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Education for All Regional Report 2014 for the Arab States

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Introduction

Education stands at a critical juncture in the Arab States – more than three years after the eruption of the Arab Spring sparked by young people of the region, and one year before the deadline for the realisation of the six Education for All (EFA) goals, the future role and direction of education hang in the balance. The enthusiasms and tensions of the Arab Spring were fuelled in part by growing demand for education and for the benefits it is purported to bring, as well as by frustrations with its low quality and inability to deliver work opportunities. Fully one in five people is aged 15-24 – a total of 85 million – and one in four of these is out of work. In some countries of the region, unemployment among university graduates is higher than among those with nothing more than primary schooling.

It is therefore a fitting moment at which to assess progress towards the achievement of the EFA goals, a fifteen-year agenda whose ambitious targets were adopted by 163 nations in Dakar, including all the Arab States. It is also a difficult moment. In countries that have experienced instability and conflict over the last three years, there have inevitably been consequences for education – disruption of the school year, damage to infrastructure, absence of teachers and learners, fear of violence and attack, non-functioning education institutions, confusion and uncertainty.

It is however also a moment of hope – to look forward to what education can become in the future, not only from the perspective of the international post-2015 agenda, but also in the light of what kind of society Arab populations want. It is a moment of debate and openness, with raised expectations and higher aspirations among youth as to the kind of life they wish to pursue. Education – and the demand for better education – lies at the heart of these aspirations and will be a major factor in shaping thinking and debate as well as in realising hopes for the future.

Change in the Arab region takes place in the context of global forces and trends. Ever faster and greater possibilities of communication lead to a constant tension between local identity and global openness – also a factor in the dilemmas that change triggers for leaders and populations alike. In this maelstrom of ideas and values, education continues to play its socialising and questioning role.

There are many differences among countries of the region, both in terms of the Arab Spring and in terms of progress towards the EFA goals, which is the focus of this report. The education system continues to experience the devastation of violent conflict in Syria (see Box 1), and the impact of instability and radical social change is still working itself out in Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen. The other countries of the region also feel the impact of change and must equally pose questions as to the direction of their societies and the role of education in that process.

The Arab Spring has highlighted the role of youth, of women, and of information and communication technologies (ICTs). EFA is of course all about what opportunities young people have to develop their potential and contribute to society. It is also worth noting that the EFA agenda set goals for gender parity and gender equality in education, and stressed the need to integrate ICTs into educational processes.

This report reviews the status of progress towards the EFA goals and then presents a number of examples of recent activities designed to accelerate progress. It also reviews the status of the 2015 EFA final review process and of discussions on the post-2015 education agenda.

Note on data

The data which served as a basis for this report are derived from the statistical tables (in print and online) of the 2013/14 EFA Global Monitoring Report, unless indicated otherwise. It is important to note that the data shown for countries affected by the 'Arab Spring' were collected before or in the early days of the movement and so do not reflect the consequences of instability, displacement and refugee movements or the destruction of infrastructure. The data shown indicate the progress made from 1999 until the 2010/11 school year, but do not reflect the current trends of basic education in those countries.

Box 1: Syria: tragedy for children's education

The conflict in Syria, now entering its fourth year, has become a tragedy for a generation of children whose chances of a quality education – or any education at all – have disappeared. An estimated 5.5 million children are now affected by the crisis – they have been displaced within their own country, become refugees in neighbouring countries, become trapped in besieged areas, or their schools have stopped functioning. Children displaced within Syria now number almost 3 million, and 1.2 million are child refugees (UNICEF. *Under siege: the devastating impact on children of three years of conflict in Syria*. March 2014).

As the pre-conflict data in this report make clear, Syria met a number of EFA goals, with virtually 100% primary school enrolment and gender parity at that level. Other indicators were moving in a positive direction. Now an estimated 3 million children are no longer in school – 20% of schools have been destroyed, damaged, turned into shelters or taken over by armed groups or forces.

International agencies such as UNESCO, UNHCR and UNICEF are working to provide education for refugee children in neighbouring countries, but the challenge is changing and growing month by month.

With the increasing number of Syrian refugees in Iraq, urgent challenges arise on many levels. Around 227,000 Syrians (57.60 per cent urban-based refugees, 42.40 per cent camp-based refugees) have entered Iraq since the beginning of the turmoil, with 97 per cent concentrated in the three Northern governorates of Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. In order to ensure refugees' right to education and to respond to the risk of youth falling into violence as a result of rampant unemployment and a lack of future opportunities, UNESCO has taken the lead on literacy and life skills, secondary, vocational education and training and INEE training.

UNICEF has also engaged with Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries:

Aid organisations plan to help the government to provide education for nearly 435,000 school-age children in Lebanon – more than the number of Lebanese children currently enrolled in public schools. In Jordan, should the influx of refugees continue, education partners will need to educate one Syrian child for every five Jordanian children. And in Turkey, if current trends continue, the number of refugee schoolchildren could reach over 500,000. (Source: UNICEF *ibid.*).

As the months become years, many children and young people are seeing their hopes of a brighter future turn into fears of losing all opportunity to develop their potential. The impact on Syria's education system and its pursuit of EFA goals will be severe and prolonged.

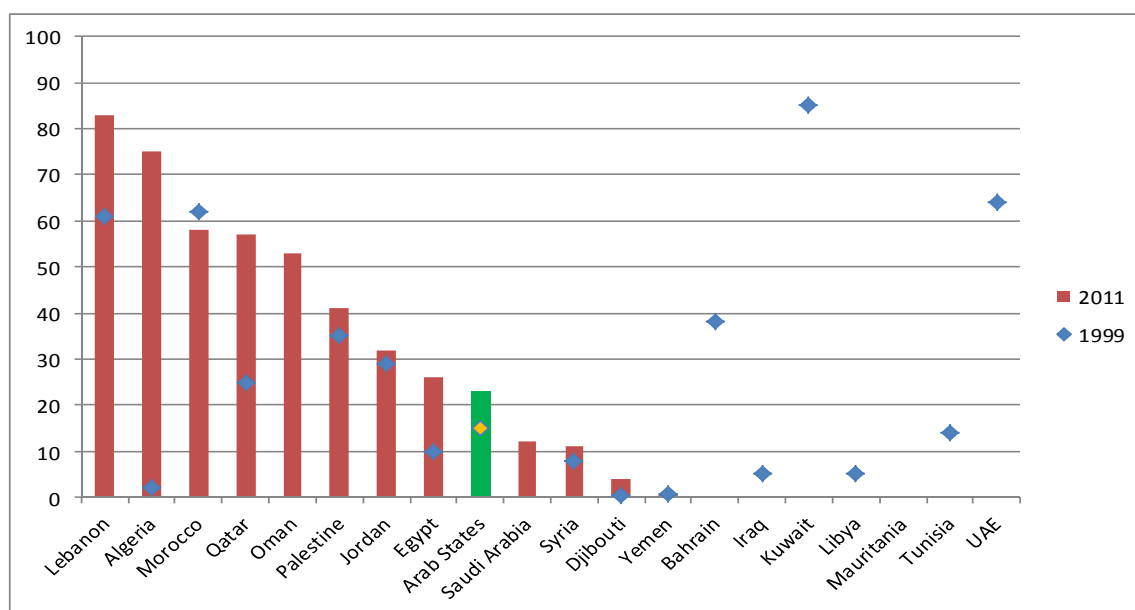
Progress on EFA goals and strategies

1. Early Childhood Care and Education

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

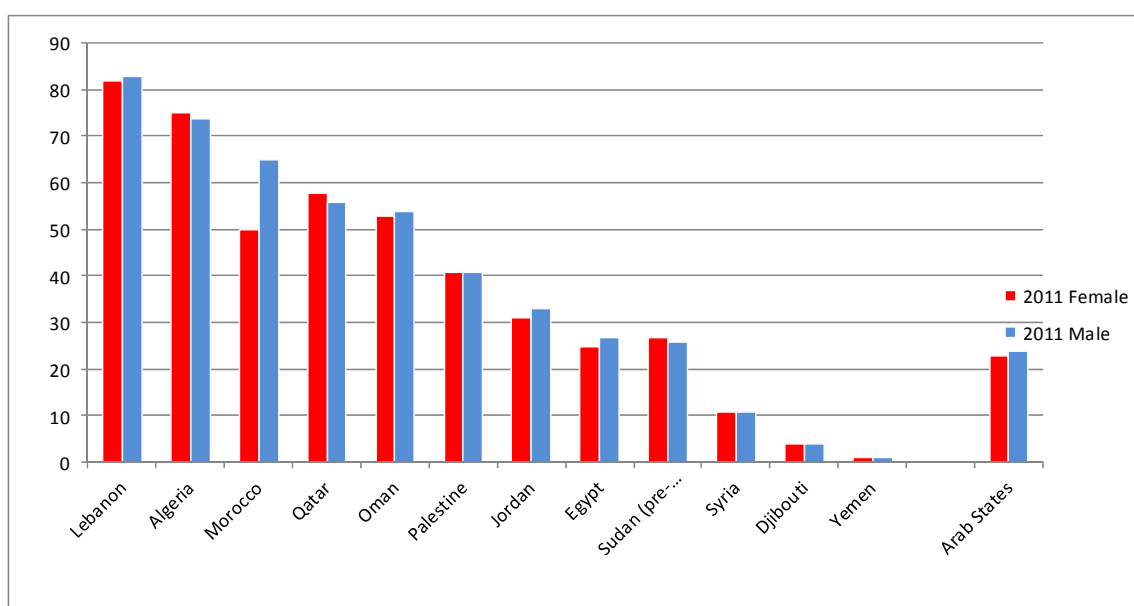
Across the Arab States as a whole, there has been significant progress in expanding pre-primary education, with a 72% increase in enrolment during the EFA period. As of 2011, 4.1 million children were enrolled – achieving a 23% average in the gross enrolment ratio. However, the regional average masks huge differences, with Algeria and Lebanon achieving $\geq 75\%$, while Djibouti and Yemen have a GER of under 5%. Algeria moved from a 2% GER in 1999 to 75% in 2011 – the largest increase in the region. For countries with data for 1999 and 2011, a further three countries – Egypt, Lebanon and Qatar – registered increases of over 10 percentage points. GER levels remain low in Saudi Arabia and Syria: $\leq 12\%$. The statistics for Morocco show a decline, albeit small, from 62% GER in 1999 to 58% in 2011 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Pre-primary Education (%)



Gender parity at the pre-primary level across the region is somewhat in favour of boys, with 47% of enrolled children being female. However, in Djibouti, Algeria and Palestine the 2011 GPI is in favour of girls. Gender disparity remains high in Morocco (GPI 0.77 – 2011), although it has improved from 0.53 in 1999. Figure 2 shows the pre-primary GER by gender for the 12 countries with data for 2011.

Figure 2: Pre-primary gross enrolment ratio (%) by gender - 2011



It is interesting to note that the proportion of private provision of pre-school does not correlate with levels of enrolment, with the implication that costs associated with private provision are not a decisive factor. Out of the 12 countries with data sets for 1999 and 2011, the proportion of public provision has grown. Six of the ten countries with (2011) data on the proportion of trained pre-primary teachers indicated that all their teachers at that level are trained – Djibouti, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, UAE.

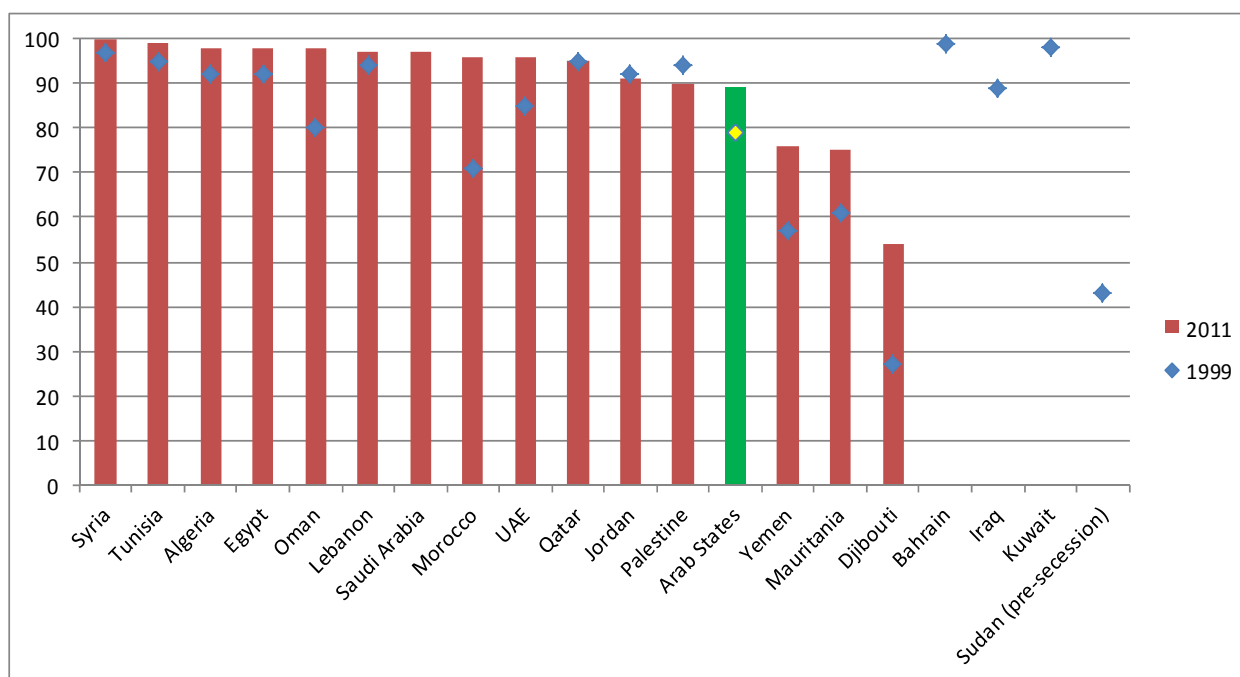
2. Universal Primary Education

Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

As indicated in Figure 3, the Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate in primary education (ANER) has increased by ten percentage points across the region from 1999 to 2011, from 79% to 89%. This is a significant achievement in the light of population growth of 34.5% across the region,¹ and means that 7.7 million more children were being provided with primary education.

¹ This figure excludes three countries of high inward migration – Bahrain, Qatar and UAE – whose population growth rates are 106%, 232% and 171% respectively.

Figure 3: Adjusted Net Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education (%)



The largest gains were made by Morocco, Oman and UAE, thus joining nine other countries whose rates exceed the regional average. Djibouti and Mauritania have also made strong gains but from a low base, leaving them still well below the regional average. Palestine has seen a small decline. There are no data for Iraq and Yemen, both countries that have also suffered conflict, and the impact of instability in other countries such as Egypt, Libya, Syria and Tunisia is not yet reflected in the data.

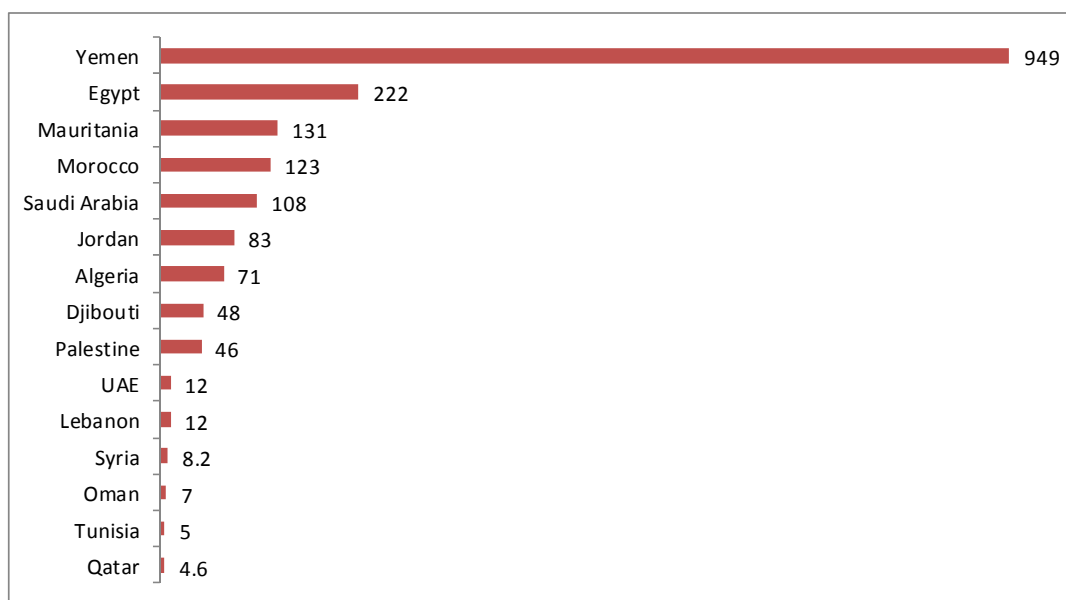
EFA goal 2 aims to see 'all' children enrolled and completing basic education; the target rate of 95% is used as a threshold for universal education. In terms of progress towards that threshold by 2015, the 2013/14 GMR classifies Arab States as follows:

- Target achieved or close: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Syria, Tunisia, UAE.
- Far from target, but strong relative progress: Mauritania, Yemen.
- Far from target, with slow progress or moving away from target: Jordan, Palestine.
- Very far from target: Djibouti.
- Countries with insufficient data: Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Sudan.

The number of out-of-school children is falling in the Arab region, though only slowly. From over 5 million children in 2010, the figure dropped to 4.8 million in 2011, of whom 60% are female (see also Goal 5 Gender Parity). As indicated in , five countries accounted for the majority of out-of-school children in 2011 – Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. However, the annual data do not capture the cumulative number of out-of-school children of compulsory schooling age, so in fact the challenge is much greater in some countries. For example, in Morocco 123,000 children were reportedly not in school in 2011 (see chart below), but the total of all those of compulsory schooling age (6-15 years) who are

not in school is estimated to be around 500,000. Local estimates of annual numbers of dropouts are 120,000 to 140,000 children.²

Figure 4: Number of out-of-school children 2011 (in 000s)



High proportions of children with disabilities continue to be deprived of educational opportunity and are more likely never to enter school than those without disabilities. ECSWA notes that “in the Arab region, significant strides have been made over recent years to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Despite these efforts however, persons with disabilities in Arab countries continue to face substantial barriers in accessing health care, education and employment. As a result, evidence shows that persons with disabilities experience lower literacy rates, poorer health outcomes, and heightened vulnerability to poverty and violence.”³ One of the principal reasons for lack of access to education and other services is the prevailing attitudes towards disability which do not recognise the potential of these children, for example, as reported from Palestine:

...children with disabilities in the West Bank, as elsewhere, confront a general lack of knowledge and skills about disability throughout the public and private sectors. They are also faced with a dominant perspective that regards people with disabilities as pitiable and as worthy to receive charity – but not as individuals with rights who have the same entitlements as others and who can and do contribute to society. (UNICEF. 2013. *State of the World’s Children 2013: Children with Disabilities*. p.38).

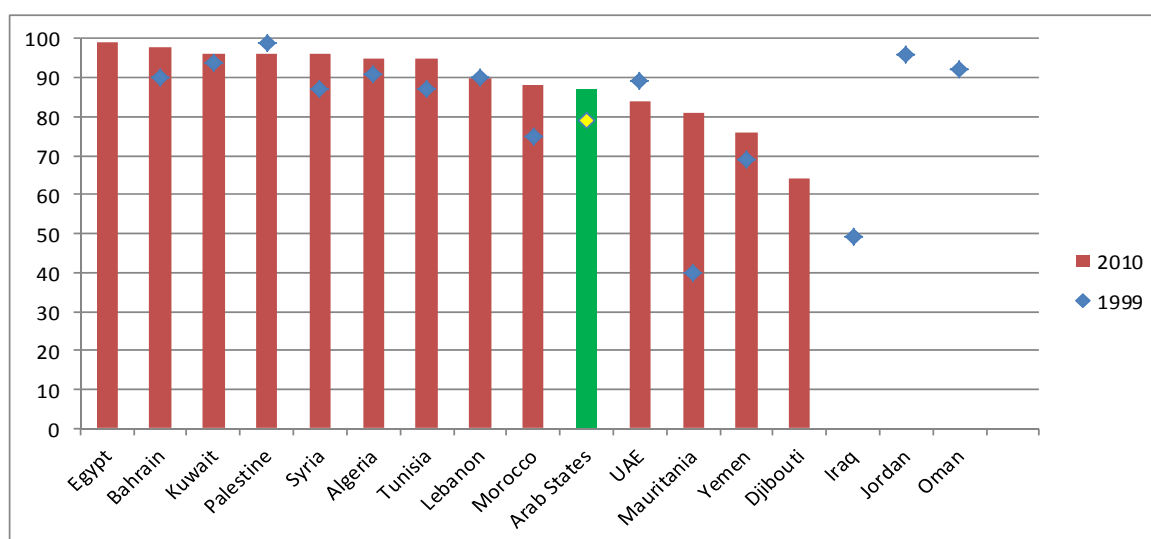
Education about disability as well as real educational opportunities for people with disabilities are areas for stronger focus throughout the region.

² Royaume du Maroc (Direction de l’Education Non Formelle). 2013. *Stratégie des approches non formelles pour l’insertion scolaire et professionnelle des enfants non scolarisés et déscolarisés*.

³ ECSWA - http://www.escwa.un.org/information/pressescwaprint.asp?id_code=606

Enrolment does not capture the whole picture for the realisation of EFA goal 2, which also aims for completion of a full primary cycle. The 2013/2014 GMR introduced a new indicator to measure this part of goal 2 – the primary cohort completion rate. Data for all the Arab States are not yet available, with four out of 20 countries shown in the report. A less precise but nevertheless relevant indicator is the survival rate to the last grade of primary schooling, shown in Figure 5. The region as a whole has seen positive progress, with an average of 87% of enrolled pupils reaching the last grade. However, Yemen and Djibouti achieved a rate of under 80%, and two countries – Palestine and UAE – have seen a decline; Lebanon has stagnated, albeit at a rate of 90%.

Figure 5: Survival Rate to Last Grade 1999/2010 (%)



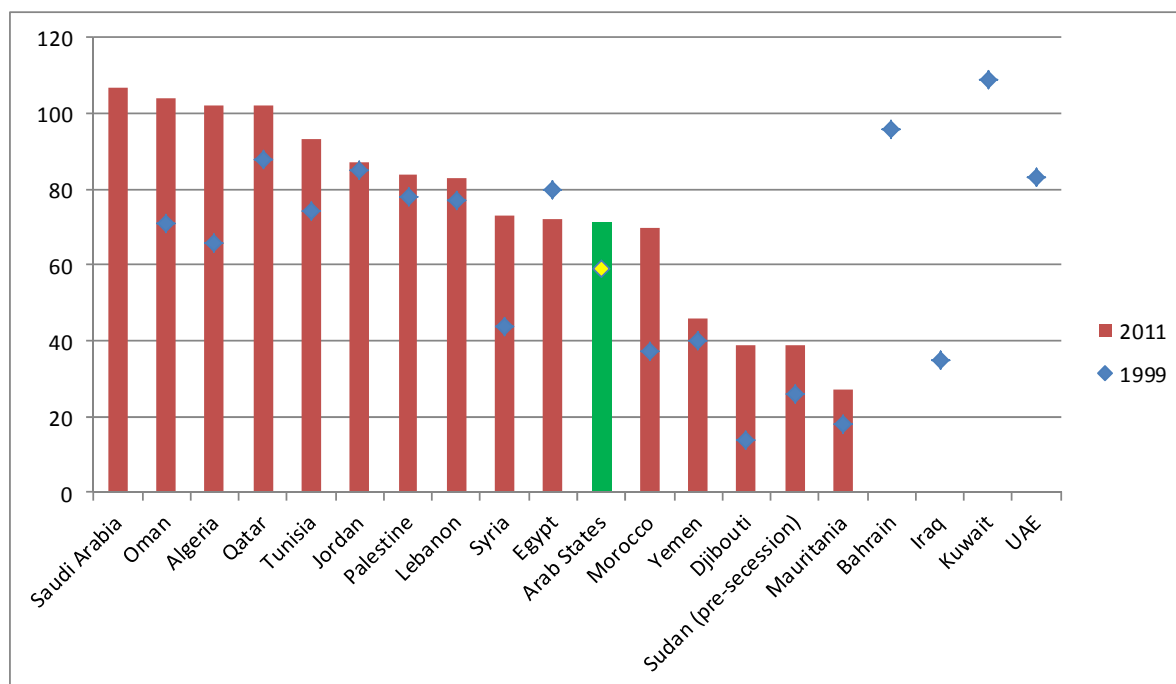
3. Learning Skills for Young People and Adults

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.

EFA goal 3 was formulated to include not only secondary education but also opportunities for technical and vocational training, as well as further training or re-training for adults. However, the wide scope of the goal, its lack of timed targets and vagueness surrounding the notion of ‘programmes’ means that it has been one of the most challenging goals to monitor.

In terms of secondary enrolment, the average GER for the region stood at 71%, an eight-point increase over 1999. During this period, data show that Algeria, Djibouti, Morocco, Oman and Syria (pre-conflict) all saw GER increases of 25 percentage points or more, although Djibouti started from a very low base to reach 39%. In addition to Djibouti, Mauritania, Sudan (pre-secession) and Yemen lie well below the regional average, ranging from 27% to 46%. Morocco lies at the regional average, as does Egypt which is, however, the only country in the region (of those with data) to see a decline in the secondary GER (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Secondary Education (%)



In terms of girls' participation in secondary education, seven out of the 15 countries with data had a GPI in 2011 greater than 1 – more girls were enrolled than boys in Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, and Tunisia. Five countries – Djibouti, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan (pre-secession), Yemen – had a GPI of below 0.9 (see also Goal 5 Gender Parity).

Of those enrolled in secondary education in the region, an average of 9.5% were enrolled in TVET programmes in 2011, down from 14.4% in 1999. Only Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia exceeded the 2011 average, while five countries – Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, UAE, Yemen – registered proportions of less than 2% enrolled in TVET programmes. Formal TVET varies from vocational streams in lower and upper-secondary schools to post-secondary institutions such as community colleges (in Jordan) or intermediate institutes (in Syria). Non-formal covers informal apprenticeships (in Yemen, Morocco), NGO provision (in Palestine and Lebanon) and other community and rural training provision (in Tunisia and Lebanon).⁴

4. Adult Literacy

Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

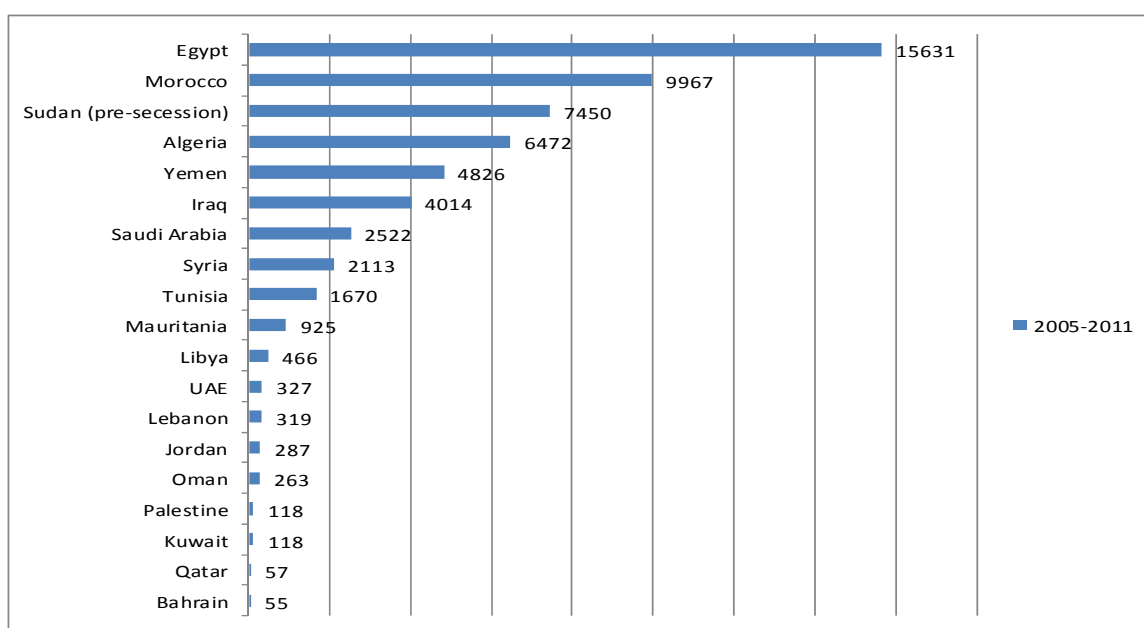
Monitoring EFA goal 4 is based on a dichotomous understanding of literacy, dividing people into 'literate' or 'illiterate'. More recent research, for example through the UNESCO Literacy Monitoring and Assessment Programme (LAMP), has sought to examine levels of literacy along a continuum, recognising that what really matters is how far people are able to use literacy to meet their needs of written communication. Be that as it may, countries and international agencies continue to collect literacy data as if there was a threshold to be

⁴ See: UNESCO. Draft Regional Report: TVET in the Arab World. 2011.

crossed. Therefore, in citing data based on the traditional assessment of literacy/illiteracy, it is clear that it is a measure that reveals little and probably overstates how many people can effectively use written communication to meet their needs; this is as true in the Arab region as it is in the rest of the world. With these caveats, for the moment, traditional literacy statistics are all we have.

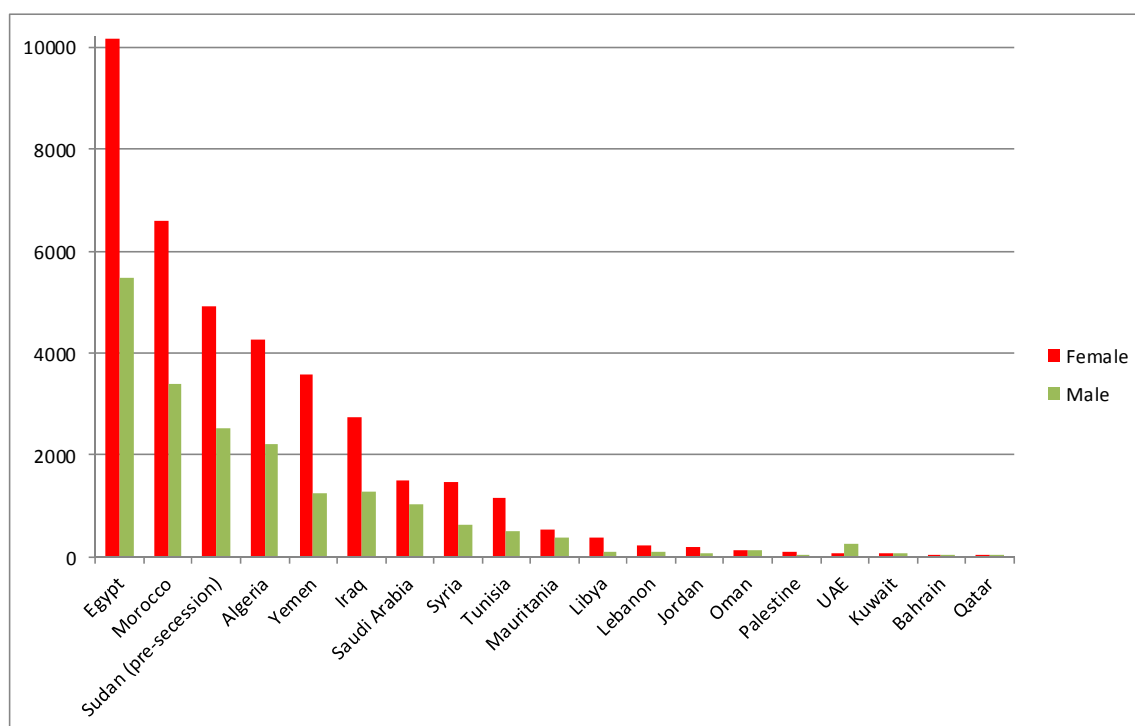
Progress during the EFA period has been significant, with the average literacy rate for the region rising from 55% to 77%. This is all the more impressive when set in the context of population growth, but that also means that the absolute number of adults (15+ years) without literacy competencies has shrunk by only 8%, from 51,697,000 to 47,603,000. The challenge of adult literacy continues to be large, requiring increased and sustained effort. Regionally, two-thirds of non-literate adults are women, roughly the same as in other regions.

Figure 7: Number of non-literate adults 2005-2011 (000s)



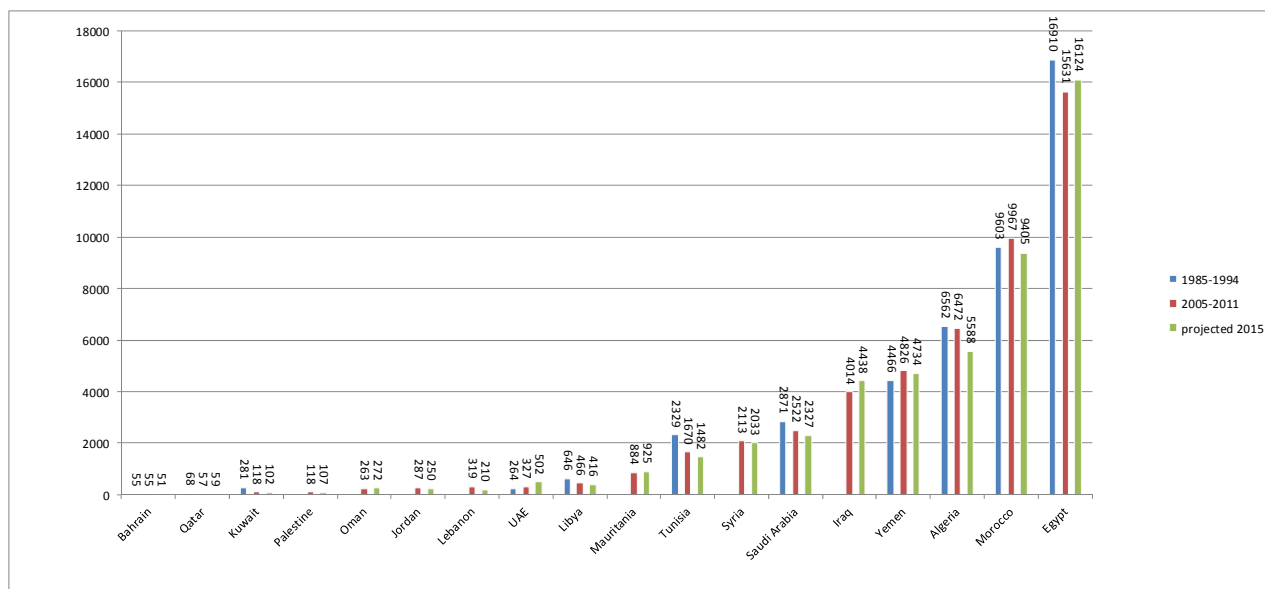
Behind the average numbers lie some major differences. As shown in Figure 7, Egypt and Morocco continue to account for 54% of non-literate adults, and a further six countries each face the challenge of still needing to reach more than 2 million adults – Algeria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Women in Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman constitute very slightly over half of non-literate adults, but in seven countries at least 70% of non-literate adults are women – Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Numbers of non-literate adults by gender – 2005-2011 (000s)



In terms of projections to 2015, the adult literacy rates are expected to continue rising. However, in some countries the absolute number of non-literate adults will actually increase, due on the one hand to population growth and on the other to the lack of capacity in the school system to meet the educational needs of a larger number of children; hence unschooled or inadequately schooled children will join the ranks of youth and adults without literacy competencies. Figure 9 shows that the absolute numbers are likely to increase in Iraq, Mauritania, Qatar and UAE. Inward migration of low-skilled labour may account for expected increases in Qatar and UAE, while the consequences of conflict may explain the situation in Iraq. Syria is also likely to see an increase as millions of young people are currently unable to access education. In all these countries increased attention to non-literate marginalised groups will be necessary to reverse the trend. The estimated regional total of non-literate adults in 2015 is projected to be unchanged from 2011 (47.6 million) and the proportion of women is likely to rise slightly from 66% to 67%. These worrying trends make a compelling case for putting adult literacy higher on the list of political and social priorities.

Figure 9: Numbers of non-literate adults (000s), 1985-1994 / 2005-2011 / projection 2015

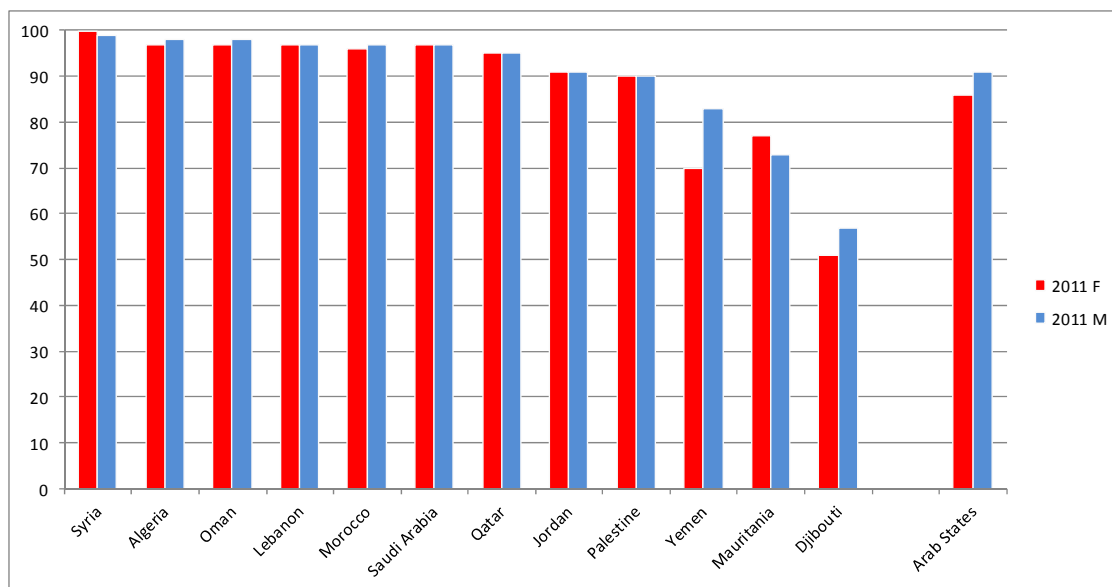


5. Gender Disparities

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

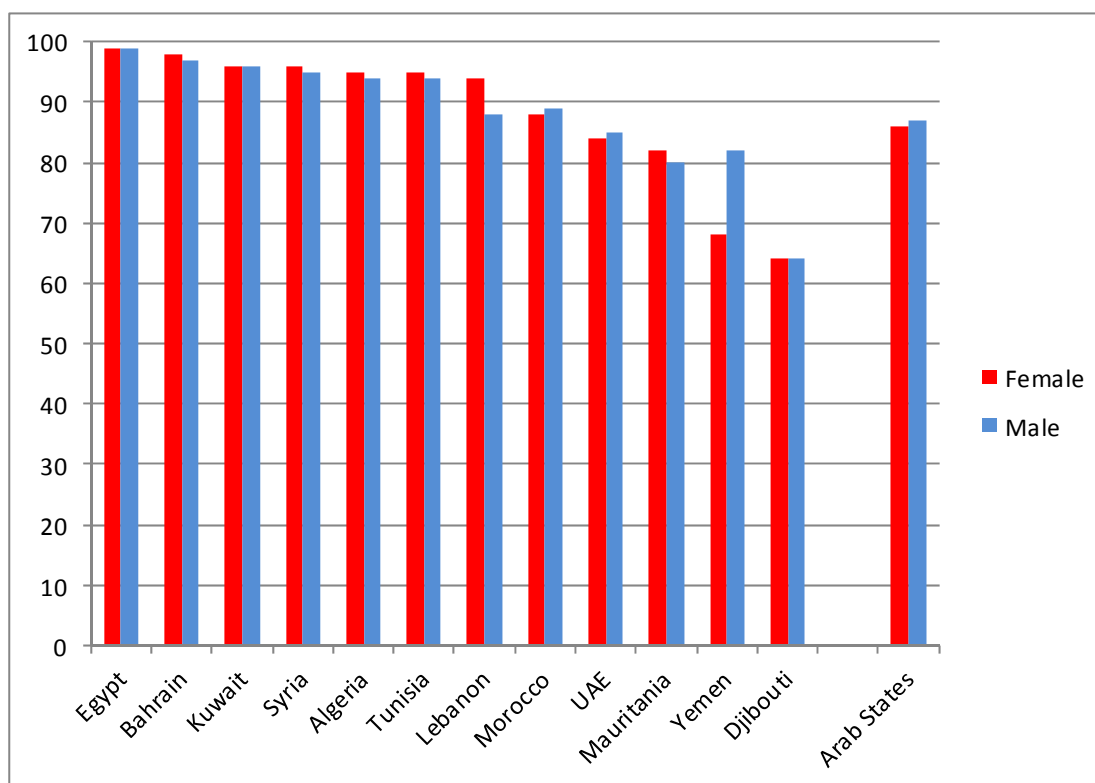
In 1999, six countries – Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, UAE – had achieved gender parity in primary schooling, and have maintained it throughout the EFA period. By 2011, a further six countries – Algeria, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria – had also achieved parity at that level. Djibouti and Yemen did not reach a GPI of 0.9. The other countries of the region do not have data sets for the two years under comparison. Figure 10 shows the Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate (ANER) at primary level in 2011.

Figure 10: Primary ANER by gender – 2011 (%)



As indicated earlier, achieving EFA goal 1 is also about completing a primary cycle of education. In terms of gender parity in that respect, Figure 11 shows the relative survival rates girls and boys in 2011, in countries with data.

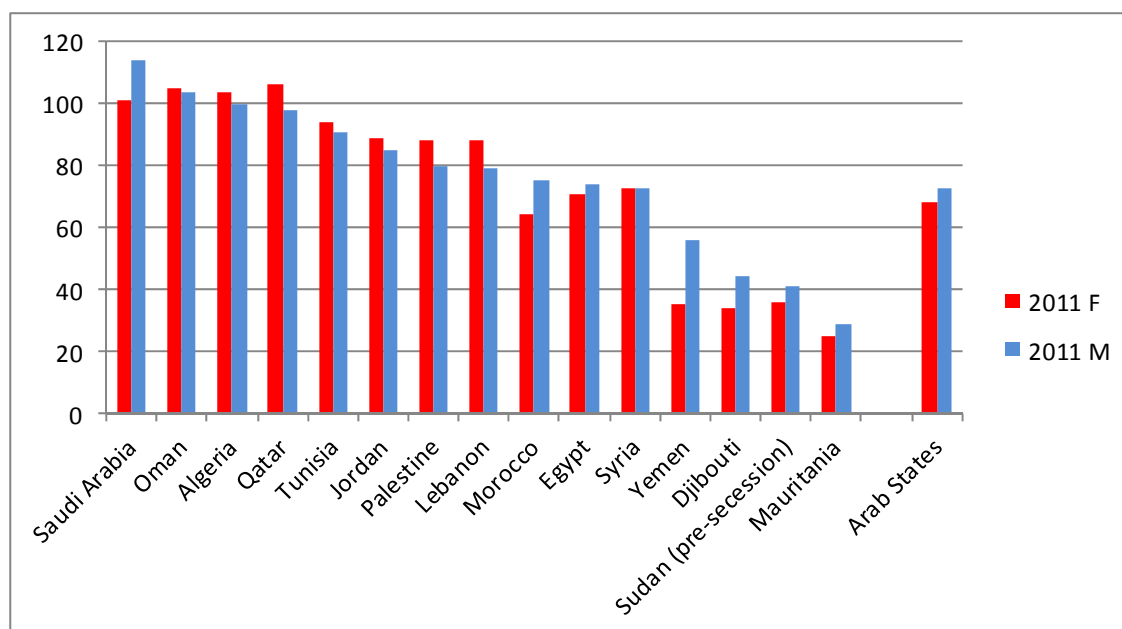
Figure 11: Survival rate (%) to last grade of primary school by gender - 2011



At secondary level, the gender situation looks rather different. Nine countries had a GPI in favour of girls in 1999 (Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, UAE) and in the four of them with comparative data this disparity grew slightly larger by 2011

(Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine); in addition, Tunisia moved from a slight disadvantage for girls to a GPI in favour of girls. Mauritania, Morocco and Saudi Arabia have improved their secondary GPI, but it remains below 0.9. Djibouti and Yemen have a long way to go with a secondary GPI of 0.76 and 0.63 respectively.

Figure 12: Secondary GER by gender – 2011 (%)



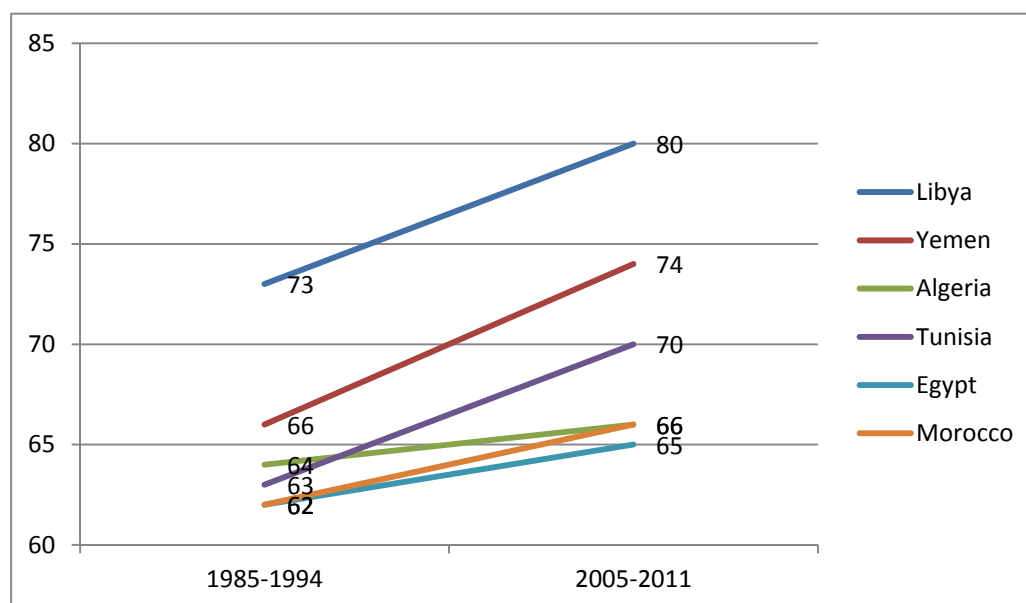
These data show the status of gender parity across primary and secondary schooling is mixed, both across levels and between countries. While for some, it will be necessary to strengthen efforts to bring more girls into primary and secondary schooling, other countries should keep a careful eye on the developing disadvantage to boys, particularly at secondary level.

Taken as a whole, the region shows gender parity levels in schooling to the disadvantage of girls although they have improved during the EFA period, as follows:

	1999	2011
GPI primary schooling	0.90	0.95
GPI secondary schooling	0.88	0.93

At a regional level, the female proportion of non-literate adults has actually increased slightly, from 63% to 66%. Only three countries show an almost equal proportion of male and female non-literate adults: Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman. The case of Qatar and UAE is rather different, as they show a large majority of non-literate men; again, this is probably due to the high level of immigrant male unskilled labour in these countries.⁵ This means that literacy efforts are doing less well in reaching women in 2011 than they were in 1999. This trend is based on a deterioration in six countries, as follows:

Figure 13: Countries with increases in female percentage of non-literate adults 1985-1994 / 2005-2011



6. Education Quality

Improving every aspect of the quality of education and ensuring the excellence for all, so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all learners, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life-skills.

As in other parts of the world, the quality of education, rather than merely access to it, is becoming a preoccupation among policy-makers, planners and educators in the Arab region. Education systems must enable learners to acquire solid, useable and sustainable skills for their lives and livelihoods. One of the first concerns is to gauge how well the systems perform and what the learning outcomes really are. While tests and examinations are an integral part of every education system, too often they measure the techniques required to pass them, rather than measuring the level of basic competencies – tools for further learning such as literacy, numeracy and cognitive processes. Participation in international assessments is one way to check on performance, using indicators that are based on widely accepted methods and standards.

Five Arab region countries participated in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2012, and scores are available for four of them. These results cannot be generalised to the region, and they must be understood in the framework of the aims and

⁵ The demographic gender profile shows that there are an estimated 3.29 and 2.19 men for every woman in Qatar and UAE respectively (2013).

methodology of the programme. One feature of PISA is that it aims to test young people's ability to use their knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges, using a random sample of 15-year olds. On that basis, reading, mathematics and science are assessed. As an indication of the challenge of achieving quality learning outcomes, the percentages of 'low performers' in the four countries with available results are in Table 1. Low performance is an indication that young people are not performing at the level expected for their grade.

Table 1: Percentages of 'low performers' in Arab countries participating in PISA 2012 (% of sample)

Low performers in:	Jordan	Qatar	Tunisia	UAE
Reading	50	57	49	35
Mathematics	68	69	67	46
Science	38	57	55	27

Source: OECD <http://gpseducation.oecd.org/IndicatorExplorer>

Learning outcomes are a key measure of how far children are benefitting from basic education, and international surveys capture performance in a comparative framework. Countries in the Arab region have participated in the international surveys of achievement in maths/science and reading - Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). Results from the 2011 TIMSS and PIRLS are available for 9 and 6 countries respectively, from the Arab region. In both studies, international benchmarks are established for four levels: advanced, high, intermediate and low, based on the grade level (in this case 4th grade). The percentage of pupils performing at each level are indicated for each country. The results for the Arab countries listed in the TIMSS/PIRLS reports are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2: Performance in TIMSS in nine Arab countries (% achieving at each level)

	Advanced benchmark	High benchmark	Intermediate benchmark	Low benchmark
UAE	2	12	35	64
Qatar	2	10	29	55
Saudi Arabia	2	7	24	55
Bahrain	1	10	34	67
Oman*	1	5	20	46
Tunisia*	0	2	11	35
Morocco*	0	2	10	26
Kuwait*	0	1	9	30
Yemen*	0	0	2	9

Source: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). 2012. TIMSS 2011 International Results in Mathematics. pp. 90-91.

Table 3: Performance in PIRLS in six Arab countries (% achieving at each level)

	Advanced benchmark	High benchmark	Intermediate benchmark	Low benchmark
UAE	3	14	38	64
Qatar	2	12	34	60
Saudi Arabia	1	8	34	65
Oman*	0	5	21	47
Morocco*	0	1	7	21
Kuwait (8 th grade)	2	11	34	58

Source: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). 2012. PIRLS 2011 International Results in Reading. pp. 68-69.

For the countries marked by an asterisk*, it is important to note that the text of the reports indicates that a percentage of pupils performed at levels too low to assess. For all the countries shown in the two tables above, it is worrying that very few achieve levels of the advanced or high benchmarks, while a majority perform only at the low benchmark level. Not only does this reflect poor learning outcomes, but also a broader challenge of ensuring that the system is focused on quality learning, not simply on delivering a curriculum.

Teacher-pupil ratios in 2011 were at or below 1:30 at both primary and secondary levels, except in Djibouti, Mauritania and Sudan (pre-secession) where the ratios at primary level were 1:35, 1:39 and 1:38 respectively. The low percentage of female teachers at primary level in Djibouti and Yemen (25% and 27% respectively) is probably a factor in the lower girls' enrolment reflected in the GPI at that level. Data on the percentage of teachers who are trained for the job are patchy and inconclusive for the region.

7. Summary of progress towards EFA goals

Assessing progress towards the EFA goals is rendered more difficult because of the lack of data in some cases – missing data on certain indicators for certain countries, or the lack of a time series. This situation is reflected in the data presented in the tables and figures above. The impact of the instability and conflict of the 'Arab spring' is not yet felt in the data, which pre-date the movement. While this summary reflects therefore the pre-existing situation, it is clear that the potential impact, both positive and negative, must be factored in.

Pre-primary education presents a mixed picture, but with slow progress; without an EFA or national target, one can only say that progress is not adequate to enable children in the region to reap the well-known benefits of pre-school, and this may have some impact on progress in primary schooling.

The targets set by EFA goal 2 for primary schooling have been achieved, or almost, in nine of the countries of the region, but 5 countries will not achieve it. A further six do not have data to assess progress – a missing piece that needs to be quickly remedied. Significant numbers of children remain out-of-school, and the number may be larger than the data show because of dropout and non-attendance.

Most countries of the region have made good progress in increasing access to secondary education, both for girls and boys. However, there is a concern that boys are increasingly disadvantaged in countries where enrolment rates are rising.

Progress in adult literacy remains unacceptably slow, with rising absolute numbers of non-literate adults in some countries, and a somewhat worsening situation for women. The level of current effort does not seem commensurate with the size of the literacy challenge, particularly in the eight countries with more than two million non-literate adults each.

Gender parity is moving in a positive direction in primary and secondary schooling with regard to equitable access to girls; the possibility of increasing disadvantage to boys must be carefully monitored. The increase in six countries in the proportion of the non-literate adults who are female is a worrying trend and would show that literacy initiatives are not effective enough in reaching women.

Finally, the quality of education is of great concern – as witnessed by poor scores in international surveys. Performance is too low in general to ensure a robust level of basic competencies among the population, thus robbing individuals, communities and society as a whole of the skills needed for balanced and equitable human development.

Overview of acceleration activities

Regional EFA meetings in 2012 and 2013 called for a ‘big push’ to achieve the six EFA goals by 2015, while recognising that progress is uneven across the countries of the region. In this spirit, a number of countries have taken bold initiatives to accelerate progress as the deadline approaches, often supported by regional funds and international partners. These acceleration activities address different EFA goals, depending on national challenges and priorities. A number of these activities are presented here as salient examples, but it is not possible to present the full range of such activities in all countries in a concise report.

1. Early Childhood Care and Education

As indicated earlier, access to early childhood care and education is very diverse across the region, ranging from a GER of 1% to 83% in 2011. In conjunction with the Global Leaders for Young Children (World Forum Foundation), the Regional Expert Meeting on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), held in Abu Dhabi (UAE) from 15 to 18 September 2013 and hosted by the UAE government, identified the challenges facing ECCE in the region, focusing on factors in emergency situations:

- Limited comprehensive programs and visions in building the child's personality in its many facets (cognitive, physical, social and national);
- Impaired ability to emulate models of some Arab countries that have committed themselves to the development of early childhood as a priority in their national agenda;
- Lack of programs and services for children in emergency situations , especially those provided to children in early childhood;
- Lack of coordination between Arab countries to draw an early childhood policy in the Arab region;
- Lack of institutional capacity of institutions and bodies offering early childhood programs.

The meeting brought together governmental departments and non-governmental organisations, as well as international agencies. Together they stressed that only a holistic

view of ECCE will enable children to develop fully – in the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social dimensions. They further called for stronger communication and exchange within the region and for greater support from international partners, if ECCE is to fulfil its universally recognised role in stimulating child development and preparing them for school.

Box 2: Introducing Early Childhood Development classrooms in Palestinian schools

Since 2012, Palestine has been implementing an Education for All Package with the support of the UN Education Group. The EFA Package focuses on inclusive and child-friendly education and early childhood development and aims at strengthening the capacities of the Ministry and education personnel to promote quality education for all children, regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds and circumstances. This Package, implemented in pilot schools in all districts of the West Bank and Gaza, responds to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's goals to increase access and retention of school-aged children in the education system and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

About 70 per cent of Palestinian children do not have access to kindergarten services, and so a majority of children will therefore start school without having been to a kindergarten first. Many Palestinian children, especially the most vulnerable, are being denied the foundation in life and learning that ECD provides. Virtually all kindergartens are privately owned and operated, although most kindergartens are licensed and monitored by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Until 2013, Early Childhood Development was not part of the formal education system in Palestine.

A major achievement through the EFA Package has been the opening of Grade 0 classrooms (one year of pre-school before Grade 1) for the first time in Palestinian public schools. In 2013, 30 ECD classrooms opened in the West Bank and 14 in Gaza, an important step in making ECD part of the formal education system. ECD teaching and learning materials were provided, aiming to improve the development and learning of more than 1000 children (50 % girls) in inclusive and child-friendly environments. Newly nominated Grade 0 teachers were trained in all these pilot schools, as well as all Grade 1 teachers to ensure linkages regarding the transition to primary education.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education also finalized the first National ECD Strategy through a highly inclusive process including representatives from the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, district offices, UN agencies, local and international NGOs, and academic institutions.

Another major step for Palestine has been the inclusion, for the first time, of ECD as a separate programme in the new Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP 2014/2019). Based on the successful pilot of the Grade 0 classrooms in all districts, the objective is now to gradually open more ECD classrooms over the next years. Capacity development component will also benefit private kindergartens as per the national ECD strategy; a priority for education quality being the preparation of well-trained caregivers and teachers.

Through the EFA Package for Palestine, solid foundations have been built to expand Early Childhood Development as part of the formal education system, contributing highly to progress towards education for all by addressing needs of children at early stage.

In emergency situations, ECCE is particularly important as a factor in providing stimulus, hope, social interaction and stability to young children. In this regard, participants from the region called for provision of psycho-social support for children affected by war and conflicts,

such as extra-curricular programs, including drawing, music and singing, and stressed the importance of educating parents and involving them in educational programs on children's rights, especially in the current programs for emergency situations. They also underlined the necessity of efforts to convince decision-makers that ECCE should be among the priorities of national agendas and a particular focus of international and civil society organizations, especially in conflict areas. In this regard, we may note the emphasis that the Arab Resource Collective gives to the well-being of young children in its work on mental health in conflict situations.

Another initiative concerns the establishment of the Arab Working Group for Early Childhood Education for the advancement of ECCE in the region. The group adopts strong partnerships in early childhood in different sectors and disciplines, organizations, agencies and institutions in various Arab countries. The group forms a strong coalition to promote early childhood issues and shares knowledge and learns about the national policies and practices related to effective and innovative early childhood. The Arab Working Group for Early Childhood Education has as an advisory board of professionals and experts in the field of early childhood; researchers from academia and representatives of non-governmental organizations, UN agencies and the concerned governments. The partners of this initiative are the Arab Gulf Program for Development; UNICEF Regional Office in the Arab States; Soul for Development (NGO); the Arab Council for Childhood; Save the Children and UNESCO Beirut. UNESCO in Beirut is currently managing the group and coordinating with all stakeholders for the institutionalization of this group and the securing of needed funding.

2. Universal Primary Education

Basic education has been disrupted in certain countries of the region owing to political and social instability associated with the Arab Spring. Strategy 5 of the Dakar Framework for Action has become especially relevant to the region: *Meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability, and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance, and that help to prevent violence and conflict.* In order to respond to the effects of political change in Egypt and Libya, the approaches developed by the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) were introduced through a project that took place from May 2012 to March 2013 – see Box 3.

Box 3: Supporting Quality Education through INEE Minimum Standards in Transitional Egypt and Libya

The aim of the project was to build the capacity of the Egyptian and Libyan education professionals to apply the international standards elaborated by INEE (International Network for Education in Emergencies) to the crisis situations in each country, thus ensuring as far as possible that quality learning opportunities are maintained or restored for children affected by emergencies. In addition the project aimed to:

- Strengthen the capacity of the education system to prepare for, prevent and mitigate the impact of disaster, through the development of disaster risk reduction and prevention strategies.
- Ensure that Education in Emergency activities meet the challenge of ensuring quality education for all through the creation of national communities of practice that

are well versed in the principles and application of the INEE Minimum Standards.

Over its 11-month duration, the project provided input and training for a total of 741 beneficiaries, through the following activities (participant numbers in brackets):

- Decision makers' workshop on "Quality Education Standards in Transitional Egypt and Libya" (18)
- Training of Trainers workshop – Egypt (28)
- Training of Trainers workshop - Libya (30)
- Six roll-out workshops for MoE officials from 8 governorates - Egypt (182)
- Three roll-out workshops for MoE officials from 3 governorates - Libya (72)
- Expert seminar on "Quality Education in Transitional Contexts: Bridging the Gap between Emergency and Development" (31)
- Workshop targeting school principles on a country-wide scale via video conference (304)
- Three training workshops in different governorates targeting MoE technical officials (53)

The success of the project was evident in two ways: an endorsement of its relevance for the countries involved, and their desire to scale up the approach in future:

"The interest and practical steps taken by both MoE's to mobilize a second phase of the project is the most explicit evidence of the project's success in gaining the buy-in of national authorities, catering to their current needs and priorities, and developing a successful pilot/ model than can be scaled up and replicated in both countries, as well as other countries affected by the Arab Spring." (Project Completion Report: 10)

In line with the possible application of the same approach in other countries of the region, representatives from Lebanon, Tunisia and Jordan took part in the Expert Seminar in November 2012.

An education system cannot be said to be effective if it is unable to keep children in school long enough for them to acquire basic competencies and the fundamental tools of learning. Apart from children who do not have any access to school, those who drop out of school once enrolled represent a waste of potential and an inefficiency in the system. Special measures must be envisaged in order to address this dimension – see Box 4:

Box 4: Reaching unschooled children and dropouts in Morocco

Morocco has made good progress towards universal primary education with a reported enrolment rate at the start of the 2013 school year of 99.6%. However, non-attendance and dropout mean that a proportion of children are not in school. Extrapolating from a 2012 study of four representative regions where the overall average of out-of-school children was 12.3% - roughly one child in eight – a national figure of approximately 500 000 out-of-school children is likely.

Since 1997 Morocco has addressed this problem through a range of initiatives aimed at either enabling children to re-enter the formal system or prepare for the world of work. The profile of the out-of-school population has changed over the last decade, with 73% now being age 12 or over, and the dropout challenge shifted from primary school to lower and higher secondary. In addition, over 75% of out-of-school children live in rural areas.

Building on the achievements and experience of the last 15 years of programmes for out-of-

school children and youth, the Department of Non-formal Education (DENF) developed a new strategy in 2013. The age range of DENF programmes will be extended from the end of compulsory schooling (age 15) to age 20. The strategy takes into consideration the aspirations of young people, and in particular the desire of many adolescents to prepare for the world of work rather than re-enter a formal system which was a less than satisfactory experience; it proposes three complementary objectives:

- Support schools so that they keep children in school at least for the years of compulsory schooling (up to 15 years).
- Facilitate school re-entry for out-of-school children who wish to go back into the formal system.
- Prepare children/adolescents who so wish to take up an apprenticeship or vocational training, and provide the 15+ with vocational preparation or training programmes.

Three distinct programmes will serve to implement these objectives:

- Support children at risk of dropout through personal follow-up and stimulus activities alongside schooling.
- School re-entry: an accelerated learning programme, to enable the learner to reach an age-appropriate level as quickly as possible in order to return to school.
- Vocational preparatory cycle: for age 12-15 who wish to choose this track, basic competencies oriented towards working life. For the 15+ age group, vocational training for work that is available to young people including generic professional competencies.

The strategy also plans for psycho-social support to give these vulnerable young people the support they need to succeed, as well as communication and mobilisation activities to promote the value of education at local level and generate community support for schools and other learning avenues.

Source: DENF. 2013.
Stratégie des approches non formelles pour l'insertion scolaire et professionnelle
des non scolarisés et des déscolarisés.

3. Learning Skills for Young People and Adults

The proportion of young people in the region who choose courses in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has declined during the EFA period, as noted earlier. Nevertheless, the need to create many more jobs in the formal economy, and the strength of the informal economy in many Arab States mean that TVET has a crucial role to play. Unfortunately, in some contexts, TVET is seen by young people as a second-best track, for those who cannot make it in the more academic track of general secondary education and do not move on to higher education institutions. There is a need therefore to raise the profile of TVET – not only its relevance to finding productive and remunerated work, but also its quality and professionalism. Recent research has identified the area of teacher and instructor training as critical to moving forward – see Box 5.

Box 5: Teacher and instructor training (TAIT) for TVET

The overall purpose of teacher and instructor training is to help construct a profession of opportunity for the TVET workforce and to equip teachers, instructors and trainers to provide TVET which is responsive to the economic, social and political needs of the societies they serve. Based on observations and experiences of TVET programmes across the region, the following domains were identified as challenging areas critical to delivering quality TVET:

- **Professionalization of the teaching force:** this involves the establishment of a common career structure and professional standards, defining such matters as progression, incentives, promotion procedures, evaluation, disciplinary procedures, ethical standards and entitlements to TAIT. The process is long-term and must include consultations with current staff; reforms in Egypt, Morocco and Jordan, for example, show that progress can be made and that ways can be found to engage and build the support of teachers and instructors.
- **Building effective governance:** effective governance brings energy, resources and authority to the development of TVET and to TAIT, and in countries where governance is relatively unified and effective, such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia, TAIT is relatively well resourced and dynamic. In Morocco reforms in governance appear to be driving improvements in TAIT and TVET.
- **Standards and quality assurance:** Several countries have quality assurance systems for TVET, public and private, including setting-up national coordinating entities such as the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education in Egypt and the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Jordan. In the Maghreb countries, ministries have accreditation procedures which look at the quality and the profile of the existing teaching force. Other issues also require attention: the status of trainers in workplace settings, validation and certification of training competences, and the role of inspection systems.
- **Relationship between TAIT institutions and TVET providers:** strategies vary as to how far TAIT is provided by TVET centres or specialist training institutions. Morocco has developed a model combining the two. Decentralising training or putting it in the hands of the private sector are also strategies pursued variously – Morocco, Tunisia and UAE promote decentralisation, while the government in Saudi Arabia has withdrawn from actual TAIT provision to take a regulatory role.
- **Working with enterprises and private markets:** improved collaboration between TAIT institutions and the ultimate employers of the trainees that their graduates will train improves the capability of trainers to connect TVET to working life. Teacher placements during initial teacher education are offered in Saudi Arabia's Technical Trainers College. A number of countries are engaging employers more in the governance of TAIT, particularly, for example, through the setting of occupational standards for teachers and trainers.
- **Pedagogy and ICTs:** pedagogical input has not featured adequately in TAIT across the region, where teacher-centred approaches in educational settings are common. Modelling a learner-centred approach at the TAIT level would impact the delivery of TVET to trainees whose experience of schooling may not have been successful. Similarly, while access to ICTs is growing, their use is not yet integrated with other approaches as part of the mix of methods used in TAIT and, down the line, in TVET

itself.

- **Research, evaluation and knowledge to inform governance and practice:** in the Arab region, there appears to be a paucity of robust research in TAIT and in TVET generally, with the result that lessons from the many initiatives are not learnt and shared. In particular, there is little evidence that research and evaluation relating to TVET, for example, to curriculum development, pedagogy and institutional reform, feeds into TAIT. A new graduate degree in Saudi Arabia (Master of International Vocational Education and Training) gives hope of an incipient research agenda.
- **Regional cooperation:** the historic and linguistic ties in the region mean that cooperation in TAIT is possible and desirable, for instance in developing and sharing educational resources, supporting comparative research, and in exchange schemes to acquire additional competences or occupational specialisms through study in other Arab countries.

Source: UNESCO (forthcoming). *Constructing a profession of opportunity: policies and practices on TVET teachers and instructors in the Arab Region.*

The quality of TVET in the region needs to be brought into line with international standards, in order that TVET institutions are fully accredited and graduates have the recognition they deserve in the job market – see Box 6 for an initiative of this kind in Iraq.

Box 6: Upgrading TVET quality in Iraq

Building on interventions carried out during 2013, UNESCO continues to cooperate with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in both Central and Kurdistan Regions to incorporate international standards within the Technical and Vocational Educational System. Two pilot institutions are currently selected: the Technical University of Dohuk and The University of Basra. Internal and external evaluation is undertaken to move the two institutions into accreditation, a comprehensive guide of “Rules of Procedures” was produced, and the international credit system was introduced for future adoption.

Interventions aim at assisting the institutions to excel in all areas according to international standards, with special attention to evaluation, accreditation and quality assurance. Moreover, the current projects focus on revitalizing the role of women in higher education institutions to take up leadership responsibilities. In addition, this cooperation will result in setting up a framework for codes of conducts and academic integrity systems within all educational institutes, by means of tools such as an online tutorial, promotional materials and the establishment of academic integrity offices and clubs in pilot institutions.

In line with the thrust to improve quality, UNESCO is adopting a comprehensive and participatory approach with the four ministries in both Central and Kurdistan Regions to restore a quality technical and vocational system in all of Iraq.

4. Adult Literacy

Adult literacy remains a persistent challenge in the region, and in certain countries more targeted efforts will be necessary to increase literacy rates and reduce the absolute number of adults without literacy competencies. Further, literacy among women requires special attention as the female proportion of non-literate adults is currently projected to rise slightly by 2015.

Egypt continues to push forward in literacy through its National Campaign for Literacy and Renaissance in Egypt 2011-2020. Smaller civil society initiatives promote the literate environment in order to increase the reading habit: the National Reading Campaign in the Palestinian Society 2014 is an initiative of the Tamer Institute for Community Education, in partnership with at least 350 Palestinian local organizations, community centres, libraries and youth clubs. UNESCO is also supporting literacy initiatives in the region – see Box 7.

Box 7: Sudan – Capacity-building for literacy

Sudan is one of the countries in Arab States with lowest primary enrolment and adult literacy rates, with more than 10 million non-literate people, mostly women, and a school dropout rate that appears to be increasing. Progress in tackling the literacy challenge is constrained by a lack of trained literacy facilitators, irrelevant literacy contents, and outdated and traditional teaching and learning practices. In early 2013, a national seminar identified priorities for a one-year literacy initiative in cooperation with UNESCO:

- Revision and development of curricula content and the teacher training package;
- Training seminars and workshops as well as provision of equipment for the national Shandy Literacy Centre;
- Strengthening the skills of the workers of the Adult Education Authority to plan, implement and evaluate literacy programmes;
- Promoting South-South cooperation in literacy programmes;
- Developing relevant preventative measures to enhance retention and reduce dropout in early grades.

It is noteworthy that the project goals included measures to address school dropouts, thus tackling one source of the adult literacy challenge – the failure of the school system to retain pupils and impart sustainable literacy competencies.

Despite challenges of instability and floods, the project achieved the following results, through training workshops, development of literacy resources, and measures to promote an inclusive approach in schooling:

- Awareness raised and regional and international experience exchanged;
- Basic resources and training packs developed;
- Modernised literacy content and the training manual for literacy facilitators;
- Trained literacy trainers;
- Introduced educational innovations to reduce school dropout/increase retention.

Further reinforcement of capacity, through ongoing in-service training, will be necessary to sustain and expand the impact of the project.

Within the framework of the same project, UNESCO also convened the first conference in Sudan on education for children with disabilities (November, 2013).

5. Gender Disparities

As in many regions of the world, simply being a girl can mean reduced opportunities to go to school in the first place and less of a chance to pursue education into secondary and higher levels. Being a girl in a rural area makes those possibilities even more remote. Improving access for girls by providing a suitable learning environment is critical to progress – see Box 8 on one experience in Egypt.

Box 8: USAID Girls' Improved Learning Outcomes – Egypt

In rural parts of Upper Egypt, poverty has increased since 2004, and more than half a million girls, of 6-10 years old, were not in school at the beginning of the decade. Even though primary school enrolment rates looked high, family circumstances meant that attendance was lower, particularly among girls who are called upon to support their households. In this context, the objectives of the five-year intervention were to:

- Expand girls' access to quality education in remote and deprived areas of Upper Egypt.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in targeted schools and idaras.
- Strengthen school management and governance.

From February 2008 to its scheduled end in March 2013, the Girls' Improved Learning Outcomes (GILO) Project at first included direct provision of training, technical support, classroom furniture and IT equipment to selected primary and preparatory schools in four governorates of Upper Egypt. It later evolved to focus on early grade reading, as well as to technical assistance to central and decentralised departments of the education ministry.

As support flowed to schools, there was a marked improvement in girls' enrolment, but standards of achievement remained very low. This realisation led to a focus on enabling rural girls to improve their reading and mathematics. Using the Early Grade Reading Program (EGRP) based on phonics and word attack skills, an evaluation showed that performance was dramatically improved; in comparison to a control group, girls in the programme achieved increased scores in syllable reading (+174%), in word reading (+77%), and in oral reading fluency (+68%). Given these results, the Egyptian government scaled the programme up to national level, and the project gave assistance in training 35,000 Grade 1 teachers in EGRP, certifying 320 EGRP trainers, and providing 48,000 packages of Grade 1 EGRP materials distributed to 16,000 primary schools.

The original justification for the project was the low participation of girls in schooling. In tackling the issue of both access and performance, the project led to the possibility of a significant improvement in the quality of primary schooling through the nation-wide adoption of a new early literacy strategy.

6. Education Quality

As access to primary and secondary schooling has increased across the region, with associated progress in gender parity, attention has shifted to improving the quality of learning. This concern is based not only on maximising the effectiveness and efficiency of school systems, but also, and above all, on ensuring that young people emerge from their formal education with sustainable skills. This will equip them, on the one hand, for lifelong learning, and, on the other, for a job market that increasingly demands the processing of

information and the handling of knowledge. Several projects are currently in progress to improve quality and learning outcomes (see Box 9 and Box 10).

Box 9: Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality Program – ARAIEQ

ARAIEQ is an initiative of the Arab States Ministers of Education to give greater impetus to the quality of education – in pursuit of EFA goal six. In cooperation with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), UNESCO and the World Bank, the initiative is a response to the concern expressed across the region that the quality of education is not adequate and so must become a priority for action. Five countries in the region – Djibouti, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco and Yemen – had transition rates to secondary education of below 90% (a proxy indicator for the quality of primary schooling), and a further six countries had no data (UNESCO 2014). To tackle the dimensions of quality enhancement, ARAIEQ established five streams of work:

- Arab Program on Curriculum Innovation, Qualifications, and ICTs in Education (APIQIT) led by the National Center for Education Technologies (CNTE) in Tunis, Tunisia;
- Arab Program on Teacher Policies (AFTP) led by the Queen Rania Teacher Academy (QRTA) in Amman, Jordan;
- Arab Program on Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis (APEEPA) led by the UNESCO Regional Bureau in Beirut, Lebanon;
- Arab Program on Early Childhood Development (APECD) led by the Arab Resource Collective in Beirut, Lebanon;
- Arab Program on Entrepreneurship (APEEI) led by the Injaz El Arab in Amman, Jordan.

Under each component, the further development of the capacity of national institutions has a central place, through regional training events. In the APEEPA stream, activities including regional workshops have aimed to enhance high-quality national mechanisms for assessing educational quality and systems for analysing assessment data:

- Regional survey on mapping the national evaluation systems (2013), in 17 countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen.
- Technical assistance to Libya and Mauritania: site visits were undertaken (2013) with the aim of providing technical assistance, and proposals for strengthening their national evaluation system have been shared with the respective Ministries.
- TIMSS 2011 Database for Research and Policy Discussion (2013), to strengthen the analytical skills of the national assessment experts using the TIMSS 2011 database: 18 national experts participated from 8 countries (Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, KSA, Tunisia, and Yemen). A regional workshop on developing national policy notes will follow (2014) to strengthen the writing skills of the TIMSS national teams.

Further events are planned for 2014, under each component.

In today's world, part of ensuring a quality education and preparing young people to take a full role in society is to train them in the use of ICTs, as recommended in Strategy 10 of the Dakar Framework for Action: *Harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals*. Box 10 describes the efforts of five Arab States (Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Palestine and Qatar) to integrate ICTs into the educational cycle.

Box 10: Integrating ICTs into educational provision

The ubiquity of ICTs in all spheres of life and employment means that children need to acquire different forms of digital literacy, not only for its own sake but also to support their education throughout secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels. A 2013 study by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics assesses ICT integration and e-readiness in the education systems of five Arab States: Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Palestine and Qatar. E-readiness is defined as a 'measure of the degree to which a country is prepared to partake in electronic activities and, thus, benefit from ICT in education.' All five countries have current and active ICT-in-education policies or other types of formal commitments including plans and regulatory provisions.

In many of the Arab States, as elsewhere in the world, children and youth learn more about how to use various ICT tools informally outside of the school system. The example from Egypt whereby youth efficiently used mobile devices and the internet to communicate during the Arab Spring is an example of mass usage of ICT that surpasses current capacity within the educational system and schools.

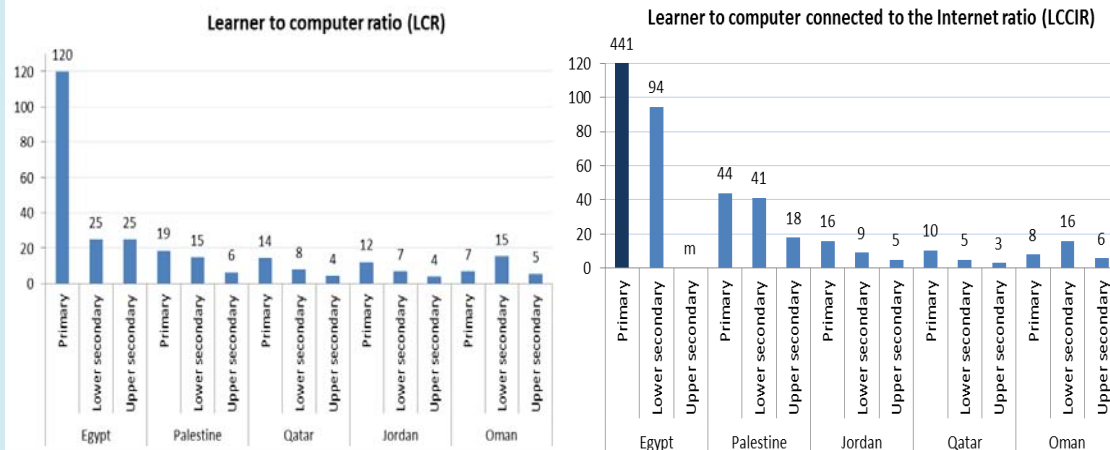
The policies towards the integration of ICTs into education differ according to the levels of education at which they are deployed, their relative integration across the curriculum, the extent to which they are taught as a subject or as a means of learning other subjects, and the extent to which internet-based material is used by teachers and students. Jordan, Oman and Qatar state that they have specific objectives at all three levels of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education. This policy approach is, however, not the case in Egypt and Palestine, where specific objectives or a course covering basic computer skills are lacking in primary education and begin in lower secondary education, continuing at the upper secondary level. Jordan, Oman and Qatar promote ICT-assisted instruction across subjects, but Egypt recommends targeting only specific subjects at certain levels.

In terms of access and use, the *learner-to-computer ratio* (LCR) serves as a proxy measure for enabling computer usage, and the *learner-to-computer connected to the Internet ratio* (LCCIR) is an indicator that measures the capacity of education systems to support ICT-assisted instruction that uses the worldwide web. The table below indicates the LCR and LCCIR in the countries of the study.

Data show that Jordan, Oman and Qatar have much higher levels of integration of ICT-assisted instruction and the essential infrastructure and internet connectivity, than Egypt and Palestine. While fewer children share a computer in Jordan, Oman and Qatar, on average 120 children share a computer in Palestine and especially Egypt. Internet connectivity and access follow a similar pattern.

UNESCO-UIS. 2013.
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) In Education in Five Arab States:
A comparative analysis of ICT integration and e-readiness in schools in
Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Palestine and Qatar

Learner-to-computer ratio (LCR) and learner-to-computer connected to the Internet ratio (LCCIR) by level of education, 2011



Source: UNESCO-UIS. 2013. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) In Education in Five Arab States: A comparative analysis of ICT integration and e-readiness in schools in Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Palestine and Qatar.

Other initiatives to improve quality in the region include cooperative work in Iraq, such as the following:

- Development of the National Education strategy: launched in December 2012, and supported by the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF by means of a workshop in June 2013 to develop the action plan and monitoring and evaluation framework for the new strategy.
- Curriculum renewal: in cooperation with Education Above All, developed a new Iraqi Curriculum Framework endorsed by MoE, and trained MoE staff in curriculum development, textbooks, standard-setting, and evaluation.
- National Teacher Training Strategy: in cooperation with Education Above All, launched in January 2014, and 16 teacher training packages developed, 30 master trainers trained on the skills of developing training materials and training teacher trainers, 190 supervisors trained on the skills of teacher training using the teacher

training packages, and 9974 grade 12 maths, biology, chemistry and physics teachers trained on the active learning approach using the designed teacher training packages.

Recognising the pivotal role that teachers play in ensuring quality education, UNESCO developed a Teacher Policy Framework and Resource Pack for the Arab States, following regional workshops in 2012 and 2013. The pack will be finalised in 2014 and addresses regional priorities, including quality of teaching and learning; attracting the best teachers; gender equality; teacher professional development; leadership; monitoring and evaluation; assessment, and education in emergencies. The pack will be the basis for training and capacity development activities from 2015 onwards. A further UNESCO initiative to improve quality focuses on the whole-school approach in Lebanon. A handbook is under development which will provide conceptual clarification, as well as examples of promising practice from Lebanese schools, among which are schools accommodating Syrian refugee students. The handbook will be available to the region as a whole.

In 2014, UNESCO Beirut will launch the Arab Community of Practice for Education Development (ACOPED), a network and platform for education development. This initiative aims to create a network for education development tailored to the needs and specifications of the Arab region. The project will function in 3 main ways: through a regional Arab Education Consultative Group; through a network of National Focal Points; and through an online network and website. ACOPED will play a central role in the facilitation of national, regional and global discourses around education development in the Arab States, which can be discussed and implemented within the framework of determining and achieving the goals of Education for All. ACOPED will offer a platform for identifying gaps, critical issues and emerging areas of need and interest related to education development. It will also focus on experience exchange on educational trends and success stories globally and regionally.

Humanitarian response: the case of Syria

UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR, aid agencies and the governments of Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are cooperating to provide educational services to Syrian refugee children, as part of the wider humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis. Education is essential in order to renew hope for the generation of children displaced by the conflict. Three examples of this response illustrate these efforts:

In **Iraq**, UNESCO is cooperating with three Northern governorates of Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah to:

- Engage the local government, international organizations, local organizations and donors to improve access to secondary and vocational education, literacy, information technology and entrepreneurial and life skills in both urban areas and camp settings. This has led to a focus on secondary school construction and rehabilitation, provision of teacher and master trainer training, catch up classes for out-of-school children and youth, life and employability skills and construction of temporary learning spaces in line with INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies.
- Establish Community Learning Centres to deliver lifelong learning opportunities. In these centers, youth, women and men are empowered with literacy and essential life skills: health, legal awareness, human rights, early child development sessions for parents, counseling, and non-formal vocational training to enhance livelihood capacity.

- Address the key issue of maintaining quality standards for education in this emergency context (INEE approach), in order to provide access to education for all Syrian refugees, working closely with partners to assure accreditation and recognition of formal and non-formal education for Syrian children and adolescents.

In Jordan, in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and its local partners, UNESCO provides support to mitigate the impact of the Syrians crisis, focusing on:

- Building teachers' capacities in class management techniques for dealing with trauma-affected children in large-size classes, and in coaching strategies for teacher trainers, supervisors, school principals and counsellors in the emergency situation;
- Offering demand-driven non-formal education programmes including vocational skills, reaching some of the estimated 20,000 Syrian youth eligible for schooling but without any learning opportunities inside refugee camps, and both Syrian and Jordanian youth in urban areas;
- Contributing to better response planning regarding the prior education profiles and needs of secondary and post-secondary level Syrians youth through a comprehensive census.

Since the launch of the programme in March 2013, over 2,000 teachers and 450 ministry officials were trained, and nearly 1,400 students enrolled in non-formal education and mentoring programs. By December 2014, the project is set to engage a total of 2,700 learners.

In Lebanon, UNICEF-supports a project designed to cater to all 435,000 Syrian child refugees now in the country. In 2013, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in collaboration with humanitarian actors, enabled about 30,000 Syrian children to enroll in the public school system. Another 45,000 vulnerable children – among them Syrians, Lebanese returnees and children from vulnerable Lebanese populations – accessed non-formal education. In 2014, the Ministry will accommodate another 90,000 children into the public system, with support from the international community. Opening second shifts in public schools has helped to accommodate more and more children into the system. But, there is still an acute need for alternative schooling. With other partners, UNICEF has scaled up non-formal education initiatives to accommodate children who have not been absorbed in the public school system. One initiative has been to bring non-formal education to tented settlements, and through the classes, the most vulnerable children are able to learn and play together, and receive psychosocial support in a safe environment.⁶

Also **in Lebanon**, UNESCO organised intensive training workshops based on the INEE Minimum Standards of Education in Emergencies, in cooperation with the Lebanese MEHE. The trainings took place in December 2013 and covered the four main geographical regions in Lebanon. They were supervised by UNESCO and led by INEE TOT graduates who had attended similar trainings in March 2013. A total of 100 school managers in primary and secondary public schools in Lebanon took part with support from the Ministry of Education. The objective was to increase the participants' knowledge and awareness of INEE Minimum Standards: preparedness, response, and recovery. The training was based on principles of adult learning using international best practice, including a variety of participatory training

⁶ See http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/70207_71753.html and http://www.praguepost.com/viewpoint/37743-education-without-borders?utm_source=Master+Newsletter+List&utm_campaign=1b3e0acc36-Newsletter+4+2+144+2+2014&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_44112a1c27-1b3e0acc36-76014761

methodologies: demonstration, practice, discussion, brain-storming, case studies, role play, games, and presentation. Content delivered in the trainings consisted of three themes:

- Principles of the minimum standards for education: a rights-based education.
- Designing and planning educational programmes in emergency and chronic crises
- Contextualisation of the INEE minimum standards in the Lebanese context.

At the end of the trainings, participants expressed the need to develop a clear disaster response programme for schools in Lebanon, and a disaster preparedness strategy and plan to be executed in situations of emergencies. Participants also recommended reaching more school managers and schools, including private schools, as well as targeting teachers.

Status of national EFA 2015 reviews

The Arab States launched preparations for the review of progress towards the six EFA goals five years before the 2015 deadline, with a regional meeting in Sharjah (UAE) in 2010, and continued with a regional EFA Forum in October 2012 in Sharm El-Sheikh (Egypt). This Forum built on the international momentum of the first EFA Steering Committee meeting, organised by UNESCO in Paris in June 2012 as part of the implementation of the new EFA international architecture. In terms of stimulating and structuring EFA review processes in the Arab region, the Sharm El-Sheikh Forum set three objectives:

- To assess the status of coordinating and reporting mechanisms;
- To lay out the roadmap towards 2015 in the region, including the launch of national assessment processes;
- To share ideas on the post-2015 agenda in the light of the principal EFA challenges in the region.

This section of the current report will address progress made on the first two of these objectives, as far as information is available at the time of writing (March 2014). The following section will summarise developments with regard to the third objective.

With the technical support of the UNESCO regional office in Beirut, a series of recommendations for implementing the national assessments were proposed in order to map out a coordinated approach to reviewing progress towards 2015. The recommendations were as follows:

- Countries should launch the national EFA review in early 2013 by organizing a national forum to explain the purpose and the scope of the assessment and to mobilize national stakeholders;
- Countries should set up a national steering committee to guide and monitor the national assessment;
- UNESCO and other agencies could be part of the national steering committee to provide guidance and assistance;
- National working groups including all partners should be created to undertake the assessment;
- The assessment is to be based on the existing data supported by thematic studies as appropriate;
- UNESCO will mobilize technical and financial support when needed by countries that expressed this need.

In order to gauge how far the recommended steps have been achieved, UNESCO Beirut enquired of the states of the region in a questionnaire in early 2014 (see questionnaire in Annex 2).

1. Responses indicated that 15 of the 19 states have engaged with the review process at national level (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen), one has not yet done so (Lebanon), one has indicated that instability will not allow it to take part (Libya), and no information was as yet received from a further two (Algeria, Jordan).
2. More detailed information on nine countries is displayed in Annex 3, with an analysis of key elements presented below for those countries with data relevant to the various areas. Note that five countries provided detailed responses to the UNESCO questionnaire in time for the production of the current report: Bahrain, Kuwait Sudan, UAE and Yemen.
3. In terms of the institutional framework to guide and lead the EFA review, countries were urged to set up a steering committee and to ensure that it included representatives of the key stakeholder groups. All five responding countries set up national coordination mechanisms, composed for the most part of government departments. Palestine also established a National Committee for the follow-up on the EFA review. In Yemen, civil society has yet to become involved, and in UAE and Bahrain there is no specific indication that civil society organisations are part of the committee. Kuwait and Sudan note that NGOs are involved though without listing any particular organisations. The Regional Interagency Coordination Meeting, held on 8 March 2013 in Beirut expressed a concern about the low level of civil society participation and argued that “Giving civil society a bigger role in this process would increase the credibility of the reviews and highlight the issues of quality and relevance of education in the report.” The participation of civil society is a key indicator of the inclusiveness of the review, and was a particular feature of the EFA Dakar process; it will therefore be important to give space for the civil society voices, particularly at a time when populations in the region are claiming greater input into matters of policy and national development.
4. In order to raise the profile of the EFA review, a launch event was recommended. Yemen launched the process with a national meeting chaired by the Minister of Education; Bahrain, Mauritania, Sudan and UAE organised national workshops as launch events with the additional aim of addressing some of the technical issues, such as developing an action plan, determining indicators and establishing training sub-committees. UAE held a national forum in conjunction with the workshop in order to mobilise key strategic partners. Kuwait plans to hold a launch event close to the finalisation of the national report. These varied events indicate a desire and a commitment on the part of the countries concerned to give a public profile to the EFA review process, thus raising hopes for strong engagement in the review and a national debate on its outcomes. It is to be hoped that other countries will take steps to ensure national visibility of EFA progress and challenges.
5. Under the guidance of the coordinating mechanism, the review was expected to be conducted by a review team, with responsibility for technical aspects, data collection and analysis, and compilation of the report. Bahrain, Kuwait, Sudan, UAE and Yemen each established teams, all with the mandate to collect and analyse data. The number of teams ranged from a single team to a group of ten sub-teams. In countries with multiple (sub-)teams, each EFA goal was to be analysed by a team, with regular, often weekly, meetings with the other sub-teams. In Bahrain and UAE, a separate team was set up to draft the report. The composition of the teams was

largely governmental – Bahrain involved 18 agencies, including the teachers’ organisation, an association for early childhood, and the petrochemical sector; UAE and Yemen involved only government departments. Kuwait, which had already produced a draft of its report at the time of writing, did not specify the composition of its team. Education is a cross-cutting issue, and so it is gratifying to see that a number of countries in the region decided to invite multiple ministries and agencies to join the review process; as indicated above with regard to the coordinating structures, the relative absence of civil society robs the review process, and particularly the analysis of data, of important perspectives.

6. The recommendations for the review proposed that countries might include studies of EFA themes and best practices, for example based on the twelve strategies adopted in Dakar in 2000. However, we should note that these strategies received little specific attention in the implementation of EFA, and have not been a focus the international coordination process; aspects of certain strategies have been addressed by the annual themes of the EFA Global Monitoring Report,⁷ but have not been systematically monitored as strategies intended to underpin the whole of the EFA agenda. The following studies planned by certain countries in the Arab region are based the priorities and challenges they face.

Kuwait intends to include in the final report some studies and its vision for the post-2015 agenda.

Sudan plans to undertake studies in the following areas:

- National studies on the cost and finance of education (unit costs, expenditures, etc.);
- Study on out-of-school children based on data collected for the report;
- Secondary education analysis and reform;
- Teacher training and management;
- The community contribution in education.

The studies will focus on the current situation, as well as proposed policies and strategies after 2015.

Yemen plans to include two studies, one on the effectiveness of indicators (by the MOE), and one on out-of-school children (UNICEF and MOE).

The UNESCO questionnaire enquired as to how far the Arab states have organised events to analyse the EFA needs beyond 2015 and to begin to establish an education agenda to address them, by holding a national forum on the topic. Responses show that countries are stimulating collective reflection on EFA progress and needs in various ways:

- **Bahrain** holds regular EFA review team meetings, and has planned a series of national dialogues from March 2014 on post-2015 needs. No national forum on a post-2015 education agenda is planned at this point.
- In the introductory workshop for the review, **Kuwait** included some consideration of the needs required after 2015, but no forum on a post-2015 agenda is planned as yet.

⁷ Certain strategies – for example, teachers, governance, and education in emergencies have been addressed as annual themes in the GMR: teachers under the headings of quality (2005) and teaching and learning (2013/14), governance under the heading of overcoming inequality (2009), and education in emergencies under the heading of armed conflict and education (2011).

- In addition to a series of review meetings at national level during March 2014, **Sudan** has planned two meetings, in March and April 2014, specifically to address the education indicators and goals post-2015, and to discuss the education agenda for Sudan after 2015.
- **UAE** organised a series of three meetings and a workshop during January and February 2014 in order to engage partners, track the assessment process and discuss the data gathered for the report. There is no indication whether meetings or a forum on the post-2015 agenda will be held.
- From December 2013 to February 2014, **Yemen** held a series of meetings to discuss EFA progress and plans for after 2015. The outcome will be a unified plan for education and development, and a national forum is planned for the end of March 2014.

Although information on other countries in the region is not available, it is clear that strenuous efforts are being made in the above countries to run a collective process of analysis on EFA progress. At the regional level, the 2013 Interagency Coordination meeting stressed the importance of a solid and credible review process, recognising that some states may require support to carry it out; the meeting also proposed an outline for the 2015 report, with suggestions for the approach and the content.

Plans, strategies and agendas for post-2015 have been less in focus thus far in country and regional debates – perhaps an indication that the analysis of successes and setbacks needs to be completed before relevant plans can be laid for the ensuing years. It is also the case that the international debate on the broader development agenda is ongoing and that the integration of education into that agenda, at both international and national levels, is a work in progress.

The EFA review process will culminate in a regional EFA conference planned for October or November 2014. It will examine regional EFA progress and draw out lessons from the experience of the 15 years of pursuing the EFA goals. Its purpose will also include discussion of challenges, priorities and goals that may form the regional education agenda post-2015.

Towards the post-2015 agenda

The six EFA goals have served globally to focus efforts on improving basic education in all its forms. Quantitative and timed targets in primary education, adult literacy, and gender parity provided a measuring-stick for progress. This report has shown how well the Arab States have performed against these targets, as well as against the more qualitative targets of the ECCE, skills and quality goals, as we approach the 2015 deadline. This deadline has, again, focused minds and energies and given a sense of urgency to policies and implementation. Nevertheless, 2015 is an arbitrary date, and countries will continue to face similar development and education challenges after that particular year.

Coinciding as it does with the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the year 2015 offers a vantage point for discerning the direction of future aspirations and goals. As the date approaches, the international community has expended a great deal of effort in mapping out a possible pathway for development, including for education. Before turning to discussions of the post-2015 agenda in the Arab States, it is important to observe the place that education occupies in the international debate.

1. International context

A report to the UN Secretary-General in 2012⁸ put education under the heading first of social equity, and, more prominently, in the section of inclusive economic development. This presented education therefore principally as an instrument of economic growth, rather than as a human right or a means of unfolding full human potential. The influential Report of the High-Level Panel⁹ made education one of twelve proposed sustainable development goals (SDGs), and gave it the title of ‘Provide quality education and lifelong learning.’ The inclusion of lifelong learning promised a broader educational agenda than that pursued by the MDGs, although the report failed to spell out what lifelong learning might mean or entail, preferring instead to maintain the previous focus on schooling. However, the debate on educational and development goals post-2015 is far from over. From the discussions on SDGs it seems that globally education is considered one domain among others that will need attention. However, learning of all kinds – thus also education – is the fundamental process of social change. Without learning there can be no change, either individually or collectively. This principle seems to be absent from the SDG agenda – learning what sustainability means and how to promote and implement it is at the heart of sustainable development.

A UNESCO/UNICEF survey report¹⁰ presents a more detailed and nuanced proposal, around the twin concepts of equitable access and equitable quality, with clear linkages to the previous EFA agenda.¹¹ The UN Open Working Group¹² proposes 19 focus areas for the post-2015 development agenda, of which the fourth is devoted to education; it picks up on the scope of the EFA goals, expanding them to emphasise equitable access to all groups.¹³ UNESCO’s proposals also support a strengthened and broadened EFA vision within the international development framework.¹⁴

2. Regional context

It is at this point that the international debate connects with the debate in the Arab region, where the continuing relevance of the EFA goals has been stressed. The Regional EFA Forum of 2012 addressed the post-2015 period and noted as part of their discussions:

Continued validity of EFA goals: The six EFA goals remain valid as the basis for a framework for educational development beyond 2015. Equitable access to effective and relevant basic education for all will not be ensured by 2015 as reflected in the persistent challenge of youth and adult literacy, incomplete schooling and out-of-school children, and the generally low average levels of learning achievement.

This clearly states the position that any further education agenda should continue to address the full range of needs, across all age groups, focusing on under-served groups, and

⁸ UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. 2012. Realizing the future we want for all: Report to the UN Secretary-General. New York: UN.

⁹ UN. 2013. A New Global Partnership: Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development. The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. New York: UN

¹⁰ UNESCO/UNICEF. 2013. Making education a priority in the post-2015 development agenda. Report of the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

¹¹ “The goals framework should be tied more closely to a new and streamlined Education for All framework, featuring complementary indicators and building on the EFA goals that have not been met.” Ibid. p.31.

¹² UN. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html>

¹³ See Annex 4.

¹⁴ See Annex 5.

addressing low quality and achievement. The 2012 Forum also re-affirmed education as a right, and set it in the context of the kind of society that Arab States envisage. Further principles for the post-2015 agenda included:

- Education as a cross-cutting issue linked to other spheres of life;
- Strengthening regional cooperation and partnerships;
- Focus on the needs of youth and the need for education that leads to work, including TVET;
- More, and more equitable early childhood care and education
- Quality of education, with improved monitoring of learning outcomes, greater attention to results, and consideration of private education, shadow education and private tutoring;
- Flexibility, with international goals providing inspiration, but goals and targets set in the regional or national context.

The regional debate on possible post-2015 development goals is ongoing and has addressed the process of engaging with international proposals.¹⁵ Specific regional discussions on sustainable development goals reflect the need to ensure that globally formulated goals are contextualised by regional priorities, of which peace, security, water and food security figure high on the agenda. Education has not yet featured prominently in these debates – perhaps because the focus has thus far been on the complexity of sustainable development and the need to integrate its economic, social and environmental aspects.¹⁶ However, education – indeed learning of all kinds – is fundamental to the social change implied by sustainable development, and thus appropriate regional goals and strategies for education, in its broadest sense, must be brought into the debate. In the Arab region, there is a concern to adapt international goals and targets so that they are appropriate and reflect priorities in each national context. The way in which each country resolves this issue will define what kind of learning and education for sustainable development will be promoted.

¹⁵ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. 2013. Report of the nineteenth meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, Cairo, 26-27 November 2013.

¹⁶ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. 2013. Report of the Arab Consultative Meeting on the Sustainable Development Goals, Gammarth, 18-19 November 2013. Further consultations are planned from April 2014.

Annexes

1. Annex 1: Arab States Statistical Tables

Pre-Primary education

Country	Enrolment			Gross enrolment ratio				Trained teachers (%)	
	MF		%F	MF		GPI		1999	2011
	1999	2011	2011	1999	2011	1999	2011		
Arab States	2,407,449	4,142,000 **	47 **	15.0	23.0 **	0.77	0.94 **	...	...
Algeria	35,701	490,000	49	2.5	75	1.01	1.02	...	...
Bahrain	14,064	27,000	...	38.2	...	0.96	...	18	46
Djibouti	171	2,000 +1	50 +1	0.4	4 +1	1.50	1.01 +1	...	100 -2
Egypt	328,140	912,000	48	10.4	26	0.95	0.95 -1	86 **, +2	...
Iraq	68,169	...	...	4.9	...	1.00	...	100 +1	...
Jordan	74,380	99,000 -1	47 -1	29.2	32 -1	0.91	0.94 -1	...	100 -1
Kuwait	57,365	78,000	49	85.2	...	1.03	...	100	72
Lebanon	143,152 **	154,000	49	60.8 **	83	0.97 **	0.98	...	...
Libya	10,429	...	...	4.8	...	0.98 **	...	...	...
Mauritania	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Morocco	805,231	683,000 +1	43 +1	62.0	58 +1	0.53	0.77 +1	...	100 +1
Oman	...	56,000	49	...	53	...	0.98	...	100
Palestine	77,173	96,000	48	35.5	41	0.96	0.98	...	100 -2
Qatar	7,961	30,000	49	25.3	57	0.96	1.03	...	29
Saudi Arabia	...	210,000	...	...	12	...	...	...	...
Sudan (pre-secession)	365,723	632,000 -2	50 -2	18.6	27 -2	...	1.04 -2	45 +2	71 -2
Syria	108,319	172,000	47	8.5	11	0.90	0.97	87	...
Tunisia	78,012	...	...	13.9	...	0.93	...	...	...
Unites Arab Emirates	64,423	131,000	49	63.9	...	0.99	...	59	100
Yemen	12,482	30,000	46	0.7	1	0.86	0.88	...	...

Qualifier symbols legend : = National estimation

**= UIS estimation ... =data not available

-+=number of years from the reference year

Primary Education

Country	Enrolment			New Entrants Grade 1		Net enrolment rate adjusted		Gross enrolment ratio				Survival rate to last grade of primary		Survival rate GPI		
	MF		%F					MF		GPI						
	1999	2011	2011	1999	2011	1999	2011	1999	2011	1999	2011	1999	2010	1999	2010	
Arab States	35,024,024	42,771,000	47	6,243,051	7,930,000	79	89	89	99	0.87	0.92	79	**	87	...	0.99
Algeria	4,778,870	3,363,000	47	744,942	664,000	92	98	106	109	0.91	0.94	91		95	1.04	1.01
Bahrain	76,302	93,000	49	13,130		99	...	107	...	1.00	...	90		98	1.02	1.01
Djibouti	38,194	64,000	+1 47 +1	5,837	12,000	+1	27 ** 54 +1	33	61 +1	0.71	0.89	+1	...	64 ** -2	...	1.01 ** -2
Egypt	8,086,230 **	10,266,000	47 **	1,451,098 **	1,799,000		92 ** 98 **	98 **	102	0.91 **	0.94	...		99	...	1.00
Iraq	3,603,864	...	...	708,881 **	...		89	...	97	...	0.83	...	49 **	...	0.92 **	...
Jordan	706,198	820,000	-1 49 -1	125,601	146,000	-1	92 ** 91 -1	96	92 1	1.01	1.00	-1	96	...	1.00	...
Kuwait	139,691	224,000	49	34,922	49,000		98	...	106	...	1.02	...	94	96 -1	1.02	1.00 -1
Lebanon	413,753 **	457,000	48	74,762 **	72,000		94 ** 97	112 **	108	0.96 **	0.97	...		90	...	1.07
Libya	821,775	...	...	...	...		...	...	122	...	0.99	...	...	...	...	...
Mauritania	346,222	536,000	51	73,139 +2	102,000		61 ** 75	84	101	0.97	1.06	40 +2	81 -2	1.06 +2	1.02 -2	
Morocco	3,461,940	4,017,000	+1 48 +1	731,073	626,000	+1	71 ** 96	87	115 +1	0.82	0.95	+1	75	88 +1	1.01	0.99
Oman	315,557	296,000	49	51,698	53,000		80	98	89	104	0.99	0.98	92	...	1.00	...
Palestine	368,321	411,000	-1 49 -1	95,245	108,000		94	90	100	92	1.00	0.99	99	96	0.99	...
Qatar	60,989	95,000	49	11,113 **	18,000		95	95	104	105	1.05	0.98	...	...	...	...
Saudi Arabia	...	3,348,000	49	...	570,000		...	97 **	...	106	...	1.00	...	...	...	...
Sudan (pre-secession)	2,512,824 **	4,744,000	-2 46 -2	446,801 +1	915,000	-2	43 **	...	48 **	73 -2	0.85 **	0.90 -2	77 **	...	1.11 **	...
Syria	2,738,083	2,507,000	48	465,885	633,000		97	100	108	121	0.92	0.99	87	96	1.00	1.01
Tunisia	1,442,904	1,028,000	-1 48 -1	203,850	169,000		95 ** 99	115	110 -1	0.93	0.96	87	95 -2	1.03	1.02 -2	
Unites Arab Emirates	270,486	335,000	49	46,871	77,000		85	96	93	111	0.99	...	89	84	0.99	1.00
Yemen	2,302,787	3,641,000	44	439,573	747,000		57	76	72	91	0.56	0.82	69 ** +2	76	0.89 ** +2	0.83

Qualifier symbols legend : * = National estimation

**= UIS estimation

... =data not available

-+=number of years from the reference year

Primary continued

Country	Gross intake ratio to last grade		Percentage of repeaters		Sum of out-of-school children				Pupil/Teacher ratio		Trained teachers (%)			
	1999	2011	1999	2011	MF	%F	MF	%F	1999	2011	1999	2011		
					1999		2011							
Arab States	75	85	9.2	6.7	8,423,297	59	4,823,000	60	**	23	27	**	...	...
Algeria	85	94	11.9	7.4	340,287	61	71,000	64		28	23		94	...
Bahrain	96	...	3.8	1.2	661	9	...	...		18	**,+1	...	...	...
Djibouti	24	57 +1	16.6	9.1 +1	83,825	** 53	48,000	+1 53	+1	40	35 +1		...	100 +1
Egypt	96 **	98	6.0 **	3.5	673,543	** 70	222,000	**	...	22 +1	28 -1		100 **,+2	...
Iraq	57 **	...	10.0	...	423,338	76	...	...		25	...		100 +1	...
Jordan	92	...	0.7	...	57,469	** 45	83,000	-1 49	-1	...	...		...	...
Kuwait	104	...	3.3	0.8	2,462	30	...	...		13	9		100	78 -1
Lebanon	102 **	87	9.1 **	9.2	21,768	** 60	12,000	54		14 **	14		...	...
Libya	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		...	...		...	...
Mauritania	46 +2	70 -2	15.2 **, +1	3.5 -1	161,174	** 50	131,000	45		47	39		...	100
Morocco	55	99 +1	12.4	7.3 +1	1,157,256	** 58	123,000	+1 55	+1	28	26 +1		...	100 +1
Oman	80	107	8.0	0.9	70,056	45	7,000	66		25	...		100	...
Palestine	100	91	2.1	0.6	23,223	48	46,000	50		38	26		100	100
Qatar	93 **	96	2.7 **	0.2	2,664	2	4,600	53		13	11		...	43 **,-1
Saudi Arabia	...	106	...	2.0	...	...	108,000	** 50	**	...	11 *		...	...
Sudan (pre-secession)	37 **	58 -2	11.3 **	3.7 -2	2,988,736	** 53	...	...		24 **, +2	38 **,-2		...	60 **, -2
Syria	94	106	6.5	7.5	87,261	...	8,200	32		25	...		81	...

Primary continued

Country	Gross intake ratio to last grade		Percentage of repeaters		Sum of out-of-school children				Pupil/Teacher ratio		Trained teachers (%)	
	1999	2011	1999	2011	MF	%F	MF	%F	1999	2011	1999	2011
					1999		2011					
Tunisia	89	91 -2	18.3	6.8 -2	63,941 **	68 **	5,000	...	24	17	...	...
Unites Arab Emirates	89	...	3.5	-	44,666	47	12,000	...	16	17	...	...
Yemen	54	63	10.6	8.9	1,386,381	66	949,000	63	22 **	30	...	...

Qualifier symbols legend :

* = National estimation

**= UIS estimation

... =data not available

-+=number of years from the reference year

Secondary Education

Country	Gross enrolment ratio				Enrolment in technical and vocational education as % of total enrolment in secondary programmes		Female enrolment as % of total enrolment in technical and vocational programmes		Percentage of repeaters in general programmes			
	MF		GPI		1999	2011	1999	2011	1999	2011	1999	2011
	1999	2011	1999	2011								
Arab States	59	71 **	0.88	0.93 **	14.3	9.5	43 **	40	12 **	10 **		
Algeria	...	102	...	1.04	...	8.3	...	34	23 **	18.3		
Bahrain	96	...	1.10	...	15.2	6.8	35	12	8 +1	3.4		
Djibouti	14	39 +1	0.72	0.76 +1	14.2	4.2	58	39	10	7.4	+1	
Egypt	80 **	72 -1	0.91 **	0.96 -1	...	17.6 -1	...	45 -1	7 **, +2	7.6 **	-1	
Iraq	35	...	0.64	...	6.0		13	...	28	...		
Jordan	85	87 -1	1.04	1.06 -1	7.2	3.4 -1	36	39 -1	1	...		
Kuwait	109 **	...	1.03 **	...	1.7 **		21 **	-	10	5.6	-1	
Lebanon	77 **	83	1.09 **	1.11	9.8 **	17.2	40	43	8 **	9.9		
Libya	...	...	...	...	...		...	...	...	...
Mauritania	18 **	27	0.75 **	0.84 **	2.6 **		32	...	14 +2	11.5	-2	
Morocco	37	70 +1	0.78	0.85 +1	7.0	6.1	44	38	19	15.1	+1	
Oman	71	104	1.01	0.98	.		.	.	10	3.0		
Palestine	78	84	1.02	1.10	0.5	0.4	23	10	3	2.2		
Qatar	88	102	1.11	1.09	1.7	0.8	.	-	...	2.0		
Saudi Arabia	...	107	...	0.88 **	...		...	...	...	1.6		
Sudan (pre-secession)	26 **	39 -2	...	0.88 -2	2.7 **	1.5 -2	36	24 -2	...	...
Syria	44	73	0.92	1.00	10.1	4.4	52	40	11	7.1		
Tunisia	74	93	0.99	1.03	...	14.0	...	32	22	14.5	-1	
Unites Arab Emirates	83	...	1.09	...	0.9	0.9	.	11	7	2.8	*	
Yemen	40	46	0.37	0.63	0.9	0.7	17	5	9	9.8		

Qualifier symbols legend : * = National estimation ; **= UIS estimation ; . =data not applicable; ... =data not available; -+=number of years from the reference year

ADULT AND YOUTH LITERACY 1995-2004

Country or territory	Reference Year 1995-2004	Adults (15 years and older)					Youth (15 to 24 years)				
		Literacy rate			Illiterate population		Literacy rate			Illiterate population	
		MF	M	F	MF	% F	MF	M	F	MF	% F
Arab States		68	78	57	51,826,536	65	83	89	78	8,615,381	66
Algeria	2002	70	80	60	6,435,795	66	90	94	86	708,710	69
Bahrain	2001	87	89	84	62,453	49	97	97	97	3,276	43
Djibouti	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Egypt	1996	56	67	44	17,422,246	63	73	79	67	3,339,988	60
Iraq	2000	74	84	64	3,520,214	70	85	89	80	751,984	63
Jordan	2003	90	95	85	312,019	74	99	99	99	9,707	60
Kuwait	1995	78	81	74	250,443	46	92	94	90	20,180	60
Lebanon	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Libya	2004	86 **	94 **	78 **	543,848 **	77 **	100 **	100 **	99 **	4,717 **	78 **
Mauritania	2000	51	60	43	736,558	59	61	68	55	206,419	57
Morocco	2004	52	66	40	9,920,761	65	70	81	60	1,864,150	68
Oman	2003	81	87	74	291,580	60	97	98	97	14,215	60
Palestine	2004	92	97	88	144,507	77	99	99	99	7,211	53
Qatar	2004	89	89	89	61,735	31	96	95	98	4,229	23
Saudi Arabia	2004	83	88	76	2,607,448	57	96	97	95	179,493	62
Sudan (Pre-secession)	2000	61	72	52	...	...	78	86	72	...	...
Syrian Arab Republic	2004	81	88	74	2,106,292	68	92	95	90	303,075	64
Tunisia	2004	74	83	65	1,852,150	68	94	96	92	115,849	68
United Arab Emirates	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Yemen	2004	55 **	74 **	35 **	4,820,365 **	72 **	77 **	93 **	60 **	1,015,102 **	84 **

Qualifier symbols legend : * = National estimation

**= UIS estimation

... =data not available

ADULT AND YOUTH LITERACY 2005-2011

Country or territory	Reference Year 2005-2011	Adults (15 years and older)					Youth (15 to 24 years)				
		Literacy rate			Illiterate population		Literacy rate			Illiterate population	
		MF	M	F	MF	% F	MF	M	F	MF	% F
Arab States		77	85	68	47,603,000	66	89	92	86	6,498,902	65
Algeria	2006	73 *	81 *	64 *	6,471,923	66 *	92 *	94 *	89 *	610,876	65 *
Bahrain	2010	95	96	92	55,000	53	98	99	98	3,000	61
Djibouti	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Egypt	2012	72 *	80 *	64 *	15,630,732	65 *	88 *	91 *	84 *	2,003,772	62 *
Iraq	2011	78	86	71	4,014,000	68	82	84	81	1,130,000	54
Jordan	2011	93 *	96 *	89 *	286,602	71 *	99 *	99 *	99 *	16,484	48 *
Kuwait	2008	94 *	95 *	92 *	117,502	50 *	99 *	99 *	99 *	5,722	41 *
Lebanon	2007	90 *	93 *	86 *	318,663	70 *	99 *	98 *	99 *	9,588	36 *
Libya	2010	90	96	83	477,151	80	100	100	100	1,380	71
Mauritania	2011	59	65	52	884,000	58	69	72	66	219,005	54
Morocco	2011	56 *	69 *	44 *	9,966,640	66 *	79 *	87 *	72 *	1,296,289	68 *
Oman	2008	87 *	90 *	82 *	263,000	54 *	97 *	98 *	98 *	14,830	35 *
Palestine	2011	95 *	98 *	92 *	117,811	76 *	99 *	99 *	99 *	7,000	47 *
Qatar	2010	96 *	97 *	95 *	56,539	25 *	97 *	96 *	98 *	8,138	14 *
Saudi Arabia	2010	87	91	82	2,522,000	59	98	99	97	100,000	74
Sudan (Pre-secession)	...	72	81	63	7,540,000	66	87	90	85	1,117,000	60
Syrian Arab Republic	2011	84	90	78	2,113,000	70	95	96	94	201,000	60
Tunisia	2010	79 *	87 *	71 *	1,661,471	70 *	97 *	98 *	96 *	56,000	68 *
United Arab Emirates	2005	90 *	89 *	91 *	326,586	24 *	95 *	94 *	97 *	34,210	24 *
Yemen	2011	65	82	49	4,826,000	74	86	96	76	743,000	86

Qualifier symbols legend : * = National estimation, all others UIS estimation

... =data not available

2. Annex 2: National Questionnaire on EFA review implementation

General information

- 1 Country:
- 2 Name of person filling the form:
- 3 Date:

Process	
1	Has the country established a National EFA 2015 Reviews Committee to guide, coordinate and oversee the implementation of the review?
	a) Does the committee include members representing national authorities, civil society organizations and in-country development partners?
	b) Please provide, as much as possible, information on the Committee members (names, organizations, titles and contact details of the Committee members).
2	How was the National EFA 2015 Review launched at the national level and what were the main outcomes and recommendations agreed upon?
3	Has the country established a National EFA 2015 Review Team(s) to implement the Review (gathering information and conducting analysis for the national report)?
	c) Who is the team leader?
	d) Does the team(s) include members representing national authorities, civil society organizations and in-country development partners?
	e) Please provide, as much as possible, information on the Team members (names, organizations, titles, and contact details of the Committee members).

Technical Inputs	
1	What national dialogue activities (seminars, workshops, media events, online forums, social media networks, etc.) have been conducted to discuss the country's progress in EFA and what needs to be done beyond 2015?
	a) Dates of the activities:
	a) Major outcomes and recommendations:
2	Has the country organized a national forum to discuss the education agenda beyond 2015?
	a) If yes, what are the main outcomes of the forum?
	b) If no, will such a forum be organized, and when?
3	Aside from the national report, has the country prepared (or is planning to prepare) relevant thematic studies and papers to assess country progress towards EFA and describe best practices and highlight views on how education should be shaped in the future? If yes, please provide more details about these studies and papers. <i>Please note that the final output of the national EFA 2015 review may be a single national report that has been collectively prepared; or the national government may prepare one report while other reports/papers, focusing on a specific EFA area, can be prepared by other EFA stakeholders such as NGOs and CSOs.</i>
4	Based on the suggested national report outline below, please describe briefly the status of the report (to date) and the expected date of submission to UNESCO.
5	Please provide any insight on the quality of the national report. For instance, does it use disaggregated data and quantitative and qualitative evidences (such as case studies)?

3. Annex 3: Status of the National EFA 2015 Reviews – Arab States

Summary of information available as of 3 April 2014

Country	Expected date of report submission to UNESCO	Notes
Bahrain	June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EFA Steering Committee formed with government and civil society representation (2 meetings held in July and October 2013). Workshop on EFA in June 2013 in coordination with Bahrain Natcom and UNESCO Doha. 8 EFA working groups have been established and started working on preliminary reports for the EFA review since December 2013 (6 groups to collect data on each EFA goal, one group for coordination and media, and one group for drafting the national report).
Egypt	May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review team established and work in progress.
Kuwait	Draft submitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established a National EFA 2015 Review Committee including members from the civil society and other authorities/stakeholders concerned with EFA. A team was formed to support the data collection and analysis process. An introductory workshop was held for EFA stakeholders and civil society members to present EFA goals and the data needed for the indicators analysis, and what is required for the post-2015 agenda. The draft report has been prepared and submitted to UNESCO. The final report will include some studies and Kuwait's vision for the post-2015 agenda. The report will include the main indicators on the current status of EFA in Kuwait and conclude what the post-2015 agenda will include in terms of education development.
Mauritania	June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National EFA 2015 Review was launched on 25 December 2013. UNESCO Beirut provided some financial support to launch the review process and conduct the data collection.
Palestine	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The national review process was initiated in July 2013 with the establishment of a National Committee. This process was initiated in parallel with MoEHE's new Education Development Strategic plan. The new plan was officially launched in February 2014. Once the draft report is reviewed by the National Committee, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is planning an EFA national consultation.

Country	Expected date of report submission to UNESCO	Notes
Sudan	May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established two committees: the High Committee to provide overall strategic guidance and facilitation, and the technical committee to prepare, collect the data and prepare the draft report. Both committees include other partners such as national councils for disabilities, local NGOs, etc. • Launch workshop conducted on 29/10/2013. • Four technical sub-committees formed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Statistical team 2- Background and demography group 3- Initiatives, legislation and regulations 4- Strategies and Policy during 2000-2015. • Meeting to discuss Sudan agenda after 2015 (1 April). • Discuss the draft report at higher committee & national commission for UNESCO (first week of April). • Organize the national workshop to discuss the draft report and recommendations. (15 April).
Syria	Submitted	
Tunisia	June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is in progress. A weekly meeting is organized to discuss the regional EFA reports that will feed into the Tunisian National Review Report
UAE	June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core National EFA 2015 review team formed to coordinate the review tasks. • A national coordination committee formed including key persons from EFA relevant bodies such as UAE MOE undersecretary, Abdu Dhabi Education Council and the Knowledge & Human Development Authority. • Ten technical sub-committees established – six tackled the EFA goals in addition to data collection committees and the formulation of the EFA report committees.. • Training workshop for the technical sub-committees on the assessment & use of data analysis of indicators (January 2014). • National Forum that involved the key strategic partners of MOE (January 2014). • Workshop at Regional Centre for Educational Planning in February 2014 to review data gathered by the technical committees.
Yemen	June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A National EFA 2015 Reviews Committee has been established with representation from the government and civil society. • The launch of the national review took place in December 2013 under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education. The EFA indicators were discussed. • Five National EFA 2015 Review teams have been established to gather information and conduct the analysis for the national report. • A national forum on the post 2015 education agenda is planned for March 2014.

4. Annex 4: UN Open Working Group education focus area

UN Sustainable Development Knowledge

Platform <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

Focus area 4. Education

Everyone has a right to education. Achieving universal access to quality education is critical to poverty eradication across generations, opens up lifelong opportunities, promotes gender equality and women's empowerment, shapes cultures, values and creates a skilled labour force. Some areas that could be considered include:

- a. universal, free primary and secondary education for girls and boys;
- b. ensuring equitable access to education at all levels with focus on the most marginalized, including indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, persons living in rural areas, and migrants;
- c. achieving high completion rates at all levels of education for both girls and boys;
- d. providing universal early childhood education;
- e. ensuring effective learning outcomes at all levels and imparting knowledge and skills that match the demands of the labour market, including through vocational training and skills development for youth;
- f. universal adult literacy and lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- g. integrating sustainable development in education curricula, including awareness raising on how culture advances sustainable development; and
- h. appropriate means of implementation*.

5. Annex 5: UNESCO proposal for post-2015 education goals

- Overall goal

Ensure equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030

- Five objectives

Objective 1: The right to equitable access and completion of a full cycle of free basic education of good quality with recognized and measurable learning outcomes based on national standards is ensured for all children and youth, girls and boys alike.

Objective 2: Equitable access to quality upper secondary as well as tertiary education is ensured.

Objective 3: Quality and relevant teaching and learning in terms of teaching and learning processes, content, learning environments and recognized and measurable learning outcomes are ensured for all children, youth and adults.

Objective 4: Functional levels of literacy, numeracy and other basic competencies are acquired by all young people and adults as foundational skills for further learning and the realization of their human potential.

Objective 5: All young people and adults have equitable access to lifelong learning opportunities to develop skills and competencies for life and work and towards fostering of personal and professional development.

(Source: UNESCO. Concept note on the post-2015 education agenda. Document submitted by UNESCO to the 37th Session of the General Conference, 5-20 November 2013.)