



Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all

Honduras: Fact Sheet

Despite progress, most EFA goals are likely to be missed by 2015

No target was set at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 to guide assessment of success in promoting early childhood education. To gauge comparative progress across countries over the decade, this Report has set an indicative pre-primary education gross enrolment ratio of 80% as a target. While early childhood outcomes have improved in Honduras, with pre-primary enrolment rates increasing from 22% in 1999 to 44% in 2011, the country is still expected to be far from the 80% enrolment target by 2015.

Honduras has achieved universal primary enrolment with a net enrolment ratio of 97%. However, assessing whether universal primary education has been achieved should be based on measures of completion rather than enrolment, which often gives a misleadingly optimistic picture. In Honduras in 2011, only 75% of children were surviving to the last grade of primary education, with 25% dropping out.

Universal literacy is fundamental to social and economic progress. Literacy skills are best developed in childhood through good quality education. Few countries offer genuine second chances to illiterate adults. As a result, countries with a legacy of low access to school have been unable to eradicate adult illiteracy. In Honduras, 85% of adults were literate in 2011. The country is projected to still be far from the target of universal adult literacy by 2015.

While parity in primary education has been achieved in the country, only 88 boys are enrolled for every 100 girls in lower secondary education and only 73 boys for every 100 girls in upper secondary education.

The pace of progress is too slow, particularly for the disadvantaged

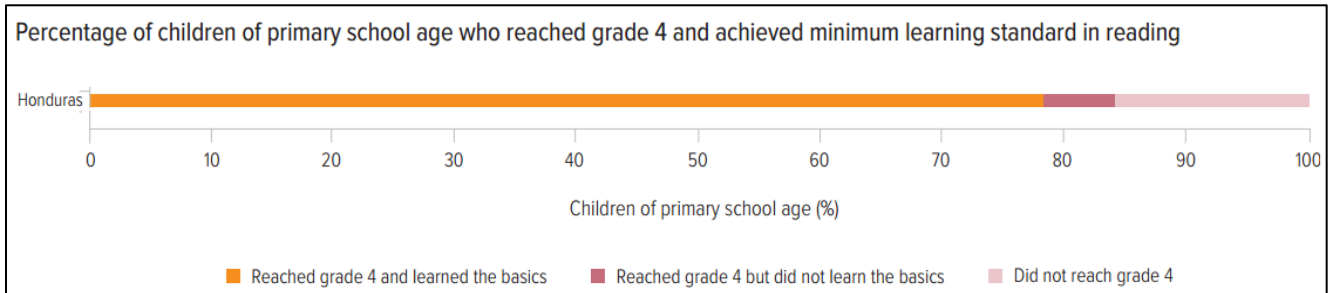
Over the past decade there has been more progress in getting children into primary school than in ensuring that children complete primary or lower secondary education. And extreme inequality persists. In Honduras, where the richest boys living in urban areas were all completing primary education ten years ago, the poorest rural girls will not catch up until 2065.

Post-2015 global education goals are widely expected to include achieving universal lower secondary completion by 2030. To inform forthcoming decisions on this target, it is vital to consider the results of projections on how long it would take countries to reach it.

The analysis shows that the pace of progress is too slow, particularly for the disadvantaged: 84% of the richest but only 10% of the poorest young people completed lower secondary school in 2011/12, and it is projected that universal lower secondary school completion will be achieved in the 2030s for the richest but almost 100 years later among the poorest young people.

The global learning crisis: action is urgent

Globally, 250 million children of primary school age are not learning the basics in reading, whether they are in school or not. In Honduras, less than 80% of primary school age who reached grade 4 can read, compared to a regional average of 90%.



Speaking a minority language can be a source of disadvantage

The discrimination some indigenous or ethnic groups face is reinforced by the fact that the language used in the classroom may not be one that they speak. In Honduras in 2011, 94% of those who spoke the language of instruction at home learned the basics in reading in primary school compared to only 62% of those who did not.



Poor quality education leaves a legacy of illiteracy

The quality of education has a marked bearing on youth literacy. Many young people who have spent just a few years in school do not develop literacy skills – and in some cases even completing primary school is not always a guarantee for literacy. For example, among young people in Honduras, one fifth of young people who had spent no more than four years in school were left illiterate

Poverty holds back learning:

Levels of literacy are high in the country overall, however, evidence demonstrates that youth from poorer households still remain the most likely to be illiterate. In Honduras, around half the number of poorest students is achieving the minimum benchmark in mathematics than the richest.

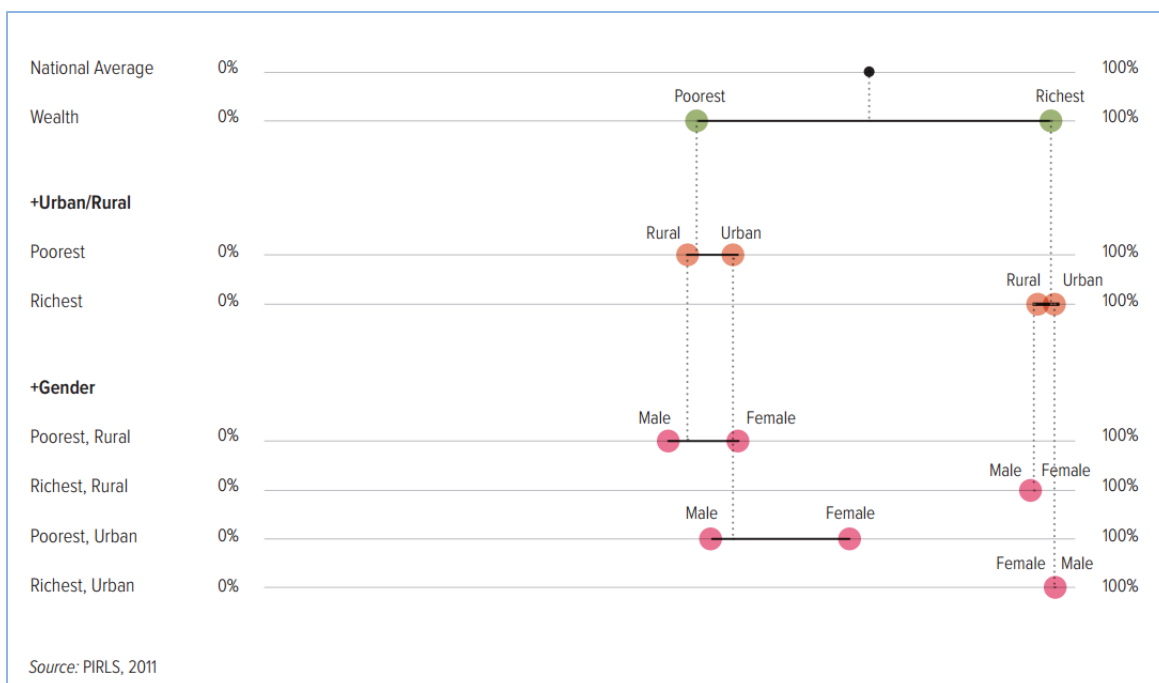


Wide inequalities in learning www.education-inequalities.org



The World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) highlights the powerful influence of circumstances, such as wealth, gender, ethnicity and location, over which people have little control but which play an important role in shaping their opportunities for education. It draws attention to unacceptable levels of inequality in access and learning across countries and within countries, with the aim of helping to inform policy design and public debate.

In Honduras, only one-half of the poorest boys living in rural areas have completed primary school and learned basics in reading. By contrast, almost all rich children have done so.



Making teaching quality a national priority

Strong national policies that make teaching quality and learning a high priority are essential to ensure that all children in school actually obtain the skills and knowledge they are meant to acquire.

In some countries, the engagement of teacher unions has improved policies aimed at helping disadvantaged groups. Sometimes teachers' union activities may harm student learning opportunities, however. Teachers campaigning for their rights should ensure that they also tackle issues holding back progress in learning, but do not always do so.

A four-part strategy for providing the best teachers

1. Attract the best teachers

It is important for all children to have teachers with at least a good secondary-level qualification. Therefore, governments should invest in improving access to quality secondary education to enlarge the pool of good teacher candidates. This reform is particularly important if the pool of better-educated female teachers is to increase in disadvantaged areas. In some countries, this will mean introducing affirmative measures to attract more women into teaching.

Policy-makers also need to focus their attention on hiring and training teachers from under-represented groups, such as ethnic minorities, to serve in their own communities. Such teachers, familiar with the cultural context and local language, can improve learning opportunities for disadvantaged children.

2. Improve teacher education so all children can learn

All teachers need to receive training to enable them to meet the learning needs of all children. Before teachers enter the classroom, they should undergo good quality pre-service teacher education programmes that provide a balance between knowledge of the subjects to be taught and knowledge of teaching methods.

Pre-service teacher education should also make adequate classroom teaching experience an essential part of training to become a qualified teacher. It should equip teachers with practical skills to teach children to read and to understand basic mathematics. In ethnically diverse societies, teachers should learn to teach in more than one language. Teacher education programmes should also prepare teachers to teach multiple grades and ages in one classroom, and to understand how teachers' attitudes to gender differences can affect learning outcomes.

Ongoing training is vital for every teacher to develop and strengthen teaching skills. It can also provide teachers with new ideas to support weak learners, especially in the early grades, and help teachers adapt to changes such as a new curriculum.

Innovative approaches such as distance teacher education, combined with face-to-face training and mentoring, should also be encouraged so as to extend both pre-service and ongoing teacher education to greater numbers of teachers.

3. Get teachers where they are most needed

Governments need to ensure that the best teachers are not only recruited and trained, but also deployed to the areas where they are most needed. Adequate compensation, bonus pay, good housing and support in the form of professional development opportunities should be used to encourage trained teachers to accept positions in rural or disadvantaged areas. In addition, governments should recruit teachers locally and provide them with ongoing training so that all children, irrespective of their location, have teachers who understand their language and culture and thus can improve their learning.

4. Provide incentives to retain the best teachers

Governments should ensure that teachers earn at least enough to lift their families above the poverty line and make their pay competitive with comparable professions. Performance-related pay has intuitive appeal as a way to motivate teachers to improve learning. However, it can be a disincentive to teach students who achieve less well, have learning difficulties or live in poor communities. Instead, an attractive career and pay structure should be used as an incentive for all teachers to improve their performance. It can also be used to recognize and reward teachers in remote areas and those who support the learning of disadvantaged children.

Strengthening teacher governance

Governments should improve governance policies to address the problems of teacher misconduct such as absenteeism, tutoring their students privately and gender-based violence in schools. Governments can also do more to address teacher absenteeism by improving teachers' working conditions, making sure they are not overburdened with non-teaching duties and offering them access to good health care.

Strong school leadership is required to ensure that teachers show up on time, work a full week and provide equal support to all. School leaders also need training in offering professional support to teachers. Governments need to work closely with teacher unions and teachers to formulate policies and adopt codes of conduct to tackle unprofessional behaviour such as gender-based violence. Codes of practice should refer clearly to violence and abuse, making penalties consistent with legal frameworks for child rights and protection.

Where private tutoring by teachers is prevalent, explicit guidelines, backed up with legislation, so that teachers do not sacrifice classroom time to teach the school curriculum privately are needed.

Curriculum and assessment strategies that improve learning

When curriculum is standardized to state policies and does not consider the native language, traditions and customs of the people, this creates a barrier that most indigenous people are unable to overcome.

- Natalee, teacher, Bay Islands, Honduras

Curricula that do not acknowledge and address issues of inclusion can alienate disadvantaged groups within the classroom, and so limit their chances to learn effectively. In some countries, curricula reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. Where gender-responsive curricula have been developed, test scores measuring attitudes on several gender-related issues improved. The Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial, a secondary school

programme serving girls from the minority Garifuna group in Honduras, aims to empower girls and women. An interdisciplinary curriculum questions dominant power structures and challenges gender stereotypes. Teaching is learner-centred and inquiry-based, and emphasizes dialogue. Graduates displayed greater ability to identify problems and conceive solutions, along with more gender awareness, self-confidence and knowledge. After two years, adolescents in villages where the programme had been implemented had higher composite test scores than those in other villages.