



**REGIONAL PREPARATORY
MEETING FOR THE FIRST
SESSION OF THE 'UNESCO
CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION
DATA AND STATISTICS'**

OECD COUNTRIES
OUTCOME DOCUMENT

2023

**2024 CONFERENCE ON
EDUCATION DATA
AND STATISTICS**

The regional preparatory meeting for the first session of the ‘UNESCO Conference on Education Data and Statistics’ for OECD Member States was organized virtually on 27 October 2023. The meeting was co-organized by the UIS and the OECD and provided the platform to discuss issues and priorities for OECD Member States. The meeting was attended by more than 70 participants.

During the preparatory meeting, a total of four presentations were made:

1. Background to the UNESCO Conference on Education Data and Statistics
2. Setting and monitoring national SDG 4 benchmarks: What are the challenges going forward?
3. Implementation of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): challenges and solutions
4. Administrative education data including teacher data: What are the challenges going forward?

For each of the position papers, UIS presented the background, key challenges, and focus areas for countries in data collection, compilation, and reporting at the international level. Some of the prominent solutions were discussed and then an agenda was proposed for UIS to collaborate with Member States in improving data collection, compilation, and reporting at both national and international levels. Following each presentation, OECD highlighted relevant activities and highlighted additional challenges for OECD countries. Participating countries were invited to provide their feedback, seek clarifications, express concerns, and offer any additional insights that each paper should address. The main points raised during the meeting are summarized in this outcome document and shall be used to further inform the organization of the first session of UNESCO Conference on Education Data and Statistics.

BACKGROUND TO THE UNESCO CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION DATA AND STATISTICS

- The meeting introduced the rationale, organisation and expected outcomes for the UNESCO Conference on Education and Statistics that will be held February 7-9, 2024, in Paris at UNESCO Headquarters.

- The conference is a response to the need for more and better data to ensure impact. Against the backdrop of increasing needs for data, the complexification of setting up effective education policies, and the multiplication of sources and data producers, improved cooperation between all stakeholders in education is necessary.
- The conference is expected to lead to the establishment of a stronger and broader community of practice of education statisticians, to highlight the importance of international statistical standards and norms, tools, and methodologies as key elements for sustainable national statistical systems and to define an agenda for education statistics moving forward.
- Seven position papers have been produced by the UIS and its partners to propose a structured approach to central topics in international education statistics, these papers cover: Administrative data, Teachers, Expenditure, Household surveys, Learning outcomes, SDG 4 benchmarks, and ISCED. Three of these papers were presented and discussed in the preparatory meeting with OECD Member States: SDG 4 Benchmarks, ISCED and Teachers.
- Representatives were informed that Andreas Schleicher has confirmed his participation to the conference and will take part in the panel to on technology opportunities and challenges.

SETTING AND MONITORING NATIONAL SDG 4 BENCHMARKS: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD?

- The meeting emphasized the challenges faced in setting and monitoring national SDG 4 benchmarks, with particular emphasis on the need for broader participation and quality of benchmark values.
- The meeting recognized the agenda forward presented, e.g., raising awareness among political levels as well as other stakeholders, providing more support to the countries in setting their national benchmarks and seeking national participation in

reporting on benchmarking indicators linking with policy levels and extend their support in implementing them.

- Spain highlighted difficulties for countries (or regions) to give the same importance to benchmark indicators set at the global level, as country (or region) level priority may differ. Suggestion was made that in addition to country level target, regional level targets may be considered.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATION (ISCED): CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FORWARD

- The meeting agreed on the role of ISCED in standardizing and compiling internationally comparable data in education and recognized the role of UIS and the OECD in mapping national education programs into ISCED.
- The meeting noted countries' specific concerns, expectations, and challenges in implementing ISCED classification for reporting data at the international level.
- OECD shared some thoughts about the review of ISCED 2011 and ISCED-F 2023 that is currently being carried out by the ISCED Committee and provided suggestions about the classifications issues currently identified namely how to classify professional and general higher education and issues that pertain to distinguishing between formal and informal early childhood education programmes.
- OECD informed that during the recent Education and Training Statistics (ETS) meeting of Eurostat, Denmark and Germany presented findings from their national case studies on early childhood educational development programmes and non ISCED programmes, which provided elements that could help refine the definition of programmes to be classified at ISCED level 01 (early childhood educational development). OECD mentioned that this topic could be raised at the next INES informal working group on early childhood education (planned for January 2024).
- Germany indicated that a general revision of ISCED is currently not necessary and that perhaps only updates and improvement of certain aspects are needed.
- Denmark indicated that there is more a need for country's support on how to use ISCED than a revision of the classification.

- Several OECD countries mentioned the need for UIS products to reflect the central importance of ISCED and notably that ISCED mappings presented on UIS website be up to date as some mappings have been found to be outdated.
- Switzerland highlighted importance of having a dynamic collection and reporting of ISCED mappings as national education systems change continuously. Currently, ISCED data collection is too static and does not allow to address this.
- Spain mentioned that sometimes it is difficult to determine the link between ISCED requirements and data collection at the national level and suggested to maybe add additional variables to the questionnaires to help address this.
- Belgium suggested to consider how ISCED could account for special needs education, for the dynamic nature of education system, and change to education programmes.
- Germany suggested to add a column to ISCED questionnaires to collect information on the date at which reported programmes were developed and implemented in the national education system.

TEACHERS' INDICATORS: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES GOING FORWARD?

- The meeting highlighted the need for collaboration and data standardization among Member States to ensure meaningful international comparisons. The importance of developing clear criteria for teacher qualification was underlined, although it was acknowledged that global-level definitions might not be practical due to country-specific needs.
- OECD Member States were presented with ISCED-T, the international classification of teacher training programmes, that will be used to help with the definition of trained/qualified teachers to later enable the UIS and OECD to collect data on SDG 4.c.1 for global monitoring. Switzerland and Belgium were thanked for their active participation in the pilot ISCED-T survey.

- OECD informed about the creation of a new group in the INES working party on attractiveness of the teaching profession and teacher shortages. The OECD carried out a survey to estimate data availability to measure teachers' shortage (data availability did not improve significantly compared to the previous survey whose results were published in *Education at a Glance 2021*). On 14 Dec the group will discuss the results of the survey and determine 1 or 2 indicators where they are confident about data availability in countries, for a launch of data collection in 2024. The idea of presenting these indicators at the Conference in February, was highlighted.
- The current methodology on teacher attrition rate used for monitoring SDG 4.c.6 is based on newly recruited teachers, which is a trade-off between methodology soundness and feasibility in terms of data availability for reporting by countries. OECD is investigating other methodologies for calculating teacher attrition to reflect teachers leaving the profession, and teachers moving across professions. But the availability represents a challenge.
- OECD has worked on the issue of attrition since 2017 and has considered several methods. An attempt was made to develop an improved methodology, but the data collection exercise led to only a small number of countries reporting the necessary data. No comparison was made on a significant number of countries between the improved methodology and the SDG 4 methodology.