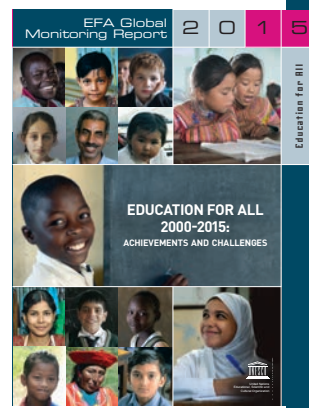




United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Regional overview: Arab States



Since 2000, the Arab States<sup>1</sup> have made some progress, albeit uneven. Early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes have expanded considerably but participation levels are still low. Responding to the needs of youth and adults remains a challenge. Illiteracy still affects almost 52 million adults, most of them women. And while there has been progress towards gender parity in primary and secondary education, gender equality remains elusive.

Even though significant progress toward universal primary education can be noted, such as in Morocco, only Tunisia is projected to achieve the EFA goal of ensuring that all children who have access to primary school also complete it. In 2012 the region is still home to 4.5 million out-of-school children of primary school age and the provision of good quality education needs particular attention. The imbalances in the way many education systems are developing have both created and reinforced disparities. These must be redressed as the world is defining a new education agenda — for children, youth and adults to benefit equally from the opportunities education provides, regardless of the circumstances they were born or live in.

In reviewing progress since 2000, this regional overview summarizes findings in response to key questions addressed by the 2015 *EFA Global Monitoring Report* (GMR): What are the main EFA achievements and failures? Which countries advanced fastest? Which faced difficulties? Which policy initiatives promoted access of both girls and boys to education and improved its quality, especially for the most disadvantaged groups and areas? Have governments and the international community provided adequate support? The 2015 GMR shows that despite progress, education for all remains unfinished business in the Arab States. This must be taken into account in the post-2015 education agenda.

## EFA progress and challenges

### Goal 1: Early childhood care and education

*Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.*

#### *Child mortality and nutrition*

- Between 1990 and 2000, the average level of child mortality in the Arab States fell from 78 to 56 deaths per 1,000 live births, and by 2013 it had reached 34. Despite progress accelerating after 2000, the MDG target of reducing the under-5 mortality rate by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015 is unlikely to be met.
- Seven countries are likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4 of reducing child mortality rate by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015, among them Egypt and Tunisia. Many other countries have made

1. See Table 2 for countries and territories in this EFA region.

considerable and encouraging progress since Dakar, including Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, where child mortality rates declined by 50% or more. Among countries that had an under-5 mortality rate above 100 per 1,000 live births in 1990, Djibouti, Sudan and Yemen decreased their rates by more than 25% between 2000 and 2013. Despite this generally positive trend, the prevalence of under-5 mortality remains particularly high in Djibouti and Sudan, where the rates still exceeded 69 per 1,000 live births in 2013.

- Having a skilled birth attendant present during childbirth is critically important for the survival and health of both mother and child. An alarming degree of disparity in access exists between the poorest and richest women in many countries. However, since 2000 great progress has been achieved in countries including Egypt in increasing the number of births aided by a skilled attendant, particularly among the poorest. While access to skilled attendants was already very high in 2000 and almost universal by 2008 for the richest women, the skilled birth attendance rate among the poorest women has increased considerably, from nearly 35% to 58% over the same period, reducing the gap between income groups.
- An average of 20% of children under 5 were affected by moderate or severe stunting in 2013 in the Arab States. However, substantial regional variations persist, with the stunting rate ranging from less than 4.3% in Saudi Arabia to about 47% in Yemen.

### Pre-primary education

- In the Arab States between 1999 and 2012, pre-primary enrolment increased considerably by 83% to reach some 4.3 million. However, the region's average gross enrolment ratio (GER) in pre-primary education remained very low, at 25%, in 2012. Almost all the 13 countries with data improved participation in pre-primary education, in particular in Algeria, Egypt and Qatar where the GERs more than doubled. In Algeria, the participation level increased from 2% in 1999 to 79% in 2011 and is projected to exceed 100% in 2015. Its massive expansion of pre-primary provision has led to an increase in the expected number of years of pre-primary schooling from zero to nearly one year. Lebanon remained the country with the highest pre-primary GER in the region, at 91% in 2012.
- Living in rural areas can be a major obstacle to accessing early learning programmes. In Tunisia in 2012, urban children aged 3-4 years had an attendance rate of 60%, more than three times that of rural

children at 17%. Inequality in attendance due to poverty was even greater, with 81% of the richest children attending, which is over six times greater than the attendance rate of 13% of the poorest children.

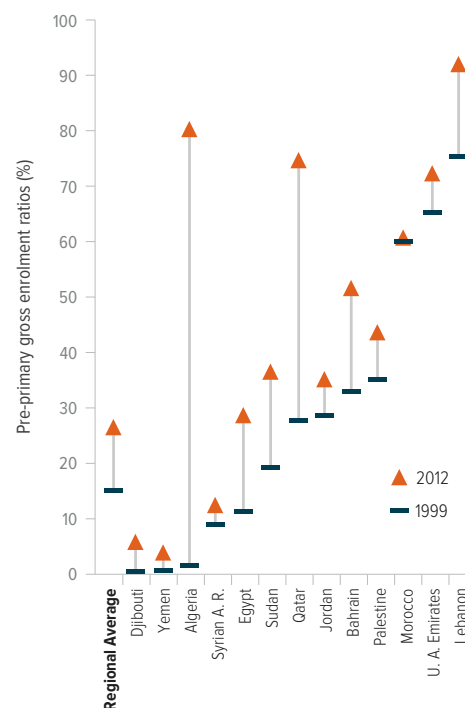
### Private sector involvement

- Cost is a major reason for low access to ECCE programmes. But private sector provision is high, limiting access to families that can afford it. The share of pre-primary enrolment provided by the private sector was about 75% or above in 2012, in half the countries reporting data. The private sector was almost the sole provider in Bahrain and Palestine. When both ECCE provision and funding are left to the non-state sector, pre-primary education tends to reach only more advantaged urban populations. While private provision is declining in Djibouti, Jordan, Morocco and Qatar, it is expanding in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. In some cases governments have agreed to public-private partnerships involving state funding for private provision, though often include some fees.

### Good quality ECCE

- Teachers are the main determinant of quality but are often insufficient in number and untrained. In 2012, the average pre-primary pupil/teacher ratio (PTR) was about 20:1, ranging from less than 10:1 in Saudi Arabia to 30:1 in Egypt. PTRs have decreased in 11 of

Figure 1: Changes in pre-primary education gross enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2012



the 13 countries with data since 1999, declining by more than 10 pupils per teacher in Palestine, from around 29:1 to 18:1 between 1999 and 2012. On the other hand, the ratio increased in Lebanon and even more so in Egypt where the ratio had stood at 24:1 in 1999. Among the few countries with data, 100% of pre-primary teachers were trained in Morocco, Oman, Palestine and the United Arab Emirates in 2012, while there was a shortage of trained teachers in Bahrain and Qatar where the percentage was only 47% and 29%, respectively.

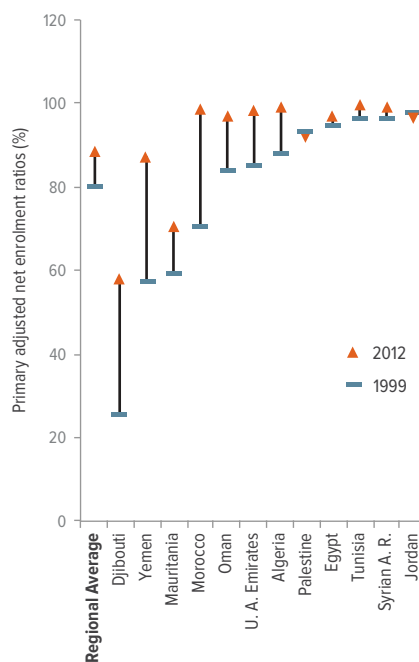
### Goal 2: Universal primary education

*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.*

#### School participation

- Since 1999, the number of children enrolled in primary schools in the Arab States increased by 22% to some 42.8 million in 2012. This translated to a rise in the primary adjusted net enrolment ratio (ANER) from nearly 80% in 1999 to 89% in 2012.
- The primary ANER increased in almost all 12 countries with data, and by more than 25 percentage points in Djibouti, Morocco and Yemen between 1999 and 2012. Morocco's net enrolment ratio increased from 71% in 1999 to universal primary enrolment, 99%, in 2013, a gain due to a long-term emphasis on school construction in rural areas and gender equity reforms.
- Projections for 2015 indicate that of 15 Arab States with data, 9 are likely to achieve universal primary enrolment by 2015 with an ANER of at least 97%. Among these are Algeria, Morocco, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Despite its ANER more than doubling from 25% to 58% between 1999 and 2013, Djibouti would still be far from the UPE target by 2015, as would Mauritania, with a projected ANER below 80%.
- Increased enrolments resulted in a 43% decrease in the number of children not enrolled to 4.5 million in 2012, but more than 40% of the region's out-of-school children are not expected ever to go to school. Girls are more likely to never having enrolled in school than boys, 50% compared with 27%.
- The problem of out-of-school children is becoming increasingly concentrated in conflict-affected countries. In 2012, 87% of the nearly 4.5 million of

**Figure 2: Changes in primary education adjusted net enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2012**



children out of school in the Arab States lived in conflict-affected countries in the region, significantly up from 63% in 1999. Among the seven conflict-affected countries in the region is Sudan, where 2.8 million children were out of school in 2011, accounting for nearly three-fifths of children not enrolled in the region.

- The Syrian Arab Republic is another conflict-affected country. Its current displacement crisis is the largest in the world. Some believe it will lead to a 'lost generation' with the majority of Syrian children lacking fundamental necessities and unable to gain an education. In 2013 alone, over 9,500 people a day fled their homes as the Syrian Arab Republic entered its third year of conflict. As of December 2013, of the 4.8 million school-age Syrian children, some 2.2 million inside the country were out of school. Two-thirds of the refugee children in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are out of school, representing about 500,000 children.

#### Primary school completion

- An average of 83% of children who enter primary school in the region reached the last grade in 2011, nearly the same percentage, 82%, as in 1999. In other words, 17% of pupils were dropping out too early to complete school. The survival rates to last grade were lower in Djibouti and Sudan, at 76% each. On the other hand, almost all children who had access to primary

school reached the last grade in Bahrain, Jordan, Palestine and Saudi Arabia.

- Most countries with data in the region maintained or improved their school retention rate between 1999 and 2011, with increases by more than seven percentage points in Bahrain, Morocco and Tunisia. In Tunisia, the survival rate to last grade increased from 87% to 95%; according to projections, it will be the only Arab State likely to achieve universal primary education by 2015, ensuring that all children who have access to school also complete it.

### *Inequalities within countries*

- Poverty affects primary attainment. In Morocco, the primary education attainment rate of the poorest children was only 37% in 2009, 31 percentage points below the average rate of 68%, a substantial gap but smaller than the one in 2000. This was also the case in Egypt where the primary attainment rate of the poorest children increased from 58% to about 71% between 2000 and 2010, while the average rate rose from 76% to 86%, narrowing the gap between income groups.

### **Goal 3: Youth and adult skills**

*Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.*

#### *Participation in secondary education*

- Participation in lower and upper secondary education has increased between 1999 and 2012 in some cases due to higher transition rates. On average, the lower secondary gross enrolment ratio increased from 75% to nearly 89%, and the upper secondary GER from 45% to about 58%. The lower secondary education GER has increased in 13 of the 15 countries with data, with larger increases in countries such as Algeria, Djibouti and Morocco, where the ratios rose by more than thirty percentage points. Large increases have also been observed in upper secondary education participation in several countries, including in Oman, where the upper secondary GER grew from 60% to 90%.
- In 2012, private institutions accounted for at least 19% of secondary education provision in half of the countries with data. The share ranged from 0.3% in Algeria to nearly 61% in the United Arab Emirates. Between 1999 and 2012, the percentage of enrolments in private secondary institutions rose in most countries with data; increases were especially pronounced in Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

### *Inequality in lower secondary education*

- Achievement gaps in secondary education have been evident among marginalized groups, including working children and those from migrant families. Working students lag behind in acquiring foundation skills. For example, as part of the 2003 and 2007 TIMSS, working grade 8 students in Egypt scored about 70 points below their non-working peers in science proficiency.

### *Second chance education*

- Education alternatives are needed for youth and adults who are no longer in school. An example of good practice can be found in Ishraq ('sunrise'), a second chance programme for adolescent girls launched in Egypt in 2001 that included literacy training and life skills for out-of-school girls aged 12 to 15. By 2008, the programme had succeeded in preparing most girls for Egypt's Adult Education Agency exam (with an 81% pass rate) and encouraging them to enter or re-enter formal schools.

### *Technical and vocational skills*

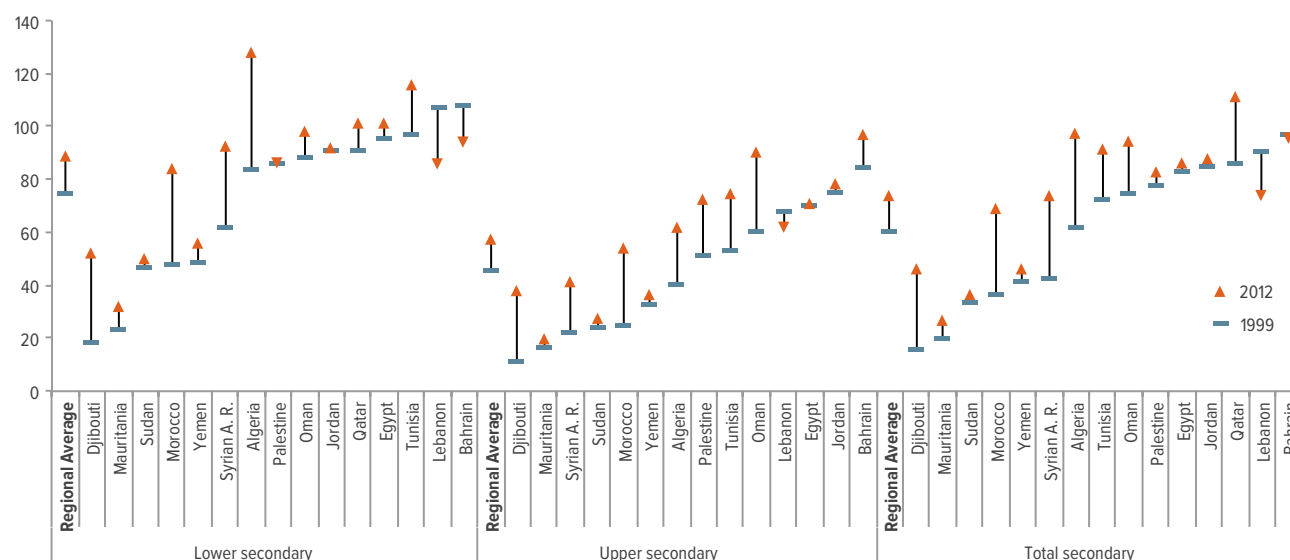
- Despite greater attention to TVET in recent years, and clearer understanding and definitions of the skills involved, this type of programme became a lower priority in the Arab States. In 2012, technical and vocational programmes accounted for an average of 9% of total secondary enrolment in the region, a decline from 14% in 1999. The share of TVET in total secondary enrolment has decreased in the majority of 12 countries with data, and by nearly eight percentage points in Bahrain, from 15% to 7%, between 1999 and 2012. In contrast, the share increased by nearly 5% in Lebanon to about 15% in 2012.

### **Goal 4: Adult literacy**

*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.*

#### *Adult literacy rates and illiterates*

- The estimated average adult literacy rate was 78% in 2012 in the Arab States. In other words, some 22% of the adult population lacked basic literacy skills. This is equivalent to about 52 million people, of whom two-thirds are adult women, a percentage that has slightly increased since 2000 when the total number of adult illiterates was at 58 million. Between 2000 and 2015, the illiteracy rate is projected to fall by 39%, but not enough to reach the goal 4 target to halve the 2000 adult illiteracy levels by 2015.

**Figure 3: Changes in lower and upper secondary gross enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2012**

- Projections to 2015 indicate that all 14 countries in the region with comparable data and a literacy rate below 95% in 1995–2004 will have reduced their adult illiteracy rates since 2000. The highest rate of illiteracy decline across the region was in Kuwait, at 83%, and the lowest in Iraq, at 21%. Kuwait together with Bahrain, Palestine, Qatar and Saudi Arabia will have reduced their 2000 adult illiteracy rate by more than half by 2015, and will therefore reach the goal 4 target. However, Morocco, Sudan and Yemen will still have rates below 80% and are unlikely to achieve the goal; Algeria, Iraq, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia, given projected literacy rates, will also not reach the target.

- The Dakar Framework made explicit reference for Goal 4 to be reached ‘especially for women’. Global progress since 2000 appears to have extended a move towards gender parity that began earlier. The regional average gender parity index (GPI) in adult literacy increased from 0.61 to 0.73 between 1990 and 2000, and would reach 0.82 by 2015. However, gender disparity at the expense of women remains widespread in the Arab States, with gender parity in adult literacy achieved only in Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Despite dramatic moves towards gender parity since 2000 in Djibouti, Morocco and Yemen, less than 80 adult women were literate to 100 adult men in these countries in 2012.

### Direct assessment of literacy

- Countries and international agencies are conducting more sophisticated investigations to gauge not only

whether adults are ‘literate’ or ‘illiterate’ but also their level of literacy and the consequences for individuals and societies. Among these more accurate literacy surveys is UNESCO’s Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP), which defines three levels of literacy attainment, and in which Jordan and Palestine took part.

- To date, most literacy data are based on a self or third-party declaration that tends to understate illiteracy’s extent compared to direct literacy assessments: for example, in Mauritania there is a decline of 4 percentage points in the male 2015 projected adult literacy rate and nearly 14 percentage points in the female projected rate when a direct assessment is used.

### Goal 5: Gender parity and equality

*Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender quality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.*

#### Gender disparities in primary education

- In primary education, the Arab States’ gender parity index (GPI) increased from about 0.87 to 0.93 between 1999 and 2012. Despite the parity gap being halved, the region remains one of those furthest from the target of gender parity. Significant gender disparities remain in Djibouti, Sudan and Yemen where less than 90 girls were enrolled in primary school to 100

boys in 2012 despite progress since 1999. Djibouti, with a gross enrolment ratio of 31% in 2012, faces the dual challenge of increasing the number of children in school while continuing to try to reduce severe gender disparity.

- A clear trend is evident in the majority of countries in this region of reducing gender disparity in the primary gross enrolment ratio, though they often started from a point of severe disadvantage for girls. In Morocco, the GPI increased from 0.82 in 1999 to close to parity, 0.95, in 2013 – even though increased efforts are needed to address obstacles to schooling faced by the most marginalized girls. The situation of girls has deteriorated in Lebanon, with the GPI declining from nearly 0.97 to 0.91 between 1999 and 2012.
- Projections for 15 countries with data indicate that by 2015, 7 will have achieved gender parity in primary education (a GPI of 0.97–1.03), 2 would be close to the target (0.95–0.96 or 1.04–1.05), and 6 would be at an intermediate distance (0.80–0.94 or 1.06–1.25), among which Mauritania is included, where boys are now underrepresented in primary school enrolment.
- When enrolled, girls stand an equal or better chance than boys of continuing to the upper grades of primary school. This is the case in most countries with data, including in Lebanon where girls suffer from some disadvantage at the point of initial intake with a GPI of 0.95, but have a greater chance to reach grade five than boys with a GPI of 1.04.

### *Inequalities within countries*

- Poverty deepens gender disparities in completing primary education. In Egypt, where gender parity in primary attainment has been achieved since 2000 for the richest girls, the poorest girls still lag far behind the poorest boys, with a GPI of 0.84 in 2008. However, the situation has improved since 2000 when the GPI of the poorest children stood at 0.65.

### *Gender disparities in secondary education*

- The Arab States also made progress in secondary education; the region's GPI of secondary GER increased from 0.87 to 0.95 between 1999 and 2012. In Yemen, the GPI increased by 79% between 1999 and 2012, but the participation of girls in secondary education is still about two-thirds that of boys. Djibouti and Sudan have also significantly improved girls' secondary enrolments while Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic have achieved parity between 1999 and 2012, with the GPI increasing from 0.91 to 0.98. Gender parity was also achieved

in Bahrain, Jordan and Lebanon, with boys' situation in secondary education improving significantly. Conversely, in Algeria, Oman, Palestine and Tunisia, the situation of boys worsened from 1999, when they had achieved gender parity.

- Projections indicate that of 18 countries with data, only 6 would achieve gender parity in secondary education in 2015; Algeria and Kuwait would be close; and Djibouti and Yemen would still be far from the target with a GPI below 0.80.

### *Gender equality*

- Achieving gender equality in education requires not only that girls and boys have an equal chance to participate in education, but also that students benefit from a gender-sensitive learning environment.
- The proportion of female teachers is an important indicator of progress towards gender equality. In 2012, the share of female teachers in primary education in the Arab States was 57%. However, the regional average masks variations between countries. A lack of female teachers denies girls important role models. But the share of female teachers remained particularly low in countries such as Djibouti and Yemen, representing only 24% and 27% respectively of the total primary teaching staff. These countries still have significant gender disparities in primary education. But encouragingly, the share of female primary teachers increased in most countries with data, and by more than 30% in Mauritania, Morocco and Yemen.
- The EFA movement provided new impetus for donors and governments to address gender bias in education. For instance, UNESCO funded gender audits of textbooks in Jordan. But despite attempts to provide greater gender balance, bias in textbooks remains pervasive in many countries.
- Learning assessments highlight gender differences in subject performance. PISA results shows that, although learning gender gaps are narrowing worldwide, boys outperform girls in mathematics, while girls increasingly outperform boys in reading by a wider margin. However, in Jordan and Qatar, girls are outperforming boys in both reading and mathematics. In Jordan, the gaps in learning outcomes at the expense of boys have increased between 2006 and 2012, particularly in reading.
- Subject choice can limit labour market opportunities. In most of the 12 countries with data in the region, females accounted for more than 50% of tertiary



students in science in 2012, with the share ranging from 29% in Djibouti to about 63% in Qatar. Female students were much less represented in the field of engineering/manufacturing and construction, accounting for less than 40% in the vast majority of countries with data. In Djibouti, no woman was enrolled in this field of study while 5% were enrolled in Saudi Arabia. Female under-representation in scientific fields exacerbates gender gaps in income, as workers in these fields earn significantly more than counterparts in other fields.

### Goal 6: Quality of education

*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.*

#### Monitoring progress in learning

- More and more countries have been carrying out national assessments. In the Arab States, the percentage of countries that carried out at least one national assessment between 2000 and 2013 was 70% compared with 25% between 1990 and 1999. National assessments are predominantly curriculum-based and subject-oriented, in contrast to international assessments, which focus on cross-curricular knowledge, skills or competencies.
- Countries have also increasingly joined cross-national comparisons of student achievement such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS. The resulting data from these various international assessments, which were carried out in some of the Arab States, allow the assessment of organizational, curricular and family-background components of students'

academic proficiency, and of overall national progress, including towards the elimination of inequality. PISA participation has also helped build national capacity for using data through the drafting of national reports, analysis of results and assessment of a wider range of skills. Assessments are also used to take the pulse of early learning. USAID, with the support of UNICEF, the World Bank and several bilateral donors, promotes early grade reading assessments (EGRAs) and early grade mathematics assessments (EGMAs). In some instances EGRAs have yielded alarming results: many children spend two or three years in school without learning to read a single word. In Iraq, 25% of third-graders were unable to tell the sound of a letter in Arabic.

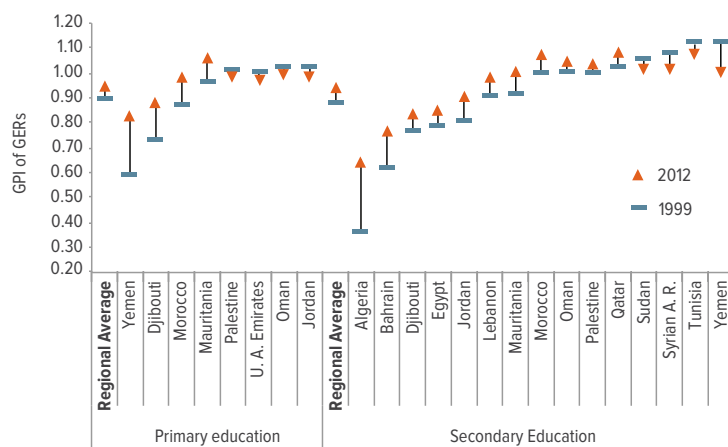
#### Investing in teachers

- The Arab States had about 2.3 million primary school teachers in 2012, an increase of 49% since 1999, the second largest increase globally. As a result, the average pupil/teacher (PTR) declined from 23:1 in 1999 to 19:1 in 2012. Most countries with data reduced the average number of pupils per teacher, and by more than 35% in Kuwait and Palestine. On the other hand, the PTR increased in some countries, including in Yemen by 35% from 22:1 to 30:1 between 1999 and 2012. Despite a decrease by 14% in the PTR since 1999, Mauritania still faced some teacher shortages in 2012, with an average PTR of 40:1.
- In the few countries with data available, most primary school teachers were trained, as in Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. But the percentage of trained teachers was 78% in 2012 in Kuwait, down from 100% in 1999.

#### Instructional time

- Instructional time has been shown to enhance learners' exposure to knowledge and result in significant learning gains. In the late 2000s, countries in the region mandated 720 hours of instructional time per year in the early primary grades, increasing in subsequent grades to reach about 830 hours in grade 8.
- Yet, in many countries, especially in schools in poor communities, schools days are lost due to late teacher postings, in-service teacher training, strikes and armed conflict. In Morocco and Tunisia, loss of instructional time ranged from 39% to 78% of the official intended time.

**Figure 4: Changes in gender disparities in primary and secondary gross enrolment ratios, 1999 to 2012**



## Government policies and actions to accelerate progress towards EFA goals since 2000

Varying policy approaches have been designed and implemented over the past 15 years to expand quality ECCE programmes, increase equitable access to education, improve school completion and education quality, and promote gender equality in education.

Box 1 indicates some of the policies and strategies that governments in the Arab States have developed to tackle the twin challenges of equity and quality.

## Financing Education for All

*Mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all, develop national action plans and enhance significantly investment in education.*

### Box 1: Examples of policies implemented over the past 15 years to:

#### INCREASE ACCESS

- ▶ **Expand public pre-primary provision:** To increase school access while facing budget constraints, many countries in the region engage with the private sector through partnerships where government pays all or part of the fees for children to attend non-government schools. These public–private partnerships do not always work—for example, in countries where privately provided and government pre-primary education systems run in parallel. In other countries, governments are establishing systems where once only the private sector existed. Jordan opened 532 public kindergartens between 2003 and 2010 as part of the 2003 Education Reform for the Knowledge Economy (it had 4,127 private kindergartens as of 2010). Jordan's achievement is dwarfed by Algeria's expansion of its government provision, resulting in a 77 percentage point increase in GER to reach 79% by 2011.
- ▶ **Primary education:** Supply-side interventions, including efforts to improve school construction, have also been especially important in some Arab States. In Morocco, education access was expanded with the National Education and Training Charter, which declared 2000 to 2009 the 'decade for education' with a focus on improving equity. Significant investment in school infrastructure in rural areas and gender reforms led to impressive progress in primary education access, including for rural girls, an ongoing emphasis.

#### PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

- ▶ **Gender-mainstreamed education planning:** Several countries that reduced wide gender gaps in education, including

Morocco, integrated a gender perspective into national education plans, strategic plans or policies, including the promotion of girls' right to education and targeted responses to girls' low enrolment. Analysis of education sector plans in 30 countries, carried out for the *2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report*, found that countries that included a gender goal in both 2000 and 2012 plans made substantial gains towards gender parity in primary enrolment. Such countries include Mauritania where girls' enrolment rose during this period to over half of total primary enrolment, effectively reversing the existing gender gap.

- ▶ **Recruiting more female teachers:**
  - The presence of female teachers can allay parents' fears of security issues and help increase demand for girls' schooling, particularly in countries with cultural and social barriers to girls' enrolment. In Morocco, recruitment of female teachers has been a prominent strategy in national education plans over the past decade, linked to strategies to encourage girls' enrolment and retention: while female teachers accounted for only 39% of teaching staff in 1999, they represented more than half in 2013.
  - In some countries, recruitment of female teachers can have a beneficial effect on girls' performance and continuation in secondary education. In Tunisia, where gender parity in primary enrolment was achieved in 2012, the greater numbers of female teachers in schools in recent years was positively associated with both girls' grade averages and girl's scores in primary school leaving examinations.

- ▶ **Reducing distance to schools:** Policy measures to increase the availability of schools can result in greater enrolment for girls. In Egypt, the Education Enhancement Programme, initiated in the late 1990s, included massive investment in new schools, targeting deprived rural areas, where girls' enrolment was traditionally low. It made significant progress in raising the primary enrolment rates of girls and reducing the enrolment gap with boys. In 1990, 84 girls for every 100 boys were enrolled in primary education in Egypt. The figure rose to 92 in 1999 and to 96 by 2012.

#### IMPROVE QUALITY

- ▶ **Deploying technology to improve learning:** Education policies regarding ICT in the early 2000s called for establishing computer laboratories in schools, acquiring equipment and networks, and providing teacher training and support. In developing countries, computer resources remain greatly overstretched, especially in primary schools. For example, in Egypt, over 100 learners share a single computer at the primary level. Wide disparity exists within countries. Effective integration of ICT into education systems is complex, relating to infrastructure, teacher competencies, pedagogy, institutional readiness, curriculum and sustained financial resources. ICT effectiveness depends on trained teachers who can use it to maximize teaching and learning. In Oman, only 6% of teachers are trained to teach basic computer skills or computing; in Egypt, only 2%.



### *Domestic expenditure on education*

- Among the few Arab States with data, the percentage of GNP devoted to public expenditure on education ranged from less than 3% in Bahrain, Lebanon and Sudan to 6.5% in Tunisia. In most countries with data, the share of GNP spent on education increased between 1999 and 2012, particularly in Mauritania and Sudan. In Mauritania, the share of national income devoted to education rose from 2.4% to 3.9% between 1999 and 2011.
- Education is not a priority in many national budgets in the region, with the percentage of the government budget allocated to education below 20% in all the nine countries with data in 2012. The share ranged from less than 10% in Bahrain and Lebanon to more than 17% in Morocco, Tunisia and the Syrian Arab Republic. The share has declined in Tunisia since 1999, as well as in Djibouti where education's share of the government budget declined by 10 percentage points from 22.9% in 1999 to 12.5% in 2010. On the other hand, the share increased in four countries: Lebanon, Oman, Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

### *International development assistance*

- Since the beginning of the decade, there has been a significant shift in total official development assistance (ODA) for total education and basic education towards countries in the Arab States region. Between 2002 and 2012, total education ODA to the region grew, on average, by 10.5% per annum compared to 6.9% per annum globally. By 2012, total education ODA to the region had reached US\$2 billion, up from US\$758 million in 2002.
- Aid to basic education for the Arab States was the highest of all regions, increasing by 17.6% per annum between 2002 and 2012, compared to 5.9% per annum globally. Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic all experienced record levels of growth in aid to basic education, exceeding 30% per annum.
- Aid provision was once the preserve of OECD donors, but since Dakar, emerging economies have been formalizing development cooperation through the creation of aid agencies. Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, which have started reporting aid levels to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), provide the majority of education aid to countries in the Arab region. In 2012, Kuwait disbursed US\$21 million and United Arab Emirates disbursed US\$110 million.
- International aid and domestic resources are not the only ways to fund education: the Dakar Framework referred specifically to debt relief and cancellation. However, despite progress, not all countries have benefitted from overall progress towards debt relief. The rise in debt servicing by 2018 could equal 60% of the education budget in Mauritania.

## Abbreviations

**ANER: adjusted net enrolment ratio.** ANER measures the proportion of children of primary school age who are enrolled either in primary or in secondary schools.

**ECCE: early childhood care and education.** ECCE are programmes that, in addition to providing children with care, offer a structured and purposeful set of learning activities either in a formal institution (pre-primary or ISCED 0) or as part of a non-formal child development programme. ECCE programmes are usually designed for children from age 3 and include organized learning activities that constitute, on average, the equivalent of at least 2 hours per day and 100 days per year.

**EFA Development Index (EDI).** EDI is a composite index aimed at measuring overall progress towards EFA. At present, the EDI incorporates four of the six EFA goals — universal primary education, adult literacy, gender parity and equality, and education quality — each with a proxy indicator. The index value is the arithmetic mean of the four indicators and ranges from 0 to 1.

**GER: gross enrolment ratio.** GER is the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education. For the tertiary level, the population used is that of the five-year age group older than the secondary school leaving age. The GER can exceed 100% due to late entry and/or repetition.

**GNP: gross national product.** GNP is the gross domestic product plus net receipts of income from abroad. As these receipts may be positive or negative, GNP may be greater or smaller than GDP. This latter indicator is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy, including distributive trades and transport, plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products.

**GPI: gender parity index.** GPI is the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator. A GPI between 0.97 and 1.03 indicates parity between the genders. A GPI below 0.97 indicates a disparity in favour of males. A GPI above 1.03 indicates a disparity in favour of females.

**PIRLS: Progress in Reading Literacy Skills.**

**PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment.**

**PPP: Purchase parity power.** An exchange rate adjustment that accounts for price differences between countries, allowing international comparisons of real output and income.

**TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.**

**Table 1: Education for all development index (EDI) and prospects for education for all goals 1, 2, 4 and 5**

MEAN DISTANCE TO EFA OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT AS MEASURED BY THE EDUCATION FOR ALL DEVELOPMENT INDEX (EDI), 2012	
<b>Overall EFA achieved</b> (EDI between 0.97 and 1.00)	(1): Jordan
<b>Close to overall EFA</b> (EDI between 0.95 and 0.96)	(2): Palestine and Saudi Arabia
<b>Intermediate position</b> (EDI between 0.80 and 0.94)	(7): Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia
<b>Far from overall EFA</b> (EDI below 0.80)	(1): Sudan
<b>Not included in the EDI calculation</b> (insufficient or no data)	(9): Bahrain, Djibouti, Iraq, Libya, Mauritania, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Yemen
PROSPECTS FOR EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS 1, 2, 4 AND 5	
Goal 1 – Likelihood of countries achieving a pre-primary gross enrolment ratio of at least 80% by 2015	
<b>High level</b> (GER: 80% and above)	(3): Algeria, Lebanon and United Arab Emirates
<b>Intermediate level</b> (GER: 70–79%)	None
<b>Low level</b> (GER: 30–69%)	(8): Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar and Sudan
<b>Very low level</b> (GER: <30%)	(4): Djibouti, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen
<b>Not included in the prospects analysis</b> (insufficient or no data)	(5): Libya, Mauritania, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia
Goal 2 – Country prospects for achieving universal primary enrolment by 2015	
<b>Target reached</b> (ANER: 97% and above)	(9): Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait*, Morocco, Oman, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates
<b>Close to target</b> (ANER: 95–96%)	(1): Iraq
<b>Intermediate position</b> (ANER: 80–94%)	(3): Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen
<b>Far from target</b> (ANER: <80%)	(2): Djibouti and Mauritania
<b>Not included in the prospects analysis</b> (insufficient or no comparable data)	(5): Bahrain, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Sudan
Goal 4 – Country prospects for achieving the adult literacy target of halving the adult illiteracy rate by 2015 <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Adult literacy rate:</b> 97% and above	(1): Jordan
<b>Target achieved</b> (adult illiteracy halved or reduced by more)	(5): Bahrain, Kuwait, Palestine, Qatar and Saudi Arabia
<b>Close to target</b> (adult illiteracy rate reduced by 40–49%)	None
<b>Intermediate position</b> (adult illiteracy rate reduced by 30–39%)	(5): Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Yemen
<b>Far from target</b> (adult illiteracy rate reduced by less than 30%)	(3): Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia
<b>Not included in the prospects analysis</b> (insufficient or no comparable data)	(6): Djibouti, Egypt, Lebanon, Mauritania, Oman and United Arab Emirates
Goal 5 – Country prospects for achieving gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015	
<i>Gender parity in primary education</i>	
<b>Target reached</b> (GPI: 0.97-1.03)	(7): Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates
<b>Close to target</b> (GPI: 0.95-0.96 or 1.04-1.05)	(2): Egypt and Morocco
<b>Intermediate position</b> (GPI: 0.80-0.94 or 1.06-1.25)	(6): Algeria, Djibouti, Lebanon, Mauritania, Sudan and Yemen
<b>Far from target</b> (GPI <0.80 or >1.25)	None
<b>Not included in the prospects analysis</b> (insufficient or no data)	(5): Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya and Qatar
<i>Gender parity in secondary education</i>	
<b>Target reached</b> (GPI: 0.97-1.03)	(6): Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syrian Arab Republic
<b>Close to target</b> (GPI: 0.95-0.96 or 1.04-1.05)	(2): Algeria and Kuwait
<b>Intermediate position</b> (GPI: 0.80-0.94 or 1.06-1.25)	(8): Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Sudan, Qatar and Tunisia
<b>Far from target</b> (GPI <0.80 or >1.25)	(2): Djibouti and Yemen
<b>Not included in the prospects analysis</b> (insufficient or no data)	(2) Libya and United Arab Emirates

1. Countries included are those where the adult literacy rate estimated in the period 1995–2004 was lower than 95%, and where both the baseline estimates and the 2015 projections are based on the method of self-declaration or declaration on behalf of others.

Table 2: Arab States, selected education indicators

Country or territory	Total population (000)	GNP per capita PPP (US\$)	Compulsory education Age group	EFA Development Index (EDI)	Adult literacy								Early childhood care and education								
					Adult literacy rate (15 and over)				Adult illiterates (15 and over)				Child survival and well-being			Pre-primary education			Primary adjusted NER		Out-of-school children <sup>2</sup>
					Total (%)	GPI (F/M)	Total (%)	GPI (F/M)	Total (000)	% Female	Total (000)	% Female	Under -5 mortality rate (%)	Moderate or severe stunting (%)	GER (%)	Total (%)	Total (%)	Total (%)	Total (%)	Total (000)	
					1995–2004 <sup>1</sup>	2005–2012 <sup>1</sup>	1995–2004 <sup>1</sup>	2005–2012 <sup>1</sup>	2000	2015	2008–2012 <sup>1</sup>	1999	2012	1999	2012	1999	2012	1999	2012		
					2015	2012	2012	2012	2015	2015	2012	2012	2015	2015	2012	2012	2012	2012	2012		
Algeria	40,633	8,360	6-16	0.886	70	0.76	73	0.79	6693	66	6,776	66	46	30	15	2	79	88	99	578	
Bahrain	1,360	...	6-15	...	87	0.94	95	0.95	66	49	55	54	13	9	...	33	50	99	...	0.6	
Djibouti	900	...	6-16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	109	78	31	0.4	4	25	58	92	
Egypt	84,706	6,450	6-14	0.900	56	0.65	74	0.81	17402	63	14,590	65	42	22	29	11	27	95	97	418	
Iraq	35,767	7,460	6-11	...	74	0.76	79	0.84	3525	69	4,098	66	43	30	23	5	...	89	...	408	
Jordan	7,690	5,980	6-16	0.979	90	0.89	98	0.99	304	74	95	62	28	18	8	29	34	97	97	18	
Kuwait	3,583	...	6-14	...	78	0.91	96	0.99	249	46	109	42	14	11	4	94	...	100	...	0.2	
Lebanon	5,054	14,160	6-12	0.939	...	...	90	0.92	...	...	311	67	19	9	...	76	91	...	96	...	
Libya	6,317	...	6-15	...	85	0.82	90	0.87	554	77	440	81	27	15	21	5	...	...	...	...	
Mauritania	4,080	2,480	6-14	...	51	0.73	46	0.62	753	59	1,050	60	118	104	23	...	...	60	70	169	
Morocco	33,955	5,060	6-15	0.864	52	0.60	67	0.76	9768	65	7,734	65	51	29	15	60	59	71	99	1 172	
Oman	4,158	...	...	0.938	81	0.85	87	0.91	286	59	265	54	22	8	10	...	55	84	97	52	
Palestine	4,549	...	6-16	0.957	92	0.91	96	0.95	144	77	102	78	31	22	11	35	42	93	93	24	
Qatar	2,351	...	6-18	...	89	0.99	97	0.99	61	31	59	25	13	7	...	27	73	95	...	3	
Saudi Arabia	29,898	...	6-11	0.969	83	0.87	94	0.95	2662	58	1,137	63	24	11	...	...	13	...	97	...	
Sudan	39,613	2,070	6-13	0.728	61	0.73	73	0.80	5956	63	5,781	66	112	83	35	19	35	...	52	...	
Syrian Arab Republic	22,265	...	6-15	0.930	81	0.84	85	0.87	2066	67	2,111	69	23	19	28	8	11	97	99	89	
Tunisia	11,235	9,210	6-16	0.919	74	0.78	80	0.82	1881	68	1,681	70	29	15	10	13	...	96	100	46	
United Arab Emirates	9,577	41,430	6-14	...	...	...	90	1.02	...	...	331	24	12	6	...	65	71	85	98	42	
Yemen	25,535	2,310	6-15	...	55	0.48	66	0.61	4742	71	4,756	74	99	73	47	0.7	2	58	87	1 338	
Sudan (pre-secession)	...	...	6-14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
	Sum	Median			Weighted average				Sum	% F	Sum	% F	Weighted average	Median	Weighted average	Weighted average	Weighted average	Sum			
Arab States	373 225	6,450	...	...	67	0.73	78	0.81	57,936	65	51,774	66	56	37	21	15	25	80	89	7,772	
Developing countries	5 944 265	4,820	...	...	77	0.84	80	0.87	775,715	64	771,717	64	82	67	29	27	49	82	90	102,930	
World	7 291 097	8,370	...	...	82	0.89	84	0.91	786,523	64	780,682	64	75	49	25	33	54	84	91	105,769	
Developing countries	5 944 265	4,820	...	...	77	0.84	80	0.87	775,715	64	771,717	64	82	67	29	27	49	82	90	102,930	
World	7 291 097	8,370	...	...	82	0.89	84	0.91	786,523	64	780,682	64	75	49	25	33	54	84	91	105,769	

Sources: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015, statistical and aid tables; UNESCO Institute for Statistics database; CRS online database.

Note: See source tables in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015 for detailed country notes.

1. Data are for the most recent year available during the period specified.

2. Data reflect the actual number of children not enrolled at all, derived from the age-specific or adjusted net enrolment ratio (ANER) of primary school age children, which measures the proportion of those who are enrolled either in primary or in secondary schools.

3. Based on headcounts of pupils and teachers.

4. Values for total aid disbursements to education and to basic education for regional and other country groups do not always sum up to world totals because some aid is not allocated by region or country.

(-) Magnitude nil or negligible

(.) The category is not applicable or does not exist.

(...) No data available.

Primary education					Secondary education														Education finance					
Out-of-school children <sup>2</sup>	GPI of GER		Survival rate to last grade		Pupil/teacher ratio <sup>3</sup>		GER														Total public expenditure on education as % of GNP	Total aid disbursements to education (Constant 2012 US\$ million)	Total aid disbursements to basic education (Constant 2012 US\$ million)	Total aid disbursements to basic education per primary school age child (Constant 2012 US\$)
	Total	(F/M)	(F/M)	Total	Total	Total	Total	Lower secondary education				Upper secondary education				Total secondary education								
(000)	(F/M)	(F/M)	(%)	(%)			Total	GPI	Total	GPI	Total	GPI	Total	GPI	Total	GPI	Total	GPI	1999	2012	2012	2012	2012	
25	0.91	0.94	91	93	28	23	84	0.89	128	0.93	40	1.34	62	1.38	63	1.01	98	1.04	...	...	131	3	1	
...	0.97	...	90	98	...	12	108	1.04	94	0.99	85	1.14	97	1.06	97	1.08	96	1.02	...	2.9	-	-	...	
39	0.72	0.88	...	76	40	34	19	0.62	52	0.79	11	0.64	38	0.73	16	0.63	46	0.77	7.5	...	27	14	151	
258	0.92	0.96	99	96	23	28	96	0.91	101	0.99	70	0.92	71	0.97	84	0.91	86	0.98	...	...	136	43	5	
...	0.83	...	49	...	21	...	45	0.63	...	...	24	0.66	...	...	35	0.64	...	...	...	...	73	31	6	
25	1.02	0.98	96	98	...	...	91	1.04	92	0.99	75	1.08	78	1.12	86	1.05	88	1.03	5.0	...	289	160	185	
...	1.01	...	94	94	13	9	122	0.99	...	...	107	1.02	...	...	115	1.00	...	...	5.6	...	...	...	...	
18	0.97	0.91	90	93	14	14	107	1.11	86	1.00	68	1.16	63	1.03	90	1.13	74	1.01	2.0	2.2	149	58	136	
...	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	121	0.99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10	3	5	
169	0.97	1.05	40	...	47	40	23	0.82	32	0.89	17	0.71	19	0.74	20	0.77	27	0.85	2.4	3.9	28	5	9	
43	0.82	0.95	75	92	28	26	48	0.78	84	0.82	25	0.81	54	0.92	36	0.79	69	0.86	5.5	5.5	355	88	...	
7	0.98	1.01	92	94	25	...	89	0.95	98	1.05	61	1.09	91	1.10	75	1.00	94	1.08	4.2	4.6	-	-	-	
33	1.00	0.99	99	99	38	24	86	1.02	86	1.06	51	1.04	73	1.25	78	1.02	83	1.10	...	...	358	180	...	
...	1.06	...	...	...	13	10	92	1.08	101	1.01	80	1.16	...	...	86	1.11	112	1.10	...	...	...	...	...	
115	...	1.03	...	99	...	10	...	...	120	1.01	...	...	112	1.01	...	...	116	1.01	7.0	...	-	-	...	
2 811	0.85	0.89	...	76	...	...	47	0.65	49	0.88	24	1.09	28	0.97	34	0.81	37	0.92	1.1	2.4	28	10	...	
19	0.92	0.97	87	93	25	...	62	0.88	93	0.98	23	1.03	41	1.11	43	0.92	74	1.00	4.5	5.2	95	18	9	
0.5	0.94	0.98	87	95	24	17	97	1.01	116	0.92	53	1.01	75	1.20	72	1.01	91	1.05	6.5	6.5	148	18	...	
5.8	0.99	0.97	89	84	16	18	96	0.97	...	...	71	1.28	...	...	84	1.10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
490	0.56	0.83	69	...	22	30	49	0.38	57	0.67	33	0.34	37	0.64	41	0.37	47	0.65	10.5	...	89	52	14	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.3	...	...	...	...	
...	...	...	77	...	24	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Sum	Weighted average		Median		Weighted average		Weighted average				Weighted average				Weighted average				Median		Sum		Weighted average	
4,467	0.87	0.93	82	83	23	19	75	0.86	89	0.92	45	0.91	58	1.00	61	0.87	74	0.95	5.3	...	2,048	686	17	
54,876	0.91	0.97	72	72	29	26	65	0.89	82	0.97	37	0.86	56	0.95	51	0.88	69	0.96	4.4	4.7	...	...	...	
57,788	0.92	0.97	75	75	26	24	71	0.92	85	0.98	45	0.91	62	0.96	59	0.91	73	0.97	4.5	5.0	12,584	5,079	8	
54,876	0.91	0.97	72	72	29	26	65	0.89	82	0.97	37	0.86	56	0.95	51	0.88	69	0.96	4.4	4.7	...	...	...	
57,788	0.92	0.97	75	75	26	24	71	0.92	85	0.98	45	0.91	62	0.96	59	0.91	73	0.97	4.5	5.0	12,584	5,079	8	



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# Regional Overview: Arab States



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