



Education for All 2000-2015: No countries in the Arab States reached all the global education goals

Paris/New Delhi, EMBARGOED 9th April 2015 00:01– Globally, just one third of countries have achieved all of the measurable Education for All (EFA) goals set in 2000 not including any in the Arab States. Only one half of countries in the world, but 60% in the Arab States, have reached the most watched goal of Universal Primary Education. Despite halving its parity gap, the region remains one of those furthest from the target of gender parity. The Report shows an extra \$22 billion a year is needed on top of already ambitious government contributions in order to ensure the world achieves the new global education targets being set for the year 2030.

These are the key findings of the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) “*Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*”, produced by an independent team at UNESCO which has tracked progress on these goals for the past 15 years.

“The world has made tremendous progress towards Education for All,” said UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova. *“Despite not meeting the 2015 deadline, millions more children are in school than would have been had the trends of the 1990s persisted. However, the agenda is far from finished. We need to see specific, well-funded strategies that prioritize the poorest – especially girls – improve the quality of learning and reduce the literacy gap so that education becomes meaningful and universal.”*

Released today, one month before the World Education Forum in Incheon (Republic of Korea), the Report reveals the following findings for the Arab States:

Goal 1. Expand early childhood care and education

Three countries achieved a gross enrolment ratio of 80% or more in pre-primary education – Lebanon, Algeria and the UAE. Four countries are very far from this target, including Yemen where barely any children are enrolled in pre-primary education. The average enrolment ratio in the region remained very low, at 25% in 2012. However, Algeria, Egypt and Qatar’s gross enrolment ratio more than doubled. In Algeria, participation was at 2% in 1999 but is projected to exceed 100% in 2015.

Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education

Nine countries – 60% of the total - have achieved universal primary education, leaving 4.5 million children out of school. Two countries, Djibouti and Mauritania, remain very far from the target despite their enrolment rates more than doubling since 1999. More than 40% of the 4.5 million out of school children are expected never to set foot in a classroom. Conflict, and its impact on education, has intensified: the proportion of the region’s out of

school children affected by armed conflict has risen from 63% to 87%. Girls are almost twice as likely never to have enrolled in school.

Just over a sixth of students leave school early and do not complete primary education in the region, a fact that has not changed since 1999. Only Tunisia is projected to achieve the EFA goal of ensuring that all children who have access to primary school also complete it

Goal 3. Ensure equal access to learning and life skills for youth and adults.

Twenty seven percent of countries reached universal lower secondary enrolment, an indicator of skills acquisition, while another 18 percent are close. However, participation in this level of education has increased in 13 of the 15 countries with data, with larger increases in countries such as Algeria, Djibouti and Morocco, where the ratios rose by more than thirty percentage points.

Goal 4. Achieving a 50 per cent reduction in levels of adult illiteracy

Adult illiteracy rates dropped by 39% in the region, still short of the 50% target. Only Jordan is projected to reach the goal and five countries are close. In the region, 52 million adults, equivalent to just over a fifth of the adult population, are denied the right to literacy, two thirds of whom are women.

Goal 5. Achieve gender parity and equality

Despite significant increases in girls' access to school, the region remains one of those furthest from the target of gender parity in education. Seven countries will have achieved gender parity in primary education, but six are far from the goal, including Mauritania, where boys are now underrepresented in primary school enrolment. Significant disparities in primary education remain in Djibouti, Sudan and Yemen. Lebanon used to have parity in 1999, but doesn't any longer.

In secondary education, only 6 countries have achieved gender parity. Parity improved dramatically in Yemen but the participation of girls in secondary education is still only two-thirds that of boys. Conversely in Algeria, Oman, Palestine and Tunisia, the situation for boys worsened from 1999, when they had achieved gender parity.

Goal 6. Improve the quality of education and ensure measurable learning outcomes for all

The total number of primary school teachers in the region has doubled since 1999, the second largest increase globally. As a result, the average number of pupils per teacher fell from 23 to 19, but increased in Yemen from 22 to 30. In the few countries with data, most primary school teachers were trained, but the percentage of trained teachers was 78% in Kuwait, down from 100% in 1999.

Education quality and learning have received increased attention since 1999: In addition to country involvement in international assessments, the percentage of Arab States that have carried out at least one national learning assessment has increased from 25% to 70%.

Funding and political will

In most countries with data, the share of GNP spent on education increased between 1999 and 2012, particularly in Mauritania and Sudan. However, education is a low priority in many national budgets in the region: less than 20% of national budgets were committed to the sector in all the nine countries with data in 2012, falling below 10% in Bahrain and Lebanon.

“Despite the progress that the Arab States have made, there remains a significant unfinished Education for All agenda,” said GMR Director, Aaron Benavot. “Countries must develop plans to address the needs of growing numbers of displaced and refugee children, whose educational aspirations have been cut short due to armed conflict. Gender equality, improvements in quality and learning, and adult illiteracy must also be addressed if the region is to establish a solid education foundation to achieve the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.”

The GMR makes the following recommendations:

Complete the EFA agenda: All governments should make at least one year of pre-primary education compulsory. Education must be free: fees for tuition should be abolished; costs for textbooks, school uniforms and transport should be covered. Policy makers should prioritize skills to be acquired by the end of each stage of schooling. All countries should ratify and implement international conventions on the minimum age for employment. Literacy policies should link up with community needs. Gender disparities at all levels must be reduced.

Equity: Programmes and funding should be targeted to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged. There should be more emphasis on gender equality, including through teacher education and safe school environments. Governments should close critical data gaps in order to be able to direct resources to those marginalized groups most in need.

Post-2015: Countries should ensure that all children and adolescents complete pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education by 2030. Governments should significantly expand adult learning and education opportunities within a lifelong learning approach. The education sector should collaborate closely with other sectors at the national and global levels to improve sustainable development prospects.

Close the finance gap: The international community, in partnership with countries, must find the means to bridge the US\$22 billion annual finance gap for quality pre-primary and basic education for all by 2030. Clear education finance targets must be established within the Sustainable Development Goals where none currently exist.

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For interviews, photos, b-roll, info-graphics, videos, including a video message by the United Nations Secretary General, or for more information, please contact:

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To download the full Report please click [here](#), using the password **Report_EFA2015**.

To directly access country-level statistics, please click [here](#)

Notes to Editors:

Developed by an independent team and published by UNESCO, the Education for All Global Monitoring Report is an authoritative reference that aims to inform, influence and sustain genuine commitment towards Education for All.

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