



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO's contribution to the report of the UN Secretary-General for the 2009 Substantive Session of the Economic Social Council and for the Sixty-Fourth Session of the UN General Assembly on the "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010" on progress achieved in achieving the education goals defined in the Brussels Programme of Action.

16 April 2009

[BSP/PMRPI/2009/PI/H/1](#)

Goal 7: 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

Achieving universal primary education (UPE) is a key target associated with the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Indeed primary education of good quality provides a strong foundation for sustainable literacy, good nutrition and healthcare while catalysing economic growth.

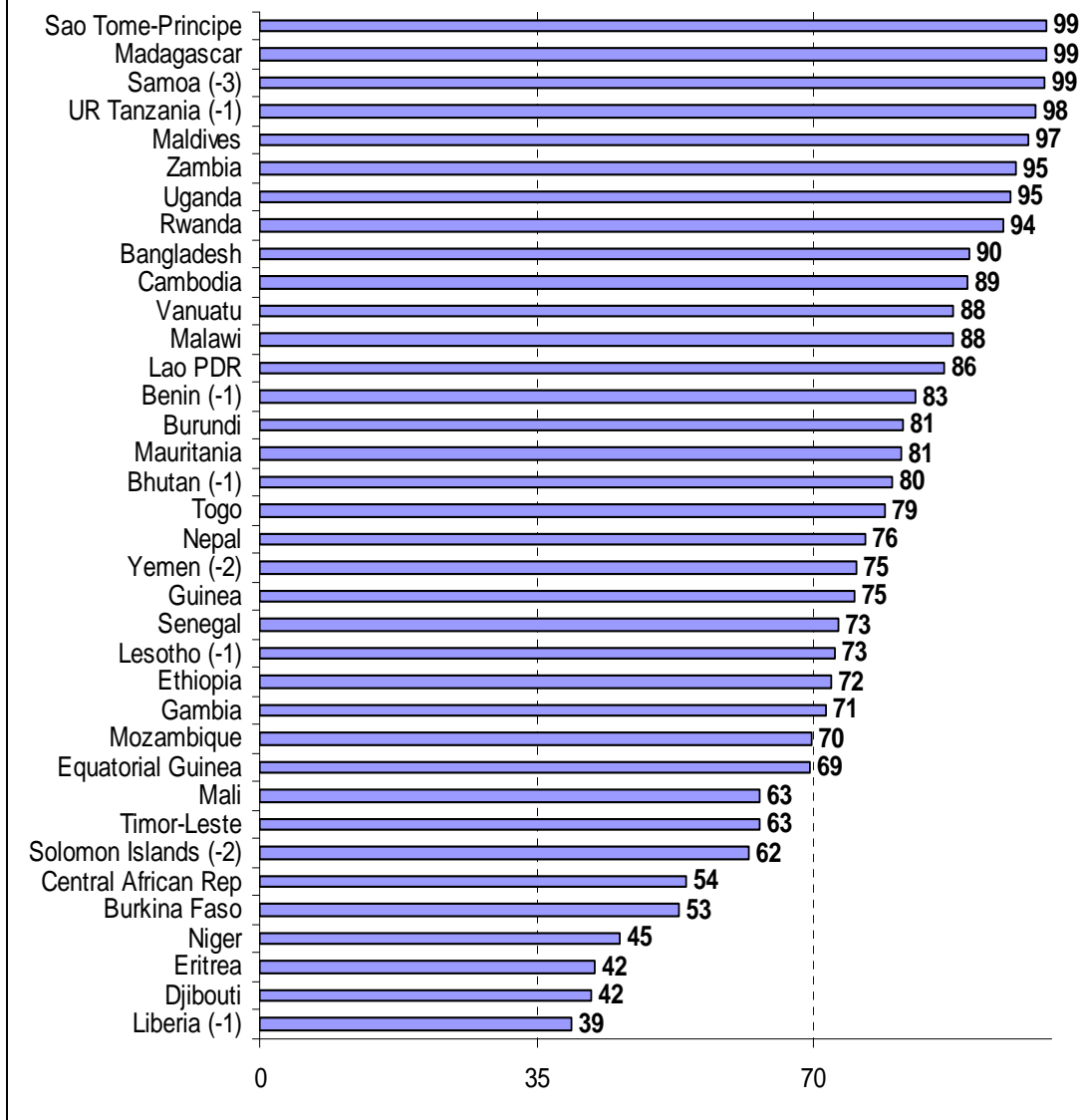
The UPE goal means that all primary school-age children have access to and complete primary school. The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are still far from achieving this goal. In 2007, one out of four primary school-age children in these countries were not in school. This means that about 29 million children of primary school-age, 54% of whom were girls, were excluded from education: either they never entered school or dropped out. These children account for more than 40% of the global population of out-of-school children.

It is however important to stress that dramatic progress has been made since the Millennium Summit and the World Education Forum in 2000. The adjusted primary net enrolment rate (which also takes into account children of primary school-age enrolled in secondary education) grew on average by 20 percentage points between 1999 and 2007 - more than five times the progress observed over the last decade.

Countries that have achieved full enrolment at primary level or are close to (adjusted NER of 95% or above) include Sao Tome and Principe, Madagascar, Samoa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Maldives and Zambia. At the other end of the spectrum, countries had less than one child out of two with access to primary school. These include Liberia (39%), Djibouti and Eritrea (42%) and Niger (45%). In general, in almost half of the LDCs with available data, one out of four children is excluded from education.

Almost all the countries with times series data, however, made substantial progress since 1999 with an increase of more than 10 percentage points to the adjusted NER. Some countries where less than one child out of two was in school in 1999 were able to double their enrolments by 2007. These include the United Republic of Tanzania, Burundi and Ethiopia. However, enrolment rates decreased by about 22 and 11 percentage points respectively in Equatorial Guinea and Malawi.

Adjusted primary Net enrolment rate, 2007



(- n) = number of years 2007

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009.

13 countries have no data by age or at all: Afghanistan, Angola, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Myanmar, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, and Tuvalu.

Goal 8: 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

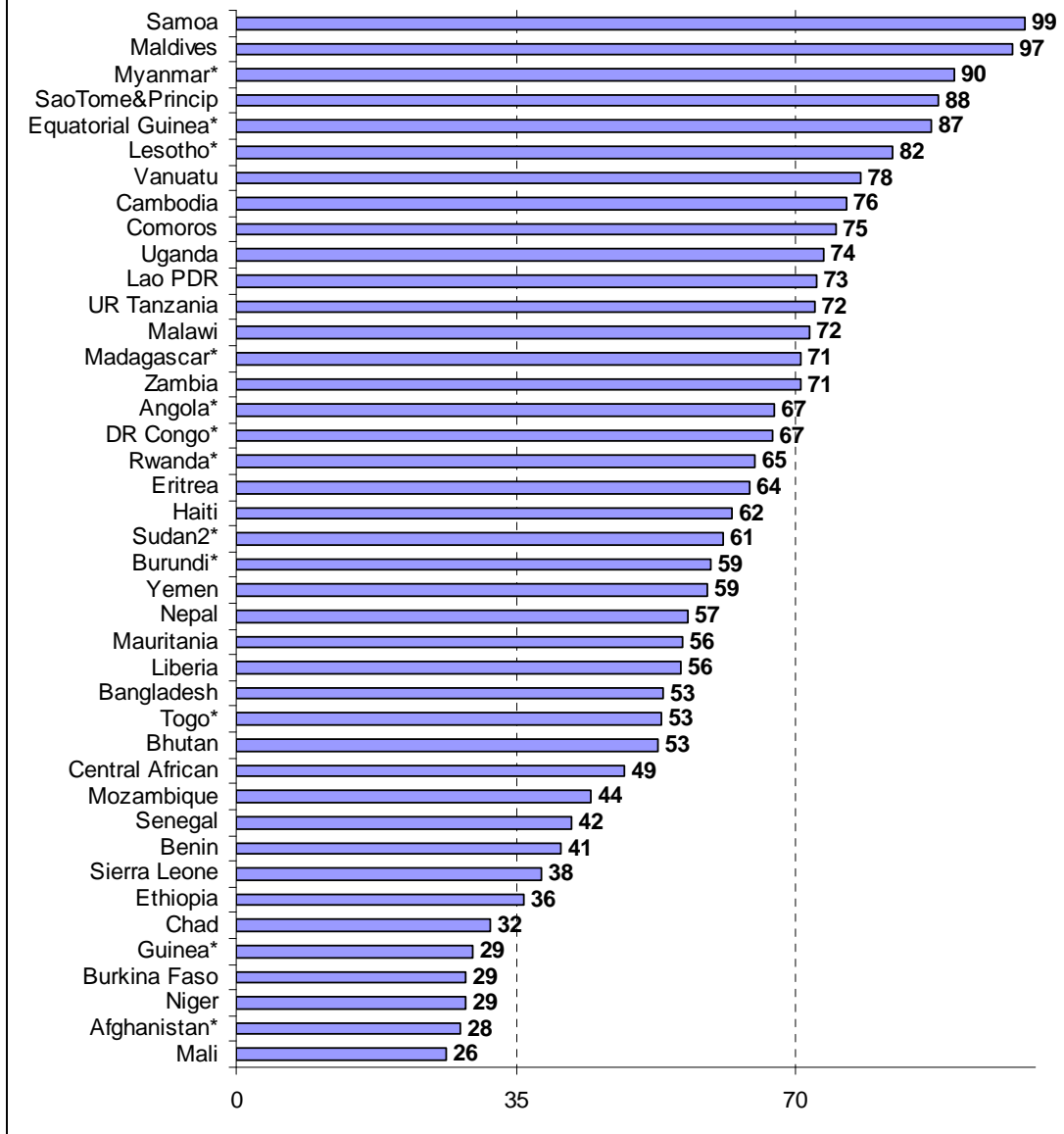
Progress in improving literacy rates has been slow in the LDCs. Since the 2000 round of censuses, the adult literacy rate increased by less than four percentage points, reaching close to 57%. This means that over 204 million adults still need to learn basic skills on how to read and write in the LDCs. They account for 26% of the global adult illiterate population. 18 of the 28 countries with available data have two million or more people who are illiterate. More than 78 illiterate adults live only in two countries, Ethiopia and Bangladesh.

While literacy rates are low in the LDCs overall, a number of countries did make important strides with rates improving by more than five percentage points since 1999. These include Uganda, Mozambique, Benin, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Malawi, Nepal and Eritrea. Niger's literacy rate tripled over the past decade, reaching 29%. Among the LDCs, only Samoa, Maldives and Myanmar reported high literacy rates of 90% or more.

There is, however, considerable variation between countries, with adult literacy rates ranging from 26% in Mali to 99% in Samoa. In 26 countries with available data, the rates are still below 70%. More than half of the adult population is illiterate in the following countries: Mali, Afghanistan, Niger Guinea, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Chad, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Benin, Senegal, Mozambique and Central African Republic.

Women are the most disadvantaged group in terms of literacy rates. In five countries (Afghanistan, Niger, Guinea, Ethiopia and Chad), the literacy rate for women is less than half of that for men. The gender parity index for literacy is below 0.75 in the other 15 LDCs, meaning that less than three women are literate for every four literate men. Only Samoa and the Maldives reported gender parity, while Haiti and Lesotho reported disparities against men.

Adult literacy rate, 2005-2007



*= Data are for the period 1995-2004

2= North Sudan only

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009.

8 countries have no recent data: Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kiribati, Salomon Islands, Somalia, Timor-Leste, and Tuvalu.

Goal 9: 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 education and achievement in basic education of good quality

Equal participation of girls and boys at all levels of education is a fundamental step towards gender equality. The target is for all countries to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all levels of education by 2015. One indicator used to measure gender parity is the ratio of female to male enrolment by level of education weighted by the corresponding population. This is referred to as the gender parity index (GPI)⁴ of the gross enrolment ratio for the relevant level of education.

Primary education:

Although gender parity in primary education has not been achieved across the LDCs, there has been slow but steady progress since 1999. The progress has been even faster compared to the last decade. Indeed, the GPI of the gross enrolment ratio rose from 0.84 in 1999 to 0.92 in 2007, compared to 0.79 in 1991.

In 2007, the GPI ranged from a low of 0.61 in Afghanistan to 1.08 in Bangladesh, where disparities are greater for boys than for girls. This situation is also found in Malawi, Gambia and Mauritania. In total, 15 countries achieved gender parity at the primary education level. But the vast majority of the LDCs (27) reported disparities against girls. Less than one girl is enrolled for every three boys in primary school in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Chad and Yemen.

It should be noted that many countries with a GPI below 0.75 in 1999 made important progress, ranging from six points in Niger to 27 points in Ethiopia. Other countries include Chad and Mali (11 points), Mozambique (13 points), Burkina Faso (14 points), Djibouti (15 points) and Guinea (22 points). However, girls are facing increasing disparities in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Secondary education:

Disparities in secondary education are more pronounced than in primary education. The overall GPI for the LDCs was 0.81 in 2007, which marks an improvement of just more than three points compared to 1999. The progress was much slower during this period than in the last decade (20 points increase). This suggests that the priority given to primary education has not carried over to higher levels.

There is also greater variation amongst countries, with GPIs ranging from a low 0.38 in Afghanistan to 1.27 in Lesotho. Only Timor-Leste has achieved gender parity at this level of education. In 16 countries, less than one girl is enrolled in secondary education out of every three boys. In three countries (Afghanistan, Chad and Yemen) the GPI is below 0.50, meaning that only one girl is enrolled for every two boys.

⁴ Parity is reached when a GPI value is approaching 1.00 (due to the margins of error in the survey and administrative data, a range between 0.97 and 1.03 is commonly considered to reflect parity. GPI's values below this range indicate disparity against girls, and GPI's values beyond this range indicate disparity against boys.

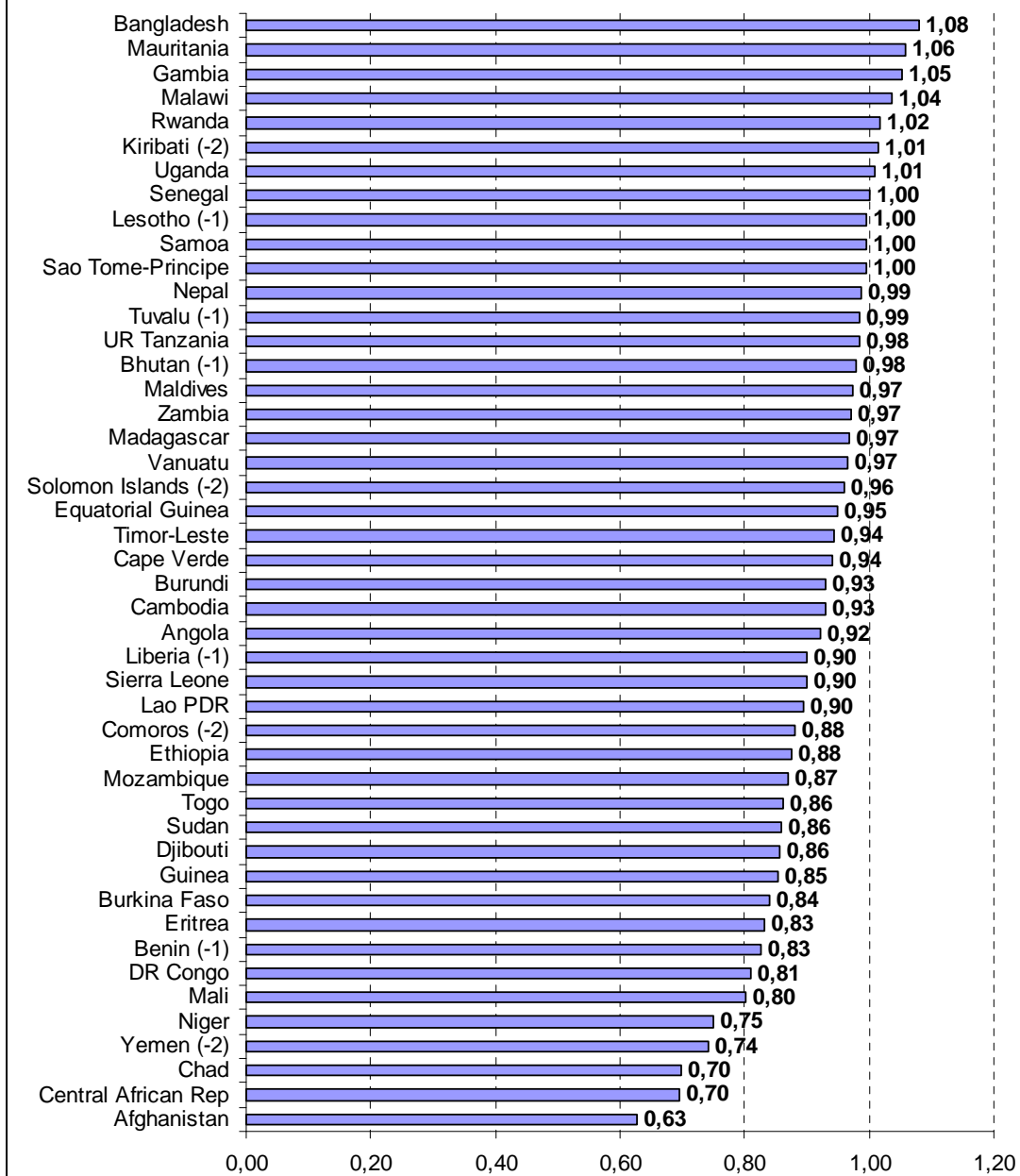
It should be noted however that most of the countries with low GPIs in 1999 have made tremendous progress of more than 10 points in 2007. The highest progress has been in Guinea, Chad, Gambia and Nepal. Other countries in this group that are stagnating or even regressing include the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti. In all these countries the progress in primary education has been achieved at the expense of secondary education.

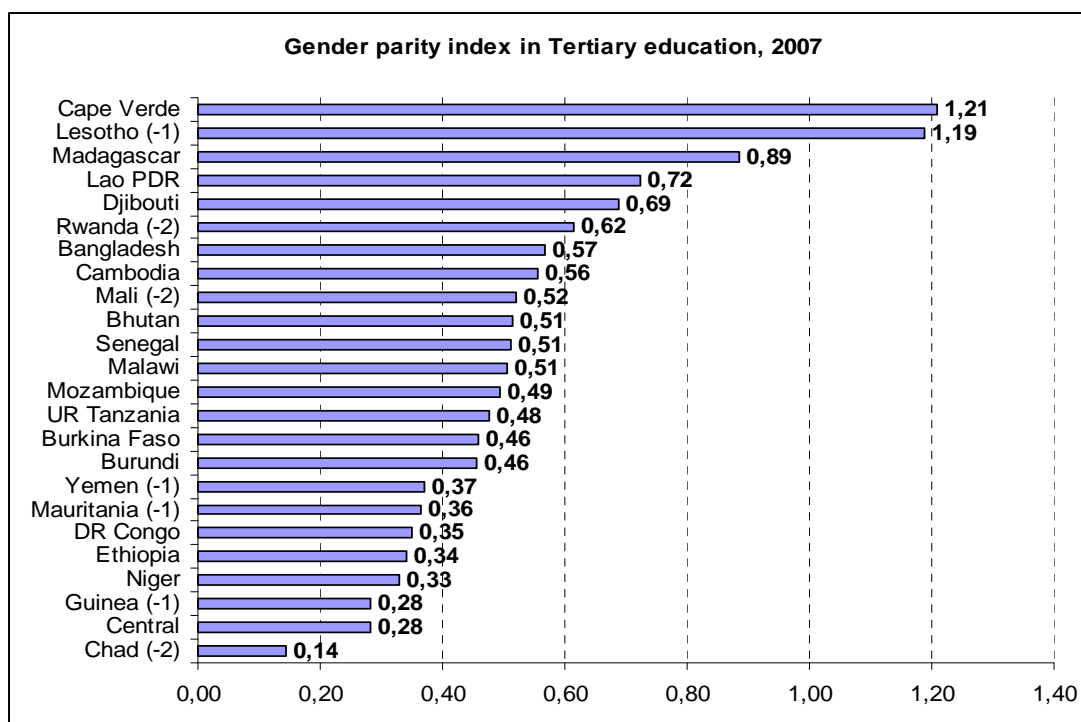
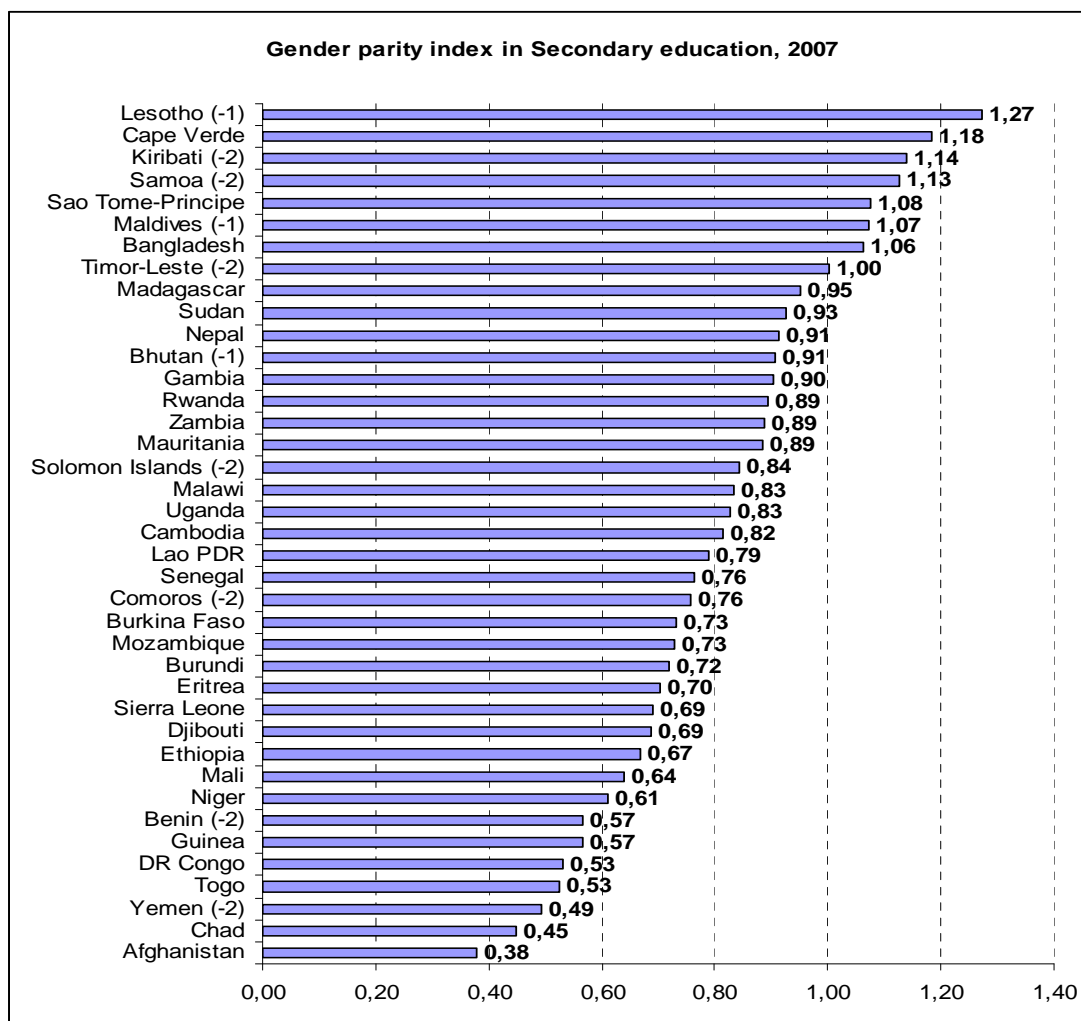
Tertiary education:

The greatest gender disparities are reported at the tertiary level, with the situation changing very little over time. Overall, the GPI for the LDCs has fluctuated slightly since 1999, but ultimately remained the same value in 2007 at 0.58. However, this average masks wide variation between countries, which range from 0.14 in Chad to 1.19 in Lesotho, where six women were enrolled for every five men pursuing tertiary education. With the exception of Lao PDR (0.72) and Madagascar (0.89), all other countries enroll less than one woman in tertiary education for every three men.

Nevertheless, several countries have reported progress of more than 10 points since 1999. They include: Lao PDR, the United Republic of Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Malawi, and Ethiopia. Other countries have shown small progress like Madagascar, Burundi and Bangladesh. It is important to note that the GPI in Djibouti has fallen sharply from 1.06 in 1999 to 0.69 in 2007.

Gender parity ratio in Primary education, 2007

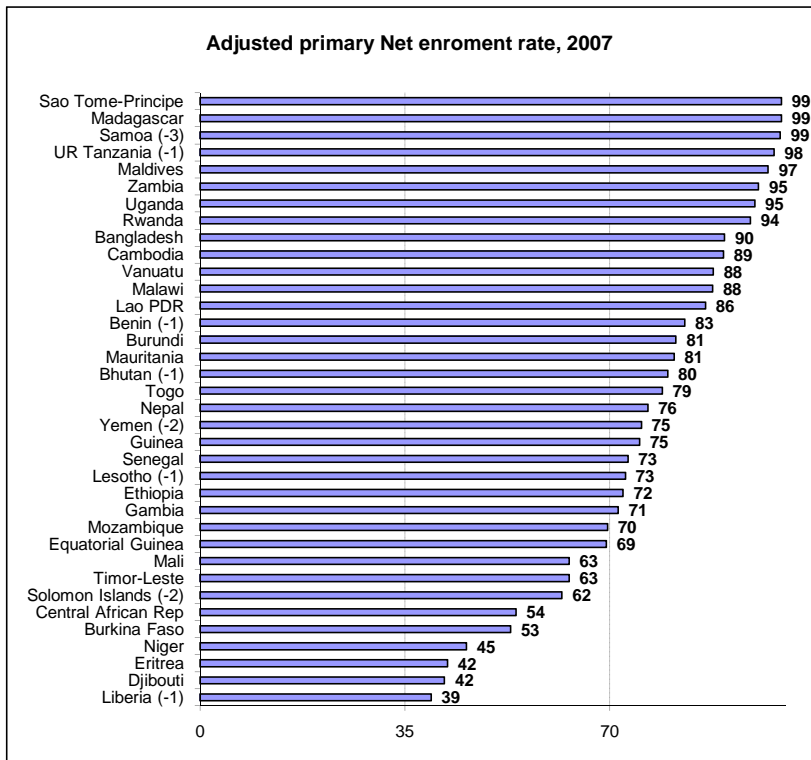




(- n) = number of years 2007
 Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009.

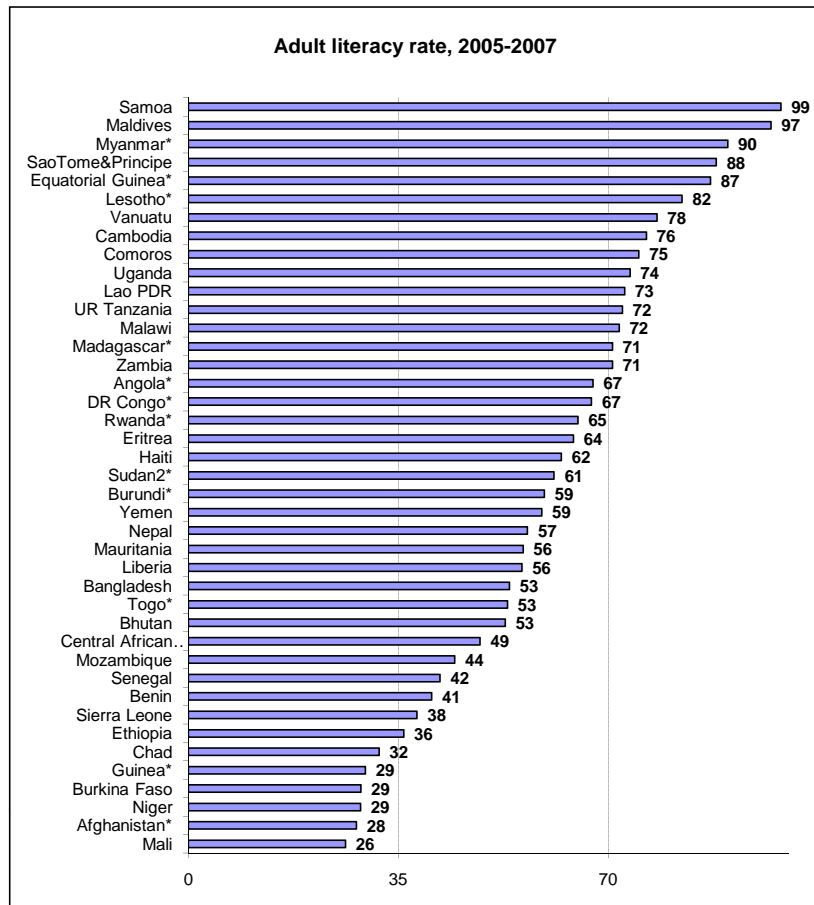
Country	Ad. NER
Liberia (-1)	39
Djibouti	42
Eritrea	42
Niger	45
Burkina Faso	53
Central African Rep	54
Solomon Islands (-2)	62
Timor-Leste	63
Mali	63
Equatorial Guinea	69
Mozambique	70
Gambia	71
Ethiopia	72
Lesotho (-1)	73
Senegal	73
Guinea	75
Yemen (-2)	75
Nepal	76
Togo	79
Bhutan (-1)	80
Mauritania	81
Burundi	81
Benin (-1)	83
Lao PDR	86
Malawi	88
Vanuatu	88
Cambodia	89
Bangladesh	90
Rwanda	94
Uganda	95
Zambia	95
Maldives	97
UR Tanzania (-1)	98
Samoa (-3)	99
Madagascar	99
Sao Tome-Principe	99

Ad. NER



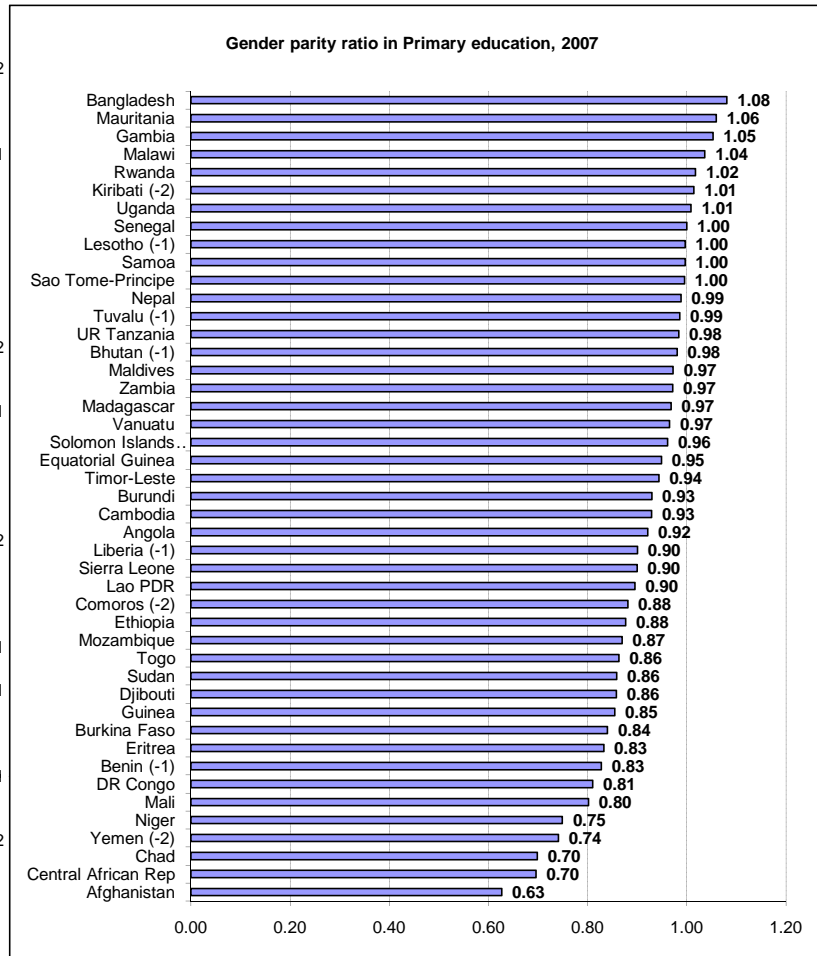
Afghanistan	...
Angola	...
Chad	...
Comoros	...
Democratic Republic of the Congo	...
Guinea-Bissau	...
Haiti	...
Kiribati	...
Myanmar	...
Sierra Leone	...
Somalia	...
Sudan	...
Tuvalu	...

	LIT rate
Mali	26
Afghanistan*	28
Niger	29
Burkina Faso	29
Guinea*	29
Chad	32
Ethiopia	36
Sierra Leone	38
Benin	41
Senegal	42
Mozambique	44
Central African Rep*	49
Bhutan	53
Togo*	53
Bangladesh	53
Liberia	56
Mauritania	56
Nepal	57
Yemen	59
Burundi*	59
Sudan*	61
Haiti	62
Eritrea	64
Rwanda*	65
DR Congo*	67
Angola*	67
Zambia	71
Madagascar*	71
Malawi	72
UR Tanzania	72
Lao PDR	73
Uganda	74
Comoros	75
Cambodia	76
Vanuatu	78
Lesotho*	82
Equatorial Guinea*	87
SaoTome&Principe	88
Myanmar*	90
Maldives	97
Samoa	99
Djibouti	...
Gambia	...
Guinea-Bissau	...
Kiribati	...
Solomon Islands	...
Somalia	...
Timor-Leste	...
Tuvalu	...

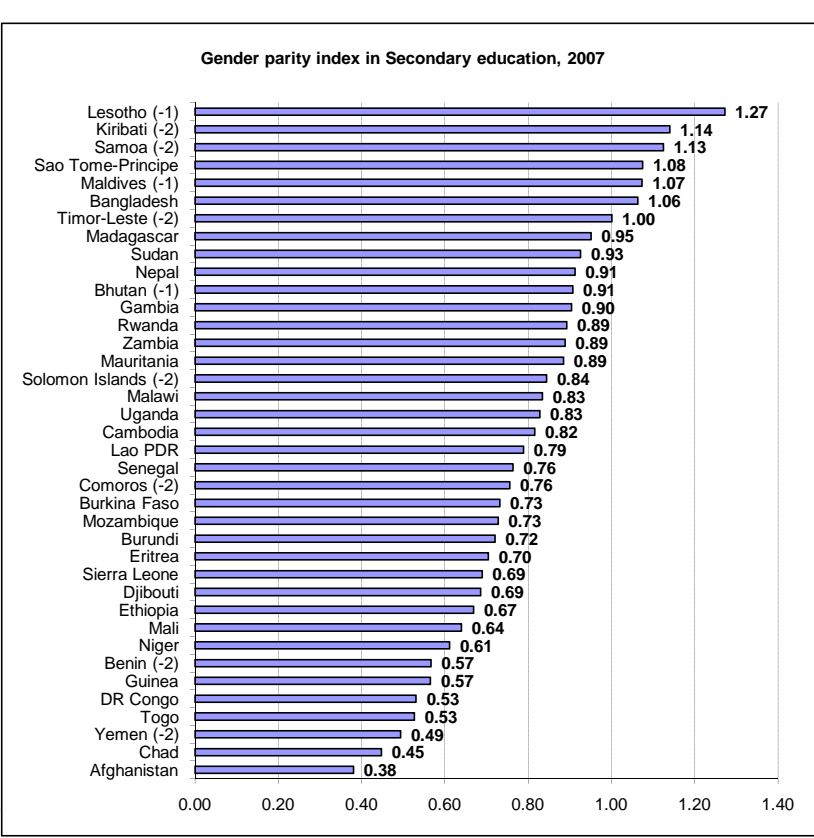


Primary GPI

Afghanistan	0.63
Central African Rep	0.70
Chad	0.70
Yemen (-2)	0.74
Niger	0.75
Mali	0.80
DR Congo	0.81
Benin (-1)	0.83
Eritrea	0.83
Burkina Faso	0.84
Guinea	0.85
Djibouti	0.86
Sudan	0.86
Togo	0.86
Mozambique	0.87
Ethiopia	0.88
Comoros (-2)	0.88
Lao PDR	0.88
Sierra Leone	0.90
Liberia (-1)	0.90
Angola	0.92
Cambodia	0.93
Burundi	0.93
Timor-Leste	0.93
Equatorial Guinea	0.95
Solomon Islands (-2)	0.96
Vanuatu	0.97
Madagascar	0.97
Zambia	0.97
Maldives	0.97
Bhutan (-1)	0.98
UR Tanzania	0.98
Tuvalu (-1)	0.99
Nepal	0.99
Sao Tome-Principe	1.00
Samoa	1.00
Lesotho (-1)	1.00
Senegal	1.00
Uganda	1.01
Kiribati (-2)	1.01
Rwanda	1.02
Malawi	1.04
Gambia	1.05
Mauritania	1.06
Bangladesh	1.08
Guinea-Bissau	...
Haiti	...
Myanmar	...
Somalia	...

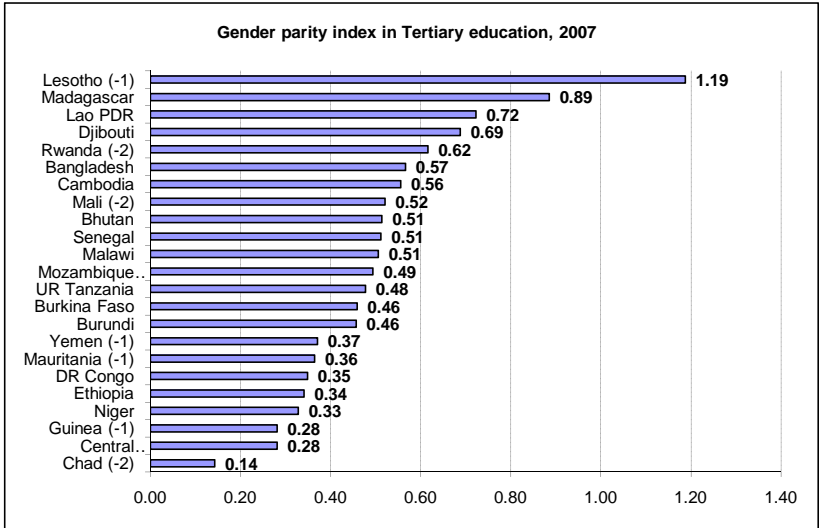


Country	Secondary GPI
Afghanistan	0.38
Chad	0.45
Yemen (-2)	0.49
Togo	0.53
DR Congo	0.53
Guinea	0.57
Benin (-2)	0.57
Niger	0.61
Mali	0.64
Ethiopia	0.67
Djibouti	0.69
Sierra Leone	0.69
Eritrea	0.70
Burundi	0.72
Mozambique	0.73
Burkina Faso	0.73
Comoros (-2)	0.76
Senegal	0.76
Lao PDR	0.79
Cambodia	0.82
Uganda	0.83
Malawi	0.83
Solomon Islands (-2)	0.84
Mauritania	0.89
Zambia	0.89
Rwanda	0.89
Gambia	0.90
Bhutan (-1)	0.91
Nepal	0.91
Sudan	0.93
Madagascar	0.95
Timor-Leste (-2)	1.00
Bangladesh	1.06
Maldives (-1)	1.07
Sao Tome-Principe	1.08
Samoa (-2)	1.13
Kiribati (-2)	1.14
Lesotho (-1)	1.27
Angola	...
Central African Republic	...
Equatorial Guinea	...
Guinea-Bissau	...
Haiti	...
Liberia	...
Myanmar	...
Somalia	...
Tuvalu	...
United Republic of Tanzania	...
Vanuatu	...



Chad (-2)
 Central African Rep (-1)
 Guinea (-1)
 Niger
 Ethiopia
 DR Congo
 Mauritania (-1)
 Yemen (-1)
 Burundi
 Burkina Faso
 UR Tanzania
 Mozambique (-2)
 Malawi
 Senegal
 Bhutan
 Mali (-2)
 Cambodia
 Bangladesh
 Rwanda (-2)
 Djibouti
 Lao PDR
 Madagascar
 Lesotho (-1)
 Afghanistan
 Angola
 Benin
 Comoros
 Equatorial Guinea
 Eritrea
 Gambia
 Guinea-Bissau
 Haiti
 Liberia
 Maldives
 Myanmar
 Nepal
 Samoa
 Sierra Leone
 Solomon Islands
 Somalia
 Sudan
 Timor-Leste
 Togo
 Uganda
 Vanuatu
 Zambia
 Kiribati
 Sao Tome and Principe
 Tuvalu

Tertiary GPI
 0.14 -2
 0.28 -1
 0.28 -1
 0.33
 0.34
 0.35
 0.36 -1
 0.37 -1
 0.46
 0.46
 0.48
 0.49 -2
 0.51
 0.51
 0.51
 0.51
 0.49
 0.48
 0.46
 0.46
 0.51
 0.52 -2
 0.56
 0.57
 0.62 -2
 0.69
 0.72
 0.89
 1.19 -1



Adult Literacy rate, by sexe¹
Indicators : 10 - 11 - 12 - 13

Time Period Country	1985-1994				1995-2004				2005-2007			
	Total	Male	Female	GPI	Total	Male	Female	GPI	Total	Male	Female	GPI
Afghanistan	...	...	...	...	28.0	43.1	12.6	0.29	...	...	...	...
Angola	...	...	...	...	67.4	82.9	54.2	0.65	...	...	...	...
Bangladesh	35.3	44.3	25.8	0.58	47.5	53.9	40.8	0.76	53.5 **	58.7 **	48.0 **	0.82
Benin	27.2	39.9	16.6	0.42	34.7	47.9	23.3	0.49	40.5 **	53.1 **	27.9 **	0.53
Bhutan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	52.8	65.0	38.7	0.59
Burkina Faso	13.6	19.6	8.2	0.42	21.8	29.4	15.2	0.52	28.7	36.7	21.6	0.59
Burundi	37.4	48.2	27.5	0.57	59.3	67.3	52.2	0.78	...	...	...	...
Cambodia	...	...	...	...	73.6	84.7	64.1	0.76	76.3 **	85.8 **	67.7 **	0.79
Central African Republic	33.6	48.0	20.3	0.42	48.6	64.8	33.5	0.52	...	...	...	...
Chad	12.2	...	...	...	28.4	39.4	18.0	0.46	31.8 **	43.0 **	20.8 **	0.48
Comoros	62.7 **	69.8 **	55.7 **	0.80	72.4 **	78.1 **	66.8 **	0.86	75.1 **	80.3 **	69.8 **	0.87
Democratic Republic of the Congo	...	...	...	...	67.2	80.9	54.1	0.67	...	...	...	...
Djibouti	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Equatorial Guinea	...	...	...	...	87.0	93.4	80.5	0.86	...	...	...	...
Eritrea	...	...	...	...	52.5	65.4	40.2	0.62	64.2 **	76.2 **	53.0 **	0.70
Ethiopia	27.0	36.0	18.5	0.51	35.9	50.0	22.8	0.46	35.9 **	50.0 **	22.8 **	0.46
Gambia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Guinea	...	...	...	...	29.5	42.6	18.1	0.43	...	...	...	...
Guinea-Bissau	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Haiti	46.2 **	46.6 **	45.9 **	0.99	54.8 **	56.5 **	53.2 **	0.94	62.1 **	60.1 **	64.0 **	1.07
Kiribati	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lao People's Democratic Republic	...	...	...	...	68.7	77.0	60.9	0.79	72.7	82.5	63.2	0.77
Lesotho	...	...	...	...	82.2	73.7	90.3	1.23	...	...	...	...
Liberia	40.8 **	52.1 **	29.7 **	0.57	52.0 **	58.3 **	45.7 **	0.78	55.5 **	60.2 **	50.9 **	0.84
Madagascar	...	...	...	...	70.7	76.5	65.3	0.85	...	...	...	...
Malawi	48.5	65.3	33.5	0.51	64.1	74.9	54.0	0.72	71.8 **	79.2 **	64.6 **	0.82
Maldives	96.0	95.9	96.1	1.00	96.3	96.2	96.4	1.00	97.0 **	97.0 **	97.1 **	1.00
Mali	...	...	...	...	24.0	32.7	15.9	0.49	26.2	34.9	18.2	0.52
Mauritania	...	...	...	...	51.2	59.5	43.4	0.73	55.8 **	63.3 **	48.3 **	0.76
Mozambique	...	...	...	...	38.7	54.8	25.0	0.46	44.4 **	57.2 **	33.0 **	0.58
Myanmar	...	...	...	...	89.9	93.9	86.4	0.92	...	...	...	...
Nepal	33.0	49.2	17.4	0.35	48.6	62.7	34.9	0.56	56.5 **	70.3 **	43.6 **	0.62
Niger	...	...	...	...	9.4	9.4	9.4	1.00	28.7	42.9	15.1	0.35
Rwanda	57.9	...	...	...	64.9	71.4	59.8	0.84	...	...	...	...
Samoa	97.9	98.4	97.4	0.99	98.6 **	98.9 **	98.2 **	0.99	98.7 **	98.9 **	98.4 **	0.99
Sao Tome and Principe	73.2	85.2	61.9	0.73	84.9	92.2	77.9	0.85	87.9 **	93.4 **	82.7 **	0.88
Senegal	26.9	36.9	17.9	0.48	39.3	51.1	29.2	0.57	41.9	52.3	33.0	0.63
Sierra Leone	...	...	...	...	34.8	46.7	24.2	0.52	38.1 **	50.0 **	26.8 **	0.54
Solomon Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Somalia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sudan ²	...	...	...	...	60.9	71.1	51.8	0.73	...	...	...	...
Timor-Leste	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Togo	...	...	...	...	53.2	68.7	38.5	0.56	...	...	...	...
Tuvalu	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Uganda	56.1	68.2	44.8	0.66	68.1	78.3	58.9	0.75	73.6 **	81.8 **	65.5 **	0.80
United Republic of Tanzania	59.1	71.4	48.1	0.67	69.4	77.5	62.2	0.80	72.3 **	79.0 **	65.9 **	0.83
Vanuatu	65.5 **	68.4 **	62.5 **	0.91	75.5 **	77.6 **	73.3 **	0.94	78.1 **	80.0 **	76.1 **	0.95
Yemen	37.1	56.7	17.1	0.30	54.1 **	73.3 **	34.7 **	0.47	58.9 **	77.0 **	40.5 **	0.53
Zambia	65.0	73.0	57.4	0.79	69.1	80.9	61.8	0.76	70.6 **	80.8 **	60.7 **	0.75
MDG: Least Developed Countries	46.1	56.1	36.6	0.65	53.4	63.0	44.2	0.70	56.6	65.8	47.8	0.73

1. All literacy data present in the table are the latest available national data and UIS GALP projection for each reference time period.

2. Data for Sudan cover North only

**= UIS GALP projection

See metadata notes for broader explanation of national literacy definition, sources and reference year of the data.

