

Can LPQA Data Unlock Genuine Centre Quality?

Pilot project findings



Data Mindset is key

Developing a **Data Mindset** enables the **Data-to-Action cycle**. When partners trust data, value it, and feel enabled to use it, they are more likely to turn data into action.



ELOM LPQA v2

- Observation-based assessment that looks at 22 items related to ELP quality.
- For use with group learning programmes delivered to children aged 3-5 years.
- Focuses on provision and implementation of the learning programme activities and is aligned with NCF curriculum.

Assessors spend a **MINIMUM of 3 hours** in a classroom at an ELP:

Observe materials and resources in the classroom

Observe learning programme (lessons)

Observe interactions between teachers and children

ELOM LPQA v2

- 22 Items split into sub questions with simple response options.
- Filled out during the 3 hour observation at the ELP.
- Assessor must focus on 1 specific classroom for the duration of the observation.
- Scores from questions are summed to provide a rating for each time:

Inadequate

Basic

Good

1. Room Arrangement

1a How many organised learning areas or interest centres are there in the classroom? <small>Learning areas/interest centres refer to spaces organised with equipment for different kinds of play. These can include make-believe play (home, shop, dolls); big blocks; sensory play (sand, water, slime etc.); an art area (painting, drawing, modelling, cutting and pasting, box construction etc.); book area; nature and science or theme table; educational toys and games (puzzles, small construction, sorting games, counting, threading etc.).</small> <small>More than 1 make-believe area (e.g., kitchen and clinic) only counts as ONE learning area. The same goes for blocks or construction areas.</small>	0-2 Learning areas <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 Learning areas <input type="checkbox"/>
	4+ Learning area <input type="checkbox"/>
1b Are quiet learning areas separated from active and/or noisier ones? <small>Examples of quiet areas are books, art, and puzzles. Examples of active areas are make-believe, sensory play, and construction. If the ELP is too small for the areas to be separated properly, answer No.</small>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
1c Are the learning areas set up so that children can carry out activities independently of the practitioner? <small>Learning areas are set out with appropriate materials accessible so that children do not need practitioner assistance to get started.</small>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

2. Indoor Materials

DOMAIN 1 MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

2a Are there enough materials for play and learning indoors? <small>Enough means that there is sufficient equipment for all children to have a choice of the materials they want to use (allowing for rotation and turn-taking). For example, if there are 4 children in a reading corner, then there must be at least 4 books.</small>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
2b Do the materials in each learning area cater for a range of interests and developmental levels? <small>For example, different kinds of books in a book area; different types of arts and crafts in an art area (drawing, painting, and dough for modelling); different materials in an educational toy area (puzzles and games); different themes in a make-believe area; etc. To answer yes there should be at least 2 different activities in each learning area.</small>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

ELOM LPQA v2: Domains

The 22 items are grouped into 5 domains with details published in recent technical manual



Materials & Equipment:

The availability, accessibility, and developmental appropriateness of learning materials, ensuring they support open-ended play and gross motor development



Planning & Assessment:

How well the programme aligns with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), including structured planning, child observation, and progress tracking.



Learning Programme:

Examines the daily schedule and the quality of numeracy, literacy, group times, and free play sessions.



Teaching strategies:

Strategies to support and extend learning (using open-ended questions, encouraging independence, etc.).



Relationships and Interactions:

Practitioner interactions with children, child interactions, and discipline.

ELOM LPQA v2

Domain	Your score	Your performance category
Materials and equipment	30%	Inadequate
Planning and assessment	50%	Inadequate
Learning programme	55%	Inadequate
Teaching strategies	50%	Basic
Relationships and interactions	82%	Good
Total LPQA score	50%	Inadequate

Inadequate means that you got a score below 60% meaning that significant improvement in this item is needed

Basic means that you got a score between 60% and 80% meaning that some things are going well but there is room for improvement in this item.

Good means that you got a score above 80% meaning classroom has met the criteria for good on this item.

ELOM LPQA v2: Training & accreditation

- Assessor criteria:
 - Years of experience in ECD settings - CRUCIAL
 - Tablet proficiency
 - Professionalism and good conduct in an ELP
 - Clearance certificates
- Current training:
 - 2-day, in-person training
 - Training included theory and visiting 2 centres of varying quality for practical experience
 - To be accredited - score at least 75% on IRR video

ELOM LPQA v2: Reports

- ELP level reports
 - Group level reports
- ← Pre-post & dipstick

All reports contain information about the importance of quality, explanation of the LPQA, some tips on how to read the reports.

The results provide item level ratings, domain ratings, and % scores. As well as some contextual data on the ELP or group (e.g., class size, practitioner experience, etc).

Each item is explained in detail with helpful tips to support practitioners to improve their score on that item.

Reports include links to other useful resources relevant to quality.

ELOM LPQA results: Domain scores

In the following pages, we provide the results of each LPQA item per domain, as well as additional information to help interpret the LPQA results. This includes possible reasons for the scores and potential inputs needed to support improvement.



Materials and equipment

Item	Your score
Indoor materials	Basic
Developmentally appropriate materials	Basic
Accessible materials	Good
Open-ended materials	Good
Gross motor materials	Inadequate
<i>Total domain score</i>	30%

Indoor materials

To get a good rating on this item, ELPs should have enough and a variety of learning materials (e.g., crayons and paints, or more than one kind of game, puzzle or make-believe materials). Enough means that there is sufficient equipment for all children to have a choice of activities at all times (allowing for rotation and turn taking). The materials should also cater for a variety of interests and developmental levels. For example, different kinds of books, different types of arts and crafts, more than one kind of game, puzzle or make-believe materials, a range of educational toys and games. Teachers may need to be assisted to improvise materials using basic supplies (e.g. using recycled materials), or to borrow books or toys.

The pilot project

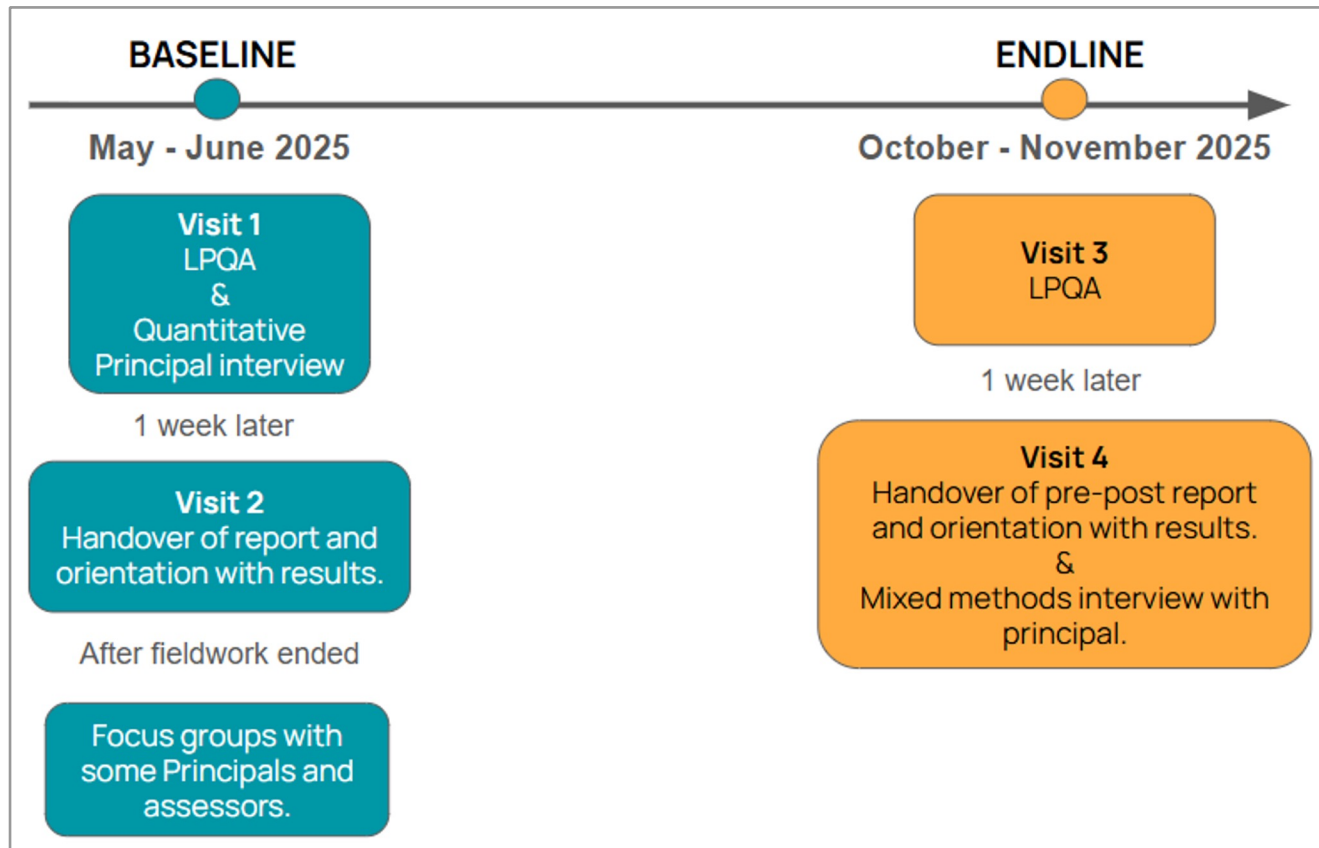
Can assessment and data benefit unserved ELPs?



Key project objectives

- **Test the usability and impact of an enhanced LPQA report in helping ELP principals understand and act on quality gaps.**
- Evaluate the feasibility of linking ELPs with RTOs and whether this results in ongoing engagement and support.
- Identify barriers and enablers to change in unserviced ELPs, informing future scaling strategies.

Study design



Final sample:
147 pre-post ELPs
129 with complete data

Assessment as intervention approach

- Process included an assessment followed by a detailed report aimed at the level of the principal. Assessors spent 1 hour taking principals through the results, ensuring they understood how to read their reports and what the results mean.
- It provides opportunities for:
 - Data-driven decision making
 - Creating motivation and accountability



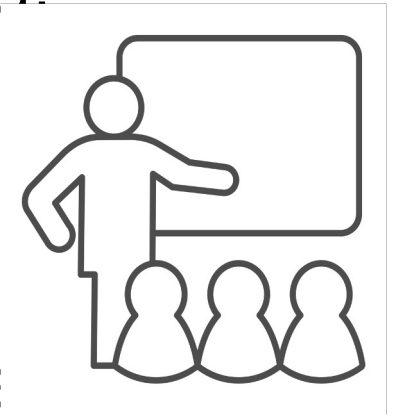
Highlighting weaknesses without providing necessary support can be harmful.

Intervention assumptions

- That assessment + report + feedback can function as an “intervention” through awareness, reflection, data-driven decision making
- That principals would understand the report, be motivated to act on it, implement improvements based on it
- That linking ELPs to RTOs would enable further support
- That assessors can effectively play a dual role (measurement + feedback)
- That information and feedback alone can drive behaviour change
- That improvements in LPQA scores reflect meaningful quality improvement
- That principals have sufficient agency, time, and resources to implement changes

Assessor training

- Before baseline, 13 **experienced** assessors completed:
 - 2 day LPQA refresher training
 - 1 day principal interview training
 - 1 day report orientation training
 - 1 day fieldwork ethics and logistics
- Before endline training, the same assessors complete
 - 1 day focused on the new report and principal interview



Note:

The aim was to have the same assessor return to the same ELP for both tool reliability and trust built with the principal. One assessor was not available for the endline work and another assessor sustained an injury halfway through endline data collection.

Fieldwork

- A dedicated fieldwork manager was required to manage appointments, print and hand out reports in time, manage travel logistics, and any issues that might have arisen.

Monday

Report handover and orientation with previous week's ELPs (x3).

Tuesday to Thursday

LPQA and principal interviews (baseline).

Friday

Team meeting to hand out printed reports and prepare for handover on Monday.

RESULTS

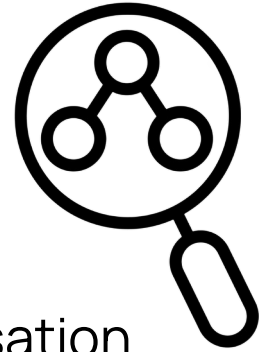


Descriptive results (baseline)

	Baseline			Endline		
	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max	Average
Number of children in ELP	3	172	25	3	172	38
Number of children enrolled in observed classroom	5	54	19	6	55	18
Number of children present in the classroom on observation day	4	47	16	5	54	16

ELP size variation

Principal qualitative insights (BEFORE)



Principals' understanding of a good quality programme

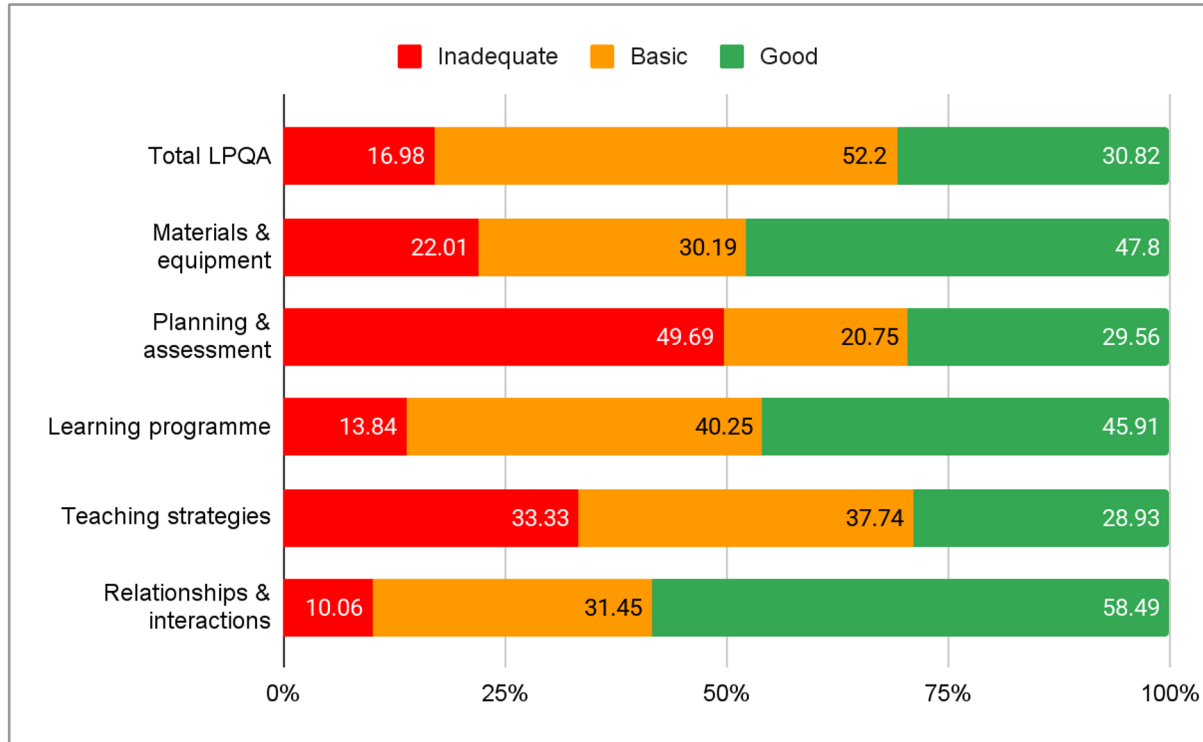
- Top 3: Safety & security, Nutritional food, Good teaching and learning activities
- Bottom 3: Space and environment, parental engagement, structure and organisation compliance

Factors impacting principals' ability to improve quality

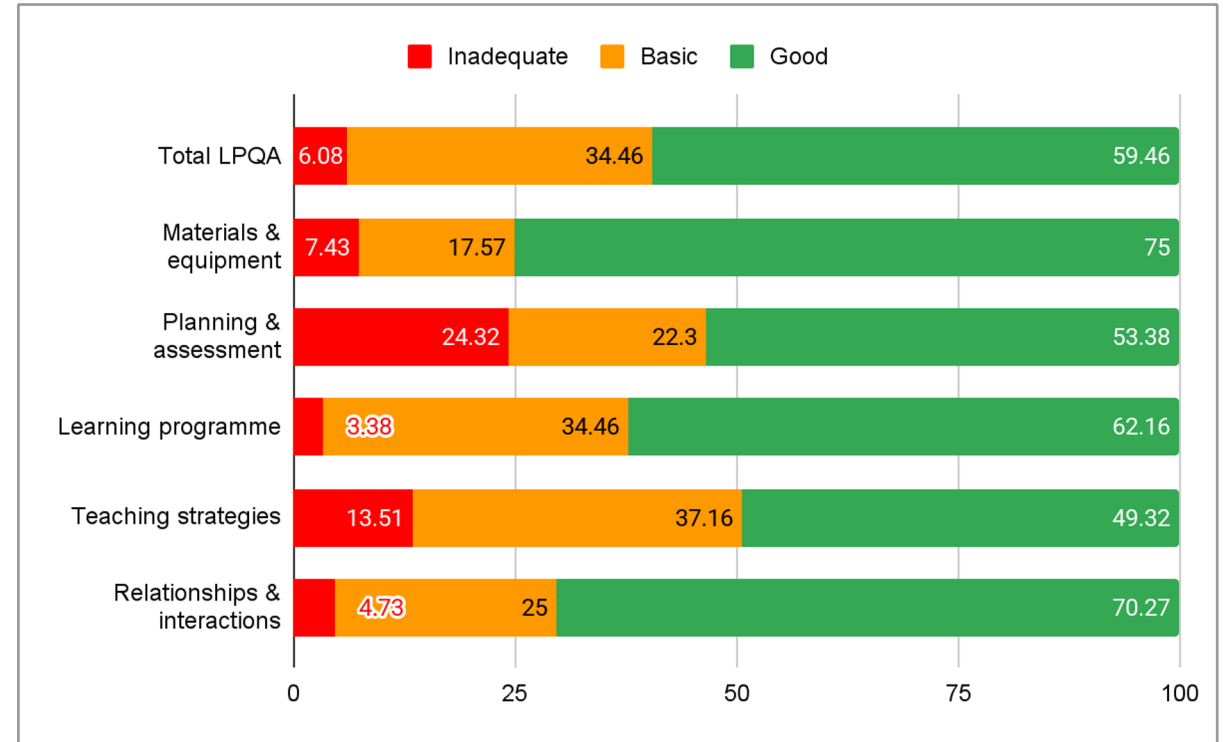
- “When parents don’t contribute to any changes”.
- “Failing to get support or funding from NGO’s and DBE in order to implement these changes”, “time and money”.
- “Teachers don’t want to implement new things they feel attacked”, “The biggest challenge is that the things are implemented but the teachers seems to be lazy to follow”.
- “Not having enough time to manage everything”.

LPQA Ratings

- Baseline ratings

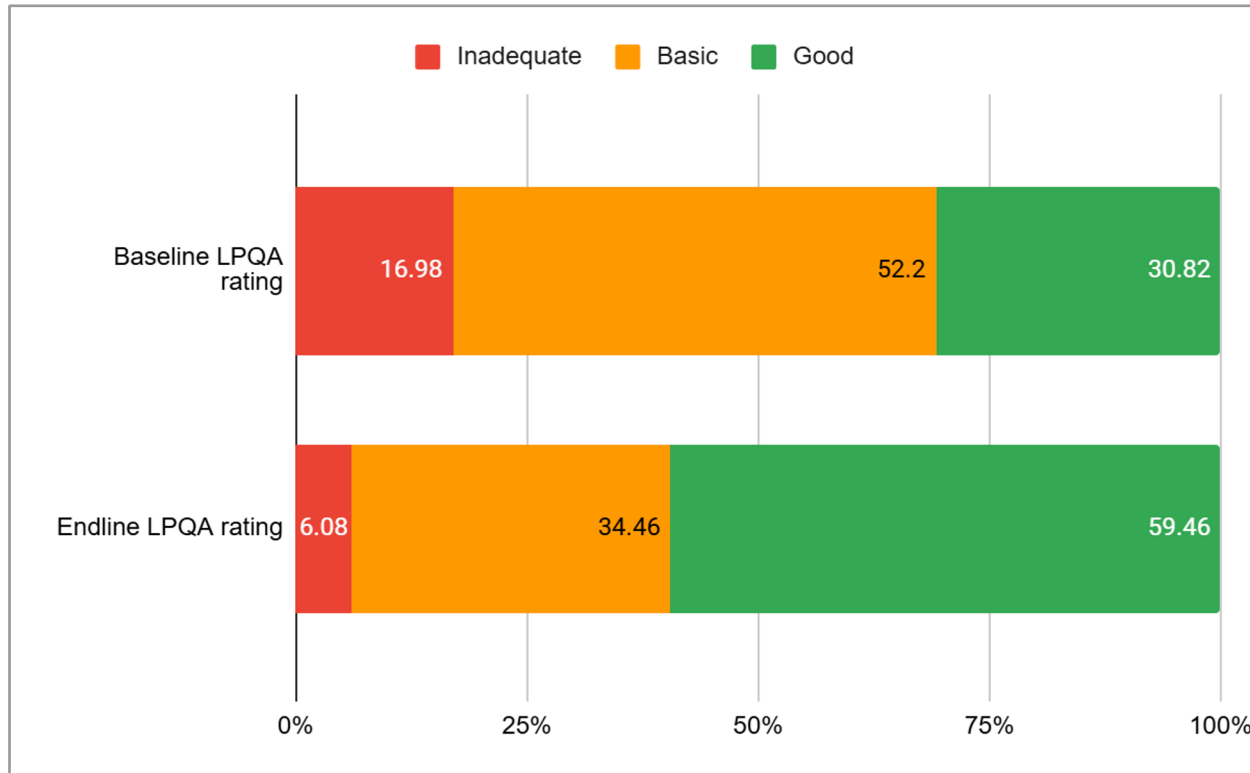


- Endline ratings



LPQA Ratings

- Improvements in overall rating



- 40 ELP's went from basic to good
- 15 ELPs went up from inadequate to basic

BASIC TO GOOD =
easier transition

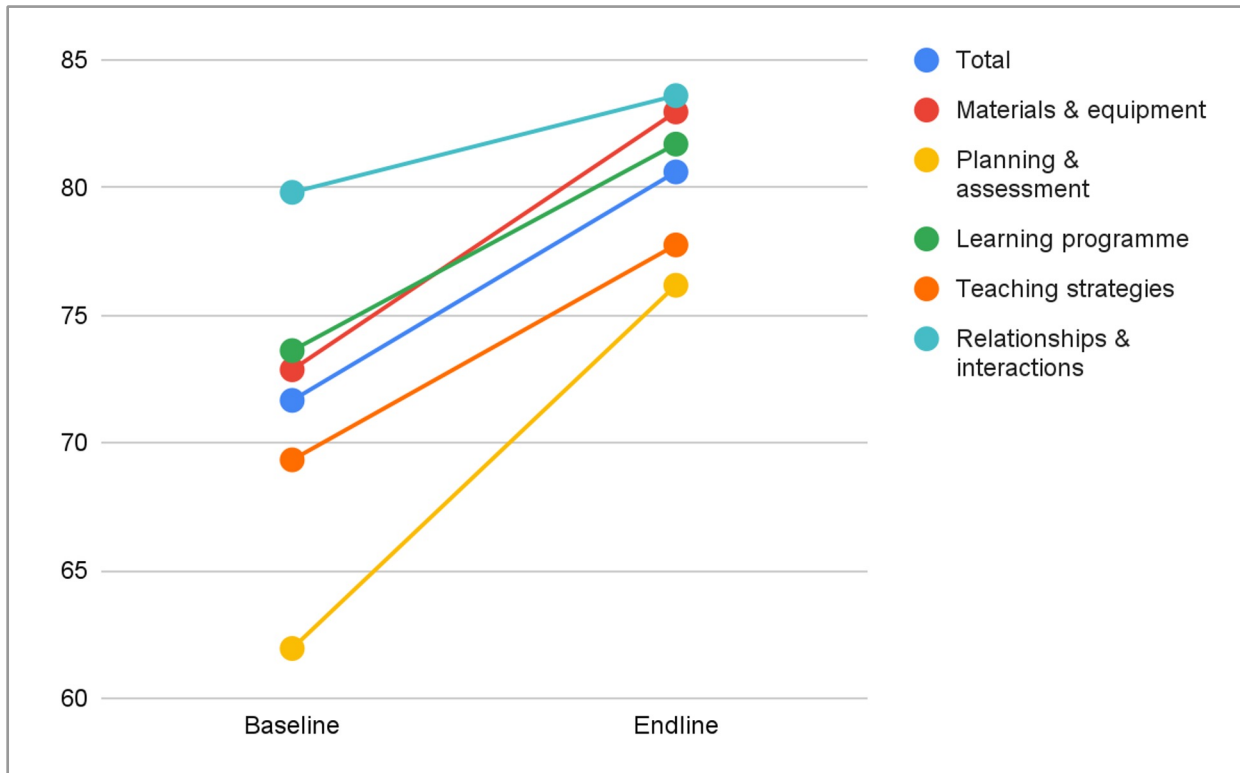
LPQA Scores

- Changes in scores



LPQA Scores

- Change in scores



Is this change significant and meaningful?

- Yes, using paired t-tests
- ALL domains showed significantly higher scores at endline
- Total LPQA score increased by 8.68 percentage points with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.83$)
- Largest gain in planning & assessment (14 percentage points, moderate effect size)
- Only Relationships & interactions have a small effect size

LPQA Scores

- Checking factors that could influence the results
 - **Attrition bias:** compare baseline scores between those who had baseline and endline vs those who only had baseline.
 - **Assessor variation:** compare the change in scores between ELPs that had the same assessor for both rounds and those that did not (N=14).
 - **Major disruption bias:** compare the change in scores between those that experienced at least 1 major disruption (N=22) and those who did not.
 - **Additional funding injections:** compare the change in scores between ELPs that reported receiving funding (N=8) vs those who did not.
 - **Teacher continuity:** compare the scores at baseline, endline, and change in scores between ELPs that had the same teacher at both rounds vs ELPs where there was a different teacher between rounds (N=28).

No evidence of impact on scores

Teacher continuity showed higher endline scores but no difference in baseline or change in scores

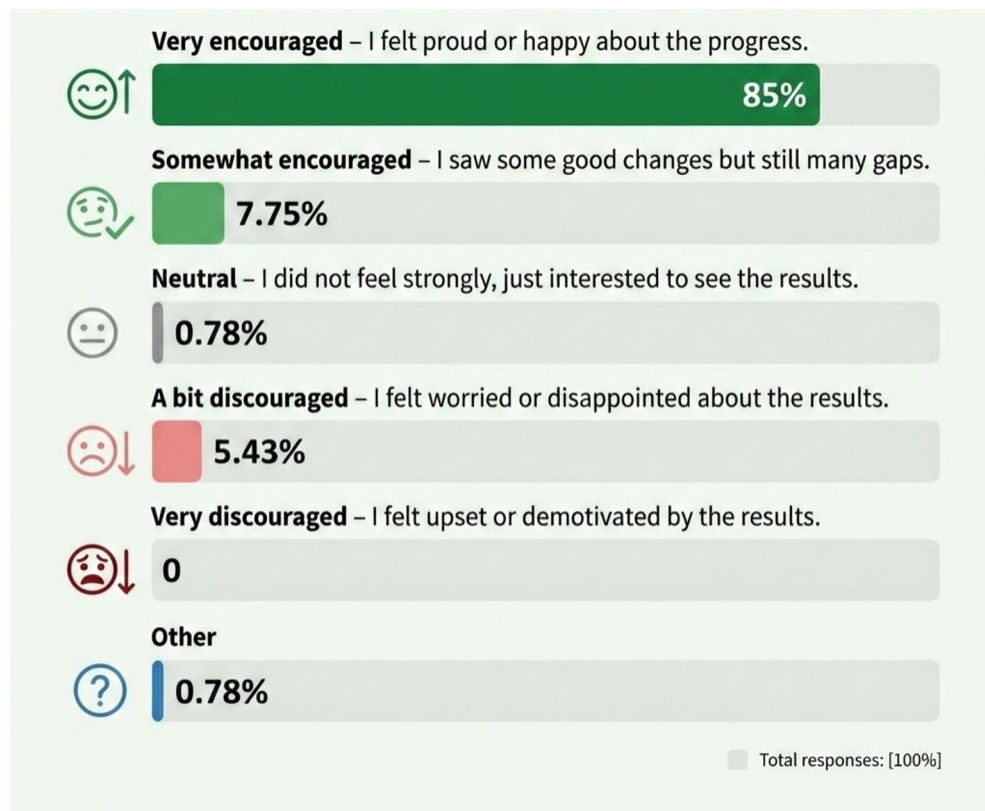
Predictors of ELP quality

Baseline LPQA	Endline LPQA	Change in LPQA
Programme fees Significant but weak $\beta = 0.006, p = 0.021$		
Practitioner years of experience Significant and meaningful $\beta = 0.63, p = 0.009$	Practitioner years of experience Significant and meaningful $\beta = 0.79, p = 0.001$	
	Teacher continuity Significant and meaningful $\beta = 5.39, p = 0.016$	

While experience, teacher continuity, and fees might support higher-quality ELPs, all ELPs had the potential to improve their scores over time.

Endline principal interview

“How did you feel after receiving the Then and Now report”



Responses about changes made:

- 96% reported that they had made changes
- Most changes in the learning programme and planning & assessment domains (admin-related)
- 92% said there were other changes they wanted to make but couldn't - materials and infrastructure mostly.
- Barriers to change were almost entirely financial and infrastructure limitations

RTO/NGO linking

BUT, Principals had not previously been aware of support available to them.

This will hopefully lead to support for ELPs in the future.

- Less than half principals contacted NGO/RTO (lack of time)
- 57 principals reached out, only 13 received support (Book Dash, Nal'ibali, Hope world Wide, ShonaQuip, Play Africa, Seriti Institute)
- Reasons for not receiving support: no response, money to register, waiting until the next intake

Principal feedback (*baseline*)



23 principals

Small focus groups

~ 2 weeks after
report handover

Aimed at
understanding
their experience

- General feedback:
 - The presence of assessors increased accountability
 - Principals were familiar with most of the content in the report, stating that they know they should be doing these things.
 - “Information can be just as if not more helpful than getting resource”

Principal feedback (*baseline*)



23 principals

Small focus groups

~ 2 weeks after
report handover

Aimed at
understanding
their experience

- Items from LPQA that came up most:
 - Observation books, programme planning, daily schedule
 - Room arrangement
 - Open ended materials
 - Open-ended questions

Largely admin
related – mentioned
being thankful to be
reminded of these

“Open-” concepts
they were not familiar
with

Principal feedback (*baseline*)



23 principals

Small focus groups

~ 2 weeks after
report handover

Aimed at
understanding
their experience

- Barriers to quality improvements:
 - Lack of response from **RTO/NGOs**
 - **Teacher training** needs – expressed the need for external training but also the concern about trained teachers leaving
 - Some shifted the **blame** entirely on their teachers
 - “*Those teachers are lazy, you show them how it should be done but when you are not there they don't do it*”
 - Younger/ less experienced principals seemed more open to learning and using tech – **growth mindset**

Assessor feedback (*baseline*)

In person focus groups

Insights on the LPQA process

- Teacher swap tactics
- Foreign national teachers hidden or swapped
- Resource constrained environments:

Assessors mentioned that principals and teachers were working under extremely difficult circumstances. These circumstances often prohibited a good rating on the LPQA which they felt didn't do them justice.

Assessor feedback (*Baseline*)

Baseline:

In person focus groups

Insights on the report handover

- Reports were welcomed with enthusiasm (appreciated personalised feedback)
- Appreciated that the reports were not framed as judgements – rating terms helped reduce stigma
- No 1-size-fits all for how to give feedback (principal alone vs including teachers)
- There was some teacher blaming happening (risk of only 1 classroom being observed)

Assessor feedback (*Endline*)

Google form

Insights on ELP characteristics that drove improvement

- Principals' who took the report seriously and engaged with it meaningfully (made notes, had questions for the assessor, shared with their teachers), were the most likely to improve.
- Financial resources specifically around materials, staff, and infrastructure (space) was the biggest limitation for improvement.
- Overall, assessors thoroughly enjoyed the process and formed good relationships with the ELPs.

Key findings



Key findings

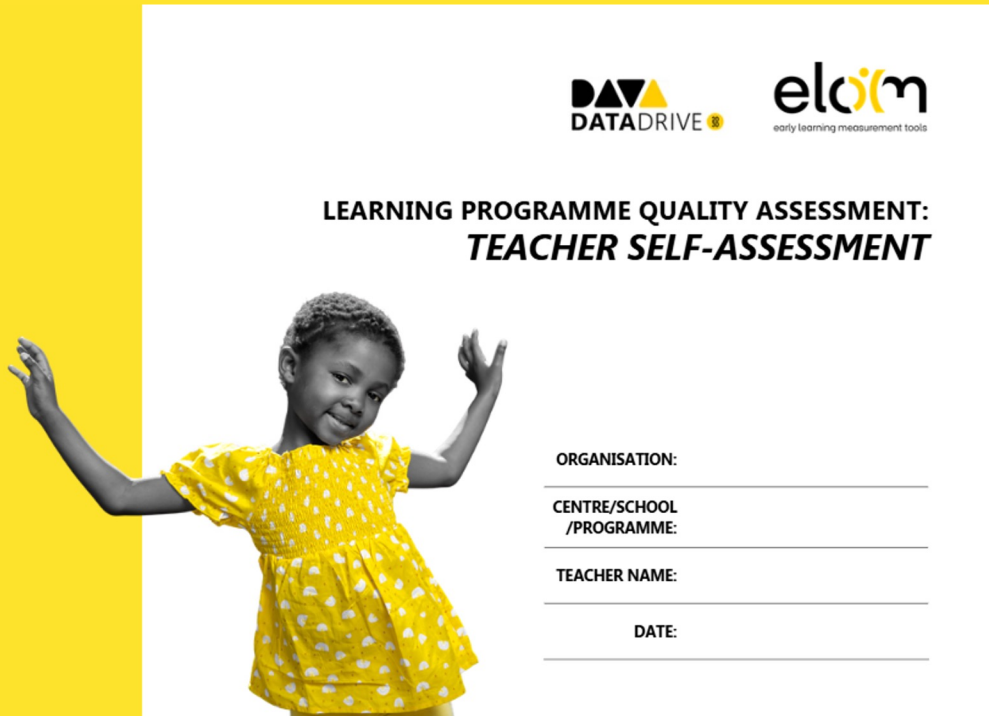
- Results suggest the LPQA assessment with in-person report handover and orientation can lead to meaningful improvements in programme quality.
- Thrive by Five revealed Planning and assessment and Teaching strategies to be the weakest domains. The 'intervention' had a large effect on P&A and a moderate effect on TS.
- NGO/RTO contact list was less successful – considerations for intake periods and participation requirements should be included next time.

Use cases

- Partner with other intermediaries – LPQA tool and feedback as a service using DD trained assessors
- Users who already follow a coaching model to use the ELP level reports and feedback



Additional LPQA resources



DATA DRIVE **elom**
early learning measurement tools

**LEARNING PROGRAMME QUALITY ASSESSMENT:
TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT**

ORGANISATION: _____

CENTRE/SCHOOL
/PROGRAMME: _____

TEACHER NAME: _____

DATE: _____

- Open access v1 LPQA
- Self-assessment checklist for practitioners and principals
- Infographics explaining key aspects of quality and highlighting resources in the ecosystem
- Any other ideas?

Additional LPQA resources

EXAMPLE

About my Planning	My Rating			Where can I improve? What support do I need?
I observe individual children and keep notes of their interests, strengths, difficulties and progress.	Yes	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	There are so many children that there is not always enough time to do this on my own. I need someone to help me observe each child.
I use what I have observed to build on children's interests and needs when I plan activities.	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Sometimes	I'm not sure how to do this. I need training to understand how I can plan around the children's individual needs.
I complete regular assessments of children in my group to feed into their progress reports.	Yes	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	I often run out of time to go this regularly because there is so much to do. I need help with a more simple report.
I discuss concerns about children's progress with the principal or available expert.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	No	Sometimes	



THANK YOU!

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