

Orphans school attendance

Current school attendance among orphans and non-orphans (10-14 years old, primary school age, secondary school age)

What it measures

It measures progress towards preventing relative disadvantage in school attendance among orphans versus non-orphans.

Rationale

The indicator is split up in two parts so comparisons can be made between orphans and non orphans:

Part A: current school attendance rate of orphans aged 10-14 primary school age, secondary school age

Part B: current school attendance rate of children aged 10–14 primary school age, secondary school age both of whose parents are alive and who live with at least one parent

AIDS deaths in adults occur just at the time in their lives when they are forming families and bringing up children. Orphanhood is frequently accompanied by prejudice and increased poverty, factors that can jeopardize children's chances of completing school education and may lead to the adoption of survival strategies that increase vulnerability to HIV. It is important therefore to monitor the extent to which AIDS support programmes succeed in securing the educational opportunities of orphaned children.

Numerator: Part A: Number of children who have lost both parents and who attend school aged 10-14, primary school age, secondary school age
Part B: Number of children both of whose parents are alive, who are living with at least one parent and who attend school aged 10-14, primary school age, secondary school age

Denominator: Part A: Number of children who have lost both parents
Part B: Number of children both of whose parents are alive who are living with at least one parent

Calculation: For both part A and B: Numerator / Denominator

Method of measurement: Population-based survey (Demographic and Health Survey, AIDS Indicator Survey, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey or other representative survey)
For every child aged 10-14, of primary school age, and secondary school age, living in a household, a household member is asked:
1. Is this child's natural mother still alive? If yes, does she live in the household?
2. Is this child's natural father still alive? If yes, does he live in the household?
3. Did this child attend school at any time during the school year?

Measurement frequency: Biennial

Disaggregation: **Gender:**

Female

Male

Explanation of numerator

The definition of primary school age and secondary school age should be consistent with the UNESCO definition and as currently used for calculating other education-specific indicators such as net primary school enrolment/attendance rate and net secondary school enrolment/attendance rate for each country. The primary school age and secondary school age populations may vary slightly from country to country. Therefore this indicator uses the terms 'primary school age' and 'secondary school age' as currently applied in standard international measurements including in major survey programmes such as DHS or MICS to allow each country to apply its own national age ranges for primary and secondary school. The important point is to compare current school attendance of orphans and non-orphans across primary school and secondary school rather than by specific ages.

Strengths and weaknesses

The definitions of orphan/non-orphan used here—i.e., child aged 10–14 years as of the last birthday both of whose parents have died/are still alive—are chosen so that the maximum effect of disadvantage resulting from orphanhood can be identified and tracked over time. The age-range 10–14 years is used because younger orphans are more likely to have lost their parents recently so any detrimental effect on their education will have had little time to materialize. However, orphaned children are typically older than non-orphaned children (because the parents of younger children have often been HIV-infected for less time) and older children are more likely to have left school.

Typically, the data used to measure this indicator are taken from household-based surveys. Children not recorded in such surveys—e.g., those living in institutions or on the street—generally, are more disadvantaged and are more likely to be orphans. Thus, the indicator will tend to understate the relative disadvantage in educational attendance experienced by orphaned children.

This indicator does not distinguish children who lost their parents due to AIDS from those whose parents died of other causes. In countries with smaller epidemics or in the early stages of epidemics, most orphans will have lost their parents due to non-HIV-related causes. Any differences in the treatment of orphans according to the known or suspected cause of death of their parents could influence trends in the indicator. However, to date there is little evidence that such differences in treatment are common.

The indicator provides no information on actual numbers of orphaned children. The restrictions to double orphans and to 10–14 year-olds mean that estimates may be based on small numbers in countries with small or nascent epidemics.

Further information

For further information, please consult the following website:

http://www.unicef.org/aids/index_documents.html