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Arab Countries Regional Report

November 2021



Regional Overview

Bridging SDG 4 and Education Monitoring in the Arab region



Regional Overview:

Bridging SDG 4 and Education Monitoring in the Arab region



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Regional Overview: Bridging SDG 4 and Education Monitoring in the Arab region

Executive Summary

The Arab Regional Roadmap for SDG 4 – Education 2030 was adopted at the First Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030 in December 2015, setting immediate actions to be undertaken to operationalize the Education 2030 Agenda in the Arab region. Several regional meetings followed clearly showing the commitment of the Arab countries to the global agenda. This has contributed to maintaining the momentum and establishing a clear and operational roadmap to help countries move forward.

This regional report shows the progress of countries in the Arab region in achieving SDG 4, highlighting the challenges faced and illustrated by the data gaps observed. The major findings of the report are as follows:

- **SDG Target 4.1 – Primary and secondary education**

Very little data is available to monitor the global indicators of this target, namely learning and completion. Completion and out-of-school rates are unavailable for Gulf countries. Gulf countries have more data on learning and in general better results. Most countries improved proficiency in reading and mathematics by the end of lower secondary. Completion rates are higher in Mashriq countries than in other groups in all three levels of education. Out-of-school children is still a challenge in most countries.

- **SDG Target 4.2 – Early childhood**

Data collected for this target in Arab States using household surveys is scarce. Administrative data is available allowing to monitor enrolment rates on early childhood. Available data for adjusted net enrolment rates one year before the official primary entry age is, by and large, stable for the Gulf countries and in the Mashriq.

- **SDG Target 4.3 – TVET and Higher Education**

Data for the global indicator measuring the participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 month is mostly unavailable for the region. Participation of 15- to 24-year-olds in technical and vocational programmes is low in most countries. All countries of the region showed increased enrollment in tertiary education during the last five years.

- **SDG Target 4.4 – Skills for Work**

Data on ICT skills are available for most countries in the region. Gulf countries have the highest proportion of skilled youth and adults. Skilled persons are mostly able to do the more basic tasks like copying, attaching and duplicating a file, while for more complex tasks like programming, the mean for all years is around 10%.

- **SDG Target 4.5 – Equity**

In terms of completion and out-of-school rates, gender parity has been achieved or has seen some progress over the years. In terms of proficiency in reading and mathematics, location parity shows that education in rural areas remains a challenge in the region.

- **SDG Target 4.6 – Literacy and Numeracy**

Youth literacy rate has been achieved in all Gulf countries and most of the Mashriq and Maghreb. Elderly population, as expected, have lower literacy rates in all sub regions.

- **SDG Target 4.7 – Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship**

Only a few data points are available for the thematic indicator that measures the proficiency in knowledge of environmental science and geoscience and the percentage of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education. Only a few countries have reported that life skills-based HIV and sexuality education is available in the schools.

- **SDG Target 4.a – School Environment**

Gulf countries reported 100% of primary and secondary schools are equipped with computers and internet, and most of them are also disability-friendly. The situation in the other regions is more varied. Attacks on students is still a reality in some of the countries facing conflicts.

- **SDG Target 4.b – Scholarships**

The volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships has increased over the years in least developed countries as well as in Mashriq and Maghreb countries.

- **SDG Target 4.c – Teachers**

Most countries recorded that 100% of the teachers have the minimum qualification for the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. The access of pupils to trained teachers has a more heterogeneous picture. Teacher attrition is still very high in some countries.

- **SDG 4 - Finance**

Only a few countries have ensured the minimum investment of 15% of Total Government Expenditure until 2019. The picture is similar as far as the share of GDP is concerned, but a few countries in the Maghreb and the Gulf have reached and maintained the target.

More effort is needed to produce indicators and data to efficiently monitor SDG framework in the region. This is an important challenge. As it can be seen in the following pages, data is unavailable for many indicators, making it difficult to monitor the global education framework.

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Foreword

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) for education requires a concerted effort by countries, regions and global organizations to track current progress and address challenges in collecting and producing high-quality data. The stakes are high as children and young people around the world will be left with fewer opportunities if they are denied a quality education and an opportunity to learn. Our current research suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed much of the progress achieved to date, with many more children now falling behind in learning even basic skills. To get back on track, it is essential that we have the data needed to measure learning so that policymakers can focus efforts on reaching the most vulnerable children.

This report by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) is part of a series of regional reports on Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union, North America and the Caucasus. The series is intended to bring a regional focus to SDG 4 monitoring by highlighting work being done in the regions while comparing SDG 4 targets with those established by regional and subregional bodies. In the case of the Arab region there is no specific monitoring framework besides the Education 2030. In that perspective, the report presents an overview of the available data and the current situation of the countries for each target. Nonetheless, the other reports in the series are useful for the regional stakeholders involved in monitoring because they shed light on the importance of mitigating duplication and concentrating effort in overall outcomes.

This report, *Regional Overview: Bridging SDG 4 and Education Monitoring in the Arab region*, looks at progress made so far, and highlights some challenges these countries have experienced in collecting high-quality data that are comparable across countries. The recommended solutions focus on identifying and addressing data gaps in order to reinforce the SDG monitoring in the region.

In addition to this report series, many data resources can be found on the UIS Technical Cooperation Group website, where readers can find a Data Book highlighting how each region performs across SDG 4 indicators as well as a section devoted to benchmarking with regional and country dashboards for each of the seven SDG 4 indicators identified for this purpose.

This report is the result of a collective effort by a team under my supervision. Tiago Vier has helped to consolidate and assemble the report, which incorporates contributions and inputs from the Foresight and Innovation team (Kim Deslandes, Adolfo Imhof and Lina Ktalli) and takes advantage of the benchmark process that is globally led by the UIS and the Global Education Monitoring Report.

Silvia Montoya

Director, UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABEGS	Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States
ALECSO	Arab League's Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
AR-MED	Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030
AU	African Union
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EFA	Education 2030 Framework for Action
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIRLG	Gross Intake Ratio to the Last Grade
GPF	Global Proficiency Framework
GPIA	Adjusted Gender Parity Index
ICESCO	Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ISESCO	Islamic World Education Science and Culture Organization
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LPIA	Adjusted Location Parity Index
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OEI	Organización de los Estados Iberoamericanos
PacREF	Pacific Regional Education Framework
PEC	Política Educativa Centroamericana
RCEP	Regional Center for Educational Planning
SEAMEO	Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPC	Pacific Community (originally South Pacific Commission)
TCG	Technical Cooperation Group
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UAE	United Arab Emirates
SAARC	South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation
SAMOA	Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action
SFFA	SAARC Framework for Action
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics

Introduction

In this publication, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) provides an overview of the current progress in the Arab region towards the Sustainable Development Goal 4 for education (SDG 4). SDG 4 is one of the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that is to “*ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*”.

This is part of a broader initiative from the UIS to connect and combine efforts at the national, regional and global levels towards the monitoring of the Agenda 2030. A first regional report on Africa considered the regional priorities in that region in the context of SDG 4 global targets. Other regional reports published on the same initiative considered the regional frameworks in the Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe, North America and Caucasus countries.

Arab States identified six priority areas for education post-2015, which correspond with the current education situation in the region, and overlap to some extent with the SDG monitoring framework.¹ However, there is no monitoring framework that requires to be bridged with the SDG 4 framework. Instead, Arab states have chosen to endorse the global framework and detailed the milestones and deliverables of both the Arab Member States and education partners to be achieved in 2016 in order to operationalize the Education 2030 Agenda in the region.

The Arab Regional Roadmap for SDG 4 - Education 2030 was agreed upon and endorsed between 2015 and 2016 and a number of Arab Regional Meetings on Education 2030 (AR-MED) took place since then. Each AR-MED resulted in concrete action and during the last meeting, countries developed a more specific Action Plan based on the priority themes of the region, taking into account the COVID-19 impact on education and how to ‘build back better’.²

The Arab Regional SDG-Education 2030 Support Group, constituted in July 2016, plays a major role in strengthening coordinated support for Education 2030 across the region. It aims at enhancing the national-regional-global nexus for effective coordination and implementation of SDG4. The UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States in Beirut, Lebanon, is in charge of piloting the education monitoring and the process of establishing benchmarks in the region.

Because there is no regional framework to bridge with the SDG 4 framework, the report focuses on the availability of data and the challenges to monitor the SDG 4 and the Education 2030 framework. The following section presents the process of monitoring the SDG 4 framework in the Arab region, including the benchmarking process that took place and the data resources available at the TCG/UIS websites. The report then presents an overview of data available in the region by SDG target and the situation of the Arab states for each dimension of the Education 2030 framework.

¹ UNESCO 2016a.

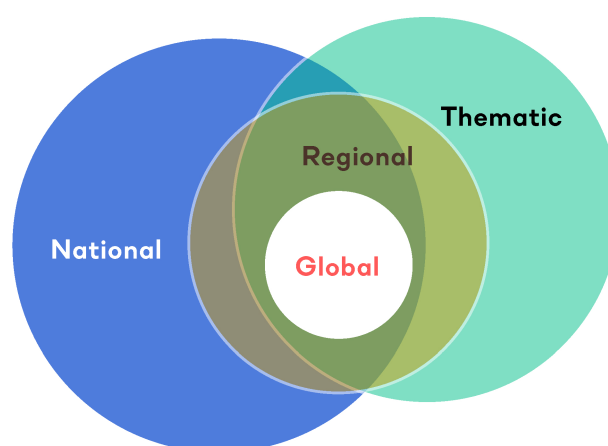
² UNESCO 2017.

Regional Monitoring Frameworks

SDG 4 monitoring is based on universal principles and emphasizes a participatory framework in which all stakeholders (including civil society, business, academia and government) recognize their shared responsibility in achieving the Education 2030 Agenda.

SDG 4 monitoring is also a multi-purpose framework based on global, thematic, regional and national levels.

Figure 1: Regional indicators and the four levels of the SDG4 monitoring



At the regional level, various sets of indicators were developed (or are in process of development) to take into account the priorities and issues that are shared by countries in a particular region, as outlined in regional planning documents or frameworks. Regions and subregions reached agreements on certain goals and targets even before the approval of the SDGs, and mapping these strategies, comparing them to the SDGs at the global level, is a crucial step in promoting efficiency and avoiding duplication.

There are multiple regional or subregional organizations that generate information and promote consensus in the field of education based on common goals. These institutions differ in their organizational structure and level of engagement with educational monitoring. In some agencies, member countries are represented by ministries of education. Others include representatives of civil society or officials appointed by member countries or governments. These entities can also be part of a supra-regional organization. In general, the member countries of these organizations are linked by common features, such as geographic territory (AU, EU, SEAMEO, CARICOM), language (CONFEMEN), or a cultural or historical characteristic (OEI). These organizations have reached agreements on common education targets in the medium and long term. Their transnational commitments require national and regional coordination and monitoring mechanisms to identify progress and obstacles. At the same time, they have articulated, or have begun to articulate, their regional objectives with the SDG 4 targets and the Education 2030 Agenda.

The following section briefly describes the SDG 4-related work of these organizations by SDG region. Some share countries located across multiple SDG regions. In these cases, the organizations are described in the region with the highest number of member countries.

Central and Southern Asia

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

The eight countries of South Asia, which are members of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), have jointly formulated the SAARC Framework for Action for Education 2030 (SFFA) affirming their

commitment to work together in advancing SDG 4 in the region. The Framework provides a roadmap for strengthening regional collaboration in education to achieve SDG 4-Education 2030 targets. The SAARC Framework for Action constitutes a comprehensive education agenda. It identifies key priorities in each sub-sector of education and training covering all ten targets of SDG 4, including a number of cross-cutting themes. It is accompanied by a more detailed Action Plan that consists of 13 key thematic areas prioritized for regional collaboration. The SAARC Framework underscores the importance of a regional monitoring mechanism for joint review, monitoring, and the evaluation of progress. The draft monitoring framework was developed in consultation with several stakeholders and includes relevant indicators for the region to ensure effective monitoring of progress towards SDG 4 in the region.

Eastern and South-Eastern Asia

Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)

SEAMEO promotes regional cooperation in education, science and culture. The SEAMEO Council is composed of 11 ministers of education who oversee the organization's mandate to explore the maximum potential of the people of the region through the promotion of quality and equity in education, preventive health, culture and the preservation of tradition, training, research, information, and ICT. Its seven priorities for the 2015–2030 Action Agenda presented at the 48th SEAMEO Council Conference are: (i) achieving universal early childhood care and education; (ii) addressing barriers to inclusion; (iii) promoting resiliency in the face of emergencies, (iv) promoting technical and vocational education and training (TVET); (v) revitalizing teacher education; (vi) harmonization in higher education and research; and (vii) adopting a 21st century curriculum.

Europe and North America

European Union (EU)

In 2017, the European Council, Member States and the European Parliament adopted the Consensus on Development, in which Member States aligned the development policy of the EU with the 2030 Agenda. By contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the EU Member States are seeking to promote a stronger, more sustainable and more inclusive existence. The Consensus also offers guidance for the implementation of SDG 4 in partnership with all developing countries. The objective is to provide a framework for a common approach to development policy that will be applied by EU institutions and Member States.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

ECLAC presents a proposal that contributes to stimulating and sustaining intergovernmental dialogue, with the contribution of specialized bodies, to reach a consensus among Member States on the regional framework of indicators for monitoring the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2018, a regional monitoring framework³ and a prioritized set of indicators for monitoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from a regional perspective was established and adopted by the Statistical Conference of the Americas.⁴

Organización de los Estados Iberoamericanos (OEI)

The 2021 educational goals of the OEI were adopted by Ibero-American countries in 2008. This framework is linked to several SDG 4 targets, but the OEI is in the process of aligning its goals with the education 2030 Agenda.

³ <https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/institutional-architecture-regional-statistical-follow-up-sdg.html>

⁴ <https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/sca-executive-committee-17.3-report-prioritization-indicators-regional-statistical-follow-up-tosdg-lac.pdf>

Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

The CARICOM 2030 Human Resources Development (HRD) Strategy is a regional framework developed to ensure the successful participation of the Caribbean community in the economy and society of the 21st century. The CARICOM 2030 HRD Strategy is articulated in the CARICOM Strategic Plan (2015–2019). Following the global assessment of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, the strategy focuses on the SDGs.

Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana

The Política Educativa Centroamericana (PEC) is a set of guidelines to provide the eight Member States of the Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana with a general framework of action based on regional education priorities. This framework was adapted and aligned with the SDG 4-Education 2030 Agenda. Currently PEC 2030 establishes the way forward on education development for Central America and a specific indicator framework was also developed to monitor that implementation.

Africa

Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25)

In 2016, the African Union (AU) adopted the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25) as the framework for transforming education systems in the region. CESA 16–25 is designed to involve the broadest coalition possible for education and training in Africa.

CESA 16–25 consists of 12 strategic objectives that find correspondence with several SDG 4 targets, and both frameworks require similar data points to track countries' progress. At the subregional level, countries are grouped within development communities that meet regularly, but their education-related objectives are in alignment with CESA 16–25.

Oceania

Pacific Community (SPC)

The Pacific Community (originally South Pacific Commission) is an international development organization owned and governed by its 26 country and territory members. The Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020 proposes goals and priorities. The SPC recognizes that national programmes and services must adapt to the new development landscape at the national, regional and global levels. These programmes should reflect the strategic direction established in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, the regional priorities identified in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the commitments of the SDGs.

Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF)

PacREF promotes a human rights approach to education and seeks to empower the people of the Pacific Islands. It is based on six targets: regionalism and mutually beneficial partnerships; the application of tests to policy and practice; efficiency in the use of resources; equity in access and opportunity; relevant and high-quality contributions; and high-quality and sustainable results. PacREF has a programme of strategies and activities in four policy areas: (i) quality and relevance;

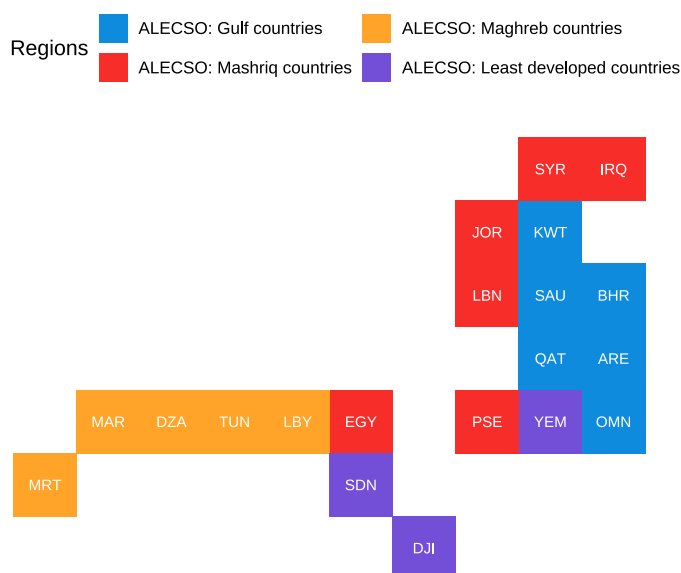
SDG 4 Arab monitoring

Arab countries have not established common education agendas or monitoring frameworks. The SDG 4-Education 2030 policy environment in the region is piloted by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States in Beirut, Lebanon. The Arab Regional Support Group for SDG-Education 2030 plays a key role in ensuring effective coordination and implementation of SDG 4 in the region.

Other international organisations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS), a member of the SDG 4 steering committee, and the Arab League's Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) also take part in the monitoring process, especially through the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO)⁵.

In particular, the Regional Center for Educational Planning (RCEP), a UNESCO Category-II centre in the region, plays an important role in monitoring the Education 2030 agenda.⁶

Figure 2: Arab States by ALECSO classification



For the Arab Region, consultations led by UNESCO at the Sharm el Sheikh Conference in 2015 were held to plan for the post-2015 development agenda. Representatives of the Arab States gathered to identify priority areas of action for education and agreed on the key messages of the region beyond the 2015 Education 2030 Framework for Action (EFA), known as the Sharm El Sheikh Statement. In line with the areas suggested by other regions, the Arab States agreed that while the EFA was still valid for the post-2015 agenda, the new framework needed to address all levels of education, focusing on learning and incorporating transformative and inclusive lifelong learning approaches. Arab States identified the following six priority areas for education post-2015, which correspond with the current education situation in the region: 1. Quality; 2. Teachers; 3. Equity; 4. Pre-primary education; 5. Secondary education; 6. Re-Definition of Arab Education.⁷

⁵ In 2020, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) was renamed Islamic World Education Science and Culture Organization (ICESCO)

⁶ The Regional Centre For Educational Planning (RCEP) was established in accordance with the agreement signed between the Government of United Arab Emirates and the United Nation Educational and Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 17th October 2003. See more <https://rcepunesco.ae/en/AboutUs/Pages/Mainareasofwork.aspx>

⁷ UNESCO 2016a.

Following the adoption of the EFA at the UNESCO High Level Meeting in November 2015, taking into consideration the recommendations made by Arab States, the Arab Regional Roadmap for SDG 4 - Education 2030 was agreed upon in Cairo, Egypt later during the first Arab Regional Meeting on Education 2030 (AR-MED). Later in 2016, during the AR-MED II, the Dubai Roadmap for 2017-2018 was endorsed detailing the significant milestones and deliverables of both the Arab Member States and education partners to be achieved in 2016 in order to operationalize the Education 2030 Agenda in the region.

Four successive Arab Regional Meetings on Education 2030 (AR-MED) took place:

- AR-MED I Cairo, Egypt, December 2015
- AR-MED II Dubai, UAE, March 2017
- AR-MED III Jordan, November 2018
- AR-MED IV, Lebanon July 2021

Each AR-MED resulted in concrete action points to enable both countries and partners to contextualize the Education 2030 Agenda and its ten Targets and Indicators, and promote multi-sectoral and stakeholder partnerships. In particular, the Dead Sea AR-Med III meeting renewed commitments known as “Dead Sea Commitments for 2019-2020” and launched also the Joint Statement of Arab States on system-wide education alignment, with a focus on harmonizing curriculum, teaching and learning assessment with a view of reaching the SDG4 targets. Due to COVID-19, activities have been delayed but the commitments were renewed and reinforced in the AR-MED IV, in July 2021 which resulted in concrete suggestions as a way forward through national action plans to accelerate progress towards SDG 4 at the country level.⁸

The Arab Regional SDG-Education 2030 Support Group, constituted in July 2016, plays a major role in strengthening coordinated support for Education 2030 across the region. It aims at enhancing the national-regional-global nexus for effective coordination and implementation of SDG4.

Some Arab States are also member States of the African Union, and equally uphold the commitments of the Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education.

Benchmarking

The benchmarking process in the Arab region is built on a consultative process with all stakeholders and ownership of the Member States. In order to achieve this, the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education In the Arab States has worked closely with regional organizations such as the ABEGS and the RCEP. In addition, it has ensured effective communication and consultation with sister agencies and partner international organisations.

UNESCO Beirut facilitated agreement by all the Member States in the region through a series of regional consultations and the regional benchmarks were finalized in July 2021. This was the first step towards the establishment of the national benchmarks by the end of 2021. Two sets of capacity-building workshops and bilateral consultations also took place to support the process.

Box 1 presents the data resources available for benchmark indicators at UIS.

⁸ UNESCO 2017.

Box 1: UIS data resources

A [TCG Data Resources](#) contains the list of SDG 4 and benchmark indicators, SDG 4 global and country data tables, data tree specifications for the extraction of data from the Bulk Data Services, and links to the UIS global education database and bulk data download service.

B TCG Benchmarks:

1. [Background](#) contains background information, benchmark indicators and describes the technical process, the global and regional roadmaps. Also contains links to the resources (publications, data, and blogs) and meetings.
2. [Dashboards](#) contains a summary of progress and global, regional and country dashboard.
3. The description of the process of setting regional benchmarks and the outcomes. The regions currently available are [Africa](#), [Arab States](#), and [Asia and the Pacific](#).

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

SDG Target 4.1 – Primary and secondary education

“Target 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes”

The two global indicators associated with SDG 4.1 measure proficiency in reading and mathematics at three steps in the educational ladder (4.1.1), and the completion rate in primary and secondary education (4.1.2). These indicators can be classified in the learning and access themes, respectively. Arab States have no specific monitoring framework and, therefore, adhere to the global and thematic monitoring indicators and targets.

Table 1: Data availability of the SDG Global Indicator 4.1.1, by country, 2015–2020

Minimum proficiency level in...	(a) Grade 2 or 3	(b) End of primary	(c) End of lower secondary
(i) reading			
(ii) mathematics			

■ ALECSO: Gulf countries
 ■ ALECSO: Maghreb countries
 ■ ALECSO: Mashriq countries
 ■ ALECSO: Least developed countries

Gulf countries have data available for the global indicator on reading proficiency for the primary and for the lower secondary. Data was collected respectively in 2016/2015 and 2018/2019. Data for Grades 2 to 3 is only available for Palestine (2019) and Tunisia (2018) and no data point is available for Yemen, Djibouti and Sudan.

Learning

Figure 3 shows the latest measured value for the Arab States in reading and mathematics. In reading, Gulf countries recorded proficiency by the end of primary between 59% and 69%. Morocco, the only country in Maghreb, reported 36% in 2016. At the end of lower secondary, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have reported proficiency close to 50%, while UAE reported almost 60%. In Maghreb, proficiency is lower, with Tunisia reporting the highest results in 2015 (28%). In Mashriq, Jordan reported 59% in 2018, and Lebanon 32% in the same year. Palestine and Tunisia are the only countries reporting results for Grades 2 and 3. In 2018, Tunisia reported that 47% of students achieved proficiency in reading while Palestine reported 26% in 2019.

Figure 3: Proportion of children and young people achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics, by country, latest year available



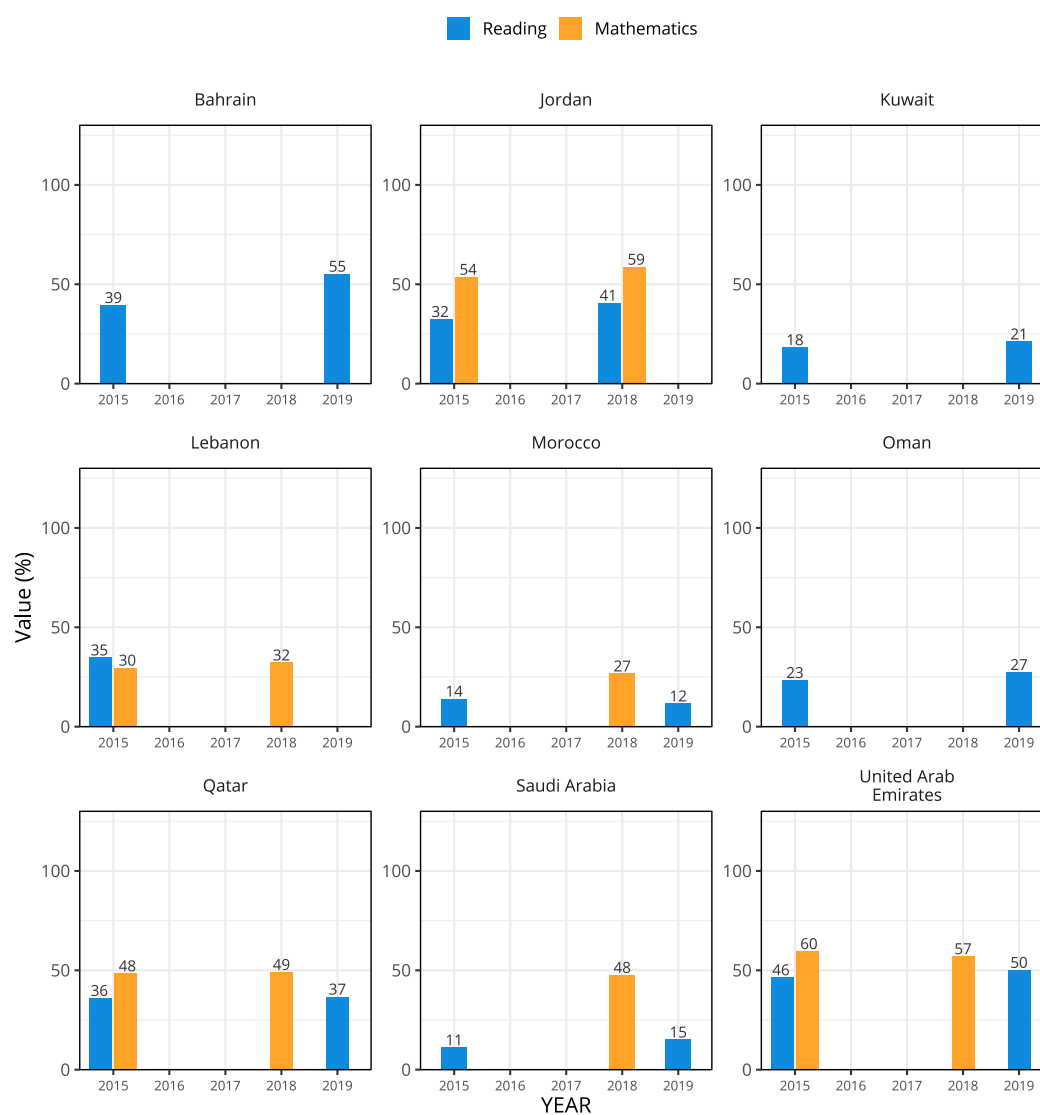
In mathematics, Bahrain and UAE have the highest proficiency levels in the Gulf and among all Arab States. In 2019, both countries reported 54% and 53% by the end of primary and 55% and 50% by the end of lower secondary respectively. Qatar reported around 40% in both levels and Oman around 30%. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have lower recorded proficiency levels. Kuwait reported 21% in both levels in 2019, while Saudi Arabia

reported 23% by the end of primary and 15% by the end of lower secondary.

Proficiency in Maghreb countries ranges from 25% in Tunisia to 12% in Morocco for lower secondary. Morocco has higher proficiency levels by the end of primary (18% in 2019). In Grades 2 and 3, Palestine reported the same levels of reading proficiency (26% in 2019) and Tunisia reported 15% in 2018.

Figure 4 shows that most countries improved the proficiency in reading and mathematics by the end of lower secondary.

Figure 4: Proportion of students in lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics, by country



Access and Completion Rates

Data for completion rates is unavailable for Gulf Countries. The latest data points available for these countries are from 2012. Except Lebanon and Libya, all the other countries have completion rates for all years between 2015 and 2020 (Table 2).

Table 2: Data availability for completion rates (SDG Global Indicator 4.1.2), by country

(a) Primary education	(b) Lower secondary	(c) Upper secondary

■ ALECSO: Gulf countries ■ ALECSO: Maghreb countries ■ ALECSO: Mashriq countries ■ ALECSO: Least developed countries

As in other subregions, the higher the educational level, the lower are the completion rates. In Arab states, in 2019, the average completion rate of primary was 85.9%, while the average completion rate in upper secondary was only 38.4% (Figure 5). Completion rate averages are higher in Mashriq countries than in other groups in all three levels of education. The average for Maghreb countries is slightly lower, because some countries in the region have low completion rates dragging the average down.

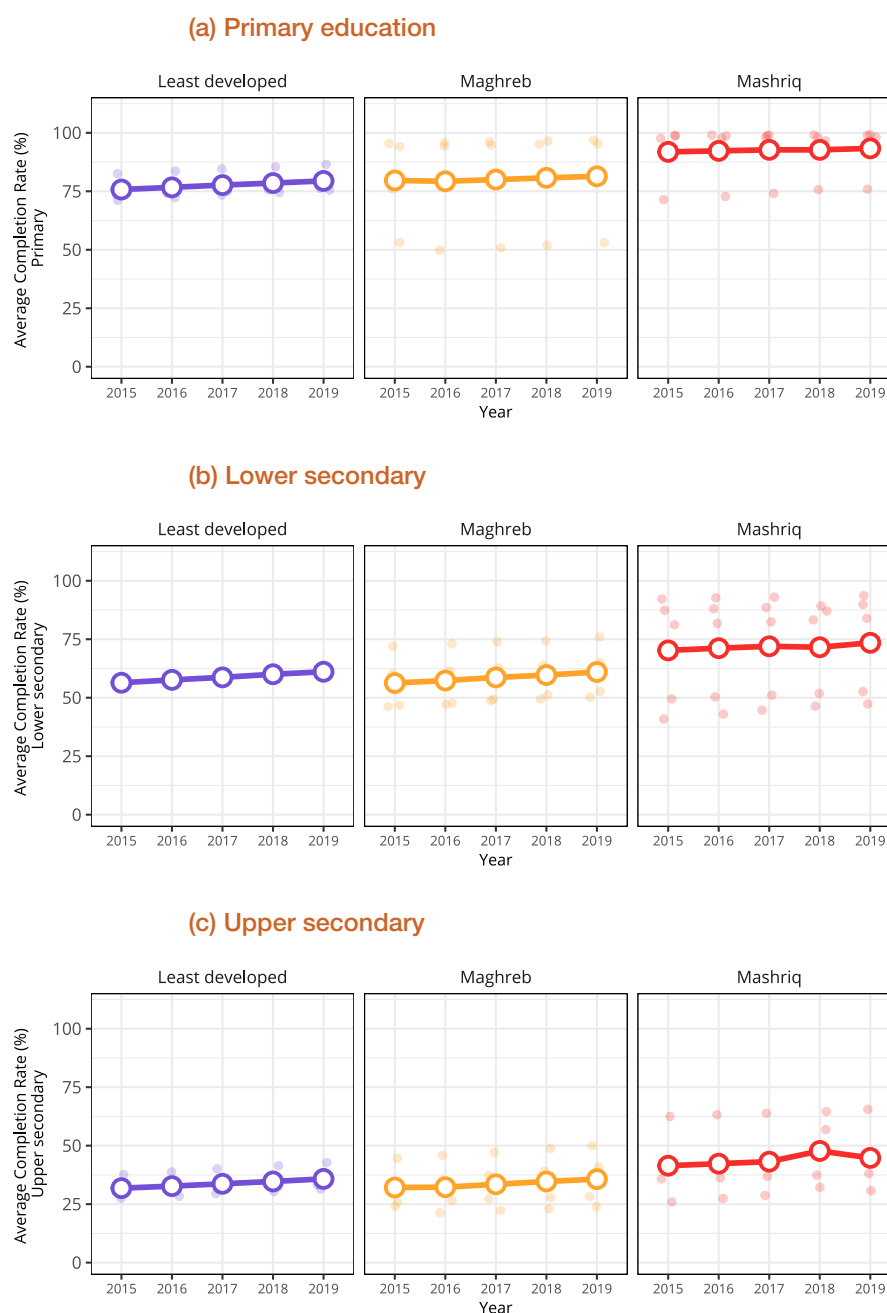
It is the case of Mauritania, that has the lowest completion rates in all Arab states in the primary (53% in 2019). Yemen and Djibouti, considered in the least developed countries (LDC) group by ALECSO, have reported values between 75% (Yemen) and 86% (Djibouti) for this educational level in 2019. Among Mashriq countries, Iraq has the lowest figures, but above 76% in 2019. Syria and Egypt in the Mashriq as well as Algeria and Tunisia in the Maghreb reported completion rates above 95% in 2019.

The lowest completion rates in the lower secondary are in Mauritania in the Maghreb, and Syria and Iraq in Mashriq. Tunisia has the highest figures in the first group (76%), while in the Mashriq, the highest completion rates above 75% in 2019 were recorded by Jordan (93%), Palestine (89.8%) and Egypt (83.9%). Among the LDC the figures are very close, averaging to around 55% in 2015 to 65% in 2019 (Figure 6).

In the upper secondary, Djibouti and Sudan have the lowest completion rate series, close to 30% in all years, while Yemen have completion rates close to 40%. All three countries improved the completion rates at this level, gaining between 3 and 5 percentage points between 2015-2019. In Maghreb, Tunisia has the highest rates, reaching almost 50% in 2019. In the lower end, Mauritania reported 24% in the same year. All four countries for which data is available, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania have improved their situation. In the Mashriq, Palestine reported 65% completion rate in 2019, the highest figure for the year. Iraq, on the other end, reported a completion rate of 31%.

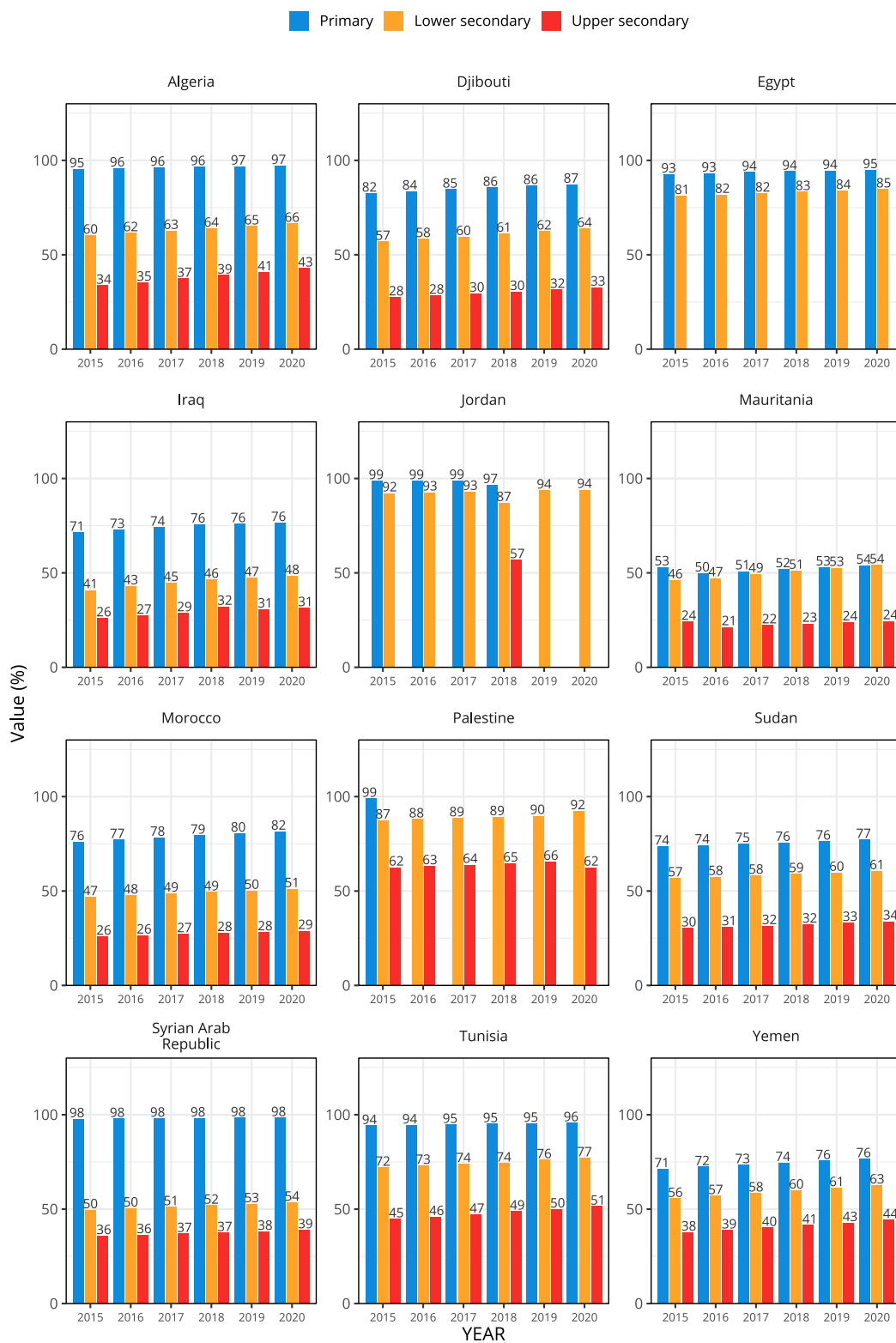
Figure 6 shows the evolution of the completion rates by country in the period between 2015 and 2019. It can be seen that the average is slightly on the rise in the lower secondary. In the primary, the situation is stable for countries that have already achieved higher completion rates and improving for the others. All countries have also seen some improvement in the upper secondary.

Figure 5: Average completion rates by level of education, both sexes, 2015–2019



The gross intake ratio at the end of primary and lower secondary levels also provides information on the impact of policies and programmes on access to school. The gross intake ratio to the last grade (GIRLG) of primary education accounts for the “total number of new entrants to the last grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official school entrance age for that grade”. As such, it measures how many children enter each grade and can be considered a proxy for the completion rate. Since it also includes over-age students and those who have repeated years, analyzing the completion rate using this proxy requires taking into consideration the ratio of students who actually reached the last grade of the level at the official age for that level of education. The table with GIRLG for the Arab States is presented in **Tables 3 and 4**.

Figure 6: Completion rates by level of education, both sexes, 2015–2018



In terms of out-of-school rate, data is mostly available for Mashriq and Maghreb and for the last years of the decade **Figure 7**. In primary education, latest values available for Sudan and Djibouti, collected respectively in 2018 and 2019, are both just above 30%. Yemen latest figure is from 2016 and reports a rate of 15%. In Maghreb, Algeria and Morocco have been reporting in the last few years rates below 1%. Mauritania reported 23% in 2019. The situation is similar in the Mashriq, where Jordan reports an out-of-school rate close to 20% in 2019, while Egypt and Palestine report much lower values (less than 1% and just above 3% in 2019 respectively).

In secondary education, there are only three data points available for Djibouti (55% in 2015), Sudan (44% in 2018) and Yemen (42% in 2016). In the Maghreb, Morocco and Mauritania have been both reducing the rate of children out of school: Mauritania still reported 41% in 2019 while Morocco reported 18% in the same year. Mashriq is represented by three countries: Jordan reported 34% in 2019, while Egypt and Palestine around 10% in the same year.

Figure 7: Out-of-school rate for children of primary and secondary school age, both sexes, 2015-2019

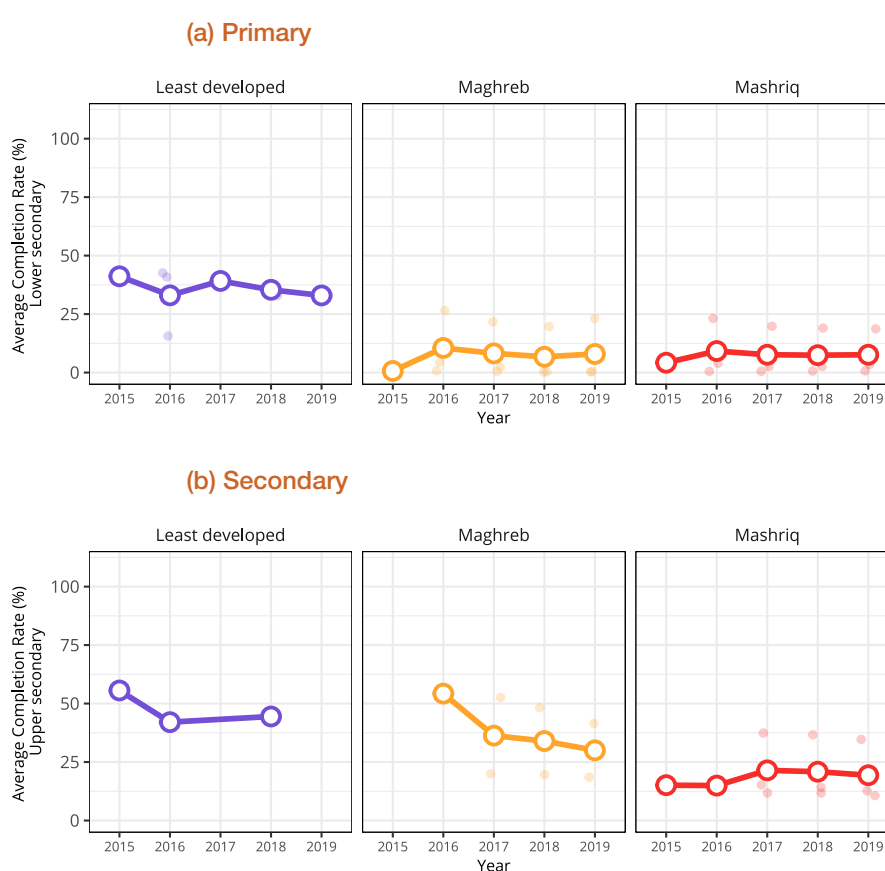


Table 3: Gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary education, both sexes, 2015–2019**Gulf countries**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain		89.5	93.2	94.5	96.6	98.7	99.5	99.5	97.9	100.2	
Kuwait	97.5	99	97.9	100			100.6	95.4	91.8	84.6	83.9
Oman		97.1	101.2	96.1	104	99.8	103.6	107.4	100.4	100.9	99.2
Qatar		95.5		96.4	92	92.6	94.7	95.7	95.8	95	96
Saudi Arabia		101.7	107.2	111				103.3	96.7	96.2	99.3
United Arab Emirates			93.9	95.7	99.1	103.5				111.9	104.7

Least developed countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Djibouti		50.8		50.7	60	65.6	67.4	63	66.4	65.6	63
Sudan	61.1		57.5	58.1	58.2	59.2	59.8	61.7	64.1		
Yemen	65.4		69.8	69.7			72.3				

Maghreb countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Algeria	95.6	97.6	101.6	106	108.4	105.5	105.6	105.6	105.1	101.4	103.7
Mauritania			70.4	72.6	69.7	70.4		69.7	76.1	72.9	
Morocco	85.3	89.4	98	96	96.3	96.3	95	92.9	93.6	97.1	100.1
Tunisia	99			96.8	99.7	103.3	99	95.1			106.5

Mashriq countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Egypt	96			100.5			96.9	97.2	100.7	104.6	
Jordan		77.2		73.8	75.2		72.1	71.3	72.7	81.7	81.6
Palestine	95	91.8	92.2	96	100.1	99.1	97.1	99.8	96.9	96.3	101.6
Syrian Arab Republic	103.4	106.9	113.6	72.3							

Table 4: Gross intake ratio to the last grade of lower secondary general education, both sexes, 2015–2019**Gulf countries**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain	92.4	92.5	89.1	93.1	96.3	99.2	97.7	95.2	94.3	93.5	
Kuwait	96.9		92.6	89			89.5	92.6	94.3	92.4	92.2
Oman		99.2	93.5	90.1	98.8	102.2	102.3	101.8	103.5	105.9	112.7
Qatar		113.6		83.6	85	89.2	90.9	84.6	89.2	94.8	93.6
Saudi Arabia	99.3	99.7					104.6	106.5	104.6	105.5	104.1
United Arab Emirates	84.4	84.5	73	74.9	81.7					101.9	96.9

Least developed countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Djibouti		50.2	47.8	43.1	42.2	44.6	43.3	47.1	49.2	49.9	49.8
Sudan	52.1			51.3	50.5	50.9	49.7		50.8		
Yemen	45.9		48.9	49.1			53.1				

Maghreb countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Algeria	58.3	70.4	114.6	85.3	79.3	76.2	79.1		84.6	82.9	
Mauritania			20.3		29.5	32.4	29.4	36.3	41.9	45.9	
Morocco	60	61.5	63.3	65.8	68.5	70.7	68	65	64.9	64.4	67.9
Tunisia	74			70	71.9	70.8		73.3	77.4		

Mashriq countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Egypt				77.7	77.2		83.5	82.4	84.6	88.4	
Jordan		79.9	76.8	70.4	68.5			58.7	59	64.3	66.4
Palestine	81.7	83.3	78.6	77.3	76	76.8	81	81.7	89.5	93.5	93.1
Syrian Arab Republic	66.9	67.3	70.5	53.8							

SDG Target 4.2 – Early childhood

“By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education”

SDG Target 4.2 focus on early childhood, an area in which Arab States show special concern and have defined as one of the six priority areas for education post-2015.

The related global indicators 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 measure the proportion of children in early childhood that are developmentally on-track before entering primary school, and their participation in organized learning. Data collected for Target 4.2 in Arab States using household surveys is scarce. Only five data points are available for the global targets on early childhood development⁹ and attendance¹⁰. Administrative data is available allowing to monitor enrolment rates on early childhood. **Table 6** reports all available data points. **Figure 5** shows the countries that have at least one data point in each indicator.

Table 5: Data availability of the SDG Global Indicator 4.2.1, by country, 2015–2020

(a) Children on track	(b) Net adjusted enrolment rates	(c) Net adjusted attendance rates
(d) Enrolment - early childhood	(e) Enrolment - early childhood development programmes	(f) Enrolment - pre-primary

■ ALECSO: Gulf countries
 ■ ALECSO: Maghreb countries
 ■ ALECSO: Mashriq countries
 ■ ALECSO: Least developed countries

Table 6 shows that adjusted net enrolment rates one year before the official primary entry age is more or less stable for the Gulf countries and in the Mashriq (from 2017 for the latter). For the other regions, data is mostly unavailable, and it is difficult to identify a clear tendency. Among LDC countries most data points are from Djibouti (12% in 2019). Yemen reported one data point from 2016 (4%) and Sudan reported one data point from 2018 (39%). Morocco has reported data in all years and we can notice a progress of 13 percentage points between 2015 (52%) and 2019 (65%). In Gulf countries, while UAE report almost 100% enrolment in all the period, Saudi Arabia reported only 50% in 2019. The remaining countries report figures between 70% (Bahrain and Kuwait) and 90% (Qatar) in 2019.

⁹ Algeria (2019), Mauritania(2019), Tunisia (2019), Iraq (2015), Jordan (2018)

¹⁰ Iraq (2018), Jordan (2018), Mauritania (2015), Palestine (2020), Tunisia (2018)

Gross enrolment ratios can be seen in **Figure 8**. Enrollment in all early childhood education is lowering the regional average. It is also declining in Kuwait that has the highest ratios in the region. Bahrain and Qatar (around 35%) and Oman and Saudi Arabia (around 15%) have fairly stable ratios during the period between 2015 and 2019. Most data from Maghreb is also from Morocco showing a stable 20% rate since 2015, Tunisia has reported the highest rates in 2016 (44%). In Mashriq, Palestine has reported the highest enrolment rates (54%), while Egypt and Jordan have similar enrolment rates of around 30% (2019).

In pre-primary only, UAE has reported the highest ratios (99% in 2019) and Saudi Arabia the lowest (21%) in 2019. The regional average in the Gulf region is lower if UAE figure for 2019 is not considered. Djibouti and Sudan have opposed situations, the first reporting ratios below 10%, while Sudan reports almost 50% in all years when considering both all early childhood education or pre-primary only.

Figure 8: Gross enrolment ratio, early childhood education and pre-primary, by framework, both sexes, 2015–2019

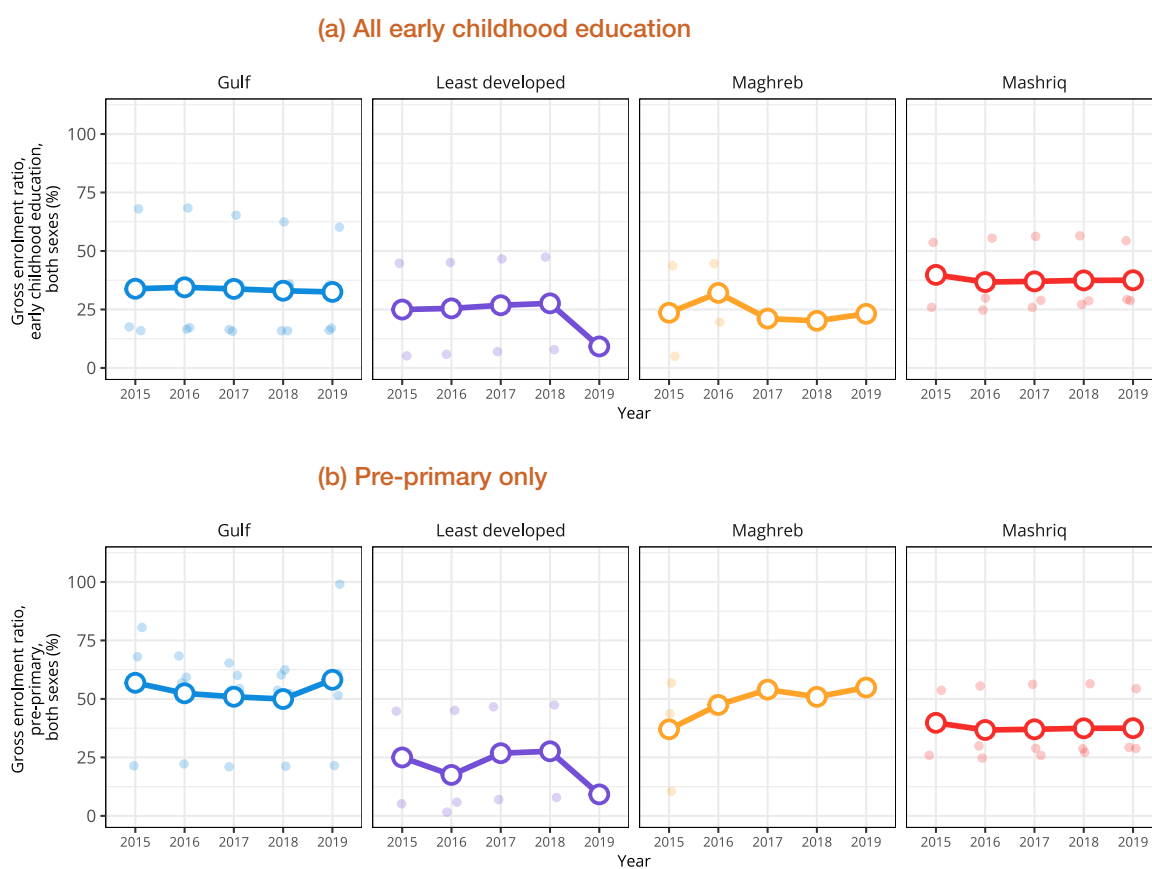


Table 6: SDG Indicator 4.2.2 Adjusted net enrolment rate, one year before the official primary entry age, both sexes**Gulf countries**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain		77.3	72.3	75.8	81.6	82.4	82.9	76.6	70.5	70.1	
Kuwait	94	96.2	93.5	88.6	84		79.9	75.9		70.7	69.3
Oman		57.1	56.7	72.1	79.1	80.8	86.2	83	80.7	85.8	86.3
Qatar		85		79.7	84.4	89	91.4	91.6	92.4	91.5	94.9
Saudi Arabia						42.4	44.7	46.8	45.8	50.1	53
United Arab Emirates	92.4	91.1	87.9	86.3		99.5	99.6	99.2		99.9	99.7

Least developed countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Djibouti		7.5					11.4	7.5	9.5	12.1	13.4
Sudan									39.9		
Yemen	5.5			4.4			4.1				

Maghreb countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Algeria	88.9	84.7									
Morocco	65.3	65.5	64.5	67.1	70.7	52.3	46.6	54.1	50	65.1	72.9

Mashriq countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Egypt		30.8	36.3		40.6		39.7	38.1	37.1	36.7	
Jordan	41.4	41.2	43.1					41.9	43.4	45.2	49.6
Palestine	41.5	52.6	47.7	53.1	58.1	66.7		64.4	67.8	65.2	68.4
Syrian Arab Republic	49.9	58.9	59.2	39.6							

SDG Target 4.3 – TVET and Higher Education

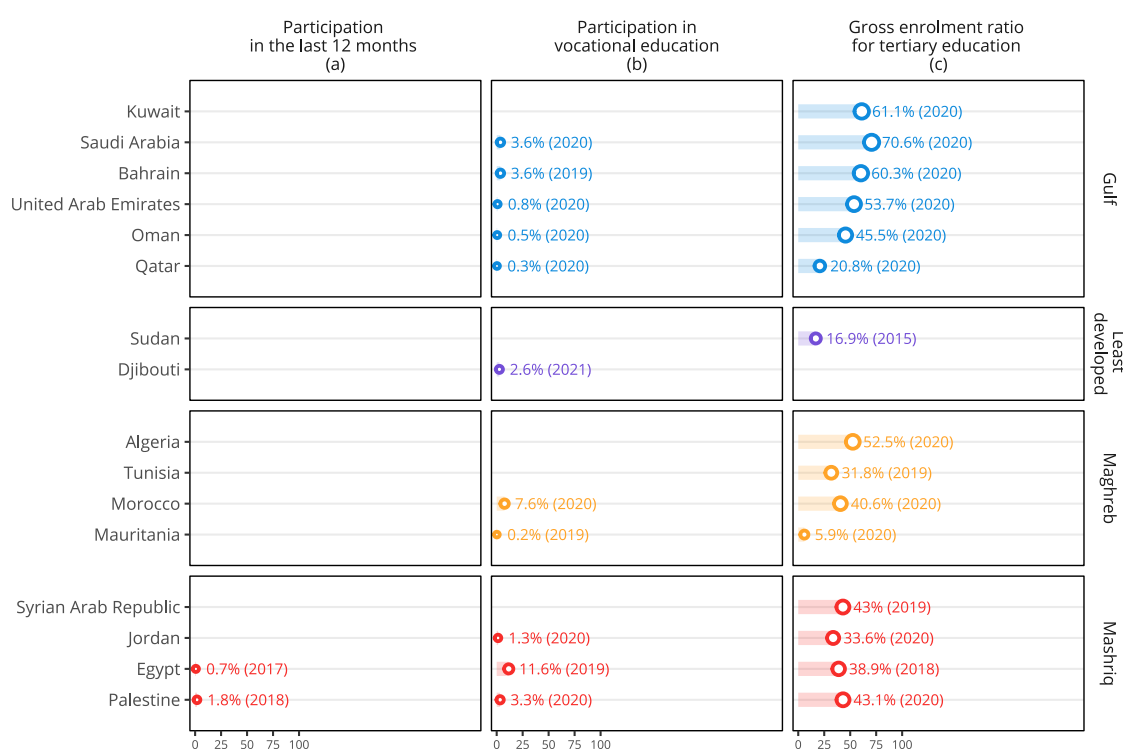
“By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university”

SDG Target 4.3 focuses on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and tertiary education. As such, it is not one of the six priority areas for education post-2015. However, when TVET is concerned, Arab countries reaffirmed their intention to provide the youth with alternatives for formal training, including in the 2013 Cairo Declaration.¹¹ The Dubai Action Plan also included “expanding TVET and improving its quality” in its directives, looking at guaranteeing that the youth are given the appropriate set of skills required for life and work.

Little data are available for the global indicator of the target, which measures the participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months. Only Egypt and Palestine reported data for this indicator. This is the same for the Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education for which only five data points are available. For the participation of 15- to 24-year-olds in technical and vocational programmes, a few more data points are available.

On the global indicator, Palestine reported 1.8% in 2018 and Egypt 0.7% in 2017. **Figure 9** and **Table 7** shows that participation in vocational education, formal or non-formal, is low in all countries. The only country that achieves at least 10% in participation in formal training is Egypt (12% in 2019). Morocco is close, with participation close to 8% in 2020.

Figure 9: Global and thematic indicators for vocational and tertiary education, latest year available



- a) Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the last 12 months, both sexes (%)
- b) Proportion of 15-to-24-year-olds enrolled in vocational education, both sexes (%)
- c) Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education (%)

¹¹ UN 2020; cited in LAS 2013.

As for tertiary education, enrolment in tertiary education is above 50% in Gulf countries except in Oman and Qatar. Saudi Arabia has the highest ratio (71% in 2020), while Bahrain and Kuwait have ratios above 60%. Qatar reported a ratio of 21% in 2020. In the Maghreb, Algeria reported the highest ratio, above 50% in 2020 while Mauritania reported only 6% in the same year. Countries in the Mashriq have reported very close ratios between 2018 and 2020. Syria and Egypt have the highest scores, around 40%. For LDC countries, only Sudan reported 17% in 2015.

All countries have improved the ratios during the last five years. Bahrain and Oman are among the countries that have seen the higher improvements (**Figure 10**).

Figure 10: Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education

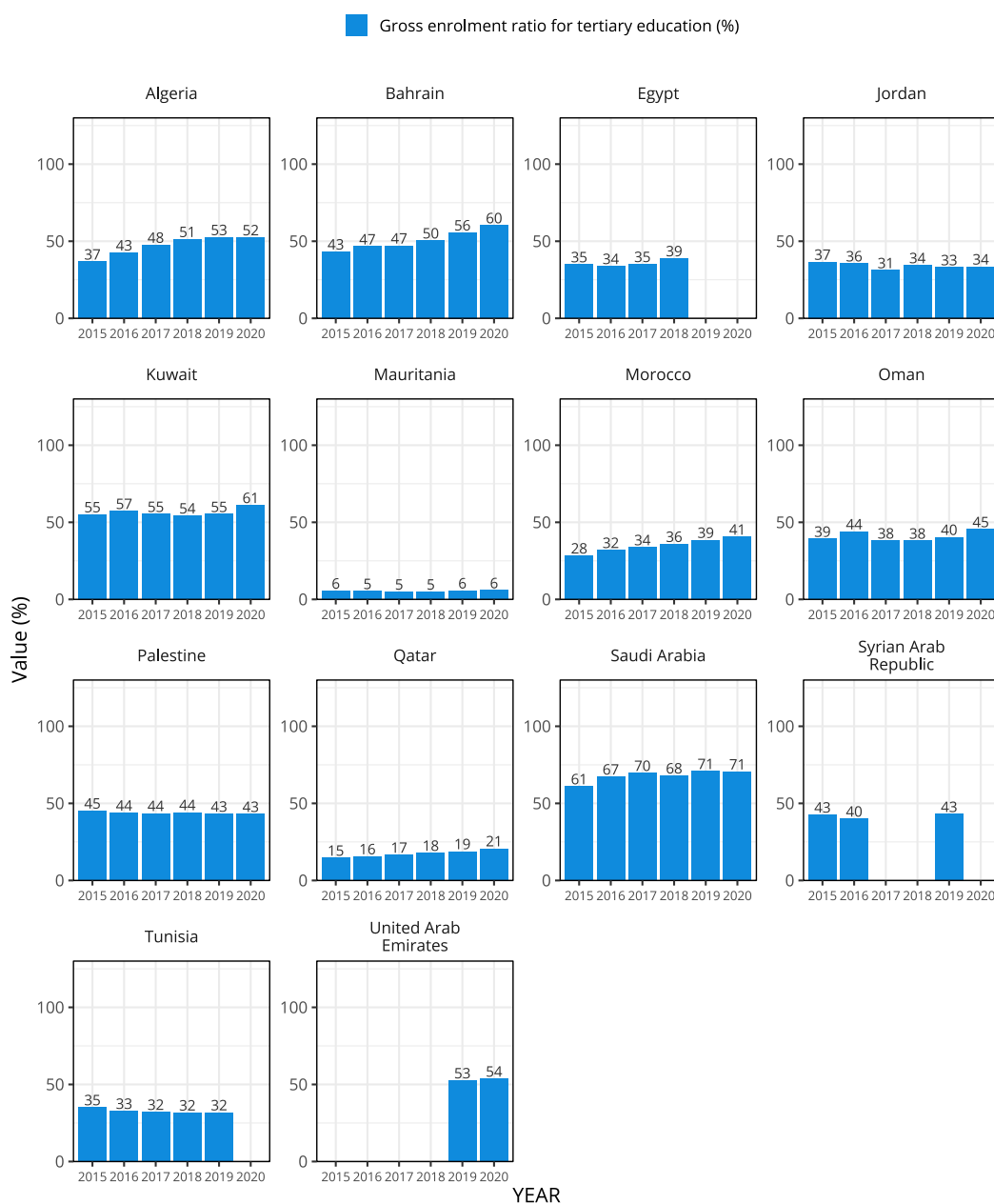


Table 7: SDG Indicator 4.3.3 Participation rate in technical and vocational programmes (15- to 24-year-olds), by sex**Gulf countries**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain	3.3	3	3.2	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.6	3.6	
Kuwait	0	0	0	0	0	0					
Oman		0	0.3	0	0	0	0	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.5
Qatar	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.3
Saudi Arabia						0.4	0.4	0.3		4.1	3.6
United Arab Emirates							0.5	0.5		0.5	0.8

Least developed countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Djibouti											2.7
Yemen	0.2		0.2				0				

Maghreb countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Mauritania			0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	
Morocco									7.7	7.8	7.6

Mashriq countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Egypt		9			10.2		10.6	11	11.4	11.6	
Jordan	1.8	1.8		1.8	1.7			1.4	1.2	1.2	1.3
Palestine									2.9	3.1	3.3
Syrian Arab Republic	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.1							

SDG Target 4.4 – Skills for Work

“By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship”

SDG Target 4.4 focuses on numeracy and ICT capabilities. As for the Target 4.3, the Arab States do not specifically select this dimension as priority for the member countries. However, skills for work are seen as essential to the youth for life and work, as mentioned in the previous section.

Within this SDG target, the global indicator 4.4.1 looks at *“the proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) by type of skill”*. Basic skills cover the most common usages of a computer, including concepts such as understanding the basic notions of computer manipulation; managing computer files, word processing, using spreadsheets and databases; creating presentations; finding information and communicating using computers; and being aware of social and ethical implications of internet use.

Data on ICT skills are available for fourteen countries out of twenty-one in the region. Data is from 2018 and 2019 for Gulf, the Maghreb and the Mashriq; and from 2016-2017 for Yemen and Sudan. As far as the thematic indicators are concerned, proficiency in functional and digital literacy skills are unavailable for the Arab countries, while a few data points are available for youth and adult educational attainment rates.

Figure 11 shows that Gulf countries have the highest proportion of skilled youth and adults, and the figures are consistently above those in the other regions. As an example, 73% of youth and adults in the Gulf region have enough skills to attach a file to an e-mail, while this proportion is 36% in the Mashriq, the second highest average.

Not surprisingly, the highest proportion of skilled persons are able to do the more basic tasks like copying, attaching and duplicating a file (mean between 40 and 50% for all countries for all years), while for more complex tasks like programming, the mean for all years is around 10%. The mean in the Gulf is the highest in this particular indicator, where close to 12% of youth and adults are reported to have some skill in a programming language.

Sudan and Yemen have the lowest proportions of skilled youth and adults among Arab states, while UAE and Oman have the highest. In Maghreb, Morocco has the highest proportions in most of the skills except for programming language in which Tunisia has 50% more skilled youth and adults than Morocco (9.3%). In this particular skill, Tunisia’s proportion (16.1%) is close to Bahrain (18.1%) and UAE (17.9%), that have the highest proportions among Arab countries.

In terms of educational attainment, most countries have reported rates above 90%, except Tunisia that reported 74% in 2016.

Figure 11: ICT skills, both sexes, last available value, latest year available

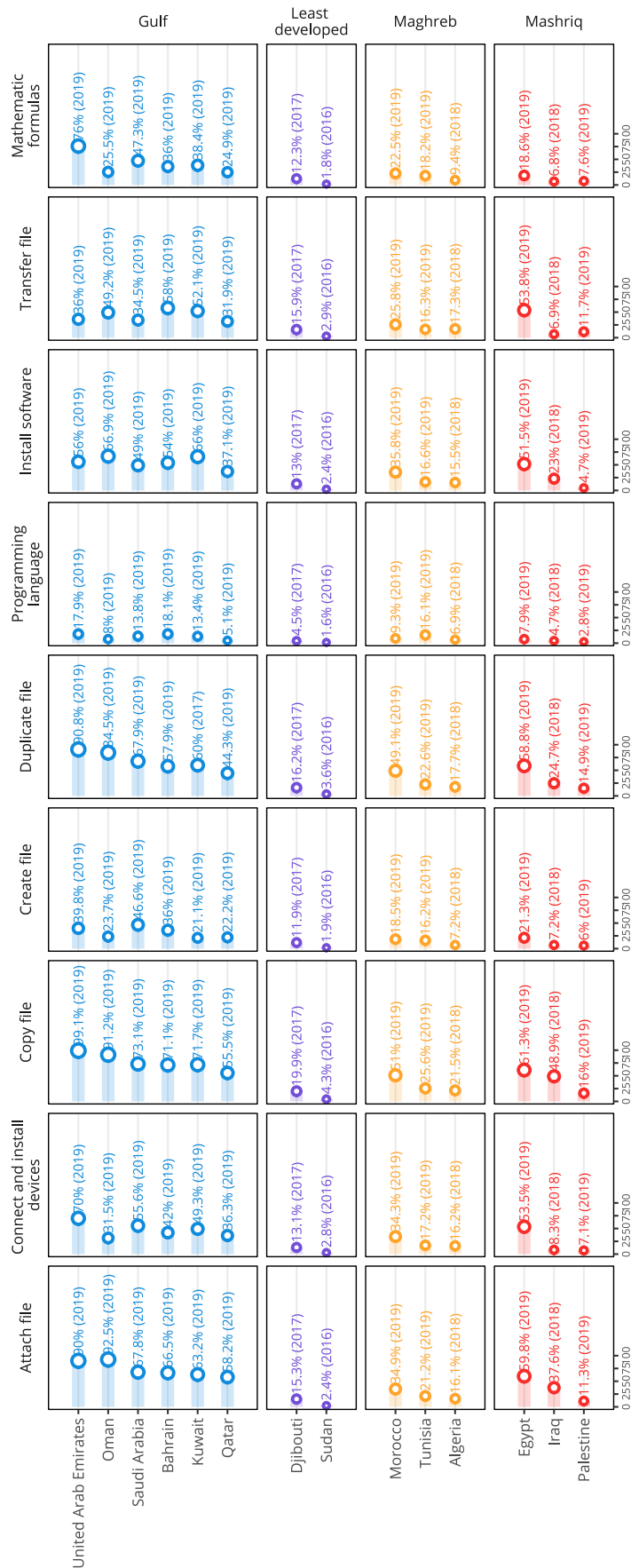


Table 8: SDG Indicator 4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills - Programming language, by sex**Gulf countries**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain						13	14	20.4	9.8	18.1	
Kuwait									13.4	13.4	
Oman										8	
Qatar						5.6	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.1	
Saudi Arabia								9.7	14.5	13.8	
United Arab Emirates							11.1	11.7	16.9	17.9	

Least developed countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Djibouti								4.5			
Sudan							1.6				

Maghreb countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Algeria									6.9		
Morocco					12.7	1.6	5	6.9	6.8	9.3	
Tunisia								14.4	14.7	16.1	

Mashriq countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Egypt					1.4	0.7	3.7		8.8	7.9	
Iraq					4.7			4.8	4.7		
Palestine									2.5	2.8	

SDG Target 4.5 – Equity

“By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations”

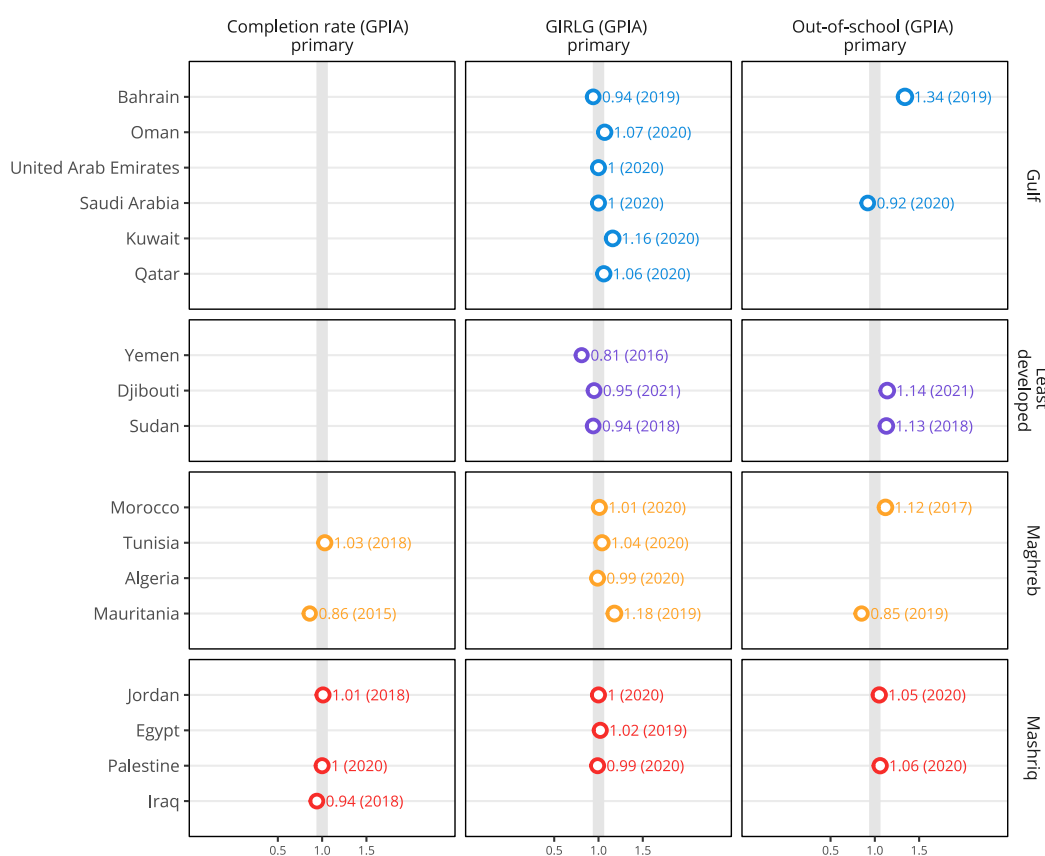
SDG Target 4.5 focuses on equity in education. The SDG 4 database enables policymakers to follow-up on disparities and inequalities related to gender, location, disability, ethnicity and children in vulnerable situations.

The global indicators used to monitor Target 4.5 are the various parity indices calculated for education indicators that can be disaggregated in the following ways: female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected.

Related to 4.1 - Primary and secondary education

Among the disaggregations that are available for the Arab countries in relation to Target 4.1, there are a few data points for the primary completion rates, gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary, and the out-of-school rate.

Figure 12: Gender parity indexes in relation to Target 4.1



GPIA = adjusted gender parity index (female/male out-of-school rate).

GIRLG = Gross intake ratio to the last grade

Parity = Shaded area between 0.97 and 1.03

As can be seen in **Figure 13**, among the countries that reported completion rates for primary, Iraq and Mauritania are the countries that still have not achieved the gender parity. Using the GIRLG as a proxy, the parity is still to be achieved in Bahrain, Yemen, Djibouti and Sudan. Algeria virtually achieved gender parity in these indicators with 0.99 GPIA. In terms of out-of-school rate, a few countries present rates higher than 1.03 GPIA, meaning that girls are more likely to be out of school compared to boys in these countries. In Mauritania, the rates are lower than 0.97 GPIA, showing that males were disadvantaged in 2019. The same is true for Saudi Arabia in the Gulf.

Another disaggregation that is available is the Adjusted location parity index (LPIA), that is the relation between rural and urban children, for the minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. Data on LPIA is available for 2018 for some countries showing great disparity and a more favorable situation for urban children. The difference is particularly important in Morocco and Saudi Arabia, where the LPIA is below 0.5 for the lower secondary.

Table 9: Adjusted location parity index (LPIA) for proficiency level in reading at the end of lower secondary education

Gulf countries		
Country	2012	2018
Qatar	0.6	1
Saudi Arabia		0.5
United Arab Emirates	0.9	0.7
Maghreb countries		
Country	2012	2018
Morocco		0.3
Tunisia	0.8	
Mashriq countries		
Country	2012	2018
Jordan	0.8	0.7
Lebanon		0.5

Table 10: Adjusted location parity index (LPIA) for proficiency level in mathematics at the end of lower secondary education

Gulf countries				
Country	2011	2012	2015	2018
Kuwait			0.7	
Oman	0.8		0.6	
Qatar	0.9		0.4	
Saudi Arabia	0.1			
United Arab Emirates	0.4		0.6	
Maghreb countries				
Country	2011	2012	2015	2018
Morocco	0.3		0.2	
Tunisia		0.7		

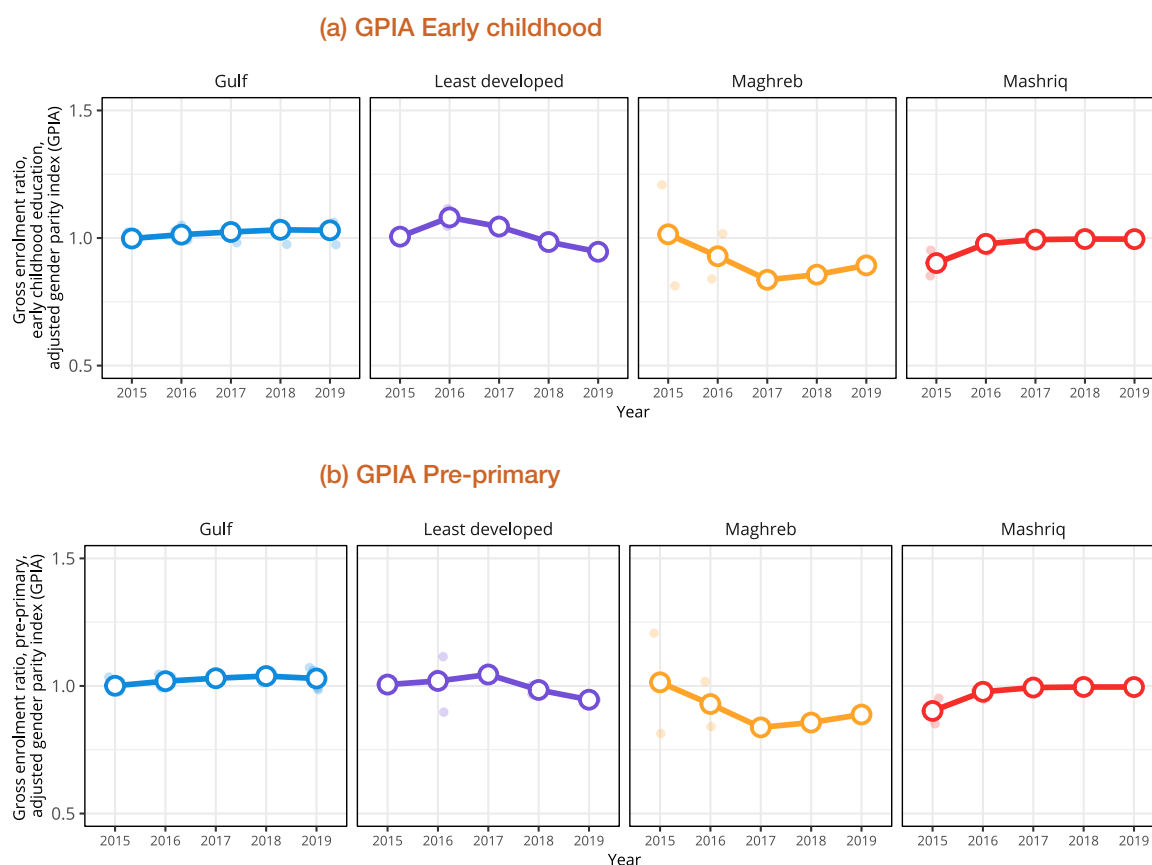
Mashriq countries

Country	2011	2012	2015	2018
Egypt			0.2	
Jordan		0.6		0.7
Lebanon	0.9		0.7	
Palestine	0.9			
Syrian Arab Republic	0.8			

Related to Target 4.2 - Early childhood

Parity indicators are available for gross early childhood education enrolment. **Figure 13** shows that Gulf countries have achieved parity in early childhood and, as of 2019, enrolment favour girls except for Qatar. Mashriq countries improved the enrolment of girls and the relation between girls and boys in this level in 2019 are equal or very close to parity. Among the three least developed countries, the parity achieved in 2016 was lost in the last couple of years. Maghreb has mainly data points for Morocco, that improved a little from 2015 (0.84) to 2019 (0.89). Tunisia and Mauritania data points are from 2015 and above 1, meaning that enrolment favored girls in those years.

In the pre-primary level, Gulf countries are also close or slightly favoring girls. Bahrain has the highest adjusted parity rates in 2019 (1.07) and the UAE has the lowest (0.98). Mashriq countries have figures very close to parity since 2017. Morocco figures in this level are very similar to the early childhood level. For the least developed countries, Djibouti is favoring more boys in 2019 than it was in 2015 and figures for Sudan are stable. In 2016, Yemen reported a parity rate of 0.89 for this level.

Figure 13: Gross enrolment ratio, early childhood and pre-primary

SDG Target 4.6 – Literacy and Numeracy

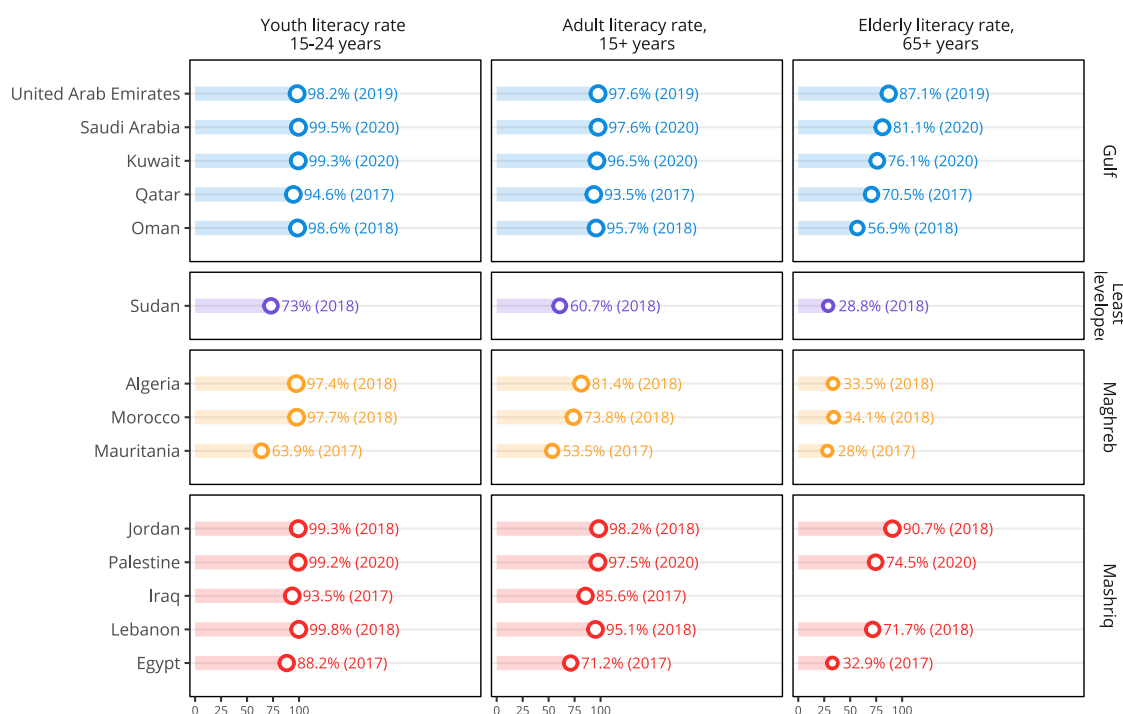
“By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy”

Indicators for SDG Target 4.6 measure learning progress in general. The SDG global Indicator 4.6.1 for literacy and numeracy on the “proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex”, is not widely collected in Arab countries and no data point is available for this indicator. The first thematic indicator “Youth/adult literacy rate” is collected for some countries and cohorts, while the second “Participation rate of illiterate youth/adults in literacy programmes” is also not collected.

Figure 14 shows that youth literacy rate has been achieved in all Gulf countries and most of the Mashriq and Maghreb. The exceptions in these two regions are Egypt (88% in 2017), Iraq (93% in 2017), and Mauritania (64% in 2017). Sudan shows literacy rate of 73% in this cohort.

Elderly population, as expected, have lower literacy rates in all sub regions. The highest rates are in Jordan (90.7% in 2018) and the UAE (87.1% in 2019). The lowest rates are in Sudan (28.8% in 2018) and Mauritania (28% in 2017).

Figure 14: Literacy Rate: Youth, Adult and Elderly Population



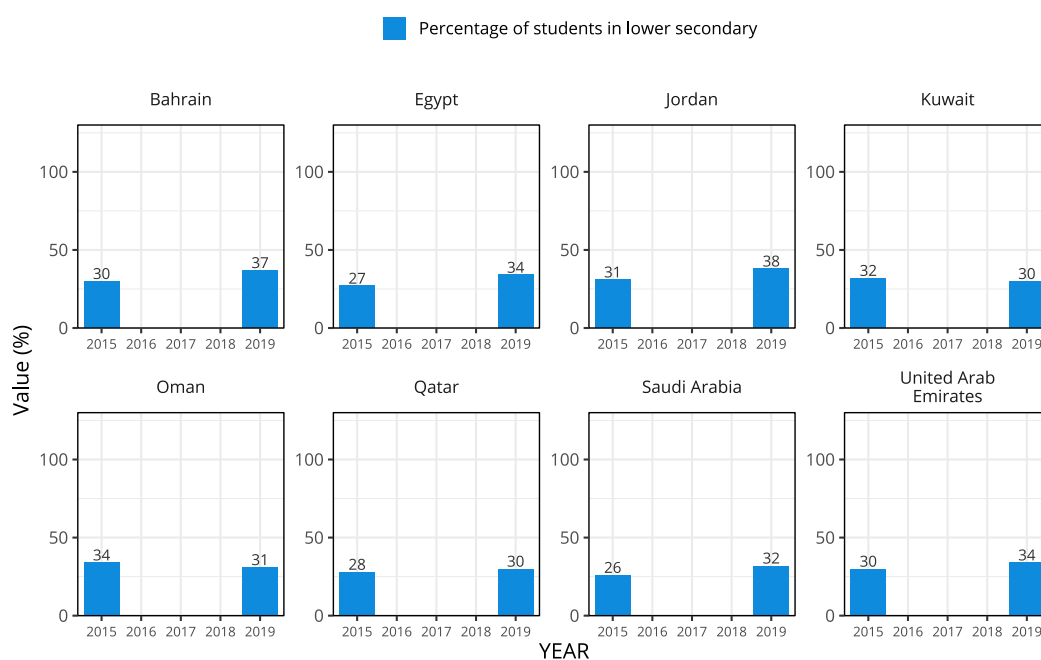
SDG Target 4.7 – Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship

“By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”

SDG Target 4.7 focuses on broad knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development. The global indicator for this target measuring the “extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment” is missing for Arab countries. The thematic indicator on “Percentage of students in lower secondary education showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability” is also missing, but a few data points are available for the thematic indicator that measures the proficiency in knowledge of environmental science and geoscience and the percentage of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education.

In relation to knowledge of environmental science and geoscience, data was collected in 2015 and 2019. Gulf countries are the most represented for both indicators. It can be seen in **Figure 15** that the percentage of students has changed significantly from 2015 to 2019 in these countries, except for Kuwait and Qatar. The only country where the percentage has decreased is Oman. In most other countries, some percentage points were gained. It is also the case of Jordan and Egypt in the Mashriq.

Figure 15: Percentage of students in lower secondary education showing proficiency in knowledge of environmental science and geoscience



Gulf countries like Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have reported that 100% of schools provide life skills-based

HIV and sexuality education. Oman, Algeria, Mauritania have reported that none of the schools provide this kind of education. Egypt also reported the same in 2016.

SDG Target 4.a – School Environment

“Build and upgrade education facilities that are child disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all”

The SDG global Indicator 4.a.1 measures the proportion of schools with access to basic services, such as electricity, internet, water and sanitation. Data for this indicator are available for a few Arab countries, except the least developed in the sample (Djibouti, Sudan, Yemen). An appropriate learning environment is one of the conditions to achieve a good quality education.

Gulf countries reported 100% of primary and secondary schools are equipped with computers and internet. The situation in the other regions is more varied (**Figure 16**).

In the primary level in the Maghreb, Tunisia has reported that most schools are equipped with computers, but only half of them have internet. In Morocco, computers and internet are available for around 80% of the schools. Mauritania reported only the proportion of schools equipped with computers (14% in 2017). Algeria reported internet connection in 5.3% of the primary schools in 2020. In the Mashriq, Egypt and Palestine have more than 80% of the schools equipped with computers. Palestine has also a high proportion of schools with internet, while Egypt reported 71.3% in 2019. Lebanon reported that almost 70% of the schools are equipped with computers and more than 90% have an internet connection. Jordan reported the lowest proportions of schools with computer and internet in the region (33.6% in 2020 for computers and internet).

In the secondary level, almost all schools in Tunisia are equipped with computers and internet. Mauritania reported that all secondary schools have computers. In Morocco, almost 90% of secondary schools have computers and internet. Algeria has the same proportion of schools equipped with computers, but internet is available in only 64% of them. In the Mashriq, all four countries reported high proportion of schools with computers. Only Lebanon reported a proportion of schools below 90%. Lebanon, Jordan and, to some extent, Palestine also have high proportions of connected schools. Egypt is the outlier in this indicator, reporting that only 50% of the secondary schools have an internet link available for the students.

Figure 16: Proportion of schools with access to basic services – computers and internet

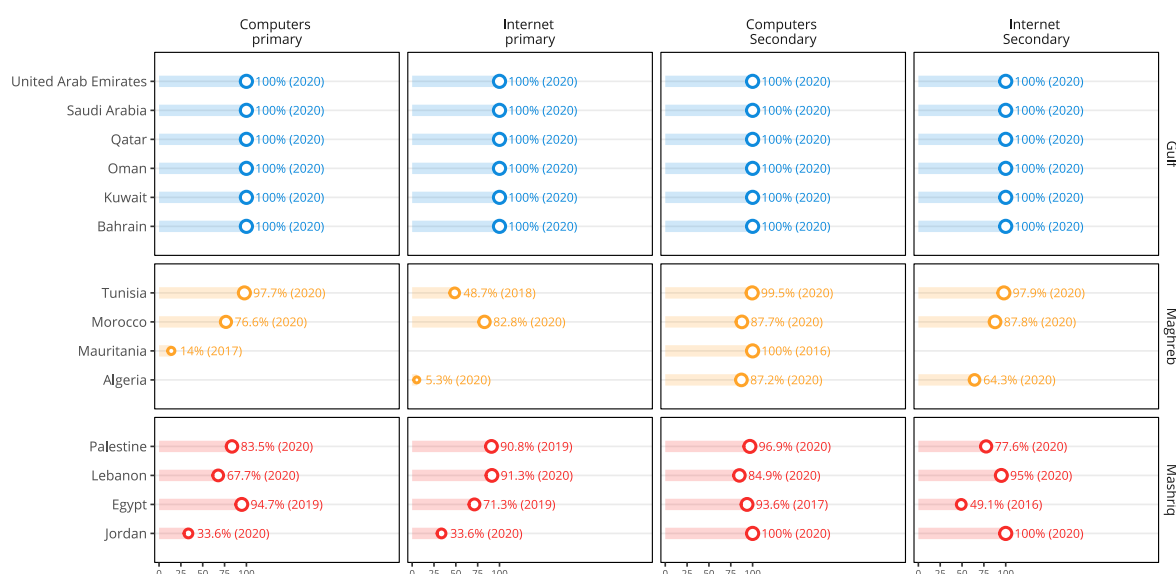


Table 11 shows a few data points available on the proportion of schools that are disability-friendly in the primary level. The information available for Gulf countries is that 5 out of 6 schools are adapted to children with disabilities. Morocco and Palestine are the only countries in their respective regions with data on this indicator. In Morocco, around 20% of the facilities in primary are adapted (in 2020). In Palestine, the proportion of adapted schools increased from 34% in 2016 to 54% in 2020.

There are a few data points available for 2019 on the thematic indicator on students experiencing bullying in the last 12 months. Data shows that on average almost 80% of the students in Gulf countries and Morocco have experienced some kind of bullying in the previous year. The lowest percentage was reported by Saudi Arabia (72%) and the highest by Qatar (83%). In all countries, percentages are higher for boys than for girls.

The number of attacks on students, personnel and institutions is also recorded for some of the countries. Syria has recorded 213 attacks in 2019, followed by Palestine, Iraq and Yemen, all reporting around 50 attacks in the last 12 months.

Table 11: SDG Indicator 4.a.1 Proportion of primary schools with access to adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities - Primary

Gulf countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain							100	100	100	100	100
Kuwait										100	100
Qatar								100	100	100	100
Saudi Arabia							100	100	100	100	100
United Arab Emirates										100	100

Maghreb countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Morocco								17.3	17.3	20.1	20.1

Mashriq countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Palestine							38.6	31.1	46.5	59.2	54.1

SDG Target 4.b – Scholarships

“By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries”

SDG Target 4.b is related to access to scholarships focusing on higher education and bridging the inequalities between rich and poor countries. The global SDG Indicator 4.b.1 for the target measures *the volume of official development assistance (ODA) flows for scholarships by sector and type of study*.

The volume of scholarships (**Figure 17 and Table 12**) is increasing in all groups and countries except for Yemen, Sudan and Djibouti. Yemen, that used to have good amounts of aid for scholarships in 2015 (US\$ 27 million) and, since 2017, had this amount cut in more than one half (US\$ 12 million in 2019) and saw again a sharp increase in 2018. Aid for Sudan has been multiplied by four since 2015 and doubled for Djibouti. Djibouti is the country that receives the lowest amount in aid for scholarships.

In Mashriq, aid for Syria has spiked in 2019, but overall the region is seeing aid increase every year. Jordan has also seen its aid increase in four times since 2015 (US\$ 4.2 million in 2015 to US\$ 18.2 million in 2019). Lebanon receives the lowest amount in the group (US\$ 5.2 million in 2019).

In Maghreb, Mauritania and Libya were the countries where aid has increased the most, but these two countries are still among the lowest recipients of aid among Arab Countries (around US\$ 3 million in 2019)

Figure 17: Volume of ODA flows for scholarships, 2015-2019

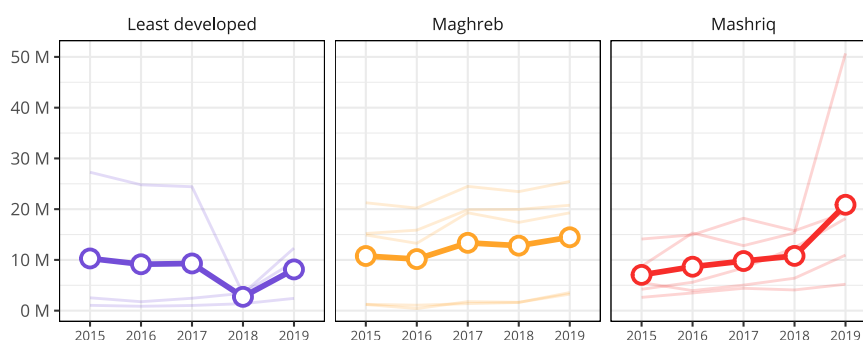


Table 12: SDG Indicator 4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study**Gulf countries**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Oman	0.6										

Least developed countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Djibouti	1.3	0.1	0.9	1.3	1.2	1	0.9	1	1.4	2.4	
Sudan	1.5	2	2.4	2.4	2.1	2.5	1.8	2.4	3.4	9.6	
Yemen	1.2	1.8	1.7	2	1.6	27.3	24.8	24.4	3.4	12.3	

Maghreb countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Algeria	7.3	1.9	5.2	18.8	18.6	15.2	15.9	19.9	19.9	20.8	
Libya	0.2	1.3	1	0.8	0.8	1.2	0.4	1.8	1.7	3.3	
Mauritania	1	0.3	1	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.6	3.6	
Morocco	5.7	2.3	6.5	20	20	21.3	20.2	24.5	23.5	25.4	
Tunisia	5.1	2.8	5.1	13.3	12.2	14.9	13.3	19.3	17.4	19.3	

Mashriq countries

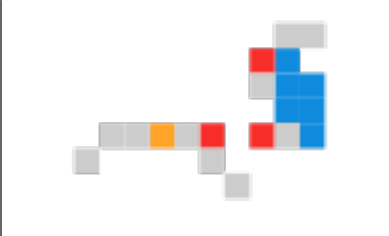
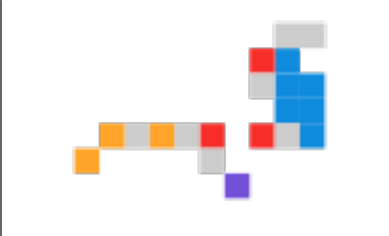
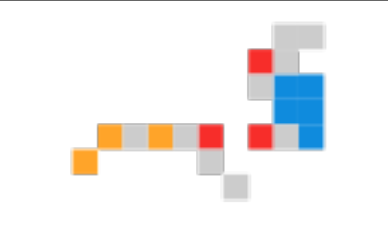
Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Egypt	7.9	7.9	10	10.4	16.2	14.1	14.9	18.2	15.7	19.3	
Iraq	8	11.5	11.5	7.2	3.5	5.5	3.9	5	6.4	11	
Jordan	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	5.4	4.2	5.6	8.4	12.4	18.2	
Lebanon	1.9	1.5	2	4.5	2.4	2.6	3.5	4.4	4.1	5.2	
Syrian Arab Republic	2.9	3.1	2.8	3.4	5.2	8.8	15.3	12.8	15.3	50.7	

SDG Target 4.c – Teachers

“By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states”

SDG Target 4.c is related to the quality of education and the provision of sufficiently trained teachers. The global Indicator 4.c.1 for the target aims to measure the *proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by educational level*. Global indicator is available for Gulf and Mashriq countries in pre-primary. Maghreb and the least developed countries have recorded some data points for primary and secondary. Some thematic indicators are also available for the region, including the percentage of qualified teachers for each education level, the pupil-to-qualified teacher ratio and attrition rates.

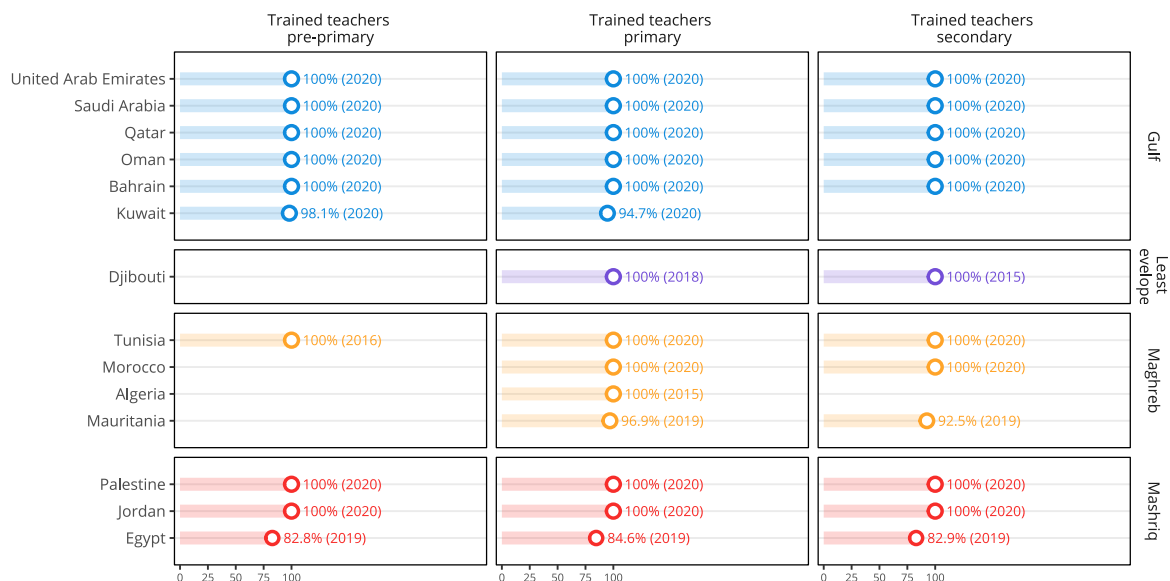
Table 13: Data availability on the proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications

(a) Pre-primary (%)	(b) Primary (%)	(c) Secondary (%)
		

■ ALECSO: Gulf countries
 ■ ALECSO: Maghreb countries
 ■ ALECSO: Mashriq countries
 ■ ALECSO: Least developed countries

As far as the global indicator is concerned (**Figure 18**), most countries recorded that 100% of the teachers have the minimum qualification for the pre-primary, primary and secondary. The only two countries that still do not have all teachers with the minimum qualifications are Egypt, that reported a proportion of around 80% in all levels in 2019, and Mauritania, that reported a proportion of 96% for the primary and 92% for the secondary in 2019.

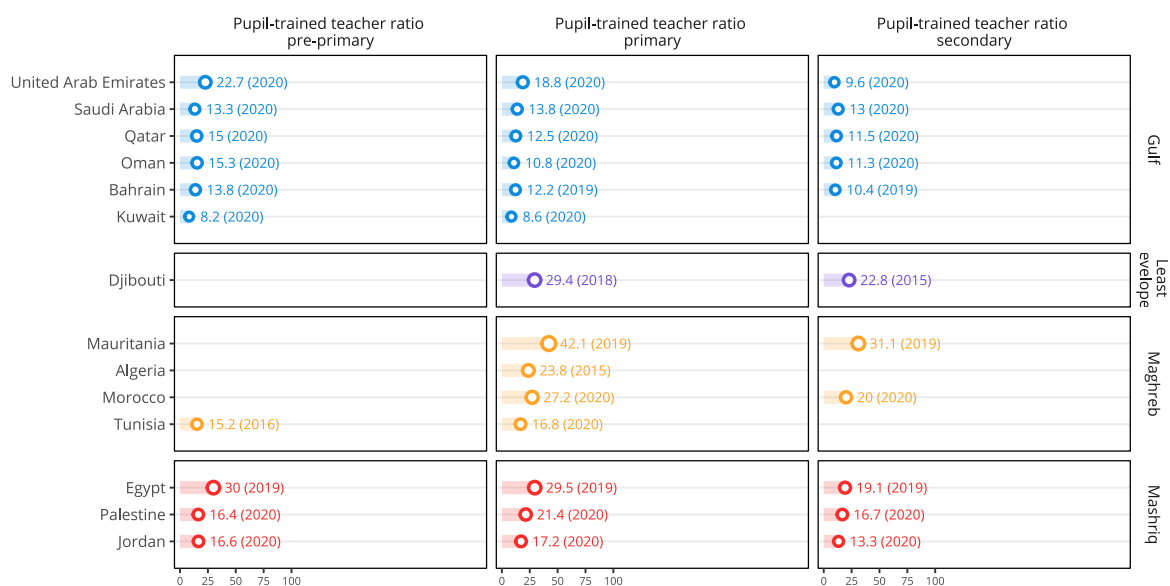
Figure 18: Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, 2015–2019



The thematic indicator 4.c.2 shows a more heterogeneous picture (Figure 19). For this indicator, the higher the ratio, the lower the relative access of pupils to trained teachers. In the Gulf region, the countries with higher ratios are the UAE for the pre-primary and primary (22.7 and 18.8 in 2020) and Saudi Arabia for the secondary (13 in 2020).

In the Maghreb, the highest ratios are in Mauritania for the primary and secondary. Tunisia has the lowest ratios for the primary (16.8 in 2020) and it is the only country to report a ratio for the pre-primary (15.2 in 2016). In the Mashriq, Egypt reported a ratio of 30 for the pre-primary and primary, and 19 for the secondary, the highest among the countries of the region. Palestine has the lowest ratios for the pre-primary (16.4 in 2020), while Jordan has the lowest for the other two levels (17.2 and 13.3, 2020).

Figure 19: Pupil-trained teacher ratio in pre-primary education (headcount basis)



Teacher attrition rates available for some countries are shown in the tables below. High levels of attrition rates can be observed in the primary, above 10%, for Mauritania, Algeria, Jordan and Qatar, indicating that the average teaching career in the primary lasts only 10 years in these countries. The same is true for the secondary in Jordan and Qatar in 2019.

Table 14: SDG Indicator 4.c.6 Teacher attrition rate by education level - Pre-primary**Gulf countries**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain									12.5	5	
Qatar					4.2	1.7	10.5	9.9			12.2

Mashriq countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Jordan								2.9		0	0
Lebanon											7.9
Palestine					0	18.4	6.2		6.1		3

Table 15: SDG Indicator 4.c.6 Teacher attrition rate by education level - Primary**Gulf countries**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain									5	8.5	
Qatar					27.4	4.9	10	7.2		5.8	10.4

Least developed countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Djibouti								2.7			

Maghreb countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Algeria									13.3		13.4
Mauritania					1.5		11.2			15.7	
Morocco							2.5	4.2		1.2	7.7

Mashriq countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Egypt										2.7	
Jordan								11.5	2.6	0	12.8
Lebanon											6.3
Palestine					3	4.3		5.7	4.5		

Table 16: SDG Indicator 4.c.6 Teacher attrition rate by education level - Secondary**Gulf countries**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Bahrain									6.9	6.7	
Qatar					17.5	6.1	6.3	6.3		13.7	4.2

Least developed countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Djibouti									6.4		

Maghreb countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Mauritania										3.4	
Morocco										0.1	8.3

Mashriq countries

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Egypt										3	
Jordan									13.7	20.9	0
Palestine					1.5	2.3	2	4.9			4.8

SDG 4 - Finance

“Governments must allocate 4-6% of their gross domestic product and/or 15-20% of total public expenditure to education, ensuring efficient spending and prioritizing the most marginalized groups”

The target on education finance was endorsed globally by the 160 signatory countries of the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of the SDG 4.¹²

Two indicators are used to monitor financing education. The first is Indicator 1.a.2 measuring the proportion of total government spending on essential services, a global indicator part of SDG 1, and SDG 4 when education services are concerned. The target agreed in Incheon is 15%. The second is education expenditure as a share of GDP, and the target is 4%. Both finance indicators are included in the set of seven benchmark indicators that are used to monitor progress of SDG 4 at both regional and country levels.

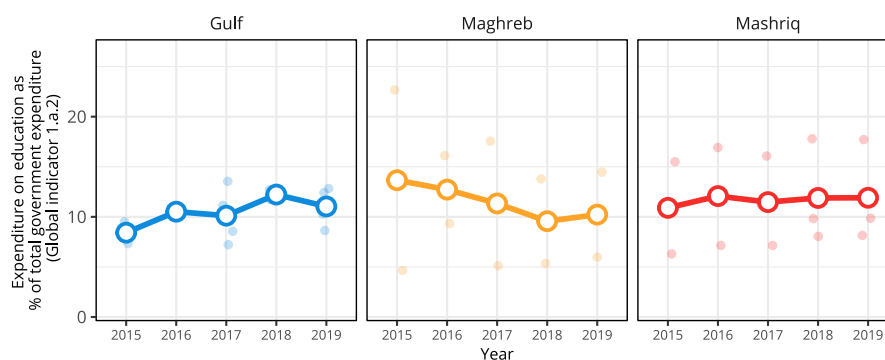
Expenditure as a part of Total Government Expenditure (Global Indicator 1.a.2)

SDG indicator 1.a.2 is expressed as the expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure on essential services. Forty-two data points are available for the Arab region from 2015 to 2019. **Figure 20** shows the average for each sub-region. Among the least developed countries, only Djibouti reported data on expenditure as part of total government expenditure. The country investment in education increased from 8.5% in 2015, to almost 14% in 2018, but it is still below the target. The average for the Gulf countries increased in the period, but none of the countries in the sample achieved the minimum threshold. The highest allocation was recorded for Kuwait (12.8% in 2019).

In the Mashriq, Palestine reached the target since 2015 and maintained it during the period, allocating 17.7% of its total expenditure in education. Jordan and Lebanon, the other two countries in the region did not reach the minimum allocation as of 2019: Jordan allocated just below 10% in 2019 and Lebanon 8.5% in the same year.

Among Maghreb countries, Algeria has virtually reached the threshold of 15% in 2019. Mauritania reported a 10% share of the budget allocated to education, and Morocco only 5%. The average calculated between these three countries is decreasing in the period, mainly because Algeria decreased the percentage in the period. Tunisia has only one data point in the series (22% in 2015).

Figure 20: Expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure (Global Indicator 1.a.2), 2015-2019



¹² UNESCO 2016b.

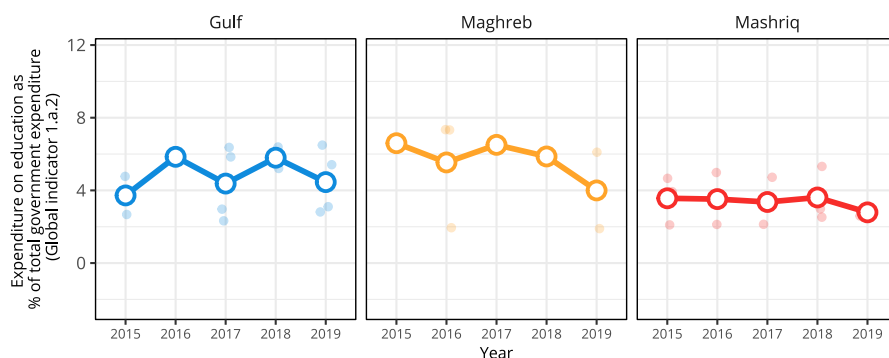
Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP

The second indicator on finance corresponds to the expenditure on education as a share of GDP. Thirty-nine data points between 2015 and 2019 are available for analysis.

Figure 21 shows that Gulf countries allocation as a share of GDP is fairly stable with some fluctuation due to the absence of data for certain countries in some years. In 2019, Kuwait and Oman have reached the target, while UAE (3.1%) and Qatar (2.8%) have not. Kuwait has actually allocated to education a share of GDP above the global target in 2019 (6.5%). Jordan and Lebanon allocated below 3% in 2019, and Palestine is also the only country in the Mashriq region that has reached the target (5.3% in 2018).

In the Maghreb, Algeria and Tunisia have reached the target and maintained the allocation levels in the period. Mauritania allocates still less than 2% of its GDP to education. Djibouti has four data points in the sample, all above 3.5%, close to the minimum allocation agreed in Incheon.

Figure 21: Expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, 2015-2019



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