



Introduction

Botswana is one of the countries which progress toward EFA since 2000 was not fully reflected in the 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) due to lack of sufficient enrolment data. The country has not reported any number of children enrolled in school to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) beyond the school year ending in 2009. In order to monitor progress made by Botswana across some of the EFA goals since 2000, the GMR Team used information provided by the country in its EFA 2015 national review report as well as data published in the 2012 Primary Education Statistics Brief¹.

It is important to note that the use of a national source meant using a different age-group from the one agreed upon in the International standard classification of education system (ISCED) framework. This is for example, the case of pre-primary education, with the age group used in national publication being 3-6 instead of 3-5 in the ISCED framework. Additionally, drop-out rates instead of survival rates were used to measure educational completion at primary level.

Pre-primary education

In Botswana, pre-primary gross enrolment ratio (GER) increases from 7% in 2000 to nearly 16% in 2012. Despite the ratio more than doubling since 2000, the country is still far from achieving high levels of pre-primary gross enrolment ratio.

Primary education

In primary education, Botswana has maintained high net enrolment ratio (NER) for the whole period. The country increased its NER from slightly 90% in 2000 to 93% in 2012, leaving it still at some distance from the target of universal primary enrolment defined as NER of at least 97%.

Access to school is an important step to universal primary education, but it is equally important to ensure that all children, who enrol in primary education, complete it. In terms of primary education completion, in 2012 the country reported a drop-out rate of 1%, indicating that almost all children who enter school at least reach the last grade.

Gender Parity

¹ Botswana Central Statistics Office (2013) Primary Education Statistics 2012. Available at <http://www.cso.gov.bw/> (Accessed 11th April 2015)

In primary education, Botswana reached the gender parity target in 2000, with a GPI of the primary GER at 0.99, and, despite a slight decrease, it maintained its position in 2012, with a GPI at 0.97.

Learning achievements

Since 1990s, there has been a great development in terms of international, regional and as well as national assessments, with more countries covered. More specifically, Botswana participated in the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) survey, in 2000 and 2007; and in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2011.

According to the SACMEQ 2000 survey of primary school sixth graders, 92% of pupils performed at level 1 in reading and 75% at level 1 in mathematics. In 2007, the proportion of pupils minimum basic skills in reading has slightly decreased to 89%, while in mathematics the trends was positive, with the proportion of pupils at level 1 reaching 78%. In terms of gender disparities in learning achievement, SACMEQ results show that, in both years and subjects, girls were outperforming boys, and this was particularly so in reading and in the most recent survey. In 2000, 95% of girls grade sixth pupils performed at level 1 in reading compared with 88% of boy pupils. In mathematics, the proportions were 79% and 72%, respectively. In 2007, the gender gap has widened in reading, with 94% of girls performing at level 1 compared with 85% of boys due to a higher deterioration of the situation of the latter. On the other hand, in mathematics the situation of boys has improved slightly more than girls, with a slight reduction of gender disparities (80% of girls performing at level 1 of mathematics compared with 75% of boys).

Girls' outperformance in reading is confirmed in a more recent learning assessment survey and is observed in early grades too. The PIRLS results of 2011 show that in grade 4, 82% of students achieved level 1 in reading, with the proportion at 89% for girls and 76% for boys.

Conclusion

The analysis of education data of Botswana demonstrates that the country has not reached universal primary education yet. Moreover, much work is still needed to make early childhood and primary education available for all children. Finally, in terms of learning achievements the country should promote initiatives supporting the quality of learning and working to address the challenges by boys, especially in reading.