

# Colombia

Region: Latin America and the Caribbean  
Income Group: Upper Middle Income

Source for region and income groupings: World Bank 2018

## National Education Profile 2018 Update



### OVERVIEW

In Colombia, the academic year begins in February and ends in November, and the official primary school entrance age is 6. The system is structured so that the primary school cycle lasts 5 years, lower secondary lasts 4 years, and upper secondary lasts 2 years. Colombia has a total of 9,137,000 pupils enrolled in primary and secondary education. Of these pupils, about 4,352,000 (48%) are enrolled in primary education. Figure 3 shows the highest level of education reached by youth ages 15-24 in Colombia. Although youth in this age group may still be in school and working towards their educational goals, it is notable that approximately 1% of youth have no formal education and 5% of youth have attained at most incomplete primary education, meaning that in total 7% of 15-24 year olds have not completed primary education in Colombia.

FIG 1. EDUCATION SYSTEM

**School Entrance Age:**

Primary school - Age 6

**Duration and Official Ages for School Cycle:**

Primary : 5 years - Ages 6 - 10

Lower secondary : 4 years - Ages 11 - 14

Upper secondary : 2 years - Ages 15 - 16

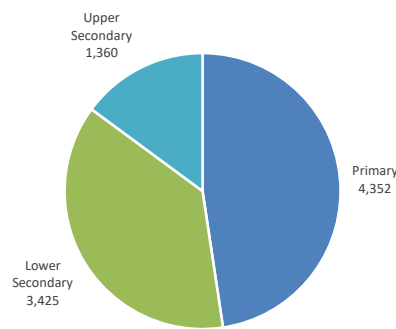
**Academic Calendar:**

Starting month : February

Ending month : November

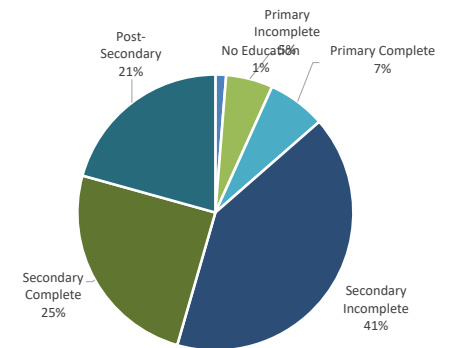
Data source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

FIG 2. NUMBER OF PUPILS BY SCHOOL LEVEL  
(IN 1000S)



Data Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2017

FIG 3. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, YOUTH  
AGES 15-24

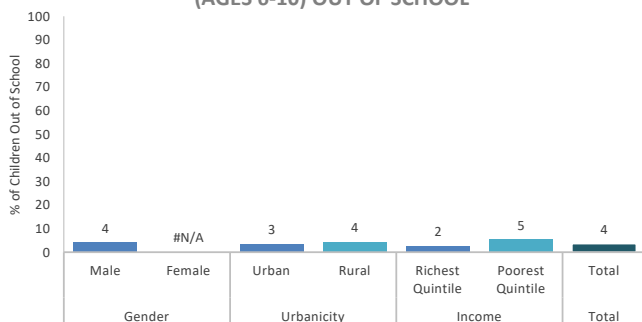


Data source: EPDC extraction of DHS dataset 2010

### SCHOOL PARTICIPATION AND EFFICIENCY

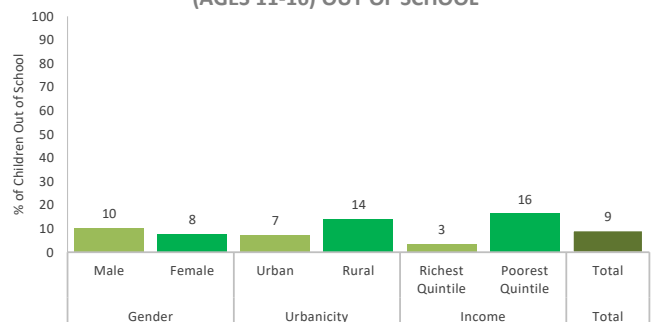
The percentage of out of school children in a country shows what proportion of children are not currently participating in the education system and who are, therefore, missing out on the benefits of school. Figure 5 looks at the percentage of youth of secondary school ages who are out of school in Colombia. Nearly 8% of female youth of secondary school age are out of school compared to 10% of male youth of the same age. For youth of secondary school age, the biggest disparity can be seen between the poorest and the richest youth.

FIG 4. PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE  
(AGES 6-10) OUT OF SCHOOL



Data source: EPDC extraction of DHS dataset 2010

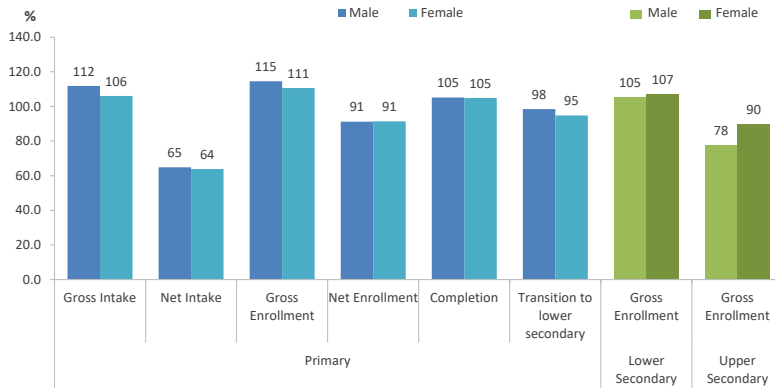
FIG 5. PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN OF SECONDARY SCHOOL AGE  
(AGES 11-16) OUT OF SCHOOL



Data source: EPDC extraction of DHS dataset 2010

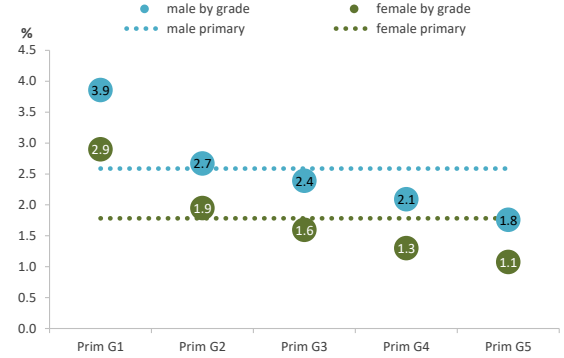
Figures 6 and 7 look at indicators of participation, completion, and progression in the education system. Figure 6 displays gross indicators (which include under- and over-age students) and net indicators (which include only on-time students of official school age) for student intake, participation, and flows. In Colombia, the gross enrollment rate in primary education is 113% for both girls and boys combined. This decreases to 106% in lower secondary, with a student transition rate to secondary school of 98%. In Colombia, the primary net enrollment rate is 91% and the primary completion rate is 105%. Both of these indicators provide a sense of the progress a country is making towards universal primary education -- a key UN Millenium Development Goal -- and, for Colombia, suggest that the country has yet to achieve universal primary education. Figure 7 displays the repetition rate in primary education, showing the specific grades in which students are more likely to repeat. It suggests that of the first 5 grades of primary in Colombia, students are more likely to repeat grade 1. The repetition rate in grade 1 is 3.4% (for both males and females), which is 1.2 points higher than the average repetition rate across primary grades of 2.2%.

FIG 6. STUDENT INTAKE AND FLOW FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS



Data sources: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), EPDC calculation based on UIS data (see Data Table for year)

FIG 7. STUDENT REPETITION BY GRADE AND LEVEL IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

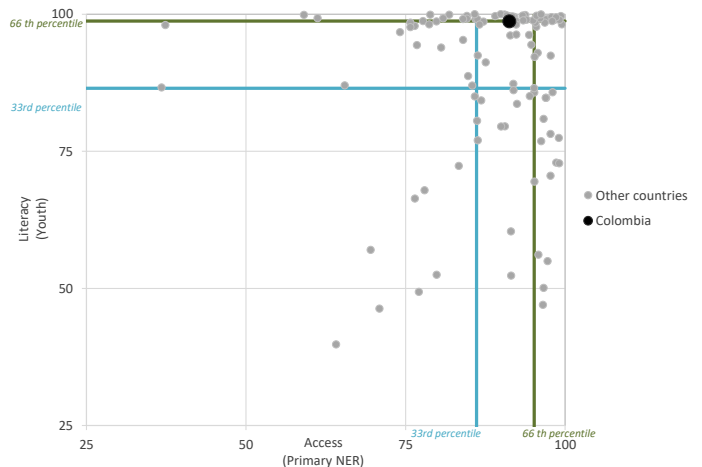


Data source: EPDC calculation based on UIS data (see Data Table for year)

## LEARNING

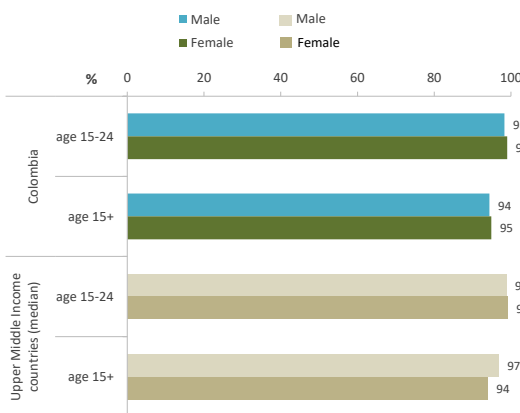
This section provides information on indicators of learning, which lend insight into the quality of educational provision. In this profile, learning is measured through literacy rates, which are important because literacy is a foundational skill needed to attain higher levels of learning, and national performance on learning assessments. Figure 8 demonstrates where Colombia stands in comparison to other low and middle income countries in access to education, measured as the primary school net enrollment rate, and youth literacy. Compared to other countries, Colombia ranks at the 47th percentile in access and at the 65th percentile in learning. Figure 9 compares youth and adult literacy rates and shows that, in Colombia, the literacy rate is 99% among the youth population; this is lower than the average youth literacy rate in other upper middle income countries. Figure 10 looks at the most recent TERCE reading and TERCE math assessment results for Colombia in Grade 6, administered in 2014. It displays the percentage of test takers that have fallen below the lowest performance levels and the percentage of test takers that have exceeded the highest performance levels in these assessments. Nearly 1% of test takers in Colombia performed below the lowest performance benchmark in reading, compared to an average of 3% for other countries that took the same assessment. To learn about assessment data and what competencies correspond with performance benchmarks, see [www.epdc.org/data-about-epdc-data/about-epdc-learning-outcomes-data](http://www.epdc.org/data-about-epdc-data/about-epdc-learning-outcomes-data).

FIG 8. COMPARISON OF ACCESS AND LITERACY



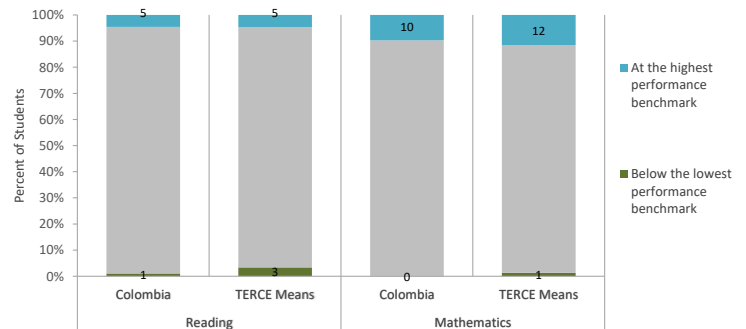
Data source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (see Data Table for year)

FIG 9. LITERACY RATE AMONG YOUTH AND ADULT POPULATION



Data source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (see Data Table for year)

FIG 10. PERFORMANCE ON LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

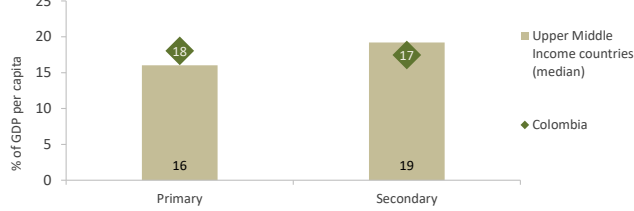


Data source: EPDC extraction of TERCE microdata 2014

## EDUCATION EXPENDITURE

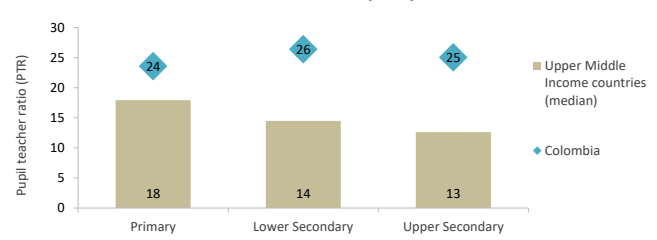
Figures 11 and 12 compare Colombia's per pupil expenditure (PPE) and pupil teacher ratio (PTR), where data is available, to those of other upper middle income countries. PPE indicates a country's commitment to education at each school level. In Colombia, PPE in primary education as a percentage of GDP per capita is 18%, higher than the median PPE in primary for upper middle income countries, which is 16%. In Colombia, the PPE in primary is higher than the PPE in secondary. PTR is a proxy learning quality and resource availability indicator. In Colombia, the PTR in primary education is 23.6, meaning that on average there is one teacher for every 23.6 primary school students. This is higher than the median PTR in primary for upper middle income countries, which is 18. In Colombia, the PTR in primary is lower than the PTR in secondary.

FIG 11. PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE (PPE) BY SCHOOL LEVEL (% OF GDP PER CAPITA)



Data source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (see Data Table for year)

FIG 12. PUPIL TEACHER RATIO (PTR) BY SCHOOL LEVEL



Data source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (see Data Table for year)

## DATA TABLE

In this table, the values of different education indicators for Colombia are compared to all countries, to Latin America & Caribbean, and to low and middle income countries. The percentile rank that is given indicates Colombia's standing relative to these country groups. A higher percentile rank indicates better relative performance than a lower percentile rank. Percentile rankings above 66% are considered high and colored in green, rankings between 33% and 66% are considered average and colored in yellow, and rankings below 33% are considered low and colored in red. For example, the gross enrollment rate for females in primary education in Colombia is 111%. For this indicator, Colombia ranks in the 86 percentile relative to all countries, meaning that 86% of countries have lower gross enrollment rates than Colombia. As another example, the survival rate to grade 5 of primary school for males in Colombia is 90%, and Colombia ranks in the 43 percentile relative to all countries, in the 43 percentile relative to Latin America & Caribbean, and in the 56 percentile relative to low and middle income countries for this indicator.

### KEY

← needs improvement → can improve further →

below 33%    between 33th and 66th percentile    above 66%

### PERCENTILE RANK RELATIVE TO...

INDICATOR	VALUE	YEAR	PERCENTILE RANK RELATIVE TO...			DATA SOURCE
			All Countries	Latin America & Caribbean	Low and Middle Income†	
Literacy rate, 15+, Female	95	2016	66%	76%	73%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Literacy rate, 15+, Male	94	2016	51%	42%	60%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Literacy rate, 15-24, Female	99	2016	60%	57%	68%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Literacy rate, 15-24, Male	98	2016	55%	47%	65%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Gross intake rate, Primary, Female	106	2017	72%	83%	67%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Gross intake rate, Primary, Male	112	2017	80%	87%	74%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Net intake rate, Primary, Female	64	2017	39%	28%	43%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Net intake rate, Primary, Male	65	2017	36%	28%	41%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Gross enrollment rate, Primary, Female	111	2017	86%	87%	82%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Gross enrollment rate, Primary, Male	115	2017	83%	83%	79%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Gross enrollment rate, Lower Secondary, Female	107	2017	83%	62%	86%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Gross enrollment rate, Lower Secondary, Male	105	2017	78%	58%	86%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Gross enrollment rate, Upper Secondary, Female	90	2017	58%	58%	77%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Gross enrollment rate, Upper Secondary, Male	78	2017	49%	50%	66%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Net enrollment rate, Primary, Female	91	2017	40%	33%	51%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Net enrollment rate, Primary, Male	91	2017	38%	41%	49%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Net enrollment rate, Secondary, Female	82	2017	54%	66%	74%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Net enrollment rate, Secondary, Male	76	2017	49%	50%	66%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Repetition rate, Primary, Female <sup>‡</sup>	2	2016	54%	74%	63%	Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC)*
Repetition rate, Primary, Male <sup>‡</sup>	3	2016	53%	79%	62%	Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC)*
Dropout rate, Primary, Female <sup>‡</sup>	6	2016	55%	60%	67%	Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC)*
Dropout rate, Primary, Male <sup>‡</sup>	10	2016	45%	46%	58%	Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC)*
Survival rate, to Prim G5, Female	94	2016	57%	56%	69%	Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC)*
Survival rate, to Prim G5, Male	90	2016	43%	43%	56%	Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC)*
Completion rate, Primary, Female	105	2017	89%	86%	89%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Completion rate, Primary, Male	105	2017	90%	86%	90%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Transition rate, to Secondary, Female	95	2012	40%	45%	51%	Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC)*
Transition rate, to Secondary, Male	98	2012	62%	77%	76%	Education Policy and Data Center (EPDC)*
Pupil teacher ratio, Primary <sup>‡</sup>	24	2017	37%	27%	53%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Pupil teacher ratio, Lower Secondary <sup>‡</sup>	26	2017	16%	10%	23%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Pupil teacher ratio, Upper Secondary <sup>‡</sup>	25	2017	13%	10%	19%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Public education expenditure per pupil (% of GDP per capita), Primary	18	2017	67%	65%	75%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Public education expenditure per pupil (% of GDP per capita), Secondary	17	2017	45%	47%	56%	UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)
Percentage of children out of school, Primary, Poorest Quintile <sup>‡</sup>	5	2010	78%	64%	79%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Secondary, Poorest Quintile <sup>‡</sup>	16	2010	86%	100%	87%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Primary, Richest Quintile <sup>‡</sup>	2	2010	60%	19%	60%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Secondary, Richest Quintile <sup>‡</sup>	3	2010	88%	100%	89%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Primary, Urban <sup>‡</sup>	3	2010	72%	47%	72%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Secondary, Urban <sup>‡</sup>	7	2010	86%	93%	86%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Primary, Rural <sup>‡</sup>	4	2010	74%	47%	74%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Secondary, Rural <sup>‡</sup>	14	2010	81%	93%	81%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Primary, Male <sup>‡</sup>	4	2010	69%	59%	77%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Secondary, Male <sup>‡</sup>	10	2010	85%	93%	84%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Primary, Female <sup>‡</sup>						
Percentage of children out of school, Secondary, Female <sup>‡</sup>	8	2010	88%	93%	87%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Primary, Total <sup>‡</sup>	4	2010	71%	65%	80%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset
Percentage of children out of school, Secondary, Total <sup>‡</sup>	9	2010	87%	93%	86%	EPDC extraction of DHS dataset

† Includes World Bank classified low and middle income countries

‡ Lower data values indicate better performance on these indicators

\* EPDC calculation based on UIS data

## GLOSSARY

### INDICATORS AND DEFINITIONS

<b>Completion Rate</b>	The total number of students completing (or graduating from) the final year of primary or secondary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population of the official primary or secondary graduation age.
<b>Dropout Rate</b>	Proportion of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given grade at a given year who are no longer enrolled in the following school year.
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	The highest level of education an individual has achieved.
<b>Gross Enrollment Rate (GER)</b>	Total enrollment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school-year. Often higher than 100% because of repetition and overage students.
<b>Gross Intake Ratio (GIR)</b>	Total number of new entrants in the first grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official primary school-entrance age.
<b>Literacy Rate</b>	The ability to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to one's daily life. Literacy often involves a continuum of reading and writing skills.
<b>Net Enrollment Rate (NER)</b>	Enrollment of the official age-group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.
<b>Net Intake Rate (NIR)</b>	New entrants in the first grade of primary education who are of the official primary school entrance age, expressed as a percentage of the population of the same age.
<b>Percentage of Children Out of School</b>	Proportion of children of a given age group who are not currently enrolled in any schooling.
<b>Public Education Expenditure per Pupil (PPE)</b>	Total number of pupils/Total education budget.
<b>Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR)</b>	Average nationally of: Total number of pupils/Total number of teachers. Rates may vary significantly throughout the country.
<b>Repetition Rate</b>	Proportion of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given grade at a given school-year who study in the same grade in the following school-year.
<b>Survival Rate</b>	Percentage of a cohort of pupils enrolled in the first grade level or cycle of education in a given school year who are expected to survive through a certain grade regardless of repetition.
<b>Transition Rate</b>	The number of pupils admitted to the first grade of a higher level of education in a given year, expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils enrolled in the last grade of the lower level of education in the previous year.
<b>Both</b>	Measures using "Both" in their title combine male and female rates.
<b>Poorest Quintile</b>	Proportion of pupils who belong to the bottom 20% of a country's population, based on household wealth measured by an index of household assets.
<b>Richest Quintile</b>	Proportion of pupils who belong to the top 20% of a country's population, based on household wealth measured by an index of household assets.

### DATA SOURCES AND LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

<b>Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)</b>	Nationally-representative household surveys that provide data for a wide range of indicators in the areas of population, health, and nutrition. They have large sample sizes (between 3,000 to 50,000 households) and are typically conducted about every 5 years in developing countries. It is funded by USAID and implemented by ICF International.
<b>Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)</b>	Household surveys that produce internationally comparable estimates of a range of indicators in the areas of health, education, child protection and HIV/AIDS. It is developed by UNICEF to provide statistically rigorous data on the situation of children and women. Since the mid-1990s, there has been 4 rounds of the MICS survey, with the latest in 2009-2011.
<b>UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)</b>	Statistical office of UNESCO and the primary UN depository for cross-nationally comparable statistics on education, science and technology, culture, and communication covering more than 200 countries and territories. It was established in 1999 and collects data directly from the national statistics agencies of its members.
<b>Analysis Programme of the CONFEMEN Education Systems (PASEC)*</b>	PASEC has been administered in 13 countries in Francophone West Africa. PASEC is designed to assess student abilities in mathematics and reading French. The program is managed by CONFEMEN (La Conférence des Ministres de l'Éducation des pays ayant le français en partage) and has been in place since 1993. It is typically administered to students in 2nd and 5th grades.
<b>Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)*</b>	The PIRLS reading assessment, which is carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) is an assessment of reading comprehension skills. In most countries, PIRLS is administered in school to children in the 4th grade of formal school, every five years since 2001. In a small number of countries, it may be administered at a different grade.
<b>Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)*</b>	The TIMSS math assessment, which is carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), assesses pupils knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts. TIMSS has been administered to children in the 4th and 8th grades of formal schools every four years since 1995. In a small number of countries, it may be administered at different grade levels.
<b>Second Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (SERCE)*</b>	The SERCE assessment was administered in 16 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean by the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE) in 2006. SERCE was administered to children in the 3rd and 6th grades of formal school. It measures student ability in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science.
<b>Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ)*</b>	The SACMEQ assessment is designed to assess student abilities in mathematics and reading English. SACMEQ reading and math assessments have been carried out in countries in Anglophone East Africa in 1995, 2000, and 2007. SACMEQ is administered in school to children in the 6th grade of formal school.
<b>Highest Performance Benchmark*</b>	The highest test-specific performance or learning levels of an assessment. These benchmarks are different for each assessment because each assessment uses different constructs, tools, and procedures. Additionally, assessments vary in the standards for each learning achievement benchmark, the number of benchmarks according to which test-takers can be evaluated, and the youth populations they test.
<b>Lowest Performance Benchmark*</b>	The lowest test-specific performance or learning levels of an assessment. These benchmarks are different for each assessment because each assessment uses different constructs, tools, and procedures. Additionally, assessments vary in the standards for each learning achievement benchmark, the number of benchmarks according to which test-takers can be evaluated, and the youth populations they test.

\* Learn more about assessment data and what competencies correspond with performance benchmarks at [www.epdc.org/data-about-epdc-data/about-epdc-learning-outcomes-data](http://www.epdc.org/data-about-epdc-data/about-epdc-learning-outcomes-data).