



Introduction

Kenya 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 2009. In order to monitor progress made by Kenya across some of the EFA goals since 2000, the GMR Team used the information provided by the country in its EFA 2015 national review report.

It is important to note that the use of data from a national source meant using school age-groups that are different from the ones agreed upon in the International standard classification of education system (ISCED) framework. This is the case for both pre-primary and primary education which nationally defined age-groups are 4-5 and 6-13, respectively while the age-groups agreed in ISCED and used by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) are 3-5 and 6-11. Actually, the 6-13 age-group in the Kenya EFA 2015 national report is about basic education as it included lower secondary education. As for pre-primary, the age-group for 2012 was 4-5 instead of 3-5, while for primary the age-group 6-13 was used instead of 6-11. Finally, in addition to the age-groups that differ, primary completion rates instead of survival rates were used to measure progress toward primary school completion.

Pre-primary education

In Kenya, the pre-primary gross enrolment ratio (GER) was 43% in 2000 according to data provided by UIS. In 2012, the GER of children stood at 66%. While the two ratios are not strictly comparable due to different population data used for their calculation, United Nations on one hand and national population estimates, on the other hand, the data suggest that there has been a noticeable improvement in the participation in pre-primary in the country, although the country is still far to reach high levels of pre-primary GER (> 80%). The sharp increase in GER, in particular since 2007, is attributable to the implementation of the early childhood development and education (ECDE) policy and introduction of community support grants and mobilization of communities for improvement of learning and infrastructure in ECDE.¹

Primary/basic education

Since 2000, Kenya's net enrolment ratio (NER) of children aged 6-13 has increased steadily, rising from 68% to nearly 96% in 2013. With this increase, the country has moved from the category of far from universal primary enrolment to close to the target. This trend is certainly linked to the fees abolition policy implemented in the country since 2003 which has attracted

¹ Kenya Education for all 2015 national review, p.40.

children from disadvantaged groups such as girls and orphans. However, important geographic disparities persist. For example, NER was much lower in the North Eastern region where it stood at only 40% in 2010 compared with the 91% national average.²

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. Despite an increase of the completion rates, which went from 58% in 2000 to 80% in 2012, dropouts remain an issue in Kenya and the country is still far to reaching the universal primary education target.

Gender Parity

In primary/basic education, Kenya is close to gender parity, with the gender parity index (GPI) around 1.03-1.04 since 2000 indicating small gender disparities in favour of girls.

In terms of primary school completion, girls' situation has improved since 2000 and they were as much likely as boys to complete school in 2013. In 2000, the primary school completion rate of girls was 55% compared with 60% for boys. In 2013, the primary completion rates of both sexes were 79% and 80%, respectively. Girls' remarkable achievement in completion can be attributed to their increased access to basic education due to infrastructure development and policy shift favouring the promotion of girl education.³

Learning achievements

Since 1990s, there has been a great development in terms of regional and international assessments. More specifically, Kenya participated in the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) survey, in 2000 and 2007.

According to the SACMEQ 2000 survey of primary school sixth grader, 95% of pupils performed at level 1 in reading and 91% at level 1 in mathematics. In 2007, the situation of learning achievement has worsened slightly, with the percentage of pupils performing at level 1 of the reading scale dropping at 92%, and at 89% in mathematics. In terms of gender disparities in learning achievement, SACMEQ results show that in both years girls and boys were performing equally in reading, with 95% of pupils of each sex reaching level 1 in 2000 and 92% in 2007. In mathematics, girls were performing less than boys in 2000, with 89% reaching level 1 compared with 93% for boys. By 2007, the situation of both sexes has deteriorated. Yet, this was more so for boys, with the proportion of those performing at level 1 in mathematics dropping to 89% compared with 86% for girls, hence a reduction of gender disparities.

Conclusion

The analysis of education data of Kenya demonstrates that the country has made great progress in relation to both pre-primary and universal primary education. Nevertheless, much work is still needed to make early childhood available for all children, and to improve primary school completion of both girls and boys in order to ensure that a larger cohort of students have access

² *ibid.*, p.63.

³ *ibid.*, p.64.

to higher levels of education. Finally, quality of education as measured by learning achievement remains an issue and must get due attention so that the education that more and more children have access to actually transforms their lives.