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Education Committee

Ensuring equitable access to education in MENA region.



**RESEARCH
REPORT**

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Forum: Education Committee

Issue: Ensuring equitable access to education in MENA region.

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Introduction

Since 2000, the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) made important progress towards the Education for All Goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which improved education access for girls and boys in the region. However, it reveals large inequalities at the primary and lower secondary levels. A large percentage of children still cannot complete their primary education; children that are girls, poor, from rural areas and with uneducated parents are less likely to be educated in all countries. This also compromised the economy growth and the lives of those young people who leave school and enter into the labour market. ¹

Countries in MENA have low grades in mathematics and science assessments; showed by the TIMSS data from 2011, which reveals staggering inequalities in learning in the region.

As Peter Salama, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) MENA Regional Director, said about this issue, reducing education inequalities in MENA will be hard, but with political will and policy dialogues, the gaps to reach areas could close. With the help of countries to achieve socio-economic progress through the Sustainable Development Goals.

"Let us therefore renew our promise and work together to ensure that all children everywhere in the region have equitable opportunities to quality and relevant education.", Peter Salama said. ²

Definition of Key Terms

Labour market: the availability of employment and labour, in terms of supply and demand.

Inequalities: difference in size, degree, circumstances, etc.; lack of equality.

Economy growth: the increase in the inflation-adjusted market value of the goods and services produced by an economy over time.

Sustainable: able to be maintained at a certain rate or level.

¹ UNICEF. "EQUITY, EDUCATIONAL ACCESS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA." *Middle East & North Africa Out-Of-School Children Initiative*, UNICEF Middle East and North Africa, OAD, www.oosci-mena.org/.

² UNICEF. "EQUITY, EDUCATIONAL ACCESS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA." *Middle East & North Africa Out-Of-School Children Initiative*, UNICEF Middle East and North Africa, OAD, www.oosci-mena.org/.

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Equitable: fair and impartial.
Instrumentalization: to render instrumental, direct, organise, adapt.
Public accountability: the hallmark of modern democratic governance. Democracy remains a paper procedure if those in power can not be held accountable in public for their acts and omissions, for their decisions, their policies, and their expenditures.
Net enrolment ratios: the ratio of the number of children of official primary school age who are enrolled in primary education to the total population of children of official primary school age, expressed as a percentage.
Pervasively: spreading or spread throughout.
Protracted crises: those environments in which a significant proportion of the population is acutely vulnerable to death, disease and disruption of livelihoods over a prolonged period of time.

General Overview

The number of out-of-school children in MENA has declined from 15 million in 2008 to 12.3 m in 2015.³ Primary school attendance varies across the countries, with a 4.3 million primary school aged children. However the progress in the primary school level, there are significant gaps between the pre-primary and lower secondary levels, with a 12 per cent (between 2.7-2.9 million lower secondary school age children) and 58 per cent age children (5.1 million pre-primary school age children).⁴

Children who were forced to abandon schools by the crisis in Syria and Iraq, the figures do not capture them. If they were, the total number of out-of-school children would be over 15 million. Plus, 6.2 million children are at risk of dropping the school, they are likely to be the out-of-school children of tomorrow.⁵ Due to political instabilities and humanitarian crisis across the region, in addition to other factors such as gender discrimination, fragile learning environments and instrumentalization of education. In total, MENA has moreover 22 million children.

Based on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2015, MENA countries performs the lowest performers in terms of learning and learning outcomes. Showed by the scores in grade 8 mathematics that achieved a mean score even lower than the international low benchmark of 400.⁶

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Countries like Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon have education systems that form better careers as engineering and greater public accountability than countries like Djibouti, Iraq, Yemen and Morocco. Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon provide high quality education their population. But when a crisis or conflict

³ UNICEF. "Working to Ensure That All Children in the Region Have Equitable Opportunities to Quality and Relevant Education." UNICEF, OAD, www.unicef.org/.

⁴ UNICEF. "Working to Ensure That All Children in the Region Have Equitable Opportunities to Quality and Relevant Education." UNICEF, OAD, www.unicef.org/.

⁵ UNICEF. "Working to Ensure That All Children in the Region Have Equitable Opportunities to Quality and Relevant Education." UNICEF, OAD, www.unicef.org/.

⁶ UNICEF. "Working to Ensure That All Children in the Region Have Equitable Opportunities to Quality and Relevant Education." UNICEF, OAD, www.unicef.org/.

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arrive, the education could be damage, as the experiences of Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza demonstrate. ⁷

The first section made on 14 MENA countries, focuses on their performance in relation to one another; alphabetically, Algeria, Djibouti, Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen. ⁸ The second section made on the better-performing countries, which possess education systems that create better possibilities in the future.

Enrolment in the region's school systems has increased significantly over the past decade to the point where universal primary education has been achieved for girls and boys in most of the MENA countries. Net enrolment ratios (NER) rose from 86 to 94 percent between 2000 and 2010. Secondary enrolment increased as well, though not as pervasively: NER rose from 62 to 70 percent over the same period.

The Region invests little in pre-and in-service training as a whole, comparatively speaking; yet, of those that do, more than half add that they must address this lack of work-readiness by providing training, which is time-consuming and costly. Students are as aware as employers of this skills mismatch: when interviewed, only one third believed that they were adequately prepared to enter the workforce. Interestingly, over one third of students were willing to pay for their education if it were to lead to better job prospects. ⁹

The World Bank Group is supporting education in MENA countries through knowledge exchanges, promoting innovations, diverse financing mechanisms and partnerships to develop integrated solutions to the remaining challenges. The World Bank Group supports early childhood, primary, secondary, technical, vocational, and tertiary education. Yemen and Djibouti benefit from credits to support such activities as school construction and rehabilitation, teacher training, and conditional cash transfers to support girls' school attendance. In Middle Income Countries, project lending is currently focused on initiatives that aim to improve quality, while in the GCC countries we offer technical assistance through Reimbursable Advisory Services.

The region's 22 Ministers of Education came together to endorse the Doha Declaration on Education Quality in November 2010 calling in effect for action on this pressing issue. As a response, the World Bank helped develop, the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality (ARAIEQ), an initiative that ties many existing regional initiatives and institutions together with new programs into a coherent and efficient network. Core regional programs, in Early Childhood Education (ECD), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Teacher Policy and Practice, Assessment, and Entrepreneurship, aim to improve the quality of education across MENA. ¹⁰

The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) is an initiative to produce comparative data and knowledge on education policies and institutions, with the aim of helping countries systematically strengthen their education systems. SABER evaluates the quality of education policies against evidence-based global standards, using new diagnostic tools and detailed policy data collected for the initiative. The latest SABER work in the region has focused on Workforce Development and ECD, two areas recognised for their essential contribution to education reform. ¹¹

⁷ *Why Some MENA Countries Did Better than Others.*

www.bing.com/cr?IG=A16B864A6A504ED09C09218E6C1FCFD9&CID=3E2EA377843E62E72133AF4685C363EE&rd=1&h=CVoOIWkxjruNrPXWBBY8mzgOibIIty9ust-7FuCFVs8&v=1&r=http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMENA/Publications/20262206/genderoverview.pdf&p=DevEx.LB.1,5050.1

⁸ *Why Some MENA Countries Did Better than Others.*

www.bing.com/cr?IG=A16B864A6A504ED09C09218E6C1FCFD9&CID=3E2EA377843E62E72133AF4685C363EE&rd=1&h=CVoOIWkxjruNrPXWBBY8mzgOibIIty9ust-7FuCFVs8&v=1&r=http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMENA/Publications/20262206/genderoverview.pdf&p=DevEx.LB.1,5050.1

⁹ The World Bank. "EDUCATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA.", world bank/org.

¹⁰ The World Bank. "EDUCATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA.", world bank/org.

¹¹ The World Bank. "EDUCATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA.", world bank/org.

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Good governance is an underlying condition for effective and efficient public policies, programs, and services. It presupposes that improved interaction between government and constituents depends on transparency, accountability, and participation. Governance reforms rank high on the development agenda of many MENA countries, particularly in regard to public service delivery in education and health. The World Bank Group is building on the available evidence in this area and developing policy proposals to assist regional governments as they formulate their strategies for the way forward.¹²

Timeline of Events

Date of Event	<i>Description of Event</i>
1886	<i>Anne Sullivan worked with a deaf and blind little girl, called Helen Keller. She is the first deaf and blind person to earn an university degree.</i>
1950s and 1960s	<i>Increased access to education by policies across MENA to provide fee-free primary education.</i>
1980s and 1990s	<i>Inequalities in education have been revealed in the region.</i>
2003	<i>19 per cent of the children in the MENA region were in private school</i>
2010	<i>Enrolments of education pre-primary in the MENA, with a GER of 22 per cent.</i>
2011	<i>Primary enrolment rates varied from 52 per cent in Djibouti to nearly 100 per cent in Iran and Tunisia.</i>

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Treaties and Events

¹² The World Bank. "EDUCATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA.", world bank/org.

¹³ UNICEF. "EQUITY, EDUCATIONAL ACCESS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA." Middle East & North Africa Out-Of-School Children Initiative, UNICEF Middle East and North Africa, OAD, www.oosci-mena.org/.

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The Five Dimensions of Exclusion Model made up by the UNICEF and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO-UIS), in 2011. Conference that focused on the problem of out-of-school children. They came out with this model that presents five groups:

- three age groups: children of pre-primary, primary and lower secondary school age;
- two groups by school participation status: children who are out of school and children who are in school with the risk of dropping out.¹⁴

The Five Dimensions of Exclusion are:

Dimension 1: Children between 4 to 7 that are not in pre-primary or primary school

Dimension 2: Children between 6 to 9 that are not in primary or secondary school

Dimension 3: Children between 10 to 15 that are not in primary or secondary school

Dimension 4: Children in primary school with the risk of dropping out

Dimension 5: Children in secondary school with the risk of dropping out.¹⁵

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

There are collections of data which measure the out-of-school problem. This data has problem in the measurement of education exclusion with special relevance to the development of the nine national Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI) studies in MENA. In mid-2013, OOSCI in the MENA region proposed a new indicator for measuring dropout from schools. It was made to calculate and control the students in primary or lower secondary school who may drop out from school. This indicator is still under development and not published by the UIS for all the countries in its Data Centre.¹⁶

It was used during 2013, while the indicator is used to control the students in preprimary and lower secondary school, there are difficulties in using it as a method to prevent the risk of dropping out. The main reason is that the children can drop school during grade 2,3,4 or 5; the indicator does not show the correct grade.

Possible Solutions

UNICEF with the help of governments and partners, works to decrease the number of out-of-school children in the MENA areas. Improving statistical information and analysis on the students, understand them as person not only just

¹⁴ Regional Report. "REGIONAL REPORT ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN." *UNESCO UIS*, uis.unesco.org/.

¹⁵ Regional Report. "REGIONAL REPORT ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN." *UNESCO UIS*, uis.unesco.org/.

¹⁶ Regional Report. "REGIONAL REPORT ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN." *UNESCO UIS*, uis.unesco.org/.

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numbers, such knowing where they are and who they are. Identifying the barriers that contribute they exclusions in school and education. Also, analysing the effective strategies to let them participate in school and to enhanced targeting. The OOSCI has developed further analysis of early childhood and post-basic education age, which is supported by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes, and explorations of samples of realtime monitoring in humanitarian situations.

UNICEF provides support to students in emergencies and protracted crises. Education is a right of children, even in times of crisis. UNICEF supports national education systems to provide access to quality education for all children, wherever they are. Such as the technical support UNICEF gave to the five Syria crisis-affected countries in emergency response and transition planning; which entails coordination and partnerships, policy dialogue, monitoring and technical support.

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