

Gender and Education for All THE LEAP TO EQUALITY



Regional Overview

Central and Eastern Europe¹

Since they regained their independence in the early 1990s, the region's countries have undergone profound economic, social, political and demographic upheavals that in many cases have damaged their education systems, notably by withdrawal of state funding for pre-primary and secondary schooling. Commitments to international treaties and declarations² will have to be fully carried out³ to reverse this trend.

Early childhood care and education (ECCE): substantial setbacks in the last decade

Pre-primary education is generally well developed in the region and half the countries with data had gross enrolment ratios of more than 64% in 2000. But this was 10 percentage points down from a decade earlier and many countries – Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, and Republic of Moldova – have been seriously set back. Enrolment has fallen since 1990 in many countries because of demographic change (a major decline in the school-age population) and a drop in the real value of state spending on education. For example, in the Republic of Moldova, higher fees for ECCE reduced the demand for places as unemployment rose. However some countries (Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Russia and Turkey) saw their pre-primary education GERs increase.

In most countries, as many girls as boys are enrolled, but boys predominate in some countries (Croatia, Latvia, Russia and Turkey) and girls in others (Albania and Romania).

Universal primary education: mixed picture

Primary enrolment in the region dropped sharply (21%) – from 31.2 to 24.5 million – over the last decade, largely but not entirely because of the demographic decline. This slightly pushed up the average net enrolment ratio from 90% in 1990 to 92% in 2000. Some countries moved towards UPE, a few appreciably (Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania), while others moved away from it (Estonia, Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia). The NER in Serbia and Montenegro fell almost 20 percentage points, from 69% to 50%.

Nearly all countries have reached gender parity but girls have lost ground in Croatia, Latvia and Russia which had achieved it in 1990.

The level of repetition is generally very low but in all countries with data, boys repeat more than girls.

1. This is the EFA classification of regions. The countries in Central and Eastern Europe are listed in the Table.

2. The first was the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which acknowledged the right of all to education and stated that elementary education would be free and compulsory and higher levels of education accessible to all on the basis of merit.

3. Despite legally-guaranteed free education, primary school fees continue to be charged in most countries – Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Latvia, the Republic of Moldova, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Russia and Ukraine – according to a World Bank survey (2002).

Participation in secondary and tertiary education: mixed picture for secondary, clear progress for tertiary

Participation in **secondary education** is relatively high and half the countries have GERs close to 90%. Enrolment has risen in many countries, sometimes significantly (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Turkey), but has declined in Belarus, Estonia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Russia.

Except for Turkey, where far fewer girls are enrolled than boys in secondary education (GPI = 0.71), nearly all countries have achieved gender parity or are close to it.

In contrast to secondary education, participation in **tertiary education** has greatly increased in the region. In half the countries, GER was higher than 36% in 2000, compared with a median of 25% in the early 1990s. In some (Albania, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovenia), GER has doubled or even tripled.

Women are over-represented among students except in Turkey, which has only 73 female students for 100 males. Whether they are over- or under- represented, women are often enrolled in so-called "feminine" fields, such as education, social sciences, humanities, services and health-related courses, that do not boost their chances of equal job opportunities with men.

Gender parity does not always translate into greater equality. In this region, as elsewhere, girls are still unable to convert their academic edge over boys into greater equality in other spheres of life and may need higher qualifications to compete successfully for jobs, equal pay and managerial positions.

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education

Achieving this goal involves understanding what holds girls and boys back so that policies can be designed to overcome these obstacles and improve access to and participation in education.

Urgent action is needed in countries where the gender gap is still large in primary and secondary education. An overriding priority is to tackle poverty constraints by reducing the direct and indirect cost of schooling to families and addressing the incidence of child labour. The school environment requires equal attention. Sexual violence and harassment within schools, particularly where HIV/AIDS is prevalent, needs to be confronted vigorously. Revising biases in teaching materials, training teachers to be gender aware and working with them and parents to break taboos are essential ingredients of an "engendered" strategy.

In countries that may not achieve parity either in 2005 or in 2015, eliminating gender disparity mainly concerns secondary education. Prospects for countries achieving it are based on past rates of change in the gender parity index in primary and secondary enrolment.

Countries that have already achieved gender parity:

- **Primary education (16 out of 18 with data):** Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- **Secondary education (15 out of 18 with data):** Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Gender parity prospects

(four countries with data in 1990 and 2000 for both primary and secondary education have not yet achieved it):

- Countries that may not achieve it in 2015 either in primary education (Estonia) or in primary and secondary education (Turkey): (2).
- Countries that may not achieve it in 2015 in secondary (2): Russia, Serbia and Montenegro.

These are forecasts based on recent trends. In the four countries that may miss reaching gender parity by 2015, policies are available to achieve it within a few years.

Resources and aid

Eliminating gender disparities and inequality while achieving all the other EFA goals is costly. Countries will need to allocate more of their own resources and use them more effectively. Education should remain a priority in the region, where half the countries spend less than 4.4% of GNP on it, compared with 5.3% in developed countries.

The least developed among them, with the lowest education indicators, may need more external aid to achieve EFA. Yet globally bilateral and multilateral aid to education fell between 1998/99 and 2000/01, though it increased for basic education. Current problems of turning aid commitments into reality do not augur well for international assistance to countries at risk or serious risk of not achieving the EFA goals, particularly the gender targets. At present aid is a tiny proportion of national education budgets. The region received 4.4% of total bilateral aid to education in 2000. ■

ACRONYMS

FTI Fast-Track Initiative. Designed primarily by the World Bank, the FTI was launched in April 2002 as a process that would provide quick and incremental, technical and financial support to countries that have policies but are not on track to attain Universal Primary Education by 2015.

GER Gross enrolment ratio. Number of pupils enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the relevant official age group.

GPI Gender parity index. Ratio of female to male value of a given indicator. A gender parity index equals 1 indicates parity between sexes; a GPI that varies between 0 and 1 means a disparity in favour of boys; a GPI > 1 indicates a disparity in favour of girls.

GNP Gross national product.

NER Net enrolment ratio. Number of pupils in the official age group for a given level of education enrolled in that level expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age-group.

UIS UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Central and Eastern Europe: selected education indicators, 2000.

Countries	Total population (thousands)	Compulsory education (age group)	Legal guarantee for free education	Adult literacy rate (%)		Pre-primary education		Primary education			Secondary education		Tertiary education		Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP	EFA Development Index (EDI)
				Total	GPI	GER (%) Total	GPI	NER (%) Total	GPI in GER	% of female teachers	GER (%) Total	GPI	GER (%) Total	GPI		
Albania ³	3 134	6-14	Yes	84.7	0.84	43.4	1.07	97.6	1.00	73.5	78.3	1.03	15.1	1.69	...	...
Belarus ¹	10 187	6-14	Yes	99.7	1.00	85.7	...	99.4	0.99	99.2	84.4	1.03	56.0	1.29	6.0	0.98
Bosnia and Herzegovina ¹	3 977	...	Yes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bulgaria ¹	7 949	7-15	Yes	98.4	0.99	67.9	0.99	94.3	0.97	91.5	94.2	0.98	40.8	1.35	...	0.95
Croatia	4 654	7-15	Yes	98.3	0.98	40.0	0.96	81.6	0.99	89.4	83.1	1.04	32.6	1.14	4.3	...
Czech Republic	10 272	6-15	Yes	...	...	91.9	1.00	90.3	0.99	84.4	94.6	1.03	29.8	1.05	4.5	...
Estonia	1 393	7-15	Yes	99.8	1.00	102.3	0.98	97.6	0.96	86.0	91.7	1.01	57.5	1.55	7.6	0.99
Hungary	9 968	7-16	Yes	99.3	1.00	79.5	0.98	90.2	0.99	86.2	98.6	1.01	40.0	1.27	5.2	...
Latvia ¹	2 421	7-15	Yes	99.8	1.00	59.4	0.94	92.0	0.99	96.8	90.9	1.01	63.1	1.65	5.9	...
Lithuania	3 696	7-16	Yes	99.6	1.00	51.8	0.97	94.6	0.99	98.1	95.2	0.99	52.5	1.51	...	...
Poland ²	38 605	7-18	Yes	99.7	1.00	49.4	1.00	97.7	0.99	83.5	101.4	0.97	55.5	1.44	5.3	0.99
Republic of Moldova ¹	4 295	6-16	Yes	98.9	0.99	34.9	1.00	78.4	1.00	95.2	71.2	1.03	27.9	1.29	3.8	...
Romania ¹	22 438	7-16	Yes	98.1	0.98	73.0	1.03	92.8	0.98	...	82.3	1.01	27.3	1.20	3.6	...
Russian Federation ¹	145 491	6-15	Yes	99.6	1.00	87.2	0.94	...	0.99	98.7	83.3	1.07	64.1	1.29	3.1	...
Serbia and Montenegro	10 552	7-15	...	...	...	30.5	1.01	50.2	1.02	82.2	59.5	1.04	26.2	1.24	5.1	...
Slovakia	5 399	6-16	Yes	...	...	81.3	0.97	89.3	0.99	93.2	87.3	1.01	30.3	1.09	4.2	...
Slovenia	1 988	7-15	Yes	99.6	1.00	74.8	0.97	93.4	0.99	95.0	106.4	1.02	60.5	1.35	...	...
The Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia ¹	2 034	7-14	Yes	...	...	28.8	1.00	92.3	1.00	68.3	84.2	0.97	24.4	1.32	4.2	...
Turkey ¹	66 668	6-14	Yes	85.0	0.82	5.7	0.94	...	0.92	...	57.7	0.71	23.6	0.73	3.4	...
Ukraine ¹	49 568	7-15	Yes	99.6	1.00	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Central and Eastern Europe	404 689	...	...	96.2	0.96	63.6	0.97	92.1	0.97	90.5	85.9	1.02	36.3	1.21	4.4	...
Developed countries	859 780	...	...	98.6	0.99	89.9	1.00	97.0	1.00	79.9	107.1	1.00	56.4	1.11	5.3	...
World	6 041 386	...	...	79.7	0.87	46.7	1.01	83.8	0.93	72.3	77.5	1.06	22.9	1.04	4.5	...

Source: EFA GMR 2003, Statistical annex.

Data in italics are for 1999.

1. Primary school fees continue to be charged despite legally-guaranteed free education, according to a World Bank survey (2002).

2. No tuition fees are charged but some direct costs have been reported, according to a World Bank survey (2002).

3. Country invited to participate in the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI).

Note: EDI is a new composite index that incorporates indicators for the four most quantifiable EFA goals – UPE, adult literacy, gender parity and quality of education. It aims to give a broader picture of progress toward EFA and identify countries doing well on all fronts, those succeeding in only some areas and those with all-round difficulties (for further explanation, see Appendix 2 in the full Report). The EDI for a country is the arithmetical mean of the observed values of indicators selected for each of the EFA goals. Since these are percentages, the value can vary from 0 to 1. The higher it is, the closer a country is to the goal and the greater its EFA achievement.