

Statistical Assessment of Foundational Reading and Numeracy Skills among Children living in Georgia: Key Findings from the 2024 Survey

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Abstract

In 2024, a national statistical survey was conducted to assess the well-being and foundational learning skills of children living in households across Georgia. The research was implemented at the scientific base of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, with financial support from the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation. The study followed internationally recognized approaches, drawing on UNICEF's Foundational Learning Skills (FLS) module, Eurostat's living standards framework, and the Washington Group's questions on functional difficulties. To account for Georgia's ethnic distribution—86.8% Georgian, 6.3% Azerbaijani, and 4.5% Armenian as reported in the 2014 census—the survey tools were offered in Georgian, Azerbaijani, and Armenian, ensuring linguistic accessibility, while remaining ethnic groups each comprised less than 1% of the population. Findings show that 67.4% of children aged 7–14 demonstrated foundational reading skills, while only 57.1% achieved foundational numeracy skills. Reading outcomes were similar for urban and rural children, whereas disparities were more pronounced in numeracy skills. Numeracy proficiency also varied across subskills: 80.9% could read numbers, 81.2% discriminated between numbers, but fewer succeeded in addition (72.8%) and pattern recognition (70.9%). Children without functional difficulties (68.5% reading; 57.4% numeracy) outperformed peers with difficulties (51.6% and 53.2%). Household income strongly influenced results, with children from the richest quintile outperforming the poorest in both domains. The survey produced internationally comparable SDG 4.1.1 and 4.5.1 indicators, providing the first national evidence on foundational learning levels in Georgia. Overall, the findings provide a robust evidence base for understanding current learning outcomes and support further educational program development.

Keywords: Education; Foundational learning skills; Functional difficulty; SDG 4.1.1 and SDG 4.5.1; Wealth index

Acknowledgments: This work was supported by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFG) Project №FR-22-25281