Higher Education Data Collection in Asia and the Pacific

*Perspectives from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics*

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Outline of the Presentation

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• Making Internationally Comparable Data
• Issues and Challenges
• UIS’ Assistance
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Introduction

Why Monitoring Higher Education?
Higher Education in Asia-Pacific
-Rapid Expansion of Higher Education-

109 million
Students in tertiary education in Asia-Pacific in 2014

×3
More students enrolled in tertiary education since 2000

53%
Of global students in tertiary education in Asia-Pacific

Source: UNESCO Bangkok, UIS Data Centre, accessed in October 2016
Higher Education in Asia-Pacific
-Growing International Student Mobility-

1.7 million
Tertiary students in Asia-Pacific studying abroad in 2013

69%
Of outbound students from Asia-Pacific were from East Asia and the Pacific

Source: UNESCO Bangkok, UIS Data Centre, accessed in October 2016
Why Monitoring Higher Education?

The ever-increasing importance and complexity of higher education have resulted in a need for clear explanation of the arguments and justifications for strategies and activities conducted in this sector (p. 22, UNESCO, 2011).

Making Internationally Comparable Data

In Higher Education
What is UNESCO Institute for Statistics?

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

• The statistical branch of UNESCO, established in Montreal, Canada, 1999.
• The primary sources for cross-nationally comparable statistics for more than 200 countries/territories.

UIS’s roles in Education 2030
The UIS will remain the main official source of cross-nationally comparative data on education and work with partners to develop new indicators, statistical approaches and monitoring tools to better assess progress toward the target (Paragraph 100, E2030 FFA, 2016).

Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics (UIS-AIMS)

• UIS liaison office and representative in Asia and the Pacific, established in Bangkok, Thailand, 2003.
• Provide advisory services and technical assistance in information systems and statistics across all sectors of the UNESCO mandate.
UIS and Data Collection, Production and Dissemination

1. Data Collection
2. Data Production
3. Data Dissemination
**UIS and Data Collection, Production and Dissemination (cont’d)**

1. **Data Collection**

- The UIS collects education statistics from official national statistical authority viaUIS survey and UOE survey.
- Higher education data are collected annually via the Survey of Formal Education “Students and Teachers (ISCED5-8)”

**LEVEL OF EDUCATION**

- ISCED5 (Short-cycle)
- ISCED6 (Bachelor’s)
- ISCED7 (Master’s)
- ISCED8 (Doctoral)

**Areas of Education**

- Enrolment
- Graduates
- Teachers
- International Student Mobility

**Collector data are developed into more than 20 indicators**

**UIS is the official United Nations agency responsible for the collection of education data.**
Collected data are carefully reviewed to ensure that they are complete and comply with international standards and definitions.
3 Data Dissemination

- Disseminated data are used to monitor and report on international goals, disseminated widely to the user community both at the national and international level.

UIS also publishes technical documents, factsheets and data visualization.

UIS Data Centre is available here: [http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx)
UIS and Data Collection, Production and Dissemination (cont’d)

3 Data Dissemination

Interactive map on the global flow of tertiary-level students

Where do students go?

Where do students come from?

Interactive map on the global flow of tertiary-level students is available here:
http://www.uis.unesco.org/EDUCATION/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx
Issues and Challenges

In Higher Education Data Collection
Response Rates and Data Availability

There is dearth of quality cross-country higher education data ...

**Response Rate**
Not all the countries respond to the UIS questionnaires every year.

**Data Availability**
Hence, not all the data are available for higher education indicators.

**Timeliness of Data**
The latest data are not necessarily there for all available indicators.
According to the regional study on SDG4 data availability (conducted in November 2015), 77% of the Asia-Pacific countries have a data collection system for higher education.
National Data Production Systems (cont’d)

Data production chain
Many countries reported that some phases of data production systems need improving.

Resource
Lack of resources is one of the major constraints for the development of a functional national data management system.

Coordination
Fragmentation of management makes it difficult to coordinate among ministries for consistent higher education data collection.

Methodologies and definitions
If the national focal points are not well informed with the methodologies and definitions, it is difficult to obtain quality data.
UIS’ Assistance

How does the UIS Tackle National Data Issues?
UIS Assistance in National Data Issues

**Capacity Building**

- The UIS assists Member States in improving their capacities for data collection, processing, quality control, analysis and dissemination via national and regional workshops and trainings.

**Technical Assistance**

- The UIS provides on-site technical and methodological support to national focal persons in applying and adapting UIS methodologies and standards.

**Questionnaire Follow Up**

- The UIS follows up with the national focal persons regarding the status of the UIS questionnaires via phone or email.
Summary
Summary

• Higher education in Asia and the Pacific is undergoing a dynamic transition. With increasing focus on accountability and evidence-based policy making, indicators are indispensable for better management of higher education systems to improve the functioning and the quality of teaching and research.

• The UNESCO Institute for Statistics has 17 years of experience in making cross-nationally comparable statistics in higher education through our own channel of data collection, data review process and dissemination. UIS data on higher education come from our focal points at the national level.
Summary

• In order to comprehensively monitor higher education, a systematic national data collection system needs to be in place. However, diverse challenges in the national data production system may hamper the regular delivery of good quality data.

• Issues in national data production systems vary by country. It is important to take stock of the national context and build feasible indicator development strategies and plans.
Thank you!

Any questions?

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