Metadata for Other Policy Relevant Indicators

Repetition rate by grade (primary and lower secondary education)

Definition
Proportion of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given grade at a given school year who study in the same grade in the following school year.

Purpose
To measure the rate at which pupils from a cohort repeat a grade, and its effect on the internal efficiency of educational systems. In addition, it is one of the key indicators for analysing and projecting pupil flows from grade to grade within the educational cycle.

Calculation method
Number of repeaters in a given grade in school year *t+1* expressed as percentage of the number of pupils from the same cohort enrolled in the same grade in the previous school year *t*.

$$RR_i^t = \frac{R_i^{t+1}}{E_i^t}$$

Where:

RR_i^t = Repetition rate at grade *i* in school year *t*

R_i^{t+1} = Number of pupils repeating grade *i*, in school year *t+1*

E_i^t = Number of pupils enrolled in grade *i*, in school year *t*

Note: the repetition rate for the whole level of education in school year *t+1,* is the sum of repeaters in all grades of the given level in school year *t+1*, expressed as percentage of the total enrolment of that level of education in the reference school year.

Interpretation
Repetition rate ideally should approach zero percent. High repetition rate reveals problems in the internal efficiency of the educational system and possibly reflect a poor level of instruction. When compared across grades, the patterns can indicate specific grades for which there is higher repetition, hence requiring more in depth study of causes and possible remedies.

Type of data source
Administrative data.

Disaggregation
By grade and sex.

Data required
Enrolment by grade for school year *t* and number of repeaters from the same cohort by grade for school year *t+1*.

Data sources
School register or school census for data on enrolment and repeaters by grade.

Quality assurance
The calculation of this indicator should be based on reliable data on enrolment and repeaters by grade and sex at each level of education (primary and lower secondary) and from all types of educational institutions in the country (public and private).

Like other pupil-flow rates (promotion and dropout rates), repetition rate is derived by analysing data on enrolment and repeaters by grade for two consecutive years. One should therefore ensure that such data are consistent in terms of coverage over time and across grades. Special attention should also be paid to minimizing some common errors which may bias these flow rates, such as: over-reporting enrolment or repeaters (particularly in grade one); incorrect distinction between new entrants and repeaters; transfers of pupils between grades and schools.

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 and repeaters data by grade.

Limitations and comments

In some cases, low repetition rates merely reflect policies or practices of automatic promotion. The level and maximum number of grade repetitions allowed can in some cases be determined by the educational authorities with the aim of coping with limited grade capacity and increasing the internal efficiency and flow of pupils. Care should be taken in interpreting this indicator, especially in comparisons between education systems.