

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

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

Indicator 4.6.1: Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex

## Institutional information

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### Organization(s):

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UNESCO-UIS)

## Concepts and definitions

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### Definition:

The proportion 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. The minimum proficiency level will be measured relative to new common literacy and numeracy scales currently in development.

### Rationale:

The indicator is a direct measure of the skill levels of youth and adults in the two areas: literacy and numeracy. There is only one threshold that divides youth and adults into above and below minimum level:

(a) Below minimum level is the proportion of youth and adults who do not achieve the minimum standard as set-up by countries according to the globally defined minimum competencies.

(b) Above minimum level is the proportion of youth and adults who have achieved the minimum standard. Due to heterogeneity of performance levels set by national and cross-national assessments, these performance levels will have to be mapped to the globally defined basic and proficiency levels. Once the performance levels are mapped, the global education community will be able to identify for each country the proportion of youth and adults above and below minimum level.

### Concepts:

The fixed level of proficiency is the benchmark of basic knowledge in a domain (literacy or numeracy) measured through learning assessments. Currently, there are no common standards validated by the international community or countries. The indicator shows data published by each of the agencies and organizations specialised in cross-national learning assessments.

### Comments and limitations:

The measurement of youth and adult skills requires some form of direct assessment. Using household surveys to measure learning can be costly and difficult to administer and may underestimate learning in

areas that are critical to daily life but are harder to assess in standardized approaches. The result may be inaccurate representations of what youth and adults know and can do, especially in relation to applying skills that may vary across contexts.

## Methodology

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### Computation Method:

Proportion of youth and adults who have achieved above the minimum threshold of proficiency as defined for large-scale (sample representative) adult literacy assessment:

Performance achieve above minimum level,  $PL_{t,a,s,above\ minimum} = p$ .

where  $p$  is the proportion of youth and adults at a national or cross-national adult literacy assessment at age group  $a$ , in learning domain  $s$  in any year  $(t-i)$  where  $0 \leq i \leq 5$ , who has achieved above the minimum level of proficiency.

### Disaggregation:

By age-group, sex, location, income and type of skill. Disability status is not currently available in most national and cross-national learning assessments.

### 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

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### Description:

This indicator is collected via skills' assessment surveys of the adult population (e.g., PIAAC, STEP, LAMP, RAMAA) and national adult literacy surveys.

**Collection process:**

Data are collected from the respective organizations responsible for each assessment.

## Data Availability

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**Description:**

31 countries (since 2012) Developing regions 22, Caucasus and Central Asia 2, Northern Africa 0, Sub-Saharan Africa 1, Eastern Asia 1, South-Eastern Asia 2, Southern Asia 1, Western Asia 0, Latin America and the Caribbean 2, Oceania 0.

**Time series:**

2012 onwards

## Calendar

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**Data collection:**

Various depending on survey and country.

**Data release:**

Various depending on survey and country.

## Data providers

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Bodies responsible for conducting learning assessments (including Ministries of Education, National Statistical Offices and other data providers).

## Data compilers

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UNESCO Institute for Statistics

## References

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**URL:**

<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx>

**References:**

Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC):

<http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/>

STEP Skills Measurement Programme: <http://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/step/about>

Action Research: Measuring Literacy Programme Participants' Learning Outcomes (RAMAA):

<https://uil.unesco.org/literacy-and-basic-skills/assessment-and-monitoring-ramaa>

## Related indicators

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1.2, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.7, 4.5, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 8.5, 8.6, 8.b, 10.2, 12.8, 13.3, 13.b