

# Glossary

**Achievement.** Performance on standardized tests or examinations that measure knowledge or competence in a specific subject area. The term is sometimes used as an indication of education quality within an education system or when comparing a group of schools.

**Adult education.** Educational activities, offered through formal, non-formal or informal frameworks, targeted at adults and aimed at advancing, or substituting for, initial education and training. The purpose may be to (a) complete a given level of formal education or professional qualification; (b) acquire knowledge and skills in a new field (not necessarily for a qualification); and/or (c) refresh or update knowledge and skills. See also **basic education** and **continuing education**.

**Adult literacy rate.** Number of literate persons aged 15 and above, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. Different ways of defining and assessing literacy yield different results regarding the number of persons designated as literate.

**Age-specific enrolment ratio (ASER).** Enrolment of a given age or age group, regardless of the level of education in which pupils or students are enrolled, expressed as a percentage of the population of the same age or age group.

**Basic education.** Term referring to the whole range of educational activities taking place in various settings (formal, non-formal and informal) that aim to meet **basic learning needs**; in the Dakar Framework it is synonymous with the broad EFA agenda. Similarly, the OECD-DAC and standard aid classifications use a definition that includes early childhood education, primary education and basic life skills for youth and adults, including literacy. According to the **International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)**, basic education comprises primary education (first stage of basic education) and lower secondary education (second stage).

**Basic learning needs.** Defined in the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) as essential tools for learning (e.g. literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem-solving) as well as basic learning content (e.g. knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) that human beings require to be able to survive, develop their full capacities, live and work in dignity, participate in development, improve their quality of life, make informed decisions and continue learning.

The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies by country and culture, and changes over time.

**Child- or under-5 mortality rate.** Probability of dying between birth and the fifth birthday. It is expressed as deaths per 1,000 live births.

**Child labour.** Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development.

**Cognitive development.** The development of the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge through thought, experience and senses.

**Compulsory education or attendance.** Educational programmes that children and young people are legally obliged to attend, usually defined in terms of a number of grades or an age range, or both.

**Constant prices.** A way to express financial values in real terms that enables comparisons over time. To measure changes in real national income or product, economists calculate the value of total production in each year at constant prices using a set of prices that applied in a chosen base year.

**Continuing (or further) education.** A general term referring to a wide range of educational activities designed to meet the **basic learning needs** of adults. See also **adult education**.

**Disability.** A physical or mental condition that may be temporary or permanent and that limits a person's opportunities to take part in the community on an equal level with others.

**Dropout rate by grade.** Percentage of pupils or students who drop out of a given grade in a given school year. It is the difference between 100% and the sum of the promotion and repetition rates.

**Early childhood.** The period of a child's life from birth to age 8.

**Early childhood care and education (ECCE).** Programmes that, in addition to providing children with care, offer a structured and purposeful set of learning activities either in a formal institution (pre-primary or ISCED 0) or as part of a non-formal child development programme.

ECCE programmes are normally designed for children from age 3 and include organized learning activities that constitute, on average, the equivalent of at least 2 hours per day and 100 days per year.

**Education for All Development Index (EDI).** Composite index aimed at measuring overall progress towards EFA. At present, the EDI incorporates four of the most easily quantifiable EFA goals – universal primary education as measured by the net enrolment ratio, adult literacy as measured by the adult literacy rate, gender parity as measured by the gender-specific EFA index and quality of education as measured by the survival rate to grade 5. Its value is the arithmetical mean of the observed values of these four indicators.

**Elementary education.** See **primary education**.

**Enrolment.** Number of pupils or students enrolled at a given level of education, regardless of age. See also **gross enrolment ratio** and **net enrolment ratio**.

**Entrance age (official).** Age at which pupils or students would enter a given programme or level of education, assuming they had started at the official entrance age for the lowest level, studied full time throughout and progressed through the system without repeating or skipping a grade. The theoretical entrance age to a given programme or level may be very different from the actual or even the most common entrance age.

**Equity.** In education, the extent to which access and opportunities for children and adults are just and fair. This implies reduction of disparities based on gender, poverty, residence, ethnicity, language and other characteristics.

**Equivalency education.** Programmes primarily organized for children and youth who lacked access to or dropped out of formal primary/basic education. Typically, such programmes aim at providing the equivalent of formal primary/basic education and at mainstreaming the target groups into the formal system upon successful completion of the equivalency programme.

**Fields of study in tertiary or higher education.**

*Education:* teacher training and education science.

*Humanities and arts:* humanities, religion and theology, fine and applied arts.

*Social sciences, business and law:* social and behavioural sciences, journalism and information, business and administration, law.

*Science:* life and physical sciences, mathematics, statistics and computer sciences.

*Engineering, manufacturing and construction:* engineering and engineering trades, manufacturing and processing, architecture and building.

*Agriculture:* agriculture, forestry and fishery, veterinary studies.

*Health and welfare:* medical sciences and health related sciences, social services.

*Services:* personal services, transport services, environmental protection, security services.

**Foreign students.** Students enrolled in an education programme in a country of which they are not permanent residents.

**Gender parity index (GPI).** Ratio of female to male values (or male to female, in certain cases) of a given indicator. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes; a GPI above or below 1 indicates a disparity in favour of one sex over the other.

**Gender-specific EFA index (GEI).** Composite index measuring relative achievement of gender parity in total participation in primary and secondary education as well as gender parity in adult literacy. The GEI is calculated as an arithmetical mean of the gender parity indices of the primary and secondary gross enrolment ratios and of the adult literacy rate.

**General education.** Programmes designed to lead students to a deeper understanding of a subject or group of subjects especially, but not necessarily, with a view to preparing them for further education at the same or a higher level. These programmes are typically school-based and may or may not contain vocational elements. Their successful completion may or may not provide students with a labour-market-relevant qualification.

**Grade.** Stage of instruction usually equivalent to one complete school year.

**Graduate.** A person who has successfully completed the final year of a level or sublevel of education. In some countries completion occurs as a result of passing an examination or a series of examinations. In others it occurs after a requisite number of course hours have been accumulated. Sometimes both types of completion occur within a country.

**Gross enrolment ratio (GER).** Total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education. For the tertiary level, the population used is that of the five-year age group following on from the secondary school-leaving age. The GER can exceed 100% due to early or late entry and/or grade repetition.

**Gross intake rate (GIR).** Total number of new entrants to a given grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official school entrance age for that grade.

**Gross domestic product (GDP).** The value of all final goods and services produced in a country in one year (see also **gross national product**). GDP can be measured by adding up all of an economy's (a) income (wages, interest, profits and rents) or (b) expenditure (consumption, investment and government purchases) plus net exports (exports minus imports). Both results should be the same because one person's expenditure is always another person's income, so the sum of all incomes must equal the sum of all expenditures.

**Gross domestic product per capita.** GDP divided by the total population at mid-year.

**Gross national product (GNP).** The value of all final goods and services produced in a country in one year (**gross domestic product**) plus income that residents have received from abroad, minus income claimed by non-residents. GNP may be much less than GDP if much of the income from a country's production flows to foreign persons or firms. If the people or firms of a country hold large amounts of the stocks and bonds of firms or governments of other countries, and receive income from them, GNP may be greater than GDP.

**Gross national product per capita.** GNP divided by the total population at mid-year.

**HIV prevalence rate.** Estimated number of people of a given age group living with HIV/AIDS at the end of a given year, expressed as a percentage of the total population of the corresponding age group.

**Infectious diseases.** Diseases that are caused by pathogenic micro-organisms, such as bacteria, fungi, parasites or viruses, and that can be spread directly or indirectly from one person to another. They include avian influenza, dengue, hepatitis, malaria, measles, tuberculosis and yellow fever.

**Illiterate.** See **literate**.

**Indigenous language.** A language that originated in a specified territory or community and was not brought in from elsewhere.

**Infant mortality rate.** Probability of dying between birth and the first birthday. It is expressed as deaths per 1,000 live births.

**International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).** Classification system designed to serve as an instrument for assembling, compiling and presenting comparable indicators and statistics of education both within countries and internationally. The system, introduced in 1976, was revised in 1997 (ISCED97).

**Labour force participation rate.** The share of employed plus unemployed people in comparison with the working-age population.

**Least developed countries (LDCs).** Low-income countries that, according to the United Nations, have human resource weaknesses (based on indicators of nutrition, health, education and adult literacy) and are economically vulnerable. A category used to guide donors and countries in allocating foreign assistance.

**Life expectancy at birth.** Theoretical number of years a newborn infant would live if prevailing patterns of age-specific mortality rates in the year of birth were to stay the same throughout the child's life.

**Literacy.** According to UNESCO's 1958 definition, the term refers to the ability of an individual to read and write with understanding a simple short statement related to his/her everyday life. The concept has since evolved to embrace multiple skill domains, each conceived on a scale of mastery levels and serving different purposes. Many today view literacy as the ability to identify, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials in various contexts. Literacy is a process of learning that enables individuals to achieve personal goals, develop their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in the community and wider society.

**Literate/illiterate.** As used in the statistical tables, the term refers to a person who can/cannot read and write with understanding a simple statement related to his or her everyday life.

**Literate environment.** The term can have at least two meanings: (a) the availability of written, printed and visual materials in learners' surroundings, enabling them to make use of their basic reading and writing skills; (b) the prevalence of literacy in households and communities, enhancing the prospects of successful literacy acquisition by learners.

**Lower-secondary education (ISCED level 2).**  
See **secondary education**.

**Net attendance rate (NAR).** Number of pupils in the official age group for a given level of education who attend school in that level, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

**Net enrolment ratio (NER).** Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

**Net intake rate (NIR).** New entrants to the first grade of primary education who are of the official primary-school entrance age, expressed as a percentage of the population of that age.

**New entrants.** Pupils entering a given level of education for the first time; the difference between enrolment and repeaters in the first grade of the level.

**New entrants to the first grade of primary education with ECCE experience.** Number of new entrants to the first grade of primary school who have attended the equivalent of at least 200 hours of organized ECCE programmes, expressed as a percentage of the total number of new entrants to the first grade.

**Non-formal education.** Learning activities typically organized outside the formal education system. The term is generally contrasted with formal and informal education. In different contexts, non-formal education covers educational activities aimed at imparting adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children and youth, life skills, work skills and general culture. Such activities usually have clear learning objectives, but vary by duration, in conferring certification for acquired learning and in organizational structure.

**Opportunity cost.** The benefit foregone when a scarce resource is used for one purpose instead of the best alternative use.

**Out-of-school children.** Children in the official primary school age range who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary school.

**Pedagogy.** The profession, science or theory of teaching.

**Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED level 4).**  
Programmes that lie between the upper secondary and tertiary levels from an international point of view, even though they might clearly be considered upper secondary or tertiary programmes in a national context. They are often not significantly more advanced than programmes at ISCED 3 (upper secondary) but they serve to broaden the knowledge of students who have completed a programme at that level. The students are usually older than those at ISCED level 3. ISCED 4 programmes typically last between six months and two years.

**Pre-primary education (ISCED level 0).** Programmes at the initial stage of organized instruction, primarily designed to introduce very young children, aged at least 3 years, to a school-type environment and provide a bridge between home and school. Various referred to as infant education, nursery education, pre-school education, kindergarten or early childhood education, such programmes are the more formal component of ECCE. Upon completion of these programmes, children continue their education at ISCED 1 (primary education).

**Primary cohort completion rate.** The number of pupils who complete the final year of primary school expressed as a percentage of the number who entered the first year.

**Primary education (ISCED level 1).** Programmes normally designed on a unit or project basis to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics, and an elementary understanding of subjects such as history, geography, natural sciences, social sciences, art and music. Religious instruction may also be featured. These subjects serve to develop pupils' ability to obtain and use information they need about their home, community or country. Also known as elementary education.

**Private enrolment.** Number of students enrolled in institutions that are not operated by public authorities but controlled and managed, whether for profit or not, by private bodies such as non-government organizations, religious bodies, special interest groups, foundations or business enterprises.

**Public enrolment.** Number of students enrolled in institutions that are controlled and managed by public authorities or agencies (national/federal, state/provincial or local), whatever the origins of their financial resources.

**Public expenditure on education.** Total current and capital expenditure on education by local, regional and national governments, including municipalities (household contributions are excluded). It covers public expenditure for both public and private institutions. Current expenditure includes expenditure for goods and services that are consumed within a given year and have to be renewed the following year, such as staff salaries and benefits; contracted or purchased services; other resources, including books and teaching materials; welfare services; and items such as furniture and equipment, minor repairs, fuel, telecommunications, travel, insurance and rent. Capital expenditure includes expenditure for construction, renovation and major repairs of buildings, and the purchase of heavy equipment or vehicles.

**Pupil.** A child enrolled in pre-primary or primary education. Youth and adults enrolled at more advanced levels are often referred to as students.

**Pupil/teacher ratio (PTR).** Average number of pupils per teacher at a specific level of education, based on headcounts for both pupils and teachers.

**Pupil/trained-teacher ratio.** Average number of pupils per **trained teacher** at a specific level of education, based on headcounts for both pupils and trained teachers.

**Purchasing power parity (PPP).** An exchange rate that accounts for price differences among countries, allowing international comparisons of real output and incomes.

**Quintile.** In statistics, one of five equal groups into which a population can be divided according to the distribution of values of a variable.

**Repetition rate by grade.** Number of **repeaters** in a given grade in a given school year, expressed as a percentage of enrolment in that grade the previous school year.

**Repeaters.** Number of pupils enrolled in the same grade or level as the previous year, expressed as a percentage of the total enrolment in that grade or level.

**School life expectancy (SLE).** Number of years a child of school entrance age is expected to spend at school or university, including years spent on repetition. It is the sum of the age-specific enrolment ratios for primary, secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary and tertiary education.

**School-age population.** Population of the age group officially corresponding to a given level of education, whether enrolled in school or not.

**Secondary education (ISCED levels 2 and 3).** Programme comprising lower secondary and upper secondary education. Lower secondary education (ISCED 2) is generally designed to continue the basic programmes of the primary level but the teaching is typically more subject-focused, requiring more specialized teachers for each subject area. The end of this level often coincides with the end of compulsory education. In upper secondary education (ISCED 3), the final stage of secondary education in most countries, instruction is often organized even more along subject lines and teachers typically need a higher or more subject-specific qualification than at ISCED level 2.

**Sector-wide programme.** A programme in which all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under the leadership of the government, adopting common approaches across the sector and progressing towards relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds.

**Stunting.** Proportion of under-5s falling below minus 2 and minus 3 standard deviations from the median height-for-age of the reference population. Low height for age is a basic indicator of malnutrition.

**Survival rate by grade.** Percentage of a cohort of students who are enrolled in the first grade of an education cycle in a given school year and are expected to reach a specified grade, regardless of repetition.

**Teacher compensation.** A teacher's base salary plus all bonuses. Base salary refers to the minimum scheduled gross annual salary for a full-time teacher who has the minimum training necessary to be qualified at the beginning of his or her teaching career. Reported base salaries are defined as the total sum of money paid by the employer for the labour supplied minus the employer's contribution to social security and pension funding. Bonuses that are a regular part of the annual salary (e.g a thirteenth month of pay or a holiday bonus) are generally included in the base salary.

**Teachers/teaching staff.** Number of persons employed full time or part time in an official capacity to guide and direct the learning experience of pupils and students, irrespective of their qualifications or the delivery mechanism, i.e. face-to-face and/or at a distance. Excludes educational personnel who have no active teaching duties (e.g. headmasters, headmistresses or principals who do not teach) and persons who work occasionally or in a voluntary capacity.

**Technical and vocational education and training (TVET).** Programmes designed mainly to prepare students for direct entry into a particular occupation or trade, or class of occupations or trades. Successful completion of such programmes normally leads to a labour-market-relevant vocational qualification recognized by the relevant authorities (ministry of education, employers' associations) in the country in which it is obtained.

**Tertiary or higher education (ISCED levels 5 and 6).** Programmes with an educational content more advanced than what is offered at ISCED levels 3 and 4. The first stage of tertiary education, ISCED level 5, includes level 5A, composed of largely theoretically based programmes intended to provide sufficient qualifications for gaining entry to advanced research programmes and professions with high skill requirements; and level 5B, where programmes are generally more practical, technical and/or occupationally specific. The second stage of tertiary education, ISCED level 6, comprises programmes devoted to advanced study and original research, leading to the award of an advanced research qualification.

**Total debt service.** Sum of principal repayments and interest paid in foreign currency, goods or services on long-term debt, or interest paid on short-term debt, as well as repayments (repurchases and charges) to the International Monetary Fund.

**Total fertility rate.** Average number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years (15 to 49) and bear children at each age in accordance with prevailing age-specific fertility rates.

**Total primary net enrolment ratio (TNER).** Enrolment of children of the official primary school age group in either primary or secondary school, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

**Trained teacher.** Teacher who has received the minimum organized teacher training normally required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country.

**Transition rate to secondary education.** New entrants to the first grade of secondary education in a given year, expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils enrolled in the final grade of primary education the previous year.

**Undernutrition/malnutrition.** The condition of people whose dietary energy intake is below that needed for maintaining a healthy life and carrying out light physical activity. Malnutrition refers to food deficiencies in terms of either quantity or quality (lack of specific nutrients or vitamins).

**Upper-secondary education (ISCED level 3).**  
See **secondary education**.

**Variance.** A measure of dispersion of a given distribution.

**Youth literacy rate.** Number of literate persons aged 15 to 24, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.