Metadata for Other Policy Relevant Indicators (OPRI)

Gross enrolment ratio (GER)

Definition
Total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year.

Purpose
To show the general level of participation in a given level of education. It indicates the capacity of the education system to enrol students of a particular age group. It can also be a complementary indicator to net enrolment rate (NER) by indicating the extent of over-aged and under-aged enrolment.

Calculation method
Number of pupils (or students) enrolled in a given level of education regardless of age expressed as percentage of the population of the age group which officially corresponds to the given level of education.

$$GER_{n,t} = \frac{E_{n,t}}{P_{n,t}^a}$$

where:

$GER_{n,t}$ = gross enrolment ratio at level **n** of education in academic year **t**

$E_{n,t}$ = Enrolment at the level **n** of education in academic year **t**

$P_{n,t}^a$ = Population in age group **a** which officially corresponds to the level **n** of education in academic year **t**

Example: If the entrance age for primary education is 7 years with a duration of 6 years, then *a* is (7 to 12) years.

n   = 1 (primary), 2 (lower secondary), 3 (upper secondary), 23 (secondary), 4 (post-secondary non-tertiary), 12 (primary and lower secondary), 1t3 (primary and secondary), and 1t8 (primary to tertiary)

Interpretation
A high GER generally indicates a high degree of participation, whether the pupils belong to the official age group or not. A GER value approaching or exceeding 100% indicates that a country is, in principle, able to accommodate all of its school-age population, but it does not indicate the proportion already enrolled. The achievement of a GER of 100% is therefore a necessary but not sufficient condition for enrolling all eligible children in school.

When the GER exceeds 90% for a particular level of education, the aggregate number of places for pupils is approaching the number required for universal access of the official age group. However, this is a meaningful interpretation only if one can expect the under-aged and over-aged enrolments to decline in the future to free places for pupils from the expected age group.

Type of data source
Administrative data.

Disaggregation
By sex and level of education.

Data required
Total enrolment for a given level of education. Population of the age group corresponding to the specified level.

Data sources
School register or school census for data on enrolment by level of education. UNPD population estimates for school-age population.

Quality assurance
GER at each level of education should be based on total enrolment in all types of schools and education institutions, including public, private and all other institutions that provide organized educational programmes.

The UIS sets standards, develops questionnaires and quality control protocols for country data reporting, and maintains the global database on the structure of education, and

enrolment data by level of education. The United Nations Population Division (UNPD) produces and maintains population data.

Limitations and comments

GER can exceed 100% due to the inclusion of over-aged and under-aged pupils/students because of early or late entrants, and grade repetition. In this case, a rigorous interpretation of GER needs additional information to assess the extent of repetition, late entrants, etc.