



Innovative approaches to reaching women, girls and the marginalized in the Arab region
Background Paper for the ECOSOC for the Western Asia Regional Consultation

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¹ Prepared by UNICEF

Background/Rationale

The Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) is a new function of the Economic and Social Council established by Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit. It was mandated as an instrument to track progress and step up efforts towards the realization of the internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals, by the 2015 target date. In preparation for the 2011 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Meeting, a series of regional consultations will be held to identify issues, challenges and solutions for consideration at the high-level segment.

The objectives of country-led regional consultations is (i) to support the preparations of the AMR and enable countries to engage at an early stage in the process leading to the AMR session to be held during the ECOSOC high-level segment in July 2011, in Geneva, and (ii) to contribute to the global review by focusing, in addition to the overall performance of the region in achieving the development goals related to education, on one specific aspect relevant to countries in the region. The outcome of such review would contribute to the analysis that will support the Council's deliberations in July.

As the theme of EOCOSC AMR for 2011 is "implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education", DESA (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs) has invited several UN agencies, including UNICEF, to provide strategic technical inputs. To this end, a coordination meeting was convened by DESA on October, 13 2010 and the need for a background paper on the West Asia region, among others, was identified.

This paper lays out the foundation for discussions and deliberations for the upcoming West Asia regional consultation meeting whose sub-theme is: "Innovative approaches to reaching women, girls and the marginalized in the Arab region". It provides a thorough review of the situation of education in the region by examining progress towards EFA goals, issues and challenges, and provides recommendations to address the issues. The paper will also identify the major education issues affecting women, girls and the marginalized. Moreover the paper will review a sample of innovative approaches implemented in the region to address some of the issues and provide recommendations for scaling up. The paper will capture also the main recommendations that will be reached during this consultation meeting in preparation for the AMR. The paper will cover all Arab States with exception of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

I. Regional Context

I.1 Demography:

It is vital to identify changes and trends in the demographic structure that would impact the education at large and of girls, women and marginalized (GWM) in particular of the states under review.

I.1.1 Total Population

Population growth continues to constrain resources the largest Arab states. The total populations of the Arab countries are presented in Figure 1 below. As shown in the Figure, the largest Arab country in the sample is Egypt (75,498,000) while the smallest is Bahrain (753,000). The smallest four Arab countries are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). While the largest Arab country in terms of population is among the lowest in terms of per capita income, the smallest Arab countries are among the highest in terms of per capita income. Having a large population with low per capita income places undue stress upon government budgets, especially in reaching rural regions. Hence, when addressing impediments to education and the required innovations, one has to keep in mind the vast differences among Arab states.

Figure 1: Total Population (000s) in 2007



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, UNESCO GMR 2010

These countries are not still having

Annual growth rates of population are within a range of 1.1% to 3.2 %. The Palestinian Autonomous Territories have the highest average annual growth rate of 3.2% per year. Jordan and Yemen come in second place at 3%. The lowest population growth rate is in Lebanon (1.1%), which is almost one third of the highest. Note that Egypt, the largest Arab country in terms of population, with a population of over 75 million is growing at 1.8% per year, means that 1.35 million people are added

Countries with large rural areas must deal with problems that predominantly urban countries in the region - like the GCC countries- do not face. Rural areas tend to be face pastoral, thereby making traditional educational systems ineffective; long distances and or absence of road infrastructure or transport increase the certainty of marginalization and gender disparity especially in terms of security traveling to and from to school.. Low population density makes school infrastructure widely dispersed to meet pupil per teacher quotas; and traditional curriculums and instructional delivery

I.2.2 Poverty Rates (Urban and Rural) and Poverty Gap
The percentages of those living under the poverty line

Country	1991	1995	2000	2005	2008
Bahrain	25.7	27.6	30.1	30.8	31.6
Kuwait	33.6	39.2	42.1	41.6	41.8
Oman	17.2	18.2	20.3	21.7	22.9
Qatar	29.3	31.8	33.7	37.2	39.8

Egypt	0.81	11	0.12	34	0.51
Jordan	0.66			29	0.41
Lebanon	0.65	8	0.09	48	0.93
Kuwait	0.66	14	0.16	34	0.52
Oman	0.67	9	0.10	33	0.49
Qatar	0.64	7	0.07	20	0.24
Saudi Arabia	0.60	8	0.09	27	0.37
Syria	0.64	10	0.11	41	0.70
UAE	0.70	10	0.11	22	0.28
Yeman					

Although Qatar has a Total Survival Rate to Last Grade of Primary School of 88%, see Table 13 below, it has 99% literacy of youth and is expected to reach 100% literacy of youth by 2015, a factor which boosted its overall UPE score. Egypt's 96.8 %

Yemen	79.7	59.5	...	56.8
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Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

3) Literacy rate of 15–24 year-old men and women (UN 2008)

Literacy efforts for most of the countries have been successful. By 2015, the youth of all of countries will be at least 90% literate. However, when we look at female youth literacy, for 2000-2007, only 67% of female youth in Yemen were literate and only 83 will be literate by 2015.

Table 12: Youth Literacy 2008

	Youth literacy rate (15-24) (%), Total		Youth literacy rate (15-24) (%), Male		Youth literacy rate (15-24) (%), Female	
	2000-2007 ⁹	2015	2000-2007	2015	2000-2007 ⁹	2015
Bahrain	100	100	100	100	100	100
Egypt	85	93	88	94	82	92
Iraq	85	...	89	...	80	...
Jordan	99	99	99	99	99	100
Kuwait	98	100	98	100	99	100
Lebanon	99	99	98	99	99	99
Oman	98	99	99	100	98	99
Palestinian Autonomous Territories	99	99	99	99	99	99
Qatar	99	100	99	100	99	100
Saudi Arabia	97	99	98	99	96	98
Sudan						

MDG Goal 3: Gender Parity (2008)	Bahrain	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	Sudan	Syria	UAE	PAT	Yemen
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)	2	18	26	6	3	5	0	0	0	18	12	23	..	
Ratio of female to male primary enrollment (%)	95	97	84*	101	98	97	101	99	96	88	96	100	100	80
Ratio of female to male secondary enrollment (%)	94*	96	67*	104	104	111	97	146	85	91	98	102	107	49*
Ratio of female to male tertiary enrollment (%)	77*	108	59*	111	214*	124	115	605	165	..	..	
Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (% of total nonagricultural employment)	18.1	36.9*	21.3*	25.9	..	5	0	0	0	18	12	23	..	0

* 2005 data

Source: World Bank Indicators, 2010

In every country for which there is data, other than

II. Education profile

Yemen	55.9	75.2	35%	2302.8	3219.6	0.59	0.76	0.288136
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Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

The combined effects of civil conflict, military incursions and restrictions on the movement of goods and people has led to the dramatic decrease in NER from 97% to 73% between 1999 and 2007 in the Palestinian Autonomous Territories.¹⁴ Although Sudan shows an increase in net enrollment over the 1997-2007 time period, its gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 66%,

Qatar	102.4	109.4	104.5	109.8	100.3	109	0.96	0.99
Saudi Arabia	...	98.1	...	99.9	...	96.3	...	0.96
Sudan	49	66.4	52.8	71.3	45	61.2	0.85	0.86
Syrian Arab Republic	102.3	126.2	106.7	129.1	97.8	123.3	0.92	0.96
United Arab Emirates	90.2	106.5	91.6	107	88.7	106	0.97	0.99
Yemen	71.4	87.3	90.8	100	51.1	74.1	0.56	0.74

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

The GPI for GER 2006 closely mirrors the GPI 2006 for NER. For all countries, the GER is greater than the NER, which can be considered a positive indication that children outside of the accepted age for primary education are in fact accessing the system. However, while the GER can exceed 100% due to early or late entry, another reason for rates greater than 100% is due to grade repetition..

II.1.3 Primary Completion Rates Disaggregated By Gender and GPI

Four years is considered as the minimum number of years of schooling needed to acquire the

However, survival to the last grade has declined in Yemen (59%, down from 80%) and the Sudan (62%, down from 77%). In Yemen, 7% to 15% of pupils drop out in each primary grade.¹⁶

GPIs for survival rates is a surprising 96% for Yemen, the same number of female students

Table 17: Out of school Primary

School-age

As mention above, with the exception of Yemen, Iraq, and Sudan, survival rates range from 90 to 100 percent for the Arab States under review. In Yemen, only 66% of primary school children stay in school up to grade 5; in Sudan 70.5 % and in Iraq 80.6%. Again we see conflict as a determinant, along with poverty in the survival rate of children in school. However, if we are looking at quality, not access, the low survival rates could probably indicate that the curriculum is not relevant or not applicable to the lives of the families the children are from, or not the lifestyle they maintain or the method of curricula delivery may be ineffective in holding the students interest in attending school against the competing demands of work, household duties, and other economic and societal pressures. Teachers may not be engaged in dialogue during the learning process; students are expected to write

Iraq	13.1	15.2	10.2	0.6710526
Jordan	1.6	...	...
Kuwait	1	1.3	0.6	0.4615385
Lebanon	9.8	11.1	8.4	0.7567568
Oman	4	3	5	1.6666667
Palestinian A T	...	...	...
Qatar	...	...	...
Saudi Arabia	...	...	...
Sudan	2.8	2.9	2.6	0.8965517
Syrian Arab Republic	...	...	...
United Arab Emirates	1.5	2	1	0.5
Yemen	5.8	6.5	4.7	0.7230769

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010 Database

A trend to falling rates continues for Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen in terms of transition to secondary school; however except for Yemen, where rates fell from 91 to 81.8, female transition rates increased for all countries. Fees, distance to school, and labor demands inhibit the transition from primary to lower secondary especially for girls. Recent studies in Yemen show that clearly the main causes for low enrolment and high drop-out rates for girls in Yemen are: 1) lack of accessibility 2) socio-cultural factors and 3) institutional factors.²⁶ However, some countries are successfully transitioning their girls: Qatar boasts a 100 female transition to a 98.7 transition for all students; Syria increased

Palestinian Autonomous Territories	97.5	97.9	96.5	97.3
Qatar	...	100	...	98.7
Saudi Arabia	...	...	...	...
Sudan	...	87.9	78.3	88
Syrian Arab Republic	66.8	96	68.5	95.5
United Arab Emirates	97.5	98.5	96	98.4
Yemen	91	81.8	84.2	82.7

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010 Database

II.2.3 Teacher Stock and Qualifications

Quantitative and qualitative data from national and international studies show the causal link between recruitment of female teachers and girls' enrolment and retention.²⁸ Female preprimary teachers total 97 to 100% of the teacher population; primary teacher female percentages range between 88% in Kuwait to 52% in Saudi Arabia; in secondary schools only half of the teachers are female.

Table 21: Percentage of Female Teachers

2007	Pre-primary teachers, % Female	Primary teachers, % Female	Secondary teachers, % Female	Tertiary teachers, % Female
Bahrain	100	...	...	41
Egypt	99	56	42	...
Iraq	100	72	58	35
Jordan	100	...	...	23
Kuwait	100	88	53	27
Lebanon	99	86	55	39
Oman	100	63	56	29
Palestinian Autonomous Territories	100	67	49	17
Qatar	99	85	56	37
Saudi Arabia	100	52	53	33
Sudan	100	64	52	...
Syrian Arab Republic	98	...	...	...
United Arab Emirates	100	85	55	31
Yemen	97	...	...	16

None of the countries have reported student teacher ratios beyond a 27 student classroom average. However, Bahrain, Jordan, Syria and Yemen have not reported classroom size. Overcrowding, according to these figures is not an issue in terms of affecting quality.

Table 22: Pupil Teacher Ratio

	Pupil/teacher ratio, pre-primary	Pupil/teacher ratio, primary	Pupil/teacher ratio, secondary
2007			

Source: TIMSS International Report 2007

Students in these states had achievement levels below those of other countries with similar income levels. In the high income countries of Qatar and Saudi Arabia, three-quarters of students ranked below the lowest score threshold in mathematics. In Egypt, more than half of students scored below the threshold;³⁰ A score of 400 is the lower level of achievement; of the countries under review, only Jordan and the UAE scored above 400.

This issue of poor quality of learning and its impact on skills affects labor force development and quality of workers and negatively impacts economic growth. The skill levels attained through the education system have to increase if we are to boost GDP growth. Traditional approaches and methods of teaching have to be reexamined to make education relevant to the student's life and to market trends and needs.

II.2.5 Drop out Rates

Drop out rates for the -5.8(1ESe stat(Thver2(ly)-)6.4ell9(i(g:1(.)5.8(ke)TJ4843512 0 TD6(t)-5Iraq)7D6(t)-529.9 %alf o

adult population. Sudan and Yemen each have 5 million to 10 million adult illiterates. Adult literacy rates are below 60% in, the Sudan and Yemen. Adult literacy rate increased in Egypt from 44% to 66% and in Yemen's from 37% to 59% during 2000 to 2007 and number of illiterate adults increased by nearly 3 million in the region and almost 400,000 in Yemen³¹

The region is losing the battle to fight adult female illiteracy. Yemen has a 40% adult female literacy rate compared to 77% for males; the Sudan, 52% to 71%; Iraq 64% to 84%, Egypt 58% to 75% . In 2015, Yemen is expected have only 55% of its female adult population literate. Youth literacy fares better: All countries expect to have over 94% male youth literacy by 2015 and female youth literacy above 90% except for Yemen at 83%. Continuing adult illiteracy and especially youth illiteracy is a sign that the system has failed to create a literate population.

education in government budgets ranged from 9.6% in Lebanon to 31.1% in Oman, where it had increased by ten percentage points since 1999.

However, the rate of return on investment in the education sector is low in terms of average number of years of schooling and contribution to overall educational quality.

II3.6 Education for All

The Arab States have made great strides in some areas towards meeting specific goals however, overall, the gap between the reality of the situation in Arab States and the EFA goals is not decreasing at a fast pace. The Education for All (EFA) goals are:

- Goal 1 :Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- Goal 2: 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.
- Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
- Goal 4: 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.
- Goal 5: 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.
- Goal 6: 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.

The EFA Development Index which measures access, equity and quality to determine how countries are doing in meeting their goal uses the four most easily quantifiable goals, attaching equal weight to each. Those goals are: universal primary education (Goal 2), adult literacy (first part of Goal 4), gender parity and equality (Goal 5), and quality (Goal 6- measured by survival rate to grade 5). Currently no countries hold the status of having achieved EFA (EDI higher than 0.97) however, three Arab States are ranked as being close to EFA (EDI between 0.95 and 0.96); they are Bahrain, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates. In an intermediate position (EDI between 0.80 and 0.94) is Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestinian Autonomous Territories, and Qatar. Far from EFA (EDI below 0.80) is Iraq and Yemen. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, and Syrian Arab Republic are not listed.

Table 25: EFA Development Index

2007	Bahrain	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon	Oman	PAT	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	Sudan	Syrian Arab Republic	United Arab Emirates	Yemen
EFA Development Index (EDI)	0.961	-	0.795	0.945	0.965	0.898	0.879	0.914	0.941	-	-	-	0.966	0.648

Low adult literacy rates in Yemen and Sudan is the predominant reason for their distance from closing the EFA gap. Recent declines in enrolment in Oman and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories lowered their EDI. In Iraq the gender gap also played a major part.

The lessons learned from the GEI are to ask the girls and their families why girls and the marginalized are not going to school. Then kick start community mobilization and participation to make sure that the programs are "an expression of the communities' decision to provide education to their daughters."

III.2 Jordan's Early Childhood Development Initiative; Making Jordan Fit for Children

Research from the United States tells us that for every dollar spent on pre-primary education, the country gains 4 to 7 dollars in broad individual and social outcome. ECE also promotes school readiness, positively impacts dropout rates, and can overcome the negative effects of disadvantage. In

IV. Recommendations:

The issues that relate to reaching MDG 2 and 3 and the EFAs will be accommodated by reaching MDGs in Arab region. Measures delineated below will expedite the pace based on the criteria of being feasible, discernable, affordable, and results driven

Each region of each country is unique. A cookie cutter approach does not utilize resources optimally. Mapping barriers to education in each area is needed to specify relevant emphasis. There is not a universal solution. For example rural areas have access and cultural sensitivity as a priority; inner city poor populations might be safety and social safety net incentives. It is imperative that increased community and child/student input and buy in into the educational process is sought and acquired for relevancy to exist and for participation to be promoted.

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- For vulnerable groups, special incentives must be