



Education for All 2000-2015: Only Cuba reached global education goals in Latin America and the Caribbean

Paris/New Delhi, EMBARGOED 9th April 2015 00:01– Globally, just one third of countries have achieved all of the measurable Education for All (EFA) goals set in 2000, including only Cuba from Latin America and the Caribbean. Only one half of countries in the world and the region have reached the most watched goal of Universal Primary Education. The Report shows an extra \$22 billion a year is needed on top of already ambitious government contributions in order to ensure the world achieves the new global education targets being set for the year 2030.

These are the key findings of the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) *“Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges”*, produced by an independent team at UNESCO which has tracked progress on these goals for the past 15 years.

“The world has made tremendous progress towards Education for All,” said UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova. *“Despite not meeting the 2015 deadline, millions more children are in school than would have been had the trends of the 1990s persisted. However, the agenda is far from finished. We need to see specific, well-funded strategies that prioritize the poorest – especially girls – improve the quality of learning and reduce the literacy gap so that education becomes meaningful and universal.”*

Released today, one month before the World Education Forum in Incheon (Republic of Korea), the Report reveals the following findings for Latin America and the Caribbean:

Goal 1. Expand early childhood care and education

Only just over half of countries in the region achieved a gross enrolment ratio of 80% or more in pre-primary education, including Ecuador, Chile, Peru and Mexico. Only two countries, the Dominican Republic and Paraguay, have fewer than 40% of children enrolled. Overall in the region participation in pre-primary education rose by three-quarters since 2000.

Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education, particularly for girls, ethnic minorities and marginalized children.

Just over half of countries have achieved universal primary education, leaving 3.7 million children out of school. Two countries, Guyana and Paraguay, are far from the goal with less than 80% enrolled. While in Latin America the number of out-of-school children declined by 9%, in the Caribbean it increased by 11%. In 2012, conflict-affected Colombia alone accounted for nearly 16% of the entire region’s out-of-school children. More than one fifth of students leave school early and do not complete primary education in the region, a situation that is unchanged from 1999.

There has been some significant progress in gaining access to school for the poor in countries such as Brazil and Guatemala, helped by successful conditional cash transfer schemes.

Goal 3. Ensure equal access to learning and life skills for youth and adults.

Thirteen percent of countries reached universal lower secondary enrolment, an indicator of skills acquisition, while another 17 countries are close. However, inequality persists particularly for marginalized groups or those in rural areas. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia 86% of the poorest adolescents continued into lower secondary school in 2008 compared to 99% of the richest, only a slight improvement from 2003. Only 43% of adolescents graduated from lower secondary school in rural areas in Peru.

Goal 4. Achieving a 50 per cent reduction in levels of adult illiteracy by 2015.

Illiteracy rates dropped by 26% in the region, far short of the 50% target. Only three countries, Peru, Suriname and the Plurinational State of Bolivia are projected to reach the literacy goal and five others are close. Colombia and Nicaragua are far from the target. In the region, 33 million adults lack minimal literacy skills, 55% of whom are women.

Goal 5. Achieve gender parity and equality

Among countries in the region, sixty percent have achieved gender parity in primary education, but only twenty percent have reached it in secondary education. At the secondary level, Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region where boys are at a significant enrolment disadvantage relative to girls.

Goal 6. Improve the quality of education and ensure measurable learning outcomes for all

To improve learning most countries in the region have participated in a regional or international assessment; since 2000 the percentage of LAC countries carrying out national assessments rose from 56% to 63%.

The total number of primary school teachers in the region increased by about 14% since 1999 to more than 3 million in 2012. Although there are no evident teacher shortages, teacher training remains an issue in many countries. In Belize and Barbados less than 60% of primary school teachers were trained in 2012.

Inequality in the provision of quality education is pronounced. In 2006 most countries showed very large gaps in reading proficiency between urban and rural students. Although some gaps persisted in 2013 in Colombia, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, it is encouraging that in the rest of the countries, the urban-rural gap substantially narrowed, including in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica and Uruguay.

Funding and political will

In 12 of the 18 countries with data in the region, progress in public spending on education exceeded economic growth. However, there were wide variations in the share of government

budget spent on education from less than 7% in Antigua and Barbuda to more than 20% in Belize and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

“Despite the progress that Latin America and the Caribbean has made, particularly in getting some of the most disadvantaged children into school, there remains a significant unfinished Education for All agenda,” said GMR Director, Aaron Benavot. “High dropout rates among boys; millions of adults, especially women, denied the right to literacy; and almost 4 million out of school children--all these issues must be addressed if the region is to establish a solid education foundation to achieve the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.”

The GMR makes the following recommendations:

Complete the EFA agenda: All governments should make at least one year of pre-primary education compulsory. Education must be free: fees for tuition should be abolished; costs for textbooks, school uniforms and transport should be covered. Policy makers should prioritize skills to be acquired by the end of each stage of schooling. All countries should ratify and implement international conventions on the minimum age for employment. Literacy policies should link up with community needs. Gender disparities at all levels must be reduced.

Equity: Programmes and funding should be targeted to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged. There should be more emphasis on gender equality, including through teacher education and safe school environments. Governments should close critical data gaps in order to be able to direct resources to those marginalized groups most in need.

Post-2015: Countries should ensure that all children and adolescents complete pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education by 2030. Governments should significantly expand adult learning and education opportunities within a lifelong learning approach. The education sector should collaborate closely with other sectors at the national and global levels to improve sustainable development prospects.

Close the finance gap: The international community, in partnership with countries, must find the means to bridge the US\$22 billion annual finance gap for quality pre-primary and basic education for all by 2030. Clear education finance targets must be established within the Sustainable Development Goals where none currently exist.

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To download the full Report please click [here](#), using the password **Report_EFA2015**.

To directly access country-level statistics, please click [here](#)

Notes to Editors:

Developed by an independent team and published by UNESCO, the Education for All Global Monitoring Report is an authoritative reference that aims to inform, influence and sustain genuine commitment towards Education for All.

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