



Introduction

Iraq, still affected by conflict, is one of the countries which progress toward EFA since 2000 was not fully reflected in the 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) due to lack of sufficient enrolment data. The country has not reported any number of children enrolled in school beyond 2007. In order to monitor progress made by Iraq across some of the EFA goals since 2000, the GMR Team used enrolment data from the country EFA 2015 review report. Enrolment ratios by gender in pre-primary and primary education by gender were then calculated using the United Nations population estimates provided by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

Pre-primary education

In Iraq, participation in pre-primary education remains very low despite an increase in the pre-primary gross enrolment ratio (GER) from 5% in 1999 to nearly 10% in 2013/2014.

Primary education

In primary education, Iraq has also made some progress, increasing its primary net enrolment ratio (NER) from 89% in 1999 to 95% in 2013. This improvement of the NER brought the country from an intermediate position to the close to achieve universal primary enrolment category.

Access to school is an important step to universal primary education, but it is equally important to ensure that all children, who enrol in primary education, complete it. In terms of primary school retention, in Iraq, most children who entered primary school reached the last grade, with an average survival rate to last grade of 96% in 2011. School retention has improved since 1999, when survival rate last grade was at 49%.

Gender Parity

The lack of disaggregate enrolment data by gender for the most recent period prevents the assessment of progress toward gender parity in primary education since 1999 when important gender disparities were prevailing, with 83 girls enrolled in primary schools to 100 boys. Evidence shows that when enrolled, girls stand equal or better chance than boys of completing primary school. This also the case in Iraq where about 97 girls to 100 boys were likely to reach the last grade in 2011, a number on the rise compared with 1999 (92).

Conclusion

The analysis of education data of Iraq demonstrates that the country has made some progress in participation in both pre-primary and primary education. Nevertheless, there is some way to go particularly in pre-primary education programmes that remain a luxury for the great majority of children. Indeed, despite the increase in the pre-primary GER, much effort is still needed to make early childhood education available for all Iraqi children, in particular the poorest who need it most.