

# **First meeting of the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG4-Education 2030**

**Review of the thematic indicator  
proposal**

**Target 4.6**

**Literacy skills (3 indicators)**

## Target 4.6 : By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

- 22: Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills
- 23: Youth/adult literacy rate
- 24: Participation rate of youth/adults in literacy programmes

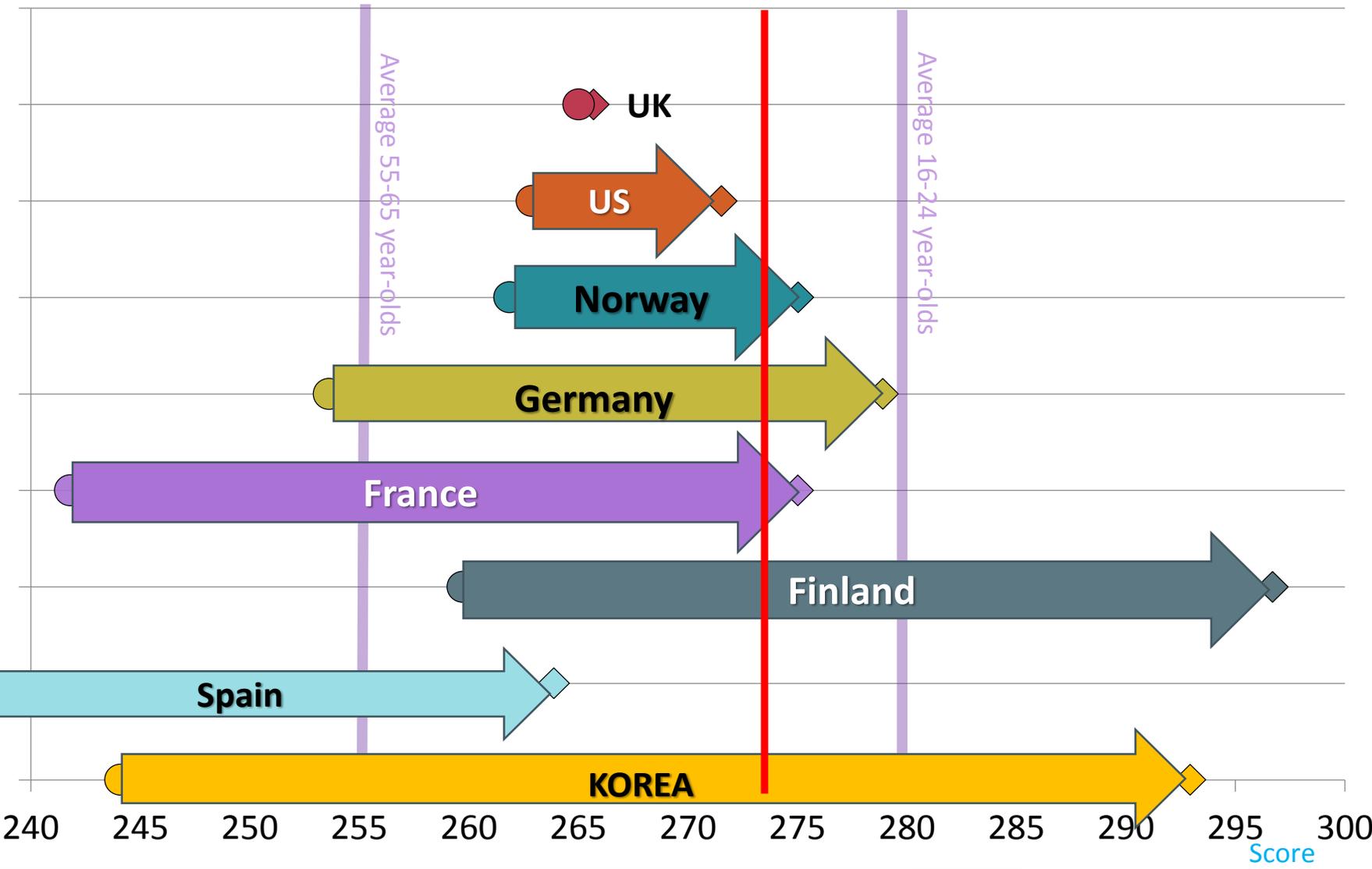
## Proposed indicators - Target 4.6 Literacy skills

Tier proposed by UNSD (for global indicators) : 2 ; Tier proposed by UIS : 1

### **22. Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills**

- Purpose :The indicator is a direct measure of the skill levels of youth and adults in the two areas: literacy and numeracy.
- Definition: The percentage of youth (aged 15-24 years) and of adults (aged 15 years and above) have achieved or exceeded a given level of proficiency in (a) literacy and (b) numeracy. Further methodological work required to agree on characteristics to be measured
- Calculation: The indicator is calculated as the percentage of young people and adult achieving or exceeding a pre-defined proficiency level in literacy and numeracy.
- Disaggregation: sex, age, location, wealth and type of skills
- Source: Learning assessments in household surveys
- This indicator is collected via :
  - skills' assessment surveys of the adult population (e.g., PIAAC, STEP, LAMP, RAMAA)
  - national adult literacy surveys.
  - where not available youth and adult literacy rates

# Literacy skills in younger and older generations



## Limitations

- The measurement of youth and adult skills requires some form of direct assessment. Using household surveys to measure learning can be:
  - costly
  - difficult to administer, and may underestimate learning in areas that are critical to daily life but are harder to assess in standardized approaches.

# Proposed indicators - Target 4.6 Literacy skills

Tier proposed by UIS : 1

## 23. Youth/adult literacy rate

- Purpose : The literacy rate indicates the proportion of a given population that has a minimum level of reading and writing skills. The interpretation of the indicator is strongly linked to the method of data collection.
- Definition: Literacy rates generally indicate the percentage of a given population with the ability to both read and write, with understanding, a short, simple statement about everyday life.
- Calculation: The literacy rate is calculated by dividing the number of literate persons by the total number of persons in the same age group, excluding persons with unknown literacy status.
- Disaggregation: sex, age, location, wealth, others if available
- Source: Population censuses, household surveys
- National data on literacy are typically collected through self- or household declaration in household surveys or population censuses that rely on the “able to read and write a simple statement” definition of literacy, although the questions asked in surveys vary between countries.

# Limitations

- The literacy rate as defined here is a binary indicator: persons are either literate (meaning they have at least a minimum of reading and writing skills) or illiterate. In fact, there is a continuum of literacy skills that is not captured by literacy rates based on a division of the population into literate and illiterate persons.
- In most high-income economies, but also many other countries, the adult and youth literacy rates are near 100% because most persons are able to read and write, but a certain proportion of the population may be at the lower end of the continuum of literacy skills.

# Proposed indicators - Target 4.6 Literacy skills

Tier proposed by UIS : 2

## 24. Participation rate of youth/adults in literacy programmes

- Purpose : To show the level of participation of illiterate youth and adults in literacy programmes.
- Definition: Number of youth (aged 15-24 years) and adults (aged 15 years and older) participating in literacy programmes
- Calculation: The indicator is calculated as the number of illiterate Youth/ Adults participating in literacy programmes expressed as a percentage of the illiterate population of the same age.
- Disaggregation: sex, age, location, and wealth
- Source: Administrative data, Household surveys, Population censuses
- This indicator is collected via administrative or household data on participation in literacy programmes for the age groups defined, combined with illiterate population estimates for the same age groups.

# Limitations

- The indicator values must be analysed with caution and together with other indicators reflecting the literacy situation of the population because of its limitations.
- The theoretical maximum value of 100% is under the assumption that literate population will not enrol or attend literacy programmes.
- The degree of coverage of the illiterate population measured by this indicator might be underestimated because of the exclusion of illiterate population that have decided to attend primary education programmes instead of specifically-designed literacy programmes).
- When numerator and denominator are taken from the household surveys, special attention should be given to the estimations' standard errors mainly in countries with very high levels of literacy where so the sample sizes and design might not be appropriate for producing the indicator.
- When numerator and denominator are taken from different data sources (i.e. administrative data and household survey or population estimates), there will be possibilities of inconsistencies.