



# HIGHER EDUCATION DATA PRODUCTION

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6 FEBRUARY 2024

11:00-12:30

ROOM XII, UNESCO HEADQUARTERS  
PARIS, FRANCE

2024 CONFERENCE ON  
**EDUCATION DATA  
AND STATISTICS**

## BACKGROUND

Organized by UNESCO, the [Conference on Education Data and Statistics](#) will take place in Paris on 7-9 February 2024. It is 'envisioned as a regular dialogue and peer learning platform to establish an international community of practice among education statisticians and to strengthen relationships with the Technical Cooperation Group ([TCG](#)) on SDG4 indicators' ([UNESCO, 2023](#)), created in 2016 and involving UNESCO Member States. The conference also seeks to develop guidelines and recommendations for advancing international standards to improve comparability (including concepts, methodologies and operational aspects for measuring SDG4 indicators) and to discuss the impact of technological development on statistics (for instance, the impact and use of big data and artificial intelligence). To delve in more detail into specific issues, an Engagement Day is organized on 6<sup>th</sup> February at UNESCO-HQ too. The [Engagement Day](#) will be structured into several sessions, each focusing on a different stage of the learning pathways and their continuum, to address "Data-Driven Approaches to Lifelong Learning" as main theme. These sessions will explore challenges and opportunities for education statistics within various educational levels and particular policy domains, emphasizing the role of data in facilitating learning pathways, enhancing learning outcomes and contributing to educational equity and inclusion.

Investments in higher education are crucial for achieving the SDGs including SDG4. Building equitable, efficient, and resilient higher education systems will provide the professional expertise needed for inclusive growth, which needs to be based on evidence-based policy and practice. However, although extensively available for some cases, SDG4-related higher education indicators are not systematically reported for other cases. For example, out of 212 countries or territories worldwide (including 194 UNESCO Member States and 12 Associate Members), 35 cases do not have statistics on gross tertiary education enrolment rate for the decade 2013-2022. In Africa, out of the 54 countries in the region, those reporting annual data to the UIS decreased from 35 to 15 during the period 2013-2022 ([UIS.stat](#)).

High-quality data is critical to guide thinking and action in advancing knowledge-based societies impacted by the digital and green transitions. Consequently, the higher education community needs to shape evidence-based programming, based on reliable data and good practices.

This panel will focus on higher education data. To support the efforts towards improving the educational data ecosystem for a better SDG4 monitoring process, this session will address the collection and use of relevant, internationally comparable and quality data to support effective policymaking and practices in higher education. Following discussions carried in the frame of the World Higher Education Conference and work carried out as follow up in recent months, the discussion will go deeply into the need to improve the international data and indicators on higher education. Specifically, the panel will approach challenges and opportunities regarding data production and use, with particular attention to official sources governmental entities and other reliable sources when available.

The transformations experienced by higher education need to be expressed by data, whose production dissemination and use need special attention. On the occasion of the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference (WHEC 2022), Barcelona, a [Higher Education Global Data Report](#) was launched, including the available official data in 2022. Also, a [background document on data and knowledge production](#) was delivered. The [WHEC2022](#) offered some recommendations to be taken into consideration and stated that the debate must be led by changing trends in higher education as the foundation of addressing data-related issues in higher education:

- Understanding higher education from a human rights approach and lifelong perspective.
- The need for data on equity policies in education to better attend to marginalized groups, including refugees.
- International mobility and recognition of studies.
- The increasing importance of flexibility in programme organization and how to account for enrolments and graduates.
- The balance between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, given the demands coming from the world of labour and needs for global citizens.
- The way the field of educational data is framed at the international level and the ways data and indicators are mobilized by specific agents led by their agendas and views.

#### **Objectives:**

- Identify key challenges, opportunities and routes of action to enhance production and use of higher education data and statistics as global, regional and country levels.

- Promote interest of Member States in producing high-quality data to enable its use for informed decision making and action in higher education within a lifelong learning perspective.
- Stimulate further research and analysis leading to enhance production and use of higher education data at global, regional and country levels.

#### **Expected Outcomes:**

- Enhanced awareness of the global and national challenges around data on higher education.
- Understanding of current trends, needs, emerging issues and opportunities to improve data availability and use to enhance policymaking and practices in higher education.

#### **Format:**

The session will be structured around short provocative presentations followed by a conversation with the panellists and Q&As.

#### **Organizers:**

- UNESCO ED/PLS/HED
- Focal Point : Paz Portales, Programme Specialist, email: [p.portales@unesco.org](mailto:p.portales@unesco.org)

## AGENDA

### Introduction (Michaela Martin IPE) – 5 minutes

#### Part 1: Presentations

- **Presentation 1: Mapping data availability in Higher Education** (Patrick Montjourides, Programme Specialist UIS and José Luis Guzmán, Associate Education Expert) – 15 minutes
- **Presentation 2: UNHRC “15by30 Refugee Higher Education” initiative.** (Cirenia Chavez, Education Officer specialist on data and evidence, UNHCR) – 15 minutes
- **Presentation 3: Steering Report. World Bank.** (Roberta Malee, Global Lead for Tertiary Education and Senior Education Specialist at the World Bank) – 15 minutes
- **Presentation 4: OECD Higher Education Policy** (Simon Roy, Head of Higher Education Policy, OECD) – 15 minutes

#### Part 2: Discussion and Wrap-up

- **Discussion and QAs** – 15 minutes
- **Closing remarks** (Borhene Chakroun, DIR/PLS) – 5 minutes

## Description

### Introduction (5 minutes)

The session will begin with an opening remark by a UNESCO representative, including a brief overview of the session's objectives and structure.

### Part 1: Presentations (60 minutes – 15 minutes each one, to be revised according to confirmations of participation)

- **Presentation 1: Mapping data availability in Higher Education.** Based on the work carried out recently by UNESCO, this presentation will provide an overview of the global situation regarding HE data availability, mainly related to the UIS defined indicators to feed ISCED 5 to 8.

- **Presentation 2: Lessons from USAID B2 HE initiative.** In recognition of the need for evidence building and sharing, the need for a collaborative network that provides a platform to communicate and coordinate evidence for higher education priorities was taken by USAID. They organized the BE2 HE, a Higher Education Interest Group to *promote the availability and access to open data and public evidence on higher education* and provide strategic guidance, connecting with donors and disseminating good practices in higher education programming. UNESCO is part of the group (HE Section, IESALC, IIPPE).
- **Presentation 3: UNHRC “15by30 Refugee Higher Education” initiative.** Today, 7 per cent of refugees have access to higher education. While this is a significant increase from only 1 per cent refugee enrolment in higher education in 2019, it is still far below the global average higher education enrolment among non-refugees, which is just over 40 per cent. In order to ensure that more refugees have access to the transformative power of higher education – to support transitions from learning to earning and to position refugees to contribute to the countries that host them – UNHCR and partners set the goal to achieve enrolment of 15 per cent of refugee youth by 2030: the 15by30 target. Realising this goal will require the coordinated and sustained engagement of a range of partners focused on supporting higher education institutions and systems, mainly in refugee hosting countries. This will result in significantly expanded access for refugees to higher education institutions, technical and vocational training institutions, and connected higher education opportunities, as well as third country education pathways. The 15by30 roadmap, developed with the support of partners and stakeholders, presents concrete guidance and strategic actions to pursue and achieve the 15by30 target.
- **Presentation 4: World Bank STEERING Tertiary Education Report.** Decades of insufficient and ineffective investment in post-secondary education and the advanced skills developed through higher learning opportunities have only exacerbated global equity gaps. The report supports the development of effective, equitable, efficient and resilient tertiary education systems and institutions. Related data is crucial to move in this direction.

- **Presentation 5: Higher Education Policy, OECD.** The Higher Education Policy Team within the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills is regularly confronted with the limitations of existing international data on higher education in its comparative and system-specific analyses. Current data provides an incomplete picture of some basic variables, such as enrolment in different forms of provision, and is lacking in some crucial areas, such as inclusion or lifelong learning. The team works closely with colleagues in the OECD Indicators of Education Systems (INES) programme to support improved data availability but has also sought to improve availability of comparable institution-level data for OECD countries and collect structured data on higher education policy. The presentation will briefly explore some of the challenges and possible ways forward for users of international data on higher education.

#### **Part 2: Panel conversation (30 minutes)**

A 30-minute panel conversation among the panellists, led by the moderator on the themes presented.

#### **Q&A (10-15 minutes)**

#### **Closing remarks (5 minutes)**