

# Target 4.1

**Technical Cooperation Group  
on the Indicators for SDG4-Education 2030**

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Husein Abdul-Hamid  
*World Bank Group*

## The target under analysis

- Target 4.1 – By 2030, ensure that all girls complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

# The focus

Learning

Provision

Participation

Completion

# Thematic indicator 1

**Percentage of children/young people (i) in grades 2/3; (ii) at the end of primary; and (iii) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (a) reading and (b) mathematics**

Definition: Percentage of children and young people in Grade 2/3 of primary education, at the end of primary and the end of lower secondary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (a) reading and (b) mathematics. The minimum proficiency level will be measured relative to new common reading and mathematics scales currently in development.

Purpose: The indicator is a direct measure of the learning outcomes achieved in the two subject areas at the end of the relevant stages of education.

# Calculations

- Calculation method: The indicator is calculated as the percentage of children and/or young people at the relevant stage of education achieving or exceeding a pre-defined proficiency level in a given subject.
- Disaggregation: "By age group; "By sex"; "By location (urban/rural) ; "By wealth quintiles ; "By disability status
- Data source: Various international assessments (e.g., PISA), regional learning assessments (e.g., LLECE, SACMEQ, PASEC), national and citizen-led learning assessments. (a) Short-term strategy: use national large scale representative assessment data coming from either national or cross-national assessments even though the performance levels are not comparable. (b) Medium-term strategy: use of a global reporting scale based on either new test or the statistical linking of national, regional and cross-national assessments

# Limitations and comments

- While data from many national assessments are available now, every country sets its own standards so the performance levels might not be comparable. One option is to link across existing regional assessments based on a **common framework**.
- assessments are typically administered within school systems, the current indicators cover only those in school and the **proportion of in-school target** population might vary from country-to-country due to the country's varied out-of-school children population.
- Assessing competencies of children and young people who are out-of-school would require **household-based surveys**. Assessing children in household is under consideration but may be very costly and difficult to administer, and unlikely to be available on the scale needed within the next 3-5 years.
- The calculation of this indicator requires specific information on the **ages of children participating** in assessments to create globally comparable data. And ages of children reported by head of household might not be consistent and reliable so makes the calculation of the indicator even more challenging.

# Indicator 2: Administration of a nationally representative learning assessment (i) in grades 2/3 (ii) at the end of primary and (iii) at the end of lower secondary

- Whether a national or cross-national assessment of learning outcomes was conducted in the last 5 years in (a) reading, writing or language and (b) mathematics at each stage of education (Grade 2/3 of primary, at the end of primary and at the end of lower secondary). An assessment of learning outcomes is a test or examination which describes the achievement of students at a particular age or grade.
- Purpose: The capacity of countries to assess learning via large-scale assessment is key to monitoring quality and equity of learning. Administration of national learning assessments is essential to supply information on the performance of education systems at least every five years.

# Calculation

- The indicator is expressed as a simple 'yes' or 'no' for each subject area and each stage of education.
- Disaggregation: Could be stage or level of education and subject
- Data required: Information on the implementation of learning assessments in each subject and at each stage of education in each country.
- Data source: Data on the administration of a Large Scale assessments coming from a national representative sample from national learning assessment offices, ministries of education or other bodies responsible for learning assessments including regional or international organizations engaged in running learning assessments (e.g., CONFEMEN, IEA, LLECE, OECD, EQAP and SACMEQ).



# Interpretation

'Yes' values indicate that the country is monitoring learning outcomes regularly at the given stage of education and in the given subject areas. This will enable the country to review and adapt as necessary its national policies on education and learning to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to acquire basic skills at each education level and in each subject area.

- Limitations and comments: This does not measure the skills of children but only the existence of assessments in country.

# Gross intake ratio to the last grade (primary, lower secondary)

"Total number of new entrants into the last grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the intended entrance age to the last grade of primary. The intended entrance age to the last grade is the age at which pupils would enter the grade if they had started school at the official primary entrance age, had studied full-time and had progressed without repeating or skipping a grade."

Disaggregation: By sex and could be level of education

Data source: Administrative data from schools on enrolments and repeaters or new entrants by grade; population censuses and surveys for population estimates by single year of age; administrative data from Ministries of Education on the structure of the education system.

# Limitations and comments

- A high ratio indicates a high degree of current primary education completion.
- This is a gross measure and may therefore exceed 100% if there are large numbers of pupils who entered school either early or late and/or who have repeated earlier grades of primary education.
- Compared to the completion rate, the gross intake ratio to the last grade does not indicate how many children complete the last grade, only how many children enter that grade. If students in the last grade leave school before graduation, the gross intake ratio to the last grade overestimates completion of primary education. The fact that the GIR can exceed 100% also makes it more difficult to interpret than the completion rate."

# Thematic indicator 4: Completion rate (primary, lower and upper secondary)

"The percentage of a cohort of children or young people aged 3-5 years above the intended age for the last grade of each level of education who have completed that grade. The intended age for the last grade of each level of education is the age at which pupils would enter the grade if they had started school at the official primary entrance age, had studied full-time and had progressed without repeating or skipping a grade. "

Calculation method: The number of persons in the relevant age group who have completed the last grade of the given level of education is expressed as a percentage of the total population (in the survey sample) of the same age group.  
Type of data source: Population censuses, household surveys.

Disaggregation (Sex, Wealth, Location, Age, Level of education, others as available in survey or census data. The options for disaggregation may be limited by the sample size in a survey.

# Data

Population censuses and household surveys which collect data on the highest level of education completed by children and young people in a household, through self- or household declaration

- Administrative data from Ministries of Education on the structure of the education system are also needed.
- Labour force surveys can serve as a source of data if they collect information for the age groups of concern.
- International sample surveys, such as Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS, <http://dhsprogram.com>) or Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS, <http://mics.unicef.org>), are another source. These surveys are designed to meet commonly agreed upon international data needs while also providing data for national policy purposes. These surveys are implemented on a regular basis in selected countries, on average every 3 to 5 years. They aim to assure cross-national comparability, although they often integrate national modules to suit specific country data needs. Modules from international surveys are sometimes added to other on-going national sample surveys.
- Population censuses are another important source of attainment data but they are carried out less frequently than household surveys, often only once per decade.

Data on attainment collected with surveys or censuses are usually mapped to ISCED levels post-enumeration.

# Interpretation and limitation

- A completion rate at or near 100% indicates that most or all children and adolescents have completed a level of education by the time they are 3 to 5 years older than the official age of entry into the last grade of that level of education.
- A low completion rate indicates low or delayed entry into a given level of education, high drop-out, high repetition, late completion, or a combination of these factors.
- To identify the causes of low completion rates, it is necessary to examine other indicators, for example the out-of-school rate, the gross intake ratio to the last grade, and the percentage of over-age children.
- When disaggregated by sex, location, and other characteristics, this indicator can identify excluded population groups.
- National data on educational attainment are often collected and reported in reference to national systems of education. The mapping from a national classification to ISCED, needed for calculation of the completion rate, is not always straightforward and can cause discrepancies between measures of attainment in national and international data. Data collection and mapping to ISCED are more difficult for upper secondary education than lower levels of education because of the variety of providers and programmes at the upper secondary level.

# Discussion