Countries with incomplete or missing data

The Education for all Global Monitoring Report (GMR) makes extensive use of comparable country-level data, collected and quality-assured by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), to monitor and show countries' progress towards education for all (EFA) goals. However, data availability remains an important issue since a number of countries have insufficient or unreliable data for international comparisons. The lack of sufficient and reliable data continues to impede comprehensive monitoring and has prevent a full assessment of countries' progress towards the EFA goals countries since 1999.

The reasons for lack of data vary and are related to either population or enrolment data. Age specific population data provided by the United Nations Population Division (UNPD) are occasionally inconsistent with enrolment data provided by countries to the UIS, leading, for example, to net enrolment ratios exceeding 100% or to very low or high enrolment ratios in countries where other evidence suggests otherwise. Moreover, it is also important to note that the UNPD does not produce population estimates for countries with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants (UNESCO, 2014c).[1] Complete enrolment information has not been collected in some countries, often as a result of poor statistical information systems, or emergencies such as armed conflict or natural disasters. And some countries may have national statistics but not always report them at the international level.

For the final edition in the EFA report series, The GMR team has made an attempt to bridge the data gaps and to increase the country coverage. The GMR team has identified 35 countries or territories[2] with insufficient or no data for four core indicators or some to measure progress across three of six EFA goals over 1999–2012. It made a concerted effort to find other sources of information, including national sources, on these selected EFA indicators. The overall aim was to provide an indication of the extent of education progress in each country since 1999, in the absence of cross-country comparable data that remain the main basis of global monitoring.

Five data sources were used for these 'missing cases': national administrative data published by Ministries of education and/or departments of statistics; national EFA 2015 national review reports; other international databases; academic articles and direct contact with national-level officials or stakeholders. These sources allowed for a brief summary of education progress for 22 of the 35 countries.

The following four indicators of progress towards the three selected EFA goals were examined:

1. Pre-primary education gross enrolment ratio (GER.0) for the education part of EFA goal 1 of early childhood care and education (ECCE);

---

[1] For countries in this case, the UIS uses national population data when available or makes its own population estimates for use in the indicator calculations.

[2] Andorra, Anguilla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Kiribati, Libya, Macao (China), Maldives, the Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Montserrat, Niue, Palau, the Philippines, Saint Martin, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sint Maarten, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Turkmenistan, Turks and Caicos Islands, Tuvalu and Zimbabwe.

2. Primary education gross enrolment ratio (GER.1) and net enrolment ratio (NER.1) to measure the enrolment part of EFA goal 2 of universal primary education;

3. Survival rate to the last grade of primary education (SR.1) for the school completion part of EFA goal 2 of universal primary education;

4. Gender parity index for GER.1 and SR.1 for EFA goal 5 of gender parity in primary education.

For each indicator, countries with missing or insufficient data between 1999 and 2012 were identified, then classified according to the main cause of the absence of data.

Countries with missing population data

No enrolment ratios could be calculated by UIS for seven countries due to inconsistencies between enrolment figures provided by the country and the United Nations population data from the 2012 population revision. For these countries with missing information on population, including Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Ethiopia, Macao (China), Maldives and Singapore, the GMR team searched for data in publications provided by each country's national statistics office. For most such countries, it was challenging to find information corresponding to the school age groups agreed upon in the International standard classification of education system (ISCED) framework. In the end, population data from national sources could be used only for Andorra, Ethiopia and Maldives to calculate enrolment ratios while the latter were taken directly from national publications for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Macao (China) and Singapore. The Department of Statistics of Macao (China) and the Ministry of Education of Singapore directly sent requested information on the four indicators.

Countries with missing enrolment data

The majority of the 22 countries included in the sample had population data but lacked complete or had partial enrolment data available over the period. These include Botswana, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Kiribati, Libya, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Zimbabwe, but also Bosnia and Herzegovina and Singapore that also lacked population data. For all these countries information was compiled from many sources, including administrative and household survey sources. Data used for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brazil came from household survey data, respectively the UNICEF's Multiple Indicator cluster and the National Household Sampling Survey (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostragem de Domicilio). For Haiti, Kenya, Kiribati, Libya, the Federated States of Micronesia and South Sudan, enrolment data were found in documents provided by statistics offices and education ministries while Somalia enrolment data were calculated from UNESCO and World Bank reports. The EFA 2015 national review reports were also an important sources of data for a number of countries, among which Botswana, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iraq, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Timor‑Leste, Tuvalu and Zimbabwe, enrolment data was found mainly in national EFA 2015 review reports.

Country profiles

Based on information and data compiled for the 22 countries out of the 35 with incomplete or missing data, the GMR team has produced country profiles for each. The analysis showed that a majority of the countries with missing cross-country comparable data produced by UIS for which alternative sources were found made considerable progress on the EFA agenda, as measured by the four indicators examined. This country profiles exercise was useful not only to shed light on countries that are otherwise 'invisible', but also because the search for data sources could be even more essential when monitoring progress towards eventual post-2015 Sustainable Development Goal targets. Ultimately, it stresses the need of improved data collection, reporting and sharing by countries and at the international level.

Some problems concerning the lack of data found during this research were similar to those pointed out by the Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. In particular, the

Group recognized that existing data was not used because it was shared too late or not at all. The experts also commented on the lack of data needed for decision-making (IEAG, 2014).

As the international community progresses towards the Sustainable Development Goals, it is important to focus on more efficient and transparent ways to improve not only data collection, reporting and availability, but also the timeliness of data in the context of data harmonization for better comparison across countries.