EFA Regional Report 2012
for the Arab States

Global Education for All Meeting,
Paris, November 21-23, 2012
The Arab region is characterized by strong heterogeneity, as it includes some of the countries with the highest per capita income in the world as well as some of poorest countries.

Gross domestic product in PPP terms for Qatar is US$108,000, while it is only US$1,894 in Sudan.

Similarly, there are large differences in terms of human development with UAE ranked 30 in the world, while Sudan is ranked 169.
Despite major progress overall in many of the MDG targets, notably in education access and gender parity, the region has failed to transform its wealth into a commensurate improvement in human welfare.

Major deficits in the areas of adult illiteracy, access to safe water, reduction of maternal mortality, child malnutrition, access to sanitation and under-five mortality.

Progress towards the MDGs has been unequal within countries as aggregate trends hide large sub-national inequalities (rich/poor, rural/urban, men/women)

Security issues also pose a serious threat to the achievement of MDGs in conflict-affected countries, namely Iraq, Palestine and Sudan.
Great disparities in pre-primary education participation: above 50% in Kuwait, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, and Qatar, but under 10% in Syria, Iraq, Djibouti and Yemen.
In average, 88% of the primary school age children are enrolled in school. Many countries are pushing close to universal enrolment. Progress has been enormous in Oman, Morocco, Djibouti, Mauritania and Yemen.
EFA achievements

Arab countries still have to enrol more than 5 million children of primary school age, of which 61% are girls.
Half of the out-of-school children live only in five countries: Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen.
Drop-out rates still remain high in Djibouti, Mauritania, Morocco and Sudan.

Number of out of school children, 2010 (in 000)

- Yemen: 857
- Iraq: 501
- Egypt: 368
- Saudi Arabia: 318
- Morocco: 134
- Mauritania: 134
- Jordan: 83
- Algeria: 82
- Djibouti: 56
- Palestine: 48
- Lebanon: 30
- Syria: 19
- Oman: 5
- Tunisia: 5
- Kuwait: 4
- Qatar: 3
EFA achievements

Participation in secondary education 69% in average
GER reported very low in Mauritania, Djibouti, Soudan, Yemen, Iraq and Morocco
In average, only 8% of the total enrolment are registered in TVET programmes
EFA achievements

Although the literacy rates for adults improved in average for the region during the last decade from 68% to 75%, they are still very low for most of the large population countries.

**Adult literacy rate, 2005-2010**

- Qatar: 96
- Palestine: 95
- Kuwait: 94
- Jordan: 93
- Bahrain: 92
- UAE: 90
- Lebanon: 90
- Libya: 89
- Oman: 87
- Saudi Arabia: 87
- Syria: 83
- Iraq: 78
- Tunisia: 78
- Arab States: 75
- Algeria: 73
- Egypt: 72
- Sudan: 71
- Yemen: 64
- Mauritania: 58
- Morocco: 56
The challenge of reducing the total illiterate population has been marginal: from 51.8 million to 50.3 million, reducing the number of illiterates by only 1.5 million. Egypt and Morocco account for more than half of the regional adult illiterates.
The 2005 gender target has been missed and unlikely to be achieved by 2015.

All countries have made progress since 1999 in the direction of the gender parity goal in primary education. Half of the countries met the target.

The progress has been slower at the secondary level of education. But few girls participate in TVET.
Education quality is the biggest challenge
All the Arab States perform below the international average (Example from TIMSS 2007 - Math)
Despite the progress achieved across the Arab region, the improvements in some countries will not be enough to reach all EFA targets on time.

There is an urgent need for key policy actions in order to accelerate the progress and to remove the remaining barriers.

To respond to the challenges—on the issues related to accessibility, affordability, cultural/social demands, curricular relevance and quality of education in the Arab States, a determined political will backed by the required resources is needed to provide the human, infrastructural, and financial resources not only to create but sustain change well after 2015.
There are high potentialities

The DAC countries total ODA coming to the Arab countries has stayed stable at around $5 billion per year for the past 40 years, except during the Iraq wars (1991 and 2003) when it peaked to $10 and $27 billion respectively.

The top ODA donors for the Arab region are USA, France, Germany, UK, Japan.

The Arab countries also provide another $4.5 billion to the Arab region. The main Arab donors are Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the UAE and recently Qatar.
There are high potentialities

A few Arab donor countries have established national development funds,

- Kuwait’s Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED),
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s Saudi Fund for Development (SFD)
- Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD).

There are also the six major multilateral agencies:

- Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD),
- Arab Gulf Program for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND),
- Arab Monetary Fund (AMF),
- Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA),
- Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
- OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID).
There are high potentialities

There are also several *Arab* charity funds which includes

- Alwaleed bin Talal Foundation (Saudi Arabia),
- Arab Science and Technology Foundation (UAE),
- Dubai Cares (United Arab Emirates),
- Gulf for Good (United Arab Emirates),
- International Humanitarian City (UAE),
- Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation (UAE),
- UAE Red Crescent Authority (UAE),
- Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation (UAE),
- Reach Out to Asia (Qatar),
- Silatech (Qatar),

It is estimated that philanthropy in the GCC gives around $15-20 billion each year. However this aid does not usually take place in an institutionalized way.
There are high potentialities

Much of the Arab bilateral ODA is untied with no conditions attached on how the funds will be used. No governance reforms or economic reforms are required in the recipient countries. This implies that funds are not properly monitored or evaluated.

Some of the Arab donor countries are establishing development agencies (such as UAE’s Office for Coordination of Foreign Aid (OCFA)) to coordinate aid.

An Arab Development Cooperation Agency should be set up to finance national development strategies and good governance projects.
UNESCO support to achieve EFA goals

ECCE:

In follow up to Damascus and Moscow Declarations in 2011, the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut has led the launch of the Arab Early Childhood Care and Education Working Group Platform in collaboration with main regional partners (UNICEF, Save Children, AGFUND, and Arab Council for Childhood Development).

The aim of this platform is to provide a place for early childhood professionals to exchange knowledge and experiences and to build bridges between those working in this field in the Arab World.
UNESCO support to achieve EFA goals

UPE:

UNESCO regional Office in Beirut, in collaboration with Arab Though Foundation, is developing the Arab Community of Practices (ACOP). The aim of ACOP is to be an interactive platform for exchanging knowledge, trends and practices in education. The platform will focus on linking theory to practices at school levels and to provide the relevant knowledge to the unreached teacher, and to educational stakeholders.

UNESCO regional Office in Beirut is also leading the “Back to school” initiative to cope with drop out.
TVET:

Councils for employment and TVET were initiated in several Arab countries (i.e. Bahrain, Jordan, Sudan, and Mauritania) to coordinate government and private sector contributions to employment and TVET systems improvement.

UNESCO, ILO, and the World Bank promote effective linkages between education, training, and the workplace to ensure quality of skills related to the world of work.
UNESCO support to achieve EFA goals

Literacy:

Given this status of low progress and in the context of Arab Spring, UNESCO-Beirut is working with Arab LIFE countries in launching National Literacy Campaign.

UNESCO-Beirut is also leading a regional initiative called “Literacy Enhancing Arab Program (LEAP), in collaboration with ALESCO, ISESCO and the Arab League. The main goal of the initiative is to achieve a well-coordinated Literacy program starting 2013 with focus on quality literacy delivery.
Gender:

Most of the programs concerning education take into account the gender goals in particular through the broader objective of reaching UPE and reducing dramatically illiteracy.

The vast majority of unemployed young people are girls and with primary levels of education. Being female and young in the Middle East represents a double burden.

TVET can be one of the best investments a country can make, especially when it is considering gender needs.
UNESCO support to achieve EFA goals

Quality:

As part of the Doha Declaration following the ministerial meeting in September 2010, the Ministers of Education in the Arab States recognized the crucial importance of monitoring education quality and the lack of national capacity in running assessment surveys and analyzing data for evidence based policy advice and committed to enhance regular monitoring of learning achievement.

The Arab Regional Agenda on Improving Education Quality (ARAIEQ) has been conceived by ALECSO and the World Bank aiming at enhancing learning outcomes on results. Five programs are proposed as pillars of the Regional Agenda:

- The Arab Program for Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis (UNESCO)
- The Arab Program on Teacher Policies and Teacher Professional Development (QRTA)
- The Arab Program of Early Childhood Development (ARC)
- The Arab Program of Curriculum Innovation, ICTs in Education, and Qualifications (Tunis)
- The Arab Program on Entrepreneurship Education and Innovation (Injad Al Arab)
Regional EFA Forum:

UNESCO Beirut Office organised the EFA regional forum on 15-16 October 2012 in Sahrm El Sheikh (Egypt), with the overall objective to encourage countries to plan and implement the 2015 EFA assessment and contribute to setting the post-2015 agenda.

Launch of the EFA assessment

• UNESCO will provide member States with technical guidelines regarding the preparation of the national EFA assessment in early 2013;

• The national EFA review will be undertaken from early 2013 and national reports should be developed before June 2014. A series of national dialogues will be carried out to contribute this process, including full participation of all EFA stakeholders. National reviews should include disaggregated data to map out who has been left out from the progress on EFA. These reviews should not only present what has been achieved but also how it has been achieved;

• UNESCO will organize EFA Regional conferences between June and September 2014 to review the EFA national reports and draw on an EFA regional agenda;

• A Global Conference on Education will be organized in April 2015 hosted by the Government of South Korea.
Recommendations for implementing the national assessment

- Countries should launch the national EFA review in early 2013 by organizing national forum to explain the purpose and the scope of the assessment and to mobilize national stakeholders
- Countries should set up a national steering committee to guide and monitor the national assessment
- UNESCO and other agencies could be part of the national steering committee to provide guidance and assistance
- National working groups should be created to undertake the assessment
- The assessment is to be based on the existing data supported by thematic studies as appropriate
- UNESCO will mobilize technical and financial support when needed by countries that expressed this need
Ideas for EFA post-2015 agenda

• **Continued validity of EFA goals**: The six EFA goals remain valid as the basis for a framework for educational development beyond 2015. Equitable access to effective and relevant basic education for all will not be ensured by 2015 as reflected in the persistent challenge of youth and adult literacy, incomplete schooling and out-of-school children, and the generally low average levels of learning achievement.

• **Youth**: Need to focus on the education of youth, whether in terms of skills development for work and life, technical and vocational education and training, or general secondary education as the crossroads between basic education and further education, training and/or the world of work.

• **Early childhood development**: The importance of early childhood development for more equitable and effective education was reaffirmed.

• **Quality of education**: Need for external bodies to monitor and assess the quality of educational outcomes.