EFA Global Monitoring Report

2015

Education for All

EDUCATION FOR ALL
2000-2015:
ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Summary

UNESCO

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

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The *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* is an independent annual publication.
It is facilitated and supported by UNESCO.

Foreword

In 2000, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, 164 governments agreed on the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments, launching an ambitious agenda to reach six wide-ranging education goals by 2015. UNESCO initiated the EFA Global Monitoring Reports in response, to monitor progress, highlight remaining gaps and provide recommendations for the global sustainable development agenda to follow in 2015.

There has been tremendous progress across the world since 2000 – but we are not there yet. Despite all efforts by governments, civil society and the international community, the world has not achieved Education for All.

On the positive side, the number of children and adolescents who were out of school has fallen by almost half since 2000. An estimated 34 million more children will have attended school as a result of faster progress since Dakar. The greatest progress has been achieved in gender parity, particularly in primary education, although gender disparity remains in almost a third of the countries with data. Governments have also increased efforts to measure learning outcomes through national and international assessments, using these to ensure that all children receive the quality of education they were promised.

And yet, for all this progress, 15 years of monitoring shows sobering results.

There are still 58 million children out of school globally and around 100 million children who do not complete primary education. Inequality in education has increased, with the poorest and most disadvantaged shouldering the heaviest burden. The world's poorest children are four times more likely not to go to school than the world's richest children, and five times more likely not to complete primary school. Conflict remains a steep barrier, with a high and growing proportion of out-of-school children living in conflict zones. Overall, the poor quality of learning at primary level still has millions of children leaving school without basic skills.
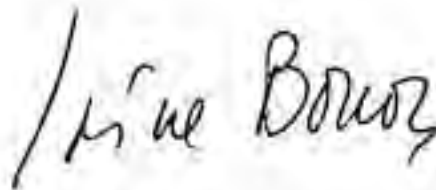
What is more, education remains under-financed. Many governments have increased spending, but few have prioritized education in national budgets, and most fall short of allocating the recommended 20% needed to bridge funding gaps. The picture is similar with donors, who, after an initial boost in aid budgets, have reduced aid to education since 2010 and not sufficiently prioritized those countries most in need.

This Report draws on all of this experience, to make sharp recommendations for the place of education in the future global sustainable development agenda. The lessons are clear. New education targets must be specific, relevant and measurable. Marginalized and disadvantaged groups, hardest to reach and still not enjoying their

right to education, must be a priority. There must be stronger action on financing across the board. While the bulk of costs will be borne by governments, the international community must step up, to sustain and increase aid to education – especially in lower and lower middle income countries where needs are greatest. The future agenda will also need ever-stronger monitoring efforts, including data collection, analysis and dissemination, to hold all stakeholders to account.

In the run-up to 2015, EFA Global Monitoring Reports have played a leading role in supporting countries, providing solid assessment and analysis to facilitate policy-making, along with a powerful advocacy tool for governments and civil society. This will continue as we turn to implementing the new Sustainable Development Goals. After 2015, the Reports will continue to provide a trusted and independent voice on the state of global education, producing useful recommendations to all countries and partners.

So much has been achieved since 2000 – we need to do far more, to ensure quality education and lifelong learning for all. There is simply no more powerful or longer-lasting investment in human rights and dignity, in social inclusion and sustainable development. Experience since 2000 shows what can be done – we need to draw on this to do more.

Irina Bokova
Director-General of UNESCO

Summary of the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report

At the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000, governments from 164 countries, together with representatives of regional groups, international organizations, donor agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs) and civil society, adopted a Framework for Action to deliver Education for All (EFA) commitments. The Dakar Framework comprised 6 goals and their associated targets to be achieved by 2015, and 12 strategies to which all stakeholders would contribute.

The *EFA Global Monitoring Report* (GMR) has monitored progress on an almost annual basis towards the EFA goals and the two education-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 2015 GMR provides a complete assessment of progress since 2000 towards the target date for reaching the Dakar Framework's goals. It *takes stock* of whether the world achieved the EFA goals and stakeholders upheld their commitments. It *explains* possible determinants of the pace of progress. Finally, it *identifies key lessons* for shaping the post-2015 global education agenda.

Taking stock of progress towards EFA

Goal 1 – Early childhood care and education

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

- Despite a drop in child mortality rates of nearly 50%, 6.3 million children under the age of 5 died in 2013 from causes that are mostly preventable.

- Progress in improving child nutrition has been considerable. Yet globally, one in four children are still short for their age – a sign of chronic deficiency in essential nutrients.

- In 2012, 184 million children were enrolled in pre-primary education worldwide, an increase of nearly two-thirds since 1999.

Goal 2 – Universal primary education

Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality

- The primary school net enrolment ratio was 84% in 1999 and is estimated to reach 93% in 2015.

- Net enrolment ratios improved significantly, rising at least 20 percentage points from 1999 to 2012 in 17 countries, 11 of which were in sub-Saharan Africa.

- While some increases in enrolment ratios are evident, nearly 58 million children were out of school in 2012, and progress in reducing this number has stalled.

Two thirds more children were enrolled in primary school in 2012 than in 1999

Figure 1: Tens of millions of children will still not be in school by 2015
Out-of-school children of primary school age, world and selected regions, 1990–2012 and 2015 (projection)
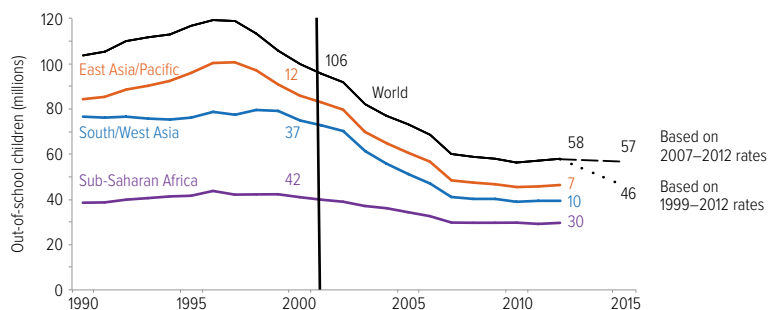
Sources: UIS database; Bruneforth (2015).

By 2015, one in six children in low and middle income countries will not have completed primary school

- Despite progress in access, dropout remains an issue: in 32 countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, at least 20% of children enrolled are not expected to reach the last grade.

- By the 2015 deadline, one in six children in low and middle income countries – or almost 100 million – will not have completed primary school.

Goal 3 – Youth and adult skills

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes

- Reflecting improved transition rates and higher retention rates, the lower secondary gross enrolment ratio increased from 71% in 1999 to 85% in 2012. Participation in lower secondary education has increased quickly since 1999. In Afghanistan, China, Ecuador, Mali and Morocco, the lower secondary gross enrolment ratio has increased by at least 25 percentage points.

- Inequality persists in the transition from primary to secondary school. For example, in the Philippines, just 69% of primary school graduates from the poorest families continued into lower secondary, compared with 94% from the richest households.

- A majority of the 94 low and middle income countries with information have legislated free lower secondary education since 1999. Of these, 66 have constitutional guarantees and 28 enacted other legal measures. As of 2015, only a few nations charge lower secondary school fees, including Botswana, Guinea, Papua New Guinea, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Goal 4 – Adult literacy

Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults

- There are about 781 million illiterate adults. The rate of illiteracy dropped slightly, from 18% in 2000 to an estimated 14% in 2015, which means the Dakar target of halving illiteracy was not achieved.

Figure 2: The world has remained far from reaching literacy targets

a. Adult literacy rate, world and selected regions, 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2015 (projection)
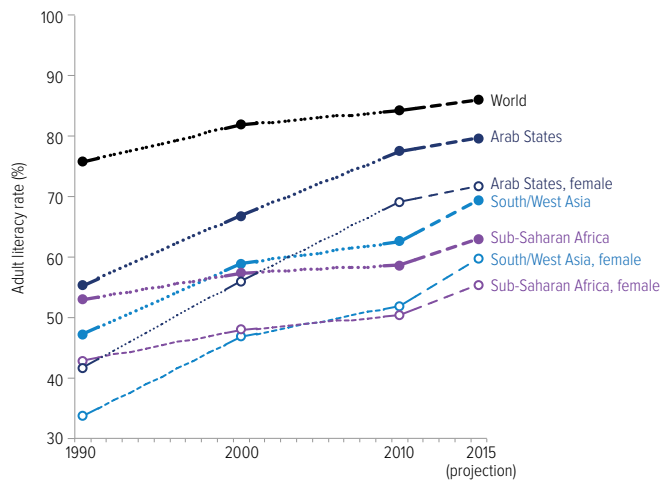
b. Youth literacy rate, world and selected regions, 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2015 (projection)
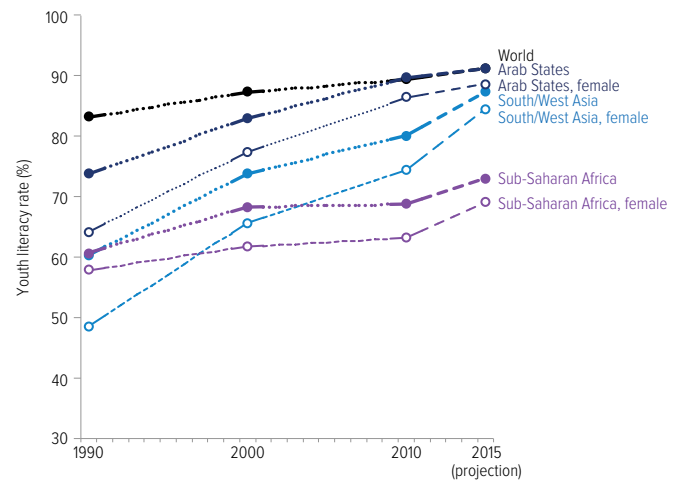
Note: Literacy data are not collected annually. Regional and global data therefore refer to census decades. This figure refers to 1990 for data from the 1985–1994 census decade; to 2000 for data from the 1995–2004 census decade, and to 2010 for the most recent data from the period 2005–2012.
Source: UIS database.

- Only 17 out of the 73 countries with a literacy rate below 95% in 2000 had halved their illiteracy rate by 2015.

- Progress has been made towards gender parity in literacy but is not sufficient. All 43 countries where fewer than 90 women for every 100 men were literate in 2000 have moved towards parity, but none of them will have reached it by 2015.

Goal 5 – Gender equality

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

- At the primary level, 69% of the countries with data are expected to have reached gender parity by 2015. Progress is slower in secondary education, with 48% projected to be at gender parity in 2015.

- Progress in tackling severe gender disparity has been made. Between 1999 and 2012, the number of countries with fewer than 90 girls enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys fell from 33 to 16.

- Amongst out-of-school children, girls are more likely than boys never to enrol in school (48% compared to 37%), while boys are more likely to leave school (26% compared with 20%). Once enrolled, girls are more likely to reach the upper grades.

- In sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest girls remain the most likely to never attend primary school. In Guinea and Niger in 2010, over 70% of the poorest girls had never attended primary school, compared with less than 20% of the richest boys.

Almost two thirds of countries will have reached gender parity in primary education by 2015

Goal 6 – Quality of education

Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

- Pupil/teacher ratios declined in 83% of the 146 countries with data at the primary education level. In one-third of the countries with data, however, less than 75% of primary school teachers are trained up to national standards.

- At the lower secondary education level, 87 of the 105 countries with data have a pupil/teacher ratio below 30:1.

- In 1990, 12 learning assessments were conducted according to national standards, but by 2013 the number had increased to 101.

34 million more children have gone to school for the first time who would not have without the EFA goals

Figure 3: Emphasis on learning assessments has increased across countries since 2000
Percentage of countries that have carried out at least one national learning assessment, by region, 1990–1999, 2000–2006 and 2007-2013
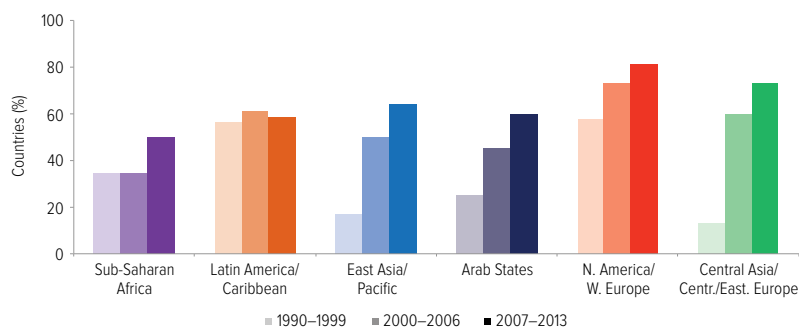
Source: *EFA Global Monitoring Report* team calculations (2014) based on annex data on national learning assessments

Box 1: Was progress faster after Dakar?

Progress in the **pre-primary education** gross enrolment ratio accelerated. Among the 90 countries with data, if enrolment had grown at the same rate as in the 1990s, the average pre-primary enrolment ratio would have been 40% in 2015; instead, it is expected to reach 57%.

Progress towards **universal primary education** was weaker. Among the 52 countries with data on the primary net enrolment ratio, if enrolment had grown at the 1990s rate, the average primary net enrolment ratio would been 82% in 2015; instead, it may reach up to 91%.

Evidence from 70 countries on the **survival rate to the last grade of primary school** suggests that some enrolment gains were at the cost of slower progression. The survival rate accelerated in 23 countries but slowed in 37. The global survival rate is projected to be no more than 76% in 2015, whereas at the 1990s rate it would have reached 80%.

It is estimated that 34 million more children born before 2010 will have had access to school for the first time by 2015, compared with what would have happened if the previous trend had persisted. It is also estimated that 20 million more children born before 2005 will have completed primary school, compared with a projection based on pre-Dakar trends.

Progress towards **gender parity** appears to have accelerated in primary education, although parity would have been achieved at the global level even on pre-Dakar trends.

The claim made in the Dakar Framework that achieving EFA by 2015 was 'a realistic and achievable goal' may have been exaggerated, even if reduced to a narrow target such as universal primary education. Yet, while the global target itself was not reached, modest progress was achieved that compares favourably with the historical record.

Explaining progress towards EFA: Assessing the role of the EFA movement at the global level

Global pledges made in the Dakar Framework were only partially fulfilled. However, some of the envisaged mechanisms worked well, advancing the state of education from 2000. This is a source of optimism for the post-2015 global education framework.

The Dakar Framework for Action proposed three types of global interventions to support countries:

- Coordination mechanisms, some of which already existed; others were outlined for the first time in the Dakar Framework and subsequently modified.

- Campaigns dedicated to particular aspects of EFA, such as adult literacy, or to particular challenges, such as conflict.

- Initiatives, some of which were specified in the Dakar Framework while others were created later, drawing from its authority.

It was hoped that, if successfully implemented, these interventions would lead to five medium-term results which in turn would help speed up the achievement of the EFA goals. The interventions were expected to:

- Reaffirm and sustain political commitment to EFA

- Help diverse types of knowledge, evidence and expertise be communicated and used

- Influence and strengthen national EFA policy and practice

- Effectively mobilize financial resources for EFA

- Establish independent monitoring and reporting of progress towards the EFA goals.

The Dakar Framework proposed 12 strategies intended to achieve these results. How well did the EFA partners collectively implement these strategies at the global level?

There were 12 strategies proposed in the Dakar Framework for achieving EFA goals

Strategy 1: Significant investment in basic education

Low and lower middle income countries have allocated a higher percentage of GNP to education since 1999, and aid to education has more than doubled in real terms. But there is little evidence that EFA interventions at the global level – such as the EFA Fast Track Initiative, later renamed the Global Partnership for Education – led to higher levels of national expenditure on public education or aid to education.

Strategy 2: EFA policies within well-integrated sector frameworks linked to poverty elimination

The Dakar Framework specified that national EFA plans were to be the main tool for turning commitment into action. A comparison of two waves of national plans from 30 low and middle income countries showed that their quality improved. Plans that look good on paper, however, may bear limited relation to the realities of countries' political processes and education systems.

Strategy 3: Engagement of civil society in strategies for educational development

An increase in civil society engagement has been a major characteristic of the education sector since 2000. This support, however, has sometimes had only limited success in creating strong national education coalitions that are capable of bringing about significant change.

Strategy 4: Accountability in governance and management

Local participation and decentralization were considered key ways to improve education governance. Overall, promoting local participation and making schools responsive to the needs of students, parents and communities remain challenging, particularly for poor households with limited time for such engagement. In poorer countries with weak capacity, decentralization and school autonomy have been found to have either a detrimental or no impact on the performance of students and education systems.

Strategy 5: Meeting the needs of education systems affected by conflict and instability

Overall, the challenges of delivering education in emergencies have received far more attention since 2000. Violations of human rights in conflict situations are receiving increased notice. Advocacy has helped keep the issue of education in conflict and emergency situations on the agenda. This can be credited to partners fulfilling relevant commitments made in Dakar.

Education in emergencies has received far more attention since 2000 thanks to strong advocacy efforts

Strategy 6: Integrated strategies for gender equality

The most visible global mechanism associated with gender equality has been the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). An evaluation acknowledged its contribution in global policy dialogue and advocacy, though less at the regional level. At the country level, UNGEI has positioned itself as a strong, valuable player through robust national partnerships. Overall, EFA partners have put enough attention on gender equality to contribute to progress towards this goal.

Strategy 7: Actions to combat HIV and AIDS

In 2000, the AIDS epidemic was threatening the very foundations of education systems in southern and eastern Africa. In 2015, while the battle is not yet won, the worst has been prevented. Education initiatives responded to the challenge of HIV with a strong sense of urgency and developed comprehensive sexuality education. Many countries have taken steps to adopt this broader approach, which should be credited to global post-Dakar efforts.

Strategy 8: Safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments

The Dakar Framework stressed how the quality of the learning environment contributed to the achievement of goals relating to gender equality and an education of good quality. But the strategy's grouping of a disparate set of issues, from pedagogy to social protection to infrastructure, meant it lacked focus. Work at the global level has contributed little to help countries establish healthy learning environments.

Strategy 9: Teacher status, morale and professionalism

The International Task Force on Teachers for EFA was established in 2008 to coordinate international efforts to fill the teacher gap. An evaluation suggested that the task force was relevant, but that its objectives should be more closely related to country needs. The Joint ILO-UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations Concerning Teaching Personnel has not proved to be a strong mechanism for change. Since 2000, there has been no progress in monitoring the status of teachers.

Strategy 10: Harnessing information and communication technology

The Dakar Framework emphasized the potential of information and communication technology (ICT) to deliver EFA. This ambition has been challenged by sluggish progress in developing infrastructure in poorer countries, the slow diffusion of technology and the absence of major global coordination of ICT related to education.

Strategy 11: Systematic monitoring of progress

The Dakar Framework called for robust and reliable education statistics. An evaluation recognized the work of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) as instrumental in this regard. Since 2000, a major increase in the availability of household survey data has enabled inequality to be monitored. Data on public education expenditure continue to be incomplete, but there has been important improvement in how donors report expenditure. The most recent evaluation found the GMR to be 'widely perceived to be a high quality report, based on robust research and analysis'. Overall, there has been clear improvement since 2000 in the way EFA goals are monitored and progress is reported.

There has been clear improvement since 2000 in the way EFA goals are monitored

Strategy 12: Building on existing mechanisms

The final strategy stressed that activities should be 'based on existing organizations, networks and initiatives'. An important question was whether existing mechanisms could hold the international community to account. The global EFA coordination mechanisms clearly could not play such a role, though the Universal Periodic Review, established in 2006, could have been used to review EFA progress. Accountability was a missing link in the EFA cycle and remains an issue to be tackled after 2015.

Global EFA Coordination

The analysis of how well EFA partners implemented the Dakar strategies at the global level requires an overall assessment of agency coordination. The report card, unfortunately, is not positive. Overall, the formal EFA coordination mechanism, led by UNESCO, did not ensure continuous political commitment and had limited success in engaging other agencies and stakeholders. The forthcoming evaluation of the EFA global coordination mechanism by the UNESCO Internal Oversight Service is expected to shed considerable light on these issues.

Putting together the evidence

Were the 12 strategies from the Dakar Framework sufficient to contribute to the five key medium-term results expected of an effective EFA architecture? In assessing **whether political commitment to EFA was reaffirmed and sustained** throughout

the period, it is clear that the EFA movement suffered once the MDGs became the dominant development agenda. The result was excessive emphasis on universal primary education. UNESCO proved cautious in its high-level political engagement, so the forum of choice for global policy actors in education shifted away from the High-Level Group. The assumption that global and regional conferences are powerful enough to hold countries and the international community to account has not been proved valid.

Since 2000, **diverse types of knowledge, evidence and expertise have been collected, communicated and employed**. Much new evidence and many policy and research initiatives were not necessarily related to EFA activities, and too often came from outside the education sector. While some of the new evidence did reach EFA coordination meetings, it did not appear to be used for policy-making.

Since 2000, there has been no shortage of national education plans. However, it is less clear that new knowledge or tools have been used to develop appropriate capacity for evidence-based national policy-making or that they have **strengthened national EFA policy and practice**.

The EFA movement suffered once the Millennium Development Goals became the dominant development agenda

A key expected result of the Dakar process was that credible plans would help **effectively mobilize financial resources for EFA**. The rise in domestic education spending in low income countries was promising, but its main cause was increased domestic resource mobilization rather than education prioritization. International aid expanded considerably in absolute terms, yet its volume fell well short of needs.

The decision to introduce an **independent mechanism to monitor and report progress towards the EFA goals** may have been critical in maintaining momentum and commitment for EFA. But improved reporting was only possible thanks to major improvement in data quality and analysis, often supported by EFA partners.

Credit: Eva-Lotta Jansson

Conclusions

Efforts since 2000 to advance education around the world have become almost synonymous with ensuring that every child would be in school. The EFA (and MDG) target of universal access to primary education was especially applicable to the poorest countries, but others found it less relevant. Meanwhile, the focus on universal primary enrolment meant less attention to other crucial areas, such as education quality, early childhood care and education (ECCE), and adult literacy.

Overall, not even the target of universal primary education was reached, let alone the more ambitious EFA goals, and the most disadvantaged continued to be the last to benefit. But there have been achievements that should not be underestimated. The world will have advanced by 2015 beyond where it would have been if the trends of the 1990s had persisted. And the monitoring of education progress since Dakar has improved and expanded.

In the end, the EFA movement can be characterized as a qualified success, even if EFA partners may not have collectively lived up to their commitments. But the lesson emerging over the past 15 years is that, while technical solutions are important, political influence and traction are more so, and are essential for realizing the scale of reform and action required to achieve EFA at the national level. The discussions on the post-2015 agenda may offer an opportunity to achieve the necessary scale.
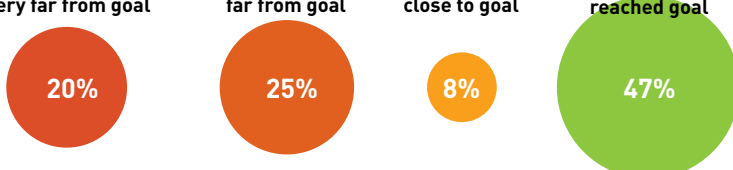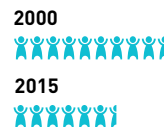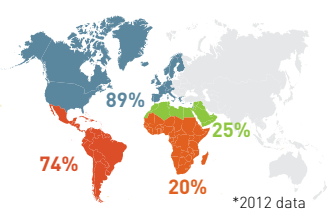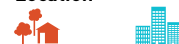
The post-2015 agenda offers an opportunity to achieve a greater scale of reform and action at the national level

REPORT CARD 2000–2015

GOAL 1 Early childhood care and education

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

Global score*

*of 148 countries with data

very far from goal	far from goal	close to goal	reached goal
20%	25%	8%	47%

Successes ✓✓

Child mortality
↓39%
2000
2015

Pre-primary enrolment
184 million children enrolled (2012)

Compulsory pre-primary education
in 40 countries by 2014

% going to pre-primary school*
89%
74%
25%
20%
*2012 data

Efforts made ✓

Evolved understanding of early childhood needs
+ Books
Cognitive stimulation
Culturally sensitive education models
Play
Learning toys
Presence of parents
Safe spaces

Different methods to increase access
Abolishing school fees (Ghana)
Cash transfers (China)
Mobile kindergartens (Mongolia)
Making school compulsory (Mexico and Myanmar)

Increased demand
PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS
(Ghana and Thailand)

Persistent challenges ✗

Child mortality
6.3 million children died before age 5 in 2013

Pre-primary enrolment
In one-fifth of countries fewer than 30% of children will be enrolled by 2015

Low quality
More trained teachers and carers are needed

Uneven progress

Child mortality
A child in sub-Saharan Africa is over 15x more likely to die before their 5th birthday than a child in a developed region

Location
Children in rural areas are 2x as likely as those in urban areas never to go to school than in 2000 (Togo, Chad and Lao PD)

Wealth
The gap between rich and poor attending school is 2x bigger than in 2000 (Niger, Togo, the C.A.R., Bosnia/Herzegovina and Mongolia)

Private pre-schools
Children enrolled in private pre-school is increasing ↑ since 1999

Recommendations for post-2015

1. Pre-primary education must be expanded to include all children, especially the most marginalized

More focus required

2. Better data on all types of early childhood care and education needed

3. At least one year of compulsory pre-primary education is needed for all children

GOAL 1 Early childhood care and education

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Supporting children's development at the earliest stages of life has an enormous impact in terms of better educational and wider societal outcomes. The highest economic returns to investment in education are at the early childhood stage. Less advantaged communities, particularly in poorer countries, gain even greater benefits, a further argument for investing heavily at this level.

Since 2000, progress has been achieved in the number of children worldwide enrolled in ECCE programmes. Yet children from marginalized groups are still denied access due to lack of funds, structural inequity and lack of attention to issues of quality.

There is some progress in survival and nutrition, but care is still of poor quality

Undernutrition can lead to delays in gross and fine motor development, and increase the risk of mortality. But good nutrition is not enough: Cooperation among health, education and social protection services is needed to combat the mutually reinforcing risk factors associated with widespread poverty.

Child mortality has declined

Between 1990 and 2013 the level of child mortality fell from 90 to 46 deaths per 1,000 live births. However, the nearly 50% drop in child mortality is insufficient to achieve the MDG target, set in 2000, of a two-thirds reduction from 1990 levels. Children – 6.3 million of them in 2013 – continue to die before they reach age 5, many from preventable causes. Children are at greater risk if they are born in poverty, in a rural area and/or to an undereducated mother. To address child mortality, political will and funding are crucial.

Child nutrition has improved – but not enough

Most countries have made progress in reducing the percentage of stunted children since the 1990s. Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have made strong progress since 2000, but the region still has by far the largest share of malnourished children, projected to reach 45% of the world total by 2020.

Parental leave and good parenting practices can help support children's development

Children should be supported so that they thrive, not just survive. Paid maternity leave during the first months of a baby's life is essential to the health and well-being of mother and child in many middle and high income countries. Though nearly all countries legally provide such leave, only 28% of employed women worldwide are likely to receive cash maternity benefits. The involvement of fathers is also important to child development. By 2013, paternal leave was provided in 78 out of 167 countries with data, with paid leave in 70. But men may be reluctant to take such leave as payment levels are often lower.

Parents can improve their children's cognitive and socio-emotional development through programmes in or outside the home, in groups or individually. Home visiting programmes provide one-on-one support and can have wide-ranging benefits.

Many countries are on their way to a multisector approach to early childhood services

In calling for countries to expand and improve comprehensive ECCE, particularly for the poor and marginalized, the Dakar Framework for Action recommended national, multisector policies

Getting the foundations right carries huge future benefits

supported by adequate resources. As of 2014, 78 countries had adopted multisector policies and 23 were preparing such policies. Elements that contribute to the success of multisector policies include coordination, agreed measurements of progress across ministries and agencies, and staff continuity.

Pre-primary education systems and enrolment levels have expanded rapidly in some countries

Expanding access to pre-primary education, whether through formal or informal programmes, is vital for improving children's life chances, increasing the efficiency of the education system and resources, and reducing inequity in broader society.

Enrolment has risen by nearly two-thirds in little more than a decade, but with considerable inequality

Between 1999 and 2012, enrolments in pre-primary education have increased by 64% (to 184 million) with little gender disparity. Some countries have massively expanded their public pre-primary systems, including Kazakhstan and Viet Nam. However, progress has been uneven, with major disparities between urban and rural areas, and communities and regions within countries. Wealth inequalities in attendance were prevalent in countries like the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Tunisia and Mongolia. Ways to spur greater expansion in enrolment include:

- **Laws** mandating participation. By 2014, 40 countries had instituted compulsory pre-primary education.

- **Policies** that include pre-primary education in the basic education cycle. Many countries have these but do not support their implementation financially.

- **The abolition of fees** for pre-primary education. Countries that have done this have experienced major growth in participation, although some governments have struggled to find the necessary resources.

- **Financial incentives** for enrolment. In rural China, children in families that received a tuition waiver and a cash transfer, conditional on attendance, were 20% more likely to attend pre-primary school.

- Making pre-primary schooling more appealing to parents and children. In Thailand, extensive provision along with **public awareness campaigns** have boosted ECCE attendance to nearly 93% of 4- and 5-year-olds.

Private sector involvement remains high

Between 1999 and 2012, the percentage of private enrolment in pre-primary education rose from 28% to 31%, for 100 countries with data. Rising private sector enrolment leads to two problems. Where ECCE access depends on paying fees, many of the poorest are left behind. And private providers are unlikely to locate in sparsely populated and remote areas. In addition, in low and lower middle income

By 2014, 40 countries had instituted compulsory pre-primary education

Figure 4: Pre-primary enrolment rates are projected to have increased by three-quarters during the Dakar period
Pre-primary gross enrolment ratio, world and regions, 1990–2012 and 2015 (projection)
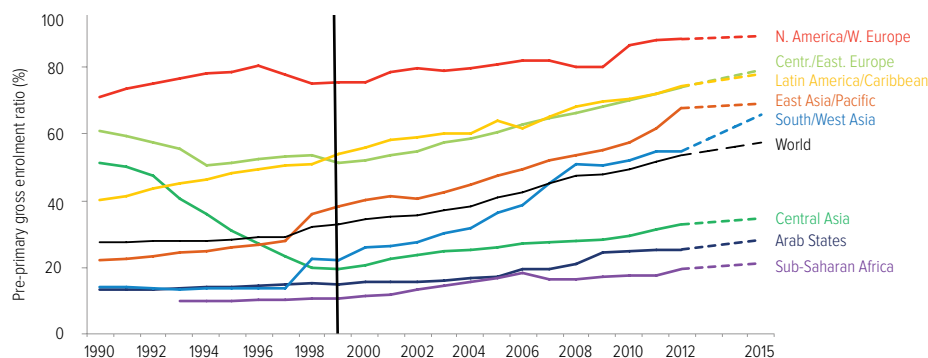
Source: UIS database; Bruneforth (2015).

countries, many low cost private schools operate in poor conditions without government registration. Even in high income countries, such as the United Kingdom, many poor children are being failed by low quality, lower cost private pre-primary facilities that tend to cluster in areas of deprivation.

The quest for quality is yet to be meaningfully addressed

Children who do not receive a pre-primary education of good quality are less likely to succeed in primary school and beyond. While even relatively poor provision brings some benefits, the better the quality is, the greater the gain.

Preparing pre-primary teachers is key to increasing quality, yet untrained staff are often employed, and low status and pay lead to high turnover, damaging learning outcomes. The private sector tends to pay teachers as little as possible to keep costs down. Countries like Kenya, Singapore and Colombia are increasingly defining clear training requirements for pre-primary teachers, but many have not yet formalized minimum standards.
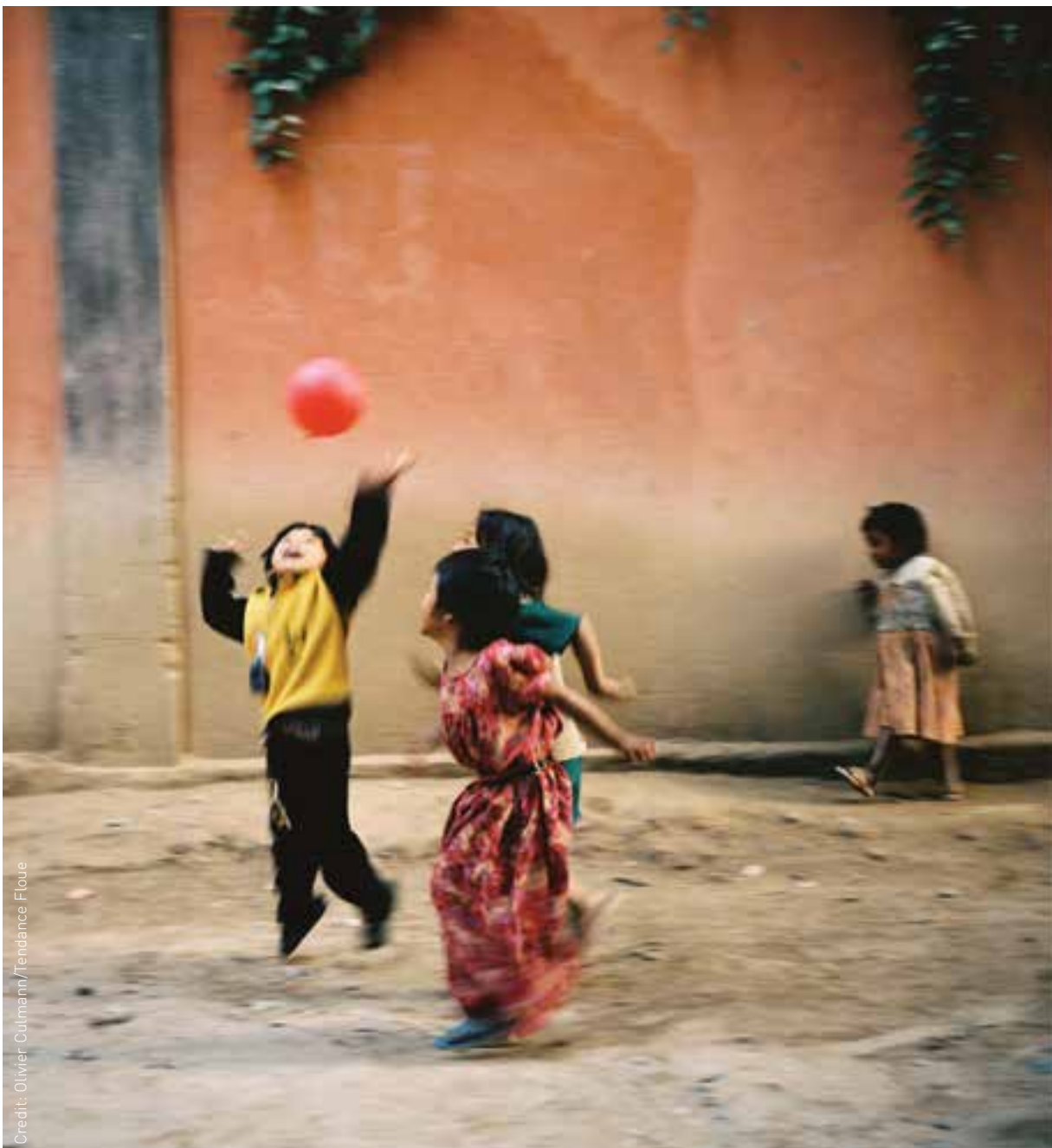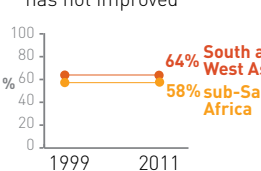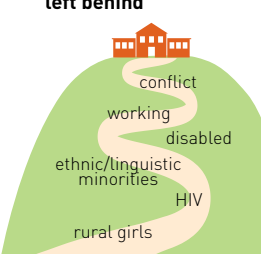
Credit: Olivier Culmann/Tendance Floue

REPORT CARD 2000–2015

GOAL 2 Universal primary education

Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic ministries have access to, and complete, free and compulsory education of good quality

Global score*

*of 140 countries with data

very far from goal	far from goal	close to goal	reached goal
9%	29%	10%	52%

Successes

Primary school children enrolled

1999 **84%**   Now **91%**   = **48 million more**

Primary school completion

Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Benin, Ethiopia, Mozambique

increased primary completion by over 20 percentage points.

Efforts made

Abolishing school fees

Social protection

(e.g. cash transfers for disadvantaged children)

Schools, water, electricity and health infrastructure

Persistent challenges

Out of school

58 million children are still out of school

Of these, **25 million** will never go to school

Not finishing school

34 million leave school early every year

The % of those reaching the last grade in school has not improved

100 / 80 / 60 / 40 / 20 / 0   %

1999   2011

64% South and West Asia
58% sub-Saharan Africa

Barriers

36% of out-of-school children are in conflict affected zones

Low quality education

$$$ Education is **still not free** for all

Uneven progress

Regional out-of-school children

rest of world

sub-Saharan Africa

South and West Asia

Rural/urban lower middle income countries

2000 **3x** as likely never to go to school

2008 **4x** as likely never to go to school

Marginalized groups left behind

conflict
working
disabled
ethnic/linguistic minorities
HIV
rural girls

The poorest are the worst off

5x less likely to complete school than the richest in 2010

Recommendations for post-2015

1. Marginalization must be addressed if we are to achieve universal primary education

2. Better data must be obtained to track the progress of the most disadvantaged

Room for improvement

GOAL 2   Universal primary education

Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Universal primary education was the most prominent EFA goal, as reflected by its inclusion in the MDGs. It has been well funded, politically supported and extensively monitored. Nevertheless, it will not have been realized by 2015.

Countries that do not reach the marginalized cannot attain universal primary education. Improvements are needed to reach the poorest populations, ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural girls, working children, nomadic communities, children affected by HIV and AIDS, slum dwellers, children with disabilities and children living in complex emergencies.

Monitoring progress

In 2012, nearly 58 million children of primary school age were not enrolled in school. The reasons include demographic pressures, conflict situations, marginalization of various socio-economic groups,

and a lack of adequate commitment in some countries with large out-of-school populations.

Despite these challenges, countries including Burundi, Ethiopia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania achieved substantial, albeit uneven, progress in reducing gender and income disparities in primary school access, and in increasing net enrolment ratios and attainment rates.

Net enrolment ratios improved substantially

Of the 116 countries with data, 17 increased primary net enrolment ratios by over 20 percentage points between 1999 and 2012. Bhutan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal provide examples of stellar improvement in net enrolment ratios in Asia. In Latin America, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua increased their net enrolment ratios by over 10 percentage points. In sub-Saharan Africa,

Goal 2 was the most prominent but still will not have been realised by 2015

Figure 5: The pace of growth in primary net enrolment rates picked up in the early 2000s but slowed after 2007
Primary adjusted net enrolment ratio, world and regions, 1990–2012 and 2015 (projection)


Sources: UIS database; Bruneforth (2015).

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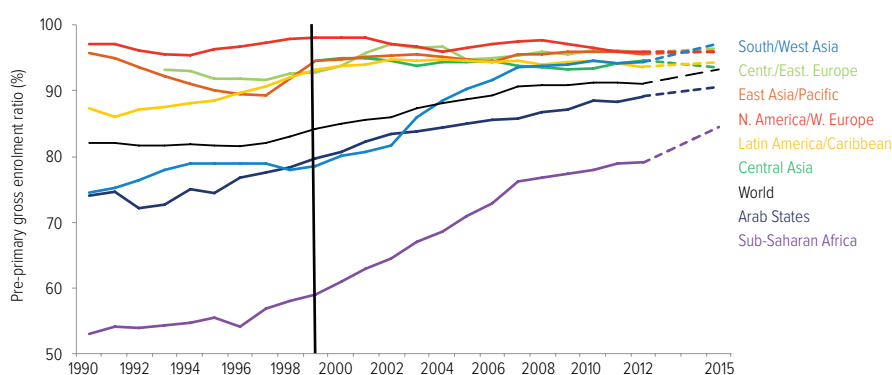
Burundi's net enrolment ratio increased from less than 41% in 2000 to 94% in 2010.

Fewer children have never been to school

The percentage of children who have never been to school fell in the vast majority of countries. Among countries where at least 20% of children did not go to school in 2000, 10 had more than halved the percentage by 2010. The percentage of children who had never been to school decreased by remarkable rates in Ethiopia (from 67% in 2000 to 28% in 2011) and the United Republic of Tanzania (from 47% in 1999 to 12% in 2010).

Large out-of-school populations remain in some countries

High population countries continued to have substantial out-of-school populations in 2012. India increased its net enrolment ratio from 86% to 99%, but Nigeria and Pakistan made far less progress than expected, due partly to ethnic and religious strife, weak democracy and corrupt political leadership.

Primary school completion increased in the vast majority of countries

Most countries have a long way to go on primary completion, especially for the poorest people

Primary school completion increased in the vast majority of countries. Eight countries increased primary attainment rates by over 20 percentage points: Benin, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal and Sierra Leone. But progress has been far from adequate, signalling enduring problems of affordability, quality and relevance.

Progression varies among countries

Dropout is a serious problem in low income countries, especially among late entrants and poor children. Of the 139 countries with sufficient data, in 54 countries – mostly in Central Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Western Europe – almost all children who enrolled in primary school were likely to reach the last grade by 2015. But in 32 countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, at least 20% of children are likely to drop out early.

Substantial progress was made in user fee abolition

Schooling is now free in most countries, in principle. In sub-Saharan Africa, 15 countries have adopted legislation abolishing school fees since 2000. Confirming the cost-related barriers to access, fee abolition had a strong positive impact on enrolment in the years after its implementation. Such progress was partly possible because of the increased finance available for education. Fee abolition was also motivated by domestic politics: it is a popular election agenda in low income African countries.

The sudden expansion of enrolment following user fee abolition can strain the primary education system, as the experience of the 1990s showed. As a result, most countries have since used a sequenced approach. However, capitation grants provided through fee abolition initiatives to expand education systems were often insufficient, poorly delivered and inadequately targeted.

Some approaches succeeded by increasing demand

Schooling is rarely free despite legislative and policy commitments to fee abolition, as there are many other costs to families. Initiatives to increase family demand for primary schooling reduce financial

burdens such as transport, school lunches and school uniforms. Social protection programmes include demand-side measures for improving education, such as cash transfers, school feeding programmes, scholarships, stipends and bursaries.

School feeding programmes

Food for education initiatives have reached 368 million children in 169 countries. Not only do school feeding programmes help ensure that children who attend school remain healthy, but also participants tend to have consistently better enrolment and attendance than non-participants.

Cash transfer programmes

Cash transfers to vulnerable households, pioneered in Latin America, have become prevalent in middle and low income Asian and sub-Saharan African countries. Most cash transfer programmes have boosted enrolment and attendance, and reduced dropout. However, cash transfers do not always improve the education outcomes of vulnerable groups.

There is debate about whether transfers should be conditional. Programmes may more easily find political support if they are conditioned on children attending school. Transfers that depend on attendance have a greater impact on education than unconditional cash transfers.

Supply-side interventions have helped increase primary school access

Infrastructure projects such as school and road construction have had strong effects on education access. There has been an increase in health interventions that can also have vital effects on education outcomes. And non-government institutions such as private, community and non-formal schools are increasingly providing education alongside public schools.

School and classroom construction

The availability of a school building is often considered the first step to ensure that children can attend school. In Mozambique, for example, abolishing fees and tripling the number of primary and secondary schools between 1992 and 2010 substantially reduced the number of students who had never been to school.

Infrastructure and health sector improvements

Many countries have significantly improved road, electricity and water infrastructure, thus increasing access to schools. Girls' enrolment is particularly sensitive to distance and infrastructure improvements, India being an important example.

Private and other non-government institutions have become important education providers

The role of private schooling in education has grown over the past two decades. In South Asia, about one-third of 6- to 18-year-olds attend private schools. The private share of primary enrolment at least doubled in a wide range of countries in the Arab States, Central and Eastern Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa.

Community schools are often more adaptable, cost-effective, student-focused and relevant to local needs than government schools. Many provide schooling in areas underserved by the government, for instance in Ghana, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

Non-formal education centres provide flexible, accelerated learning programmes as bridges to the formal system or for young children who have missed schooling. In Bangladesh, BRAC, a large NGO, operates thousands of non-formal schools.

Religious schools fill a niche for many parents. In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Pakistan, Islamic schools, called *madrasas*, have long played an important role in providing education to underprivileged groups. The Jesuit network Fe y Alegría in Latin America has increased enrolments in 17 countries by an estimated 1 million children.

Reaching the marginalized is essential for universal primary education

Progress in legislation and policy has increased primary school participation for many disadvantaged groups. Marginalized groups, however, continue to experience barriers to education on the grounds of poverty, gender, caste, ethnicity and linguistic background, race, disability, geographical location and livelihood. Marginalized children often suffer from multiple disadvantages that reinforce each other.

Private primary school provision at least doubled in many countries

School-children who work lag behind their peers in many countries

Ethnic and linguistic minorities

In many countries, wide gaps exist in education participation and attainment between the ethnic majority population, which often speaks the dominant language, and minority groups that speak other languages. In some contexts mother tongue and bilingual instruction are seen as improving education access for ethnolinguistic minorities. However, serious questions remain about the quality of education provided in these different languages.

Working children

Child labour affects educational attainment and achievement. Availability of education and enforcement of education legislation can reduce child labour, thus improving education outcomes and reducing poverty. The number of children aged 5 to 11 in the labour force fell from 139 million in 2000 to 73 million in 2012. Schoolchildren who work were found at age 13 to lag behind their non-working peers in grade progression in many countries.

Nomadic communities

Pastoralist populations remain among the most underserved by education globally. Since 2000, nomad-specific education plans have emerged in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania, but may not have increased enrolment. Open and distance learning, potentially a useful model for nomadic communities, has remained limited.

Children affected by HIV and AIDS

Since Dakar, the growth in financing, policies and support services related to children affected by HIV and AIDS has focused on their care, treatment and social welfare but has not prioritized education. The first policies to address education access for orphaned and vulnerable children emerged around the mid-2000s. Numerous countries in sub-Saharan Africa and in South and West Asia have since created national action plans for such children.
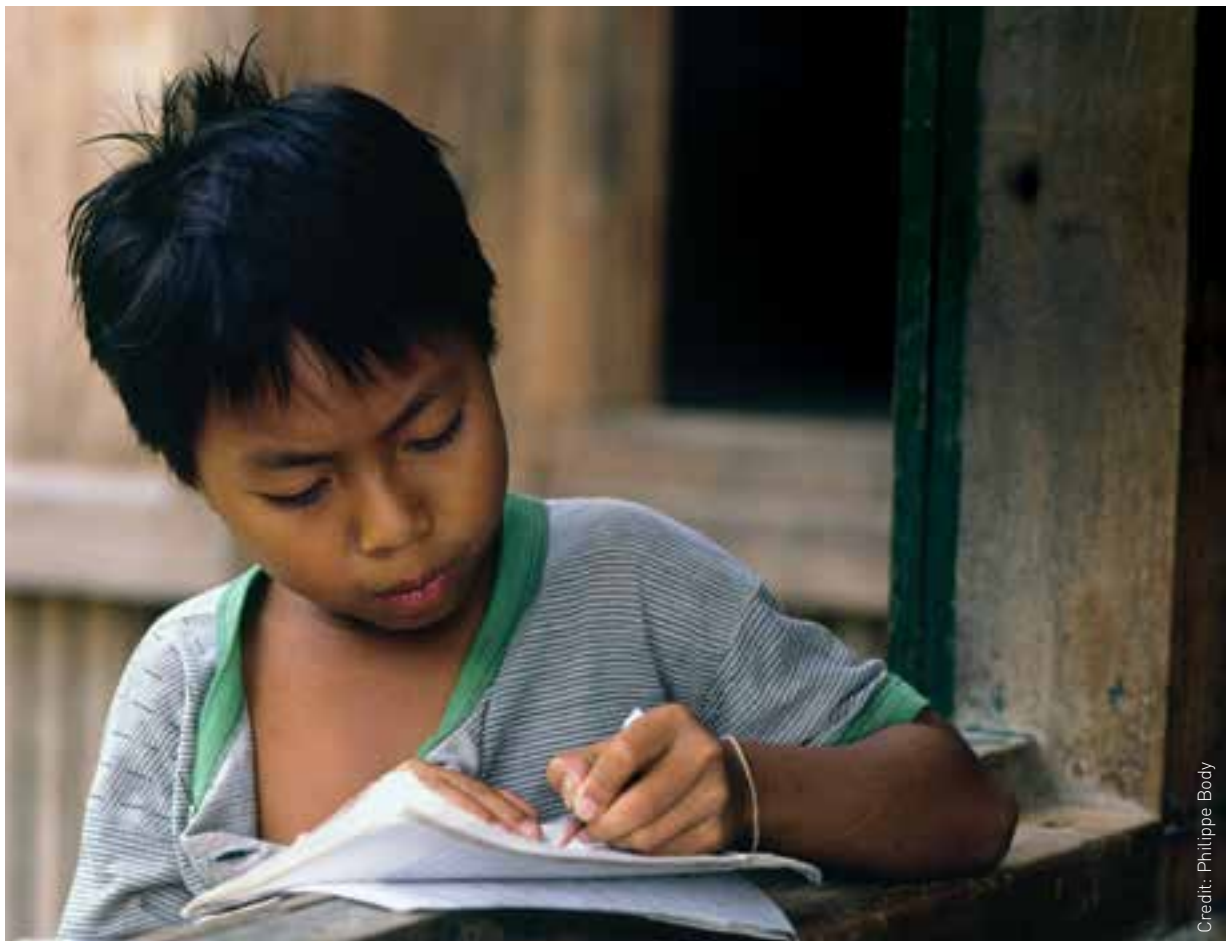
Credit: Philippe Body

Slum children

In 2000, most governments were ambivalent about providing education in slums. Since then, the issue of slum dwellers has become more critical with substantial migration from rural areas. In the absence of adequate government policy and planning, NGOs and the private sector have played a significant role. Low fee private schools have proliferated in slums in countries including India, Kenya and Nigeria.

Children with disabilities

Between 93 million and 150 million children are estimated to live with disabilities, which increases their risk of being excluded from education. In developing countries, disability tends to be linked with poverty, and it hinders access to education even more than socio-economic status, rural location or gender. Girls with disabilities can be especially marginalized. Disabled children's access to schooling is often limited by a lack of understanding about different forms of disability and the needs of disabled children, as well as a lack of teacher training and physical facilities, and discriminatory attitudes towards disability and difference.

Many countries have begun including children with disabilities in mainstream education, although some still favour segregation. In practice, most countries have hybrid policies and are incrementally improving inclusionary practices. Approaches that involve the community, parents and the children themselves are more likely to provide sustainable, relevant solutions and foster inclusion.

Education in complex emergencies is an evolving problem

Education in complex emergencies – such as warfare, civil disturbances and the large-scale movements of people – is an evolving problem, and a serious one. Emergency situations can lead to high numbers of school attacks, or sexual violence, further marginalizing already disadvantaged groups. Boys and girls are at risk of being forcibly recruited, sometimes from their classrooms, and exploited as front-line soldiers, spies, suicide bombers or sexual slaves. Girls are especially vulnerable in conflict situations.

Since 2000, the Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies has grown into a vast network of organizations and individuals in over 170 countries. Establishing minimum standards for education in emergencies in 2003 was a key step; a further one is the growing financial commitment for fragile states by the Global Partnership for Education. Despite such advances, however, the lack of funding for education within humanitarian aid budgeting remains a huge problem.

Conflict remains a steep barrier to education for many

REPORT CARD 2000–2015

GOAL 3 Skills and lower secondary education

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes

Global score*

*of 75 countries with data

very far from goal	far from goal	close to goal	reached goal
11%	35%	9%	45%

Successes ✓✓

Enrolment

↑**27% globally**

More than doubled in sub-Saharan Africa

1999
now

Gross enrolment ratio increased

1999 — 71% lower secondary / 45% upper secondary
2012 — 85% / 62%

0 20 40 60 80 100%

Out-of-school adolescents declined

1999 **99 million**

2012 **63 million**

Efforts made ✓

Lower secondary school

94 countries made it free
Some included it into basic education

27 countries made it compulsory since 2000
Many suspended high-stakes entry exams

Development of direct assessments of skills

PIAAC   STEP

Better understanding of HIV/AIDS since 2000

Persistent challenges ✗

Out-of-school adolescents

63 million in 2012

Lower secondary completion

1/3 of adolescents in low and middle income countries will not have completed lower secondary school in 2015

Skill

?

Lack of clarity for types of skills

Working youth

Number has not decreased

Second chance education

Chronic need for greater access

Uneven progress

Lower/upper secondary enrolment

103%/98%
89%/58%
97%/89%
96%/104%
98%/76%
81%/51%
97%/73%
50%/32%

Wealth

Since 2000, the gap hardly changed between rich and poor transitioning from lower to upper secondary school

Location

Only a few countries substantially reduced rural-urban inequality in access to lower secondary school (notably Viet Nam, Nepal and Indonesia)

Recommendations for post-2015

Opportunities to improve

1. Lower secondary education must be universalized
2. Second chance learning programmes must be expanded
3. Better definition of skills and corresponding data post-2015 are needed

GOAL 3 # Youth and adult skills

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.

The third EFA goal focused not only on formal education in schools but also on experiences outside school, such as on-the-job training and other opportunities over the life course. The wide focus of goal 3 came at the cost of clarity: it lacks a clear, measurable target and refers to an outcome – life skills – that can be understood in many ways.

The 2015 GMR focuses on three kinds of skills. Foundation skills are those needed to obtain work or continued training. Transferable skills can be adapted to different environments, including work related. Technical and vocational skills are the specific know-how related to particular work activities.

The most important indicator of progress in opportunities to acquire foundation skills is access to secondary school. Although there has been major progress in expanding access to the lower and even upper secondary levels, inequality relating to income and location persists. Many children, especially those from poor households, often must work, adversely affecting their participation, retention and academic success in secondary education. The uncertain legal status of many migrant children puts them at risk of being further marginalized unless countries ensure their secondary school access.

Foundation skills: Participation in secondary attainment has increased

Foundation skills include the literacy and numeracy skills necessary for decent work that pays enough to meet daily needs. Foundation skills obtained in secondary school can also be considered essential for career advancement, active citizenship and safe choices about personal health. Participation in secondary education has increased fast since 1999, with 551 million students enrolled in 2012. The GER in secondary education grew in both low (from 29% to 44%) and middle (from 56% to 74%) income countries.

The abolition of school fees has contributed to increased secondary enrolments. Of the 107 low and middle income countries with data, 94 have legislated free lower secondary education. The rising rate of primary education completion in many countries has also contributed, enabling larger cohorts to become eligible for continued study.

Demand for and interest in private alternatives in secondary education have increased. Between 1999 and 2012, the percentage of enrolment in private secondary institutions rose from 15% to 17% in

The wide focus of goal 3 came at the cost of clarity

Figure 6: The proportion of adolescents in school increased by 12 percentage points during the Dakar period
Lower secondary total net enrolment ratio, world and regions, 1999–2012 and 2015 (projection)
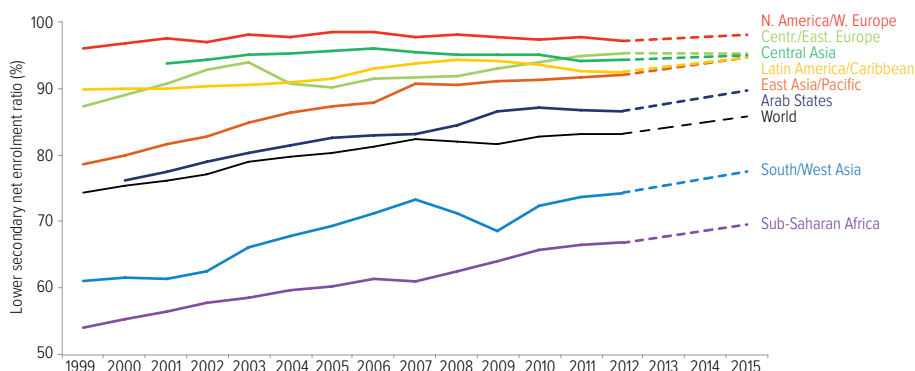
Sources: UIS database; Bruneforth (2015).

developing countries; increases were especially pronounced in the Arab States and East Asia.

Inequality persists in secondary education

As access to secondary schooling gradually becomes universal, it is usually obtained first by advantaged groups and only later by the marginalized, the poor and those living in rural areas. Unequal access to lower secondary often means upper secondary also remains or becomes a source of inequality. This pattern is found even in countries that promise educational opportunity to children irrespective of ability to pay.

Even as school coverage has increased, substantial proportions of adolescents of secondary school age have continued to work outside of school in most countries. Some leave school altogether, while others combine work with schooling. Working students lag in acquiring foundation skills. The percentage of students who work while studying is likely underestimated, as parents may be reluctant to tell interviewers that children are working.

Addressing the needs of migrant youth for skill acquisition has become a pressing concern in all regions and requires additional financing. A survey of migration policies in 14 developed and 14 developing countries found that 40% of the former and more than 50% of the latter did not allow children with irregular legal status access to schooling. Language education policies are essential for the education of immigrant youth and their future engagement with the labour market.

Education alternatives are needed for youth and adults who are no longer in school

As well as expanding formal schooling, countries have committed themselves to meeting the education needs of out-of-school youth and of adults whose formal education opportunities were cut short. Below are examples of alternative, 'second chance' and non-formal programmes:

In **Bangladesh**, BRAC programmes aim to bring out-of-school children into primary education and prepare them for the secondary level. More than 97% of BRAC primary school graduates continue to formal secondary school.

In **India**, the National Institute of Open Schooling offers 'open basic education programmes' for those aged 14 and older. Learners also have access to vocational courses and life enrichment programmes.

As of 2011, a cumulative total of 2.2 million students had benefited from these programs.

In **Thailand**, a national action plan combined EFA goals 3 and 4 into a composite goal focusing on adult literacy and on basic and continuing education for all adults. This created an alternative for diverse disadvantaged populations, including prison inmates and street children.

Transferable skills: Competencies that enable social progress

In addition to goal 3's pledge to make sure youth and adults received equitable opportunities for learning and life skills, the Dakar Framework for Action stated: 'All young people and adults must be given the opportunity to gain the knowledge and develop the values, attitudes and skills that will enable them to develop their capacities to work, to participate fully in their society, to take control of their own lives and to continue learning.' Monitoring this broad goal requires information on values, attitudes and non-academic skills that are neither internationally assessed nor reported by national education systems.

The 2015 GMR sheds light on two types of life skills that are relevant to health and society: knowledge about HIV and AIDS, and attitudes towards gender equity.

Knowledge on HIV and AIDS has increased but is far from universal: Recent surveys indicate improvements in HIV and AIDS knowledge among young men in 9 countries and among young women in 13 countries. The countries showing the greatest improvement appear to be those where HIV was most prevalent. It is likely that schools have taken HIV education more seriously in these countries, and that life skills education has played a role.

Attitudes towards gender equity have not consistently improved: For over 20 years, the World Values Survey has asked respondents whether they agreed that a university education was more important for men than for women. In recent years in some countries (for example, Ukraine and Morocco) respondents were more likely to disagree with the statement, and to reveal positive attitudes towards women in higher education. But in other countries there was no change, and in some (for example, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan) respondents' attitudes towards gender equity worsened).

Technical and vocational skills: Approaches are evolving

Technical and vocational skills can be acquired through secondary schooling and formal technical and vocational education, or through work-based training, including traditional apprenticeships and training through agricultural cooperatives. There were 28 countries that showed either substantial gains or declines in the percentages of students enrolled in vocational tracks, as opposed to general tracks, relative to total secondary enrolment; in 12 of these countries the share increased and in 16 it decreased.

In 2000, there were few advocates of technical and vocational skills at the Dakar World Education Forum, and as a consequence goal 3 was not well defined. However, there has been much greater attention to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in recent years, notably from the European Union and the OECD. Another reason for this focus is that the definition of skills has widened beyond those concerned with livelihood. Most advocates now see skills training not as separate from, but as integral to, general education, offering foundation and transferable skills at the same time as job skills.

Continuing and adult education: Four contrasting cases

Unless opportunities are carefully designed, adult education tends to be taken up by people who have already benefited from formal schooling. Four countries that have tried in recent years to address equality of opportunity in adult education have had diverse results:

Brazil's Education of Youth and Adults skills programme is aimed at those aged 15 and older who have not completed formal education. In 2012, over 3 million students were registered, including migrants, rural workers and people from poor backgrounds or working-class families. However, the quality of education obtained is deficient and dropout rates are high.

In 2006, **Norway** promoted a major initiative that channelled funds to employers for courses for employees with low levels of general skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT and oral communication. The country's adult education system is diverse: programmes outside the formal system also include 'folk high schools', education associations, language training centres for immigrants, and distance education.

In 2007, the **Republic of Korea** revised the coordination, development and implementation of adult education. Many activities were redesigned to mobilize stakeholders, such as a campaign to select and develop lifelong learning cities. Participation rates increased from about 26% in 2008 to about 36% in 2012. The government also created four initiatives to promote job-related skills for employees of small and medium-sized enterprises.

In **Viet Nam**, non-formal adult education and adult literacy training were made major components of the overall education system in 2005. There were almost 10 million participants in adult learning and non-formal education programmes in 2008, compared with just over half a million in 1999.

Direct measures of hard and soft skills are emerging in many countries

Socio-emotional ('soft') skills can be learned through positive school experiences and may be as important as cognitive ('hard') skills in realizing positive labour market outcomes. Two examples of direct measures of hard and soft skills are the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), and the World Bank's ongoing Skills Toward Employment and Productivity (STEP) study. Their results can and should be used to answer key questions about how different types of education contribute to skills and learning, and how these skills boost an individual's employment opportunities and civic engagement.

PIAAC assessed adults' literacy and numeracy skills and their ability to solve problems in technology-rich environments. The evidence shows that not only can skills be learned after individuals leave school, but they can also be lost if not used regularly. It also suggests that those who attend vocational programmes have lower skill levels than those in general programmes.

STEP is based on samples of households and enterprises in mainly urban areas of middle income countries. It surveys reading proficiency as well as task-specific skills, including numeracy and computer use, which are used both in and outside work. STEP confirmed the value of soft skills in general, and more specifically found that 'openness' boosts earnings, even when years of education are taken into account.

Almost 10 million adults took part in education programmes in Vietnam in 2008

REPORT CARD 2000–2015

GOAL 4 Adult literacy and education

Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults

Global score*

*of 73 countries with data

very far from goal	far from goal	close to goal	reached goal
32%	26%	19%	23%

Successes

Adult illiteracy rate

Global trends

18% (2000)
14% (2015)

Central Asia and Central and Eastern Europe are expected to have **halved their illiteracy rates** by 2015

Since 2000, the adult illiteracy rate fell by:

9%
32%
38%
26%
3%

Efforts made

More campaigns and global commitment

WE WANT TO BE LITERATE
WE WANT LITERATE COMMUNITIES

Higher demand for literacy

WE MUST IMPROVE LITERACY FOR ALL

Literacy assessments

2000
Subjective

Are you literate?
Y ☐ N ☐

Now
Direct

Read this sentence and sign your name

Persistent challenges

At least
781 million
adults do not have basic literacy skills

Women will make up
64% of illiterate adults in 2015

– no change since 2000

Progress in adult literacy is mostly due to educated young people reaching adulthood

Opportunities

Better data collection

New technology

Better understanding of literacy skills as a scale

literate illiterate

Better understanding of literacy's impact
on health, democracy, empowerment

Recommendations for post-2015

1. Data are needed to reflect emerging agreements that literacy skills are not black and white but exist on a scale

2. Countries should specify a level of functional literacy, in line with international agreements, that all adults should attain

Need a rethink

GOAL 4 Adult literacy

Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Many positive developments must be acknowledged in approaches to adult literacy since 2000. There has been a clear trend towards measuring literacy skills on a continuum, as opposed to assessments that characterize adults as either literate or illiterate, which has influenced policy and programme development in many countries. However, very few countries met the EFA literacy target of halving their 2000 adult illiteracy rate by 2015.

Progress has been slower towards EFA goal 4 than towards other goals. Nearly 781 million adults are deficient in literacy skills. Reductions in adult illiteracy rates partly reflect the entry of younger, more educated cohorts into adulthood, rather than improvement within cohorts of adults who were past school age.

Most countries are still far from goal 4

Monitoring adult literacy requires consistent information to allow comparisons. But because definitions of literacy have evolved since 2000, obtaining such information can be challenging. Focusing on countries with a literacy rate below 95% in the 1995–2004 period and where information was consistently based on self-declarations, only 17 out of 73 countries are projected to have at least halved their adult illiteracy rate by 2015. Poor countries continued to be furthest from achieving the target.

Analysis of these 73 countries shows the projected change by 2015 is faster for females than for males. All countries where fewer than 90 women for every 100 men were literate in or around 2000 have moved towards gender parity.

International and national surveys facilitate the direct assessment of literacy

Most standard household surveys that assess literacy skills are based on a simple binary division between literacy and illiteracy. Since 2000, however, literacy has increasingly been accepted as a continuum of skills. Countries and international agencies have therefore begun to conduct more sophisticated investigations to gauge not only whether adults are 'literate' or 'illiterate' but also their level of literacy.

Since 2000, the two main international household survey programmes, the **Demographic and Health Surveys** and the **Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys**, have attempted to assess literacy directly by asking respondents to read a sentence from a card. When estimates are based on direct assessment, more adults appear to be deficient in reading skills than when estimates are derived from self-declaration.

The OECD's **PIAAC**, which surveyed 166,000 persons aged 16 to 65 in 25 highly literate societies, showed that, even in high income countries, a notable minority of adults had very low reading proficiency. In countries including France, Italy and Spain, more than one in four adults had low literacy skills.

UIS initiated the **Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme** (LAMP) to highlight the multiple dimensions of literacy as measured in prose reading, document reading and numeracy. LAMP sampled adults from both rural and urban areas in Jordan, Mongolia, Palestine and Paraguay. It defined three levels of literacy attainment. Results from Paraguay showed that adults in rural areas had lower prose reading skills than urban dwellers, possibly because fewer rural than urban residents identified Spanish as a mother tongue.

17 countries will have reached the literacy goal by 2015

National adult literacy assessments

Many lower literacy countries have begun to use assessments of literacy along a continuum. These produce more accurate results than surveys of household declarations of literacy versus illiteracy. The Kenya National Adult Literacy Survey of 2006, for example, found wide urban–rural differences and adult national literacy rates of 59% for women, 13 points below the rate that UIS estimated based on self-declarations of ability to read. The result for men, 64%, was 15 points lower than the estimated UIS rate.

Comparing cohorts shows almost no real gains in adult literacy since 2000

The value of the adult literacy rate for assessing the success of literacy programmes is hampered by the fact that it is based on different adult populations at different times. As a result, even if not a single adult changes their literacy status, the adult literacy rate may change – increasing, for example, if young people with higher literacy skills cross into the adult age bracket while older people with lower literacy skills depart.

If, on the other hand, a group of people – or cohort – is observed aged 20 to 30 in 2000 and 30 to 40 in 2010, any change will be due not to changing schooling but to literacy skill acquisition through literacy programmes or other life opportunities. New analysis for the 2015 GMR follows this approach.

The result is that some countries can be seen on a trajectory of slow but definite improvement in the literacy rates of young women, but that these apparent gains disappear from a cohort perspective. For example, in Malawi the literacy rate of women aged 20 to 34 was 49% in 2000 and 63% in 2010. However, the literacy rate of the cohort of women who were aged 20 to 34 in 2000 and 30 to 44 in 2010 remained constant at 49%.

In most of the 30 countries analysed, literacy in a given cohort stagnated, or even declined as skills were underutilized. Nepal was the only country where sustained improvement was confirmed at the cohort level over three survey waves. One reason could be the success of the government's investment of US$35 million in its 2008–2012 National Literacy Campaign.

Most of progress in Goal 4 is due to educated young people reaching adulthood

Explaining limited progress in adult literacy

If the literacy skills of adults who were above school age did not improve in most developing countries, then considerable doubt is cast on the impact of efforts to improve adult literacy skills since 2000. Four factors may help explain the slow progress: the extent of global political commitment, the effectiveness of literacy campaigns and programmes, the scope of attempts to promote mother tongue literacy programmes and the responsiveness of programmes to the demand for literacy.

The global commitment to adult literacy was ambiguous

The international community has repeatedly made declarations to promote adult literacy over the past quarter-century. Declared targets have raised

Figure 7: In developing countries, the literacy skills of adults have rarely improved
Female literacy rate, selected countries and age groups, circa 2000 and 2010
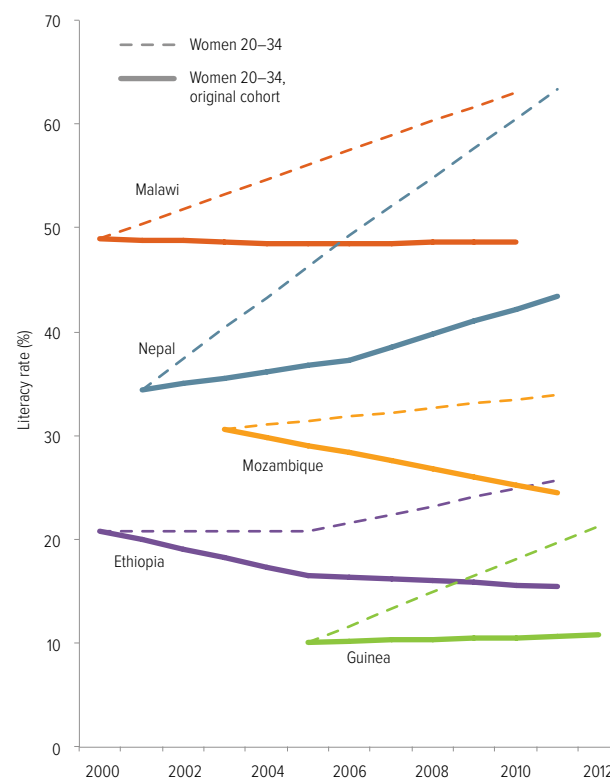
Notes: 1. Literacy was assessed directly. 2. For every country, the continuous line follows over time women who were aged 20–34 at the first observation point; for example, the continuous line in Malawi follows women aged 20–34 in 2000 who were aged 30–44 by 2010. The dashed line follows the same age group; for example, the dashed line in Malawi follows women aged 20–34 in 2000 and 2010. 3. In 2001, the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey sampled only married women, but in 2006 and 2011, it sampled all women.
Source: Barakat (2015) and EFA GMR team, based on Demographic and Health Survey data analysis.

expectations that illiteracy would follow a path like that of polio and could be 'eradicated'. A GMR analysis of 30 countries' national education plans from around 2000 and after 2007 found that adult literacy has been neglected compared with other EFA goals.

Despite several global initiatives since 2000 to reconceptualize adult literacy and initiate programmes (e.g. Literacy Initiative for Empowerment) embracing new concepts, the effectiveness of such programmes in practice has been limited. Many were found to lack a long-term vision in line with national education strategies.

Literacy campaigns and programmes have changed, but their impact is elusive

Interest by regional organizations and governments in launching literacy campaigns has increased since 2000, especially in Latin America. Most of the campaigns set ambitious targets, but the deadlines have already passed in some cases with targets unmet.

Major campaigns carry risks. They can raise unrealistic expectations and they do not always cater to diversity. The language of campaigns often portrays illiteracy as a 'social illness' that can be 'eradicated' with the right intervention. This can stigmatize illiteracy, discourage those with low literacy skills and lead them to hide their situation. Overall, literacy campaigns since 2000 have not had a major impact globally on improving literacy skills.

Progress in recognizing the importance of the mother tongue

Since 2000, conditions have been more favourable in many low literacy countries for increasing focus on the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in adult literacy programmes. However, because of logistical constraints or ambivalence by political leaders, such programmes have not yet made a major contribution to improving adult literacy skills on any significant scale.

Changes in daily life have not led to a strong increase in demand for literacy

Literacy requires not only a better supply of learning opportunities but also more opportunities to use, improve and retain literacy skills. Such opportunities have been growing since 2000. The 2015 GMR examines examples in agricultural marketing, public health interventions, microfinance initiatives and water management investment. Despite growing recognition that literacy programmes need to be attached to such opportunities, the impact on literacy skill acquisition has not yet been perceptible.

However, another change, the rapid expansion of ICT, holds considerable promise. It may be possible to take advantage of widespread mobile phone use to promote stronger literacy environments and reading practices, though clear evidence is not yet available on the impact of ICT on literacy skills.

ICT and mobile phone use may help promote stronger literacy environments

Credit: Juan Manuel Castro Prieto/Agence Vu

REPORT CARD 2000–2015

GOAL 5 Gender parity and equality

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality

Global score*

*of 170 countries with data for primary and 157 countries with data for secondary

very far from goal	far from goal	close to goal	reached goal
0.6% 10%	21% 35%	10% 7%	69% 48%

Primary
Secondary

Successes

Gender disparities in secondary education are lessening

Countries with less than **90 girls** enrolled for every **100 boys =**

30 → **19**

1999   now
(out of 133 countries)

Guaranteeing rights

40 of the **59** member states that responded make explicit reference to guaranteeing women's right to education

Girls completing lower secondary education

2000   **81** per 100 boys

2010   **93** per 100 boys

Efforts made

Advocacy for girls' education

FAIR PLAY FOR GIRLS!

at national and international levels

Stipend schemes

have increased numbers of girls enrolling in some countries

More female teachers

e.g. in Nepal

1999   **23%**

2012   **42%**

(60% of these were new teachers)

Persistent challenges

Child marriage and pregnancy

Teacher training

in gender-sensitive approaches need to be scaled up

School-related gender-based violence

Physical Psychological

Sexual

Gender equality

Difficulties in defining and measuring

Uneven progress

Poorest girls still least likely to enrol

In Pakistan fewer than **70 girls** for every **100 boys** have ever attended school

Underperformance

of girls in maths

and boys in reading

Gender disparities at expense of boys

in secondary education in Latin America and the Caribbean and in some poorer countries (especially Bangladesh, Myanmar and Rwanda)

Recommendations for post-2015

1. Schools should be safe, inclusive and gender-sensitive, with teaching and learning that empowers students and promotes positive gender relations

2. Resources must be targeted at those communities where gender disparities are more prevalent

More effort needed

GOAL 5 Gender parity and equality

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Since 2000, progress towards gender parity in primary education has been uneven. The target of gender parity in primary enrolment by 2005 was missed, while only 69% of countries will have achieved it by 2015. In secondary education, only 48% of countries will have reached gender parity by 2015.

Gender equality is more complex than gender parity and harder to measure. It requires exploring the quality of girls' and boys' experiences in the classroom and school community, their achievements in education institutions and their aspirations for the future.

Progress towards gender parity

Gender disparity in primary enrolment has been substantially reduced since 1999, but not eliminated. Among the 161 countries with data for 1999 and 2012, the number at parity – measured by a gender parity index (GPI) of between 0.97 and 1.03 – rose from 83 to 104. The number of countries with a GPI under 0.97 – with fewer girls enrolled relative to boys – dropped from 73 to 48. Of countries yet to achieve parity by 2012, the majority had disparities at the expense of girls and only nine at the expense of boys.

There was marked improvement in reducing gender disparity in primary enrolment in South and West Asia, where the GPI increased from 0.83 in 1999 to 1.00 in 2012. Disparities were also reduced in the Arab States (from 0.87 to 0.93) and sub-Saharan Africa (from 0.85 to 0.92) but remain far from parity.

Progress in countries where girls faced the greatest disadvantage

Since 1999, major progress has been made in reducing gender gaps in primary enrolment in many of the countries where girls faced the worst disadvantage. Of the 161 countries with data, 33 – including 20 in sub-Saharan Africa – had a GPI below 0.90 in 1999; by 2012 the number had fallen to 16.

The poorest girls remain the least likely to enrol

In countries with large populations of primary-age children who have never attended school, girls are still less likely than boys to go to school, particularly among the poorest children. About 43% of the world's out-of-school children will never go to school: 48% of girls are likely never to go to school, compared with 37% of boys.

Once in school, girls progress alongside boys

When enrolled, girls stand an equal or better chance, compared with boys, of continuing to the upper grades of primary school: survival rates to grade 5 for girls have consistently been equal to or higher than those of boys in many countries. Of 68 countries with data for both years, 57 in 2000 had either parity in grade 5 survival rates or a GPI at boys' expense, and 58 in 2011.

Poverty deepens gender disparity in completing primary education

Gender disparity in the completion of primary schooling has often remained far wider among the poorest children than the richest. In countries including the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique and Uganda, where gender parity in primary attainment has been achieved since 1999 for the richest girls, the poorest girls still lag far behind the poorest boys.

Gender disparity in primary completion remains far wider among the poorest children

Gender disparity is wider and more varied in secondary education

Gender disparity is found in more countries in secondary education than in primary. By 2012, 63% of the countries with data had yet to achieve gender parity in secondary enrolment. The proportion of countries with disparities at the expense of boys and of girls were equal at nearly 32% each. In sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, girls continued to be more disadvantaged in secondary enrolment. In Latin America and the Caribbean, by contrast, only 93 boys are enrolled for every 100 girls, the same level as in 1999.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, only 93 boys are enrolled for every 100 girls

Promoting an enabling environment

Sustained global advocacy has led in recent years to unprecedented government and civil society support for gender parity and equality in education. Governments have implemented legislative and policy reform; mainstreamed gender into education institutional structures, planning and budgeting; and built a critical mass of support within societies.

Gender mainstreaming and budgeting provide a focus

Gender mainstreaming aims to make gender equality a central ideal reflected in the structures
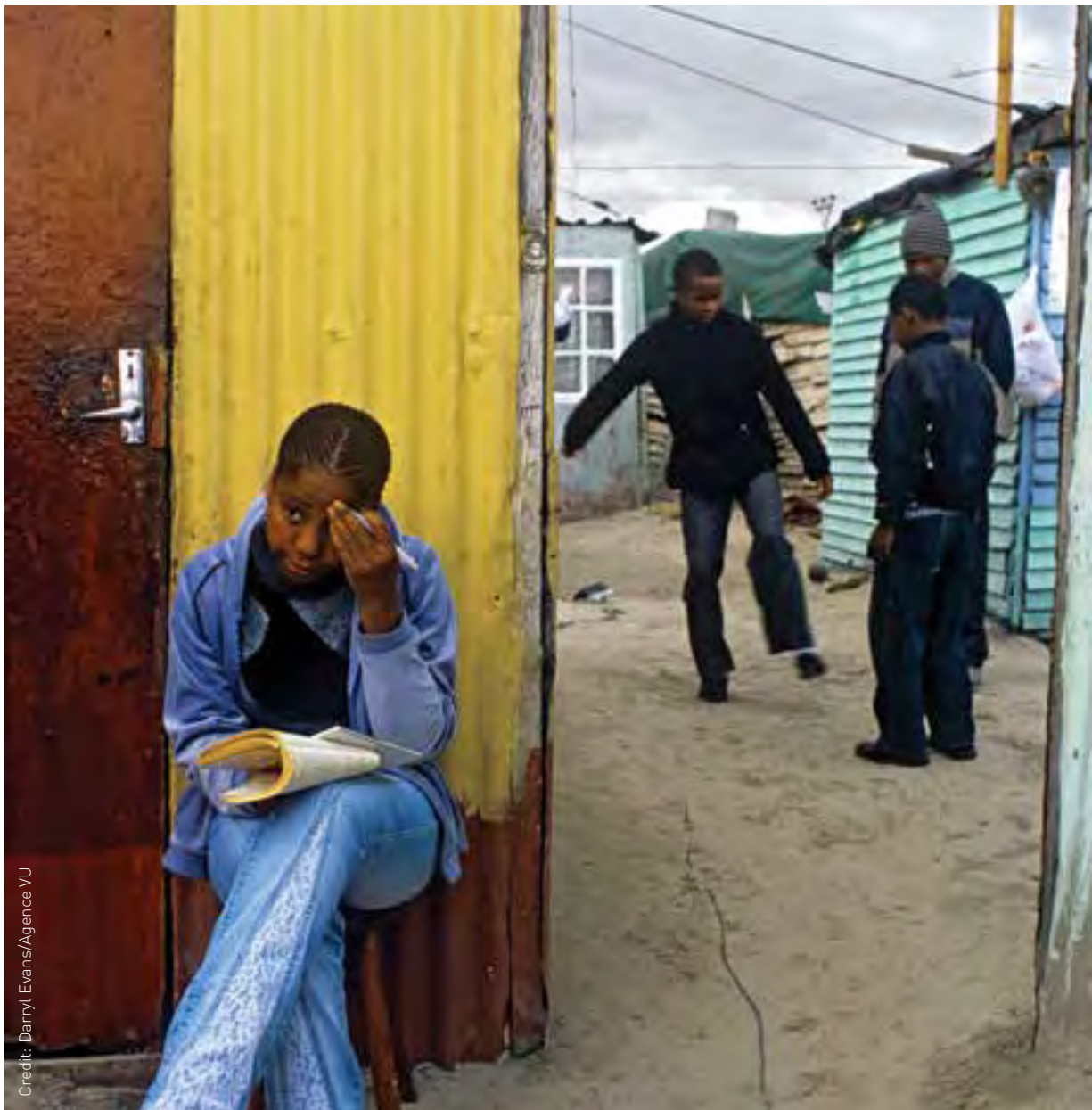
Credit: Darryl Evans/Agence VU

and practices of institutions and society as a whole rather than a separate issue or sector. The UN Development Fund for Women, now UN Women, promotes gender-responsive budgeting in over 60 countries worldwide. Yet, in many countries, resources to effect change have been inadequate, gender units marginalized within institutions, advocacy support insufficient and implementation limited by entrenched discrimination.

Legislation and policy reform underpin progress

In a recent UNESCO overview, 40 of the 59 reporting member states refer explicitly to guaranteeing girls' and women's right to education or to forbidding gender-based discrimination in national constitutions, legislation or specific policies. However, social institutions continue to undermine gender equality. Discriminatory inheritance laws or practices persist, and the prevalence of early marriage remains unacceptably high.

Increasing demand and supporting rights to education

Governments, NGOs and civil society have sought to overcome economic and socio-cultural barriers to schooling and reduce gender gaps in three key ways: promoting positive values and attitudes to girls' education through community mobilization and advocacy campaigns; providing incentives to offset school and opportunity costs; and tackling early marriage and adolescent pregnancy.

Changing attitudes and mobilizing support for girls' education

National campaigns have been used as part of wider policy frameworks to change parental attitudes and build a groundswell of support for girls' education. Campaigns that have proved particularly effective engage partners from several sectors, are supported by national planning and policy, and directly involve grass-roots organizations and communities.

Reducing costs of schooling

School-related costs can disproportionately affect girls. Targeted fee waivers and scholarships can offset direct school costs, and cash stipends can reduce additional costs to families. Nevertheless, issues of equity remain a concern. In Bangladesh, for example, despite the acclaimed success of a secondary school stipend programme for rural

girls, girls from wealthier, landowning households benefited disproportionately.

Early marriage and adolescent pregnancy

Early entry into marriage and adolescent pregnancy limit girls' access to and continuation in education, but progress towards eliminating child marriage globally has been slow. Data for 2000–2011 indicated that in 41 countries, 30% or more of women aged 20 to 24 were married or in unions by the age of 18. Legislation alone may not be an effective deterrent to this practice. An evaluation of the 1974 National Marriage Act in Indonesia found no significant departure from the trend in child marriage following the act's introduction. The incidence of child marriage has been reduced substantially in some countries, however. In Ethiopia, the prevalence of early marriage fell by over 20% between 2005 and 2011 due to legislative change, advocacy and community campaigns.

Expanding and improving school infrastructure

The goals of gender parity and equality have been directly and indirectly supported by policies to increase the availability and adequacy of school infrastructure. Increasing the supply of schools, including girls-only schools, and improving school facilities – especially water and sanitation – can improve girls' attendance.

Reducing distances to school

Building schools in underserved communities has helped overcome barriers to girls' education related to distance. In Ghor province in Afghanistan, in villages randomly selected to receive a primary school building, overall enrolment increased by 42 percentage points and girls' enrolment increased by 17 percentage points more than that of boys, eliminating a gender gap.

Improving water and sanitation facilities

Providing safe and separate sanitation facilities for girls is a key strategy in improving school attendance for girls and promoting more equitable school environments. School water and sanitation provision in many developing countries has improved over the past decade, but progress has been slow: of 126 countries with data, the average percentage of primary schools with adequate sanitation coverage rose from 59% in 2008 to 68% in 2012.

School construction and improving school facilities can improve girls' attendance

Policies to improve boys' participation are also needed

While girls remain less likely than boys to enter school in the first place, in many countries boys are at higher risk of failing to progress and complete a cycle of education. High dropout rates among boys also have broader repercussions for gender relations. Research in 2009 and 2010 in Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico and Rwanda found that men with less education expressed discriminatory gender views, were more likely to be violent in the home and, if they were fathers, were less likely to be involved in child care.

Several factors increase boys' risk of leaving school

Significant numbers of boys leave school early due to poverty and the obligation or desire to work, often combined with late entry, poor performance and a subsequent lack of interest in school, as well as factors such as ethnicity and other forms of marginalization.

Policies to address boys' school leaving are limited

Developing countries' education policies often pay little attention to improving boys' enrolment in and completion of education, even in countries with severe gender disparity at boys' expense. Caribbean countries have been active in sharing strategies and interventions such as mentoring, second-chance initiatives, training and community dialogue that are aimed at responding to school dropout.

Equitable school and classroom environments

Gender equality in education requires not only equality of access, but also equality in the learning process, in educational outcomes and in external results. Four factors are essential to improving the quality of learning, particularly for girls: enhancing the number and quality of teachers, including female teachers; removing gender bias from curricula and textbooks; making classroom practices more gender-sensitive through training; and tackling gender-based violence.

Recruiting female teachers

The presence of female teachers can allay parents' security fears and increase demand for girls' schooling, particularly in countries where cultural and social barriers to girls' enrolment exist. Globally, the share of women in the primary teaching force has increased since 1999, from 58% to 63% in 2012. In secondary education, the global average

Figure 8: Since 1999, women's share of the primary teaching force has increased, and they make up a substantial proportion of new entrants in several countries
Percentage of female teachers in primary education, 1999 and 2012; percentage of female teachers as new entrants 2009–2012
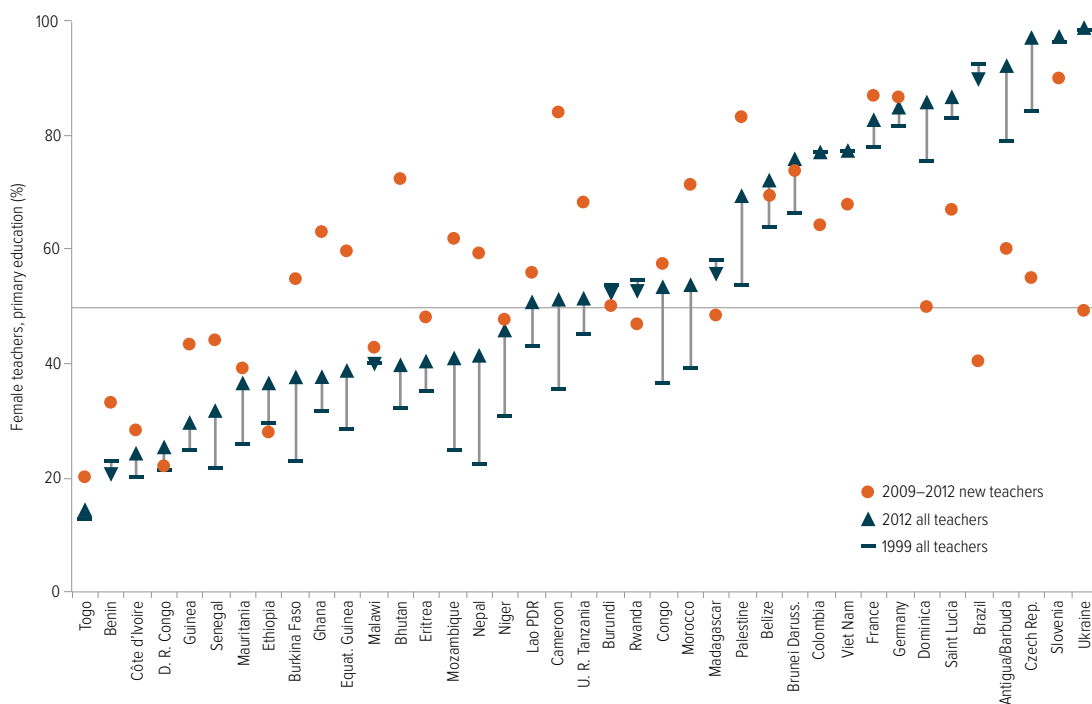
Sources: Annex, Statistical Table 8 (Print) and 10A (GMR website); *EFA Global Monitoring Report* team calculations (2014) using data from UIS database.

remains unchanged at 52%. Even where a majority of teachers are women, proportionally fewer women than men ascend to leadership positions.

Gender-sensitive training for classroom practice

Teachers' attitudes, practices and expectations of boys and girls in class can reproduce gender stereotypes and affect girls' and boys' motivation, participation and learning outcomes. In many settings, classroom observations show teachers of both sexes interacting more often with boys, thus encouraging passivity among girls. Teacher education regarding inclusion, gender-sensitive pedagogy and classroom management can reduce bias and build more supportive school environments. Even where such policies exist, however, a lack of clear strategies, poor implementation and supervision, and inadequate evaluation frequently limit their effectiveness.

Curriculum and textbook reform to promote gender equality

Despite attempts to increase gender balance, bias in textbooks remains pervasive in many countries, partly because of a lack of political will and support within the wider society. Gender-responsive curricula have potential to support learning and promote positive gender relations. Comprehensive sex education is a critical curriculum area for promoting gender equality, but sex education programmes may fail to deal with the gender dynamics that accompany sexual and reproductive health.

Tackling gender-based violence in schools

Gender-based violence in school settings is widespread. Boys are more likely to experience physical violence, while girls are more often subject to sexual harassment and abuse, perpetrated by male students and teachers. Homophobic bullying and cyberbullying are also recognized as areas of concern. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa have been at the forefront of policy to tackle school-related gender-based violence, especially sexual violence. Girls' clubs and programmes promoting non-violence among men and boys have demonstrated positive shifts in attitudes. But overall, there is little evidence that increased awareness of the prevalence of school-related gender-based violence is translating into effective action to reduce violence.

Supporting equality in learning outcomes

Achieving gender equality in education requires not only reducing disparities in education opportunity, but also in learning outcomes. Regional and international learning assessments show that girls perform better overall in reading and boys in mathematics in most countries, although the gap in mathematics is narrowing. Performance in science is more varied, with no significant difference between boys and girls in many countries.

In poorer settings, girls continue to face disadvantage in achievement

In some poorer countries where girls have historically faced barriers to equal participation in education, they continue to face disadvantage in obtaining important foundation skills. In rural Pakistan, gender gaps are small among grade 5 students, sometimes favouring girls. However, when girls not in school are taken into account, girls' relative performance is worse among children aged 10 to 12, particularly in poorer, less developed provinces and territories.

Tackling boys' underachievement

Concern over boys' underachievement in learning outcomes, particularly in reading, has grown since 2000. Yet only a few countries have comprehensive policy frameworks to address this concern. Strategies and small-scale interventions in teaching and learning that have potential to tackle boys' low achievement include an emphasis on transferable skills, classroom approaches that foster active learning, individual mentoring and target-setting, and a school ethos promoting respect and cooperation.

Female representation in the teaching force falls as the level of education rises

REPORT CARD 2000–2015

GOAL 6 Quality of education

Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

Global score*

*of countries with data

Pupil to teacher ratio at primary level

17
14
16
19
35
19
21
42

*average

Pupil to trained teacher ratio at primary level

24
29
23
55

*median

Successes ✓✓

Access and learning

No trade-off needed
e.g. Kenya

- 62% children completing primary school
- 42%
- 39% children achieving the minimum standard in maths
- 25%

2000 2007
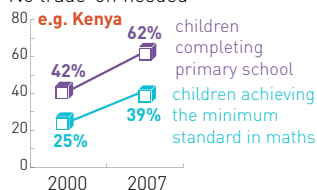
Pupil/teacher ratios

At primary education level, pupil/teacher ratios declined in 121 of 146 countries

1999   2012

Congo and Mali reduced their pupil/teacher ratio by 10 pupils per teacher, while doubling enrolment

1999   2012

Efforts made ✓

National assessments

to measure learning achievement

283	1,157
1990-1999	2000-2013
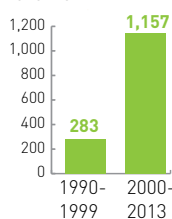
Targeted social protection programmes

in Mexico, for both children and adults, aimed at disadvantaged families, helped improve learning outcomes

Policy to upgrade teacher training

in Nepal led to decrease in pupil/teacher ratio in primary school

260:1 in 1999   28:1 in 2013
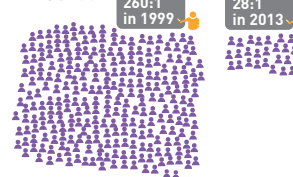
Persistent challenges ✗

Trained teacher shortages

In 2012, in one-third of countries

less than 75% of primary teachers were trained

Learning deficits start early

2 + 2 = ?
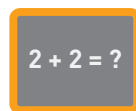
Many children are not learning the basics

Material shortages

of textbooks and teaching materials, as well as classroom furniture

Uneven progress

Trained teachers

Below 50%
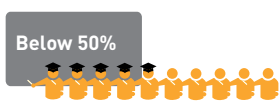
in Angola, Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and South Sudan

Multilingual education

needs to be sustained to improve learning

Urban-rural gaps

improving in 8 Latin American countries, but 6 still lag behind in learning

Recommendations for post-2015

1. More and better trained teachers, improved learning materials and relevant curriculum are needed

2. Learning assessments to support good quality education and equitable learning outcomes are needed

Must try harder

GOAL 6 Quality of education

Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.
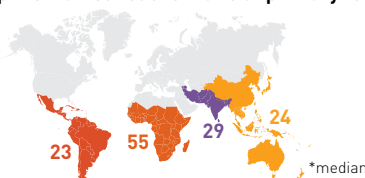
While many countries have made impressive gains in access to education since Dakar, improvement in quality has not always kept pace. A discernible shift in emphasis towards quality and learning is likely to become more central to the post-2015 global framework, since, as the 2013/14 GMR showed, 250 million children have not had the chance to learn the basics – even though 130 million of them have spent at least four years in school.

It is possible to improve access and equitable learning simultaneously

As enrolment rises, children entering school systems are more likely to come from marginalized groups, have disabilities or be affected by malnutrition and poverty. The new entrants are also more likely to come from households with less literate parents or where a non-official language is spoken. The impact of these factors would predict lower learning levels to accompany a rise in enrolments. Yet findings from most regional and international learning assessments do not reflect this.

In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the number of children entering and completing school rose between 2000 and 2007. At the same time, learning outcomes improved or were maintained. In secondary education, too, access and equitable learning can increase side by side. In Mexico, enrolment of 15-year-olds increased by almost 12 percentage points between 2003 and 2012 while the mean scores in mathematics in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) increased from 385 to 413 points.

Progress in learning outcomes should be monitored

Effective strategies to assess and monitor knowledge and skills require large-scale learning assessments based on sample surveys that provide countrywide information about learning outcomes. More national assessments are being conducted since Dakar: from a cumulative total of 283 assessments in 1990-99 to 1,167 assessments in 2000-13. The prevalence of conducting assessments occurred not only among more affluent countries, but also among poorer ones.

Most national assessments call on education authorities to improve student knowledge levels and competencies. A review of 54 studies shows that the range of education policies resulting from the use of national assessment data is wide, from curriculum reform and textbook revision to teacher education and ongoing training, instructional material development, parent engagement, performance standards and allocation of resources to support poorly performing schools.

Citizen-led assessments gain ground

Civil society organizations are increasingly involved in assessment activities to inform national policies in education. Citizen-led, household-based assessments of children's literacy and numeracy skills began in India in 2005 and have been adapted in Pakistan (since 2008), Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania (2009), Mali (2011) and Senegal (2012). Together, they reached more than 1 million children in 2012.

There have been over 1000 national learning assessments carried out since Dakar

Assessments are used to evaluate early grade learning

Between 2007 and mid-2014, more than 60 countries carried out one or more early grade reading assessments (EGRAs). By mid-2014, more than 20 countries had conducted early grade mathematics assessments (EGMAs). The results paint an alarming picture: many children spend two or three years in school without learning to read a single word, and many schools do not teach students the basics of arithmetic in their early years. EGRA/EGMA results have prompted governments and donors to rethink policies so that students achieve minimum learning standards in reading and mathematics.

Regional and international assessments contribute to measuring equity in learning

In addition to the growing use of national assessments, countries have increasingly joined cross-national and cross-system comparisons of student achievement. The Latin American studies PERCE, SERCE and TERCE[1] allow assessment of components relating to students' academic proficiency – organizational, curricular and family-background – and of overall national progress, including towards the reduction of inequality. The OECD's PISA collects information on 15-year-olds that makes it possible to relate inequality in social origin to literacy and numeracy skills.

A majority of OECD countries have initiated policy reform and initiatives in direct response to PISA results. Learning assessments have also influenced curricular and instructional reform in many countries. Regional and international assessments can pose problems, though. Publishing comparisons can discourage participation by poorer countries where few children are learning the basics. Some countries have altered the intended contents of required subjects to better capture the cross-curricular competences tested in PISA.

The world lacks 4 million teachers to get all children in school by 2015

Investing in teachers is essential

The Dakar Framework stressed that, to achieve EFA, governments need to improve the availability and deployment of skilled and motivated teachers. To attract and retain good teachers, policy-makers need to improve teacher education,

1. Respectively, the First, Second and Third Regional Comparative and Explanatory Studies conducted by the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education.
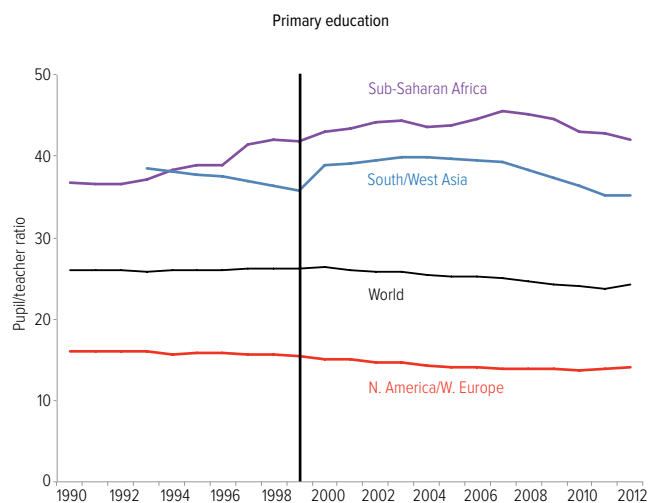
deploy teachers more fairly, provide incentives in the form of appropriate salaries, and create attractive career paths.

Despite progress, teacher shortages remain a serious concern

Disparity in pupil/teacher ratios across regions has remained large. As of 2012, 29 of the 161 countries with data had pupil/teacher ratios in primary education exceeding 40:1. Of these, 24 were in sub-Saharan Africa. Primary pupil/teacher ratios declined in 121 of the 146 countries with data for both 1999 and 2012. Many of the improvements occurred in countries that already had pupil/teacher ratios below 40:1. At the lower secondary level, where 105 countries had data for 2012, 18 had ratios above 30:1. Between 1999 and 2012, the ratios grew by six pupils per teacher in Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Myanmar. Upper secondary pupil/teacher ratios stayed constant or decreased in most countries with data over the last decade.

Figure 9: Disparity in pupil/teacher ratios across regions has remained large
Pupil/teacher ratios, world and selected regions, 1990–2012

Source: UIS database.

How many primary school teachers were needed to reach universal primary education by 2015?

Between 2012 and 2015, 4 million teachers would have been needed to achieve UPE: 2.6 million to replace teachers who retired, changed occupations, died or left due to illness, and 1.4 million to make up shortfalls, address expanding enrolment and keep pupil/teacher ratios below 40:1. Some regions and

countries would have needed many more additional primary school teachers than others. The region facing the greatest challenge, by a large margin, was sub-Saharan Africa, accounting for 63% of the additional teachers needed. Among the 93 countries needing to find additional teachers, only 29 were on track to do so by 2015, leaving 64 with shortfalls.

Trained teachers: The most severe shortages

Improving the quantity of teachers will not be enough; quality needs improvement, too, with teachers well trained and motivated. Many countries have expanded teacher numbers rapidly by hiring people without proper qualifications. Among the 91 countries with 2012 data, the percentage of primary school teachers whose training met national standards ranged from 39% in Guinea-Bissau to more than 95% in 31 countries. Projections made for 46 countries showed that 12 of them would have less than 75% of their teaching workforce trained to national standards by 2015.

Equity gaps in teacher deployment need tackling

Total teacher numbers and average pupil/teacher ratios can conceal unequal distributions of teachers within countries, raising equity concerns. There is generally a marked and sustained gap between government and non-government providers. In several sub-Saharan African countries, including Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, the pupil/teacher ratio of public primary schools exceeds that of private schools by 30 pupils or more. Students in disadvantaged schools are often taught by teachers with less preparation than those in wealthier ones. Over the past decade, governments have tried to address challenges to teacher deployment in various ways, including centralized deployment; incentives such as housing, financial benefits and accelerated promotion; and local recruitment.

The use of contract teachers is increasing, but also causing concern

To respond to the need for more teachers arising from increased enrolment, governments in some developing countries recruited large numbers of contract teachers. By the late 2000s, some countries in sub-Saharan Africa had far more teachers on temporary contracts than civil service teachers. Contract teachers have poorer working conditions, job security and salaries than permanent teachers. They are more likely than civil servant teachers to have either no training or less than one month

of training. Can contract teachers be as effective as civil servant teachers? In Niger and Togo, contract teachers had an overall negative or mixed impact on learning achievement in grade 5 French and mathematics, though in Mali the impact was positive. Contract teachers tend to be most effective when parental or community involvement is strong.

The success of teaching and learning is linked to available resources

Three factors support teaching and learning of good quality: the supply, distribution and use of learning materials; a secure, accessible physical environment with appropriate facilities; and time spent in the classroom.

Widening the use of appropriate teaching and learning materials

The critical role of textbooks in improving student achievement has influenced education policies and is confirmed by a growing body of evidence. Centralized procurement and distribution systems are increasingly being replaced by public–private partnerships. The international community plays an important role in supporting textbook development and distribution in many developing countries. Updating textbooks is important so they are aligned with the latest developments in education and subject areas.

Fostering child-friendly school environments

Many children go to school in conditions that are not conducive to learning – lacking potable water, hand-washing facilities and safe, clean toilets. Children may also face discrimination, harassment and even violence. In the past 15 years, several countries have adopted a child-friendly school model, but evaluation of child-friendly schools in Guyana, Nicaragua, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa and Thailand highlighted challenges to effective implementation. Poor school infrastructure, lack of maintenance and lack of appropriate training for school heads and teachers are major problems.

Making every minute count in the classroom

Increasing the amount of instructional time has been shown to enhance learners' exposure to knowledge and result in significant learning gains. International agencies have recommended that primary schools operate between 850 and 1,000 hours per year, but the average time allocated

Unequal distribution of teachers within countries exacerbates inequity

for classroom instruction in primary and lower secondary education worldwide has slightly declined over the past decade to less than 1,000 hours. In many countries, especially in poor communities, schools days are lost to teacher absenteeism, late teacher postings, in-service teacher training, strikes and armed conflict.

Teaching and learning processes matter

Four aspects of teaching and learning practices contribute to an education of good quality: a curriculum that is relevant and inclusive; an effective and appropriate pedagogical approach; the use of children's mother tongues; and the use of appropriate technology.

Developing a relevant curriculum

Growing pressure to improve economic competitiveness has led to governments reforming curricula in increasingly similar ways, often with less focus on content knowledge and more

on competencies. There has also been a drive to make content more relevant to the contemporary needs of individuals, communities and societies. In some cases, however, teachers were not involved in curriculum planning, leaving them disempowered by a top-down process. Thus they lacked an understanding of the reforms' intentions, and the reforms lacked grounding in classroom reality.

Adopting effective teaching strategies

The past decade has seen a move away from teacher-dominated instructional practices to learner-centred pedagogy. But implementation can be difficult. Challenges include a lack of supportive environments, teacher training and preparation, textbooks and teaching materials, and too-large class sizes. Without sustained and coherent support, teachers largely teach the way they were taught. Yet by adapting new teaching strategies to local contexts, teachers can create a learner-centred environment, even in adverse circumstances.

Learner-centred environments can be created by adapting teacher strategies to local contexts

Credit: Poulomi Basu

Shifting towards a multilingual language policy

The language of instruction and languages taught in school are of considerable importance for the quality of teaching and learning. In sub-Saharan Africa and much of Southeast Asia, there has been a general trend towards more widespread use of local languages. In Latin America, most countries have intercultural bilingual education policies. Yet parents and educators often view local languages as offering insufficient opportunity for educational advancement and employment.

Deploying technology to support learning

ICT has the potential to enhance teaching and learning, but studies have been equivocal as to its impact. The effective integration of ICT into education systems is complex. Many countries cannot support widespread computer-assisted learning, simply because schools lack internet access or electricity. ICT effectiveness also depends on trained teachers. Mobile phones arguably have great potential for ICT-based learning, since they do not require the same level of infrastructure as computers, networks are more widely available, and many devices have internet and video capabilities.

The decentralization of education governance

Devolving decision-making authority to schools shifts more responsibility to principals, teachers and parents. Decentralization in education aims to improve quality by strengthening accountability between schools and local communities. In practice, implementation of decentralization strategies has been uneven. Outcomes depend on local factors such as finance allocation, human resources, strong school leadership, parental involvement and support from government officials.

Implications of private provision for education quality

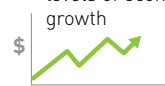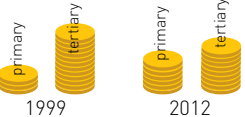Private schooling has proliferated since 2000. Students in private schools often perform better than those in public schools on learning assessments, probably because students from more advantaged backgrounds typically attend private schools. Wealthier and higher ability students and better-networked schools end up with the most benefits, while public schools increasingly serve disadvantaged populations. There is almost no evidence that private schools offer innovative ways to improve the quality of education. In fact, public schools may have more scope to be innovative with curriculum, while private schools must respond to parents' demands for good examination results.

There is almost no evidence to show that private schools improve the quality of education

REPORT CARD 2000–2015

FINANCE

Mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in education

Global score*

*of countries with data

In 1999, of 116 countries with data

18 spent **6%** or more of GNP on education

In 2012, of 142 countries with data

39 spent **6%** or more of GNP on education

Successes

Increased spending on education

by many governments, especially poorer ones (e.g. Brazil, Ethiopia, Nepal)

Strong civil society involvement has led to successes

e.g. more efficient textbook distribution in the Philippines led to savings of **US$1.84 million**

Prioritizing education spending

64% of countries have achieved this alongside robust levels of economic growth

Efforts made

Transparency and accountability

Civil society organizations have helped emphasize their importance

Increased spending

in **38** countries

by 1%

or more of national income (1999-2012)

Narrowing spending gap

per student between primary and tertiary levels has been achieved in 30 countries

primary · tertiary · primary · tertiary

1999   2012

Persistent challenges

Cost of learning materials

In 12 African countries, learning and teaching materials made up **56%** of household budget

Government and donor funding

Other than on primary education, a large share is spent on non-EFA areas of education

Humanitarian appeals

In 2013, of the total funds made available for all humanitarian appeals, just **2%** was for **education**

Opportunities

Delivery of resources

needs to be more equitable and efficient

More effective delivery of aid

Non-traditional financing

in funding under-resourced areas of education (e.g. private investment, corporate sponsorship, etc.)

Recommendations for post-2015

1. Neglected areas of education, such as pre-primary, second chance and adult literacy, must be prioritized by governments and donors.

2. Better diagnostic tools to understand how spending is disbursed are needed

More commitment needed

CHAPTER 8 # Finance

Mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in basic education.

The Dakar Framework for Action called for significant increases in financial commitment by national governments and donors to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals. It encouraged donors to support government efforts to increase aid for basic education and deliver it as effectively as possible. It also called for countries to be more accountable to citizens.

The pledge made at Dakar that no country should be thwarted in achieving the EFA goals due to lack of resources has been one of the biggest failures of the EFA period. Donors failed to live up to their promises. The efforts of many low income governments in reprioritizing education budgets towards primary education are commendable, but more is required to prioritize education spending in general. Financial support from governments and donors for the other EFA goals has been negligible and progress towards them weak.

Changes in national financial commitments to EFA since Dakar

The Dakar Framework saw national governments as largely financing EFA. That expectation has been borne out even in regions dependent on aid: domestic public spending dwarfs external assistance.

In 2006, the EFA High-Level Group proposed that governments should spend between 4% and 6% of GNP on education and that, within government budgets, between 15% and 20% should be earmarked for education.

Progress in prioritizing education has been mixed. Globally, the amount devoted to education as a share of GNP was 5% in 2012. For low income countries, the average was 4%. Of 142 countries with data,

96 spent 4% or more of GNP on education (including 14 low income and 18 lower middle income countries), and of these 96 countries, 39 spent 6% or more on education.

Education expenditure did not always keep pace with economic and enrolment growth

Economic growth over 1999–2012 was accompanied by real growth in public expenditure on education. Economic growth averaging 4.0% in sub-Saharan Africa was outpaced by growth in public expenditure on education averaging 6.1% a year. By contrast, in South and West Asia annual economic growth between 1999 and 2012 averaged 4.5%, while public expenditure on education grew slightly more at 4.9% per year.

Education is not a priority in many national budgets

As a share of government spending, expenditure on education has changed little since 1999. In 2012 the world average was 13.7%, falling short of the 15% to 20% target. Sub-Saharan Africa is where countries have allocated the largest share of government expenditure to education (18.4%), followed by East Asia and the Pacific (17.5%). South and West Asia allocated 12.6%.

A low share of education budgets is allocated to pre-primary education

As a share of total public government expenditure on education, global spending on pre-primary education made up only 4.9% in 2012. North America and Western Europe allocated 8.8% of education budgets on pre-primary education while sub-Saharan Africa spent 0.3%.

In 2012, the amount devoted to education as a share of GNP was 5%

There is wide variation in funding trends for primary education

The EFA and MDG targets on education emphasized the need to expand free primary education of good quality, demanding greater investment in and priority on primary education budgets. Despite this, of the 56 countries with data on the share of domestic government spending on primary education in both 1999 and 2012, just 16 increased the share.

In many poor countries, teacher salaries make up the largest share of primary school budgets

Teacher salaries averaged 82% of total recurrent spending on primary education in low and lower middle income countries. In high income countries, the average was 64%. For many countries, this leaves few resources for other areas, such as meeting quality and efficiency goals. A 2003 study for the World Bank and the 2004 indicative framework for the EFA Fast Track Initiative recommended earmarking one-third of primary recurrent spending for non-salary expenditure. In 2012, in the 36 low and middle income countries with data, the share of the primary education recurrent budget spent on textbooks and other teaching and learning materials was 2%; 16 countries spent less than 1%. Only Kuwait and Malawi spent close to 5% or more.

A majority of countries increased spending on secondary education

The high numbers of children transitioning to secondary education warrant extra resources. Among the 61 countries with data for public spending on secondary education as a share of national income in both 1999 and 2012, 38 increased expenditure on secondary education. Of these, 15 were low and lower middle income countries.

Corruption continues to be a drain

Government corruption has been shown to negatively impact the equality of public services, including education. The Dakar Framework noted, 'Corruption is a major drain on the effective use of resources for education and should be drastically curbed.' Civil society organizations (CSOs) have played an important role in countering corrupt practices. Despite such action over the past decade, corruption in education continues, and the costs have largely been borne by the poor, who often

have less choice in access to services outside the public sector.

Equity and inclusiveness in education expenditure

It is not enough to simply allocate more domestic resources to education; the resources must be equitably spent. This entails targeting public spending towards the groups furthest from meeting the EFA goals, such as the poorest, those with disabilities and those living in remote locations and from ethnic minorities. However, many countries continue to disburse funding on the basis of equal amounts per child, thereby failing to take into account differences among schools and regions, and the needs of disadvantaged groups.

For most low income countries, the rationale is strong for spending more on primary education, the level most likely to be accessed by children from poorer households. But on average in 2012, low income countries spent 11 times more per tertiary student than per primary student, while high income countries spent 1.3 times more. In the countries that might be most expected to support the poor through public spending, the benefits of education, particularly at the levels attained primarily by the rich, continue to be received by the rich.

Households bolster the national education effort, especially when governments neglect spending

The issue in many countries is not insufficient national education spending but the large cost borne by households. In general, the poorer a country, the larger the burden on households. Among 50 low, middle and high income countries in all regions with data at one point during 2005–2012, household education spending accounted for 31% of the total. Among the 25 countries with the lowest amount of public finance of education, households contributed 42% of total expenditure, while among the 25 countries with the highest amount, households contributed 27%.

International development assistance

After 2000, there was strong expectation that the donor community would increase its financial support to education, in specific alignment with the objectives set out in the six EFA goals. While aid to basic education grew by 6% a year, on average, the share of total aid disbursed for education did not change, never exceeding 10%. By contrast, the share of total aid for health increased from 9% to 14%.

In 2012, low income countries spent 11 times more per tertiary student than primary student

Overall aid to education did increase steadily until 2010, but fell by 10% (i.e. by a total of US$1.3 billion) between 2010 and 2012.

Aid disbursements by education level

Aid to basic education, which involves five of the six EFA goals, peaked over 2009 and 2010. Then between 2010 and 2012, aid disbursements to this level fell by 15%, or US$921 million. Aid to post-secondary education, in contrast, fell by 6%. In absolute volume, aid to post-secondary education was higher than that to basic in 2012.

External funding for education has focused heavily on primary education, to the neglect of other EFA goals. As a share of total disbursements to basic education, aid to basic life skills for youth and adults and to early childhood education has fallen. Donor strategies focus little on adult education, distance learning, non-formal education or education for children with special needs.

Aid disbursements by region

Aid to basic education in sub-Saharan Africa, home to over half of the world's out-of-school children, grew steadily from 2002 then fell from 2009 onwards. On average in 2002–2004, 47% of the total aid disbursed to basic education was allocated to sub-Saharan Africa, but by 2010–2012 the level had fallen to 31%. South and West Asia's share of basic education stayed fairly constant, rising from 21% to 22%.

Aid disbursements to reach the poor

While 93% of the world's poor lived in low income countries at the beginning of the 1990s, 72% lived in middle income countries in 2012. Currently, 59% of out-of-school children are concentrated in middle income countries. Nevertheless, the countries most in need of aid for basic services – low income countries and fragile states – should still be prioritized. Yet the share of basic education aid going to low income countries declined from 40% to 34% over the decade.

The changing landscape of aid since 2000

Aid was once the preserve of OECD donors, but since 2000, emerging economies have been formalizing alternative global mechanisms for development cooperation, such as the IBSA Facility

Aid to basic education stagnated in 2010

Figure 10: Aid to EFA goals outside of primary education has failed to increase
Total aid to education commitments, three-year rolling averages, 1995–2012
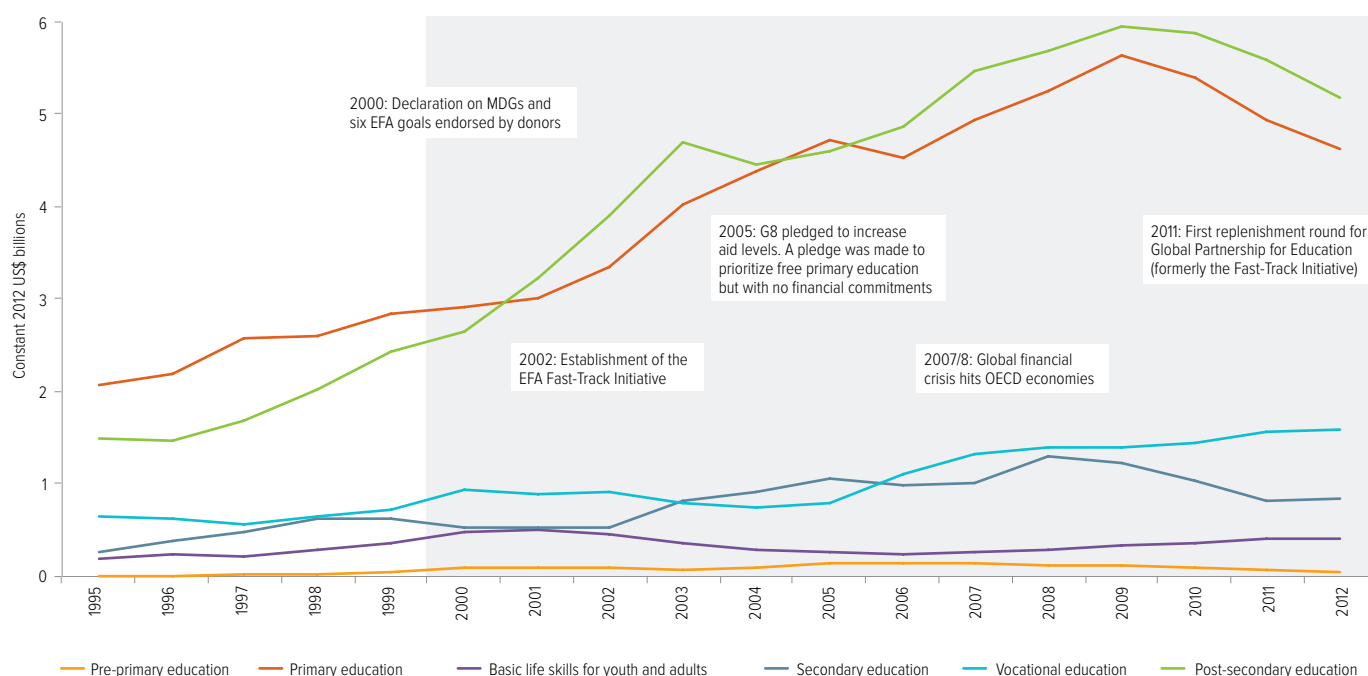
Notes: Data from before 2002 are for aid commitments, since data on disbursements were not available. Because of the volatility of aid commitments, the graph presents them as three-year rolling averages.
Source: OECD-DAC (2014).

for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation, created in 2004 by India, Brazil, and South Africa, and the New Development Bank, launched by Brazil, China, India, Russia and South Africa.

Donors have not met their commitment to deliver education aid more effectively

Since Dakar, there has been stronger political commitment to improve not just the quantity but also the governance of international aid. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 marked an

unprecedented commitment to better aid delivery. But of 13 aid effectiveness targets, only that of aligning and coordinating technical assistance had been achieved by 2010.

The lack of global aid architecture hinders effective donor coordination

Global coordination would allow education donors to allocate aid where the need is greatest. But current global and country-level coordination mechanisms do not seem to have

Credit: Ami Vitale\Panos Pictures

helped significantly. The fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2011, stressed using multilateral institutions and global funds to increase coordination, yet most bilateral aid for basic education continues to be earmarked by location and sector.

The Global Partnership has become better able to target countries in need

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – formerly the EFA Fast Track Initiative, established in 2002 – could play a critical role in the global coordination of education aid, but lacks the financial support to do it effectively. Instead, its strength and potential lie in its ability to target countries in need. On average, over 2010–2012, 81% of total GPE disbursements were to low income countries, compared with 42% from members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee.

Aid strategies need to expand beyond achieving access

The most tangible outcome of education aid has been expanded enrolment, especially in basic education. The impact of foreign aid on gender parity has been found to be minimal. Yet challenging factors that keep girls from entering school in the first place – such as poverty-related issues, distance to school, the opportunity cost of girls' schooling, and cultural beliefs – could be addressed by more effective donor aid.

The role of humanitarian aid to the education sector

With protracted emergencies occurring more frequently, the education sector in the past decade has tried to convince the humanitarian aid sector that investment in education is life-saving. However, aid to education continues to be neglected within an already under-resourced humanitarian aid system. In 2012, governments, UN agencies, the private sector and CSOs called for doubling the percentage of total humanitarian aid earmarked for education to at least 4% of all funds from humanitarian appeals. Despite this, in 2013 the sector still received only 2%.

NGOs appear to disburse resources better for neglected EFA goals

NGO funding of formal education has grown to between US$2.6 billion and US$5.2 billion. NGOs have become important providers of basic services in some countries, and their spending on education indicates that their objectives are aligned with EFA goals traditionally neglected by governments and donors, such as non-formal education and ECCE.

Non-traditional financing could become more important

Non-traditional financing has grown exponentially, to more than US$50 billion. In 2010, the Leading Group on Innovative Financing for Development recommended nine mechanisms to broaden education funding: a financial transaction tax, local currency education bonds, venture funds, diaspora bonds, voluntary contributions from migrants, debt swaps, sport levies, public–private partnerships and micro-donations. Similar mechanisms have generated over US$7 billion in health funding since 2002, but few have been applied to financing the education sector.

In 2013, education received only 2% of humanitarian aid

Recommendations

1 Increase emphasis on early childhood care and education

All countries should make at least one year of pre-primary education compulsory as part of the basic education cycle, and governments should make the necessary resources available.

Where government budgets cannot expand services for all, they should target the most disadvantaged populations.

Non-formal and community-based early learning programmes should be supported where formal programmes are less feasible.

Care and teaching should be of good quality and staff should be trained to stimulate young children cognitively and offer socio-emotional support.

Countries should strive to attract more and better caregivers and teachers by lifting their status and pay to the level of primary school teachers.

2 Do everything it takes to enable all children to complete primary school

Governments need to develop realistic cash transfer programmes, with simplified conditionality and targeting schemes, to help poor households meet costs of schooling such as informal fees, uniforms and transportation.

To improve school participation and reduce dropout, governments should implement intersectoral programmes in areas such as health and nutrition, as well as investments in roads, water and electricity infrastructure.

Governments should prepare contingency plans to meet the education needs of children in emergency situations and zones of armed conflict.

3 Improve the acquisition of work and life skills among youth and adults

Governments need to ensure that all young people, especially the least advantaged, acquire foundation skills through universal access to free and compulsory lower secondary education.

In recognition of the fact that combining schooling with work harms children's chances of acquiring foundation skills, all countries should ratify, promulgate and implement Convention 138 of the International Labour Organization, which sets a minimum age for admission to employment.

Policy-makers should identify and prioritize skills to be acquired by the end of each stage of formal schooling.

Governments should gauge which kind of education or training – including on-the-job and apprenticeship programmes – is most effective and equitable for skill acquisition.

To meet the needs of adults with low education qualifications, governments should expand opportunities for continuing, further and adult education.

4 Enable all adults to realize their right to literacy and numeracy

Literacy policies and strategies should link existing development policies to the needs of communities, health, community development, agricultural innovation and active citizenship.

The use of mobile phones and other ICT for literacy acquisition and retention should be supported through partnerships between government and the private sector.

Countries should strengthen literacy programmes by specifying the levels of skills to be attained by adults and by measuring and monitoring participation and outcomes.

5   Shift focus from parity to achieving gender equality

To make learning environments more equitable, it is necessary to target resources so as to ensure that instructional materials and water and sanitation facilities are adequate.

Governments need to ensure that pre-service and in-service training programmes cover gender strategies for teachers to use in classroom pedagogy and management. These programmes must be carefully designed with reference to inequality encountered in local contexts.

Curricula should be gender sensitive and include reproductive health and sexuality teaching.

6   Invest in the quality of education

Governments need to make sound investments in providing good quality education. Policies that enhance teacher professionalism and motivation should be given priority. The risks involved in recruiting contract teachers should be carefully considered.

Teachers should be supported with relevant and inclusive curriculum content that improves learning, allowing low achievers to catch up. Sufficient appropriate learning resources, especially textbooks, need to be provided to all.

Teaching styles and methods need to respond much better to diverse cultural and classroom contexts. In multilingual societies, language policies in education are particularly important for effective learning.

Governance systems should combine strong institutional arrangements with a commitment to equity.

Governments should adopt appropriate teacher deployment policies in underserved areas.

Sufficient school time of good quality, in which teachers and pupils are actively engaged in learning activities, is vital.

Countries should strengthen their capacity to conduct learning assessments that reflect national priorities and support efforts to ensure good quality education, effective teaching and equitable learning outcomes in diverse subject areas.

7   Step up education financing and target resources to the most marginalized

Governments should mobilize more domestic resources to ensure a sustainable source of funding for the post-2015 education framework. Low and lower middle income countries will need to spend 3.4% of GDP on pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education or 5.4% of GDP across all education levels.

Public education resources need to be re-allocated to pre-primary education, non-formal schooling and adult literacy for the benefit of marginalized groups. Donors should greatly increase their disbursements to education and ensure that they are better targeted. Global development and humanitarian aid coordination must not leave behind the countries most in need of support.

In light of the estimated $22 billion financing gap, donors will need to increase the volume of aid for pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education in low and lower middle income countries by at least four times.

Investment in diagnostic tools that track all education resources will help governments and donors better assess how various income groups benefit from official spending, and ensure that the poorest children do not get left behind.

8   Sharpen the focus on equity

To address equity first and foremost, governments need to change the way they use information to plan their education interventions.

Governments should prioritize the use of disaggregated data from school, household and labour market surveys to improve their education plans and direct resources to those most in need.

9   Address serious gaps in data to further improve monitoring

It is vital to improve the knowledge base of national education systems to close critical data gaps in issues ranging from quality to literacy

skills to finance. This requires work on common standards, capacity building and data coordination.

Closer collaboration is required to monitor progress in learning over time and across countries, based on metrics to which national assessments of learning in a range of subjects can be linked.

Governments should develop their monitoring frameworks to collect disaggregated data on the educational status of various population groups.

The availability, reliability and comparability of literacy data should be expanded to improve planning and policy-making.

With the mandate of the GMR coming to an end, there is a continuing need for an independent, education-specific global monitoring report.

10 Resolve coordination challenges to maintain high-level political support for education

Strategies for implementing education policy need to be technically strong and politically attractive. They must have clear objectives and dedicated strategic and technical capacity. They should be financed collectively and evaluated regularly, with overt political support and backing from influential bodies.

There needs to be a clear accountability mechanism to hold governments and donors to account if they miss targets or fail to live up to commitments.

Education holds the key to achieving most of the goals of the post-2015 development agenda, from sustainable consumption to health and peaceful societies. Education programmes and approaches should be redesigned to achieve these objectives.

Credit: Tuan Nguyen

EDUCATION FOR ALL 2000-2015:
ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

The twelfth edition of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* – marking the 2015 deadline for the six goals set at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000 – provides a considered and comprehensive accounting of global progress. As the international community prepares for a new development and education agenda, this report takes stock of past achievements and reflects on future challenges.

There are many signs of notable advances. The pace towards universal primary education has quickened, gender disparity has been reduced in many countries and governments are increasing their focus on making sure children receive an education of good quality. However, despite these efforts, the world failed to meet its overall commitment to Education for All. Millions of children and adolescents are still out of school, and it is the poorest and most disadvantaged who bear the brunt of this failure to reach the EFA targets.

Education for All 2000–2015: Achievements and Challenges provides a comprehensive assessment of country progress towards the EFA goals and highlights the work that remains. It highlights effective policies and makes recommendations for monitoring and evaluating education targets after 2015. It also provides policy-makers with an authoritative source with which to advocate that education be a cornerstone of the post-2015 global development architecture.

The *EFA Global Monitoring Report* is an editorially independent, evidence-based publication that serves as an indispensable tool for governments, researchers, education and development specialists, media and students. It has assessed education progress in some 200 countries and territories on an almost annual basis since 2002. This work will continue, throughout the implementation of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, as the *Global Education Monitoring Report*.

One of the major reforms since 2000 is the policy where every child must go to school. This has assisted every person to taste the fruits of education. It may have robbed the farmers of their labour force, but it has given them the seeds for a better life in the future.

– Sonam, teacher in Bhutan

Parents that have faced the hardships of not being able to write letters, use mobile phones or ATMs do all they can to provide their children with an education so they don't ever become excluded due to illiteracy.

– Omovigho Rani Ebireri,
University of Maiduguri, Nigeria

I left because of the things that were happening, with the rebels. They destroyed our school, we couldn't go any more. They didn't like the way some of the girls were dressed. They yelled at us, saying that what we were wearing wasn't good. They broke our school desks, destroyed our school books and our things. School is supposed to be a place where we learn things.

– Sita, student in Nigeria

Every child under 5 has to attend pre-school. Early childhood education is a major priority.

– Martha Isabel Castano,
Primary school teacher, Colombia