



**unesco**

Institute for Statistics

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

**METADATA**

**Target 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship**

**4.4.3 Youth/adult educational attainment rates by age group and level of education**

**Definition**

Distribution of the population aged 25 years and above according to the highest level of education attained or completed. This indicator is usually presented for age groups of at least 25 years and older in order to ensure that the majority of the population has completed their education. Younger age groups are often still enrolled in the education system. The indicator can be calculated for youth (15-24 years) if desired.

The indicator measures for each level of education the percentage of the population who completed at least that level of education. Education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

**Purpose**

To show the educational composition of the population aged 25 years and above. This indicator reflects the structure and performance of the education system and informs policies to increase educational opportunity.

**Calculation method**

Divide the number of persons aged 25 years and above with respect to the highest level of education attained by the total population of the same age group and multiply the result by 100.

$$EA_{AG_i,n}^t = \frac{EAP_{AG_i,n}^t}{P_{AG_i}^t}$$

where:

$EA_{AG_i,n}^t$  = percentage of population in age group  $i$  that attained educational level  $n$ , in year  $t$

$EAP_{AG_i,n}^t$  = population in age group  $i$  that attained educational level  $n$ , in year  $t$

$P_{AG_i}^t$  = population in age group  $i$ , in year  $t$

**Interpretation**

Educational attainment by the level of education provides an indication of the stock of knowledge, skills and competencies associated with completing that level. Differences in the distribution of attainment between different population groups can provide an indication of the current and historical effectiveness of the education system in promoting equal access to education.

**Type of data source**

National population census; household and/or labour force surveys.

**Disaggregation**

By age, sex, location and socio-economic status, level of education, and others as available in survey or census data. Disability status is not currently available in most household surveys and censuses.

The options for disaggregation may be limited by the sample size in a survey.

**Data required**

Populations in the relevant age groups (25 years and older, 15-24 years, other age groups if required) by the highest level of education completed.

**Data sources**

Population censuses and household surveys which collect data on the highest levels of education completed by members of a household, through self- or household declaration. In the former case, each household member above a certain age reports his or her own level of educational attainment. In the latter case, one person, usually the head of the household or another reference person, indicates the highest qualification held or level of education completed of each member of the household.

Labour force surveys are the most common source of data on educational attainment. 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 labour force surveys or other sample surveys, often only once per decade.

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

**Quality assurance**

This indicator should be based on complete and reliable census or survey data, applying clear classification of levels of education in accordance with ISCED.

**Limitations and comments**

Caution is required when using this indicator for cross-country comparison, since the countries do not always classify degrees and qualifications at the same ISCED levels, even if they are received at roughly the same age or after a similar number of years of schooling. Moreover, certain educational programmes and study courses cannot be easily classified according to ISCED, and segments of the population may be assigned an unknown level of educational attainment. In reporting educational attainment, this indicator only measures educational attainment in terms of the level of education attained and does not necessarily reveal the quality of the education.