

## Concept Note

### Measurement of Target 4.3: Technical issues

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#### Introduction

The role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and tertiary education has been topping policy debates across the globe due to the increased recognition of higher-level skills and competencies as essential to national development – especially in the context of globalization and the shift towards knowledge economies. Countries at every level of development have important national policy priorities related to these educational areas. In this context, cross-nationally comparable data are vital to formulating policies, benchmarking progress and learning from experiences in other countries. Recognizing the importance of TVET, tertiary education and lifelong learning for development, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 has defined the following target for this area:

**Target 4.3: *By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university***

The target has three thematic indicators covering:

- Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex (Indicator 4.3.1)
- Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education (Indicator 4.3.2)
- Participation rate in technical-vocational programmes (15- to 24-year-olds) (Indicator 4.3.3)

Data for Indicators 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 are currently readily available and are collected annually by the UIS from countries with good coverage, whereas Indicator 4.3.1 needs important statistical development.

Indicator 4.3.1 can currently be calculated only for a limited number countries in the European region from the following surveys: A European enterprise surveys called Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) and another European household survey called Adult Education Survey(AES) that collects data on adult participation education and training (formal, non-formal and informal). AES is conducted every five years (first wave in 2007; latest wave in 2016) and CVTS is conducted every 5-6 years (first wave in 1993; latest wave 2015). Currently, there is no global mechanism to collect data on a

regular basis to produce this indicator. UIS is proposing to use a placeholder based on the participation of adult to formal education-which is collected annually by the UIS.

## Technical issues

### 1. Indicator 4.3.2: Gross enrolment ratio to tertiary education.

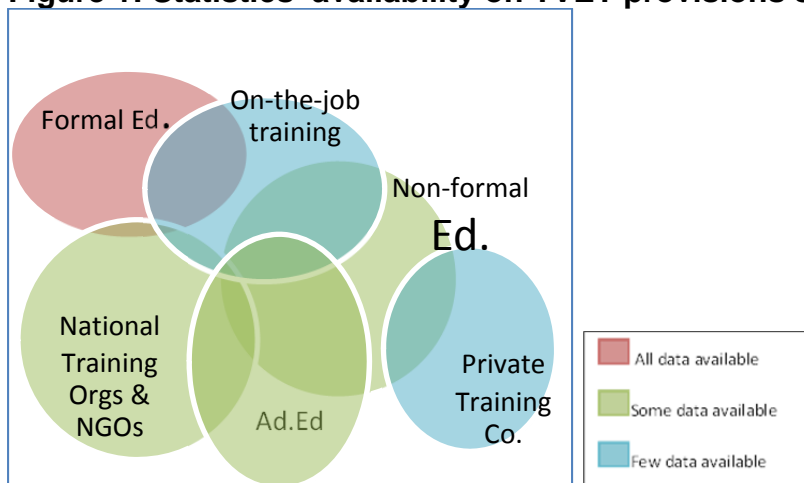
The indicator has the following limitations:

- It is a broad measure of participation in tertiary education and does not take account of differences in duration of programmes between countries or between different levels of education and fields of study;
- It is standardised to some extent by measuring participation to tertiary education relative to a 5-year age group for all countries but may underestimate participation especially in countries with poorly developed tertiary education systems or those where provision is limited to first tertiary programmes (which are generally shorter than 5 years in duration).

### 2. Measuring participation to TVET systems

Technical and vocational education and training can be offered in a variety of settings including schools and universities, workplace environments and others. Administrative data often capture only provision in formal settings such as schools and universities. Participation rates do not capture the intensity or quality of the provision nor the outcomes of the education and training on offer. As UIS current data collection covers formal education only, it covers a limited part of the whole participation of TVET or skills development programmes. As shown in Figure 1, formal technical and vocational education programmes represent only one of the various ways of the TVET provision.

**Figure 1: Statistics' availability on TVET provisions systems**



Moreover, although formal TVET educational programmes supervised outside of the ministry of education are within the scope of UIS data collection system, the main national counterparts of the UIS (i.e. the education ministry and the national statistical office responsible for the education sector) would not have comprehensive information on these programmes. Therefore the UIS needs to closely work with its regular national counterparts to collect all types of formal TVE data from outside the education ministry and include them to the data that they report to the UIS. It is also necessary to do mapping of TVET provision in a critical number of countries to fully understand the sector and develop a sound strategy to collect data that are representative of the sector.

### **3. Measuring continuing adult and participation to education and training through standard national surveys**

There are a number of difficulties in collecting data on adult/youth continuing participation to education and training in an internationally comparable basis. The main problems are:

- Duration, organization, purpose of programmes can vary enormously within countries and between countries;
- Classifying the programme in a cross-nationally comparable manner;
- Existence of comprehensive information systems that gather the statistics;
- Certification and accreditation may be unrecognized or non-existent;
- While an indicator on adult and youth participation can be a sign of an individual's commitment to lifelong learning it is questionable whether it relates to labour market opportunities or skills development. Even the EU AES requires a substantial number of supplementary questions at national level, and post-processing, to determine the nature and relevance of the training received.

At national level, the two most relevant major structured surveys that could be in developing countries to measure adult and youth participation to education and training are the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS). Even when a country has a more general all-purpose annual household survey it tend to be recognisably based on one of these two models. The major function of the LFS is in establishing patterns of employment and unemployment. The major function of the LSMS is to examine household income and expenditure, often with a view to establishing a poverty line. When an LFS contains TVET questions it readily lends itself to examining patterns of employment or unemployment with various forms of education and training. When an LSMS contains questions on TVET it readily lends itself to analysis of training as a way of increasing income and avoiding poverty. The problem is that there are no common standards adopted by developing countries in asking questions on TVET in these surveys. So countries must be guided through 'best practices' on including questions about adult/youth participation to education and training in these two major types of surveys.