

Synopsis of the Status of Key Development Statistics in Africa

Education Statistics

Motivation and Objectives

Reliable and timely education statistics play a key role in development planning by enabling governments to identify inequalities, allocate resources more equitably, and track progress towards national and international development goals. However, uneven and irregular data on completion, learning outcomes, adult literacy and skills create an incomplete picture of education in Africa, motivating this review of the availability, coverage and gaps in the continent's education statistics.

The brief sets out to assess the coverage of education statistics across 13 core indicators among African member States; determine the breadth and depth of data gaps across enrolment, completion, literacy and skills, and across levels of education; identify countries with multiple data gaps; and present opportunities for filling these gaps and discuss their implications for policy.

Highlights of the Status of Statistics

1. Statistics on completion rates is far less frequently available than enrolment statistics: each completion-rate indicator has only 258-259 observations, fewer than half the 569 observations available for even the least-reported enrolment indicator.
2. Coverage of enrolment statistics varies sharply across African countries. Across seven indicators covering pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary education, Lesotho records the highest average coverage, at 74.2 percent, nearly 15 times the average of 5.1 percent recorded for Djibouti, Somalia, and South Sudan.
3. Completion-rate statistics also reveal considerable gaps and uneven country coverage. The UNESCO UIS database contains no completion-rate observations for Eritrea, Libya and Seychelles, while Senegal records the highest coverage at 40.7 percent, followed by Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria, each at 37.0 percent
4. The availability of statistics on the outcomes of education is particularly scarce. Primary and lower-secondary reading proficiency have only 62 and 11 observations, respectively, compared with 258-259 observations for each completion-rate indicator, while adult-literacy data average only five observations per country.
5. Morocco and Tunisia record the highest average coverage of reading proficiency and statistics on adult literacy, at 30.9 and 29.7 percent, respectively. They are also ranked among Africa's top ten across three selected well-being indicators (Human Development Indicators, Monetary Poverty and Global Multi-dimensional Poverty).
6. Data on skills prevalence, investments and outcomes, including digital and life skills that are important for employment and economic growth, are not routinely generated and disseminated in most African countries.