



Introduction

Zimbabwe 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 a 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 2003. In order to assess progress made by Zimbabwe across some of the EFA goals since 2000, the GMR Team used enrolment numbers published in the Zimbabwe EFA 2015 review report. These data were then used together with United Nations population estimates provided by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) to calculate enrolment ratios by gender.

Pre-primary education

Between 2000 and 2012 participation in pre-primary education as measured by gross enrolment ratio (GER) decreased. The ratio dropped by more than ten percent points from 41% to nearly 31% probably due to the political and economic crisis the country has gone through over the period.

Primary education

Zimbabwe has maintained high participation level over the period, with the net enrolment ratio (NER), around 96% in 2000 and 2012 indicating that it close to reaching the target of universal primary enrolment.

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. However, dropouts remain in Zimbabwe, with nearly 30% of children who enter primary school not reaching the last grade in 2012. While survival rate to the last grade has increased from 48% in 2000 to around 70% the country is still at distance from reaching universal primary education.

Gender Parity

In primary education, Zimbabwe reached the gender parity target in 2000, with GPI of GER at 0.97 in 1999 and has maintained its position by 2012 (GPI of 0.99).

Learning achievements

Since 1990s, there has been a great development in terms of international, regional and national assessments. More specifically, Zimbabwe participated in the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) survey, in 1995 and 2007.

According to the SACMEQ survey of 2007, 81% of primary school sixth graders performed at level 1 in reading and 73% were doing so in mathematics. In terms of gender disparities in learning achievement, SACMEQ results show that, girls were performing better than boys in both subjects. The gender gap was more pronounced in reading, with 84% of girls reaching level 1 compared with about 78%, than in mathematics (nearly 75% and 72%, respectively).

Conclusion

Zimbabwe has maintained high levels of participation in primary education over the period and was close to reaching universal primary enrolment. Gender parity in primary enrolment has also been reached. Nevertheless, much work is still needed to make early childhood education available for all children in the country as well as to improve school retention. Finally, quantity and quality of education must go hand in hand, which mean more attention should be paid to overall learning achievement while reducing the challenges are faced with boys in learning.