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| 20 | 13 | 2 | International agreed definition | The youth literacy rate is defined by the percentage of the population aged 15 to 24 years that can read and write. It is typically measured according to the ability to comprehend a short simple statement on everyday life. Generally, literacy also encompasses numeracy, and measurement may incorporate a simple assessment of arithmetic ability. The literacy rate and number of literates should be distinguished from functional literacy, a more comprehensive measure of literacy assessed on a continuum in which multiple proficiency levels can be determined. |
| 20 | 13 | 3 | Method of computation | Percentage of the number of literate persons out of the total number of persons in the same age group, excluding persons with unknown literacy status.  Disaggregation:  By sex |
| 20 | 13 | 4 | Importance of the indicator in addressing gender issues and its limitation | Literacy represents a potential for further intellectual growth and contribution to economic, social and cultural development of society.  A high literacy rate suggests the existence of an effective primary education system and/or literacy programmes that have enabled a large proportion of the population to acquire the ability of using the written word (and making simple arithmetic calculations) in daily life and to continue learning. It is common practice to present and analyse literacy rates together with the absolute number of adult illiterates as improvements in literacy rates may sometimes be accompanied by increases in the illiterate population due to a changing demographic structure.  Differences in literacy levels between young women and men will often reflect recent inequalities in access to formal education and persisting inequalities in adult life and the world of work.  Some countries apply definitions and criteria for literacy which are different from the international standards, or equate persons with no schooling to illiterates, or change definitions between censuses. Some assessments of literacy may also rely on self-reporting, possibly reducing accuracy. In countries where nearly all individuals have completed basic education, the literacy rate provides limited information on the variance of literacy skills in the population. |
| 20 | 13 | 5 | Sources of discrepancies between global and national figures |  |
| 20 | 13 | 6 | Process of obtaining data | 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. Household surveys like the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS, http://dhsprogram.com) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS, http://mics.unicef.org) have moved from self- or household-declaration to simple assessments in the form of a reading test, in which respondents are asked to read a simple sentence written in their language. |
| 20 | 13 | 7 | Treatment of missing values |  |
| 20 | 13 | 8 | Data availability and assessment of countries’ capacity |  |
| 20 | 13 | 9 | Expected time of release |  |
| 20 | 13 | 10 | Data source | UNESCO Institute for Statistics, http://uis.unesco.org |