
European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education

Methodology Report – Updated 2018



EUROPEAN AGENCY
for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

EUROPEAN AGENCY STATISTICS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Methodology Report – Updated 2018

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education



The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency) is an independent and self-governing organisation. The Agency is co-funded by the ministries of education in its member countries and by the European Commission via an operating grant within the European Union (EU) Erasmus+ education programme (2014–2020).



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The views expressed by any individual in this document do not necessarily represent the official views of the Agency, its member countries or the Commission.

The nominated country data collection experts' contributions to the EASIE work and to this report are gratefully acknowledged.

Serge Ebersold's contribution to the initial development of the EASIE work is gratefully acknowledged.

Editors: András Lénárt, Joacim Ramberg and Amanda Watkins

Extracts from the document are permitted provided that a clear reference to the source is given. This report should be referenced as follows: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2018. *European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education: Methodology Report – Updated 2018*. (A. Lénárt, J. Ramberg and A. Watkins, eds.). Odense, Denmark

With a view to greater accessibility, this report is available in accessible electronic format on the Agency's website: www.european-agency.org

ISBN: 978-87-7110-832-3 (Electronic)

ISBN: 978-87-7110-831-6 (Printed)

© European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education 2018

Secretariat
Østre Stationsvej 33
DK-5000 Odense C Denmark
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20
secretariat@european-agency.org

Brussels Office
Rue Montoyer, 21
BE-1000 Brussels Belgium
Tel: +32 2 213 62 80
brussels.office@european-agency.org

www.european-agency.org



CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
CONCEPTUAL STARTING POINTS FOR AGENCY DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES	6
TIMELINE OF AGENCY DATA COLLECTION WORK	8
Data collection on learners with special educational needs	8
Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education	9
Guidelines for EASIE data collection work	10
THE BASIS FOR THE EASIE WORK	12
The current focus of EASIE data collection	12
1. <i>Operational definition of an official decision of SEN</i>	13
2. <i>Operational definition of an inclusive setting</i>	13
EASIE QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION	15
Table 1: Population and enrolment	15
Table 2: Age samples of 4, 9, 15 and 17 years	16
Table 3: Official decision of SEN	17
FRAMEWORK FOR DATA ANALYSIS	19
EASIE QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION	21
1. A description of how the official decision of SEN used in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition	21
2. The proxy indicator for the 80% benchmark used for data collection	22
3. A detailed description of what ‘out of formal education’ means within the country	22
4. How data on private sector education has been covered in the country information	23
REFERENCES	24
ANNEX: ISCED (2011) DEFINITIONS USED WITHIN EASIE	26



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full version
Agency:	European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education
EASIE:	European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education
ET 2020:	Education and Training 2020
EU:	European Union
ISCED:	International Standard Classification of Education
MIPIE:	Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-INES:	OECD Indicators of Education Systems
PISA:	Programme for International Student Assessment
SEN:	Special educational needs
UNCRPD:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



INTRODUCTION

This report presents an overview of the methodology developed within the European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE) data collection activities. It sets out the relevant information about **what** has been done, **how** and **why** within the EASIE activities.

This is the second version of the EASIE Methodology Report. The [first version](#) (European Agency, 2016) outlined the methodology used in the [2014 and 2016 data collection exercises](#).

This report has been prepared to accompany the quantitative and qualitative country information collected during the 2018 data collection exercise and available on the [Data area of the Agency's website](#) (European Agency, no date-a). The web area presents all available quantitative and qualitative country information in an accessible, interactive and easily comparable way.

To put the EASIE work into a clear context, this Methodology Report presents the following information:

- The [conceptual basis](#) for Agency data collection work
- A [timeline of data collection activities](#) since 1999
- The [basis and working procedures](#) for the current EASIE work
- A description of the [methods used for quantitative data collection](#) (country data)
- A description of the framework for [data analysis and interpretation](#)
- A description of the [methods used for qualitative data collection](#) (country background information).

The methodology described in this version of the Methodology Report has been applied to the data collection exercise conducted in 2018 (covering the 2016/2017 school year).

This report does not present any actual data. All quantitative and qualitative data is freely available from the [Data area of the Agency's website](#) (ibid.).

Please direct any questions regarding the EASIE work and information to the Agency via: secretariat@european-agency.org



CONCEPTUAL STARTING POINTS FOR AGENCY DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

The field of inclusive and special needs education does not deal with ‘absolutes’ – policy-makers, practitioners, researchers and the wider community do not always agree on who does and does not have a disability, impairment or special educational need. This is because a person’s special need essentially arises from two possible sources:

- Factors within the person themselves (some form of impairment)
- Factors within their environment (which can either minimise or exacerbate the impairment).

Special educational needs (SEN) is a ‘construction’ that countries usually define within their legislation. This definition is then used to identify, assess and make provision for learners in different ways. There are no universally accepted definitions of disability and/or SEN available to use to compare European countries. Some countries are considering incorporating ISCED definitions into their legislation. However, there are no other specific, externally generated definitions relating to SEN or special needs education in use within countries’ educational legislation or data collection work.

Agency member countries recognise that using ‘external’ definitions of disability or SEN in data collection work has significant methodological difficulties in practice. The policies and practice that direct inclusive and special needs education provision in countries have evolved over time, within very specific contexts. They are, therefore, highly individual.

Increasingly, many countries’ policies have a clear focus on special or additional ‘provision’, rather than solely ‘in-learner’ factors. Alongside this, many countries are moving away from definitions, assessment and provision based on a medical model, towards educational and ‘interactionist’ approaches. Nevertheless, there are no agreed criteria regarding the type of provision certain learners should receive. For this reason, Agency countries have agreed on the most useful means of collecting any form of quantitative data on inclusive or special needs education. This is through a ‘bottom-up’ approach, which uses the country’s own legal definition of SEN as the basis for data collection.

Using country definitions of SEN as the basis for data collection presents a number of methodological difficulties. These must be made clear if the data is to be interpreted correctly:

- Country legislation and policy may or may not include a ‘definition’ of what is meant by inclusive education and a segregated setting.
- Countries include different ‘categories’ of children/learners¹ within their definitions of SEN. Different ‘categories’ of special needs may or may not be

¹ This report uses ‘children/learners’ instead of ‘pupils’ to refer to everyone in the education system from ISCED 02 level programmes (pre-primary education) up to ISCED 3 (upper-secondary education).



covered: disability (sensory, physical, psychological), learning difficulties, behavioural problems, health problems, social disadvantage, etc.

- Countries may or may not 'count' only those children/learners who have an official 'recognition' – decision, certificate, statement or another legal document – of SEN.
- The age range of school education is not the same in all countries. Alongside this, some countries count children/learners outside a certain age range if they are enrolled in the respective ISCED level education.
- Many countries do not collect data on the numbers of children/learners in fully inclusive settings who receive SEN support. A number of countries indicate that official figures are for 'known' children/learners, but that other children/learners also receive support.

The points above illustrate that **it is not useful to compare raw numbers of children/learners officially recognised as having SEN** or to compare raw numbers of children/learners with SEN in different placements.

Identification rates – the percentage of children/learners recognised as having SEN, against the whole school population – can be calculated using raw numbers. However, the rates are only directly comparable across countries if an operational definition of SEN is applied.

Placement rates – the percentage of children/learners recognised as having SEN, educated in different settings, against the whole school population – can also be calculated. These rates are only comparable if some operational definitions of different settings are applied.

Quantitative data on identification and placement rates is of interest. Nonetheless, **it cannot provide any indication of the quality, suitability or appropriateness of the education provided for children/learners with SEN.** Other, qualitative data must be considered in relation to quantitative data in order to fully understand trends in provision and movement towards inclusion.

This thinking has underpinned all Agency data collection activities since 1999. During that time, there have been different steps and developments to address the difficulties highlighted above and the methodological issues evident in collecting quantitative data within the field of inclusive and special needs education. The subsequent sections focus on these concrete steps and developments.



TIMELINE OF AGENCY DATA COLLECTION WORK

The current EASIE data collection work has built upon a series of Agency activities conducted since 1999. This section outlines the activities so as to put the EASIE work into a timeline context.

Data collection on learners with special educational needs

The Agency first collected comparative quantitative data on the numbers of learners identified as having SEN in 17 Agency member countries in 1999. This work was an activity under the evaluation of the European Commission's Socrates programme (European Commission, 1999).

The information collected in 1999 was reviewed and considered useful reference material for Agency country representatives. A decision was taken to regularly collect quantitative data on the numbers of learners identified as having SEN and where they were educated. Since 2002, data has been collected by Agency member country representatives and published by the Agency every two years.

In 2002 and 2004, the quantitative information collected focused upon:

1. The number of **compulsory school-aged learners** (including those with SEN)
2. The number of **compulsory school-aged learners with SEN** (in all educational settings)
3. The number of **learners with SEN in separate special schools**.

In addition, the Agency collected accompanying background (qualitative) information from countries. This consisted of a description of the compulsory age phase, clarification of public/private sector education, and the legal definition of SEN in the country concerned.

Using this information, two comparative indicators could be calculated:

- The percentage of learners identified as having SEN (based on the whole school population)
- The percentage of learners educated in separate special schools (based on the whole school population).

The Agency published this information. It was also used within the *Key Data on Education in Europe 2005* publication in the section on 'Participation – Trends in the proportion of pupils with special needs educated separately' (Eurydice, 2005, pp. 123–124).

In 2006, a further quantitative data collection element was added:

4. The **number of learners with SEN in inclusive settings** (mainstream schools).



The information provided through this additional data element was then reviewed. It was considered too unclear to give additional comparative information. Therefore, a decision was taken to refine the data collected relating to the placements of learners with SEN:

4. The number of **learners with SEN in special classes in mainstream schools**
5. The number of **learners with SEN in fully inclusive settings**.

These refined quantitative data questions used a placement benchmark relating to time spent in an educational setting. A separate (segregated) setting is where a learner with SEN follows education in a separate special class or special school for the largest part – 80% or more – of their time.

Agency member country representatives agreed upon this operational definition of a segregated placement. It has been used across different areas of Agency thematic project work.

These five quantitative data questions were used for the data collection exercises in 2008, 2010 and 2012. The same qualitative data was collected for each dataset.

Agency data collected during this period was used in the Commission staff working documents entitled *Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training: Indicators and Benchmarks 2008* (European Commission, 2008) and *2009* (European Commission, 2009).

The 2008, 2010 and 2012 datasets are available from the [Publications section](#) of the Agency's website (European Agency, 2009; 2010; 2012).

Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education

In late 2010, a parallel scoping activity was initiated, entitled [Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education](#) (MIPIE) (European Agency, no date-b). This activity was co-financed by a European Union Grant under the Lifelong Learning, Comenius Accompanying Measures programme.

The MIPIE work did not focus on collecting qualitative or quantitative data. Rather, its goal was to identify **what** data is required to inform policy for inclusive education and **how** it can be collected. Crucially, the project involved both policy-makers for inclusive education – Agency member country representatives – and data collection experts – statisticians working in ministries of education and responsible for national-level data collection.

Working collectively, the representatives from 27 countries:

- developed a rationale for what information needs to be made available for policy-makers;
- identified what information is already available;
- highlighted the gaps in current information;
- provided detailed proposals on how the necessary information could be collected in the future for the purposes of national self-mapping and for European-level comparative purposes.

The [MIPIE project report](#) contains the final proposals (European Agency, 2011).



The project concluded that data collection must be in line with European Union (EU) objectives for education and training (Publications Office of the European Union, 2016). It must also be in line with the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD) (United Nations, 2006), as this has an increasing influence upon legal frameworks for education. Mapping the implementation of policy for inclusive education therefore requires indicators that provide evidence that education systems are equitable for children/learners with SEN. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators need to be identified in relation to:

- participation in education and training;
- access to support and accommodation;
- learning success and transition opportunities;
- affiliation opportunities.

The project findings provided a long-term agenda for developing Agency data collection and related project work. However, not all of the MIPIE project findings could be implemented immediately. Therefore, in 2012, Agency country representatives agreed to undertake further development work to agree the focus and procedures for collecting quantitative and qualitative data collection regarding **participation in inclusive education** in the compulsory school sector.

This long-term work is the on-going European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE) activity. It has been agreed with all Agency country representatives that EASIE will be a long-term, incremental Agency activity. The intention is that the work will:

- be the starting point for developing longer-term data collection on rights, quality and effectiveness issues;
- lead to an agreed set of indicators on inclusive education for Agency member countries, as well as a wider audience.

Guidelines for EASIE data collection work

Throughout all of this work, a number of guidelines for EASIE – which underpin all the work – have been agreed:

Taking a bottom-up approach – the EASIE work is based on Agency member countries' current policy and practice for inclusive education, as well as data collection work. No externally generated definitions relating to SEN or special needs education are used within EASIE. All areas of data collection, as well as procedures, are based on working agreements that have been discussed with the EASIE data collection experts.

Focusing on educational opportunities – the information collected within EASIE does not rely on the identification of 'in-learner' factors (i.e. types of disability or SEN). It focuses on key aspects of the educational system: enrolment in education and placement in different types of provision.

Using existing data sources – the EASIE data collection uses quantitative and qualitative information that is already collected and available in countries. No additional data collection is involved.



Building on existing international tools and definitions – to support comparability, existing data collection concepts, parameters, definitions and sources have been used wherever possible. These include ISCED 2011 definitions for a number of key concepts and the use of Eurostat population data as a source.

(The [Annex](#) at the end of this report contains the ISCED definitions used in the EASIE work).

Sharing information with other organisations – the Agency regularly shares information about the development, implementation and outcomes of the EASIE activities with representatives of the European Commission, Eurostat, OECD-INES and UNESCO. This information exchange is an important way of ensuring synergy of the respective organisations' work in this area, and avoiding duplication of country work as far as possible.



THE BASIS FOR THE EASIE WORK

As a result of the various developments in Agency data collection work with member countries, the **agreed goal for the EASIE work is to provide individual country, comparative and aggregated data that informs country-level work on learners' rights issues and informs debates on equity and participation in inclusive education.**

The EASIE work represents a shift in the emphasis of Agency data collection. It moves away from a focus on children/learners with recognised SEN and placement in separate segregated settings, towards a focus on all children/learners across different ISCED levels of education and participation in inclusive settings.

Since 2012, the Agency has conducted discussions with the nominated data collection experts from member countries, as well as pilot work in a limited number of countries. This has been in order to reach agreement on what data is needed to achieve this change in focus and how it should be collected.

Since 2013, workshops with the data experts from all Agency member countries have been held each year to:

- identify country data collection possibilities;
- explore feasibility and comparability issues;
- agree the focus and procedures for data collection.

Existing data availability in countries was examined in depth through piloting activities. In 2013, pilots were implemented in ten countries. In 2015, pilots were implemented in four countries.

In 2017, a joint workshop was held involving the data experts and the nominated policy-maker ministerial representatives of Agency member countries. In the workshop, new policy questions for Agency data collection were identified and the parameters for developing the EASIE activities were agreed. Based upon these discussions, a new framework for data collection was developed for implementation in 2018.

This Methodology Report focuses on the revised framework for data collection.

The current focus of EASIE data collection

Overall, the development of the EASIE data collection work has focused on procedures and outputs that provide comparable information from countries to inform questions relating to five equity issues:

1. Access to mainstream education (the proportion of children/learners who go to mainstream school)
2. Access to inclusive education (the proportion of children/learners who spend the majority of their time with their peers in mainstream classrooms)
3. Placement of children/learners with an official decision of SEN



4. Gender breakdowns of data on placement of children/learners with an official decision of SEN
5. ISCED level breakdowns of data on placement of children/learners with an official decision of SEN.

The agreed focus for EASIE data collection therefore covers:

- the **potential (pre-)school age range population** in ISCED levels 02, 1, 2 and 3 in a country (the number of children/learners in a given age range);
- the **actual school age range population** in ISCED levels 02, 1, 2 and 3 (the number of children/learners enrolled in (pre-)schools in a given age range);
- **all education sectors** (state, independent and private);
- **all possible educational placements** (mainstream, special classes and units and special schools);
- **non-formal education**;
- **children/learners out of any form of education.**

In order for country data covering these areas to be comparable, two important operational definitions for data collection were identified and agreed upon:

1. Operational definition of an official decision of SEN

An official decision leads to a child/learner being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs. An official decision meets the following criteria:

- There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team.
- The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the child's/learner's (pre)school.
- There is a legal document which describes the support the child/learner is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning.
- The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process.

All data collected relating to children/learners with SEN is in line with this operational definition of an official decision of SEN.

2. Operational definition of an inclusive setting

An inclusive setting refers to education where the child/learner with SEN follows education in mainstream classes alongside their mainstream peers for the largest part – 80% or more – of the school week.

Previous Agency projects and data collection work have used this benchmark in different forms. 80% clearly indicates that a child/learner is placed in a mainstream setting for the majority of their school week. At the same time, it acknowledges possibilities for small group or one-to-one withdrawal for limited periods of time (i.e. 20% or one day a week).



Not all countries are able to provide exact data relating to the 80% time placement benchmark. Therefore, proxies have been identified, agreed upon and applied as needed. More details are available in the [country background information section](#) of the EASIE web area (European Agency, no date-c).



EASIE QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The EASIE quantitative data collection involves country data collection experts providing statistical information in an Excel file. This file has a number of agreed inbuilt checks and calculations to aid data accuracy.

The statistical data is complemented by information on sources, as well as detailed notes – regarding, for example, methodology issues – as required to explain the data presented.

All the available information is presented in a [dedicated section on each country page](#) of the Data web area (European Agency, no date-c).

There are three data collection tables for each country – with some compulsory and some optional cells:

1. Population and enrolment
2. Age samples of 4, 9, 15 and 17 years
3. Children/learners with an official decision of SEN.

All data collection tables ask for gender information (i.e. the number of male and female children/learners for each question) in order to be able to provide gender breakdowns and gender distributions on all indicators.

The data collected is actual numbers of children/learners, not full-time equivalents. Estimations or rounded-up figures are only acceptable where absolutely necessary. However, if any form of estimation is used, it is explained in the notes section.

Where necessary, the following agreed abbreviations are used to indicate missing data or a question that is not applicable within the country context:

- M (Missing data)
- NA (Not applicable).

Notes always accompany Missing data and Not applicable entries.

The sections below describe the content, purpose, essential focus and comparability factors of each of the tables.

Table 1: Population and enrolment

This table's **purpose** is to provide data for the headline indicator on inclusive education – the percentage of all children/learners within ISCED levels 02, 1, 2 and 3 typical age ranges being educated in inclusive settings.

The headline indicator focuses on inclusive education in the broadest sense. It is based on data on all children/learners eligible to be in formal education, not just those recognised as having an official decision of SEN.

Data from this table can be used as a basis for wider data analysis linked to all other tables.

The table's **focus** is on the entire potential population at ISCED levels 02, 1, 2 and 3.



The data collected explores:

- who is in formal education and who is not;
- who is educated in an inclusive setting and who is not.

The data collected provides information on:

- access to formal education;
- the placement of children/learners in inclusive settings or otherwise.

There are five questions in the table, each requiring data relating to numbers at ISCED levels 02, 1, 2 and 3.

1. Actual population of children/learners at [ISCED 02/1/2/3]
2. Children/learners enrolled in all formal educational settings at [ISCED 02/1/2/3]
3. Children/learners out of formal educational settings at [ISCED 02/1/2/3]
4. Children/learners enrolled in mainstream formal educational settings at [ISCED 02/1/2/3]
5. Children/learners enrolled in mainstream groups/classes for at least 80% of the time at [ISCED 02/1/2/3].

The **comparability factors** accounted for within the table are:

- The ISCED definitions of levels 02, 1, 2 and 3
- The ISCED definition of formal education
- The entire potential school population data taken from the Eurostat annual population statistics (Question 1).

The potential use of different data sources – population data and enrolment data – for this table was recognised as a possible methodological issue. Therefore, it was agreed with the data experts that significant discrepancies between data for Questions 1 and 2 should be explained. Any data discrepancies over 5% required more extensive explanations.

Table 2: Age samples of 4, 9, 15 and 17 years

This table's **purpose** is to provide age sample data in line with the headline indicator on inclusive education – the percentage of children/learners aged 4, 9, 15 and 17 years being educated in inclusive settings.

The age sample data focuses upon inclusive education in the broadest sense. It is based on data for all children/learners of 4, 9, 15 and 17 years eligible to be in formal education.

The sample age of 15 years gives possibilities for cross-referencing with OECD PISA analyses, as well as data relating to the ET 2020 targets on school drop-outs, etc.

The table's **focus** is on the potential populations of children/learners of a specific age:

- 4 years



- 9 years
- 15 years (this age corresponds with EU-level data collection on school drop-out rates)
- 17 years.

The data provided within this table focuses upon age-based samples. Within these samples, it explores:

- who is in formal education and who is not;
- who is educated in an inclusive setting and who is not.

Data collected in line with this table provides comparative sample information on:

- access to formal education;
- the placement of children/learners in inclusive settings or otherwise.

The data collection questions for the table are based on the 'Population and enrolment' table. However, they are re-phrased to link to specific age samples:

1. Population aged [4/9/15/17 years]
2. Children/learners enrolled in all formal educational settings aged [4/9/15/17 years]
3. Children/learners out of formal education aged [4/9/15/17 years]
4. Children/learners enrolled in mainstream formal educational settings aged [4/9/15/17 years]
5. Children/learners enrolled in mainstream groups/classes for at least 80% of the time aged [4/9/15/17 years].

The **comparability factors** accounted for within the table are:

- The age samples of 4, 9, 15 and 17 years
- Data by specific age will be comparable across all countries
- The ISCED definition of formal education
- Entire population data taken from the Eurostat annual population statistics (Question 1).

Table 3: Official decision of SEN

This table's **purpose** is to provide data relating to children/learners with an official decision of SEN that is in line with the agreed operational definition of an official decision used within the EASIE data collection work.

The data provided via the table examines where children/learners with an official decision of SEN are placed for their education.

All data provided must be considered in line with the country background information relating to the official decision of SEN procedures in the country concerned.



The **focus** is on those children/learners who are officially recognised as having significant educational needs and who require resources to be allocated to them.

The data provides information about the placement of children/learners with recognised SEN in inclusive settings or otherwise.

There are six questions in the table, each requiring data relating to numbers of children/learners with an official decision of SEN at ISCED levels 02, 1, 2 and 3:

1. Children/learners with an official decision of SEN in any form of education at [ISCED 02/1/2/3]
2. Children/learners with an official decision of SEN educated in mainstream groups/classes for at least 80% of the time at [ISCED 02/1/2/3]
3. Children/learners with an official decision of SEN educated in separate special groups/units/classes in mainstream educational settings at [ISCED 02/1/2/3]
4. Children/learners with an official decision of SEN educated in separate special (pre)schools at [ISCED 02/1/2/3]
5. Children/learners with an official decision of SEN educated in non-formal education at [ISCED 02/1/2/3]
6. Children/learners with an official decision of SEN out of any form of education.

The **comparability factors** accounted for within the table are:

- The operational definition of an official decision of SEN
- The ISCED definitions of levels 02, 1, 2 and 3
- The ISCED definition of formal education.



FRAMEWORK FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Work with the EASIE country data collection experts has also led to the identification of possibilities for data analysis based on agreed indicators. The data analysis has the potential to provide:

- an analysis of individual country information;
- comparative information across all countries;
- aggregated, total averages across countries;
- trend analysis data.

This different information is reported in different forms. All countries receive an internal country report that includes all possible indicators for that specific country. The Agency Representative Board members in each country check and approve their respective country reports. The country reports are later used in the Cross-Country Report, which presents all available indicators for all countries, as well as calculated total averages on all indicators (European Agency, 2017; 2018a).

In addition to these reports, there is a Key Messages and Findings report (European Agency, 2018b). This provides an overarching interpretation of the 2014 and 2016 datasets in order to highlight key messages and emerging findings across the datasets that are important for the Agency member countries' work.

In relation to **population and enrolment data**, the following data analysis possibilities have been agreed:

- Enrolment rate in mainstream education based on the enrolled school population
- Enrolment rate in inclusive education based on the enrolled school population.

In relation to data on the **age samples of children/learners aged 4, 9, 15 and 17 years**, the following data analysis possibilities have been agreed:

- Age sample enrolment rate in mainstream education based on the enrolled school population
- Age sample enrolment rate in inclusive education based on the enrolled school population.

In relation to data on **children/learners with an official decision of SEN**, the following data analysis possibilities have been agreed:

- Percentage of children/learners with an official decision of SEN based on the enrolled school population
- A breakdown of placements of children/learners with an official decision of SEN by:
 - placement in inclusive education;
 - placement in special classes;
 - placement in special schools;



-
- placement in non-formal educational settings
 - Percentage of children/learners with an official decision of SEN in inclusive settings based on the enrolled school population
 - Percentage of children/learners with an official decision of SEN in special classes based on the enrolled school population
 - Percentage of children/learners with an official decision of SEN in special schools based on the enrolled school population
 - Percentage of children/learners with an official decision of SEN in non-formal educational settings based on the enrolled school population.

Data analysis reports will be available from the [Data web area](#) (European Agency, no date-a).

The data analysis reports aim to provide:

- an agreed set of indicators for countries to inform their work in relation to the UNCRPD (2006) and EU objectives for education and training;
- country and comparative data from an inclusive perspective to inform learners' rights issues;
- country and comparative data to inform debates on equity and participation in education.



EASIE QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

In order to put the quantitative data supplied by countries into a clear context, all countries provide four areas of descriptive, qualitative information – country background information. This is presented in a [dedicated section on each country page](#) of the Data web area (European Agency, no date-c).

The qualitative background information takes the form of short written texts in relation to each of the agreed four areas, listed below. The specific questions that countries answer in providing their qualitative information are indicated in bold.

The country background information online survey for the 2018 EASIE data collection asked for information about the typical ISCED level age ranges.

1. A description of how the official decision of SEN used in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition

The agreed EASIE operational definition is:

An official decision leads to a child/learner being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.

An official decision of SEN meets the following criteria:

- There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team.
 - **What educational assessment procedure has been followed?**
- The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the child's/learner's (pre)school.
 - **How is the multi-disciplinary team comprised?**
- There is a legal document which describes the support the child/learner is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning.
 - **What type of legal document is used in the country to outline the support that the child/learner is eligible to receive?**
 - **How is the document used as the basis for planning in the country?**
- The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process.
 - **What processes of formal, regular review are involved?**



2. The proxy indicator for the 80% benchmark used for data collection

The EASIE work uses an 80% benchmark of inclusive education. The definition is as follows:

An inclusive setting refers to education where the child/learner with SEN follows education in mainstream classes alongside their mainstream peers for most – 80% or more – of the school week.

For some countries, actual data is available to verify the 80% placement in inclusive settings benchmark. Other countries use proxy indicators for the benchmark in the data collection.

These proxy indicators are:

- Actual data is available to verify the 80% benchmark.
- Placement in a mainstream class implies over 80% or more.
- Data is available on the number of support hours allocated to a child/learner.
- Placement in a mainstream class implies over 50% or more.

Countries indicate which proxy indicator they are using, as well as the following:

- **Details on what the country proxy is**
- **Why this proxy is used**
- **Difficulties in using the proxy**
- **Country-specific issues in applying the proxy.**

3. A detailed description of what ‘out of formal education’ means within the country

ISCED 2011 defines ‘formal education’ as:

... education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies, and – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national education authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education [...] Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognised as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognised and, therefore, are within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalised education occurs when an organization provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012, p. 11).



Using this definition of ‘formal education’, the EASIE data experts were asked:

- **Do the country definitions of formal, non-formal and informal education differ from the ISCED definitions?**
- **How are specific cases considered?**
- **Which children/learners are considered out of formal education (meaning those not in formal education as defined by ISCED)?**
- **How is the population of children/learners who are out of formal education defined? Are they out of any form of provision, or are some of them in non-formal education?**

4. How data on private sector education has been covered in the country information

The EASIE data collection covers all education sectors, including the child/learner population in the private sector. The EASIE data experts were asked to describe:

- **What is understood by the private sector in the country?**
- **Who has been counted for each relevant question?**
- **Any specific issues with providing data on private sector education and how these have been overcome in the data collection.**



REFERENCES

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2009. *Special Needs Education Country Data 2008*. (A. Watkins, ed.). Odense, Denmark. www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/special-needs-education-country-data-2008 (Last accessed November 2018)

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2010. *Special Needs Education Country Data 2010*. (A. Watkins, ed.). Odense, Denmark. www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/special-needs-education-country-data-2010 (Last accessed November 2018)

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2011. *Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education: An exploration of challenges and opportunities for developing indicators*. (S. Ebersold and A. Watkins, eds.). Odense, Denmark. www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/mapping-implementation-policy-inclusive-education-exploration-challenges-and (Last accessed November 2018)

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2012. *Special Needs Education Country Data 2012*. (A. Lénárt and A. Watkins, eds.). Odense, Denmark. www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/special-needs-education-country-data-2012 (Last accessed November 2018)

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2016. *European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (EASIE): Methodology Report*. (A. Watkins, S. Ebersold and A. Lénárt, eds.). Odense, Denmark. www.european-agency.org/data/methodology-report (Last accessed November 2018)

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2017. *European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education: 2014 Dataset Cross-Country Report*. (J. Ramberg, A. Lénárt and A. Watkins, eds.). Odense, Denmark. www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/european-agency-statistics-inclusive-education-2014-dataset-cross-country (Last accessed November 2018)

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2018a. *European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education: 2016 Dataset Cross-Country Report*. (J. Ramberg, A. Lénárt and A. Watkins, eds.). Odense, Denmark. www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/european-agency-statistics-inclusive-education-2016-dataset-cross-country (Last accessed November 2018)

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2018b. *European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education: Key Messages and Findings (2014 / 2016)*. (A. Watkins, J. Ramberg and A. Lénárt, eds.). Odense, Denmark. www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/EASIE-key-messages-findings-2014-2016 (Last accessed December 2018)

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, no date-a. *Data*. Web area. www.european-agency.org/data (Last accessed November 2018)



European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, no date-b. *Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education*. Web area. www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/mapping-the-implementation-of-policy-for-inclusive-education (Last accessed November 2018)

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, no date-c. *Data tables and background information*. Web area. www.european-agency.org/data/data-tables-background-information (Last accessed November 2018)

European Commission, 1999. *Evaluation of the Socrates programme*. cordis.europa.eu/news/rcn/11898_en.html (Last accessed November 2018)

European Commission, 2008. *Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training: Indicators and Benchmarks 2008*. SEC (2008) 2293. ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/relation/relation_other/npo/docs/portugal/2008/sec20082293/sec20082293_en.pdf (Last accessed November 2018)

European Commission, 2009. *Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training: Indicators and benchmarks 2009*. SEC(2009) 1616 final ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/2/2009/EN/2-2009-1616-EN-F-0.Pdf (Last accessed November 2018)

Eurydice, 2005. *Key Data on Education in Europe 2005*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/5666850/NC-AF-05-001-EN.PDF/09eebb67-39c1-4fa1-a590-5fa921aa2eba (Last accessed November 2018)

Publications Office of the European Union, 2016. *EU cooperation in education and training (ET 2020)*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Aef0016 (Last accessed November 2018)

UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012. *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011*. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf (Last accessed November 2018)

United Nations, 2006. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html (Last accessed November 2018)



ANNEX: ISCED (2011) DEFINITIONS USED WITHIN EASIE

In order to support data comparability across countries, all country data has, as far as possible, been provided in line with the ISCED definitions below.

All definitions are taken from: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012. [International Standard Classification of Education \(ISCED\) 2011](#). Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

*An **education programme** is defined as a coherent set or sequence of educational activities or communication designed and organized to achieve pre-determined learning objectives or accomplish a specific set of educational tasks over a sustained period. Objectives encompass improving knowledge, skills and competencies within any personal, civic, social and/or employment-related context. Learning objectives are typically linked to the purpose of preparing for more advanced studies and/or for an occupation, trade, or class of occupations or trades but may be related to personal development or leisure (p. 7).*

***Special needs education.** Education designed to facilitate learning by individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an education programme. Reasons may include (but are not limited to) disadvantages in physical, behavioural, intellectual, emotional and social capacities. Education programmes in special needs education may follow a similar curriculum as that offered in the parallel regular education system, but they take individual needs into account by providing specific resources (e.g. specially-trained personnel, equipment or space) and, if appropriate, modified educational content or learning objectives. These programmes can be offered to individual students within already-existing education programmes or as a separate class in the same or separate educational institutions (p. 83).*

The following ISCED definitions can be used to support specific comparability factors. An explanation of why applying this definition is important for the proposed EASIE work follows each definition.

***Formal education** is education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies, and – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national education authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education [...] Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognised as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognised and, therefore, are within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalised education occurs when an organization provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning (p. 11).*



Explanation: Applying this definition to country data collection makes it easier to understand what non-formal education means and, therefore, who should be considered ‘out of formal education’ for data collection purposes.

Programmes at **ISCED level 02**, or pre-primary education, are:

... characterised by interaction with peers and educators, through which children improve their use of language and social skills, start to develop logical and reasoning skills, and talk through their thought processes. They are also introduced to alphabetical and mathematical concepts, and encouraged to explore their surrounding world and environment. Supervised gross motor activities (i.e. physical exercise through games and other activities) and play-based activities can be used as learning opportunities to promote social interactions with peers and to develop skills, autonomy and school readiness (p. 27).

Explanation: Applying this definition to country data collection makes it possible to address comparability issues around the ISCED levels of specific programmes children/learners are following.

*Programmes at **ISCED level 1**, or primary education, are typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy) and establish a solid foundation for learning and understanding core areas of knowledge, personal and social development, in preparation for lower secondary education. It focuses on learning at a basic level of complexity with little, if any, specialisation (p. 30).*

Explanation: Applying this definition to country data collection makes it possible to address comparability issues around the ISCED levels of specific programmes children/learners are following.

*Programmes at **ISCED level 2**, or lower secondary education, are typically designed to build on the learning outcomes from ISCED level 1. Usually, the aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development upon which education systems may then expand further educational opportunities. Some education systems may already offer vocational education programmes at ISCED level 2 to provide individuals with skills relevant to employment (p. 33).*

Explanation: Applying this definition to country data collection makes it possible to address comparability issues around the ISCED levels of specific programmes children/learners are following.

*Programmes at **ISCED level 3**, or upper secondary education, are typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education or provide skills relevant to employment, or both.*

Programmes at this level offer students more varied, specialised and in-depth instruction than programmes at ISCED level 2. They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available. Teachers are often highly qualified in the subjects or fields of specialisation they teach, particularly in the higher grades (p. 38).



Explanation: Applying this definition to country data collection makes it possible to address comparability issues around the ISCED levels of specific programmes children/learners are following.

Secretariat:

Østre Stationsvej 33
DK-5000
Odense C
Denmark
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20
secretariat@european-agency.org

Brussels Office:

Rue Montoyer 21
BE-1000
Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 213 62 80
brussels.office@european-agency.org

www.european-agency.org

