



Education is the key to lasting development

As world leaders prepare to meet in New York later this month to discuss progress on the Millennium Development Goals, UNESCO's *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* is releasing new data to highlight how education helps fight poverty, and empowers people with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to shape a better future. According to the Report's team:

- 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills – that is equivalent to a 12% drop in the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 1.8 million children's lives could have been saved in 2008 if their mothers had at least secondary education – a 41% reduction.

The past decade has seen remarkable progress in many countries in getting more children, especially girls, into school – bringing the second and third Millennium Development Goals nearer. However, the Report warns that the momentum built up since the beginning of the decade is starting to wane, and that the pace of progress is slipping. Governments need to urgently step up their efforts to reach the 2015 target.

- While the number of primary school-age children out of school fell by almost 37 million from 1999 to 2008, there were still 69 million children out of school in 2008¹.
- The past five years have witnessed a marked slowdown in the rate of progress towards universal primary education. Compared with the first half of the decade, progress has halved. If current trends continue, there will be more children out of school in 2015 than there are today.

This note provides background information on progress towards universal primary education (MDG 2) and gender parity in education (MDG 3) and outlines education's vital contribution towards the other goals. It draws on data prepared by UNESCO for the period 1999 to 2008 and projections to 2015.

The full global information, including trends and projections, will be published in the 2011 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* in February 2011. See www.efareport.unesco.org.

¹ According to preliminary estimates carried out by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in March 2010.

MDG 2 - Universal Primary Education

Ensure that by 2015 any child in any country will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

There has been tremendous progress towards universal primary education, especially in developing countries, during the past decade. However, many countries are still to reach this goal, and the 69 million of primary school-aged children still not attending school in 2008 bears witness to the challenges that remain to reach this goal by 2015.

Progress:

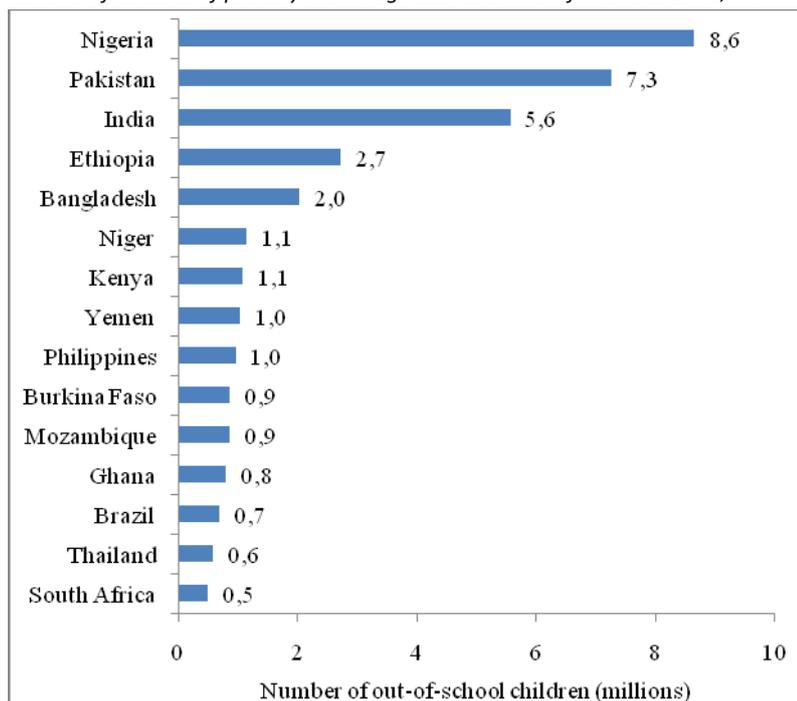
- Newly released estimates from UNESCO reveal that the number of primary school-age children out of school fell by 37 million from 1999 to 2008.
- In 2008, 52 countries out of 152 with data had achieved universal primary enrolment.
- Some countries have increased primary enrolment massively over the last decade. Ethiopia cut the number of out of school children from 6.5 million in 1999 to 2.7 million in 2008. In Tanzania, at the beginning of the decade less than half of all primary school-aged children were in school – today nearly all children that age attend primary school. In Morocco, there were 1.2 million children out of school in 1999, a figure that had dropped to over 360,000 in 2008.
- Some countries with high numbers of children out of school are making great progress towards universal primary education. India, with about 5.6 million children out of school in 2007, is projected to reduce this number to about 750,000 by 2015. Both Kenya and Yemen, both with about 1 million children out of school in 2008, are set to almost halve this number by 2015.

Challenges:

- There is a danger that the momentum built up since the beginning of the decade is starting to wane, and that progress is slowing down. Moreover, the financial crisis has put extra pressure on stretched public funding as well as households struggling to afford schooling.
- Deep-rooted inequalities linked to wealth, gender, ethnicity, language and location are still a major barrier to universal primary education.
- Out of school numbers have been rising in some countries such as South Africa and in Nigeria. Nigeria, which is home to the largest number of children out of school (8.6 million in 2007), is expected to still have 8.3 million children still not in school in 2015.
- Getting children into school is a vital first step. But to receive the full benefits of education, they must continue to attend classes. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, about 38 million children drop out of school each year.
- The key missing ingredient in terms of the 2015 target on UPE is an estimated 1.9 million new teachers required annually to 2015.
- Past failures in education are still measurable today. Globally about 796 million adults are not able to read or write.

Figure 1: More than half of the world's out-of-school children live in just 15 countries

Number of children of primary school age who were out of school in 2008, selected countries.

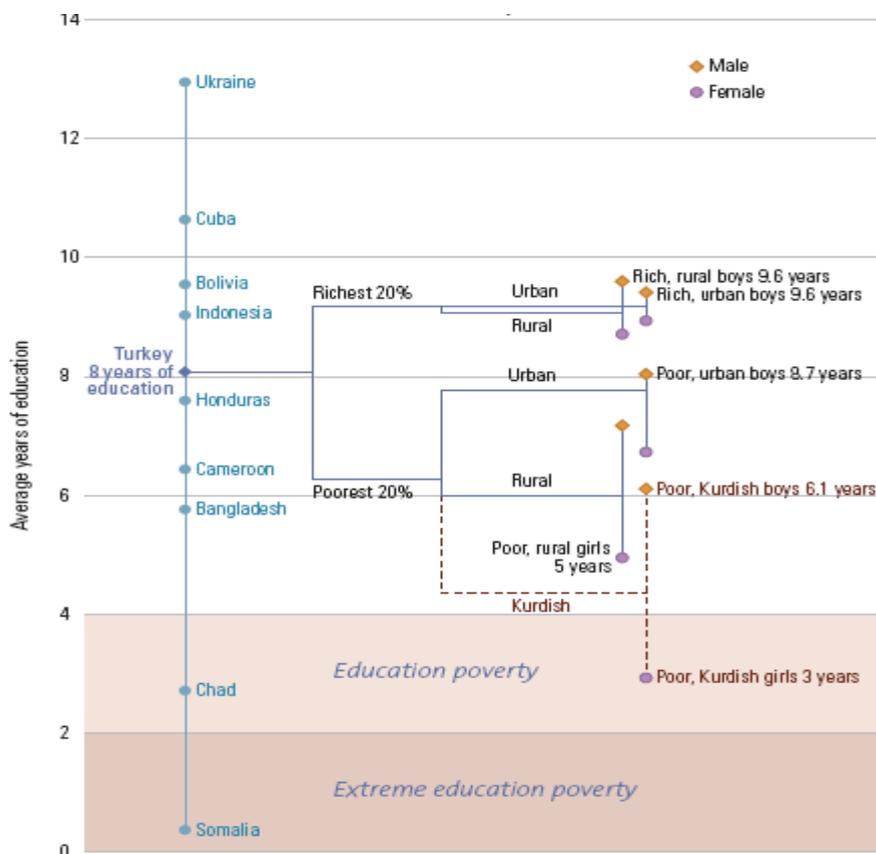


Note: Data for India, Nigeria, South Africa are UIS estimates for 2007. Data for Burkina Faso, Niger and Thailand are for 2009.

Source: Education for All Global Monitoring Report

Figure 2 - Inequality and marginalization is holding back progress in education

Education marginalization in Turkey



Source: Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2010

MDG 3 – Gender parity

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

The world is edging slowly towards gender equity in primary and secondary school enrolment. Some of the greatest progress has been seen in South and West Asia, with improvements also marked in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States.

Progress

- The gender gap in primary school enrolment has narrowed to over 96 girls for every 100 boys in developing countries, a 5 percentage point improvement since 1999.
- In 2008, 112 of 184 countries with data had reached gender parity in primary education. For secondary education, only 57 out of 167 countries with data had reached parity.
- Some countries that are off track for gender parity in primary school, such as Guinea, Mozambique and Yemen, have made substantial progress since 1999. Benin narrowed the gender gap, going from just 67 girls to every 100 boys in school in 1999 to 87 girls in 2008.

Challenges

- In 2008, 72 of 184 countries with data had not reached gender parity in primary education. For secondary education, 110 out of 167 countries with data had not reached parity.
- Some countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire and Eritrea have made little progress in narrowing large gender gaps.
- Getting girls into schools demands concerted action and political leadership to change attitudes and household labour practices. Efforts must be scaled up in order to ensure transition from primary to secondary education and make sure that girls can complete a full course of education.
- It is only possible to make projections for 47 countries, but out of these, 38 will fall short of the target for primary level in 2015.
- Of the 74 countries with data that still need to achieve gender parity in secondary education, current projections suggest that only fourteen will have done so by 2015.

Education and the Millennium Development Goals

UNESCO and the EFA Global Monitoring Report are holding an exhibition 'Education Counts', highlighting the key role that education plays towards all the Millennium Development Goals. With only five years until the 2015 deadline, governments can no longer afford to neglect the education agenda. For more information, and to visit the Virtual Gallery, see <http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/mdg2010>.



Education beats poverty (MDG Goal 1)

- 1) One extra year of schooling increases an individual's earnings by up to 10%.
- 2) Each additional year of schooling raises average annual gross domestic product by 0.37%. (HDR2005)
- 3) 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills.



Education promotes gender equality (MDG Goal 3)

- 1) Education helps women control how many children they have – in Mali, women with secondary education or higher have an average of 3 children ... while those with no education have an average of 7 children.
- 2) In Latin America, children whose mothers have some secondary schooling remain in school for two to three more years than children of mothers with less schooling. (IADB)
- 3) In Kenya, if women farmers are given the same level of education as their male partners, their yields for maize, beans and cowpeas increase by up to 22%. (IFPRI)



Education reduces child mortality (MDG Goal 4)

- 1) A child born to a mother who can read is 50% more likely to survive past age 5.
- 2) In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 1.8 million children's lives could have been saved in 2008 if their mothers had at least secondary education.
- 3) In Indonesia, child vaccination rates are 19% when mothers have no education. This increases to 68% when mothers have at least secondary school education.



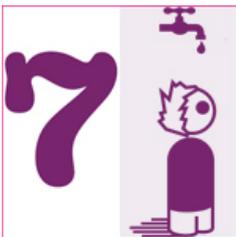
Education helps improve maternal health (MDG Goal 5)

- 1) Women with higher levels of education are most likely to delay and space out pregnancies, and to seek health care and support.
- 2) In Burkina Faso, mothers with secondary education are twice as likely to give birth in health facilities as those with no education.
- 3) In Namibia, the proportion of births assisted by skilled personnel is 60% among the poorest 20% of the population and 98% among the richest 20% of the population.



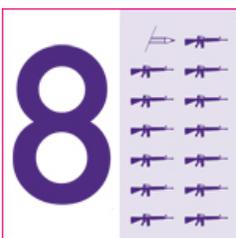
Education helps combat preventable diseases (MDG Goal 6)

- 1) Education fosters access to treatment and helps combat stigma and discrimination.
- 2) Women with post-primary education are 5 times more likely than illiterate women to be educated on the topic of HIV and AIDS. (UNFPA/UNAIDS/UNIFEM)
- 3) In Malawi, 27% of women with no education know that HIV transmission risks can be reduced by mother taking drugs during pregnancy. For women with secondary education, the figure rises to 59%.



Education helps ensure environmental sustainability (MDG Goal 7)

- 1) Education helps people make decisions that meet the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations.
- 2) 443 million school days are lost globally due to water-related illnesses. (HDR 2006)
- 3) More than 2.6 billion people still lack access to proper sanitation and 1.1 billion people have no regular access to clean water. As a result, 1.8 million children die from diarrhea each year. (HDR 2006)



Education and global development (MDG Goal 8)

- 1) An estimated US\$16 billion in aid annually is needed to reach the Education for All goals in poor countries. In 2008 poor countries received only \$2 billion in aid for basic education.
- 2) Aid to basic education in sub-Saharan Africa decreased from \$1.72 billion in 2007 to \$1.65 billion in 2008.
- 3) The worldwide military expenditure for 2009 was \$1.5 trillion. Despite the financial crisis, this represents an increase of 5.9% in real terms compared to 2008 and an increase of 49% since 2000. (SIPRI)