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Institute for Statistics

SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

METADATA

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

4.1.7 Number of years of (a) free and (b) compulsory primary and secondary education guaranteed in legal frameworks

Definition

Number of years of primary and secondary education to which children and young people are legally entitled that are either free from tuition fees or compulsory or both.

Most countries have legislation specifying the ages and the level of education (typically pre-primary or primary education) at which children should start school. Such legislation usually also specifies either the number of years of education that are guaranteed or the age at which young people may leave education or, in some cases, both.

The number of years of primary and secondary education to which children are legally entitled should ideally be the number of grades of primary and secondary education which young people are expected to have completed before being legally eligible to leave school. Years of pre-primary education covered by the legal entitlement should be excluded from this indicator (and reported in Indicator 4.2.5 instead).

Purpose

To measure government commitment to guaranteeing the right to education to children and young people.

Calculation method

Record the number of grades of primary and secondary education that are guaranteed. If using ages rather than grades, subtract from the upper age, either the lower age if it is an age at which a child should be in primary school or, if not, subtract the official entrance age to primary school. If the upper age is the age at the start of the last year of free or compulsory education, it will be necessary to add 1 to the result.

YF_{123} = number of years of free primary and secondary education (ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3)
 YC_{123} = number of years of compulsory primary and secondary education (ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3)

Interpretation

The existence of national legislation guaranteeing the right to education at given ages and/or grades demonstrates the government's commitment to ensuring that children and young people attend school regularly. The greater the number of years guaranteed the more likely that children and young people will remain in school longer and have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills and competencies at each level of education.

Type of data source

Administrative data.

Disaggregation

By level of education.

Data required

Number of grades of primary and secondary education which are (a) free from tuition fees and/or (b) compulsory according to national legislation. If the number of grades is not specified, the age range in which education is (a) free and/or (b) compulsory may be used instead. Data on the structure (entrance age and duration) of each level of education are also required.

Data sources

National legislation and formal education standards and norms on access to schooling and, in particular, the legal entitlement or obligation to attend school; and administrative data from ministries of education on the structure of the education system.

Quality assurance

The UIS maintains a global database used to produce this indicator. The indicator should be based on actual information on free and compulsory education by age and grade from official national legislation documents or education Acts.

Limitations and comments

The existence of national legislation does not guarantee that countries ensure that it is implemented effectively and that parents are indeed ensuring their children benefit from the provision available.