

Concept Note

Measuring Target 4.c: Technical issues

May 2016

Introduction

The inclusion of a separate target on teachers in SDG4 reflects the critical role teachers play in the delivery of high quality education and the achievement by their students of relevant learning outcomes. Target 4.c reflects the growing demand for highly trained and qualified teachers. The seven thematic indicators proposed for Target 4.c cover:

- The pedagogical training and academic qualifications of teachers (Indicators 4.c.1 and 4.c.3)
- The allocation of trained and qualified teachers to schools and other centres of learning (Indicators 4.c.2 and 4.c.4)
- The relative financial attractiveness of teaching as a career (Indicator 4.c.5)
- Teacher turnover (Indicator 4.c.6)
- Continuing in-service training of teachers (Indicator 4.c.7)

Four of the indicators are currently readily available and are collected annually by the UIS from countries. These are:

- 4.c.1. Percentage of teachers trained according to national standards
- 4.c.2. Pupil-trained teacher ratio
- 4.c.3. Percentage of teachers qualified according to national standards
- 4.c.4. Pupil-qualified teacher ratio

A fifth is available but for relatively few countries currently:

- 4.c.6. Teacher attrition rate

Two others require further development:

- 4.c.5. Average teacher salary relative to other professions
- 4.c.7. Percentage of teachers who received in-service training in the last 12 months

Technical issues

1. Trained and qualified

Even though indicators 4.c.1 - 4.c.4 are readily available, there are questions regarding cross-national comparability in particular in relation to the definition of 'trained' and, to a lesser extent, of 'qualified' as both are assessed relative to national standards which can vary widely across countries. A teacher is 'trained' if they have received training in pedagogics and the art of teaching. In some countries, the national standard can be very short – a matter of a few weeks in some cases. In others, teachers may be required to follow a training programme of several years' duration. A teacher is 'qualified' if they have been educated to the required standard in the subject(s) they teach. In some countries, there is no minimum requirement to teach a given subject at a given level (or the education is acquired during the pedagogical training programme) but in others, especially at secondary levels, teachers are expected to have a certain level of knowledge in the subjects they teach. In order to improve cross-national comparability of these indicators further work would be needed to develop global standards of training and qualifications for teaching.

2. Allocation of teaching resources

On the question of the allocation of teachers to schools, it should be noted that the pupil-teacher ratios are simple ratios of the total number of trained (or qualified) teachers to all students. They do not measure the average number of pupils that are actually taught by trained (or qualified) teachers. It may even be the case that untrained (or unqualified) teachers have larger classes than their better prepared colleagues.

3. Teacher turnover

The teacher attrition rate is estimated at the national level from data on the stock of teachers in two consecutive school years and the numbers of new entrant teachers in the more recent of the two years. It therefore does not capture teacher turnover between schools, levels of education or regions of a country. In cases where teacher contracts are renewed every year or where certain categories of teacher are only employed during term-time, attrition rates may be over-estimated. Normally we would expect attrition rates to be in the range 2.5-10% (equivalent to average teaching careers of between 10 and 40 years).

4. Financial attractiveness

The proposed indicator would compare the average salaries of teachers with a group (or basket) of other professions requiring a similar level of qualification. Data are most likely to be available for public sector teachers and other professionals and may need to be based on statutory salaries rather than actual average salaries. The comparable professions are likely to vary from one country to another but at the global level it may be necessary to identify a small group of professions that are broadly comparable, for

example, nurses, police and/or certain categories of civil servants. OECD has developed methodologies based on actual average salaries which could be further explored and extended to other countries.

Two potential placeholders have been proposed: one based on expenditures on teachers compensation (which would require a rough estimate of the associated teacher numbers in order to convert the expenditure to a per capita amount) and one based on teachers' statutory salaries. Neither placeholder is currently widely available.

5. In-service training

There is currently no global mechanism for collecting data on in-service training of teachers. This indicator will require substantial development work and, perhaps, the design of new school-based surveys. An assessment will need to be undertaken on the extent to which Ministries of Education and teachers' councils have annual records of the in-service training of teachers.