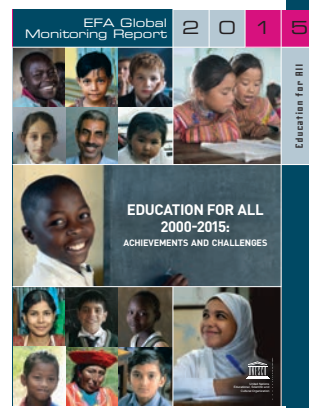
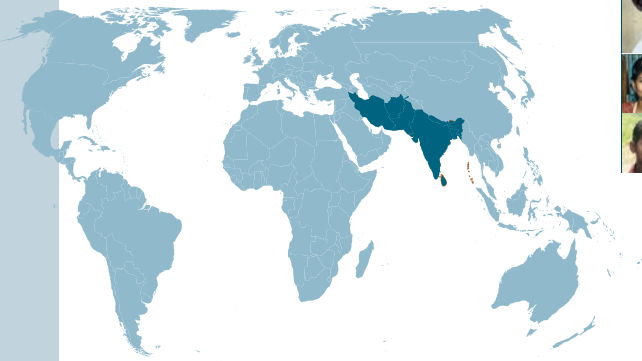




United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Regional overview: South and West Asia



Education for All (EFA) remains a challenge in South and West Asia.¹ Since 2000, the region's countries have made important progress, albeit uneven. Early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes have expanded, yet the level of participation remains limited and unequal in several countries; responding to the needs of youth and adults remains a challenge; low literacy levels still affect over 400 million adults, most of them women; gender disparities were reduced considerably, yet full equality remains elusive.

Significant progress towards free and universal primary education can be noted, especially in India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Nepal, but too many children leave school too early and the quality of education remains poor. Secondary education has been continuously expanding, due to the extension of basic education in some countries. But the share of enrolments in private schools has grown, which has maintained or even increased inequalities. Overall, imbalances in the way many education systems are developing have both created and reinforced disparities. These must be redressed as the world is defining a new education agenda – for children, youth and adults to benefit equally from the opportunities education provides, regardless of the circumstances they were born or live in.

In reviewing progress since 2000, this regional overview summarizes findings in response to key questions addressed by the *2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report*: What are the main EFA achievements and what challenges remain as the world is defining a new education agenda after 2015? Which countries have advanced fastest? Which faced difficulties? Which policy initiatives have been implemented to promote access of both girls and boys to education and improve its quality, especially for the most disadvantaged groups and areas? Have governments and the international community provided adequate support? The 2015 GMR shows that, despite progress, Education For All remains unfinished in the countries of South and West Asia. This must be taken into account in the post-2015 agenda.

EFA progress and challenges

Goal 1: Early childhood care and education

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

Child mortality and nutrition

- Under-5 child mortality rates in the region improved noticeably, falling from 116 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 86 in 2000, to 55 deaths per 1,000 births in 2013. Despite the acceleration of progress after 2000, the MDG target of reducing the under-5 mortality rate by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015 is unlikely to be met for the whole region. Thanks to the tremendous progress countries have made since 2000, with child mortality rates falling faster than over the 1990s, Bangladesh,

1. See Table 2 for countries and territories in this EFA region.

Bhutan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives and Nepal were projected to meet the MDG 4 target by 2015, but Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were not. Afghanistan remains the country with the highest under-5 mortality rate (85) and Sri Lanka the country with the lowest (10).

- Having a skilled birth attendant present during childbirth is critically important for the survival and health of both mother and child. An alarming degree of disparity in access between the poorest and richest women exists in many countries. However, since 2000, great progress has been achieved, such as in Nepal, where the number of births aided by a skilled attendant increased from 14% in 2001 to 50% in 2011.
- Immunizing children against common and preventable illnesses is important to their overall health, and therefore to their readiness to learn and subsequent schooling. However, the gaps between the richest and poorest households continue to be vast, particularly striking in Pakistan where 75% of richest children were immunized in 2012–2013 compared with only 23% for the poorest.
- In the region, 34% of children under 5 were affected by moderate or severe stunting in 2013, a decline of more than 25 percentage points since 1990. Despite regional progress, in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, over 40% of children were stunted, well above the world average (25%). In contrast, less than 10% of children under 5 were stunted in the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2011.

Pre-primary education

- Since 1999, pre-primary enrolment in South and West Asia grew considerably, rising by almost two and half times to reach 53.5 million in 2012. This translated into an increase in the pre-primary gross enrolment ratio (GER) from 22% to 55%.
- The six countries in the region with data for both 1999 and 2012 made substantial progress in pre-primary enrolment. India and Nepal started from extremely low baselines in 1999 and greatly increased their GER. Nepal, which increased its ratio from 11% to 84% between 1999 and 2013, took action to expand pre-primary education in successive national development plans. Despite progress, pre-primary participation is still very low in Bangladesh, at about 26%, and even more so in Bhutan, at 9%.

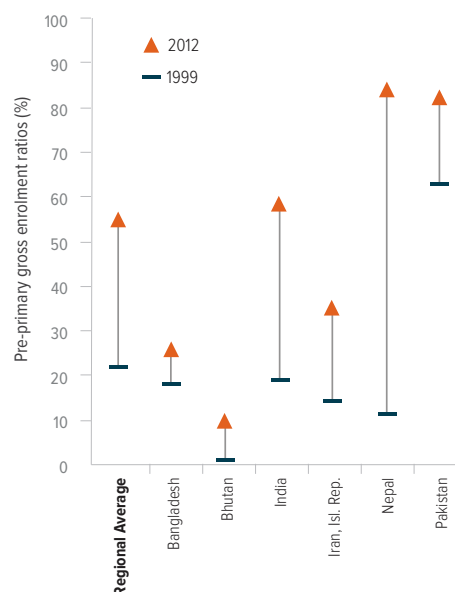
Private sector involvement

- Among the four countries with data, enrolment in private institutions as a percentage of total pre-primary enrolment ranged from 24% in Nepal in 2013 to some 94% in Maldives in 2012. The share decreased significantly in Bhutan from 100% to 40% between 1999 and 2011.
- In some countries, parallel pre-primary education systems have emerged: those privately provided alongside government ones. A recent study following children in 362 villages in three Indian States showed that while 85% of children in Assam attend government child- and mother-care centres that also provide non-formal pre-school education (Anganwadis), only 52% do in Andhra Pradesh and 20% in Rajasthan. Meanwhile, about 30% attend private schools in Andhra Pradesh and 40% in Rajasthan, reflecting the enormous growth in private pre-primary schools across rural, urban and tribal areas. Four countries in the region (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal) have arrived at public–private partnerships, usually involving state funding for private provision, though often with some fees as well.

Good quality ECCE

- Recent data on teacher numbers and training are scarce for the region. In 2012, of the very few countries with data, the pupil/teacher ratio ranged from 11:1 in Bhutan to 23:1 in Nepal and 25:1 in Maldives. The latter two were the sole reporting data on teacher training, with the percentage of those trained being

Figure 1: Changes in pre-primary education gross enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2012



87% in Nepal and 89% in Maldives, where it had increased by 42 percentage points since 1999.

- Curriculum, pedagogy and culture all influence the quality of preschools in addition to teachers. India through its new Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework offers an example of how countries have improved curriculum and pedagogy for ECCE. The framework takes a developmental approach, with different activities for age groups 3 to 4 and 4 to 6. In addition to interactive learning around reading, storytelling, songs, problem solving, writing and numeracy, the curriculum also includes activities to develop fine motor skills, physical coordination and fitness, as well as creativity through drama, music and more.

Goal 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.

School participation

- South and West Asia has seen one of the world's largest increases in the primary adjusted net enrolment ratio (ANER), which increased from 78% to 94% between 1999 and 2012. This led to a 73% decline in the number of out-of-school children, from 37.7 million to 9.8 million over the period. Thus, South and West Asia, where 35% of the world's out-of-school children lived in 1999, accounted for only 17% of the total in 2012. Despite this progress, access to school remains an issue in the region. Estimates for 2012 indicate that 57% of the region's out-of-school children were not expected to ever go to school.
- Four of the six countries with data have made considerable progress toward universal primary enrolment since 1999. Bhutan and Nepal made the most rapid improvements in primary ANER. Nepal was far from the target in 1999 but had reached it by 2013, as had India and the Islamic Republic of Iran. But Sri Lanka, which had achieved the goal by 2001 had moved away from it by 2012, with the ANER declining from 100% to 94% in 2012. Pakistan had the lowest participation rate, at 72%, and was projected to still be far from UPE in 2015.
- Pakistan had the largest number of out-of-school children in 2012, at 5.4 million, followed by India at 1.4 million. It made less progress than would be expected given its initial starting point and per capita

income. By contrast, in the same period India made marked progress, reducing its number of children not enrolled by nearly 16 million as GDP per capita improved, which suggests equity in the distribution of economic gains.

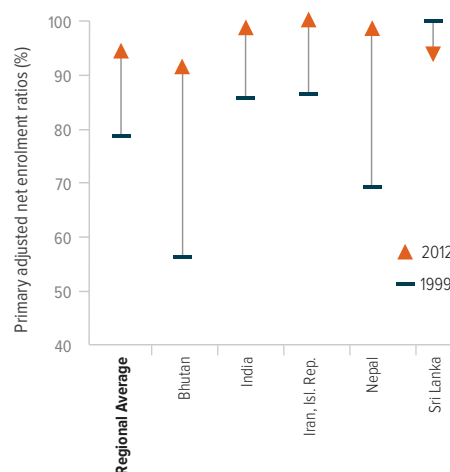
Primary school completion

- Despite the significant progress towards universal primary education in South and West Asia, school retention remains a crucial issue. The percentage of children who reached the last grade of primary school was constant, at only 64%, in both 1999 and 2011. In other words, 36% of pupils were dropping out too early to complete school, putting the region still at a distance to universal primary education. The survival rate to the last grade in Pakistan was among the lowest, whereas nearly 97% of primary school pupils reached the last grade in Sri Lanka in 2011.

Inequalities within countries

- Poverty affects primary attainment. In Bangladesh, the primary education attainment rate of the poorest children was only about 49% in 2010, a gap of 28 percentage points from the average rate of 77%. The situation of the poorest has improved since 2000, when it was 42%, but did so more slowly than the average, with the gap between them increasing by 8 percentage points. By contrast, in Nepal the attainment rates of children from the poorest households increased sizably from 25% to 61% between 2000 and 2010, with the gap between the poor and the average population declining by nearly 8 percentage points. With a strong commitment to universalizing education, Nepal's experience

Figure 2: Changes in primary education adjusted net enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2012



shows that countries can rise from conflict situations and greatly improve their education systems, reducing gender and income disparities in school access.

Goal 3: Youth and adult skills

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

Transition to and participation in secondary education

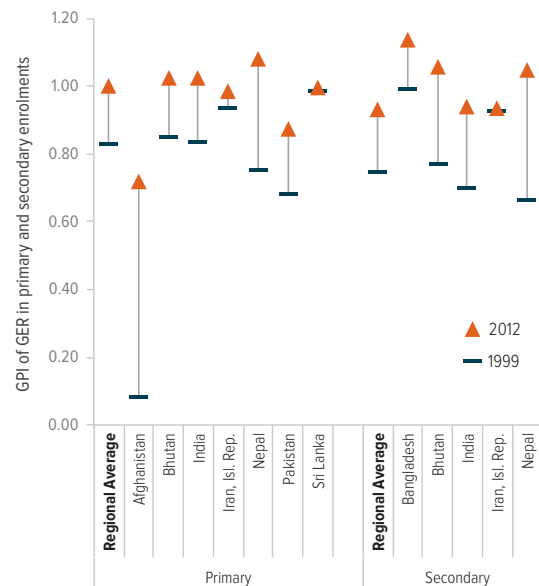
■ Participation in lower and upper secondary education has increased since 1999 in the region. On average, the lower secondary gross enrolment ratio rose from 60% to 81% between 1999 and 2012. At the upper secondary level, the GER increased on average from 32% to 51%. Lower secondary GERs increased in all 8 countries with data, and fastest in countries that started at a low level, including Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal. In Afghanistan, the lower secondary GER increased from 13% to 63% between 2001 and 2012. Large increases have also been observed in upper secondary education participation, particularly in the same three countries, with the ratio rising almost ninefold in Bhutan, from 6% to 50% over the period.

- Inequality in access to secondary education still persists. Marginalized groups are the most affected. In Pakistan, the transition rate from primary to lower secondary of the poorest adolescents has increased from 54% to nearly 60% between 2006 and 2012. However, the gap with the wealthiest group did not change noticeably, with the rate for the richest adolescents rising from 90% to 93%.
- Inequalities also remain in the attainment of lower secondary education, for example according to where adolescents live. Yet, in a few countries the rural–urban gap in lower secondary school attainment has been substantially reduced. In Nepal, this gap was about 35 percentage points in 2001 with only 27% of adolescents graduating from lower secondary school in rural areas. By 2011, the gap had fallen to about 20 percentage points with 58% of adolescents graduating.

Technical and vocational skills

- Despite much greater attention to TVET in recent years, and clearer definitions of the skills involved, this type of programme remains of low priority in South and West Asia. In 2012, technical and vocational education was less than 4% of total secondary enrolment in the majority of countries with data, and ranged from nil in

Figure 3: Lower and upper secondary gross enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2012



Bhutan to 11% in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where the percentage had increased by more than 5 points between 1999 and 2012.

Second chance education

- Education alternatives are needed for youth and adults who are no longer in school. An array of alternative, 'second chance' and non-formal programmes can be cited as examples of progress in this region. For example, in Bangladesh, BRAC programmes aim to bring out-of-school children into the primary education system and prepare them for the secondary level. More than 97% of BRAC primary school graduates continue to formal secondary school, though many of them cannot complete their secondary education due to poverty. Yet, regular follow-up meetings with children, guardians, teachers and school committee members are conducted, and BRAC provides financial support to poor primary school graduates.
- In India, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) was established in 1990 with 'authority to register, examine and certify students registered with it up to pre-degree courses.' NIOS offers 'open basic education programmes' for those aged 14 and older. Courses and certification are geared for levels that are equivalent to grades 3, 5 and 8 in the formal system. Learners also have access to vocational courses and life enrichment programmes that lead to secondary and higher secondary certification examinations. Enrolment figures and the number of certified learners have

risen steadily over the years. As of 2011, NIOS had a cumulative total of 2.2 million students; it is often called the world's largest open school.

- The Pratham Open School of Education (POSE) is another second chance initiative in India. It started in 2011 and aims to reach young girls and women who have been marginalized from the mainstream education system and give them a second chance to complete their schooling. This residential programme has expanded to seven states and provides a three month condensed foundation course to bridge the gap between basic concepts and the secondary school curriculum. So far, POSE has taught 20,000 primary school children.

Goal 4: Adult literacy

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

Adult literacy rates and illiterates

- The average adult literacy in the region was 47% in 1990, increased to nearly 59% in 2000 and to 63% in 2012, and is projected to reach 69% in 2015. While the adult illiteracy rate was projected to fall by 26% between 2000 and 2015, the reduction will fall short of the target to reduce illiteracy by 50%.
- Due to population growth, the number of adults with low literacy skills has increased from 390 million in 2000 to nearly 410 million in the 2005-12 period, but is projected to drop to 388 million in 2015. Women account for about two-thirds of the total adult illiterate population in the region, a percentage almost unchanged since 2000.
- Adult illiteracy rates are projected to have declined between 2000 and 2015 in all six countries with comparable data in the region. Yet, with the exception of Maldives where the adult literacy rate was 98% in 2006, no country is projected to have its illiteracy rate halved between 2000 and 2015, and thus reach the target. The Islamic Republic of Iran, with a decline in its adult illiteracy rate of 42%, will be close to the target. Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be far from it.
- The Dakar Framework made explicit reference for the goal to be reached 'especially for women'. Global improvement since 2000 appears to extend a move towards gender parity that began earlier. The region's average gender parity index (GPI) in adult literacy increased from 0.66 to 0.70 between 1990 and 2000 and is projected to reach 0.76 by 2015. South and West Asia will remain the region with the biggest gender disparity.
- The adult literacy GPI improved in all countries. Marked improvements are projected for Bangladesh (from 0.58 to 0.91), India (from 0.55 to 0.75) and Pakistan (from 0.53 to 0.66). However, gender parity in adult literacy will be achieved only in the Maldives and Sri Lanka. In Afghanistan, the literacy situation of adult women will remain dismal with a projected GPI of only 0.46 in 2015.

Direct assessment of literacy

- Countries and international agencies are conducting more sophisticated investigations to gauge not only whether adults are 'literate' or 'illiterate' but also their level of literacy and the consequences for individuals and societies.
- Among these more accurate literacy surveys is the Skills toward Employment and Productivity (STEP) survey of adult skills, including literacy, launched by the World Bank in 13 middle income countries in 2010. One of them was Sri Lanka, where adults were administered the assessment in either Sinhalese or Tamil and where 81% of respondents passed an initial screen for reading literacy in one of these languages, with no gender disparity.
- To date, most literacy data are based on self- or third-party declaration that tend to understate illiteracy's extent. Findings from direct literacy assessments are more accurate and contribute to understanding literacy levels. For example, in 2011 in Bangladesh, the census declaration method led to adult literacy rate estimates of 64% for men and 58% for women in the 11 to 45 age group. But the second national literacy survey conducted the same year, a direct assessment, showed that only 57% of men and 50% of women were functionally literate.

Goal 5: Gender parity and equality

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

Gender disparities in primary education

- Since Dakar, there have been substantial reductions in or elimination of gender disparities in primary enrolment, around the world. South and West Asia made the strongest progress of all regions, achieving parity as early as 2008 from the lowest starting point, a GPI of 0.83 in 1999.
- Regional averages mask wide variation among countries. Of the 8 countries with data, 4 were at gender parity in 2012, with Bhutan, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran reaching the target over the period, while parity has been achieved in Sri Lanka since 1999. Despite considerable progress in getting girls into school, Afghanistan still had 72 girls enrolled for every 100 boys in 2012. In Nepal, previous gender gaps have been reversed, with 92 boys for every 100 girls enrolled in primary education by 2012.
- When enrolled, girls stand an equal or better chance than boys of continuing to the upper grades of primary school. In Bangladesh and Bhutan, while boys and girls have equal chances to have access to school, boys are more likely to drop out before grade 5 than girls.

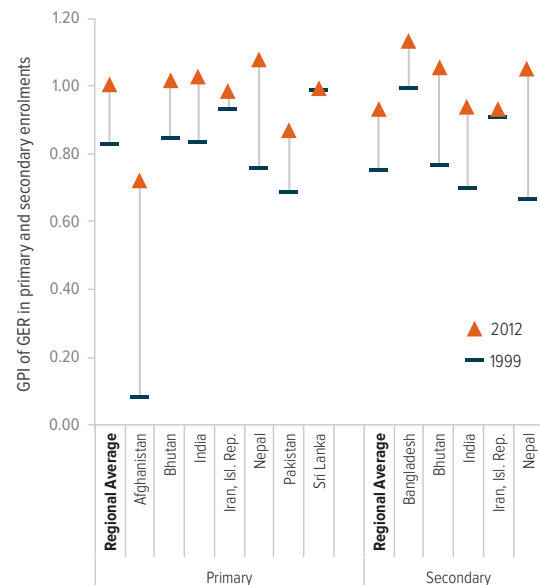
Inequalities within countries

- The poorest girls remain the least likely to attend school in South and West Asia. In Pakistan, between 2006 and 2012, little progress was made in reducing the proportion of the poorest children who had never attended school, and in reducing the gender gap of 18 percentage points between the poorest girls and boys. By contrast, among the richest children, there was little gender disparity in either year.
- Poverty deepens gender disparities in primary education completion. In Nepal, where gender parity in primary attainment has been achieved since 2000 for the richest girls, the poorest girls still lag far behind the poorest boys, with a GPI of 0.84 in 2010. However, the situation has improved considerably since 2000 when the GPI amongst the poorest children stood at about 0.40.

Gender disparities in secondary education

- At the secondary school level, South and West Asia again made the strongest global progress, with the GPI increasing from about 0.75 to 0.93 between 1999 and 2012. Gender disparities at the expense of girls have reduced significantly in India where the GPI stood at 0.70 in 1999 and rose to 0.94 in 2012, with the country likely to achieve parity in 2015. In Bhutan and

Figure 4: Gender parity indices in the primary and secondary gross enrolment ratios, 1999 and 2012



Nepal, while girls were extremely disadvantaged in secondary enrolment in 1999, with GPIs of 0.77 and 0.66, respectively, the situation had reversed by 2012, as boys became relatively disadvantaged. Bangladesh observed the same trend, moving away from the gender parity it had achieved by 1999 to a disadvantage for boys by 2012.

Gender equality

- Achieving gender equality in education requires not only that girls and boys have an equal chance to participate in education, but also that students benefit from a gender-sensitive learning environment.
- The proportion of female teachers is an important indicator of progress towards gender equality. Yet in South and West Asia, there are cases where women are still severely under-represented in the teaching profession. For example, in Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan, women made up less than 47% of primary teachers in 2012. In secondary education, the average share of female teachers was only 39% in the region, thus denying adolescent girls important role models.
- Despite attempts to correct it, gender bias in textbooks remains pervasive in many countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. In Pakistan, resistance within institutions responsible for curriculum reform and textbook production has contributed to the low political priority given to revising

textbooks; this has been reinforced by a lack of public support.

- Gender-responsive curricula that develop transferable skills have the potential to support learning and promote positive gender relations. Gender Equity Movement in Schools, a project in Mumbai, India, developed an add-on curriculum including content on gender roles, violence, and sexual and reproductive health for standard 6 and 7 children. Graduates demonstrated greater problem-solving skills and self-confidence, alongside improved attitudes and gender awareness.
- School-related gender-based violence is one of the worst manifestations of gender discrimination and seriously undermines attempts to achieve gender equality in education. Unsafe and violent school experiences have been shown to have a negative impact on boys' and girls' achievement and attainment. Social taboos make researching gender-based violence difficult in Asian countries and incidences of abuse are often unreported. Yet small-scale studies in South and West Asia report sexualized behaviour by teachers towards girls.
- Learning assessments highlight gender differences in subject performance. In some poorer countries where girls have historically faced barriers to equal participation in education, they continue to face disadvantage in obtaining important foundation skills. Results of the 2014 Annual Status of Education Report learning assessment in rural Pakistan shows that gender gaps are small among grade 5 students, sometimes favouring girls. However, girls' relative performance is worse among children aged 10–12 years, whether they are in school or not, particularly in poorer, less developed provinces and territories.

Goal 6: Quality of education

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

Monitoring progress in learning outcomes

- Of the nine countries in the region only the Islamic Republic of Iran and Nepal had conducted a national assessment of learning outcomes before 1999. Since then all nine countries have carried out at least one national assessment; many have done so on multiple occasions. National assessments are predominantly curriculum-based and subject-oriented, and have typically focused on student performance in latter grades of primary education.
- Government is not alone in education assessment. In India, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), a non-government household survey, reported that, while India's education system succeeded at enrolling many more children, there were wide disparities in students' achievement of basic skills across states, a finding validated in the official National Achievement Survey of grade 3 students. ASER further noted a small decline in reading outcomes in recent years, and a larger one in mathematics. The ASER findings have been used to inform national education policy.

Learning outcomes

- Recent ASER results in rural Pakistan provide a stark illustration of the challenge to enable all children to acquire basic skills. In 2014 in Balochistan province, only 33% of grade 5 students could read a story in Urdu, Sindhi or Pashto, whereas in the wealthier province of Punjab, 63% could do so. In Balochistan, only 24% of fifth-graders could do a division exercise, compared with 50% in Punjab.

Investing in teachers

- South and West Asia had about 5.5 million primary school teachers in 2012, an increase of 26% since 1999. Despite the increase in the number of teachers, the primary school pupil/teacher ratio (PTR) for the region remains more or less the same, at 35:1 over the period. At the country level most countries with data reduced their PTR with the largest reductions occurring in Nepal and Bhutan, where the PTR decreased from 42:1 to 24:1. On the other hand, in Pakistan the PTR increased by more than 25%. In Afghanistan, it rose by 31%, from 33:1 in 1999 to 44:1 in 2011, where an almost fivefold rise in the teaching force was not enough to meet the almost sevenfold rise in primary enrolment.
- Insufficient teacher training remains an issue. The median percentage of trained primary school teachers was 82% in South and West Asia in 2012, ranging from 58% in Bangladesh to 96% in Nepal. In Bangladesh, while the PTR was already high at 40:1, the shortage of trained teachers was even more apparent. In 2011, the number of primary school pupils per trained teacher was 70:1. In Nepal, the dramatic increase in the percentage of trained teachers from 15% to 96% between 1999 and 2013 led to a sharp decline in the

pupil/trained teacher ratio from 260:1 to about 28:1, a huge improvement due to a policy of upgrading teacher qualifications to require additional training.

Instructional time

- Instructional time has been shown to enhance learners' exposure to knowledge and result in significant learning gains. In the late 2000s, countries in South and West Asia mandated an average of about 800 hours of official instructional time in grade 1, increasing in subsequent grades to 880 hours in grade 8.
- Yet, in many countries, especially in schools in poor communities, school days are lost due to late teacher postings, in-service teacher training, strikes and armed conflict. Teacher absenteeism can also reduce learning time. Estimates indicate that the teacher absenteeism rate in primary education exceeded 20% in India.

Government policies and actions to accelerate progress towards EFA goals since 2000

Varying policy approaches have been designed and implemented over the 15 past years to expand quality ECCE programmes, increase equitable access to education and improve school completion and education quality, as well as promote gender equality in education. Box 1 indicates some of the policies and strategies that governments in South and West Asia put in place to achieve EFA goals.

Financing Education for All

Mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in education.

Box 1: Examples of policies implemented over the past 15 years to:

INCREASE ACCESS

- ▶ The 2009 Right to Education (RTE) Act of India, was a key legislative advance, and was monitored by Pakistan as it prepared its own RTE Act. In India, the RTE Act created opportunities for people with disabilities to be included in mainstream schools. National estimates of enrolment of children with special needs show a sharp increase, from 0.57 million in 2002/03 to 2.16 million in 2007/08; the percentage of schools with ramps increased from 1.5% in 2004 to 55% in 2012/13. However, a large share of children with disabilities still remains out of school. In 2012/13, it was estimated that nationally almost half the children with mental disabilities were out of school. Still, the major advances reflect emerging political attention to children with disabilities.
- ▶ The universalization of primary school was a driver of post-primary expansion. Subsequently, many countries, such as India and Pakistan, have included lower secondary as part of their compulsory basic education cycle since 2000.

Efforts to improve infrastructure, such as roads, electricity and water, and reduce the distance to schooling have been important in the region to increase education access. In Afghanistan, the addition of village-based community schools in 2007 increased enrolment by 42% in sample villages. In rural India, the availability of paved roads increased, so that 78% of schools had a road within one kilometre in 2010 compared with 69% in 2003. Demand also increased as a result of midday meals and school feeding programmes in rural India, which have had a sizeable impact on girls' enrolment. Bangladesh's take-home ration programme reduced dropout by 9%.

PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

- ▶ **Reducing cost of school:** Scholarships and stipends can help girls continue in education. In Punjab province in Pakistan, the Female School Stipend Programme was established in 2003, targeting girls in grades 6 to 8 in government schools in districts with the lowest literacy rates. This led to increased enrolment rates, ranging from 11% to 32% for all

cohorts, during the first four years of the programme. However, policy makers need to be aware that the positive effects of their interventions may be overturned. In Pakistan, among families where girls are eligible for stipends restricted to government schools, boys are more likely to be enrolled in private schools, which often provide better quality education. In Bangladesh, despite the acclaimed success of a secondary school stipend programme for rural girls in increasing girls' enrolment, data suggest girls from wealthier, landowning households benefited disproportionately.

- ▶ **Reducing distance to school:** Building schools in underserved communities has helped overcome barriers to girls' education related to distance. A study in Ghor province in Afghanistan, where villages were randomly selected to receive a primary school building, found that overall enrolment increased by 42 percentage points and that girls' enrolment increased by 17 percentage points more than that of boys, eliminating an existing gender gap. A longitudinal

study in Pakistan found a strong positive relationship between the availability of post-primary schooling and girls' retention in primary school. And in Bangladesh, where stipends for girls have driven enormous growth in secondary enrolment, the government's action to bring Islamic schools into the formal sector increased the availability of places.

► **Improving water and sanitation**

facilities: In India, after a school latrine construction effort in the early 2000s, girls' enrolment increased more than that of boys' in schools with latrines. At younger ages, girls and boys both benefited substantially from latrines, whether sex-specific or not, but adolescent girls' enrolment increased substantially after separate latrines were installed. The construction of single-sex toilets also had a positive impact on the share of female teachers at schools, another benefit for girls, as described below, that can support enrolment and retention.

► **Recruiting more female teachers:** In countries including Afghanistan and Nepal, recruitment of female teachers has been a prominent strategy in national education plans over the past decade,

linked to strategies to encourage girls' enrolment and retention. In Afghanistan, where conservative communities do not allow girls to be taught by men, two national plans have included clear targets on female teacher recruitment to address low levels of girls' enrolment. These included strategies to increase the number of female primary and secondary teachers by 50% by 2010 and to recruit and train 50,000 grade 12 graduates, of whom 45% were to be women. Between 1999 and 2012, the percentage of female teachers in Afghanistan rose from an extremely low 10% to 31% in primary education.

► **Integrating gender-sensitive training in teacher education:**

Some governments have made efforts to include gender training in formal teacher education policy and programmes. A 12 month certificate of education course for teachers in Bangladesh includes a unit on gender issues, which gives teachers ways to explore their own practice and develop more inclusive approaches.

IMPROVE QUALITY

► **Fostering child-friendly schools:** One of the most important requirements for education of better quality is an improved

learning environment, encompassing the physical school infrastructure and interaction between children and teachers. In rural India, child-friendly practices – such as asking questions, using local examples to explain lessons and working in small groups – were positively correlated with test scores in standards 2 and 4. In Pakistan, a school-based survey in the Lahore district of Punjab province in 2002/2003 found that lesson planning and interactive teaching increased language and mathematics achievement, especially in private schools.

► **Decentralization of education**

governance: The decentralization of education has become more common since 2000. The Dakar Framework urged moving from highly centralized, standardized and command-driven forms of management to more decentralized and participatory decision-making, implementation and monitoring at lower levels of accountability. But decentralization is a highly political process. In Nepal, its implementation was difficult: challenges included schools lacking the necessary financial and technical capacity, parents and communities feeling disempowered, and accountability being weak.

While governments and donors have increased their spending on education in the region, lack of adequate, equitable and sustainable financing has been a main obstacle to achieving EFA Goals.

Domestic expenditure on education

■ In 2012, half of the countries in South and West Asia spent less than 4% of their GNP on education. The percentage ranged from less than 2% in Sri Lanka to 8% in Maldives. The share of national income devoted to education decreased in four of the six countries with data between 1999 and 2012, in particular in Bhutan and India. In Bhutan, the percentage declined from 6.7% to 4.9% between 2000 and 2011. In contrast, the percentage of GNP going to education increased by almost two percentage points in Nepal, from 2.7% in 1999 to 4.7% in 2010.

■ In the region in 2012, the median share of government budget on education was 12.6%, much lower than the average for developing countries. The share ranged widely, from 8.8% in Sri Lanka to nearly 23% in Nepal. Not only is the share of the budget on education low, it has even declined in all countries with data, particularly in Bangladesh and India. In India, the percentage declined by 5 percentage points from 16.3% to 11.3% between 1999 and 2012.

■ The allocation of education expenditure is not balanced: in the majority of countries with data, public spending on pre-primary education is minimal, while the share devoted to primary education ranged from 26% in Sri Lanka to 60% in Nepal in 2012.

International development assistance

■ Levels of aid to basic education for the South and West Asia region increased from US\$582 million to US\$947

million over the decade. Annual growth rates of aid disbursements to basic education averaged 6% per annum between 2002 and 2012 for the region. The region's share of total global aid to basic education stayed about the same, rising only from 21% to 22% between 2002–04 and 2010–12.

- Aid provision, which was once the preserve of OECD donors, has changed since Dakar with emerging economies formalizing development cooperation through the creation of aid agencies. The significance of India in volume of aid increased over the decade. Emerging alternative global mechanisms, such as the IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation,

created in 2004 by Brazil, China, India and South Africa with an annual budget of US\$3 million, help least developed and post-conflict countries reach the MDGs. More recently, the US\$100 billion New Development Bank, launched by Brazil, India, Russia and South Africa, is intended to finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects.

Abbreviations

ANER: adjusted net enrolment ratio. ANER measures the proportion of those who are enrolled either in primary or in secondary schools.

ECCE: early childhood care and education. ECCE are programmes that, in addition to providing children with care, offer a structured and purposeful set of learning activities either in a formal institution (pre-primary or ISCED 0) or as part of a non-formal child development programme. ECCE programmes are usually designed for children from age 3 and include organized learning activities that constitute, on average, the equivalent of at least 2 hours per day and 100 days per year.

EFA Development Index (EDI). EDI is a composite index aimed at measuring overall progress towards EFA. At present, the EDI incorporates four of the six EFA goals — universal primary education, adult literacy, gender parity and equality, and education quality — each with a proxy indicator. The index value is the arithmetic mean of the four indicators and ranges from 0 to 1.

GER: gross enrolment ratio. GER is the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education. For the tertiary level, the population used is that of the five-year age group older than the secondary school leaving age. The GER can exceed 100% due to late entry and/or repetition.

GNP: gross national product. GNP is the gross domestic product plus net receipts of income from abroad. As these receipts may be positive or negative, GNP may be greater or smaller than GDP. This latter indicator is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy, including distributive trades and transport, plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products.

GPI: gender parity index. GPI is the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator. A GPI between 0.97 and 1.03 indicates parity between the genders. A GPI below 0.97 indicates a disparity in favour of males. A GPI above 1.03 indicates a disparity in favour of females.

PPP: Purchase parity power. An exchange rate adjustment that accounts for price differences between countries, allowing international comparisons of real out and income.

Table 1: Education for all development index (EDI) and prospects for education for all goals 1, 2, 4 and 5

MEAN DISTANCE TO EFA OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT AS MEASURED BY THE EDUCATION FOR ALL DEVELOPMENT INDEX (EDI), 2012	
Overall EFA achieved (EDI between 0.97 and 1.00)	None
Close to overall EFA (EDI between 0.95 and 0.96)	None
Intermediate position (EDI between 0.80 and 0.94)	(3): Bhutan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Sri Lanka
Far from overall EFA (EDI below 0.80)	(3): Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan
Not included in the EDI calculation (insufficient or no data)	(3): Afghanistan, India and Maldives
PROSPECTS FOR EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS 1, 2, 4 AND 5	
Goal 1 – Likelihood of countries achieving a pre-primary gross enrolment ratio of at least 80% by 2015	
High level (GER: 80% and above)	(3): Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan
Intermediate level (GER: 70–79%)	(1): India
Low level (GER: 30–69%)	(1): Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Very low level (GER: <30%)	(2): Bangladesh and Bhutan
Not included in the prospects analysis (insufficient or no data)	(2): Afghanistan and Sri Lanka
Goal 2 – Country prospects for achieving universal primary enrolment by 2015	
Target reached (ANER: 97% and above)	(3): India, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Nepal
Close to target (ANER: 95–96%)	(1): Bangladesh
Intermediate position (ANER: 80–94%)	(3): Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka
Far from target (ANER: <80%)	(1): Pakistan
Not included in the prospects analysis (insufficient or no data)	(1): Afghanistan
Goal 4 – Country prospects for achieving the adult literacy target of halving the adult illiteracy rate by 2015 ¹	
Adult literacy rate: 97% and above	(1): Maldives
Target achieved (adult illiteracy halved or reduced by more)	None
Close to target (adult illiteracy rate reduced by 40-49%)	(1): Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Intermediate position (adult illiteracy rate reduced by 30-39%)	None
Far from target (adult illiteracy rate reduced by less than 30%)	(4): Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
Not included in the prospects analysis (insufficient or no comparable data)	(3): Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal
Goal 5 – Country prospects for achieving gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015	
<i>Gender parity in primary education</i>	
Target reached (GPI: 0.97-1.03)	(4): Bhutan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Sri Lanka
Close to target (GPI: 0.95-0.96 or 1.04-1.05)	(2): Maldives and Pakistan
Intermediate position (GPI: 0.80-0.94 or 1.06-1.25)	(2): Afghanistan and Nepal
Far from target (GPI <0.80 or >1.25)	None
Not included in the prospects analysis (insufficient or no data)	(1): Bangladesh
<i>Gender parity in secondary education</i>	
Target reached (GPI: 0.97-1.03)	(1): India
Close to target (GPI: 0.95-0.96 or 1.04-1.05)	(1): Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Intermediate position (GPI: 0.80-0.94 or 1.06-1.25)	(3): Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal
Far from target (GPI <0.80 or >1.25)	(1): Pakistan
Not included in the prospects analysis (insufficient or no data)	(3): Afghanistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka

1. Countries included are those where the adult literacy rate estimated in the period 1995–2004 was lower than 95%, and where both the baseline estimates and the 2015 projections are based on the method of self-declaration or declaration on behalf of others.

Table 2: South and West Asia, selected education indicators

Country or territory	Total population (000)	GNP per capita PPP (US\$)	Compulsory education Age group	EFA Development Index (EDI)	Adult literacy								Early childhood care and education								
					Adult literacy rate (15 and over)				Adult illiterates (15 and over)				Child survival and well-being			Pre-primary education			Primary adjusted NER		Out-of-school children ²
					Total (%)	GPI (F/M)	Total (%)	GPI (F/M)	Total (000)	% Female	Total (000)	% Female	Under -5 mortality rate (%)	Moderate or severe and stunting (%)	2008-2012 ¹	Total (%)	Total (%)	Total (%)	Total (%)		
					1995-2004 ¹	2005-2012 ¹	1995-2004 ¹	2005-2012 ¹	2000	2015	2008-2012 ¹	1999	2012	1999	2012	1999	2012	1999			
Afghanistan	32,007	1,560	7-16	...	...	...	32	0.39	...	...	10,336	60	137	85	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bangladesh	160,411	2,030	6-10	0.778	47	0.76	59	0.88	44854	54	44,302	54	85	36	41	18	26	...	96	...	
Bhutan	776	6,200	.	0.815	...	...	53	0.59	...	...	201	59	89	42	34	0.9	9	56	92	47
India	1,282,390	3,820	6-14	...	61	0.65	63	0.68	273107	65	285,523	65	85	52	48	19	58	86	99	16 948	
Iran, Islamic Republic of	79,476	...	6-14	0.935	77	0.84	84	0.89	10694	63	9,150	66	42	19	7	15	35	86	100	1 154	
Maldives	358	7,560	...	...	96	1.00	98	1.00	6	48	3	49	53	11	19	56	...	98	...	1.1
Nepal	28,441	1,470	.	0.739	49	0.56	57	0.66	7287	65	7,228	67	83	38	41	11	84	69	99	906	
Pakistan	188,144	2,880	5-16	0.654	43	0.53	55	0.59	45289	60	49,227	65	97	68	44	63	82	...	72	...	
Sri Lanka	21,612	6,030	5-14	0.947	91	0.97	91	0.97	1305	59	1,363	59	18	10	17	...	89	100	94	3	
	Sum	Median			Weighted average				Sum	% F	Sum	% F	Weighted average	Median	Weighted average		Weighted average	Weighted average	Sum		
1 793 616	3,350	...	...	59	0.66	63	0.70	390,219	63	409,909	64	86	51	37	22	55	78	94	36,697	
5 944 265	4,820	...	...	77	0.84	80	0.87	775,715	64	771,717	64	82	67	29	27	49	82	90	102,930	
World	7 291 097	8,370	...	...	82	0.89	84	0.91	786,523	64	780,682	64	75	49	25	33	54	84	91	105,769

Sources: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015, statistical and aid tables; UNESCO Institute for Statistics database; CRS online database.

Note: See source tables in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015 for detailed country notes.

1. Data are for the most recent year available during the period specified.

2. Data reflect the actual number of children not enrolled at all, derived from the age-specific or adjusted net enrolment ratio (ANER) of primary school age children, which measures the proportion of those who are enrolled either in primary or in secondary schools.

3. Based on headcounts of pupils and teachers.

4. Values for total aid disbursements to education and to basic education for regional and other country groups do not always sum up to world totals because some aid is not allocated by region or country.

(-) Magnitude nil or negligible

(.) The category is not applicable or does not exist.

(...) No data available.

Primary education							Secondary education											Education finance					
Out-of-school children ²	GPI of GER		Survival rate to last grade		Pupil/teacher ratio ²		GER											Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP	Total aid disbursements to education (Constant 2012 US\$ million)	Total aid disbursements to basic education (Constant 2012 US\$ million)	Total aid disbursements to basic education per primary school age child (Constant 2012 US\$)		
	Total	(F/M)	(F/M)	Total	Total			Lower secondary education				Upper secondary education				Total secondary education							
(000)	(F/M)	(F/M)	(%)	(%)			Total	GPI	Total	GPI	Total	GPI	Total	GPI	Total	GPI	Total	GPI	1999	2012	2012	2012	2012
...	0.08	0.72	...	...	33	44	13	-	63	0.57	12	-	43	0.53	13	-	54	0.55	...	...	350	219	63
621	...	1.06	...	66	...	40	62	1.11	71	1.25	34	0.84	41	1.01	46	0.99	54	1.14	2.3	2.1	504	316	32
8	0.85	1.02	82	95	42	24	37	0.80	86	1.10	6	0.46	50	0.93	27	0.77	74	1.06	6.7	4.9	5	1	48
1 387	0.84	1.02	62	...	35	35	61	0.73	86	0.99	31	0.66	55	0.89	44	0.70	69	0.94	4.4	3.2	257	100	2
3	0.94	0.99	97	96	25	...	96	0.87	101	0.94	64	1.00	77	0.93	78	0.93	86	0.94	4.5	4.7	76	1	14
...	1.01	...	...	83	24	11	65	1.09	104	1.01	3	0.74	...	...	42	1.08	...	...	...	8.0	2	1	...
45	0.76	1.08	59	55	39	26	52	0.71	89	1.09	22	0.58	49	1.01	36	0.66	67	1.05	2.9	4.7	157	73	46
5 370	0.68	0.87	...	61	33	41	...	...	49	0.82	...	...	27	0.64	...	...	37	0.74	2.6	2.0	421	207	22
108	0.99	1.00	98	97	26	24	96	1.01	99	1.01	...	...	100	1.12	...	...	99	1.06	...	1.8	69	30	39
Sum	Weighted average	Median	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Median	Median	Sum	Sum	Weighted average	
9,814	0.83	1.00	64	64	36	35	60	0.78	81	0.98	32	0.69	51	0.88	44	0.75	64	0.93	3.6	3.9	1,843	947	5
54,876	0.91	0.97	72	72	29	26	65	0.89	82	0.97	37	0.86	56	0.95	51	0.88	69	0.96	4.4	4.7	...	...	...
57,788	0.92	0.97	75	75	26	24	71	0.92	85	0.98	45	0.91	62	0.96	59	0.91	73	0.97	4.5	5.0	12,584	5,079	8



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Regional Overview: South and West Asia



e-mail: efareport@unesco.org

Tel.: +33 1 45 68 09 52

Fax: +33 1 45 68 56 41

www.efareport.unesco.org

ED/EFA/MRT/2015/RO/04REV2