

GENDER PARITY IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

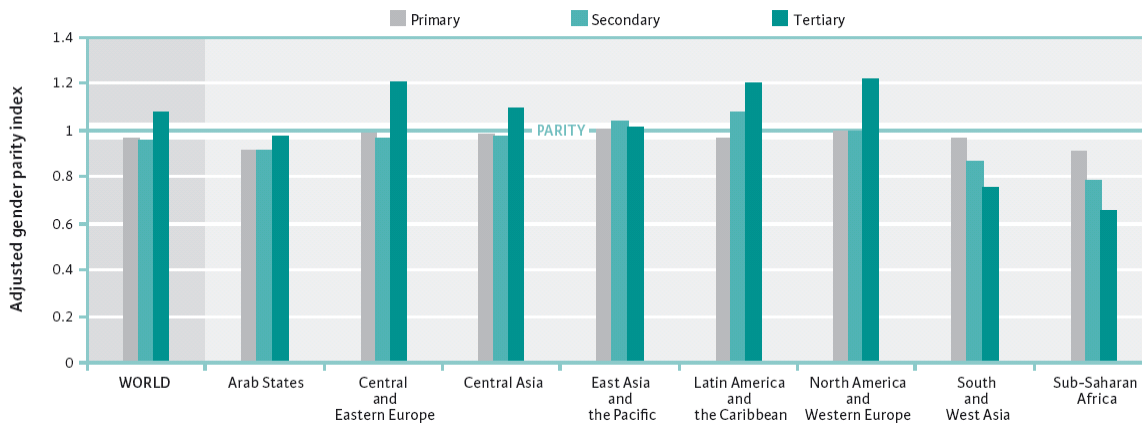
The international community pledged to eliminate gender disparities at all levels of education by 2015 as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As the official source of data to monitor advancement towards these goals, the UIS has released the 2010 Global Education Digest. It presents the latest statistics and analysis to chart national progress and pitfalls as countries strive to offer every child equal access to education regardless of their sex. The Digest is available at www.uis.unesco.org/publications/ged2010

Overall progress towards gender parity

Despite the critical progress in bridging gender gaps, persistent inequalities remain in many regions and at different levels of education. **Figure 1** highlights the varying rate in gender parity at different education levels across regions. The gender parity index shows that only East Asia and the Pacific has reached or is close to gender parity in all levels of education. Almost all other regions are closer to gender parity at the primary level than at any other level of education, except for the Arab States where tertiary education is closest to a position of parity. The majority of countries fell short of achieving the first step towards the gender goal (i.e. parity in both primary and secondary education by 2005).

Figure 1. Are educational opportunities equally distributed?

Adjusted parity index of the gross enrolment ratio by level of education, 2008



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Global Education Digest 2010*, Statistical Tables 3, 5 and 8.

The most recent statistics available for 157 countries that provided data for both levels of education in 2008 indicate that only one country out of three has reached parity in both primary and secondary education. This gender goal is therefore still being missed in over 63% of countries and is at risk of not being attained by 2015 for 46% of countries (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Which countries will achieve gender parity by 2015

Gender parity in primary and secondary education current status and prospects for achieving the 2015 goal

		Gender parity in secondary education			Number of countries
		Achieved in 2008	Likely to achieve by 2015	At risk of not achieving goal by 2015	
Gender parity in primary education	Achieved in 2008	Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, France, Germany, Guyana, Hong Kong SAR of China, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia FYR, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Moldova, Myanmar, Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Palau, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Tonga, United States of America, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay and Uzbekistan	Armenia, Austria, Bahrain, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Finland, Georgia, Ghana, India, Jordan, Kuwait, Mongolia, Malawi, Senegal, Saint Lucia, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela and Zimbabwe	Anguilla , Argentina, Australia , Belize, Botswana, Colombia, Costa Rica, Fiji, Greece , Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya , Kiribati, Republic of Korea , Lebanon, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Palestinian Autonomous Territories, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Samoa, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Spain, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Zambia	113
		58	20	35	
	Likely to achieve by 2015	Chile, Latvia, Syrian A.R.	Cambodia, Guatemala, Guinea and South Africa	Aruba , British Virgin Islands, Burkina Faso , China, Djibouti , Ethiopia , Liberia , Morocco , Mozambique , Nauru, Nigeria , Sierra Leone, Tajikistan and Togo	
	3	4	14		
	At risk of not achieving goal by 2015	Cayman Islands , Iran (Islamic Republic of), Macao (China) and Monaco	Chad , Gambia, Maldives , Mauritania and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Bermuda , Brazil, Cameroon , Democratic Republic of the Congo , Dominica, Dominican Republic, Eritrea , Lao People's Democratic Republic , Mali , Niger , Portugal, Sudan , Suriname and Swaziland	23
	4	5	14		
	Number of countries	65	29	63	157

Notes: Countries in **bold** indicate that enrolment rates are higher for males. The achievement of the gender goal is defined as a GPI value ranging from 0.97 to 1.03. The reported results have been derived by applying a linear extrapolation of the change in GPI at primary and secondary levels in the period of 1999 to 2008. Where data do not exist for one or both of these two data points, figures from up to two years after 1999 and before 2008 have been used with the necessary adjustment to the extrapolation model. In cases where a simple extrapolation of past rates of growth would cause the goal to be exceeded (i.e. where previous inequality in favour of boys would thus become an inequality in favour of girls, or vice versa), it is assumed that no such switch will occur and that parity will be maintained.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Global Education Digest 2010*, Statistical Tables 3, 5 and 8.

Regions in which the majority of countries are at risk of not achieving the goal in 2015 include sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab States, and East Asia and the Pacific. Among countries that are currently falling short of the goal, only four countries – Cambodia, Guatemala, Guinea and South Africa – are likely to achieve gender parity at both primary and secondary levels in 2015 if the observed trend is maintained. Twenty-three countries are not likely to reach the goal for primary education by 2015 while almost three times as many countries (63) are still far from the gender parity goal for secondary education. The following 14 countries will not reach either primary or secondary goals: Bermuda, Brazil, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Lao PDR, Mali, Niger, Portugal, Sudan, Suriname and Swaziland. Nineteen countries are likely to reach parity either in primary or secondary education – but not both.

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