

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Target 1.a: Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions

[Indicator 1.a.2: Proportion of total government spending on essential services \(education, health and social protection\)](#)

[This document applies to the education component of indicator 1.a.2.](#)

Institutional information

Organization(s):

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UNESCO-UIS)

Concepts and definitions

Definition:

Total general (local, regional and central) government expenditure on education (current, capital, and transfers), expressed as a percentage of total general government expenditure on all sectors (including health, education, social services, etc.). It includes expenditure funded by transfers from international sources to the government.

Rationale:

The indicator is used to assess a government's emphasis on education relative to its investments in other sectors. The indicator shows how much of a priority education is for a given government, over time or in comparison with other countries.

Concepts:

Government expenditure on education covers educational expenditure by all levels of government (local, regional, central) on the formal education system, from early childhood to tertiary education, in both public and private instructional and non-instructional institutions within the borders of a country.

Expenditure on education includes expenditure on core educational goods and services, such as teaching staff, school buildings, or school books and teaching materials, and peripheral educational goods and services such as ancillary services, general administration and other activities.

Comments and limitations:

A high proportion of government expenditure on education demonstrates a high government priority for education relative to other public investments. When interpreting this indicator one should keep in mind that some governments have more (or fewer) financial resources and therefore larger (or smaller) overall budgets, and that countries with younger populations may spend more on education relative to other sectors such as health or social security, and vice-versa. The Education 2030 Framework for Action has

endorsed a benchmark for this indicator, which encourages countries to allocate at least 15% to 20% of their public expenditure to education.

In some instances data on total public expenditure on education refer only to the Ministry of Education, excluding other ministries may also spend a part of their budget on educational activities. Although the IMF aims to publish data on total general government expenditure following common definitions based on the Government Finance Statistics Manual, in practice this concept (and what it includes) may differ between countries.

Methodology

Computation Method:

Total government expenditure for a given level of education (e.g. primary, secondary, or all levels combined) is expressed as a percentage of total general government expenditure (all sectors).

$$PXE_{n,t} = \frac{XE_{n,t}}{TPX_t}$$

$PXE_{n,t}$ = expenditure on education level n as a percentage of total government expenditure in financial year t

$XE_{n,t}$ = total general government expenditure on education level n in financial year t

TPX_t = total government expenditure in financial year t

Disaggregation:

By level of education.

Treatment of missing values:

- [At country level](#)
None by data compiler.
- [At regional and global levels](#)
None by data compiler.

Regional aggregates:

Regional and global aggregates are not currently available for this indicator.

Sources of discrepancies:

None.

Data Sources

Description:

Annual financial reports by national Ministries of Finance or Ministries of Education, or national accounts reports by National Statistical Offices.

Collection process:

Data on education expenditure are submitted by country governments in response to the annual UIS survey on formal education or to the UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat (UOE) data collection.

Data on total general government expenditure (all sectors) are obtained from the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook database and are updated once a year.

Data Availability

Description:

156 countries with at least one data point for the period 2010-2019.

Time series:

1980-2019 in UIS database; 2000-2019 in the SDG Global database.

Calendar

Data collection:

Annual UIS survey (latest launched in October 2019) and UOE survey (latest launched in June 2019).

Data release:

Biannual UIS data release (February and September).

Data providers

Ministries of Finance, Ministries of Education, National Statistical Offices.

Data compilers

UNESCO Institute for Statistics, OECD, Eurostat, International Monetary Fund

References

URL:

<http://uis.unesco.org>

References:

UIS Instructional Manual: Survey of Formal Education

<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/instruction-manual-survey-formal-education-2017-en.pdf>

UOE data collection on formal education: Manual on concepts, definitions and classifications

<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/uoe-data-collection-manual-2019-en.pdf>

UIS Questionnaire on Educational Expenditure (ISCED 0-8)

<http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-questionnaires>

IMF World Economic Outlook

<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO>

Related indicators

4.5.3, 4.5.4, 4.5.5, 4.a.1, 4.b.1, 4.b.2