



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Basic Data

Despite progress, Senegal is unlikely to meet the Education for All (EFA) Goals by 2015¹ and is ranked 117th out of 127 countries in the EFA Development Index².

Primary Education Enrollment			Transition from Primary to Secondary		Secondary Education Enrollment			Adult Literacy (15 and over)	
M	F	GPI ³	M	F	M	F	GPI	M	F
72%	74%	1.04	62%	57%	34%	27%	0.79	62%	39%

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report statistical tables (school year ending in 2009).

Girls' education

As the above statistics show, although gender parity has been achieved in favour of girls in primary education (for every 100 boys enrolled, there are approximately 104 girls), as the level of education increases girls' enrollment rates decrease. Dropping out of school is significantly common not only in the transition from primary to secondary, but also within secondary education. In 2009, girls' enrollment in secondary education was 27% and gender parity was still far from being achieved, where for every 100 boys there were approximately 79 girls.

Women's literacy

The literacy rate is still of concern in the country. As a consequence of low enrollment and poor quality of education, only 39% of women aged 15 years and over are literate, compared to 62% of men. In other words, approximately one out of six women in Senegal (61%) still lacks basic literacy skills.

Challenges and Issues

Illiteracy is considered to be one of the main factors for intergenerational poverty in Senegal, and this is more serious in the rural areas of the country. Households with a high number of illiterates are found to be among the poorest and most vulnerable population groups⁴. Poverty in the Senegalese context is manifested not only in terms of lack of financial resources, but more importantly, in terms of lack of ability and opportunity of the household to improve their lives. This situation affects the most vulnerable groups such as households led by women - particularly divorced women and widows, the unemployed, those who have never enrolled in school or those with lower levels of education⁵. In contrast, the level of social and economic capital increases as the level of education attained by the household head increases.

¹UNESCO (2012). Senegal EFA Profile. Dakar, UNESCO.

²UNESCO (2011). Global Monitoring Report. Paris, UNESCO.

³The gender parity index (GPI) is the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between sexes.

⁴UNESCO BREDA (2011). *Projet d'Alphabétisation des Jeunes Filles et Jeunes Femmes au Sénégal*.

⁵Ibid.

In certain regions of the country, girls are commonly employed in economic activities and therefore parents from poor areas tend to keep their children, especially girls, out of school in order for them to earn some additional income.

Alongside the economic reasons, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, the long distance to school, unsafe roads and poor infrastructure of school buildings, as well as the low quality of education constitute other impediments to girls' enrollment, retention and completion of education. Furthermore, socio-cultural norms and practices concerning the role and position of women in society and other challenges such as gender-based violence, contribute to the low literacy rate of girls and women.

Girls' and women's literacy in Senegal

The project "*Girls' and women's literacy in Senegal*" was initiated in August 2011 and officially launched by the Government of Senegal and UNESCO on 30 January 2012 in Dakar, Senegal. This project, which benefits from funding of the amount of US\$ 750.000 from Procter and Gamble, for a two-year period, is being implemented in seven regions of Senegal: Dakar, Diourbel, Fatick, Kedougou, Matam, Saint-Louis and Tambacounda. It targets a population of 40,000 young girls and women, working through community learning centres, with the objectives of (i) improving their access to quality literacy programmes through ICT, in local languages and in the French language; (ii) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of training programmes for neo-literates through ICTs, and (iii) improving professional and economic opportunities for girls and women and creating an enabling environment for income-generation through ICTs.

Five categories of activities have been designed to provide a comprehensive response to the literacy challenge in Senegal and support the Government's national programme on literacy. These include providing literacy classes to illiterate learners through face-to-face classes in reading, writing, basic numeracy and economic empowerment; providing literacy training through the use of ICT to neo-literates (through mobile phones and online programmes); targeting illiterate and neo-literate learners through radio and television programmes; training in ICT tools through the use of local languages; supporting primary-school girls at risk of dropping out from school and providing income-generating activities for neo-literates, involving whole communities.

A total of one hundred trainers have been taught to use competency-based teaching approaches in the classrooms. Another hundred trainers are currently being trained in the use of ICTs in local languages to support the learners who will be benefitting from the ICT-based literacy programmes.

As of April 2012, a total of 160 classes have opened under the programme, providing access to face-to-face learning for some 3000 illiterate learners, and supplementary classes to some 1000 primary-school young girls facing difficulty in their schooling.

“Better Life, Better Future”

UNESCO Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education

One Year On

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<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/>