

Indicator description	Cost per child supported in primary education
Methodological summary	<p>This is an estimate of current unit costs for country governments for each primary school child enrolled.</p> <p>The total public current expenditure on primary education is divided by the total number of children enrolled in government primary schools.</p> <p>All primary school grades should be included to get an accurate cost per child estimate.</p> <p>It should be noted that an average figures can hide a wide variation in unit costs. Where possible the average should be supplemented with information to explain this variation and help with interpretation. This might include information on the important drivers of costs (e.g. teachers' pay, construction costs etc.) and what we are doing to reduce these. It could also include the trends required to improve education outcomes. In some cases this may very well mean an increase in spend on some of these drivers (such as teacher pay) and therefore costs per pupil.</p>
Country Office role	<p>Country offices should collect the data required and calculate the indicator to provide final numbers. Country offices might also have to do a light touch QA when using National data.</p>
Data source	<p>Primary expenditure and primary enrolment data are available from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) data centre.</p> <p>It is preferable to use the most up-to-date data available. This is very likely to come from partner governments (from Ministry of Education EMIS systems and in some cases Ministries of Finance for expenditure data).</p> <p>It is crucial to ensure that the expenditure and enrolment data are from the same period as far as possible. However finance data is likely to be based on financial years so will not be a perfect match for calendar year data. In this case 2012 enrolment data should be matched with 2012/13 finance data, for example.</p>
Data included	<p>This calculation covers all expenditure on primary education through governments. This should include both recipient country and donor expenditure. It does not capture spending outside government systems.</p>

	Data are not available to estimate education spend in country occurring outside government systems. Each donor may very well have this information (DFID does) but the OECD-DAC reporting system does not capture this. In 2009/10 this calculation excluded 24% (£95m) of DFID bilateral aid to education.
Data calculations	<p>The numerator is the total public current expenditure on primary education. Countries using UIS data will need to convert from purchasing power parity back to market rates. The cost per child data should be presented in £'s at the mid-year market rate.</p> <p>The denominator is the number of children enrolled in government primary schools. All grades should be included. This will be different for different countries - see data issues below.</p>
Most recent baseline	In 2010/11 the average spend of our partner countries (for whom data was available) was £98 per child per year at primary school.
Good Performance	This is complex to assess as costs in each country will vary depending on local contexts. Trends over time can also be difficult to assess, without controls for exchange rate variation and inflation. Improvements in the quality of education can lead to increases in unit costs.
Data dis-aggregation	Not applicable for this indicator.
Data availability	Yearly updates should be possible however the data are unlikely to change dramatically year on year. Any comparisons over time should control for inflation in prices using an appropriate deflator, and take into account differences in exchange rates.
Time period/ lag	International data has a 2-3 year time lag i.e. the 2010 UIS publication contains 2007 data. Data from government systems are likely to be more up-to-date, with a minimum of a year lag.
Quality assurance measures	<p>UIS are responsible for the quality assurance of their own data.</p> <p>Where data from Government systems is used, country offices might have to quality assure these data.</p>
Data issues	The number of grades in a primary school system

	<p>varies from country to country; UIS have a standardised taxonomy (6 years for primary) to enable between country comparisons. However this taxonomy is not used when collecting financial data which are collected for the entire primary system. In order to avoid an overestimate of costs for those countries with systems of more than 6 grades the number of children enrolled in the entire primary system should be used to get a more accurate estimate of cost per child. The expenditure figures do not include spending outside government systems (Civil Society, NGOs, Private Sector and other Multilaterals). It is difficult to estimate this additional expenditure as a proportion of all expenditure in education for a partner country.</p> <p>Care must be taken, where private enrolments are substantial, to ensure that enrolment data covers only those who are enrolled in government schools. Where dual enrolment is known to be an issue, this should be noted in the returns.</p> <p>The measure will exclude household and community contributions to education, which may be non-negligible, and advisers should take this into account when using this data. However, is not practically feasible or cost-effective to measure the full costs of education (which requires household surveys and estimates of the 'opportunity cost', often the wages foregone) on a regular basis at an aggregate level.</p>
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