Metadata for Other Policy Relevant Indicators

Net enrolment rate (NER)

Definition
Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

Purpose
To show the extent of coverage in a given level of education of children and youths belonging to the official age group corresponding to the given level of education.

Calculation method
Number of pupils (or students) enrolled who are of the official age group for a given level of education expressed as percentage of the population for the same age group.

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

where:

$NER_{n,t}$ = Net enrolment rate at level **n** of education in academic year **t**

$E_{n,t}^a$ = Enrolment of the population of the official age group **a** for 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)

Interpretation
A high NER denotes a high degree of coverage for the official school-age population. The theoretical maximum value is 100%. Increasing trends can be considered as reflecting improving coverage at the specified level of education. When the NER is compared with the GER, the difference between the two highlights the incidence of under-aged and over-aged enrolment. If the NER is below 100%, then the complement, i.e. the difference with 100%, provides a measure of the proportion of children not enrolled at the specified level of education. However, since some of these children/youth could be enrolled at other levels of education, this difference should in no way be considered as indicating the percentage of students not enrolled. To measure universal primary education, for example, adjusted primary NER is calculated on the basis of the percentage of children in the official primary school age range who are enrolled in either primary or secondary education. A more precise complementary indicator is the age-specific enrolment ratio (ASER) which shows the participation in education of the population of each particular age, regardless of the level of education.

Type of data source
Administrative data.

Disaggregation
By sex and level of education.

Data required
Enrolment by single years of age for a given level of education. Population of the age group corresponding to the given level of education.

Data sources
School register or school census for data on enrolment by age.

Quality assurance
NER at each level of education should be based on enrolment of the relevant age group 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 age. The United Nations Population Division (UNPD) produces and maintains population data.

Limitations and comments

For tertiary education, this indicator is not pertinent because of the difficulties in determining an appropriate age group due to the wide variations in the duration of programmes at this level of education. As regards primary and secondary education, difficulties may arise when calculating an NER that approaches 100% if:

1. The reference date for entry to primary education does not coincide with the birth dates of all of the cohort eligible to enrol at this level of education;
2. A significant portion of the population starts primary school earlier than the prescribed age and consequently finishes earlier as well;
3. There is an increase in the entrance age to primary education but the duration remains unchanged.

Although the NER cannot exceed 100%, values slightly over that ceiling (e.g. 105%) can be obtained reflecting inconsistencies in the enrolment and/or population data.