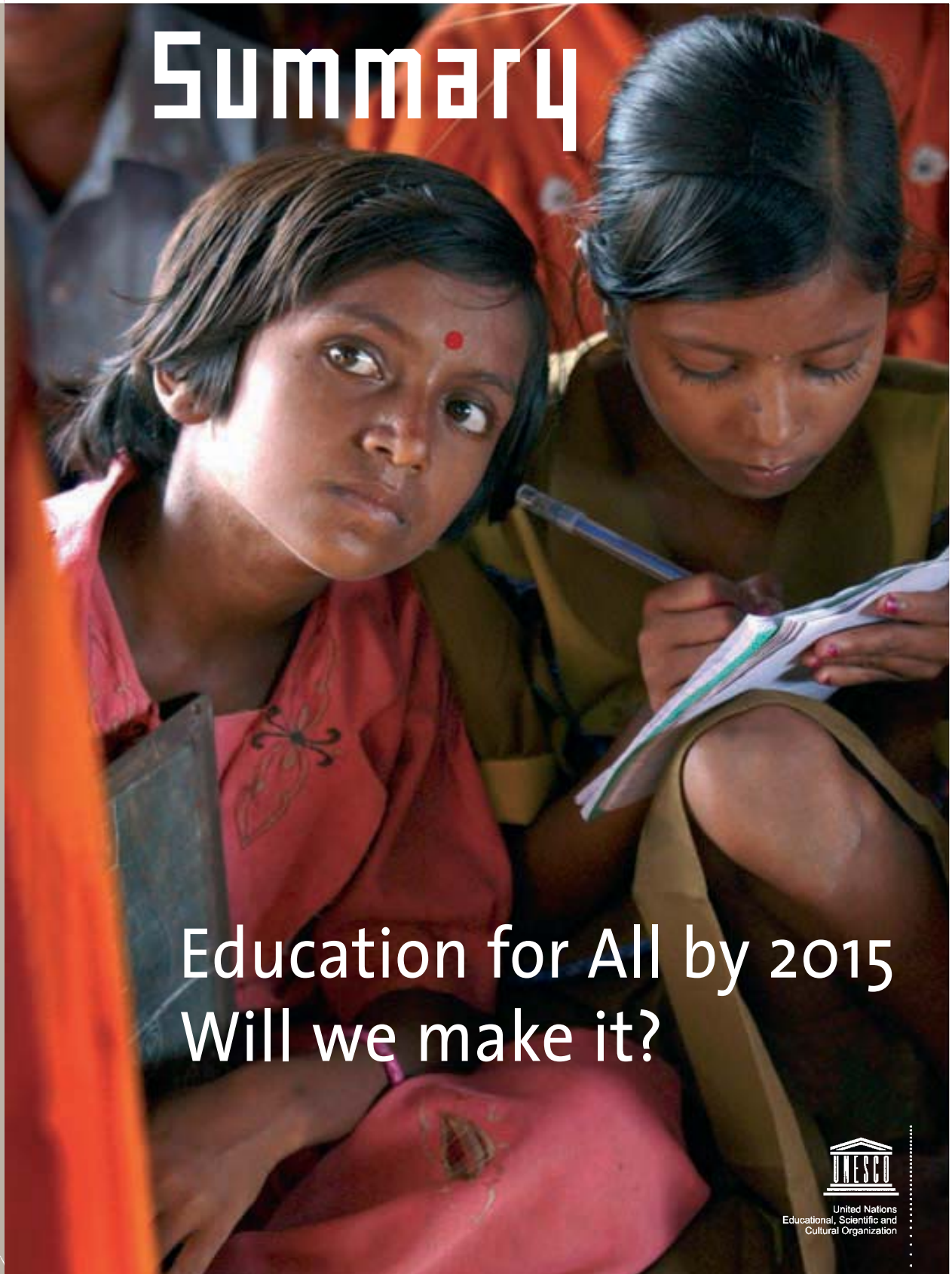
EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008

Summary

Education for All



Education for All by 2015 Will we make it?

UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Education for All by 2015
Will we make it?

Summary

UNESCO Publishing

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Foreword

Seven years ago 164 governments, together with partner organizations from around the world, made a collective commitment to dramatically expand educational opportunities for children, youth and adults by 2015.

Participants at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, endorsed a comprehensive vision of education, anchored in human rights, affirming the importance of learning at all ages and emphasizing the need for special measures to reach the poorest, most vulnerable and most disadvantaged groups in society.

This sixth edition of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* assesses the extent to which these commitments are being met. There is clearly a 'Dakar effect', evidence that rallying around common goals can mobilize countries to empower individual lives. Partly because of the abolition of tuition fees, more children are enrolled in school than in 2000, with the sharpest increases in the regions farthest from the goals set in Dakar. Many governments have introduced targeted strategies to reach the poorest households and to encourage girls' schooling. A growing number are conducting national assessments to measure pupils' learning achievement, valuable evidence for improving education quality. Though a recent downturn is cause for concern, aid to basic education has increased rapidly since 2000.

As education systems expand, however, they face more complex and more specific challenges. They must address the increasing number and diversity of student populations by ensuring that all children and youth, regardless of their backgrounds, gain access to a quality education. They must act upon the challenges of our era: rapid urbanization, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the demands of knowledge societies. Any failure to deliver on these obligations breaches our commitment to universal basic education.

We are steering the right course but the years ahead will require unwavering political will to consistently ensure that education from early childhood onwards is a national priority, to engage governments, civil society and the private sector in creative partnerships, and to generate dynamic coordination and support from the international community. Time is of the essence: for the 72 million children out of school, for the one in five adults without basic literacy skills and for the many pupils who leave school without acquiring essential skills and knowledge.

The *EFA Global Monitoring Report* offers an authoritative reference for comparing the experiences of countries, understanding the positive impact of specific policies and recognizing that progress happens when there is political vision and commitment. I urge every development and education stakeholder to use this report as a guide and impetus for bold and sustained action. We cannot afford to fail.

Koïchiro Matsuura

Highlights of the EFA Report 2008

Major developments since 2000

- Primary school enrolment rose from 647 million to 688 million worldwide between 1999 and 2005, increasing by 36% in sub-Saharan Africa and 22% in South and West Asia. As a result, the number of out-of-school children declined, with the pace of this decrease particularly marked after 2002.
- Rapid progress towards universal enrolment and gender parity at the primary level, for example in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen and Zambia, shows that national political will combined with international support can make a difference.
- The cost of schooling remains a major obstacle to education for millions of children and youth despite the abolition of primary school tuition fees in fourteen countries since 2000.
- The gender parity goal has been missed: only about one-third of countries reported parity in both primary and secondary education in 2005, with only three reaching it since 1999 (though 17 achieved it in primary and 19 in secondary during the period).
- An increasing number of international, regional and national assessments report low and unequal learning outcomes, reflecting the extent to which poor education quality is undermining the achievement of EFA.
- National governments and donors have favoured formal primary schooling over early childhood, literacy and skills programmes for youth and adults despite the direct impact of these on achieving universal primary education and gender parity.
- Illiteracy is receiving minimal political attention and remains a global disgrace, keeping one in five adults (one in four women) on the margins of society.
- Aid to basic education in low-income countries more than doubled between 2000 and 2004 but decreased significantly in 2005.

Where the world stands on the six EFA goals

- Out of 129 countries, 51 have achieved or are close to achieving the four most quantifiable EFA goals (universal primary education, adult literacy, gender and quality of education), 53 are in an intermediate position and 25 are far from achieving EFA as a whole, the EFA Development Index shows. The lowest category would be larger still if data were available for a number of fragile states, including conflict or post-conflict countries with very low levels of education development.

1. Early childhood care and education

- Although child mortality rates have dropped, a majority of countries are not taking the necessary policy measures to provide care and education to children below age 3.
- The provision of pre-primary education for children aged 3 and above has improved but remains scarce across sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States.
- Early childhood care and education programmes generally do not reach the poorest and most disadvantaged children, who stand to gain the most from them in terms of health, nutrition and cognitive development.

2. Universal primary education

- Twenty-three countries that lacked legal provisions for compulsory education in 2000 have since established them. Compulsory education laws now exist in 95% of 203 countries and territories.
- The global net enrolment ratio rose from 83% to 87% between 1999 and 2005, faster than from 1991 to 1999. Participation levels increased most rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa (23%), and South and West Asia (11%).
- The number of out-of-school children dropped by 24 million to 72 million between 1999 and 2005. Thirty-five fragile states account for 37% of all out-of-school children.
- Despite overall enrolment increases, subnational disparities in school participation persist between regions, provinces or states and between urban and rural areas. Children from poor, indigenous and disabled populations are also at a systematic disadvantage, as are those living in slums.
- On current trends, fifty-eight out of eighty-six countries that have not yet reached universal primary enrolment will not achieve it by 2015.

3. Learning needs of young people and adults

- Non-formal education programmes remain neglected in terms of public funding, although some governments have recently developed national frameworks for sustained provision.
- Household surveys show that non-formal education is nonetheless the main route to learning for many disadvantaged youth and adults in some of the world's poorest countries.

4. Adult literacy

- Worldwide, 774 million adults lack basic literacy skills, as measured by conventional methods. Some 64% of them are women, a share virtually unchanged since the early 1990s. Direct measurement of literacy skills would significantly increase the global estimate of the number of adults denied the right to literacy.
- Most countries have made little progress during the past decade in reducing the absolute number of adult illiterates, with the notable exception of China.
- The adult literacy rate in developing countries increased from 68% to 77% between the periods 1985–1994 and 1995–2004.
- Of the 101 countries still far from achieving 'universal literacy', 72 will not succeed in halving their adult illiteracy rates by 2015.

5. Gender

- Only 59 countries with data had achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005; 75% of countries with data are at parity or close to it at primary level (17 additional countries since 1999), while 47% have achieved or are close to reaching the goal in secondary education (19 additional countries since 1999).
- Boys' underparticipation and underachievement are of growing concern in secondary education.
- Only 18 out of 113 countries that missed the gender parity goal at primary and secondary level in 2005 stand a chance of achieving it by 2015.
- Gender equality remains elusive: sexual violence, insecure school environments and inadequate sanitation disproportionately affect girls' self-esteem, participation and retention. Textbooks, curricula and teacher attitudes continue to reinforce stereotypes on gender roles in society.

6. Quality

- Survival rates to the last grade of primary school improved between 1999 and 2004 in most countries with data but remained low in sub-Saharan Africa (median rate of 63%) and in South and West Asia (79%).
- Relatively low and unequal learning achievement in language and mathematics characterize many countries worldwide.
- Crowded and dilapidated classrooms, too few textbooks and insufficient instructional time are widespread in many developing countries and fragile states.
- Pupil/teacher ratios have increased in sub-Saharan Africa and in South and West Asia since 1999. Eighteen million new primary school teachers are needed worldwide to reach universal primary education by 2015.
- Many governments are hiring contract teachers to save costs and rapidly increase the teaching force, but where such teachers lack adequate training and service conditions, this practice could have a negative impact on quality in the future.

Financing EFA

National spending

- Outside North America and Western Europe, education expenditure as a share of GNP increased in fifty countries and decreased in thirty-four between 1999 and 2005.
- Public expenditure on education increased by over 5% annually in sub-Saharan Africa and in South and West Asia, the two regions farthest from achieving the EFA goals.
- Countries with primary net enrolment ratios below 80% in 2005 but making significant progress towards universal primary education increased their education expenditure as a share of GNP from 3.4% in 1999 to 4.2% in 2005, on average. In countries where progress has been slower, the average share decreased.

Aid to basic education

- Commitments to basic education increased from US$2.7 billion in 2000 to US$5.1 billion in 2004 before declining to US$3.7 billion in 2005.
- The increase particularly benefited low-income countries, which received on average US$3.1 billion a year in 2004 and 2005. On current trends, and if total aid pledges are met, bilateral aid to basic education will likely reach US$5 billion a year in 2010. Even when multilateral aid is included, the total will still be well below the US$11 billion a year required to reach the EFA goals.
- Aid to education is still not targeted to the neediest countries, and a minute share goes to early childhood and literacy programmes.

Top policy priorities

- Increased participation, equity and quality can be promoted together through a mix of adequately financed universal and targeted measures that encompass all six EFA goals.
- Education policies must focus on inclusion, literacy, quality, capacity development and finance.
- In addition the international architecture for EFA must be made more effective.

National governments

Measures to promote inclusion

- assure provision of early childhood care and education programmes with health, nutrition and education components, especially for the most disadvantaged children;
- abolish school fees and provide enough places and teachers in schools to cope with new entrants;
- provide financial support such as scholarships, cash or in-kind transfers to children from poorer households;
- take measures to alleviate the need for child labour and allow for flexible schooling and non-formal equivalency courses for working children and youth;
- promote inclusive policies that open schools to disabled children, indigenous children and those from other disadvantaged groups;
- address gender disparities by increasing the numbers of female teachers in countries with low enrolment of girls and by building schools close to home and with proper sanitation;
- place top priority on boldly expanding adequately staffed and funded literacy and skills-training programmes for youth and adults, harnessing all forms of media;
- establish media and publishing policies that promote reading.

Measures to promote quality

- use incentives to attract new recruits to the teaching profession, provide adequate teacher training and professional development;
- assure sufficient instructional time and a textbook development and distribution policy;
- create safe and healthy learning environments;
- promote gender equality through teacher training, the curriculum and textbook contents;
- recognize the importance of mother tongue instruction in early childhood and the first years of primary school;
- develop constructive partnerships between government and the non-state sector to increase access to quality education.

Measures to improve capacity and financing

- maintain or, where necessary, increase public spending, noting that unit costs are likely to rise for enrolling the most disadvantaged and marginalized;
- increase financing for early childhood, literacy and quality, especially teacher training and professional development;
- strengthen management capacity at all levels of government;
- coordinate early childhood and adult literacy programmes with all involved ministries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- formally engage civil society in EFA policy formulation, implementation and monitoring;
- invest in capacity to collect, analyse and use data on education systems.

Civil society

- further strengthen civil society organizations that enable citizens to advocate for EFA and to hold government and the international community to account;
- engage with national governments in the development, implementation and monitoring of education policies;
- encourage training in education policy analysis and finance.

Donors and international agencies

- increase aid to basic education sharply to meet the annual external financing need of US$11 billion by 2010;
- raise to at least 10% the share of basic education in bilateral sectoral aid;
- improve governments' capacity to use larger amounts of aid effectively;
- ensure that aid is:

  more targeted, to reach the countries most in need, especially fragile states and countries in sub-Saharan Africa;

  more comprehensive, to include early childhood, youth and adult literacy and skills programmes, and capacity development in policy, planning, implementation and monitoring;

  more focused on EFA rather than post-secondary education;

  more predictable, to support long-term national education plans;

  more aligned with government programmes and priorities.

Chapter 1. The enduring relevance of education for all

This sixth edition of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* marks the midway point in an ambitious international movement to expand and improve learning opportunities for every child, youth and adult by 2015.

In April 2000 in Dakar, 164 governments together with partner institutions adopted a Framework for Action focusing on achieving six Education for All goals relating to the expansion of early childhood care and education, achievement of universal primary education (UPE), development of learning opportunities for youth and adults, spread of literacy, gender parity and gender equality in education, and improvements in education quality.

The EFA agenda rests on a belief that public policy can radically transform education systems, given adequate political will and resources

Have national governments followed up on their commitment to EFA? Which regions and countries have made the most progress? Where do the greatest challenges lie? Which policy initiatives are promoting access to education and improving its quality, especially for the most disadvantaged groups and areas? Has the international community provided adequate support?

The EFA agenda rests on a belief that public policy can radically transform education systems, given adequate political will and resources. A review of key global trends since 2000 demonstrates the enduring relevance of the Dakar agenda for development, though there is a risk of its primacy on the global agenda being eclipsed by such issues as climate change and public health.

Global trends affecting education

Population growth and urbanization. Four out of five new births occur in developing countries. People under age 15 account for 42% of the total population in the least developed countries. Many of the countries furthest from universal primary and secondary education will face increasing enrolment pressure in coming decades.

By 2008 more than half the world's population (about 3.3 billion people) will live in cities, nearly one-third of them in urban slums. Nearly half of new urban dwellers are rural-to-urban migrants. Establishing urban schools to accommodate the children of these migrants and of slum dwellers is fast becoming a pressing policy issue.

Health. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria are responsible for about 6 million deaths worldwide each year, with a particularly heavy toll in sub-Saharan Africa. They are having a devastating impact on school systems. Women increasingly carry the burden of HIV/AIDS. The number of AIDS orphans under age 18 is expected to exceed 25 million by 2010. Teacher absenteeism and deaths due to HIV/AIDS, meanwhile, directly affect the provision and quality of education. Health and nutrition interventions in school affect attendance and learning, and are essential for moving towards UPE.

Economic growth and rising inequality. Between 2000 and 2005, economic growth increased in sub-Saharan Africa (GDP per capita grew at 1.9% a year, on average) and South Asia (at 4.3%), and remained high in East Asia and the Pacific (at 7.2%). Between 1990 and 2004, the number of people living in extreme poverty (i.e. on less than US$1 a day) fell by 260 million, with more than half this drop occurring since 1999. However, reductions in absolute poverty have often been accompanied by rising inequality. Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America are the developing regions with the highest levels of economic inequality, but the gap has also widened since 1990 across Asia and the transition countries of south-eastern Europe. Unless education policies targeting poor and disadvantaged children are introduced, existing socio-economic inequality may be worsened through poor quality of education and differentiated school systems. Levels of educational attainment continue to differ sharply by student social background.

Rise of the knowledge economy. By 2006 services had become the largest employment sector in all regions except sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia. A more knowledge-intensive world economy is gaining ground, necessitating a more skilled labour force. Quality primary education and the development of secondary education systems that promote problem-solving and critical-thinking skills are foundations for development.

Conflict and fragile states. The number of armed conflicts in the world has been declining and surveys indicate that in a growing number of countries the level of freedom has risen. Civil society groups, meanwhile, have increased in strength internationally. Fragile states – characterized by weak institutions, economic hardship and in some cases civil and ethnic conflict – are emerging as a key priority on the EFA agenda. It is

estimated that more than half a billion people live in the thirty-five states identified as fragile by the OECD Development Assistance Committee.

Efforts to increase aid. Official development assistance (ODA) from bilateral donors grew by 9% annually between 1999 and 2005. However, preliminary data indicate that total ODA fell by 5.1% in 2006. While the share of low-income countries in total ODA increased between 1999 and 2004, middle-income countries benefited most between 2004 and 2005, mainly due to large contributions to Iraq. During the 2005 Gleneagles Summit, G8 countries announced a US$50 billion increase in ODA for all developing countries by 2010, including US$25 billion to Africa. If debt relief and humanitarian aid are excluded, aid to Africa has barely increased since 2004, and there is a clear need for donors to scale up support for the continent.

Trends in research on education and development

Recent research confirms the developmental benefits of expanding education systems but points to a need for complementary policies to offset inequality and improve learning.

- Cognitive neuroscience shows that early childhood is a critical period for the acquisition of cognitive skills. Such findings underline the need for adequate stimulation of young children, notably through early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes.
- Schools are a favourable context for nutrition and health interventions.

More than half a billion people live in the thirty-five states identified as fragile

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Discovering the world: a schoolgirl examines a globe in Djibouti.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent treaties establish the right to education and have the force of law for governments that ratify them

- Development economists have shown that parents' education and literacy translates into healthier lives, reduced fertility and children who are less disease prone.
- Educational expansion does not necessarily mean reduced inequality. Children from ethnic and cultural minorities are typically the last to benefit from school creation and expansion.
- Recent research based on test scores in mathematics and language indicates that quality in education may have a stronger impact on economic growth than total years of schooling.

Supporting the right to education

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent treaties establish the right to education and have the force of law for governments that ratify them. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely ratified human rights treaty, reaffirms the right to free and compulsory primary schooling and emphasizes child well-being and development. Ratification of international treaties implies that governments translate the provisions into national legislation and enforce this legislation. However, of a total of 173 countries recently reporting, 38 – one in five – have no provisions in their constitutions mandating free and compulsory primary schooling, and the proportion rises to one in three if North America and Western Europe are excluded. Since 2000, twenty-three countries have established legal provisions for compulsory education. Some countries have introduced national legislation to secure resources: the constitutions of Brazil and Indonesia set aside a specific percentage of revenue for basic education.

International EFA initiatives have focused on specific targets (literacy, girls, HIV/AIDS) and on improving the quality of aid. The convergence of such initiatives will be vital for the full range of basic education goals to be achieved.

This summary report analyses progress towards the six EFA goals (Chapter 2), reviews national education policy initiatives taken since Dakar, in particular for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (Chapter 3), examines national and international financing of education (Chapter 4) and concludes with prospects for achieving EFA and a policy agenda (Chapter 5).

Several generations at a literacy class in China.

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Pre-primary education: uneven progress, minimal access for disadvantaged children

Primary education: faster progress since 2000 in regions with low enrolments

Poor education quality: a global issue, especially where systems have expanded rapidly

Out-of-school children: rapid decline since 2002

Chapter 2. The six goals: how far have we come?

Global literacy: small gains, with notable progress in China

Geographic disparities: often persisting despite increasing primary enrolment

Gender disparities: no significant decline, still acute in secondary and higher education

Teacher recruitment: not keeping pace with primary enrolment increases

Midway between 2000 and the 2015 target date for achieving EFA, this chapter assesses progress towards the six EFA goals, using data for the school year ending in 2005. The world has made significant but uneven progress towards EFA since Dakar. Education disparities within countries are widespread and poor education quality is emerging as a major concern.

Goal 1. Early childhood care and education: large gaps between regions

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

The case for well-designed ECCE programmes is compelling, especially for the most disadvantaged.[1] Holistic programmes improve children's health, nutrition, well-being and cognitive development, and leave them better prepared for entering and staying in primary school. Investing in such programmes yields high economic returns, offsetting disadvantage and inequality – especially for children from poor families.

Although the global under-5 mortality rate has declined since 1995 (down from 92 in every 1,000 children to 78), the rate remains high in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly 10 million children under age 5 died in 2005, the majority in developing countries. Most of these deaths could have been prevented with basic health services and child nutrition programmes. Undernutrition and malnutrition affect one in four children under age 5 in developing countries. This situation has a direct impact on education, making children vulnerable to illness, less likely to enrol in school and more likely to drop out.

Programmes for under-3s that include nutrition, health and cognitive components have a positive impact on child well-being. Yet, only 53% of the world's countries have an official ECCE programme targeting this age group. These programmes are most prevalent in North America and Western Europe, Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Their emergence partly reflects women's massive entry into the labour market. In other parts of the world, governments often view the care and education of very young children as the responsibility of families and/or private providers. As a result, there are few national frameworks for financing, coordinating and supervising ECCE programmes.

Uneven advances in pre-primary education

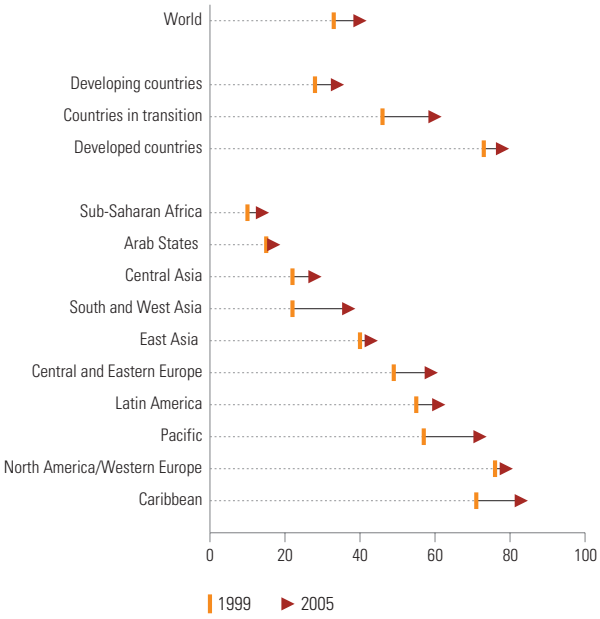
Governments are more active in providing for children between age 3 and the beginning of primary school. The number of children enrolled in pre-primary schools worldwide rose by 20 million to 132 million between 1999 and 2005. South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa registered the largest increases (by 67% and 61%, respectively), while in East Asia the number of pupils fell largely because the relevant age group in China decreased.

Programmes for under-3s that include nutrition, health and cognitive components have a positive impact on child well-being

1. For details see the 2007 Report, *Strong foundations: early childhood care and education.*

Participation in pre-primary education also increased, with the global gross enrolment ratio (GER) rising from 33% in 1999 to 40% in 2005 (see Figure 2.1). Regionally the ratio ranges widely, from 14% in sub-Saharan Africa to 83% in the Caribbean. The Pacific, and South and West Asia registered the highest gains, with fifteen percentage points each, followed by the Caribbean (twelve percentage points), and Central and Eastern Europe (ten percentage points), confirming the latter region's recovery from the 1990s. Participation is highest in developed and transition countries, in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in the Pacific.

Figure 2.1: GERs in pre-primary education, weighted average by region, 1999 and 2005



Source: See Chapter 2 in the full EFA Report.

Although children from poorer and rural backgrounds are the most likely to benefit from ECCE programmes, they have the least access to them

Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States account for almost three-quarters of the fifty countries with participation rates under 30%. Nevertheless, several of these countries registered rapid change: GERs doubled or tripled from a very low base in Burundi, the Congo, Eritrea, Madagascar and Senegal. In some cases, the number of schools increased by over 100% (Senegal, the Congo); in others, governments introduced free kindergarten (Ghana) or supported the opening of new child care centres (Eritrea).

Although children from poorer and rural backgrounds are the most likely to benefit from ECCE programmes, they have the least access to them. Gender disparities in pre-primary, on the other hand, are less marked than at other levels of education, possibly because children enrolled are generally from more affluent backgrounds. The gender parity index (GPI) was near or over 0.90 in all regions in 2005. High disparities against girls prevail in several countries, including Chad (0.48) and Morocco (0.65), but high disparities against boys are equally common.

Shortages of pre-primary teachers

The single most important determinant of quality in ECCE programmes is the interaction between the children and the carer or teacher. Adequate teacher training and relatively small classes are particularly crucial in maximizing the benefits children receive. Worldwide there were about twenty-two pupils per pre-primary teacher in 2005, slightly higher than in 1999. The pupil/teacher ratio (PTR) increased in 40% of the 121 countries with data. South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa registered the sharpest increases, with the PTR reaching 40:1 in the former region. The number of pupils per trained teacher, an additional indicator of children's exposure to quality learning, can be much higher than the PTR: in Ghana, it reached 155:1, reflecting the country's difficulty in coping with the surge in kindergarten enrolment.

Goal 2. Universal primary education: moving but not yet close

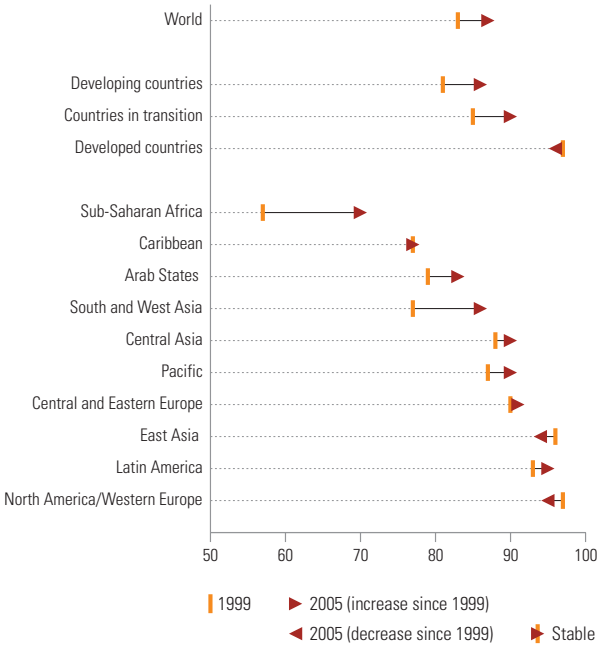
'Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.'

The world is making rapid strides towards UPE, partly due to the abolition of school tuition fees in several countries. The number of children entering primary school grew by 4%, from 130 million to 135 million, between 1999 and 2005. The most impressive gains were registered in sub-Saharan Africa (40%), the Arab States (11.6%), and South and West Asia (9.4%). Decreases in other regions are the result of declining fertility rates.

To reach UPE by 2015, all children of the relevant age group should be enrolled in school by 2009. Trends are positive, with the number of new entrants increasing in countries that have lagged in terms of access. But several countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States, will find it very difficult to approach UPE in the coming decade.

Participation in primary education is increasing but is still far from universal (see Figure 2.2). Worldwide 688 million children were enrolled in primary school in 2005, up 6.4% since 1999. Enrolment speeded up after Dakar in sub-Saharan Africa (growing by 29 million, or 36%), and South and West Asia (35 million, 22%), while in the Arab States

Figure 2.2: NER in primary education, weighted average by region, 1999 and 2005



Source: See Chapter 2 in the full EFA Report.

it continued at almost the same pace as before Dakar. Demographic growth will continue to place education systems under pressure in the next decade: primary school-age populations are expected to increase by 22% in sub-Saharan Africa and by 13% in the Arab States. In many other regions enrolment has been stable or decreased, a trend linked to smaller school-age populations.

In the Arab States, Central Asia, and South and West Asia, average net enrolment ratios (NERs) are below 90%, with lows in Djibouti (33%) and Pakistan (68%). The situation is most critical in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 60% of the countries have values below 80% and more than one-third are below 70%. Most countries that had NERs below 95% in either 1999 or 2005 registered increases over the period, and in some the pace of progress has clearly accelerated since Dakar. In several cases this reflects the impact of public policies designed to facilitate enrolment of the most disadvantaged, such as the abolition of school tuition fees. Most of the countries that had the lowest values in 1999 registered improvement.

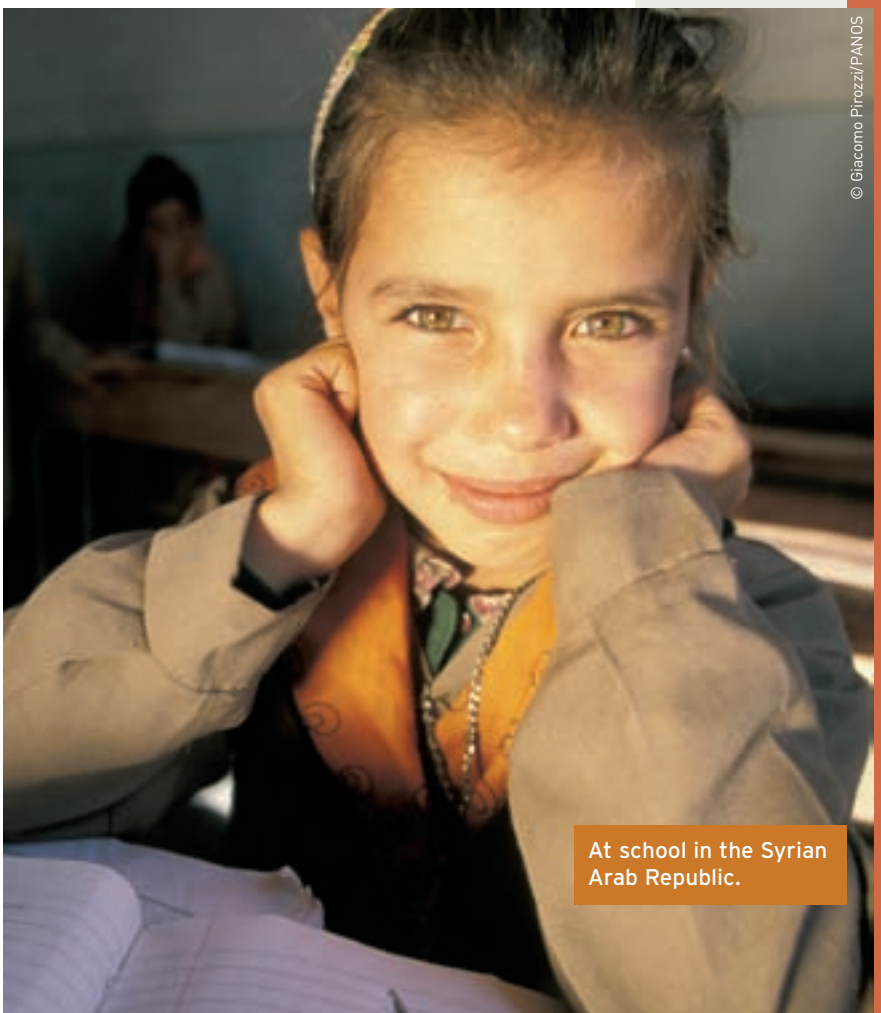
The opportunity gap: inequities in education

Progress in enrolment since Dakar has rarely been uniform across regions, provinces or states within a country. In Nepal, for example, NERs in the western and far-western regions are high (above 95%), whereas in parts of the eastern and central regions they are below 60%. In Guinea almost all children in the capital region of Conakry are enrolled, but ratios fall below 50% in outlying districts.

As education systems expand, are disparities decreasing within countries? There is no clear association between increasing NER levels and geographic disparities. Improvement in NERs has been associated with reduced geographic disparities in Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, the Niger and the United Republic of Tanzania, but greater ones in Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, India, Kenya, Mauritania and Zambia. Stark contrasts can exist between countries with similar NERs, varying from high disparity in Ethiopia and Nigeria to very low in Ghana.

Households in rural or remote communities tend to be poorer and more socially marginalized, with less access to quality basic education. Household survey data from forty countries show that, in thirty-two of them, net attendance rates in urban areas are higher than those in rural ones. However, the 'urban advantage' does not work for all children, particularly those growing up in urban slums. In several countries, including Brazil, Guatemala, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, enrolment ratios have decreased in slum areas.

Demographic growth will continue to place education systems under pressure in the next decade



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At school in the Syrian Arab Republic.

A global momentum has developed, with much now depending on a few countries

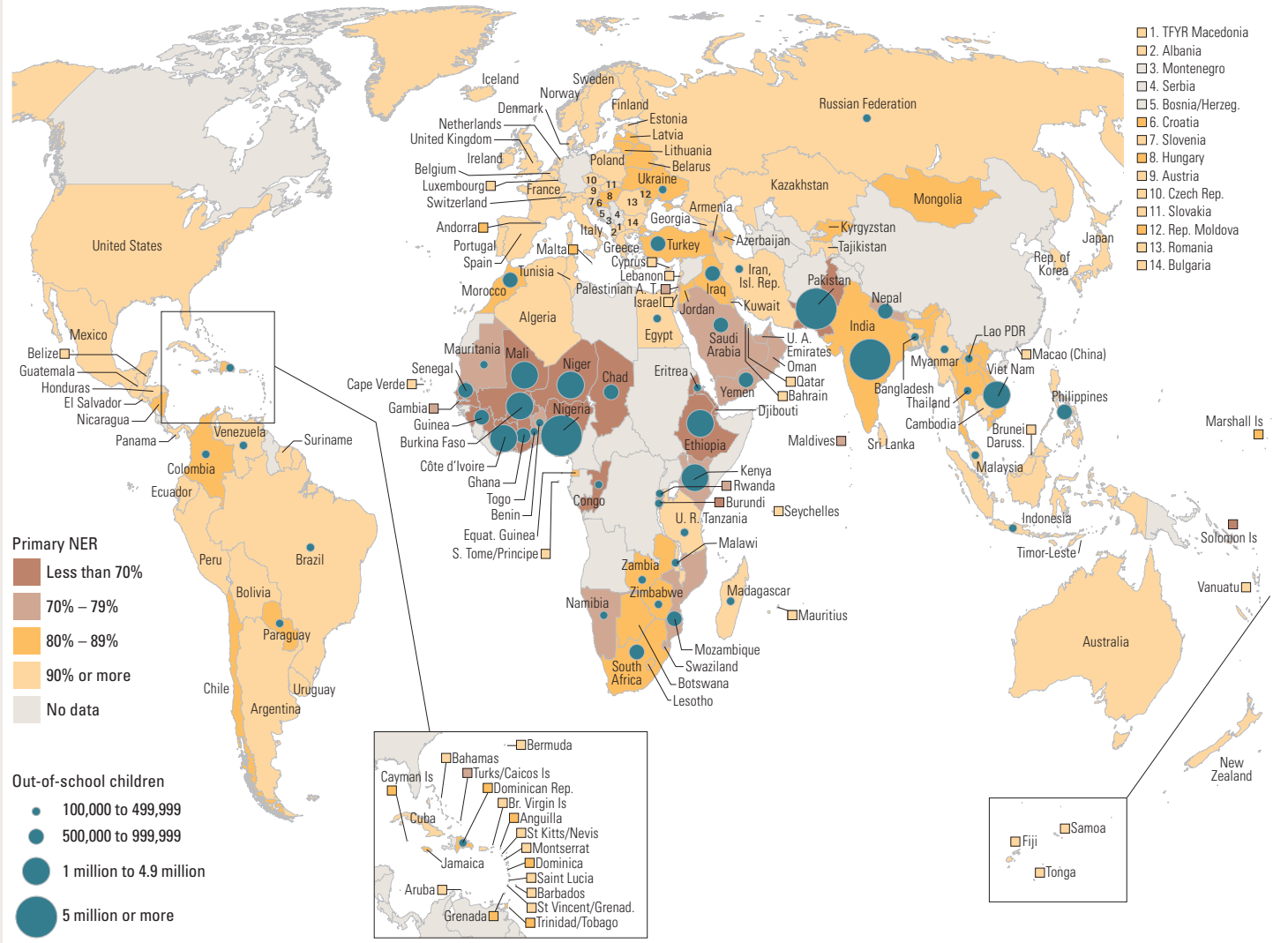
Household surveys conducted in several sub-Saharan African countries indicate that poor households suffer reduced attendance rates, regardless of whether they are in an urban or rural region.

A sharp drop in the number of out-of-school children

Just over 72 million primary school aged children were not in primary or secondary school in 2005, a sharp drop from 96 million in 1999. The decline was marked in South and West Asia (from 31 million to 17 million), and sub-Saharan Africa (from 42 million to 33 million). These two regions nevertheless account for 24% and 45%, respectively, of all out-of-school children. The decline has been particularly rapid since 2002 (by 19.2 million, compared with 5.2 million between 1999 and 2002). This encouraging trend in the face of growing population numbers reflects the worldwide increase in primary school access and participation.

A global momentum has developed, with much now depending on a few countries. India, Nigeria and Pakistan together account for 27% of the world's out-of-school children. Including the other seven countries with more than 1 million out-of-school children (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, the Niger and Viet Nam) raises the proportion to 40%. The thirty-five countries identified as fragile states were home to 37% of the world's out-of-school children in 2005. Providing places in primary schools for all these children will be particularly difficult. (Map 2.1)

Map 2.1: Challenge of out-of-school children relative to NER, 2005



Source: See Chapter 2 in the full EFA Report.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by UNESCO. Based on United Nations map.

Around 16% of children counted as being out of school had initially enrolled but left before reaching the official age of completion. A further 32% may eventually enrol as late entrants. Overall, children are more likely to be out of school if they are from poor households, live in rural areas and/or have a mother with no schooling. Being a girl heightens the probability of not being in school. The share of girls among out-of-school children fell slightly between 1999 and 2005, from 59% to 57%. Girls remain most disadvantaged in these terms in South and West Asia (66%), and the Arab States (60%). Finally, disability is strongly associated with being out of school: on average across seven developing countries, case studies show that a disabled child was half as likely to be in primary school as one without a disability.

Advancing through primary school

Where repetition rates are high, so is dropout. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest incidence of repetition (median of 15%), followed by South and West Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean (5% each). In most regions, the rate peaks in grade 1 (e.g. 37% in Nepal, 34% in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, above 30% in Burundi, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, 27% in Brazil and 24% in Guatemala), partly because children enter school unprepared, having rarely participated in ECCE programmes, especially in the poorest countries or areas. Nonetheless, between 1999 and 2005, repetition decreased in two-thirds of the countries with data for both years. Some countries are adopting automatic promotion policies (Ethiopia) while others witnessed a decline with the introduction of a new curriculum (Mozambique).

Pupils dropping out before the end of primary school is cause for concern. In half the countries with available data for 2004, less than 87% of pupils who started grade 1 reached the last grade, a measure called the survival rate. In South and West Asia, the median survival rate to the last grade drops to 79%, and the measure is lowest in sub-Saharan Africa (63%), where in several countries fewer than half of pupils reach the last grade. At the other end of the spectrum, median values are 94% in the Arab States, 97% in Central Asia and above 98% in Central and Eastern Europe, and in North America and Western Europe.

The percentage of children reaching the last grade of primary education improved between 1999 and 2004 in most countries with data. In some, net enrolment increased while the number of children reaching grade 5 dropped, pointing to the difficulty of expanding access to education while also retaining pupils to the end of the primary cycle. Not all children who reach the last grade complete it, with gaps above twenty percentage points in Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Grenada, Nepal, the Niger, Pakistan and Senegal.

Secondary education and beyond

Taking stock of secondary education is important for monitoring EFA progress. As increasing numbers of students finish primary education, demand for secondary education grows. Most governments view the extension of compulsory education to primary and lower secondary as an important policy objective. Worldwide three out of four countries include the lower secondary level in compulsory education. The gender parity goal also calls on countries to assure parity in both primary and secondary school.

In 2005, some 512 million students were enrolled in secondary schools worldwide, an increase of more than 73 million (17%) since 1999. The growth was driven by rises in sub-Saharan Africa (55%), South and West Asia, and the Arab States (25% each), and East Asia (21%).

Worldwide participation rates in secondary education have increased sharply since the early 1990s: the average secondary GER was 52% in 1991, 60% in 1999 and 66% in 2005. Two-thirds or more of secondary school-age students are enrolled in Latin America and in East Asia and the Pacific, with lower averages in sub-Saharan Africa (25%), South and West Asia (53%), and the Arab States (66%). Most countries in North America and Western Europe have almost achieved universal secondary education, and relatively high secondary NERs are found in Central and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.

Tertiary education is also relevant to EFA goals as a component of the gender equality goal and as an important provider of teachers and administrators. Worldwide some 138 million students were enrolled in tertiary education in 2005, about 45 million more than in 1999. The vast majority of new places in tertiary institutions were created in developing countries (e.g. Brazil, China, India and Nigeria). However, only a relatively small share of the relevant age group has access to this level. The world tertiary GER was around 24% in 2005, with participation varying substantially by region, from 5% in sub-Saharan Africa and 11% in South and West Asia to 70% in North America and Western Europe.

Goal 3. Meeting the learning needs of young people and adults

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

Governments have mainly responded to the learning needs of young people and adults by expanding formal secondary and tertiary education. However, people also acquire skills through informal means and in non-formal

The percentage of children reaching the last grade of primary education improved between 1999 and 2004 in most countries with data

settings. From an equity perspective these learning activities deserve attention because they often reach disadvantaged youth and adults, and because too many children do not go to school or leave school without acquiring basic skills. Non-formal education programmes are highly diverse and tend to be overseen by multiple ministries or other government bodies. In many countries, small-scale initiatives run by NGOs dominate the provision. Improved monitoring of supply and demand for non-formal education is urgently needed at national levels. While many types of learning activities take place outside formal education systems, the extent to which supply matches demand is largely unknown.

The 2008 Report draws on work from thirty countries regarding the provision of non-formal education. Household survey data show that non-formal education is the main route to learning for many disadvantaged youth and adults in some of the world's poorest countries.

Household survey data show that non-formal education is the main route to learning for many disadvantaged youth and adults in some of the world's poorest countries

Large-scale literacy programmes, often encompassing life skills (health, civic rights) and livelihoods (income generation, farming), are common, especially in poor countries including Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Nepal and Senegal, where they benefit from substantial external support. Equivalency or 'second chance' services, sometimes linked to literacy programmes, are a common means of providing learning opportunities for young people (e.g. in Brazil, Cambodia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam). Other national programmes focus on skills development in the informal economy, including in China, Egypt, Ghana, South Africa and Viet Nam. Programmes focusing on rural development are run in cooperation with agriculture ministries in Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand.

Non-formal education programmes are often linked with community development. In many Asian countries community learning centres (Thailand, for instance, has over 8,000) provide a wide range of structured learning activities, driven by local needs and encompassing literacy, continuing education and skills training.

Goal 4. Literacy and literate environments: essential yet elusive

'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.'

Literacy is a fundamental human right, a foundation not only for achieving EFA but, more broadly, for reducing poverty and broadening participation in society. Yet, about 774 million adults worldwide, 64% of them women, remain illiterate. This figure, moreover, is drawn from censuses or household surveys that rely on indirect assessments; evidence from direct testing suggests that the full scale of the literacy challenge is actually much greater, as a recent survey in Kenya illustrates (Box 2.1).

Box 2.1: Kenya's national adult literacy survey

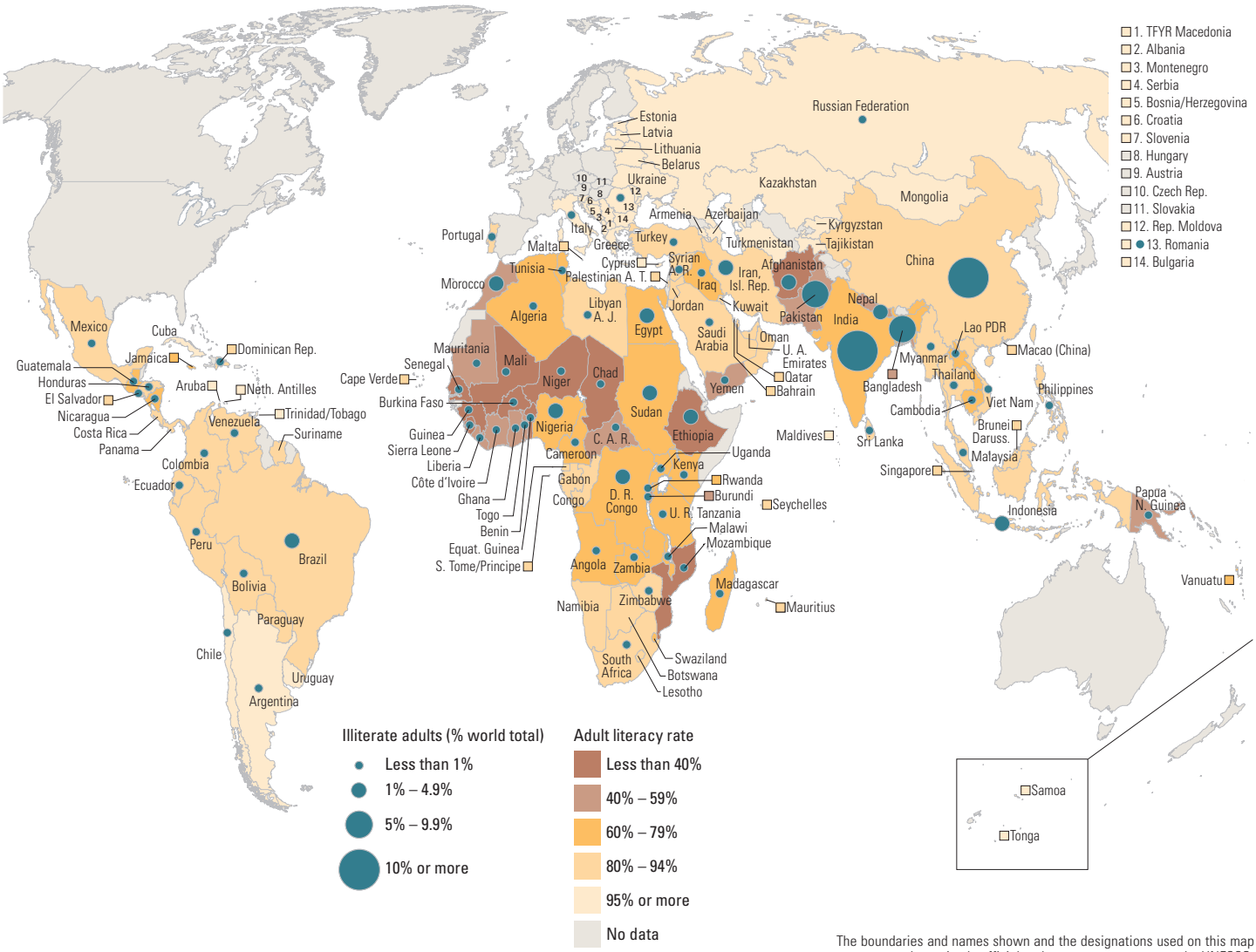
In 2006 Kenya conducted a national adult literacy survey using direct assessment of 15,000 households. It estimated the adult literacy rate at 62%, much lower than the self-estimated rate of 74% from the 2000 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys. Literacy and numeracy rates varied significantly by district, age and level of education completed, with a turning point between grades 4 and 5. Literacy rates were under 20% among adults who completed four grades or fewer, and over 65% for those who completed five grades or more. Many survey respondents said they did not attend literacy classes or had dropped out due to distance from a learning centre and a lack of teachers. This type of direct assessment improves the quality of literacy data and provides more accurate information with which to assess existing programmes and design appropriate policies.

Between the 1985–1994 and 1995–2004 periods the global adult literacy rate rose from 76% to 82%. The increase was more marked among developing countries (68% to 77%). The Arab States, and South and West Asia experienced the most sustained progress, each up twelve percentage points. The number of illiterate adults in the former region as well as in sub-Saharan Africa did not drop systematically, partly due to continuing high population growth. Adult literacy rates remain below the world average in South and West Asia, and in sub-Saharan Africa (59% in each) as well as in the Arab States and the Caribbean (about 71% each).

More than three-quarters of the world's illiterates live in only fifteen countries, including eight of the nine high-population countries (E-9): Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Pakistan. In most of the fifteen countries, adult literacy rates have improved since 1985–1994, although continuing population growth translates into increases in absolute numbers of illiterates in several countries (e.g. Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Morocco). Adult literacy rates below 50% persist in several countries of South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. (Map 2.2)

The number of adult illiterates in China dropped sharply, by 98 million, which largely accounts for the rise in the average adult literacy rate for developing countries. China's achievement stemmed from sustained increases in primary school participation, highly targeted literacy programmes and the development of literate

Map 2.2: Adult literacy and number of illiterates, 1995–2004



Source: See Chapter 2 in the full EFA Report.

environments. Such environments, found in the public and private spheres and typically including written materials (newspapers, books, posters), broadcast media and information and communication technology (ICT), encourage the acquisition and use of literacy skills.

Youth literacy rates (among those aged 15 to 24) improved more rapidly in all regions, especially in the Arab States and East Asia, reflecting better access and participation in formal schooling among younger generations. In nearly all regions, the increase was accompanied by a reduction in the number of illiterates. Although youth literacy rates increased in sub-Saharan Africa by 9%, the region counted 5 million additional young illiterates, due to persisting high population growth and low school completion rates.

Literacy and equity

Globally, there are 89 literate women for every 100 literate men. Despite improvement over the 1985–1994 period, disparities are still marked in South and West Asia (67 literate women per 100 literate men), the Arab States (74) and sub-Saharan Africa (76).

Overall, illiteracy rates are highest in the countries with the greatest poverty, a link observed right down to the household level. More generally, for various social, cultural or political reasons, certain populations – such as migrants, indigenous groups and people with disabilities – suffer reduced access to formal education and literacy programmes.

Illiteracy rates are highest in the countries with the greatest poverty, a link observed right down to the household level

Goal 6. Quality: how much are children learning?

'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.'

Quality is at the heart of education. When children lack trained teachers, learning materials, instructional time and adequate school facilities, they are unlikely to master the basics. This Report looks at quality in terms of learning outcomes, learning conditions and the teaching workforce.

Learning outcomes: low achievement is widespread

In numerous African countries between 25% and 40% of teachers say they possess no book or guide for the subjects they teach

International and regional assessments provide considerable evidence of low achievement in both developed and developing countries. The PISA[2] 2003 reading assessment, for example, found that 20% or more of 15-year-olds in several OECD countries performed at the lowest reading proficiency level or below. The PIRLS[3] 2001 assessment found that in many countries, including Argentina, Colombia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Morocco and Turkey, over 40% of grade 4 pupils read at or below the lowest level. All assessments point to inequalities in learning outcomes within countries. A positive relationship generally exists between higher socio-economic status (parents' education, job, household wealth) and student achievement. African and Latin American assessments find strong disparities in favour of urban students, reflecting both higher household incomes and better school provision in urban areas. Recent studies in Central and Eastern Europe found that most achievement gaps between regions and between different types of schools or programmes were associated with student socio-economic status.

More and more governments are carrying out national learning assessments: 81% of developed countries, 50% of developing countries and 17% of countries in transition conducted at least one in 2000–2006, a much higher percentage than from 1995 to 1999. National assessments tend to focus on grades 4 to 6 and learning outcomes in the official language and in mathematics. This trend indicates serious attempts by national authorities to collect timely information about the quality of education provided. Morocco, for example, conducted an assessment in 2006 as part of a reform of the education sector. In Arabic, French and mathematics fewer than half of students achieved the minimum mastery level. In Haiti, the 2004/05 assessment showed that only 44% of grade 4 students met expectations. Comparisons in sixteen countries between earlier and more recent national assessments show an upward trend in average achievement. In most countries with data, rural children score lower than urban ones in language and mathematics.

The time actually spent learning subject matter – either in school or as part of homework – affects performance, especially in language, mathematics and science. Overall, countries expect schools to provide an accumulated total of almost 4,600 hours of instruction in grades 1 to 6. In most regions adequate time policies are in place, but in practice, children do not receive the required hours. In several Arab States actual learning time is estimated to be 30% less than intended instructional time, on average. Evidence indicates that teacher absenteeism, in-service training, strikes, armed conflict and the use of schools as polling stations or to conduct examinations can significantly reduce the time students have available for learning.

Textbooks have a positive impact on student learning and can counteract socio-economic disadvantage, particularly in low-income settings. Many classrooms in developing countries, especially in poor and rural areas, possess one textbook, typically in the hands of the teacher. Students spend most of their time copying the content from blackboards to notebooks, and then memorizing it. In numerous African countries between 25% and 40% of teachers say they possess no book or guide for the subjects they teach. Although international agencies support textbook development and distribution in many developing countries, investment tends to be in one-off, short-term projects that do little to sustain local publishing over the long term.

The dilapidated state of schools and overcrowded classrooms add up to unsatisfactory learning conditions. In SACMEQ[4] countries 47% of school buildings were reported in need of major repairs. Overcrowded classrooms, where students do not have a chair, bench or desk, are common in Africa. A lack of clean water and sanitary latrines can hamper attendance, especially of girls. In conflict-ridden areas, schools are not spared. In Iraq more than 2,700 schools were looted, damaged or burned in 2003. Education infrastructure has been extensively damaged in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Kosovo, Mozambique and Timor-Leste. In Liberia, an estimated 23% of all primary schools were destroyed between 2001 and 2003. In Afghanistan, the burning and bombing of schools and killing of teachers and students severely affected education in some provinces.

2. Programme for International Student Assessment.

3. Progress in International Reading Literacy Study.

4. Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality.

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Learning to read Braille in Botswana.

Expanding and upgrading the teaching workforce

No EFA goal can be achieved without a sufficiently large and well-trained teaching workforce. Worldwide, primary education systems employed about 27 million teachers in 2005, more than one-third of them in East Asia, where 28% of the world's primary pupils are enrolled. The total number of primary school teachers increased by 5% between 1999 and 2005 – that is, at a slightly slower pace than enrolment. Sub-Saharan Africa expanded its teaching force by 25% in those six years, and South and West Asia by 14%, but enrolment increases were much steeper – 36% and 22%, respectively. In secondary education, the total number of teachers increased in all regions except Central and Eastern Europe, and at a much faster pace than in primary education.

PTRs of more than 40:1 tend to hamper learning. Twenty-four out of 176 countries with data have PTRs above that benchmark, and twenty are in sub-Saharan Africa, with the highest ratio (83:1) in the Congo. Worldwide, average PTRs remained stable at 25:1 between 1999 and 2005. The ratios increased in sub-Saharan Africa (from 41:1 to 45:1), and South and West Asia (from 37:1 to 39:1), the regions where enrolments grew fastest. In the Arab States and the Pacific, the number of pupils per teacher declined slightly even though enrolments increased. Overall, PTRs tend to be much higher in public than in private schools.

Most countries with PTRs under 40:1 in 1999 have been able to maintain the status quo. There are some alarming exceptions: Afghanistan's PTR jumped from 36:1 in 1999 to above 83:1 in 2005 even though the teacher workforce doubled. The United Republic of Tanzania experienced teacher shortages, especially after 2001, when the country abolished school tuition fees and enrolment shot up by 23% in one year.

The picture changes when looking at the number of students per trained teacher. Due to shortages, this ratio is often much higher. The median percentage of trained primary teachers in 2005 was about 64% in South and West Asia, 80% or above in Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa, and 100% in the Arab States in 2005. Data on the percentage of trained teachers for both 1999 and 2005 are available for only forty-three countries. In about 50% the share of trained teachers increased. The number of pupils per trained teacher exceeds 100:1 in Afghanistan, Chad, Madagascar, Mozambique and Nepal.

No analysis of the teaching workforce would be complete without evoking the toll of HIV/AIDS. The pandemic is an important cause of teacher absenteeism and attrition. In Lesotho and Malawi, about a third of all teacher departures are due to terminal illness, most of it presumably HIV-related. In Mozambique, death in service increased by 72% between 2000 and 2004. In the United Republic of Tanzania 42% of teacher deaths between 2000 and 2002 were reported to be HIV/AIDS related.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is an important cause of teacher absenteeism and attrition

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.'

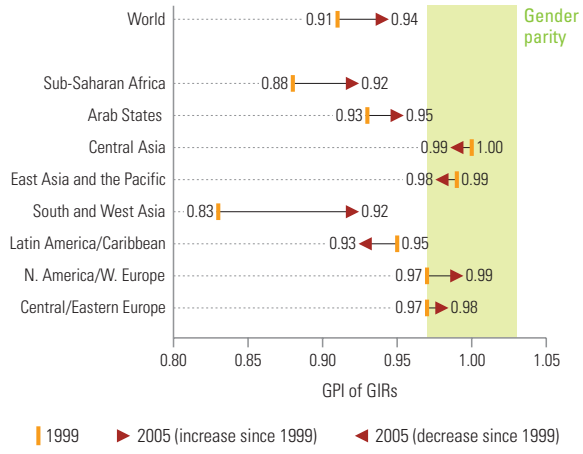
Gender disparities in education have been reduced since 1999 but remain pervasive worldwide. By 2005 only 59 countries out of the 181 with data available (that is, about one-third) had achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary education. Most of them had already achieved parity by 1999, and most are developed and transition countries, or in Latin America and the Caribbean. Only seven countries in East Asia and the Pacific, two in sub-Saharan Africa, two in the Arab States and two in South and West Asia have achieved the EFA gender parity goal.

In countries where gender disparities still prevail, they are often greater at higher education levels

Disparities remain widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and South and West Asia, where they mainly favour boys. In countries where gender disparities still prevail, they are often greater at higher education levels. Worldwide, 118 countries out of 188 with data for primary education (63%) had achieved gender parity at this level by 2005. Only 37% of countries had achieved parity in secondary education and less than 3% in tertiary education.

Gender disparities in primary education stem first and foremost from disparities in enrolment in the first grade (Figure 2.3). In 2005, on average worldwide, 94 girls started grade 1 for every 100 boys, though the figure is lower in sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia (92 in each case) and in Latin America and the Caribbean, where it deteriorated from 95 in 1999 to 93 in 2005. It is 95 or above in all other regions. Overall, gender disparities in access to education have eased since 1999, sometimes substantially, particularly in South and West Asia (from 83 to 92 girls per 100 boys). In Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Niger, Pakistan and Yemen, however, the number of girls starting school is 80% of that of boys, or less.

Figure 2.3: Changes in gender disparities in access to primary schooling, by region, between 1999 and 2005



Note: The GPI values in this figure are weighted averages.
Source: See Chapter 2 in the full EFA Report.

School participation: big gains for girls in South and West Asia

Globally, for every 100 boys, 95 girls were enrolled in primary school in 2005, compared with 92 in 1999. South and West Asia, the region with the worst situation at the beginning of the period, registered the highest gains: the number of girls per 100 boys increased from 82 to 93. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States registered increases of three percentage points in the GPI of primary enrolment ratios.

Still, the female GER was 80% or less of the male one in the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Niger, as well as in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen. Gender disparities tend to be higher in low-income segments of the population and in rural areas and urban slums.

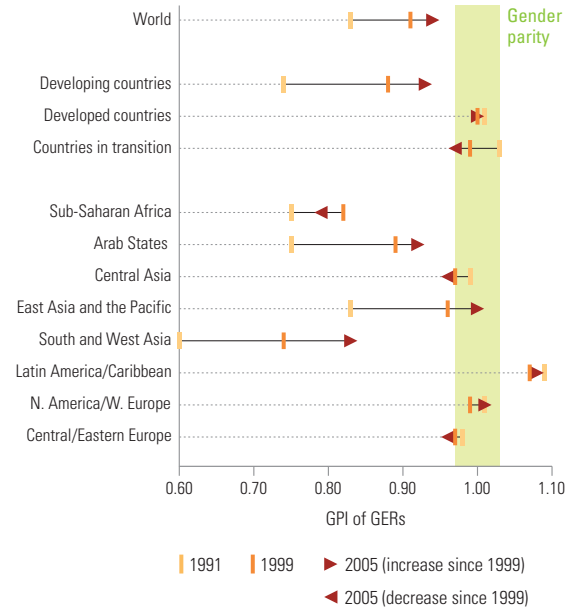
In general, once girls gain access to school they tend to do better than boys. In no country of Latin America and the Caribbean or North America and Western Europe do girls repeat more than boys. Overall, in 2004 there were seventy countries where girls and boys reached the last grade in equal proportions. In fifty-three others, sizeable differences persist, often in favour of girls, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. In sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States there are roughly as many countries with gender gaps in favour of girls as in favour of boys for survival to the last grade of primary school.

Gender disparities in secondary education

Gender disparities are more prevalent and even greater in secondary and higher education than at the primary level, but follow more complex patterns (Figure 2.4).

At secondary level in 2005, disparities favoured boys in sixty-one countries, slightly more than the fifty-three countries where girls were at an advantage. Boys' underachievement in terms of participation and performance is increasingly an issue, in particular in the developed world but also in Latin America and the

Figure 2.4: Changes in gender disparities in secondary gross enrolment ratios by region, 1991, 1999 and 2005



Source: See Chapter 2 in the full EFA Report.

Caribbean. That is the only region where more girls than boys are enrolled in secondary school, on average (90 boys or fewer enrolled for every 100 girls in 11 countries). Boys are more likely to participate in shorter academic programmes not leading to tertiary education and to leave school prematurely to make a living. Poverty is usually an important obstacle to boys' participation in secondary school. A study in Chile found poor boys four times more likely to enter the workforce than poor girls.

Globally, the GPI for secondary education was 0.94 in 2005, up from 0.91 in 1999. Disparities declined much more slowly after Dakar than between 1991 and 1999. South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa remain regions with low enrolment in secondary education and have the lowest girls' participation at this level, with 83 and 79 girls enrolled, respectively, for every 100 boys. Indeed, sub-Saharan Africa moved away from gender parity between 1999 and 2005.

Gender disparities, whether in favour of boys or girls, narrowed in secondary education in two-thirds of the 144 countries with data available for 1999 and 2005, leading in some cases to parity.

Tertiary education: parity is rare

Only 4 countries out of 144 – Botswana, China, Mexico and Peru – had achieved gender parity at this level by 2005. Globally, many more women than men were enrolled in higher education in 2005 (the average GPI was 1.05), a reversal from 1999. Gender disparities in favour of females were greater in developed countries and those in transition, and had widened since 1999. Disparities favouring men were found in sub-Saharan Africa (0.68), South and West Asia (0.74), and East Asia (0.92). In the Arab States, as many men as women are enrolled in tertiary education, but the regional average conceals very low participation of females in several countries.

Gender equality: subtler and harder to achieve

Narrowing the gender gap in education does not automatically translate into equality between women and men. Salary gaps, minimal access of women to certain fields of study and jobs, and lack of political representation are evidence of enduring gender inequalities. Clearly gender parity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for gender equality.

Promoting gender equality in education requires altering gender socialization processes and certain learning conditions in school. The following all matter in promoting gender equality in education.

Safe and gender-supportive school environments

Physical and psychological violence perpetuated by teachers and other staff and by children themselves are still found in many schools. Boys are more likely to experience frequent and severe physical violence, particularly corporal punishment. Girls are more likely to be affected by sexual violence and harassment, often resulting in low self-esteem and early dropout. A comparative study in Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe found that many girls reported aggressive sexual advances by older male students and male teachers. The physical environment of schools is equally important. Young girls, particularly after puberty, are less likely to attend classes if the school lacks suitable hygiene facilities. One study contends that half the girls in sub-Saharan African who drop out of primary school do so because of poor water and sanitation facilities.

Female teachers and classroom dynamics

Countries with higher percentages of female teachers have higher gender parity levels in primary school participation. Globally, 94% of pre-primary teachers are women, but the share drops to 62% in primary, 53% in secondary and 41% in tertiary. The mere presence of female teachers, however, does not guarantee that girls and boys will be treated the same in school.

Many teachers claim they treat boys and girls equally but in practice their attitudes often reflect subtle biases. Boys generally enjoy more challenging interactions with teachers, dominate classroom activities and receive more attention than girls through criticism, praise and constructive feedback. Studies of rural pupils in Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda found that teachers have low expectations of female students. Both teachers and students contribute to a pattern than gives girls fewer opportunities to participate actively in class. Teachers need training to understand how gender interacts with their own identity in order to recognize their own and students' attitudes, perceptions and expectations. Such training is still relatively rare.

Biases in contents of learning materials

Contents analysis of textbooks points to gender bias against girls and women regardless of the level of education, subject matter, country or region. Girls and women are systematically under-represented in textbooks and still shown in highly stereotyped roles, even in countries that have achieved gender parity in primary education. Social studies textbooks in China portray all scientists as male and teachers as female. A study of mathematics textbooks in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Tunisia found the proportion of female characters in written material to be below 30% in each

Girls and women are systematically under-represented in textbooks and still shown in highly stereotyped roles

country. Studies on improvements in gender equality in textbooks show that the changes in women's roles in recent decades have been largely ignored.

Sex education, a critical curriculum area from a gender perspective, is receiving increased attention, mainly due to HIV/AIDS. Such programmes are criticized in many countries for ignoring women's sexuality and perspectives in dealing with boys. A study of sex education in a junior secondary school in Botswana showed that discussion by both teachers and pupils reproduced social stereotypes of boys and girls. Teachers marginalized girls' sexuality by citing examples that appealed to boys' experience and sexuality.

Better reading scores for girls, catching up in mathematics

On average girls are catching up with boys in mathematics achievement

Data from large international and regional assessments underscore three major trends in language, mathematics and science achievement. First, girls continue to consistently perform better than boys in language, even in countries with significant gender disparities in enrolment, such as many Arab States.

Second, on average girls are catching up with boys in mathematics achievement. Most recently, differences in favour of girls have appeared in several countries (e.g. Armenia, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova). Third, while boys maintain a comfortable advantage in science, girls are gaining ground.

Women remain under-represented in certain scientific fields. In most countries with data, they account for less than one-third of students in scientific subjects at tertiary level but over two-thirds in the humanities, social sciences and health-related fields. In all OECD countries except Italy, more males than females earn advanced research qualifications.

Overall progress towards Education for All

The EFA Development Index (EDI), introduced in 2003, provides an overall view of progress towards four EFA goals: UPE, adult literacy, gender and education quality.[5] This year's index covers 129 countries (Box 2.2). Among the many countries excluded from this picture are fragile states that are likely to suffer from low education development.

Box 2.2: EDI results

- Fifty-one countries (about 40% of the total sample) have EDI values of 0.95 or above. Most are in North America and Europe, but this category of high achievers includes countries from all regions except South and West Asia. The right to education in these countries goes beyond rhetoric; compulsory education has been established for decades and is rigorously enforced, and education is often free.
- Fifty-three countries, in all eight EFA regions, have EDI values ranging from 0.80 to 0.94. While primary enrolment is often high among countries in this group, the EDI value is pulled down either by low education quality, low adult literacy levels, or both.
- Twenty-five countries (about one-fifth of all those included in the EDI calculations) are far from achieving EFA, with scores lower than 0.80. Eight of them are fragile states.* About two-thirds of the twenty-five countries are in sub-Saharan Africa, and several have EDI scores under 0.60. The group includes four of the nine high-population countries: Bangladesh, India, Nigeria and Pakistan. Most countries in this category score low in all four of the EFA goals in the index.

* Burundi, Chad, Eritrea, Guinea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Niger, Nigeria and Togo.

For the forty-four countries with EDI data available for both 1999 and 2005, the index increased in thirty-two countries, by an average of 3.4%. Progress was substantial in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nepal and Yemen, where the EDI increased by more than 10% between 1999 and 2005. With the exception of Guatemala, all these countries are in the low EDI category, but are moving rapidly towards EFA. On the other hand, the EDI declined slightly in twelve countries, with a rate of decrease of about 2% or above in Albania, Chad, Lithuania and the Republic of Moldova.

Overall, the increase in total primary NER has driven the index upwards. In most countries where the EDI improved only slightly or declined, the weak point was the survival rate to grade 5.

5. Each goal is represented by a proxy indicator. For UPE it is total primary NER; for adult literacy, the literacy rate for persons aged 15 and over; for gender parity and equality, the gender-specific EFA index; for education quality, survival rate to grade 5. The EDI varies between 0 and 1, with 1 representing EFA achievement.

Improving management capacities in least developed countries

The rise of civil society voices

Abolition of primary school tuition fees in fourteen countries

Offsetting costs for poor households

Chapter 3. Countries on the move

Encouraging girls' participation

Enhancing quality: a package of measures required

Inclusive learning opportunities

Strategies to cope with teacher shortages

This chapter focuses on three policy areas to illustrate how countries are developing and strengthening education systems to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults: an institutional environment promoting and supporting education; strategies to expand access, especially for the poorest and most disadvantaged groups; and measures to improve teaching and learning. Information is based largely on a review of policies and strategies adopted since 2000 by a selected group of thirty mainly developing countries.

A favourable education policy environment

Focus on planning

Government efforts to develop national education sector plans have gained momentum since 2000. Most of the thirty countries reviewed now have education plans. They typically emphasize measures to improve access, quality and management of education. A recent review of plans endorsed through the EFA Fast Track Initiative found that most included well-defined measures to tackle disparities and improve education quality. However, priority setting was found to be weak and fewer than half the plans included a medium-term financial framework taking all costs into account.

The Dakar Framework highlights the importance of better national capacity to monitor education. Many countries in all regions (e.g. Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, the Philippines, Yemen) have stepped up efforts to develop Education Management Information Systems. However, weak management capacities continue to be a major barrier to education progress in many low-income countries. In Burkina Faso, for example, where considerable progress has been achieved in improving access to basic education, the Ministry has had difficulty providing enough classrooms, teachers and learning materials. There is growing awareness that both staff training and changes in the organizational structure of education systems are necessary to cope with expansion and qualitative issues.

Civil society: strong advocates

Civil society has played a much more visible advocacy role since Dakar. Education sector policies in almost every country now call for some form of partnership between government and civil society organizations (CSOs) that goes beyond the traditional service delivery role. The Global Campaign for Education, established in 1999, has spurred the emergence of a powerful advocacy network at national, regional and global level. Reviews suggest that civil society perspectives and proposals have to some degree influenced the formulation of national education plans but that opportunities to participate systematically in agenda setting and final drafting remain limited. Governments sometimes seek ways to manage and limit civil society participation in policy dialogue. Still, CSOs are creating new opportunities for an expanded policy role. Some have been pedagogically innovative (e.g. Action Aid's Reflect adult literacy method), and others have involved communities in budget tracking exercises and alternative monitoring activities. In Latin America, for example, the Partnership for Educational Revitalization (PREAL) publishes report cards on education in a number of countries. Their release often leads to lively national debates and has encouraged governments to improve their own reporting to the public.

The Global Campaign for Education, established in 1999, has spurred the emergence of a powerful advocacy network at national, regional and global level

Decentralization aims to make schools more responsive to local needs

Non-state providers

In many sub-Saharan African countries where primary school enrolments have increased sharply since 2000, non-state providers have played a prominent role. Other countries, including Bangladesh and Pakistan, also continue to rely on non-state providers for a large share of places in primary education. Partnerships between governments and the non-state sector take various forms, including direct financing, contracting of services and training of teachers. In several cases, mechanisms are in place to regulate the sector. In Bogota, Colombia, private schools receive public support to provide education for lower-income learners, with positive results in terms of retaining children in school and improving learning outcomes.

All too often, however, regulations for non-state providers tend to be cumbersome and do not develop a supportive environment for promoting quality and improving access for the underserved. Effective oversight may also be hampered by a lack of government capacity to enforce regulations and insufficient clarity regarding responsibilities within government. Chile and South Africa have introduced financial incentives for the non-state sector to increase compliance with regulations. The incentives are conditional on proof of good quality.

Decentralization: promises often differ from reality

Many developing countries are decentralizing financial, political and administrative responsibilities for education to regional, provincial or school level. Decentralization

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Reaching remote communities: a primary school in an isolated Amazon estuary village, Brazil.

aims to make schools more responsive to local needs. Guatemala's school-based management programme is often cited: key functions such as hiring, paying and supervising of teachers and monitoring of student attendance were decentralized to community school councils. Evaluations suggest that the councils have helped raise primary school enrolment.

Decentralization is often a long and gradual process. The impact on education access and quality is far from clear. In many countries with centralized traditions, the skills needed to manage and govern education systems are limited locally. Lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities is a common problem. There is also a risk of decentralization making subnational inequality worse. An evaluation in Ghana found that disparities in school quality between poor and less poor areas widened after decentralization in the 1990s. Similar findings have been reported in Argentina and Mexico.

Expanding equitable access

The Dakar Framework calls on governments to ensure that education systems explicitly identify, target and respond to the needs of poor and marginalized populations. What are the main strategies adopted by countries to assure access to education for children, youth and adults? A comprehensive approach – one not limited to UPE – is the hallmark of the Dakar agenda.

Early childhood: new constitutional obligations

Programmes that integrate health, nutrition, education and parental support for young children can offset disadvantage and inequality. Brazil's 1988 Constitution obliges governments to provide care and education to children aged 6 and below. The country's 2001 National Education Plan established targets to reach 50% of children below age 4 and 80% of those aged 4 and 5 by the end of the decade. By 2005 the enrolment goals for 4- and 5-year-olds had been surpassed. Early childhood education is included in a federal fund that redistributes resources among states for the development of basic education. Mexico approved a constitutional amendment in 2002 making three years of pre-primary education compulsory by 2008. Several countries – including Cambodia, Guatemala, India, Nicaragua and the Philippines – have increased access to pre-primary education for the most disadvantaged children by focusing on the poorest areas.

Overall ECCE is moving up on a number of national policy agendas, but problems remain: not enough focus on under-3s, lack of a holistic approach, poorly trained workforce and frequently uncoordinated implementation involving different providers.

More primary school places

In many countries the sheer lack of schools stands as a barrier to achieving UPE, especially in rural and remote areas and in slums. Most of the thirty country case studies indicate that governments have taken actions to expand physical infrastructure in recent years, particularly by targeting rural and other disadvantaged areas, although not always enough to keep pace with enrolment (in Ethiopia enrolments doubled while the number of classrooms increased by 55% between 1999 and 2005). Governments have attempted to cope with rapid expansion by using classrooms on a multishift basis and putting additional pressure on teachers. Others have mobilized additional domestic resources to finance the expansion of school infrastructure: in Turkey one-fifth of the 100,000 new classrooms constructed between 2003 and 2006 were financed through private sources. The Philippine Government gives tax incentives to NGOs, businesses and other civil society groups to 'adopt' schools by providing support for infrastructure, learning materials, food and nutrition supplements, and science laboratory equipment. The programme has benefited more than half of the state schools nationwide since 2000. Another common response has been to shift some financial responsibility, ranging from the building of schools to the payment of locally hired teachers and other recurrent costs, to local communities.

Redressing subnational disparities in access

Several governments have established mechanisms to redistribute funds to poorer regions or to target areas that are lagging in terms of access to education. Burkina Faso's ten-year plan for basic education, launched in 2001, aims to reduce geographic disparities by setting aside additional resources for twenty provinces. In Brazil, a special fund was created requiring states and municipalities to allocate part of their revenue for basic education. Resources are then redistributed to secure a minimum annual per-pupil expenditure across states. Evidence suggests that the fund has contributed to the expansion of primary schooling and the reduction of regional disparities. In India, the government has also implemented special programmes in disadvantaged districts.

Abolishing school charges: sustaining the gains

Fourteen countries have abolished tuition fees for primary school since 2000. Evidence suggests that this measure promotes enrolment of the most disadvantaged children. But in some cases rapid enrolment increases are happening at the expense of quality: PTRs have increased, teachers are recruited with little training or schools have to adopt multiple shifts.

Several governments have established mechanisms to redistribute funds to poorer regions or to target areas that are lagging in terms of access to education

Abolishing fees has two financial consequences for governments: they have to replace the revenue lost by schools and cover the extra costs associated with higher enrolment. Capitation grants are allocated directly to schools as compensation, but schools do not always receive grants on time and in some cases the grants have been smaller than agreed. In Malawi, even though additional resources were allocated to compensate for fee waivers, the surge in enrolment resulted in a decline in per-pupil spending.

A phased-in approach that first targets the most deprived areas or one grade at a time, as in Lesotho and Mozambique, gives governments time to add teaching posts and support schools with additional classrooms and learning materials. Some governments abolish fees only for specific groups, schools or regions: the Gratuidad programme in Bogota, Colombia, reduces fees for children from the poorest households. In South Africa schools that charge fees are obligated by law to exempt parents with low income.

If school fee abolition is not complemented with measures to build classrooms, hire and train more teachers, and improve school management, poor learning conditions are likely to drive children away from school prematurely or lead to very low achievement. Donors have funded at least part of the additional expenditure necessitated by fee abolition in several countries, including Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Beyond tuition fees, households face charges for uniforms, transport and other requirements, which can be prohibitive

Targeted approaches to increase participation

Universal policies to encourage enrolment are not sufficient to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized children, including girls (Box 3.1). Beyond tuition fees, households face charges for uniforms, transport and other requirements, which can be prohibitive. In addition, for many children living in poverty, paid or unpaid work in the home stands in the way of schooling. In an effort to offset these economic barriers, some governments have designed targeted programmes directed at poor households. They include scholarships for girls and conditional cash transfers. Among the latter, Brazil's Bolsa Familia is the largest such programme in the developing world, covering around 46 million people, including more than 16 million children who receive the special Bolsa Escola education transfer. In 2005, the Mexican poverty alleviation programme Progresa-Oportunidades covered 5.3 million children, providing cash transfers conditional on a child's school attendance. Researchers calculate that extending such programmes to all children of primary school age below the poverty line in eighteen Latin American countries would cost US$2.4 billion a year.

Box 3.1: Policies to reduce gender inequalities

The gender parity goal for 2005 was missed in most developing countries but significant progress had been made since 1999 in several of those that had the largest gaps against girls in primary school enrolment. A few examples of how this happened:

Burkina Faso: Girls' school participation has been encouraged through groups for mothers of schoolchildren. In addition, parents of girls entering primary school are no longer required to pay contributions to parent-teacher associations.

Ethiopia: Education Sector Development Programmes focus on actions to increase equality, particularly for girls, pastoral groups and children with special needs. Actions include community sensitization campaigns and programmes to accompany girls to school and to install toilets and water supply in schools. Teacher-training colleges have set quotas to increase the number of female teachers.

India: Targeted measures include free textbooks for all girls up to grade 8, the installation of separate toilets for girls, bridging courses for out-of-school girls and recruitment of female teachers. A national programme launched in 2003 targets girls from disadvantaged groups and rural areas. Its holistic approach includes community mobilization, early childhood centres to release girls from caring for their siblings, free uniforms and learning materials, and gender sensitization training for teachers.

Yemen: The National Girls' Education Strategy is at the centre of the country's overall sectoral policy. Key elements include community mobilization to raise awareness of the importance of girls' and women's education, construction of co-educational and female-only schools, especially in rural areas, and more female teachers. Female secondary school graduates from remote rural areas are selected to teach lower grades in local schools. They receive in-service training and professional support. In 2006 primary school fees for girls were abolished.

Conditional cash transfer programmes have increased access to school in several middle-income Latin American countries. Extending this approach to poorer countries would require careful targeting and very stringent administrative procedures to assure transparency and minimize fraud. Experience suggests that a pilot phase is crucial to identify key constraints before going to scale. Constraints typically include political interference in selection of beneficiaries, problems with payment systems and lack of monitoring. Another frequent problem is a weak connection between transfer programmes and education policies. Transfer programmes are often designed as safety nets for disadvantaged families but usually lack specific learning objectives.

Facing up to child labour

Child labour restricts the ability to attend school. Although the number of child labourers worldwide decreased between 2000 and 2004, some 218 million children are still employed, restricting their education opportunities. Laws establishing a minimum work age, banning certain types of child labour and requiring school attendance exist in most countries, but enforcement is often weak. It is more difficult when poverty is the main reason children work. Subsidies to families have enabled more children to go to school but many continue to work at the same time.

Countries have introduced alternatives to meet working children's learning needs. Programmes tend to be small scale and have not been sufficiently evaluated. Flexible schooling adapts to the work season and compensates for lost time through independent learning modules or 'summer schools'. Intensive 'catch-up' courses can help working children follow schooling they have missed and eventually be admitted to regular school. In Bangladesh, a two-year bridging course has reached over 350,000 urban children working in the informal sector. Brazil's Child Labour Eradication Programme takes a broad approach: it includes subsidies to families, surveillance of employers' compliance with child labour laws, non-formal equivalency programmes and extra-curricular activities. An evaluation of this programme in three poor rural states found a decline in the probability of a child working and faster progression through primary school.

Reducing ethnic discrimination in schools

Children from indigenous groups and ethnic minorities are less likely to enrol in primary school and more likely to repeat grades. Data from ten Latin American countries show that disparities in educational attainment between indigenous and non-indigenous populations were more marked than disparities based on gender or area of residence.

Language of instruction plays a key role. Bilingual education programmes in Guatemala and Mexico have improved the schooling outcomes of children from indigenous communities. Such programmes require the production of learning materials in local languages and special teacher training. Children belonging to nomadic or pastoralist communities also face challenges, which governments in several countries, including Mongolia and Ethiopia, have met by providing schools with boarding and hostel facilities, though there are concerns about their quality.

In the European Union, Roma are vulnerable to education discrimination. Although systematic segregation is gradually ending, Roma children still face more informal types of exclusion. Government strategies in Central and Eastern Europe have included financial incentives for schools and learners, and the appointment of classroom mediators to support children and their families.

Inclusive education for the disabled

The recently adopted United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for inclusive education at all levels. There is increasing recognition, especially in Europe, that it is preferable for children with special needs to be taught in regular schools, albeit with various forms of special support. In recent years several developing countries have taken initiatives to promote inclusive schools. In Brazil, the 2002 Education Law emphasizes the need for schools to promote enrolment of children with specific learning needs and commits the government to providing specialized teachers. Ethiopia's special education needs strategy, introduced in 2006, is designed to encourage inclusive schooling by training teachers to identify learning difficulties and to establish support systems.

There is increasing recognition, especially in Europe, that it is preferable for children with special needs to be taught in regular schools

Scaling up learning opportunities for youth and adults

Youth and adult education programmes remain marginalized and underfunded. Some governments in recent years have made efforts to develop national frameworks for meeting the needs of youth and adults. Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand have reinforced the scope of non-formal education. China has developed materials that combine learning to read with training in agricultural and entrepreneurial skills. Bangladesh, India and Senegal have developed close partnerships with CSOs to increase learning opportunities for youth and adults. Senegal's 'faire-faire' approach, which has spread to several countries in the region, relies on non-state providers to design and implement programmes within a framework set by the state. Although enrolment in such programmes is steadily increasing, insufficient public funds and government monitoring capacity are constraints. Brazil has launched several programmes reaching close to 5 million youth and adults. In East Asia and the Pacific, the spread of community learning centres that combine education with development activities has given momentum to literacy.

Improving learning

To varying degrees, all countries face the challenge of improving the quality of education. There is no single strategy to enhance learning, but key elements include health and safety at school, enough learning time and resources, skilled and motivated teachers, and effective

pedagogy. Countries including Cambodia, Mexico and South Africa have taken a comprehensive approach to quality improvement integrating all these elements (Box 3.2).

Health, safety, learning time and textbooks

School feeding programmes encourage parents to enrol their children in primary schools and to keep them there. Evaluations from Bangladesh and Chile show that they help reduce absenteeism and dropout, and increase enrolment. Providing children with take-home rations in addition to school meals was accompanied by a sustained increase in enrolment in thirty-two sub-Saharan African countries. School-based programmes to promote health have also been linked to higher attendance in primary school.

Coordinated responses to school violence remain limited. Studies in several African and South Asian countries have found that strong management, teachers' ability to listen and respond to pupils' concerns, and opportunities for pupils to participate in school decision-making were effective in combating violence. Working closely with communities can help overcome gender-based abuse.

Many countries might be able to improve learning if they increased official instructional time to about 800 hours a year and made sure these were all actually devoted to learning. Having more textbooks is also associated with better student outcomes, especially for disadvantaged students. Some countries (e.g. Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal) have started to distribute textbooks free to priority areas or targeted groups. Others have liberalized the textbook market, with varying degrees of success.

Skilled and motivated teachers

The Dakar Framework for Action stresses that governments need to enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers to achieve EFA. Previous reports have analysed strategies for this (Box 3.3). While significant numbers of additional primary school teachers were appointed in many countries of sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia between 1999 and 2005, the effort was not in line with the sharp increase in enrolment over the period. To address shortages and limit costs, many governments are hiring teachers on temporary contracts. Contract teachers are typically paid less than regular civil service employees and are not entitled to benefits such as sick pay and pensions.

Countries with a large proportion of contract teachers in primary schools tend to be those where enrolments have expanded rapidly; in 2002, 65% of all educators in Cameroon and 56% in Senegal, for instance, were contract teachers. PTRs in these two countries are still above 40:1. Information from thirteen francophone sub-Saharan African countries shows that, in nine, more than 50% of all teachers were hired on a contract basis. In several cases, they were more likely than civil-servant

Countries with a large proportion of contract teachers in primary schools tend to be those where enrolments have expanded rapidly

Box 3.2: Comprehensive approaches to education quality

Cambodia launched the Priority Action Programme in 2000, targeting poor families by reducing the cost of schooling, offering scholarships for secondary students, providing breakfast in poor schools and introducing health components. The programme includes measures to improve teacher training and allowances to encourage teachers to take posts in hardship areas.

Mexico has scaled up programmes aimed at dispersed rural communities and indigenous populations. The programmes include ECCE provision, improvement of primary school infrastructure, supply of learning materials, training for education staff and monetary incentives for teachers to reduce turnover and absenteeism. These measures have reduced repetition rates and inequality in learning outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous children by up to 30%.

South Africa: The District Development Support Programme (1989-2003) aimed to improve the quality of education in grades 1 to 9 in four provinces with major education challenges. It included teacher training, provision of learning resources and capacity development. Evaluations showed gains in grade 3 literacy and numeracy.

Box 3.3: Attracting teachers to the profession

- Lowering teacher-training admission requirements (Mozambique).
- Making the paths to teacher training more flexible (South Africa).
- Shortening the initial teacher-training cycle (Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania).
- Balancing full-time residential training with school-based experience (Cuba, United Kingdom).
- Using distance education models (rural Africa, India).
- Offering incentives to increase performance and motivation, including (a) sufficient teacher salaries, both relative to other groups and in real terms; and (b) appropriate work conditions.
- Providing lifelong learning structures and professional activities (China, Sri Lanka)

teachers to have less than a month of training or none at all. In Chad, Mauritania and Togo, nearly three-quarters or more of contract teachers have no or little training. Salaries tend to be between a quarter and a half those of permanent teachers.

There is mixed and limited evidence regarding the impact of contract teachers on learning. Where contract teachers are employed through local communities, a positive effect on test scores has been observed in some, though not in all, cases. Absenteeism is often similar to, or higher than, that of civil-servant teachers, but again no generalizations can be made.

In the long term, can two groups of teachers with very different conditions of service be maintained? This is a key challenge for governments. Policy frameworks should be developed that preserve the flexibility and local responsiveness of contract teaching while ensuring that quality is not compromised. In the long run regular and contract teachers should be integrated into one career stream, as is the case in, for example, Mali, Senegal and some states of India.

Deploying teachers to underserved areas

In many countries high PTRs – a sign of teacher shortage – coexist with relatively large geographic disparities (examples include Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania). Teachers may prefer urban postings for several reasons, mostly related to quality of life, working conditions, opportunities for professional development and access to health facilities. Cultural and safety conditions in rural areas may also make the employment of female teachers more of a problem.

Governments use different strategies to deploy teachers so as to ease geographic disparities. In a system introduced in Turkey in 2000, state school teachers have to complete three to four years in an underserved region. In China the government waives university fees and offers a free year of courses at master's level if new graduates accept a three-year rural posting. In Lesotho and Nigeria, teachers who agree to teach in rural schools are paid bonuses or hardship allowances. However, payment delays in Nigeria have rendered the policy largely ineffective and it has not led to extensive relocation to rural areas.

Teaching and learning

Classroom practices influence teaching and learning. Of particular importance are the curriculum, the use of children's mother tongue, assessment and taking advantage of ICT.

Child-centred curricula

Country case studies prepared for this report reflect a trend to revise curricula to make classroom interaction more dynamic and child centred. There is a move away from 'chalk and talk' methods to more discovery-based learning and greater emphasis on outcomes that are broader than basic recall of facts and information. China, Morocco and Turkey are among countries that have reformed curricula since 1999. Equally important is teaching that is sufficiently structured to enable learners to acquire basic skills, such as literacy, in the early years of schooling.

HIV/AIDS education

Another important innovation in recent years has been the introduction of HIV/AIDS education. In a survey of eighteen low-income countries, nearly all had developed an HIV/AIDS curriculum but implementation was limited. A separate set of studies of school-based HIV/AIDS courses in developing countries found a strong impact on increasing HIV-related knowledge. Such courses require professional development for teachers, which remains too limited.

Promoting bilingual and multilingual instruction

Research has consistently shown that children acquire linguistic and cognitive skills more readily in their mother tongue and can then transfer these to a widely used national or regional language. While there is a long way to go in promoting multilingualism and mother tongue initial instruction in primary education, progress is being made. Cambodia has introduced several minority languages as media of instruction in pilot projects. Zambia's Primary Reading Programme uses mother tongues for the first three years of schooling as the main medium of instruction. India strongly upholds the principle of mother tongue instruction. Bilingual and multilingual education can have significant benefits for improving learning but countries must ensure that enough teachers are proficient in the mother tongue and that learning resources in various languages are widely available.

While there is a long way to go in promoting multilingualism and mother tongue initial instruction in primary education, progress is being made

Improving assessment

Assessments can help governments improve the quality of education. In Zambia, results of a national assessment led to targeted distribution of learning materials to the schools where achievement was the lowest. There is however a risk of tying assessment systems too closely to rewards and sanctions, which can lead schools to exaggerate learner progress or prevent poorly prepared students from taking exams. Many countries (Malawi,

Namibia, Swaziland) are moving towards a system of continuous assessment conducted by teachers to provide pupils with regular feedback. To be effective, assessments must be aligned with the curriculum, teachers trained to use them and parents kept informed about their children's progress or difficulties.

ICT: an emerging tool for learning

The expansion of ICT has facilitated increased use of distance education and pedagogical innovations in the classroom. With developing countries needing to train millions of new teachers, distance education can help with both initial and in-service training. In Latin America, ICT is used in ten countries to improve the quality of teacher training. India launched EDUSAT, the world's first dedicated education satellite, devoted to beaming distance learning programmes to schools, colleges, teacher-training institutions and non-formal education centres. Older technologies continue to play an important role in increasing access to both formal and non-formal education. Radio and television have helped expand access to secondary schooling in Brazil, India and Mexico, among others.

ICT has the potential to improve education quality through new modes of learning that are more interactive and participatory. It can also link schools together to share experiences. School networks have spread in recent years. SchoolNet Africa involves more than twenty African countries, while the New Partnership for Africa's Development has launched a campaign to connect more than 550,000 schools in Africa to the Internet by 2020.

Despite enthusiasm about ICT, rigorous study of its impact on learning is still limited and mixed, especially in developing countries. Country studies suggest that successful efforts to integrate ICT into classrooms rely on a holistic approach encompassing the curriculum, teacher training and infrastructure needs.

Restoring education in difficult circumstances

Although the number of armed conflicts around the world has been declining, most wars continue to be fought in the developing world, where civilians account for the majority of casualties. A particularly severe breach of human rights is the recruitment of children into armed groups: an estimated 250,000 children continue to be used as child soldiers. It is vital for child soldiers to be reintegrated into their communities through specially designed programmes, as in southern Sudan (Box 3.4).

Box 3.4: Education for child soldiers in southern Sudan

Developed by CARE during the war in southern Sudan, the Miith Akolda curriculum aims to disarm and rehabilitate children associated with armed groups. Transit camps were set up away from the front line combat zone. Besides classes, the programme incorporated activities such as problem-solving, health and hygiene, singing and dancing, children's rights, story telling, sports and physical education. It was devised to be flexible since children initially were often unable to cope with many hours of learning. The time spent in schooling was gradually increased as children became accustomed to life in the camps and learned routine tasks such as washing, preparing meals, collecting wood and water, and washing clothes. As a result, the children took responsibility for the camps and the routine helped stabilize their lives, allowing the slow process of reintegration and learning to take place.

By investing in education in post-conflict situations, governments and the international community send out a forceful message about the future

By investing in education in post-conflict situations, governments and the international community send out a forceful message about the future. In Uganda, for example, during the first post-conflict election campaign of the 1990s, the ruling party announced that primary school fees would be abolished, which helped restore faith in a more peaceful future. Renewing school infrastructure is a priority in post-conflict periods often characterized by a shortage of skilled labour. Alternative forms of schooling can play a role, as in Afghanistan. Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, NGOs have been instrumental in establishing community and home-based schools that have helped restore hope to war-torn communities. Short distances to school, a secure learning environment and locally hired women teachers are some of the features that have encouraged girls' enrolment.

Caution is required when advocating for education in post-conflict situations. Under certain conditions – segregated schools, denial of mother tongues in schools, negative images in textbooks – education can contribute to a climate of violence. Peace education and multicultural education help overcome distrust and hatred between groups, and give youth tools with which to critically analyse their attitudes and communicate in ways that prevent conflict.

Education expenditure: increasing in regions with the greatest needs

Cost of schooling: still too high for the poorest households

Basic education: benefiting from debt relief initiatives

Chapter 4. Progress in financing education for all

Donors: too many giving priority to post-primary levels

Aid for basic education: a rise between 2000 and 2004, but decline in 2005

Shift from project to sector-wide support: better coordination

The ultimate responsibility for achieving EFA lies with governments, but for many countries, particularly the poorest, progress also relies on support from donors. A kind of compact is embedded in the Dakar Framework: if developing country governments demonstrate that the EFA goals are being given greater priority, in terms of higher spending and solid plans developed through wide consultation, then donors will provide additional resources to help implement these plans.

Seven years since the Dakar Framework was endorsed by 164 countries, what is the record? This chapter reviews national financial commitments, trends in aid to basic education and initiatives to make aid more effective.

Are governments spending enough on basic education?

A majority of governments, particularly in the least developed countries and most noticeably in sub-Saharan Africa, have risen to the challenge of increasing the financial priority given to education, including basic education. Nevertheless, many countries still allocate very low shares of GNP and total government expenditure to education.

Education expenditure as a share of GNP tends to be highest across countries of North America and Western Europe, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa (Table 4.1). The variations between countries within the different regions, though, are large. Out of 105 countries outside of North America and Western Europe, twenty-six spent 6% or more of GNP on education in 2005 while twenty-four spent 3% or less.

Overall education expenditure in GNP increased between 1999 and 2005 in fifty of the eighty-four countries with data for both years. Across Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia and the Pacific, South and West Asia and the Arab States, the number of countries in which the share increased was almost matched by the number where it decreased (the respective totals being twenty-three and nineteen). However, in sub-Saharan Africa, the share increased in eighteen out of twenty-four countries.

A majority of governments, particularly in the least developed countries, have risen to the challenge of increasing the financial priority given to education

Table 4.1: Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP and as % of total government expenditure (median), 2005

Sub-Saharan Africa	Arab States	Central Asia	East Asia and the Pacific	South and West Asia	Latin America and the Caribbean	North America and Western Europe	Central and Eastern Europe
Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP							
5.0	4.5	3.2	4.7	3.6	5.0	5.7	4.9
Total public education expenditure as % of total government expenditure							
17.5	25.7	18.0	15.0	14.6	13.4	12.7	12.8

Source: See Chapter 4 in the full EFA Report.

Public spending on primary education is one of the strongest policy weapons available to governments to advance a poverty reduction agenda

The share of education expenditure in GNP is a result of several factors, including government ability to collect domestic revenue. A relatively low share does not necessarily mean education is a low government priority; it may signal a small public sector.

The share of education in total government expenditure can be a more direct measure of priority. Data for 2005 are available for 87 countries. Among the Arab States, those countries with data tend to devote a significantly higher proportion of total expenditure to education than do governments in other regions (Table 4.1). The next highest proportion is for Central Asia, followed by sub-Saharan Africa. East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South and West Asia have the lowest proportions of education expenditure in government spending.

Information on change in the share of education in total government spending between 1999 and 2005 is available for only forty countries, of which fifteen are in Latin America and the Caribbean. Among the forty, all four Arab States increased the share, while just two out of four did in South and West Asia and one out of five in sub-Saharan Africa.

Rates of growth in total education expenditure since 1999 have been impressive for many countries. For the twenty-four countries with data in sub-Saharan Africa the median rate of growth was 5.5% or more a year; for five countries in South and West Asia it was 5.1%. The rates were lower in East Asia and the Pacific (4.7%) and in Latin America and the Caribbean (2.4%). Central Asia registered the highest rate of growth (8.1%).

It is encouraging that in the two regions where most of the world's out-of-school children live (sub-Saharan Africa, and South and West Asia), education expenditure has been increasing rapidly, although not in all countries.

Spending on primary education favoured in low-income countries

On average, low-income countries devote almost half their education expenditure to the primary level, compared with around 38% in middle-income countries and 25% in high-income ones. Compared with middle- and high-income countries, the share received by secondary education is particularly modest (28%) in low-income countries. As the pressure to expand secondary school enrolment intensifies in low-income countries so will the contest with primary education for increases in the education budget. Information on the change in the share of public expenditure on primary education between 1999 and 2005 is limited to nineteen developing countries and is very mixed (increase in seven, decrease in twelve).

Public spending on primary education is one of the strongest policy weapons available to governments to advance a poverty reduction agenda. A study in Ethiopia found that increases in public expenditure on education between 1996 and 2000 led to more spending on children in the poorest households, and particularly on girls.

Geographic disparities in education expenditure are often widest within large countries, especially those with federal structures. In recent years, Brazil, India and Nigeria, for example, have taken measures to compensate relatively underdeveloped and under-resourced regions, which generally have the lowest levels of educational provision and attainment.

Heavy charges for poor households

While some governments have taken initiatives to reduce the financial burden of schooling on households, the reality is that in many countries families are still required to make substantial contributions for the education of their children, thereby limiting access for the poorest.

First, there are contributions to educational institutions per se. A study of eleven low- and middle-income developing countries finds that, in nine, households assume more than one-quarter of total expenditure on educational institutions nationwide. In Chile and Jamaica the household share exceeds 40%; and there is evidence that it has been rising in Argentina, Chile, India, Jamaica and Thailand. In general, governments in developing countries tend to fund a greater share of primary and secondary education than of tertiary. Still, households often contribute around 20% of total expenditure at the primary and secondary level.

Despite constitutional provisions guaranteeing free primary education, most children in public primary schools face some type of charge, commonly for uniforms, supplies, transport, contributions to parent associations and improvements in school facilities. A recent survey reveals that out of ninety-four countries, only sixteen have no school charges at primary level. Costs can be as large as one-third of household discretionary income, representing a heavy burden for the poorest families. In most countries the poor allocate a higher share of their resources to education than do better-off households. The financial effort required to continue beyond primary education is often even more significant for lower-income households. 'Lack of money', 'economic problems', 'need to work', 'family can't afford school expenses' are the main reasons cited in several studies on why children are not attending school. In Uganda, 71% of children surveyed on why they dropped out of primary school before fees were abolished cited the cost of attendance as the main reason.

Exacerbating the effects of these costs, many households tend to invest less in children for whom the value of schooling is not perceived to be so important, or when cultural norms lead to different treatment of children in the same household. When there are preferences, girls and older children are generally at a disadvantage.

External aid to EFA

The Dakar meeting in 2000 was intended to reinvigorate the movement towards UPE and basic education, and galvanize increased donor support. In the years immediately following it, total commitments of official development assistance (ODA) for education rapidly increased, reaching US$10.7 billion in 2004 compared with US$6.5 billion in 2000, a gain of 65% in real terms (see Figure 4.1). However, in 2005, allocations fell by over US$2 billion, taking commitments to education almost back to their 2002 level. The share of aid allocated to the education sector remained stable at about 13% for developing countries and 16% in low-income ones.

Total aid to basic education across all developing countries increased at an even higher rate between 2000 and 2004, by 90%, from US$2.7 billion to US$5.1 billion – but also suffered a 27% fall in commitments in 2005. It is difficult to assess whether this drop is due to the normal volatility of aid commitments or reveals a real change in donor engagement towards education. In 2004, some of the largest donors committed very high amounts of aid to education, and particularly to basic education, to several large countries.

Aid disbursements measure the actual transfer of financial resources and hence the amount of ODA spent on education systems in recipient countries. Disbursements for education across all developing countries reached US$6.7 billion in 2005, up from US$4.4 billion in 2002 (11% per year). Those for basic education were US$2.8 billion in both 2004 and 2005. As commitments in 2005 decreased significantly, disbursements will likely stay at the same level or even decrease in the next few years.

Increased focus on low-income countries

The increase in total aid to education since 1999 has particularly benefited low-income countries. Aid to education in these countries averaged US$5.3 billion in 2004 and 2005, up from an average of US$3.5 billion annually in 1999 and 2000. Their share of total aid to education increased from 50% to 56%. The trend was even more pronounced in the allocation of aid to basic education. In 2004 and 2005, low-income countries received an average of US$3.1 billion annually, almost three-quarters of the aid to basic education allocated to all developing countries, up from US$1.8 billion in 1999 and 2000.

Figure 4.1: Total aid commitments to education and to basic education, 1999-2005

Source: See Chapter 4 in the full EFA Report.

The regional distribution of aid to education has also changed since 2000. While sub-Saharan African countries continue to receive the largest amount for education and for basic education, the share for South and West Asia increased from 12% to 20% for education and from 16% to 31% for basic education.

This is not to imply that aid to basic education is targeted to the neediest among the poorest countries. Two simple comparisons suggest that it is not. Countries with a high proportion of out-of-school children (e.g. Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, the Niger) received relatively low amounts of aid to basic education per primary school-age child. Also, some countries with a relatively high level of income per capita received relatively large amounts of aid for basic education per primary school-age child while some poor countries received relatively low amounts. The thirty-five fragile states received 14% of all aid to basic education in 2005, similar to their 1999 share.

Turning to the fifteen largest recipient countries of aid to education in 2004 and 2005, four South and West Asian countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan) received 17%, and five sub-Saharan Africa countries (Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania) received 10%. The four largest recipients of aid to basic education are in South and West Asia, and India alone received 11% of total allocations to basic education over 2004–2005. The share of basic education in total aid to education has increased since 1999 for each of the top ten recipient countries.

Donor strategies for education

The priority devoted to education in total aid varies greatly among bilateral donors. France was the largest contributor to the education sector during 2004–2005

In 2004 and 2005, low-income countries received US$3.1 billion annually for basic education, up from US$1.8 billion in 1999 and 2000

Some of the largest donors to the education sector allocate less than one-third of their total education aid to the basic level

with US$1.5 billion committed per year, or 40% of its total aid to sectors. The next largest donors were Japan and the United States, whose aid to education averaged US$1 billion and US$0.7 billion a year, respectively. These levels, however, represent a relatively small share of their total aid. Japan allocates 12% of its sector aid to education (up from 5% in 1999) and the United States less than 4%. Among multilateral donors, the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) and the European Commission were the largest contributors to education in 2004 and 2005 (respectively, US$1.4 billion and US$0.8 billion annually).

Bilateral donors have had very different strategies towards basic education. Some, including Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States, clearly make basic education a top priority within the education sector and earmark more than half their education aid to it. But some of the largest donors to the education sector, including France, Germany and Japan, allocate less than one-third of their total education aid to the basic level (see Table 4.2). These donors allocate a substantial share of their aid to education to the post-secondary level. It is also clear that donors allocate very small levels of aid to pre-primary education and adult literacy.

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Under her teacher's eye, a young girl does her sums in a multigrade school, Indonesia.

Table 4.2: Aid to education and to basic education, by donor, 1999–2000 and 2004–2005 averages

	Total aid to education		Total aid to basic education		Basic education as a share of total education		Basic education as a share of total sector-allocable ODA	
	1999–2000 annual average	2004–2005 annual average	1999–2000 annual average	2004–2005 annual average	1999–2000 annual average	2004–2005 annual average	1999–2000 annual average	2004–2005 annual average
	Constant 2005 US$ millions		Constant 2005 US$ millions		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
France	1 548	1 537	354	279	23	18	9	7
Japan	517	1 047	213	281	41	27	2	3
Germany	829	760	119	146	14	19	3	3
United States	355	672	194	563	55	84	3	3
United Kingdom	435	646	320	540	74	84	8	13
Netherlands	272	570	176	375	65	66	12	13
Canada	95	223	48	173	51	78	6	11
Norway	137	186	85	117	62	63	8	9
Spain	225	155	68	59	30	38	6	7
Belgium	89	155	15	35	17	23	3	4
Denmark	69	137	42	82	61	60	4	6
Sweden	68	129	44	66	65	51	5	4
Australia	239	127	63	57	26	45	6	5
Austria	122	89	5	4	4	5	2	2
Italy	53	86	15	39	29	46	3	9
Finland	26	66	12	40	44	61	7	10
Ireland	17	61	9	38	51	63	14	12
Portugal	36	60	9	8	26	14	4	4
New Zealand	0	58	0	31	...	54	...	19
Switzerland	45	35	19	16	43	45	3	2
Greece	0	30	0	4	...	14	...	3
Luxembourg	0	26	0	12	...	46	...	11
Total DAC	**5 180**	**6 812**	**1 811**	**2 944**	**35**	**43**	**5**	**6**
International Development Association	787	1 355	406	822	52	61	7	9
European Commission	709	762	451	351	64	46	7	4
Asian Development Fund	125	308	9	78	7	25	1	5
African Development Fund	74	141	46	55	62	39	7	4
UNICEF	28	64	28	63	100	99	16	14
Fast Track Initiative	0	44	0	44	...	100	...	100
Inter-American Development Bank Special Fund	5	35	3	15	50	42	1	4
Total multilaterals	**1 734**	**2 709**	**945**	**1 428**	**55**	**53**	**6**	**6**
Total	**6 914**	**9 520**	**2 756**	**4 373**	**40**	**46**	**5**	**6**

Note: (...) indicates that data are not available.
Source: See Chapter 4 in the full EFA Report.

On average, multilateral donors allocated 53% of their total aid to education to the basic level in 2004 and 2005, compared with 43% for bilateral donors. However, the bilateral share represented an increase of eight percentage points over 1999–2000. The Fast Track Initiative's Catalytic Fund (for countries with limited donor representation) allocated all of its aid to basic education. By the end of June 2007, donors had committed a total of US$930 million for the 2003-2007 period, and US$130 million had been disbursed to eighteen countries.

Among some of the largest contributors to education, there was a dramatic reduction in aid to basic education in 2005. The United Kingdom and IDA decreased their commitments by 70% and 80%, respectively. The donors that reduced aid the most in 2005 were those that had concentrated their distribution in 2004, when India and Bangladesh received three-quarters of the United Kingdom's aid to basic education and half of IDA's. Other donors spread their aid more widely. France, the United States and the European Commission have a core group of countries to which they allocate aid to basic education almost every year, spreading the rest over several countries. The behaviour of a few donors in delivering large amounts of aid to a few countries in 2004 partly explains the large drop in 2005. If such a drop were repeated in the future, the situation would be serious.

Debt relief programmes are benefiting some low-income countries. To qualify for the Enhanced Highly Indebted

Poor Country Initiative, countries must prepare and implement a poverty reduction strategy. Among thirty countries eligible for relief, spending on poverty reduction programmes increased on average from 6.4% to 8.5% of GDP between 1999 and 2005. In Mali, 37% of the savings from debt relief was directed towards basic education every year between 2001 and 2005, on average. As a result, expenditure on basic education increased by an additional 15% over the period.

Delivering aid more effectively

In twenty out of the sixty-eight least developed countries, at least eight major donors were operating in the education sector between 2003 and 2005, and ten of those countries had at least twelve donors. Since 2000 the movement to improve the impact of aid through greater harmonization between donors and a better match of donor and government priorities has accelerated. There has been growing support among many donors for programmes that reach the whole education sector, rather than fund specific projects. This approach reduces the high transaction costs for recipient countries when development agencies 'go it alone' with their own individual projects.

Since 2000 the movement to improve the impact of aid through greater harmonization between donors and a better match of donor and government priorities has accelerated

The move towards better cooperation among donors culminated in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, signed by 107 countries and 26 international organizations in 2005. It introduced indicators of progress and targets of good practice for its five key tenets of aid effectiveness: ownership, harmonization, alignment, results and mutual accountability. These principles are also central to the EFA Fast Track Initiative, with its emphasis on endorsement of an education sector plan by the local donor group.

The Paris Declaration stipulates that, by 2010, 66% of aid flows are to be provided through programmes rather than projects. For the education sector as a whole, across all countries, the share of aid provided to sector programmes increased between 1999–2000 and 2004–2005 from 6% to 18%, while the share of project aid remained almost constant at 11% to 12% (much of total aid is in the form of technical cooperation, including post-secondary education scholarships). For basic education the change was even more substantial: support for sector programmes increased from 20% to 34% and project support fell from 20% to 13%. The situation is still more pronounced for the poorest countries. Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden each devoted over 40% of their aid to education in the form of sector support in 2004–2005.

Certain conditions are required for the funding of sector-wide reform to work. Governments must have 'ownership' of the reform and the finance ministry must stand behind it. Sufficient capacity within ministries in recipient countries needs to exist to make sure decisions are made and carried through effectively.

How well are new ways of delivering aid working in countries on the receiving end? In the United Republic of Tanzania, around 50% of all aid is in the form of direct budget support provided by fourteen donors. Reviews point to higher spending on both education and health. Still, in 2004, the country had 110 externally supported education projects with an average size of under US$1 million. In Bangladesh an evaluation of the Primary Education Development Programme, supported by ten donors, suggested that government-donor coordination was poor. Aid agency staff contended in addition that donors basically thrust the primary education reform upon the government. Also, in several countries surveyed, substantive government-donor policy dialogue is lacking in areas such as education quality.

Several donors have conducted qualitative assessments of their basic education programmes. An evaluation of the World Bank's support to primary education between 1990 and 2005 concluded that projects had helped countries increase enrolment but had been less effective in reducing school dropout rates and improving learning outcomes, particularly among the disadvantaged. Only around 60% of the 700 projects evaluated were rated as likely to be sustainable. A review of thirty-two education projects funded by the Asian Development Bank found that the most successful ones were based on participatory approaches and shared ownership.

To sum up the financing picture, since 2000 there has been a global acceleration in financial commitments made to EFA by both national governments and donors, but with a great deal of variation. In some countries, governments and donors have adopted new and more effective ways of working together, while in others the necessary conditions do not yet exist.

Chapter 5. The way forward

Break time in a school located in a slum area, Yemen.

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As we move beyond the midway point from Dakar to 2015, key questions arise. What are the prospects for achieving the EFA goals and how can governments and actors at every level accelerate the movement towards quality education for all?

Across the world more than 18 million new teachers will need to be employed by 2015

Projections for countries with relevant data suggest that without further acceleration:

- 58 of the 86 countries that have not yet reached UPE will not achieve it by 2015;
- 72 out of 101 countries will not succeed in halving their adult illiteracy rates by 2015;
- only 18 of the 113 countries that missed the gender parity goal at primary and secondary level in 2005 will achieve it by 2015.

Countries making significant progress towards universal enrolment in primary education have tended to increase their education expenditure as a share of GNP. In countries where the progress has been slower, the average share has decreased.

Across the world more than 18 million new teachers will need to be employed by 2015. Sub-Saharan Africa faces the greatest challenge: to reach UPE, the stock of teachers will have to increase from 2.4 million in 2004 to 4 million in 2015, in addition to the 2.1 million new teachers required to replace those leaving the teaching workforce.

Recent increases in economic growth across low-income countries create the potential for higher government expenditure on EFA, as does the increasing share of national income that many governments in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa accord to education. But governments face the need to spend more on secondary and tertiary education as well as on EFA.

The amount of aid to basic education for low-income countries in 2004 and 2005 – an average of US$3.1 billion per year – is clearly well below the estimated annual US$11 billion required to reach the EFA goals. Significant amounts of aid have been channelled successfully to several countries, including Bangladesh, India, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania, suggesting that opportunities for scaling up exist and could be widened.

The priority that several bilateral donors give to basic education needs to increase. Several donors allocate to basic education less than 10% of their aid to sectors (Table 4.2). None of the three largest donors of aid to sectors – the United States, Japan and Germany – allocated more than 4% to basic education in 2004. If bilateral donors keep their pledges made in 2005 to increase total aid and raise the share of basic education in their total sector aid to at least 10%, bilateral aid to basic education could reach US$8.6 billion by 2010. Adding this to multilateral aid to basic education could raise the total to US$10 billion.

The distribution of increased levels of aid for basic education is of great importance. Less than 2% of aid to basic education goes to pre-primary education and evidence shows donors give very little priority to literacy programmes for youth and adults.

What do the projections for primary education and literacy imply for the future distribution of aid across countries for EFA? Overall, the thirty-two low-income countries identified as having the lowest levels of education development received one-third of total aid to basic education in 2004–2005, roughly the same as before Dakar. Fifteen have had their plans endorsed by the FTI and a further nine are expected to in 2008. A key question is how to channel aid to the eight remaining countries, all but two of which are fragile states. Six of the thirty-two countries received below-average amounts of aid to basic education per primary school-age child in 2004–2005 and in four countries the amount of aid per school-age child had decreased significantly since 1999–2000.

Towards an agenda to make EFA happen

At global level:

- All stakeholders need to ensure that EFA remains a priority in the face of other emerging issues such as climate change and public health, and that the focus is not just on UPE.
- Policy and implementation must emphasize inclusion, literacy, quality, capacity development and finance.
- The international architecture should be made more effective, encompassing all of the EFA agenda.

National governments need to:

- take full responsibility for all the EFA goals, even if all services are not delivered through the public sector;
- include the poorest and most marginalized children through better school infrastructure, elimination of tuition fees, provision of additional financial support to the poorest households, flexible schooling for working children and youth, and inclusive education for the disabled, indigenous people and other disadvantaged groups;
- ensure that gender parity is sustained and that gender equality is pursued;
- recruit and train teachers on a vast scale;
- promote a diversity of youth and adult education programmes;

- greatly expand adult literacy programmes;
- make sure pupils master basic skills by paying particular attention to teacher training, safe and healthy learning environments, mother tongue instruction and sufficient learning resources;
- maintain public spending and increase it where necessary;
- improve management capacity at all levels of government;
- formally engage with civil society in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring.

Civil society should:

- further strengthen organizations that enable citizens to advocate for EFA, and to hold government and the international community to account;
- assure regular and timely participation with national governments in the development, implementation and monitoring of education policies;
- encourage training of CSO members in education policy analysis and finance.

Bilateral and multilateral agencies need to:

- increase the amount of aid they provide to basic education and deploy it differently;
- raise to at least 10% the share of basic education in bilateral sectoral aid and further increase multilateral aid to basic education;
- make long-term commitments to enable finance ministers to approve major policy initiatives;
- focus special attention on sub-Saharan Africa and fragile states;
- allocate more to early childhood programmes, literacy, other programmes for youth and adults, and capacity development;
- continue efforts to align aid behind country-led sector plans.

The evidence since Dakar is clear: determined national governments have made progress in all regions and increased aid has worked to support this progress. This momentum must be maintained and accelerated, in the short time left to 2015, if the right to education at every age is to be fulfilled.

Education for All by 2015 Will we make it?

This year's *EFA Global Monitoring Report* marks the midterm point in the international commitment to provide a quality education to all by 2015. It assesses progress towards expanding early childhood learning programmes, achieving free and universal primary education, realizing gender parity and gender equality in education, reducing adult illiteracy and improving education quality.

There have been some real gains, especially in getting more children into primary school. Many governments have taken measures to reduce the cost of schooling and tackle obstacles to girls' education. But great challenges remain. There are not enough schools, teachers and learning materials. Poverty and disadvantage remain a major barrier for millions of children and youth. Policies exist that address both access and quality, but they require much bolder action, from the earliest age, to reach the most vulnerable groups and dramatically expand literacy programmes for youth and adults. Aid to education must also be stepped up in line with promises donors made in 2000.

This Summary Report also highlights innovative projects and strategies, and underscores the urgency of pushing forward with a common agenda for action.

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Children studying at the Kishori Kendra school in the State of Bihar, India.
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