Preparatory meeting for the UNESCO Conference on Education Data and Statistics

Implementation of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): challenges and solutions forward

October - November 2023
Outline

- Background of ISCED
- Current status
- UIS ISCED data collection and quality assurance
- Most common issues about the use of ISCED 2011 and ISCED-F 2013
- Potential solutions forward
Background of ISCED

- Comprehensive framework that facilitates transformation of national education data into internationally agreed categories that make cross-national comparisons possible.

- UIS is custodian and responsible for development, maintenance, and providing guidance on effective and consistent use of ISCED for data collection and analysis.

- ISCED family classifications include:
  - ISCED-P 2011: national educational programmes
  - ISCED-A 2011: educational attainment
  - ISCED-F 2013: fields of education and training
  - ISCED-T 2021: teacher training programmes and related qualifications
## Current status

### How many ISCED 2011 mappings are currently available?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDG regions</th>
<th>Number of countries</th>
<th>Number of ISCED 2011 published mappings</th>
<th>Coverage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central and Southern Asia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern and South-Eastern Asia</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and Northern America</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Africa and Western Asia</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>211</strong></td>
<td><strong>201</strong></td>
<td><strong>95</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Countries with incomplete ISCED 2011 mapping**
Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Sint Marteen, Trinidad and Tobago.

**Countries with ISCED 1997 mapping only**
Dominica, Haiti, and Paraguay.
Overview of UIS ISCED data collection and quality assurance

**UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat ISCMAP questionnaire**

**UIS ISCED questionnaire**
- Free and compulsory education ISCED 0 to 3
- Information required for mapping national education systems:
  - ISCED 2011 educational programmes (ISCED-P) and
  - ISCED 2011 educational attainment (ISCED-A)

**UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat (UOE)**
- Qualifications outside scope of UOE
- Old qualifications from programmes that no longer exist
- Metadata on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)
  - ECEC programmes that meet ISCED 0 criteria
  - Other ECEC services that are not covered by ISCED 2011 classification

For quality assurance of survey operations:
- UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat (UOE) data collection manual 2022

When the questionnaire is returned by countries, the UIS processes the submission, and works with each country to validate the information collected before publishing them on UIS website.
Most common issues about the use of ISCED 2011 and ISCED-F 2013?

Main issues:

- National education programmes not classified in correct level of ISCED (issue not intrinsic to ISCED).
- National education programmes classified but not in a harmonised manner across countries.

Unresolved broad ISCED 2011 classification issues:

- Under which conditions is home schooling considered as formal education that can be classified in ISCED 2011?
- Classification of early childhood programmes (3 or 4) as ISCED 01?
- How to define academic and professional programmes for ISCED 6-8?

ISCED-F 2013:

- Issues reported by countries include change to certain fields name and description, specifically fields “03 Social sciences, journalism and information”, “0111 Education Science”, “04 Business, administration and law“.
Solutions forward

ISCED Committee:
- Composed of education and classification experts from International Organisations and UNESCO Member States; balanced technically and geographically and reflects different types of education systems that exist globally.
- Recommendations of ISCED Committee are expected by mid-2024.

Training and technical support to countries to improve consistency in classification of education programmes across countries
ISCED 2 and 3 at partial level completion; Programmes that span two levels; Long first-degree programmes (ISCED 6 and 7); Second or further degree for specialization (following completion of a Bachelor’s or equivalent programme) classified sometimes as ISCED 7.
Thank you

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