

## GLOBAL EDUCATION DIGEST 2011

### Regional Profile: Arab States

#### Overview

The Arab States have witnessed significant progress towards Education for All (EFA) goals over the past decade. The region has the largest population of youth in the world, which has driven an increase in primary and secondary net enrolment rates. The gender gap has narrowed at both the primary and secondary school levels. More children are making the transition from primary to lower secondary education. However, some 6 million primary school-age children are still out of school.

#### Key indicators

##### Primary school enrolment

Between 1999 and 2009, the primary school-age population grew by 5% and enrolment increased by 17%. Adjusted for the actual school-age population, only 86% of primary school-age children were attending school. The adjusted net enrolment rate (ANER) increased by 9 percentage points over the past decade.

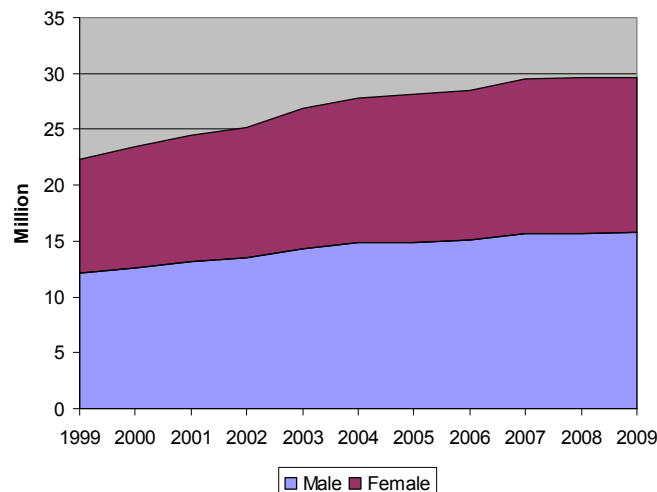
##### Transition from primary to secondary school

The effective transition rate of students moving from primary to secondary education, a new UIS indicator, varied across the Arab States, ranging from 100% in Jordan to 61% in Mauritania.

##### Secondary school enrolment

Globally, participation in lower secondary education is on the rise. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for this level increased from 72% to 80% between 1999 and 2009. In the Arab States, the gross enrolment ratio rose from 72% to 87%, which was one of the most notable increases in the world.

**Figure 1. Total enrolment at secondary education in the Arab States by gender, 1999-2009**



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

### **Gender disparities in secondary school enrolment**

Girls' participation in lower secondary education has been rising steadily since 1999. In the Arab States, girls' enrolment rose from 67% to 82%. However, the GER for boys was 9 percentage points higher in this region, indicating that persistent disparities in enrolment still need to be addressed.

### **Gender disparities in lower secondary graduation**

Once given the chance to attend school, girls do well. In the Arab States, a gender gap to the disadvantage of boys is observed at the lower secondary level. In three-quarters of states with data, girls have higher graduation ratios than boys.

### **Participation in upper secondary education**

In the Arab States, the upper secondary GER rose by just 6 percentage points between 1999 and 2009, from 42% to 48%. This may partly reflect the greater priority placed on improving access to lower secondary education in many countries across the region.

### **Out-of-school children of lower secondary age**

Approximately 16% of the world's out-of-school children of lower secondary school age live in the Arab States, and most of them are expected never to enter a classroom. However, the region has made a significant effort to reduce its share: in 1999, the proportion of out-of-school youth was 30% of the world's total.

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