

WHAT IS RTEI?

The Right to Education Index (RTEI) is a global accountability initiative that aims to ensure that all people, no matter where they live, enjoy their right to a quality education. RTEI is built out of the international right to education framework to monitor national progress towards its fulfillment. It reveals key areas in need of improvement, offers country-to-country comparisons, and tracks progress over time. Ultimately, RTEI seeks to strengthen the expertise and capacity of civil society and education advocates; increase public and political support for realizing the right to education; hold governments and institutions accountable for their commitments to the right to education; and uphold the right to education for every child and adult everywhere.

HOW DOES RTEI WORK?

RTEI partners with civil society organizations, research institutions, and governments to collect data on a wide range of indicators explicitly derived from the international right to education framework. The data is used to form the Index, which can be used by the public, civil society advocates, researchers, policymakers, and government officials to identify areas in need of improvement, explore indicators more deeply, and place efforts where they are most needed to fulfill the right to education.

RTEI Questionnaire

The primary tool of RTEI is the RTEI Questionnaire, a comprehensive survey of close-ended questions with explicit bases in one or several international human rights instruments, namely United Nations' legally binding international conventions. Civil society partners, researchers, and government officials answer each question and provide supporting documentation.

The RTEI Questionnaire consists of 81 questions covering 288 data points that monitor aspects of the right to education. The Questionnaire includes minimum core obligations and progressively realized rights that aim to

ensure the right to education on a non-discriminatory basis; provide free and compulsory, quality primary education; ensure that education conforms to the objectives set out in the international right to education framework; adopt and implement a national education strategy; and ensure free choice of education without interference, subject to conformity with minimum educational standards.

The RTEI Questionnaire is structured into themes of Governance and the 4 As (Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, and Adaptability) along with their respective subthemes:

- **Governance:** The legal structure of education in a state. This includes state ratification of international declarations or treaties, education financing, and education standards and regulations. Subthemes include: International Framework, National Law, Plan of Action, Monitoring and Reporting, Financing, and Data Availability.
- **Availability:** The specific quantity of educational institutions available and the condition of such institutions. Subthemes include: Classrooms, Sanitation, Teachers, and Textbooks.
- **Accessibility:** Whether available institutions are accessible to all students regardless of their socio-economic, familial, or demographic status. Subthemes include: Free Education, Discrimination, and Participation.
- **Acceptability:** The quality of available education. This moves beyond learning outcomes to also capture the educational environment's cultural relevance, security, and the aims and content of education. Subthemes include: Aims of Education, Learning Environment, and Learning Outcomes.
- **Adaptability:** The ability of education to be flexible in meeting the needs of a diverse range of students. Subthemes include: Children with Disabilities, Children of Minorities, Out-of-school Children, and Out-of-school Education.

The RTEI Questionnaire also allow for further analysis of additional cross-cutting themes:

- **Girls' Education:** The laws that specifically target girls and outcomes of girls' participation to evaluate education equality across sexes.
- **Children with Disabilities:** Disaggregation of questions to evaluate education equality for children with disabilities.
- **Regional Disparities:** The difference in the education system and learning outcomes based on urban-rural divides.
- **Indigenous and Minority Populations:** Educational equality concerns amongst potentially marginalized groups (specifically ethnic, racial, or religious).
- **Private Education:** Laws that shape the use and availability of private education.
- **Teachers:** The nationwide professional state and requisite training of teachers.
- **Income Inequality:** Differences in educational access and outcomes by socio-economic status.
- **Content of Education:** Investment in learning materials and topics included in national curriculum.
- **Monitoring and Accountability:** The laws that provide oversight for the education system of a country.
- **National Normative Framework:** The laws that guide the national education system.
- **Opportunity and Indirect Costs:** Costs that price children out of education and the loss of potential gains from education for out-of-school children.
- **Alignment of Education Aims:** How well the aims of education, outlined in the international right to education framework, are included in the national legal structure, national curriculum, and teacher training.
- **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4:** The progress being made towards various targets under SDG 4.

Process

RTEI partners with civil society organizations and national education coalitions, who are the primary respondents to the RTEI Questionnaire. Partners are identified through a competitive call for applications and selected based on their history of engaging their governments to strengthen education systems, research experience, and capacity to drive public discourse on education. RTEI research was conducted in five countries in the 2015 pilot, 15 countries in the 2016 first official round, and 21 countries in 2018.

Partners are trained and supported for two months to complete the RTEI Questionnaire. Partners submit each response with supporting documentation, comments, and clarifications, as necessary. Upon submission, Questionnaires are assessed by RESULTS staff to ensure readiness for peer review and to obtain clarifications where needed. Completed Questionnaires are then peer reviewed by in-country independent experts and national research organizations. Two anonymous reviewers per country are given one month to review. National government officials identified by partner organizations and RESULTS staff are provided the same 30-day window to review and comment. Disparities in responses are reconciled by RESULTS staff in coordination with national partner organization staff.

Calculations

RTEI compares national level indicators using the most recent data, preferring government sources, followed by international governmental sources like UIS, and then non-governmental sources. Fully reviewed and reconciled Questionnaires are used to calculate RTEI scores.

Question responses come in four types: quantitative (e.g., "80 percent"), ordinal (i.e., "a", "b", "c" response categories), inapplicable (does not apply to that country context), and missing (question applicable but data unavailable).

All responses are put on a 0 to 1 scale. Most quantitative responses naturally fall into a 0 to 1 scale with a 0 or 100 percent benchmark. Quantitative responses that fall outside the range of 0 to 1 are inversed to return to a 0 to 1 scale. Responses with benchmarks other than 0 or 100 percent are rescaled to be benchmarked against their

relevant standard (e.g., the percent of national budget allocated to education is rescaled against the 20 percent benchmark rather than 100 percent). Ordinal responses are correlated to interval values (e.g., “b” = 66 percent, “c” = 33 percent, etc.).

Responses related to immediately realizable minimum core obligations are not adjusted. Responses related to progressively realized obligations (indicated by a ^W in the Questionnaire) are weighted to account for a country’s maximum available resources by using a formula based on the natural log of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP):

$$1 - (1 - x) \left(\frac{\ln \text{GNI PPP per capita of respondent country}}{\ln \text{GNI PPP per capita of world}} \right)$$

where *x* is the question response score

Nonapplicable questions are excluded from calculation.

Missing data is treated as follows:

- If 50 percent or more of applicable questions within a subtheme do not have response data in a particular country, “Insufficient Data” is reported for that country’s subtheme.
- If 50 percent or more of subthemes within a theme do not have sufficient data in a particular country, “Insufficient Data” is reported for that country’s theme.
- If data for a question is missing for more than 20 percent of all country respondents, the question is excluded from calculation for all countries.
- Data Availability is calculated as a separately constructed subtheme (the percent of data available for all questions within a country’s Questionnaire) and is a subtheme of Governance.

Scores range from 0 (right to education absent) to 100 (right to education respected, protected, and fulfilled). Responses to sub-questions of a question are averaged together to derive a single data point response for that question. Subtheme scores (except for Data Availability) are the average of question responses in that subtheme. Theme scores are the average of their respective subtheme scores. Index scores are the average of all available and applicable Structural, Process, and

Outcome question responses in the Questionnaire (indicated by an ^S, ^P, and ^O, respectively, in the Questionnaire) and weighted to comprise 15 percent, 15 percent, and 70 percent of the Index score, respectively, with the Data Availability subtheme score acting as a weight to the Structural score.

Cross-cutting theme scores are derived by using reconfigurations of indicators found in the Questionnaire. See the [RTEI 2016 Methodology Technical Note](#) for more information on cross-cutting things and further background on RTEI methodology.

INTERPRETING RTEI RESULTS

RTEI scores can be used to identify deficits in the right to education in countries and across countries and point towards actions that governments can take to improve progress towards the right to education.

As with any index, RTEI has limitations in its interpretation and application:

RTEI is:

- A general measure of the right to education in a country.
- Based on an important, but non-exhaustive, list of indicators explicitly derived from the international right to education framework.
- A first step toward further analysis and advocacy.

RTEI is not:

- The comprehensive, definitive measure of the right to education in a country.
- An exhaustive index that covers the full complexity of the right to education.
- A legal document that can be used for adjudication purposes.