

GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT

2026

COUNTDOWN TO 2030

Access and equity

COUNTDOWN TO 2030

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Sustainable Development Goals

Global Education Monitoring Report

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Access and equity

COUNTDOWN TO 2030

The Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action specifies that the mandate of the *Global Education Monitoring Report* is to be "the mechanism for monitoring and reporting on SDG 4 and on education in the other SDGs" with the responsibility to "report on the implementation of national and international strategies to help hold all relevant partners to account for their commitments as part of the overall SDG follow-up and review". It is prepared by an independent team hosted by UNESCO.

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Photography caption: Godfred, aged six, and his friend on their way to school in a small rural town in the Eastern region of Ghana.

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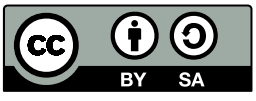
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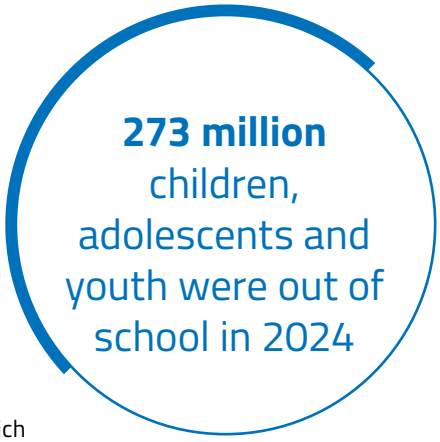


SHORT SUMMARY

To understand progress in access and equity, combine data and stories

The three major global education agendas increased levels of ambition faster than education systems could expand, promising universal access to primary education in 1990, universal completion of primary education in 2000, and universal completion of secondary education in 2015. Not even the first will have been achieved by 2030.

But there is reason for hope over cynicism. Globally, enrolment has expanded dramatically. There are 327 million more students, or 30%, in schools today than in 2000. There are 45% more in preschools and 161% more in colleges and universities. Many countries have managed to progress, and their success has been hard won. They have lifted barriers to bring disadvantaged children to school, keep them studying, and see them progress and complete each education cycle. Legal and policy frameworks have made education more equitable, affordable, inclusive and flexible, adapting to the needs and circumstances of students. They offer lessons for a future global education agenda.



The first in a three-part series, entitled Countdown to 2030, this report focuses on access and equity in education. A set of 35 country case studies drawn from rich data illustrates what happens when an international agenda meets national realities. The stories, supplemented by further research insights, show that change in education takes time; no single reform will address educational exclusion. Following the optimism of the 2000s, after fiscal restrictions had been lifted allowing many countries to invest in public education, the harder work of keeping students in school and dismantling the many constraints facing them has required more sophisticated action, often beyond education. But what sometimes appears as progress stalling may be progress in disguise.

Ignoring such progress means missing how international agendas help motivate and sustain change. Monitoring needs to compare countries with similar starting points, track policies as well as outcomes, and take context seriously. This report offers guiding principles and recommendations rather than a universal checklist, drawn from countries that have maintained progress over time. Crises and structural obstacles will persist. But examining how some countries have navigated them is a contribution this report aims to make to national, regional and global dialogue.

This report also illustrates significant efforts by countries to reallocate financial resources to subnational governments, schools, students and their families, from cash and in-kind transfers to scholarships and school feeding, in order to achieve equitable outcomes. Still, a new index, developed for this report and aiming to capture the orientation of national policies, finds that fewer than 1 in 10 countries have a sufficiently strong equity focus.

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"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defenses of peace must be constructed"

Foreword

The 21st century carries a universal promise: that every child—regardless of where they were born, how much their family earned, or what language they spoke at home—deserved access to quality education. This promise was first made in 1990, it was restated in 2000, and it was extended in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This edition of UNESCO's flagship education report asks whether we have kept it.

How we frame progress matters. The narrative around global education tends to focus on who is out of school, but less on the surging numbers who are in it. The progress since 2000 is real: hundreds of millions more children are in classrooms, legal frameworks have been strengthened, gender gaps have narrowed. These gains reflect political commitments, public investment, and the determination of communities that refused to accept that quality education was for someone else's children. Yet we must confront the persistent gaps—especially as the number of children and young people out of school has risen for seven consecutive years.

UNESCO, as the lead United Nations agency for education, plays a key role in elevating this discussion to the highest political level. Our motto is "UNESCO for the people"—as such, this report is not merely about statistics or international frameworks. It is the lived experience of those whose lives have been transformed through education that animates this new edition of the *Global Education Monitoring Report*. For them, this report illustrates where progress has been made, and why. Alongside robust data and statistical analysis, it sheds light on country case studies and shows what happens when political will meets practice.

This report reveals something important about how change occurs. Education systems rarely fail all at once. They weaken gradually, as pressures accumulate across different parts simultaneously. Recovery works the same way. Countries that have moved fastest have done so through sustained, and multifaceted reforms. There is a persistent temptation in global development to reach for universal lists of what works. But such country studies rarely capture what sustaining large-scale change over decades actually requires. It requires strong governance, persistence, humility and a willingness to learn from countries' historical trajectories, rather than seizing at what might be a simple one-size-fits-all fix.

By offering such historical and comparative perspectives, this report feeds peer learning about how progress in countries with similar starting points can best happen, to help inform national dialogue—not to prescribe global answers, assuming they will work for all. Instead of outlining a list of policies for all, it illuminates on a set of guiding principles that should appear consistently in the different policy choices countries make in their different contexts.

In all parts of the world, and particularly in Africa where UNESCO invests more than one-third of its education budget, we work with governments and the whole of society to support such systemic change. From Côte d'Ivoire to Cambodia, we implement large-scale programmes to advance the right to quality education for all, with support from the Global Partnership for Education—the world's largest education fund, of which $235 million are being implemented by UNESCO in 30 countries.

The world has achieved something worth acknowledging in the past generation and left undone something that demands continued commitment. This report is offered to the people and leaders working every day—alongside UNESCO—to close that gap.

Khaled El-Enany
Director-General of UNESCO

Foreword

Getting children through the school gate is only half the battle. Who gets through it, and on what terms, is the other half, and it is the half we have been losing.

The progress of the past 25 years is real. More children are in school today than at any point in human history. But expansion and equity are not the same thing. A system can grow dramatically and still leave its poorest, most rural, most marginalized children systematically behind. When we look honestly at who remains out of school, who drops out before completing, and who progresses without the support they need, we see the same groups, in the same places, generation after generation. That is not misfortune. It is the predictable consequence of systems financed and governed without them in mind.

We have grown comfortable measuring commitment to education in inputs: how much governments spend, how many schools are built, how many children are enrolled. But these tell us almost nothing about whether the children who have been failed the longest are finally being reached. A country can increase its education budget year on year and still, if the money flows without deliberate redistribution, leave its most marginalized children exactly where they were. Neutral financing in an unequal system entrenches the status quo.

The findings in the 2026 GEM Report are not easy to sit with. About one in three young people worldwide still does not complete secondary school. Early leavers are overwhelmingly poor and live in rural areas. Fewer than 1 in 10 countries have a financing system with a genuinely strong equity focus. School grants, the fastest growing equity instrument globally, represent less than half a percent of education spending in at least half the countries that have them. The architecture of equitable financing exists. The problem is that it is nowhere near on a sufficient scale.

This is a political failure as much as a technical one. Equity-oriented financing means designing transfers with explicit redistribution criteria rather than leaving equity to goodwill. It means targeting support not only by poverty and geography, but also by disability, language, ethnicity and displacement status. Conditional cash transfers work. School feeding programmes work. Direct financial support to students works. The question is for countries to identify which will work best in their context, and decide whether they are willing to fund them at the scale needed to actually close gaps.

Wealthier countries are significantly more likely to have equity-focused financing systems. But the argument that this kind of policy is a luxury licenses complacency precisely where the consequences of exclusion are most severe. Every country faces choices about how to allocate scarce resources. The real question is whether equity shapes those choices, or gets quietly set aside when budgets are drawn up.

This report offers a rigorous basis for honest self-assessment. Governments, development partners and civil society should use it. The promise of education for all will not be kept until equity becomes the organizing principle of how systems are financed, not an afterthought.

Jutta Urpilainen
Chair of the GEM Report Advisory Board

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KEY MESSAGES

Countries will not achieve access for all by 2030, but this does not mean that the global education agenda has failed.

- The three major global education agendas – universal access to primary education declared in 1990; universal completion of primary education in 2000; and universal completion of secondary education in 2015 – increased levels of ambition faster than education system expansion, undermining the credibility of these agendas.
- Behind the numbers of those out of school is a more encouraging story of surging enrolment. With 1.4 billion students enrolled in school in 2024, enrolment had increased by 327 million, or 30%, in primary and secondary education since 2000. It also increased by 45% in pre-primary and by 161% in post-secondary education.
- Countries have also transformed their policy approach to education equity and inclusion. Governments support disadvantaged regions and groups, and have leveraged investments in technology, transport, energy and health to expand education access.

Since 2015, progress in reducing out-of-school rates has slowed across all regions.

- After falling by 33% between 2000 and 2015, the out-of-school population has risen for a seventh year in a row, up 3% since 2015 and reaching 273 million in 2024. This means that one in six children, adolescents and youth worldwide are excluded from education.
- This population is undercounted by at least 13 million if supplementary information from humanitarian sources is used to correct data gaps in the 10 countries most affected by conflict.
- Progress is possible. Some countries have reduced out-of-school rates by at least 80% since 2000, such as Madagascar and Togo among children, Morocco and Viet Nam among adolescents, and Georgia and Türkiye among youth.

At the current rates, we may never get everyone through to the end of secondary school.

- More children are completing their education even if the out-of-school rate has stagnated. Since 2000, the completion rate has increased from 77% to 88% in primary, from 60% to 78% in lower secondary, and from 37% to 61% in upper secondary. The pace of increase has been, for instance, one percentage point per year in upper secondary education since 2000.
- At current rates of expansion, the world would achieve 95% upper secondary completion by 2105.
- High rates of children repeating grades have fallen since 2000 by 62% in primary and by 38% in lower secondary education, which explains why out-of-school rates can stagnate, while completion rates improve.
- Many children still enrol in school late and repeat grades in low- and lower-middle-income countries, meaning that many complete each cycle with several years of delay. The gap between 'timely' (within three to five years of official graduation age) and 'ultimate' (even later) completion in lower secondary education is four percentage points globally but nine percentage points in low-income countries, a gap that has been growing since 2005.

The way to define progress needs to be improved.

- While the 2030 Agenda acknowledged that governments should set their own national targets based on their circumstances, little was done in this way, with education a notable exception. Since 2022, 80% of countries have communicated national targets for eight indicators to be achieved by 2030, with progress monitored annually by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the GEM Report.
- Progress is best understood when comparing countries that started from similar points. For example between 2000 and 2024, Mexico cut out-of-school rates over 20 percentage points more than El Salvador; Sierra Leone increased primary completion rates 22 points more than Liberia; and Iraq increased its secondary completion rate 10 points more than Algeria.

- Monitoring progress in equity is not served well by the parity index, the global indicator, which says more about the progress of the indicator being disaggregated rather than the state of inequality. Conclusions can be drawn but trends need to be analysed in context.

Some measurement tools need to be adjusted to be more informative.

- In pre-primary education, the global indicator, which says that 75% of 5-year-olds are in education, overestimates how many children attended preschool before primary because 27% of those children were already in primary school. This report estimates that only 60% of primary school students had at least one year of pre-primary education.
- In primary and secondary education, one in three countries do not report disparity by urban–rural location and one in two countries do not report disparity by wealth. In most cases, this reflects the fact that education ministries do not appreciate survey data enough to use them or that countries are reluctant to reveal disparity even if they have the data.
- In post-secondary education, the gross enrolment ratio overstates progress because many do not ultimately graduate. The tertiary attainment rate of 25- to 34-year-olds consistently represents only some 60% of the gross enrolment ratio 10 years earlier. The attainment rate of 25- to 29-year-olds should become the basis of monitoring and that of 30- to 34-year-olds a measure of late completion.

There are no simple explanations of long-term progress in access and equity.

- Factors outside of education policy can often explain long-term educational expansion, such as rising women's labour force participation, the prospect of migration, and the peace and stability dividend in countries recovering from conflict.
- Experimental evaluations have provided important policy insights, for instance on the importance of health and nutrition interventions for education. But there is also a tendency to pay too much attention to results of these short-term impact studies, which try to suggest 'what works' and yet are silent on the robust institutions that matter for policy implementation to sustain educational expansion.
- No single solution will work. Policy reviews in this report highlight the importance of coherent, context-specific and balanced policy packages that develop institutions, encourage demand, and strengthen the supply of education.

There have been major policy efforts to improve access.

- Since 2000, the share of countries with inclusive education laws has risen from 1% to 24%, while those calling in their laws for children with disabilities to be taught in inclusive education settings has increased from 17% to 29%. The proportion of countries that have adopted a definition of inclusive education has grown from 68% in 2020 to 84% in 2025; of those, the share whose definition extends beyond disability has increased from 51% to 69%.
- Between 1998 and 2023, among 158 countries, the share of those with 12 years of compulsory education has increased from 8% to 26%; among 130 countries, the average duration of free education increased from 10 years to 10.8 years.

There is a shift towards policies that redistribute resources to improve equity in education.

- Financing is an important policy area for achieving equitable outcomes in education. The share of countries deploying four financing mechanisms and using their potential to benefit disadvantaged populations in primary and secondary education – transfers to subnational governments, to schools, and to students and households – has increased by 4 to 6 times in the past 25 years. School meal programmes, which started from a higher baseline, have doubled.
- A new index measuring the intended coverage and volume of equity-oriented policies shows, however, that fewer than 1 in 10 countries have a sufficiently strong equity focus.
- In pre-primary education, 54% of countries transfer resources to institutions serving disadvantaged children, 26% transfer resources to families through the education ministry and 55% transfer resources to families through some other ministry.
- In post-secondary education, 1 in 3 countries charge no tuition in public universities, almost 1 in 2 countries subsidize student housing, 4 in 10 support transport, and just under 3 in 10 subsidize textbooks.



In Bangladesh, Tawhida enjoys learning alongside her best friend, Tania Begum, 12, as they assist each other in their studies and share playful moments in their free time. With dreams of becoming a doctor, Tawhida's journey illustrates the transformative power of education and the importance of community support in overcoming adversity.

Credit: © UNICEF/UNI636924/Himu*



CHAPTER

1

Introduction



The *Countdown to 2030* series 2
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Access to education has been at the heart of humanity's vision for peace, dignity and equality. Enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the commitment to universal 'elementary' education was the foundation for every global education goal that has followed since. This reflected a shared conviction that education is a social good that provides an indispensable pillar of world order, international stability and the broader architecture of human rights. At a moment when the spirit and value of multilateral cooperation are being tested, this enduring commitment to equitable access to education as a universal human right remains a powerful reminder of what can unite us: the shared belief that every child, everywhere, deserves the chance to learn and thrive.

This aspiration for universality is also reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that brought together for the first time people and the planet, poor and rich countries, under an integrated framework through an inclusive and participatory process. Within the overall agenda, the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on education, which is recognized as central to the achievement of all the other SDGs, weaves universal access to education as a precondition for the full vision of SDG 4 to be realized.

The 2030 Agenda promotes educational expansion in two directions. Vertically, countries have been called to ensure that everyone completes at least 1 year of pre-primary and 12 years of primary and secondary school. This is a major extension considering that the previous global education agendas between 1990 and 2015 focused on universal primary enrolment and completion. The extension was far more ambitious than countries could achieve between 2015 and 2030 given the historical record of educational expansion. But it reflected a recognition that graduating from secondary school has become a prerequisite for preparing young people to confront the uncertainty of a rapidly changing world. The proposed expansion was also horizontal. Whereas the previous global education agendas only explicitly referred to gender parity, the promise to leave no one behind, which is a foundation of the 2030 Agenda, expanded the scope of equity and inclusion to anyone who might be at a disadvantage because of background, identity or ability.

As the 2030 deadline is rapidly approaching, there is a clear need to take stock of this agenda's achievements. This report emphasizes the need to reflect on why a global education agenda is needed. It argues that the agenda helps set targets, collect and report data, and provide a framework through which countries' contexts, experiences and varied pathways towards targets can be better understood.

THE *COUNTDOWN TO 2030* SERIES

This edition of the *Global Education Monitoring Report* is the first of a three-part series, entitled *Countdown to 2030*, which aims to take stock of progress and help frame the international community's debate about the education agenda beyond 2030.

Past editions had two distinct and roughly equally-sized parts. A thematic part explored in depth one of the strategies – and associated policies – for achieving SDG 4 and set the overall tone. A monitoring part provided the latest account of progress in achieving each of the SDG 4 targets. The approach of the three editions in the *Countdown to 2030* series blends discussion of data and policies, involving two steps. First, monitoring data are analysed to identify countries that have improved faster than their peers over a long period of time according to some measure of education development. Second, drivers of strong country performance are described, including both a broad range of explanatory factors, as they emerge from country case studies and a more focused range of policies that research has credited with having made a difference.

The three editions of the *Global Education Monitoring Report* planned for the *Countdown to 2030* series split the international education agenda into three broad topics:

- This first report (2026) focuses on **access and equity**.
- The second report (2027) will focus on **quality and learning**.
- The third report (2028/9) will focus on **relevance** in education, in particular the extent to which education systems prepare students to be agents in addressing global challenges.

The *Countdown to 2030* series is designed as an integrated trilogy. It recognizes that access, learning and relevance are pillars of a single educational vision. Presenting them in three distinct reports is a response to the diverse nature of the global educational data that underpin each of these themes. Each topic demands a different approach to monitoring. Access to education, and to a somewhat lesser extent equity, can be most easily quantified as data are abundant, yielding reasonably objective conclusions on which countries have done better than others. The availability of data on learning has increased considerably, permitting selected comparisons within regions or country income groups, although it remains too patchy and insufficient to lead to any clear conclusions on global progress. There is also less agreement on the determinants of quality and the indicators that can best capture it. Finally, there is the least consensus on definitions of relevance and even less on the measures of relevance, while data are much scarcer; it is the part of the agenda with the least amount of hard data to support an assessment of whether countries have progressed.

While each report will tackle one theme at a time, they will jointly emphasize the intersection of the three themes. Beginning the trilogy with a focus on access and equity does not indicate that they are more important than quality and relevance.

Equity serves as a connective tissue across the trilogy: how to ensure not only that all have an education opportunity but also that the capabilities that they develop and the opportunities they get to develop them are distributed fairly, so that education can be a force for equalizing opportunities rather than reproducing inequalities.

Quality ensures that the time spent in preschools, schools and universities helps learners achieve the intended objectives of education. Quality is understood and defined in various ways across the world. The *Global Education Monitoring Report* considers that any definition should encompass learners, organization, inputs, teaching and learning processes, and leadership which, combined, lead to learning outcomes that support individual and societal development. Resources that are sufficient and efficiently used, learning environments that are safe and inclusive, teachers who are motivated and competent – all are markers of good quality in education. Access to education and the quality of education must therefore always be analysed in light of each other.

Relevance is one of the foundations of quality. An education system that does not prepare learners adequately cannot be described as a system of quality. But while there is consensus on some outcomes, there are endless debates over the content of education and the values it should instil. These debates are becoming more urgent, as global challenges mount up at an unexpected pace. They relate to the impact of digital technology, encroaching authoritarianism, climate-related disasters, environmental pollution and degradation, and changes in demography, family structure and social relations. They contrast uniformity and diversity, standards and freedoms, individuals and groups, rights and liberties, national and global, short term and long term, tradition and innovation, and more.

To conclude, the three reports under the *Countdown to 2030* series will collectively provide a basis for international dialogue on where countries stand, how fast they have progressed, what are the main drivers of differences between countries, and what this record suggests about the priorities that education systems need to address in the future. The separation of focus is a device for organizing this discussion and links between the three issues will be built within each edition.

A REPORT ON EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION IS AS RELEVANT AS EVER

An explicit focus on equitable access to education in this first volume is justified. As the first in the series, the 2026 *Global Education Monitoring Report* aims to address three questions.

- First, for each access to – and equity in – education measure, among countries that started from similar levels, which ones have improved much faster than others?
- Second, among a select group of countries singled out for their improvement or their stagnation, what are the key reasons that help explain the observed trends? How do these explanations compare to those that research has identified as having played a key role for improving education participation and reducing disparity in the long term?

- Third, what are the implications of the statistical, country case study and policy analyses for a future international education agenda on issues of access and equity?

Data and methods for measuring access and equity may not be perfect but they have never been sharper, allowing for critical analysis of trends. In the recent past, the use of imperfect measures has led to misinterpretations and flawed conclusions that the world was close to or had already achieved universal primary (World Bank, 2011) and secondary completion (Nicolai et al., 2015). Fresh analyses in pre-primary and post-secondary education can also be used to turn attention to other imperfect measures currently used at these two levels of education and the steps needed to fix them.

There are achievements that deserve recognition. Almost 330 million more children, adolescents and youth are attending school today than in 2000, an increase of 30%. Enrolment has also increased by 45% in pre-primary education and by more than 160% in post-secondary education. Gender gaps have been eliminated on average in primary and secondary education even though they exist in many individual countries, especially in secondary education. The number of countries that have made 12 years of education compulsory has tripled in 25 years. Many governments are making significant efforts to reach and support education for disadvantaged regions, schools and students in their bid to support those left furthest behind. During the exceptional challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries used advances in technology to respond and prevent the worst possible consequences of the disruption to education. Improvements in transport, energy and health infrastructure have been supporting access to education.

> In 2024, 273 million children, adolescents and youth were out of school

But the same analysis can draw attention to where access to education continues being denied, as well as to the many and varied barriers. In 2024, 273 million children, adolescents and youth were out of school – and this excludes an estimated 13 million more in 10 of the countries most affected by conflict. These children are missing out on an opportunity that could change their lives. They include girls who are discouraged, even prohibited, from attending school by discriminatory laws or community practices. They include those from poor families living in countries where education is supposedly free, yet the actual costs are beyond their reach. They increasingly include those living in conflict-affected areas who are displaced, see school buildings destroyed and feel insecure, as civil and cross-border strife have reached new highs. They include those who may have beaten the odds to progress through education only to find that the school environment is unwelcoming, unresponsive, unequipped and unsuitable.

A closer look is warranted at the historical pace of increases in participation but also in completion, at each level of education, from pre-primary to post-secondary, and from different starting points. Compiling such information and documenting what rates of progress have been feasible up to now can and should be used to set realistic but still ambitious targets in the future. One in three youth do not complete secondary school and, to this date, essentially no country has achieved universal secondary completion for its youth, despite it being a declared objective of all countries under SDG 4. Targets for post-secondary education are much more complex. While discussion on the right to education includes content issues, and therefore relevance, the targets are still mainly seen in terms of access. But there is no consensus on what level of access to higher education should be considered a right (Martin, 2022).

Finally, although access to education has been routinely, and to some extent justifiably, criticized as an unsatisfactory measure of progress, compared to measures of learning (Pritchett, 2013), the report concurs with the view that improving access to education remains the most effective route in the short term to improving learning outcomes in a country's population (Crawfurd, 2024). Although reliable measures of progress in meeting a minimum level of proficiency remain somewhat elusive, the best estimates that this report has published in the past suggest that progress in such outcome measures is much slower than progress in access measures.

Many countries have found context-specific solutions to the challenges they face that have allowed them to surge ahead of other countries and expand access to education at an unprecedented pace. Any progress that exceeds past rates should be singled out and studied rather than be judged against an excessively high and ultimately unfair standard of universalized access. The significant efforts that have produced measurable gains around the world should not be ignored. This report calls for paying attention to individual countries' realities. It calls for listening to experiences in different contexts that have proven effective, even if it cannot be expected that these approaches can be adopted wholesale elsewhere and produce the same results. The recommendations reiterate

this point, emphasizing that a dialogue-based approach is an essential component of education progress.

MEASURING PROGRESS IN ACCESS AND EQUITY USING FIVE INDICATORS

Five SDG global and thematic indicators are used by this report. First, SDG global indicator 4.2.2 is the participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age, which for most countries means the participation rate of 5-year-olds in education. The indicator does not distinguish between enrolment in pre-primary and primary education and therefore its data must be unpacked further. Moreover, this indicator is less relevant for richer countries, which have achieved universal enrolment in this age group and therefore focus on progress at younger age groups.

Second, SDG thematic indicator 4.1.4 is the out-of-school rate. This was the headline indicator under the MDGs but only for children of primary school age, whereas progress is also examined in this report for adolescents of lower secondary school age and youth of upper secondary school age. The analysis focuses on administrative data reported to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), which remains the official method of reporting, but also looks into estimated regional and global aggregates based on the out-of-school rate model that the UIS and the GEM Report have developed and at national data (e.g. enrolment, repetition and population) to triangulate some of the trends. A closer look is taken at the over-age rate, as changes in late enrolment and repetition rates have been affecting the evolution of out-of-school rates.

Third, SDG global indicator 4.1.2 is the completion rate at the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education level. This indicator was added to the global list during the first comprehensive review of the SDG monitoring framework in 2020. Before 2015, completion was measured using administrative data as the gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary and lower secondary education. There were two reasons for replacing it. The first reason was that the intake ratio depends on the denominator, the population of children of graduation age (e.g. 11-year-olds in primary), which is difficult to estimate with precision. The second reason was that no gross intake measure was available for upper secondary education. The new indicator is better. The completion rate indicator is based on survey data and defined over the population of those aged three to five years above graduation age in order to capture those completing later than intended due to late enrolment and repetition. It is calculated over all those in the age group and not only over those who started that education level.

Fourth, SDG thematic indicator 4.3.2 is the tertiary education gross enrolment ratio. Based on administrative data, it is the number of students enrolled in tertiary education divided by the population of a five-year age group after secondary school graduation (i.e. usually 19- to 23-year-olds) that are the theoretical age group. Among these students are those who attend short-cycle, bachelor's and post-graduate courses. These characteristics suggest that a specific indicator value incorporates potentially very different structures between countries in terms of course and age distribution – let alone other characteristics currently not captured in internationally comparable statistics, such as part-time vs full-time study or face-to-face vs distance and online learning. Critically, as mentioned above, participation measures often give a misleading sense of progress, especially as this is the level of education with the highest dropout rates, which also requires considering attainment rates.

Fifth, SDG global indicator 4.5.1, the parity index, is the generic measure used to track equity. It is the ratio of the value of an education indicator for a disadvantaged group relative to the value of that same indicator for a privileged group. It has been used extensively to assess gender disparity (females relative to males) and has been informative because administrative data are relatively abundant. It has proven less informative for other characteristics, such as location and wealth, partly because of limited data availability and partly because the comparability of definitions across countries and over time is less than perfect, even if they are more comparable than for characteristics such as ethnicity or language. Steps have been taken to standardize the definition of disability, but data are still very limited and cannot show changes in the education status of learners with disability over time.

The parity index is used exclusively for indicators whose values range from 0 to 100. Its value tends to grow at low levels of the indicator being disaggregated (when the privileged group enjoys a faster increase in access to education than the disadvantaged group) and to fall at higher levels (as the disadvantaged group catches up). The value of the parity index tends to track the value of the underlying indicator, i.e. changes in the value of the parity index are almost mechanical. There is usually little to distinguish countries' records on equity. Demographic and/or geographic characteristics tend to explain why some countries have higher disparity at a particular level of the underlying indicator rather than the extent of countries' efforts to reduce disparities. Given all these challenges, this report has taken extra steps to identify countries that have made equitable progress in access to education.

Using these indicators, this report provides a robust analysis of trends, showing that some countries have done better than other countries with which they were in the same or a similar starting position 20 to 25 years ago. An in-depth explanation is given for how countries have been identified for case studies (**Chapter 2**).

SETTING TARGETS, DRAWING LESSONS AND GUIDING POLICIES

The report's intention is to open discussion on what countries have achieved, in what ways, and how this knowledge can be used to rethink global pledges on education. Its approach addresses the relevance of global targets for countries; of a case study–based approach for explaining progress; and of making policy recommendations to countries.

COUNTRIES MUST ADAPT GLOBAL EDUCATION TARGETS TO MAKE THEM RELEVANT

In the past 25 years, the use of data and indicators as governance tools in education has grown rapidly at the national and international level. It is a practice that has helped lock governments into committing budgets and implementing medium-term plans to achieve specific education targets. Depending on how the political system is organized, it can help political forces reach consensus on a way forward, potentially shielding education from politics.

While the practice of target setting has become a standard feature of education system management, it is not without criticism. First, indicators sometimes come to be accepted uncritically as accurate representations of school and education system performance. While core access and equity indicators, such as those described in the previous section, are generally accepted as a fair reflection of the status of national education development, learning outcome measures generated by standardized assessments receive more criticism. Moreover, there is a risk that only what is measurable, quantifiable and comparable is examined, not allowing for adaptation. And data on access and equity can hide as much as reveal. This report tries to clarify challenges in data quality and indicator definitions.

A second concern relates to the use of data and indicators for policy recommendations. While decision making needs to be evidence-based, the evidence is often too limited or unsuited to answering key policy questions. Data tend to be communicated in a simplistic way. They are often used to generate rankings, either at the national level to compare schools, creating market-like pressures and incentives in systems that encourage school choice, or at the international level to compare countries, putting pressure on governments to act before they know the right solutions. As is sometimes said, solutions chase problems, instead of the other way around. In the worst case, efforts are directed to improve results for the indicator rather than to address the underlying causes or challenges that drive the indicator. This report strives to avoid drawing simplistic inferences by drawing on a wider pool of data both in trend analysis and in country case studies.

> “Starting in 2017, a process led by the UIS and the GEM Report resulted in 80% of countries sharing at least some national targets for 2025 and 2030 on eight SDG 4 indicators”

Finally, a third concern is related to how indicators and targets are selected. This is a challenge with which the *Global Education Monitoring Report* has been strongly engaged, as the criticism that standards and measures are often set without sufficient consultation with countries has often been directed at international organizations and their overreach. While the foundational document of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledged that '[t]argets are defined as aspirational and global, with each government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances' (United Nations, 2015; §55), very little coordinated action has in reality been taken on national target setting. But SDG 4 was a major exception. Starting in 2017, a process led by the UIS and the GEM Report with strong country participation resulted in 80% of countries sharing at least some national targets (called benchmarks to distinguish them from the SDG 4 global targets) for 2025 and 2030 on eight SDG 4 indicators, including four indicators reviewed in this report (**Box 1.1**).

The main purpose of the SDG 4 benchmarking process is to put the 2030 Agenda's call into practice, ensuring that countries set national targets within an international agenda monitoring framework but not apart from the regular process of government target setting. Targets can be updated when governments, political programmes or budgets change. Governments should be first and foremost accountable to their citizens. The responsibility of international bodies is to encourage countries to make sure

that target setting, an essential part of good governance, is implemented, publicly communicated and transparent.

In addition to monitoring and evaluating, the UIS and the GEM Report have seen an equally important purpose in the SDG 4 benchmarking process: to help countries set realistic targets which are linked to budgets. Many governments have a weak track record in target setting and monitoring. Sharing information on the targets that countries set should help other countries set better targets in the future.

This report does not select countries based on their success in meeting their national targets, which is the focus of the annual SDG 4 Scorecard. Instead, it looks at countries that started from similar points as others but have moved faster and further. Still, the overall approach of the *Countdown to 2030* series is inspired by the logic of the benchmarking process and one of its core aims is to popularize it and advocate for its use, not only in education but in all areas of a future development agenda.

BOX 1.1:

The SDG 4 benchmarking process invites countries to share their national targets

When the SDGs were being formulated, UN Member States resisted monitoring and evaluation, in other words, being held to account. To some extent, this is understandable. Governments should first and foremost be accountable for social and economic progress to their citizens, not to a different level of governance. But at the same time, an agenda with no accountability is problematic. While accountability should not necessarily be towards an international mechanism, international bodies can act to ensure that governments are accountable to their citizens.

To its credit, the international education community called for accountability and encouraged countries to establish benchmarks, i.e. national targets, in the Education 2030 Framework for Action, which is the roadmap for achieving SDG 4 that was agreed in 2015: 'Governments are expected to translate global targets into achievable national targets based on their education priorities, national development strategies and plans, the ways their education systems are organized, their institutional capacity and the availability of resources. This requires establishing appropriate intermediate benchmarks … through an inclusive process, with full transparency and accountability, engaging all partners so there is country ownership and common understanding … Such benchmarks should build on existing reporting mechanisms, as appropriate. Intermediate benchmarks are indispensable for addressing the accountability deficit associated with longer-term targets' (UNESCO, 2015; §28).

The UIS and the GEM Report, mandated by the Education 2030 Framework for Action to jointly monitor progress towards SDG 4, helped countries fulfil this commitment. The benchmarking process began shortly after the UN General Assembly adopted the SDG monitoring framework in 2017. In August 2019, the Technical Cooperation Group on SDG 4 Indicators, which is the intergovernmental body charged with the development of the SDG 4 monitoring framework, now known as the Education Data and Statistics Commission, endorsed six SDG 4 indicators (**Table 1.1**): the participation rate one year before entry into primary education; the out-of-school rate; the completion rate; minimum learning proficiency; trained teachers; and public education expenditure. The gender gap in secondary completion was added as an equity measure in 2020.

These indicators were considered suitable for benchmarking because they were backed by data for most countries; they followed a clear historical trend (from 0 to 100%) or were linked to a clear target (e.g. gender parity, minimum expenditure thresholds); and they were policy relevant for countries in different contexts. Between August 2021 and May 2022, countries were invited to submit benchmark values. As the response was positive, plans were put in place to monitor progress. In February 2023, the first SDG 4 Scorecard was published, which monitors the probability that countries will achieve their 2025 and 2030 benchmarks (UIS and GEM Report, 2023). As of 2025, 80% of countries have set national targets for at least some of the benchmark indicators.

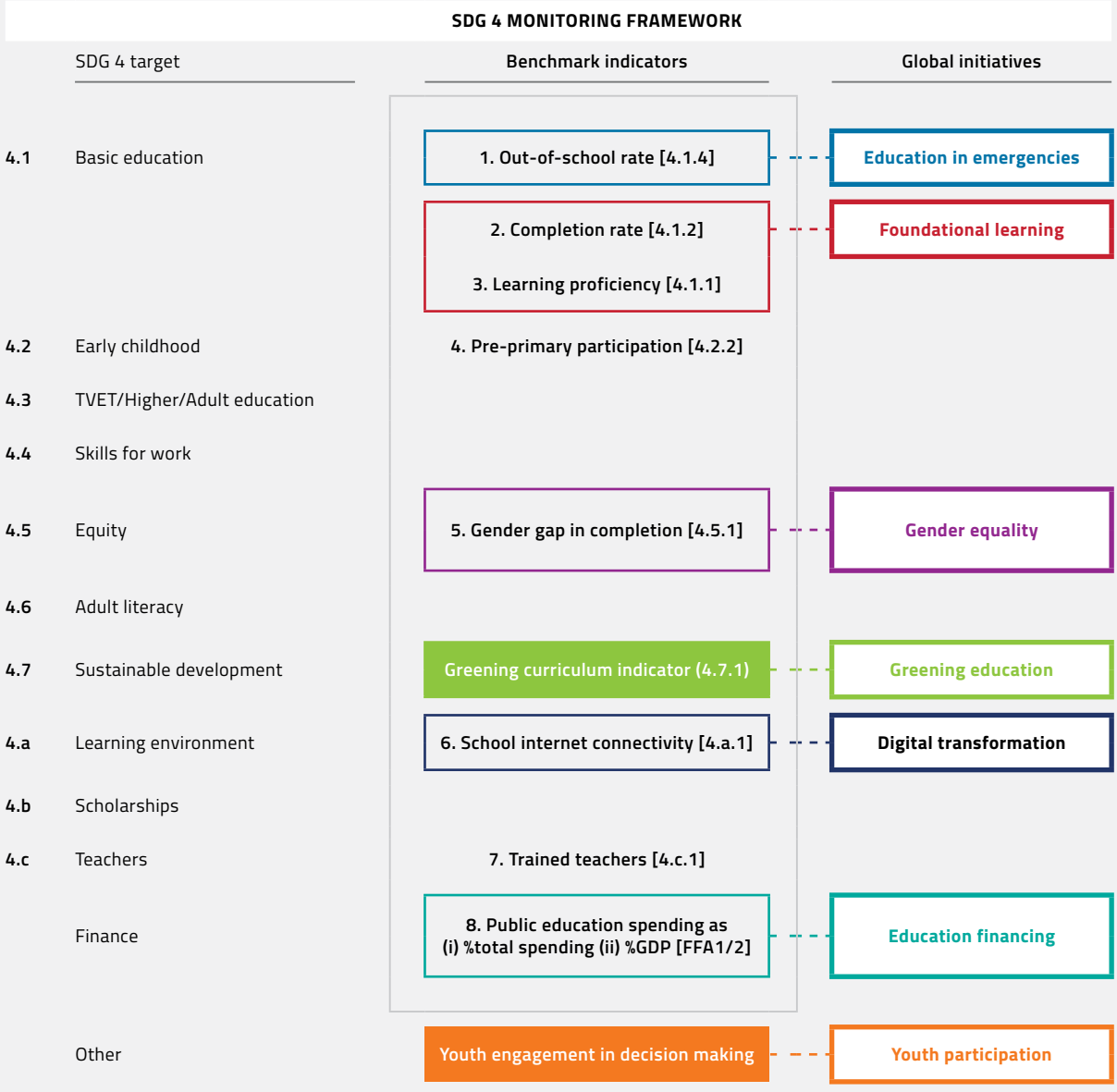
In the meantime, in September 2022, the UN Secretary-General called in his Vision Statement at the Transforming Education Summit for 'ways to strengthen political accountability … taking current arrangements for monitoring SDG 4 implementation including … the national SDG 4 benchmarking process to the next level'. In December 2022, the SDG 4 High-level Steering Committee recognized that existing benchmark indicators could help monitor four of the seven global initiatives proposed during the Summit, and that new indicators would be needed to monitor the other three global initiatives.

Continued on next page…

BOX 1.1 CONTINUED:

First, digital transformation was covered by school internet connectivity, a pre-existing indicator. Second, greening education is covered by a new indicator launched in 2025, which measures the frequency with which selected keywords appear in national curriculum frameworks and syllabi of grades 3, 6 and 9 (UNESCO, 2025). Third, youth and student engagement will be covered by another new indicator launched in 2026, which records whether governments have a mechanism, enshrined in law or regulation, to engage youth and students in education legislation and policymaking (UNESCO, 2026). In relation to the three initiatives, countries have so far only been invited to set national targets on school connectivity.

TABLE 1.1:
SDG 4 benchmark indicators and their alignment with the SDG 4 targets and the Transforming Education Summit global initiatives



Notes: Countries have not yet been invited to set national targets for the indicators in the white font.
Source: UIS and GEM Report.

LESSONS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES' STORIES EXPLAIN WHAT DRIVES PROGRESS

In addition to a trend analysis since 2000 of the five indicators specific to equitable access, this report also includes 35 country case studies outlining stories that help explain what factors have driven progress in some countries at rates faster than others with similar initial conditions, and what might have held some other countries back. The case studies are based on descriptive quantitative data, document reviews and expert interviews with people who have first- or second-hand experience of the events being described. The selected cases represent a sizeable and representative sample of countries that progressed quickly. Even if each country is different, they represent a variety of contexts that should help to provide more general lessons. A few countries are also included where progress has stagnated or reversed, but describe equally important narratives about how country contexts can stand in the way of advances and about limits to progress.

Case studies are not suited to examining some theories of educational expansion (Fuller and Rubinson, 1992). For example, one theory argues that education systems expand because economic development creates the need for a skilled workforce and the schooling institutions to produce it. Another theory argues that education systems expand regardless of the economic conditions, as if through imitation (Meyer et al., 1992). As there are many reasons for expansion and national contexts are not necessarily comparable, case studies cannot be used to tell which theory best explains what happened. Rather, statistical analyses are better suited for examining alternative theories of educational expansion. These analyses have been increasing in sophistication as data availability improves, helping extend the length of time examined (which is important as expansion takes place over centuries), refine the research questions, and lead to causal inferences.

Nevertheless, statistical analyses look at issues from a high level of abstraction. Moving away from the testing of an individual hypothesis also makes the limits of statistical analysis clear. When the number of units of analysis is as small as the number of countries in the world and when the potential factors that explain a phenomenon, such as educational expansion, are so numerous, hard to measure and variable in their impact across space and over time, the ability of statistical analyses to yield informative findings is constrained. A narrative case study–based approach that addresses multiple layers is also better suited to understand the context in which policy decisions are taken that affect the pace of education expansion. It can highlight nuances in the reasons behind the improvement of an indicator. For example, an increase in the completion rate may have been the result of lowering the requirements to make it easier for students to graduate.

This report considers three types of levers that explain educational expansion (**Figure 1.1**). First, there are factors internal to education, of which the most prominent is the effective design and implementation of policies to increase access to schooling. This report focuses on policies but is mindful to not overemphasize their role in explaining change, given that so many powerful factors exert an influence.

Second are factors, mainly economic, that can be considered as both internal and external to education, as they both affect and are affected by education expansion. Economic growth, which can accelerate when the population is more educated and skilled, can open up opportunities for governments to invest more in education. Conversely, when low- and middle-income countries were affected by the debt crisis in the 1980s that was external to education, the introduction of structural adjustment policies, which severely restricted social spending, constrained the fiscal space to invest in education.

Labour demand characteristics can increase incentives to enrol and remain in education. For example, in some countries many people were attracted to education by the promise of a public sector job in the 1970s and 1980s. Falling poverty and growing income create opportunities for families to save and allocate a growing share of their consumption to education goods and services. People move to urban areas for better employment opportunities but also for education, as the quality of services tends to be better in cities. Sometimes the prospect of migration has also maintained high levels of demand for education in rural areas. The capacity of public administrations to deliver education more efficiently and more effectively depends on the skills of an educated population but can also in turn support better education structures that can accommodate education expansion.

Third are factors that, although also related, are more external to education. History, geography, culture, religion, demography and politics shape countries' education trajectories. These factors determine nation building and strategic direction, which in turn affect whether a country views education investment as a tool to compete with other countries. For example, there is a tendency to replicate institutional structures of schooling that are observed elsewhere. This may happen because countries observe one another (Boli et al., 1985) or because other stakeholders, often international organizations, encourage countries to invest in schooling (Mundy, 2007).

FIGURE 1.1:
Factors that explain an increase in access to education in the long term



Source: GEM Report team.

Politics is a central driver of educational development (Hickey and Hossain, 2019). Schooling expands when political leaders, parties, trade unions and social movements include education as part of their vision for the country. But political arrangements can collapse (Kelsall et al., 2022), often when education had previously developed insufficiently or inequitably, creating crises, tensions and conflicts. These have delayed many countries' educational development for a generation; conversely, the return to peacetime has often led to some of the fastest expansions of education participation.

A significant criticism in the field of comparative and international education is that most studies have a single-country focus and there are fewer and fewer full-scale historical comparisons (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010). This report does not manage to avoid this criticism, as its case studies also focus on individual countries. But by

placing and discussing them next to each other, it invites and engages in comparison. It asks readers to reflect on the real stories behind each case study, showing what happens when policies meet reality, and not rush to judgements.

POLICY GUIDANCE WORKS BETTER WITH PRINCIPLES NOT PRESCRIPTIONS

Armed with evidence, it is expected that international organizations will make policy recommendations. Without them, a report is considered incomplete, even a monitoring report like this one. But international actors are sometimes accused of recommending policies that serve their agendas and fitting the evidence to the recommendation: 'The assertion that, despite the claims of its advocates, evidence-based policy planning is deeply political is premised upon the analysis that political manipulation has operated under the guise of scientific rationality' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2013; p. 21). In an extreme case about 20 years ago, countries seeking to be funded by the predecessor of the Global Partnership for Education had to comply with an indicative framework of policy targets.

A related trend in recent years has been making recommendations on 'what works' without considering the context. There has been an explosion in studies of interventions in controlled environments using experimental or quasi-experimental research methodologies, including randomized controlled trials. These have greatly enriched understandings of human motivation and responses to incentives. In a few cases, they have shown the way for scalable policies that can benefit education, especially policies related to health and nutrition. But their value in policymaking may have been overstated. Often their proposed solutions are not easily transferable, ignore the structures that are needed to deliver change at a national level, neglect causal chains and do not consider cost effectiveness. Ultimately, their controlled conditions cannot be replicated and therefore lack external validity. What works in a controlled environment is not necessarily what matters for ensuring that children, adolescents and youth progress through each education cycle.

Most experimental studies evaluate results within a short time frame following the intervention. When analysing educational participation and equity statistics over the course of 20 to 25 years instead, the types of policies that made a difference tend not to be the ones featuring in 'what works' shortlists. The report urges its readers to consider what if the desired outcome is not the impact of an intervention and the statistical significance attached to it, but a nationwide increase in education participation.

What, therefore, can be learned from the compilation of extensive monitoring information, multiple country case studies, and reviews of a large body of research in low-, middle- and high-income countries?

> “Progress at scale requires looking beyond isolated interventions to the broader systems, structures and political economy that enable or constrain educational participation”

First, progress at scale requires looking beyond isolated interventions to the broader systems, structures and political economy that enable or constrain educational participation. The evidence compiled in this report suggests that sustained growth in access has rarely come from implementing a single policy, but rather from coordinated action across multiple sectors, sustained political commitment and adaptation to local realities. An index of equity orientation in core financing mechanisms created for this report points in that direction. This does not mean abandoning the search for effective policies but rather understanding that their effectiveness depends fundamentally on context, implementation capacity and alignment with national priorities.

Second, while context matters enormously, this should not lead to complete relativism. Certain fundamental principles have consistently emerged. Leaving no one behind must be central to policy design, not an afterthought. Progress requires understanding who is excluded and why, which demands better data and disaggregation. And educational access cannot be separated from questions of legal frameworks, financing, infrastructure, health and social protection. The challenge for any international agenda, then, is to balance universal principles with national ownership and to articulate core commitments that apply everywhere, while allowing sufficient flexibility for countries to chart their own paths towards those goals. The recommendations that follow, which cover both issues of monitoring and issues of policy, attempt to navigate this balance, proposing both a basic package of fundamental principles and the mechanisms through which countries can adapt and implement them according to their own circumstances.

GUIDE TO THE REPORT

This report follows a different structure than its predecessors. Following this brief introduction (**Chapter 1**), a short methodological chapter outlines the approach

to country case study selection. It is technically more demanding and would normally be delegated to an annex but given how critical the selection process is to the report's logic, it was decided to inform readers of the steps taken to make sense of thousands of data points (**Chapter 2**).

The next four chapters follow a common structure. First, there is a review of the trends of the focus indicators, alongside the identification of core issues that deserve more attention and should be taken into account when monitoring a future education agenda. Second, seven country case studies are presented in alphabetical order for each of the five focus indicators (the chapter on primary and secondary education groups together the case studies based on the out-of-school and completion rate indicators). Third, an education policy analysis follows. For the first three chapters on pre-primary (**Chapter 3**), primary and secondary (**Chapter 4**), and post-secondary education (**Chapter 5**), the presentation combines inputs from three externally commissioned reviews with the GEM Report team's further analysis of the literature, as well as the lessons that have emerged from the case studies.

For the fourth chapter on equity (**Chapter 6**), a different approach is taken for policy analysis. While recognizing the various types of policies that influence education inequality, this report has selected one set of policies, those related to the use of public financing – whether from education or from other social ministries – to channel resources to disadvantaged subnational governments, schools and students (or their households) to equalize education opportunities. Country profiles of all national education systems have been developed for the PEER website and an index has been developed that assesses the extent to which countries intentionally reallocate resources for improving education outcomes. The analysis also features how countries' policies in this field have changed over the past 25 years. This forms part of a reshaping of the PEER website, which will be exploring how selected law and policy indicators have evolved since 2000, starting with inclusion, the theme of the 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report* (covered in Chapter 4).

The final chapter reviews progress on all SDG 4 targets and their respective global and thematic indicators. The presentation is more concise than in previous reports, offering a snapshot of key developments (**Chapter 7**). The analysis draws on the statistical tables that are presented in the annex.

BOX 1.2:

Three regional editions of the 2026 Global Education Monitoring Report cycle will examine selected access and equity issues

- It is impossible to do justice to such a broad range of topics in a single publication. For this reason, three regional editions will explore selected issues in more detail that resonate in different parts of the world.
- A regional edition on the Arab States will focus on the region that lags behind furthest in terms of access to early childhood education.
- The fourth edition of the Spotlight series on universal basic education completion and foundational learning in Africa will focus on late enrolment and repetition, which hold the continent back in terms of educational expansion.
- A regional edition on the Caribbean will analyse the efforts countries are making to close the gender gap in upper secondary education completion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs were designed to be universal, interdependent and focused on leaving no one behind. This approach has helped create a common lens with which to view the world's education challenges. It has highlighted the role of education in influencing other development outcomes and has brought equity to the centre of policy discussions.

> What are the implications of the statistical, country case study and policy analyses for a future international education agenda?

As the world is coming closer to the 2030 deadline, and as the multilateral approach to solving global challenges at the heart of the SDGs is being sorely tested, the *Global Education Monitoring Report* is putting forward its *Countdown to 2030* series to evaluate the success of SDG 4 on education and the lessons to be drawn. It has split the scope of SDG 4 into three parts: access and equity, quality and learning, and relevance in education. It asks three questions. First, among countries that started from similar levels, which ones have improved much faster than others in these broad domains? Second,

among a select group of countries singled out for their improvement or their stagnation, what are the key reasons that help explain the observed trends and how do these explanations compare to those that research has identified as having played a key role? Third, what are the implications of the statistical, country case study and policy analyses for a future international education agenda?

This first report in the series addresses these questions as they pertain to access and equity in education. In the case of access, it is clear that the goal of universal secondary completion was wildly unrealistic, considering that not even universal primary completion will have been achieved by 2030. In the case of equity, the targets of eliminating gender disparities and ensuring equal access to all levels of education were similarly too ambitious. But this report argues that it would be wrong to judge the success of the agenda solely on the basis of whether the world came closer to achieving these symbolic targets. The question is instead whether countries have tried to address bottlenecks using tools that were relevant for their level of educational development and their context: setting targets, monitoring them, and using the information to adopt and adjust the right policy mix. There is evidence that this has been happening.

The following recommendations focus on a selected set of issues related to monitoring progress and designing policies to improve access and equity in education that may not be receiving sufficient attention in global and national policy dialogue processes.

HOW SHOULD MONITORING BE IMPROVED?

a. Countries need to set national targets within a global monitoring framework.

Global agendas tend to be determined by their effectiveness in mobilizing the international community, using a common language to reach shared goals, such as eradicating extreme poverty or keeping the increase in the global temperature below 1.5°. But actual progress happens at the country level: what matters is what national decision makers state publicly as their targets, what resources they allocate to achieve them, and how they confirm whether these targets are being achieved. However, while the foundational documents of the 2030 Agenda clearly stated the expectation of 'each government setting its own national targets', this expectation seems to have been lost.

There is a clear role for international actors. They can and should help develop a common monitoring framework and a process through which countries can communicate these targets. This is what has happened in education. With the support of the UIS and the GEM Report, the SDG 4 national benchmarking process has offered countries an opportunity to declare their targets.

Moving forward, two things need to happen. First, countries need to more actively embrace the benchmarking process. While 80% of countries have contributed national targets for 2030 for at least some of the eight SDG 4 indicators and 56% of potential target values have been set, more of these target values could also be set. Target-setting processes can be more firmly embedded in national planning and budgeting processes, informed by past rates of progress and other countries' experiences. And these targets can be better communicated domestically. Second, countries also need to actively embrace the benchmarking process at the international level, beyond just education, as the basis of any future broader development agenda post 2030. It should be countries that decide how far they are prepared to go, reflecting their starting points and unique conditions. The global target should be the aggregation of these national commitments.

b. More efficient use of data is needed to monitor education participation and equity.

One of the improvements brought about by the 2030 Agenda across various development sectors is adopting multiple data sources for understanding progress. This is a trend that began in the 2000s, facilitated by the increased production of information and by methods to link such sources. Important steps were also taken in recent years at the international level in education. The UIS and the GEM Report have developed a model to estimate out-of-school rates, which has broken the artificial divide between administrative and survey sources, helping make the most of each source, while also addressing their respective weaknesses along the way. The GEM Report had earlier developed a model to estimate completion rates, helping make much more effective use of the data available in surveys and censuses. Such estimates make it possible to track trends in these two headline indicators consistently, whereas relying solely on estimates for individual years would have limited the timeliness and comparability of findings.

However, many education ministries are yet to embrace multiple data sources for monitoring progress, continuing to opt for the administrative sources they have traditionally relied upon, even if they often show an incomplete picture. The use of multiple data sources is crucial for monitoring equity in education, yet there

is a lack of awareness of the variety of data sources that can help disaggregate education participation and attainment indicators by individual characteristics specific to countries' contexts. Collaboration between education ministries and national statistical offices needs to be further developed.

c. The education monitoring framework needs to be refined to produce more accurate education participation and attainment statistics.

Each international agenda has helped improve the monitoring of education progress, incorporating changes made possible by improved data collection. For example, the gross enrolment ratio and the gross intake rate to the last grade have been gradually replaced by the out-of-school rate and the completion rate, which have contributed to more realistic assessments of progress. But more refinements of this kind are needed to give the right information to policymakers.

This report presents examples. In pre-primary education, the global indicator overestimates the proportion of children who have ever attended preschool because it includes students who may be enrolled too early in primary school. In primary and secondary education, there is a need for a mechanism to monitor children who are out of school in conflict-affected countries. In post-secondary education, it is also time to move beyond the gross enrolment ratio, which overestimates progress, given high levels of dropout and very different ways of participation by age across countries, to instead adopt an attainment measure. The education community now has a governance mechanism through the process of the Education Data and Statistics Conference, first convened in 2024 and next scheduled for 2027, which countries need to use as the focus of efforts for an inclusive development of the monitoring framework of a future international education agenda.

d. Policies also need to be monitored, not just outputs and outcomes.

Since 2020, the GEM Report, through its PEER website, has been systematically reviewing the laws and policies that countries have adopted to improve education outcomes. This year there are two extensions. First, a comprehensive set of country profiles on policies to improve equity through five financing mechanisms has been added and summarized into an index of equity orientation in policy intent. Second, this year some of the policy indicators first reported in its 2020 edition on inclusion have been updated, reporting on their evolution since 2000 and providing insights into long-term change. PEER country profiles were originally designed to document the situation in a certain policy area at a particular point in time. Interest in this approach has generated demand for the GEM Report team to follow progress in certain policies over time.

International policy dialogue needs more structured information on national policy choices. As is clearly stated in this report, this does not mean that policies should be ranked or prescribed. There are multiple paths to achieve the same result. Moreover, it is widely documented that policies are often not implemented. But better documentation and mapping of policy intentions can still offer a solid basis for understanding how countries eventually make progress, inform advocacy and guide technical support. It is therefore recommended that more emphasis be placed on monitoring how key policies are evolving and how governments respond to shared challenges.

HOW SHOULD POLICYMAKING RESPOND TO MONITORING EVIDENCE?

This report has tried to identify why some countries have moved much faster than their peers in expanding access and improving equity. The stories that emerge are full of relevant insights. Some are straightforward, especially when the change was the result of a clear political decision that was carried out effectively. Others are less clear cut, especially when the change was the result of multiple factors, including some from outside education.

A key message of this report is that there has been too much emphasis on the ability of certain solutions to deliver drastic improvements. These solutions were usually not applied as nationwide policies. Rather they were well-curated interventions, followed by high-quality evaluations. These policy experiments indicate where change is needed but have usually not been applied system-wide. They were evaluated within a year of implementation and on a small scale. In contrast, the change documented in this report had a longer horizon, often a decade or more, and has taken place at a system level. The drivers of change may have been more mundane, related to the development of institutional and system capacity. Yet policymakers can be tempted to follow simple and well-publicized recipes with 'proven' results. The following four recommendations, which span all levels of education, point to core principles and advise exercising caution.

a. Make appropriate policy choices that are relevant to the country context.

Learning from peers is a priceless and yet affordable opportunity in an era of frequent exchanges and low-cost communications. Other countries' experiences are a rich source of ideas. But these ideas need not be seen as solutions to be copied and applied elsewhere. Rather they need to be studied carefully to understand which institutional structures and policy combinations were effective (or not) and why. They call for reflection on which elements of other countries' choices are applicable and which problems they tried to solve. While this may sound obvious, there is a tendency for countries to focus on transposing 'what works' elsewhere to their systems – and sometimes international actors perpetuate the idea that there are off-the-shelf solutions. Yet no policy can be imported wholesale unless it has gone through the scrutiny of whether it is appropriate. Policies need to respond to a country's unique combination of assets and barriers.

b. Design education policies with an equity orientation and evaluate their results.

Equity in education requires a range of policy tools that predict, identify and compensate for disadvantage. It needs fair and inclusive institutions that facilitate enrolment, progression and completion. It calls for support rather than penalties for struggling students. It favours comprehensive solutions that open opportunities rather than selective solutions that concentrate disadvantage. It champions flexibility over rigidity. Some of these approaches need financing to subnational governments, to schools, to students and their families, in cash or in kind, that redistribute resources to those who need them the most. But even poor countries that cannot afford reallocation can achieve results by committing to inclusion. Many education ministries are still missing important elements. They need to recognize the relevance of social protection mechanisms that can complement their efforts; to coordinate with other sectors; to improve the quality of their targeting mechanisms; and to evaluate whether policies designed to be equity oriented are actually achieving this goal. A peer learning network on the implementation of equity in education policies would be particularly relevant and help countries assess their policy choices.

c. Think long term: change takes time.

One of the challenges of education policymaking is the slow pace with which it translates actions to results. A child that reaches preschool age today will have lived through, on average, six different ministers of education before they are lucky enough to reach the last year of secondary school. Yet, at a time when everything seems to accelerate and attention spans shorten, the appetite for quick fixes seems to be growing. Expanding access and improving equity typically result from sustained interventions, not short-term projects that fit within a political cycle. They require institutions that have their capacity developed patiently over many years to be transformed. Countries that made the fastest gains combined steady investment, kept core policies in place, and adjusted them gradually in light of emerging evidence and experience, recognizing that institutions, behaviours and expectations around schooling shift slowly. This message is also relevant in the context of declining external financing for education: rather than seek even quicker results, now is the time to correct past mistakes and stop counting effectiveness in terms of numbers of children sent to school at a cost that was never going to be sustainable.

d. Choose a balanced and consistent policy mix: no single reform will increase access and improve equity sustainably.

The four policy reviews included in this report, at the pre-primary, primary and secondary, and post-secondary level, as well as on equity through financing, all serve as a reminder that a combination of policy instruments is needed to achieve long-term outcomes. System-level measures (related to legislation, governance and general financing) need to be supported by demand-side policies (targeted financing to reduce costs for more disadvantaged populations) and supply-side policies (e.g. infrastructure, regulation and learning environments). An effective package, whose elements are well aligned, treats education as an integrated system. It tackles access alongside equity and quality so that once learners enter the schooling system, they are supported to progress and graduate.



A teacher with the students riding the school's bus in Oman.

Credit: © UNICEF/UNI577500/*



CHAPTER

2

Methodology of country case study selection



Identifying periods of sustained growth and stagnation 18
Country selection 19

One of the three building blocks of the 2026 *Global Education Monitoring Report* is the case study approach. Case studies are examined for a diverse set of countries that have achieved a prolonged period of progress as well as those that appear to have stagnated. Countries were selected using four focus indicators – the participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age, out-of-school rate, completion rate and tertiary gross enrolment ratio. A more flexible approach was used to identify countries that have made progress in equity, due to limited data availability and comparability issues. The methodology was structured and data-driven.

The methodology was divided into two main phases:

1. All countries with sustained growth or stagnation for long enough periods between 2000 and 2024 were identified for each of the focus indicators.
2. A smaller set of countries was chosen from this broader set for the case studies.

The countries selected represent a range of experiences associated with periods of noteworthy progress or stagnation, rather than those that have progressed the most or the least. The terms 'progress' and 'stagnation' in this context strictly refer to changes in the official SDG database. Some case studies illustrate a more complex story, by exploring the data or using complementary data sources.

All data used in the selection process were drawn from publicly available sources, primarily from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) September 2025 release, complemented by additional data sets such as the UIS-GEM Report World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) for subnational regions.

IDENTIFYING PERIODS OF SUSTAINED GROWTH AND STAGNATION

Identifying countries that have progressed faster or slower than their peers requires grouping countries according to their starting points. This is because simply comparing the growth trajectories of countries with different starting points is misleading: countries at very low (below 20%) or very high levels (over 80%) of an indicator expand their education participation rates slower than other countries (e.g. those close to a value of 50%). For any given country, expected growth will vary depending on its starting value at different points in time and thus, progress must always be assessed relative to that starting point.

> "For any given country, expected growth will vary depending on its starting value at different points in time"

Accordingly, data points – each of which represents a country's growth during a specific period – were grouped into five categories (or quintiles) based on that period's starting values. This method distributes data points evenly across groups and allows countries to shift between quintiles as conditions change. The ranges defining each quintile vary substantially by indicator. For indicators with values clustered within a narrow range, some quintiles span only a few percentage points, whereas for indicators with more dispersed values, quintiles extend across tens of percentage points. For the out-of-school rate of children of primary school age, for example, where countries' starting values are mostly below 15%, the lower quintiles cover a very narrow range of three to five percentage points. By contrast, for early childhood education, each of the two lowest quintiles spans some 30 percentage points.

To avoid setting boundaries at the extremes of the distribution, the data set is restricted using the thresholds defined by the GEM Report and UIS SDG 4 Scorecard series, which classify countries as having achieved the target once participation or completion rates exceed 95% or out-of-school rates fall below 5%. This restriction also ensures that the analysis remains focused on more relevant cases, in which countries are still some distance away from universal access.

PERIODS OF ANALYSIS

Identifying countries from each quintile is challenging because trend data for most education indicators are incomplete and uneven across countries. This requires defining the periods over which progress and stagnation will be assessed, establishing appropriate time frames for analysis.

Variation in the periods of data availability may bias growth rate comparisons between countries. For example, take two countries which grew at the same rate over the last 10 years. The country with data covering an earlier period of stagnation will have a lower overall average growth rate for the full period than a country lacking data for those years. The methodology therefore identifies specific periods of growth and stagnation rather than calculating the overall average growth rate over all available years examined in this report, 2000 to 2024.

The base criterion for choosing an analysis period was that the period must be long enough to capture a sustained trend, but not so long that too many countries are excluded due to limited data availability. To balance these factors, periods of 5 to 10 years are assessed for each indicator, and the longest period that results in the loss of fewer than 5 countries was selected. For the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education, for example, data are available for at least a 5-year period between 2000 and 2024 in 185 countries. Coverage decreases to 183 countries with a 6-year period, 181 with a 7-year period, and 179 with an 8-year period. Based on this criterion, the 7-year window is selected for this indicator, as well as for the participation rate in early childhood education and the out-of-school rate. A 10-year period is used for completion rates.

Missing observations were imputed with a simple linear interpolation so that more countries could be included in the analysis. For each country and indicator, a rolling average annual growth rate – the total change over the period divided by the number of years – was calculated over the specified period across the entire time series. Each data point in the figures that follow therefore represents the average annual growth rate for a country within that window. Countries with longer time series generate multiple data points, e.g. with a seven-year window for 2000 to 2007 and 2001 to 2008.

COUNTRY SELECTION

Countries with at least one period of average annual growth above the 75th percentile of their starting group were classified as having experienced rapid progress, while those below the 25th percentile were classified as having experienced stagnation. This step produces the initial pool of potential case study countries.

Additional checks were then applied to refine the pool, including the requirement for recent data (with the latest data point at least in 2020) and the exclusion of cases showing drastic, unexplained fluctuations in trends. For stagnation cases, the level at which stagnation occurred is also considered, since periods of stagnation near universal completion are not relevant for case studies. After identifying potential cases for each indicator, a subset of countries was selected for the case studies based on representativeness in terms of SDG region, income level and population size, while avoiding duplication of countries featured in different indicators.

PARTICIPATION RATE IN ORGANIZED LEARNING ONE YEAR BEFORE THE OFFICIAL PRIMARY ENTRY AGE

For the early childhood education participation rate, countries were grouped into five equal-sized groups (quintiles) based on the starting level of each period. Annual growth rates were calculated over seven-year periods. Countries with starting levels up to around 60% – the first and second quintiles – were those that grew faster on average. In contrast, among countries in the higher quintiles, growth slows as participation rates come closer to being universal – and the range of growth rates is also more compressed (**Figure 2.1**).

Although the advancement of early childhood education is globally relevant, the reduced scope of the indicator – participation at a single year of age – limits its relevance for high-income countries, where starting levels have been historically high. To ensure inclusion of a high-income example which demonstrates notable progress in early childhood education participation, SDG thematic indicator 4.2.4, which is the net enrolment rate in pre-primary education, was also analysed using the same methodology. Lithuania was selected as a case study. Between 2013 and 2020, the country achieved an average annual growth rate of 1.5 percentage points, a particularly strong performance among high-income countries. For reference, this rate places Lithuania above the 75th percentile within its corresponding quintile in the distribution of the SDG global indicator 4.2.2.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND COMPLETION RATES

The out-of-school rate was analysed for three age groups (children of primary school age, adolescents of lower secondary school age, and youth of upper secondary school age) and completion rates were analysed across three education levels (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary). Most case study countries selected for these indicators focus on upper secondary education, as differences in expansion patterns can be discerned

more clearly, with a few noteworthy examples included from primary and lower secondary education.

The figures presented combine growth rate distributions for all three levels to facilitate visualization. While the selected case study countries remain consistently above the 75th percentile or below the 25th percentile when all levels are aggregated, each level was also analysed separately to ensure robustness. The selected countries continue to stand out when compared exclusively to peers within the same age group or education level.

For out-of-school rates, progress and stagnation move in the opposite direction of other indicators, as a decrease in the indicator value represents an improvement. As a result, countries that have achieved sustained progress appear below the 25th percentile line, while those that experienced stagnation appear above the 75th percentile line. Accordingly, the order of quintiles is reversed: quintile 1 represents countries with the highest initial values.

As with early childhood participation, out-of-school rates improve (i.e. fall) faster for countries in quintiles 1 and 2. In quintiles 4 and 5, the spread is compressed around zero, as countries get closer to universal schooling and have less room for further gains (**Figure 2.2**). For completion rates, because the quintiles are more evenly distributed and there are sufficient data points across the entire spectrum, the growth pattern more clearly reflects a typical education development trajectory: countries' progress accelerates as they approach roughly 50%, and then gradually slows thereafter (**Figure 2.3**).

TERTIARY EDUCATION GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO

Unlike the other indicators included in this edition, the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education can exceed 100%, as it is defined as total enrolment regardless of age relative to the official tertiary-age population (**Figure 2.4**). While starting values were capped at 95%, as for other indicators, the end values could surpass 100%. This helps explain why some relatively high average annual growth rates are observed among countries already situated in quintile 5. As with completion rates, countries tend to experience faster growth in the middle of the distribution, reflecting the greater challenges associated with making progress from very low or very high starting points.

Dispersion varies between quintiles. Quintiles 1 and 2 show relatively narrow distributions, indicating a narrow range of growth rates among countries starting from low participation levels. The widest vertical dispersions appear in quintiles 3 and 4, reflecting greater variability in growth experiences as systems expand. In quintile 5, growth tends to slow or stabilize.

EQUITY INDICATORS

Most country case studies under the four indicators discussed up to this point look at equity issues. But it was decided to also try to identify countries that appear to have progressed according to an inequality-specific measure. This was challenging. The limited availability of comparable data over time makes it hard to assess long-term trends. Except for gender, which is captured in administrative data, other equity dimensions rely primarily on household surveys, which are less regular and available for fewer countries.

Among several dimensions of potential disadvantage, five were selected based on data availability: gender, wealth (by quintile), location (urban vs rural), region and disability. To maintain analytical consistency, the equity-related case studies focus on completion rates (since they draw on survey data that can be disaggregated by the respective dimension) except for disability.

> Disparities generally widen at higher levels of education

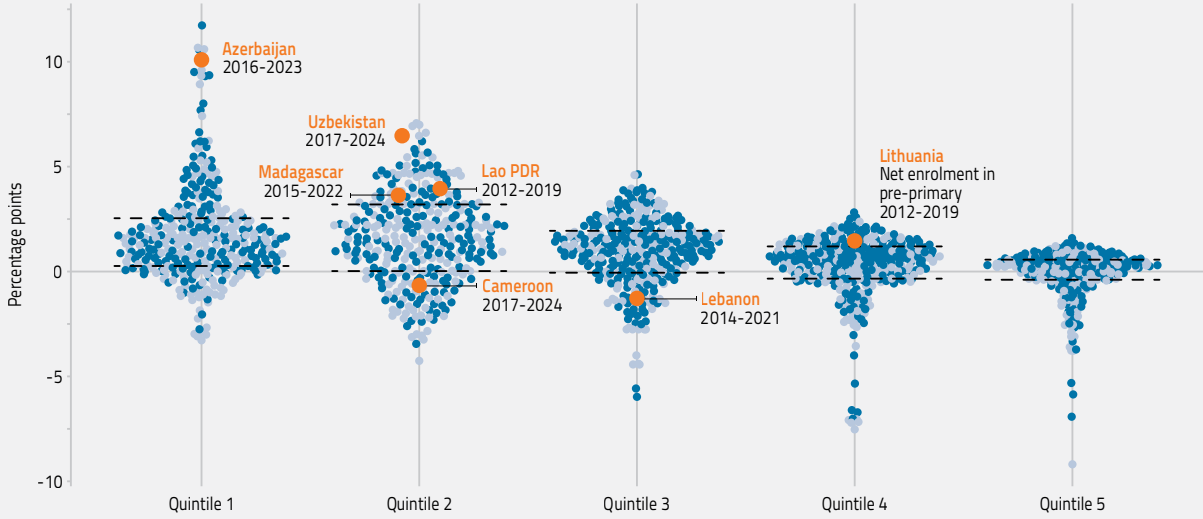
Different education levels were analysed for different equity dimensions: location was examined for primary completion; wealth for lower secondary completion; and gender and regional disparities for upper secondary completion.

Completion rates are reported in two ways for SDG monitoring. First, reported results may refer to point estimates from a particular year when a survey was carried out. Second, reported results may refer to model-based estimates that used survey or census data to generate long-term trends even for years when no survey had taken place. Model-based estimates were used to identify case studies of progress and stagnation in overall completion rates. However, because these estimates are only disaggregated by gender, the selection of case studies on equity combines model-based results for analysis by gender with survey- and census-specific data for analysis by the remaining dimensions.

FIGURE 2.1:

Distribution of average annual growth rates of SDG global indicator 4.2.2

Average annual growth rate (in percentage points) over rolling seven-year periods for the participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age, grouped by starting value of each period, 2000–24



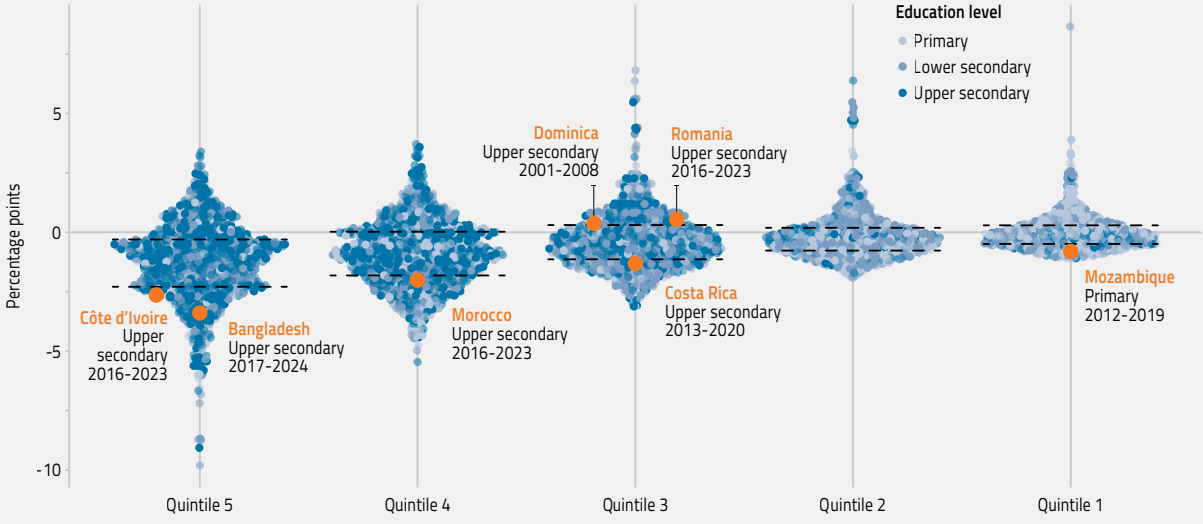
Notes: Lighter-coloured points represent periods with interpolated data. The starting value quintiles cover the following ranges: quintile 1 (0%–35%); quintile 2 (35%–62%); quintile 3 (62%–80%); quintile 4 (80%–89%); and quintile 5 (89%–95%). The two dashed lines for each quintile represent the 25th and 75th percentiles of growth rates. For each selected country, the most recent period identified as progress/stagnation is highlighted in the figure.

Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

FIGURE 2.2:

Distribution of average annual growth rates of SDG thematic indicator 4.1.4

Average annual growth rate (in percentage points) over rolling seven-year periods for the out-of-school rate (children of primary school age, adolescents of lower secondary school age, and youth of upper secondary school age), grouped by starting value of each period, 2000–24



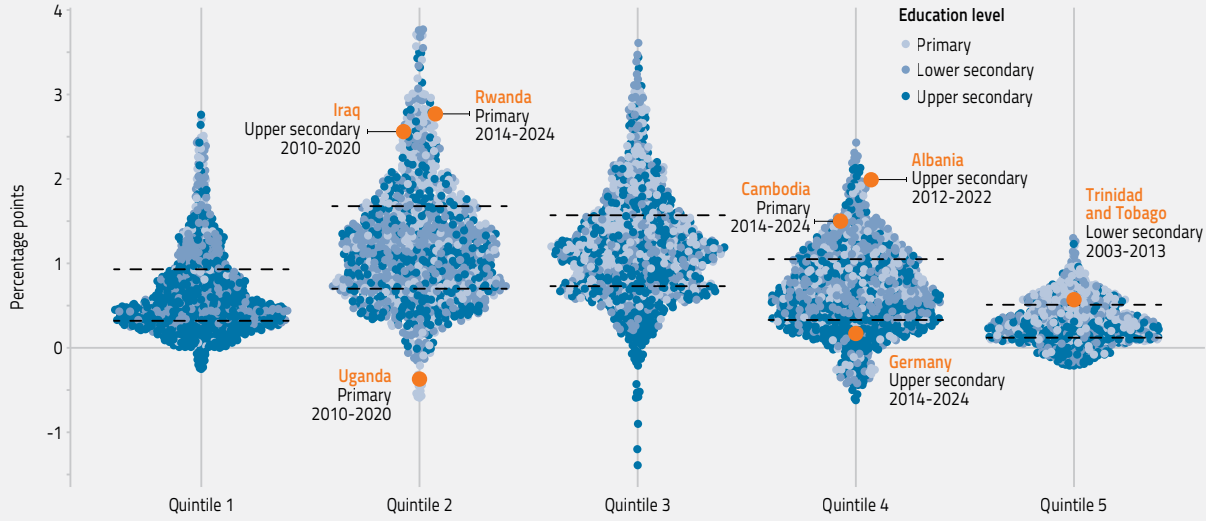
Notes: Lighter-coloured points represent periods with interpolated data. The starting value quintiles cover the following ranges: quintile 1 (40%–100%); quintile 2 (24%–40%); quintile 3 (14%–24%); quintile 4 (8%–14%); and quintile 5 (5%–8%). The two dashed lines for each quintile represent the 25th and 75th percentiles of growth rates. For each selected country, the most recent period identified as progress/stagnation is highlighted in the figure.

Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

FIGURE 2.3:

Distribution of average annual growth rates of SDG global indicator 4.1.2

Average annual growth rate (in percentage points) over rolling 10-year periods for the completion rate (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary), grouped by starting value of each period, 2000–24



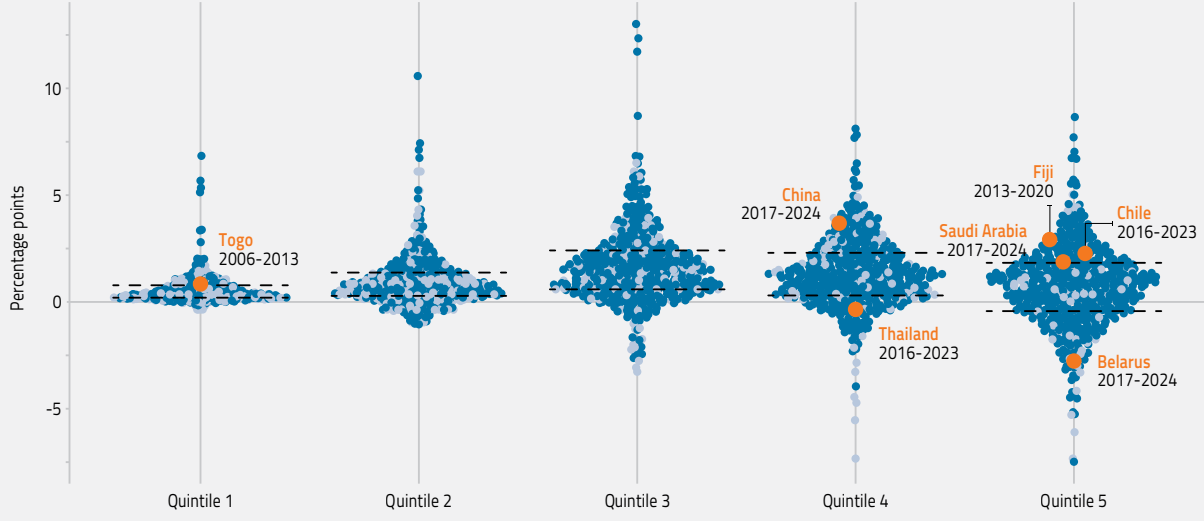
Notes: Lighter-coloured points represent periods with interpolated data. The starting value quintiles cover the following ranges: quintile 1 (0%–20%); quintile 2 (20%–42%); quintile 3 (42%–66%); quintile 4 (66%–84%); and quintile 5 (84%–95%). The two dashed lines for each quintile represent the 25th and 75th percentiles of growth rates. For each selected country, the most recent period identified as progress/stagnation is highlighted in the figure.

Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the VIEW database.

FIGURE 2.4:

Distribution of average annual growth rates of SDG thematic indicator 4.3.2

Average annual growth rate (in percentage points) over rolling seven-year periods for the tertiary education gross enrolment ratio, grouped by starting values of each period, 2000–24



Notes: Lighter-coloured points represent periods with interpolated data. The starting value quintiles cover the following ranges: quintile 1 (0%–9%); quintile 2 (9%–21%); quintile 3 (21%–40%); quintile 4 (40%–60%); and quintile 5 (60%–95%). The two dashed lines for each quintile represent the 25th and 75th percentiles of growth rates. For each selected country, the most recent period identified as progress/stagnation is highlighted in the figure.

Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

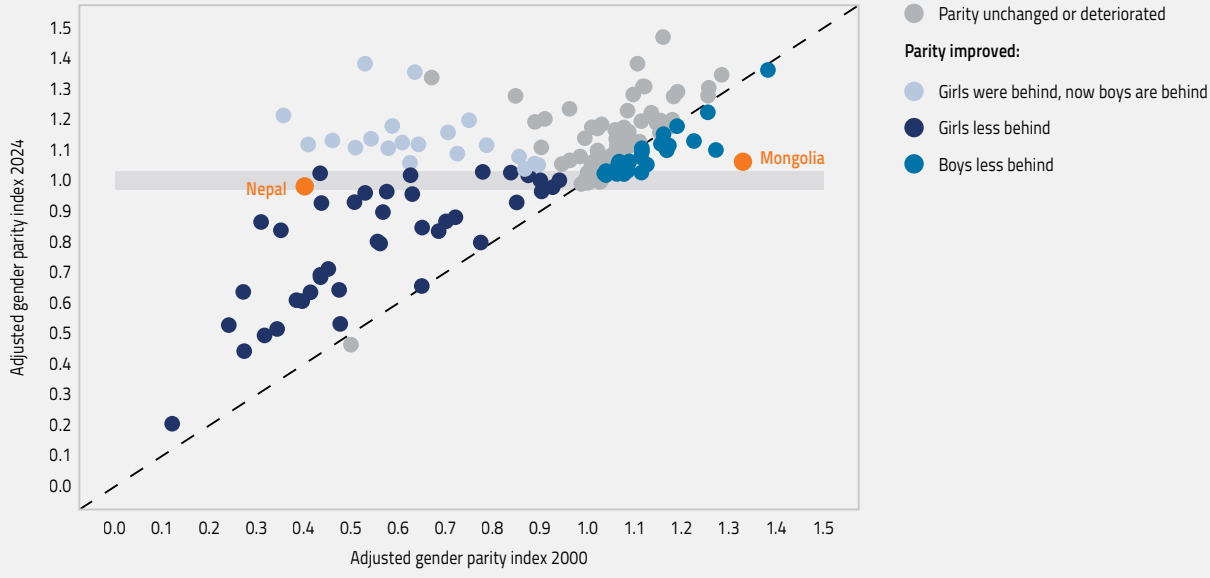
Equity case studies were selected by identifying countries that improved notably in equity along at least one dimension. While these countries stand out relative to others with available data, it was not possible to apply a uniform quantitative method for their selection. Moreover, because it is more difficult to determine stagnation under such data constraints, only countries showing progress were included in the equity analysis.

Gender. The gender dimension is available for all countries with data on upper secondary completion rates. For the purposes of the equity analysis, countries are categorized into two groups: those where girls are disadvantaged and those where boys are disadvantaged. Because the analysis uses model-based estimates, data are available for every year from 2000 to 2024, allowing the growth rate to be directly comparable across countries. Plots show each country's adjusted gender parity index in upper secondary completion, defined as the girls' completion rate divided by the boys' completion rate in 2000 and in 2024. The diagonal line distinguishes countries where completion rates for girls have improved relative to boys (to the left of the diagonal) from those where the opposite is true (to the right of the diagonal) (**Figure 2.5**).

> Excessive progress in one direction can reverse the pattern of disadvantage

The direction of progress depends on each country's starting position. Countries below the parity line in 2000 (i.e. where disparity was at the expense of girls) progressed by moving up toward parity, while those above the parity line (i.e. where disparity was at the expense of boys) progressed by moving down. Gender disparities in upper secondary completion have narrowed substantially over the past two decades, largely due to gains among previously disadvantaged girls. However, it is also shown that excessive progress in one direction can reverse the pattern of disadvantage. In some countries, parity has improved – the distance to the parity line has narrowed between 2000 and 2024 – yet the initial gender gap has reversed, shifting from being at the expense of girls to being at the expense of boys.

FIGURE 2.5:
Gender parity has generally improved, especially for disadvantaged girls
Adjusted gender parity index for upper secondary completion rates in 2000 and 2024



Note: The shaded horizontal band between 0.97 and 1.03 represents parity in 2024.
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the VIEW database.

Nepal was the selected case study on improvement in girls' situation. Among the countries that achieved gender parity in 2024, Nepal started from the highest level of disparity in 2000. The adjusted gender parity index increased from 0.40, which means that girls' upper secondary completion rates were less than half those of boys, to 0.98. Mongolia was the selected case study on improvement in boys' situation. The adjusted gender parity index fell from 1.33 to 1.06, marking the strongest movement toward parity among countries that started with a disadvantage for boys.

Location and wealth. Case study selection for these two dimensions was based on countries' relative progress in the corresponding indices: location parity index (rural vs urban) and wealth parity index (poorest quintile vs richest quintile). As survey data availability varies widely across countries, only countries with at least seven survey data points between 2000 and 2024 were analysed; of those, only those whose most recent data point was from 2020 or later were retained. Countries that had already achieved parity at the start were excluded. These criteria meant that the choice for the location parity index for primary completion was made out of a pool of 35 countries and for the wealth parity index for lower secondary completion out of a pool of 24 countries. Ethiopia was selected as a case study for the reduction of disparity between rural and urban areas, at least until before the start of civil conflict, and the Plurinational State of Bolivia for the reduction of disparity between the poorest and the richest.

Region. Comparing countries' progress using regions, or administrative units, as the equity dimension introduces additional challenges. Administrative boundaries change over time, either officially or in the way they are captured in surveys as distinct strata. Sample sizes may not be large enough and estimated education indicators fluctuate much more widely for individual regions than for the entire country. In some countries, regional disaggregation may not be relevant. For this analysis, only countries with at least four regions and at least four survey rounds were included. These criteria were less strict than for gender, location and wealth, given more limited data availability. After applying these filters, the pool consisted of 32 countries. Unlike the other dimensions, only a few countries were clear candidates for case studies, as the evolution of regional disparity is often not very consistent. The Philippines was selected as a case study for the reduction of disparity between regions.

> "Standardized definitions on disability have not yet been applied to many countries nor for long enough to obtain trend data"

Disability. While standardized definitions on disability have been developed in recent years, they have not yet been applied to many countries nor for long enough to obtain trend data. Comparisons are complicated by differences in definitions, categorization and identification rates. The case studies selected for this report draw on the Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity (TransMonEE) database compiled by UNICEF, which provides data for countries in Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The focus was on countries where the share of children with disabilities enrolled in special schools relative to mainstream schools has decreased over time. Although this does not necessarily reflect improved inclusion (as it may also reflect changes in identification practices), it is a starting point for further investigation. Two countries were selected as case studies. Armenia experienced a 75% reduction in the number of children with disabilities enrolled in special schools between 2015 and 2023 (while children with disabilities in mainstream schools more than doubled) and the Republic of Moldova a nearly 50% decrease over the same period (although the number of children with disabilities in mainstream schools also declined for demographic reasons).



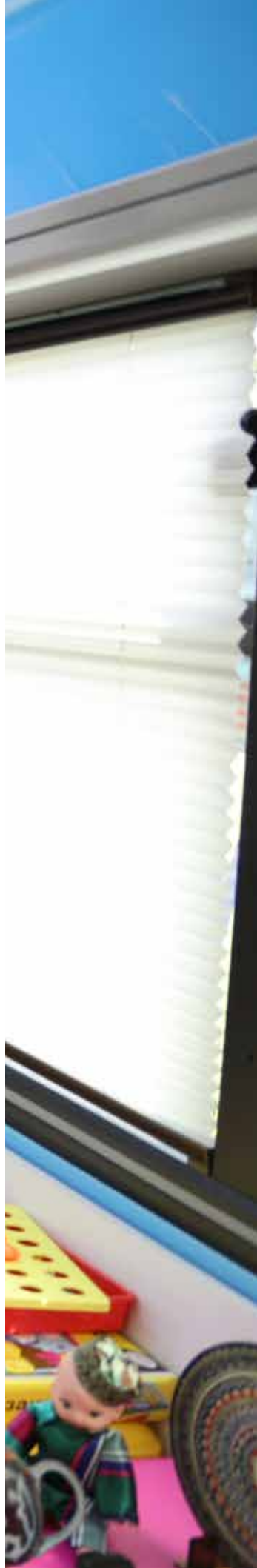
Credit: © Mr Azimjon Abdulkahev*



CHAPTER

3

Pre-primary education



KEY MESSAGES

What do the data show?

Early childhood education participation stalled after 2015 and has been affected by COVID-19.

- Globally, the net enrolment rate of children one year younger than the age of entering primary school increased from 64% in 2003 to 74% in 2015 – but only reached 75% in 2024. The net enrolment rate of all children of pre-primary school age also increased, from 41% in 2003 to 51% in 2015 and to 54% in 2020 but stagnated until 2024, as participation rates have not recovered since the pandemic.

The global indicator does not tell us how many children have had at least one year of preschool.

- The net enrolment rate of children one year before entering primary does not distinguish whether they are in preschool or in school. Yet 27% of children start primary one year early. Taking this into account, it is estimated that only 59% of children have attended at least one year of pre-primary education, and only 36% in low-income countries.

What do we know about policies associated with expansion and equity in the long run?

Making pre-primary free and/or compulsory raises enrolment but is not enough on its own.

- Between 1998 and 2023, the number of countries with at least one year of compulsory pre-primary education increased from 20 to 44, and those with at least one year of free pre-primary education increased from 46 to 69. Enrolment in countries that made pre-primary compulsory increased by 30% (compared to 23% in those that did not) but gains were largest where legal changes were paired with concrete implementation measures.

Early childhood education should not be split among ministries but many countries do this.

- Of 181 countries mapped, only 76% assign responsibility for early childhood education exclusively to the education ministry. Asian and sub-Saharan African countries that split mandates and budget lines have struggled with curriculum coherence, quality assurance and equity monitoring.

Public investment in early childhood education pays off strongly but it remains low.

- Only 10 of 119 countries observed since 2020 spent at least 1% of GDP on pre-primary education. Doubling public spending is associated with roughly tripling the participation rate in public preschools among children one year before primary. Among 61 countries with comparable data, median spending rose from 0.29% to only 0.43% of GDP in 20 years.

Adding pre-primary classes to primary schools makes expansion efficient but it needs to be pedagogically appropriate.

- Using primary schools as a vehicle to expand pre-primary education helps cut infrastructure costs, leverages current administrative systems, and offers families convenience and continuity. But this needs to be accompanied by recruiting specialized teachers.

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Key trends

The global expansion of early childhood provision has weakened over the past decade. Following steady progress throughout the 2000s and early 2010s, growth in participation has slowed markedly since 2015. Some of this slowdown can also be attributed to declines in participation during the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a particularly strong impact on early childhood education.

Assessing progress in early childhood education, however, is far from straightforward. International monitoring relies on a set of indicators that are sensitive to substantial cross-country variation in age ranges, programme definitions and enrolment practices, including early entry into primary education. As a result, current participation rates can obscure important differences in the actual expansion of children's early learning opportunities. Monitoring frameworks need to be refined and expanded to provide a more detailed and accurate picture of progress.

THE INCREASE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PARTICIPATION HAS SLOWED DOWN AFTER 2015

Participation in early childhood education is monitored through two SDG 4 indicators. First, global indicator 4.2.2 measures the participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age. This indicator measures the participation typically of children age 5 although, depending on the country's primary entry age, these children may be age 4, 5 or 6. But as the indicator covers participation in any level of education (early childhood educational development programmes, pre-primary and primary education), it is not easy to use it to draw comparisons.

Second, thematic indicator 4.2.4 measures the net enrolment rate in early childhood educational development programmes and in pre-primary education. This indicator focuses on participation among children below primary school age but there is variation between countries. The age groups broadly correspond to children under 3 for early childhood educational development programmes and children aged 3 and above for pre-primary education. However, the pre-primary entry age ranges from 2 (for example, in Georgia and Mongolia) to 6 years (for example, in Afghanistan and the United Republic of Tanzania), which makes comparisons difficult.

Analysing enrolment rates by single year of age provides a more detailed and nuanced understanding of early childhood education participation. Combining single-age enrolment data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, national data published by China's Ministry of Education and single-age population estimates from the United Nations Population Division, it is estimated that about 42% of 3-year-olds, 59% of 4-year-olds, and 80% of 5-year-olds are enrolled globally. These large increases in enrolment by age are generally observed across all country income groups, but in low-income countries, the largest increase in enrolment is observed between ages 5 and 6.

> "The net enrolment rate one year before the official primary entry age rose from 64% in 2003 to 75% in 2024"

Over the past 25 years, participation in early childhood education has increased worldwide. The net enrolment rate one year before the official primary entry age rose from 64% in 2003 to 75% in 2024, but most of the increase was until 2015 (to 73%) and the trend has essentially been stagnant since. The fastest progress occurred in the three regions and subregions that had the lowest starting levels: Northern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia. Each of them grew by 1.1 percentage point per year on average and did not have a major slowdown after 2015. Other subregions with notable growth episodes are Central Asia (by 3.7 percentage points per year between 2016 and 2020) and Southeastern Asia (by 2 percentage points per year between 2006 and 2015) (**Figure 3.1a**).

Although no regional average is reported for Eastern Asia due to the lack of internationally comparable data for China, the subregion is likely also among the highest performing on this indicator. Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, and Hong Kong, China, all report values above 95%. National figures published by China's Ministry of Education also indicate high participation: the enrolment of 5-year-olds in pre-primary education was about 94% in 2020 and the gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education as a whole was around 90% in 2023 (China Ministry of Education, 2021, 2024).

Net enrolment rates in pre-primary education followed a similar pattern and rose faster, from 41% in 2003 to 54% in 2024, but again most of the increase had happened until 2015 (to 51%) and the growth has slowed down by almost two thirds since. Central Asia, Northern Africa and Western Asia, South-eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa again stand out for their rapid growth, as participation rates more than doubled since 2000 (**Figure 3.1b**). There is a wider spread of enrolment rates at this age group than at the age group of the global indicator. Europe has much higher enrolment rates than other regions, which have

also been increasing – from 73% to 90% between 2000 and 2024. By contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa less than one in four children of pre-primary school age are enrolled.

> A large part of the slowdown in growth since 2015 can be attributed to the decline in participation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

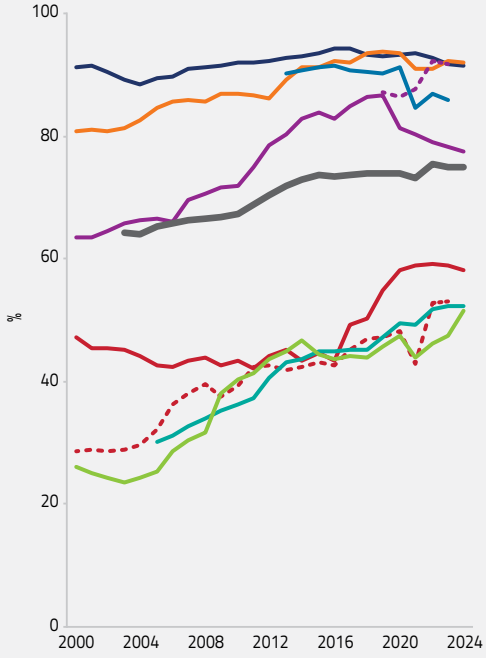
There are less data on participation in early childhood educational development programmes, making it difficult to identify clear global trends, and available data are insufficient to calculate a global average. Regions with trend data show divergent patterns. Some have made substantial progress, notably sub-Saharan Africa, where participation nearly tripled, from 6% in 2012 to 17% in 2024. In contrast, both Northern Africa and Western Asia have seen little improvement and continue to report low participation levels in 2024, at 2% and 5% respectively.

A large part of the slowdown in growth since 2015 can be attributed to the decline in participation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participation among children one year before the official primary entry age (typically 5-year-olds) fell by 2% globally in 2021, but by more than 5% in several regions (**Figure 3.2a**). The impact was even more pronounced for younger children, as captured in the net enrolment rate of pre-primary school age children (typically 3- to 5-year-olds), which fell by 5% in 2021 but by more than 10% in Northern America, Western Asia and Southern Asia (**Figure 3.2b**).

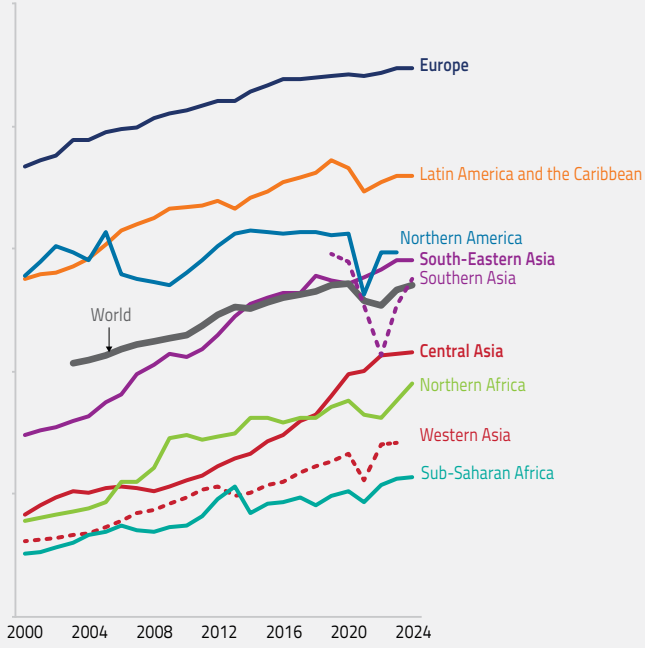
Reasons why COVID-19 had a larger impact on pre-primary than on other levels of education included the unsuitability of distance modalities, concern about the limited ability of children to comply with health protocols (Neuman and Powers, 2022), and the financial impact of the pandemic on households, which meant some families could not afford to pay for private preschool at least temporarily and may not have had an alternative (Wills and Kika-Mistry, 2022).

FIGURE 3.1:
Increases in early childhood education participation have slowed down since 2015

a. Adjusted net enrolment rate, one year before the official primary entry age



b. Net enrolment rate in pre-primary education

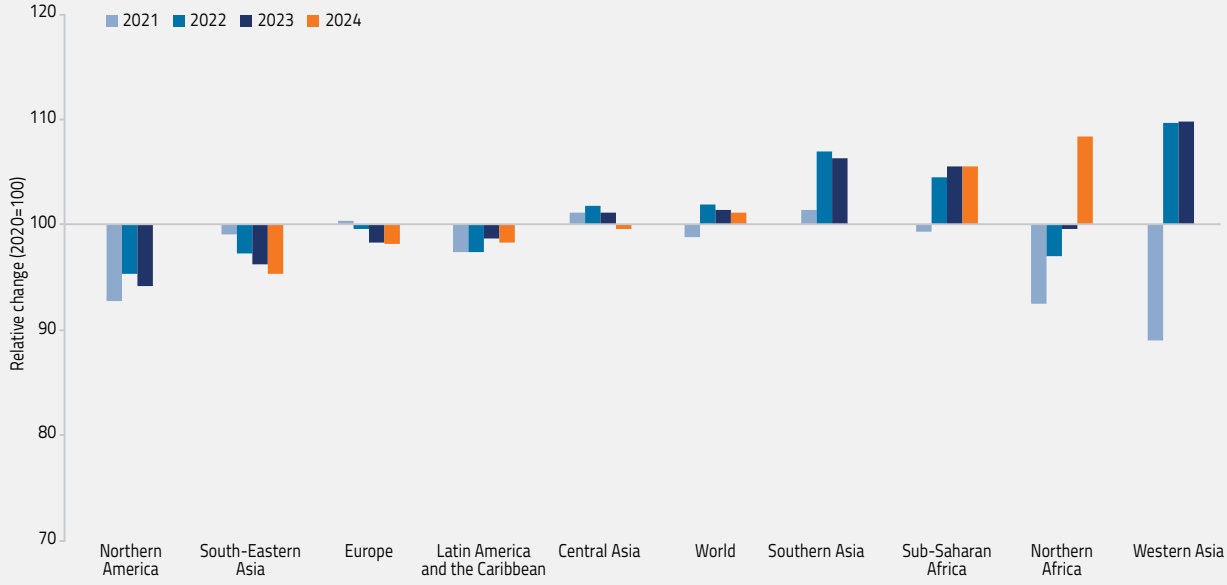


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_1
Source: UIS database.

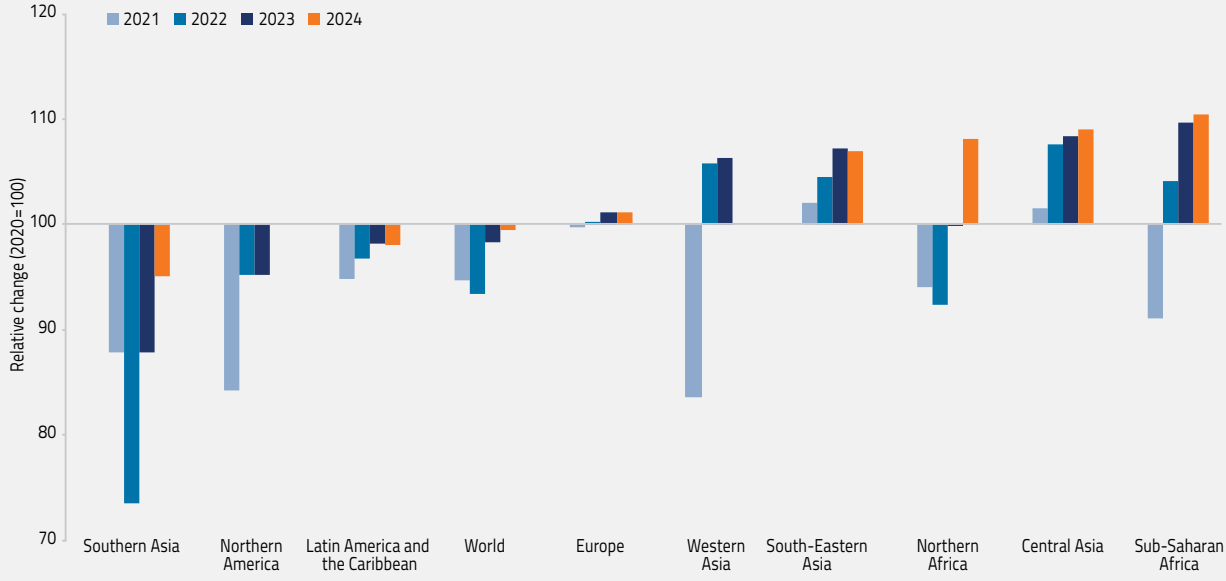
FIGURE 3.2:

The COVID-19 impact on education participation was large, particularly for younger children

a. Relative change of the adjusted net enrolment rate, one year before the official primary entry age, by region, 2020–24



b. Relative change of the net enrolment rate in pre-primary education, by region, 2020–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_2

Source: UIS database.

EARLY ENTRY INTO PRIMARY MAKES IT HARD TO INTERPRET PROGRESS IN PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION

The SDG global indicator, the participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age, is age specific. It is meant to highlight the importance of having children participating in organized learning to boost their preparedness for primary education. However, assessment is hampered by the fact that the indicator does not distinguish between children enrolled in pre-primary education and those who entered primary education a year early. Early entry into primary education is a common phenomenon worldwide. In 75 of 153 countries with data, at least 97% of children were attending pre-primary. But in at least 53 countries, over 10% of children aged one year before primary who participate in education were enrolled at the primary level instead of pre-primary – and in 13 countries more than half were enrolled in primary (**Figure 3.3**).

> On average, 27% of students aged one year before primary already attend primary

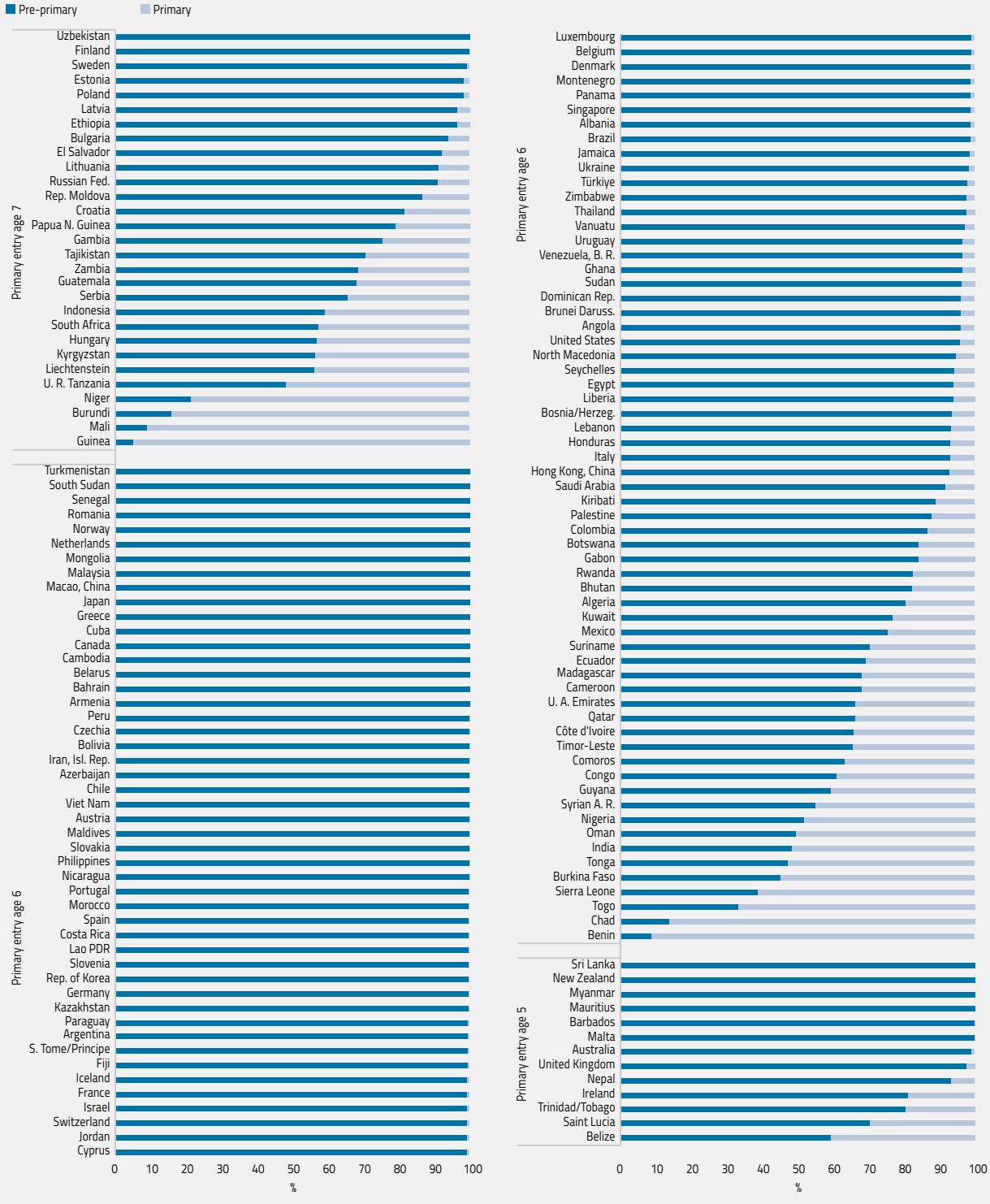
On average, 27% of students aged one year before primary already attend primary. This global figure is largely driven by India, where 51% of 5-year-olds are enrolled in primary rather than in pre-primary education – a share that likely increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, when early childhood education services were severely disrupted (Raut and Huy, 2022; Ravindran and Shah, 2024). Evidence from the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+), India's national education management information system, which excludes Anganwadi centres (i.e. rural child care centres) and private kindergartens, indicates that the share of children under 6 enrolled in primary rather than pre-primary education rose from around 35% in 2019 and 2020 to 41% in 2021 and 60% in 2022 (India Ministry of Education, 2022). At the same time, UDISE+ reports show a sharp rise in the proportion of students entering grade 1 with prior pre-school experience – from 41% in 2019 to 80% in 2025 – suggesting children may also be attending some pre-school education before entering primary education early (India Ministry of Education, 2025).

Analysing the share of early entry into primary is important to interpret SDG global indicator 4.2.2 correctly. In many countries, increases in participation are largely due to increases in early enrolment in primary education and not to an improvement in pre-primary and, more generally, early childhood education provision, as is commonly interpreted (**Figure 3.4**). In Rwanda, for example, the education participation of 5-year-olds increased from 47% in 2017 to 80% in 2024, but part of the increase was due to an increase in early entry into primary education. Among those enrolled, 8% were in primary in 2017, compared to 18% in 2024. Conversely, in some countries, a stagnation or even decrease in participation may mask improvements in early childhood education participation. In Cameroon, while participation decreased from 46% to 41% between 2017 and 2024, the share of those enrolled attending pre-primary education increased from 52% to 68%, which means that, counterintuitively, early childhood education expanded overall.

FIGURE 3.3:

Early entry into primary education is a common phenomenon

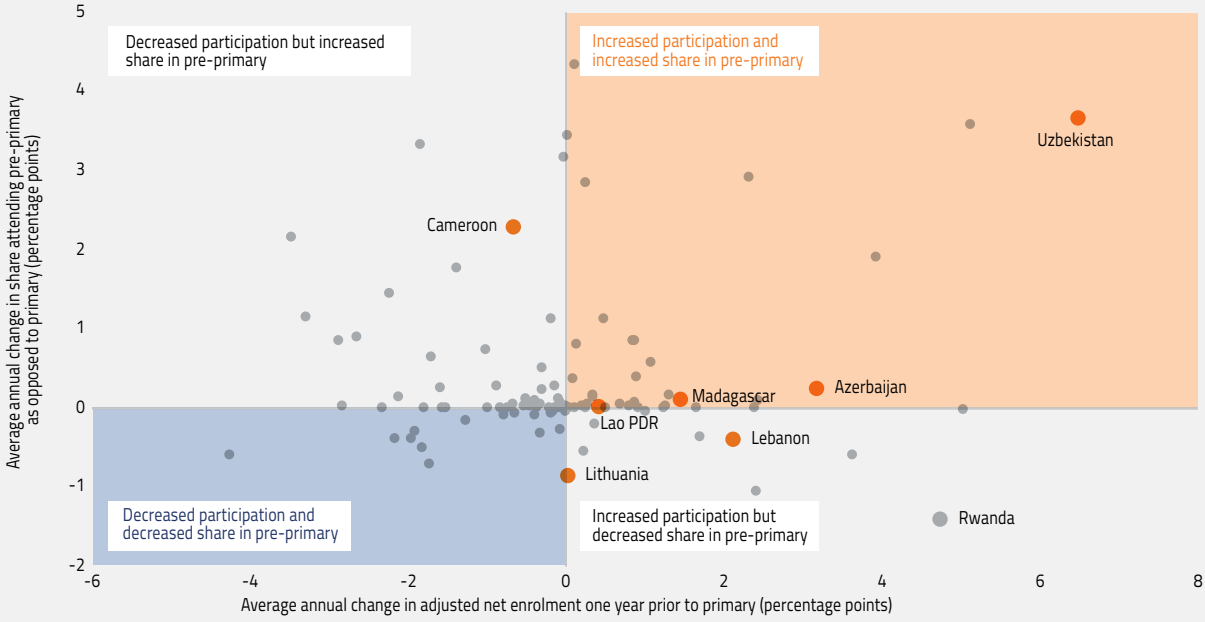
Distribution of children aged one year prior to official primary entry age enrolled, by level of education, 2024 or latest available year



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_3

Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

FIGURE 3.4:
Increased education participation of 5-year-olds does not only mean increased pre-primary education enrolment
Average annual change between 2017 and 2024 (or latest available year) in (a) the participation rate of children one year prior to the official primary entry age and (b) the share of enrolled children attending pre-primary (rather than primary) education, 2017–24



Note: Countries with observations at least five years apart between 2017 and 2024 were included.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_4
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

ESTIMATING HOW MANY CHILDREN HAVE ATTENDED PRESCHOOL REQUIRES A DIFFERENT APPROACH

The SDG global indicator is not a sufficiently reliable measure to establish the share of children that have participated in at least one year of education prior to entering primary school; instead, it tends to overestimate that share. For example, the fact that the value of indicator 4.2.2 was 75% in 2024 should not be interpreted to mean that three quarters of children have attended pre-primary education. A rough alternative estimate would be to say that excluding children enrolled in primary education would lead to about a 27% drop in the global indicator, which would mean that only 55% of children in the world complete at least one year of pre-primary school. But this might underestimate preschool attendance, as children that attend primary school early may well have attended preschool before.

For a more accurate estimate, one option is to use enrolment data by single year of age and education level attended from administrative sources. The approach follows two steps. First, the highest single-year participation rate in pre-primary education is identified from the relevant age group. In some countries, this peak occurs among children one year below the official primary entry age; in others, it occurs among those two years below, because many children in the year immediately preceding primary entry may have already transitioned into primary education. Second, this enrolment figure is then divided by the total number of primary entry age children enrolled, whether in primary or pre-primary. This gives the share of primary entry age students who likely attended pre-primary education. Combining this with the overall enrolment rate of primary entry age children yields a rough distribution of children between three groups: those who entered primary school having attended pre-primary; those who entered primary school without having attended pre-primary; and those who are not enrolled yet (**Figure 3.5**).

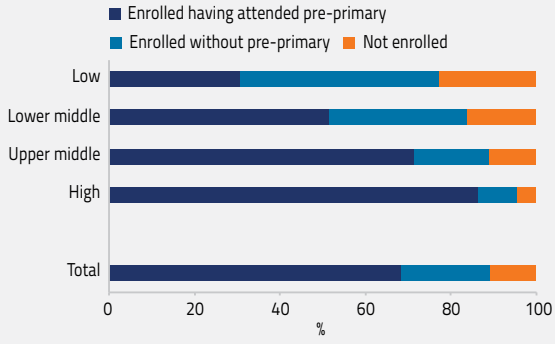
“For a more accurate estimate, one option is to use enrolment data by single year of age and education level attended from administrative sources”

This approach estimates nearly 60% of children aged one year before they begin primary school have attended at least one year of pre-primary education, ranging from 36% in low-income to 86% in high-income countries. Another 30% are in primary school without previously having attended preschool. Finally, 11% are not enrolled by that age, although the vast majority will enrol later.

This approach relies on two assumptions. The first assumption is that cohort sizes remain relatively stable across adjacent ages (e.g. the numbers of 4- and 6-year-olds do not differ substantially). Of 165 countries with a single-year age cohort of at least 10,000 children, there are 10 low- and lower-middle-income countries where the cohort of 4-year-olds was at least 3% higher than the cohort of 5-year-olds, implying that the estimate is likely overestimated in these countries. In contrast, in 26 upper-middle- and high-income countries the cohort of 4-year-olds was at least 3% smaller, meaning the estimate is likely underestimated in these countries.

The second assumption is that children remain in education once they enter, meaning that a child enrolled in pre-primary will continue at least until the first grade of primary. As the approach uses the enrolment patterns of younger children to infer the prior participation of primary school-aged children, it will overestimate pre-primary participation in countries where early childhood education is expanding rapidly.

FIGURE 3.5:
It is estimated that 6 in 10 children have attended pre-primary education
Estimated distribution of primary entry age by enrolment status and pre-primary participation, by country income group, 2024 or latest available year



Note: The estimation is based on enrolment data by single year of age and education level, assuming that the cohort size remains stable and that children stay at least until the first grade of primary, once enrolled in pre-primary.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_5
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

MONITORING PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN UNDER 3 IS VERY CHALLENGING

Monitoring participation of children under 3, especially at the international level, poses significant challenges. It is difficult to establish whether programmes meet the specific criteria to be classified under ISCED level 0, which include having an intentional educational component (for at least 2 hours per day and/or 100 days per year) and being regulated by an education-oriented authority (UIS et. al, 2015). Often, educational components may exist in practice but not be formally documented. Interpretations of what counts as 'educational' vary across countries (e.g. changing diapers may be considered educational in a country because of the interaction during the process, but not in others). As a result, similar childcare arrangements can be classified differently across countries, hindering comparability.

> “Childcare arrangements can be classified differently across countries, hindering comparability”

In some countries, most or all early childhood care and education provision for children under 3 is outside the ISCED classification. In France and Italy, for example, childcare for children under 3 is governed by ministries of social affairs and excluded from ISCED, so less than 5% of children are considered enrolled in formal education. In contrast, more than 50% of children are considered enrolled in Denmark and Norway. Across the 27 European Union member states, using administrative data, the participation rate increased slightly from 17% in 2015 to 20% in 2023 (**Figure 3.6a**).

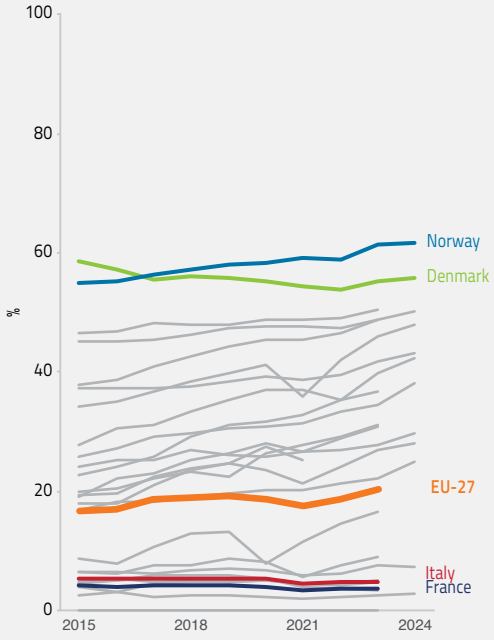
The rate of participation in both education and care among children under 3 doubles among the European Union's 27 member states to 39% using household survey data and based on a broad definition that includes participation for as little as one hour per week. While in Denmark and Norway, participation rates are the same as those reported as education only, in France and Italy participation rates increase to 59% and 39%, respectively (**Figure 3.6b**).

Moreover, participation before age 3 is strongly linked to broader social policies, including parental leave, income support and childcare subsidies, making it hard to define the meaning of progress. Higher participation is not always the preferred outcome and there is usually no clear target,

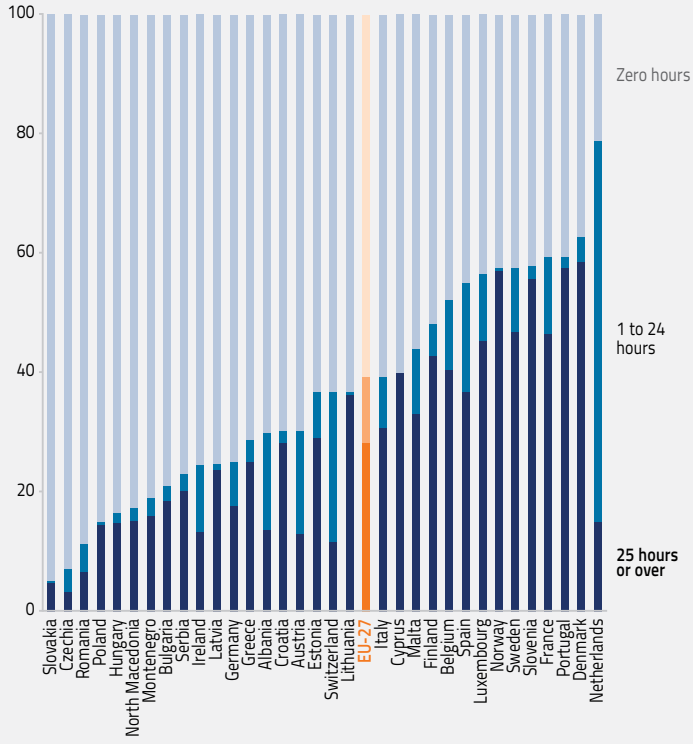
except the European Union which has set a target to reach a participation rate of 45% by 2030. Families' needs vary and many could provide care and education of better quality at home.

FIGURE 3.6:
In Europe, one in five children under 3 attend formal education
Early childhood care and education participation measures, children under 3, European countries

a. Children in formal education, 2015–24



b. Children in formal childcare or education, 2024



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_6
Source: Eurostat (2025a).

Source: Eurostat (2025b)

CONCLUSION

> To capture the true intent of SDG target 4.2, monitoring should account for early entry into primary and track whether children have actually attended pre-primary education

Global monitoring of access to early childhood education requires recalibration. To capture the true intent of SDG target 4.2 – ensuring that children have access to early learning opportunities before entering primary school – monitoring should account for early entry into primary and track whether children have actually attended pre-primary education. For all children, and particularly those under 3, where internationally comparable participation data are limited, monitoring should emphasize equity of access, ensuring that all who want early learning opportunities are able to benefit from them.

Improving monitoring therefore requires not only better and more harmonized data tools, but also a broader policy perspective. Complementing participation indicators with information on legal entitlement and public financing would provide a more comprehensive picture of governments' commitment to early childhood education, and better capture progress toward equitable access in diverse national contexts.



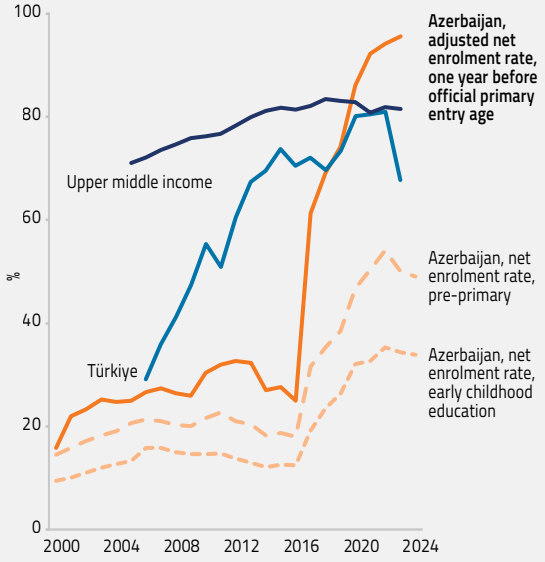
Case studies



Azerbaijan: RAPID ENROLMENT INCREASE IS POSSIBLE.

Azerbaijan, an upper-middle-income country, has recently dramatically increased access to pre-primary education for 5-year-olds. In 2016, it was a country with one of the lowest values – 25% – of the SDG global indicator 4.2.2, which is the net enrolment rate, one year before the official primary entry age, among its income group and regional peers. Within just five years, it progressed to near universal enrolment in 2021 – 92%. Impressive increases were also recorded for two other participation indicators that include younger children (3- to 5-year-olds and 1- to 5-year-olds), albeit at lower rates (**Figure 1**).

FIGURE 1:
Within five years, Azerbaijan almost universalized access to pre-primary education for 5-year-olds
Adjusted net enrolment rate, one year before the official primary entry age, Azerbaijan, Türkiye and upper-middle-income countries, 2000–24

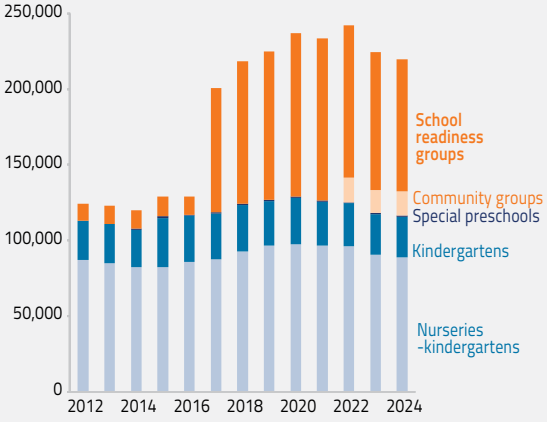


Notes:
1. Two other indicators are shown for Azerbaijan: the net enrolment rates for (i) pre-primary education (which refer to the age group 3 to 5 years) and (ii) for early childhood education (which refer to the age group 1 to 5 years).
2. The UIS database reports a sharp drop in the adjusted net enrolment rate, one year before the official primary entry age in Azerbaijan from 96% in 2023 to 83% in 2024, which is not reflected in government data. According to the Ministry of Education, participation rate of 5-year-olds is 87% in 2024 and the number of 5-year-olds enrolled in school readiness groups increased from 87,569 in 2023 (Azerbaijan Ministry of Education, 2024) to 93,211 in 2024 (Azerbaijan Ministry of Education, 2025).

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Azerbaijan_fig1
Source: UIS database.

Considering absolute enrolment figures in early childhood education institutions, 'school readiness' groups, targeted at 5-year-olds, accounted for almost the full increase. The number of children enrolled in these groups increased from 12,000 in 2016 to 107,000 in 2021 (**Figure 2**). Note that the 5-year-old population is estimated to have increased by 13% to 137,200 between 2011 and 2024 (Azerbaijan State Statistical Committee, 2024).

FIGURE 2:
In Azerbaijan, early childhood education participation increases are exclusively from enrolment in school readiness groups
Number of children aged 1 to 6 years enrolled in early childhood education institutions, by type of institution, Azerbaijan, 2012–24



Note: School readiness groups cater to children aged 5 and 6, while other early childhood education institutions cater to children aged 1 to 5.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Azerbaijan_fig2
Source: Azerbaijan State Statistical Committee (2025).

In the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the early childhood education sector struggled with institutional instability – as responsibility shifted several times between different government agencies; policy fragmentation; insufficient human, financial and material resources; lack of political will; and no legislation (Mammadova, 2024). In 2011, just 36% of grade 4 children had previously attended preschool, one of the lowest levels among the 45 countries that took part in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (Radsky, 2013). In recognition of the low enrolment rates, lack of facilities in three quarters of residential settlements,

and the importance of pre-primary education for school preparedness and equity, the government made improving enrolment for this group a national policy priority, setting an enrolment rate target of 90% by 2020 and identifying pre-primary education as one of the accelerators for achieving SDG 4 (Azerbaijan Government, 2019; UNESCO, 2022).

The school readiness programme offers free-of-charge, daily public preschool classes for 5-year-olds run by primary school teachers in existing public schools to ensure their smooth transition into primary education. Following a pilot phase (2008–2012) and preparation phase for rollout (2012–2015), supported by UNICEF and the World Bank, the government adopted a resolution in 2016 for the Ministry of Education to scale up a school readiness programme nationwide. While school readiness groups were originally financed by parental fees, the government also allocated funds to make pre-primary free for 5- and 6-year-olds, covering 98% of the costs (including tuition and learning materials) (Azerbaijan Institute of Professional Development and UNICEF, 2017; Azerbaijan Ministry of Education, 2017a; Gheorghe, 2020; van Ravens, 2018). Pre-primary education is not yet compulsory, as not all schools have the capacity and space to introduce school readiness classes. Once this is resolved, the Ministry of Education plans to make it mandatory and change the law.

Funds allocated to early childhood education grew from AZN 94 million in 2012 to AZN 171 million in 2015 (Gheorghe, 2020a), an increase from 6.5% to 10% of public education expenditure, a level it has since maintained (Azerbaijan President of the Republic, 2014, 2017, 2021), in line with international recommendations (UNESCO, 2023). While pre-primary education used to be budgeted together with primary education, pre-primary education became a distinct budget item in 2015 (Azerbaijan President of the Republic, 2015). Funding to school readiness groups, in particular, increased from AZN 6 million in 2016 to AZN 35 million in 2019. Most of that amount went to teachers' salaries, whose share of the budget increased from 45% to 80% in this period (Gheorghe, 2020a).

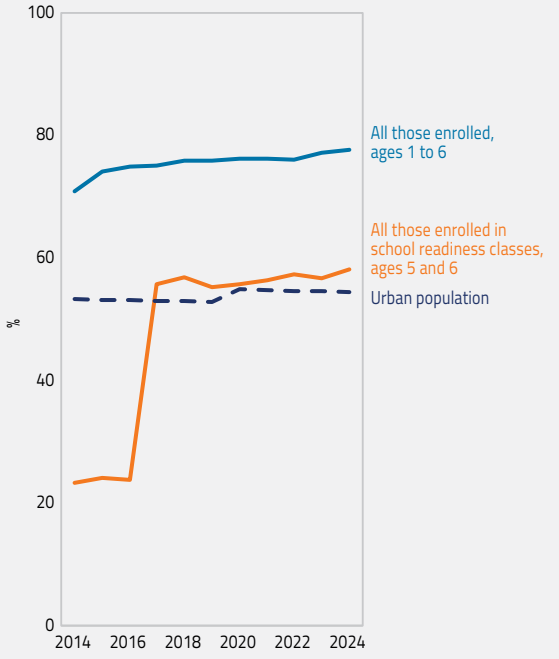
The programme took advantage of existing staff and infrastructure, which enabled fast expansion. The number of schools with school readiness groups increased from 100 in 2012 to over 5,000 in 2023 (Azerbaijan Ministry of Education, 2024; Gheorghe, 2020). While private education facilities were encouraged to help increase pre-primary education coverage levels (Azerbaijan Government, 2019), public institutions consistently account for over 90% of early childhood education institutions and enrolments (Azerbaijan State Statistical Committee, 2025). Already employed public primary school teachers were allocated to these school readiness classes. No new teachers were hired but over 10,000 already employed teachers were trained between 2010 and 2017 to also teach school readiness in addition to their regular classes. As of 2017, 89% of teachers working in school readiness groups had received the minimum required training (Gheorghe, 2020a; Mammadova, 2024). New content and teaching materials were developed and introduced.

To ensure the sustainability of the sector, the government developed its governance, approving the preschool education law (2017), the admission procedure for preschool education institutions (2018), state standards for the education of preschool-age children with disabilities (2018) and a procedure for the organization of preschool education (2018). Additional delivery options regulated by law included community-based education (ages 3 and 4), launched in 2017 for children in remote villages and regions, and family-based early childhood education (ages 1 to 6) (Gheorghe, 2020a). Community-based groups are included within the state budget but have not yet been scaled up nationally, as they require more investment given their higher unit cost.

A further step to improve management, accountability, transparency and quality was to move the responsibility for early childhood education from local government authorities to the Ministry of Education and centralize the oversight of services. The Ministry of Education established the State Agency for Preschool and General Education, a Preschool Educational Institutions Information System to collect data, and an online preschool admission portal (Azerbaijan Ministry of Education, 2022; European Training Foundation, 2024; Mammadova, 2024).

A qualitative assessment of programme impact reported significant improvements in language, socio-affective, cognitive and motor development of children enrolled in the school readiness programme. However, given the rapid increase in pre-primary enrolment, the rollout inevitably faced implementation challenges, such as inadequate school infrastructure (as existing classrooms were not adapted), an overloaded curriculum, insufficient teaching and learning materials, and high child/teacher ratios (Gheorghe, 2020a). Another study reported that despite strong staff motivation and dedication, teacher capacity was insufficient (Mammadova, 2024).

FIGURE 3:
Access to preschool for 5-year-olds is almost equal between urban and rural areas
Share of early childhood education enrolment in urban areas, by type, 2014–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Azerbaijan_fig3
Source: Azerbaijan State Statistical Committee (2025).

Despite the rapid expansion, there has been progress in reducing disparity in access. In the 2000 round of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in some form of organized learning programme was 21% among the richest and 5% among the poorest in the household wealth distribution. In the 2023 round of the same survey, the corresponding shares were 30% for the top two and 18% for the bottom two quintiles. The percentage of 5-year-olds attending an early childhood education programme was 70% for the richest and 55% for the poorest quintile (Azerbaijan State Statistical Committee and UNICEF, 2024).

By geographic location, there is significant disparity in access for younger children but near parity among preschool-age children. The share of children aged 1 to 6 years living in urban areas among those enrolled in early childhood education increased from 71% in 2014 to 78% in 2024. During this period, the share of the urban population increased from 53.2% to 54.5%. But the share of children aged 5 to 6 years living in urban areas among those enrolled in school readiness classes jumped to 56% in 2017 (it was originally about 25% as the pilot phase was implemented in rural areas) and had slightly increased to 58% by 2024, following the national rollout (**Figure 3**), which suggests that children from urban areas are only very slightly overrepresented.

However, the programme was reported to have limited adaptability for children with disabilities. Although the law requires preschools to prioritize marginalized groups, including children with disabilities (Azerbaijan Ministry of Education, 2017b), the education system is still influenced by the medical model prevalent during the Soviet era (Abdullayeva, 2024), whereby children with disabilities are educated in separate settings. While the government adopted the State Programme on the Development of Inclusive Education in 2017, which focuses on providing education in mainstream schools and preschools to children with disabilities, the implementation of this programme remains limited (Gheorghe, 2020; Mikayılova, 2025).

In summary, Azerbaijan's Ministry of Education rapidly increased the enrolment of 5-year-olds through the introduction of free and fully state-funded school readiness classes. This change was possible through strong government commitment to take over and own a programme previously piloted with strong development partner support. It developed a comprehensive legal framework, and consistent, sustainable government funding channels. The programme relied on existing infrastructure and teachers to rapidly increase enrolment (Azerbaijan Institute of Education, 2024; Gheorghe, 2020).

Cameroon: ACCESS BARRIERS INCLUDE CONFLICT AND POVERTY

In Cameroon, 41% of 5-year-olds are enrolled in education, well above the subregional average for Central Africa, but below the averages for lower-middle-income and sub-Saharan African countries. Two different trends can be distinguished over the past 15 years: a period of expansion from 41% in 2008 to 52% in 2015, followed by an equally steep decline back to 41% by 2018 and stagnation thereafter (**Figure 1**).

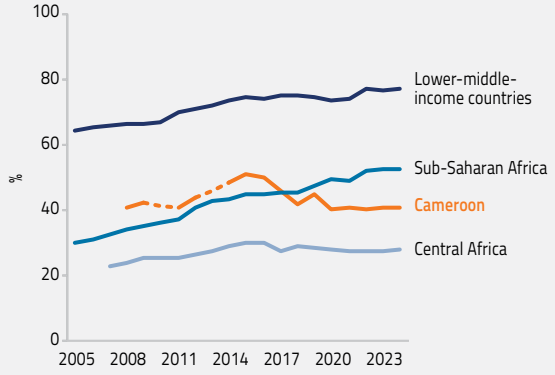
However, while this indicator is commonly understood to be a measure of progress in pre-primary education, this is not necessarily the case. SDG global indicator 4.2.2 measures the education participation of 5-year-olds regardless of the education level attended and can therefore be misleading in countries where children enrol in primary school before the official entry age.

In Cameroon, while the number of 5-year-olds enrolled in education has remained stagnant since 2017, unpacking the data indicates a different picture. The share of 5-year-olds in education who were in fact enrolled in pre-primary education (instead of starting primary school early) grew from 52% in 2017 to 68% in 2024. The number of 5-year-olds enrolled in preschool therefore increased by 39% in this period (**Figure 2**), more than twice as fast as the population of 5-year-olds (18%). However, the data also suggest that the percentage of all 5-year-olds in pre-primary education is below 30%.

The number of students enrolled in pre-primary education according to the Ministry of Basic Education increased rapidly, more than tripling between 2005 and 2016, a trend which was then interrupted and marked by a two-year decline, then a resumption of growth albeit at a slower rate. The growth in recent years is even slower in terms of the gross enrolment ratio (**Figure 3**).

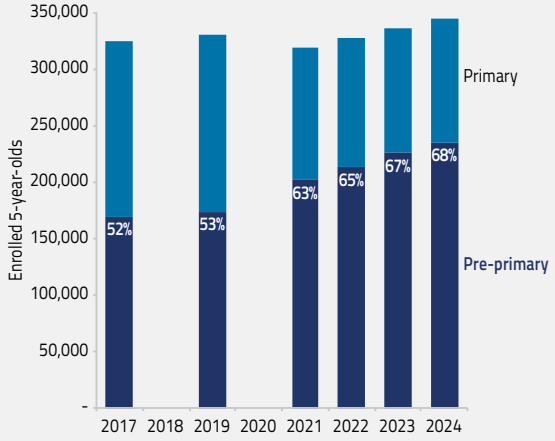
Cameroon has dealt with persistent security crises over the past 10 years, mainly due to the escalation of Boko Haram violence in the Far North since 2014 and the separatist conflict in the anglophone Northwest and Southwest regions since 2016. Moreover, an influx of refugees from the Central African Republic has affected the East and Adamawa regions. Chronic internal displacement, a ban on education by non-state armed groups, attacks on school buildings and personnel, and the looting and occupying of school buildings contribute to widespread education disruption. In recent years, more than 3 million people have been reported in need of humanitarian assistance, reaching a maximum of 4.7 million in 2023 (Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education et al., 2025; UNICEF, 2024), when 1.4 million school-age children were estimated to need education assistance (Chimtom, 2024).

FIGURE 1:
In Cameroon, after a period of expansion, participation of 5-year-olds in education has stagnated since 2018
Adjusted net enrolment rate, one year before the official primary entry age, Cameroon and selected country group averages, 2003–24



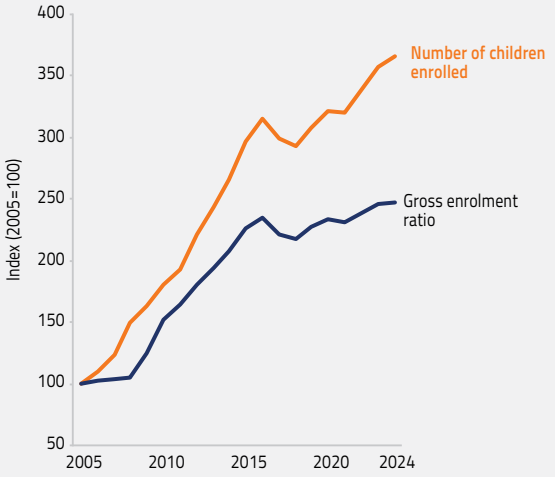
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cameroon_fig1
Source: UIS database.

FIGURE 2:
The number of 5-year-olds enrolled in pre-primary school early has been increasing in Cameroon
Enrolment of 5-year-olds, by level of education attended, Cameroon, 2017–24



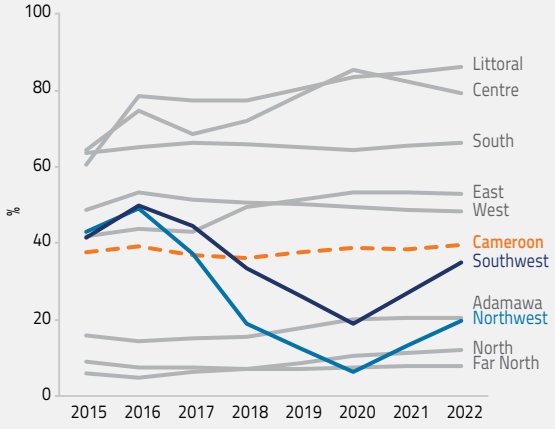
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cameroon_fig2
Source: UIS database.

FIGURE 3:
Pre-primary enrolment in Cameroon has been growing but at a slower rate in recent years
Change in the number of children enrolled in pre-primary education and the pre-primary gross enrolment ratio, Cameroon, 2005–24 (2005 = 100)



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cameroon_fig3
Sources: Annual reports of the Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education.

FIGURE 4:
Conflict in Cameroon's Northwest and Southwest regions severely hindered access to pre-primary education
Gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education, by region, Cameroon, 2015–24



Note: The population in the denominator refers to 4- and 5-year-olds, which corresponds to the theoretical age group for the pre-primary level, but private schools often have a three-year duration and take children from age 3, while children older than 5 may also be enrolled.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cameroon_fig4
Source: Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education.

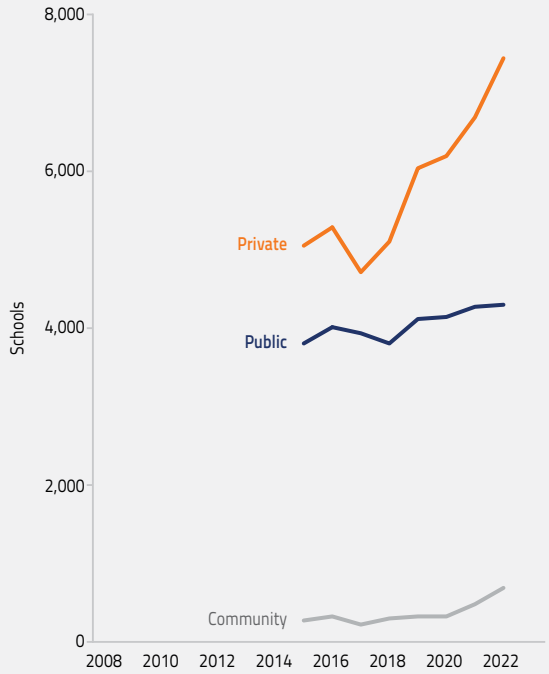
While the Far North region already had very low pre-primary education enrolment levels, the Northwest and Southwest regions witnessed a sharp drop in enrolment in the aftermath of the conflict, from about 50% in 2015/16 to 6% in the Northwest and 19% in the Southwest in 2019/20, when 90% of public primary schools in the two regions were closed at the start of that school year, affecting over 850,000 children (UNICEF, 2019). Although enrolment levels in both regions are trending upwards again, they have not yet recovered to the pre-conflict levels (**Figure 4**). A recent study on the impact of this conflict on education found that it directly led to a significant decline in reading and mathematics test scores, higher teacher absenteeism and reduced access to electricity in schools (Galindo-Silva and Tchuente, 2023).

Public investment in pre-primary education in Cameroon dropped from around 0.10% of GDP between 2008 and 2013 to 0.06% in 2014, where it has remained ever since, declining even further as a share of the Ministry of Basic Education budget, from 6.8% in 2019 to 6.3% in 2022 (Ministry of Basic Education Cameroon, 2023b). The number of public pre-primary schools has barely changed since 2014, while nearly 20% of them were not operational in 2022 (Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education, 2023a; Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education et al., 2023a). In contrast, between 2017 and 2023, the number of private preschools increased by 47% and the share of students enrolled in private preschools increased from 62% to 73% (**Figure 5**). Barely any public preschool has a canteen, only 13% have equipped playgrounds, 16% have electricity and 63% have toilets, with an average of 3 per 100 students (Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education et al., 2025).

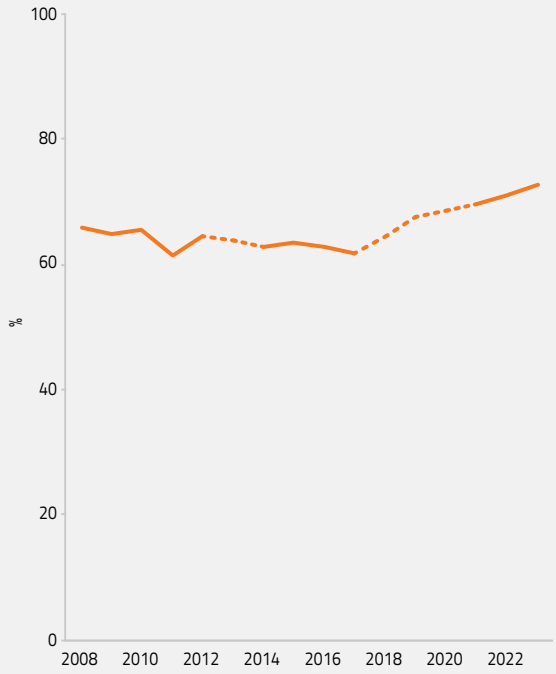
While public schools charge annual fees of CFA 7,500 (USD 13.40), already an obstacle for many, fees in private schools can be 15 to 20 times higher (DataCameroon, 2023; Ministry of Basic Education Cameroon, 2017). Additional ad hoc costs are often incurred to fund temporary teachers, materials or construction works (Institut National de la Statistique, 2021; Zouga, 2024). In 2021, the cost of pre-primary education was on average CFA 19,600 for public schools, CFA 47,000 for confessional private and CFA 74,500 for non-religious private schools (Institut National de la Statistique, 2021), making access especially difficult, since some 40% of the population lives below the poverty line (Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education et al., 2025).

FIGURE 5:
Private provision of pre-primary education has increased in Cameroon

a. Number of pre-primary schools, by type, 2015–22



b. Share of pre-primary school students enrolled in non-state institutions, 2008–22



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cameroon_fig5
Sources: Cameroon Minitry of Basic Education (2023b) (number of schools) and UIS database (enrolment in private institutions).

Private providers are mostly concentrated in urban areas, which account for 70% of pre-primary students and only 58% of the population (Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education, 2023b; World Bank, 2023), exacerbating the gap in access. In fact, the number of operational preschools was almost 10% higher in urban than in rural areas in 2015 but over 40% in 2022 (Ministry of Basic Education Cameroon, 2023b).

Over the past two decades, Cameroon's government has established several frameworks to improve access to pre-primary education. Law No. 98/004 officially integrated pre-primary education into the formal education structure for children aged 4 and 5. Currently, the Education and Training Sector Strategy 2024–2030 seeks to expand public preschool provision and ensure that 70% of 5-year-olds will have access to at least one year of pre-primary education by 2030 (Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education et al., 2023b). The government aims to enrol 715,000 children in pre-primary education by 2027, although at the current rates it will fall short by some 60,000 children (Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education, 2023b).

A central strategy to expand access in underserved rural areas has been the development of community-based preschools (centres préscolaires communautaires), managed by local authorities and communities with municipal financial support, under the framework of the decentralization policy. However, this strategy has faced significant implementation challenges. As of 2022, only 4% of children were enrolled in community preschools, far short of the government's target of nearly 64% by 2025/26 (Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education et al., 2023b).

Public education expenditure has been below both international benchmarks, oscillating just below 3% of GDP and around 14% of total public expenditure since 2017. The government has recently committed to increasing the share of education in public current expenditure, excluding debt service, by 2.4 percentage points from its 2022 level (Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education, 2023b) and to increase the share of pre-primary and primary education from just 29.5% in 2024 to 42% by 2030 (Cameroon Ministry of Basic Education et al., 2025).

Cameroon

A teacher's story about the trials of children aged 4 or 5 years starting primary school early

I have been a teacher in the public sector in Cameroon for 19 years, in a primary school with 317 students in just six classes. At my school, we face a difficult reality: the massive influx of 4- or 5-year-olds directly into first grade.

Why don't these little ones go through preschool? The answer is simple. In Cameroon, there are two worlds: private and public. In the private sector, costs are set according to the founder's wishes. Primary school is supposedly free in the public sector, although we ask for around 7,000 CFA francs for PTA fees to buy things like chalk and toilet paper, because the government doesn't provide us with anything. Within a 6 km radius of my school, there are eight private preschools, but none in the public sector. For parents working in the informal sector, it's impossible to pay. When their child turns 4 years old, parents want to put the child in school so they can go to work.

If we refuse to take in these children under six, they are exposed to serious risks. In rural areas, I've seen children sitting in front of closed doors as early as 6:00 am, starving, because their parents have gone to the fields. At school, we're involved in social work as well as education. We accept these children so they aren't alone on the streets, but it's a constant struggle.

This situation is disastrous for learning. Our teachers are angry because a four-year-old in a class with older children represents immature socialization. We're forcing their memory before its time. If you force me to walk before I'm old enough, I'll have bowlegs. If you ask my memory to do what it can't do, it will shut down.

The child draws on their cognitive reserves to try and keep up with older children, which leads to excessive fatigue and discouragement. Often, I deliberately have them repeat two or three years in the same grade so they reach the necessary maturity, but the child ends up believing they have failed.

The number of public preschools must increase. The government is neglecting our children; there are schools that exist only on paper or in models inaugurated even though no buildings have been constructed. As a union representative, I carry this message despite the risks: education and health must be paramount.

Nahadzou Marylse,
Teacher

Lao People's Democratic Republic: OVER A DECADE, ENROLMENT RATES INCREASED BY 5 PERCENTAGE POINTS PER YEAR

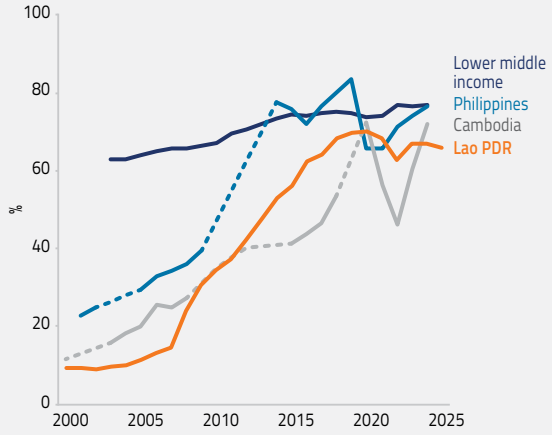
Up until about 2005, just 1 in 10 children aged 5 were enrolled in education in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. But a major transformation took place over the next decade, initially based on the ambition expressed in the 2001–2020 Education Strategic Vision and the Education for All National Plan of Action 2003–2015. The government prioritized the construction of early childhood education schools in cities, while early childhood education would spread in rural areas through community-based projects supported by development partners (Manivanh, 2005).

Between 2007 and 2016, enrolment rates of 5-year-olds increased from 14% to 62%, or at a rate of 4.8 percentage points per year throughout the decade, converging to the average of other lower-middle-income countries and mirroring the progress of other countries in the region, such as Cambodia and the Philippines. Importantly, the growth has been based on the expansion of public provision, which has accounted since 2000 for about 80% of total enrolment. The 2015 revision of the national education law ensured the provision of free public early childhood education and led the way for the establishment of the Early Childhood Education Department and the National Plan of Action for Early Childhood Care and Development (Viraphanh, 2024). Nevertheless, growth appears to have ground to a halt since 2016 (**Figure 1**).

There are three main forms of early childhood education provision in the Lao People's Democratic Republic: *playgroups*, for children aged 3 and 4, usually delivered by locally recruited and trained caregivers at the community level; *kindergarten*, for children aged 3 to 5; and *pre-primary* for children aged 5 attached to primary schools and known as preparatory programmes. In 2025, according to the Ministry of Education and Sports, kindergartens accounted for 81% of total early childhood education enrolments (up from 72% in 2015), followed by pre-primary preparatory classes (16%, down from 26% in 2015) and playgroups (2%).

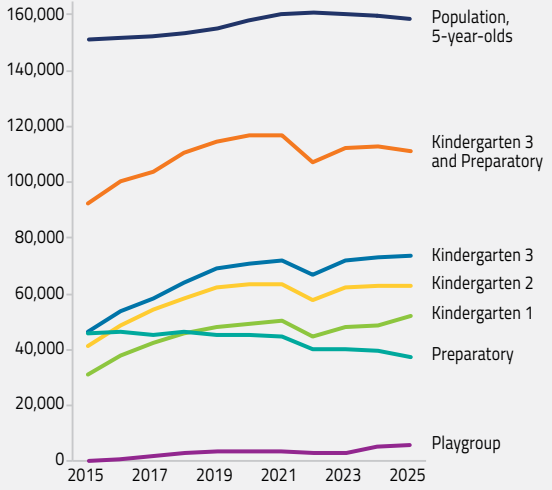
Adding together the number of children enrolled in the third year of kindergarten and in preparatory classes, which correspond to the types of education 5-year-olds should be attending, the share of those attending a preparatory class in the total enrolment of 5-year-olds has fallen from one half to one third in 10 years. The evidence also suggests that 70% of 5-year-olds were in early childhood education, compared to 38% of 3- to 4-year-olds in playgroups and in the first and second years of kindergarten (**Figure 2**).

FIGURE 1:
Enrolment of Laotian 5-year-olds increased steadily and rapidly between 2007 and 2016
Adjusted net enrolment rate, one year before official primary entry age, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia, the Philippines and lower-middle-income countries, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Lao_PDR_fig1
Sources: UIS database.

FIGURE 2:
Enrolment in kindergarten has increased relative to preschools in recent years
Number of children enrolled, by type and level of early childhood education, 2015–25



Note: Kindergarten 3 and Preparatory have been combined to represent the potential enrolment of 5-year-olds.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Lao_PDR_fig2
Source: 2024 World Population Prospects (population) and Lao Education and Sports Management Information System (enrolment).

These numbers broadly correspond to the results of the 2023 Lao Social Indicators Survey. The survey shows that 27% of 3- to 4-year-olds were attending an organized learning programme and 67% of 5-year-olds were in education, although the latter were evenly split between those attending some form of early childhood education and those already in primary school, which is a high percentage of premature enrolment in grade 1. However, a further question confirmed that 61% of grade 1 students had previously attended some form of early childhood education (Lao Statistics Bureau and UNICEF, 2025).

A key feature of development policy in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, particularly in rural areas, has been decentralization under the Sam Sang (Three Builds) directive. In the case of education, including at the early childhood level, the Ministry of Education and Sports develops national policies and plans; Provincial Education and Sports Services localize them (also developing local budgets and managing private and development partner funds); and District Education and Sports Bureaus implement them (also mobilizing local resources, inspecting, monitoring and evaluating). Decentralization has allowed provinces and districts to adjust the school year to match the local agricultural cycle and improve student attendance (Somsanith and Noonan, 2020). The 2021–2025 Education and Sports Sector Development Plan has further aligned and clarified the management responsibilities of provinces and districts.

Development partners have supported the government in its efforts to expand early childhood education, although mainly in the early influence on national policy that helped the government scale up some models, including the Early Childhood Development and the Community- and School-Based Early Childhood Development pilot projects with UNICEF and Save the Children Norway (Emblen and Stephens, 2007). Subsequent more ambitious projects, such as the five-year World Bank–funded USD 28 million Early Childhood Education Project started in 2014 (Brinkman et al., 2022), came after the government had successfully expanded access. The UNICEF-funded Community Based School Readiness Programme, launched in 2013, only operated in 6 of the 148 districts and focused on quality improvements (teaching through play and using minority languages to ease introduction into Lao-medium education) (MacDonald, 2019), although several of the centres established were converted into public pre-primary schools, demonstrating government ownership (UNICEF Lao PDR, 2019). As of 2025, there are 3,389 early childhood education schools, of which 241 were supported by development partners, according to the ministry's management information system, mostly in hard-to-reach areas.

Geography, ethnicity and socioeconomic status have a large impact on the probability that a child attends early childhood education. These issues tend to be interconnected, as Lao-Tai, the majority ethnic group, lives in accessible lowland and wealthier areas and their language is the medium of instruction. The expansion in access to early childhood education has not reduced disparities among 3- and 4-year-olds but has somewhat reduced gaps among 5-year-olds.

In 2006, there was a 43 percentage point gap between urban and rural areas in the percentage of grade 1 students who had attended early childhood education the previous year; this gap was reduced to 31 points in 2017 and 26 points in 2023 (81% vs 55%). In 2006, there was a 61 percentage point gap in this indicator between children from the richest 20% and the poorest 20% of households; this gap was reduced to 51 points in 2017 and 34 points in 2023. Disparities between ethnic groups were somewhat lower (e.g. attendance was 65% for the majority Lao-Tai vs 51% for the Mon-Khmer minority) (**Figure 3**).

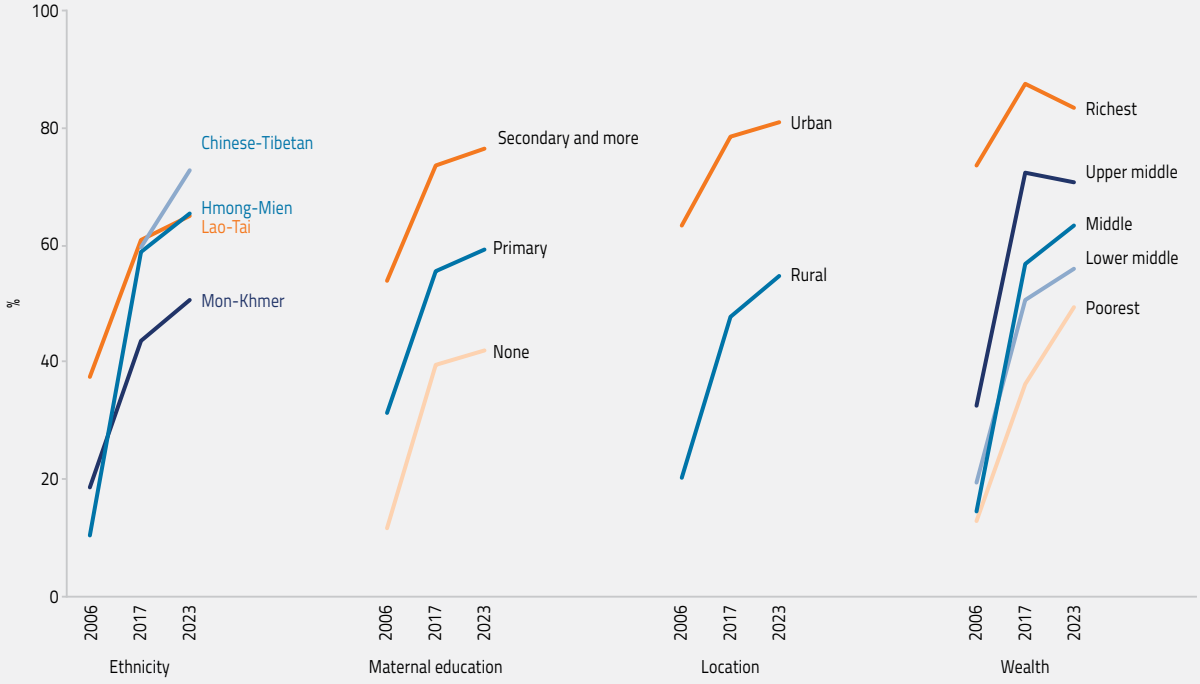
Around 2005, the Ministry of Education and Sports prioritized communities with a high percentage of minority ethnic groups and located in the poorest districts (Manivanh, 2005), an effort which continues to this day. School clusters have been established in the 40 most disadvantaged districts to prioritize support, including by directing international development partners to them (Lao People's Democratic Republic Ministry of Education and Sports, 2020a).

Government efforts to improve early childhood education have been aided by rapid improvements in living conditions that were taking place over this period, at least up until 2019. According to six rounds of the Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey, the poverty headcount rate has fallen from 46% in 1992/93 to 18.6% in 2018/19, or by 60%, at an almost steady rate of 1.05 percentage points per year (World Bank, 2020).

FIGURE 3:

Expanding access to pre-primary education led to a small decline in inequality

Percentage of children attending the first grade of primary school who attended an early childhood education programme during the previous school year, by ethnicity, maternal education, location and wealth, Lao People's Democratic Republic, 2006, 2017 and 2023



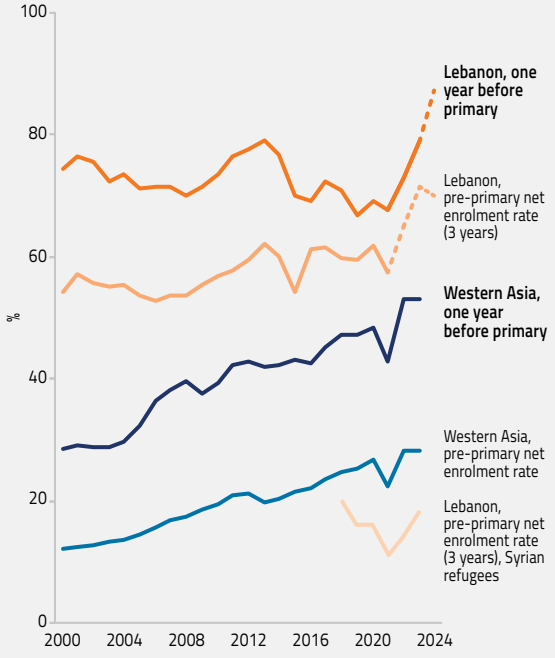
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Source: Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey findings reports.

Lebanon: FRAYING RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF EXTREME ADVERSITY

Lebanon historically had a higher level of education development than other countries in the region, including at the pre-primary education level. In 2000, 74% of 5-year-olds and 54% of 3- to 5-year-olds were in education, more than 40 percentage points above the sub-regional average in Western Asia. Pre-primary education in Lebanon is a three-year cycle (Kindergarten 1 to 3), which means that pre-primary education enrolment rates are even higher in Lebanon than the rest of Western Asia where most systems follow a two-year cycle. Although the government pledged in 2016 to enrol all children aged 3 to 5 in early childhood education (Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2016b), there is still no legal framework to make pre-primary education compulsory.

FIGURE 1:
Early childhood education participation stalled in Lebanon in the 2000s and 2010s
Adjusted net enrolment rate one year before primary and pre-primary net enrolment rate, Lebanon and Western Asia, 2000–24



Note: The enrolment rate series for Lebanon are dotted after 2021 because of concerns about the population estimates.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Lebanon_fig1
Source: UIS database and Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.

However, the next two decades from 2000 were marked by stagnation. By 2008, the enrolment rate of 5-year-olds in Lebanon had fallen to 70% before increasing to 79% by 2013 and then declining again to 68% by 2020, linked to the Syrian refugee crisis. During this period, the enrolment rate of 5-year-olds in Western Asia increased by almost 20 percentage points. A similar pattern is observed in the net enrolment rate of 3- to 5-year-olds in Lebanon, where progress ground to a halt in the 2000s and 2010s, while there was a modest increase in Western Asia (**Figure 1**).

The apparent sharp increase in enrolment rates after 2020, a period marked by a severe financial crisis, the COVID-19 emergency, the Beirut port explosion and the latest conflict with Israel, does not reflect an increase in enrolment. According to government data, such enrolment remained constant at the Kindergarten 3 level and declined slightly in Kindergarten 2 and, more significantly, in Kindergarten 1 (by 22% between 2020 and 2024) (**Figure 2**). The decline in Kindergarten 1 enrolment is a more accurate reflection of the severe crisis for Lebanese households in recent years, with the poverty rate increasing by over three times from 12% in 2012 to 44% in 2022 (World Bank, 2024). The need to satisfy basic needs has prevented many families from sending their children to attend preschool (Rafik Hariri University and University of East London, 2022).

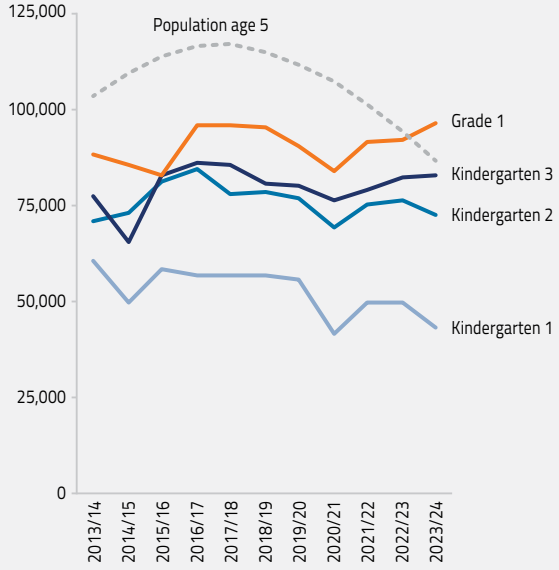
The increase in the official enrolment rate estimates was probably spurious and related to UN Population Division assumptions, which had been anticipating the return of Syrian refugees though likely at a pace faster than happened in practice. In the absence of a national population census since 1932, estimates of the school-age population are difficult to make, especially considering the unprecedented refugee inflows.

Perhaps a more reliable measure of the percentage of 5-year-olds that have attended at least one year of pre-primary education is the ratio of Kindergarten 3 students relative to grade 1 students, assuming that entry into primary education is universal, at least for Lebanese citizens. Based on such a calculation, 87% of grade 1 students have been in Kindergarten 3 the previous year, a ratio that has remained constant for the past 10 years (**Figure 2**). This assumption may underestimate the Kindergarten 3 attendance rate of Lebanese citizens if non-Lebanese citizens are more likely to attend grade 1 of primary school than to attend preschool. This interpretation may be consistent with household survey evidence from

2009 before the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis, which had shown that 94% had attended kindergarten before entering grade 1 of primary school (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics and UNICEF, 2009).

Communal divisions and political instability, which culminated in the prolonged civil war (1975–90), characterize Lebanese politics and society, which is divided along religious lines with 18 officially recognized sects. While the lack of a population census is a prominent consequence of the mistrust generated by these divisions, another one is a highly fragmented education system, including at the early childhood level, where public schools are a minority. Many communities prefer educating their children separately when they can afford it.

FIGURE 2:
About one in seven children do not attend even one year of pre-primary school
Number of children enrolled in pre-primary education by grade and in the first grade of primary education, Lebanon, 2013/14 to 2023/24

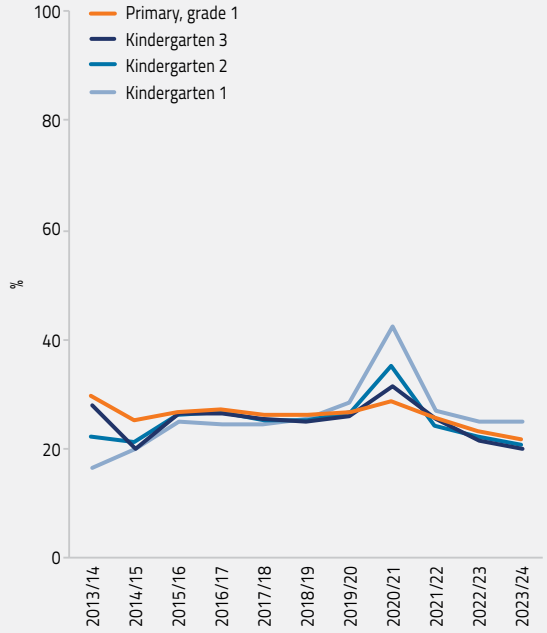


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Lebanon_fig2
Sources: Center for Educational Research and Development statistical bulletins (enrolment) and United Nations Population Division (population).

Only about one in five children attend a public preschool and the first grade of primary in a public school, a share that started falling after 2020. For instance, the share of public preschools in Kindergarten 3 enrolment fell from 25% in 2021/22 to 20% in 2023/24 after it had hit a high of 31% during the financial crisis and COVID-19 emergency that raised the cost of living (**Figure 3**). Currently, there are almost 2,000 institutions offering pre-primary education of which 795, or 40%, are public. Of those, just 45 are dedicated public early childhood education centres, the rest being within existing public primary schools (Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2020).

Moreover, responsibility for early childhood education has been divided among various ministries, resulting in unclear oversight and inconsistent adherence to legislation (Abdulrazzak et al., 2025; Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2020). The lack of unified regulatory standards and uneven teacher training practices means quality varies significantly across settings.

FIGURE 3:
Only about one in five children attend preschool and the first grade of primary
Share of enrolment in public schools, by grade, Lebanon, 2013/14 to 2023/24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Lebanon_fig3
Source: Center for Educational Research and Development statistical bulletins.

Early childhood education has featured in Lebanon's Education Sector Development Plan (General Education): 2010–2015 and Five-year General Education Plan 2021–2025 (Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2010, 2020). However, the prevalence of private education provision and high levels of out-of-pocket household expenditure mean that government spending on education is one of the lowest in the world: less than 2% of GDP in 2020 (Abdul-Hamid and Yassine, 2020; Centre for Lebanese Studies, 2023; World Bank, 2021). Conversely, it has been estimated that households accounted for 47% of total education spending between 2011 and 2022, one of the largest shares in the world. During this period, international support for education amounted to USD 4.7 billion or 11% of total education spending, by far the largest share in the world for a middle-income country (Centre for Lebanese Studies, 2023).

Following the financial crisis, which turned Lebanon from an upper- to a lower-middle-income economy, the government struggled to meet payroll obligations, causing repeated strikes for the past six school years (Save the Children, 2024). It has tried to address the issues through the creation of the Transition Resilience Education Fund in 2022, which aims to ensure timely disbursements to 12,500 teachers and all 1,237 public schools, while improving governance, transparency and efficiency through a collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and multiple donors, implemented by UNICEF (UNICEF, 2025).

State capacity to deliver pre-primary education to all children in its territory was severely tested during the Syrian refugee crisis. Lebanon has the highest number of refugees per capita and per square kilometre in the world. An estimated population of 5 million people in 2011 was receiving 1.17 million refugees by 2014 at the peak of the crisis (or 19% of the population), of which 818,000 were still estimated to be in the country in 2024 (International Rescue Committee, 2023; UNICEF, 2023).

To meet demand for pre-primary education, the government encouraged the enrolment of refugees in public schools. According to the 2018/19 Living Conditions Survey, 62% of enrolled refugees were in public schools compared to 31% of Lebanese citizens (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics, 2020). The Ministry introduced one-year afternoon pre-primary classes for refugee children aged 5 and 6, along with community programmes for children aged 3 to 6 run by non-governmental organizations under the Reaching All Children with Education policy (Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2014, 2016a).

Nevertheless, most refugee children have remained outside formal pre-primary education according to the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, with only 18% of 3- to 5-year-olds attending in 2023 (UNHCR et al., 2024) (**Figure 1**). Just 6% of those living in dedicated refugee settlements were attending pre-primary education according to the 2023 Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey. By contrast, 45% of Palestinian refugees living in camps were in pre-primary education (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics and UNICEF, 2025).

Lebanon has gone through an extremely difficult set of challenges related to conflict, displacement and financial mismanagement on top of a fractured social environment and a weak state. Its people have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of these adversities but there are signs that the ability of vulnerable households to cope may be taking its toll on education enrolment, with clear signs in the case of early childhood education.

Lithuania: EXPANDING PARTICIPATION OF YOUNGER CHILDREN

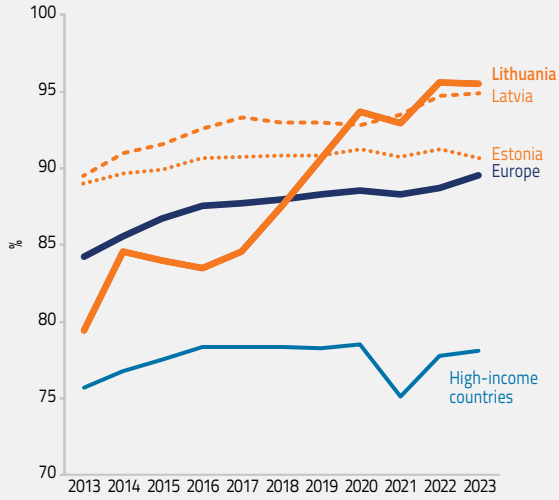
In Lithuania, like many of its European peers, participation of children one year before the official primary entry age has been nearly universal for the past two decades. Yet its considerable progress in increasing the participation of younger children is worth noting. Between 2013 and 2023, enrolment of children aged 3 to 5 increased from 79% to 96% (**Figure 1**), with slight variations depending on the source of the data and the age group. This represents one of the fastest increases compared to other countries with a similar baseline value. Children of this age group are enrolled for 39 hours per week on average, one of the highest amounts in Europe (Eurostat, 2025).

Early childhood care and education in Lithuania is divided in two levels. The first is preschool education (Ikimokyklinis ugdymas) for children from birth to about age 6 (of which most are aged 2 to 5). The second is a compulsory year of pre-primary education (Priešmokyklinis ugdymas) for 6-year-olds, which is designed to prepare children for entry into primary education at age 7 (Lithuania Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2023b). In terms of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) for cross-country comparisons, enrolment of children under 3 is classified as ISCED 01 and enrolment for children 3 and above is classified as ISCED 02, regardless of the programme attended (Lithuania Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2023b).

The considerable increase in participation of younger children has seen the enrolment of children under 3 in Lithuania increase by an average annual growth rate of 1.6 percentage points per year, from 21% to 35%, between 2013 and 2022. The growth has been even steeper among 2-year-olds with enrolment increasing from 55% to 83% during the period, an average of 3.1 percentage points per year, the second highest among 38 upper-middle- and high-income countries with data available by single year of age.

Early childhood education legislation has evolved significantly since Lithuania regained independence in 1991. The first Law on Education initially encouraged home education of children under 6, with the state providing compensatory benefits to support families (Lithuania Government, 1991). A major shift occurred in 2003, when the law formally introduced preschool education for children aged 1 to 5, in addition to pre-primary education at age 6 (Lithuania Government, 2003). In 2011, preschool provision was expanded to cover children from birth (Lithuania Government, 2011). In 2016, Lithuania made pre-primary education at age 6 compulsory for all children (Lithuania Government, 2016).

FIGURE 1:
Enrolment of 3- to 5-year-olds has spiked over the last decade
Pre-primary education net enrolment rate, Lithuania and other Baltic countries, 2013–23

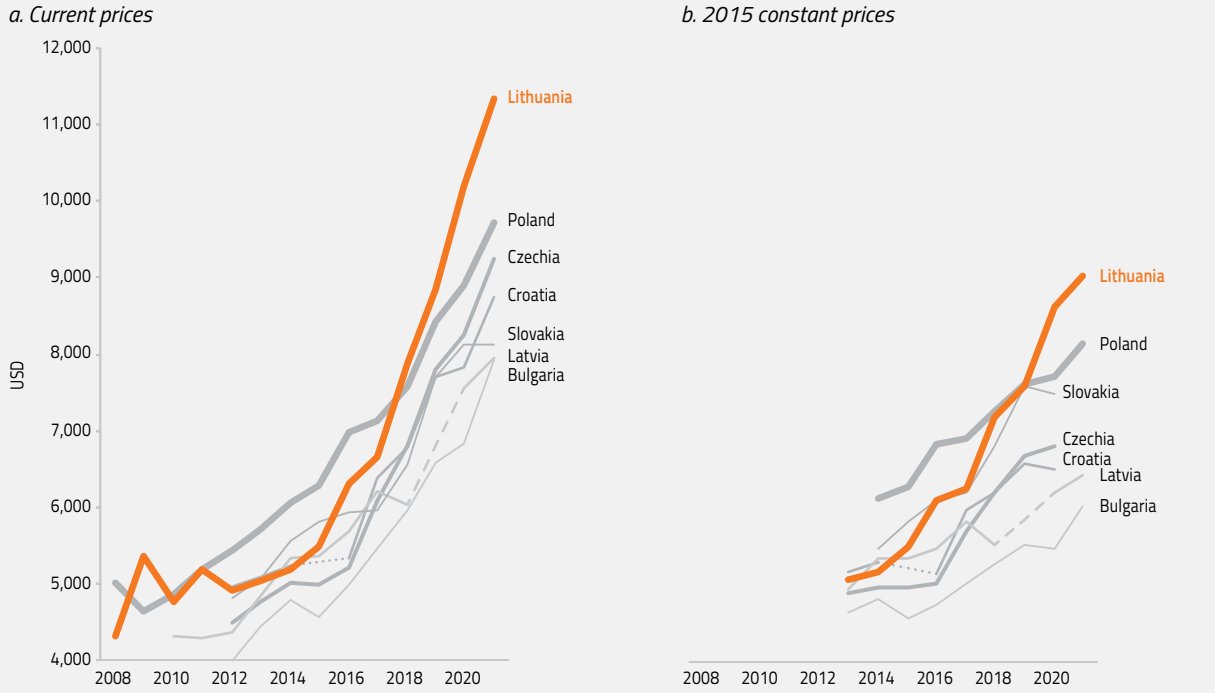


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Lithuania_fig1
Sources: UIS (Europe and high-income country averages) and OECD (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) database.

More recently, Article 7 of the education law enacted in 2020 outlines the gradual implementation of guaranteed preschool education: from the age of 4 by 2023, from the age of 3 by 2024 and from the age of 2 by 2025. This means that if parents choose to enrol their children in preschool institutions, national and local governments are required to provide the necessary places (Lithuania Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2024a).

The prioritization and expansion of early childhood education in policy documents has been accompanied by increased funding. Spending on early childhood education in Lithuania grew from 0.74% of GDP in 2013 to 1.17% in 2021, rising above the OECD average. This has also translated into a spike in spending per student, outpacing all other Central and Eastern European countries that started off at a similar level (**Figure 2**). Between 2015 and 2020, annual spending per child in pre-primary education increased by an average of 9.4% in Lithuania, by far the highest of all OECD countries. This is despite the fact that the number of children of that age group increased, a contrasting trend to most other OECD countries (OECD, 2023).

FIGURE 2:
Spending per student in early childhood education grew rapidly in Lithuania
Spending per student in early childhood education in US dollars converted for purchasing power parity, current and constant prices, Lithuania and selected Eastern European countries, 2008–21



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Lithuania_fig2
Source: UIS database.

The allocation of these funds has focused on increasing access. Since 2011, Lithuania uses a per-child funding model, which means that it allocates funds based on the number and size of groups, with special provisions. For example, children with special needs count as double, while funding is increased by 6.25% for students taught in a national minority language (Eurydice, 2024a). The government funds 20 hours a week of preschool and pre-primary education for every child, regardless of the institution attended. If education is provided for longer hours, the owner of the school (state, municipality or non-state provider) finances the remaining part. Moreover, starting in 2020, the government has been providing free lunch to all children attending pre-primary education, regardless of income (Lithuania Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2024b).

The per-child funding model has helped diversify the supply of provision through non-state actors. The number of non-state preschools increased from 4 in 2011 to 179 in 2023 (Eurydice, 2024b). Although still small, the share of 3- to 6-year-olds enrolled in non-state institutions has grown from 2% in 2013 to 7% in 2022. The government has also sought to diversify the supply by relaxing Soviet-era 'hygiene norms', allowing provision in a broader range of settings, including private homes, multistorey dwellings and blended facilities offering early childhood care and education and other services, known as multifunctional centres (Aidukienė, 2014; OECD, 2017).

Lithuania has made substantial reforms towards inclusive education for children with special needs since its independence. In 1993, the Act of Special Educational Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Educational Institutions established that students with special needs could be educated in mainstream institutions, giving parents the right to choose. The National Education Strategy 2013–2022 stressed the goal to include learners with special needs in mainstream education to the maximum extent possible, which was reaffirmed in the Agreement on National Education Policy 2021–2030. From the 2024/25 school year, inclusion is mandatory and every child must be given the opportunity to study at their nearest educational institution. To implement this change, the government is investing EUR 30 million in school

infrastructure upgrades, staff training and support service expansion (EASNIE, 2023).

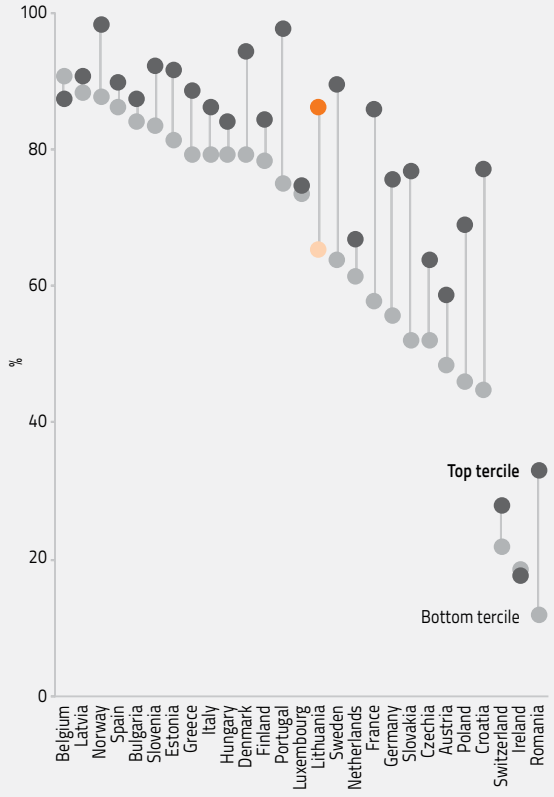
Challenges remain, including a lack of fully adapted facilities, insufficient specialists and low public support. According to a 2022 survey, only 43% of adults supported inclusive classrooms (EASNIE, 2023). Still, participation data reflect growing inclusion. In 2022, Lithuania had the highest rate of identification of children with special needs of all European countries and subnational entities with available data, reaching over 20%. Of those, nearly all were enrolled in mainstream preschools (EASNIE, 2024). For students with disabilities in pre-primary to secondary education, 50% were in mainstream general classes and 14% in special classes within general schools (EASNIE, 2023).

The government has also made efforts to increase the participation of children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. It aims to alleviate financial burden by providing free meals and assistance for the purchase of school supplies for pupils whose family income is below a specified threshold (Eurydice, 2024a; Lithuania Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2025). Moreover, municipalities often set lower fees or exemptions for disadvantaged families, families with three or more children, and others, based on local regulations (Eurydice, 2024a). By law, children who live in rural areas and small towns more than three kilometres from the nearest pre-primary education programme must be transported to and from the school (Lithuania Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2024c).

Since 2011, the government can mandate attendance for children under 6 considered at risk. Criteria for identifying children at risk include family issues, disability and financial difficulties (Lithuania Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Lithuania Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2012). In these cases, attendance and meals are free of charge for the family. The EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey monitors the participation of children who are living at risk of poverty, facing severe material and social deprivation, or living in households with very low work intensity. In Lithuania, they represent around 20% of children under 6 (Eurostat, 2025). Participation in early childhood education of children aged 3 to 6 considered at risk has increased from 53% in 2015 to 94% in 2024.

Nevertheless, significant disparities by income and location persist. In 2023, the participation rate of 3- to 5-year-olds in early childhood education for at least 25 hours per week was 20 percentage points higher among children from the top income tercile compared to those from the bottom, one of the widest gaps in Europe (**Figure 3**). Progress in narrowing the urban–rural divide has also been limited, despite the Agreement on National Education Policy (2021–2030) setting a target for 70% of rural children aged 2 to 5 to be enrolled in preschool by 2027 (Lithuania Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, 2023a). Between 2016 and 2024, enrolment in rural areas rose only modestly from 43% to 49%, still well below the national goal.

FIGURE 3:
Participation in early childhood education is much higher for richer children
Participation rates in regulated early childhood care and education for at least 25 hours per week, 3- to 5-year-olds, by income tercile, 2023



Note: The reference year for Germany is 2022 and for Switzerland is 2021.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Lithuania_fig3
Source: OECD (2025) based on EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey data.

Lithuania

The Ministry's story about a country's determination to improve early childhood participation in education

I have spent fourteen years working in early childhood care and education, first in a municipality, then for the past seven years at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in Lithuania. Before all of that, I was a teacher. My background shapes how I talk about our reforms: I always think about how they affect real children, families and local administrators.

The turning point came in 2012, when the Ministry decided that children from social risk families had to have the opportunity to attend early childhood education and care (ECEC) as a form of compulsory education. It was a quiet but important shift — an acknowledgment that some children needed the system to come to them, not the other way around. Municipalities were given the authority to place children in ECEC settings if their families were facing economic hardship, social difficulties, or other vulnerabilities. Then in 2016, pre-primary education became compulsory for the year before school. And in 2020, we changed the education law to introduce a place guarantee — a commitment that every child would have a spot in ECEC, rolled out step by step from age four down to age two, carefully aligned with our parental leave legislation. The idea was simple: when your time at home with your child ends, a place in ECEC begins.

Funding followed the ambition. The per-child basket more than doubled between 2020 and 2025, from around 1,700 to 3,400 euro per year. It covers teacher salaries, professional development, digital tools, and support for children with special needs.

One of the things I am most proud of is how we have used data. In Lithuania, we have a pupil's registry that follows each child from the moment they enter an ECEC institution all the way through secondary education. If a municipality is falling behind on enrolment, we know, and we work with them directly. For the most vulnerable children, the EU Child Guarantee has been transformative. By combining two separate registries, we identified around 4,800 children living in social risk conditions. The child guarantee project now reaches over 4,200 of them, covering transport, food, cultural and non-formal activities, support for children with special needs, and individual learning support.

What I have come to understand over fourteen years is that you can have the best parent in the world, but even the most devoted parent cannot replicate what a good ECEC setting offers. The stimulation of learning alongside other children, the qualified educators, the structured but playful environment — these can only be offered through education. The percentage of two-year-olds enrolled jumped from 72% in 2020 to nearly 87% in 2024. That is not a law doing that. That is trust.

Looking ahead, I see my role as helping Lithuania build on this progress while addressing persistent inequalities. Our current twinning project with Rwanda shows how lessons from Lithuania can be adapted in very different contexts. The direction is clear: guarantee access from an early age, support vulnerable families, and maintain quality as participation grows.

Sandra Valavičiūtė,
Advisor to the Minister of Education, Science and Sport

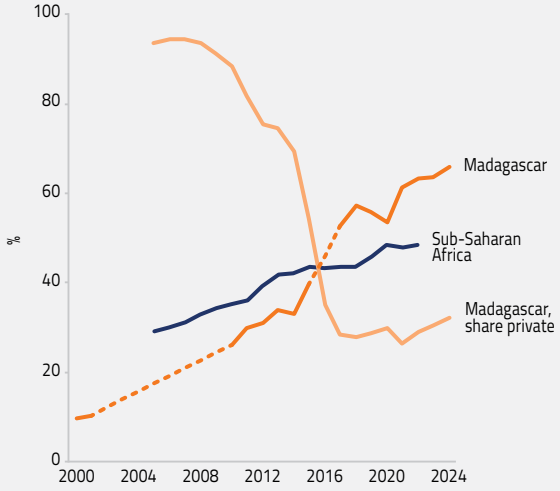
Madagascar: ONE OF THE POOREST COUNTRIES RAPIDLY EXPANDS PRESCHOOL ACCESS

In Madagascar, the adjusted net enrolment rate one year before the official primary entry age of 6 rose from 10% in 2000 to 66% in 2024, with the most rapid growth achieved between 2014 and 2018, when it increased from 33% to 57%. During this period, it exceeded the sub-Saharan African average (**Figure 1**). Data from two Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) rounds that span this period show that the adjusted net attendance rate increased from 30% in 2009 to 66% in 2021, closely matching the evidence from administrative data.

In 2004, an important first step for the development of the sector was Law No. 2004-004, which integrated pre-primary education into the national education system (Madagascar Government, 2004), helping initiate efforts to expand access. In 2007, plans were introduced to establish pre-primary centres in public schools and communities, aiming to boost enrolment. Decree No. 2008-532, Articles 7 and 12, prioritized early childhood education for children in rural areas, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those living with disabilities (Madagascar Government, 2008). In 2009, the responsibility for pre-primary education, which was until then divided between the Ministry of Population and the Ministry of National Education (Madagascar Ministry of Secondary and Basic Education, 1999), shifted entirely to the Ministry of National Education to improve coordination and resource allocation (Rakotonandrasana, 2020). In 2012, a pre-primary education curriculum was developed with UNICEF support (Madagascar Ministry of National Education, 2012).

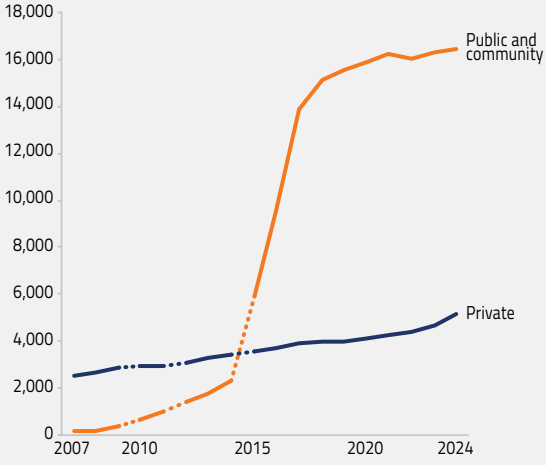
The 2013–2015 Interim Education Plan placed additional emphasis on community-based centres in rural areas to lower costs for families. Indeed, up until the 2013/14 school year there were more private than public and community school facilities offering pre-primary education. But between the 2013/14 and 2016/17 school years, the number of public and community schools with a pre-primary class attached increased sixfold from 2,300 to 13,900. By the 2023/24 school year, there were 16,440 public and community schools (of which 8% were in urban areas) and 5,140 private schools (of which 8% were in urban areas) offering pre-primary education (**Figure 2**) (Madagascar Ministry of National Education, 2024).

FIGURE 1:
Enrolment of 5-year-olds sharply increased in Madagascar in the mid-2010s
Adjusted net enrolment rate, one year before the official primary entry age, Madagascar and sub-Saharan Africa, and share of pre-primary enrolment in private institutions, Madagascar 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Madagascar_fig1
Sources: UIS database (enrolment rate) and Madagascar Ministry of National Education statistical yearbooks (share of enrolment in private institutions).

FIGURE 2:
Within three years, the number of public schools offering pre-primary education increased sixfold in Madagascar
Number of schools offering pre-primary education, by sector, Madagascar, 2007–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Madagascar_fig2
Source: Madagascar Ministry of National Education statistical yearbooks.

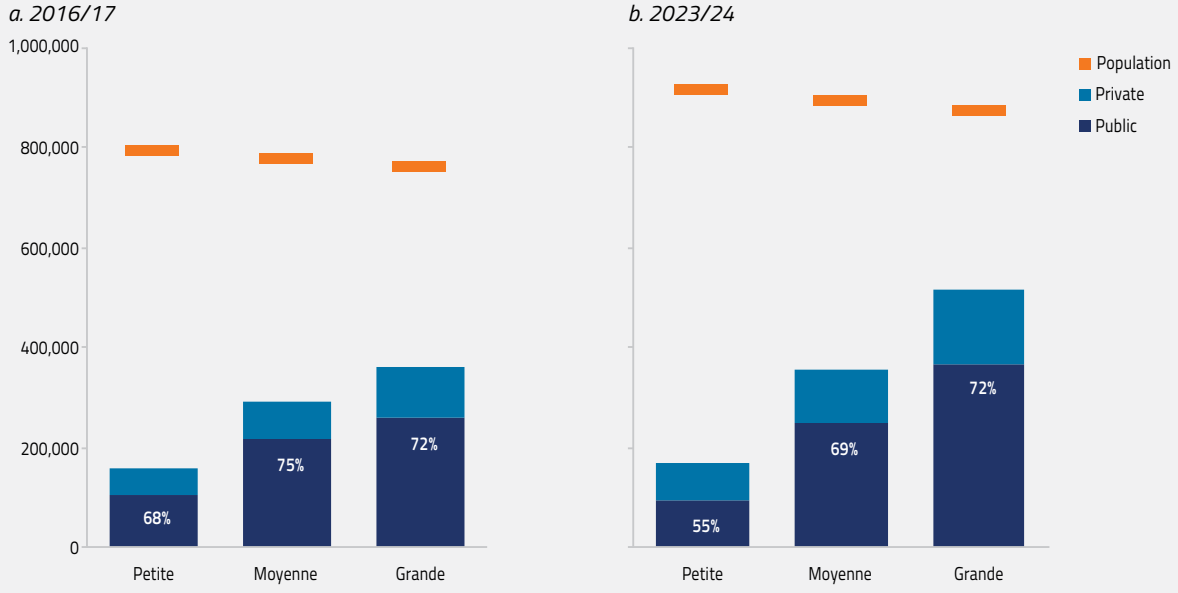
Accordingly, the share of pre-primary enrolment in public (and community) education institutions increased rapidly from 6% in 2006/07 and 25% in 2012/13 to 72% by 2016/17, a level which it has more or less maintained since then (**Figure 1**). In 2023/24, public pre-primary institutions accounted for 68% of students and 70% of educators. However, it should be noted that none of these educators in public pre-primary institutions is a civil servant: 17% are on public sector service contracts, 8% are in subsidized community schools and most of the others in community schools supported by parents' associations (or FRAM) (Safin, 2024) that are not subsidized (Eklou et. al, 2025).

There have been small changes in enrolment patterns since the peak of the expansion of public provision in 2016/17. Pre-primary education covers three levels or sections: *petite* (small, for 3-year-olds), *moyenne* (middle, for 4-year-olds) and *grande* (big, for 5-year-olds) sections, of which *grande* accounts for almost half of total enrolment. Between 2016/17 and 2023/24, the share of total enrolment in public and community institutions has somewhat decreased, from 68% to 55% in the *petite* section and from 75% to 68% in the *moyenne* section, while it has remained constant at 72% in the *grande* section. In brief, administrative data suggest that about 7 in 10 children attend a public institution, although the 2021–2022 Permanent Household Survey found that only 53% of children were in public institutions (Madagascar Institute of Statistics, 2024), suggesting that administrative sources may be underestimating attendance in private institutions and, therefore, also total attendance levels. Administrative sources say that the percentage of 5-year-olds enrolled in the *grande* section increased from 47% to 59% between 2016/17 and 2023/24. In 2022, Law No. 2022-018 mandated one year of pre-primary education for all 5-year-olds (Madagascar Government, 2022) (**Figure 3**).

FIGURE 3:

About 6 in 10 children aged 5 attend preschool in Madagascar

Number of pre-primary school single-age children and number of children enrolled in pre-primary education, by level and sector, Madagascar



Notes: Petite (small) section is the level of pre-primary education corresponding to children aged 3; moyenne (medium) to children aged 4; and grande (big) to children aged 5. The label in the bars is the percentage of total enrolment in the respective level of education that is accounted for by public (and community) institutions.

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Madagascar_fig3

Sources: Ministry of National Education statistical yearbooks (enrolment) and World Population Prospects 2024 (population).

Studies prior to the expansion had shown that families recognized the importance of pre-primary education but faced economic, cultural and personal barriers. A 2010 study found that while many parents supported early organized learning, some preferred traditional approaches or were simply financially constrained, even if they acknowledged the benefits of early childhood education, such as better school retention and performance (Mingat and Seurat, 2010). A 2012 study concluded that parents viewed early childhood education as key to escaping poverty but struggled with costs and sought better integration of local traditions into programmes (Loomis and Akkari, 2012).

Data from the two above-mentioned DHS rounds show that during the massive expansion of the system, attendance rose less for children from the poorest fifth of households (from 20% to 39%) than for children from the wealthiest fifth (from 56% to 96%) between 2009 and 2021. Likewise, attendance rose less in rural areas (from 29% to 63%) than in urban areas (from 44% to 90%). However, in both cases the gains for the disadvantaged population were very large and the parity index, which is the SDG global indicator 4.5.1 on equity, improved slightly from 0.37 to 0.41 in the case of wealth (ratio of attendance rates between the poorest and the richest) and from 0.65 to 0.70 in the case of location (ratio of attendance rates between rural and urban areas).

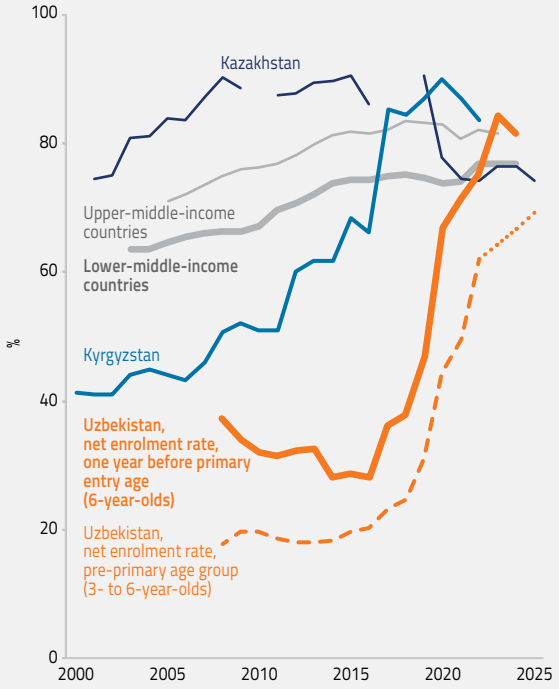
As 4 in 10 children aged 5 are still not attending preschool, the issue of making pre-primary education more affordable and more accessible remains critical. According to the 2021–2022 Permanent Household Survey, only about 24% of pre-primary students paid no enrolment or tuition fees. Families spent on average MGA 108,000 per year (USD 27) on costs such as meals, transport, uniforms and supplies. The main causes of non-attendance among 5-year-olds were distance (11%), financial (27%) and attitudinal: 48% considered their child to be 'too young'.

Poverty levels in Madagascar are among the highest in the world, with 75% of the population falling below the national poverty line in 2021 (World Bank, 2025). In 2018, 52% of children aged 2 to 4 were considered stunted, or too short for their age (UNICEF, 2018). One quarter of children have been estimated to live in extreme multidimensional poverty (Silva-Leander, 2020). Income per capita since 1960 is estimated to have fallen by almost one half, making Madagascar the country to have suffered the worst economic decline without having experienced a civil war (The Economist, 2025). In this context, the rapid expansion of pre-primary education in the mid-2010s and the continuing growth of the sector, largely through public institutions, is a considerable achievement.

Uzbekistan: COMPLETING THE TRANSITION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Over the past decade, Uzbekistan has increased preschool enrolment and modernized its institutions. The participation rate one year before primary education increased from just 28% in 2016 to 84% in 2024, not only exceeding its own lower-middle-income group average (77%) but also the upper-middle-income group average (82%), while catching up with neighbouring Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Extended over the entire preschool age group (3 to 6 years), the net enrolment rate increased from 20% in 2016 to 69% in 2025 (**Figure 1**).

FIGURE 1:
In Uzbekistan, preschool enrolment tripled in just seven years
Adjusted net enrolment rate, one year before the official primary entry age, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, 2000–25



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Uzbekistan_fig1
Source: UIS database.

After independence in 1991, the Soviet-era kindergarten system declined, leading to an estimated decline in enrolment from over 70% to less than 40%. It is estimated that the number of kindergartens fell by 45% between 1999 and 2019 (Uzbekistan Presidency, 2019b). Moreover, teachers were not being retrained and insufficient government funding had affected both access and quality, particularly in rural areas (Uzbekistan Government, 2012). In 2012, only 23% of children aged 3 to 6 attended preschool (Abdurazzakova et al., 2025) and there were modest plans to raise this share to 32% by 2016/17 (Uzbekistan Government, 2012).

But in late 2016, a Presidential Decree ("Measures Aimed at Further Improvement of the Pre-School Education System in 2017–2021") called for further improvements, including the introduction of half-day preschool groups for 5- to 6-year-olds and new preschools in rural areas. In 2017, 11 preschool policies were introduced, one of which notably established the Ministry of Preschool Education to centralize management (Uzbekistan Government, 2019). The 2019 Law on Preschool Education guaranteed each child one year of preschool before school entry. Regulations set standards for facilities, teacher training and budgets, assigning clear roles to central and regional authorities for enhancing access and quality (Uzbekistan Parliament, 2019).

In 2018, the government piloted free one-year school preparatory groups in select regions, enrolling over 11,000 children. By 2020, these groups were fully rolled out, with the objective to become the main vehicle for universalizing early childhood education (Uzbekistan Cabinet of Ministers, 2020, 2024). Under the 2022–2026 Development Strategy of the New Uzbekistan, which focuses on creating an equitable, inclusive and high-quality education system, Goal 38 seeks to increase pre-primary education coverage of 3- to 6-year-olds from 67% to at least 80%, with preschool access for 6-year-olds reaching 90% in 2022/23 and 100% by 2024/25 (Uzbekistan Presidency, 2023). In February 2026, a ministerial decision made one year of preschool compulsory (Uzbekistan Government, 2026).

A key part of efforts to increase preschool enrolment has been the mobilization of private entrepreneurship. In 2018, Resolution 3651 introduced the concept of public–private partnerships (Uzbekistan Presidency, 2018).

The model offers incentives such as free land, buildings and subsidies to encourage private entities to set up preschools, particularly in urban areas (Uzbekistan Cabinet of Ministers, 2018a, 2022a). In addition, family-based non-state preschools cater for disadvantaged children (kunu.uz, 2021; Uzbekistan Cabinet of Ministers, 2018b). These centres offer reduced parental payments for at least three years (Uzbekistan Cabinet of Ministers, 2021).

From 2018 to 2022, UZS 4 trillion (USD 400 million) in subsidies were granted to non-governmental preschools through these partnerships (Uzbekistan Ministry of Preschool Education, 2022). The amount of subsidies varied by region, from 30% in the capital Tashkent to 40% in Nukus and other regional capitals, 50% in other regions and 75% in remote and marginalized areas (Uzbekistan Cabinet of Ministers, 2022a). In 2022, more than 1,600 agreements created 172,000 places, of which 118,000 were backed by preferential loans totalling UZS 2.1 trillion (USD 190 million), with entrepreneurs investing UZS 1.3 trillion (USD 103 million). The commercial loans are for a period of 15 years with a grace period of 3 years at an annual interest rate of 1%.

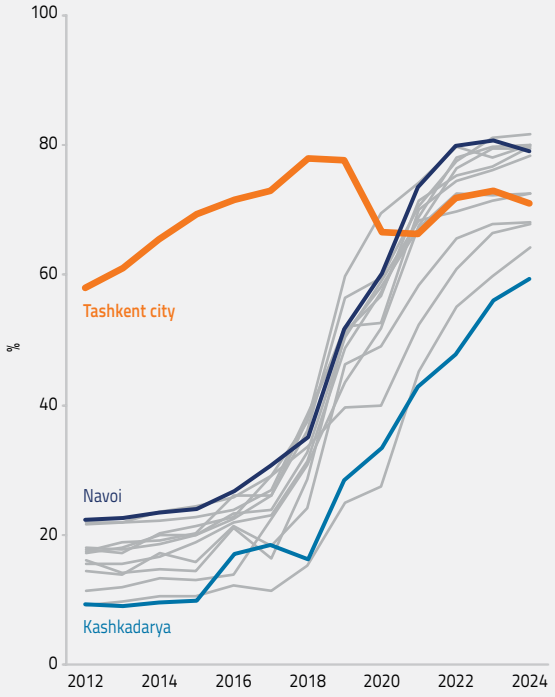
To improve transparency in the allocation of subsidies, the Non-State Preschool Educational Organization Management Information System was introduced. In 2022, Presidential Resolution 128 and Cabinet of Ministers Resolutions 322 and 426 established an automated system to calculate subsidies and compensations from State Budget funds in all non-state preschools. The system utilizes biometric identification technology to electronically record the arrival and departure of employees as well as student attendance (Uzbekistan Ministry of Preschool Education, 2022). Automation in the calculation of subsidies, reporting, and tax and state withholdings reduced bureaucracy for individual entrepreneurs and removed the need to involve accountants. An electronic list of non-state educational institutions has been created, which contains the location, capacity, bank details, student and staff identification, and other necessary databases of each educational institution, meaning that attendance can be monitored at any time through the system (Nodavlat Bog'cha, 2025; Uzbekistan Cabinet of Ministers, 2022b).

In 2024, there were 27,162 non-state providers, of which 847 were private, 24,927 family-based and 1,388 public–private partnerships (Gazeta, 2024). In addition to the non-state preschools, there were 6,780 state preschools. Jointly they serve 2.4 million children. Of the 6-year-old children enrolled, 69% were in full-time preparatory groups, 26% in free one-year preparatory groups for primary education, and the rest in short-term preparatory groups. According to the UIS database, the percentage of pre-primary students enrolled in private institutions increased from 2% in 2016 to 9% in 2022 and 41% in 2024. Public spending for public preschools has been considerable. In 2024, the budget allocated UZS 3 trillion (USD 270 million) to public preschools compared to UZS 10.4 trillion (USD 936 million) to schools and UZS 1.6 trillion (USD 144 million) to universities.

Uzbekistan has made efforts to reduce disparity by sex, region, location and income. The gap between Tashkent city and the other regions has been eliminated, although there remains a 20-point gap between the regions with the highest and lowest participation rates (**Figure 2**). In 2021/22, there was a gap of nine percentage points in the participation rates of 3- to 4-year-olds between urban and rural areas, and an even smaller gap of just four percentage points among 6-year-olds (UNICEF and Uzbekistan State Statistics Committee, 2022). This is due to efforts to expand alternative preschool options, including early childhood centres, Sunday schools, short-stay groups and community-based programmes at market places (makhalla guzar) (UNESCO, 2021). Mobile kindergartens, such as aqlvoy (wise) buses and playgroups also serve thousands in remote areas and underserved communities (Turp-Balazs, 2022; Economic Policy Research Institute and Center for Policy Research and Outreach, 2024).

High preschool costs limit access for low-income families. In 2021/22, the gap in participation between children from the richest and poorest quintiles was 28 percentage points among 3- to 4-year-olds and 20 percentage points among 6-year-olds (UNICEF and Uzbekistan State Statistics Committee, 2022). To address this challenge, public and private preschools reserve subsidized seats for households earning less than 1.5 times the minimum wage, verified by local committees. Public preschools set aside up to 15% of enrolment for these children, particularly prioritizing parents with major disabilities. Over 171,000 low-income children receive free placements, and 178,000 get sibling discounts of up to 30% (kunu.uz, 2023). In response to recommendations in the fifth Periodic Report of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to expand preschool access, a National Action Plan was adopted for 2024–2027 (Uzbekistan Parliament, 2024). Achieving the target of 80% preschool enrolment for 3- to 6-year-olds will require further support to family preschools and alternative delivery models in remote areas.

FIGURE 2:
In Uzbekistan, there is no more a gap in early childhood education participation rates between the capital city and the other regions
Net enrolment rate, pre-primary age group (3- to 6-year-olds), Uzbekistan, by region, 2012–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Uzbekistan_fig2
Source: National Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics.

Children with disabilities have gained greater access to specialized preschools and rehabilitation centres, known as Imkon (Opportunity) and Umid (Hope). These offer advanced therapy and support to 2- to 7-year-olds (UNICEF, 2024). Of about 6,000 students (52% with disability) in 576 groups, 91% attend free of cost. These inclusive facilities operate below capacity and could serve as a model for expanding early education and rehabilitation services.

Uzbekistan has been at the forefront of international developments in early childhood education, including by hosting the UNESCO World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in 2022. The National Partnership Compact for 2023–2026 musters international resources to support pre-primary school expansion and quality improvements (Uzbekistan Ministry of Preschool Education and GPE, 2023). Moreover, the country tries to innovate. Between 2026 and 2028, each region will establish a Yangi Avlod (New Generation) kindergarten with 120 places and an Innovative Child Development Centre. The new roles of head and mentor-educator will be added and staff will receive a monthly bonus of 20% of their standard pay (Uzbekistan Government, 2026).

Uzbekistan

The Ministry's story about introducing kindergarten buses to bring pre-school education to hard-to-reach areas

In the late 1990s, there were only nurseries that looked after children without educating them and with no curriculum. After we gained independence from the Soviet Union, the country was developing very fast, but in terms of preschool education, there was a significant decrease in enrolment rates. By 2016, only 27% of children had access to preschool and the others could not go at all.

After 2017, our new president started reforms beginning with early childhood education, dividing the ministry into two: a preschool ministry and a public education ministry. Coverage became the priority of the government, with the goal of giving all children access.

But it wasn't economically feasible to build traditional preschools in rural areas. We have villages in the mountains where you cannot build anything. There are only three, five, or ten children in a village. That's why we decided to develop alternative models to reach them, including kindergartens on wheels. The maintenance costs for these mobile kindergartens weren't as high in terms of funding. It was much easier to give access simultaneously to several villages because the buses work in shifts.

Right now we have more than 142 mobile buses working in two shifts. More than 11,000 children are currently covered across more than 640 locations that the buses travel to every day. All the villages have their own playgrounds where the buses can stop and let the children receive education both inside the bus and through outside activities.

The equipment inside the bus includes all the educational materials required: didactic materials, toys, and everything needed to educate children according to the curriculum. They have toilets, microwaves, and all the necessary equipment. They also have screens to provide children with online and video materials.

This project started in 2019, and in the beginning there was a pilot with several buses to test the results. The feedback was very positive. Children were satisfied to have the buses, which allowed them to receive preschool education completely free of charge. Rather than traveling far away to city centers to get education, the mobile groups come directly to their villages. Over six years, the government has steadily increased the number of buses.

Early childhood education is very important in the life of any person. For the first time in Uzbekistan's history, we recently participated in PISA research, which showed that children who had preschool education performed significantly better than children who didn't attend. We also conducted research with the World Bank, which demonstrated that children with preschool education had better results in mathematics and science.

Azimjon Abdulkhaev,
Head of the International Relations Department,
Ministry of Education



Policy analysis



Early childhood is a vital period for cognitive, social and physical growth (Karoly et al., 1998). For that reason, early childhood care and education of high quality are essential, especially for disadvantaged children (Heckman and Masterov, 2007), and can lead to lasting positive outcomes for individuals and society (Britto et al., 2017; Heckman, 2011). Longitudinal studies have shown that structured early learning improves cognitive, social and emotional skills, easing the transition to primary school (Degli Esposti and Cigala, 2025; Heckman and Karapakula, 2019). Meta-analyses also indicate substantial and persistent gains in these skills during pre-primary education (Holla et al., 2021). In the United States, where many high-quality studies have been carried out, early childhood education has been found to reduce special education placement and grade retention, and to increase primary and secondary completion (McCoy et al., 2017).

> Structured early learning improves cognitive, social and emotional skills, easing the transition to primary school

Despite these benefits, many countries still struggle to provide even one year of pre-primary education. This is partly because pre-primary education has not been an established part of many education systems. The idea of sending a child to a formal education structure often clashes with social perceptions — sometimes biased — that the best place to nurture a young child is the home. Even when governments are willing to expand preschools and parents are willing to sign up for them, the costs are considerable, including not only infrastructure costs but also the specialized human resources that are required. At the end of the day, pre-primary education needs to be of sufficient quality, otherwise its potential benefits do not materialize.

As the case studies have shown, several countries have managed to find solutions that mobilized public policy and private demand. Many of the success stories of expansion ultimately trace their roots back to political leaders who were convinced of the need to invest in pre-primary education, and early childhood development more generally. In Azerbaijan, political leadership was essential for the expansion of pre-primary enrolment (Mammadova, 2024). In Morocco, strong political leadership through the National Initiative for Human Development and sustained financial support have contributed to the growth of preschools in the past five years (Ettabaa, 2025). In the Punjab province of Pakistan, early childhood education shifted from informal to formal and, aided by the extension of the constitutional entitlement on the right to education to age 3 in 2014, 97% of public schools were offering early childhood education by 2019, serving 5.7 million children (Khan et al., 2017; Neuman and Powers, 2022). Within countries, political ideology has been a more important driver of change for gender-responsive policies, including concerning pre-primary education, than the gender of decision makers, as a study found in Spain (Carozzi and Gago, 2023).

This section integrates the lessons from the case studies with research findings on the factors that have led countries on different trajectories to build preschool systems. As this report maintains, deliberate policy action does not always explain progress. Social and economic conditions, especially labour market dynamics and expectations about the role of women, have forced many governments to respond to the pressing demand for early childhood care and education (**Box 3.1**).

Even so, this section focuses on the policies and programmes that governments have undertaken to encourage pre-primary education expansion. Three broad categories are distinguished. First, *institutional* measures, such as legislative and governance frameworks, have played a role, often symbolizing public interest in early childhood education. Second, among measures to strengthen *demand*, the most prominent are those linked to the easing of financial constraints, which are more essential in a sector that has relied more than other education levels on non-government provision. Finally, measures to expand *supply*, i.e. investment in infrastructure and the establishment of inclusive environments, are also covered. A literature review conducted for this report has supported the analysis (ACER, 2026).

BOX 3.1:

Women's demand for employment is one of the drivers of pre-primary expansion

The expansion of pre-primary education has been shaped not only by deliberate policy choices but also by broad socioeconomic transformations. In particular, increases in women's paid employment have increased demand for organized early childhood services, both as a strategy for securing children's early learning opportunities and as a means of reconciling work and caregiving, given the unequal gender distribution of the unpaid care burden. This relationship works in both directions: pre-primary education expansion has been both a response to and a condition for gender-related labour market change.

On the one hand, maternal employment boosts demand for early education, driving policy changes. In high-income countries, adult women's employment rates increased from 47% in 1995 to 54% in 2024. Such a shift put pressure on governments to expand provision, regulate private care and education markets more tightly, and introduce public subsidies to increase affordability and guarantee minimum quality standards (d'Addio and Mira d'Ercole, 2005). In the rest of the world, women's employment rates have in fact declined (in low-income countries from 64% to 55% and in upper-middle-income countries from 58% to 54%) or stagnated (in lower-middle-income countries at around 40%). Urbanization and employment formalization increase demand for early childhood services among mothers who want to work but the limited availability of full-day provision of early childhood care and education, high transport costs and weak regulatory oversight reduce the feasibility of combining employment and their children's preschool participation in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Harris et al., 2024; ILO, 2023; Talamas Marcos, 2023).

On the other hand, expanded enrolment enables more mothers to work. The early childcare policy histories in Europe show that labour market shifts, rather than pedagogical agendas alone, drove the initial expansion and formalization of early childhood provision (Kamerman, 2006). In the Nordic countries, the rise of dual-earner households and the political embrace of gender equality formed the backdrop for the introduction of universal or near-universal entitlement to early childhood education to support women's continuous participation in the labour market and reduce the gender-unbalanced burden of care (Ellingsæter and Gulbrandsen, 2007; Hernes, 1987).

In Quebec, Canada, low-cost universal childcare led to an estimated eight-percentage-point rise in maternal labour force participation (Baker et al., 2008). In Poland, the 2009 education reform lowered the primary school starting age to 6 and guaranteed preschool for 5-year-olds, freeing up more preschool places for younger children. A 10% rise in the availability of places led to a 4.2% increase in maternal employment, especially among highly educated mothers and families with 3-year-olds (Akgunduz et al., 2021). In Spain, rolling out public preschool for 3-year-olds raised mothers' employment probability by three to seven percentage points (Nollenberger and Rodríguez-Planas, 2015). In Argentina, the expansion of public preschools significantly increased women's likelihood of paid work (Berlinski and Galiani, 2007; Berlinski et al., 2011).

The availability of affordable, high-quality early childhood care and education services significantly influences individuals' and families' opportunities, especially women's, whose employment is shaped by the number and age of their children. Although the concept of employment varies between broad geographic regions with different labour market structures, there is still a positive correlation between female employment rates and pre-primary enrolment rates. In a sample of 80 countries, an increase in the female employment rate from 40% to 50% is associated with an increase in the pre-primary enrolment rate from 60% to 90%.

Globally, the female labour force participation rate is 52% but ranges from 82% for women living alone and without children, to 64% for women living with a partner and without children, and 49% for women living with a partner and having a child under 6. The employment rates of mothers decline, the lower the age of their children. In 2021, across many Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, the percentage of mothers who were employed increased from 61.5% when they had a child under 2, to 70.2% when they had a child between ages 3 and 5, and 76.3% when they had a child aged 6 to 14 (**Figure 3.7a**). In a sample of 36 mostly middle-income countries, the female labour force participation rate was, on average, 68% when they had no children, 63% when they had one child under 6, 53% when they had two children under 6, and 44% if they had three or more children under 6 (**Figure 3.7b**). These patterns of labour force attachment and employment depend on the increased share of care activities that a parent has to carry out upon or after childbirth. As women are typically the main carers, they have to choose between home and their career.

Employment effects depend critically on the quality, reliability and opening hours of provision. When pre-primary services consist of short daily sessions or where they follow school calendars, employment effects tend to be small because the time children spend in pre-primary is insufficient to support mothers' full-time work.

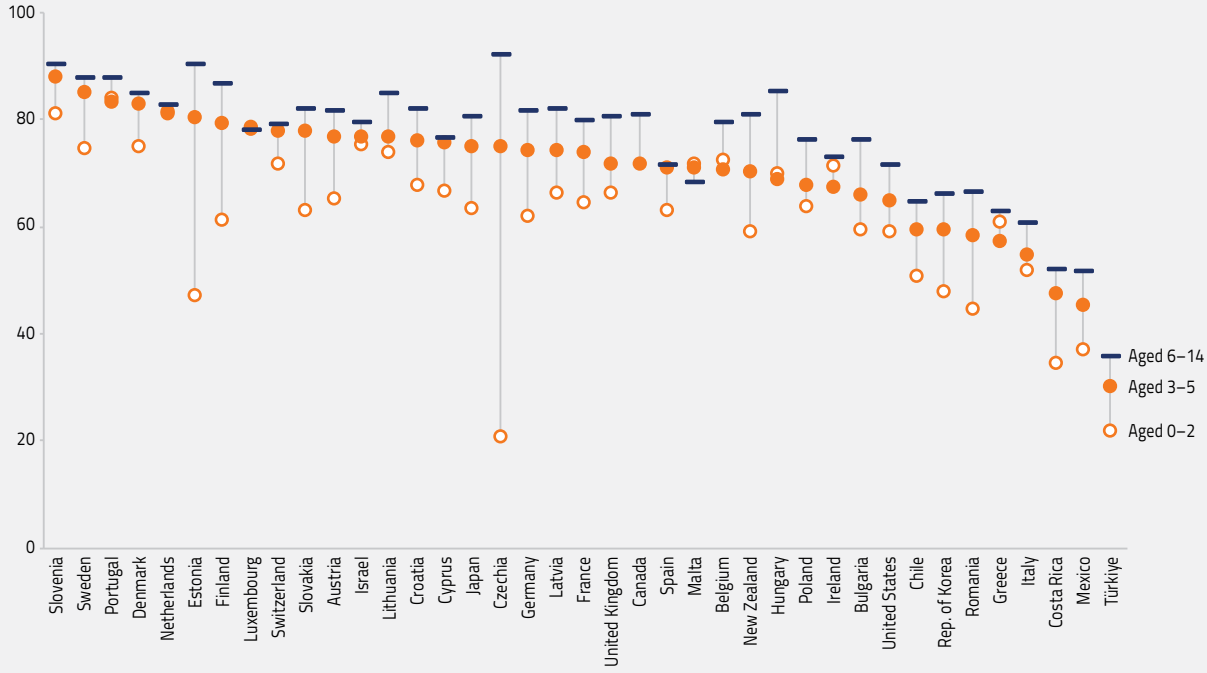
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BOX 3.1 CONTINUED:

FIGURE 3.7:

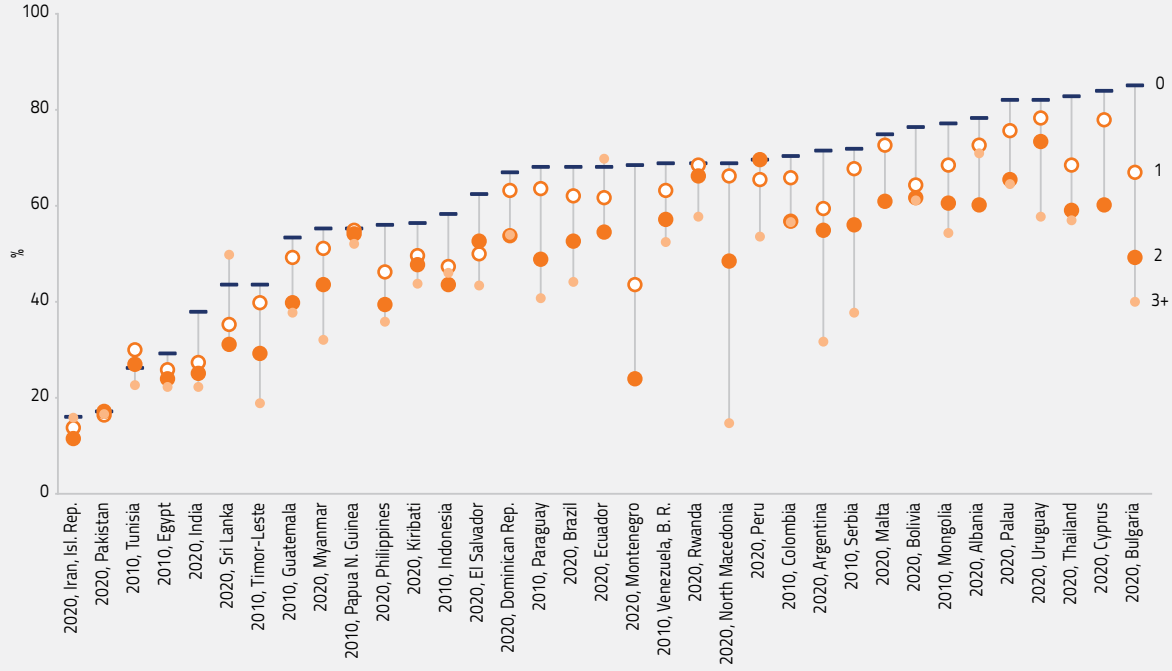
Women's labour force participation and employment are negatively correlated with the number and age of children

a. Maternal employment rate, by child's age, OECD countries, 2021 or latest year



Source: OECD Family Database.

b. Female labour force participation rate, by number of children under 6, selected countries, 2020 or 2010



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_7
Source: ILOstat.

SYSTEM-LEVEL POLICIES

Enrolment in pre-primary education is characterized by large inequality by wealth, location and ethnicity. Identifying policies that reduce such inequality and drive lasting, system-level change requires improved legislation, governance and funding.

LEGISLATION

Mandating free and compulsory pre-primary education shifts the idea of public provision from discretionary to universal, or in some cases, targeted entitlements. Eliminating fees quickly improves access by removing financial barriers for low-income families, while compulsory attendance increases accountability and encourages expanding educational supply.

Early education is recognized internationally as a fundamental right by the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with General Comment No. 7 in 2005 affirming access from birth and emphasizing quality provision by trained staff. In 2015, Sustainable Development Goal target 4.2 called for universal access to quality pre-primary education by 2030, while the 2022 Tashkent Declaration at the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education called on countries to provide at least one year of free, compulsory pre-primary education and dedicate at least 10% of education budgets to early childhood education. In 2024, the UN Human Rights Council began considering a Convention on the Rights of the Child protocol to make free pre-primary education a binding international right (United Nations, 2024). If adopted, this would establish the first binding international right to pre-primary education.

Among 182 countries with data in 1998 and 2023, the number of countries with at least one year of compulsory pre-primary education increased from 20 to 44 (**Figure 3.8a**). The average duration of compulsory pre-primary education tripled from 0.14 to 0.42 years. In total, 47 out of 195 countries mandated at least one year of compulsory pre-primary education in 2023, with regional differences. No country among the Arab States has mandatory pre-primary education. Most Pacific Island countries start education at age 3, but only 6 out of the 15 make pre-primary education mandatory: the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tokelau and Tonga (Vindrola et al., 2024). Preschool is compulsory at age 5 in all Latin American countries even if enrolment increased only where legislation was backed by public investment, notably in Brazil, Costa Rica and Guatemala (Arrabal, 2019).

In recent years, many upper-middle- and high-income countries have been making schooling compulsory at a lower starting age, including Bulgaria in 2023 (to the age of 4 years), Costa Rica in 2018 (to 4 years), Cyprus in 2024 (gradually over an 8-year period to 4 years), Greece in 2018 (to 4 years), Hungary in 2015 (to 3 years) and Romania in 2020 (initially to 5 years, then to 4 years by 2023 and to 3 years by 2030). In countries with high enrolment, lowering the compulsory school age can support the access of disadvantaged groups. Belgium added a year of pre-primary education to boost attendance among migrant children (OECD, 2026), while France made education compulsory from age 3 in 2019 to improve foundational learning and reduce inequalities, especially in priority-area schools (OECD, 2020b). Lithuania requires pre-school for children under 5 at risk because of social and economic reasons.

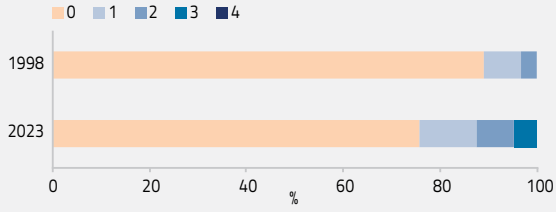
Among 119 countries with data in 1998 and 2023, the number of those with at least one year of free pre-primary education increased from 46 to 69, of which 6 increased to 2 years and 13 to 3 years (**Figure 3.8b**). The average duration of compulsory pre-primary education increased by half a year, from 0.85 to 1.34 years. Analysis in Latin America found that countries which guaranteed two or more years of free pre-primary education consistently achieved higher participation among low-income households than those offering only one year or none (Arrabal, 2019).

> “Among 119 countries with data in 1998 and 2023, the number of those with at least one year of free pre-primary education increased from 46 to 69”

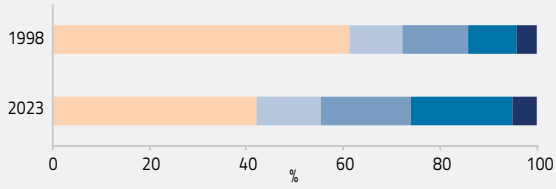
In total, 91 out of 195 countries (or 47%) guarantee at least one year of free pre-primary education, of which 42 guarantee at least three years, according to the UIS database. However, a global analysis for this report featured in the PEER website suggests that this might be an underestimate, as it found that public pre-primary education is tuition-free in 128 of 191 countries (or 67%), ranging from 48% in sub-Saharan Africa to 81% in Europe and Northern America.

FIGURE 3.8:
In the past 25 years, more countries have legislated for compulsory and free pre-primary education but the change has been slow

a. Years of compulsory education in legislation, 1998–2023



b. Years of free education in legislation, 1998–2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_8
Source: UIS database.

FIGURE 3.9:
Increasing the years of compulsory and free pre-primary education is associated with larger enrolment gains
Average pre-primary enrolment rate, by status of compulsory and free pre-primary education, 2003 and 2023



Note: There were 36 countries with no change, 15 countries that increased free education and 22 countries that increased compulsory education.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_9
Source: GEM Report team analysis of the UIS database.

Free and/or compulsory pre-primary education may shift preschool participation from private to public services instead of increasing total use (Bassok et al., 2012; Cascio and Whitmore Schazenback, 2013). But an analysis of 73 countries for this report found that countries on average witnessed a larger increase in the pre-primary net enrolment rate between 2003 and 2023 when they made pre-primary free (by 28%) or compulsory (by 30%) than when they did not (by 23%) (**Figure 3.9**).

Various countries have introduced free pre-primary education in Asia, including the Lao People's Democratic Republic for 5-year-olds since the 2015 Education Law; and Uzbekistan, where a presidential decree in 2016 introduced half-day preschool groups for 5- to 6-year-olds and new preschools in rural areas, while a 2019 law on preschool education guaranteed one year of compulsory preschool, leading to a net enrolment rate increase from under 20% in 2008 to 46% in 2022. Pacific Island countries that eliminated fees for at least one year also saw enrolment grow (Vindrola et al., 2024).

There are also various examples from sub-Saharan Africa. Madagascar has been providing one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education since 2022. In Rwanda, the government abolished fees for pre-primary government-aided schools in September 2022 (Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2022), at least partly in response to concerns that parents had been paying on average RWF 66,600 (USD 58) per year per child (Pascal et al., 2021). In 2023, Sierra Leone adopted legislation for 13 years of free education, including one year of pre-primary (Sierra Leone Parliament, 2023). South Africa amended its Basic Education Law in 2024 to mandate one year of pre-primary schooling (Act for Early Years, 2025; South Africa Presidency, 2024).

Eliminating fees in Bulgaria increased enrolment by 19% and daily attendance by 20%, benefiting Roma and low-income families (Huillery et al., 2017; World Bank, 2018). As of April 2022, all children in Bulgaria can attend nursery and kindergarten free of charge (Volen, 2023). In Ireland, the Access and Inclusion Model and Equal Start initiatives have broadened access, especially for children with disabilities and from disadvantaged backgrounds (OECD, 2025). In the US states of Georgia and Oklahoma, eliminating cost and eligibility barriers increased participation for children of mothers with only secondary education by nearly 20 percentage points. Although parents increased their working hours and spent less direct time with their children when the children began preschool, the quality of their interactions improved through shared activities such as reading and learning together (Cascio and Whitmore Schanzenbach, 2013).

Abolishing fees should help expand the public pre-primary education system and reduce the role of private institutions, but this is not always the case. Jordan, which introduced one year of free pre-primary education in 2016, reduced the share of private pre-primary education institutions from 100% in 2000 to 58% in 2024. Between the early 2000s and the early 2020s, the share also fell in the Bahamas (from 79% to 49%), Belize (from 100% to 77%) and Malta (from 38% to 28%), three countries that have been offering two years of free pre-primary. In Ethiopia, the large pre-primary enrolment expansion, from 16% in 2012 to 41% in 2024, which followed the 2010 early childhood policy, took place alongside a fall in the share of private provision from 100% in 2003 to 23% in 2020. But the size of private provision also fell in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt and Togo by about 20 percentage points or more, without relevant legislation.

Conversely, Chile, which introduced two years of free pre-primary education in 2009, saw the share of private institutions rise from 47% in 2002 to 64% in 2022. The share of private provision also increased between the early 2000s and the early 2020s in Kazakhstan (from 6% to 30%), Türkiye (from 3% to 18%) and the United Kingdom (from 6% to 59%), even though they had been offering at least two years of free pre-primary education.

GOVERNANCE

Early childhood education governance influences policy execution, funding, workforce training and quality control (Dougherty and Morabito, 2023). Countries differ in whether they organize early childhood care and education in an integrated way or not. The benefits of integrated governance extend beyond enrolment. When early childhood is part of the education system, transitions between pre-primary and early primary tend to be smoother, with curriculum and pedagogy becoming more aligned and children's learning gains more likely to be sustained through primary school reforms (Neuman and Powers, 2021). Fragmented or split governance often correlates with variable quality and inequitable access (Bertram and Pascal, 2016).

Many countries split systems, separating governance for services to younger children (under 3) and older children (3 and above). For example, among OECD countries, 24 use a split model and 16 an integrated model, with Germany and Japan combining features of both (OECD, 2025a). But a global review for this report, which features in the PEER website, shows that split governance also exists just for education services for children 3 and above. Of 186 countries, while 76% assign responsibility for early childhood education to the education ministry, 21% split it between the education and other ministries, and 3% assign it to another ministry.

> Of 186 countries, 76% assign responsibility for early childhood education to the education ministry

In Asia, there have been countries with a centralized approach, such as China and the Republic of Korea, as well as Singapore, although its Early Childhood Development Agency is under the Ministry of Family and Social Development. Mongolia coordinated three ministries in 2005 under the National Policy on Integrated Early Childhood Development (education, health and social welfare), allocating public funds to all kindergartens in 2008, which helped expand access (World Bank, 2017). Uzbekistan's Ministry of Preschool Education, established in 2017, streamlined oversight and enabled rapid participation growth (Uzbekistan Government, 2019). In Southern Asia, systems in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are fragmented. In India, early childhood education is delivered through a combination of anganwadi centres under the Ministry of Women and Child Development and emerging pre-primary classes under state education departments. Structural fragmentation reduces quality assurance capacity, constrains curriculum alignment and slows enrolment progress, especially among disadvantaged populations (Kaul et al., 2017).

In Western Asia, coordination of early childhood education services is receiving some policy focus, such as in Abu Dhabi's Early Childhood Authority in the United Arab Emirates. Israel established an Early Childhood Council led by the Minister of Education to coordinate services and address service gaps, with participation from multiple government sectors (OECD, 2021). Combined with extending compulsory and free preschool to 3- and 4-year-olds in disadvantaged areas, enrolment grew from 16% to 80% among 3-year-olds and from 23% to 90% among 4-year-olds (DeMalach and Schlosser, 2026). But integration remains limited overall. In Lebanon, responsibility for children under 5 rests with the health ministry and for those age 5 with the education ministry. More generally, responsibilities are divided between education authorities, municipalities and non-state providers (Abdulrazzak et al., 2025), leaving a major role for non-governmental organizations, especially for reaching marginalized communities (Al-Hroub et al., 2025).

With 13 out of 47 countries splitting early childhood education responsibility between ministries, sub-Saharan Africa has an above-average prevalence of fragmentation. In mainland Tanzania, the education budget is managed

jointly by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government, with the Ministry of Finance channeling most funds to the 184 local government authorities. The pre-primary education budget for 5- to 6-year-olds is a budget line in the primary education budget and is part of compulsory and free basic education. The Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children coordinates early childhood education for children under 5, with the Department of Social Welfare overseeing integrated early childhood development. Kenya also delegated early childhood education to counties following the 2010 Constitution, under a National Pre-Primary Education Policy and Standard Guidelines, which has some advantages but also created coordination gaps on issues such as curriculum and teachers (TheirWorld, 2022). Moreover, counties mostly spent their funding on infrastructure rather than teaching and learning improvements (Piper et al., 2018). In South Africa, two years of compulsory pre-primary education are the responsibility of the Department of Basic Education in a move towards integration.

In Latin America, Brazil's legal framework for intersectoral coordination of early childhood policies has improved efficiency and care for children aged 0 to 6, although data management and funding integration remain challenges (OECD, 2021). Colombia's De Cero a Siempre (From Zero to Forever) is also a holistic and integrated approach. A 2016 law coordinates family, community and institution-based support for children under 5 (Santos Calderón, 2018) and is believed to have helped enrolment increase from below 0.6 million in 2010 to 1.4 million in 2019 (OECD, 2021). The early childhood strategy Chile Crece Contigo (Chile Grows with You) is holistic, but the institutional framework of early childhood education is fragmented. While the main providers all try to target children from the 60% most disadvantaged families, different administrators and service agreements lead to arbitrary budget disparities in per capita funding (Bas Moore et al., 2024).

An important dimension of an integrated early childhood education system is consolidated data systems. Administrative data in fragmented systems often miss private and community-based early childhood education programmes, leading to undercounting compared to household surveys (King et al., 2020; Raikes et al., 2023).

PUBLIC FINANCING

Pre-primary education continues to receive low amounts of public funding, a consequence of the fact that many governments outsource a large part of service provision to non-state actors. Among 119 countries with at least one observation since 2020, there were 10 countries that spent at least 1% of their gross domestic product (GDP) on any one year: two in Northern Europe (Iceland and Sweden), three in Eastern Europe (Belarus, Bulgaria and the Republic of Moldova), three in Central and Eastern Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Uzbekistan), one in the Pacific (Tuvalu) and one in Latin America (Ecuador).

Analysis of the UIS database for 61 countries with observations in 2000–03, 2010–13 and 2020–23 shows that the median value of their average expenditure in each of these 4-year periods increased steadily from 0.29% to 0.37% and 0.43% of GDP (**Figure 3.10**). Another analysis of some 80 countries with data in 2018–20 has also shown that the amount of public spending bears no relation to overall enrolment. But considering that the share of enrolment in private institutions is high in many countries, if the focus is on public institutions only, then a clear positive association emerges between spending and enrolment. Doubling spending from 0.25% to 0.5% of GDP is associated with a tripling of the participation rate in public institutions from 20% to 60% on average (**Figure 3.11**) (UIS and GEM Report, 2023).

> "Doubling spending from 0.25% to 0.5% of GDP is associated with a tripling of the participation rate in public institutions from 20% to 60% on average"

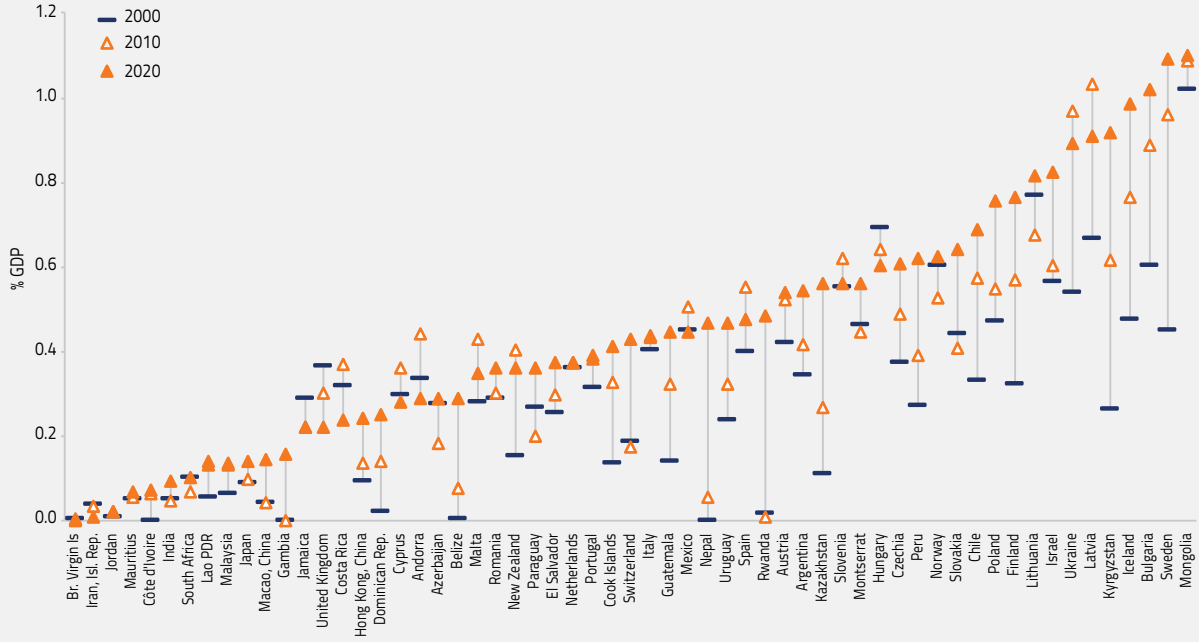
In Lithuania, the prioritization and expansion of early childhood education in policy led to increased funding. Not only did public pre-primary education spending increase from 0.52% in 2013 to 0.83% in 2020 as a share of GDP, but early childhood education spending increased from 0.63% in 2013 to 1.02% in 2020. Between 2015 and 2020, a period of rapid growth, the average annual increase in spending per full-time equivalent student in pre-primary education was 13%, even as the number of children increased (OECD, 2023).

Who provides funding and how resources are distributed influences whether disadvantaged children benefit. Denmark has tried to balance a decentralized system and private provision with public funding to prevent inequality from rising. All children aged between 26 weeks and 6 years are entitled to subsidized early childhood care and education (Eurydice, 2025a). Following a 2018 agreement, the government allocates DKK 330 million (USD 52 million) annually to disadvantaged centres. Municipalities fund at least 75% of costs, capping parental fees at 25%, with standard rates for ages 0–2 and 3–5 applied in all municipal centres (NLS, 2025).

FIGURE 3.10:

Public spending on pre-primary education is low but growing

Public expenditure in pre-primary education as a share of GDP, 2000–03, 2010–13 and 2020–23



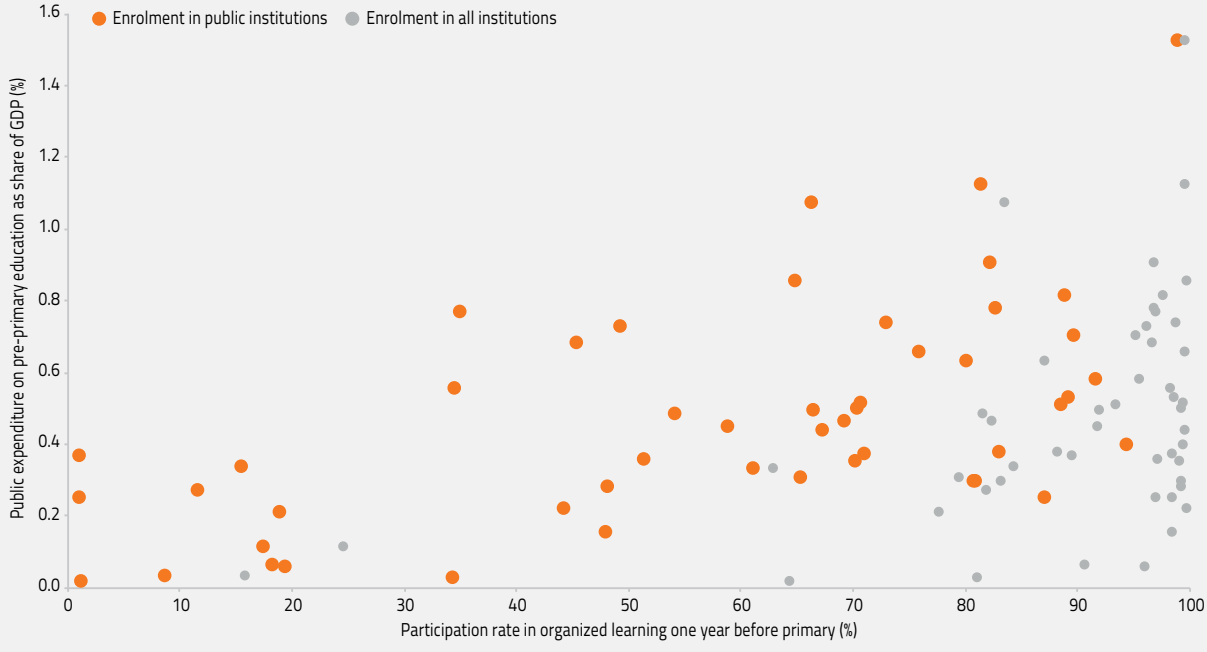
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_10

Source: GEM Report team analysis of the UIS database.

FIGURE 3.11:

Public spending is low but matters for enrolment in public pre-primary education institutions

Public expenditure in pre-primary education as a share of GDP and participation rate in organized learning one year before primary, total and public institutions only, 2020 or latest year



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_11

Source: GEM Report and UIS (2023).

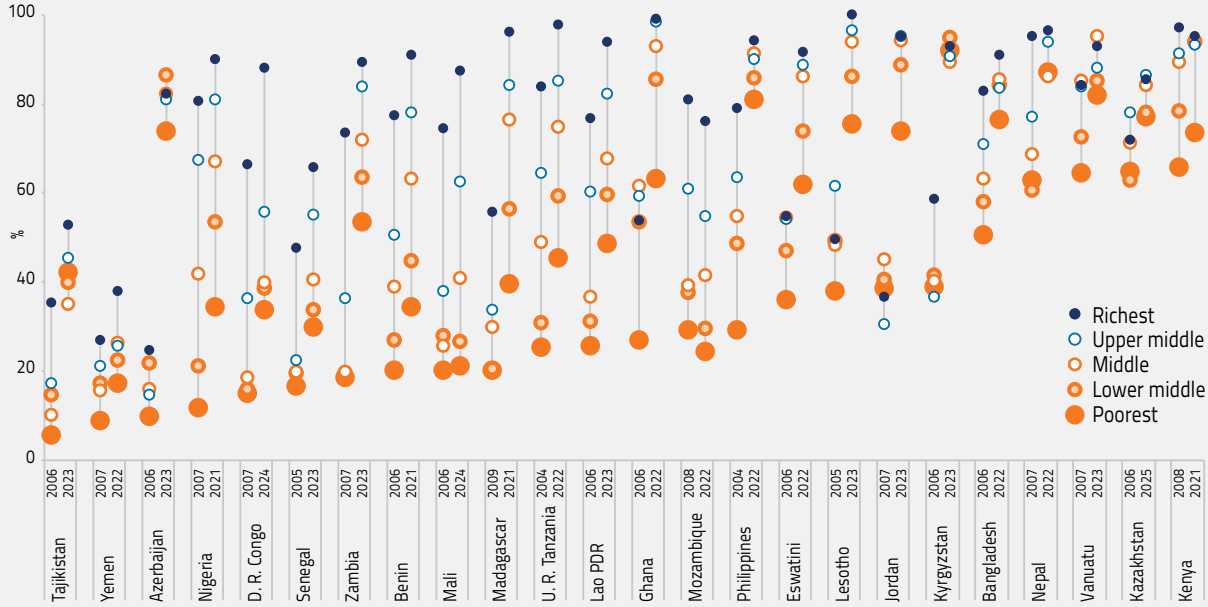
DEMAND-SIDE POLICIES

In many contexts, historic government underinvestment in pre-primary education means that households that want to send their children to preschool have to pay the cost of private service provision. Affordability, therefore, becomes a major barrier to the expansion of early childhood education and disproportionately impacts low-income households. Either as a substitute to investing in developing a public pre-primary education system or as a complement to these efforts, governments may try to reduce the cost of pre-primary education through a mix of universal and targeted approaches to improve affordability (Cascio, 2017).

> Affordability is a major barrier to the expansion of early childhood education and dispoportionately impacts low-income households

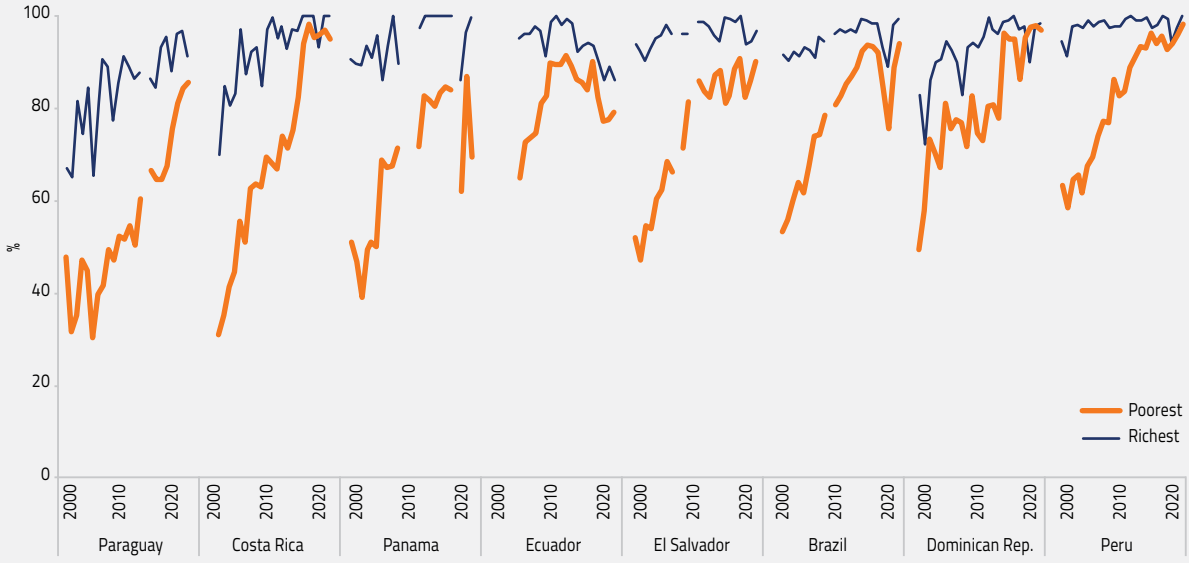
In 25 countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific with observations roughly 15 years apart between 2005 and 2020, participation rates of children one year before the official primary entry age increased rapidly by about 30 percentage points, with notable progress in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and the Philippines. But the average gap between the poorest and the richest barely changed, with 30 percentage points separating them on average (**Figure 3.12**). In eight Latin American countries, children from the poorest quintile, which in 2005 had a participation rate twice as high as the children in the African, Asian and Pacific countries reviewed (60% vs 30%), managed to close the gap with the richest peers between 2000 and 2024 (**Figure 3.13**).

FIGURE 3.12:
In Africa and Asia, early childhood education participation levels have increased, but participation gaps between the poorest and the richest have remained the same
Participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age, by wealth quintile, selected African, Asian and Pacific countries, 2004–08, and 2020–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_12
Source: UIS database.

FIGURE 3.13:
In Latin America, participation gaps between the poorest and the richest have been eliminated in the past 25 years
Participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age, by wealth quintile, selected Latin American countries, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_13
Source: UIS database.

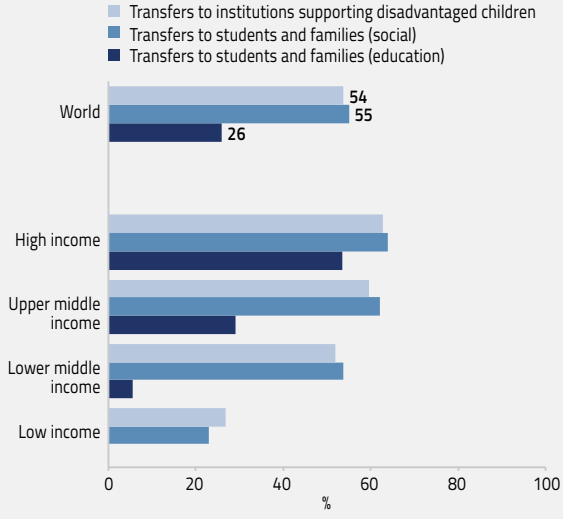
As discussed in the previous section, universal approaches frame pre-primary education as a public entitlement, making it compulsory and free, and reducing stigma and administrative barriers (Friedman-Krauss et al., 2025). They generally prove more politically stable than programmes serving only low-income populations (Barnett, 2010). They also include child protection measures to reduce education costs, such as those in Europe following the adoption of the European Child Guarantee. In 2024, Finland capped monthly fees at EUR 311, exempting over half of families. In Sweden, municipalities fund early education for children aged 1 to 6, while parents pay a capped, income-based fee (Eurydice, 2025b).

Targeted programmes allocate resources where they are likely to yield the highest returns (Blau, 2022; Carneiro and Ginja, 2014). Analysis for this report, which is featured on the PEER website, found that in addition to making it free, countries use three other mechanisms to make pre-primary education more affordable: transfers to institutions serving disadvantaged children (54%) and transfers to families either by the education ministry (26%) or some other ministry, usually social protection (55%) (**Figure 3.14**). While transfers to institutions are mainly aimed at assisting children with disabilities (59%), transfers to students and households focus primarily on poverty (92%). Another mechanism that could enhance participation is school feeding, whose coverage in preschool ranges from 2% in low-income to 13% in high-income countries (Global Child Nutrition Foundation, 2024).

> 54% of countries transfer resources to institutions serving disadvantaged children, 26% transfer resources to families through the education ministry and 55% transfer resources to families through some other ministry

Examples of country efforts to subsidize preschools to support equitable access include Burkina Faso, whose 2017–2030 education plan targets underserved regions by expanding pre-primary classes in Integrated Basic Education Complexes to serve poor and remote areas; and Morocco, where the National Initiative for Human Development supports preschool expansion in disadvantaged rural areas. Preschools are developed through an alliance between the education ministry and local organizations for building and upgrading preschool units. Enrolment increased from 33% in 2018 to 91% in 2024 in rural areas (World Bank, 2025a).

FIGURE 3.14:
Just over half of countries use cash transfers to families to expand equitable access to pre-primary education
Percentage of countries with a national law or policy supporting financing for equity mechanisms in pre-primary education, by country income group, 2025



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_14
Source: GEM Report team analysis of PEER country profiles.

CASH TRANSFERS

Public funding that directs resources to disadvantaged populations has helped make services more affordable for those with limited ability to pay. In rural Karnataka, India, scholarships covering preschool fees raised participation by 20 percentage points, while cognitive gains lasting through Grade 1 were also confirmed (Dean and Jayachandran, 2020). Singapore, apart from a basic subsidy offered to all citizens enrolled in licensed early childhood education centres, also offers subsidies and financial schemes to help low-income families afford early education of good quality. The amount varies according to the age of the child and the working status of the applicant (Early Childhood Education Agency, 2026). As a result, very low-income families pay only minimal preschool fees (Karuppiah and Poon, 2024). Integrating cash transfers with health and nutrition interventions offers comprehensive benefits (Little et al., 2021).

While conditional cash transfer programmes are primarily designed to support primary and secondary education (**Chapter 6**), in a few cases they have also been made conditional on pre-primary attendance. In El Salvador, exposure to a conditional cash transfer from birth to age 5 and 6 increased preschool enrolment by 12 percentage points and the completion of at least one year of preschool by 9 percentage points (Sanchez Chico et al., 2020). In the Philippines, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) provides cash transfers to poor households conditional on children's school and preschool attendance. A 2011 evaluation found that it increased preschool and daycare enrolment of 3- to 5-year-olds in poor districts by 10 percentage points compared to the baseline in districts that were not covered by the programme (World Bank, 2014). But a subsequent evaluation did not find a significant impact on 3- to 5-year-olds' enrolment (which was low at about 55%) with mothers reporting their children were too young or unprepared to attend preschool (Orbeta et al., 2023).

In Flanders, Belgium, the School Allowance (Schooltoelage) combines a basic amount for each child with targeted support for low-income families (Flanders Government, 2025; Vinck and van Lancker, 2024), contingent on school attendance. Non-compliance leads to sanctions (Nieuwsblad, 2025). In Hungary, low-income parents lacking secondary education received a lump-sum benefit of HUF 20,000 (USD 92) for enrolling their child in kindergarten before age 5, plus HUF 10,000 for each additional semester attended. Programme evaluation found that the allowance led to an increase of one percentage point in kindergarten enrolment, succeeding in getting one out of five children targeted by the allowance into preschool (Kertesi and Kézdi, 2014).

Besides transfers, incentive schemes (such as income-indexed fees, tax relief and cash bonuses) have helped raise enrolment among low-income and immigrant families in high-income countries, including France, Germany and Norway (ACER, 2026). Means-tested approaches can improve access for children who lack access to organized learning, although coverage may be limited by income fluctuations, bureaucracy and stigma (Barnett, 2010). A randomized study of the Head Start programme in the United States showed many children moved from home care to centre-based preschool (Carneiro and Ginja, 2014). Later research found Head Start's long-term effects were initially underestimated because they had not accounted for children's alternative care arrangements (Elango et al., 2015).

HOME-BASED PROGRAMMES

Home-based programmes and home visiting initiatives play an essential role in creating the conditions under which enrolment in pre-primary education can grow. Home-based programmes lead to measurable improvements in cognitive, linguistic and social and emotional outcomes, helping close early developmental gaps by reaching families who live in remote areas

or lack resources (Jeong et al., 2021). Analysis of Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey data in 63 low- and middle-income countries serves as a reminder that activities that stimulate 3- to 4-year-old children, such as reading, storytelling and playing, are twice as common (72%) as being enrolled in organized learning programmes (34%) (McCoy et al., 2018).

Community health or social workers connect families to early learning by advising on how to stimulate their children and sharing information about local early childhood care and education options, which change caregivers' perceptions (Ahun et al., 2023). Brazil's Criança Feliz programme, launched in 2016, was expanded to all poor families registered with the Single Registry and led to over 57 million home visits by 2021, making it one of the largest early childhood development programmes globally (Buccini et al., 2024).

Few studies have investigated the impact of such programmes on the decision to enrol in pre-primary education. In Indonesia, the Early Childhood Education and Development Project boosted access to playgroups for children under 6 by raising community awareness and providing block grants of USD 18,000 to villages over three years. Preschool enrolment increased by 7 to 15 percentage points (Brinkman et al., 2015).

SUPPLY-SIDE POLICIES

As most of the case studies have shown, expansion is unlikely to happen unless the government invests in expanding public preschool infrastructure and improving quality to convince parents that this is an appropriate use of time for their children.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Several countries have undertaken ambitious infrastructure programmes to increase the availability of places in public preschools and reduce parents' reliance on fee-charging private providers. As part of its De Cero a Siempre programme, Colombia added 780,000 places to integrated centres for disadvantaged children under 5, reaching 900,000 by 2013 and just over 1 million by 2016. Each eligible child in targeted areas had 0.47 places compared to 0.14 places in the other areas, highlighting the scale of the unmet need (Bernal and Ramírez, 2019).

In Mozambique, the Early Childhood Development Programme introduced early childhood education services in rural communities in 10 districts, including the low-cost construction of 350 preschools. While the classrooms were originally planned to have cement floors, straw walls and tin roofs, the design was later adapted to more traditional and sustainable construction methods. The programme increased preschool enrolment from 2% to 75% and primary school enrolment by 6 percentage points, while reducing repetition by 3 percentage points (Bassi et al., 2025).

Viet Nam boosted public kindergarten funding after 2002, targeting ethnic minority and remote communities, raising 5-year-olds' enrolment from 72% in 2001 to 98% in 2015, while reducing the private enrolment share from 60% to 12% in this period. In 2025, the National Assembly passed a resolution calling for the universalization of early childhood education for 3- to 5-year-olds (Nguyễn, 2025). It is estimated that between 2025 and 2028, 3,771 substandard classrooms will need to be constructed or replaced to meet universal preschool infrastructure needs (World Bank, 2025b).

> “In many low- and middle-income countries, pre-primary classrooms are added to primary schools to cut infrastructure costs, use current administrative systems, and offer families convenience and continuity”

In many low- and middle-income countries, pre-primary classrooms are added to primary schools to cut infrastructure costs, use current administrative systems, and offer families convenience and continuity. Ethiopia decided to expand pre-primary education in 2010 considering community-based, private, faith-based and primary school–attached preschools as options, of which the last (known as O-Class) contributed about 80% of the total enrolment increase of 2.6 million between 2010 and 2015 (Woodhead et al., 2017). The enrolment rate increased from 5% in 2012 to 44% in 2022 at the national level. In Oromia, the enrolment increased from 11% in 2018 to 48% in 2022. In 2021 alone, 3,700 preschools were built (World Bank, 2023). The Gambia (UNESCO-IIEP, 2021) and Liberia (Oxford Policy Management, 2022) integrate pre-primary classes within basic schools, sometimes sharing teachers. South Africa placed most of its reception, or R, classes in primary schools. Enrolment at public schools tripled from 242,000 in 2001 to 768,000 in 2012, which meant that, by 2014, 95% of Grade 1 students had attended Grade R (Taylor, 2014).

Bangladesh recruits dedicated pre-primary teachers in each government primary school (Rahman et al., 2020). In Guatemala, public pre-primary schools increased

from about 5,300 in 1998 to 11,500 in 2005, primarily as extensions of primary schools (Bastos et al., 2017). In Morocco, the government decided in 2018 to introduce pre-primary classes in all public schools as a step towards universal pre-primary education by 2027/28 (World Bank, 2025a).

In Azerbaijan, universal, state-funded readiness classes for 5-year-olds expanded participation one year before primary school from 25% in 2016 to 96% in 2023 (Azerbaijan Ministry of Education, 2023), particularly benefiting rural areas (Gheorghe, 2020). In Romania, where the preparatory grade was institutionalized in 2012, early education groups are also found in primary or secondary schools and are commonly referred to as ludotheques, playgroups or community kindergartens (Eurydice, 2025c). Uzbekistan mandated compulsory school readiness groups for 6-year-olds and expanded state-funded preschool options with overall pre-primary enrolment increasing from below 20% to approximately 46% over a decade (Uzbekistan Ministry of Preschool Education and GPE, 2023).

Preparatory classes have served as a pillar of primary education expansion, although they do not always count as adding to pre-primary expansion. In Cambodia, an eight-week school readiness programme uses existing resources, such as primary teachers and community spaces, to prepare children for primary school (Plan International et al., 2024a). The Lao People's Democratic Republic offers preparatory programmes for children unable to attend kindergarten (Nanthanavone, 2024). Since 2021, a summer pre-primary preparation programme has operated in disadvantaged communities, increasing retention and school readiness (Plan International et al., 2024b).

Expansion of places can also be through policy and funding. China began the gradual introduction of free preschool education in 2025. Apart from infrastructure improvements and increases in teacher pay, it set a target of 4.5 places per 1,000 people and aimed to create 660,000 new subsidized places by 2025. As of 2024, 253,000 kindergartens were serving 35.8 million children (China State Council, 2025). According to the national action plans and progress reports for the European Child Guarantee, France is investing EUR 6 billion by 2027 to reform early education and increase places by 2030; Germany improved access and quality with its daycare act; Italy funds upgrades and renovations for public childcare facilities through its South Agenda and a 2021–2025 Action Plan; and Spain has funded over 65,000 new early education places (European Commission, 2025).

NON-STATE PROVISION

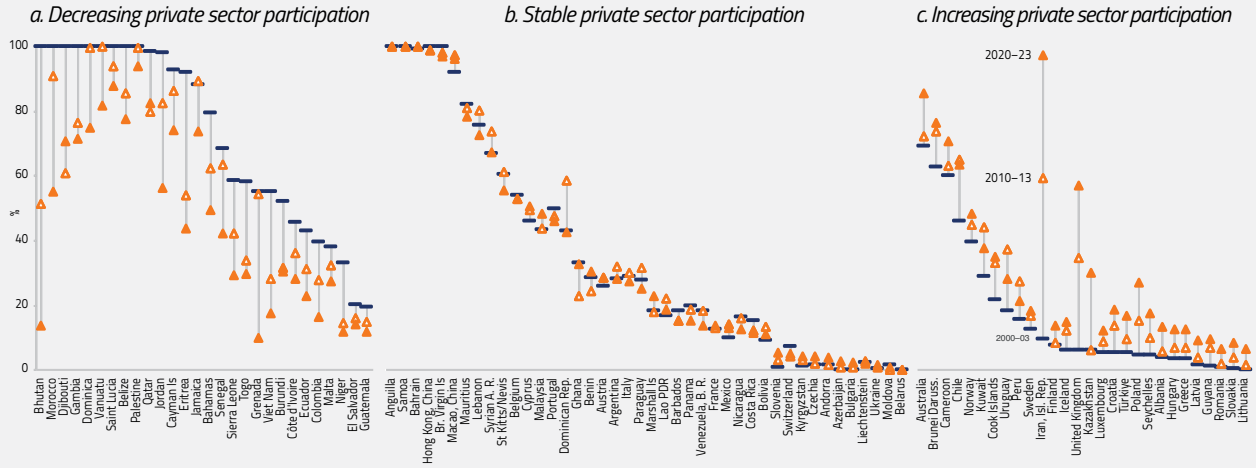
Private providers account for a considerable share of pre-primary education provision. In 49 out of 153 countries with observations since 2020, the share of private institutions exceeded 50%. However, over the past two decades, the share of these providers appears to have remained constant, as private sector participation has been moving in opposite directions in various countries (**Figure 3.15**), and the trends seem to be balancing each other out. Having said that, the extent of private provision is likely to be underestimated in official administrative statistics in low- and middle-income countries, as some providers are not registered (Baum, 2021).

> In 49 out of 153 countries with observations since 2020, the share of private institutions exceeded 50%

Community and non-governmental organization providers have been instrumental in reaching disadvantaged groups, especially when public resources are limited. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, pre-primary schools were mainly built in urban areas with private sector support, while rural expansion relied on community-led projects where trained caregivers facilitated informal playgroups (Brinkman et al., 2022). In Madagascar, the share of private provision fell in the 2010s from about 90% to about 30% according to administrative records, although a household survey in 2021/22 found that there was an equal split between public and private providers. But most of the public providers are in fact community based (Instat Madagascar, 2024). In Trinidad and Tobago, two thirds of early childhood education centres were being run by SERVOL, a non-profit organization supported by the Ministry of Education in quality assurance and with curriculum assistance to maintain standards (Araujo et al., 2013).

Analysis of the PEER country profiles on the regulation of non-state actors in pre-primary education, carried out as part of the 2021/2 *Global Education Monitoring Report*, found that most countries require registration and licensing for non-state early childhood care and education centres. About 81% of countries provided incentives to encourage non-state providers to operate, ranging between 65% in low-income to 89% in high-income countries.

FIGURE 3.15:
Countries have moved in opposite directions in terms of their preference for private actor involvement in pre-primary education
Share of private institutions in pre-primary education enrolment, 2000–03, 2010–13 and 2020–23



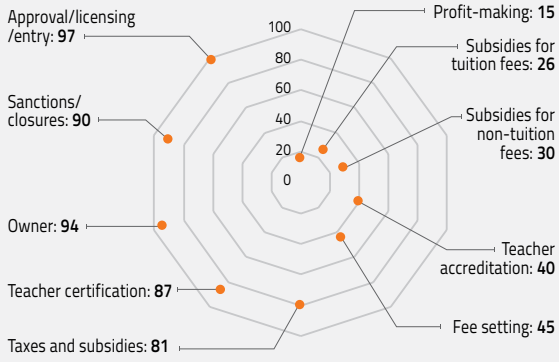
Notes: Values represent the average of observations in each four-year period. Stable participation means that the share of private institutions has not changed by more than five percentage points between 2000–03 and 2020–23.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_15
Source: UIS database.

Government contracting is a common method for funding pre-primary education. In Brazil, 8% of children in day care and pre-primary education attended government-contracted private providers, making up 29% of total private provision (INEP, 2020). In the Philippines, Pasig City signed agreements with 95 private Child Development Centers accredited by the city authorities. This approach of local government–led service delivery, system integration and public–private partnerships has now been enshrined in the 2025 Early Childhood Care and Development System Act, which envisages a fund for a contracting scheme (EDCOM2, 2026; Philippines Senate, 2025). In Samoa, the One Government Grant programme channels state resources to mission-run and private early childhood centres, providing curriculum and teacher support that tightens coherence across providers (Samoa Ministry of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, 2022). In South Africa, the Department of Social Development used to subsidize registered early childhood development programmes in vulnerable communities, ensuring compliance with registration conditions. Responsibility over the registration, certification, funding and training processes has been shifted to the Department of Basic Education, which eased registration requirements in 2023 (Sello, 2025; World Bank and South Africa Department of Basic Education, 2022).

> “Globally, only 45% of countries regulate fees and just 15% regulate profit making”

But fewer countries address the problems in equity and quality, which can arise when private provision dominates but can be hard to monitor. Poorer households are more likely to attend unregistered centres. In Lebanon, over 80% of pre-primary education is provided by private actors, where lack of regulation and inconsistent quality assurance lead to significant disparities. In Rwanda, rural and poor children are far more likely to attend home- and community-based settings of lower quality than the centre-based settings attended by urban and richer children (Pages and Munyemana, 2025). Globally, only 45% of countries regulate fees and just 15% regulate profit making (**Figure 3.16**). The challenge lies in establishing regulations that promote equity and quality, with clear standards to support children's learning and safety, while also ensuring compliance.

FIGURE 3.16:
Regulations tend to focus more on administrative requirements than on promoting equity
Percentage of countries with early childhood education non-state provider regulations, by topic, 2021



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig3_16
Source: GEM Report team analysis of PEER country profiles on non-state actors in education.

Voucher programmes can improve access, depending on their design. In the Bahamas, the Universal Pre-Primary Education Initiative offers USD 2,000 vouchers to children who cannot get public preschool spots, allowing them to enrol in approved private centres (Bahamas Ministry of Finance, 2019). In Hong Kong, China, the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (2007–17) provided HKD 20,000 (USD 2,500) to parents but was replaced with the Kindergarten Education Scheme in 2017, which subsidizes kindergartens. Both have helped expand access and improve quality (Li, 2026). In the Republic of Korea, private providers receive an additional KRW 110,000 per child (USD 77) to bridge the gap between the government-set monthly fee (KRW 557,000) and current subsidies (KRW 448,000) (Jeong-yoon, 2025). Saudi Arabia introduced income-related vouchers to increase enrolment of children from low-income families in registered private centres (Saudi Arabia Government, 2021).

QUALITY AND INCLUSION

Increasing access to pre-primary education alone does not guarantee sustained participation. Families are more likely to enrol their children when programmes visibly benefit them (McCoy et al., 2017, 2018). Surges in enrolment, for example in Mexico (Yoshikawa et al., 2007) and the United Republic of Tanzania (Children in Crossfire, 2024), strained quality and affected parental perceptions. Investments in quality and inclusion are therefore needed to sustain participation (Holla et al., 2021) and improve children's cognitive, social and emotional skills (Berlinski et al., 2009; Ganimian and Murnane, 2014).

Educator quality plays a crucial role. Observable factors like teacher–child interactions also shape family decisions. System-strengthening measures, including teachers' professional development and coaching, can enhance educator practices and learning outcomes, driving further demand. In Chile, Un Buen Comienzo (A Good Start), a two-year teacher professional development programme contributed to a decrease in students' absenteeism from 54% to 35% (Arbour et al., 2023). In Ghana, preschools whose teachers received professional development recorded higher attendance and stronger parental engagement (Wolf et al., 2019). How roles are structured and supported matter (Bowne et al., 2017). In Colombia, teaching assistants alone had no effect, as teachers' efforts declined, and were only effective if professional development was offered (Andrew et al., 2019). In India, adding part-time staff to preschools increased instructional time and improved quality (Ganimian et al., 2024). Experimental evidence from Pakistan showed that in-service professional development improved teaching practices (Yousafzai et al., 2025).

Playful, positive environments are a key quality component (Alla, 2025; Sahlberg and Doyle, 2019). Play requires minimal resources but fosters school readiness and strengthens parent–child bonds (Ginsburg et al., 2007; Mader, 2021). It has also been vital in humanitarian contexts (UNICEF, 2025). Various studies show that blending play and instruction benefits children's development, especially in disadvantaged areas (Dowd and Thomsen, 2021). A meta-analysis has concluded that guided play improves children's mathematics skills better than direct instruction (Skene et al., 2022). Overall, quality improvements signal to parents increased returns, making early education more attractive and supporting sustained participation.

Specific interventions that make preschool environments more inclusive by targeting disadvantaged groups are also necessary to increase participation. Children with disabilities remain one of the most excluded groups from pre-primary education globally. Barriers such as inaccessible infrastructure, high fees and a lack of sufficient specialists prevent their access (Washington Group on Disability Statistics, 2022), while such a lack of support has been highlighted all over the world, including, for example, in Ethiopia (Admas, 2019), India (Kaul et al., 2015) and Kenya (Sitati et al., 2016). South Australia's Early Childhood Facilities Design Standards guide the planning and redesign of childhood facilities so that they foster

safety, security, support and belonging (South Australia Department for Education, 2025). In Parana state, Brazil, multifunctional resource rooms support children with disabilities from age 4 in mainstream public schools (Parana Superintendencia da Educacao, 2019). European countries, including Croatia, Finland and Italy, have hired teaching assistants and rehabilitation specialists to include children with disabilities in pre-primary education (Eurydice, 2025d). In Ireland, the Access and Inclusion Model helps mainstream schools accommodate diverse learning needs, without needing formal diagnoses (Deloitte, 2021).

> Children from ethnic and linguistic minorities often face barriers related to cultural mismatches, discrimination and geographic isolation

Children from ethnic and linguistic minorities often face barriers related to cultural mismatches, discrimination and geographic isolation. Roma children in Europe face significant barriers to preschool, including discrimination, transport costs and limited outreach (FRA, 2022). Cambodia's community preschools use multilingual curricula, starting with native language instruction and transitioning to Khmer (Om, 2024). In Ecuador, the Bilingual Intercultural Education Programme for the Amazon supported early childhood and community education (Bustamante, 2013). In New Zealand, Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum, uses a bicultural framework to support Indigenous and immigrant learners in inclusive environments (Gordon-Burns and Campbell, 2014). In Papua New Guinea, Tok Ples schools use over 400 indigenous languages for early education, demonstrating effective linguistic inclusion (Hasan et al., 2025).

Children in rural and remote areas need flexible approaches. Colombia has introduced the Itinerant Rural Early Education Strategy to reach remote areas (Colombia Government, 2025). Mongolia introduced mobile kindergartens (known as ger) for pastoralist communities, enrolling 10% of 2- to 5-year-olds in them (Bollag, 2019). Uzbekistan also has mobile kindergartens and playgroups (aqlvoy), which now serve thousands in remote areas and underserved communities (Turp-Balazs, 2022), improving equity (Economic Policy Research Institute and Center for Policy Research and Outreach, 2024).

Early childhood education opportunities are vital for displaced children (Erdemir, 2022; Robinson, 2025). However, most refugee-targeted preschool programmes are small and donor-funded, highlighting the urgent need for systemic solutions (Moore, 2021). Between 2021 and 2024, refugee children's pre-primary enrolment rates increased in Ethiopia (from 44% to 57%), Lebanon (from 22% to 33%) and Türkiye (from 34% to 42%) but fell in Chad (from 23% to 12%), Kenya (from 70% to 49%) and South Sudan (from 47% to 28%), largely because of funding issues and services being overwhelmed (UNHCR, 2025).

> Most refugee-targeted preschool programmes are small and donor-funded, highlighting the urgent need for systemic solutions

CONCLUSION

As the benefits of early childhood education are better understood, many governments have invested to expand access, especially for disadvantaged children. A comprehensive package of policies that combine legislation, public financing, coordinated governance, mixed provision with regulated private and community actors, and inclusive measures for marginalized children, for example, has proven to be effective. Where these align and result in cohesive institutional frameworks rather than isolated programmes, then universal, high-quality pre-primary education is achievable and its benefits endure.



UNICEF carries out Explosive Hazard Education activities in response to the presence or suspected presence of anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance, and improvised explosive devices in rural and urban areas of the country, in places where civilians live or travel, with the aim of raising awareness and promoting a culture of safe behavior that contributes to reducing the risk of accidents. These actions have reached schools in Medio Baudó in Choco, where children and adolescents learn how to prevent accidents with explosive devices.

Credit: © UNICEF/UNI898815/Gonzalez Yepes*



CHAPTER

4

Primary and secondary education



KEY MESSAGES

What do the data show?

The out-of-school rate fell sharply after 2000 but has stalled since 2015.

- Globally, the out-of-school rate of children, adolescents and youth fell from 27% in 2000 to 17% in 2015 but has stagnated since. While 327 million more students have entered school since 2000, the out-of-school population has been rising for the past 7 years and has reached 273 million. This is likely undercounted, as 13 million more are out of school in the 10 countries most affected by conflict.

Completion has been rising at all levels but too slowly to achieve past and current global targets.

- Increases in primary completion (from 77% to 88%), lower secondary completion (from 60% to 78%) and upper secondary completion (from 37% to 61%) between 2000 and 2024 are too slow to reach global targets. Upper secondary completion has improved by 0.8 percentage points per year; at this rate, globally, it will reach 95% in 2105.

Stalling out-of-school rates and rising completion rates may seem to contradict each other but they are not contradictory.

- As enrolment expanded in the 2000s, out-of-school rates fell but led to bottlenecks, as many students struggled to progress. Since then, repetition has fallen, which explains how out-of-school rates may stall just as more students are completing. While education systems have become more efficient, still too many enrol late and repeat, especially in low-income countries, where the gap between timely and ultimate completion is 11 percentage points in primary education.

What do we know about policies associated with expansion and equity in the long run?

Countries are moving away from policies that are unfavourable to disadvantaged students.

- In OECD countries, students from a low socioeconomic background are 50% more likely to repeat a grade than more privileged peers with the same academic performance. As countries adopt automatic promotion, repetition rates have fallen by almost two thirds in primary education and by more than one third in lower secondary education. Early academic tracking has been shown to reduce completion.

Physically accessible, safe and well-equipped schools are key for educational expansion.

- School construction remains one of the strongest predictors of enrolment, particularly for girls, yet new school building stagnated or declined in much of sub-Saharan Africa from 2010 to 2020. Measures that have increased enrolment include boarding schools, distance learning, latrines and electrification.

Countries are expanding inclusive education legislation and policies.

- The share of countries with a definition of inclusive education has increased from 68% in 2020 to 84% in 2025, of which those with a definition not limited to learners with disabilities increased from 51% to 69%. As of 2025, 37% of countries have inclusive education policies for all learners. The share of countries whose legislation permits segregation of students with disabilities has fallen from 25% in 2020 to 9% today.

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Key trends

The three major global education agendas increased the world's ambition level disproportionately to the speed at which education systems have been expanding: in 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All called for universal access to primary education; in 2000, the second Millennium Development Goal for universal completion of primary education; and in 2015, the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for universal completion of (upper) secondary education.

Arguably, information was initially insufficient to establish evidence-based targets. It was only as recently as 2000, when global data were compiled in a systematic and internationally comparable manner for the first time. These first efforts to measure access to education relied on the gross enrolment ratio, which played an important role in mobilizing political commitment worldwide, helping set a baseline, albeit an optimistic one.

By the time the SDG 4 targets were about to be set in the early 2010s, it was clear a global goal needed to be less ambitious. The 2013/4 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* had suggested, with the data available at the time, that universal primary completion in lower-middle-income countries would be achieved by 2036 and universal lower secondary completion by 2053, and that it would take low-income countries two more decades to achieve these targets. The report also drew attention to disparity within countries. In 44 of the 74 low-and middle-income countries analysed at the time, there was at least a 50-year gap between all the richest boys completing lower secondary school and all the poorest girls doing so (UNESCO, 2014).

Nevertheless, the international community went ahead with a universal upper secondary completion target. It is likely that the optimism was caused by the rapid progress that low- and middle-income countries achieved between 2000 and 2015. However, the rapid expansion of enrolment also caused bottlenecks. Irregular attendance, repetition and early school leaving, particularly during transitions between education levels, became a concern. They were the consequence of strains on the quality of provision, which would slow down progress after 2015.

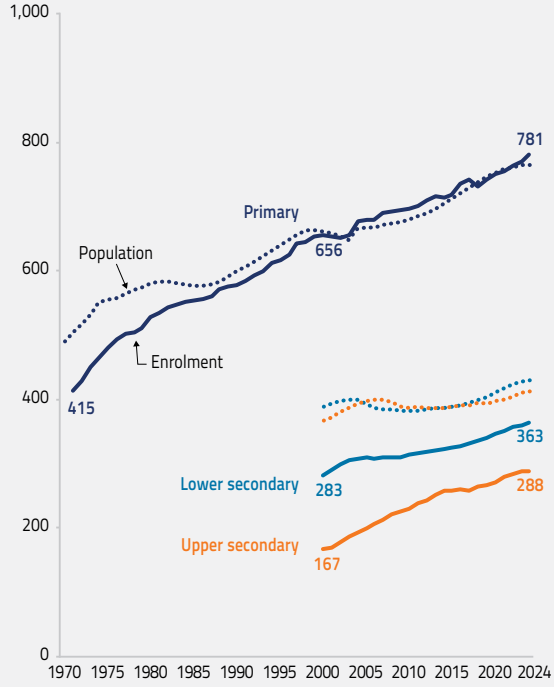
With the benefit of hindsight and with better, even if still far from satisfactory data, this section reviews progress in access to education over the past 25 years, in terms of enrolment, over-age, repetition, out-of-school, transition and completion indicators, setting the scene for the country case studies and the policy analysis that follow.

THE GOAL OF BRINGING OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATES TO ZERO HAS NOT BEEN MET

While the number of out-of-school children (and, since 2015, adolescents and youth) has been the indicator which has grabbed headlines for the past 25 years, it is easy to forget that the number of those in school has been growing rapidly. Between 2000 and 2024, enrolment has grown by 19% in primary (from 656 to 781 million), by 28% in lower secondary (from 283 to 363 million) and by 73% in upper secondary education (from 167 to 288 million). In total, there are 327 million more students in primary and secondary education, of which 125 million are in primary and 202 million in secondary education (**Figure 4.1**).

> There are 327 million more students in primary and secondary education, of which 125 million are in primary and 202 million in secondary education

FIGURE 4.1:
Primary and secondary enrolment has grown by 30% since 2000
Total enrolment and school age population, by education level, 1970–2024



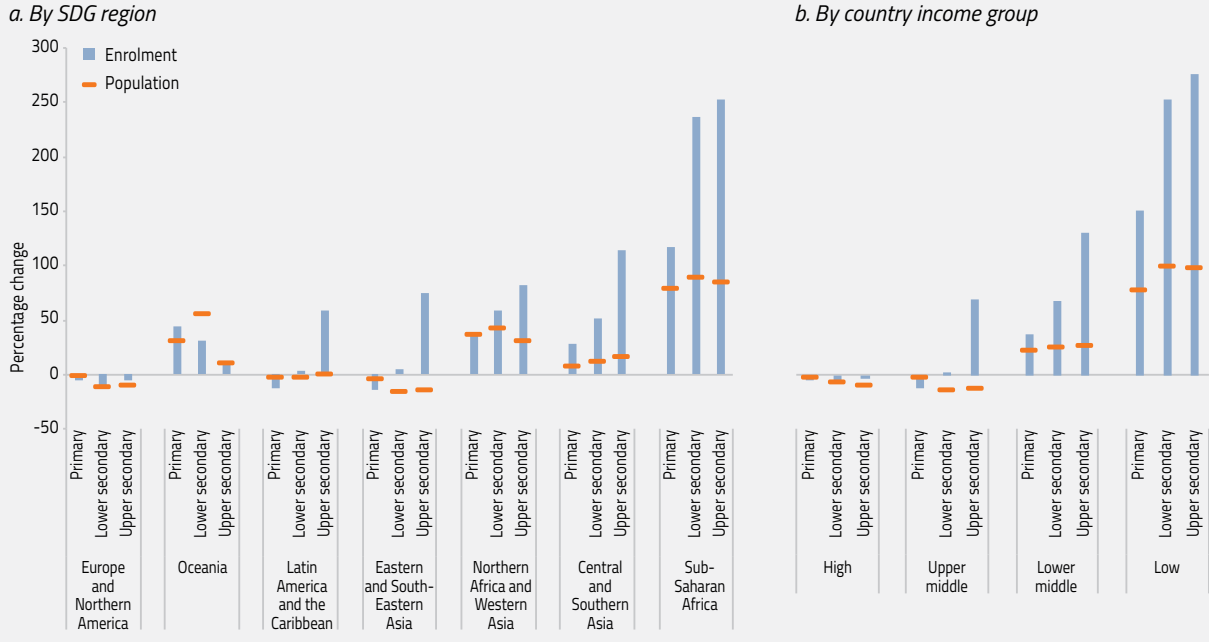
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_1
Source: UIS database

The long-term enrolment data in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database also capture the slowdown in the 1980s when low- and middle-income countries had to cut their social spending to access structural adjustment loans. Primary enrolment grew by 12 million per year in the 1970s but by 5 million per year in the 1980s, before starting to pick up again and increasing by 7 million per year in the 1990s, towards the end of which enrolment matched the primary school age population.

Enrolment growth rates since 2000 have varied a lot by region and country income group. While enrolment levels have fallen in Europe and Northern America in both primary and secondary education between 2000 and 2024, they have more than doubled in primary education and more than tripled in secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa. In low-income countries, secondary education enrolment has almost quadrupled. Enrolment growth has been concentrated in upper secondary education in Central and Southern Asia, in Eastern and South-eastern Asia, and in Latin America and the Caribbean – and in middle-income countries more generally. In the first quarter of the century, the school-age population has fallen by 9% in upper-middle- and high-income countries, has increased by 25% in lower-middle-income countries and has doubled in low-income countries. (**Figure 4.2**).

These diverging demographic trajectories will continue, leading to different challenges in access to education in coming years. According to the United Nations' *World Population Prospects 2024*, the global school-age population is expected to decrease by 4% between 2025 and 2050. It will increase only in Oceania (5%), Northern Africa and Western Asia (7%) and, especially, sub-Saharan Africa (37%). It will decrease in Central and Southern Asia (-7%), Europe and Northern America (-14%), Latin America and the Caribbean (-19%) and, especially, Eastern and South-eastern Asia (-37%) (UN DESA, 2024).

FIGURE 4.2:
In low-income countries, the secondary school age population has doubled and secondary school enrolment has almost quadrupled since 2000
Percentage change in enrolment and school-age population, by education level, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_2
Source: UIS database

THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL POPULATION HAS INCREASED SINCE 2015

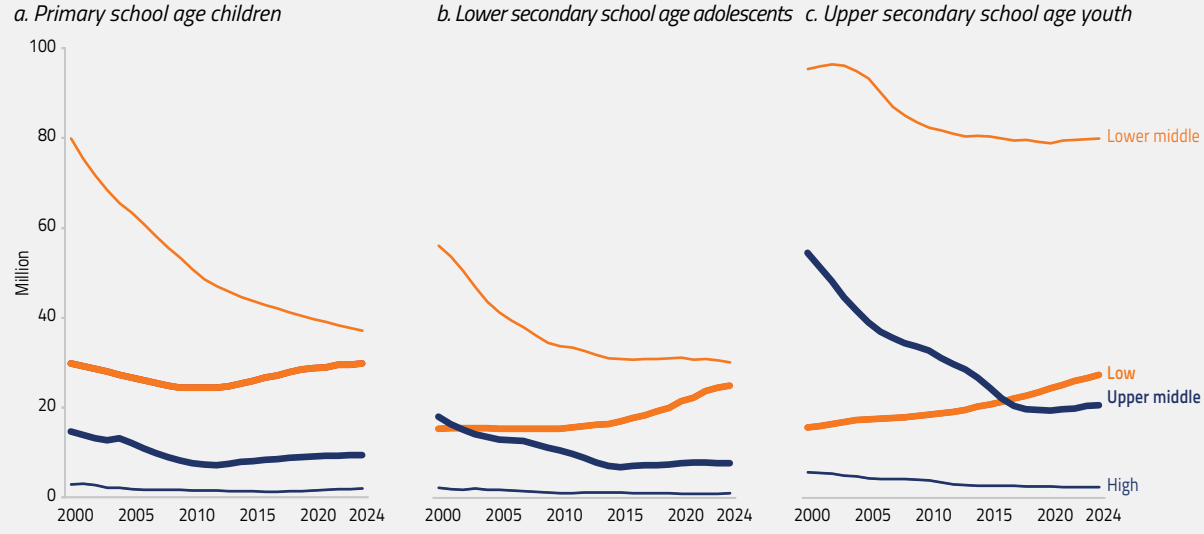
While 1,433 million were attending primary and secondary school globally in 2024, it is also estimated that 273 million were out of school. Of these, 79 million were primary school age children, 64 million adolescents of lower secondary school age and 130 million youth of upper secondary school age. The out-of-school population fell by 127 million between 2000 and 2015, or by 33%, to 264 million but it increased by 9 million, or by 3%, by 2024. In low-income countries, the out-of-school population has increased by 29% since 2015 (and by 41% since 2009), while it has remained flat in the rest of the world (**Figure 4.3**).

> While 1,433 million were attending primary and secondary school globally in 2024, it is also estimated that 273 million were out of school

Since 2000, Central and Southern Asia has been making rapid progress in access to education for younger children and by 2019 its share of the total out-of-school population had fallen from 43% to 25% among primary school age children and from 42% to 28% among lower secondary school age adolescents, although the decline has since slowed down. In this period, the share of sub-Saharan Africa in the global out-of-school population in these two age groups increased from 32% to 50% and from 25% to 47%, respectively. But across all age groups, the two regions jointly now account for three quarters of the global out-of-school population. Their share in the out-of-school youth of upper secondary school age group has increased from 59% in 2000 to 74% in 2024 (**Figure 4.4**).

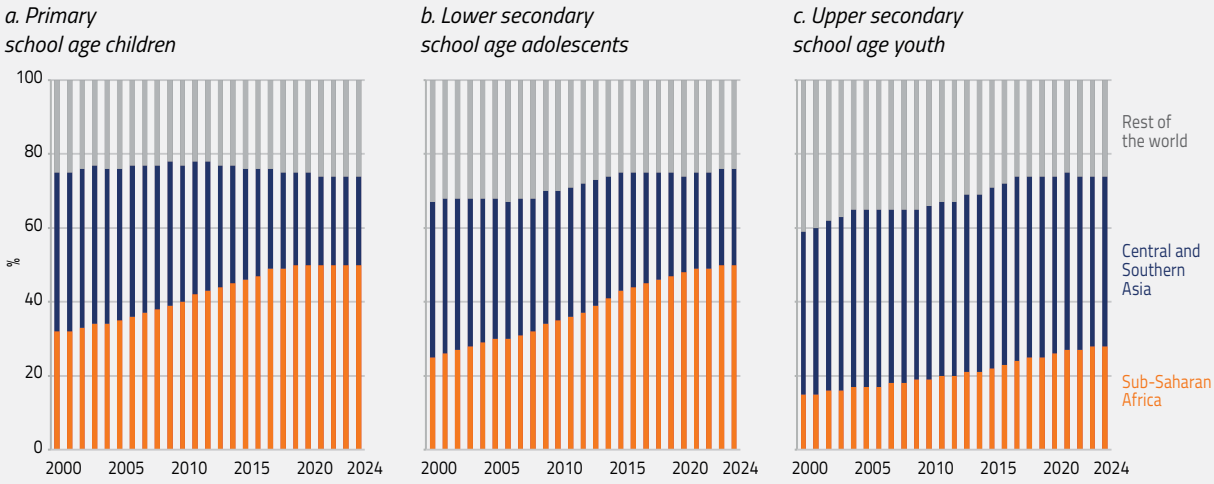
These estimates are based on a model developed by the *Global Education Monitoring Report* team and the UIS, which combines administrative and survey data and is featured on the Visualizing Indicators of Education for the World (VIEW) website. However, many countries, especially low-income countries, are affected by conflict, for which data are patchy at best, while model estimates certainly undercount the out-of-school populations (**Box 4.1**).

FIGURE 4.3:
The out-of-school population has increased since 2015
Out-of-school population, by age group and country income group, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_3
Source: GEM Report and UIS estimates.

FIGURE 4.4:
Sub-Saharan Africa and Central and South and Central Asia account for 75% of the total out-of-school population
Distribution of out-of-school population, by SDG region, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_4
Source: GEM Report and UIS estimates.

BOX 4.1:

The out-of-school population is underestimated due to conflict

The out-of-school estimation model relies on the stability of the long-term progression of school-age populations through the education system to ensure that trends are consistent over time. However, this methodological strength becomes a weakness when enrolment changes suddenly due to crises. There is usually insufficient information to understand crises' impacts, as conflict hampers data collection on school participation. Model estimates therefore need to be complemented by information generated mostly by humanitarian actors.

Following the first attempt to adjust the out-of-school data for 2023 for the 2024 SDG 4 Scorecard (UIS and GEM Report, 2025), the International Rescue Committee's 2025 Watchlist is used again as a basis to select the 10 countries in emergency and crisis whose out-of-school populations may have been underestimated in 2024. Compared to the previous list, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Niger have been replaced by Haiti, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic (International Rescue Committee, 2024). Information from humanitarian or other sources on the potential size of the out-of-school population in these 10 countries was compiled and reviewed with reference to the population described (e.g. a report may cover a population larger than that of school age), the measure of education participation (e.g. a report may describe a population whose education is 'at risk' which is not the same as not being in school), and geographic coverage. This information was then compared with the model estimates, which in many, though not all, cases may be out of date.

In **Burkina Faso**, the government is carefully monitoring attacks on schools, producing monthly reports on education in emergencies. In February 2024, the education ministry estimated that 5,365 schools were closed due to insecurity affecting 834,000 students (UNICEF, 2024a). The model estimates the out-of-school population at 3.6 million, but the government's own estimate is 4 million, which calls for an upward adjustment of 0.4 million.

In **Haiti**, which has been heavily affected by political instability and violence by armed groups, more than half a million children, nearly one in eight, were internally displaced in late 2024 (Global Education Cluster, 2025). Some 8% of schools were closed or suspended due to attacks, insecurity or use as shelters (UNICEF, 2025a). The out-of-school rate is estimated to be 22% among children and adolescents of primary and lower secondary school age and at least 50% among youth of upper secondary school age (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2026). This suggests an out-of-school population of 0.95 million, which requires the model estimate to be adjusted upward by 0.6 million.

Continued on next page...

BOX 4.1 CONTINUED:

Lebanon, afflicted by multiple overlapping political, financial and security crises, was hosting 0.8 million Syrian refugees in 2024. The model agrees with the government's out-of-school population estimate of 0.45 million. In 2023, Lebanon carried out a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, which also covered Syrian refugee settlements, and was representative of about 70% of the population (Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics and UNICEF, 2023). Analysis of the results suggests an out-of-school rate of 46%, which corresponds to an out-of-school population of 0.57 million, which calls for an upward adjustment of 0.1 million.

In **Mali**, as of December 2024, 1,984 schools were non-functional due to the security crisis (Cluster Éducation Mali, 2025). A Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment estimated that 45% of 3- to 18-year-olds were not in formal education in 2023/24 (Cluster Éducation Mali, 2024). Considering that only 5% of children aged 3 to 5 are in school and that only 12% complete secondary education at age 18, the out-of-school rate for those of primary and secondary school age would be 27% or just over 2 million, which is an underestimate. UNICEF reported an out-of-school population of 3.3 million in its annual report (UNICEF, 2025b). The model estimate of 3.6 million does not need an adjustment.

In **Myanmar**, multiple inconsistent estimates have been published in recent years. A World Bank study, based on a phone survey, estimated the out-of-school rate at 6% for primary, 16% for lower secondary and 45% for upper secondary school age populations, i.e. 17% or 1.9 million out of school in 2024 (Fukao et al., 2024). Education Cannot Wait estimated that 3.6 million of 3- to 18-year-olds were out of school in 2023, which is consistent with the 1.9 million estimate for 6- to 17-year-olds (Education Cannot Wait, 2023). But a second World Bank study had estimated the out-of-school rate at 28% (Bhatta et al., 2023) and a think tank reported official data that 6.1 million were enrolled in 2025/26 (Institute for Strategy and Policy, 2025). If the school age population is 9.7 million, as per the UIS database, then an out-of-school population of 3.6 million would correspond to an out-of-school rate of 37%. This is consistent with Ministry of Education announcements in mid-2024 that 28% of public schools were closed (Radio Free Asia, 2024). If the out-of-school population is indeed 3.6 million, then the model estimate needs to be adjusted upwards by 2.4 million.

In the **State of Palestine**, all the estimated 0.55 million children aged 6 to 17 years in Gaza were out of school through 2024 (Occupied Palestinian Territory Education Cluster, 2024) and would need to be added to the estimate. By 2025, 92% of all school buildings needed to be fully reconstructed or required major rehabilitation (Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge et al., 2026).

Somalia is the largest of a handful of countries for which the model does not generate out-of-school estimates because of a lack of historic data. The 2022 Somalia Integrated Household Budget Survey suggests that the out-of-school rate was 74% among primary school age children and 54% among secondary school age adolescents and youth. With an estimated primary school age population of 3.49 million and a secondary school age population of 2.79 million, the out-of-school population is therefore estimated to be 4 million in 2024. This is higher than an Education Cannot Wait estimate of 3.4 million based on a Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (Education Cannot Wait, 2025) but lower than an Education Cluster estimate of 4.5 million.

No estimates of enrolment have been reported in recent years from **South Sudan**. The model has projected an out-of-school population of 2.2 million children. An Intersectoral Needs Assessment in 2024 estimated the out-of-school rate at 42% which corresponds to an out-of-school population of 1.6 million (International Organization for Migration, 2025). But an estimate in December 2023 had raised that number to 2.8 million (South Sudan Education Cluster, 2023) and the UNICEF annual report in 2024 expected that number to increase to 3.5 million in 2024 (UNICEF, 2025c). For lack of further information, it is assumed that the out-of-school population in South Sudan was 2.8 million in 2024, which calls for an upward adjustment of 0.6 million.

In **Sudan**, using baseline information from the 2022 Labor Market Panel Survey, which had estimated the out-of-school rate at 41%, and external information on the three regions most affected by the conflict (Darfur, Khartoum and Kordofan) accounting for 60% of the population, the out-of-school population was estimated at 11.4 million, or 4.8 million more than the model prediction. Education Cannot Wait estimates the out-of-school population of school-age children, adolescents and youth at 9.7 million. Two other estimates exceed the school-age population of 14.6 million, which means they include children under 6 and are not comparable: one says that there were 15.9 million (Global Education Cluster, 2024) and the other that there were 17 million out of school (UNICEF, 2025d). For lack of better evidence, the assumption for 2023 is therefore maintained.

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BOX 4.1 CONTINUED:

In the **Syrian Arab Republic**, the 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview reported that there were 'more than' 2.45 million out of school (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2024). The government reported 2.75 million for 2024, which is consistent with the model, and therefore no further adjustment is needed.

In summary, the additional information compiled and assumptions made about the impact of the 10 most significant crises on the school participation of 6- to 17-year-olds in 2023 suggest that this out-of-school population is underestimated by almost 13 million, which would raise the global out-of-school population to 286 million.

TABLE 4.1:
Recommended adjustments to the global out-of-school population estimate including external information and assumptions from the 10 most significant conflicts in 2024

	Administrative data estimate (million), 2024	Model estimate, 2024	Summary assessment for recommended adjustment to model estimates
Burkina Faso	4.0	3.8	Adjust upwards by 0.2 million
Haiti	Not available	0.35	Adjust upwards by 0.6 million
Lebanon	0.43	0.45	Adjust upwards by 0.1 million
Mali	Not available	3.6	No adjustment needed
Myanmar	Not available	1.1	Adjust upwards by 2.4 million
State of Palestine	0.17[+1]	0.16	Adjust upwards by 0.5 million
Somalia	Not available	Not available	Use 4.0 million as an estimate
South Sudan	1.5	2.2	Adjust upwards by 0.7 million
Sudan	6.0 [-5]	6.7	Adjust upwards by 4.8 million
Syrian Arab Republic	2.8	2.8	No adjustment needed
Total			**Adjust upwards by 13.3 million**

Note: Out-of-school population estimates based on administrative data refer to 2024. Superscripts indicate whether it is an earlier year (up to five years earlier, e.g. -5 in the case of 2019 data for Sudan).

> The out-of-school rate across the entire primary and secondary school age population fell from 27.2% in 2000 to 17.4% in 2015 but has remained constant ever since

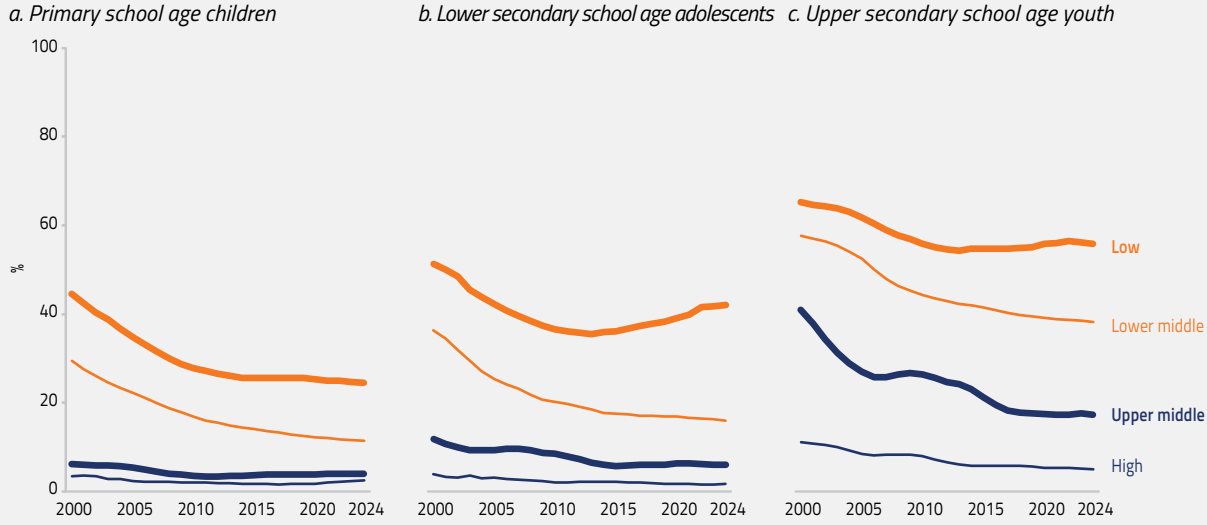
The increasing out-of-school population reflects the demographic growth in low- and lower-middle-income countries. The out-of-school rate across the entire primary and secondary school age population fell from 27.2% in 2000 to 17.4% in 2015 but has remained constant ever since and was estimated at 16.8% in 2024. Among school-age children, adolescents and youth, it is 36% in low-, 20% in lower-middle-, 8% in upper-middle-income and 3% in high-income countries. Globally, about 10% of primary school age children (down from 19% in 2000), 15% of lower secondary school age adolescents (down from 23%) and 31% of upper secondary school age youth (down from 46%) are out of school.

In low-income countries, the out-of-school rate is 24% among primary school age children, 42% among lower secondary school age adolescents and 56% among upper secondary school age youth. In lower-middle-income countries, the respective out-of-school rates are 11%, 16% and 38%. The youth out-of-school rate is less than half as high in upper-middle-income countries (17%) and just 5% in high-income countries (**Figure 4.5**).

While the out-of-school rate in the entire school-age population fell every year by 1 percentage point in sub-Saharan Africa and by 1.2 percentage points in Central and Southern Asia between 2000 and 2015, progress has stopped in both regions. In fact, there has been no progress in five of the SDG regions at all (**Figure 4.6**), and possibly in six out of the seven regions, although data for Oceania are insufficient to draw a firm conclusion.

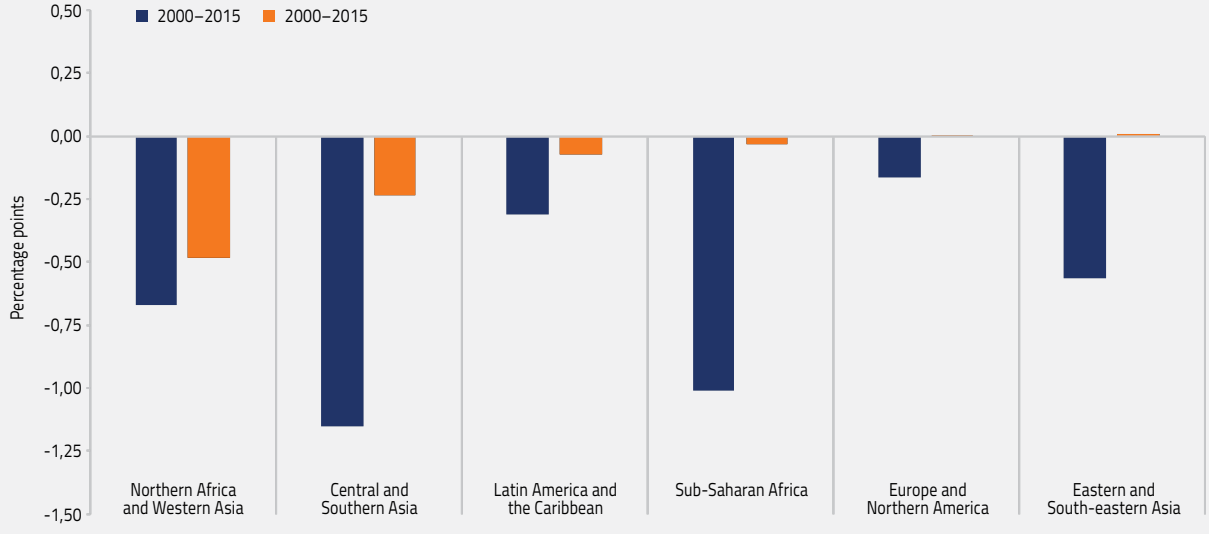
While on average, progress in reducing out-of-school rates has slowed down, this does not mean that all countries stop progressing. The model estimates presented in this section address some important challenges, such as uncertainty over population estimates and complementing patchy administrative data with household surveys and censuses. However, administrative data are the source of official national estimates reported to the SDG database and provide insights into countries' variable trajectories (**Figure 4.7**).

FIGURE 4.5:
Progress in out-of-school rates has slowed down after 2015
Out-of-school rate, by age group and country income group, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_5
Source: GEM Report and UIS estimates.

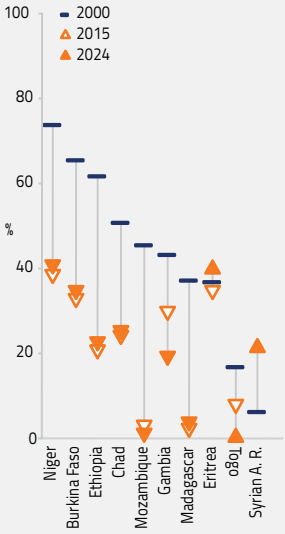
FIGURE 4.6:
Progress in out-of-school rates has stopped in four regions after 2015
Annual change (percentage points) in the out-of-school rate, school-age population, by SDG region, 2000–15 and 2015–24



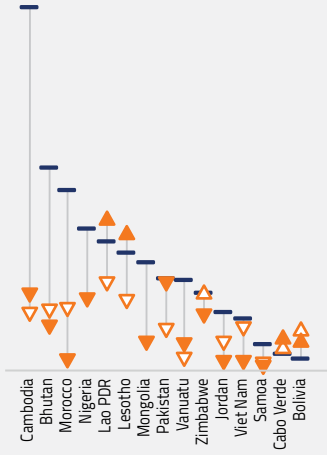
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_6
Source: GEM Report and UIS estimates.

FIGURE 4.7:
Few low- and lower-middle-income countries have administrative data on out-of-school rate trends
Out-of-school rate, by age group and country income group, 2000, 2015 and 2024

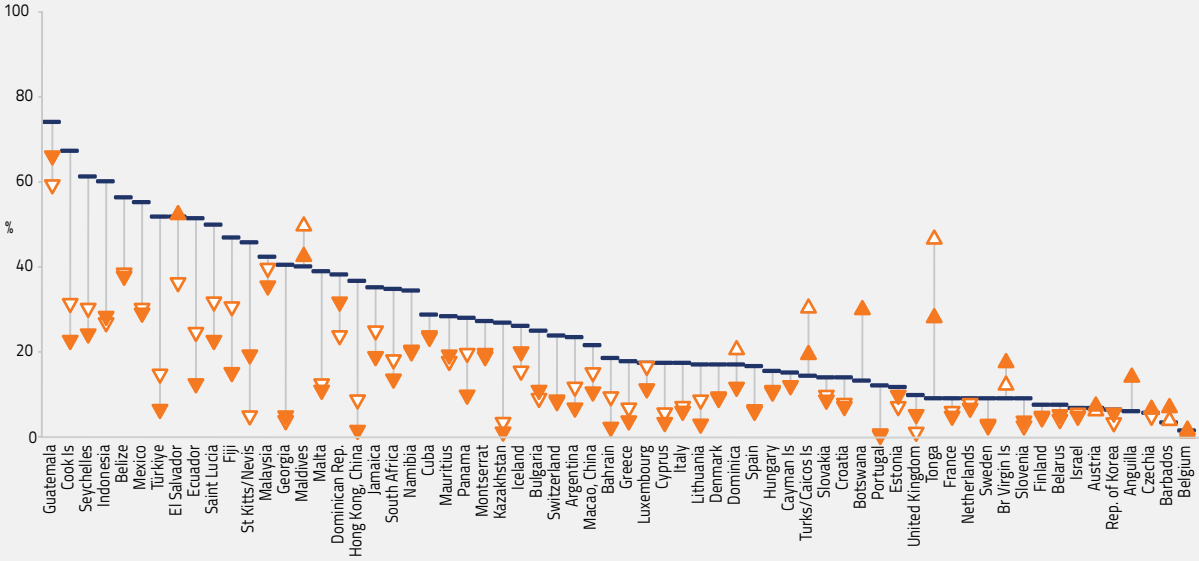
a. Primary school age children, low-income countries



b. Lower secondary school age adolescents, lower-middle-income countries



c. Upper secondary school age youth, upper-middle- and high-income countries



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_7
Source: UIS database.

The UIS database on country-level out-of-school rates was analysed by looking at three points in time: 2000–02, 2014–16 and 2022–24. First focusing on out-of-school rates for primary school age children in low-income countries, out of 25 countries, only 9 had observations at all three points, while 1 had observations at the beginning and the end of this period (40% of all countries). The four countries which were furthest behind in 2000, with at least 60% of children out of school, were Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia and Niger. They made rapid progress by halving their out-of-school rates by 2015 but have all seen a slight reversal since.

With respect to out-of-school rates for lower secondary school age adolescents in lower-middle-income countries, out of 54 countries, only 13 had observations at all three points, while 2 more had observations at the beginning and the end (28% of all countries). The three countries which were furthest behind in 2000, with at least 40% of adolescents out of school, were Bhutan, Cambodia and Morocco. They made even faster progress by 2015 (e.g. Cambodia reduced its out-of-school rate by 85%) and Morocco even continued its progress to 2024. The second and third most populous lower-middle-income countries appear to have different trajectories, with Nigeria reporting that it had halved its adolescent out-of-school rate (from 33% in 2000 to 17% in 2023) and Pakistan reporting a lack of long-term progress (21% in 2000 and 20% in 2023), after having halved its rate by 2015 to 9%. However, both countries have struggled with their population census in recent years.

Finally, with respect to out-of-school rates for upper secondary school age youth in upper-middle- and high-income countries, out of 129 countries, 61 had observations at all three points, while 3 more had observations at the beginning and the end (50% of all countries). Only 5% of countries had no observations at all at the three points in time, compared to 9% of lower-middle and 24% of low-income countries. Of the 3 most populous among the 10 countries furthest behind in 2000, with at least 50% of youth out of school, all made rapid progress by 2015. Indonesia and Mexico have stagnated since 2015, but Türkiye continued its progress, reducing its out-of-school rate by 88% by 2024, a record exceeded only by Bahrain, Kazakhstan and Portugal.

PROGRESS IN COMPLETION DOES NOT ALWAYS FOLLOW PROGRESS IN ENROLMENT

Not all education systems retain students through to completion and therefore, progress in enrolment has not always been accompanied by comparable gains in completion. The most important development in monitoring education participation since 2015 is the introduction of the completion rate as a second global indicator for SDG target 4.1.

> The most important development in monitoring education participation since 2015 is the introduction of the completion rate as a second global indicator for SDG target 4.1

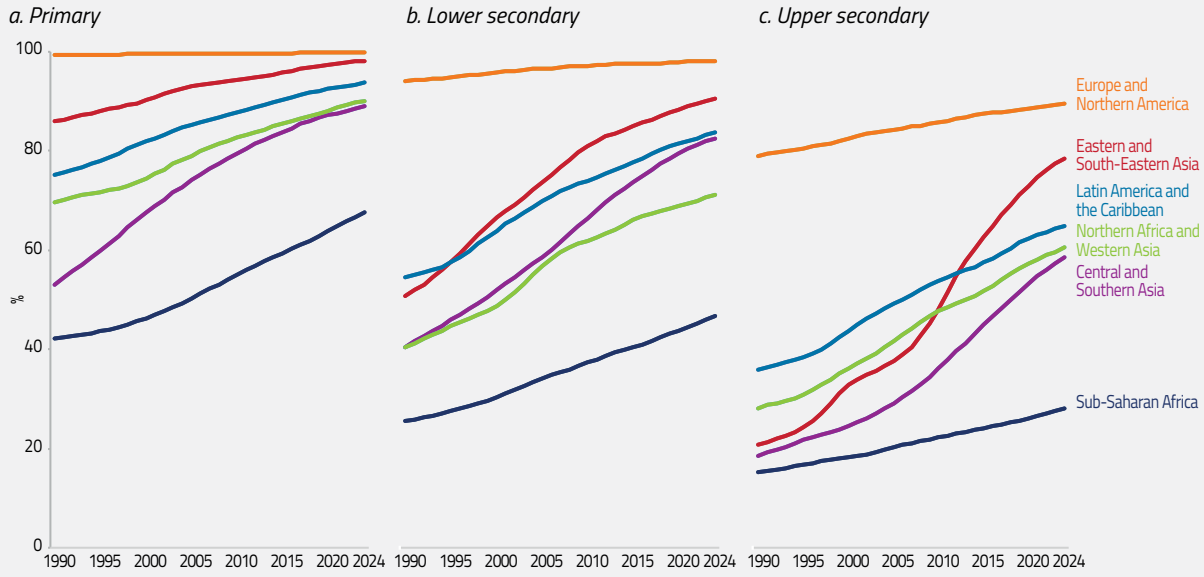
During discussions about the SDG 4 monitoring framework in 2014 and 2015, there was general consensus that a global indicator should reflect the target 4.1 formulation that 'all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes'. To mark the shift of attention from participation to learning, an indicator was therefore originally proposed that would consist of two components: the percentage of children completing each education cycle; and the percentage of these students who had achieved a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics. Some international organizations, led by the OECD, argued that because it would be difficult to identify and agree on a minimum proficiency level, there was a risk that countries would drop the learning component, which would therefore be lost. Counterintuitively, it was therefore proposed to drop the completion component, leaving a major gap in the monitoring framework.

The UIS and the GEM Report worked to fill this gap, taking the opportunity of the first Comprehensive Review of the SDG monitoring framework under the auspices of the intergovernmental Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) in 2019. The completion rate indicator that was endorsed as SDG global indicator 4.1.2 in 2020 was methodologically different to the indicator that had up to that point represented completion: the gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary (and lower secondary) school. The intake rate, like other enrolment rate indicators, is heavily dependent on the population denominator, which comes from a different source than the enrolment measure, often creating inconsistencies. For instance, 15% of age-specific enrolment observations in the UIS database exceed the relevant single-age population (UIS and GEM Report, 2022). In the case of a single age population measure, like the one required for the intake rate, the weaknesses of a population measure are exacerbated.

As a result, it was proposed that the completion rate be sourced from surveys and be defined over the age group three to five years above graduation age to address the challenges of late enrolment and repetition. The development of a model by the GEM Report has thereby also helped address potential challenges with survey biases and periodicity (Dharamshi et al., 2022).

The long-term perspective afforded by the completion rate model, which extends back to 1990, highlights both the predictability of educational expansion but at the same time that some countries and regions buck the trend (**Figure 4.8**). For example, in the case of primary completion, Central and Southern Asia had an 11 percentage point gap with sub-Saharan Africa in 1990, which by 2010 had increased to 25 percentage points. By 2024, Central and Southern Asia had closed the 18 percentage point gap that separated it from Northern Africa and Western Asia in 1990.

FIGURE 4.8:
Eastern and South-eastern Asia is the region where completion rates have improved the most
Completion rate, by education level and region, 1990–2024



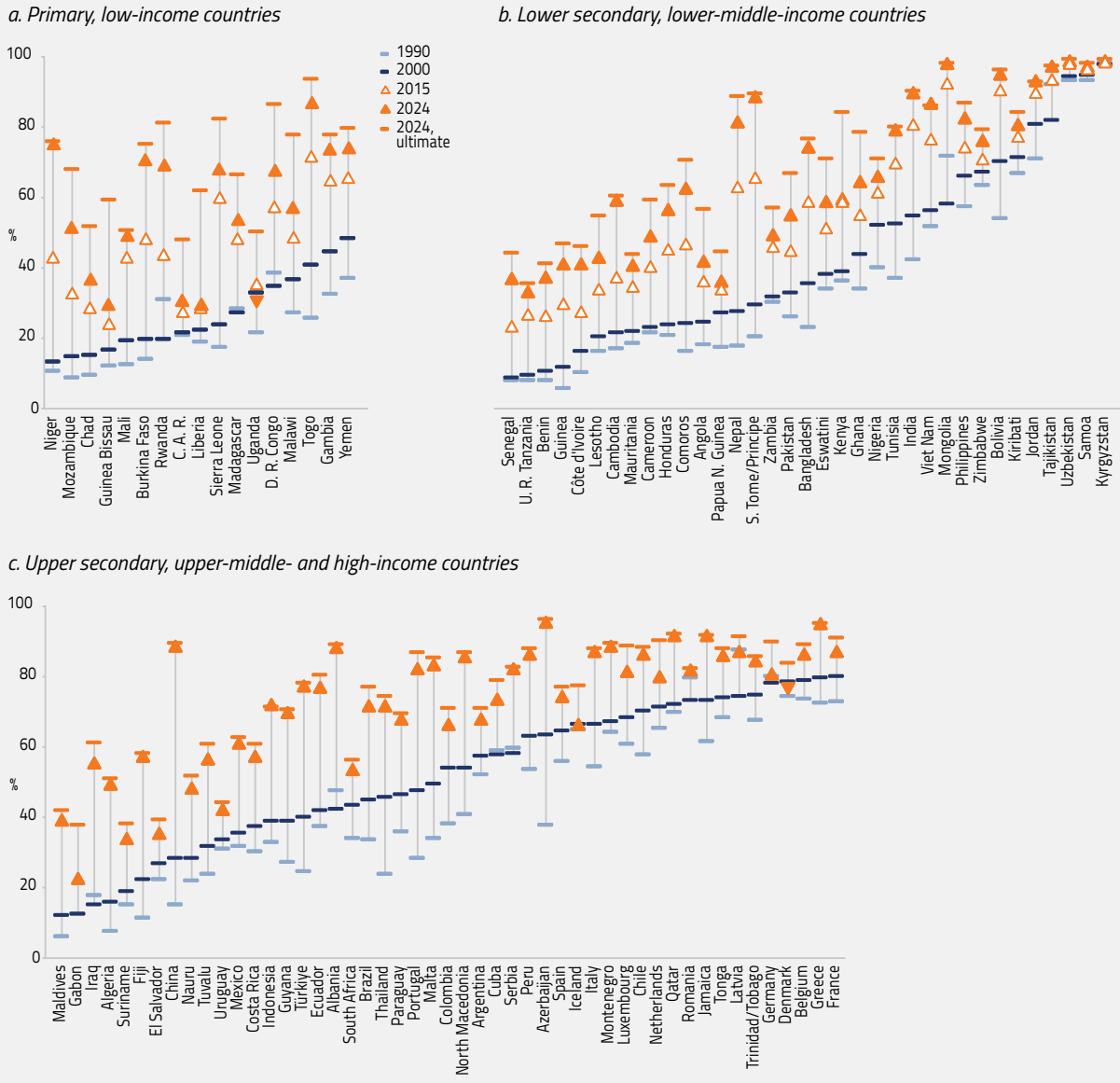
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_8
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW completion rate model.

With respect to lower secondary completion, between 1990 and 2024, Central and Southern Asia and Eastern and South-eastern Asia achieved faster growth rates (1.2 percentage points per year) than Latin America and the Caribbean and Northern Africa and Western Asia (0.9 percentage points). Finally, the growth of the upper secondary completion rate in Eastern and South-eastern Asia, primarily as a result of progress in China, is perhaps the most spectacular education expansion story of this generation, expanding by 1.7 percentage points per year in this period, twice as fast as Latin America and the Caribbean and Northern Africa and Western Asia. Upper secondary completion rates increased by 10 percentage points in Europe and Northern America (where 89% of youth complete) and by 13 percentage points in sub-Saharan Africa (where 28% of youth complete).

Individual country trajectories also show a wide variety of experiences (**Figure 4.9**). To simplify the presentation, as with the out-of-school rate, the focus is on primary completion for low-income countries, lower secondary completion for lower-middle-income countries, and upper secondary completion for upper-middle and high-income countries. Data availability is higher in the case of the completion rate, as the model enables a more efficient use of available data, although gaps remain for small island developing states. Coverage is at least 68% in low-income countries, 65% in lower-middle-income countries and 58% in upper-middle- and high-income countries.

Low-income countries have followed a variety of trajectories with some countries slowing down after 2015, such as Mali, and others continuing at the same pace, such as Rwanda. Overall, there is less evidence of a slowdown in completion than with the out-of-school rates. This issue is treated in the next section, alongside the most striking observation in this figure, which is how the completion rate, defined over those aged three to five years above the official graduation age (e.g. if children should be in the final grade at age 11, then the completion rate is defined over 14- to 16-year-olds), lags behind the percentage of children who ultimately complete primary school with even more years of delay. In Guinea-Bissau and Liberia, just 30% of children complete primary school 'on time' (figuratively speaking, as the indicator already builds a considerable delay into its definition) but 59% and 62%, respectively, complete primary school with even more delay. This phenomenon is quite general, but it is not observed, for example, in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

FIGURE 4.9:
Countries starting from similar initial levels have improved completion rates at a different pace
Completion rate, by education level and country income group, 1990, 2000 and 2024 (timely and ultimate)



Note: Figure c only shows countries where the upper secondary completion rate was below 80% in 2000.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_9
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW completion rate model.

Major differences in progress in universal lower secondary completion are observed between lower-middle-income countries that started from the same level in 2000. For example, between 2000 and 2024, the lower secondary completion rate increased from 24% to 42% in Angola but to 63% in Comoros. It increased from about 27% to 36% in Papua New Guinea and to 81% in Nepal.

Other lower-middle-income countries, apart from Comoros and Nepal, that have expanded at rates of at least 1.5 percentage points per year, are Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Mongolia, and Sao Tome and Principe. Over-age completion is less of an issue at this level but appears very high in Kenya, where 60% complete lower secondary school on time and another 24% with several years of delay.

Among upper-middle-income countries, apart from China that has expanded at the pace of 2.5 percentage points per year since 2000, Albania, Ecuador, Fiji, Iraq and Türkiye expanded by at least 1.5 percentage points per year.

Portugal is the only high-income country to achieve a similar rate. The achievements of these countries raise interesting questions about national and global prospects for achieving universal upper secondary completion (**Box 4.2**).

BOX 4.2:

When will universal secondary completion be achieved?

Only a handful of countries have achieved universal upper secondary completion. Among 164 countries for which the GEM Report has estimated completion, 7 countries have ultimate completion rates above 97%, 13 countries above 95% and 37 countries above 90%. This raises the question of how long it would take for countries to move towards universal upper secondary completion, which is a declared target under SDG 4.

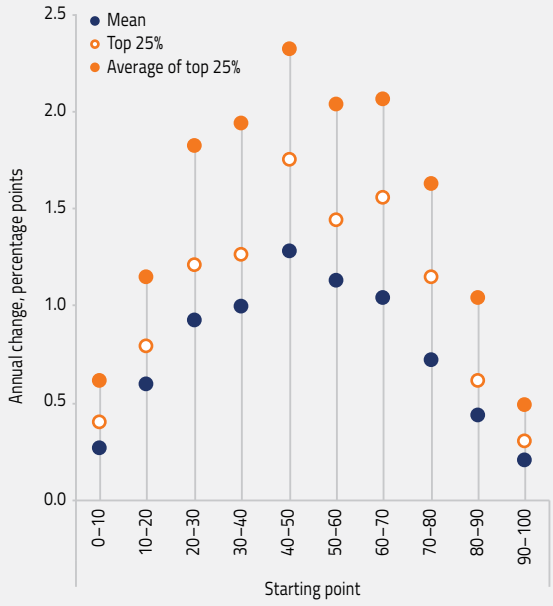
The evidence compiled for this report provides a detailed account of the historical record of all countries' educational expansion rates from different starting points. To answer the above questions, the following steps were carried out. First, the annual growth in upper secondary completion rates was calculated for all countries and all years between 2000 and 2025. These rates were divided into 10 groups based on the starting value from which they were achieved, each of which was 10 percentage points wide.

The mean, top quartile, and the mean within the top quartile for each group was then calculated. For instance, for countries that at any point in the past 25 years started from an upper secondary completion rate of between 40% and 50%, the average country expanded by 1.3 percentage points per year, the 75th percentile country (i.e. if all countries were ranked by their speed of expansion, from slowest to fastest, and the country at the bottom of the top quarter was selected) expanded by 1.8 percentage points per year, and the average country among all those in the top quarter expanded by 2.3 percentage points per year (**Figure 4.10**). These rates were then applied based on countries' upper secondary completion rates in 2025. As the projected value crosses to a different group, the rate of growth of the new group is used.

FIGURE 4.10:

The average growth of the upper secondary completion rate has been 0.8 percentage points per year

Annual percentage point change of the upper secondary completion rate, by starting point. 2000–25



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_10

Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW completion rate model.

An analysis of 132 countries at all income levels carried out for this report shows that if they continued to expand at the average rate, then 32 countries would achieve at least a 95% rate by 2050 and 84 countries by 2100. If they expanded at the rate of the country at the top quarter, then 50 countries would achieve at least a 95% rate by 2050 and 113 countries by 2100. Finally, if they expanded even faster, at the rate of the average country among those in the top quarter, then 70 countries would achieve at least a 95% rate by 2050 and all countries by 2100, the last one being Niger, which would achieve at least a 95% rate by 2093 (at an average rate, it would achieve a 95% rate by 2169) (**Figure 4.11**).

The world would achieve 95% upper secondary completion by 2105 in the average scenario, by 2081 in the fast expansion scenario, and by 2062 in the fastest expansion scenario. These projections are based on the timely completion rate estimate. If the ultimate completion rate estimate is used as a basis instead, then universal completion will be shortened by five years in the average scenario and by three years in the two accelerated scenarios.

The conclusions are sensitive to demographic projections. The projections give a sense of how long it will take for the 2030 target to be achieved, while noting that a country's current state of educational development does not necessarily determine how a country might progress, as many countries have been able to beat the odds in the past.

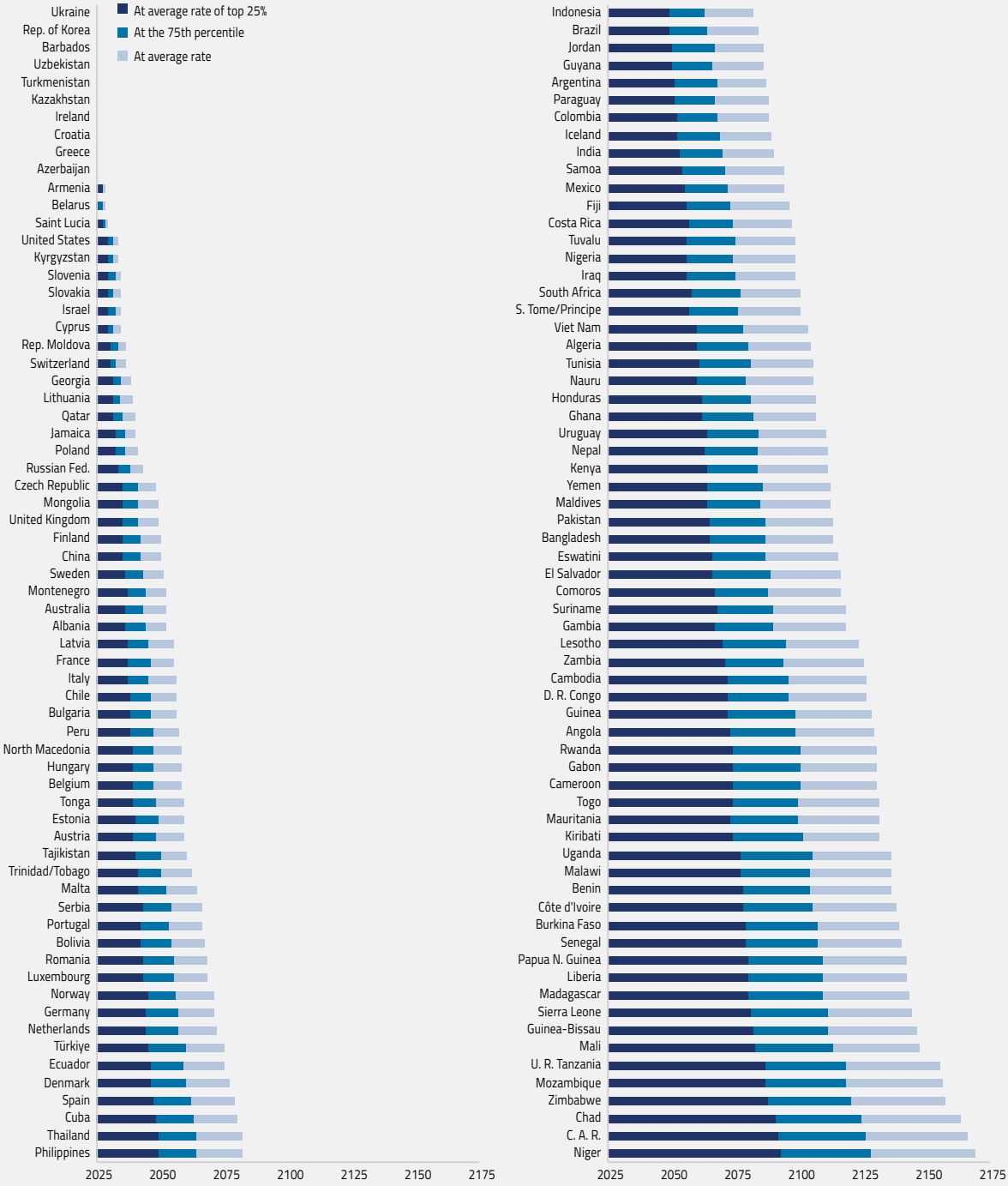
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BOX 4.2 CONTINUED:

FIGURE 4.11:

At the average observed pace of expansion of the past 25 years, it would take 80 years for the world to achieve a 95% upper secondary completion rate

Projected year of achieving a 95% upper secondary completion rate, by three expansion scenarios



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_11

Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW completion rate model.

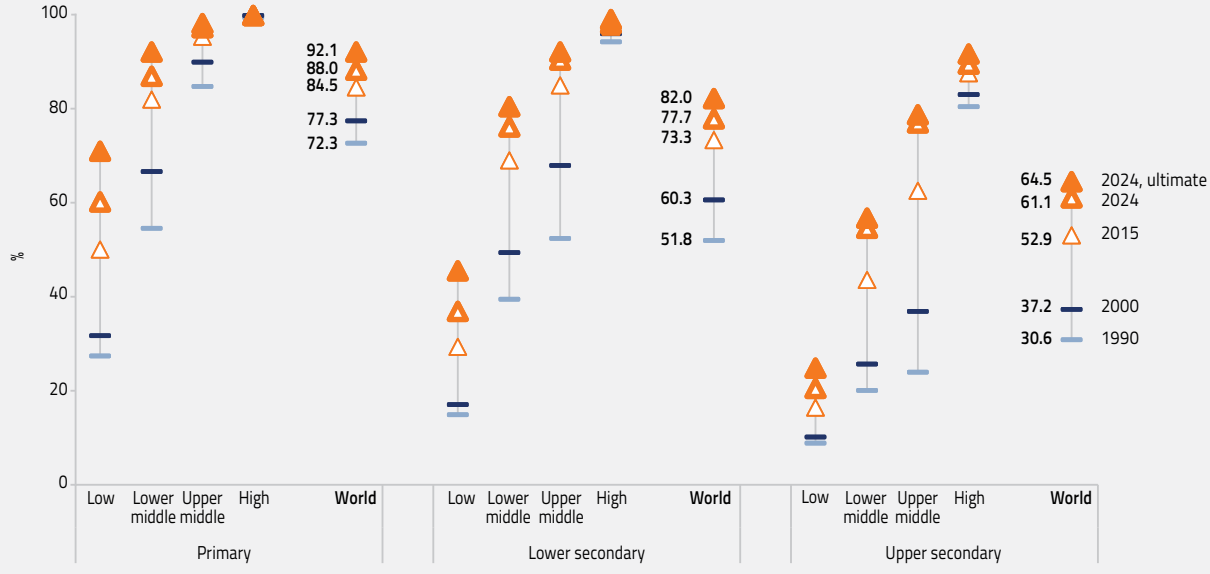
OVER-AGE ENROLMENT AND COMPLETION REQUIRE ATTENTION

As described above, analysis of survey data to estimate completion rates, which collect more reliable information on age, has exposed an under-the-radar policy issue. Many children start school late and repeat classes. The result is that many leave school early, as they have not progressed quickly enough through the education system and are pulled into work, marriage and childbearing. Late enrolment may be a historical legacy, a cultural characteristic, e.g. believing that a child is too young to go to school, or the result of an assessment of risks, e.g. because the road to school is unsafe. Moreover, at least partly because of the rapid expansion of primary and lower secondary education since the late 1990s, overcrowding and other challenges in the learning environment made progression slower, leading to an increase in repetition rates in the 2000s. Repetition may also be an ingrained feature of an education system.

The observable outcome is that in many countries, the percentage of children, adolescents and adults who reach the end of primary, lower and upper secondary school on time is much lower than the percentage of those who eventually graduate. This is more common in low- and lower-middle-income countries – and in primary and lower secondary than in upper secondary education. The median difference between the official and the 'ultimate' completion rate is no more than two percentage points but the mean difference is much larger because the distribution of late completion is skewed towards a few countries. Globally, it averages between three and four percentage points: in primary education, the ultimate completion is 92.1% (compared to an official rate of 88%), in lower secondary education it is 82% (compared to an official rate of 77.7%) and in upper secondary completion it is 64.5% (compared to an official rate of 61.1%) (**Figure 4.12**).

> In many countries, the percentage of children, adolescents and adults who reach the end of primary, lower and upper secondary school on time is much lower than the percentage of those who eventually graduate

FIGURE 4.12:
Although upper secondary completion rates have doubled in a generation, more than one in three youth do not graduate from secondary school
Completion rate, by education level and country income group, 1990, 2000, 2015 and 2024 (timely and ultimate)



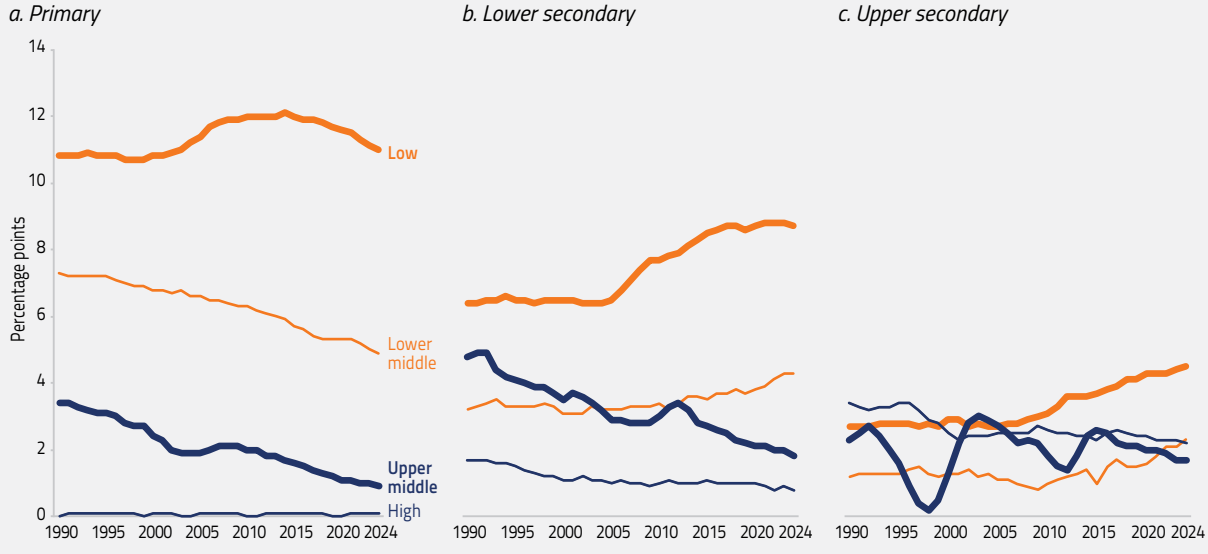
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_12
Source: GEM Report team estimate based on the VIEW completion rate model.

However, the gap is much higher in low-income countries where the completion rate is lower than the ultimate completion rate by 11 percentage points in primary education and by 9 percentage points in lower secondary education. The gap is half as high in lower-middle-income countries and almost negligible in upper-middle- and high-income countries. Analysis of this phenomenon's long-term trend shows that it was already high in 1990 in both low- and lower-middle-income countries. But it was more pronounced in low-income countries after 2000 in primary education, after 2005 in lower secondary education and after 2010 in upper secondary education, where it is still rising. By contrast, the over-age issue has been attenuating in lower-middle-income countries in primary education in the past 35 years but not yet in secondary education (**Figure 4.13**).

As suggested earlier, there is a wide variety of experiences, even within the same regions. For example, in primary education, the gap between timely and ultimate completion is 21 percentage points in Malawi, 12 to 13 points in Eswatini and Lesotho and 5 to 6 points in the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. In lower secondary education, the gap between timely and ultimate completion is 12 percentage points in Pakistan, 7 points in Nepal and 0 points in India. It is 10 points in Suriname, 7 points in Honduras, 5 points in Colombia and Paraguay and 1 point in Bolivia and Mexico. In upper secondary education, the gap between timely and ultimate completion is 9 to 10 percentage points in Germany and the Netherlands, where at least one in five students have repeated a grade, 3 points in France and Spain, but close to zero in Greece and Italy.

> In low-income countries, the completion rate is lower than the ultimate completion rate by 11 percentage points in primary education and by 9 percentage points in lower secondary education

FIGURE 4.13:
Enrolment expansion has led to delayed completion in low-income countries
Gap between timely and ultimate completion rate, by education level and country income group, 1990–2024



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_13
Source: GEM Report team estimate based on the VIEW completion rate model.

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING IS AN OUTCOME OF SEVERAL BOTTLENECKS

Dropout is a process rather than a discrete event. Children typically pass through phases of irregular attendance and partial disengagement before exiting the system permanently, as household constraints, community challenges and school practices interact over time (Hunt, 2008). Attention therefore needs to be paid to addressing structural barriers that relate to attendance, transition and retention.

ABSENTEEISM

In education statistics, the terms enrolment and attendance are used to describe whether a child is in school as recorded in administrative data (enrolment) or survey data (attendance). However, the term 'attendance' is a little misleading, as it does not refer to the more common usage, which for most people is whether students are actually attending school on a day-to-day basis. There are no comparable global statistics capturing absenteeism, despite the fact that it is a critical precursor of subsequent early school leaving. Regular attendance strengthens engagement and raises the likelihood of progressing and completing education (Fadare, 2021; Liut et al, 2021). Conversely, absenteeism weakens ties to school, and often marks the first step in a trajectory toward dropout (Gubbels et al., 2019; Kearney et al., 2023). High absenteeism rates are a dropout risk even in countries with high enrolment ratios.

> There are no comparable global statistics capturing absenteeism, despite the fact that it is a critical precursor of subsequent early school leaving

At the system level, absenteeism is most commonly measured using school attendance registers, although such information is rarely aggregated at the national level and is used mostly for school management purposes.

Information on absenteeism is gleaned from a range of methodologies, usually for research purposes, including unannounced school visits and self-reported attendance from students or caregivers. A review of 27 studies in low- and middle-income countries identified seven distinct approaches to measuring absenteeism that differed in data sources, recall periods and definitions of presence. School registers can, in some settings, approximate spot-check estimates, but discrepancies are frequent and context dependent. Self-reported attendance, particularly by caregivers, tends to systematically understate absenteeism (Evans and Mendez Acosta, 2023). As a result, absenteeism levels reported across studies are not directly comparable unless methods and samples are closely aligned.

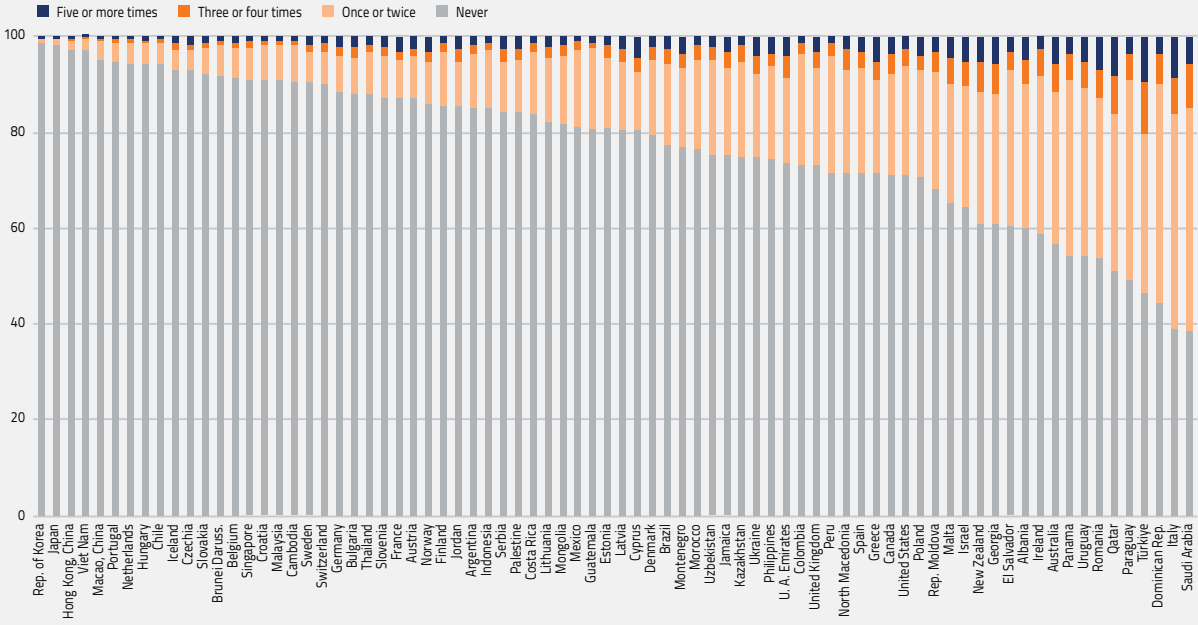
Few impact evaluations report absolute levels of absenteeism, even when unannounced visits are used. Where they do, reported rates vary widely. In low- and middle-income countries, studies report absenteeism levels ranging from less than 10% to 30%, depending on age group, location and definition of presence. For example, spot-check–based studies in Ethiopia, India and Pakistan report markedly different absenteeism levels despite similar data collection approaches (Berry et al., 2018; Bick et al., 2024; Karachiwalla et al., 2020).

In richer countries, standardized learning achievement surveys provide relevant information, as they ask students in the background questionnaire to report whether they had skipped school, skipped classes or arrived late. While it is difficult to convert these responses to any absenteeism measure that is easy to interpret (e.g. percentage of days of school lost in a year), they still indicate that absenteeism is an important issue and that there are considerable differences between countries. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), for instance, asks whether students had skipped at least an entire school day in the two weeks before they took part in the assessment. In Italy, Romania and Saudi Arabia, 7 in 10 students reported they had skipped at least one school day and between 13% and 16% had skipped at least three days in the previous two weeks (**Figure 4.14**).

FIGURE 4.14:

There are large differences between countries in absenteeism levels

Percentage of 15-year-old students who reported that they skipped a whole day of school in the two weeks prior to taking part in an assessment, selected countries, 2022



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_14

Source: OECD (2023).

TRANSITION

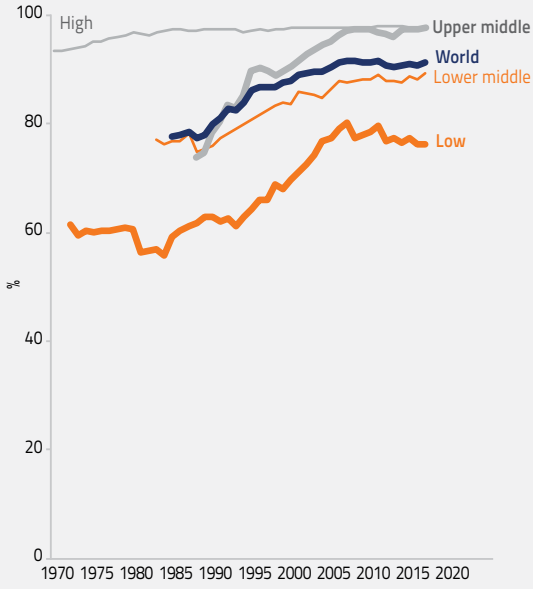
A key moment when students are lost from the system is at transition points between cycles. The UIS database stopped reporting data on transition rates in 2017 but data up to that point provide an indication of the long-term trend that is likely to have continued since then. Globally, between 1985 and 2000, the transition rate improved from 78% to 88%. Progress slowed down considerably in the following 15 years with the transition rate only reaching 91% by 2015. In low-income countries, the transition rate improved consistently over 25 years from 56% in 1982 to 80% in 2007 but then plateaued over the next 10 years (**Figure 4.15a**).

This is also evident in individual low-income countries' experiences. Between 2000 and 2017, the transition rate from primary to lower secondary stagnated in Chad, Mali and Togo. One of the countries that had a major change in policy was the United Republic of Tanzania, which eased the historically stringent constraints in access to secondary education: the transition rate increased from just 20% in 2000 to 71% in 2017. By that year, two countries still had transition rates below 60%: Niger and Uganda (**Figure 4.15b**).

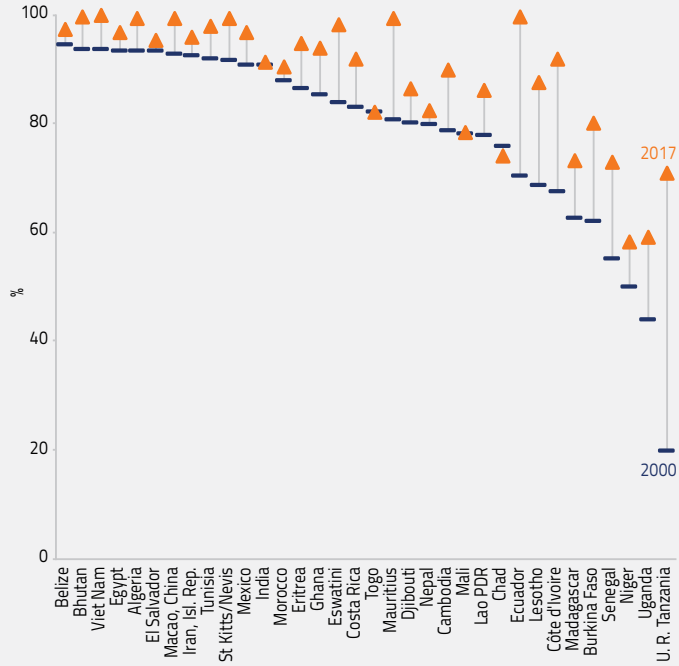
> Globally, between 1985 and 2000, the transition rate improved from 78% to 88% but has slowed down considerably in the following 15 years

FIGURE 4.15:
There has been progress in the transition between primary and lower secondary
Transition rate from primary to lower secondary

a. By country income group, 1970–2017



b. Selected countries, 2000 and 2017



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_15
Source: UIS database.

REPETITION

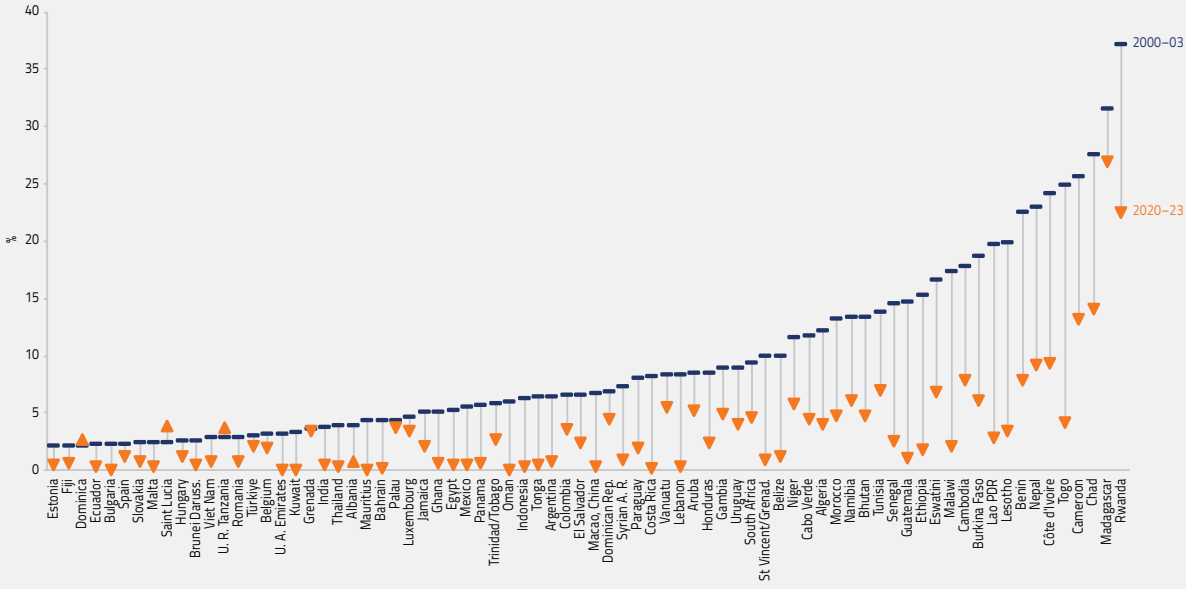
Repetition delays student trajectories and increases the risk of being too old for the grade attended, transitioning late between cycles and, ultimately, leaving school early. Global data on repetition are not sufficient for the UIS to provide global and regional aggregates but are enough to indicate the scale of the issue and recent trends.

In primary education, there are 118 countries with observations in both 2000–04 and 2020–24. The median value was 3.2% in 2000–04 and 0.7% in 2020–24. Repetition rates fell in practically every country, on average by about two thirds. Among countries where repetition was over 10% in 2000–04, repetition fell by at least 85% in Ethiopia (from 15% to 2%), Guatemala (from 15% to 1%), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (from 20% to 3%) and Malawi (from 17% to 2%). However, repetition remained high in Cameroon (13%), Chad (14%), Rwanda (23%) and Madagascar (27%) (**Figure 4.16a**).

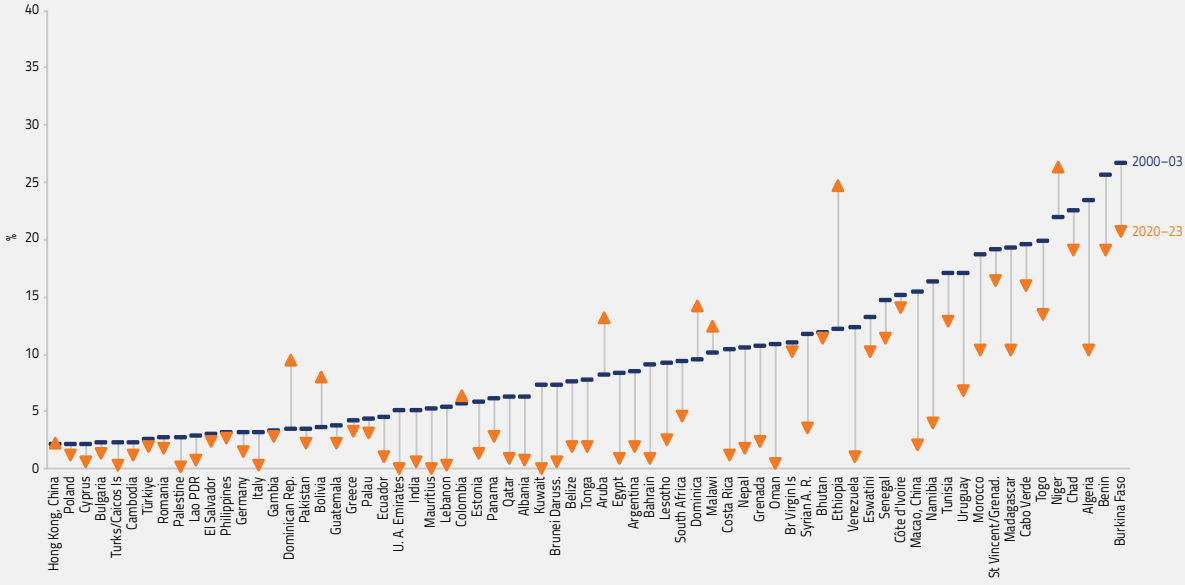
In lower secondary education, over a period of 20 years, there are 113 countries with observations in both 2000–04 and 2020–24. The median value was 3.2% in 2000–04 and 1% in 2020–24. Repetition rates fell in most countries, on average by about 40%, although it increased in a few countries, notably in Ethiopia and Malawi, two countries that had almost eliminated repetition in primary education. Among countries where repetition was over 10% in 2000–04, repetition fell by at least 85% in Costa Rica (from 10% to 1%), Oman (from 11% to 1%) and Venezuela (from 12% to 1%). However, repetition remains high in Cabo Verde (16%), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (16%), Benin (19%), Chad (19%), Ethiopia (25%) and Niger (26%) (**Figure 4.16b**).

FIGURE 4.16:
High levels of repetition in primary and, especially, lower secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa contribute to the problem of overage enrolment
Repetition rate, 2000–04 and 2020–24

a. Primary education



b. Lower secondary education



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_16
Note: The figure shows countries where the repetition rate was at least 2% in 2000–04.
Source: UIS database.

The large fall in repetition rates is probably the main reason for the apparent inconsistency between stagnating out-of-school rates and increasing completion rates. As systems in low- and middle-income countries expanded and their capacity strained to absorb more students, quality declined in many countries, forcing repetition rates up and halting students' progress. As systems have been adjusting in recent years, student numbers may no longer appear to increase as fast partly because there are fewer repeaters – which also means that students are more likely to progress and reach the end of each cycle.

> The large fall in repetition rates is probably the main reason for the apparent inconsistency between stagnating out-of-school rates and increasing completion rates

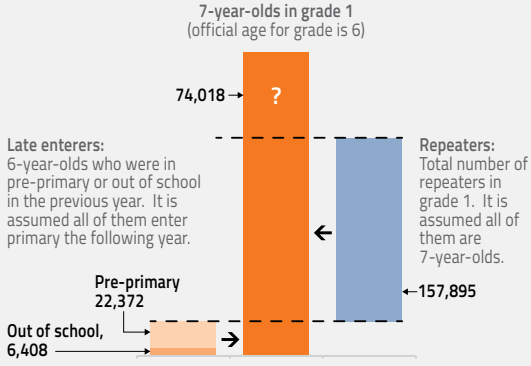
While the evidence on declining repetition rates appears strong, it is also recognized that repetition is difficult to measure accurately, especially in early grades, where persistently high gross intake ratios in grades 1 and 2 suggest that repetition may be under-reported in some poorer countries (Crouch and Merseth, 2017). Some studies document inconsistencies between repetition rates obtained from administrative statistics and surveys. For example, in Uganda, administrative records indicated that 11% of grade 1 students were repeaters in 2017, while surveys of teachers (41%) and parents (52%) suggested repetition was much higher (Weatherholt et al., 2019).

One indirect way to assess whether repetition data are accurate is to examine the age of students as they move up grades. In principle, students in grade 2 should be, on average, one year older than those in grade 1. Age differences greater than one year signal the presence of repeaters. An analysis for this report found that there is generally a positive relationship between the increase in average age between grades 1 and 2 and the officially reported repetition rate in grade 1. Most countries with low repetition align closely with the expected pattern of one year of ageing, while countries such as Burundi, Madagascar and Rwanda show both high ageing and high reported repetition. However, some countries report near-zero repetition despite substantial ageing across grades, including Bangladesh, Benin, and Trinidad and Tobago, which suggests the possible under-reporting of repetition in administrative data.

Repetition may be under-reported in countries with automatic promotion policies, because school administrators may hesitate to report it. In other contexts, high repetition in grade 1 may reflect early entry into primary school without formal classification as repeaters. Parents may enrol under-age children directly in free primary school rather than in fee-paying or less accessible pre-primary programmes, increasing the likelihood of grade repetition (Weatherholt et al., 2019).

Cameroon provides an illustrative example. The official entry age for primary education is 6. In 2022, enrolment and population data suggest that almost 30,000 6-year-olds were either out of school or enrolled in pre-primary education, representing the maximum pool of potential late entrants into grade 1 the following year. Yet in 2023, more than 260,000 7-year-olds were enrolled in grade 1. Even assuming that all potential late entrants entered at age 7, this implies at least 230,000 repeaters. However, fewer than 160,000 repeaters were officially reported, suggesting the potential under-reporting of more than 70,000 students (**Figure 4.17**). Understanding repetition dynamics is therefore essential for interpreting completion and progression indicators and for assessing the efficiency and equity of education systems.

FIGURE 4.17:
In Cameroon, the number of repeaters is likely to be under-reported
Distribution of 6-year-olds in 2022 and 7-year-olds in 2023 by education status, Cameroon



Note: The number of out-of-school 6-year-olds was calculated by subtracting the total number of 6-year-olds enrolled regardless of level or grade from the school-age population at the primary entry age.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_17
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

DID COVID-19 AFFECT PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION PARTICIPATION?

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered the largest disruption to education systems in modern history, raising widespread concerns that school closures and prolonged interruptions to face-to-face instruction would translate into lasting setbacks in access to education. Early projections warned of sharp increases in school dropout, particularly among disadvantaged children who were at higher risk of disengagement from school, not least as their families struggled financially.

However, assessing this impact presents significant challenges. First, the consequences of school closures are likely to be cumulative, for instance, if children fell behind in their learning and struggled subsequently in school, and may therefore materialize only over the medium term. Early school leaving may be best captured by indicators such as the completion rate, which only show a change after several years. As a result, it may still be too early to fully observe the pandemic's effects on access outcomes. Second, data availability has deteriorated in the post-COVID period, as administrative reporting systems were disrupted in many countries and the implementation of household surveys slowed down. These constraints mean that any assessment of COVID-19's impact on access is tentative and limited to a subset of countries with sufficiently complete and comparable data.

> Any assessment of COVID-19's impact on access is tentative and limited to a subset of countries with sufficiently complete and comparable data

For the purpose of this report, trends in access to lower secondary education before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic were examined by jointly tracking gross enrolment ratios and over-age enrolment, before (2015–19), during (2020–21) and after (2022–24) COVID-19 in 29 countries. Gross enrolment ratios remained high and largely stable, indicating that participation levels were maintained despite the disruption caused by school closures. In many countries, a decline in over-age rates is observed. In contrast, a smaller group of countries shows persistent or rising over-age enrolment during or after the pandemic, suggesting that enrolment levels may be masking underlying delays in progression. Overall, the COVID-19 impact on access is not well captured by enrolment alone: while participation has largely held up in the short term, growing over-age enrolment in some countries suggests that some adjustments have taken place, which may have longer-term implications for completion and dropout beyond the immediate post-pandemic period.

CONCLUSION

Major developments have taken place in the past 25 years in the expansion of educational systems. At the end of the imposition of structural adjustment policies in the late 1990s, many low- and middle-income countries expanded their educational systems, which was reflected in high enrolment increases. However, the rapid pace of the decline of the out-of-school rates had already by 2010 started slowing down considerably in most of these countries. And yet completion rates kept on increasing throughout this period, at more or less the same rate: a paradox. The explanation can be found in the age distribution of enrolment. The initial bottlenecks were translated into high repetition rates, over-age enrolment and very late completion, especially in low-income countries. These pressures are only just beginning to ease off. Recent methodological developments in estimating out-of-school and completion rates, using multiple data sources, have contributed to a better understanding of these factors and need to be complemented in the future with improvements in the measurement of related phenomena, such as absenteeism, transition and repetition.



Case studies

Albania: DOUBLING SECONDARY COMPLETION RATES IN 20 YEARS

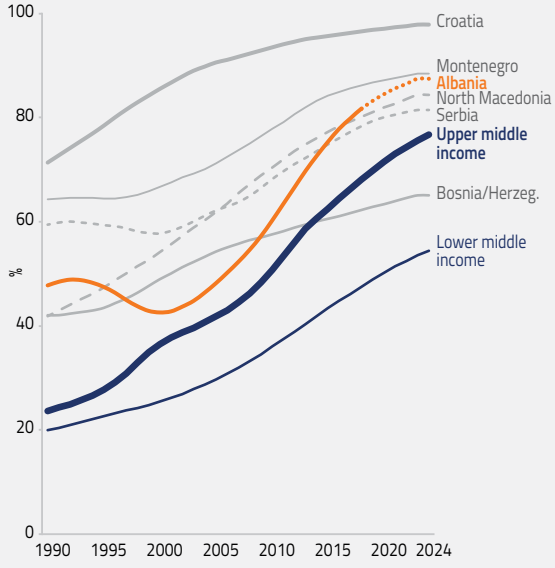
Albania saw upper secondary completion rates decline from 49% in 1992 to 42.5% in 2000. This was during the turbulent years that followed the end of the communist regime, which saw a sharp drop in national income and the resources available for education. Albania was a lower-middle-income country at the time. But as stability returned, upper secondary completion rates increased and rapidly reached 82% in 2018. This is significantly above the average of the upper-middle-income countries whose ranks it joined during this period. It notably progressed at a faster rate than its Western Balkan neighbouring countries (**Figure 1**).

Before Albania's transition to a market-based economy in 1991, the country had relatively high levels of participation at the upper secondary level. But this period was marked by a reduction in the number of teachers, classes and schools, and dramatic declines in enrolment and completion at all levels of education, also as a result of mass emigration mainly to Greece and Italy. While efforts to rehabilitate schools began at the time, the large drop in enrolment was also attributed to the closure of a large number of vocational schools in the early 1990s, most of which were agricultural schools in rural areas perceived to be less relevant in the new economy (Berryman, 2000; Palomba and Vodopivec, 2001). Vocational schools accounted for 72% of enrolled students in 1990 and 19% in 2002 (Dundar et al., 2005), and for 62% of upper secondary school graduates in 1992 before dropping to 13% in 2001.

Since the early 2000s, public education expenditure has doubled from 7% of total public expenditure in 1990 to 14% in 2016, while the share of upper secondary education in the education budget tripled from 6.5% in 2002 to 20% in 2020 (Dundar et al., 2005; UNICEF, 2021). This expansion has helped fund various reforms aimed at improving quality, reducing dropout rates, and developing a more skilled working population. The upper secondary curriculum was revised to be more attractive to students (Palomba and Vodopivec, 2001; Picard and Wolff, 2007). A second chance programme was launched in 2004, which provided students with additional opportunities to finish school, scholarships for vulnerable children at risk of not graduating – such as Roma and Egyptian students and students from low-income backgrounds, free transport for those living more than two kilometres from their school, and a psycho-social unit to follow up with students who had dropped out or were at risk of doing so. Compulsory education was expanded from eight to nine years in 2012, while part-time or distance education was provided for students over the age of 21 to complete their upper secondary studies (Maghnouj et al., 2020; Meçe, 2015; UNESCO IIEP, 2024). Many of the reforms were supported by the European Union as part of Albania's bid to join the EU, which offers financial opportunities to member states, but also requires meeting specific conditions.

Following a further decline in the percentage of vocational graduates (eventually reaching 7% in 2012), entry barriers to vocational education and training, such as the enrolment examination, average grade, and students' city or village of origin, were removed in 2009. Vocational programmes have also been offered on a part-time basis since 2011, transport costs have been subsidized for students and teachers in rural areas, while scholarships, fee subsidies and increased social benefits have been provided to students from vulnerable backgrounds on the condition that they enrol, with approximately 15% of vocational students being offered scholarships in 2025 (Xhumari and Dibra, 2016; Gjonaj, 2025). Following these interventions, the share of vocational education graduates bounced back to 12% by 2016. Since 2017, the country has a vocational education and training law and a national strategy on employment and skills to 2030 to develop a unified system (Sherifaj, 2023).

FIGURE 1:
Upper secondary completion rates doubled in a very short time in Albania
Upper secondary completion rate, Albania and selected Western Balkan countries, 1990–2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Albania_fig1
Source: VIEW database.

While various reforms have also been made in pre-university assessment systems (Aliaj and Bushi, 2025), national examinations have not been a barrier to upper secondary enrolment and completion. The results of the National Basic Education Examination are not used to place students in general upper secondary schools (placement is based on school catchment area) and the vast majority of students pass the upper secondary exit examination (95% in 2017) (Maghnouj et al., 2020).

The prospect of tertiary education, combined with the possibility of studying abroad, a factor also linked to mass emigration, may account for a large part of the observed increase in upper secondary education. Albania was marked by migration during the transition years (Dabalen and Miluka, 2010; Sultana, 2006). However, migration trends have largely shifted from being dominated by the migration of largely unskilled young men in the 1990s due to poverty to more educated and qualified workers moving abroad for better educational and professional prospects, thereby much increasing the demand for upper secondary and higher education (Gardinier, 2016; King and Gëdeshi, 2020; UNESCO IIEP, 2024). It is estimated that since 1991, about 50% of the Albanian population has an experience of migration, with the majority tertiary educated (Hilpert, 2020). Having said that, large remittance volumes from migrants do not appear to have influenced household education spending (Cattaneo, 2012; Mastrorillo and Fagiolo, 2014).

The tertiary education system was particularly transformed when Albania joined the Bologna process in 2003 (Barjaba and Barjaba, 2023), which led to the massification of higher education, drastic increase in providers and enrolments, and mobility of students and staff. Between 2003 and 2013, the number of enrolled students in higher education increased each year by 13% on average, with the gross enrolment ratio increasing from 16% to 64% within the same period, reaching 82% in 2024. However, the precise numbers need to be treated with caution due to the fluidity of population estimates in the context of high migration levels. The rapid increase of upper secondary completion in Albania has been directly attributed to the Bologna reforms (Sulstarova, 2017). Albania has a very high proportion of outbound internationally mobile students. The number of Albanian students studying abroad has risen more rapidly than in the rest of the Western Balkans (**Figure 2**).

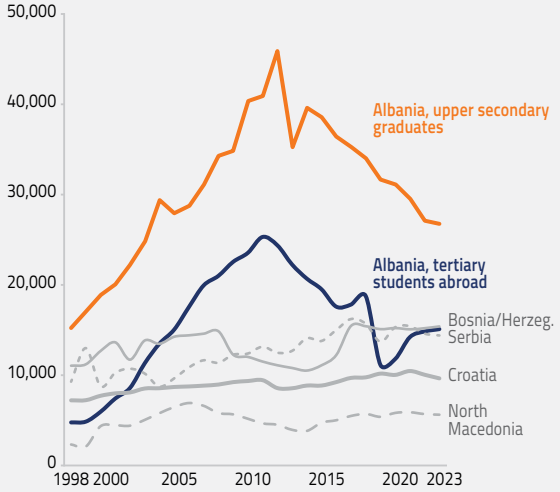
The high emigration rate has had major implications for the demographics of the education system, which has been faced with a shrinking school-age population since the early 1990s (Gardinier, 2016; UNESCO IIEP, 2024). The number of outbound internationally mobile students has mirrored the decline in the number of upper secondary education graduates which peaked around 2010–2012 and has been declining rapidly ever since.

While closures of rural schools have continued (Gardinier, 2016), internal migration from remote, rural areas to towns and cities has offset any potential negative impact on the probability of attending upper secondary school. Changes in the educational profile of Albania's working-age population are also compounding increases in the upper secondary education participation of their children (Hana and Gjipali, 2010; Sherifaj, 2023). Albanian youth have been transitioning from school to work at a later age compared to a decade ago, with the share of the working-age population with a tertiary degree increasing from 13% in 2014 to 19% in 2021 (UNESCO IIEP, 2024).

Despite the increase in completion rates in post-compulsory education, disparities continue to exist for minority groups, particularly the Roma and the Egyptians. These communities face barriers including social and economic discrimination, high levels of poverty, low levels of parental education, and early marriage. In 2017, it was estimated that only 1% of Roma and 5% of Egyptians had completed upper secondary education (Maghnouj et al., 2020; Meçe, 2015; UNESCO IIEP, 2024).

Albania's transition to a market-based economy had a large impact on trends in upper secondary completion rates, with a steady recovery following improving living standards, targeted government reforms, shifting migration and labour market patterns, and the expansion of higher education. In recent years, long distances from school, low parental education and poverty, which significantly increase the likelihood of upper secondary school dropout, have been mitigated.

FIGURE 2:
The number of Albanian students studying abroad rose more rapidly than other Western Balkan countries
Number of outbound internationally mobile students studying abroad and number of upper secondary graduates, Albania and selected Western Balkan countries, 1998–2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Albania_fig2
Source: Albania INSTAT and UIS databases.

Bangladesh: CHANGING CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN BROUGHT DOWN OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATES

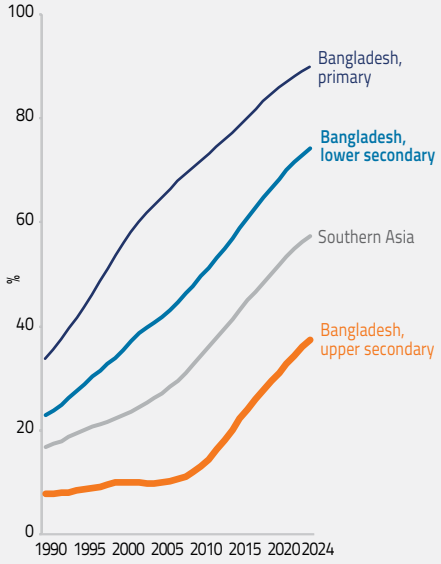
Bangladesh has made huge progress in expanding its education system. Primary completion increased from 34% in 1990 to 90% in 2024, with an annual growth of 2.2 percentage points in the 1990s, 1.5 points between 2000 and 2015, and 1.3 points since 2015. Lower secondary completion increased from 23% in 1990 to 74% in 2024, with an annual growth of 1.3 percentage points in the 1990s, 1.6 points between 2000 and 2015, and 1.7 points since 2015 (**Figure 1a**).

Progress in upper secondary education has been more recent. In terms of the completion rate, Bangladesh was growing at 40% of the average pace of Southern Asia in the 1990s and 60% of the pace between 2000 and 2015. But since 2015, it has increased faster than Southern Asia. In 2024, it is estimated that 38% completed upper secondary school, still lagging behind Southern Asia (57%). In terms of the out-of-school rate, 72% of youth of upper secondary school age were out of school in Bangladesh in 2005, compared to 53% in Southern Asia. But by 2023, the rate had fallen by two thirds in Bangladesh to below the Southern Asian average (**Figure 1b**). Further data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics show that while 42% of boys and girls who had enrolled at the higher secondary level (grades 11 and 12) dropped out in 2009, the percentage was halved to 21% by 2023 (BANBEIS, 2023).

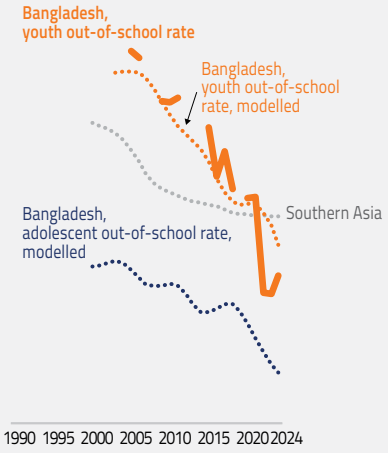
Progress has been particularly strong among girls. The out-of-school rate of adolescent boys of lower secondary school age has exceeded the rate of their adolescent girl peers by about 10 percentage points on average since at least 2000. In 2024, 15% of adolescent boys were out of school compared to 4% of adolescent girls. The out-of-school rates of young men and women of upper secondary school age were equal until the early 2010s but the gap has widened dramatically recently. In 2024, the percentage of young men out of school was 8 percentage points higher than that of young women according to administrative data – and 10 percentage points higher according to modelled estimates that also rely on household survey data (**Figure 1c**).

FIGURE 1:
Bangladesh has made fast progress in youth education participation

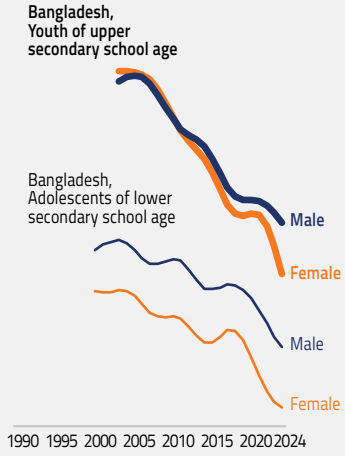
a. Completion rate by level, Bangladesh and Southern Asia, 1990–2024



b. Out-of-school rate of youth of upper secondary school age, Bangladesh and Southern Asia, 2000–24



c. Out-of-school rate of youth of upper secondary school age, by sex, Bangladesh, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Bangladesh_fig1
Source: UIS database (out-of-school rate), UIS and GEM Report team estimates (out-of-school rate model) and GEM Report team estimates (completion rate model).

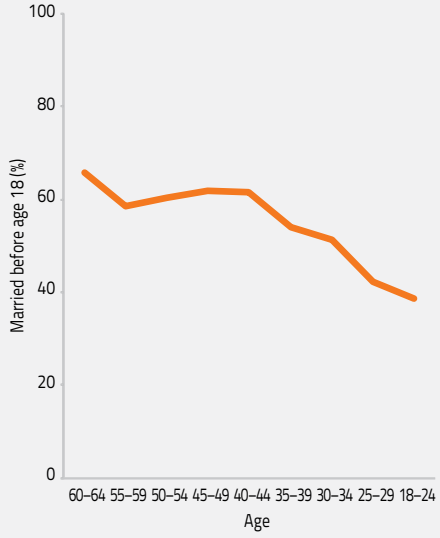
Major changes in women's conditions have taken place in recent years. First, although Bangladesh still has one of the highest rates of teenage marriage in the world (Uddin, 2021), progress has been observed in the last 25 years. According to the 2022 Demographic and Health Survey, the share of women who had married by age 18 had been constant between women aged 40 to 44 and women aged 60 to 64 at over 60%. But since then this share has been falling by one percentage point per year, reaching 39% for 18- to 24-year-old women (**Figure 2a**). The same survey shows that marriage tends to stop education: while one quarter of 15- to 17-year-olds continued in school after marriage, most did not continue beyond a year (NIPORT and ICF, 2024). The 2017 Child Marriage Restraint Act set a minimum age at 18 for women and 21 for men. However, a special provision legalizes child marriage with parental consent and judicial authorization, which is an exception compared to neighbouring Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2018; Datta & Hassan, 2022). Nevertheless, awareness-building programmes administered at the village level aim to prevent early marriage (Billah et al., 2023).

Second, the total fertility rate began declining well before teenage marriages started falling. The decline began as early as 1975, falling from 6.7 births per woman to 3.6 births by 1995, when it caught up with India, and continued falling to reach 2.2 births by 2015 (**Figure 2b**).

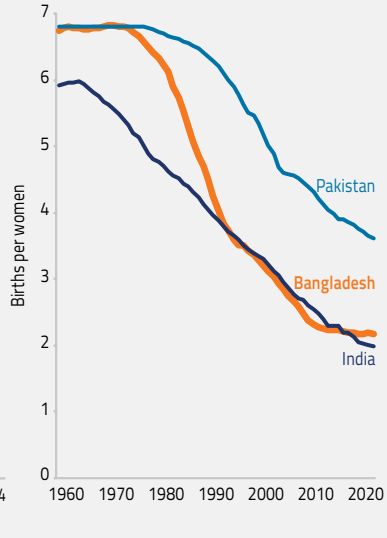
Third, female labour force participation, although still low by international standards, has been increasing by 0.6 percentage points per year since 1990, reaching 44% in 2023 having surpassed India, which stagnated at about 30%, and Pakistan, which has been increasing by 0.4 percentage points per year and from a much lower starting point (**Figure 2c**). There have been export-oriented growth policies, with a particular focus on the garment industry, which is the largest employment sector after agriculture and has the highest number of female workers in Bangladesh (Asian Center for Development, 2020). Girls exposed to the garment sector delayed marriage and childbirth. Having a garment factory nearby led to an increase in girls' educational attainment, linked to the demand for skills in factories that offered job opportunities for women. Young women opted for garment factory jobs at the ages of 17 to 23 instead of getting married. At the same time, factory employment was also estimated to have had a small negative effect on school enrolment of 17- and 18-year-olds (Heath and Mobarak, 2015). Altogether, these significant changes in the status of girls and women in the past few decades have both contributed to education expansion and were shaped by it.

FIGURE 2:
Women's conditions have been changed rapidly in Bangladesh

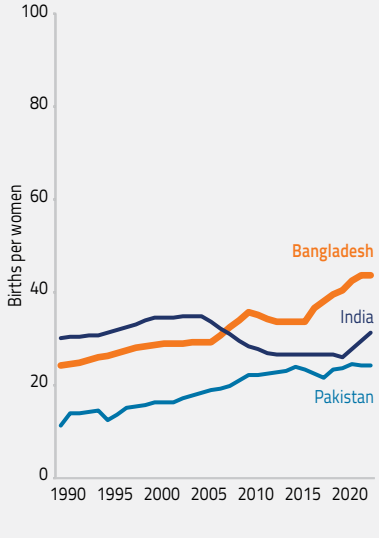
a. Teenage marriage rate, by women's age, Bangladesh, 2022



b. Total fertility rate, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, 1960–2023



c. Women's labour force participation rate, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, 1960–2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Bangladesh_fig2
Source: World Development Indicators.

One of the education programmes that targeted girls and accelerated labour supply developments was the Female Secondary School Assistance Programme, a conditional cash transfer introduced in 1994. Its objective was to increase girls' enrolment and secondary completion, as well as delay the age at which they marry. Longitudinal analysis of individual and household data over 26 years shows that the programme improved education outcomes (for girls and their brothers), delayed marriage and reduced fertility, while it increased the probability of employment (Khandker et al., 2021).

Other education programmes have targeted the poor. The Reaching Out-of-School Children (ROSC) programme was a second-chance education programme, introduced in 2005 and funded by the World Bank. It helped primary and lower secondary school age children and adolescents that had left school early to transition back to formal secondary education through community-based centres. An evaluation found that it helped enrol about 500,000 out-of-school children. Compared to religious schools (madrasas) and non-government schools (mostly run by BRAC) alternatives, ROSC centres had a higher presence in poor sub-districts (Asadullah, 2016). A second phase began in 2013, building on experiences from both public and non-governmental innovations that blended formal and non-formal education approaches. The project funded learning centres in targeted communities and provided student allowances. The number of children enrolled in its centres increased from 260,000 to almost 700,000 by 2021; the children came from extremely poor households. Almost 50,000 children living in urban slums also received primary education through an accelerated learning model (World Bank, 2022).

Another intervention was to strengthen the employment focus through vocational education, which has the potential to keep those in school who would not otherwise have continued schooling after lower secondary. The number of technical and vocational education and training institutions doubled from 1,600 in 2002 to 3,300 in 2012 and then more than doubled to almost 8,000 by 2022. In this period, enrolment increased tenfold, from 130,000 to 1,300,000, of which three quarters were boys. About 20% of boys in grades 11 and 12 attended a vocational school in 2023 (BANBEIS, 2023).

Finally, there has been an effort to simplify the high-stakes secondary school certificate examination in order to increase the pass rates and reduce dropout, which was escalating between grades 6 and 10. Students were found to struggle with the demands of their studies, as well as with examination fees. The Bangladesh Secondary School Certificate pass rate increased from 48% in 2004 to 86% in 2012 and 93% in 2014 (ADB, 2015). During COVID-19, the secondary school examination was reduced to three elective subjects and an abbreviated syllabus, while students were given more time to prepare. As a result, in 2021, 95% of candidates passed higher secondary or equivalent examinations (Mamun, 2021) (**Figure 3**). Making examinations easier has been criticized as a sign of having prioritized access over quality. Media reporting has highlighted concerns over the fact that over 90% of students who achieve a grade 5 point average, the highest score that can be attained at the upper secondary level, fail the university entrance examination (Suman, 2025).

FIGURE 3:
It has become easier to pass the secondary and higher secondary examinations
Percentage of candidates who pass certificate examinations, by level. 1990–2023

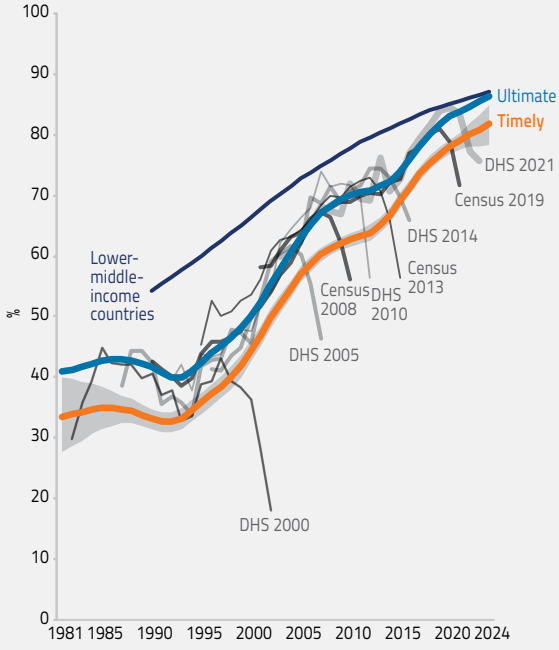


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Bangladesh_fig3
Source: BANBEIS, 2023.

Cambodia: REBUILDING AN EDUCATION SYSTEM FROM SCRATCH

In 1980, Cambodia emerged from the Khmer Rouge regime – and its systematic persecution and killing of millions of citizens – with a destroyed education system: few trained teachers, crumbling buildings and scarce resources (Meas et al., 2024). Barely one in three children were completing primary school in 1995, and no progress had been made in the difficult first 15 years of transition. At that point, the situation began changing. Over the next 30 years, the primary completion rate has been increasing at an almost constant rate of 1.5 percentage points per year, except for a brief slowdown around 2010. It reached 82% in 2024 – or 85% if very late completers are included – converging towards the global average (**Figure 1**).

FIGURE 1:
In 30 years, Cambodia has achieved a 45-percentage-point increase in the primary completion rate
Primary completion rate, modelled estimates and individual survey estimates, Cambodia and lower-middle-income countries, 2000–24



Note : DHS = Demographic and Health Survey.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cambodia_fig1
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW model.

Early in this period, Cambodia also reduced the percentage of students who were enrolling late or repeating grades. According to the UIS database, the repetition rate in primary education fell from 32% in 1994 to 11% in 2001 and 6% in 2011, a level at which it has stayed until now. Nevertheless, this level also means that an estimated 29% of students have repeated at least one grade, most often in the first two years. In 2018, 40% of 15-year-olds were already a year behind their expected grade (Cambodia Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, 2018).

In Cambodia, survey data sources are both abundant and consistent with each other. In addition to 3 rounds of the population census and 5 rounds of the DHS, 13 rounds of the Cambodia Socio-economic Survey (CSES) between 2004 and 2023 also confirm progress in primary completion (which reached 84% among the age group 15 to 24 in 2023) and show the contrast with those who survived the genocide (just one in five of those aged 65 and above had completed primary school) (Cambodia National Institute of Statistics, 2025).

By the mid-1990s, a political consensus emerged in support of education as an essential driver of national recovery and long-term development (Tao and Kao, 2024). The 1993 Constitution had enshrined education as a right and guaranteed free primary and secondary schooling. In 1996, the government restructured the system from 4+3+3 to 6+3+3 years (Chhinh and Dy, 2009) and abolished the primary education graduation examination.

In the early 2000s, education became a national project, supported by a coalition of government agencies and non-governmental organizations (Engel, 2011) as well as international partners who engaged in a sector-wide programme (Hattori, 2009). Education was positioned centrally in the four phases of the Rectangular Strategy (for 'growth, employment, equity and efficiency') and successive National Strategic Development Plans. In turn, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports also translated these frameworks into successive Education Strategic Plans since 2004–08 and the Cambodia Education 2030 Roadmap.

Policies have addressed a range of challenges. A first challenge is poor quality of education, which various initiatives have tried to improve, although their impact on progression and completion has not been assessed. A flagship initiative was the Child-Friendly School programme, launched in 2007 and based on principles

promoted by UNICEF, which aims to make classrooms safe, inclusive and engaging, all critical in a country recovering from violence. Questions have been raised, however, about how such concepts were absorbed into the system (King, 2021) and what impact they had on teaching practice (Song, 2015), despite curriculum reform encouraging more participatory teaching methods (Chhy and Kawai, 2025). The 2013 Teacher Policy and 2015 Teacher Policy Action Plan strengthened both pre-service and in-service training and expanded capacity in multilingual (Ball and Smith, 2019) and inclusive education (Millard et al., 2022).

A second major obstacle to education progress has been poverty, especially because very low levels of public spending meant that parents had to sustain school operations through a range of formal charges and non-formal donations (e.g. at school-sponsored flower festivals) (Bray, 1999). In 2001, the government eliminated formal charges, aiming to cut household education costs by 60% (UNESCO-IIEP, 2011).

Following a pilot initiated by the World Bank in the late 1990s, School Operations (later known as Programme-based) Budgets were introduced to compensate schools for the loss of parental contributions (Chansopheak, 2009). These grants were formalized in the 2007 Education Law, which guaranteed free primary education (Chhinh and Dy, 2009). The grants consist of fixed and per student components, which vary slightly by area (disadvantaged or not) and classroom number, and have been backed by international donors, which has been a source of strength but also a weakness because of fragmentation and lack of continuity. Another donor initiative led by Sweden provided School Improvement Grants to all schools between 2013 and 2021, which have since been discontinued. School grants were important but insufficient and schools still raised funds from parents (UNESCO, 2017). The government has expressed a commitment to increase the volume of the School Operating Fund (GPE, 2024).

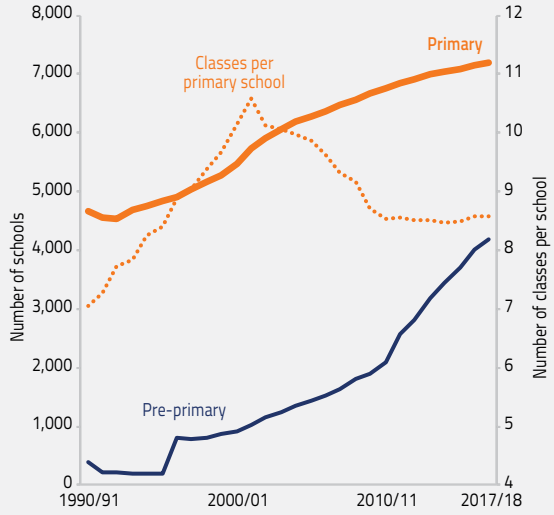
In addition to charges and donations, another major expenditure item for households has been private tutoring, even in primary education. Analysis of CSES data shows that the percentage of grade 5 and 6 students participating in after-school private tutoring increased from 20% to 28% between 2004 and 2015 (Marshall and Fukao, 2019). The distinctive feature of such tutoring is that it is largely provided by public school teachers, a practice tolerated due to the low levels of teacher salaries (Brehm and Silova, 2014). Nevertheless, it appears that the share of households in total education spending may have been slowly declining. CSES data show that the share of education in total household consumption expenditure has remained constant at 2% between 2009 and 2023. But as the share of household consumption expenditure in GDP has fallen from 80% to 60%, the result of improving living conditions, household education expenditure has fallen from 1.7% to 1.2% as a share of GDP. Coupled with a small increase in government spending from 1.5% to 2.2% of GDP, the share of households in total education expenditure has fallen from a very high 55% to 36%.

Scholarships and school feeding are other measures to support poor students. Two evaluations found scholarships to be effective in increasing attainment, one assessing the national programme (MacAuslan et al., 2019) and another a pilot programme, which increased primary completion by 20 percentage points, with larger gains for the poorest (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2024). With respect to school feeding, about 14% of primary school students were benefiting from two World Food Programme–supported projects in 2017/18, with a budget of USD 10.3 million, only 12% of which was provided by the government (Global Child Nutrition Foundation, 2019). An evaluation of three earlier versions of these programmes in the early 2000s (breakfast before school, plus a take-home ration for poor families with girls in grades 4 to 6, plus deworming medicine) found that they increased enrolment by 6%, 5% and 19%, respectively, and improved primary completion (Cheung and Perrotta, 2005).

A third major challenge has been infrastructure. The number of pre-primary schools increased by five times between 1996/97 and 2016/17, while the number of primary schools increased by 60% from 4,500 in 1992/93 to 7,200 in 2017/18. The average number of classes per primary school increased in the 1990s, suggesting investment in larger, urban schools, but the trend was reversed after 2000, suggesting a reorientation of construction efforts towards rural areas (**Figure 2**). Schools were equipped with water supply and sanitation facilities – and the presence of improved toilets has been associated with higher enrolment (Yamada and Vu, 2025).

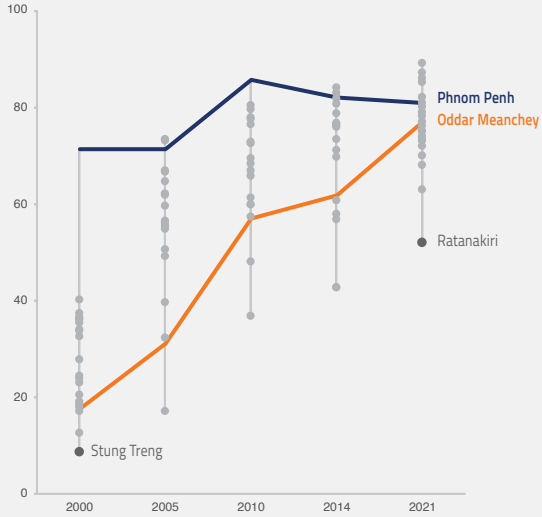
Cambodia has made improvements, including a significant reduction in regional disparity. In 2000, the primary completion rate was 71% in the capital Phnom Penh and 40% in Preah Sihanouk, the province with the second highest rate. In the northeastern Stung Treng province, just 8% of children completed primary school. But already by 2005 the gaps started closing. For instance, the gap between Phnom Penh and the northern Oddar Meanchey province fell from 54 percentage points in 2000 to 29 points in 2010 and 4 points in 2021. In that year, 5 out of 24 provinces had a higher completion rate than Phnom Penh, although the completion rate was still only 52% in Ratanakiri province (**Figure 3**).

FIGURE 2:
The number of schools has increased by 60% in 25 years and mainly in rural areas
Number of pre-primary and primary schools and number of classes per primary school, Cambodia, 1990/91–2017/18



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cambodia_fig2
Source: Cambodia National Institute of Statistics (2021).

FIGURE 3:
Regional inequality in primary completion has declined rapidly
Primary completion rate, by province, Cambodia, 2000–21



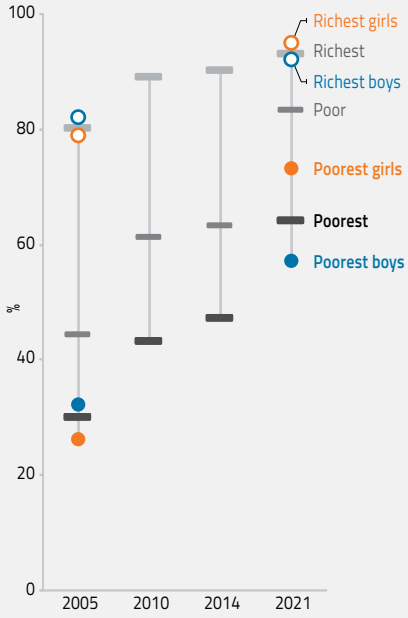
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cambodia_fig3
Source: World Inequality Database on Education based on the DHS.

The wealth gap in primary completion between the poorest and the richest quintile fell from 50 percentage points in 2005 to 29 points in 2021 (64% vs 93%). However, the data also point to a large reversal of the gender gap. While the poorest girls were lagging behind the poorest boys by 6 percentage points in 2005, the poorest girls were ahead of the poorest boys by 16 points in 2021 (73% vs 57%) (**Figure 4a**). A 22-percentage-point disadvantage in primary completion for girls in 1981 (28 points if very late completers are included) was reversed in 2006 (or 2009 if very late completers are included) and has extended to 11 percentage points by 2024 (**Figure 4b**). Girls have also been transitioning at faster rates into lower secondary education since 2009 (**Figure 4c**).

The challenges for access are not over for Cambodia and the question of public spending should be confronted, especially as international funding is expected to decline in coming years. In 2000, public expenditure on education was 11.1% of total public expenditure or 1.7% of GDP. It reached a low of just 7.2% of total public expenditure or just 1.2% of GDP in 2012 because of poor implementation rates (Tandon and Fukao, 2015). While it has recovered to 12% and 2.2%, respectively, in 2023, Cambodia spends one of the least amounts on education globally.

FIGURE 4:
The gender gap in primary completion has been reversed in Cambodia

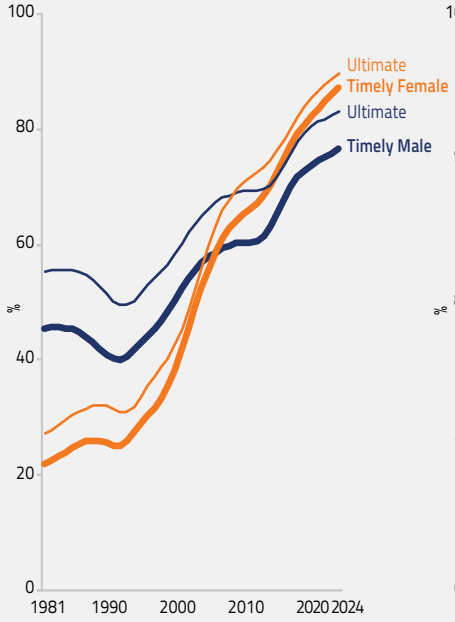
a. Primary completion rate, by wealth and by sex, 2005–2021



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cambodia_fig4

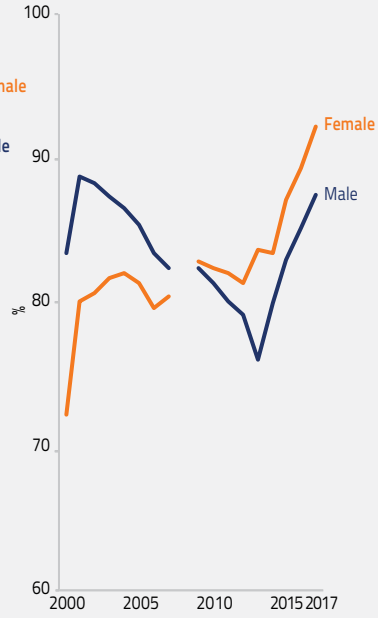
Source: World Inequality Database on Education based on the DHS.

b. Primary completion rate by sex, timely and ultimate, 1981–2024



Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW model.

c. Transition rate into lower secondary, by sex, 2005–2021



Source: UIS database.

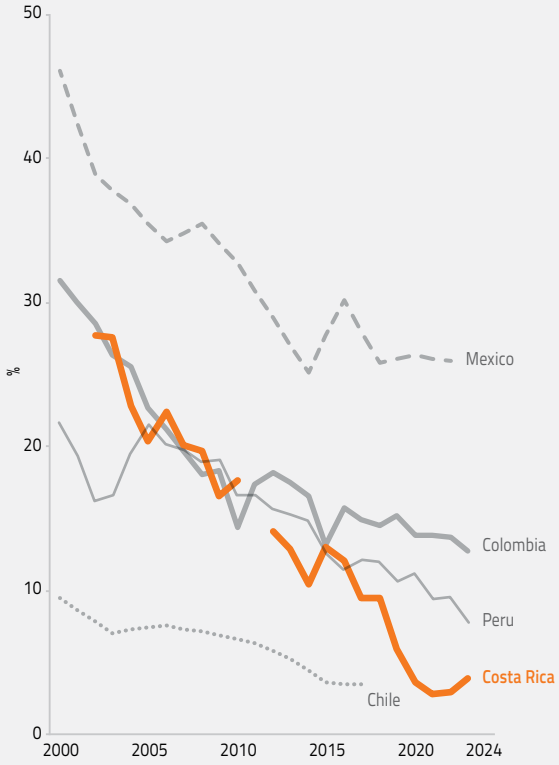
Costa Rica: YOUTH OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATES HAVE PLUMMETED SINCE 2015

Like other Latin American countries, Costa Rica has greatly expanded participation in upper secondary education in the past 25 years. Household survey data show that the share of out-of-school adolescents of lower secondary school age dropped from 11% in 2002 to 1.5% in 2023 and among youth of upper secondary school age from 28% to 4%. Progress has accelerated since 2015, when Costa Rica had the same level of out-of-school youth as Colombia and Peru (**Figure 1a**). To achieve this, Costa Rica progressed rapidly in keeping young people from the poorest one fifth of households and from rural areas in school. As recently as 2016, 23% of the poorest youth were out of school; within five years the share had been cut by 80% to reach 5%. A 24-percentage-point gap in 2002 between richest and poorest was eliminated in 2021 (**Figure 1b**).

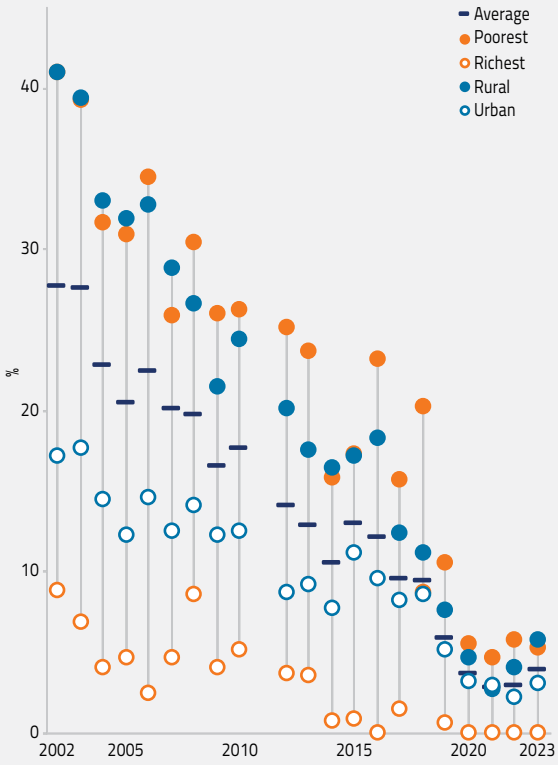
The change is so recent that the completion rate, having risen by 1.1 percentage points per year between 2000 and 2018 according to the National Household Survey data (or by 0.8 points according to model estimates since 1990), has increased by 4 percentage points between 2018 and 2024, even in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, to reach 84% in 2024. The large gender gap, which averaged 12 percentage points in favour of girls between 2011 and 2017 has fallen to 7 percentage points on average between 2018 and 2024 (**Figure 2**). Among the poorest quintile, upper secondary completion increased by almost six times, from 12% in 2000 to 68% in 2024, while the richest quintile has achieved almost universal completion at 97%.

FIGURE 1:
The youth out-of-school population fell rapidly in Costa Rica, especially after 2015
Out-of-school rate for youth of upper secondary school age

a. Costa Rica and other Latin American countries, 2000–24

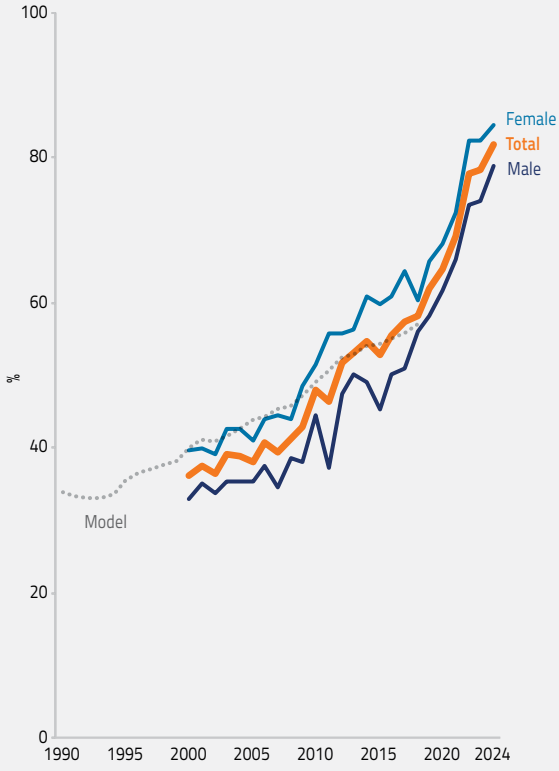


b. Costa Rica, by wealth quintile and location, 2002–23



Note: Dotted lines for Chile and Mexico mean that there are data every alternate year.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Costa_Rica_fig1
Source: UIS database based on household surveys.

FIGURE 2:
The upper secondary completion rate has reportedly increased by four percentage points per year since 2018
Upper secondary completion rate, by sex, Costa Rica, 1990–2024



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Costa_Rica_fig2
Source: UIS database based on the National Household Survey (2000– 24) and GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW model (1990–2018).

Costa Rica offers incentives to alleviate disadvantaged students' costs – opportunity and direct – of schooling and help them stay in education. Along with free school meals and transport, Avancemos (Let's move forward) is a conditional cash transfer programme which has operated since 2006. It provides CRC 30,000 (USD 45) monthly for students from poor households as long as they remain in lower and upper secondary education (IMAS, 2025). An analysis of National Household Survey data between 2006 and 2014 found that Avancemos increased school attendance by 27% and attainment by 0.7 years, while decreasing the probability of working by 6% (Meza-Cordero and Gulemetova, 2023). In the mid-2010s, it covered 45% of secondary school students. The target population of Avancemos is identified through the Social Information Records, which contain verifiable socioeconomic information on families through 65 variables that are used to develop a Target Population Information System index. Nevertheless, mistargeting at the policy level as well as limited awareness at the individual level (Hernández Romero, 2016) mean that over half of disadvantaged secondary students do not receive Avancemos transfers (PEN, 2025).

A motivating factor for education in Costa Rica has been that higher educational attainment has always brought high returns in the country. The average wage gap between those with and without an upper secondary degree (19%) is wider than in other OECD countries (17%) (OECD, 2025a). Some evidence suggests that young people in Costa Rica have even less to gain from entering the labour market without an upper secondary degree than in the past, as formal employment has expanded (OECD, 2025b). Upper secondary completion has therefore become the minimum entry requirement for many jobs in Costa Rica (Trucco and Acosta, 2022): in the services sector, 75% of private sector vacancies call for at least full secondary education (OECD, 2023). Costa Rica has also removed administrative barriers that historically pushed young people out of school and has replaced them with measures that promote continued attendance. A major step was the 2011 decision to make upper secondary education compulsory, aligning Costa Rica with a broader regional trend, previously adopted in Argentina (2006), Brazil (2009) and Mexico (2012) (OECD, 2017, 2018).

In 2008/09, the Ministry of Public Education introduced tighter regulations on grade repetition as a way to tackle a practice that was seen as an artificial cause of school dropout (PEN, 2019). The new promotion system established that students would only need to retake the subjects they failed (CEPPE, 2016). In lower secondary education, the repetition rate was on average 11% between 2000 and 2015 (and even reached 16% in 2010 and 2011). But it fell from 12% in 2015 to 2% in 2018. As disadvantaged students are disproportionately affected by grade repetition, changes in promotion and assessment policies tend to benefit them the most. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a risk that repetition would increase again but certain measures helped keep it relatively low: national assessments were postponed or cancelled, school work was given greater weight, teachers were granted greater autonomy in assessing students, and graduation requirements were adjusted (PEN, 2023).

Although ensuring that students stay in school has long been a government priority, efforts were for many years limited in scope, often focusing on targeted activities to address specific problems (e.g. school belonging). As government authorities came to recognize that school exclusion stems from multiple, interrelated factors, they shifted towards more holistic, system-level strategies

involving a broader range of actors (Pereznieto et al., 2019). A key example of this shift was the launch of the Yo me apunto (I'm in) strategy in 2015, which marked the government's most comprehensive approach to dropout prevention. Rather than create new programmes, Yo me apunto coordinated and activated existing ministry policies, resources and partnerships**,** bringing them together under a single framework. The strategy operated across the national, district, school and individual levels (e.g. offering additional support for priority school districts) (OECD, 2017; Pereznieto et al., 2019). It has helped make exclusion a shared institutional priority rather than just an individual student problem. Exclusion fell by 0.9 percentage points in the first years after implementation (Costa Rica Presidency, 2018).

This policy was accompanied by the introduction of Costa Rica's Early Warning System (Sistema de Alerta Temprano, SAT) in 2016. SAT combines a digital platform that records risk-related information with a set of protocols that guide school responses. School leaders regularly register key data in the platform, such as attendance, behaviour, prior exclusions and socioeconomic information, which the system analyses to generate alerts for students who may be at risk. Based on these alerts and following national protocols, school teams review each case, identify the underlying causes, and design a support plan, with all follow-up actions documented and monitored through the same system. Strong communication and collaboration between schools and institutions at the local, regional and national levels have been central to SAT's effectiveness, helping re-engage nearly 20,000 young people to date (IDB, 2024; UNESCO IIEP, 2025).

In Costa Rica, upper secondary students can choose between three main tracks: academic, vocational or artistic. Within these tracks, upper secondary students can opt for different specializations. Academic and artistic programmes are two years long, whereas the vocational track is three years long. Academic students take the upper secondary exit examination (Bachillerato), and those successful are awarded the upper secondary diploma. Vocational students follow a more demanding programme of study that includes both the Bachillerato and an additional technical qualification. Unlike in most countries, outside a few others in Latin America, students in vocational tracks outperform their peers in academic tracks. In the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment, students in pre-vocational or vocational programmes scored 17 points higher in reading than those in general or modular programmes before accounting for socioeconomic background, and 23 points higher after accounting for it (OECD, 2017, 2018, 2019).

Costa Rica has also expanded the range of pathways available to adolescents and young adults, which has helped keep more students engaged in upper secondary education. Alongside the growth of second-chance and flexible programmes for those who left school, the country has strengthened vocational provision to make upper secondary more attractive and relevant. These efforts, particularly the increase in the number of technical schools and the opening of evening vocational courses, contributed to an increase in participation in vocational programmes from 15% in 2010 to 24% in 2015. While enrolment in vocational tracks remains limited by international standards, its expansion in Costa Rica has played an important role in keeping students in school (PEN, 2019).

Costa Rica

A researcher's story about the long path to improving upper secondary education

Through the Informe del Estado de la Educación, *I have always worked on answering one question: how far is Costa Rica truly advancing toward its educational aspirations, and for whom is that progress real?*

Costa Rica's achievements in upper secondary education are remarkable. This success stems from effective public policies, sustained investment, and a national understanding that education is a shared right rather than an individual obligation. Yet progress has never been linear. It took years of mapping exclusion, identifying vulnerable territories, and proving repeatedly that targeted equity programs such as scholarships, school meals, and transport make an undeniable difference in whether a student stays in school.

We also learned that changing the language changes the policy. When we stopped speaking of desertion and began analyzing educational exclusion, attention shifted from blaming families to questioning institutions and public action. This conceptual shift opened the door to policies that valued permanence and graduation over repetition, helping thousands of young people complete their studies.

Information systems became a quiet revolution. Developing early warning tools and cleaning administrative records allowed schools to identify at-risk students in real time and intervene before they disappeared from the statistics. With these data, the country moved from reacting to exclusion to preventing it.

But new challenges have emerged. The pandemic generated a new category of exclusion, the disconnected, students who were invisible to the traditional system because they lacked devices or connectivity. At the same time, flexibility in promotion kept many inside the system, though not always with solid learning. And now, the geography of risk has changed: exclusion is no longer urban but rural, no longer mostly about poverty but increasingly about insecurity.

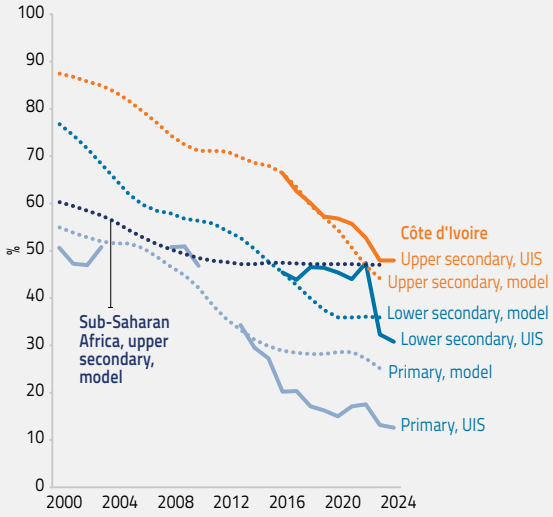
One of the hardest truths is that scholarships cannot compete with the money offered by narcotraffic in vulnerable communities. When young people see no viable employment paths or social recognition for their efforts, schools lose their hold. Structural problems such as these cannot be solved with shrinking budgets or short-term fixes.

Despite everything, I remain convinced that sustained political will, real investment, and strong data systems can transform opportunities. I remain convinced that an increasing, sustained investment in education—one that is used efficiently to achieve strategic goals—is essential for countries like Costa Rica that are committed to human development and whose greatest asset is its people.

Isabel Román Vega,
Director of the Program Status of the Nation and coordinator of the State of Education Report

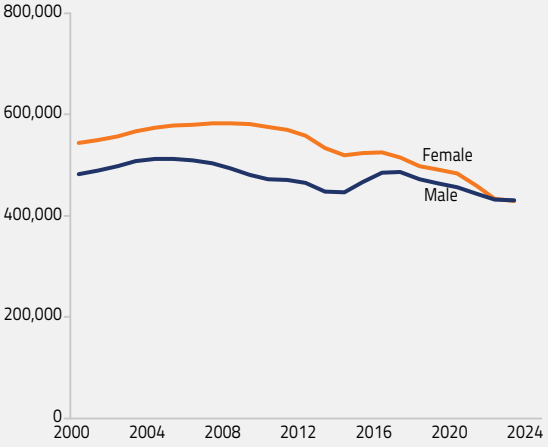
Côte d'Ivoire: POLITICAL COMMITMENT HELPED OVERCOME CIVIL WAR LEGACY

FIGURE 1:
Youth out-of-school rates in Côte d'Ivoire have converged to the regional average
Out-of-school rates by age group, reported and modelled data, Côte d'Ivoire and sub-Saharan Africa, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cote_dIvoire_fig1
Sources: UIS database (for reported rates, straight lines) and UIS and GEM Report estimates (for modelled rates, including sub-Saharan Africa, dotted lines).

FIGURE 2:
Young women have caught up with young men in school attendance
Number of out-of-school youth of upper secondary school age, by sex, Côte d'Ivoire, 2000–23



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cote_dIvoire_fig2
Source: UIS and GEM Report estimates.

Côte d'Ivoire experienced political instability in the 1990s that resulted in two civil wars, the first from 2002 to 2007 (Sany, 2010) and the second from 2010 to 2011. Administrative data on education attendance are patchy for this period; therefore, survey data are used as a complementary source to help recreate the country's out-of-school rate trajectory. For example, evidence from the 2008 Household Living Standards Survey showed that the first civil war had a negative impact on education attainment (Dabalen and Paul, 2014). In Abidjan, where over half of the 224 attacks on schools occurred, schools closed for months (ACTED, 2012).

Encouragingly, out-of-school rates in Côte d'Ivoire appear to have declined rapidly for all three age groups – primary school age children, lower secondary school age adolescents and upper secondary school age youth – after the second civil war. For example, in the case of youth of upper secondary school age, 87% were out of school in Côte d'Ivoire in 2000 compared to 60% in sub-Saharan Africa. The decline in the out-of-school rates slowed down twice during the two civil war periods. But since 2015 it appears to have fallen by about three percentage points per year, converging with the sub-Saharan Africa average, which has stagnated in the past 15 years at about 47% (**Figure 1**).

Out-of-school rates have followed different trajectories for each of the three age groups but are overall estimated to have halved in a quarter of a century, albeit from levels higher than expected for an African country that enjoyed the prosperity of Côte d'Ivoire up until the 1990s. However, due to an annual population growth rate of 2.3%, the number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth has only declined by 20%, from 4 million in 2000 to 3.2 million in 2023. Among youth of upper secondary school age, two features are noteworthy. First, gender parity has been achieved, a remarkable achievement considering that Côte d'Ivoire was until recently one of the 20 most inequitable countries in the world in terms of girls' education opportunities (UNESCO, 2019). Second, this outcome was to some extent the result of the second civil war, which appears to have had a more negative impact on boys' school attendance than on girls' (**Figure 2**). However, as shown below, very large gender disparity at the expense of girls continues to exist in completion rates.

A closer examination of administrative data produced by the Directorate of Strategies, Planning and Statistics points to various factors that can help explain the trend in

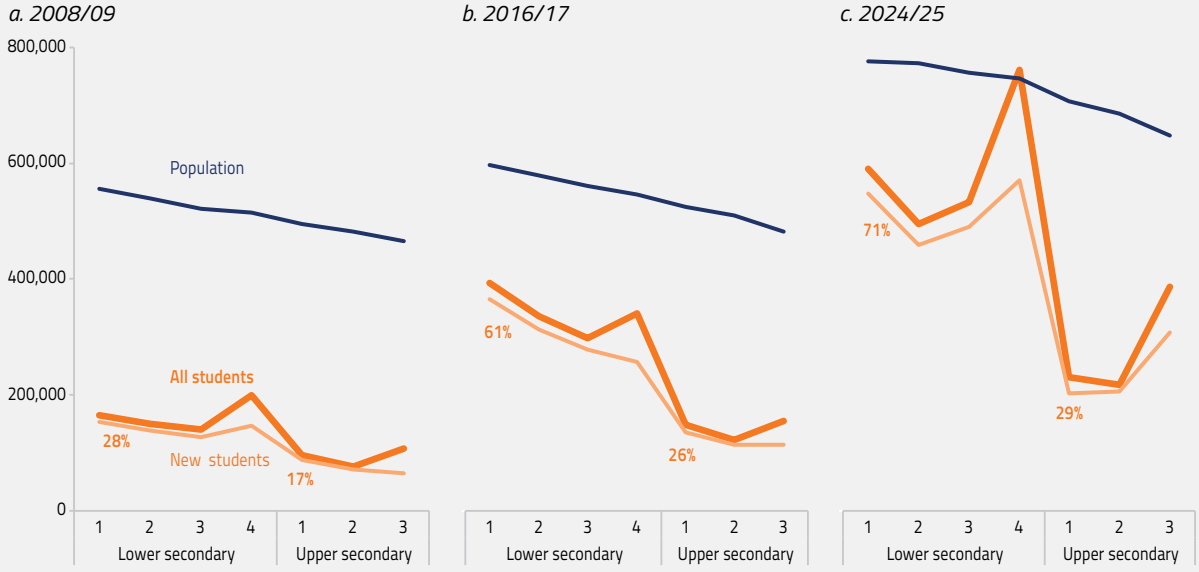
adolescent and youth out-of-school rates. First, the data confirm a significant increase in the intake rate of new students in the first grade of lower secondary school (*sixième*) from 28% in 2008/09 to 61% in 2016/17 and 71% in 2024/25. The increase in the intake rate of new students in the first grade of upper secondary school (*seconde*) was modest by comparison, from 17% to 26% and 29% in the same period (**Figure 3**). Second, the repetition rate, which is high by international standards, has remained constant at 13% in lower secondary – and at 25% in the last grade of lower secondary (*troisième*), when students take a certificate examination (*brevet*). This means that many youth of upper secondary school age may be in school but are in fact attending lower secondary school.

Third, enrolment of new students by grade in the 2008/09 and 2016/17 school years followed a logical trend, whereby the number of those enrolled at one grade is higher than in the following grade. However, enrolment of new students in the 2024/25 school year was irregular: in lower secondary, there were more new students in grade 4 than in grade 3 and more in grade 3 than in grade 2; likewise, in upper secondary, there were more new students in grade 3 than in grade 2 and more in grade 2 than in grade 1 (**Figure 3**). It is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the flow of students.

Estimates of secondary school completion rates based on household surveys, albeit the last survey analysed was carried out in 2022, also show that lower secondary education expanded faster than upper secondary education in recent years. The 'timely' lower secondary completion rate (calculated over young people aged 18 to 20, which is the official definition of SDG global indicator 4.1.2), doubled from 20% in 2007 to 40% in 2023 (or to 46% if very late completers are also included), a rapid increase of 2 percentage points per year, which was only slowed down briefly after the second civil war. The timely upper secondary completion rate increased from 9% to 16% in this period (or to 18% if very late completers are also included), an increase of 0.7 percentage points per year. (**Figure 4**).

The gender gap in ultimate upper secondary completion is extremely high, with young women (13%) completing at half the rate of young men (26%), one of the largest gaps globally. This may appear inconsistent with the earlier finding achievement of gender parity in attendance among youth of upper secondary school age. However, it can be explained by late enrolment and repetition. Many girls of upper secondary school age are still attending lower secondary school and are unable to continue their studies up to upper secondary school completion due to social norms.

FIGURE 3:
Secondary school enrolment patterns have been disrupted by COVID-19
Number of students enrolled in secondary education by grade and grade-specific population, Côte d'Ivoire

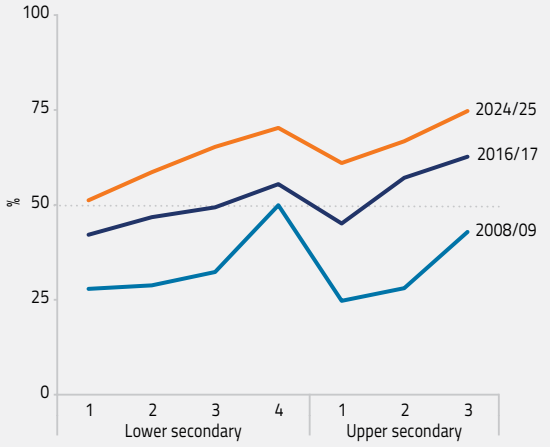


Note: The percentage figures represent the intake rate of new students in the first grade of lower (*sixième*) and the first grade of upper (*seconde*) secondary education.

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cote_dIvoire_fig3

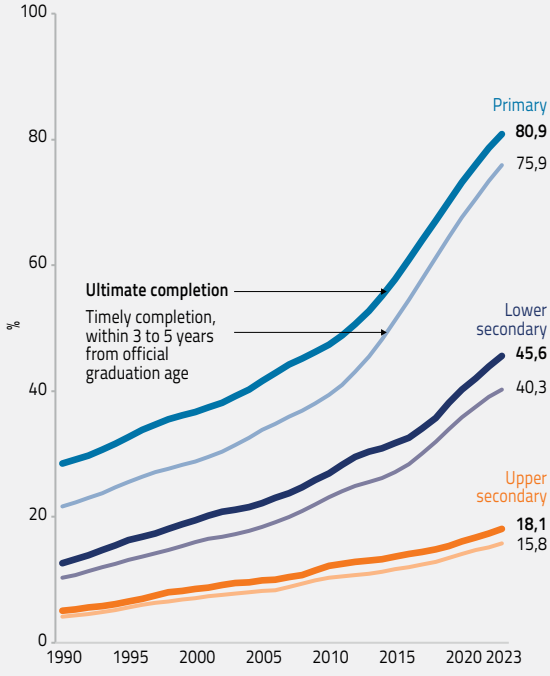
Sources: GEM Report team estimates based on statistical yearbooks of the Directorate of Strategies, Planning and Statistics (enrolment) and the UN Statistical Division World Population Prospects 2024 (population).

FIGURE 4:
Lower secondary school completion rates have doubled in the past 15 years
Timely and ultimate completion rate, by education level, Côte d'Ivoire, 1990–2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cote_dIvoire_fig4
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the completion rate model.

FIGURE 5:
The share of private schools in total secondary enrolment doubled in 15 years
Share of private schools in secondary enrolment, by grade, Côte d'Ivoire, 2008/09, 2016/17 and 2024/25



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Cote_dIvoire_fig5
Source: Statistical yearbooks of the Directorate of Strategies, Planning and Statistics.

The government has taken several steps to prevent early school leaving, both in primary and secondary education, of which the most important was the 2015 Education Law, which made schooling free and compulsory for children aged 6 to 16, i.e. from primary to lower secondary education. The law established bridging classes (*passerelles*) for children aged 9 to 13 who had dropped out of school to facilitate their re-entry into the system. Following a positive experience on school retention in 22 communities that took part between 2019 and 2022 (International Cocoa Initiative, 2022), 277 classes served 5,900 children in 2021/22 and 166 classes served 4,900 children in 2022/23 (Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of National Education and Literacy, 2025a). The model of accelerated learning and tailored teaching methods is being extended to also help students resume formal upper secondary education or transition to vocational training (Côte d'Ivoire Government, 2024).

Another provision of the 2015 law was a sanction mechanism for parents whose children were not in school, including fines and prison sentences, although these were not to be applied until 2025 if no public school was available nearby (Côte d'Ivoire Government, 2015). The number of public secondary schools indeed tripled from 270 in 2008/09 to 899 in 2024/25. But the number of private secondary schools more than quadrupled from 716 in 2008/09 to 3,002 in 2024/25. While most students in every secondary school grade attended a public school in 2008/09, the situation was reversed by 2024/25 (**Figure 5**). The share of private institutions in total enrolment increased from 36% to 62% in lower secondary and from 33% to 69% in upper secondary education. The increase in private enrolment is reflected in the high and growing household out-of-pocket expenditure. Two recent waves of the Harmonized Household Living Conditions Survey show that the share of education in total household consumption expenditure increased from 2.9% in 2018 to 3.2% in 2021/22, with the share ranging from 1.1% in the far-north Folon region to 4.5% in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire National Institute of Statistics, 2023; 2024).

In 2022, the General Assembly on National Education and Literacy (États généraux de l'éducation nationale et de l'alphabétisation, EGENA), a national consultation process on the state of education, adopted a 10-year roadmap to system transformation (Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of National Education and Literacy, 2022). Following a commitment under the third axis on school quality to develop an educational and psychosocial support system, including remedial measures, to reduce school dropout rates, School Dropout Prevention Cells were established to identify students at risk; collaborate with teachers, parents, local leaders and health workers; offer one-on-one support; track progress; and follow up as needed (Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of National Education and Literacy, 2024a). In the 2022/23 school year, 87% of 3,250 students

identified as at risk were retained in school. By August 2023, 192 cells were operating in secondary schools, with plans to expand to 268 (Côte d'Ivoire Government, 2023; Hetinnon, 2023), a target that was exceeded by 2025, reaching 370 cells (Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of National Education and Literacy, 2025b).

A related measure in 2024 was the pilot launch of DOB CONNECT as part of the World Bank–funded Enhancing Government Effectiveness for Improved Public Services project. This digital platform, which aims to strengthen school monitoring (Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of National Education and Literacy, 2025c), also features psychological tests to help identify students at risk and prevent dropout (Gonety, 2024).

The same project has also funded universal primary school textbook provision. Meanwhile, an initiative to support lower secondary school textbook provision is the National Textbook Exchange (*Bourse nationale du manuel scolaire*, BONAMAS). Students whose households pay a flat fee of CFA 10,000 (USD 11) are eligible to receive a set of eight textbooks (that would cost six times as much) at the beginning of the school year; they are obliged to return them at the end of the year or else pay CFA 2,000 for each book. Following a pilot phase in 33 schools, all students in the first grade of lower secondary school became beneficiaries and it is planned that the initiative is scaled up to all four grades (Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of National Education and Literacy, 2024b).

Finally, a long-standing programme credited with reducing dropout for girls in primary education is Mothers' Clubs for Girls' Education (*Club des mères d'élèves filles*, CMEF) (Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of National Education, 2017). The clubs are formal associations committed to promoting girls' education, guided and supported by advisors from local education inspectorates and regional directorates appointed by the government. In 2022, 11% of rural schools and 17% of urban schools had a CMEF. Girls in schools with such a club were 1.2 percentage points more likely to transition to the next grade (UNICEF, 2023b).

Côte d'Ivoire

A head teacher's story about mothers rallying together against girls' dropout

The Club of Mothers of Schoolgirls (CMEF) was born out of the desire to fight against injustices committed against girls in our community. In simple terms, it is an association whose goal is to mobilize its members to promote equal access for girls to education, ensure their retention and success in the school system, and protect them from any gender-based discrimination. We are an Islamic faith-based school, and we have seen that these problems particularly affect our community: many girls are taken out of school to be married or to work at the market and at home. When I discovered the decree that created the Mothers' Clubs, I immediately understood that it was an important tool to change mindsets and protect girls' schooling.

We created our club in 2022, with an executive committee of 10 mothers, but in reality all women who have daughters in school feel concerned. At the beginning of each term, we draw up an action plan with specific themes: early marriage, dropping out, children's sexuality, communication between parents and daughters. We organize film screenings showing, for example, young girls taken out of school to help at the market, reading workshops built around stories of girls forced to work instead of studying, and conferences with psychologists to help mothers learn how to listen and talk with their children. Sometimes we also invite fathers, and we can see that they are increasingly sensitive to these issues.

A very positive development is that religious leaders have become involved. In Islamic faith-based schools, many founders are imams or Qur'anic teachers; they have agreed to look for verses and hadiths to show that Islam encourages girls' education and condemns early marriage. When an imam gathers mothers to say that girls must not be taken out of school and that early marriage must be refused, the message resonates much more sstrongly with families who themselves did not go to school.

We have concrete examples: one pupil, who had just lost her mother, was supposed to be withdrawn in the middle of the school year and sent to the village; it was the mothers in the club who spoke with the family until they obtained assurance that the girl would return to school, and in fact she did come back to continue her education. For me, this is proof that when mothers are organized, informed and supported, they become a barrier against their daughters dropping out of school. The Mothers' Clubs give women the confidence, the tools and the collective framework to defend their daughters' right to stay in school in Côte d'Ivoire.

Baradji Maïmouna,
Headteacher

Dominica: DEMOCRATIZING ACCESS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION

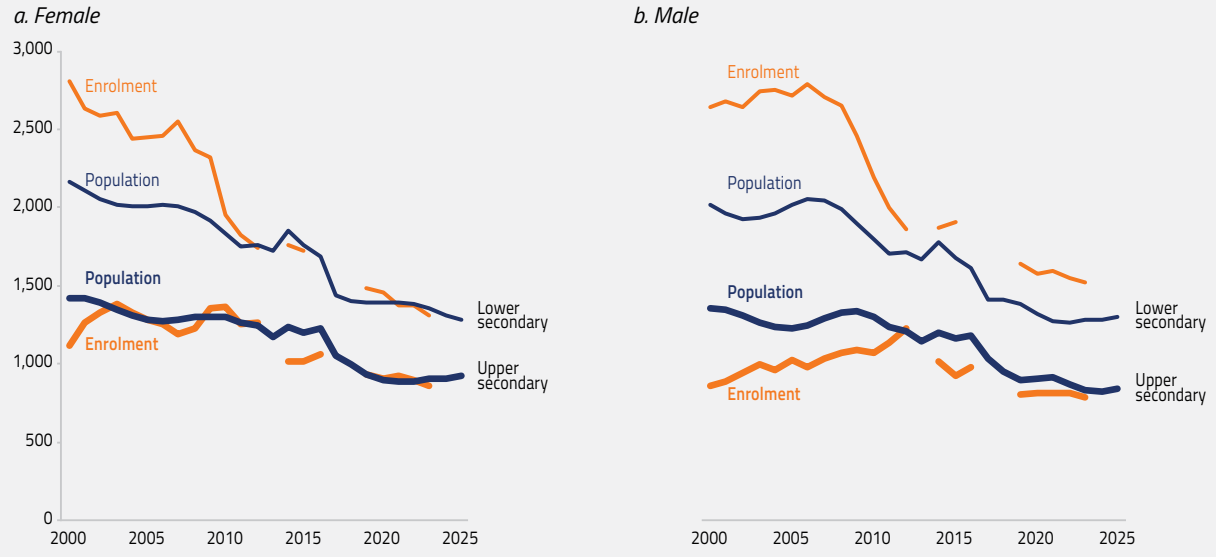
Small Island Developing States are a challenge for global monitoring of education progress due to their small populations and often inconsistent statistical data. Yet despite differences in scale, they generally face the same type of education challenges as their peers in their region and income group in expanding access to primary and secondary education.

Similar to other English-speaking Caribbean Island States, Dominica introduced universal secondary education in 2005 to promote human development and economic growth (Gordon, 2011a, 2011b). Secondary education consists of three years of lower secondary and two years of upper secondary. Two additional years of preparation, which are not captured in the enrolment statistics presented here, allow students to sit for the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination as a pathway to university entry.

The data show improvement shortly after 2010, especially for boys. In the 2000s, the number of students enrolled in lower secondary education vastly exceeded the corresponding population group of adolescents of lower secondary school age, a sign of high levels of repetition. In contrast, the number of students enrolled in upper secondary education was below the corresponding population group of youth of upper secondary school age, especially for boys. From 2010 onwards, the population and enrolment levels are essentially identical for girls. In the case of boys, they have converged but there are also still signs of enrolment exceeding population in lower secondary and being a little under population in upper secondary education (**Figure 1**).

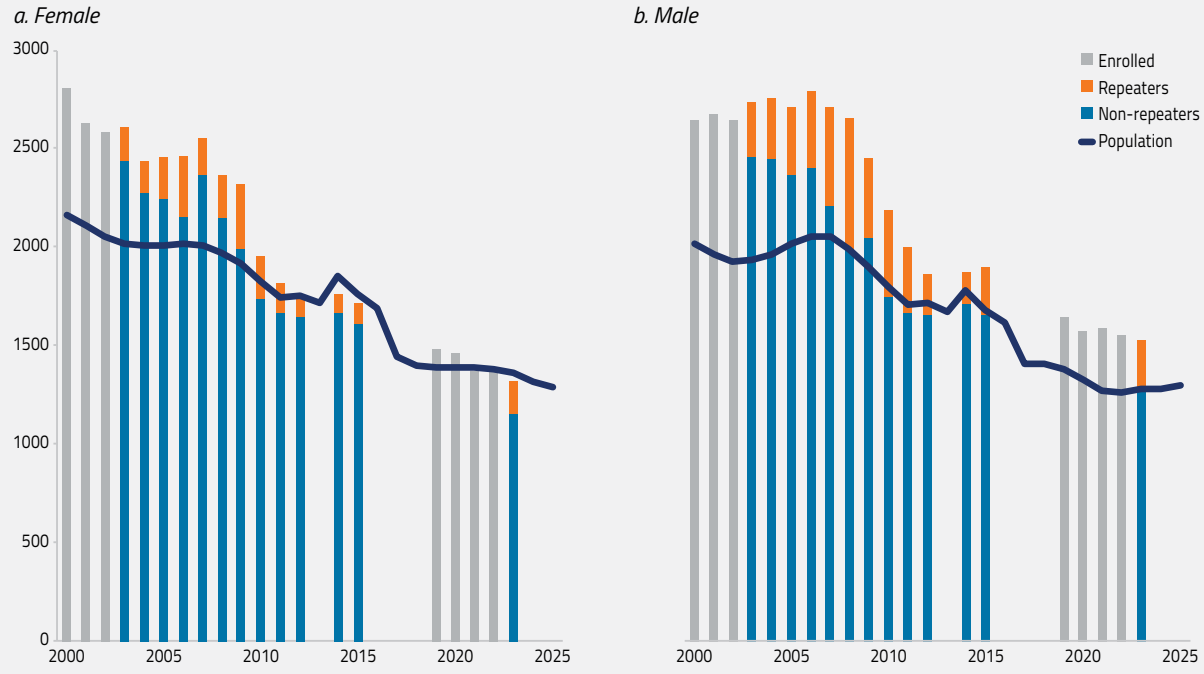
Information on repeaters is only available at the lower secondary level and not for all years. It clearly shows that repetition levels have been and remain much higher for boys. Between 2003 and 2009, the average repetition rate was 10% for girls and 17% for boys. Between 2010 and 2015, it was 40% lower for girls to a 6% average rate and 30% lower for boys to a 12% average rate. In 2022, the only other and more recent year with data on repetition, the repetition rate appeared to have jumped back to levels previously observed in the 2000s at 12% and 16%, respectively (**Figure 2**). Boys are therefore nearly twice as likely as girls to be over-age, and already over-age in primary school (UNICEF, 2021).

FIGURE 1:
Dominica has experienced a transition towards universal secondary education
Secondary education enrolment and secondary age population, by level, Dominica, 2000–25



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Dominica_fig1
Source: UIS database.

FIGURE 2:
In Dominica, repetition rates have been much higher for boys than for girls
Lower secondary education enrolled students and repeaters and secondary age population, Dominica, 2000–25



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Dominica_fig2
Source: UIS database.

Expanding education was a response to a new political phase in Dominica. With full independence in 1978, the country took control of the schools, which were established and traditionally run by religious bodies, intending to expand access and ensure a more inclusive education system (Knight, 2014). The 1997 Education Act (amended in 2008) established free primary and secondary education for 5- to 16-year-olds (Andrew, 1999) but it was only in 2004 that school fees were abolished (Haßler et al., 2021). A notable feature of the 1997 Act was that it allowed girls to return to school after giving birth, even if the decision is still at the discretion of the school principal and girls may choose to stop schooling in the face of stigma (UNICEF, 2017). The country set the target to reach universal secondary education by 2007 (Dominica Government, 2016).

The democratization of secondary education has allowed youth who might not have been fully prepared to enter lower secondary education to do so. Inherited from the past colonial education system, the Common Entrance Examination, which used to allocate students at the end of primary to limited places available in secondary schools, was phased out in the early 2000s and replaced by the Grade 6 National Assessment, which still evaluates students but whose results do not prevent placement into secondary (DOM767, 2025).

However, many students began struggling academically (Kelleher and Philip, 2013). Repetition was used as a remedial strategy but it frustrated teachers, parents and students (Gordon, 2011a, 2011b) as it negatively affects students' trajectories and ultimately increased the risk of dropping out (Knight and Obidah, 2014). Dropout has been particularly high in grade 4, the first year of upper secondary school, with boys disproportionally represented among early school leavers. In 2022, the number of boys who dropped out was 2.5 times higher than the number of girls (Dominica Government, 2024). This may also be linked to negative experiences at school. In 2019, 13- to 15-year-old boys were more likely to have experienced bullying and to have been involved in physical fights compared to girls (UNICEF, 2021).

The policy introducing universal secondary education also raised questions about the readiness of the education system to accommodate students with different abilities (Miller, 2009). Students with learning disabilities,

for example, are placed in general education classrooms but inadequate teacher preparation, a shortage of counsellors, and limited capacity to develop individualized education plans have been reported as contributing to school dropout (Thomas-Jeremy, 2012).

Teachers have been reporting being under pressure and secondary schools have been questioned for the quality of service provision (Dominica Weekly, 2009). The low performance of Dominica's students in the region-wide Caribbean Examinations Council examinations taken at the end of upper secondary (Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate) and in post-secondary education (Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination) generated public debate on the shortcomings and inequality of the school system (Dominica News Online, 2024). While expanding secondary education was seen as the opportunity to create an educated middle class, the relevance of the content has been questioned (Jules et al., 2007), especially as levels of youth unemployment have been high (Miller, 2009). In 2020, a national task force was expected to discuss reform of basic education with an emphasis on teaching and learning (Dominica News Online, 2023).

The high dropout rate in secondary schools among boys may also be caused by factors other than poor quality of education. Poor households have difficulties covering transportation, textbook and other education costs and uniforms. The incentive for boys from disadvantaged households to leave school in search of employment to provide for them and their families is strong. Migration is also reported as a cause of dropout. An analysis conducted by the Education Planning Unit identified outward migration as one of the primary reasons for dropping out. In 2007/08, 57% of students who left education without completing secondary school were motivated by the decision to migrate (Dominica Government, 2013; UNICEF, 2017). The decline in population (by 37% in the secondary age group between 2000 and 2023) is also partly a result of migration, as Dominica has one of the highest net emigration rates in the world, with more than double the citizens abroad than those in the country (UNICEF, 2017).

Dominica has introduced several initiatives to address challenges in access. Concerning discipline, it launched a Safe Schools campaign and a Child Friendly Schools initiative in 2008/09 supported by UNICEF in secondary schools (Dominica Government, 2022; Dominica Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 2013), which was reported to be a model also for other island countries (Knight et al., 2021). In 2012/13, a National Policy on Behaviour Management and Discipline in Primary and Secondary Schools was adopted to ensure common guidelines across schools (Dominica Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 2014).

Some targeted measures have been used to support financially disadvantaged households, such as free textbooks for grade 1 secondary students, free transportation for rural children and youth, and a school feeding programme for vulnerable and at-risk students (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2012). Remedial programmes were introduced to help students who had difficulties in passing the five Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Subjects at the end of upper secondary education (Q95FM, 2022).

With the adoption of the Caribbean Vocational Qualification in 2007, a regional certification based on CARICOM skills standards, and the introduction of universal secondary education, Dominica has relaunched its technical and vocational education and training. Historically, the three-year Junior Secondary Programme was aimed to prepare students to enter the workforce or to provide them with a bridge into secondary education. Supported by the Caribbean Development Bank, Dominica strengthened vocational course provision in secondary schools through the Dominica Education Enhancement Project between 2010 and 2015, a project that trained teachers in selected schools and provided new equipment and learning materials (UNICEF, 2017).

Dominica has 15 secondary schools, of which 7 are public, 6 government-assisted and 2 private (Knight et al., 2021). Urban schools are affected by overcrowding (Haßler et al., 2021). School buildings are particularly vulnerable to natural hazards. Due to its geographical location, Dominica is exposed to severe tropical storms that have repeatedly damaged schools (Dominica Government, 2024). Tropical Storm Erika in 2015 and category-5 Hurricane Maria in 2017 caused damage to 83% of schools, including teaching materials, furniture and educational resources (Dominica Government, 2022). The hurricane season overlaps with up to four months of the academic year, challenging the continuity of provision. Moreover, most schools operate as public emergency shelters and are often required to serve multiple purposes during emergency situations (Serrant, 2013).

Dominica remains committed to addressing ongoing challenges in access to education. Looking ahead, the Citizenship by Investment programme has been introduced to leverage resources for the improvement of school infrastructure and the establishment of vocational training centres (CNG, 2024).

Germany: INCREASED FLEXIBILITY IS YET TO UNIVERSALIZE SECONDARY COMPLETION

In Germany, almost three quarters of young people – 74.7% – aged 20 to 24 finished upper secondary education in 2000. By 2024, this had inched up by just one percentage point to 76%. Although small changes in the definition of what counts as upper secondary completion may make the series not fully comparable over time, the distance from the European Union average has increased from four percentage points in 2002 to six points in 2018 and nine points in 2024. Among the five most populous EU member states, Germany now has the lowest percentage of youth with at least upper secondary education (**Figure 1**).

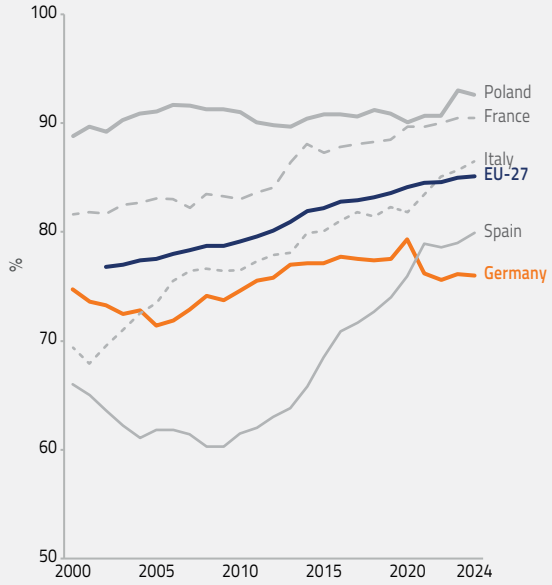
As Germany is a federal country, the federal states – or Länder – benefit from great autonomy in shaping education systems based on their specific historical, demographic and socioeconomic contexts, which is reflected in the variation in the duration and structure of secondary schooling (Helbig and Nikolai, 2015; Nikolai, 2018). As a result, Germany's secondary education system is complex – as well as stratified.

An important characteristic is that students are sorted into different tracks at age 10, which is earlier than in most countries. After primary school, families choose the type of school in which to enrol their children in most Länder based on teachers' recommendations and the child's performance (Dräger et al., 2022; Wohlkinger and Ditton, 2023). When school choice occurs at such an early age, there is less time for education to compensate for unequal starting conditions; this has implications for children's educational ambitions and future pathways (Dräger et al., 2022).

In secondary education, there are two tracks – general and vocational – and within the general track there are four main types of secondary schools, not all of which lead directly to an upper secondary qualification. Transitions between tracks have generally been limited (Broschinski et al., 2025).

Students who enrol in Hauptschulen (general secondary schools) and Realschulen (intermediate schools), which typically last between five and six years (i.e. they graduate by age 15 or 16), obtain a lower secondary qualification. They generally transition into the vocational track for another two or three years, which may be either full-time school or dual (i.e. combining school-based learning with apprenticeship). Both full- and part-time programmes can provide an upper secondary qualification and the opportunity to apply to universities of applied sciences (Hippach-Schneider and Huismann, 2016; Maaz et al., 2024).

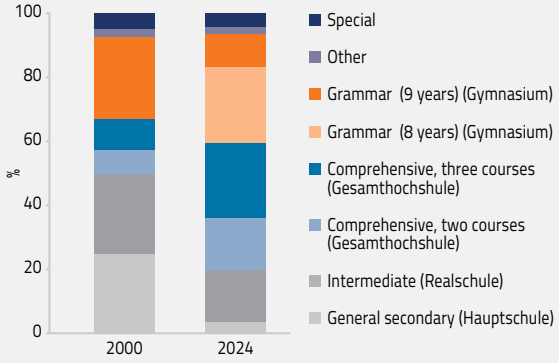
FIGURE 1:
The upper secondary completion rate in Germany lags behind the European Union average
Share of 20- to 24-year-olds with at least upper secondary education, Germany and selected European countries, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Germany_fig1
Source: Eurostat.

Students who enrol in Gesamtschulen (comprehensive schools) and Gymnasien (grammar schools), which typically last between eight and nine years (i.e. they graduate by age 18 or 19), obtain an upper secondary qualification, which prepares them for university entry (Becker et al., 2022; Maaz et al., 2024). Gesamtschulen bring two or three school types under one roof and are part of an effort to gradually abolish Hauptschulen and Realschulen, whose share among school leavers in the general track fell from 50% in 2000 to 20% in 2024 (**Figure 2**). These reforms are aimed at facilitating transitions between tracks and encouraging flexible pathways toward higher education (Bittmann, 2025). They were influenced by the so-called 'shock' that followed the release of results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in the early 2000s, which showed that Germany was faring worse in reading, mathematics and science than its peers (Davoli and Entorf, 2018). Länder started simplifying secondary school tracks and providing alternative pathways into higher education (Nikolai, 2018; Tillmann, 2015).

FIGURE 2:
In Germany, there has been a move towards comprehensive schools
School leavers by type of school, Germany, 2000 and 2024



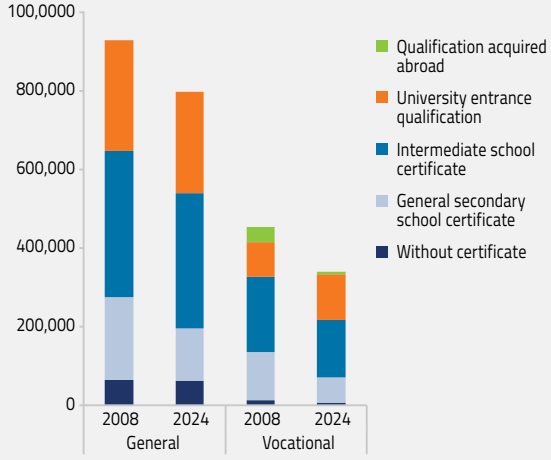
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Germany_fig2
Note: School leavers include graduates and dropouts.
Source: Destatis.

There is also a parallel, independent system for students with special educational needs. Assigned based on defined school procedures, often because they experienced difficulties in other educational tracks, special support was provided to 7.5% of students in 2022, of which half were in separate institutions, special schools (Förderschulen), a share that has remained stable in the last 10 years. They usually provide education up to lower secondary education, putting these students at a disadvantage if they want to transition into higher levels, as they are practically excluded from obtaining an upper secondary qualification (Holtmann et al., 2023). In 2022, three quarters of students who left special schools had no qualifications (Maaz et al., 2024). Moving out of special schools is less common than being transferred into them (Helbig and Steinmetz, 2021).

Children's access to different types of secondary schools is strongly influenced by their parents' socioeconomic status (Dräger et al., 2022; Schneider, 2008). Almost four in five children from wealthy households receive a recommendation to attend Gymnasium, that directly leads to a university entry qualification, compared with less than one in three from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. Even when they get a positive recommendation, 17% of children from disadvantaged families decide not to enrol in the academic track (Maaz et al., 2024). In 2022, more than one third of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds opted for Hauptschulen and Realschulen. Conversely, 68% of students from wealthier households enrolled in a Gymnasium. Between students who perform equally well, those from affluent families are also more likely to transition from a non-academic to the academic track during their studies. Parents with lower qualifications tend to have higher economic and social risks that negatively affect their child's likelihood of transitioning to upper educational levels (Maaz et al., 2024).

Inequalities are reflected in upper secondary completion as well as access. Families play a key role in their children's educational expectations and achievements (Pinquart and Ebeling, 2020). According to the longitudinal National Educational Panel Study, students whose parents have low education levels are almost half as likely to complete upper secondary education compared to their peers whose parents have higher formal qualifications (Maaz et al., 2024). In 2023, adding together those who left school from either the general or the vocational track, 6% obtained no qualifications and 17% obtained only a lower secondary qualification (**Figure 3**).

FIGURE 3:
In Germany, almost one in four school leavers have at most a lower secondary qualification
Number of school leavers (graduates and dropouts) by track and school leaving certificate, Germany, 2008 and 2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Germany_fig3
Source: Destatis.

Family and school factors are linked to leaving school without a qualification. In Germany, according to the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 15-year-olds reported a lower level of support from their families (e.g. time, consistency and effort dedicated to interaction) than in other OECD countries (OECD, 2023). Low family support affects the educational experience and is linked to students' disengagement from school (Broschinski and Feldhaus, 2025) and absenteeism,

which has increased since 2012 according to PISA data (Broschinski et al., 2025). Stratification in schools also contributes to early school leaving. Teachers may lower their expectations and adjust their teaching activities accordingly, which impacts students' learning aspirations and achievements, especially those who have started school at a disadvantage (Deppe and Hadjar, 2021; Georgi, 2024).

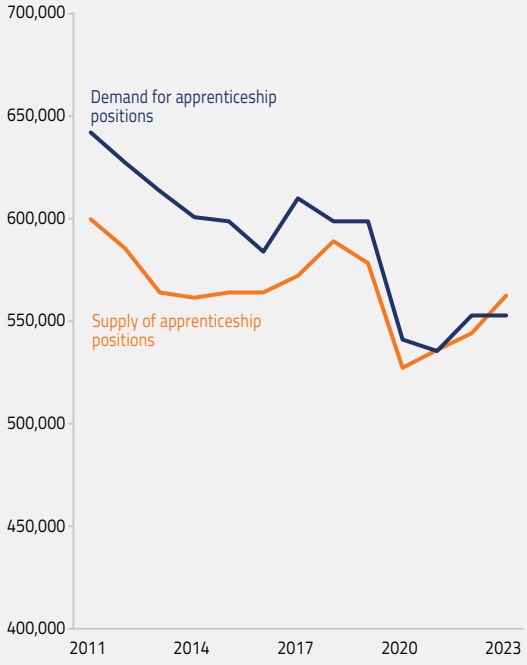
A group that is particularly affected is those with an immigrant background, who represent nearly one fifth of the population, about half of whom were born in Germany (Maaz et al., 2024). By the late 2010s, immigration reached its highest level in decades, as a result of the government's decision to receive the majority of Syrian refugees who arrived in Europe. Immigrants' education trajectories are strongly shaped by the age at which they arrived in Germany. Among those who migrated before the age of 6, roughly half attain a vocational or university entrance qualification, whereas only 38% of those who arrived between ages 14 and 18 reach that level (Maaz et al., 2024). Therefore, the arrival of a large number of refugee youth is likely to have been reflected in the upper secondary education completion statistics.

At the opposite end, the share of those who left school having obtained a qualification that allows them to enter a university or a university of applied sciences increased from 27% in 2008 to 33% in 2023, with the increase higher among those attending the vocational track, indicating a growing emphasis on flexible pathways. In recent years, the number of students entering university without traditional academic qualifications has increased (Nickel, 2023). A related trend is a relative decline of interest in the vocational track. While demand for apprenticeships has historically exceeded supply, the supply of apprenticeships outnumbered demand for the first time in 2022 (**Figure 4**).

Germany intends to strengthen its support to disadvantaged students. Launched in 2024/25, the 10-year Startchancen (Starting opportunities) programme is the largest educational initiative targeting underserved schools, with a federal and Länder budget of over USD 23 billion. About 4,000 schools and 1 million disadvantaged students will benefit from a modernized learning environment, expanded multidisciplinary staff, and tailored school and curriculum development measures decided at the school level (Startchancen-Programm, 2025).

Efforts have also gone into targeted reforms to the technical and vocational education and training system to improve equity and responsiveness. Since August 2024, an apprenticeship guarantee has supported disadvantaged youth unable to secure placements (Germany Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2025), while the renewed Alliance for Initial and Further Training 2023–2026 promotes inclusive transitions from school to work (CEDEFOP, 2025; Germany Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2024).

FIGURE 4:
Apprenticeship opportunities go unfilled as youth interest drops
Number of apprenticeship positions supplied and demanded, Germany, 2011–23



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Germany_fig4
Source: Maaz et al., (2024).

Germany

A student's story about why she chose a different path from upper secondary education

My name is Marie Setter, I am 17 years old, from Germany, and am currently completing a three-year apprenticeship to become a farmer. I made a conscious decision not to pursue upper secondary education and left comprehensive school after the 10th grade.

My TVET programme consists of classes at a vocational college in the nearest large city and practical training on a farm close by. I am on a mixed farm, which means we work with animals as well as crops. As a result, my tasks on the farm are very varied.

At the vocational school, in addition to standard subjects such as mathematics and German, we have many subjects related to our profession. We learn a lot about animals and crops. However, we also have business management, where we are currently studying production factors and pricing.

I decided early on not to do my high school diploma, but to do an apprenticeship after finishing middle school.

I had the qualifications for upper secondary school, and many of my friends and some of my teachers would have liked me to continue at the comprehensive school.

However, because I knew what I wanted to do early on, I thought it would be better to specialize directly in what I need for my profession. I also have a family connection to agriculture. My uncle runs a potato and chicken farm. I started helping him out at an early age, and that's where I realized that simply driving out to the fields, getting my hands dirty, or taking care of animals is really what I want to do.

Even though I miss spending time with my friends at school and finishing school days early, I am now more motivated to study for exams that are relevant to what I want to do later.

I can highly recommend vocational training to everyone who is interested. Of course, it depends on the field; for some professions, you need a high school diploma and a college degree. But you don't necessarily need it to be a farmer.

Maybe I'll go to an agricultural college later. There, you can get your training certificate and also complete your vocational baccalaureate diploma. After this diploma, you can then continue studying in tertiary education. I'm keeping all my options open, but right now I'm enjoying learning a lot of practical skills.

Marie Setter,
Student

Iraq: TWO GENERATIONS OF STUDENTS LOST DUE TO WAR AND CONFLICT

In the 1970s, Iraq's education system was considered one of the best in the region. Primary education had been made compulsory and all levels had been made free, opening the door for mass enrolment (Santisteban, 2005), which the nationalization of the oil industry would bankroll. This progress was halted in the 1980s as a result of the war with Iran. This was followed by the first Gulf War with Iraq invading Kuwait in 1990 and the resulting crippling international sanctions. The second Gulf War and the United States occupation in 2003 brought a military campaign and sectarian violence.

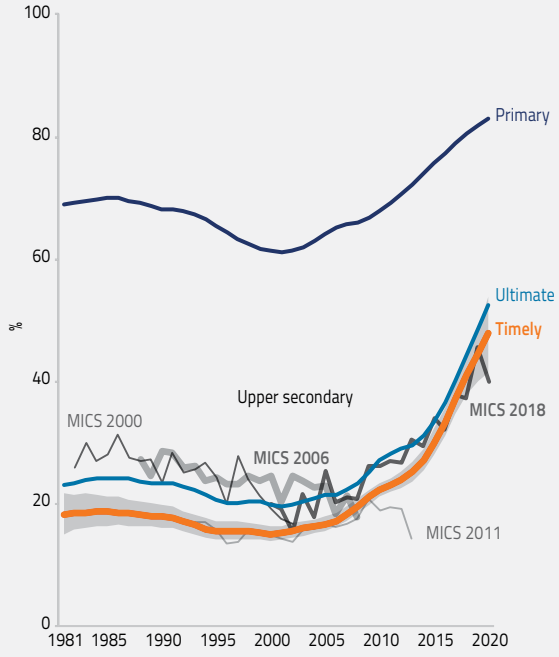
Since 1980, war, civil strife, economic crisis and the dissolution of institutions have ravaged Iraq's education system, sacrificing two generations of children and undermining the country's future potential (Shafiq, 2013). It is estimated that, by 2010, 80% of schools had been damaged or destroyed (Issa and Jamil, 2010). Data collection was also affected. Since 2000, Iraq has only provided data on the out-of-school rate for 4 out of the 25 years, the last one in 2007. Assessing the situation would have been impossible were it not for UNICEF's multipurpose household survey, the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS), which has been carried out four times (2000, 2006, 2011 and 2018), offering valuable insights.

The first three MICS rounds confirmed that primary and upper secondary completion rates declined between 1980 and 1995 and then stagnated until 2010, an exceptionally long period of no educational development. However, the 2018 MICS suggested a possible significant change around 2010. According to the completion rate model estimated by the GEM Report, the primary completion rate increased from 68% in 2010 to 83% in 2020. The upper secondary completion rate is estimated to have doubled from 22% to 48% in this period – and reached perhaps as high as 52% if very late completers are also included (**Figure 1**).

These findings are counterintuitive considering that civil conflict resumed between 2013 and 2017, as the Islamic State organized an insurgency that led to the occupation of about one third of the national territory, and had a grave impact on the affected population before the insurgents were eventually defeated. By December 2017, there were 2.6 million internally displaced people (IOM, 2018). Concentrated largely in the northwest of the country, violence and battles damaged or destroyed 50% of schools in the occupied territory (World Bank, 2024).

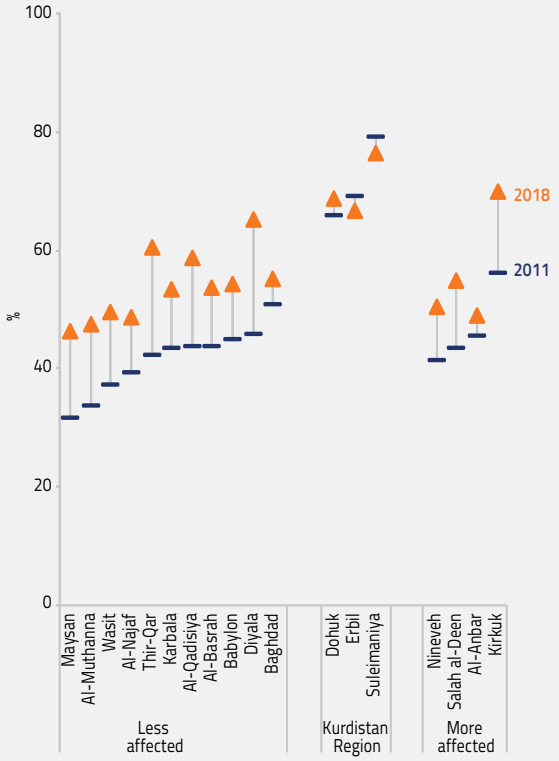
The 2018 MICS did not sample internally displaced populations living in camps and non-residential units, and six districts in two governorates. However, this was still a relatively small area. Comparisons between the 2011 and 2018 rounds of the MICS show that the increase in net attendance rate was higher in areas not directly affected by the war (**Figure 2**).

FIGURE 1:
Following 30 years of stagnation, education expansion may have resumed in Iraq since 2010
Primary and upper secondary completion rate, Iraq, survey point estimates and model estimates, 1981–20



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Iraq_fig1
Source: GEM Report team analysis of four rounds of MICS.

FIGURE 2:
Governorates less affected by the war increased secondary attendance rates more
Secondary net attendance rate, by governorate and exposure to the 2013–17 war, Iraq, 2011 and 2018



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Iraq_fig2
Source: 2011 and 2018 MICS final reports.

Education in Iraq is governed through separate systems in the Kurdistan Region and in the rest of the country. Each has its own ministry of education, distinct curricula and languages of instruction. The data generated by the Ministry of Education do not cover the governorates that comprise the Kurdistan Region. Data for the other governorates do document a large increase in total secondary school enrolment by 47% between 2011/12 and 2019/20 (from 2.2 to 3.3 million), which corresponds to a large increase of 11 percentage points in the enrolment ratio (from 50% to 61%). However, the corresponding increase in upper secondary education is more modest (from 33.5% to 37% between 2015/16 and 2019/20) and less in line with survey data.

One final piece of evidence which also suggests that educational expansion resumed is the Arab Barometer, an opinion poll of a random sample of the population, which has been most recently carried out in 2019 and 2022. Analysis of the educational background of respondents carried out for this report suggests an expansion in secondary participation, albeit not as fast as that captured in the MICS throughout the 2010s. The next MICS round, to take place in 2026, will be able to confirm whether this trend was sustained, which, if verified, can likely be attributed to the partial economic recovery after the lifting of the sanctions in 2003 and security improvements in large parts of the country.

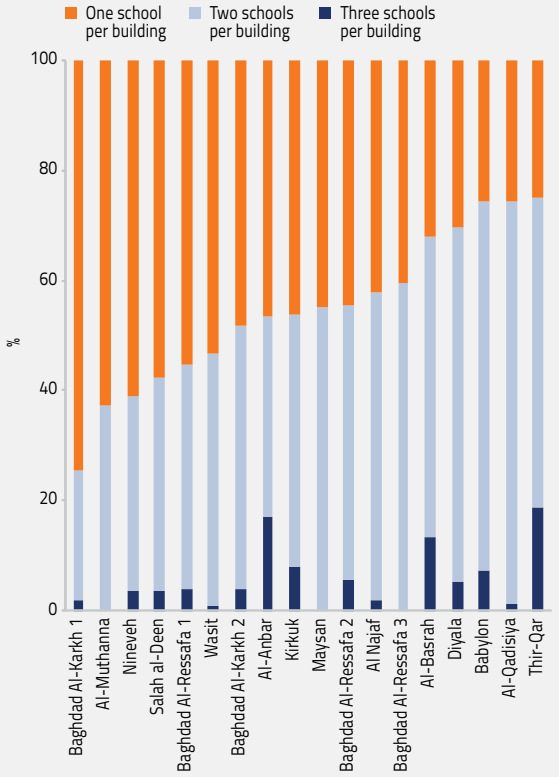
Oil-based economic growth, after the sanctions were lifted, helped increase public education spending in absolute terms, from IQD 8.2 trillion in 2009 to IQD 10.8 trillion in 2019, but not in relative terms as it fell as a share both of total government expenditure and GDP (World Bank, 2021). The education budget fell by 30% in the Kurdistan Region between 2013 and 2016 as a result of the conflict. School reconstruction efforts have been constrained by the small share (2%) of the education budget allocated to capital expenditure (UNICEF, 2017). Execution of investment budgets has also been consistently low (World Bank, 2021). In 2015/16, one third of the investment budget was not spent (UNICEF, 2017). Even so, as the level of violent conflict subsided in large parts of Iraq, the government invested in reconstructing schools. It is estimated that the number of secondary school buildings in Iraq, excluding the Kurdistan Region, increased by 60% from 2,306 in 2014 to 3,693 in 2019.

Both systems have implemented double and even triple shifts in schools, for example, 36% of public upper secondary schools in the Kurdistan Region and 31% in the rest of Iraq operated multiple shifts in 2015/16. These negatively impacted quality by reducing instruction hours and putting additional strain on teachers but also enabled schools to absorb a greater number of students who would have otherwise been left without an option for continuing their education. At the same time, schools share premises. In 2019/20, only 46% of school buildings hosted only one school entity, and as few as about 25% in the Babylon, Al-Qadisiya and Thir-Qar governorates, the rest sharing premises with other schools (**Figure 3**). The Ministry of Education reports a gap of over 10,000 school buildings as well as a lack of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities (World Bank, 2021).

While public spending has not increased, household living conditions have improved. According to the 2025 Human Development Report, the share of household income spent on food has halved from 63% in 1993 to 32% in 2024, freeing up family income to cover other needs, including education (UNDP, 2025). Survey data also show that internally displaced people had faced the additional economic strain of losing their livelihoods and paying rent for their new shelters. As the number

of internally displaced people fell back to 1.2 million by 2019 (IDMC, 2025), their return to their region of origin, livelihoods and homes also freed up household funds that enabled students to return to school (Adely et al., 2025). The federal and Kurdish regional governments worked together to provide access to education for the internally displaced, one third of whom fled to the Kurdistan Region (IOM, 2018). The Kurdish regional government supported Arabic-medium schools to operate out of its buildings (Oswald, 2019) and the federal government established regional offices in the Kurdistan Region to support the provision of Arabic language instruction until 2024.

FIGURE 3:
More than half of schools in Iraq share buildings with other schools
Number of schools hosted per building, by governorate, Iraq, 2019/20



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Iraq_fig3
Source: Iraq Central Statistical Organization.

National policy is trying to expand vocational secondary education. Enrolment doubled from some 50,000 students in 2017 to 109,000 in 2021, following an administrative decision to allow vocational students to qualify for post-secondary education (World Bank, 2024). However, considering that total upper secondary enrolment was 955,000 in 2020, enrolment in vocational education accounted for only about 11%.

Various programmes have been initiated to facilitate the return of out-of-school children, but are small scale. The government implemented an accelerated learning programme to provide a condensed primary curriculum for 12- to 18-year-olds. Upon completion, students are provided a primary certificate to aid their transition to secondary school. In 2017/18, 33,000 students were enrolled in the programme, but data on those able to transition to secondary school were not available (World Bank, 2024). Multiple back-to-school campaigns tried to reach out-of-school children and adolescents through community engagement (Oswald, 2019; UNICEF, 2024). A UNICEF Back to Learning campaign supported 25,000 children to enrol in 2023. However, bureaucratic barriers to enrolment were substantial, especially if a child had missed over two years of school or was lacking documents (Oswald, 2019; UNICEF, 2019). Access to reintegration services varies by region and provides limited concrete pathways to secondary school (ECI, 2022).

Considerable challenges lie ahead to overcome the legacy of conflict. Schools continue to be a site of sectarian struggle, as armed groups exert influence on curriculum, budgets and hiring practices (Palani, 2025). The last presents a particular challenge. Many teachers left the profession due to conflict and low pay and have been hard to replace, especially as the teacher training system has been in disarray. Due to budget constraints, many teachers have been hired on a temporary or volunteer basis (ECI, 2022). This practice has been criticized, as unqualified teachers take on such posts, while appointments to permanent teaching posts are seen as based on political patronage rather than qualifications (World Bank, 2021). The World Bank has described the possibility of payroll malpractice with ghost teachers, citing the fact that there are over twice as many secondary school teachers being paid as classes being taught (World Bank, 2024).

Iraq is a reminder of the serious long-term impacts of conflict on education. The international sanctions imposed during the 1990s, which severely curtailed both public and private spending on education and the interminable cycle of war, sectarian and terrorist violence have affected families' ability to send their children to school. School attendance levels have rebounded, a testament to society's resilience and the benefits from even the slightest return to economic and social stability.

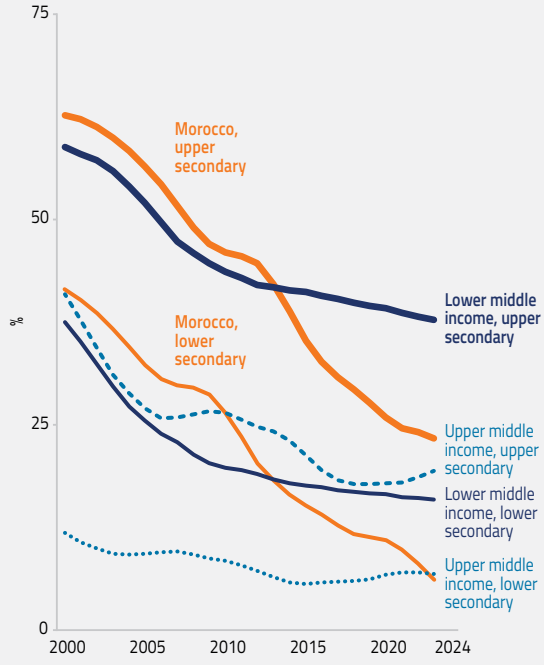
Morocco: SUSTAINED PROGRESS IN IMPROVING SCHOOL ACCESS

At the end of the 20th century, school attendance levels in Morocco were below the average of other lower-middle-income countries. Recognizing this, the government changed course and made education a policy priority in 1999 (Chtatou, 2015). Between 2000 and 2023, the out-of-school rate fell by 85% among adolescents of lower secondary school age (from 42% to 6%) and by 63% among youth of upper secondary school age (from 63% to 23%), reaching the average of upper-middle-income countries, where 7% of adolescents and 19% of youth were out of school in 2023 (**Figure 1**). The out-of-school rate in Morocco fell at a pace of 1.6 percentage points per year, a fast pace that has been maintained for over a quarter of a century. The out-of-school population of adolescents and youth fell from just over 2 million in 2000 to 570,000 in 2023, or by 72%. This progress was supported by a large public school construction programme: between 1999/2000 and 2023/24, the number of public lower secondary schools more than doubled (from 941 to 2,024 in 2023/24) and the number of public upper secondary schools almost tripled (from 537 to 1,505).

However, being in school does not necessarily mean progressing through each grade on time. Morocco had high repetition rates in 2000: 13% in primary and 18% in secondary education. But while repetition fell gradually in primary education, reaching 7% in 2024, it stayed constant in secondary education in the 2000s, before following a different trajectory after 2015: rising in lower secondary education, reaching 23% by 2019, and falling in upper secondary education, reaching 11% in 2024 (**Figure 2**).

As many students repeat classes, the number of new students enrolled in each grade can be a more transparent measure of education progress. While primary education was universalized by the late 2010s, the proportion of the target population enrolled in the first grade of lower secondary education increased from 50% in 2000 to 90% in 2024, or from 330,000 to 610,000, at a rate of 2.5% per year. In upper secondary education, the proportion of the target population enrolling in the first grade increased from 20% in 2000 to 50% in 2020, or from 145,000 to 315,000, at a rate of 3.8% per year (**Figure 3**). The faster increase in enrolment reflects an increase in transition rates from lower to upper secondary education, from 57% in 2009/10 to 67% in 2019/20 (Morocco High Commission for Planning, 2025). Enrolment levels in upper secondary education are a little more difficult to assess in the aftermath of COVID-19, which disrupted student flows.

FIGURE 1:
Morocco, which had worse out-of-school rates than the average lower-middle-income country in 2000, reached upper-middle-income country levels by 2023
Out-of-school rate of adolescents of lower secondary school age and of youth of upper secondary school age, Morocco, lower- and upper-middle-income countries, 2000–23

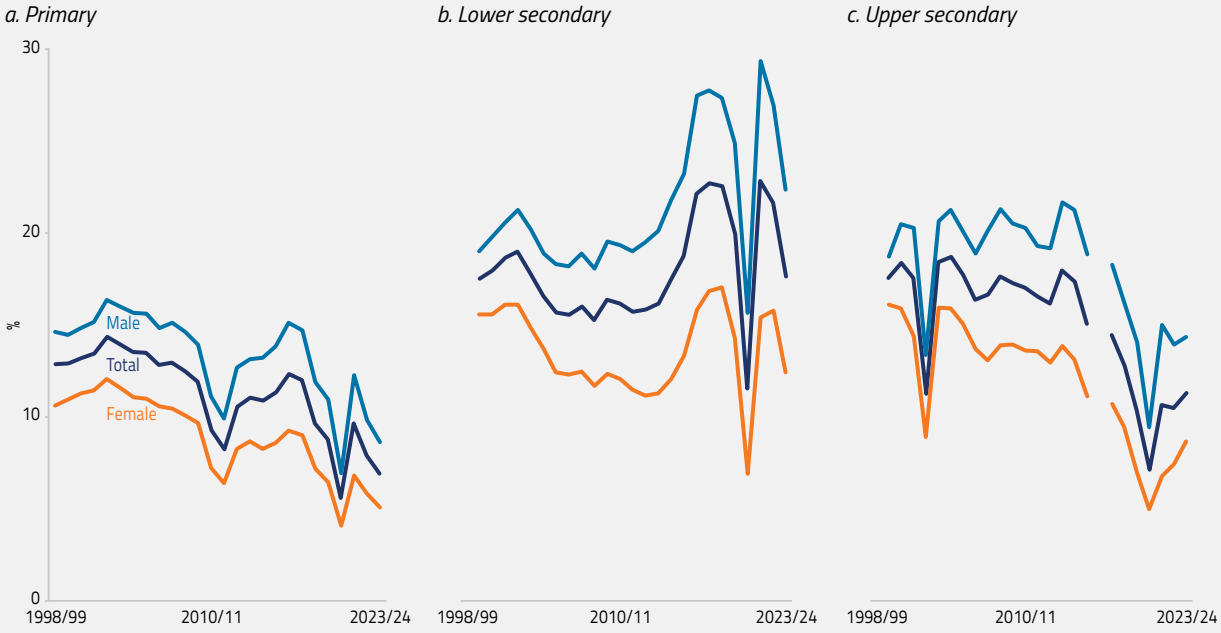


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Morocco_fig1
Source: UIS and GEM Report model estimates.

FIGURE 2:

Repetition increased in lower secondary education in the 2010s

Repetition rate in public schools, by education level and sex, Morocco, 1998/99–2023/24



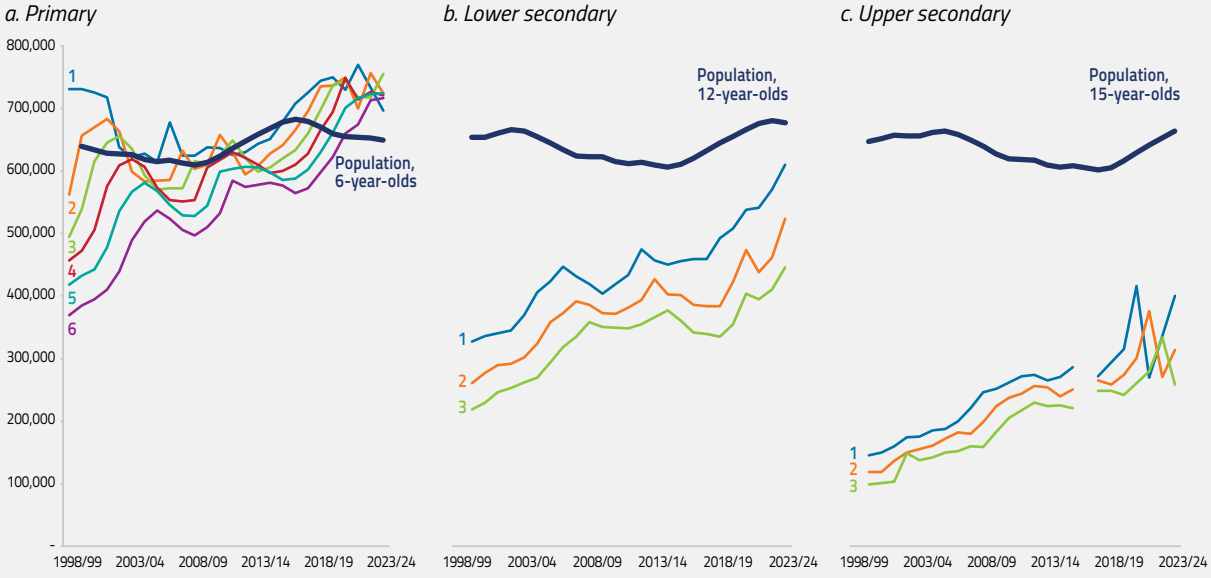
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Morocco_fig2

Source: Morocco High Commission for Planning Statistical Yearbook (1999–2024).

FIGURE 3:

Secondary education enrolment levels have more than doubled in 25 years

Number of new students enrolled by grade and population of official entrance age, by level, Morocco, 1999/2000–2022/2023



Notes: Enrolment levels exclude repeaters. In primary education, enrolment refers to public and private schools. In secondary education, enrolment refers to public schools only.

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Morocco_fig3

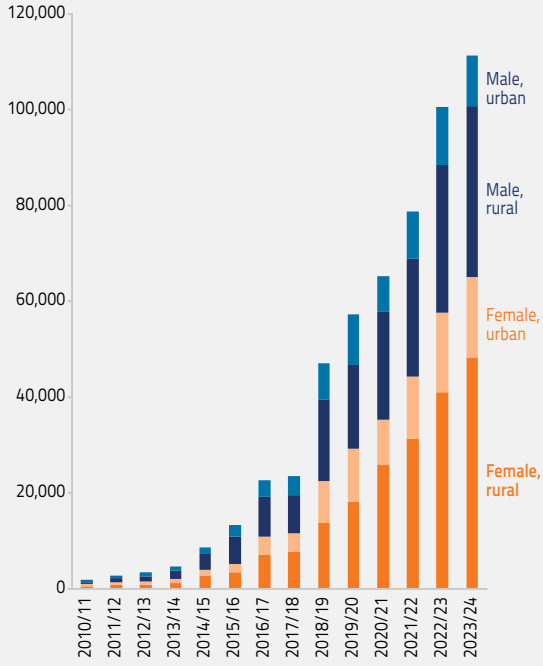
Sources: Morocco High Commission for Planning Statistical Yearbook (1999–2024) (enrolment) and World Population Prospects 2024 (population).

The National Charter for Education and Training was key to the development of policies for education expansion (Morocco Government, 1999). It was followed by a range of documents aimed at reducing dropout and repetition, including the 2012 Government Programme, which focused on upgrading schools and training staff (Morocco Government, 2012), and the Strategic Vision of Reform 2015–2030, which took a broader approach to address the root causes. In 2019, Framework Law No. 51-17 emphasized preventive measures, such as awareness campaigns and psychological support, while involving families in addressing early school leaving (Morocco Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research, 2015, 2019). Next, the 2022–2026 Roadmap aimed to reduce dropout by one third, focusing on at-risk students and improving social support, transportation, canteens and community schools (Morocco Ministry of National Education, Preschool and Sports, 2022).

One of the challenges has been the growing cost of education. The share of education in total household consumption expenditure has increased rapidly from 1.6% in 2001 to 2.7% in 2007 and 3.7% in 2014 (Morocco High Commission for Planning, 2016). This is at least partly reflected in the growing share of private institutions in total enrolment, which increased between 2003/04 and 2023/24, from 2% to 11% in lower secondary education and from 4% to 12% in upper secondary education. The annual cost of secondary education is considerable, estimated at MAD 3,412, or USD 370 in 2019/20 (Morocco High Commission for Planning, 2022a), even if poverty fell fast from 15.5% in 2001 to 4.8% in 2013 (World Bank, 2024), helping lift financial barriers for some families.

The government has been trying to address the affordability challenge in various ways. In 2018, it enacted free public education at all levels through Framework Law No. 51-17. The Tayssir conditional cash transfer programme was first piloted in 2008, distributing monthly stipends of between USD 8 and USD 13 to primary school students. In 2010, following an evaluation that found a positive impact on retention (Benhassine et al., 2015), it was rolled out to 434 rural municipalities (one quarter of the total) where poverty exceeded 30%. By 2013, the programme extended to lower secondary school students and, in 2018/19, it extended to other municipalities using proxy means testing (Gazeaud and Ricard, 2021). One condition is that a child should not repeat a grade more than once in primary or in lower secondary. In 2025, 3.1 million students received a stipend (Telquel, 2025).

FIGURE 4:
One in nine upper secondary school students benefit from school transport support
Number of upper secondary school students benefiting from school transport, by sex and location, Morocco, 2010/11–2023/24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Morocco_fig4
Source: Morocco Ministry of National Education, Preschool, and Sports (2019b, 2024b)

In 2023, Law No. 58-23 required families to register with the Unified Social Register to receive any targeted support, including a one-time payment of MAD 200 (about USD 20) for primary and lower secondary school students and MAD 300 (about USD 30) for upper secondary school students to cover back-to-school costs, a monetary support that replaced the earlier in-kind One Million Schoolbags initiative, which ran since 2013.

School transport support has also significantly improved for upper secondary school students. From 2010/11 to 2023/24, the number of beneficiaries grew to 111,000, of which 75% live in rural areas (Morocco Ministry of National Education, Preschool, and Sports, 2024b) (**Figure 4**). During this period, the share of upper secondary school students boarding has remained constant at 6% at the national level and at 10% in rural areas, compared to 3% at the national level and 6% in rural areas in lower secondary education. Public upper secondary boarding schools with canteens doubled between 2010/11 and 2023/24 (from 246 to 477) and almost quadrupled

in rural areas (from 60 to 226) (Morocco Ministry of National Education, Preschool, and Sports, 2019b, 2024b). Boarding students are also supported through grants and scholarships, awarded on the basis of factors such as distance, disability and socioeconomic background (Morocco Government, 2024).

Looking ahead, the government is seeking to establish an early warning system based on psychological and educational monitoring units that will use data from the Massar education management information system to identify students at risk of dropout, develop support plans and enrol them in extracurricular programmes (Elkhodar, 2025; Faouzi, 2025). These units already guide students toward the Second Chance School programme, which aims to reintegrate young people, offering foundational education and vocational training tailored to labour market needs. In 2011/12, the programme reintroduced 40,000 children and youth to school (Jarousse and Benddine, 2013). The RAE2C-Maroc network, launched in 2020, runs 238 centres around the country serving youth aged 16 to 20. In 2024/25, nearly 18,000 enrolled, of which 72% were reintegrated: 16% into formal education, 21% into vocational training, and 35% into employment (Benthami, 2024; La Vie Éco, 2024). In 2024, a partnership agreement was signed between the ministry and civil society organizations to manage second chance schools (Aamir and Fizati, 2025).

Early identification of at-risk students and personalized support are also key features of a recent major reform, the Pioneer Schools Programme, one of whose aims is to reduce dropout. Launched in 2023/24 and currently covering half of all primary schools, it was extended to 232 lower secondary schools in 2024/25 – or about 10% of total enrolment – expanding to 500 schools or almost 30% of total enrolment in 2025/26 (Khatla, 2024, 2025). The school year consists of six periods of six weeks each. The first period begins with testing to place students in remediation groups, based on content, and teaching methods that do not follow the standard curriculum. The sixth week is dedicated to a post-test, followed by an open house for parents, where the results are shared. Those who do not reach the required level receive comprehensive, personalized and continuous academic support throughout the rest of the school year. The remaining periods alternate new learning and integrated remediation for five weeks, followed by one week of assessment. This data-driven approach has improved learning and should therefore also impact dropout, although the link has not yet been assessed (Ibrahim et al., 2024).

In summary, strong and sustained improvements in reducing out-of-school rates in Morocco have been driven by various targeted interventions to facilitate student retention, even if the rapid increase in enrolment may have increased repetition and class sizes in lower secondary education (Gazeaud and Ricard, 2024). However, there are concerns that, despite major progress, regional disparities in dropout rates remain significant (Ibourk and Raoui, 2025).

Mozambique: A FAST EXPANSION HAS COME TO A HALT

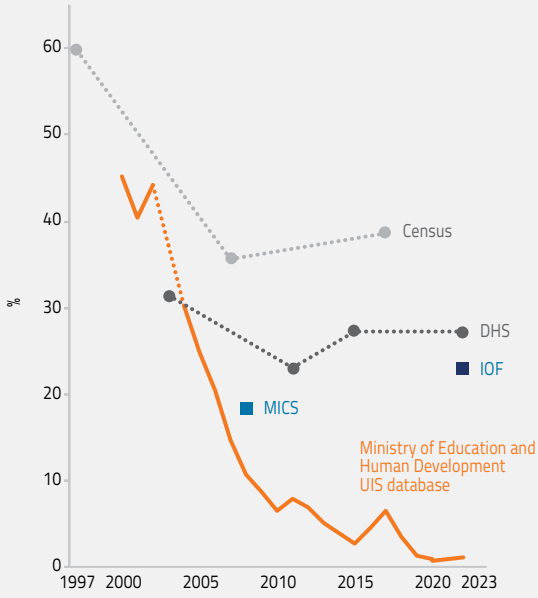
Over the past 25 years, primary education participation has greatly expanded in Mozambique, one of the poorest countries in the world. However, the extent to which this expansion has been captured across different data sources varies considerably. According to the administrative records of the Ministry of Education and Human Development, the out-of-school rate of primary school age children has fallen sharply from about 45% in 2000 to nearly zero in 2022. This reflects a dramatic increase in the number of students enrolled in primary education, which has more than tripled since 2000, from 2.5 million to 7.6 million.

Household surveys confirm a downward trend, particularly in the early 2000s, but indicate very different out-of-school rates for primary school age children. The latest available surveys, the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and the Household Budget Survey (Inquérito sobre o Orçamento Familiar, IOF), estimate the rate at about 25% in 2022. All the survey and census sources seem to agree that there has been a stagnation since the late 2000s (**Figure 1**).

Several reasons related to the characteristics of administrative data could explain these discrepancies. First, administrative records may be biased because age by grade reporting is inaccurate (e.g. only one third of children had their birth registered in 2023) (UNICEF, 2024a). Second, population projections, on which administrative estimates rely, may be inaccurate. Third, administrative records include all students who enrolled, regardless of whether they stopped attending.

This last reason deserves attention. Student absenteeism is a systemic problem in Mozambique that could explain why attendance rates are lower in household surveys than in administrative data. A 2019 study found that primary students attended school on average only about 49% of the time, while teachers further reported that nearly 10% of students attended school only infrequently or almost never, often missing one or more academic quarters (UNICEF, 2022). Another study in northern Mozambique recorded student absenteeism rates of nearly 60% (Bassi et al., 2019).

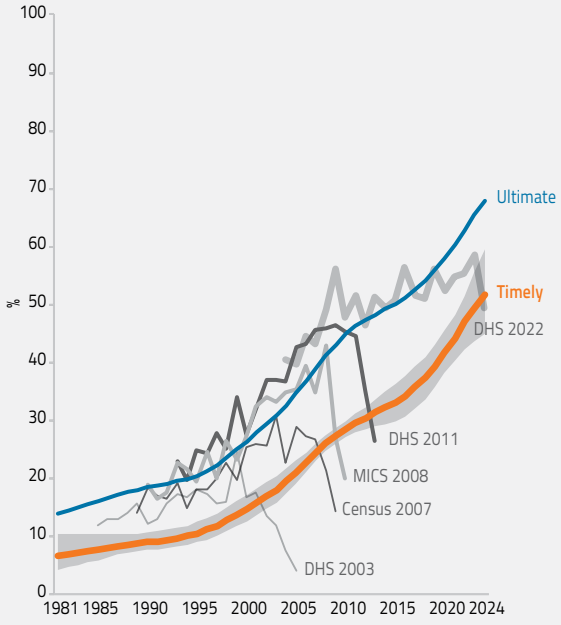
FIGURE 1:
Out-of-school rates of primary-aged children have fallen, but the extent varies by source
Out of school rate of primary school age children (6- to 12-year-olds), Mozambique, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Mozambique_fig1
Note: The out-of-school rate for the IOF survey was calculated for the age group 5 to 12 years.
Sources: Ministry of Education and Human Development (administrative data); UIS database (DHS and MICS point estimates); Mozambique Ministry of Planning and Development, UNICEF and UN-WIDER (2025) (IOF); and GEM Report analysis of IPUMS database (census).

Analysis of the primary completion rate confirms an overall improvement in primary education participation. The share of 15- to 17-year-olds who have completed primary education (i.e. those three to five years above graduation age, as per the official definition of the indicator, described as 'timely') increased from 15% in 2000 to 52% in 2024. Due to late entry and repetition, many young people complete primary education even later, so the 'ultimate' completion rate is estimated to be higher. However, the 2022 DHS suggests that the stagnation indicated by the slowing down of the out-of-school rate trajectory has affected progress in completion, which also appears to have decelerated drastically after 2010, suggesting that the model's conclusions may be optimistic and that an ultimate completion rate of no more than 60% is perhaps more accurate (**Figure 2**).

FIGURE 2:
Primary completion rates improved until 2010 but may have plateaued since
Primary completion rate, modelled estimates and by data source, Mozambique, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Mozambique_fig2
Note: The (timely) completion rate refers to those aged three to five years above the intended graduation age and the ultimate completion to those aged up to eight years above.
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW model.

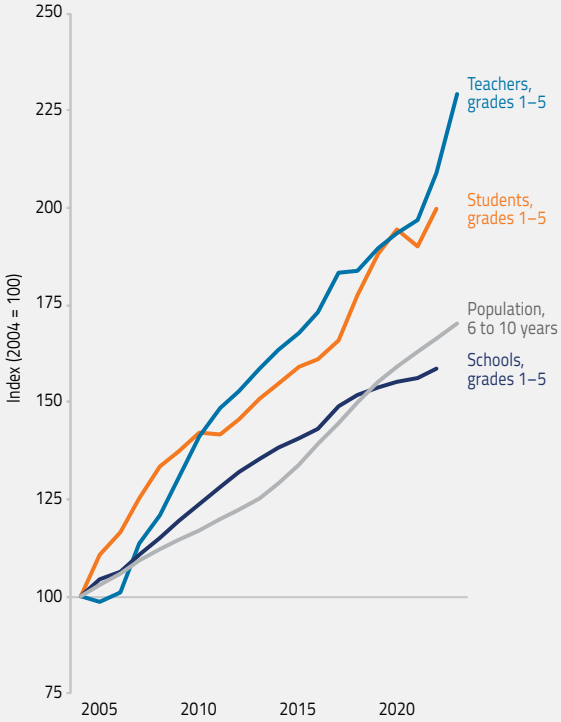
Also likely to have contributed to this stagnation are rising tensions, especially in the northern Cabo Delgado province, where over a million people have been displaced and schools have been extensively damaged since 2017 (ACAPS, 2023; Deutsche Welle, 2021; Nhamirre, 2025); natural disasters, such as Cyclones Idai and Kenneth in 2019 (Batel et al., 2023); and extended school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21 (Chimbutane et al., 2023; Kan, 2023).

Mozambique held its first democratic elections in 1994 after 16 years of post-independence civil war. As the country recovered, education became central to development efforts and the 1999–2003 Strategic Plan set universal primary education as the country's main goal (Mozambique Ministry of Education and Human Development, 1998).

Most of the policy efforts at the time were devoted to primary school rehabilitation (as many had been damaged or destroyed during the war) and construction. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of lower primary schools (grades 1 to 5) increased from 6,000 to 10,500, while new classrooms were built within existing schools to accommodate more students. But the pace of school construction has fallen behind the pace of enrolment growth. It is estimated that some 10,000 classes are held outdoors under trees. In Nampula province alone, over 1 million primary students attended classes sitting on the ground due to the lack of desks (Club of Mozambique, 2025). In 2018, about 40% of classrooms were built with precarious materials, which contributed to widespread destruction during the 2019 cyclones.

In contrast, after a slow start in the 2000s, the number of primary teachers has kept pace with enrolment growth (**Figure 3**). But teacher and principal absenteeism reportedly affect school operations and contribute to school closures, affecting over 10% of scheduled school days (Pontuschka and Kan, 2023).

FIGURE 3:
School construction and teacher recruitment have increased but needs are very high
Index of change in the number of primary students, teachers and schools since, 2004–23 (2004 = 100)



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Mozambique_fig3
Source: Mozambique Ministry of Education and Human Development (schools, teachers and students) and UN Population Division (2025) (population).

In this early period, the share of education in total public expenditure increased from 12% in 1998 to 23% in 2005. It has since fluctuated between 18% and 20% until 2021, the latest year with data. International development assistance made an important contribution to these reforms, accounting for more than half of the education budget in the early 2000s. Aid has been decreasing, especially after the 2016 debt crisis, but Mozambique still received USD 161 million for education in 2023 (Mozambique Ministry of Education and Human Development, 2020; UNESCO, 2024).

A major push towards universalization took place with a series of education reforms in 2004, when the government abolished tuition and other school fees for primary education and began providing textbooks free of charge to schools. This was achieved through school grants known as Direct Support to Schools, which allocated funding on a per capita basis (GPE, 2019; UNESCO, 2023b). Although there are still costs associated with sending a child to school, including parent–teacher association fees and other 'voluntary' fees, the policy was successful in reducing the direct cost of education, with greater gains for poor and rural children (Fox et al., 2012; Nguyen and King, 2022).

In a context where 70% of children live in poor households and 15% of children suffer from malnutrition, school meals have had a positive impact on preventing dropout (UNICEF, 2025). According to a longitudinal assessment conducted in 2021, school meals had the strongest association with dropout reduction, even more than distance to school, textbook availability, reading proficiency and school director attendance (UNICEF, 2024). Schools which introduced on-site meals improved enrolment and attendance, which reached 92% in 2024 (WFP, 2024). Nevertheless, school meal provision remains limited. The government launched the National School Feeding Programme (PRONAE) in 2013 (UNESCO, 2023b). In 2025, it provided meals to 650,000, or about 9%, of primary students (Global Child Nutrition Foundation, 2024; Jornal Notícias, 2025).

Poverty, often rising after natural disasters, has a major impact on child labour, which exceeds 10% for children aged 5 to 10, rises to 30% for those aged 11 to 13, and reaches 50% among adolescents aged 14 to 17, many of whom are still at the primary level (Ciaschi et al., 2026). Seasonal and household labour demands also frequently disrupt schooling (UNICEF, 2021). Dropout rates more than double for children engaged in paid work and increase by nearly 70% for children engaged in unpaid work (UNICEF, 2022).

Mozambique faces significant challenges with over-age enrolment and repetition in primary education, an issue that contributes to classroom overcrowding and dropout. The proportion of over-age students fell from 70% in 2000 to 37% in 2020 but remains above the sub-Saharan African average of 26%. Repetition rates have been historically high in Mozambique, with children taking on average nearly twice the expected time to complete primary education (Mozambique Ministry of Education and Human Development, 2020). The government introduced a semi-automatic promotion policy in 2004, supported by remedial programmes and continuous assessment to support student progression (Fox et al., 2012; UNICEF, 2024). Nevertheless, repetition remained high in grades 2, 5 and 7, marking the end of learning cycles within primary education (UNESCO, 2023b).

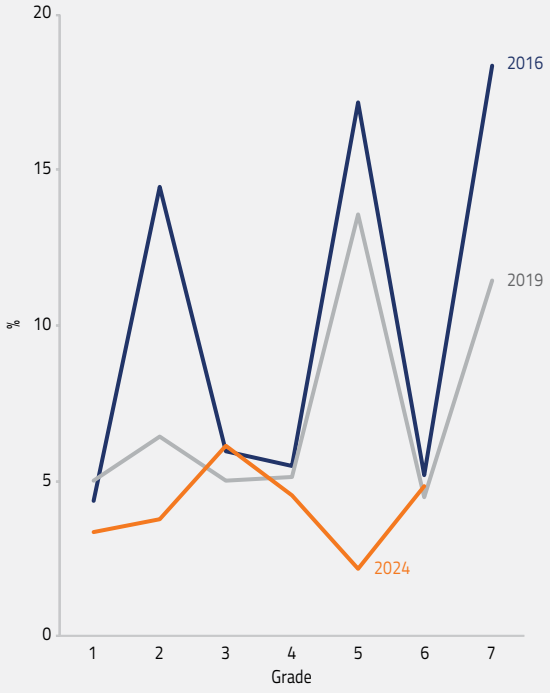
In 2018, the basic education system was restructured, making it free and compulsory for nine years instead of seven. The first two primary cycles (grades 1 to 5 and 6 to 7) were merged into a single cycle spanning grades 1 to 6, with grade 7 reclassified as part of lower secondary education. The grade 5 transition exam, a key bottleneck, was eliminated. Prior to the reform, about one third of public schools only offered classes up to grade 5, forcing many students to transfer to more distant schools to continue their education. Under the reform, gradually implemented through 2023, all primary schools are required to offer at least six grades (Club of Mozambique, 2018; UNESCO, 2023b). Since then, repetition rates have become lower and flatter across grades, signalling improved transitions (**Figure 4**).

Mozambique is a multilingual country. Less than 17% of people (and only 5% in rural areas) speak Portuguese as their mother tongue (Batel et al. 2023; UNESCO, 2023). The government began implementing bilingual education in 2003, officially recognizing it in 2018 (Aleixo et al., 2021), and the 2020–2029 Bilingual Education Expansion Strategy outlines a framework for scaling it up (UNESCO, 2023b). The share of primary students enrolled in bilingual education programmes has sharply increased from about 1% in 2015 to 19% in 2024, and the share of teachers in these schools from less than 2% to 21% (Mozambique Ministry of Education and Human Development, 2015, 2024). It is believed that the programme has improved student engagement and progression (ADPP Mozambique, 2020).

Girls in Mozambique have been at a high risk of dropping out: 53% of girls marry before age 18 and 17% before age 15, often in informal unions, which are among the highest rates globally. At least 1 in 10 girls has had a child before the age of 15. A 2019 study found that 70% of pregnant girls, many of whom were still in primary school due to late entry, left school. In 2019, the government criminalized

child marriage and revoked a 2003 Ministerial Order which had previously required pregnant girls to transfer to night school (Human Rights Watch, 2024). Gender equity also became a policy priority in the 2018 education reform and in the Education Strategic Plan 2020–2029 (Mozambique Ministry of Education and Human Development, 2020). Implementation of these policies has been uneven (Human Rights Watch, 2024), but gender equity in participation has been steadily improving. Between 2004 and 2024, the share of girls enrolled increased from 45% to 49% in primary education.

FIGURE 4:
Repetition rates decreased and become flatter across primary grades after the 2018 education reform
Repetition rates by primary grade and year, Mozambique, 2016, 2019 and 2024

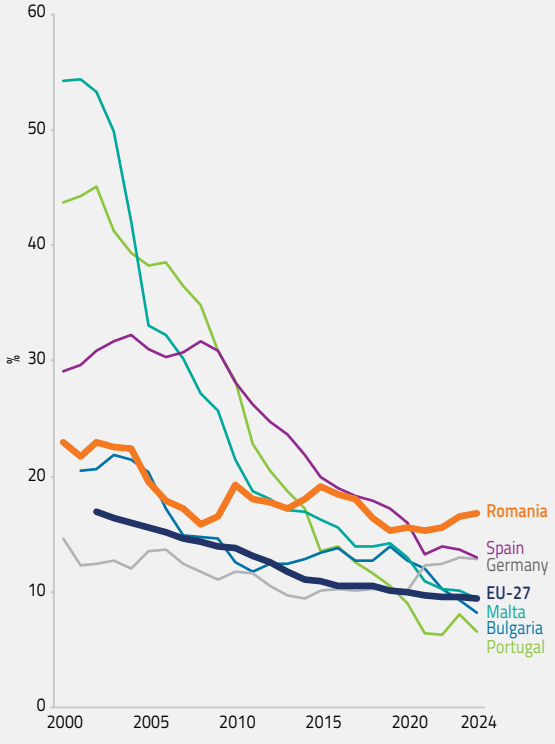


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Mozambique_fig4
Source: Education Statistics Annual School Survey, Mozambique Ministry of Education and Human Development.

Romania: REACHING THE YOUTH FURTHEST BEHIND

High early school leaving rates were a significant policy concern in several European Union member states at the turn of the century. In 2002, there were 6 countries with an early school leaving rate above the EU average, 17%, of the current 27 member states: Malta (53%), Portugal (45%), Spain (31%), Italy (23%), Romania (22%), Bulgaria (21%) and Luxembourg (17%). By 2024, Malta and Portugal had reduced their early school leaving rate by more than 80%, while Bulgaria, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain reduced theirs by more than 50%. Romania reduced its early school leaving rate by 23% between 2002 and 2008 but the rate has since stagnated. In 2024, it had the highest early school leaving rate in the European Union (16%), well above the EU average (9%) (**Figure 1**).

FIGURE 1:
Romania has the highest early school leaving rate in Europe
Early school leaving rate, 18- to 24-year-olds, Romania and selected European countries, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Romania_fig1
Source: Eurostat (2026a).

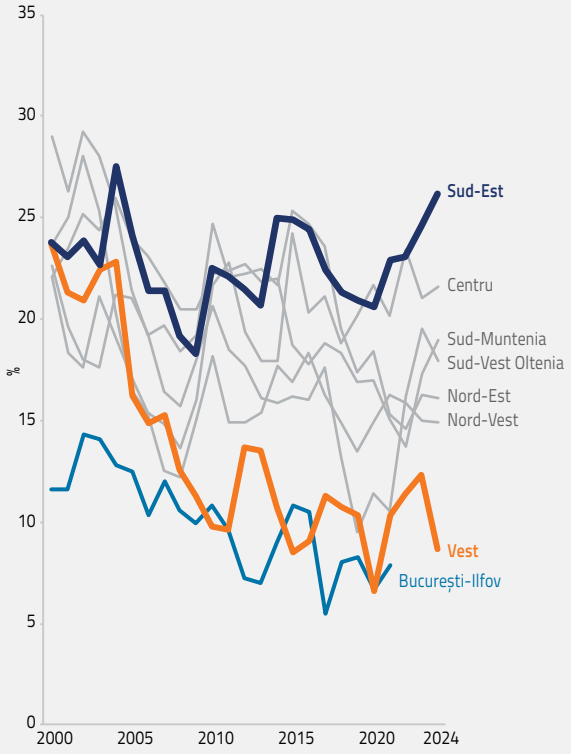
In the UIS database, the out-of-school rate of youth of upper secondary school age has in fact increased in Romania, from 18% in 2014 to 27% in 2023. But this estimate needs to be interpreted with caution, as the population denominator may be affected by high emigration that is not captured in the data (Anghel et al., 2017). Interpretation of trends using the out-of-school rate indicator may also be complicated by several reforms, including the introduction of the preparatory grade at age 6 (fully implemented by 2014), the extension of compulsory education and the reorganization of vocational education in 2014 and again in 2023.

Interpretation of administrative data is difficult for the dropout rate. No nationally comparable data are available that disaggregate early school leaving by type of upper secondary school. While students in vocational and technological pathways are consistently identified as being at higher risk of dropout, it is difficult to precisely attribute early school leaving to specific school types.

Even so, the overall picture is clear: Romania has made only limited progress in reducing youth exclusion from education even though there is wide variation across the regions. In the early 2000s, there was near regional parity. Seven of the eight regions in the country were clustered around the national average, with an early school leaving rate more than twice as high as the rate of the capital region, București-Ilfov. But by 2024, two regions (Sud-Est and Centru) had stagnated; in fact, in the Sud-Est region, the early school leaving rate increased from 24% in 2002 to 26% in 2024. Four regions improved a little, and one (Vest) improved fast enough to converge with the capital region, as its rate fell from 24% in 2002 to 9% in 2024 (**Figure 2**).

Under communism, Romania's education system was highly centralized. Law 28 of 1978 extended compulsory schooling to 10 years, reflecting an emphasis on mass education. Despite strong ideological control, the state invested extensively in kindergartens and schools, expanding educational infrastructure and access (Serban, 2024). In the difficult transition years following the collapse of Communism in 1990, compulsory education was reduced to 8 years, before reverting back again to 10 years in 2003. Under the 2023 Law on Pre-university Education, compulsory education has increased to 14 years, which now includes 2 years of pre-primary and 12 years of primary and secondary education (Eurydice, 2024).

FIGURE 2:
Romanian regions diverge in terms of their early school leaving rate performance
Early school leaving rate, 18- to 24-year-olds, by region, Romania, 2000–24



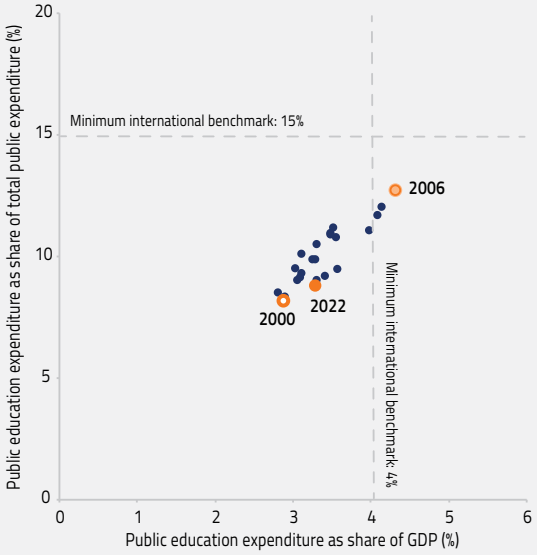
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Romania_fig2
Source: Eurostat (2026b).

Upon joining the European Union in 2007, Bulgaria and Romania committed to contribute to the EU-wide Education and Training 2020 benchmark of reducing early school leaving to below 10% (Marin, 2025). National benchmarks were set at 11% for Bulgaria and 11.3% for Romania (Bulgaria Ministry of Education, 2014; Popa, 2019). While they both missed the 2020 target, Bulgaria eventually reduced its early school leaving rate from 15% in 2007 to 8% in 2024, while Romania has stagnated at 17%, which is nearly double the EU mean. Three issues seem to stand out: the strength of institutional and financial frameworks; the vocational education and training system; and the efforts directed at supporting the Roma minority.

First, Romania developed a national strategy to address early school leaving in 2015, aligned with the Education and Training 2020 framework, and spent more than RON 2 billion (USD 500 million) on relevant measures by 2021 (Marin, 2025). Despite a comprehensive design which covered prevention, intervention and compensation measures, implementation remained fragmented. Evaluations point to problems of interministerial coordination and communication, weak local administrative capacity, limited monitoring and insufficient support services in schools (Alexa and Baciu, 2021; Marin, 2025). Some of these limitations are related to underinvestment, as public expenditure on education has been consistently below both international benchmarks (4% of GDP and 15% of total public expenditure) with the exception of a short period between 2006 and 2009 when it just met the 4% of GDP benchmark (**Figure 3**).

Second, Romania's vocational education and training system experienced a major disruption in 2009 when the government abolished the Schools of Arts and Trades (Școlile de Arte și Meserii), often located in rural communities, which had provided short, practice-oriented training after grade 8. Their removal shifted students into four-year technical secondary schools, typically located in urban areas and combining general and vocational curricula. For many low-income rural families, this pathway proved difficult due to higher indirect costs, a longer study duration and the absence of a short-cycle qualification enabling rapid labour market entry. As a result, dropout increased sharply in grades 9 and 10, and more than 55,000 adolescents were out of school by the mid-2010s (Pantazi, 2014).

FIGURE 3:
Romania has spent below the two international benchmarks in education
Public education expenditure as share of GDP and as share of total public expenditure, Romania, 2000–22



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Romania_fig3
Source: UIS database.

Since then, Romania has sought to rebuild its vocational education and training sector. Reforms in the mid-2010s, as reflected in the 2016–2020 strategy, aimed to improve access, retention and labour market relevance to strengthen school-to-work transitions, supported by mechanisms to anticipate skills needs and monitor graduate outcomes (Cerkez et al., 2024; Romania Ministry of Education, 2016). Among students in medium-level education (i.e. upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary programmes), 61% were enrolled in vocational education and training programmes in 2023, compared with an EU average of 52% (European Commission, 2022).

Vocational education and training at the upper secondary level comprises multiple tracks with different structures and labour market orientations, reflecting longstanding challenges in aligning provision with labour market needs and adapting planning mechanisms to changing economic demands (CEDEFOP, 2022). In 2017/18, the National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development introduced a dual pathway, combining school-based instruction with work-based learning in firms, at the upper secondary level, typically within three-year vocational programmes. However, participation in this system has been limited, accounting for around 1.5% of vocational education enrolment at this level, with uneven geographical coverage (CEDEFOP, 2019). Despite incentives such as a technological scholarship of RON 300 (USD 68) per month in 2023/24, reaching over 82,500 students, dropout remains a concern, particularly in disadvantaged and rural areas, reflecting broader challenges of unequal access and limited institutional capacity (European Commission, 2022).

Third, the Roma account for 3.3% of the population in Romania according to the 2011 census, although another estimate suggested that they may account for as much as 8% (Council of Europe, 2012). Their educational attainment has improved in Romania, faster than in other European countries with smaller Roma populations. About 60% of Roma completed lower secondary education in 2024, twice as much as the older generation, and 34% completed at least upper secondary education, compared to 20% in 2016 (**Figure 4a**).

But Roma children continue to face significant barriers to education. They are segregated, as elsewhere in Europe, and increasingly so: the percentage of children aged 6 to 15 who were in a school where most or all other pupils were Roma increased in Romania from 28% in 2016 to 43% in 2024 (**Figure 4b**). The Roma are disproportionately represented in rural or under-resourced schools where poor infrastructure, limited teacher training and language barriers reduce opportunities for learning (European Commission, 2022). Socioeconomic disadvantage further constrains participation in education, while discrimination and low levels of institutional trust continue to discourage school engagement among Roma communities (UNESCO, 2020).

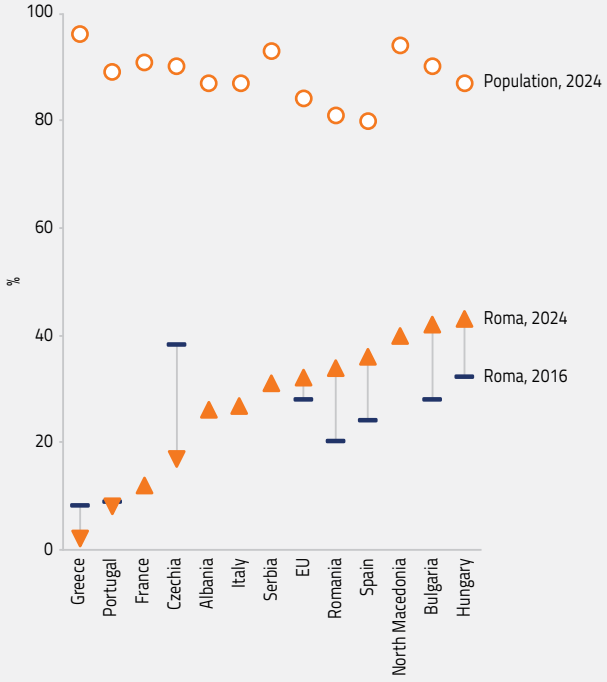
Romania tries to address these challenges at the policy level. The National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2021–2027 places education at the centre of inclusion efforts, with commitments such as a national methodology for school desegregation and the expansion of early childhood education (Ghimisi, 2021). Additional measures include reserved places for Roma students in upper secondary education and new programmes to reduce school dropout. While some innovations led by non-governmental organizations have informed system-level policies, such as second chance programmes, most remain fragmented and dependent on donor financing, limiting their scalability and sustainability (Alexa and Baciu, 2021; Marin, 2025). Projects have often functioned as parallel support mechanisms rather than as integrated components of national policy (Lauritzen, 2020; Marin, 2025). Recent funding from the European Union's Recovery and Resilience Facility, notably to support the 2021–2026 National Programme to Reduce School Dropout, could be used to strengthen systemic responses and benefit Roma students in Romania (OECD, 2025).

FIGURE 4:

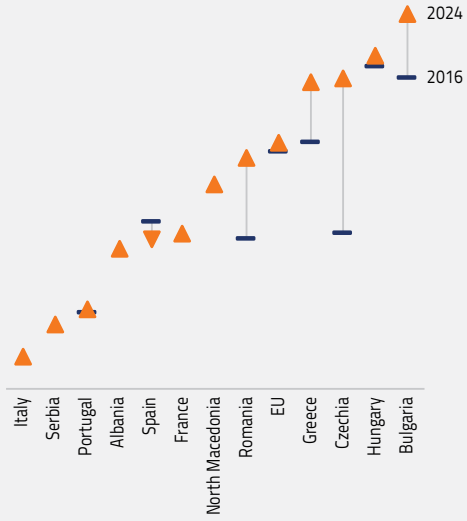
There has been progress in Roma secondary attainment but a regression in term of their inclusion

Selected Roma education indicators, Romania and selected European countries, 2016 and 2024

a. People aged 20 to 24 who completed at least upper secondary education



b. Children aged 6 to 15 who attend schools where all or most pupils are Roma, according to respondents



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Romania_fig4

Source: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2025).

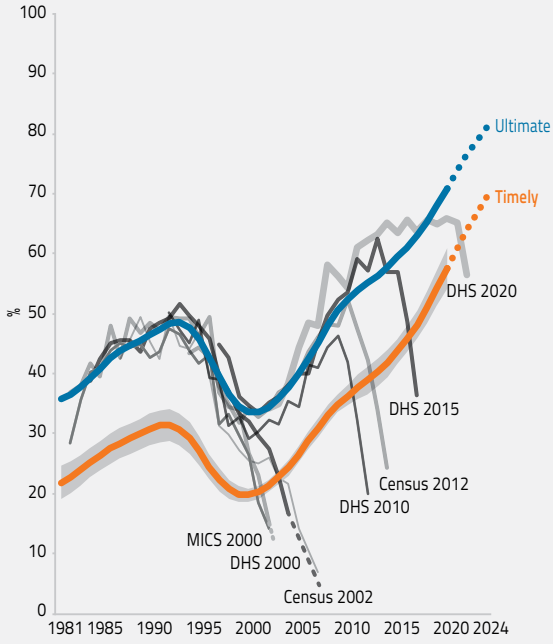
Rwanda: ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF MAJOR ENROLMENT EXPANSION

Rwanda experienced one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. The 1994 genocide against the Tutsi resulted in the deaths of an estimated 800,000 people and caused mass displacement (Rwanda Ministry of Education, 1998a, 1998b). It also caused severe damage to the national educational system: destroying school infrastructure, killing and displacing teachers, and causing traumatic scars on the education community. It had a direct impact on the education attainment of those who experienced it, initially estimated at a loss of 0.5 years of schooling (Akresh and de Walque, 2008) and later revised upwards to 1.2 years (Guariso and Verpoorten, 2019). Studies have even documented the education impact on children who were in their mother's wombs at the time (Bundervoet and Fransen, 2018).

Analysis of censuses and household surveys since 2000 shows the magnitude of the impact on educational development. Throughout the 1980s and until the genocide, the primary completion rate was growing at the rate of one percentage point per year and had reached 49% by 1994 if very late completers are included. It is estimated that the primary completion rate fell by one third, reaching a low of 33% by 2000. Since then, sustained government efforts that placed education at the centre of the development agenda, with strong external support, have put Rwanda on an accelerated path. The primary completion rate has grown by two percentage points per year, twice the rate before the genocide. By 2024, it is estimated that about 69% of 14- to 16-year-olds (i.e. those three to five years above the official graduation age) were completing primary school, although ultimately about 81% are estimated to complete primary school if very late completers are taken into account (**Figure 1**). However, this estimate may need to be adjusted in view of developments after 2020.

This gap between the 'timely' and 'ultimate' primary completion rates has fluctuated around 15 percentage points during these past 40 years. This is a sizeable gap, which indicates that repetition is a significant and persistent challenge (Laterite, 2019). Only 38% of students completed primary school in six years (Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2024a). The repetition rate fell from 18% in 2007 to 12.5% in 2012. After a short-term increase between 2012 and 2016, it fell further to 10% in 2018. But the repetition rate jumped to 30% in 2021. Disaggregated by grade, repetition is highest in grades 1 and 5 (**Figure 2a**). The effect of this bottleneck is a decline in the number of students who sat for the final examination at grade 6 by 28% between 2019 and 2023 (**Figure 2b**).

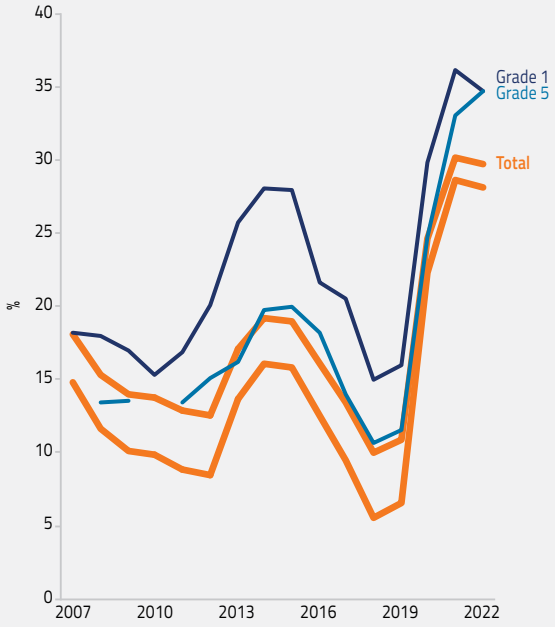
FIGURE 1:
Rwanda has been recovering from the consequences of the 1994 genocide on its education system
Primary completion rate, modelled estimates and estimates by individual source, 1981–2024



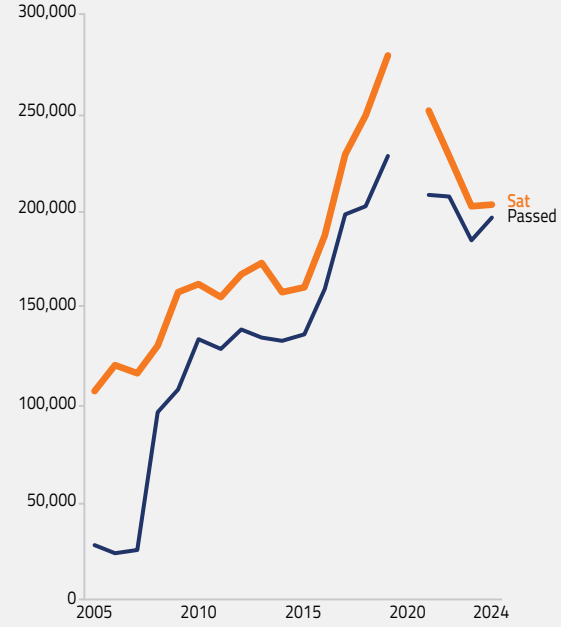
Note: DHS = Demographic and Health Survey; MICS = Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Rwanda_fig1
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW model.

FIGURE 2:
Repetition has been high in Rwanda and grew after 2020, affecting primary graduation

a. Primary education repetition rate, Rwanda, 2007–22



b. Number of students who sat and passed the grade 6 national examination, Rwanda, 2005–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Rwanda_fig2
Source: UIS database and Rwanda Ministry of Education (various editions of the Education Statistical Yearbook).

Education has been seen in Rwanda as vital for the nation's recovery. It was prioritized as an engine for reconciliation, reconstruction and socioeconomic progress. Improving infrastructure, retraining teachers and revising curricula to promote unity and peace were early priorities (Obura, 2003). The Vision 2020 and Vision 2050 frameworks and subsequent policies have reflected a commitment to 'leave no child behind' (Rwanda Government, 2012, 2020) that has shaped educational policies and interventions. Key milestones have included the introduction of free primary education of six years in 2003 and extended to nine years in 2007 to includ lower secondary education (World Bank et al., 2011). This policy change explains the sharp increase in the primary examination pass rate from 22% in 2007 to 74% in 2008 (**Figure 2b**). There has been a succession of five-year education sector strategic plans, beginning in 2004; the two most recent ones have covered the periods 2018/19–2023/24 and 2024–2029 (Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2018; 2024b).

The government has placed good governance, accountability and development at the heart of its quest for political legitimacy in all sectors, including education (Williams, 2017). As part of a decentralization reform that began in 2000, the central government, while keeping oversight of planning, policymaking, standard setting and monitoring, transferred responsibilities to districts through a results-oriented governance process based on performance contracts, known as imihigo, which has been credited for early progress in service delivery (Honeyman, 2017). Nevertheless, there was a noticeable decline in funding with the share of education in total public expenditure falling gradually from 18.8% in 2000 to 15.6% in 2008, 13.7% in 2014 and 10.8% in 2018. This created challenges, leading the government to increase the share of education in total public expenditure to an average of 14% between 2021 and 2025 to address three key areas: infrastructure, teachers and school feeding.

Progress in building new primary schools was slow until the late 2010s. An average of 40 primary schools per year were constructed during the 2000s, increasing only slightly to 50 per year in the 2010s. Classroom overcrowding, even combined with widespread double-shifting, had become a serious problem. The student/classroom ratio in government and government-assisted primary schools increased from 60:1 in 2005 to 83:1 in 2020 (ranging from 107:1 in government to 72:1 in government-assisted schools). As part of the 2018/19–2023/24 Education Sector Strategic Plan and with the support of a World

Bank concessional loan, some 1,100 new schools were constructed despite the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was 200 more schools in a 5-year period than had been built in the previous 20 years. The total number of public primary schools almost doubled, from 726 in 2017 to 1,327 in 2022/23 and their share from 25% to 35%, as the number of faith-based schools remained largely unchanged. The number of classrooms, which grew by 15,000 between 2007 and 2018, expanded by 22,500 in this period, helping the student/classroom ratio to fall back to 60:1 in 2024. Moreover, between 2017 and 2022/23, there were rapid improvements in other school infrastructure quality indicators: on-grid electricity (from 56% to 78%), access to safe drinking water (from 46% to 69%), access to tap water (from 53% to 80%) and single-sex toilets (from 71% to 96%). The student/desk ratio fell from 5:1 to 2:1 (Bennell, 2025).

Rapid expansion was facilitated by a local innovation. In 2009, the government introduced the Home-Grown School Construction Approach, a distinctive solution, heavily based on mass community mobilization, coupled with effective central and local government backstopping with respect to planning, funding and monitoring. All new classrooms and schools were constructed with this approach. A key feature of the programme was off-site construction, whereby classrooms were constructed according to high-quality, modular and standardized designs and prefabricated in dedicated factories, which allowed simultaneous site preparation that shortened the overall project timeline by 30% to 50%: all buildings were delivered in six months. The unit cost of classroom construction was around USD 100/m2 compared to USD 2700/m2 for conventional, externally funded projects. Small and medium-sized local contractors were used which boosted local economies. Local education officers and communities had the autonomy to exercise their own initiative to tackle implementation problems as they arose (Bennell, 2025).

Similar decisive action has been taken since 2019 on teacher recruitment. Between 2000 and 2019, primary school enrolment increased by 75% from 1.4 million to 2.5 million students but the number of teachers increased by only 66% from 26,500 to 43,900. But challenges had been noted in attracting and retaining teachers in rural areas (Monaco, 2016). An estimated 20% of teachers were leaving their jobs every year (Zeitlin, 2020). In 2019, the government set a target of hiring 29,000 teachers. Between 2019 and 2021, the number of teachers increased by 17,000 (i.e. as many teachers were hired in 2 years as in the previous 20 years). Another 8,000 were hired by 2023, while 5,000 more teachers were expected to be recruited in 2024/5 (Africa Diplomacy Network, 2025).

Such a massive recruitment drive was not straightforward. In two successive rounds in December 2019 and July 2020, only 2% and 15% of applicants, respectively, managed to pass the hiring examination. The government had to change the recruitment criteria: applicants were hired only on the basis of their academic transcript but appointed to one-year trial contracts (Buningwire, 2020).

A third large-scale policy that the government has implemented in recent years is school feeding, which has been shown to have a positive impact on student achievement (Tei Mensah and Nsabimana, 2025). The national programme was scaled up in 2020/21 and by 2022/23, 93% of primary school students were benefiting from school meals. Critically, the government was covering 93% of the cost with its own funds, having tripled the size of its contribution (Global Child Nutrition Foundation, 2024). In September 2022, a new directive capped parents' contributions to school feeding at RWF 975 per term (USD 0.60) to reduce disparities and support vulnerable families (Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2022).

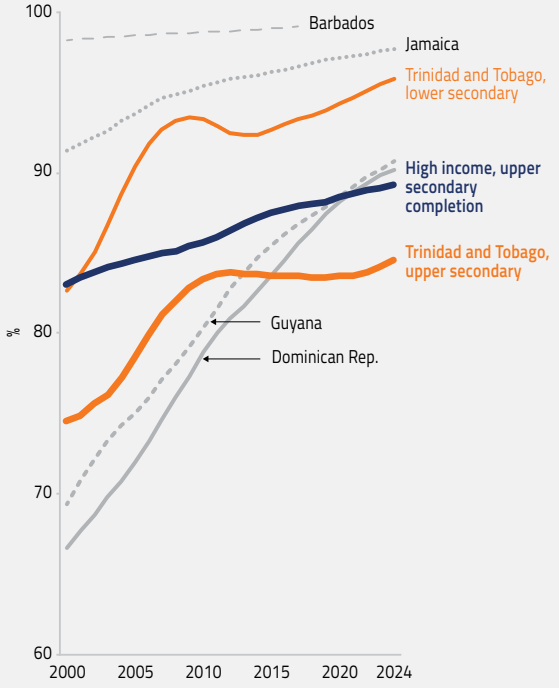
Given these important developments, the recent increase in repetition and the corresponding decline in graduation examination participation, which are slowing down the rapid progress between 2000 and 2019, may appear counterintuitive. It is possible that COVID-19 played a role in the observed bottlenecks. However, the main reason seems to be a change in the language of instruction policy.

Rwanda is unusual among African countries for having one national language spoken by everybody, Kinyarwanda. Yet it was declared as language of instruction only for grades 1 to 3 upon independence in 1962, followed by French in higher grades. Between 1978 and 1991, Kinyarwanda was named the language of instruction through all eight years of formal education. Following the 1994 genocide, English was added to French as a language of instruction in 1996 and named an official language in the 2003 Constitution. In 2008, English was mandated as the language of instruction at all education institution levels (Tusiime et al., 2025). As the move was not pedagogically sustainable (Kral, 2023; Laitin and Ramachandran, 2024; Ukobizaba et al., 2025), Kinyarwanda was reinstated as the medium of instruction in the early primary grades in 2011. However, in 2019, the national language of instruction policy once again mandated the use of English as the medium of instruction from grade 1 onwards. The link between language and repetition has received political attention (Uwayezu, 2025), with large-scale remedial education one of the measures introduced to address the challenge (Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2026).

Trinidad and Tobago: UNIVERSAL SECONDARY COMPLETION PURSUED SINCE THE 1990S

In the 1990s, Trinidad and Tobago's secondary education participation rates lagged behind those of other less wealthy English-speaking Caribbean countries (De Lisle et al., 2010). For example, the transition rate to secondary education in Tobago was only 40% (Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education, 1993). In response, the government's White Paper on Educational Policy (1993–2003) expressed its commitment to a universal secondary education policy, accompanied by a set of reforms (Knight, 2016; Warrican, 2009). Between 2000 and 2010, the lower secondary completion rate increased by 10 percentage points, reducing the gap that separated it from Barbados (from 16 to 5 percentage points) and Jamaica (from 9 to 2 percentage points). There was a comparable increase in upper secondary completion, although this plateaued after 2010, until recent years (**Figure 1**).

FIGURE 1:
Trinidad and Tobago expanded secondary education in the 2000s
Lower and upper secondary school completion rate, Trinidad and Tobago , selected Caribbean countries, and high-income countries, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Trinidad_Tobago_fig1
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW model.

Unlike other English-speaking Caribbean countries, which kept the single-cycle secondary education system inherited from colonial times, Trinidad and Tobago was one of two countries (alongside the Bahamas) to introduce a two-cycle (lower and upper) secondary education system, complementing rather than replacing the pre-existing single secondary cycle (Warrican, 2009). The introduction of the two-cycle secondary education system was meant to ease the transition from lower to upper secondary education and help guide subject selection in upper secondary education.

Secondary education expansion was facilitated by two large Inter-American Development Bank projects: the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (1999–2009), a USD 150 million loan with USD 45 million government counterpart funding (IADB, 1999) and the Seamless Education Project (2009-2019), a USD 62 million loan with USD 14 million government counterpart funding (IADB, 2009); the latter covered the entire education system and included teacher and principal training, institutional governance issues and curriculum content (De Lisle, 2012; Mohammed, 2018). The interventions aimed to facilitate access to higher education (Knight, 2016).

Between 2002 and 2007, 23 new secondary schools were built mainly in rural and underserved areas (Lochan, 2014; Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education, 2001). These schools, established under the Secondary Education Modernization Programme, were added to the stock of grammar schools (traditional secondary schools established during the British colonial period), modern secondary schools (1959) and comprehensive schools (1972) (De Lisle, 2019). Increased school capacity helped eliminate the two-shift system (Lochan, 2014) and introduce a longer school day (IDB, 2013). In 2019/20, there were 90 government, 44 government-assisted and 55 private secondary schools; the last enrols about 12% of students (Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education, 2022a).

At the same time, the proliferation of different school types has fragmented secondary education by reputation and performance with a negative impact on equity. Smaller schools, usually located in rural areas, tend to rely on fewer full-time and certified teachers (OECD, 2010, 2016) and have a higher concentration of low-performing students (De Lisle, 2019). The main divide is between government-led and government-assisted schools,

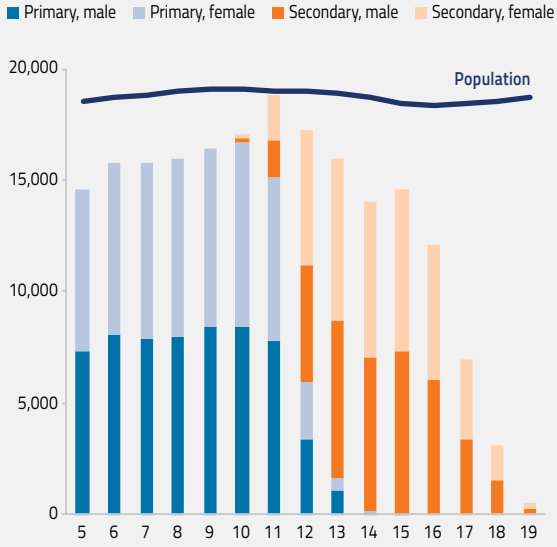
which are run by private bodies, usually a religious board, and teach the same national curriculum but are privately funded, except for teacher salaries. Assisted schools, almost all of which are single sex, benefit from higher reputation, rely on teachers with higher qualifications and attract students with the highest scores (Beuermann et al., 2015).

Despite efforts to overcome the legacy of an elitist system, the Secondary Entrance Assessment at the end of the seven-year primary cycle (age 5 to 11) still determines students' educational path early on, perpetuating the association between socioeconomic status and educational opportunities (De Lisle, 2022a). Students are assigned to secondary schools based on their test scores, top four school preferences and school capacity. A computer algorithm progressively places students into schools until all slots are filled and every student is assigned (Beuermann et al., 2015, 2019). Government-assisted secondary schools have the privilege of selecting up to one fifth of their students, which raises favouritism concerns, while the remaining places are assigned based on the computer-based algorithm (Persad and Antoine, 2023).

Students express their school preferences based on religious affiliation, geographic proximity and reputation, with traditional schools typically favoured over newer institutions (De Lisle et al., 2010; Jackson 2013). Students value these schools, even though they do not appear to add more to students' learning once student background characteristics are controlled for (Persad and Antoine, 2023). But they try to avoid less prestigious schools because they associate them with a negative school environment, including bullying and violence (Bahall, 2024). Ranking schools based on reputation and student performance has reshaped segregation and student disparities within the framework of universal secondary education (Knight, 2019).

The Secondary Entrance Assessment creates a bottleneck in the system, as about 5% of students are required to retake the examination if their score falls below a minimum threshold. The system considers that these students have not yet mastered the basic competencies and need support to prepare for secondary education. This is reflected in national statistics, which show that enrolment jumps at age 11 (**Figure 2**).

FIGURE 2:
The Secondary Entrance Assessment is a bottleneck in Trinidad and Tobago 's education system
Number of students enrolled in government and government-assisted schools by age, education level and sex, Trinidad and Tobago , 2019/20



Notes: Enrolment figures do not include students without age information (1.6% of primary and 4.8% of secondary government and government-assisted school enrolment) and students enrolled in private schools (9.4% of total primary enrolment and 12.2% of total secondary enrolment).
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Trinidad_Tobago_fig2
Source: Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education 2019/20 Education Statistics Digest (enrolment) and United Nations Population Division (population).

At the end of the three-year lower secondary cycle (Forms 1 to III, age 12 to 14), students used to sit for the low-stakes National Certificate of Secondary Education examination, which helped some students who wanted to leave school before finishing the full cycle get a diploma (Miller, 2009). Progressively phased out since 2023, it has been replaced by a sample-based examination in line with international student assessments (Regional Monitoring Platform, 2023; Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education, 2022b). At the end of the two-year upper secondary cycle (Forms IV and V, ages 15 and 16), students sit for the Caribbean Secondary Entrance Certificate (CSEC) examination to obtain a secondary school completion certificate, which allows them access to tertiary education. Some secondary schools also provide two more years (Lower and Upper Form VI, ages 17 and 18), at the end of which students can take the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE).

In a system with early tracking and competitive examinations, more disadvantaged students struggle

to fare well. Upper secondary completion appears to have stagnated at about 85% since 2010 but there is a 12 percentage point gap between boys and girls and a 26 percentage point gap between students from the poorest and the richest households. Socioeconomic background remains the major determinant of obtaining the CSEC but boys from the poorest households remain at a significant disadvantage (De Lisle, 2022b). They are more likely to be absent, to repeat grades (Campbell-Phillips, 2020) and to perform poorly due to social norms, including in the education system (Beuermann et al., 2024; Thailinger et al., 2023; De Lisle, 2018). According to the World Inequalities Database on Education, only 57% of the poorest boys complete upper secondary school.

Trinidad and Tobago has introduced a number of social initiatives to improve equity. Since 2011, some students have been benefiting from free public transportation (AGD, 2016) while a textbook rental loan programme is ensuring that secondary students have equal access to affordable learning materials (Joseph, 2010; Trinidad and Tobago Parliament, 2017). Moreover, a school feeding programme has provided children whose families receive social assistance and almost all rural students with two free meals per day (De Lisle et al., 2017; FAO and the University of the West Indies, 2021). In 2022/23, they accounted for 21% of the secondary student population (GCNF, 2024).

Trinidad and Tobago is also putting emphasis on technical and vocational education and training, which has been neglected due to a combination of teacher shortages and funding restrictions (Trinidad and Tobago Newsday, 2025). Vocational education has long been part of the secondary curriculum and has also been available at the post-secondary level. However, it limits accessibility to students without a secondary diploma, reflecting poorly on its reputation. The 2023–2027 National Education Policy outlines a reform of technical and vocational curricula to reflect modern technologies, relaunch the image of the sector as part of upper secondary education, and expand access and inclusion (Duncan, 2025).

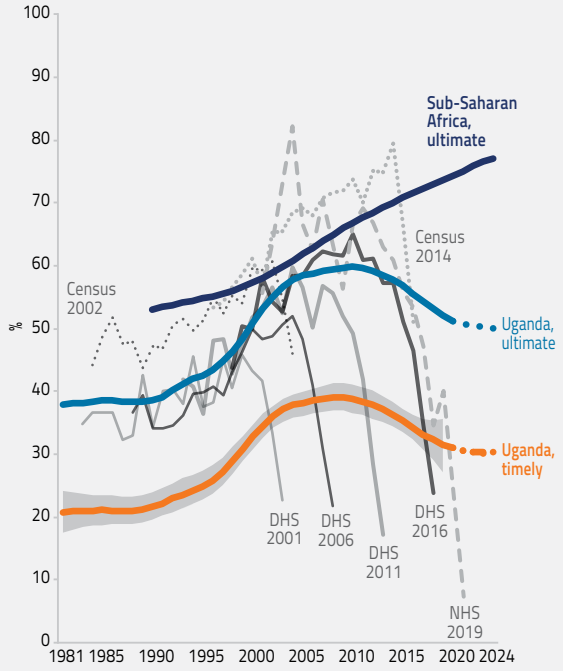
Uganda: A 30-YEAR AMBITION STILL FAR FROM BEING REALIZED

Uganda has faced multiple challenges in relation to education. In the post-independence era, two decades of civil war hampered progress. While it then entered a period of relative political stability in 1986, violent conflict continued for another 20 years, especially in the north of the country, where the conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army led to mass displacement into camps and forced child soldiering (Kazibwe, 2025). While most of those internally displaced returned to their homes after the end of hostilities in 2006.

Uganda was one of the early champions in the Education for All movement in Africa. The introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 was supported by the abolition of school fees. Enrolment increased from 3.1 million in 1996 to 5.3 million in 1997 and to 7.6 million in 2003. However, household survey data suggest there were no corresponding large gains in completion as might have been expected from such an unprecedented surge in enrolment. The primary completion rate had in fact started growing prior to the UPE policy. Between 1990 and 2000, the ultimate primary completion rate (which includes very late completers) increased by 1.2 percentage points per year, from 39% to 51%, but progress slowed down in the 2000s to 0.9 percentage points per year, reaching 60% in 2010. Analysis of surveys after 2010 suggests that Uganda entered a period of stagnation at that point. While it came within three percentage points of equalling the sub-Saharan African average in 2004, it has been diverging ever since (**Figure 1**).

A distinct feature of the enrolment pattern in Uganda is over-age enrolment. Students are supposed to reach grade 7 by age 12. As late enrolment and repetition are widespread in low- and lower-middle-income countries, the completion rate is officially defined over those aged three to five years above graduation age (i.e. for 15- to 17-year-olds) in order not to underestimate progress. But as attainment estimates by age show for each household survey, only a fraction of children complete primary education by age 15 to 17. In fact, this phenomenon has been worsening as shown visually by the 'tails' of these attainment rate estimates getting longer over time (Figure 1). The repetition rate in Uganda averaged 11% between 2000 and 2017, despite a policy of automatic promotion (Kabay, 2021), which the government abolished in March 2026 (Nafula and Walugembe, 2026).

FIGURE 1:
High levels of over-age enrolment make it difficult to assess progress in Uganda
Primary completion rate, modelled estimates and estimates by individual source, 1981–2024



Note: DHS = Demographic and Health Survey; NHS = National Household Survey.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Uganda_fig1
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW model.

The last enrolment data for Uganda on the UIS database and the last published Education Abstract of the Ministry of Education and Sports date from 2017, which prevents triangulation of these estimates with administrative data. However, other surveys, whose microdata could not be analysed by the *Global Education Monitoring Report* team, but which have published estimates on related indicators in their respective reports, seem to confirm that educational development has stagnated in the past few years in Uganda.

First, a comparison of adolescent (age 13 to 18) and youth (age 19 to 24) attendance rates between the 2016/17 and the 2019/20 National Household Survey (NHS) rounds

suggests no progress in three years (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2021; Table 3.1). Second, the 2022 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) report, which features attainment estimates for five-year cohorts (20- to 24-year olds and 30- to 34-year-olds), shows that the percentage of those who had completed at least primary school had increased among women (from 53% to 59%) and had fallen among men (from 61% to 58%) over 10 years (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2023; Table 2.8).

Third, the 2021 National Service Delivery Survey reported a decline in the primary net enrolment rate from 78% in 2015 to 73% in 2021 and an increase in the proportion of 6- to 12-year-olds who had never been to school from 8% to 15% (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Fourth, a citizen-led assessment report showed that the percentage of 14-year-olds who had reached grade 7 fell from 13% in 2020 to 10% in 2024 (UWEZO Uganda, 2025). While the exceptionally long school closures because of COVID-19, which were the longest in Africa, may have played a role, the NHS and DHS estimates suggest that the stagnation had begun much earlier.

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics has been instrumental in carrying out several household and facility surveys of good quality in the past 30 years and making the data publicly available, which has enabled the evaluation of the UPE policy. Most of the initial studies looked at short-term effects. For instance, they highlighted the drastic narrowing of primary school attendance gaps by sex, region and income in the late 1990s (Deininger, 2003), a 3% increase in the likelihood that children would begin primary school by age 9 (Grogan, 2009) and an increase in attainment for girls by about 1.4 years (Moussa and Omoeva, 2020). But more recent evaluations have been sceptical about the policy's long-term impact (Kan and Klasen, 2021; Kazibwe and Li, 2025).

The implementation of UPE has been thoroughly evaluated domestically in six thematic reports by the National Planning Authority that touched upon the six themes of institutions, curriculum, teachers, inspectors, financing and modelling (e.g. Uganda National Planning Authority, 2018). Governance is a key issue. Around the time of the UPE policy rollout in 1998, Uganda implemented an extensive decentralization programme, transferring primary education management for service delivery to district councils, while the Ministry of Education and Sports handled policy, standards, teacher training, curriculum and examinations. However, this devolution approach, with relatively little autonomy in financial management, has been seen as ineffective in the sense that it prevented consistent reform implementation (Kayabwe et al., 2014).

Arguably, one of the biggest impediments to improving education in Uganda is with respect to financing. Public education expenditure as a share of total public expenditure increased from 14% in 1990 to 25% in 1998 to support the implementation of the UPE policy (Iwiire, 2025). However, spending levels fell significantly later, well below both minimum international benchmarks (at least 4% of GDP and at least 15% of total public expenditure). Between 2011 and 2022, public education expenditure as a share of GDP increased slightly from 2.3% to 2.6% but fell as a share of total public expenditure from 13.6% to 8.5%, both among the lowest spending levels in sub-Saharan Africa and in the world. The latest estimate suggests that spending fell even further, reaching 6.6% of total public expenditure in 2024/25. The share of pre-primary and primary education in total spending has also decreased sharply recently, from 51% in 2017/18 to 29% in 2024/25 (UNICEF, 2025).

Capitation grants are allocated to local governments to cover schools' non-wage recurrent expenses (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, 2021). The small volume and weak emphasis on equalization have made it difficult for poorer districts to sustain quality, leading to persistent disparity in access (Datzberger, 2018). In 2018, it was estimated that achieving UPE of good quality would require raising per pupil spending from UGX 10,000 (USD 3) to at least UGX 59,000 to UGX 63,000 for rural and urban schools (i.e. about USD 6) (Uganda National Planning Authority, 2018b). Primary school allocations for 2025/26 were still UGX 18,000 per pupil (USD 4.75), which means schools depend on parent–teacher association contributions to cover basic expenses (The Independent, 2025). Fees are still being charged, even in public primary schools (Sakaue, 2018; Uganda Equality Opportunity Commission, 2024). A report by the Auditor General found more than half of schools are still charging fees (Owiny, 2024). The cost of schooling has been named as the main reason of dropout by 60% of households (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2025).

At least part of this decline in public spending is explained by the fact that the share of private institutions in total primary education enrolment has increased rapidly, from 6% in 1997 to 10% in 2007 and 20% in 2017 according to the UIS database. The 2021 National Service Delivery Survey reported that 33% of primary school students were attending private institutions (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2022). In urban areas, such as the capital city Kampala, 84% of all pre-primary, primary and secondary schools are private (Andebo, 2025). Accordingly, Uganda is one of the countries with the highest share of education in household consumption expenditure. According to the country's

National Household Survey, the share of education in household consumption expenditure increased from 5% in 2012/13 to 7.8% in 2016/17 and 8.5% in both 2019/20 and 2023/24 (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, 2024), when the global average is 2.1% and the low-income country average is 0.9% (UNESCO and World Bank, 2024).

Low spending leading to low education quality that precipitates dropout has been well-documented. With respect to infrastructure, some regions were well above the target pupil/classroom ratio of 53:1 including Central (65:1), Eastern (76:1) and Northern/West Nile (107:1) (Owiny, 2024). Between 1997 and 2003, the number of teachers increased by almost 80% but the number of students increased by almost 150%, a problem that was never resolved. In 2024, the pupil/teacher ratio in public primary schools was 60:1, with 37 out of 177 local government authorities having an average pupil/teacher ratio of at least 80:1 (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, 2024). Apart from Kampala, the 12 districts that host the 2 million refugees from neighbouring central and eastern African countries (Uganda Office of the Prime Minister, 2025) have an average pupil/teacher ratio of 81:1. Three of these districts (Koboko, Madi-Okollo and Terego) are among eight district with a ratio of more than 100:1, a reminder of both the generosity of Uganda but also of the challenges of providing everyone with access to education.



Policy analysis

Two decades of structural adjustment programmes forced low- and middle-income countries to cut public spending and interrupt their educational development. As these spending restrictions were gradually lifted in the late 1990s, access to primary and secondary education accelerated in the early 2000s. With the numbers of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth tumbling, two optimistic assessments were made by around 2010. First, that this trend would continue; hence the decision was made to include the ambitious target of universal upper secondary education, or 12 years of schooling, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Second, that this unprecedented expansion would be free of side effects; yet increased repetition, overage enrolment and higher dropout rates ensued, in addition to the widely voiced concerns about the decline in quality. Optimism has since been succeeded by some scepticism.

> Several countries have defied the bottlenecks and have maintained fast education expansion rates throughout the past 25 years

Yet, as the case studies have shown, several countries have defied the bottlenecks and have maintained fast education expansion rates throughout the past 25 years. The case studies put forward various accounts that explain how progress was achieved. This section integrates these lessons with conclusions from a voluminous body of research to provide a panorama of the various paths that countries have trodden to expand education – and, where possible, to do so not at the expense of equity. As this report maintains, deliberate education policy actions do not account for all or even most of the observed trajectories. Social, economic, political, historic and demographic dynamics that are external, even if not unrelated, to education go a long way towards explaining why schooling expanded. And by many accounts, education expansion has been a 'self-propelling and path-dependent process' (Ballarino et al., 2013, p. 46) with a dynamic of its own, as countries build on progress already achieved and as they imitate each other.

Even so, this section focuses on the policies and programmes that governments have undertaken to encourage primary and secondary education expansion. Roughly, three broad categories are distinguished, although the classification is porous and has significant overlaps. First, institutional measures, such as legislative and governance frameworks, admission and progression rules, and alternative pathways, have each played a role. Second, among measures to strengthen demand, the most prominent are those linked to the easing of financial constraints, which are treated at the end of the report (**Chapter 6**). In this section, attention is given to in-kind provision of school supplies, school-based health interventions, and the fostering of supportive relationships. Finally, measures to expand supply, i.e. investment in infrastructure and the establishment of inclusive and safe learning environments, are also covered. A literature review conducted for this report has supported the analysis (University of Edinburgh, 2026).

The field of educational expansion has been studied extensively. In low- and middle-income countries, systematic reviews have attempted to quantify the size of the contribution that distinct types of programmes have made to increase access to education. A review of 73 studies on 36 interventions in 27 countries assessed the relative contributions of economic, educational, health, infrastructure and training factors to four education participation measures. Infrastructure and health interventions had a stronger impact, while impact petered out as the measure of analysis moved from enrolment to attendance to progression and to dropout (Petrosino et al., 2012). Another review of 238 studies on 216 interventions in 52 countries that covered not only participation but also learning, looked at the channels through which interventions work – child, household, system, school and teacher (Snilstveit et al., 2015). Many, if not most, of the studies analysed in these reviews are randomized control trials, which have come to be recognized as a kind of gold standard.

There is a lively global debate on whether this should be the case (Deaton and Cartwright, 2018; Muralidharan and Niehaus, 2017). The trend towards experimentation has diverted attention from the ultimate outcomes, which in this report are defined as long-term trends in participation, progression and completion, from which experimental studies often diverge. Accordingly, the selection of issues and examples that feature in this section, as throughout this report, has been determined less by their potential to expand education and more by the actual impact they may have had on expanding education in the long term. Where possible, priority has been given to national policies over donor-funded projects, which rarely achieved the scale required to make a sustainable impact at population level, even though their emphasis on research and evaluation has yielded important policy lessons.

No attempt has been made to quantify the relative contribution of each factor, recognizing the impossible task of disentangling interrelated forces at work. Studies that have attempted this approach have generally drawn

on rich historical data from Europe (Braga et al., 2013). However, to the extent possible, information is provided on the context and characteristics of the interventions and on the size of the impact on participation and attainment measures. Finally, high-income countries and their efforts to achieve universal secondary completion are also included. This is also a field that has been studied extensively (Lamb et al., 2011; Lyche, 2010).

SYSTEM-LEVEL POLICIES

System-level policies set the framework that enables children to access, stay in and complete primary and secondary education. They reshape the legal, financial and institutional set-up, affecting education participation through laws, governance, funding, accountability and progression rules.

LEGISLATION

The global movement towards universal education has been supported by three interdependent institutional reform pillars: legal recognition of education as a right, compulsory schooling legislation and fee abolition.

Three instruments define primary education as a universal entitlement and call on countries to take progressive steps toward free and compulsory secondary education (Sheppard, 2022): the 1960 Convention against Discrimination in Education; the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Framing education as a right in primary (Maher, 2025) and, increasingly, secondary education forms the foundation for national laws. A United Nations Human Rights Council resolution established an open-ended intergovernmental working group with the mandate to explore an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the rights to free secondary (and pre-primary) education (United Nations, 2024).

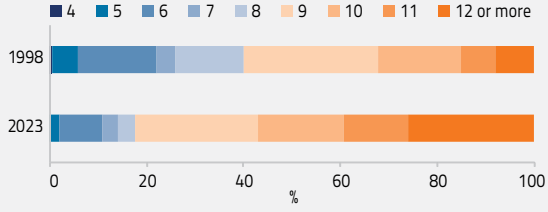
Among 158 countries with data in both years, the average duration of compulsory education increased from 8.6 years in 1998 to 9.8 years in 2023. The biggest increase, by about 1.6 years, happened in middle-income countries. In the same period, among 130 countries with data in both years, the average duration of free education increased from 10 years to 10.8 years (**Figure 4.18**).

Capturing the effect of **compulsory** education legislation generally requires long-term, historic data to examine variation between cohorts. Two analyses of European countries found that changes in the minimum school leaving age increased educational attainment by 0.3 to 0.4 years and more for populations that were more disadvantaged (Brunello et al., 2009; Gathmann et al., 2015). Similar results have been reported for individual countries, such as the United Kingdom (Oreopoulos, 2006).

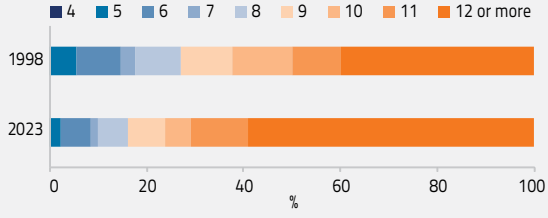
> Among 158 countries with data in both years, the average duration of compulsory education increased from 8.6 years in 1998 to 9.8 years in 2023

FIGURE 4.18:
Countries have extended the duration of compulsory and free education

a. Years of compulsory education in legislation, 1998–2023



b. Years of free education in legislation, 1998–2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_18
Source: UIS database.

> An analysis of 49 countries found that extending compulsory education beyond primary school increased the transition rate to secondary education by 7.3 percentage points

Evidence increasingly also comes from low- and middle-income countries. An analysis of 49 countries found that extending compulsory education beyond primary school increased the transition rate to secondary education by 7.3 percentage points (Diaz-Serrano, 2020). In China, the 1986 nine-year compulsory education law and later amendments increased attainment and increased the workforce entry age, especially for those in rural areas and from low-income households (Fang and Chen, 2020; Liu et al., 2024). In India, the 2009 Right to Education Act is estimated to have increased attainment by 0.6 years (Bhattacharjee, 2026). In Kenya, increasing the duration of compulsory schooling from seven to eight years in 1985 increased attainment by 0.7 years (Chicoine, 2012). In Thailand, increasing the duration of compulsory schooling from six to nine years in 2002 is estimated to have increased the percentage of girls completing lower secondary school by eight to nine percentage points (Chaijaroen and Panda, 2023).

Laws and policies related to **free** education have also been credited with influencing participation. To start with, in seven sub-Saharan African countries, the introduction of fees as part of structural adjustment measures in the 1980s reduced primary enrolment by an average of 17% (Iscan et al., 2015). Many studies focused on the positive impact on enrolment when fees started being abolished from the 1990s onwards (Nielsen et al., 2009). Primary school fee abolition increased girls' attainment by 0.5 years in Malawi, 0.6 years in Ethiopia and 1.1 years in Uganda (Behrman, 2015). However, it is important to take a long-term perspective and not only look at the immediate effects of fee abolition. In Uganda, analysis of survey data over 10 years shows that the 1997 primary school fee abolition had no impact on primary school completion (Kan and Klasen, 2021).

In sub-Saharan Africa, abolishing tuition fees in secondary education appears to have increased enrolment by seven percentage points (Asante, 2024). In Ghana, an evaluation of the introduction of free secondary education in 2017/18 found that girls' completion rose by 14 percentage points in high-uptake districts (Stenzel et al., 2024). But studies also indicate that fee abolition policies at this level of education have a negative impact on disparity (Gruijters et al., 2024).

The impact of compulsory and free education legislation is stronger when they complement each other. A study of 14 African countries found that making lower secondary education compulsory and free increased attainment by 1.6 years for girls and 1.4 for boys relative to only making education free, while the transition rate into lower secondary education increased by 14 percentage points (Martin et al., 2025).

Compulsory and free education reforms also work best if accompanied by complementary interventions, as discussed in the rest of the chapter. First, infrastructure, teacher supply and learning materials are needed to maintain quality; otherwise overcrowding and disillusionment cancel out any benefits. The United Republic of Tanzania's universal primary education policy only had a positive impact on girls when teacher shortages were addressed (Sabates et al., 2012). Second, financial support measures are key (**Chapter 6**). In rural China, the free tuition, free textbooks and living expense subsidies programme in the 2000s, aiming to support the compulsory education law, increased poor girls' enrolment by seven percentage points (Chyi and Zhou, 2014). Third, compulsory schooling and minimum age labour laws reinforce each other. In Türkiye, a 1997 law, which extended compulsory schooling from five to eight years, increased attainment (Kırdar et al., 2016) and reduced child labour by 81% for 7- to 11-year-olds (Dayıoğlu and Kırdar, 2022). Fourth, mechanisms that identify absenteeism early and coordinate responses between schools and social services are needed (Kearney, 2016) (**Box 4.3**). Finally, retention, assessment, tracking and certification policies also matter. In Rwanda, reforms to national examinations, introduced alongside extensions to compulsory education, increased lower secondary participation (Dufitumukiza et al., 2021).

BOX 4.3:

Early warning systems and data analytics are being used to reduce dropout

If dropout is predictable, prediction allows prevention (Brunello and Paola, 2014). Early warning systems enable the early identification of students at risk of dropout by tracking attendance, academic performance and behavioural indicators.

As part of the European Education Area initiative, the European Union has set two targets for early school leaving not to exceed 10% by 2020 and 9% by 2030. A 2011 EU Council Recommendation advised member states to monitor indicators to identify students at risk of leaving school early and to intervene quickly with personalized support (European Commission, 2022). By 2020, most EU countries had adopted early monitoring policies, using indicators such as attendance, behaviour and achievement to trigger remedial actions (European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2023).

Some countries integrate early warning systems with welfare programmes. In Nordland, Norway, combining early detection, teacher training and links with social services has been credited with increasing the upper secondary completion rate from 62% to 66% between 2011 and 2015 (Assembly of European Regions, 2017). In Bradford, United Kingdom, linked health, social care and education data showed unauthorized absence ranging from 0.2% to 5.1%, with 12% of pupils accounting for 80% of missed days (Wood et al., 2024). Predictive analytics tools drew on hundreds of variables to identify risk profiles and shape interventions (Ifenthaler, 2021). But coordinated action among schools, families and social services is ultimately necessary to address these risks. Effective systems recognize schools' protective role in children's welfare (Alaimo and Kelly, 2025; Cook et al., 2017). Under its Early Leaving from Education and Training Strategy 2023–2030, Malta has established a protocol of family, community and school links (Spiteri and Vella, 2025).

Around the world, education systems are shifting to preventive approaches, but their success relies on adequate staff and referral pathways. In Guatemala, a pilot programme applied in 17% of primary schools improved transition into lower secondary school by 1.3 percentage points after one year – and by 3.1 percentage points in schools that fully complied with the process (Haimovich et al., 2021). In Serbia, an Early Warning and Intervention System supported by UNICEF reduced dropout by two thirds in its first cycle of implementation (Assembly of European Regions, 2017).

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCING

Appropriate governance and funding arrangements can provide the right incentives for schools to operate effectively. Accountability mechanisms, for example to ensure fairness, responsiveness and safety, develop trust in schools and strengthen active community oversight, improving attendance.

> A cross-country review of 65 countries found that decentralization can improve attendance and progression by giving local actors the authority to respond to school-level constraints

At the system level, decentralization reforms can strengthen participation when they improve responsiveness. A cross-country review of 65 countries found that decentralization can improve attendance and progression by giving local actors the authority to respond to school-level constraints, such as teacher needs and disciplinary measures (Kameshwara et al., 2020). Indonesia's decentralization, accompanied by a per student funding programme, increased school finances and improved textbook availability. Schools also reported a rise in enrolment of disadvantaged students and reduced dropout, yet effectiveness varied by local administrative capacity (Karam et al., 2012). Likewise, accountability reforms, such as school report cards and community monitoring only work where administrative capacity is sufficient (UNESCO, 2017). In Mexico, school-based management reduced dropout by improving local monitoring and incentives, although the effects were not uniform (Gertler et al., 2012).

Outcomes of such ambitious interventions depend first and foremost on community empowerment but also on resources. In one sense, there is an obvious link between financing and results. The educational expansion of the early 2000s was associated with the end of austerity after almost two decades of structural adjustment in low- and middle-income countries. Cross-national evidence from 1990 to 2021 suggests that increased public spending reduces dropout where initial levels are high (Beri and Cochrane, 2025).

Case study countries covered in this report show the variety of links between education finance and expansion. Some countries, such as Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire and Mozambique, have seen a sustained increase in public education expenditure, either as a share of GDP or as a share of total public expenditure. For others, short-term increases have accompanied key interventions, such as the pioneer schools in Morocco and school construction in Rwanda. For relatively richer countries, such as Albania and Trinidad and Tobago, sharp declines in the school-age population since 2000 (by one half and one quarter, respectively) explain why spending did not need to rise. However, Bangladesh and Cambodia, where spending levels have remained flat and very low (at 2% and 1.6% of GDP on average, respectively), yet education participation has expanded, present a paradox.

At a more micro level, studies have been more ambivalent on the effect of spending on education outcomes, leading to a general perception that one cannot 'throw money' at solving education problems. However, recent longitudinal and quasi-experimental evidence in the United States has shown that increased funding, when targeted effectively, enhances participation and completion. A sustained 10% increase in school spending over 12 years targeted at improved instruction, teacher pay, support services and smaller class sizes led to higher graduation rates (Jackson et al., 2016). An increase of USD 1,000 in per pupil spending was found to raise attainment by 0.06 standard deviations and increased upper secondary school completion, particularly for low-income students (Jackson and Mackevicius, 2024). An additional USD 580 per child in education or social programmes raises upper secondary school completion rates by one percentage point (Kukla-Acevedo and Acevedo-Polakovich, 2024). However, for systems already spending at high levels, the returns diminish; hence, accountability is central to sustaining improvements (Baker, 2016).

PROGRESSION

Policies on repetition, high-stakes examinations and certification have significant implications for completion and inequality. Tracking policies, which are later discussed under the theme of differentiation, and admission policies, which intend to make schools' student composition more equal (**Box 4.4**), also relate to completion and inequality.

Grade retention divides policymakers into those who see it as a mechanism to maintain quality standards and those who see it as a mechanism that worsens educational inequality. Repetition leads to over-age enrolment, which is a well-established predictor of dropout, for example in Bangladesh (Sabates et al., 2013), Panama (Adelman and Szekely, 2016) and Rwanda (Stoelinga et al., 2018). This is partly because social norms pull adolescent boys into work and adolescent girls into marriage when they are too old for their grade. Repetition also lowers academic self-concept and motivation (Fernández-Alonso et al., 2025), which also leads to dropout in high-income countries such as Belgium (Cockx et al., 2019), France (Moulin and Sari, 2025) and the United States (Jacob and Lefgren, 2009).

> "Around the world, disadvantaged students are more likely to repeat grades"

Around the world, disadvantaged students are more likely to repeat grades, whether in Brazil (Ferrão and Gonzaga Alves, 2023), Egypt (Elbadawy, 2014) or South Africa (van der Berg et al., 2019). Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are 50% more likely to repeat a grade even among peers with similar academic achievement in OECD countries and by more than 100% in countries including the Russian Federation, Tunisia and Viet Nam (OECD, 2014). The fact that poor and immigrant students are more likely to repeat grades even if they perform as well as other students suggests discrimination, especially when teachers have discretion in the decision to retain a student, as in Italy (Contini and Salza, 2024).

One of the potential criticisms of linking repetition to subsequent dropout is that it cannot be compared to the opposite scenario, i.e. whether these students would have not left school early if they had not been forced to repeat. In Mongolia, where an automatic promotion policy applies and is linked to a performance-based bonus for teachers, students appear to receive the same academic grades regardless of socioeconomic background, which raises the concern that perverse incentives lead teachers to inflate grades (Ogawa et al., 2024). In Uganda, which also implemented automatic promotion after the introduction of universal primary education in the late 1990s, lack of remedial support, oversized classes and limited resources have also increased dropout (Kabay, 2021).

One of the arguments against repetition is inefficiency in the use of scarce public resources. For example, one estimate suggests that education systems in Latin America and the Caribbean spend USD 5.3 billion annually to retain 2.7 million primary school students (Näslund-Hadley, 2023). As a result, many countries have introduced automatic promotion to avoid this cost. However, without remedial support, these students do

not have sufficient opportunities to improve their learning, which therefore may simply postpone but not prevent early school leaving. Automatic promotion in Costa Rica for grade 1 students pushed repetition rates up in grades 2 and 3 (Rodriguez-Segura, 2020). The lack of repetition as an incentive mechanism may have negative consequences for students performing just above the lowest performers, as a study in Minas Gerais, Brazil, has shown (Foureaux Koppensteiner, 2014).

Some studies find short-term test-score improvements for retained students, for example in Colombia (Ferreira Sequeda et al., 2018) and in South Africa in early grades of primary education (Clayton, 2025), even without remedial support. But overall, repetition, especially in later grades, seems to have long-term negative consequences for engagement and completion (Hughes et al., 2018; Xia and Kirby, 2009).

Examinations are milestones for completion of each cycle and entry into the next level – and they can hinder transitions (Périco e Santos, 2023). In Uganda, of those children who did not transition into secondary education, one third had failed the primary school leaving examination (Nath et al., 2017). In the United States, high-stakes exit examinations lowered upper secondary school completion by two to four percentage points, especially for poor and minority students (Dee and Jacob, 2006; Jacob, 2001). However, it is also argued that the impact from the introduction of a high-stakes examination may be negative in the short term but positive in the long term if the certificate is important for transition into the next stage of education and for the labour market (Caves and Balestra, 2018). In South Africa, the introduction of the National Senior Certificate in 2008 is believed to have contributed to the increase of the upper secondary completion rate (Wills et al., 2024).

BOX 4.4:

Various countries have struggled to equitably assign students to schools

A range of assignment policies, such as catchment areas, open enrolment and various preferential or reserved-seat mechanisms, have been used to promote equity in primary and secondary education. When combined with targeted support, such as equitable funding, transportation assistance and controlled-choice schemes, choice can improve access for disadvantaged students (Masset, 2012; Prieto et al., 2022). Without such protections, these policies may simply reproduce or even deepen existing inequalities, delivering benefits disproportionately to those who already have an advantage.

The success of school zoning policies depends on their design to avoid perverse incentives (Bjerre-Nielsen et al., 2023). In Denmark, when a policy was announced linking school assignment to residential addresses, the number of families changing their address increased abruptly and the probability of such a change was strongly linked with family socioeconomic status (Bjerre-Nielsen and Gandil, 2024). In France, where desegregation is a policy objective, three long-standing efforts (comprehensive secondary schools, restrictions on parental choice through school mapping, and priority education zones with compensatory measures) have not been effective (Felouzis et al., 2019). Wealthier families are able to circumvent some restrictions, while targeting resources to disadvantaged schools had the perverse effect of stigmatizing schools' reputations. An evaluation of a reform to the zoning system in 2014 found that schools located in priority neighbourhoods experienced an immediate and persistent decline in enrolment of about four percentage points (Garrouste and Lafourcade, 2023). Schools labelled by the policies experienced student flight, which indirectly exacerbated school segregation (France Cour des Comptes, 2025).

In Indonesia, a school zoning policy experiment in the city of Yogyakarta introduced in 2018 changed the admission criteria for elite public lower secondary schools from examination scores to distance from school. Schools' student composition drastically changed as evidenced by the sharp fall in the average examination score of admitted students (Berkhout et al., 2022). At the national level, a school zoning policy was introduced in 2017, according to which at least 90% of primary and secondary school students would be selected through the 'zoning' pathway, i.e. according to distance from school, with the remaining admissions made on the basis of three criteria: affirmative action, parental relocation and achievement (Gustati, 2024). This share was reduced in three amendments between 2018 and 2021, and the policy was renamed in 2025, further reducing the 'zoning' quota to 70% in primary, 40% in lower secondary and 30% in upper secondary schools. Standardized test scores will also replace report card grades for the 'achievement' pathway in 2026 (Aranditio, 2025).

Continued on next page...

BOX 4.4 CONTINUED:

Preferential and reserved-seat systems, designed to protect or prioritize certain groups in admissions, also produce outcomes that are not equitable or inclusive. In Malaysia, ethnic segregation stems not from zoning but from parallel schooling streams of Malay-, Chinese- and Tamil-medium schools, initially preserved after independence to respect linguistic and cultural diversity. Combined with preferential policies, the arrangement has undermined the inclusive function of common schooling (Raman and Sua, 2010).

Open enrolment policies allow students to attend schools outside their residential areas. In the United States, 33 states and the District of Columbia allow intra-district open enrolment and 43 states allow inter-district transfers, but most policies operate on a space-available basis and typically allow districts to opt out (Wixom, 2019), which limits their equalizing potential. Although many states prohibit selection based on academic ability, open-enrolment rules frequently prioritize specific groups (e.g. siblings, students from low-performing schools), which may indirectly benefit more informed or mobile families. Without guaranteed transportation, addressed only in a few state reforms, open enrolment often serves families already equipped to navigate administrative complexity rather than those most in need of alternatives (Erwin et al., 2022).

Unlike the examples mentioned above, which aim at student assignment policies to improve equity, some countries have gone in the opposite direction, with student assignment based on segregation to improve education outcomes. Single-sex school interventions have had positive effects in the case of the Republic of Korea, where attainment increased by an estimated 0.4 years of schooling (Lee, 2023), and in Trinidad and Tobago, where completion rates increased by four percentage points (Jackson, 2012, 2016).

FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS

Despite efforts to secure education access for young people and facilitate their progression, many disadvantaged young people who, for instance, work, live in slums or are displaced, struggle to complete compulsory and/or upper secondary education. A range of programmes exists to help them stay in or return to school. These programmes differ in key design parameters – alignment with the curriculum, formal or non-formal modality, certification, quality assurance, ministerial responsibility and providers – and in the target populations (UNICEF, 2020). Despite notable successes, an evaluation of flexible pathway programmes supported by UNICEF in 21 countries found challenges with results monitoring, sustainability and scalability (UNICEF, 2024a).

Alternative modalities of education delivery are found all over the world. They are large-scale, recognized equivalency programmes that allow learners to complete formal primary or secondary education in a flexible way in terms of location, curriculum adaptation, timeframes and pedagogies. Indonesia's Kejar Paket system, delivered primarily through community learning centres, offers part-time, self-paced learning at the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels (known as Paket A, B and C, respectively) tailored to working youth. In 2017, there were 370,000 students enrolled in the upper secondary equivalent (Kahar, 2018). In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Primary Equivalency Programme offers modular, community-based classes aligned with the national curriculum for out-of-school children, particularly in rural and ethnic minority areas. Recognized certification allows them to transition into formal lower secondary school (Inui, 2020; Inui et al., 2025).

In Argentina, the Primary and Secondary Education Completion Plan (or FINES) programme offers online and off-line modalities, including for obtaining certification for secondary school courses not previously completed (Abramo et al., 2019). The Bangladesh Reaching Out of School Children project delivered second-chance education to more than 700,000 children (World Bank, 2022a). In India, the Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning programme offers foundational and vocational skills training linked to secondary credentials and employment to marginalized women (UN Women, 2021). In Tunisia, the Second Chance Programme provides a range of academic and vocational pathways for 12- to 18-year-olds managed by the ministries of education, youth and social affairs (Tunisia Ministry of Social Affairs, 2018; 2021); the government intends to make it available in all regions as of 2026 (La Presse, 2025). In sub-Saharan Africa, most countries operate accelerated learning programmes for children whose education has been disrupted to support re-entry into formal secondary education by providing basic skills in a short time frame (**Box 4.5**).

BOX 4.5:

Accelerated learning programmes in Africa help children complete primary education, but transition to formal school remains weak

Accelerated education programmes (AEPs) provide flexible, age-appropriate learning opportunities for children and youth who have missed out on formal schooling. A review of AEPs found such programmes operating in 33 African countries (Nwagbo and D'Angelo, 2025). They have emerged as a particularly critical strategy to reach those in crisis and displacement contexts. Evaluations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Nigeria show that students in AEPs often make rapid progress in foundational literacy and numeracy, sometimes outperforming their peers in formal schools (Diazgranados Ferráns et al., 2022; McManus et al., 2025).

Yet despite such gains, the transition from these programmes into the formal school system remains a key challenge. Evidence from 40 programmes suggests that transition rates vary widely, from 3% to 90% (D'Angelo et al., 2025). As only 40% of AEPs in Africa monitored post-programme transitions, it is difficult to estimate an average transition rate (Nwagbo and D'Angelo, 2025). Studies from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali and Niger have shown that many learners who enrol in formal school after completing an AEP either drop out or repeat grades (Kebede, 2018; Shah and Choo, 2020). In Madagascar, although nearly all AEP graduates entered school, between one quarter and one third left again within two years (Valenza and Dreesen, 2022). An evaluation in Ethiopia showed that, once in formal schools, learners often encounter barriers that may have excluded them in the first place: a different language of instruction, rigid curricula, inappropriate pedagogy and overcrowded, under-resourced classrooms (D'Angelo et al., 2025; Nwagbo and D'Angelo, 2025).

Linkages between AEPs and formal education systems are often limited. Education sector plans increasingly mention AEPs but tend to emphasize expanding access and learning, with little attention to post-completion pathways or sustained support for learners (Nwagbo and D'Angelo, 2025). In many countries, AEP certificates are not consistently recognized by ministries of education, making enrolment into the formal system difficult. A recent review found that only up to 40% of AEPs in Africa provided nationally recognized certificates. In terms of financing, many AEPs rely on short-term donor or humanitarian funding with little integration into national budgets, undermining their sustainability (International Development Research Centre, 2024).

Key elements of a sustainable transition to formal education systems include aligning AEP and formal curricula, formally recognizing AEP certificates, creating linkages to schools and alternative pathways where schools are limited, providing enrolment and post-enrolment support, and ensuring inclusive, flexible school environments (D'Angelo et al., 2025).

Unlike corrective measures, which focus on bringing young people back who have left school, preventative interventions target those struggling and at risk of leaving school early. Remedial or compensatory programmes have received increased attention in recent years. The 'teaching at the right level' interventions of the Indian non-governmental organization Pratham assess primary school children's skills and place them in different ability groups to adapt instruction. Following positive impact evaluations (Banerjee et al., 2015, 2016), the approach was scaled up in India, including in partnership with selected state governments, where teachers follow the approach over four to six months for one to two hours a day. The model was exported to Africa, where positive effects were also documented, for instance in Côte d'Ivoire (Wyss and Perlman Robinson, 2021), where it was rolled out nationally, and Ghana (Duflo et al., 2024). Improvements in learning outcomes are expected to improve progression, but studies on improving progression are rare, especially for programmes rolled out at the system level (Kitzmüller et al., 2024). Grouping by ability in secondary education has generally been questioned due to its impact on students' self-esteem (Alam and Mohanty, 2023) but also in terms of implementation challenges (Mills et al., 2014).

Remedial education programmes have been implemented for decades in high-income countries. Results vary and depend on programme design and implementation. In Israel, a programme which supported upper secondary school students to pass the end-of-cycle examination increased the completion rate by 3.3 percentage points (Lavy and Schlosser, 2005). In Italy, a programme combining remedial education, which was combined with stricter progression rules, did not have an impact in academic schools and even had a negative impact in technical schools (Battistin and Schizzerotto, 2019). In Sweden, the Introductory Programme, which targets disadvantaged students to transition from the end of compulsory education into upper secondary education with individually adapted instruction, has reduced early school leaving but needs to be accompanied by socioemotional learning to build students' self-confidence (Sundelin et al., 2023).

DIFFERENTIATION

Countries vary in the extent to which they choose between comprehensive and differentiated secondary education. Those that offer differentiated tracks also differ in terms of the age at which these options become available and the mechanism for assigning students to them. Among those differentiated tracks that are vocationally oriented, programmes also differ in the extent to which they offer work-based training and apprenticeships (Lamb et al., 2011).

Technical and vocational education and training is promoted for two key objectives among others: to strengthen the supply of skills in the labour market, and to present an alternative for students not drawn to academically oriented programmes and who are at a greater risk of dropout in a comprehensive system.

Most studies evaluate the achievement of the first objective, based on information about graduate employability, job matching and earnings (Tripney and Hombrados, 2013). The second objective is far more difficult to evaluate because the alternative scenario is not observed (Markussen and Sandberg, 2011). In differentiated systems, students also leave technical and vocational schools early (Cerda-Navarro et al., 2017; Yi et al., 2015) but what cannot be observed is what would have happened if these students did not have that option. Even in countries where dropout is higher in vocational than in general schools, there may be differences in the selectivity of technical and vocational tracks. Although these tend to enrol students from relatively more disadvantaged socioeconomic background, the strength of that relationship varies by country (Lamb, 2011).

> “An analysis of age reforms in 14 European countries during the 20th century shows that the later that sorting into different tracks happens, the more equitable education opportunities become.”

A key policy question is what age are students assigned to different tracks, with some countries making this sorting as early as age 10, which reduces the opportunity children from disadvantaged backgrounds have to join the track that best matches their abilities and interests (Terrin and Triventi, 2022). An analysis of age reforms in 14 European countries during the 20th century shows that the later this sorting happens, the more equitable education opportunities become. The analysis also showed that tracking at age 10 reduced the probability of upper secondary school completion by four percentage points for youth whose parents were senior managers rather than workers (Van De Werfhorst, 2019). Conversely, a reform in France that softened tracking in the 1970s increased the levels of qualification attained, among men and those from a low socioeconomic background, though not among immigrants (Canaan, 2020). In Romania, delaying student tracking raised general secondary school completion by five percentage points (Malamud and Pop-Eleches, 2011).

Another important objective of expanding technical and vocational secondary education, which governments tend not to admit in public, is to relieve pressure for entry into post-secondary education. However, as this clashes with other objectives and makes the technical and vocational track less attractive, there have been more efforts to allow transition into parts or the entirety of the post-secondary education system, including university, as in Bangladesh (Kabir and Ahmed, 2024), Brazil (Camargo et al., 2021) and Uganda (Kazibwe and Li, 2025).

Technical and vocational education systems differ in many other ways that hamper comparisons, for instance in the mix of enrolment between tracks and the mix of academic and vocational courses students take in each track (Bishop and Mane, 2004; Plank et al., 2008). Ultimately, the extent to which technical and vocational tracks succeed in reducing dropout is their quality in terms of teachers, curricula, equipment, active employer participation, and work-based training opportunities to ease the school-to-work transition. In OECD countries, the share of upper secondary vocational students enrolled in combined school- and work-based programmes increased from 35% in 2013 to 45% in 2023, even though the share of vocational students in upper secondary education remained constant at 44% during this period (OECD, 2025), suggesting a growing emphasis on improving quality and relevance.

Several countries experiment with alternative types of differentiation. Saudi Arabia, where no upper secondary school students attend vocational tracks, introduced a system of pathways in 2022. The first year is common, while during the last two years students can enrol in any one of five tracks: general; Shariah; computer science and engineering; health and life; and business management (Saudi Gazette, 2022).

DEMAND-SIDE POLICIES

Despite legislative, governance and organizational reforms, many children, adolescents and youth face financial, social, health and other barriers that constrain

their education participation. Demand-side policies can lower these obstacles by reducing costs and changing household incentives. Fee abolition was covered in the previous section as it is usually combined with compulsory education legislation. In any case, fees tend to be a lesser obstacle; their abolition has mainly served as a signal of the importance the government assigns to education. Other direct and indirect costs, including opportunity costs, are a much bigger challenge. This report has analysed in depth the full range of financing policies deployed to improve equity in primary and secondary education (**Chapter 6**). This section is limited to selected policies that support school participation by increasing affordability and improving the perception of its benefits.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Textbook provision is a prerequisite for learning and therefore for progression, although some evaluations have shown that it may not be sufficient. In Armenia, a textbook rental programme was established by an organization managing textbooks purchased through a World Bank project in 1997. Its aim was to reduce the cost to families by enabling them to rent textbooks from the school for a small fee instead of purchasing them. Putting together the collected rental fees and a government contribution, new textbooks could be purchased after four years (Gallagher, 2016). Countries in Central Asia, including Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, also used rental schemes (Smart and Jagannathan, 2018). In China, under the Two Waivers, One Subsidy programme, waiving textbook fees combined with cash subsidies among poor rural households increased junior secondary enrolment by 12 percentage points (Wang, 2018). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, textbook availability increased the probability of passing the end-of-primary examination by seven percentage points (Falisse et al., 2024). In Kenya, an evaluation of an intervention that included textbook provision showed that it increased progression from grade 8 to grade 9, but did not reduce grade repetition or increase attendance in lower grades, which means that richer students benefited more than poorer students (Glewwe et al., 2009).

> “Uniforms can be a substantial burden for families”

Uniforms can be a substantial burden for families. Poor students who could not afford a uniform in Mongolia felt stigmatized, raising the probability of dropout (Sabic-El-Rayess et al., 2020). Various studies have highlighted aspects related to design and implementation aspects of subsidy programmes. A partially implemented free uniform programme in Ecuador was found to have a negative impact on attendance, possibly due to poor targeting or raising false expectations (Hidalgo et al., 2013). In Kenya, a study of a uniform subsidy, which initially found a 55% decline in absenteeism for students without a uniform one year after the programme rollout, found no impact on attainment eight years later (Evans and Ngatia, 2020). Support programmes need to be offered as a package, combining uniforms with waivers of other costs (Cho et al., 2017).

HEALTH

The health and nutrition status of children is a key determinant behind education expansion. Moreover, the school itself acts as a locus for health and nutrition interventions that further support such progress. School feeding and the provision of micronutrient supplements are the interventions that have received most attention (UNESCO, 2025) and global progress in school meals programmes is also covered in this report in detail (**Chapter 6**).

A type of intervention recommended by the World Health Organization whose impact has been well documented is deworming. Intestinal worms transmitted through contact with contaminated water or soil reduce nutrient absorption, leading to anaemia and malnutrition (making it difficult to concentrate in class), and weaker immunity to other infections (leading to more frequent sickness and absenteeism). Systematic reviews, albeit based on very limited number of studies, have not found a strong impact on school attendance (Taylor-Robinson et al., 2019; Welch et al., 2016), possibly also because of variations in infection intensity (Liu et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, an influential series of in-depth evaluations of a World Bank–funded project in 75 rural primary schools in a county in western Kenya in the late 1990s has led to deworming being called the most cost-effective way to increase school attendance, somewhat exaggeratedly associating it with an increase of 12 years of schooling per USD 100 invested (J-PAL, 2022). The original study found that the intervention reduced absenteeism by 25% (Miguel and Kremer, 2004). It was then found to have increased girls' transition rate into secondary school, while attendance-increasing spillover effects extended to other nearby schools within a radius of four kilometres (Baird et al., 2016). In the longer term, the intervention was also found to have increased attainment by 0.3 years (Hamory et al., 2021). Subsequent action has led to large treatment

campaigns in Kenya (2.8 million children), Ethiopia (15 million), India (17 million) and Nigeria (4.8 million) (J-PAL, 2022), becoming part of or complementing existing national programmes.

In Ethiopia, a meta-analysis found that, after declining in the early 2000s, the prevalence of worms has declined but remains high (Chelkeba et al., 2020). Evidence on education outcomes remains limited. A randomized control trial in 60 primary schools in Addis Ababa found no effect on absenteeism (Bick et al., 2024). In the United Republic of Tanzania, deworming increased attendance by 2.6%, primary school completion by 3.2% and national examination pass rates by 0.7% (Hyun, 2014).

In India, the nationwide school-based deworming programme has been institutionalized since 2015, targeting 240 million children at risk of infection (Uniyal, 2024). According to the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey, coverage of deworming treatment at school from 2016 to 2018 peaked among 12-year-olds at almost 50%, which means that schools accounted for more than 85% of deworming treatments received. In turn, this meant that deworming still did not reach more than half of the school-age population. Lower incidence of anaemia and iron and folate deficiency were noted among children and youth that had received treatment. But the persistence of these conditions also pointed at a record of mixed effectiveness of existing programmes and the need to also invest in sanitation (Chakrabarti et al., 2024).

> A cross-country analysis suggested that countries with intensive malaria had 54% lower primary completion rates than countries without malaria

Another health-based intervention that has yielded positive results on participation is malaria treatment. A meta-analysis of studies since 2000 found that frequent use of long-acting malaria drugs in school-age children averted 70% to 90% of cases in that group (up to about two cases per child yearly) with bigger community benefits from the lower transmission rates. Shorter-acting drugs or less frequent dosing averted 40% to 60% of cases (Suresh et al., 2025). A cross-country analysis suggested that countries with intensive malaria had 54% lower primary completion rates than countries without malaria (Thuilliez, 2009). In the Gambia, malaria prophylaxis increased schooling by 0.52 years (Jukes et al., 2006), while intermittent preventative treatment during early childhood significantly reduced subsequent dropout in government schools (Zuilkowski and Jukes, 2014). Evaluations of malaria initiatives found that absenteeism and repetition fell in Malawi (Simwaka et al., 2009), primary school absenteeism fell by 28% in southern Mozambique (Cirera et al., 2022), and the malaria incidence rate fell by 55% – and school absenteeism due to malaria by 62.5% – in Sri Lanka (Fernando et al., 2006).

There has been growing interest globally in the impact of adolescents' mental health on educational attainment. Mental disorders and expressions of distress accounted for 19% of the total disease burden among adolescents across all countries, making it the largest cause of such burden (Baird et al., 2025). The prevalence of mental disorders and their impact on education attainment have been more systematically assessed in high-income countries. In England (United Kingdom), they have been identified as negatively affecting attainment through their links to school behaviour and social exclusion (Hale and Viner, 2018). As part of the broader concept of health promoting schools (Sawyer et al., 2019), education institutions are called upon to promote positive mental health (Fazel et al., 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2018).

RELATIONSHIPS

A wide range of interventions has sought to strengthen relationships between students at risk of early school leaving, parents and schools and experts. These include the provision of accurate information, psychosocial support and sustained guidance to improve attendance, completion and education path choices. Policies and programmes have aimed to lift constraints to participation and progression, such as limited awareness of education's benefits, disengagement from school affairs and lack of orientation.

One, possibly patronizing, assumption is that young people and their families from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds may be unaware of the long-term benefits of education – and could make different choices about the future if they were better informed. Evaluations are based on small project interventions. In the Dominican Republic, giving grade 8 boys information on adult wages by education level increased attainment by up to 0.35 years in the following four years (Jensen, 2010). In Madagascar, information to grade 4 students accompanied by role models increased attendance by 3.5 percentage points (Nguyen, 2008). But in rural China, an intervention that combined information on returns to education with counselling did not have any impact on attendance (Loyalka et al., 2013). Another more direct and short-term type of information involves messages that remind families of

their obligations. In Chile, weekly or monthly updates on attendance and performance sent to parents of students attending schools located in low-income neighbourhoods increased the chances by five percentage points that attendance thresholds for promotion were met, with strongest effects for those at greatest risk (Berlinski et al., 2025a).

Parental and community mobilization should in principle help foster improved education outcomes, such as school attendance (Morris Markovich and Nóra, 2024). However, causal studies have been rare, even in high-income countries (Avvisati et al., 2010). In low- and lower-middle-income countries, it is often underestimated that the social status gap between parents and more educated teachers and principals can be a significant barrier. In Niger, an intervention involving parents in the management of primary school grants did not have an impact on either enrolment or dropout (Beasley and Huillery, 2017). A more insightful research direction than evaluating the results of donor-funded interventions is the use of longitudinal data. In India, 15- to 18-year-old adolescents were less likely to have left school early if their parents had taken part in parent–teacher association meetings, discussed academic progress with teachers, and supervised homework when they were still in primary school (Paul et al., 2021). However, this finding also points at the differences in social capital between disadvantaged and other parents and is vague on the policy implications.

> “Many adolescents who are at risk of leaving school early lack trusted adults who can help them navigate difficult situations”

Many adolescents who are at risk of leaving school early lack trusted adults who can help them navigate difficult situations. Setting high expectations for students, following-up regularly with them, facilitating positive relationships with school staff, and providing guidance services are elements of a whole-school approach (García-Cid et al., 2025).

In France, guidance to secondary school students on future education options varies considerably with schools in disadvantaged areas rarely offering early, personalized advice that steers students toward ambitious paths (van Zanten, 2018). In Germany, primary school children from disadvantaged backgrounds were provided with university students as mentors for a year who spent an afternoon per week stimulating new ideas. Mentors kept an online diary and discussed issues with programme coordinators. An evaluation showed that mentees eventually were 11 percentage points more likely to attend the academic upper secondary track than disadvantaged peers, halving the gap between them and more privileged peers (Falk et al., 2026). In the United States, longitudinal data sets have identified a positive effect of mentors on disadvantaged youth on attainment through setting ambitious educational goals (Kraft et al., 2023; Samuels et al., 2023). An evaluation of a structured programme, which assigns in-school mentors who monitor mentee students' attendance and school performance, connect students to school and social services, and develop relationships with the students, found that it reduced absences in grades 5 to 7 by 23% (Guryan et al., 2020).

SUPPLY-SIDE POLICIES

Supply-side policies shape the conditions under which children enter, attend and progress through school. While demand-side measures reduce private costs and influence incentives, their impact is compromised where education systems cannot absorb additional learners and ensure inclusive and safe learning environments. Overcrowded classrooms, dilapidated facilities, unsafe routes to school, absent teachers, vacant positions, and a lack of teaching and learning materials all contribute to making the schooling experience unattractive even when financial barriers are reduced. Supply-side reforms include investments in infrastructure and improvements in learning environments from the perspective of inclusion and safety.

> “Overcrowded classrooms, dilapidated facilities, unsafe routes to school, absent teachers, vacant positions, and a lack of teaching and learning materials all contribute to make the schooling experience unattractive even when financial barriers are reduced”

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure development reduces the distance to schools, lowers safety risks and increases teachers' regular attendance. It has been among the strongest determinants of expanding access to education, with a larger impact on girls (Snilstveit et al., 2016), for whom long distances from schools put them at a disadvantage, due to both safety reasons and discriminatory social

norms. Investment in public infrastructure is important not only in primary and secondary education but also in pre-primary education (**Box 4.6**).

Several large-scale infrastructure programmes demonstrate that gains in participation persist into adulthood. An evaluation of the school construction programme in Indonesia in the 1970s found that each primary school constructed per 1,000 children increased education attainment by 0.12 to 0.19 years (Duflo, 2001). In Sierra Leone, rebuilding schools after the civil war increased women's schooling by about half a year (Mocan and Cannonier, 2012). In Türkiye, an evaluation of a large classroom expansion programme between 1998 and 2002 found that it increased secondary school completion by more than two percentage points (Ercan et al., 2021).

In contrast, despite the demographic pressures, infrastructure expansion has slowed down in sub-Saharan Africa. From 2010 to 2020, public primary school growth in sub-Saharan Africa stagnated or fell in 28 out of 29 countries. Recent surveys also report that at least 40% of classrooms are non-permanent in 9 out of 19 countries, and at least half of schools are in good condition in just 7 out of 17 countries with data (Bennell, 2025).

Rwanda has been a major recent exception in sub-Saharan Africa. There too, despite the introduction of the 9-Year Basic Education policy in 2006, the annual primary school construction rate increased from 40 schools annually in the 2000s to just 50 in the 2010s, while the student/classroom ratio in government and government-assisted primary schools increased from 60:1 in 2005 to 83:1 in 2020. In response, around 1,100 new schools were constructed between 2019 and 2023/24 despite the COVID-19 pandemic constraints. The programme was funded by the World Bank and driven by mass community mobilization, coupled with central and local government support for planning, funding and monitoring. A key feature was that classrooms were constructed off-site using modular and standardized designs and prefabricated in dedicated factories, which allowed simultaneous site preparation that shortened the overall project timeline by 30% to 50%, and building delivery in six months (Bennell, 2025).

Community involvement has been the approach of many governments to maintain low costs and yet increase the number of schools. In Afghanistan, before the ban on girls was re-established 20 years after it was first overturned, establishing village-based schools increased enrolment by 52 percentage points for girls and by 35 percentage points for boys (as an extra mile of walking distance reduced enrolment by 15 percentage points, and more for girls) (Burde and Linden, 2013). In Egypt, about 5,000 girl-friendly community schools were established between the early 1990s and mid-2010s while government public schools were being constructed to fill the gap (Abdelkhalek and Langsten, 2022). Community schools established under the Programa Hondureño de Educación Comunitaria in underserved regions accounted for 14% of rural schools, although dropout rates remained higher than in comparable government schools (Souto Simão et al., 2015).

BOX 4.6:

Pre-primary education expansion has helped increase school attainment

Expanding quality, equitable pre-primary education boosts primary school participation and completion, especially when reforms are widespread, backed by national policy, and supported by better curricula and teacher training. As long as quality standards are maintained, early childhood education improves cognitive development and school readiness, thereby enabling children to advance more smoothly through the early grades.

When access is expanded systemwide, these benefits accumulate at the population level and translate into improvement in school attainment. A cross-country analysis found that free and compulsory pre-primary education was associated with an increase in primary completion of 10% for countries with baselines in the middle and 12% for countries with baselines at the bottom of the distribution (Earle et al., 2018).

In Egypt, pre-primary attendance has been associated with 0.4 more years of education among young adults aged 18 to 29 (Krafft, 2015). In Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, preschool participation accelerated grade progression and reduced dropout (Bietenbeck et al., 2019). In Mozambique, children who had attended community-based preschool programmes were more likely to enter primary school on time (Martinez et al., 2012).

Continued on next page...

BOX 4.6 CONTINUED:

In Argentina, the expansion of pre-primary education in the 1990s by 10 percentage points, targeting disadvantaged areas, increased beneficiaries' primary and secondary school attainment by 0.5 years and the probability of secondary school completion by 12 percentage points (Berlinski et al., 2025b). In Guatemala, a national construction programme that more than doubled the number of pre-primary schools between 1998 and 2005 raised the share of children reaching grade 6 by 2.1 percentage points (Bastos et al., 2012). In Uruguay, children exposed to preschool expansion completed 0.8 additional years of schooling by age 15 (Berlinski et al., 2008).

Evidence from high-income countries shows lasting benefits of early childhood education expansion. In Austria, attending preschool has been associated with 0.4 years of educational attainment (Fessler and Schneebaum, 2019). In France, an evaluation of a large-scale expansion of public pre-primary education in the 1960s estimated that one additional preschool facility per 100 children increased the probability of secondary school completion by 6 percentage points, although the impact was biased towards higher socioeconomic groups (Andreoli et al., 2026). In the US city of Boston, a universal public preschool programme implemented between 1997 and 2003 is estimated to have increased the probability of students completing secondary school and enrolling in post-secondary education by eight percentage points (Gray-Lobe et al., 2023).

Children in rural and remote areas face disadvantages that limit enrolment, attendance and progression, including travel distance, unsafe routes, teacher capacities and shortages, and household poverty. Governments have been trying to reduce such barriers in conventional ways, while the transformative prospect of distance education has only been realized in a few contexts (**Box 4.7**).

> “Distance significantly affects school attendance”

Distance significantly affects school attendance. In Pakistan, girls of lower secondary school age (10 to 12 years old) who have to travel 45 to 60 minutes to school are 15 percentage points less likely to attend school than those who live within 15 minutes' distance from the school (Barón et al., 2024). It was also found that between two girls living the same distance from school, those from households allowing unrestricted mobility to school had 1.5 times higher odds to be enrolled and 1.6 times higher odds to remain in school than those who required an escort (Callum et al., 2012). In Yemen, 24% of schools only offered the first six grades, which meant that these children and especially girls had the challenge of travelling to reach a school with lower secondary grades (Yemen Ministry of Education, 2024).

Many countries focused on reducing the distance of students to school through boarding facilities, rather than on reducing the distance of homes to schools. China had a major rural primary school consolidation programme in the 2000s to ensure quality at a sustainable cost (Liu et al., 2010). In 2016, there were 26 million boarding students in rural schools, representing 14% of primary and 59% of lower secondary school enrolment (China Ministry of Education, 2017). One evaluation found that rural school consolidation was associated with lower educational attainment for girls, and that these negative effects tended to be larger for ethnic minority students (Hannum et al., 2021) but the impact was dwarfed at the national level by rapid secondary education expansion. In Ghana, a consequence of the free upper secondary school policy introduced in 2017 was the increase in demand for boarding (Casely-Hayford et al., 2025). In Türkiye, the number of students transported by bus increased by five times and the number of boarding students by eight times between 1997 and 2002 (Kırdar et al., 2016). In Viet Nam, selective upper secondary boarding schools, which were introduced in the 1970s for students from ethnic minorities who were supported with privileges such as food stipends, were also joined by semi-boarding schools in the 2010s at the primary and lower secondary school level (Iyer et al., 2021).

In urban areas, the design, implementation and evaluation of school transport policies and interventions remain of weak interest for education policymakers (Larouche et al., 2018). Policies can refer to roads, vehicles, users, speed limits, zone restrictions, accident responses, safe transport options and education. In high-income countries, school commuting is often regulated. In Estonia, a draft regulation stipulates that the walking distance to school for primary school students should not exceed 3 kilometres and municipalities must provide transport if a student's route is next to a road with a speed limit over 50 km/h and lacks a pedestrian path or pavement (Koppel, 2025). In England, United Kingdom, free travel is offered if the distance exceeds 3.2 kilometres for pupils under 8 and 4.8 kilometres for older children (Department for Education, 2024). Such norms are less common in low- and middle-income countries. In peri-urban Accra, 55% of children who walked unaccompanied to school exhibited risky behaviours, such as jaywalking (Poku-Boansi et al., 2019). Road injuries are the first cause of death among 15- to 19-year-olds and second cause of death among 10- to 14-year-olds in East Asia and the Pacific (UNICEF, 2023) and South Asia (UNICEF, 2024b).

BOX 4.7:

Distance education has only been used in a few contexts to improve access

Distance education may have become prominent during COVID-19 but it has long been a pillar of education systems in island states and remote areas. The Modern Distance Education Project for Rural Schools was rolled out in China between 2004 and 2007. It consisted of three pedagogical modalities: DVD players, which played lectures and learning materials prepared by high-quality teachers; satellite receiving sets, which delivered new lectures and learning materials through the internet; and computer classrooms, in which students could follow the new teaching materials from their own devices. The programme reached 85% of counties, almost 350,000 schools and more than 100 million students. It is estimated to have increased the probability of lower secondary completion by 7% (Bianchi et al., 2022). In general, gains in progression and completion in China were strongest where remote instruction was systematically integrated with in-person teaching rather than offered as a stand-alone modality (Guo et al., 2022).

Guyana continues using radio-based instruction. EdYou FM is the official radio station of the education ministry's Distance Education Unit, which delivers curriculum-aligned content to both coastal and hinterland communities through over 20 relay sites. A campaign launched in 2025 aimed to ensure that every remote school would be equipped with a radio set capable of receiving the content (Guyana Ministry of Education, 2025).

New Zealand's Correspondence School, known as Te Kura, gradually moved from paper-based to online personalized delivery, and expanded to being the largest school in the country, with over 25,000 students, mostly at the secondary level. Almost 60% of its full-time students are identified as at risk because they are disengaged, excluded or alienated from face-to-face schooling. Some 40% of students are Māori. Te Kura has opened regional offices in 3 major cities, outposts in smaller communities and some 140 smaller sites, where weekly face-to-face group sessions, event days and tutorials further provide students with the opportunity to receive additional support and connect with their peers and local communities. The approach is also being delivered to students in the three Pacific territories of the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. The Cook Islands developed the Te Kura Uira online learning school in 2014. Secondary students in hard-to-reach islands gather in local classrooms and attend online classes taught by teachers from the main island of Rarotonga through Skype. Students in Tokelau use My Te Kura. However, delivery in these jurisdictions is hampered by limited digital infrastructure and accessibility to online learning (UNESCO, 2024a).

In Papua New Guinea, where 87% of the population lives in rural or remote areas, the main form of distance learning in secondary education is the Flexible, Open and Distance Education (FODE) programme, which offers an alternative pathway for students who decide to study from home and second chance education for upgrading grade 10 and 12 results. More than 110,000 students are registered in FODE in grades 7 to 12, either at home or at local learning centres. Coursework is provided through textbooks with assignments, which must be marked by teachers at the centres. While traditionally offered through a print-based and contact-supported model, there have been efforts to move the programme online through the online platform Moodle (UNESCO, 2024a).

> "Investments in water, sanitation and hygiene help improve participation"

Investments in water, sanitation and hygiene help improve participation. An early systematic review did not find studies that linked sex-specific latrines to girls' education (Birdthistle et al., 2011). But a subsequent evaluation of a government sex-specific latrine construction programme in India showed it increased girls' enrolment (Adukia, 2017). In Mali, latrines have been associated with reducing girls' dropout by 0.7 percentage points and increasing their promotion by 1.3 percentage points in remote rural schools, where nearly one third of students had no access to sanitation (UNICEF Innocenti et al., 2024). Most evaluations refer to donor-funded programmes and, while their results are positive, they are of smaller scale and cannot be linked to national impact. In Burkina Faso, a programme funded by the United States combined water, sanitation and hygiene interventions with other gender-sensitive infrastructure and nutrition support. It increased girls' enrolment by around 20 percentage points, an effect which largely persisted (Kazianga et al., 2013, 2019). In Kenya's Nyanza province, primary schools that did not have good water access during the dry season and received a water supply, hygiene promotion, and water treatment and sanitation improvement by the international non-governmental organization CARE saw enrolment increase, including a 4% rise in the proportion of girls enrolled (Garn et al., 2013).

Rural electrification of homes and schools has been a significant strategy to retain students. In Brazil, as part of the Light for All in Schools programme, in rural primary schools connected to electricity between 2013 and 2016, dropout fell by 27% within three years (Mejdalani et al., 2018). In Cambodia, rural electrification increased attainment by 0.85 years for boys and 0.62 years for girls. It also increased the probability of having ever been enrolled in primary school for boys by approximately 9.7% but did not increase the probability of having ever been enrolled for girls (Saing, 2018). In India, electrification in the 1980s and 1990s had a large positive impact on girls' enrolment and attainment (Van De Walle et al., 2013). In Kenya, where the share of schools with electricity increased from 56% in 2014 to 94% in 2016, either through connection to the grid network or through solar photovoltaics, an analysis found that off-grid electrification increased completion of grade 8 by 1% (Koima, 2024).

Private school expansion

Between 2000 and 2019, the share of private institutions in total enrolment increased from 10% to 19% in primary education and from 19% to 27% in secondary education. However, the only region which far exceeded these shares at both levels was Central and Southern Asia, where they reached 36% in primary and 48% in secondary education. In India, the share of private schools in total enrolment was 45% in primary and 51% in secondary education in 2023, while in Pakistan, it was 47% at both levels in 2024.

> Between 2000 and 2019, the share of private institutions in total enrolment increased from 10% to 19% in primary education and from 19% to 27% in secondary education

There is a lack of studies on whether the expansion of private schools has directly increased enrolment. Two facts suggest that they have not done so. First, private schools have been mostly established in urban areas with close to universal enrolment (Crawfurd et al., 2023), with the potential exception of informal areas where governments have often been reluctant to build schools. Second, they serve richer populations: in a sample of 42 countries, children from the richest households (39%) were 10 times more likely than from the poorest (4%) to attend private schools (UNESCO, 2021a). In other words, private schools have probably only attracted students from public schools, changing the composition of enrolment, rather than increasing overall enrolment. This conclusion is also supported by the inverse relationship between government and household spending. In Africa, in countries where governments spent less than 3% of GDP on education, households spent on average 2.6% of GDP on education; by contrast, in countries where governments spend more than 6% of GDP on education, households spent 1.2% of GDP on average (UNESCO, 2022).

In contrast, there are many studies on whether private schools have increased enrolment indirectly by being more efficient and more effective than public schools. The studies were evaluations of demand-oriented (rather than supply-driven) interventions to make private schools more attractive to families through subsidies to private schools, contractual agreements for services with private providers, and vouchers to students. In Pakistan, the Foundation Assisted Schools programme in Punjab province, which includes both grants to schools and vouchers to households, increased enrolment (Barrera-Osorio and Raju, 2015); in Sindh, per-student subsidies to low-cost private schools raised enrolment by 30 percentage points in the context of low public school availability (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2017); and in Balochistan, per-girl subsidies increased access in urban but not in rural areas (Alderman et al., 2003).

In Haiti, which essentially lacks a public school system, a tuition-waiver programme expanded enrolment, while reducing grade repetition and overage enrolment (Adelman et al., 2017). In Latin America, the Fe y Alegría network of private schools used public subsidies to expand schooling into remote rural areas (Parra Osorio and Wodon, 2014). In Uganda, a public–private partnership contractual arrangement, which subsidized private schools in areas lacking public provision, expanded access at an equal or lower cost to supporting public schools (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020).

Overall, systematic reviews of contractual agreements for services with private providers emphasize that there is substantial heterogeneity in results, depending on contracting rules, monitoring and regulatory capacity (Ali et al., 2024; Crawfurd et al., 2023). The Liberia Education Advancement Programme actually reduced enrolment by 3.3 percentage points (Romero et al., 2020; Romero and Sandefur, 2019). In Pakistan, the Punjab School Support Programme did not demonstrably increase enrolment (Crawfurd, 2018). But even when they are found to improve access, the impact on equity is questionable (Akmal et al., 2022).

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Learning environments in which students feel accepted, supported academically and emotionally, and safe are associated with higher attendance and lower dropout. They foster belonging and reduce the likelihood that vulnerable students disengage or leave school early. When schools address discrimination, protect students from bullying and violence, and provide responsive pedagogical support, students are more likely to attend regularly and progress through school.

> When schools address discrimination, protect students from bullying and violence, and provide responsive pedagogical support, students are more likely to attend regularly and progress through school

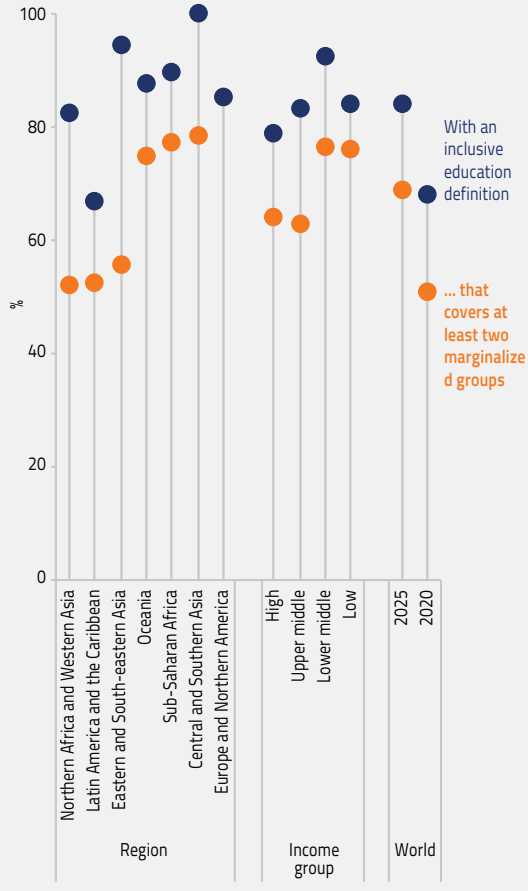
Inclusive

Inclusive environments help disadvantaged learners – notably those with disabilities – enrol in, progress through and complete school. Three questions are important for characterizing the inclusiveness of environments: what, where and how.

The **first** question asks **what** is the inclusiveness orientation of an education system. Inclusive education is a process that contributes to the broader goal of an inclusive society. The values that underpin education are influenced by wider conceptions of solidarity and collective responsibility – just as education values in turn also influence these conceptions. This mutual relationship also means that inclusive education should be conceived broadly and not be associated only with any single group.

New analysis, which is featured in the updated version of the PEER website, has found that the share of countries with a definition of inclusive education has increased from 68% in 2020 to 84% in 2025. The share of those definitions that cover at least two marginalized groups and are not limited to learners with disabilities and special educational needs has increased even faster from 51% to 69%. In other words, the share of countries with definitions of inclusive education that are relatively broad increased from 75% to 82%, which indicates increased policy awareness. Three regions are lagging behind: Northern Africa and Western Asia (52%), Latin America and the Caribbean (52%) and Eastern and South-eastern Asia (56%). In Northern Africa and Western Asia, as well as in Eastern and South-eastern Asia, among countries with an inclusive education definition, 4 in 10 countries focus exclusively on disability (**Figure 4.19**).

FIGURE 4.19:
Definitions of inclusive education have broadened in the last five years
Distribution of countries by national definition of inclusive education, 2020–25

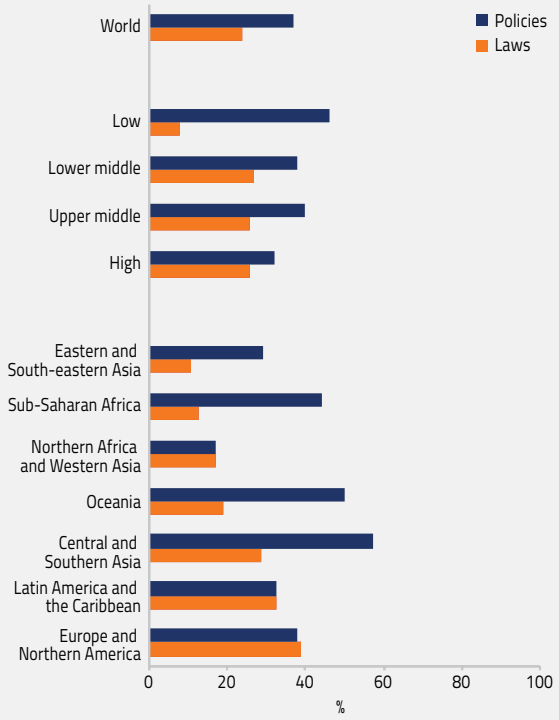


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_19
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the PEER country profiles.

Among countries that have recently adopted definitions of inclusive education, Cameroon recognizes diverse learner needs in its 2024 education policy and calls for systemic changes to prevent exclusion (Cameroon Government, 2024). A 2023 policy of Papua New Guinea focuses mainly on students with disabilities, aiming to support their potential but not addressing other forms of diversity (Papua New Guinea Department of Education, 2023b).

Countries are more likely to develop policies that support inclusive education rather than enact laws to mandate it. As of 2025, 37% of countries have inclusive education policies for all learners, ranging from 17% in Northern Africa and Western Asia to 57% in Central and Southern Asia. However, only 24% of countries have inclusive education laws, ranging from 11% in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia to 39% in Europe and Northern America (**Figure 4.20**).

FIGURE 4.20:
Almost one in four countries have inclusive education laws
Share of countries with inclusive education laws and policies, by region and income group, 2025



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_20
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on PEER country profiles.

Among countries that have adopted new inclusive education policies, the 2021 National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools of Sierra Leone prioritizes girls, adolescent mothers, children with disabilities and those from rural or low-income backgrounds (Sierra Leone Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, 2021). Among 12 countries that have established inclusive education laws since 2020, 6 of which are in Europe, examples include the 2021 Education Code in France that guarantees inclusive schooling for all children (France Government, 2021), a 2023 law in Romania that affirms the right to inclusive, quality education for all (Romania Government, 2023) and the 2021 law on the organization of education in Rwanda that promotes quality and inclusive education for all learners (Rwanda Government, 2021).

The **second** question is **where** children are meant to be educated, i.e. in what kind of school and with what type of arrangement. The ultimate goal of inclusive education is hard to define, which makes it difficult to know whether it has been achieved, not least because some groups may find that their identity is best preserved through separate education arrangements. But the intention – or lack thereof – of countries to eliminate barriers to the right to education and change the culture, policy and practice of mainstream schools to accommodate and effectively include all learners helps identify when a country violates the principles of inclusive education (de Beco, 2022).

> The share of countries whose legislation permits segregation of students with disabilities has fallen to 9% today from 25% in 2020

In the case of learners with disabilities, countries have been increasingly introducing legislation to facilitate the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, educating students of all abilities and backgrounds together, while implementing necessary accommodations to facilitate their full participation. In 2020, the *Global Education Monitoring Report* found that 25% of countries had provisions for education in segregated settings (instructing students exclusively in special schools or designated classes within mainstream settings), 48% combined mainstreaming with separate settings, usually for those with severe disabilities; 10% privileged integration (placing students with disabilities in mainstream schools but without comprehensive support, resulting in some students attending separate classes); and 17% had legislative provisions to educate people with disabilities in inclusive settings, with the highest prevalence observed in Europe and Northern America and in Oceania. Five years later, new analysis, which is featured in the updated version of the PEER website, has found that laws have been embracing the principle of inclusion at a fast pace. The share of countries whose legislation permits segregation has fallen to 9% while the share of those supporting inclusion has increased to 29%. The majority of countries, or 59%, have opted for a combination. Inclusive laws are most frequent in Oceania (67%) (**Figure 4.21a**). Unlike laws, policies are more likely to promote fully inclusive environments. As of 2025, 56% of countries have policies for inclusive education, again led by Oceania (88%) (**Figure 4.21b**).

FIGURE 4.21:
Inclusive education legislation is being widely adopted
Distribution of countries by school organization for students with disabilities, 2025



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig4_21
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the PEER country profiles.

Among countries that have recently passed laws promoting full inclusion for students with disabilities include Cabo Verde, which shifted from a 2010 law based on integrating students with special needs in mainstream classes to mandating full inclusion in 2024 (Cabo Verde Government, 2024), and Kyrgyzstan, which amended a law that allowed separate or home study to now guarantee inclusive education for all students (Kyrgyzstan Government, 2017, 2023). Ethiopia, which did not have prior legislation, now ensures students with special needs have equal access on the same basis as other students (Ethiopia Government, 2024). Madagascar, Malawi and Uganda are other low-income countries with inclusive laws.

Moving students from special to mainstream schools is not automatically a solution unless the material resources exist to provide inclusive education effectively. Missing ramps, adapted toilets, accessible materials and tactile markers lead to the exclusion of children with disabilities. Universal design not only addresses these constraints but is a cost-effective solution: if included in the original design, it increases costs by roughly 1%, compared with more than 5% when retrofitted (UNESCO, 2020b).

Material inputs beyond buildings include teaching and learning materials. Technology has opened a huge window of opportunity. On top of accessible textbooks in braille and large print formats, digital versions with text-to-speech, sign language, captions or adjustable display features drastically remove print barriers for students with visual, hearing, intellectual and other learning disabilities. Yet progress in the diffusion of these technologies remains slow. Until recently, most countries rarely prioritized accessibility features in open educational resources (Zhang et al., 2020).

However, the more substantive issue is human resources. Therefore, the **third** question asks **how** mentalities need to be transformed to create an inclusive environment. The shift away from a system that asks some children to adapt does not happen automatically, as it needs to challenge mindsets. An inclusive environment needs to ensure school engagement and prevent placements in special schools (Foreman-Murray et al., 2022).

Beyond disability, inclusive learning environments have also become more responsive in other respects. A major focus has been on overcoming **gender** barriers. In low- and lower-middle-income countries, especially in western

Africa and southern Asia, girls are lagging behind boys in secondary school completion. Many policies described in this chapter have increased girls' participation (e.g. rural school construction, measures to prevent school-related gender-based violence) (Psaki et al., 2022) and these need not be targeted at girls to be effective (Evans and Yuan, 2021). Various interventions can make learning environments more inclusive. Textbooks continue to entrench negative gender stereotypes and underrepresent women (Crawfurd et al., 2024).

A major issue remains the high prevalence of teenage marriage and pregnancy. Globally, the proportion of women married before age 18 dropped from 25% in 1995 to 19% in 2024 but is as high as 25% in Central and Southern Asia and the Pacific Island states and 31% in Sub-Saharan Africa, impacting girls' education and futures (The Child Marriage Data Portal, 2025). Extending compulsory education has been one of the levers that helped reduce early marriage and adolescent pregnancy. In Thailand, the extension of compulsory education to nine years in 2002 increased lower secondary completion among girls by 7 to 15 percentage points and reduced adolescent births (Chaijaroen and Panda, 2023). Similar effects occurred in China (Chen and Guo, 2022), India (Bhattacharjee, 2026) and Kenya (Chicoine, 2012).

Legislation alone cannot shift norms (Bergstrom and Özler, 2021). A randomized control trial in 121 villages in the Indian state of Karnataka modestly improved secondary school completion, as many girls remained vulnerable to early marriage (Prakash et al., 2019). Pedagogical changes are also needed to delay marriage and increase secondary completion (Rasmussen et al., 2019). Ultimately, the challenge is the capacity to implement inclusive policies. In Uganda, the government issued guidelines to prevent and manage teenage pregnancy in school settings, but limited capacity to monitor and put the plan into practice (e.g. offer childcare) prevents young mothers from re-entering school (Opok, 2024).

“In most middle- and in high-income countries, gender norms work in the opposite direction with poorer boys less likely to complete secondary education as they leave school early to work”

In most middle- and in high-income countries, gender norms work in the opposite direction with poorer boys less likely to complete secondary education as they leave school early to work. Apart from poverty alleviation interventions (**Chapter 6**), differentiated pathways and counselling, which are covered elsewhere in this chapter, an inclusive environment requires extensive training to prepare teachers to deal with boys (Kollmayer et al., 2018).

The choice of **language** of instruction is critical for students' sense of belonging but also for children to be able to progress through grades. In Cameroon, students who were taught in their home language were 22% more likely to stay in school through grade 3 and 14% more likely through grade 5 (Laitin et al., 2019). In Ethiopia, the 1994 education reform, which introduced mother tongue instruction in primary schools, increased primary enrolment by 7.4 percentage points within states. The likelihood of children being in the appropriate grade for their age was higher by 8.8 percentage points. The reform had a stronger impact in rural than in urban areas (Seid, 2016). Another study on Ethiopia found that the reform added more than half a year to schooling and increased primary completion rates by five percentage points (Ramachandran, 2017).

Countries' linguistic and historical contexts are not comparable, and policy implementation also differs considerably. A systematic review of home language policy impact studies pointed to the importance of teacher preparedness and good-quality learning materials in home languages (Nakamura et al., 2023). Despite the clear pedagogical advantages of home language policies, the inability to implement them consistently at a system level may explain why countries such as Nigeria and Zambia have recently backtracked, reintroducing English as the language of instruction. Political considerations also determine the decision of countries such as Pakistan and Rwanda to opt for English-medium instruction. However, there are consequences for students with limited English exposure, who require support such as bilingual materials in Pakistan and remedial English in Rwanda (Mahoro and Amini Ngabonziza, 2024; Qayyum and Rizwan, 2024).

For countries with **immigrant** and **indigenous** populations, attitudes towards the home languages and cultures of students, curriculum choices, and measures to address segregation are needed. In France, more than 30% of lower secondary school students of Comorian, Haitian, Malian and Turkish origin repeated a class compared to the national average of 10% (Ichou, 2018). Studies based on socioeconomic status show that education segregation is higher than social segregation in upper secondary education (Ly and Riegert, 2016).

In Canada, the upper secondary completion rate for First Nations youth aged 18 to 24 was 53% in 2021 which, while very low, marked a considerable increase in closing the gap with non-indigenous Canadians: by 7 percentage points since 2016 (Canada Government, 2023). A legacy of discrimination in residential schools meant that the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission emphasized the central role of curriculum, calling for all jurisdictions to embed age-appropriate content (Canada Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). In response, several jurisdictions expanded culturally relevant curriculum content and provided teachers with professional development grounded in Indigenous histories and perspectives. However, progress remains uneven in scope, depth and mandatory content, with only a few provinces making Indigenous content mandatory through the end of secondary schooling (Kairos, 2018).

Changes in legislation have increased school participation among **refugees** by granting them access to local schools. In Colombia, the Special Residence Permit (2018) and Temporary Protection Status (2021) reduced documentation barriers for Venezuelan children, supporting their inclusion in schools (López Castro and Vargas Valle, 2023). In Ecuador, a ministerial agreement in 2020 eliminated the need for Venezuelan children to carry official documentation or an identity card to enrol (Lobos, 2023). In Türkiye, Temporary Education Centres for Syrian refugees were closed and students moved to local public schools, helping increase access (Akyuz et al., 2018). A review in 23 countries indicates that education documentation requirements become more stringent with age, and that refugees face more restrictions than internally displaced children. For example, the Islamic Republic of Iran imposes especially rigid rules (NRC, 2021). Bangladesh denies access to formal schooling for children in legally ambiguous situations, relegating them to non-formal settings (Karim, 2020).

In the United States, ever since a 1950s decision of the Supreme Court to desegregate schools, the study of **racial** segregation in education has been sophisticated and complex. After a significant decline in segregation in the late 1960s and through the 1970s, it appears to have been increasing ever since – albeit very slowly – though it has not gone back to the original levels. Overall, segregation remains high in absolute terms and occurs largely between school districts. Nevertheless, the share of segregation within school districts has increased, which leaves scope for policy tools to promote integration, whether voluntary or through student assignment and school choice (Owens et al., 2022; Owens and Reardon, 2024). Segregation has been associated with higher attainment gaps by race (Rubinton and Isaacson, 2022).

In India, rapid education development since the late 1990s reduced education gaps by gender, ethnicity and social **caste**, although education expansion in the early years also saw the shift of mainly urban and richer families to urban schools. In order to prevent stratification, one of the clauses of the 2009 Right to Education Act demanded that private schools admit one quarter of students from marginalized castes and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Analysis of administrative data found that the clause had no impact on improving school segregation (Edara, 2025). Moreover, children admitted on the basis of quotas often face discrimination in private schools (Kumar et al., 2025).

In some contexts, governments have promoted, encouraged or tolerated the expansion of **religious** schools, which can give families a more attractive option for the education participation of their children, especially girls (D'Agostino and Asadullah, 2025). In Bangladesh, districts that had more registered madrasas experienced greater secondary female enrolment growth around the turn of the century (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2013). In Indonesia, community resources from religious endowments funded the construction of Islamic schools that attracted girls but also strengthened religious values (Bazzi et al., 2025). In both cases, religious schools responded to the growth in demand that had been generated by the expansion of primary schools – by non-government actors in Bangladesh and by the state in Indonesia. The long-term impact on participation and attainment may be difficult to assess as, ultimately, they may simply have changed the composition of enrolment. Yet it is clear that Islamic schools have accelerated the expansion of some education systems.

Safe

School safety extends to a very broad range of issues, from violence and attacks to natural disasters which, while unrelated to each other, all contribute in their way to making the education experience unpleasant, reduce school attendance and eventually lead to dropout.

> "All over the world, bullying has been linked with school avoidance and eventually dropout"

Violence, for example, measured as district-level arrests in Brazil (Caldas Montes and Mendes, 2021) and homicide rates in Mexico (Caudillo and Torche, 2014), has been associated with increased dropout. In Kingston, Jamaica,

interviews with inner city secondary school students found that 66% had witnessed some act of violence and 11% had witnessed murders (Bourne et al., 2018). Bullying by peers, like any form of violence, is a significant barrier to student engagement. All over the world, it has been linked with school avoidance and eventually dropout, from Ethiopia (Woldehanna et al., 2021) to the United States (Cornell et al., 2013). Teacher conduct matters both in negative and positive ways (De Luca et al., 2019). In Haiti, more than one third of 13- to 17-year-olds were victimized in the previous year and most perpetrators were reported to be parents or teachers (Flynn-O'Brien et al., 2016). In Uganda, 5% of 13- to 18-year-old girls reported having experienced sexual violence from a teacher (Parkes et al., 2023). Weak disapproval of bullying by teachers predicts a higher incidence of it (Saarento-Zaprudin et al., 2013), whereas positive teacher–student relationships increase the likelihood that students seek help (Eliot et al., 2010).

Measures to address violence include a wide and complex range of community-level interventions as well as measures to improve the school climate. These efforts should, for example, promote social and emotional development; ensure that students experience school rules as strict but fair and respectful; cultivate socially responsible behaviour to stand up to violence; and build relationships that connect students with each other but also with a caring adult at school. The use of strict discipline and punishments for classroom management has been associated with further ostracizing disruptive students who end up feeling stigmatized, kicking off a spiral of isolation and anti-social behaviour (Cohen, 2021). In that sense, school leadership is key (UNESCO, 2024b), as it can foster positive school climates and support inclusive practices (Mills et al., 2021; Nurlina et al., 2024).

Likewise, punitive measures are used to fight truancy, yet have had little effect (Conry and Richards, 2018). Meanwhile, imposing fines disproportionately affects low-income families (Cantillon and Lancker, 2012). Conversely, policies that reduce suspension have been found to improve attendance (Anderson, 2020). Recognizing these limitations, some systems are shifting towards supportive models. In Germany, following a 2015 recommendation from the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education, the state of Schleswig-Holstein adopted an approach combining early identification, targeted support and reintegration measures for long-term absentees (Enderle et al., 2023).

Conflict, attacks and insecurity set education back. First, schools and infrastructure get destroyed; parents, teachers and students die; and fear of reprisals, suppression of identity and erosion of trust make the school an unsuitable place for learning. Globally, more than one in six children live in areas affected by conflict (Østby and Rustad, 2024). In northern Uganda, where the 20-year Lord's Resistance Army insurgency unfolded, an estimate based on the cumulative number of fatalities within a three-kilometre radius of a household as a measure of conflict intensity found that a one standard deviation increase in this number led to a loss of 1.9 years of schooling (Kazibwe, 2025). Second, conflict also affects education through displacement. Of the 12.4 million school-age refugee children globally, just 67% of children of primary and 37% of adolescents of secondary school age are enrolled (UNHCR, 2025a). Displacement often disrupts education trajectories and lowers the chance of finishing compulsory education, even after resettlement (Cha, 2021). Third, conflict leads to institutional breakdown and the loss of resources, which are diverted to fund the conflict and may also be impossible to allocate (Komatsu, 2024).

> Globally, more than one in six children live in areas affected by conflict

Yemen has been engulfed in a protracted military conflict for over a decade. The crisis has devastated livelihoods, as 83% of the population lived in multidimensional poverty in 2021 (OPHI and UNDP, 2023). In the past 20 years, boys' primary completion rate increased at half the average rate of low-income countries. It is estimated that 4.5 million people were displaced since 2015 due to the conflict (UNHCR, 2025c), while 20% of schools have been destroyed, damaged or are being used by displaced populations (Yemen Ministry of Education, 2024). The country has been split between the Houthi authorities controlling much of the north and west, the internationally recognized government holding parts of the south and the east, and the Southern Transitional Council controlling other areas, which has fragmented governance and has created parallel administrative systems. One consequence is that over 155,000 teachers were reported to be working without salary in 2022/23 (Arab News, 2023; GCPEA, 2024).

Just as education systems collapse with conflict, they often catch up afterwards if predictability, legitimacy and trust in public institutions are restored. Cambodia has tried to rebuild its education system (Meas et al., 2024) and develop its capacity (Kelsall et al., 2016) after decades of conflict, as education was considered essential for national recovery and long-term development (Tao and

Kao, 2024). Education policy contributed to stabilization in several ways. For example, curriculum reforms introduced peace education and genocide history, alongside participatory pedagogies designed to foster dialogue and reconciliation (Manning and Paulson, 2024).

The capacity of education systems to anticipate, withstand and recover from **disasters** is becoming increasingly important. Over the past two decades, schools were closed in at least 75% of extreme weather events affecting 5 million people or more in low- and middle-income countries, contributing to dropout (UNESCO and MECCE, 2024). In Mozambique, Cyclone Idai destroyed 3,400 classrooms in 2019, depriving more than 300,000 children of schooling (United Nations, 2019). About 70% of schools are in high-risk areas due to one or more hazards. In 2018, it was estimated that there was more than USD 2 million damage in infrastructure on average per year, which corresponds to 540 classrooms and 57,000 students affected annually (Hove et al., 2025). The country introduced mandatory climate-resilient construction standards for all new and existing schools in 2021 (UN Habitat, 2022).

A regional assessment of over 6,000 school buildings in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu found that 50% to 90% may not withstand a strong cyclone or earthquake (World Bank, 2022b). Globally, for every USD 1 invested in climate-resilient infrastructure, USD 87 was spent on infrastructure that does not integrate resilience principles, leading to reactive rather than preventive approaches (Padmanabhi et al., 2022). In 2022, 32.6 million people were displaced by disasters, which often raised barriers to schooling linked to documentation, residency requirements and financial constraints (IDMC, 2023).

Disaster risk reduction in education combines structural interventions (e.g. hazard-resilient school design) with non-structural measures (e.g. contingency planning, teacher training in emergency response, school-based preparedness protocols). Countries that embed education within national disaster risk reduction frameworks show greater preparedness (Tyas et al., 2025). The Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector launched in 2022 a Comprehensive School Safety Framework to support governments. Indonesia has implemented the framework in more than 35,000 schools, combining multisectoral coordination with school-based preparedness (GADRRRES, 2023). Disaster risk reduction is integrated into social studies, science and physical education at each grade, with content and methods adaptable to local contexts (Teixeira and Crawfurd, 2022). In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the climate change mitigation and adaptation and disaster risk reduction curriculum, developed by the Ministry of Education in 2019/20, employs interactive, participatory and experiential learning modalities (Selby et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

This section has presented a wide range of educational factors, organized roughly in three broad groups – institutional, demand-oriented and supply-oriented – for which evidence exists that they have contributed to primary and secondary education expansion in the past 25 years. Such impact comes on top of broad social, economic, political, historic and demographic factors – which may have fuelled or dampened educational development. Educational policies and programmes may have also simply accelerated a process of education expansion that had its own inexorable internal dynamic or logic. For instance, many of the countries featured in case studies were recovering from the legacy of conflict and, through recovered stability, may simply have been returning to a long-term, steady state of enrolment growth. Countries set their destiny, but they are also unlikely to veer off too much from long-term dynamics that have been observed in the last decades.

> “Single-dimension explanations of what works risk oversimplifying the much more complex long-term evolution of education systems”

The broad canvas of this section serves as a reminder that single-dimension explanations of what works risk oversimplifying the much more complex long-term evolution of education systems – and also risk brushing over a variety of contexts with their own characteristics and considerations. Individual studies that have attracted a lot of interest and debate over the years tend to privilege particular narratives through which researchers try to draw the attention of policy makers. While this is important, it should not distract debate from the issues that matter. Few studies have tried to explain long-term trends. Most are content to explain the impact of interventions. However, interventions are not institutions – and it is the latter that determine the course of development, including in education.



Just a few days before graduation at the Knapp Center, Lincoln High School held a Senior Class Day in their Roundhouse to honor the academic achievements, service, leadership, and future plans of graduating Railsplitters.

Credit: © Jon Lemons/Des Moines Public Schools*



CHAPTER

5

Post-secondary



KEY MESSAGES

What do the data show?

Access to tertiary education has expanded, but graduation rates have risen far more slowly.

- Gross enrolment in tertiary education more than doubled from 19% in 2000 to 44% in 2024, but the graduation rate rose from 17% to only 27%.

Attainment is a more transparent measure of progress than participation.

- Attainment among 25- to 34-year-olds is consistently only about 60% of the tertiary gross enrolment ratio observed 10 years earlier.

What do we know about policies associated with expansion and equity in the long run?

Free tuition policies improve equity but non-fee-related costs need to be addressed too.

- Public universities are tuition-free in some one in three countries, but high dropout among low-income students shows that free tuition alone is not enough. Needs-based grants can reduce dropout if they keep pace with living costs and are supported by subsidies. Almost half of countries subsidize student housing, less than 4 in 10 support transport and just under 3 in 10 subsidize textbooks.

Equity-oriented student aid helps equitable access *but* coverage and design matter.

- About four in five countries have student aid aimed at poverty, disability or geographic disadvantage; one in five have conditional grants rewarding institutions for enrolling under-represented groups. But such funding models are five times more common in upper-middle- and high-income countries than in low-income countries.

Student loans can widen participation *but* risk deepening inequality if poorly designed.

- For every USD 1,000 of student debt, dropout rates increase by about 3%. Loans with high interest rates or strict guarantor requirements can deter or disadvantage low-income students. Income-contingent loans can bypass some of the main problems by making payments depend on graduates' ability to pay but have been rolled out mainly in high-income countries because recovery requires strong income tax or social security administration.

Private provision expands places *but* does not automatically advance equity.

- Private institutions account for about one third of tertiary enrolment globally and this share has remained stable since 2000. However, in the absence of strong quality assurance and targeted financial support, private education provision can reproduce stratification rather than broaden opportunities.

Diversified provision widens equitable access but needs to be connected to further study.

- Short-cycle tertiary programmes account for some 15% of total tertiary enrolment globally, with a weak declining trend over time. Student enrolment in the world's largest open universities represent about 4% of total higher education enrolment. Flexible pathways support access but need to be supported by national qualifications frameworks, credit transfers and recognition of prior learning.

Affirmative action helps improve access for marginalized groups but has faced opposition.

- Some 32% of countries use affirmative action in admissions, with positive effects for targeted groups in about two thirds of 27 countries with evaluation evidence.

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Key trends

Access to tertiary education has greatly expanded worldwide over the past two decades. Participation has risen sharply in almost all regions, reflecting sustained policy efforts to widen access and respond to the growing demand for advanced skills. However, rising participation has not been matched by comparable gains in completion. Graduation and attainment indicators reveal a growing gap between the number of students who enter tertiary education and those who successfully complete a degree.

This divergence and the wide variety of enrolment patterns by age and modality underscore the need to reassess the adequacy of commonly used indicators of tertiary participation and their comparability across countries. These issues also call on the international community to look beyond participation levels alone and to monitor more closely who has access to tertiary education, under what conditions, and with what likelihood of successful completion.

ACCESS TO TERTIARY EDUCATION – BUT NOT COMPLETION – HAS INCREASED RAPIDLY WORLDWIDE

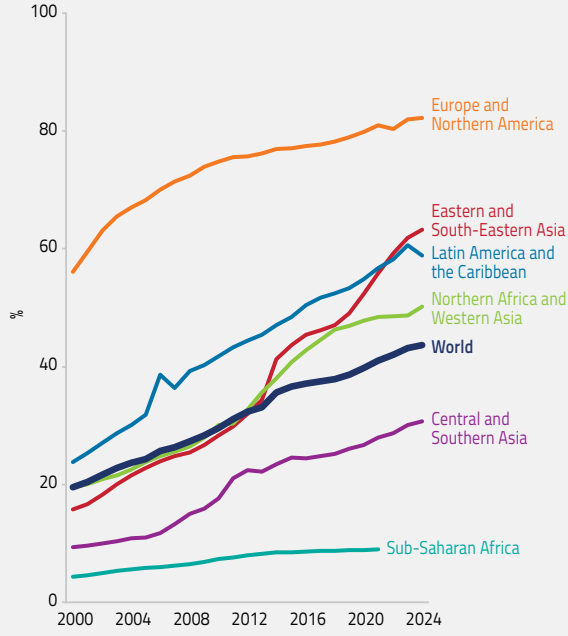
The tertiary education gross enrolment ratio is the main SDG monitoring indicator of higher education participation. The ratio is calculated by dividing the total number of enrolled students, regardless of age or level, by the target population, which is the five-year age group immediately following upper secondary education. Over the past 25 years, the gross enrolment ratio has more than doubled globally (from 19% in 2000 to 44% in 2024) and in all regions, except for Europe and Northern America, where it had started off at the highest level (**Figure 5.1a**). The fastest growth took place in Eastern and South-eastern Asia, where the ratio quadrupled between 2000 and 2024, from 16% to 63%.

> While the participation rate has increased by 1 percentage point per year since 2000, the graduation ratio has only increased at less than half that rate

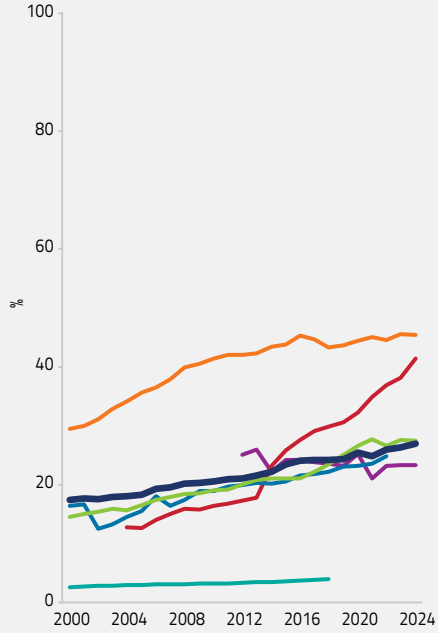
While the participation rate has increased by 1 percentage point per year, the graduation ratio has only increased at less than half that rate, or by 0.4 percentage points per year. The gross graduation ratio from first-degree programmes (bachelor's, long-first degrees or the equivalent) rose from 17% in 2000 to 27% in 2024, driven primarily by gains in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, where it increased from 13% in 2004 to 41% in 2024 (**Figure 5.1b**).

FIGURE 5.1:
Tertiary participation has doubled globally, while graduation has risen more slowly

a. Tertiary education gross enrolment ratio, ISCED 5–8, by region, 2000–24



b. Gross graduation ratio from first-time programmes, ISCED 6–7, by region, 2000–24

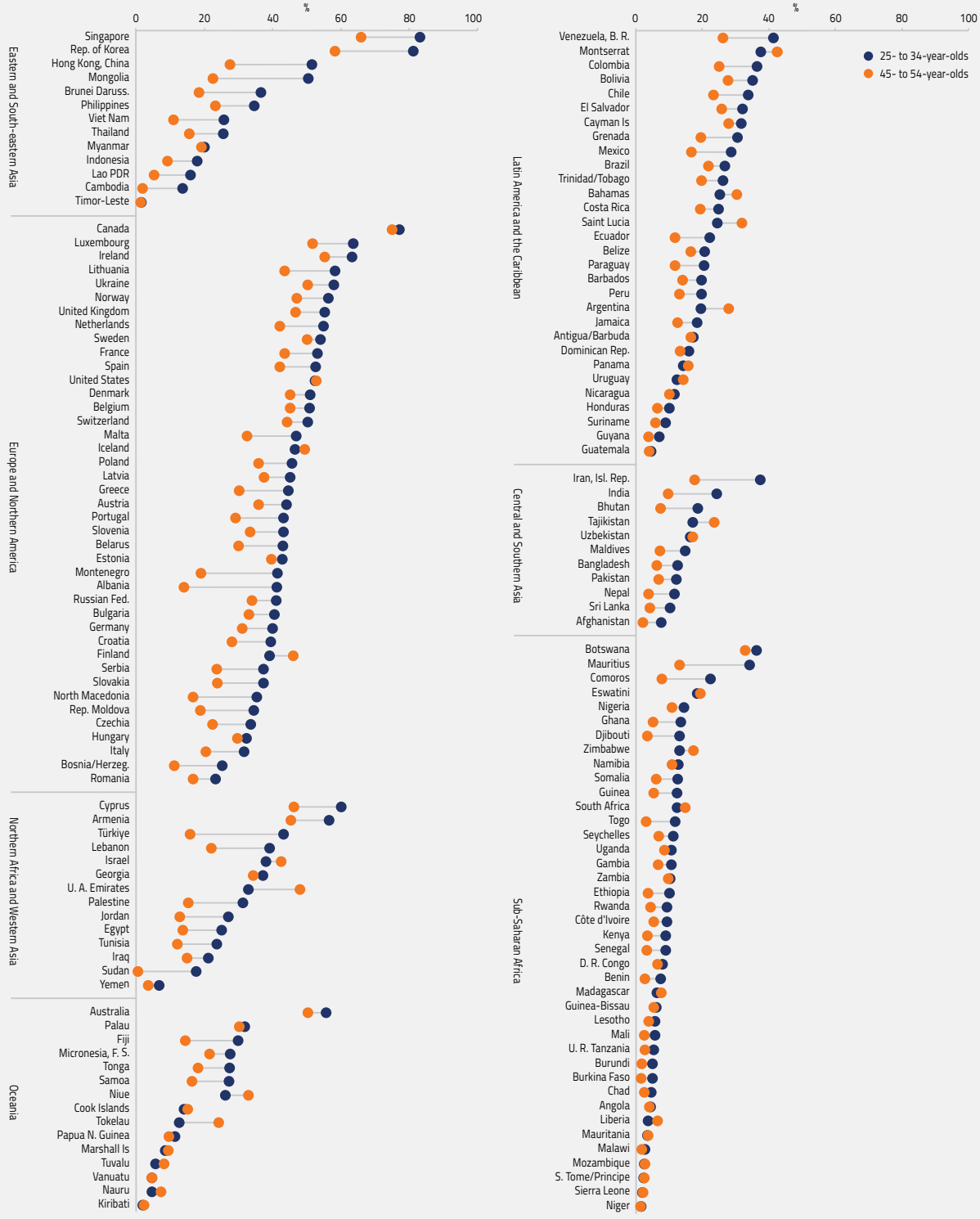


Note: ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education; 5 = Short cycle; 6 = Bachelor; 7 = Master; 8 = Doctorate.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_1
Source: UIS database.

FIGURE 5.2:

Tertiary attainment rates have increased across generations

Share of 25- to 34-year-olds and of 45- to 54-year-olds with tertiary education, 2024 or more recent year



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_2

Source: ILO database.

The gap between enrolment and graduation ratio levels is explained by two factors. First, the graduation ratio indicator does not include short-cycle or non-first-degree programmes. Enrolment in these programmes accounts for some 15% of total tertiary enrolment and the trend has been slightly decreasing over the past 10 years, as explained in the last section of this chapter. Therefore, this can factor at most for one quarter of the gap. Second, many students who enrol do not complete their studies. As the gap between participation and graduation ratios has been growing, this may suggest that the dropouts have risen as more young people enter tertiary education.

Another way to analyse the relationship between tertiary education participation and completion is through attainment data, the share of the population with a tertiary education degree. Such data are available from household surveys and in particular labour force surveys, which report attainment data in 10-year age groups. Attainment data capture tertiary education participation growth with a considerable lag. For example, the attainment rate of 25- to 34-year-olds in 2024 reflects the participation of young people who entered tertiary education in the 2010s, while the attainment rate of 45- to 54-year-olds reflects the participation of young people who entered tertiary education in the 1990s. This lag may be even longer as many students often take longer to complete their studies, while data from some countries may be older than from 2024.

> Globally, tertiary education attainment rises from 15% among 45- to 54-year-olds to 24% among 25- to 34-year-olds (Figure 5.2), or by 9 percentage points

Globally, tertiary education attainment rises from 15% among 45- to 54-year-olds to 24% among 25- to 34-year-olds (**Figure 5.2**), or by 9 percentage points, which is much lower than the increase in the tertiary gross enrolment ratio between 1994 and 2014, which was 20 percentage points (from 16% to 36%). This confirms the assumption that there is a considerable dropout issue in tertiary education. For instance, the share of bachelor's students who drop out within the first year of study is 15% or higher in high-income countries such as Australia, Denmark, Iceland, Slovenia and Poland. In many Latin American countries, including Brazil, Colombia and Peru, it exceeds 20% (OECD, 2025a).

MORE COMPARABLE MEASURES OF TERTIARY EDUCATION ARE NEEDED

While the gross enrolment ratio is helpful in assessing the overall capacity of an education system, it has significant comparability limitations at all levels of education, but particularly at the post-secondary level.

THE TERTIARY GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO HAS LIMITED COMPARABILITY

One of the primary challenges of the gross enrolment ratio is that it does not consider differences in programme duration, which varies widely by country, tertiary education level and field of study. Whereas in Luxembourg the nominal duration of a bachelor's programme can be as low as two years, some programmes take six years to complete in Brazil, Chile and Colombia (OECD, 2025a).

Moreover, the de facto duration of studies at the tertiary level can vary significantly depending on the prevalence of part-time studies and periods of inactivity during which students remain enrolled. Countries with longer typical programme durations or where students take longer to graduate have higher enrolment ratios, even if they are not actually providing broader access to tertiary education.

Unlike at earlier levels, students may also pursue more than one tertiary programme, which inflates the gross enrolment ratio in two ways. First, individuals who are simultaneously enrolled in different programmes, whether at the same or different institutions, may be counted more than once. Second, those who return to education after completing a first tertiary degree are also included again in the ratio, even though they do not increase the share of the population with tertiary qualifications. This is particularly relevant in high-income countries. According to OECD data, the share of bachelor's graduates who already have another tertiary degree is about 25% in Chile, Hungary, Iceland, New Zealand and the United States, and over 40% in Austria and Poland.

The assumption embedded in the gross enrolment ratio – that the main age group for tertiary education is the five years immediately following upper secondary school (usually 19 to 23 years) – is increasingly unrealistic in many countries. Tertiary education systems are more flexible than this, with opportunities for adult learners to enter and exit education throughout their lives.

Finally, the prevalence of international students at the tertiary level can inflate gross enrolment ratios for countries with high inbound mobility. In at least 40 countries, over 10% of tertiary students are international mobile students. The share reaches 20% in Canada, Switzerland and the

United Kingdom, 27% in Australia, and over 40% in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

COMPLETION RATES ARE A MORE TRANSPARENT COMPARABLE MEASURE

Tertiary education is also monitored through the SDG thematic indicator 4.4.3 of adult education attainment rates. The rate is calculated as the distribution of adults aged 25 years by level of education attained and is measured through household surveys, in most cases labour force surveys. The tertiary attainment rate avoids many of the challenges associated with the gross enrolment ratio. It reduces the impact of factors like different durations, part-time study and delayed graduation. It counts those who have attained tertiary education only once, regardless of the number of degrees. And because the measure focuses on an older age group, it is less affected by short-term fluctuations or discrepancies in tertiary systems and offers a smoother picture of the trends in access to tertiary education.

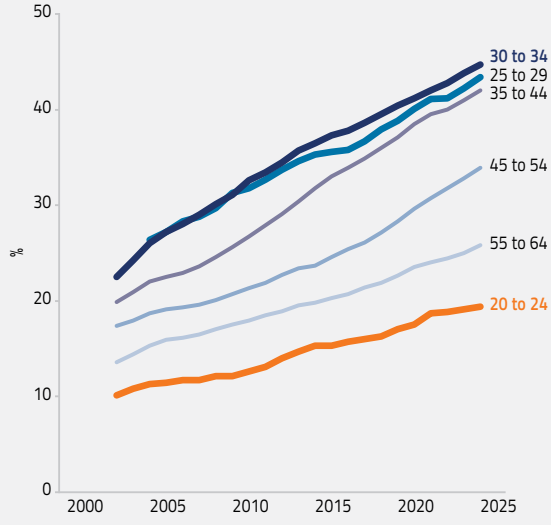
At the same time, this last advantage is also a disadvantage, as a large age group does not provide an up-to-date picture of tertiary education development. To be informative, age groups would need to be younger, capturing a time shortly after the official graduation age, in the same way as the primary and secondary education completion rates are estimated for the age groups three to five years above the official graduation age. They would also need to be smaller age groups, extending at most to 5 instead of 10 years, to be more informative about whether recent policy changes are having an impact.

The European Union monitors the attainment rate of all tertiary education degrees, from ISCED 5 level upwards, as the European Education Area includes the target that the share of 25- to 34-year-olds with a tertiary qualification should be at least 45% by 2030, after having achieved the earlier target of 40% in the previous decade when the rate increased from 32.2% in 2010 to 40.7% in 2020. Analysis of the attainment rate in the 27 member states for different age groups reveals various facts (**Figure 5.3**). First, the attainment rate is highest among 30- to 34-year-olds, as a small gap between them and 25- to 29-year-olds opened after 2010, suggesting either that slightly older adults have been attracted to tertiary education, possibly as a result of efforts to make pathways more flexible, or that young people are delaying their graduation. Second, tertiary attainment among 20- to 24-year-olds has doubled from 10% in 2002 to 19% in 2024, which probably reflects the impact of reforms to introduce three-year bachelor's programmes under the so-called Bologna process, which enable more young people to obtain certificates earlier.

According to the ISCED 2011 manual, short-cycle tertiary programmes typically last two years, while bachelor's programmes usually span three to four years. Given a typical upper secondary graduation age of 18, the 25–29 age group provides a reasonable timeframe for measuring tertiary attainment, as it allows for delays of up to nearly double the theoretical duration of most programmes. This approach is also consistent with the OECD completion rate measure, which records completion up to three years beyond the theoretical programme duration. The 30–34 age group may be considered an 'ultimate completion' window. This would mirror the 'ultimate' upper secondary completion rate indicator, which is calculated by the GEM Report and UIS over young people up to eight years above graduation age, to supplement the SDG 4 completion rate indicator, which is calculated over the age group three to eight years above graduation age.

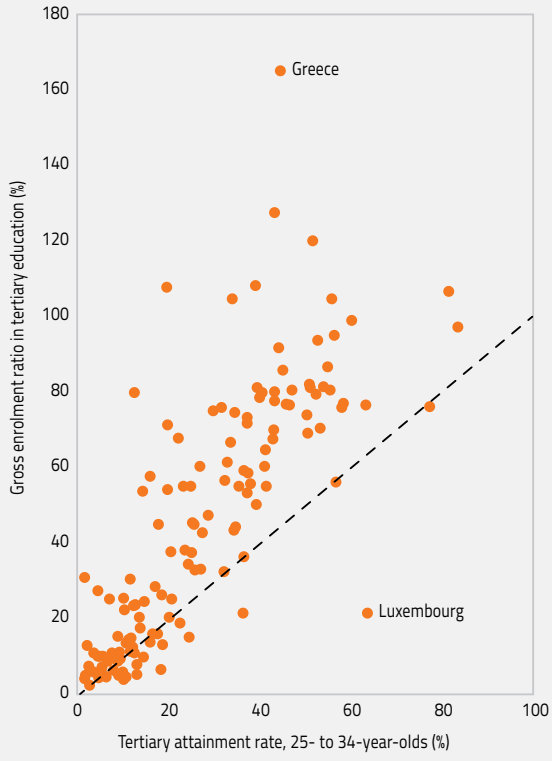
Another finding is that the tertiary attainment rate of 25- to 34-year-olds in any given year consistently represents only some 60% of the gross enrolment ratio 10 years earlier, which confirms that the gross enrolment ratio provides an inflated sense of the number of those with tertiary certificates. Comparing the tertiary attainment rate of 25- to 34-year-olds with the gross enrolment ratio for all countries with data further confirms that the ratio of attainment to enrolment is in the order of 60% (**Figure 5.4**).

FIGURE 5.3:
In the European Union, the highest level of tertiary attainment is observed among adults aged 30 to 34
Tertiary education attainment rate, by age group, European Union 27 member states, 2002–24



Note: Eurostat notes breaks in the time series in 2014 and 2021.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_3
Source: Eurostat.

FIGURE 5.4:
The gross enrolment ratio is a biased measure of tertiary attainment
Tertiary attainment rate for 25- to 34-year-olds and the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education

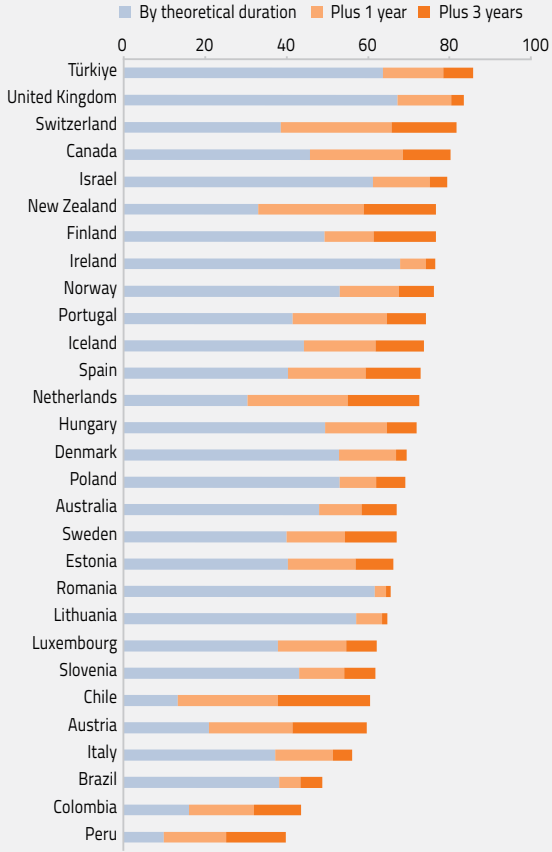


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_4
Source: Gross enrolment ratio: UIS. Tertiary attainment rates: ILO.

Two outlier countries offer insights into the difficulties of comparisons, because of different factors. In Luxembourg, attainment rates greatly exceed enrolment rates. While this partly reflects the short duration of programmes as described above, the main reason is that many tertiary-educated individuals obtain their degrees abroad. In 2023, 78% of national tertiary students from Luxembourg were enrolled abroad and would therefore not count towards the gross enrolment ratio (OECD, 2025b). In Greece, the opposite is observed because, while many students are inactive, they remain enrolled, referred to as 'perpetual' students (OECD, 2018; Prokou et al., 2025). All students are enrolled in public institutions, which are tuition free for first-degree programmes and not subject to expulsion (OECD, 2025c; Zachariadi, 2024). A law introduced in 2025 has put an end to this situation, removing 280,000 people from student registries and granting another 35,000 a final extension, accounting for 45% out of a prior population of 704,000 students (ProtoThema, 2025).

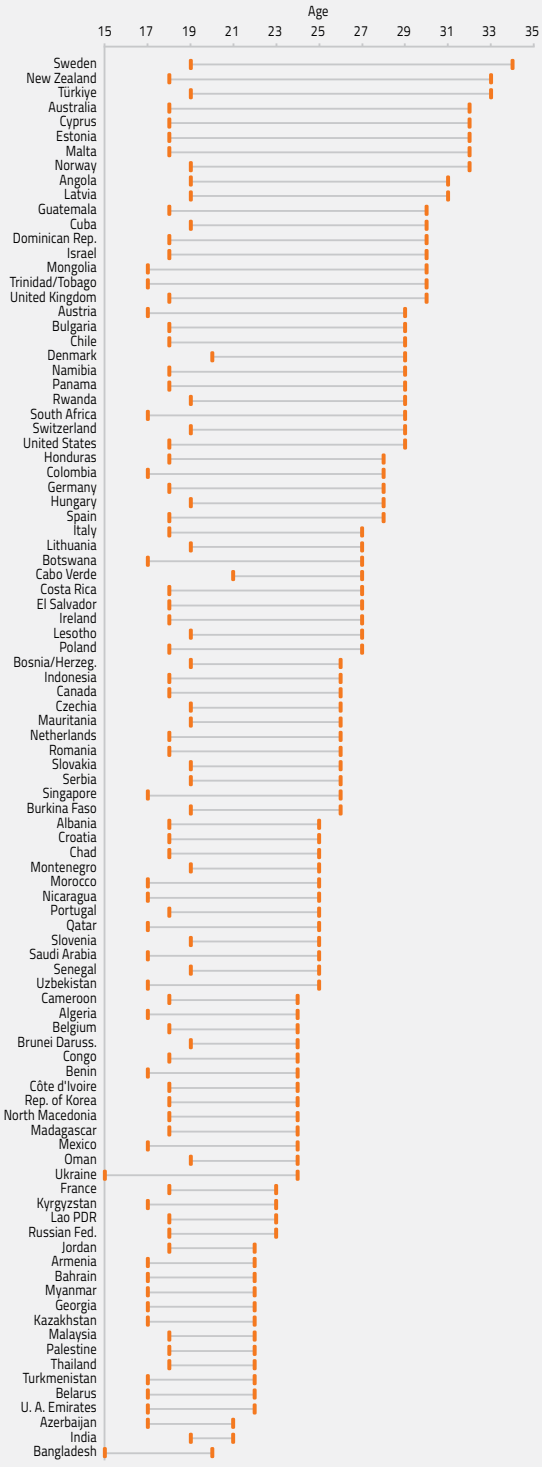
Measuring the precise rate at which students who enter tertiary education complete their studies and the time it takes them to do so requires individualized data. National information systems need to be able to track students throughout their studies, either through individual student records or regular longitudinal surveys. Such data already exist for many upper-middle-income and high-income countries. Results show substantial variation between countries in the share of students who entered and completed a course by a specific time. For example, within three years of the official graduation time, more than 80% of students have finished their course in Canada, Switzerland, Türkiye and the United Kingdom but less than 50% in Brazil, Colombia and Peru. Among those who had finished, just 22% did so on time in Chile but 94% in Romania. On-time completion ranges from 13% in Chile to more than 65% in Ireland and the United Kingdom (**Figure 5.5**).

FIGURE 5.5:
Students graduate tertiary education with significant delays
Completion rates of new entrants into bachelor's (or equivalent) programme, by time frame, 2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_5
Source: OECD (2025a).

FIGURE 5.6:
Tertiary student age distributions vary widely between countries
Shortest age group encompassing 75% of students enrolled in tertiary education, 2024 or latest year



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_6
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

This type of detailed data makes it possible to analyse students' progression over time and to determine, for example, whether those who have not graduated are still enrolled or have dropped out. It may also be possible to examine how often students who enter a given tertiary level (in this case, a bachelor's or equivalent programme) transfer and graduate by field or level of study. However, this kind of detailed student-level data is unlikely to be feasible on a global scale.

THE AGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS REVEALS PARTICIPATION PROFILES

The main limitation of using the attainment rate as the focal monitoring indicator in tertiary education is that it captures development only through the lens of completion. Complementing attainment data with alternative enrolment analysis, notably the age distribution of students, can provide additional insight into students' trajectories between entry and graduation.

> Complementing attainment data with alternative enrolment analysis, notably the age distribution of students, can provide additional insight into students' trajectories between entry and graduation

Analysis of the age distribution of enrolled students reveals a wide variety of profiles between countries (**Figure 5.6**). A share of 75% of students is between 18 and 22 years in Malaysia but, for the reasons mentioned above, between 18 and 35 years in Greece. A broader age distribution may reflect a more flexible system that accommodates part-time students and older learners, or it may signal inefficiencies if students remain enrolled much longer than expected. Conversely, a narrower age distribution typically indicates a system focused on full-time, shorter programmes that primarily serve recent upper secondary graduates.

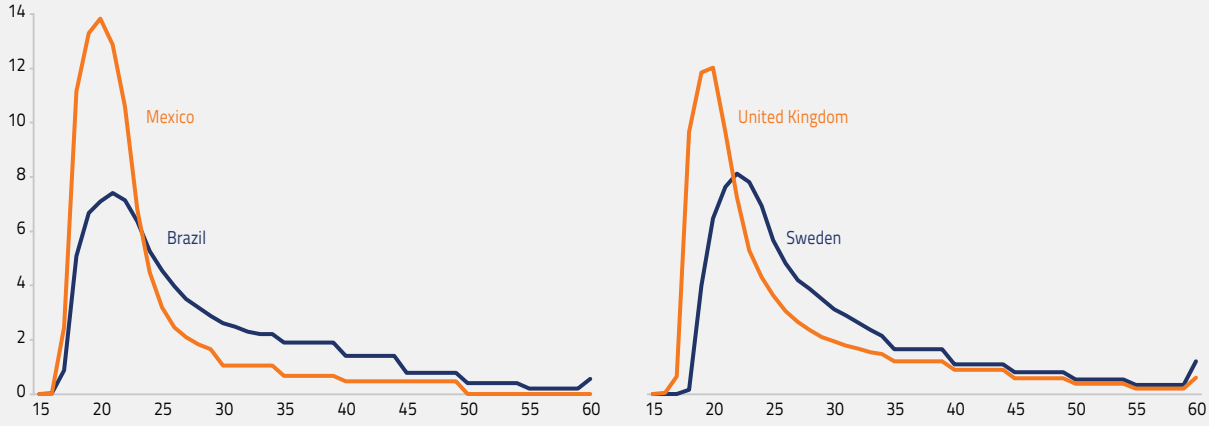
Comparing the age distribution of tertiary students between countries helps place other measures of participation in context (**Figure 5.7**). For example, Brazil has a higher gross enrolment ratio (60%) than Mexico (46%) but tertiary attainment among 25- to 34-year-olds is higher in Mexico (29%) than Brazil (27%). This apparent contradiction is largely explained by differences in student profiles. In Brazil, 50% of tertiary students pursue distance education programmes and another 28% attend evening classes, both of which are modalities geared towards older adults, who already work,

have other responsibilities and prefer to study with more flexibility (Instituto Semesp, 2025; Palhares and Santos, 2025). Only 38% of tertiary students in Brazil graduate within the nominal duration of their programmes (OECD, 2025a). In Mexico, the system is still mostly designed for full-time students leaving upper secondary education. The share of students in 'non-school-based' programmes, which include distance, virtual, open and hybrid education modes, more than doubled over the past decade, but still only made up 20% of tertiary students in 2023 (Mexico Ministry of Public Education, 2023).

A wider age distribution may also reflect different entry points into tertiary education. In Sweden, there is a strong emphasis on lifelong learning. About half of tertiary students are adults returning to study part-time, the highest share among high-income countries (OECD, 2025a). The United Kingdom has a considerably narrower age distribution, but very similar tertiary attainment rates (around 55% among 25- to 34-year-olds) and gross enrolment ratios (around 81%).

Comparing the age distribution of different types of tertiary programmes further highlights their different roles and how they cater to different groups across countries (**Figure 5.8**). Short-cycle vocational programmes in Australia and New Zealand attract adults across the life course. In Australia, for example, vocational qualifications are predominantly offered as post-school options, rather than being embedded in the standard school system (OECD, 2022). These programmes provide short, practical, industry-focused training that enables adults to upskill, reskill or change careers (Australian Trade and Investment Commission, 2025). In contrast, in France and Israel, short-cycle vocational programmes have a narrower and younger age distribution than bachelor's programmes. This suggests that such programmes are primarily oriented toward students seeking practical qualifications when transitioning directly from upper secondary education.

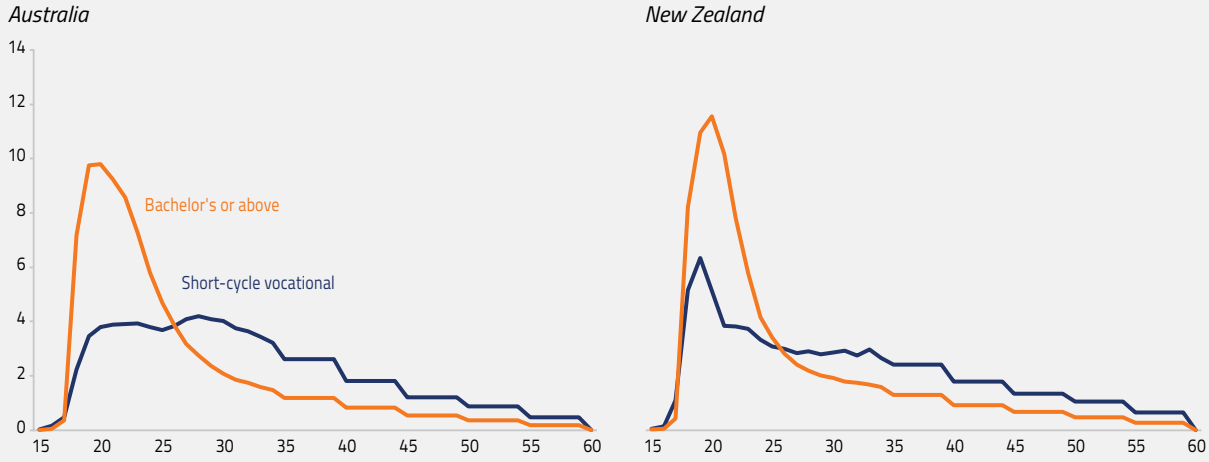
FIGURE 5.7:
Even countries in the same region may have vastly different student age profiles
Single-year age distribution of students enrolled in tertiary education, selected countries, 2023



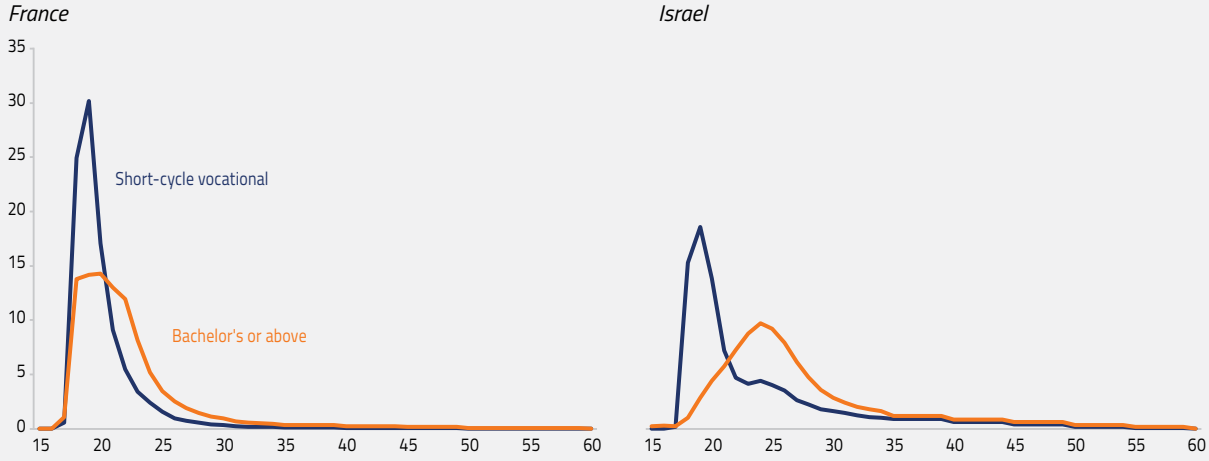
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_7
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

FIGURE 5.8:
Age profiles highlight differences in short-cycle programmes across countries
Single-year age distribution of students enrolled in tertiary education, by level, selected countries, 2023

a. Short-cycle (vocational) programmes have wider age distribution than bachelor's programmes



b. Short-cycle (vocational) programmes have narrower age distribution than bachelor's programmes



Note: Countries shown have at least 10% of tertiary students in short-cycle vocational programmes. Students in bachelor's or above are calculated by subtracting students in short-cycle vocational programmes from total tertiary enrolment.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_8
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

CONCLUSION

Enrolment ratios have grown faster in higher education than in other levels of education. But while countries have reached a broad consensus on achieving universal completion of primary and secondary education, setting an international target for tertiary education is far more challenging. National targets linked to policy priorities are important. In 2024, Brazil's Ministry of Education submitted a new 10-year National Education Plan to Congress, proposing to increase tertiary attainment among 25- to 34-year-olds from 27% in 2024 to 40% by 2034 (Brazil Ministry of Education, 2024). In India, the National Education Policy 2020 set a target to raise the gross enrolment ratio in higher education from around 24% in 2024 to 50% by 2035 (India Ministry of Education, 2020). More than at any other level of education, it would be necessary to base any future global target on an aggregation of national targets.

The international community can agree on whether those who wish to pursue higher education can do so (access) and whether they are able to successfully complete their studies (attainment). This would be more in line with the phrasing of the SDG targets, which call for universal *completion* of primary and secondary education (4.1), but only for equal *access* to quality tertiary education (4.3).

Complementary insights can be gained through policy indicators that capture the incentives and structures influencing completion, for example, whether the financing of tertiary institutions or the financial support provided to students, such as through loans or grants, is linked in any way to completion rates or the duration of studies. Such policy-based measures can offer a valuable proxy for understanding how national systems encourage timely completion.

> "Developing and refining monitoring frameworks that capture the full diversity of tertiary participation is essential"

Finally, as participation in distance and online learning grows and tertiary pathways become more flexible (e.g., recognition of prior learning, micro-credentials), monitoring of tertiary education must evolve accordingly. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, significant shares of tertiary students were enrolled in open and distance education, reaching over 15% in some of the world's largest systems including Australia, Brazil, China, India, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Türkiye and the United States (Qayyum and Zawacki-Richter, 2019). These numbers have likely surged after the pandemic. The lack of globally comparable data on different modes of study obscures important differences in access, progression and outcomes. Developing and refining monitoring frameworks that capture the full diversity of tertiary participation is therefore essential.



Case studies



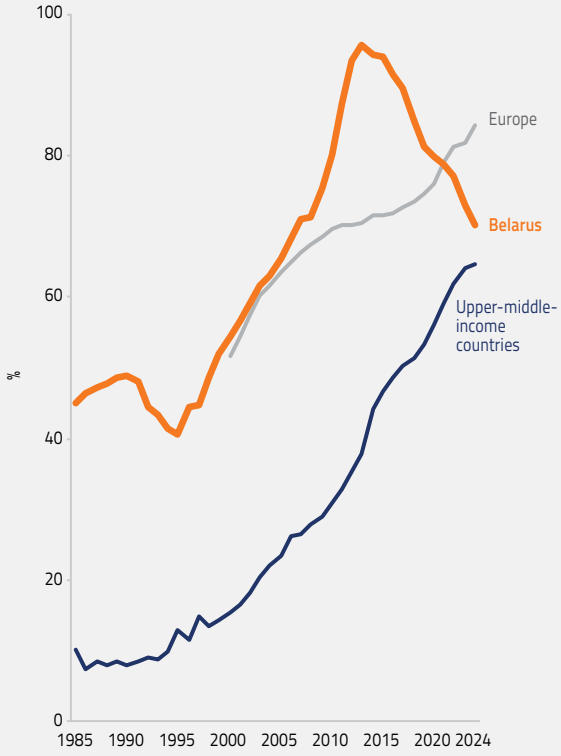
Belarus: CHANGING PERCEPTIONS AFFECTING THE PATH OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Belarus saw a rapid expansion in tertiary education participation in the 1990s and 2000s, although it started from a much higher starting point than other upper-middle-income countries, with tertiary participation levels closer to that of other European countries. Gross enrolment ratios in tertiary education in Belarus rose from 48% in 1991 to 96% in 2013, with a slight contraction immediately following its independence in 1991. In comparison, the average across upper-middle-income countries rose steadily from 9% to 38% in the same period. This period of expansion in tertiary enrolment translated into a rise in tertiary attainment among young adults (aged 25 to 34), from around 30% in 2009 to 41% in 2018. Thereafter, growth in attainment slowed markedly, reaching only 43% by 2024 (ILO, 2025). While both upper-middle-income and European countries have continued to expand participation in tertiary education, Belarus has been experiencing a marked contraction since the mid-2010s. The country's current tertiary enrolment ratio (70% in 2024) fell by 25 percentage points over the past decade and is converging towards the average – 65% – of other upper-middle income economies (**Figure 1**).

This recent period has also been marked by a large absolute decline in the country's tertiary population. According to data from the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus, the number of students in Bachelor's (ISCED 6) programmes dropped from 261,000 in 2019 to 207,000 in 2024, or by 21% in just five years. This is partly explained by a demographic transition. Low fertility rates and net emigration trends have meant that the youth population aged 15 to 24 has nearly halved in 40 years, from 1.66 million in 1983 to 0.89 million in 2023.

A parallel development worth noting, which is indirectly linked to the expansion and contraction of the national tertiary education system, is the trend in the number of outbound internationally mobile tertiary students from Belarus studying abroad. From a modest and constant 7,000 students in the early 2000s, their number began to increase by more than five times between 2003 and 2011, reaching 41,000. It then fell by 46% to 22,000 by 2017, a level which it has more or less maintained. However, in relative terms, given the decline in the number of domestic students, the outbound mobility ratio has been increasing since 2017, reaching a historic high of 9% in 2023.

FIGURE 1:
After rising in the transition years, participation in tertiary education has fallen in the past decade in Belarus
Tertiary education gross enrolment ratio, Belarus, Europe and upper-middle-income countries 1985–2024



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Belarus_fig1
Source: UIS database.

Belarus's tertiary education system was deeply shaped by the country's Soviet legacy. Between 1919 and 1991, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic created 33 tertiary education institutions. These institutions primarily offered professional training to meet the needs of a planned economy and reproduce the ideological elite (Gille-Belova and Titarenko, 2018). By expanding the number of free study places and removing barriers to participation, the Soviet system succeeded in significantly increasing tertiary enrolment, including among previously underrepresented groups, such as women.

Upon independence, a new Law on Education in 1991 authorized the creation of private institutions, the introduction of new programmes and curricula and the

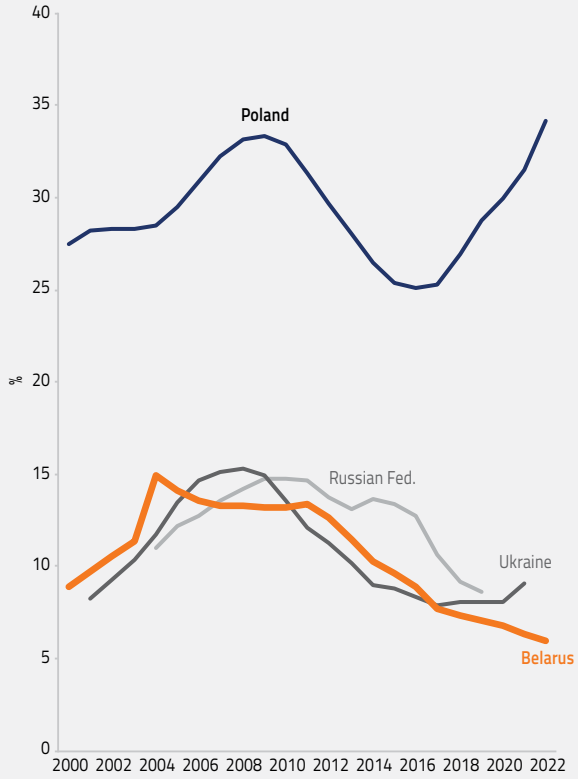
introduction of tuition fees in public institutions. The law began steering Belarus toward a more European-style system (Gille-Belova and Titarenko, 2018). However, this transition was never fully realized, and Belarus's tertiary education system has kept many of its Soviet features, notably including a small core of prestigious and highly selective public universities; limited institutional autonomy, even within the private sector; and a compulsory two-year work placement for students who attend public tertiary education for free, once they graduate. These structural legacies have shaped participation in tertiary education in the post-Soviet period.

The adoption of the 1991 Law on Education triggered unprecedented expansion. By authorizing the creation of private institutions and new programmes, the law substantially increased the supply of tertiary education opportunities. Demand also rose, fuelled by expectations that Belarus would transition toward a more market-based economy and that new professions and sectors would emerge (Gille-Belova and Titarenko, 2018). These factors help explain the rapid rise in enrolment during the 1990s and 2000s.

As elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, the private tertiary sector expanded quickly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Gille-Belova and Titarenko, 2018; Smolentseva, Huisman and Froumin, 2018; UNESCO, 2022). The first private university in Belarus opened in 1994 and by 1996/97 the country counted around 20 private institutions, roughly one third of all tertiary institutions at the time. These institutions offered programmes in new and highly demanded fields such as management, economics, law and the humanities. Admission was generally non-selective and tuition fees relatively low, enabling strong absolute and relative growth in enrolment. However, after peaking in 2004, the share of students enrolled in private institutions fell from 15% to 6% in 2022 (**Figure 2**). Similar patterns have been observed in the Russian Federation and Ukraine, while Poland's private sector continues to expand.

Two factors help explain the contraction of the private tertiary sector in Belarus. First, the economic expectations of the 1990s did not materialize for the most part. A mismatch emerged between tertiary provision and labour market demand: 33% of Belarusian tertiary graduates were employed in jobs requiring lower qualifications, and higher education did not consistently lead to higher earnings (Dounaev, 2018; World Bank, 2020). This eroded the perceived returns to tertiary education and weakened demand for programmes in new fields.

FIGURE 2:
The private tertiary education sector has shrunk in Belarus
Percentage of enrolment in tertiary education in private institutions, Belarus and selected Eastern European countries, 2000–22



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Belarus_fig2
Source: UIS database.

Second, the government introduced stricter quality assurance requirements for institutions seeking initial or renewed accreditation (Gille-Belova and Titarenko, 2018). Many private institutions, explicitly the main targets of these reforms, failed to meet the new standards and were closed.

These changes were part of a broader effort to reassert state control over tertiary education institutions, for example over key appointments (Gille-Belova and Titarenko, 2018). State control has also increasingly extended to students. One of the clearest examples is the reinstatement of mandatory post-graduation work placements. Introduced in 2000 for students whose places were state-funded, this policy requires graduates to accept state-assigned jobs for two years (and up to five for some vocational programmes in critical skills), often in locations they do not choose. Authorities have also intensified

monitoring of graduates seeking to avoid placements and signalled plans to expand the list of programmes subject to mandatory employment (Belarus Government, 2023; Science at Risk, 2024). There has been some discussion that mandatory placements may be extended to fee-paying students (Razumov, 2023).

In a separate development, after having been conditionally admitted in 2015, Belarus was in 2022 suspended from the Bologna Process, a series of ministerial meetings and agreements between European countries to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications. The suspension had significant repercussions for the sector, including the loss of degree recognition within the European Higher Education Area, reduced student and staff mobility, and restricted access to external funding for education and research projects. As a result, tertiary institutions have increased tuition fees (Science at Risk, 2024). These developments have affected the incentives and opportunities for Belarusians to pursue tertiary education and also explain why the tertiary gross enrolment ratio declined even more sharply after 2020 in Belarus.

Chile: MARKET-DRIVEN EXPANSION AND THE CHALLENGE OF EQUITY

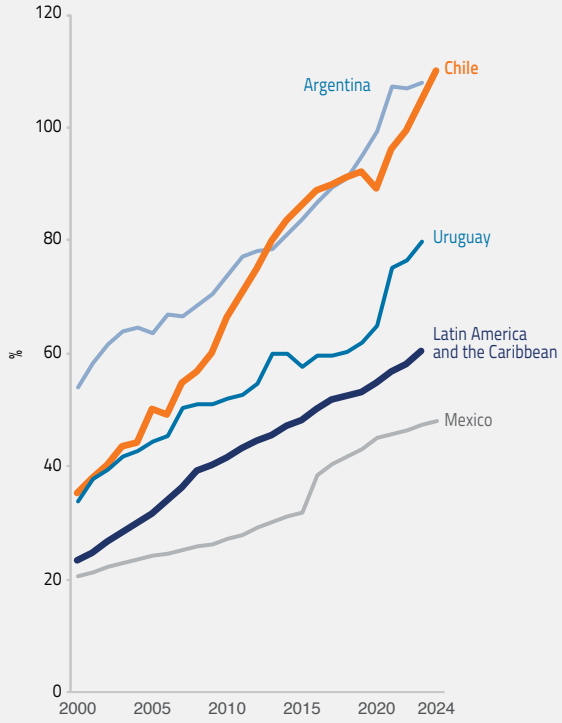
Latin America and the Caribbean have been at the forefront of higher education expansion, with enrolment rising from 4 million students in 1970 to 31 million in 2024. Chile represents one of the most striking cases of this transformation, with the gross enrolment ratio rising from 35% in 2000 to 110% in 2024, alongside Argentina, which also passed the 100% mark in 2021. The gross enrolment ratio in Chile has been growing at 3.1 percentage points per year, or twice the rate of the Latin America and the Caribbean region, whose average increased from 23% in 2000 to 61% in 2023 (**Figure 1**).

However, enrolment does not always translate into graduation and attainment of a tertiary qualification. In Chile, the dropout rate for first-year undergraduate students is 14%. Only 13% of new students complete their undergraduate degree within the programme's expected duration. Some 38% graduate one year late and 60% graduate within three years after the expected timeframe (OECD, 2025). Nevertheless, the gains in tertiary enrolment are eventually reflected in progress in attainment: in 2023, around 34% of 25- to 34-year-olds had completed a degree compared to 14% of 55- to 64-year-olds (ILO, 2025).

Unlike the more common regional model of state-led, tuition-free public universities, as in Argentina, Chile's expansion has been driven largely by market-oriented reforms, including selective admissions, institutional diversification and large-scale student loans (García de Fanelli and Adrogué, 2019). Following the reforms introduced in the 1980s, the Chilean higher education system diversified rapidly (Brunner, 2015). In 2015, there were 16 state universities and 9 private universities belonging to the Council of Chilean Universities (Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas, CRUCH), 35 independent private universities, 43 professional institutes (IP) and 54 technical training centres (CFT) (García De Fanelli and Adrogué, 2019).

Admission practices differ sharply across Chilean institutions. Professional institutes and technical training centres generally offer open or less selective entry, allowing large numbers of students to access post-secondary education. In contrast, universities belonging to the CRUCH and a small number of private universities operate a centralized and highly selective admission system based on the national standardized test (Prueba de Admisión a la Educación Superior, PAES) and secondary school performance (García de Fanelli and Adrogué, 2019).

FIGURE 1:
Chile has expanded tertiary education participation at twice the pace of the rest of Latin America
Tertiary gross enrolment ratio, Chile and selected Latin American countries, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Chile_fig1
Source: UIS database.

This dual structure has allowed Chile to expand access rapidly – with nearly 1.4 million students enrolled in higher education institutions in 2024 – while preserving strong selectivity in elite universities. However, it has also contributed to institutional stratification. Students from more affluent families are disproportionately represented in selective universities, while students from lower-income backgrounds and first-generation backgrounds are more likely to enrol in less selective institutions and non-university institutions, including technical programmes (Chile Ministry of Education, 2024; Quaresma et al., 2022; Villalobos et al., 2025).

In Chile, tuition fees became universal, yet public funding to institutions, particularly those in the CRUCH network remained significant, consisting of a combination of institutional subsidies and student-based funding. In 2015,

the government allocated CLP 363 billion (USD 545 million) in direct transfers to institutions, of which 63% was delivered as base funding, almost entirely through the Direct Fiscal Contribution (Aporte Fiscal Directo, AFD), and the remainder through competitive funds. The AFD continues to structure the system, despite the historical inequities in its distribution noted by reviews by international organizations (OECD, 2017). The result is a hybrid model: strong, enduring subsidies to institutions complemented by a substantial expansion of scholarships and loans for students.

The State-Guaranteed Student Loan (Crédito con Aval del Estado, CAE), launched in 2006, became a cornerstone of Chile's massification. It provided low- and middle-income students with bank loans backed by state guarantees, conditional on minimum academic performance. CAE enabled rapid expansion, from 663,000 students in 2005 to over 1.2 million by 2015. However, this expansion came at the cost of deep privatization and growing student debt.

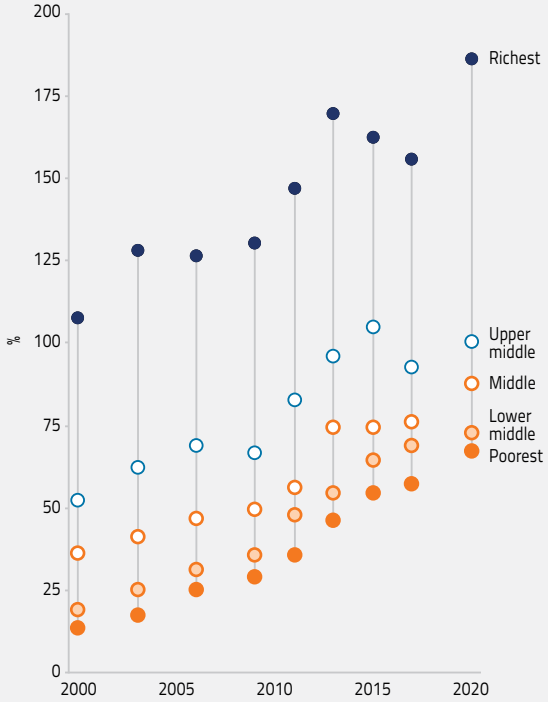
By 2015, scholarships and loans absorbed over 70% of public higher education spending. Total public expenditure rose from 0.93% to 1.38% of GDP between 2010 and 2016, with overall public and private spending combined reaching 2.5% of GDP, among the region's highest (García de Fanelli and Adrogué, 2019). Private universities, which enrolled two thirds of CAE beneficiaries, used the influx of funds to expand enrolment and raise tuition, while lowering academic standards to avoid dropouts (Villalobos et al., 2025). In response, the Tuition-Free Programme (Gratuidad) was introduced in 2016, covering students from the lowest 60% of households enrolled in accredited institutions. By 2023, 53% of institutions of higher education participated in the Gratuidad programme, and 38% of total enrolment benefited from the policy (Zamorano Figueroa and Santori, 2025).

In 2025, a new financial mechanism was proposed in Congress, the Public Fund for Higher Education (Fondo de Educación Superior, FES), which would have replaced the CAE student loan scheme and enabled students to repay loans only once employed, based on their income (Chile Ministry of Education, 2025). Together with the Tuition-Free Programme, these programmes would have reoriented Chile's market system towards redistributive equity, replacing debt with direct public financing for eligible students. However, the newly elected administration has withdrawn support for the FES proposal. While the bill remains under discussion in Congress, the government will instead prioritize the recovery of unpaid CAE debt, which has reached significant levels (Cooperativa, 2026).

The expansion of higher education in Chile raises important questions not only about who accesses but also who benefits from expansion and who ultimately completes their studies. Chile has substantially expanded tertiary access for young people from all levels of income. In 2000, just 13% of young people from the poorest 20% of households attended higher education. The rate increased by 2 percentage points per year until 2011, when it reached 36%. But the progress accelerated at a rate of 3.5 percentage points per year between 2011 and 2020, while 67% of the poorest youth attended higher education, a remarkable achievement (**Figure 2**).

This progress should also be assessed in light of two other developments. First, while the gap between the bottom (poorest) and the three middle quintiles was reduced, all four quintiles saw the gap increase relative to the top (richest) quintile, whose attendance increased faster than all the other quintiles in both periods. Second, as described above, the gaps are not only quantitative but also qualitative due to the stratification of the higher education system.

FIGURE 2:
In Chile, the poorest youth reduced the gap in higher education participation, especially after 2010
Tertiary education gross attendance rate, by income quintile, Chile, 2000–20



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Chile_fig2
Source: UIS database.

Nevertheless, it is clear that a push to make higher education more equitable took place in the 2010s. The Gratuidad programme replaced student loans with direct public funding, reducing debt and signalling a shift towards higher education as a social right (Contreras and Zenteno, 2023). At the same time, Chile's quality assurance reforms tightened regulation. The National Accreditation Commission expanded oversight, making accreditation a prerequisite for public aid. This process, though still incomplete, reduced predatory behaviour by low-quality private institutions and protected vulnerable students. By 2016, accredited programmes had grown from 374 to 1,352 (Espinoza, 2017) and, as of 2024, 97% of students were in an accredited programme (Chile Ministry of Education, 2024). Moreover, non-university higher education, such as the technical training centres, has played a crucial role in recent enrolment growth (e.g. a 31% increase between 2022 and 2023), a consequence of policy-driven expansion of affordable technical education (Chile Ministry of Education, 2024).

Equity also advanced through state re-engagement. In 2015, Chile created two new public universities in underserved regions, the University of Aysén and the University of O'Higgins. The government also launched the Programme for Accompaniment and Effective Access to Higher Education (PACE), which offers academic and social and emotional support for students from disadvantaged schools to encourage them to continue their studies in higher education. Finally, the 2018 Higher Education Law consolidated these efforts. It banned profit-making, established the Superintendency of Higher Education, and introduced mandatory accreditation within a unified quality framework.

Privatization, selective admissions and tuition-based financing rapidly increased tertiary enrolment and attainment. Yet this growth came with pronounced stratification and modest system efficiency, as only a small share of students complete their degrees on time and many drop out, despite a highly regulated and credential-oriented system. Recent reforms, focused on free higher education, counselling and quality assurance, have mitigated financial barriers and protected vulnerable students, but have not fully resolved issues of inequality in institutional quality and outcomes.

China: UNMATCHED EXPANSION

In 1974, the tertiary gross enrolment ratio in China was 0.3%. It took 25 years to reach 7% in 1999 and another 25 years to reach 77% in 2024. China exceeded the average of low-income countries in 1995, of lower-middle-income countries in 2003 and of upper-middle-income countries in 2015. At the current rate of expansion, it will exceed the high-income country average in 2028 (**Figure 1**). The share of young people under 24 who held a tertiary qualification increased from 6% in 2000 to 41% in 2020 (ILO, 2025). Most enrolled students complete their degrees without significant delays, which is remarkable considering that the pace of expansion has included students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In 2024, the gross graduation ratio was 38% in upper-middle-income countries and 45% in high-income countries, while in China it was 53%.

China's education expansion began with the 1998 Action Plan for Education Revitalisation in the 21st Century, which framed higher education as a tool to serve the national economic strategy, providing skilled personnel to sustain growth and boost domestic consumption in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis (Xu, 2021). The Ministry of Education announced an increase in university places by 47% in 1999, followed by further increases by 38% in 2000 and 22% in 2001 respectively (Huang et al., 2022). The opening of more places was supported by an increase in higher education programmes and institutions, helping kickstart the growth in participation.

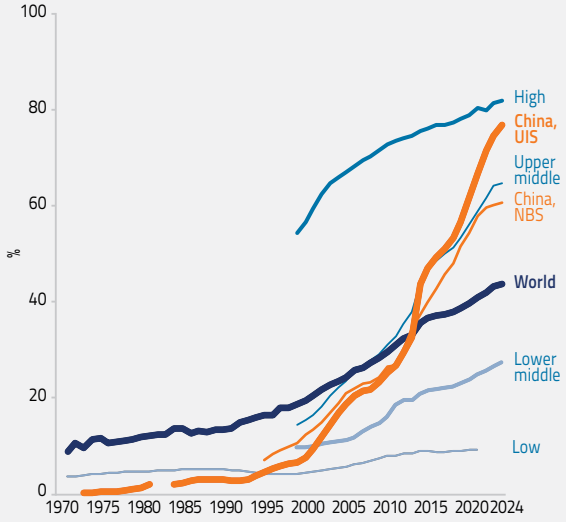
National data confirm a rapid acceleration from 1998 onwards. The percentage of upper secondary school graduates who transitioned into tertiary education increased dramatically. The official transition rate, i.e. the share of 'regular' senior secondary school graduates who enrolled in higher education institutions the following academic year, increased rapidly from 27% in 1990 to 50% in 1995 and 84% by 2002. The Ministry of Education stopped reporting this rate in 2016, as graduates of vocational secondary schools had in the meantime also been able to enrol in higher education institutions. Defined over both regular and vocational secondary school graduates, the transition rate doubled from 45% in 2009 to 88% in 2022 (**Figure 2a**). The expansion of the transition rate followed the rapid increase in the percentage of youth completing upper secondary school by 2.5 percentage points per year between 2000 and 2024.

Enrolment in higher education grew from 3.9 million in 1990 to 7.4 million in 2000, 31 million in 2010 and 61 million in 2024. In recent years, about 43% of total enrolment is from short-cycle tertiary (ISCED 5), 51% from bachelor's programmes (ISCED 6) and the remaining 6% from postgraduate programmes (ISCED 7–8) (**Figure 2b**). Total enrolment increased in double-digit rates for much of the 1980s (albeit from a very low base), in 1994–1995, in 2000–2006 and in 2014, while the growth in the number of graduates tended to happen a few years later (**Figure 2c**).

Massification did not mean uniformity; rather, there was a deliberate strategy to expand through diversification and stratification. In 2023, enrolment was shared between regular undergraduate (34%), vocational (29%), adult (17%), web-based (13%) and postgraduate programmes (7%).

China's tuition policy for public universities was introduced in 1989 and implemented nationwide in 1997. Two developments have since characterized higher education funding. First, the central government reduced its share of public spending on higher education from 60% in 1998 to 34% in 2006 (**Figure 3a**). Second, the share of government as a source of higher education funding fell from 70% in 1995 to 45% in 2005, largely replaced by fees. Regulatory caps later slowed fee increases and the share of government funding increased back to 68% by 2015 (**Figure 3b**).

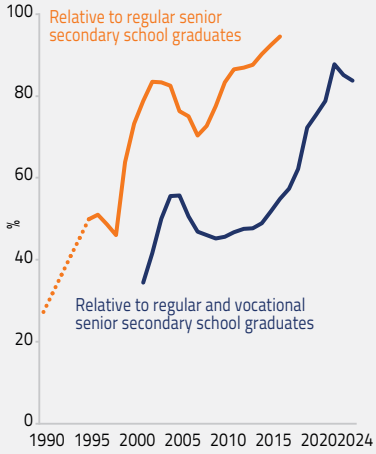
FIGURE 1:
China's tertiary expansion is unprecedented
Tertiary gross enrolment ratio, China and country income group averages, 1970–2024



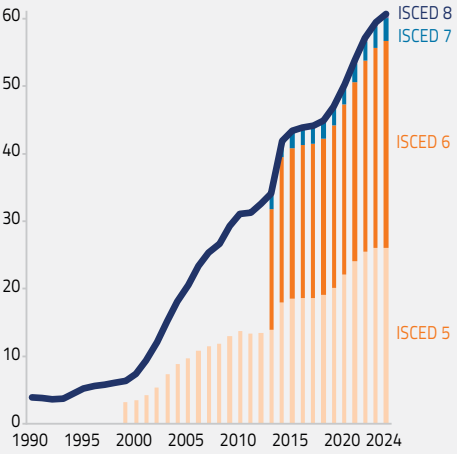
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_China_fig1
Sources: UIS database and China National Bureau of Statistics (2025).

FIGURE 2:
Enrolment growth in undergraduate and vocational institutions is rapid
Selected measures of enrolment in higher education, China, 1990–2024

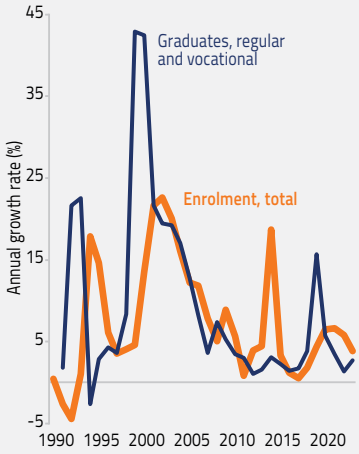
a. Transition rate from upper secondary to tertiary education



b. Enrolment in higher education institutions, by level



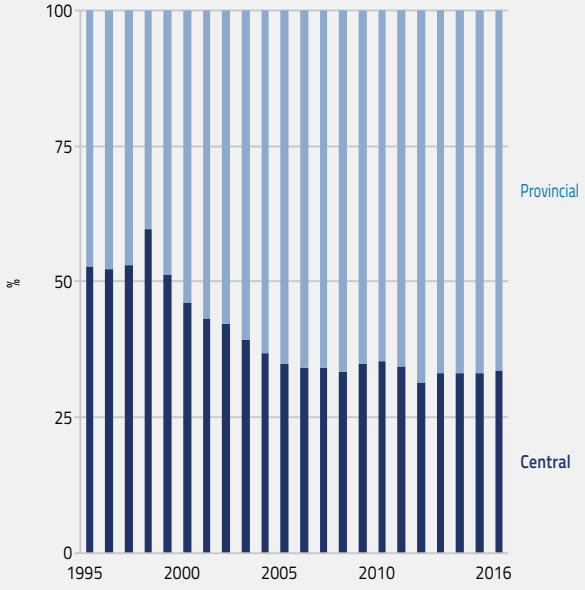
c. Enrolment growth rate in higher education institutions



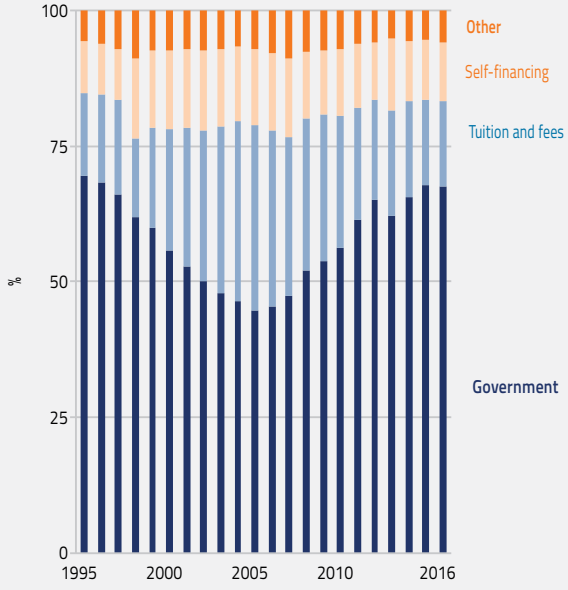
Note: ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education; 5 = short cycle; 6 = bachelor's; 7 = master's; 8 = PhD.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_China_fig2
Source: China Statistical Yearbook.

FIGURE 3:
In China, the structure of higher education financing was affected by the expansion
Distribution of higher education financing, China, 1995–2016

a. By level of government



b. By source



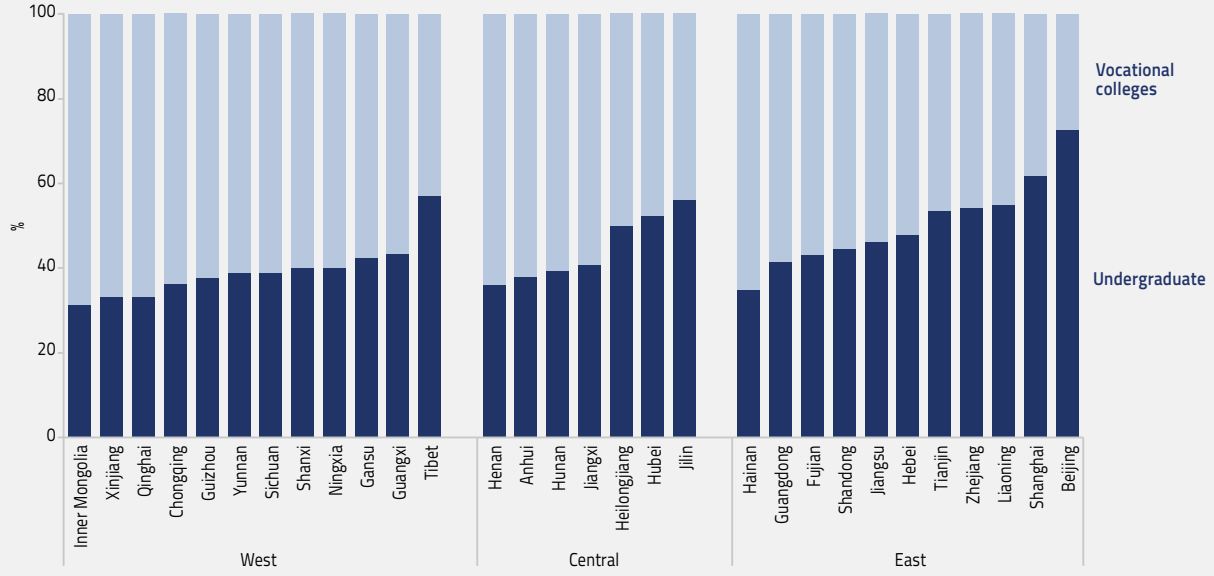
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_China_fig3
Source: Liu at al. (2020).

The central government has concentrated its spending on a small group of top-tier universities whose enrolment initially grew very slowly from 1.4 to 1.6 million between 1997 and 2005. Its key excellence initiatives included Project 211 in 1995 (115 universities) and Project 985 in 1999 (39 universities) (Yang, 2023). In 2015, the Double First-Class University Plan was established. Initially, it included 42 universities and 465 disciplines spread across 140 universities in 31 provinces, and expanded to 150 universities in 2022 (China Education Daily, 2024). After 2016, these universities trained more than 50% of master's degree holders in the country, 80% of doctoral degree holders, and 90% of degree holders in the fields prioritized by the plan (Zha, 2020). Between 2012 and 2021, the number of universities under the Ministry of Education's direct supervision was consolidated, but the funding for higher education, primarily directed to these universities, doubled from USD 92 to USD 179 billion (Fedasiuk et al., 2022).

The expansion was achieved by shifting responsibility to subnational governments. Provincial authorities were granted autonomy to establish institutions and enrolment expanded from 1.8 million to nearly 12 million between 1997 and 2005 (Zha, 2020). As of 2020, out of 827 public undergraduate universities, 14% were run by central authorities and 86% by provincial authorities; of the latter, 90% were run by provincial ministries of education and the rest by other departments. Vocational education at the provincial level absorbed much of the growth (Yu et al., 2024). There are 1,128 public vocational institutions, of which 25% are run by provincial departments of education and 28% by other provincial government departments. In 2014, more than 600 four-year institutions were converted into vocational colleges (Han et al., 2023). As of now, there are 102 four-year vocational colleges.

Centrally administered universities and more generally academically oriented institutions offering undergraduate degrees are concentrated in Beijing and Shanghai and are relatively more common in the eastern provinces. By contrast, the western provinces expanded relatively more through vocational institutions (**Figure 4**). Just as the central government has been redirecting resources through targeted programmes, including the Central and Western Higher Education Revitalization Plan from the eastern provinces to the central and western provinces (e.g. about half of central funding for provincial universities went to these provinces in 2024), recent growth has been concentrated mainly in vocational institutions. For example, the Ministry of Education approved 47 new universities and colleges in 2025, of which 29, or 62%, are located in the central and western regions, most of them vocational colleges (Alimire and Li, 2025).

FIGURE 4:
Vocational colleges are relatively more common in the western than in the eastern provinces of China
Distribution of higher education institutions, by province and type, 2022



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_China_fig4
Source: China Ministry of Education (2022a).

Non-state provision also expanded rapidly, including *minban* (people-run) institutions, transnational providers and independent colleges affiliated with public universities (Mok, 2021). The 2003 Law for Promoting Minban Education, enacted in 2003, allowed providers to make a profit from running schools (Liu, 2012). The share of non-state higher education institutions increased from 4% in 2007 to 32% in 2021 (Liu et al., 2024). The development of private higher education is overseen in accordance with rules and laws. In recent years, independent colleges have been required either to become fully private or to merge with vocational institutions. As a result, their number fell from 292 in 2013 to 164 by 2022.

A comparison of the results of the 2000 and 2010 population censuses showed that the share of adults with a post-secondary degree increased from below 1% to 4% in rural areas and from 15% to 30% in urban areas (Shen and Zhou, 2024). Yet the urban–rural gap has remained high, especially if quality differences between universities are considered. Analysis using the 2015 Chinese General Social Survey shows that among students who enrolled after the expansion, born between 1981 and 1997, students from urban areas were 2.3 times more likely to get into a better university compared to their peers in rural areas (Wu et al., 2020).

The education, finance and other authorities have developed policies to support students with financial difficulties ever since 1987 (Zhang, 2001). Currently, the student aid system comprises 28 national programmes (China Ministry of Education, 2022c), which have been shown to increase students' time for study and performance (Qi et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2024). Grants reached 7.8 million students in 2018 (Williams and Usher, 2022), as the amount of annual funding doubled in the 2010s (China Ministry of Education, 2022c). By 2023, student assistance programmes distributed CNY 185 billion (USD 27 billion), half of which (CNY 93 billion) was provided by the central and provincial governments, and the rest by banks, universities and social organizations (China National Center for Student Financial Aid, 2024). However, average grant values had fallen (HESA, 2022). An analysis of data from a 2019 China Institute for Education Finance Research household survey found that households with members in higher education spent 32% of their total disposable income on it (Wei, 2024). In 2024, the government doubled the number of tertiary scholarship recipients (China Daily, 2024). Many provincial governments, such as Hubei, require colleges and universities to reduce or drop tuition fees for students with financial difficulties (Hubei Price Control Office, 2025).

The national university entrance examination, the gaokao, has been central to higher education access (Cheng and Hamid, 2025). But while pass rates increased drastically from 22% in 1990 to over 90% in 2020, access to top-tier universities remains inequitable. Data from 2006 to 2013 showed that Beijing students were 30 times more likely to enter the prestigious Tsinghua University than their peers from neighbouring Henan province (Fu, 2018). Recent reforms have introduced preferential admission schemes for rural and poor students. By 2023, nearly 1.1 million students had entered higher education through such channels, though their impact on elite access remains limited (Huai, 2023).

Higher education institutions are likely to further increase their emphasis on quality and employability now that the system has been nearly universalized. At the same time, many institutions will have to deal with pressures to close or merge, given the impending demographic decline.

China

A student from rural China's story about the new opportunities given to girls like her to go to university in the city

I grew up in the southern part of Shaanxi Province, in a nationally designated poverty area. Surrounded by mountains, my hometown felt geographically remote and, for many years, higher education seemed distant and almost unattainable. For a long time, I believed that, no matter how hard I studied, students from major cities would always have an advantage.

Like many students from less-resourced regions in China, I completed my entire primary and secondary education in local schools. Our teachers were dedicated, but resources were limited. We did not have access to good classroom facilities, extracurricular tutoring, or the kind of academic guidance that students in large cities often have access to. Still, education was the only path I saw to change my future.

What truly changed my trajectory was China's National Special Admission Programme, a policy designed to expand access to higher education for students from nationally designated poor areas. As part of China's broader poverty alleviation strategy, this programme targets students from regions facing long-standing structural disadvantages, including both rural villages and small towns. Its purpose is simple but powerful: to ensure that talented students from these areas are not excluded from top universities because of disadvantages.

Under this policy, key national universities are required to reserve a certain number of admission places each year for eligible students from nationally designated poverty areas. Applications are submitted through a separate early admission process, which allows those students to be evaluated within a separate pool, rather than competing directly with students from larger cities who often benefit from better schools and private tutoring. Admission is still based on Gaokao exam results, but this adjusted evaluation process significantly improves our chances of entering good universities and competitive majors.

For me, the programme did more than just increasing my likelihood of admission and allowing me to pursue better majors. It gave me confidence. Knowing that there was a pathway designed specifically for me to set higher goals and believe that they were achievable. As I say, this policy gives students from those poor areas hope and, more importantly, a clear and attainable goal.

My own experience shows that targeted public policy can make a real difference. The National Special Admission Programme has opened doors that once seemed closed to students from less-resourced regions. It demonstrates that with thoughtful institutional design, talent from poor areas can reach China's most prestigious universities, and begin to reshape not only individual lives, but also broader patterns of educational inequality.

Yanjing,
Student

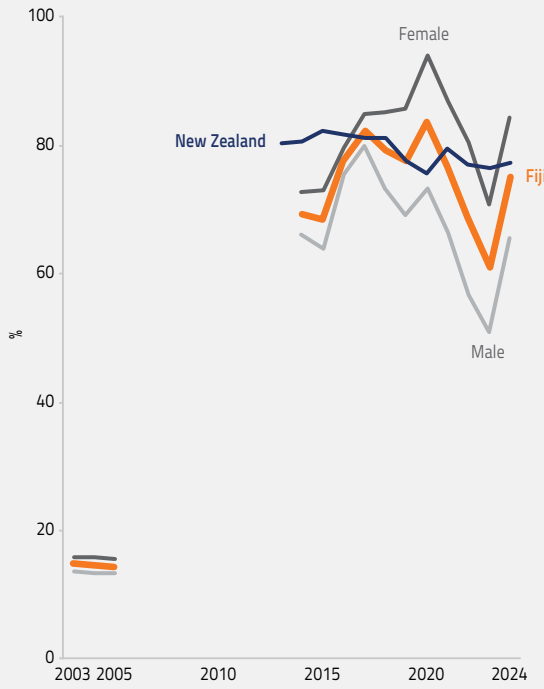
Fiji: A REGIONAL LEADER IN TERTIARY PARTICIPATION FACING NEW PRESSURES

Tertiary education enrolment in Fiji has seen remarkable progress since the early 2000s. The gross enrolment ratio increased from just 14% in 2005 to 69% by 2014. Growth continued steadily, peaking at nearly 84% in 2020 before declining in 2021, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 2024, the latest year for which data are available, the gross enrolment ratio stood at 75%. Female participation in tertiary education has consistently outpaced that of males and, at its peak in 2020, the gap reached 21 percentage points (94% vs. 73%). Among Pacific Island countries, Fiji stands out with the highest tertiary gross enrolment ratio. It is followed by Palau (72%), Tonga (43%) and the Marshall Islands (38%). Fiji's participation rate is currently about on par with New Zealand (77%) (**Figure 1**). Labour force survey data confirm this substantial tertiary education expansion in Fiji. The share of young adults aged 25 to 34 who have attained tertiary qualifications has risen from just 3.5% in 2005 to 30% in 2024.

As a high-cost public service, higher education is especially difficult to sustain in small, geographically dispersed island nations that often lack the financial stability and scale to support comprehensive, internationally competitive institutions. To address these limitations, Pacific governments took the bold step in 1968 of founding the University of the South Pacific (USP), a shared regional university serving 12 Pacific Island countries with its main campus based in Fiji. This collaborative model was designed to pool resources and offer higher education opportunities that no country could afford individually.

Over time, however, national ambitions began to grow. As education systems across the region matured, so too did interest in building domestic tertiary institutions. This shift became evident in countries like Samoa and Solomon Islands, both of which went on to establish their own national universities (Groves, 2019).

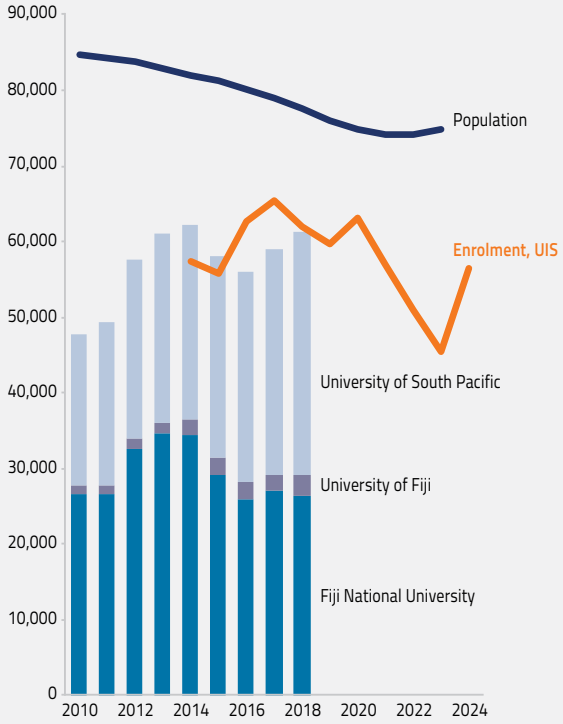
FIGURE 1:
Fiji's tertiary enrolment has grown rapidly in recent years
Tertiary education gross enrolment ratio, by sex, Fiji and New Zealand, 2003–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Fiji_fig1
Source: UIS database.

Similar developments took place in Fiji. In 2004, the unexpected creation of the University of Fiji by a private, faith-based organization prompted the government to establish a formal regulatory framework by creating the Fiji Higher Education Commission in 2008. A year later, it launched the Fiji National University, formed through the merger of several public institutions, including the Fiji School of Medicine, the oldest tertiary institution in the Pacific, and the Fiji Institute of Technology, then the region's largest provider of technical and vocational education and training (**Figure 2**). Alongside USP, the University of Fiji and Fiji National University, a number of local and international providers offer franchised programmes (Chandra, 2011). This has created a uniquely crowded higher education landscape in a country with fewer than 1 million people.

FIGURE 2:
Three higher education institutions compete for Fiji's students
Enrolment, by university, Fiji, 2010–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Fiji_fig2
Sources: Goundar (2019) (on enrolment by university), UIS database (on total enrolment) and UN Population Division (on age group 19 to 23).

Beyond inspiring national developments, Fiji's position in the regional arrangement has brought it distinct advantages. As the host of USP's main campus and headquarters, it is the largest government contributor, providing 73% of the total funding (USP, 2023). But it also reaps the greatest benefits. Donors have generally preferred to channel their support through a single, regional university rather than to separate national institutions (Groves, 2019). Fijian nationals account for 58% of full-time equivalent enrolments (USP, 2023). Hosting the regional hub also brings broader economic advantages, from student fees to the presence of a large, internationally connected institution that anchors knowledge, infrastructure and opportunity in the country.

Although data are very incomplete, the available evidence on internationally mobile students highlights the situation of Fiji relative to other Pacific nations. While only 3.5% of Fijian students were outwardly mobile in 2019, the corresponding rates were 23% for the Marshall Islands (in 2022), 27% for Tonga and 39% in Samoa (in 2023). In the Cook Islands, there are 17 students studying abroad for every student at home.

Strong national policy commitments have driven the expansion of access to tertiary education in Fiji. Over the years, the government has introduced a comprehensive package of financial support measures to help achieve this goal. For Fijian citizens, higher education is effectively free at the point of use, with costs covered through a mix of grants and income-contingent loans (Healey, 2017, 2018).

The National Toppers Scholarship (NTS), a merit-based scheme, covers full tuition and living costs, locally and abroad, for top-performing students in priority fields such as engineering and information technology. All other students can access the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme (TELS), which offers interest-bearing loans for tuition and living expenses, with repayment set at 20% of gross income once graduates begin working (Healey, 2017). The creation of the Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Service (TSLS) in 2014 to administer these schemes coincided with a peak in tertiary enrolment.

All higher education institutions are directly subsidized, with the government covering the gap between tuition fees and the full cost of provision (Healey, 2018). As a result, around 70% of students completing Year 13 make the transition into higher education via NTS scholarships or TELS loans (Healey, 2017, 2018). For those who do not proceed to Year 13, the Technical College of Fiji offers an alternative route, serving roughly 30% of Year 12 graduates (Healey, 2018).

While financial support has expanded access to higher education for a significant share of the Fijian population, it has also exposed tertiary institutions to vulnerabilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Fiji's economy, heavily reliant on tourism, suffered a severe recession, which in turn forced the government to reduce funding for the TSLS and cut capital grants to universities (Healey, 2022; USP, 2020).

Enrolment expansion has also been enabled by advances in distance learning, which have helped address the country's geographic and infrastructural challenges. All major providers in Fiji have embraced digital delivery to improve access and continuity. Between 2016 and 2020, Fiji National University focused on improving accessibility through broadband provision, campus-wide Wi-Fi, online modules via the Virtual Learning Environment, and digitized library resources (Healey, 2022). The University of Fiji has shifted fully to online delivery, offering all courses in digital mode (The University of Fiji, 2020).

USP is clearly the regional pioneer. To connect its campuses across 12 Pacific Island countries, USP established its own satellite communication network, USPNet (Chandra, 2011). Since 2006, it has offered online and blended learning, and these modes have steadily become more popular. Between 2017 and 2023, the proportion of students learning face-to-face declined from 70% to 50% (USP, 2023). USP's distance learning model has delivered clear benefits, especially in times of crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it adapted quickly with offline print packages to ensure learning continuity and even served as a communications hub after Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu (UNESCO, 2024).

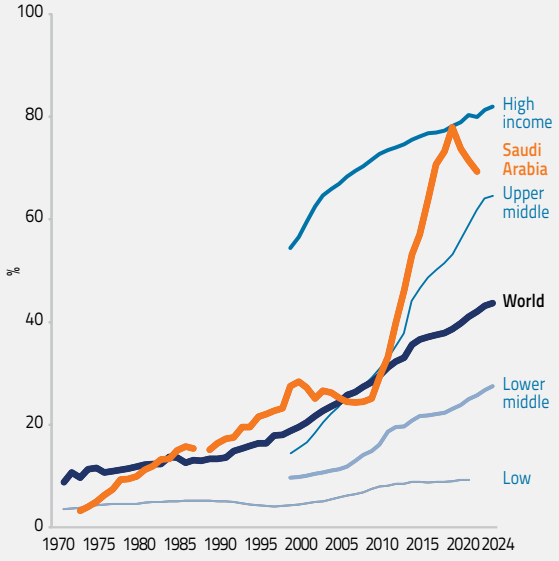
Nonetheless, the expansion of distance learning across the region faces persistent obstacles. The remoteness of many islands, coupled with the high cost of internet and telephone infrastructure, continues to limit reach. These challenges have partly driven USP's efforts to decentralize some of its faculties and research units to other islands (Groves, 2019).

Fiji is a unique case among Small Island Developing States. A regional hub along with strong national commitments to higher education and distance learning to overcome geographic constraints have enabled the significant expansion of tertiary education. But this rapid growth has also brought new challenges. The growing number of tertiary providers serving a relatively small and declining population has led to concerns around quality assurance, regulatory oversight and coordination – and more broadly about the structure, scale and sustainability of the sector. At the same time, the economy has not grown quickly enough to generate sufficient employment opportunities for the increasing number of graduates, leading to saturation in some sections of the labour market (Chandra, 2011). As in many small island states, brain drain remains a concern. Australia and New Zealand attract many of the most highly skilled graduates (Healey, 2017). Meanwhile, wages and job prospects in Fiji are not substantially better than in other Pacific countries, offering limited incentives for regional students to remain in Fiji after graduation (Groves, 2019).

Saudi Arabia: ON A PATH TO UNIVERSALIZE HIGHER EDUCATION

In the decade that began in 1999, the tertiary education gross enrolment ratio in Saudi Arabia stagnated, falling from 28% to 25% in 2009, having also fallen below the global average three years earlier. But in the next decade, the ratio shot up to 78%, increasing by more than five percentage points per year, and equalling the high-income country average (**Figure 1**). This is a remarkable achievement funded by the country's natural resource wealth. The modern education system was only formally established in the 1950s, with King Saud University being founded in 1957. In 1971, there were just 8,000 university students and the gross enrolment ratio was below the low-income country average. By 2025, 46% of 25- to 34-year-olds had completed higher education (Saudi Arabia Government, 2025a), which corresponds to 65% of Saudi nationals and 35% of non-Saudis (Saudi Arabia General Directorate for Statistics, 2025).

FIGURE 1:
In the 2010s, the tertiary gross enrolment ratio grew by five percentage points per year
Tertiary education gross enrolment ratio, Saudi Arabia and country income groups, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Saudi_Arabia_fig1
Source: UIS database.

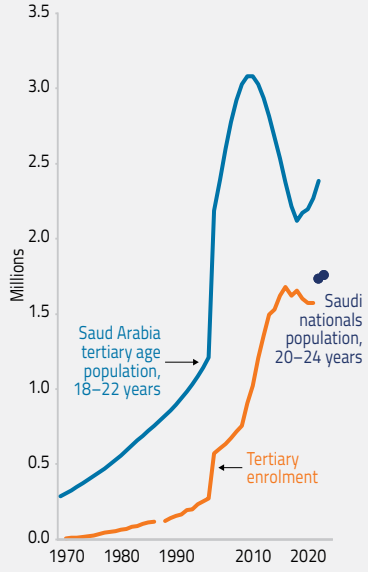
Indeed, the growth is much stronger when considering the country's particular demographic characteristics as a major migrant destination and the difficulties that Saudi Arabia and its fellow member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have faced in accurately estimating those populations historically (ILO, 2022). Changing government immigration policies and the individual migration trajectories of young adults in and out of the GCC countries make it difficult to interpret actual tertiary-age populations. However, even setting aside the population bulge reported between 2000 and 2020 (**Figure 2a**), the tertiary-age population of 2.38 million reported by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics for 2023, which corresponds roughly to the age group 18 to 22 years and is informed by the 2022 national population census, is certainly inflated. A breakdown of the population by nationality shows that the number of Saudi nationals aged 20 to 24 is 1.73 million. In the Saudi population aged 20 to 24, 20% of women and 50% of men are foreign nationals (**Figure 2b**).

As the population denominator of the gross enrolment ratio is therefore smaller by at least 25%, tertiary education participation would be almost universal, as tertiary enrolment in 2022 was 1.57 million. The number of foreign students according to the UIS database peaked at 80,000 in 2016 and was standing at 65,000 in 2022 (of which 57% were from other Arab States). This accounts for just 4% of the total tertiary education enrolment and therefore does not exert a major influence on the tertiary gross enrolment ratio.

Conversely, for much of the past 20 years, there were more Saudi students studying abroad (more than half of whom are in the United States) than the number of foreign students in Saudi Arabia, not least encouraged by the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) introduced in 2005, which contributed to the gap reaching its maximum point in 2010. Mobility patterns changed markedly after 2016, driven by a combination of tighter KASP eligibility criteria, geopolitical dynamics and the expansion of domestic higher education capacity. The steepest declines were recorded in business administration, information and communications technology (ICT) and health disciplines, with enrolments abroad falling by 44% for bachelor's and 42% for master's programmes. This gap was reversed in 2019 (**Figure 2c**).

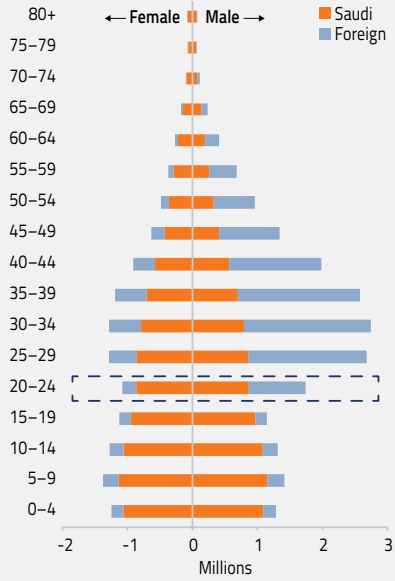
FIGURE 2:
The population structure impacts education indicators in large immigrant-receiving countries such as Saudi Arabia
Selected demographic indicators, Saudi Arabia

a. Saudi Arabia tertiary age population and enrolment, 1970–2024



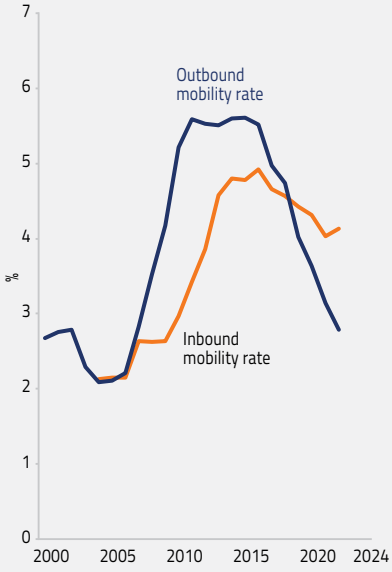
Source: UIS database and Saudi Arabia General Authority for Statistics (2025).

b. Saudi Arabia population, by sex, age group and nationality, 2023



Source: Saudi Arabia General Authority for Statistics (2024).

c. Inbound and outbound student mobility rate, 2000–24



Source: UIS database.

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Saudi_Arabia_fig2

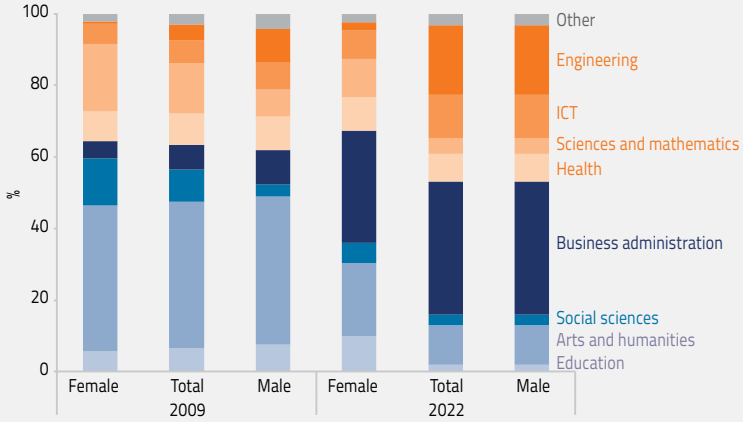
In 2005, the government of Saudi Arabia announced its expansion strategy, which sought to widen education access and address regional disparities. Among various measures, seven new universities were established in underserved regions, while a range of free or low-cost tertiary options were introduced, including community colleges, women's colleges, and technical and vocational training institutions (Saudi Arabia Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2005; Saudi Arabia Ministry of Higher Education, 2009). Tertiary enrolment grew by almost 1 million in 10 years, from 640,000 in 2006 to 1,620,000 in 2016. Launched in that year, Vision 2030 explicitly positions the tertiary education sector as a key driver of the transition from an oil-based to a knowledge-based economy through diversification and innovation (Saudi Arabia Government, 2025b).

The 2019 Universities Law marked a governance turning point, granting public universities more financial and administrative autonomy to better align with Vision 2030. It aims to enable institutions to design accredited curricula, establish their own policies, diversify funding sources and create specialized programmes tailored to sector needs such as health sciences, ICT, engineering and hospitality (PwC, 2019; Saudi Arabia Council of Universities' Affairs, 2020).

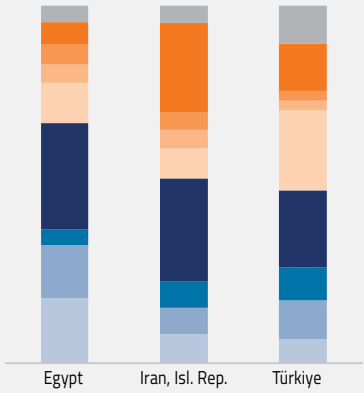
Between 2009 and 2020, the distribution of graduates by field has not changed significantly between scientific and other fields. However, there have been shifts within these two broad categories. The share of graduates in engineering increased from 4% to 11% and in ICT from 6% to 10%, at the expense of science and mathematics. The share of graduates in business administration increased from 7% to 34% at the expense of arts and humanities. These shifts have increased gender specialization: only 2% of women graduate from engineering compared to 19% of men; conversely, 30% of women graduate from education, arts and humanities, compared to 13% of men (**Figure 3a**). Relative to other countries in Northern Africa and Western Asia, Saudi Arabia has twice as many graduates in ICT as Egypt, less than half as many graduates in engineering as the Islamic Republic of Iran, and almost twice as many graduates in business administration as Türkiye (**Figure 3b**).

FIGURE 3:
In Saudi Arabia, some steps have been taken to raise enrolment in scientific fields
Distribution of graduates by field of study

a. Saudi Arabia, by sex, 2009 and 2022



b. Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran and Türkiye, 2022

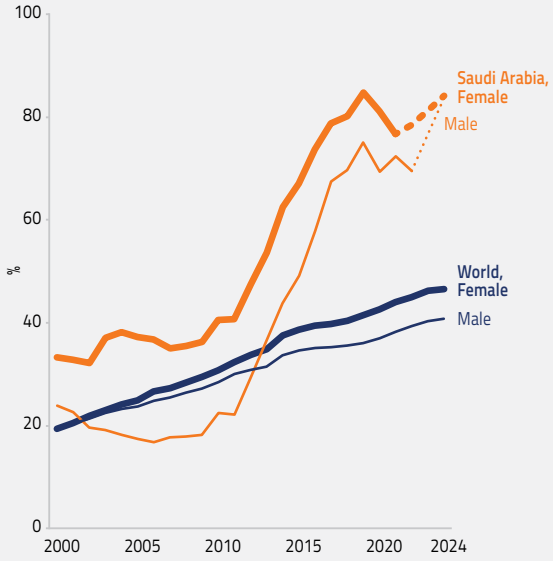


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Saudi_Arabia_fig3
Source: UIS database.

The gender gap in choices of field is in the context of one of the largest gender gaps in tertiary enrolment in the world, an artificial consequence of the particular population structure. At its peak in 2006, there was a gap of 20 percentage points: 37% of women and 17% of men were enrolled in tertiary education. The gap started closing in 2016, reaching five percentage points in 2022 and some evidence suggests that it may have even been eliminated in 2024 (**Figure 4**). Even so, women face obstacles to higher education participation that recent advances in blended and online learning have helped remove. Female enrolment at Saudi Electronic University, the first to provide higher education through a blended learning model, nearly doubled between 2018/19 and 2023/24 (Saudi Arabia Electronic University, 2025).

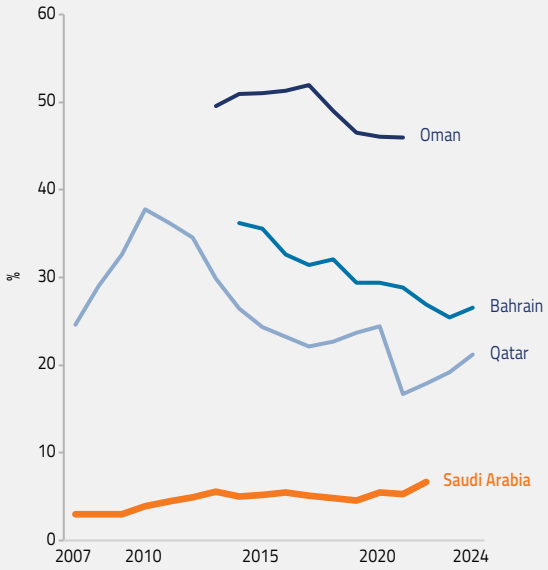
In 2023, Saudi Arabia allocated SAR 189 billion to education (USD 50 billion), or 17% of its total public expenditure, of which 42% is allocated to higher, technical and vocational education and training (George, 2024). The share of private institutions in total higher education enrolment has been consistently lower than in its GCC peers. In 2020, they accounted for 5% of total enrolment, compared to 24% in Qatar, 29% in Bahrain, 30% in Kuwait and 46% in Oman, although in three of these countries with trend data there has been a decline in the share of private institutions in recent years (**Figure 5**).

FIGURE 4:
A large gender gap in Saudi higher education has narrowed
Tertiary education gross enrolment ratio, Saudi Arabia and world, by sex, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Saudi_Arabia_fig4
Source: UIS database.

FIGURE 5:
In Saudi Arabia, public institutions lead higher education provision
Share of private institutions in tertiary education enrolment, selected Gulf Cooperation Council countries, 2007–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Saudi_Arabia_fig5
Source: UIS database.

Still, in the context of a rapid expansion of the higher education system, the number of students in private institutions increased fivefold from 20,000 in 2007 to 104,000 in 2022. The first private university opened in 1998 (Saudi Arabia Ministry of Education, 2025) and the number of private universities increased to 57 by 2024 (Saudi Arabia Council of Universities' Affairs, 2024). Part of that expansion is attributed to labour market demands for practically trained graduates, which public universities have been considered not to adequately meet (Al-Dali et al., 2013).

Saudi Arabia

A student's story about the growing interest in going to university among women in Saudi Arabia

I'm currently studying software engineering at Prince Sultan University. Pursuing higher education is strongly encouraged here in Saudi Arabia, especially with the way the government has been actively paving the way for high school graduates to attend university.

On a personal level, my motivation came from seeing the long-term impact university education had on people around me. I've seen how it opened doors for them professionally, provided stability, and allowed them to contribute meaningfully to their respective fields. That made me feel like university is a clear and worthwhile investment in my future.

Almost all women in my family have pursued higher education, including bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees. My mother, she went into university late, I think around 28 she started.

But it was still really encouraged back then for women to continue their education, even though they stopped after high school. All my aunts, they're still pursuing their degrees.

A lot of them wanted to study abroad, but those opportunities were harder for women to access 10 years ago. Now there are fewer restrictions so women can study abroad without a guardian.

Many universities are now opening. International universities are now opening their branches in Saudi Arabia. Also, universities are opening new majors for women. Ten years ago, there weren't any engineering programmes in Saudi Arabia. Now, Princess Nourah University, the world's biggest women's university, has, I think, five or six engineering majors.

So, Saudi Arabia is definitely evolving with time. And you're seeing how women are evolving, every generation more than the one before. Many women are highly motivated and see education as a pathway for their own independence, also for contributing to their country, and for their own long-term security. There's also strong family and institutional support now, so that might be a big reason why enrolment is so high.

Some challenges remain, such as financial barriers or social expectations, but they are far less restrictive than before, and they continue to improve. In the future, I'd like to see other links between universities and industry and also continued encouragement for women to enter technical and especially leadership fields.

After graduating, I'm interested in roles that sit at the intersection of technology, data, structured problem solving. Beyond career goals, I hope to maintain balance, to grow personally as well as professionally. I want to contribute to my country, whether through my work, mentorship, or involvement in my community.

I don't take access to education for granted. I'm grateful for the opportunities that I've had, and I do feel a responsibility to make meaningful use of them, and I'm sure that's how all women in Saudi Arabia feel.

Ghala Alsalem,
Student

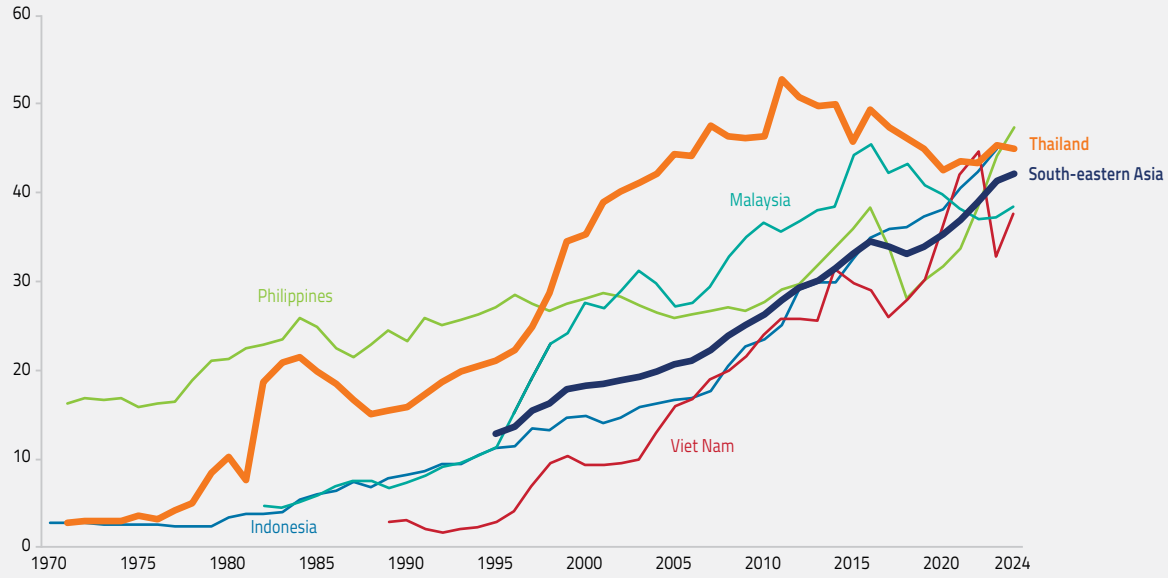
Thailand: A DEMOGRAPHIC SHOCK AFFECTS HIGHER EDUCATION

In 2024, the five most populous South-eastern Asian countries had converged to an average tertiary gross enrolment ratio of just over 40%, after having experienced very different expansion trajectories in the previous 50 years. In 1970, when four of the five countries had an enrolment ratio of less than 3%, the Philippines had a ratio more than five times higher. In 1998, Thailand surpassed the Philippines; over the next 25 years, its gross enrolment ratio increased by 1.6 percentage points per year, reaching the peak of its tertiary education expansion in 2011 at 53%. It was a period during which students had opportunities to enter higher education well beyond the traditional elite institutions (Crocco, 2018; Salmi and Hauptman, 2006).

But since 2011, the gross enrolment ratio has been declining, reaching 43% in 2020; it was 45% in 2024 (**Figure 1**). Tertiary attainment mirrors this evolution. The share of 25- to 34-year-olds with a tertiary education qualification increased sharply from 9% in 2000 to 25% in 2014, but remained at that level, a decade later, in 2024 (ILO, 2025).

In absolute enrolment terms, the number of students fell from 2.5 million in 2011 to 2 million in 2024, a decline of 20%. The root cause of this downward trajectory in both absolute and relative terms appears to be demographic. Since 1970, the number of births in Thailand has fallen by 54%. In contrast, the other countries in the region have followed the global average and have only recently seen a decline after COVID-19 (**Figure 2a**). The consequences of these divergent demographic trajectories started becoming apparent in the tertiary education age group 20 years later in 1990. The size of that cohort has since declined by 22% in Thailand but has increased by about 20% in Indonesia and Viet Nam and by more than 70% in Malaysia and the Philippines (**Figure 2b**). This trend in Thailand will continue, as the tertiary-age population is expected to shrink relative to 2023 by 25% in 2040 and 54% in 2060.

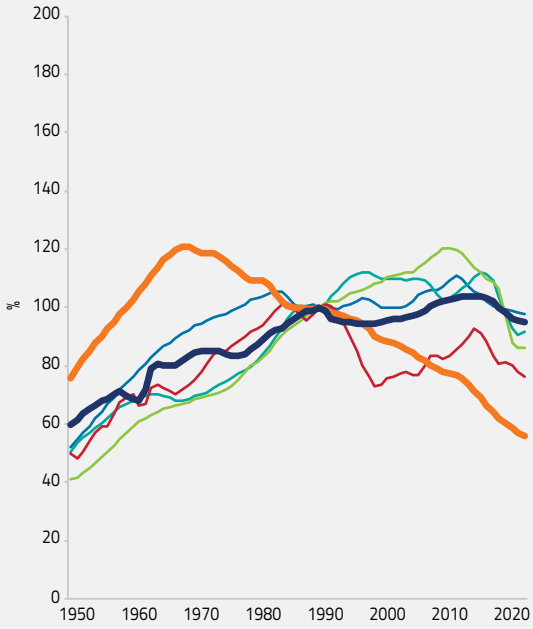
FIGURE 1:
After peaking in 2011, tertiary enrolment has declined in Thailand
Tertiary gross enrolment ratio, Thailand and selected South-eastern Asian countries, 1970–2024



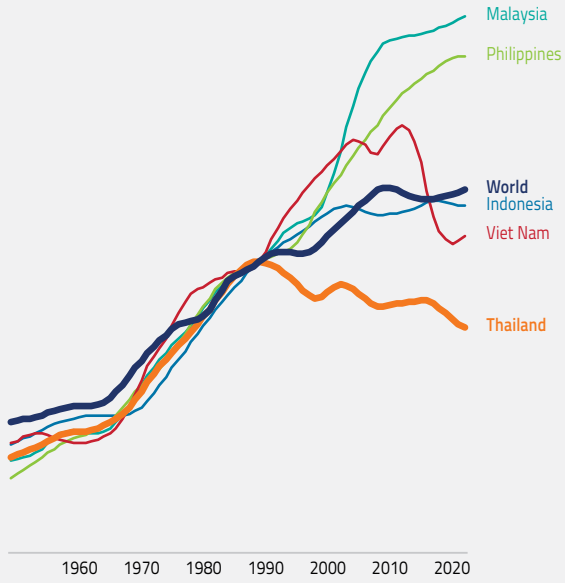
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Thailand_fig1
Source: UIS database.

FIGURE 2:
Thailand has experienced a drastic demographic transition that affected its tertiary education sector
Population indicators, Thailand and selected South-eastern Asian countries, 1970–2023

a. Population of newly born (under 1) (1990 = 100)



b. Population of tertiary education age (19- to 23-year olds) (1990 = 100)



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Thailand_fig2
Source: 2024 World Population Prospects.

The size of the demographic adjustment explains how absolute changes (i.e. the sharp contraction in university intake) also affect relative changes (i.e. the gross enrolment ratio). This impact operates through direct and indirect channels.

In terms of direct impact, all universities have gradually found themselves in a situation where they have more seats than applicants, a factor that raises costs and negatively affects efficiency. Private universities were particularly affected. The expansion of higher education in the 1990s was associated with the expansion of private provision whose share in total enrolment reached 21% in 2001. That growth was interrupted in the 2000s. This was partly attributed to public universities enjoying some privileges in branch campuses and admission processes, while a reform that granted some public universities autonomy in 2003 also made them more agile (Praphamontripon, 2015). Yet despite these adverse conditions, the number of private higher education institutions continued to increase rapidly, from 73 in 2010 to 455 in 2017, just as public institutions were consolidating from 98 to 66 (Atherton et al., 2018). These numbers are deceptive. The share of private institutions in total enrolment remained constant (19% in 2024), which means that private universities were weakened by competing for an ever smaller market due to the demographic change. Attempts to internationalize higher education to fill the gap have not been very effective, as the inbound mobility rate has only increased from 0.8% in 2011 to 2.3% in 2025.

An indirect impact of demographic change was labour scarcity, which was one of the main causes of the relative stagnation in economic growth rates, a phenomenon known as the middle-income trap of which Thailand came to be known as a characteristic example (Jitsuchon, 2012). Compared to 2010, income per capita grew more slowly in Thailand (30%) than in the other South-eastern Asian countries (from 50% in Malaysia to 100% in Viet Nam). In this context, the contraction of higher education was both a result and a cause of economic slowdown. On the one hand, worsening economic conditions reduced individual incentives to pursue higher education. Analysis of quarterly labour force survey data shows that the wage premium of those with university over those with secondary education declined constantly between 2010 and 2024 (Leawsakul, 2025). On the other hand,

deeper questions have been raised about the higher education system's relevance, quality and adaptability (Lao, 2017) and its ability to bring innovation to the Thai economy. A survey of 1,029 Thai employers revealed dissatisfaction with the level and quality of graduates' skills (Khampirat, 2016).

These concerns have been expressed for some time. An analysis of links between enterprises and universities in the early 2000s had shown them to be limited, with few incentives for universities to engage in contract research and the administration's weak capacity to facilitate and build on the few strong links between universities and industry (Brimble and Doner, 2007). In 2017, the government launched its major development strategy, Thailand 4.0, which aims to transform the economy through a focus on technology. Higher education has a critical role to play to foster the required levels of creativity and innovation. But major social and cultural changes are needed at all levels to improve teaching processes, develop learning networks and strengthen links with industry (Buasuwan, 2018; Chaemchoy et al., 2021). More than 20% of higher education courses at both public and private universities were found by the Auditor General not to meet quality standards (Lamubol, 2017).

In response to these multiple challenges that have reduced the attractiveness and effectiveness of higher education, the government has been taking various measures. First, it has tried to strengthen the pipeline into higher education. The Thai University Central Admission System (TCAS) was introduced in 2018 to remove bottlenecks in the transition from secondary to tertiary education. However, its structure remains complex with multiple rounds, frequent changes in rules and varied testing requirements that have been disproportionately affecting disadvantaged students. In 2022, only 13.5% of nearly 150,000 underprivileged students who had received targeted educational support at the lower secondary level in 2018 secured university offers through TCAS (Equitable Education Fund, 2022, 2024; Thailand Council of University Presidents, 2022). This challenge should also be seen in the context of a declining share of students who achieve minimum proficiency in secondary education, as evidenced by the results from Thailand's participation in the Programme for International Student Assessment: in reading, the share fell from 63% in 2000 to 41% in 2018; in mathematics, it fell from 54% to 47%. These international results are also reflected in the national Ordinary National Educational Test. Between 2017 and 2024, grade 12 students' scores fell by 14% in reading and by 11% in mathematics (Thailand National Institution of Educational Testing Service, 2024).

Second, the government has tried to increase demand for higher education by easing financial constraints for young people from low-income families. The Student Loan Fund, introduced 30 years ago, lent approximately USD 5.7 billion to 2.6 million students between 1996 and 2006. However, an evaluation found that one in five beneficiaries were not poor, disbursements faced an average of a three-month delay, borrowers were repaying only between 36% and 67% of the amount borrowed, and recovery rates ranged between 22% and 51% (Tangkitvanich and Manasboonphempool, 2010). Changes brought by the 2017 law and an amendment in 2023 eased repayment terms and removed guarantor requirements, which further weakened the fund's financial situation. A key provision to introduce an income-contingent loan system (Krongkaew, 2018) was not followed up on. While disbursements have declined to USD 1.2 billion for just over 0.6 million students (Thailand Ministry of Finance, 2023), problems continue. Some 100,000 borrowers are facing lawsuits for non-payment and non-compliance with debt restructuring, while at the same time the fund faces a liquidity crisis and needs the government to replenish it (The Nation, 2026). This is in the context of government expenditure on tertiary education falling from over 1% of GDP in 2000 to 0.58% in 2023.

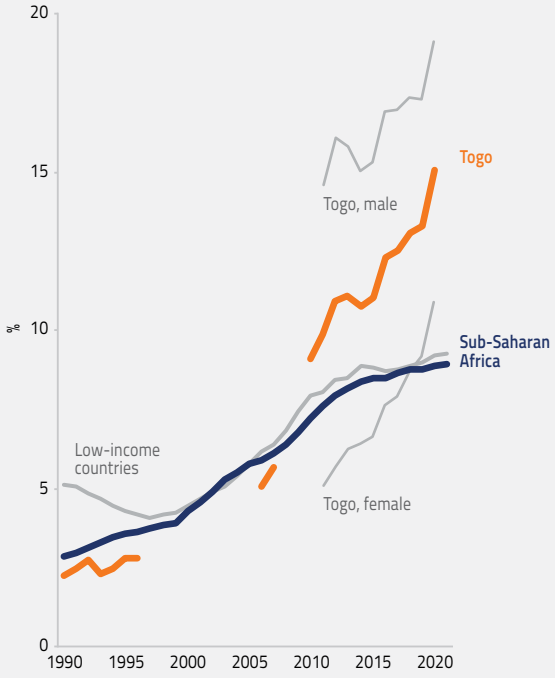
Third, the government has been trying to strengthen vocational education and training, beginning with the 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan in 2007 and followed by the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training in 2017, which is aligned with the Thailand 4.0 vision. As a result, the share of post-secondary education students in vocational programmes increased from 14% in 2012 to 19% in 2019 (OECD, 2021).

Finally, the government is looking to increase the responsiveness of the skill acquisition and innovation system. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, which was established in 2019, is trying to strengthen university–industry partnerships in selected engineering fields (Thailand National Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation Policy Council, 2024). It is also encouraging a shift away from traditional degrees towards alternative forms of certification that recognize prior learning. In this context, a National Credit Bank programme was piloted in 2023 by four universities to enable learners to accumulate credits from various subjects, courses or work experiences and eventually apply for a degree certificate or cumulative learning outcome report. However, such a reform will require a long time to bring the expected results (British Council, 2022; Prajuablap and Khomsod, 2025).

Togo: FAST GROWTH RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT EQUITY AND QUALITY

Togo has seen a steady rise in tertiary enrolment, growing from 3% in 1998 to 6% in 2007 and 15% in 2020 (**Figure 1**). It moved ahead of the rest of sub-Saharan Africa and low-income countries in 2008. Between 1995 and 2020, the gross enrolment ratio grew by an average of 0.5 percentage points per year, while it grew by only 0.2 percentage points per year in sub-Saharan Africa. The progress in the gross enrolment ratio is primarily driven by men's enrolment, with a relatively stable gender gap of around nine percentage points which shows signs of narrowing in recent years (Figure 1). Among other low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the gross enrolment ratio in Togo is higher by 10 percentage points than in Uganda, by 6 points than Rwanda, by 5 points than Burkina Faso and by 2 points than the Gambia.

FIGURE 1:
In Togo, access to tertiary education has tripled in 14 years
Tertiary gross enrolment ratio, by sex, Togo, sub-Saharan Africa and low-income countries, 1990–2020



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Togo_fig1
Source: UIS database.

These administrative data are also confirmed by evidence from the 2021–22 Harmonized Living Conditions Survey, which shows that 11% of 20- to 29-year-olds had completed higher education (with an 8 percentage point gap between men and women) compared to 7% of 30- to 39-year-olds, 3% of 40- to 49-year-olds and 2% of 50- to 59-year-olds.

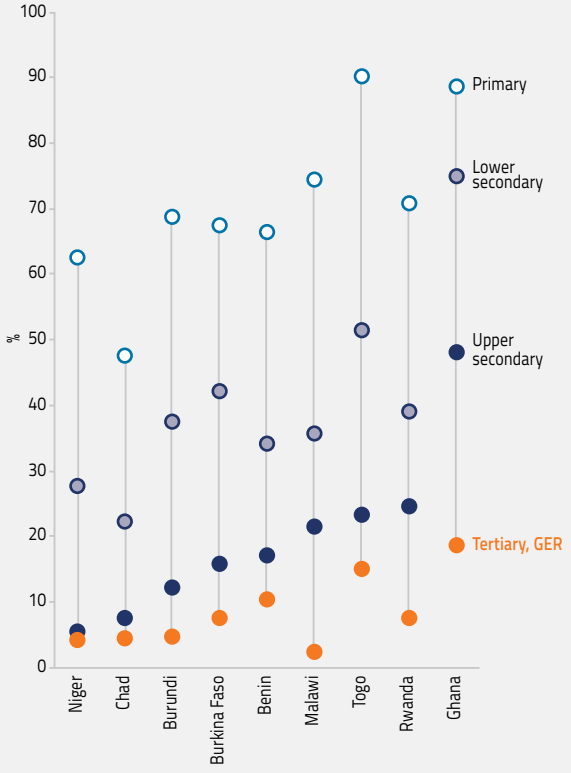
The University of Lomé, which was the first public higher education institution, was established in 1970, while the second public university was the University of Kara, which opened in 2004 in the north of the country. As of 2025/26, four public universities are licensed, including the École Normale Supérieure in Atakpamé and the International Centre for Language Research and Studies, known as Village du Bénin. But there are also 93 privately owned accredited institutions, an increase by 14 from 2024 (Edoh, 2025). Despite their large number, private institutions accounted for only 19% of total enrolment in 2020, according to the UIS database.

It was this rapid expansion of private providers that prompted the 2017 Law on the Orientation of Higher Education and Research, aimed at regulating higher education (Agboh et al., 2022). Despite the creation of a dedicated Ministry of Higher Education and Research in 2003 and clarifying decrees in 2012, higher education governance has been fragmented, with overlapping ministerial mandates and weak mechanisms to align education with employment policies (OECD, 2016). The absence of effective career guidance at the secondary level means that many students are channelled into general pathways with limited prospects, underscoring the need for a whole-of-government approach that can regulate student flows and ensure stronger links between education supply and labour market demand (Chitou, 2011; OECD, 2016; Togo Government, 2014). At the institutional level, public universities face governance and management constraints, with limited autonomy and capacity to adapt to rising enrolments and the growing role of private providers (Chitou, 2017; Togo Government, 2014).

The rising trend in tertiary enrolment reflects broader shifts in the education system, with more students entering school, advancing through grades and completing secondary education. These developments have unfolded gradually since the early 2000s and were reinforced by key policy measures, notably the abolition of tuition fees for public pre-primary and primary education in 2008. Enrolment has since increased across all levels, with

particularly sharp growth in secondary education. Between 2000 and 2023, primary enrolment rose by about 80%, lower secondary by 220% and upper secondary by 390%. This expansion has naturally led to a growing pool of students eligible for tertiary education. The abolition of tuition fees for public secondary education in 2021/22 is expected to further accelerate this trend (Togo Ministry of Primary, Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education, 2021). Already, Togo has made more progress expanding tertiary education, given its upper secondary completion rate, than Malawi or Rwanda. It had almost the same tertiary gross enrolment ratio as neighbouring Ghana (19%), which has twice as high an ultimate upper secondary completion rate (48%) as Togo (24%) (**Figure 2**).

FIGURE 2:
Togo has expanded tertiary education faster than peers with similar secondary completion rates
Ultimate primary, lower secondary and upper secondary completion rate and tertiary gross enrolment ratio, Togo and selected sub-Saharan African countries, 2020



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Togo_fig2
Notes: GER = gross enrolment ratio. GER data refer to 2018 in Burundi and 2019 in Niger. The ultimate completion rate is estimated over an age group up to eight years older than the official graduation age.
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the VIEW model (completion rates) and UIS database (tertiary gross enrolment ratio).

An earlier report confirmed that higher transition rates from secondary to tertiary education were the main driver behind the increase in university enrolment, in other words, more students who complete secondary education now choose to continue their studies (OECD, 2016). Tertiary access is relatively open in Togo. Admission to public tertiary institutions is guaranteed by right for students who have obtained their baccalauréat, with placement in specific programmes determined by candidates' academic records, including their grades in relevant subjects and their major (France Government, 2024).

Moreover, the financial cost of public higher education is substantially reduced by scholarships awarded with minimal eligibility criteria. In 2014, 90% of students received scholarships, and despite a substantial increase in enrolment over the years, the proportion of beneficiaries had remained largely unchanged at that time (Togo National Team et al., 2014). While such financial support has helped lower cost barriers, it may also threaten the sector's financial sustainability in the long run. In 2017, scholarships represented the second largest expenditure item for the Ministry of Higher Education and Research (35%), behind personnel costs (50%) (Togo Government et al., 2019). Their share remained relatively stable in the following years and stood at 36% in 2024 (Togo Ministry of Higher Education and Research, 2025).

The sharp rise in access to tertiary education has not benefited all segments of the population equally. As already noted, boys have benefited more than girls. While the ultimate upper secondary completion rates have improved for both over the past 25 years, the gender gap has been growing, from 8.5 percentage points in 2000 to 16 points in 2015 and 21.5 points in 2024. There are also clear patterns in programme choice by sex, with girls less likely to be represented in science fields (Agboh et al., 2022; Togo National Team et al., 2014).

Wealth disparities are also stark. In 2014, 81% of tertiary students came from the top two wealth quintiles (Togo National Team et al., 2014), suggesting that the benefits of public subsidies are largely captured by students from more privileged backgrounds. Household contributions to higher education in Togo remain low, similar to those at the primary school level, which is likely due to the near-universal granting of scholarships regardless of income (Togo Government et al., 2019). In contrast, household contributions are highest in secondary education, where 34% of students enrolled in upper secondary education attend private institutions. This may discourage poorer students from reaching tertiary education in the first place. To contain the rising costs of funding tertiary education, the criteria for scholarship

allocation have been revised, but have focused more on discouraging indefinite enrolment to retain a scholarship, rather than on introducing income-based criteria. Scholarships for bachelor's students are primarily awarded based on age and merit (Togo Government et al., 2019). Under the 2020–2030 Education Sector Plan, it is intended to raise tertiary education fees along with efforts to diversify financing sources (Togo Government, 2020).

Structural challenges remain. Many students drop out before completing their programmes (INSEED, 2021; OECD, 2016). The average student in higher education reportedly stayed in university for just six months (OECD, 2016). Weak preparation at earlier levels, lack of academic guidance, poor teaching quality, and inadequate pedagogical resources and infrastructure are among the reasons why students abandon their studies before obtaining a diploma (Chitou, 2011; OECD, 2016; Togo Government et al., 2019). For instance, in 2024, the student/teacher ratio was 127:1 at the University of Lomé (the target was 102:1) and 80:1 at the University of Kara (Togo Ministry of Higher Education and Research, 2025).

Even for those who graduate, employment prospects remain narrow: a recent survey found that 8 out of 10 were in skills-related underemployment five years after completing their studies (Togo National Technical Team, 2024). Curricula are often overly theoretical and poorly aligned with labour market needs, while outdated equipment and insufficient practical training leave graduates underprepared (Bayale, 2019; OECD, 2013). To respond, the government has committed to strengthening data systems, including mechanisms for transferring information from higher education institutions, developing tools to monitor the relevance of training to labour market needs, and improving data collection to guide scholarship allocation (Togo Government, 2020).



Policy analysis



In the past 50 years, access to post-secondary education has been transformed in most countries from a privilege for a few to a central societal demand. Rising secondary completion rates have put more pressure on higher education institutions to expand. Social and economic factors external to education have also played a major role. Research on tertiary education development in the 20th century concluded that expansion was faster in countries that were decentralized (Schofer and Meyer, 2005), more open to the rest of the world, with citizen movements that viewed tertiary education as a right, and with strong labour market demand for advanced skills, among other factors. Last but not least, government policies and programmes – and the conditions they have created – helped prompt or facilitate post-secondary expansion.

This section describes two broad categories of policies. First are measures to strengthen demand, notably relaxing financial constraints through fee policies, loans, subsidies and scholarships (preventative), providing information, and compensating for disadvantages (interventionist). Second are measures to expand supply, including the capacity of public and private institutions, diversification of provision, including through short-cycle courses or vocationally oriented higher education, and institutional interventions, such as admission rules and affirmative action regulations. Thereby, expansion has been the result of many factors, including changes in administrative decisions, targeted funding to parts of the system or to population groups that required support, and public or private investments in infrastructure, including through the opportunities afforded by technology. A review conducted for this report has supported the analysis (ACER, 2026).

> There has been a profound transformation in post-secondary education governance and financing over the last generation

Accompanying this expansion, there has been a profound transformation in post-secondary education governance and financing over the last generation. Funding and regulation have been decoupled in many countries. Governance arrangements started shifting around 1990 in high-income countries from state control to state steering, with more autonomy balanced by stronger accountability, quality assurance and increased reliance on market mechanisms (Raza, 2009; Varghese and Martin, 2014). There has also been growing cost-sharing and an increase in the enrolment in private institutions (Johnstone, 2004; Sanyal and Johnstone, 2011).

The global transition from elite to mass post-secondary education systems has opened up access to millions but has not resolved issues of **equity**. *Vertical* inequality still exists, the extent to which individual characteristics such as income, gender, location, ethnicity and disability continue to determine the probability of access to education. But inequality and stratification have taken new forms. *Horizontal* inequality, driven by tracking and institutional hierarchies, means that equity is not just a matter of entering and completing a post-secondary education institution but also which institutions students enter and which types of course they attend, which eventually affects the benefits they receive in life and at work (Dynarski et al., 2023).

Inequality also exists *within institutions* which affects individual students' chances to progress through a course on time, graduate and make the most of their education experience after graduating. These outcomes relate to both the ability to study unencumbered from financial, caring or health concerns, and the ability to overcome the challenges of being a post-secondary education student, managing institutions' administrative rules and cultural norms (Marginson, 2016; Salmi, 2020). Inequality exists *outside institutions* too. Questions over what knowledge should be considered valuable have supported a movement and efforts to recognize prior learning, including learning not acquired in formal institutions. While the trend is still in its infancy, it may be accelerated by expanding distance education opportunities afforded by technology.

An in-depth analysis of post-secondary education in 15 high-income countries has found that, depending on the measure used, changes in inequality depend on the post-secondary education system's expansion, differentiation and privatization. Overall, inequality is unlikely to decline until the system has expanded considerably. Differentiation of tertiary education institutions between elite and mass institutions increases inequality but this effect can be significantly mitigated with a greater variety of institutions, which ends up including rather than diverting students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and with flexible pathways facilitating moves from one type of institution to another. Depending on the context, even privatization may have a neutral impact. While inequality clearly increases when access is related to the ability to pay, some of that effect can be mitigated by expansion, which can be stimulated by privatization. Expansion in that sense is a potential source of inclusion, even when vertical inequality remains stable. After all, tertiary education helps young people develop

competences that directly improve their lives; it is not just a tool that helps place them ahead of others in the queue for jobs (Shavit et al., 2007).

This section focuses on national policy choices that matter for system-wide participation (e.g. legislation, funding, investment, system-wide planning, regulatory frameworks, admission). Yet institutional policies can also be very important for individual student outcomes (e.g. admissions, programme offerings, support mechanisms), especially where countries grant autonomy and where practices adopted by a few large or prestigious institutions are subsequently diffused across the sector.

DEMAND-SIDE POLICIES

Factors that determine demand for higher education can be distinguished between those that cannot be affected by policy (such as academic ability, personality traits or an intrinsic interest in an area of study) and those that can be. Of the latter, income, or more broadly, affordability is the most prominent determinant, as the ability to finance several years of study is not an option for young people from poor households. Related to financial constraints are the expected long-term rewards from investment in higher education and, conversely, the opportunity costs from not entering the labour market upon secondary school graduation. Depending on the context, a range of social background characteristics affect not only the perceived benefits but also the perceived costs; for instance, a young person from a household where no member has previously attended post-secondary education may lack critical cultural capital to make the study experience frictionless. As out-of-pocket costs, uncertainty about returns and social barriers keep tertiary study beyond reach, this section discusses a range of policies that have been used to overcome financial, informational and cultural constraints.

> “The ability to finance several years of study is not an option for young people from poor households”

ALLEVIATING FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

The total cost of study includes fees, learning inputs, living expenses and the opportunity costs of forgone income. Cost sharing between students, households and the state has become a key policy issue (Heller and Callender, 2013). Countries, depending on the mix of public and private institutions and the tuition fee policy applied, combine tuition fee waivers, scholarships, subsidies and loans (**Table 5.1**) to maintain affordability that can expand access, while ensuring financial sustainability. Success depends on the balance between the support volume, coverage and targeting.

> “Scholarships, grants or loans intended to promote equity exist in 79% of countries”

A review of tertiary education financing laws and policies for this report, which is featured in the PEER country profiles, shows that scholarships, grants or loans intended to promote equity exist in 79% of countries, ranging from 50% in Oceania to 95% in Europe and Northern America. These funding mechanisms primarily target students on the basis of poverty (83%), disability or special educational needs (60%) and geographic location (30%), while other populations (e.g. women, displaced and refugees, indigenous and ethnic minorities) are targeted much less frequently.

There is no consensus on the impact of policies that ease financial constraints on enrolment. A review argued that enrolment rises when the net price of studies falls (Dynarski et al., 2023), but another review qualified that conclusion, arguing that non-repayable student aid works in countries above a certain threshold of tertiary education attainment (Czarnecki and Korpi, 2025).

Earlier reviews also point to mixed effects of financial aid on enrolment. Reductions in tuition fees and expanded student support were reported to be associated with modest overall enrolment effects, with more consistent impacts for specific groups, including students from low-income backgrounds and mature learners. Financial aid influences participation decisions less than timing and programme choice. Effects also vary according to financial aid programme design and existing participation levels (Asplund et al., 2008). Combined interventions outperform isolated ones (Herbaut and Geven, 2020; Salmi, 2020).

TABLE 5.1:
Examples of financial instruments to increase demand for tertiary education

Instrument type	Examples
Tuition waivers	Chile: free-tuition scheme for students in the lowest six income deciles Ghana: No fee stress waiver for first-year students Ireland: Fund for Students with Disabilities
Needs-based scholarships and grants	Brazil: PROUNI scholarships Cambodia: special priority scholarships France: need-based grants Indonesia: Bidikmisi / Smart Card for College (KIP) scholarship Italy: income-based grants (e.g. right-to-study schemes) Nepal: Dalit scholarships United States: Pell Grants
Income-contingent loans	Australia: Higher Education Contribution Scheme/Higher Education Loan Program (HECS/HELP) Colombia: ICETEX subsidized income-linked loans Japan: Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) loans New Zealand: zero-interest income-contingent loans South Africa: National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) (partial income-contingent loans) United Kingdom: income-contingent repayment system in England

All the measures presented in this section directly support individual students and their households. An alternative approach that governments have pursued, mostly in high-income countries, is to fund higher education institutions under the condition that they meet policy goals, such as enrolling more disadvantaged students and ensuring they graduate (de Boer et al., 2015). A global review for this report, featured in the PEER country profiles, found that 18% of countries' laws or policies incorporate conditional grants to institutions, of which most focus on poverty (64%), followed by geographic disadvantage (49%), disability or special educational needs (46%) and gender (26%). About one third of these countries also target indigenous and ethnic minority populations. Equity-focused institutional funding is more common in high-income countries (27%) than in lower-middle- (15%) and low-income countries (4%).

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In 2022, in the United States, 12% of operating funds of four-year institutions were disbursed based on some type of performance-based funding for institutions (Laderman et al., 2022). For example, 32 states linked funding to graduation targets (Education Commission of the States, 2020); 22 states specifically referred to African-Americans (Education Trust, 2021). However, these have not proven effective. An analysis of completion gaps by race in the states of Ohio and Tennessee found that performance-based funding not only did not narrow but even widened the gap, as institutions focused mainly on incentives to boost graduation rates regardless of the impact on equity. Universities enrolling students from under-represented groups were often historically under-resourced (Chan et al., 2023). As observed with outcome-based funding in other education levels, institutions sometimes respond to incentives in ways that contradict the original objectives, such as by restricting access (Ortagus et al., 2020, 2023).

Tuition fees

Tuition policy is politically potent and economically difficult. Of 147 countries, 40 have legal commitments to free higher education (UNESCO-IESALC, 2025a). In 1992, the Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka court ruling declared fees unconstitutional in India. In South Africa, income-targeted free higher education was introduced in 2018 after the 2015–17 Fees Must Fall movement. Similar targeted models emerged in Chile after the 2011 protests and in the Philippines under the 2017 Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act.

> 31% of countries have national laws or policies declaring public universities tuition-free

Globally, most public universities charge minimal or no tuition. A review of tertiary education financing systems for this report, featured in the PEER country profiles, indicates that 31% of countries have national laws or policies declaring public universities tuition-free, with figures ranging from 19% in Eastern and South-eastern Asia and 21% in sub-Saharan Africa to 48% in Northern Africa and Western Asia and 53% in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the policy is based on a rights-based approach.

But while free tuition aims to promote equity, it is not enough on its own and can even become regressive if wealthier students secure university places when access is constrained (Salmi and Bassett, 2014). By contrast, targeted free tuition or tuition combined with well-designed grants and income-contingent aid tends to be more effective at reducing financial barriers for disadvantaged students (Salmi and Sursock, 2018). In Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Ecuador, the abolition of tuition fees did not automatically reduce inequality, as fees are only one part of the total cost to students (Dynarski et al., 2023). In Colombia, following a 2021 decree, education became free for low-income 14- to 28-year-olds, a policy (Matricula Cero) that benefits 63% of undergraduates attending public universities. However, nearly half of enrolled university students are still not graduating (Sarmiento-Espinel and Silva-Arias, 2025).

Most countries charge fees for public higher education. A review of tuition fee policies in public institutions in the mostly high-income member states of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) showed that the fees charged to national students ranged from USD 250 in France to USD 5,500 in Lithuania, USD 7,500 in Poland and USD 9,600 in the United States. In Germany, the decision of some federal states to charge fees of some EUR 1,000 in the early 2000s led to an estimated decrease in enrolment in those states by three to five percentage points (Hübner, 2012).

In England (United Kingdom), universities are privately governed institutions in a technical and statistical sense but had fully relied on public funding until a 1998 reform, which introduced GBP 1,000 annual tuition fees for the first time. Fees were increased to GBP 3,000 in 2006 and GBP 9,000 in 2012. An analysis found that enrolment continued increasing without exacerbating inequality, mainly because students do not have to pay fees upfront, as they get loans for those, and also receive public grants to cover living expenses (Murphy et al., 2019). In recent years, a cap on fees created financial challenges for universities, as the real value of fee income in 2024 was 31% below its 2015 level, leading the government to increase fees in 2025/26 for the first time since 2017 in line with inflation (Universities UK, 2024).

In Ghana, the No Fee Stress policy introduced in 2025 pays all academic fees for first-year students at universities, technical institutes, colleges of education and nursing schools. This initiative complements existing financial aid programmes like Student Loan Plus, scholarships for under-represented groups, and free education for students with disabilities. Over 120,000 first-year students have benefited (News Ghana, 2025). In 2017, the Philippines enacted the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, eliminating tuition in public universities and colleges. Tertiary education participation increased from 38% in 2017 to 47% in 2024 and the growth rate was faster among poorer students. Over 2.3 million students benefit from free higher education, and 713,000 receive subsidies (Untalan, 2025a). However, 40% of first-year university students drop out (Untalan, 2025b).

Countries often use fee regulation alongside reference pricing for scholarships to ensure fair access while maintaining provider viability. In Azerbaijan and India, state committees monitor fees at non-state institutions to prevent excessive charges (Varghese et al, 2019; Salmi, 2020). In Kenya, the regulator has denied university fee increases to protect access for low-income students (Nganga, 2019). Chile and Côte d'Ivoire indirectly regulate fees by setting reference prices to determine scholarship amounts for low-income students at private institutions (Salmi, 2020). South Africa monitors and sets limits to annual increases of public university fees. In addition, under the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, a targeted tuition policy introduced in 2018, first-time undergraduate students from low-income and working-class households are eligible to be fully subsidized. Challenges include funding delays, payment issues, administrative changes and increased bank charges (Lewin, 2024; Naidu, 2023).

Governments in countries with large non-state education sectors often provide targeted fee subsidies to students at both state and non-state institutions. In Brazil and Chile, where most students attend non-state institutions, low-income students receive exemptions for selected non-state institutions. In Brazil, low-income students admitted to tuition-free universities are 8.5 percentage

points more likely to earn a degree and see a 26% increase in earnings after 10 years. The policy has little effect on high-income students (Duryea et al., 2023). In 2016, Chile introduced free tuition for students in the lowest six income deciles at accredited public and private non-profit universities that join the national admission system or support equitable access. From 2015 to 2019, low-income student enrolment at tuition-free institutions rose from 40% to 60% (Olivares, 2025).

Scholarships

Scholarships can advance equity, inclusion and social mobility, helping young people with a disadvantaged background to access and complete higher education. They can also support national development by targeting strategic fields to attract and retain talent. Out of 146 countries, 63% have at least one national scholarship programme established by law, ranging from 30% in the Arab States to 83% in Central and Eastern Europe (Bouckaert, et al., 2024).

> Out of 146 countries, 63% have at least one national scholarship programme established by law

In 2010, Indonesia launched the Bidikmisi scholarship, which offers tuition support and stipends to academically strong students from low-income families (Wanti et al., 2023). In 2020, Japan introduced a new financial support system that offers tuition reductions and scholarships for disadvantaged students (Kakuchi, 2025). Latvia awards honour scholarships to students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Latvia Government, 2024). In Panama, the Scholarships for Distinguished Positions (Becas por Puestos Distinguidos), managed by the Human Resources Training and Development Institute, covered 13% of higher education students in 2021 (IFARHU, 2022). In Sri Lanka, the Mahapola needs-based scholarship for students from low-income households is equal to LKR 7,500 (USD 24) (Sunday Times, 2024). In 2021//22, the 16,000 recipient students corresponded to 40% of the total number of admitted students (Sri Lanka Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Food Security, 2022).

Some governments require universities to offer financial aid to students from under-represented groups. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia and in Ecuador, all non-state universities must provide scholarships to 10% of their students (Ferreyra et al., 2017). Mexico mandates private universities to support at least 5% of their students with grants or scholarships. Viet Nam applies a 10% requirement to public universities. In England (United Kingdom), higher education institutions allocate a set portion of tuition fees to scholarships and bursaries via Access and Participation Plans (Salmi, 2020).

Increased public investment through scholarships and financial aid have expanded the participation of disadvantaged groups in Brazil (Silva and Sampaio, 2022), Cambodia (Hun, 2024), India (Varghese and Sabharwal, 2025) and Pakistan (Rind and Malin, 2024). In Indonesia, the Bidikmisi scholarship was found to have a strong impact on performance, especially among the poorest students, but not on timely graduation (Mulyaningsih et al., 2022). It was replaced in 2020 by the Indonesia Smart Card for College (KIP) which supports economically disadvantaged but academically strong students admitted to accredited public and private universities, fully covering tuition fees (ranging from IDR 2.4 to IDR 12 million per semester, or from USD 170 to USD 850) and offering a living allowance (ranging from IDR 0.7 to IDR 1.4 million per semester, or from USD 57 to USD 100) (VOI, 2021). In West Virginia, the second poorest state in the United States, a programme offering free tuition at state colleges for students meeting a minimum of academic strength criteria raised enrolment by almost six percentage points (Scott-Clayton and Zafar, 2019).

Grants

Subsidies to students cover a wide range of cost items that are difficult to summarize and to even distinguish from scholarships in some cases. Evidence on their effectiveness comes from high-income countries. These are not representative of global contexts: middle-income countries may not have the financial and administrative capacity to verify means-tested conditions with the same degree of precision. They are also not representative for answering the core question of whether financial aid to students supports enrolment expansion and reduces or at least does not exacerbate inequality. But grants in high-income countries can still inform middle-income countries of the issues they need to contend with as they plan grants.

A meta-analysis of 43 studies, mostly from the United States, found that grant aid, including scholarships, increased student persistence and completion rates by 2 to 3 percentage points or about 1.5 to 2 points per USD1,000 awarded. Non-financial programme elements like tutoring had greater impacts than merit-based aid (Nguyen et al., 2019). In France, a EUR 1,500 grant under the Bourses sur Critères Sociaux programme reached about one third of enrolled students in 2010 and was

found to have raised enrolment by an average of 5 to 7 percentage points though the impact on completion was less clear (Fack and Grenet, 2015). In England (United Kingdom), an extra GBP 1,000 of student aid improved first-year persistence by 1.4 percentage points and graduation from courses of good quality by 3.4 percentage points, especially among low-income, well-prepared students (Murphy and Wyness, 2023).

In Germany, the federal students' financial assistance scheme, better known as BAföG, provides financial support on the basis of personal characteristics such as income, age and citizenship. In 2021, some 333,000 or 11.5% of all students received BAföG funds with an average monthly support of EUR 579. In 2024, the maximum rate for students not living with their parents was EUR 452 basic allowance plus EUR 360 housing allowance, with a 5% increase decided in 2024, while changes introduced from 2025/26 included a one-off payment of EUR 1,000 for particularly needy students. However, the lack of impact assessment has been criticized (Meier et al., 2024).

An evaluation of the means-tested Student Grant Scheme administered by Student Universal Support Ireland found that most recipients would have been unlikely to pursue studies without this grant. But it also recognized that the level had remained constant at a time when the cost of living had increased by 25%. It singled out particularly vulnerable groups that required extra attention and recommended facilitating flexible arrangements such as part-time study, which the 2022–28 National Access Plan committed to examine (Ireland Higher Education Authority, 2022). In the same year, responding to growing concern, Ireland introduced for the first time a state-funded policy to increase student housing and established a special unit to manage the plan that includes tax credits, financial support and rental protection for students (Ireland Government, 2023).

In Italy, students from low-income families who wish to enrol in a university programme are eligible for grants under the Right to University Study programme. The dropout rate for low-income students increases from 7% to 10% when they do not receive a grant (Modena et al., 2020). A study of five universities found an even more sizeable impact of such financial aid on preventing dropout during the first year, and promoting graduation and timely graduation rates (Graziosi et al., 2021).

In Portugal, a programme co-funded by the government and the European Union has supported about 70,000 low-income students per year covering tuition and providing extra aid for very poor students. Grant recipients had improved education outcomes, such as lower dropout and timely graduation for male students and faster credit accumulation for female students. The impact was large for students from poorer regions and in public universities. Multi-year grants further improved timely graduation and progression into post-graduate studies and contributed to the government's achievement of its 2020 goals (Guthmuller and Meroni, 2022).

In addition to programmes oriented mainly to students from poor households, many countries also have financial aid programmes for certain categories of students. The Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment – Students with Disabilities offers up to CAD 20,000 (Canada Government, 2022). In South Africa, under the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, students with disabilities have higher income eligibility thresholds (Akala, 2023).

Finally, many countries provide in-kind support to students, subsidizing selected living and study-related cost items. A review of tertiary education financing policies for this report, featured in the PEER country profiles, found that almost 5 in 10 of countries in the world subsidize student accommodation costs, less than 4 in 10 transportation costs, and just under 3 in 10 textbook costs. In Europe and Northern America, 6 in 10 countries subsidize accommodation and transportation, while in Oceania just 2 in 10 do.

> Almost 5 in 10 of countries in the world subsidize student accommodation costs, less than 4 in 10 transportation costs, and just under 3 in 10 textbook costs

Loans

Student loans have become more popular in recent years as a mechanism for governments to share the cost of post-secondary education with students' households. Students must usually repay them after graduation, although some loans may be forgiven or cancelled under certain circumstances. There are three main loan models globally (Salmi, 2017). First, direct loans funded by governments are the most common mechanism, although they often struggle to raise the initial capital and maintain efficiency, keeping administrative costs, interest subsidies and default rates at sustainable levels. Second, privately funded loans that are leveraged by governments, which in turn offer interest rate subsidies and guarantees for defaults, are known as the shared risk model and are less common. Third, universal income–contingent loans aim to

balance the government's recovery cost with the borrowing students' risk. Recovery is handled through income tax or social security administration, which means that payments take into account graduates' ability to pay. These loans have been rolled out mainly in high-income countries.

In Australia, the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP), originally launched as the Higher Education Contribution Scheme in 1989, is a leading income-contingent loan programme. Students pay no upfront tuition, as repayments begin only when their income surpasses a set threshold and are collected automatically via the tax system. Debts are indexed to inflation, avoiding real interest and excessive negative amortization. Earnings-based repayments and integration with payrolls mean that defaults are rare and collection costs are very low (Australia Government, 2026).

Examples of middle-income countries with loan systems include Jamaica, where the Targeted Loan programme is means-tested. Borrowers have 15 to 20 years to repay loans at a post-graduation interest rate of 9.5% (Virri, 2022). However, until recently a guarantor was required, which meant many low-income students were unable to access them (Barrett, 2023). Faced with this problem, Ghana removed the guarantor requirement, opting instead to collect loans using the national identification, social security and national insurance systems (Ghana Parliament, 2021). In Malaysia, the Student Loan Fund Corporation targets high-performing students from the poorest 40% of households. Repayment schedules are adjusted according to employment status and income (UNESCO-IIEP, 2021). Vietnam introduced a loan scheme in 2003 but its design was criticized, as it covered only 84% of the cost in public and 52% in private institutions. A short repayment duration (at most six years) and a high interest rate (at least 4%) meant that it was not attractive to potential borrowers (Doan et al., 2020).

Some studies show that loans have positive effects on enrolment. The easing of income eligibility criteria for access to Japan Student Services Organization loans increased the enrolment rate of young males by 0.5 to 0.7 percentage points (Sano, 2019). In New Zealand, continuing loan eligibility for struggling students has raised re-enrolment rates and ensured most students graduate within seven years (Chu and Cuffe, 2024). Positive results have been found for comparable loan programmes in Colombia (Londoño-Vélez et al., 2020) and South Africa (Gurgand et al., 2011).

In Brazil, the federal government supports private higher education through subsidized loans offered by the Fundo de Financiamento ao Estudante do Ensino Superior (FIES). A study of nearly 2 million applicants between 2015 and 2017 showed that FIES funding greatly increased enrolment, access to preferred courses and persistence, although to a lesser degree (Regatieri, 2024). In Colombia, evaluations of the Access with Quality to Higher Education (Acceso con Calidad a la Educación Superior, ACCES) loan programme that aimed to increase access for low-income students with a good academic record have shown that it increased enrolment and reduced dropout (Melguizo et al., 2016). The programme was implemented between 2003 and 2015 and has since been replaced by free tuition in public universities (Silva-Arias and Sarmiento-Espinel, 2025).

Chile's experience has been studied extensively. The two main types of publicly funded loans are the State Guaranteed Loan (Crédito con Aval del Estado, CAE, introduced in 2006) and the University Solidarity Fund (Fondo Solidario de Crédito Universitario, FSCU, introduced in 1994). A study found that loan access increased post-secondary education enrolment by 18 percentage points, doubling the probability of enrolment for the relevant population group and offsetting the income differential in education access (Solis, 2017). A follow-up study found that loan access also increased the probability of course completion by 12 percentage points, although two thirds of that was a substitution effect, as these students would have otherwise continued studying in a vocational college (Card and Solis, 2022).

Another study in Chile compared these loans with two government grants (Bicentenario and Juan Gómez Millas), which cover at least 75% of tuition costs. Eligibility for grants made it more likely to enrol in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields, because it offered insurance against the uncertainty over degree completion linked to loans (De Falco and Reichlin, 2025). Chile has struggled with low loan repayment rates and high operational costs and has been considering education debt restructuring (Dearden et al., 2025).

> "The accumulation of debt can ultimately discourage enrolment, especially among low-income and loan-averse students"

Loans may not be enough to cover other significant costs beyond tuition, yet they are needed to increase students' financial resources. The accumulation of debt can ultimately discourage enrolment, especially among low-income and loan-averse students. For every USD 1,000 of debt, dropout rates increase by 3%, while

debts over USD 10,000 have been particularly associated with lower graduation rates (Elliott and Lewis, 2013). In England (United Kingdom), the graduates of the 2017 cohort left university with an average debt of about GBP 55,000, among the highest globally (Britton et al., 2019). Student loans cover tuition and some living costs, but means-tested maintenance loans usually meet only half of students' expenses living (Department for Education, 2024).

Loan features like write-off periods, repayment thresholds, rates and interest have differing impacts based on the debt size (Britton et al., 2019). Extending the write-off period mainly reduces subsidies for large debts. Lowering thresholds or increasing rates primarily lowers subsidies for those unlikely to repay fully, while high earners simply repay faster without changing the total repayment.

PROVIDING INFORMATION

In many contexts, prospective students and their families may overestimate the costs or underestimate the returns to higher education. They may also lack information about admission processes or sources of financial and other support, which may hinder access, participation and graduation from higher education. Young people from low-income families are more likely to be affected, especially when they are the first in their family to attend higher education and likely to have low self-esteem. The trajectories of older siblings in higher education have been found to affect the choices of their younger brothers and sisters in a comparative study of Chile, Croatia, Sweden and the United States (Altmejd et al., 2021).

Information provision can help address these issues, for example, on costs, support and returns to higher education. This can be complemented with personalized assistance, ranging from low-cost messaging to long-term, high-cost counselling that accompanies young people before, during and after admission. Sharing information on graduation rates or future earnings by course may change the choices of applicants, conditional on the decision to pursue higher education. Some evidence has shown that shuffling the matching of students and courses can have broader implications. In Chile, publishing graduate earnings data online not only reduced the probability that low-income youth would select courses with low returns by 5% but also appeared to slightly increase the probability they would persist in their studies (Hastings et al., 2015).

In England (United Kingdom), the government funds Uni Connect, an initiative working with schools and universities to deliver tailored information by region on the costs and benefits of pursuing post-secondary education (Office for Students, 2022). In the East Anglia region, the Take Your Place programme targeted more than 100 schools in areas where higher education participation was low. The first component focused on the requirements, means and options for transition into higher education. The second component focused on helping students explore and articulate their study preferences. A study, which evaluated the impact of a third component that provided 14 text messages on preparatory steps and practical issues on the centralized application process, found no impact (Ilie et al., 2022).

Australia has been implementing a range of outreach programmes to help universities attract and retain disadvantaged youth. Since 2010, the largest of those has been the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program, which focused on raising aspirations of youth of a socioeconomic background before extending its coverage in 2021 to also target Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders and those living in remote areas. A review found that about one quarter of schools had been reached but that the targeting had not been effective. Moreover, the focus on grade 11 and 12 students may be too late to change student perceptions, while the lack of school involvement in the design is another factor that limits effectiveness (Arnup et al., 2025).

Information provision is more effective overall in increasing the enrolment of disadvantaged groups when accompanied by complementary measures such as counselling or simplifying application processes (Herbaut and Geven, 2020). This finding has been confirmed by another study in Chile, which showed that information with mentoring increased the probability of enrolment by eight percentage points (Barrios-Fernández et al., 2024).

COMPENSATING FOR DISADVANTAGES

Financial constraints are not the only obstacles young people face in pursuing post-secondary education, especially if they come from a disadvantaged background. While academic ability may be the biggest predictor of graduation, it is mediated by intrinsic motivation, self-regulation and self-efficacy (Kocsis and Molnár, 2025). These factors can be addressed by support measures, including psychological counselling, mentoring and academic advising to prevent students from dropping out (Vidourek et al., 2014).

The preparedness of first-year students varies depending on their school experiences, with some therefore requiring support. For example, inspired by South Africa's foundation programmes, pre-entry courses have been designed to help students adjust to tertiary studies in mathematics, medicine and science in neighbouring Botswana (Mabila et al., 2006), Lesotho (Mohafa and George, 2025) and Namibia (Nghtpandulwa, 2020). In Colombia, Uniminuto, a Catholic

private university with more than 100,000 students, has a support programme for struggling first-year students, known as the Integrated Focus Model, which offers academic counselling, financial aid, psychological support, a life project course and remedial classes. It is supported by early warning systems, monitoring and impact evaluation for at-risk students (Salmi and Sursock, 2018; Uniminuto, 2025).

Cultural factors often influence higher education access and progression, with issues as varied as accents, language, dress and religion shaping who feels they are accepted and belong. The role of social support networks is critical (Mishra, 2020). Support systems like mentoring, peer networks and transition programmes can reduce dropout rates by enhancing social capital. Some universities assign mentors or buddies to help new students adjust, reducing dependence on family cultural capital. A three-week orientation and mentorship programme at an engineering school in Chennai, India, helped rural first-generation students overcome social barriers, although participants remained concerned about their job prospects (Vijayakumar, 2020). Peer-assisted study sessions in high-income countries have been associated with higher progression rates and a stronger sense of belonging, particularly for first-generation students from under-represented groups (Dawson et al., 2014).

Another issue is that the use of English as language of instruction in higher education has grown around the world, usually in scientific or business fields but sometimes more widely (Macaro et al., 2018). While this is often in response to demand, at the same time it can exclude many (Rose et al., 2026). Challenges include difficulties with content comprehension, assessment, classroom language practices, code-switching, motivation, speaking anxiety, campus socialization and self-image (Alam et al., 2022). Official policies to deal with these challenges are still rare (Sahan et al., 2021). A systematic review found that using English as the medium of instruction in the Arab States poses challenges for student achievement (Alhamami, 2024), which tends to impact graduation. But in countries such as Thailand and Viet Nam, students expected to be taught in English and believed their skills would improve through an English-only environment (Sahan et al., 2025).

Moreover, access to counsellors and support programmes is needed to address cases of psychological distress. A systematic review found that psychological counselling for university students was effective in improving psychological functioning and in dealing with depression and anxiety, leading to improvements in academic performance but not in dropout (Pizzo et al., 2025). In Kerala, India, the Jeevani Mental Health Programme was launched by the government in 2019/20 to provide free, on-campus psychological counselling in public colleges to address increasing mental health issues. The programme deploys trained counsellors to offer early identification, brief interventions and referrals. An evaluation reported high student uptake and specialist referrals in a number of cases (Jaisoorya et al., 2023).

SUPPLY-SIDE POLICIES

Demand-side financing and support interventions open doors; supply-side measures determine what students find on the other side. Governments face important policy questions: how to increase tertiary education capacity; how to diversify education provision to attract different types of candidates while avoiding stratification; how to introduce flexible pathways; and how to organize admission to ease access barriers.

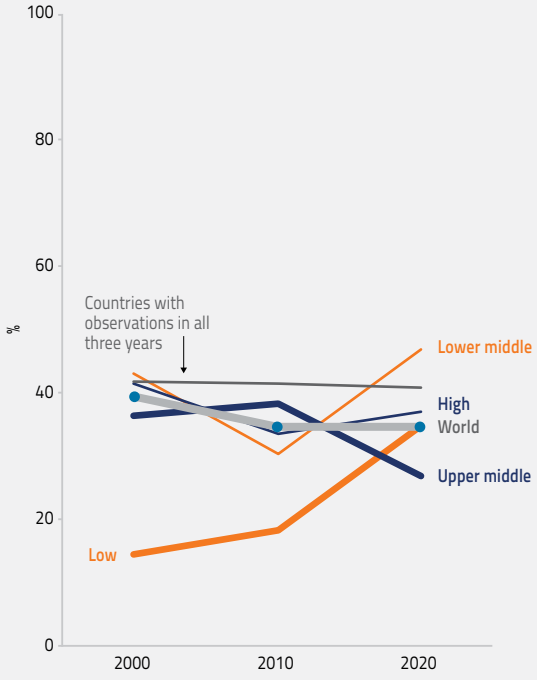
EXPANDING CAPACITY

Establishing and funding higher education institutions is a challenge for most countries that seek to expand provision. Governments have followed different paths depending on the emphasis they have placed on private provision.

> The share of private institutions in total enrolment in all countries with observations in these years fell from 40% in 2000 to 35% in 2010 and in 2020

Gaps in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, especially for some of the more populous countries, make it difficult to establish a clear trend on the share of private institutions in total tertiary education enrolment. The number of countries with observations in different years increased from 75 in 2000 to 129 in 2010 and fell to 119 in 2020. But data availability is very different when expressed as a share of the total tertiary enrolment: it rose from 41% in 2000 to 49% in 2010 and to 90% in 2020 because data for large countries, including China, India and the United States, are available for the first time. The share of private institutions in total enrolment in all countries with observations in these years fell from 40% in 2000 to 35% in 2010 and in 2020. Focusing on the 54 countries with observations in each of the three years (which account for about one third of total enrolment but is less representative of low- and middle-income countries) shows that the share of private institutions in total enrolment has remained constant at 41% (**Figure 5.9**).

FIGURE 5.9:
More than one in three students enrol in private higher education institutions but this share has remained constant
Share of private institutions in total tertiary education enrolment, by country income group, 2000, 2010 and 2020



Notes: Data refer to 2000, 2010 and 2020 (+2 years). There were 75 countries with observations in 2000, 129 in 2010 and 119 in 2020.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_9
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

Three tentative conclusions emerge. First, private provision is sizeable at 35% of total tertiary enrolment. Second, there has been no upward trend in that share; any growth seems to have happened before 2000 (Buckner, 2021; Levy, 2018). Third, there is no clear pattern on the share of private institutions by country income group.

The fastest growing segment of non-state provision often consists of small, for-profit providers that expanded rapidly in response to unmet public demand (Levy, 2013; Welch, 2021, 2024). In Brazil, where non-state tertiary education was traditionally provided by Christian or elite secular institutions, smaller institutions emerged in the 1960s to meet demand, subsequently supported by regulatory flexibility. Similar trends were also observed elsewhere in Latin America (Corbucci et al., 2016; Ferreyra et al., 2017). In anglophone sub-Saharan Africa, after post-independence nationalization, smaller non-elite institutions drove most of the increase in tertiary enrolment (Irene and Hussain, 2020). Non-state sector growth in Central and Eastern Europe was the result of market-friendly policies in the 1990s (Kwiek, 2016). A similar trend was seen in India after the reversal of public expansion strategies (Ravi et al., 2019; Varghese and Panigrahi, 2019).

Public

Several countries have expanded tertiary education a lot, while keeping the share of public provision high. In Argentina, the tertiary gross enrolment ratio exceeded 100% in 2022, with public institutions accounting for about 75% of enrolment and funding mainly from government sources. Public universities are tuition-free, receiving block grants that totalled around 1% of GDP in the mid-2010s. The creation of new national universities near Buenos Aires and in underserved areas helped lower geographic and financial barriers for low-income and first-generation students. The government strategy to promote equity mainly relies on public funding for institutions (and targeted student aid programmes for disadvantaged groups) (García de Fanelli and Adrogué, 2019; Mendonça, 2020) rather than large-scale loans or market financing. While this approach allows broad access without privatization, it was affected by low completion rates and growing fiscal strain on public universities (CONEAU-OEI, 2023).

China has rapidly expanded tertiary education, while keeping its system largely public (Chunchun et al., 2024). After the 1998 Action Plan for Education Revitalization, the tertiary gross enrolment ratio increased from 8% in 2000 to 72% in 2022. Expansion responsibility shifted to local governments, while central funding focused on elite universities. The central government's share of total public expenditure on higher education spending dropped from 60% in 1995 to 34% in 2016, although total public investment grew from USD 92 to USD 179 billion. Cost-sharing via regulated tuition began in 1997, but public ownership prevailed, and private institutions mainly grew in vocational areas. A robust, state-led financial aid program was introduced and expanded, supporting enrolment growth without significant privatization.

In Ethiopia, the number of public universities grew from 6 in 1995 to 49 in 2018, while the number of accredited private universities grew from 0 to 128 (Hunde et al., 2023). Enrolment increased from 38,000 in 1990 to 765,000 in 2023/24 (Tamrat and Teferra, 2018; Tareke et al., 2024), of which 36% was in private institutions (Ethiopia Ministry of Education, 2024). Sustained public financing has supported this expansion. Despite enrolling only around 3% of all students, tertiary education accounted for roughly two fifths of total public education

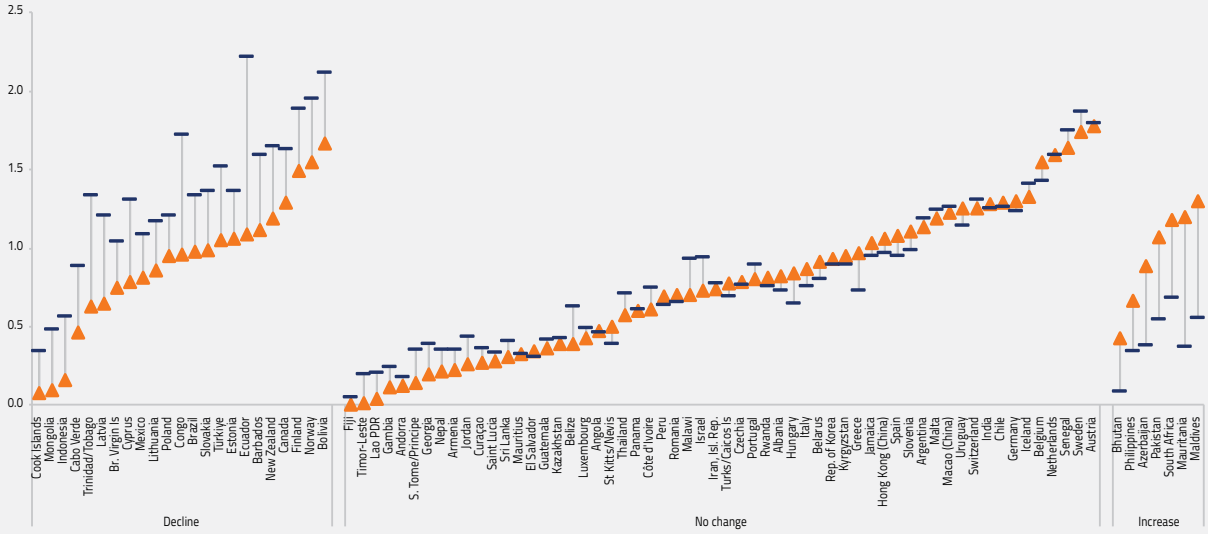
expenditure during the expansion period, reflecting significant capital investment in new public universities and high recurrent spending per student (World Bank, 2022). The Higher Education Proclamation Act, ratified in 2003 and amended in 2019, requires public institutions to receive federal or state funding via a block grant system based on strategic plan agreements (Ethiopia Ministry of Justice, 2019).

The government has signalled the intention to halt the establishment of new public universities. The available options, for instance expand existing universities, use distance education or rely on private providers; have limitations. Public universities are operating at full capacity, online education is not well developed, and private institutions face quality and regulatory issues. Despite plans for public universities to raise their own income to 15% of their budgets, the share fell to 4% in 2020/21 (Tamrat, 2022).

> “Many governments seeking to expand tertiary education face financial challenges, especially as public tertiary education expenditure as a share of GDP has in general remained constant or fallen since 2015”

Many governments seeking to expand tertiary education face financial challenges, especially as public tertiary education expenditure as a share of GDP has in general remained constant or fallen since 2015. It fell between 0.3 and 0.5 percentage points in Brazil, Mexico and Türkiye, although it has increased by the same amount in Pakistan, the Philippines and South Africa (**Figure 5.10**).

FIGURE 5.10:
Three times as many countries have decreased than increased public spending on tertiary education since 2015
Public expenditure on tertiary education as share of GDP, 2015 and 2022–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_10
Source: UIS database.

Public governance mechanisms often focus on expanding in an equitable manner. Saudi Arabia rapidly expanded tertiary education through a state-led, publicly funded approach closely linked to national priorities. Government spending on education reached 17% of total expenditure by 2023 (Saudi Arabia Central Bank, 2023), with 42% directed to higher education and technical training (George, 2024). Public institutions enrol about 93% of students, among the highest rates globally (OECD, 2025a). The 2020 university law defines universities as public, non-profit entities. While private and foreign institutions have grown since the late 1990s, they supplement rather than replace the public sector.

However, establishing mechanisms with clear intentions rarely proves enough. In Pakistan, the Higher Education Commission was established in 2002 to enhance funding, increase opportunities for underserved groups, improve governance and raise educational quality. There have been efforts to broaden access and boost female enrolment: the gender parity index improved from 78 young women per 100 young men enrolled in tertiary education in 2004 to 99 in 2020. But progress has mostly benefited wealthy, urban areas (Rind and Malin, 2024).

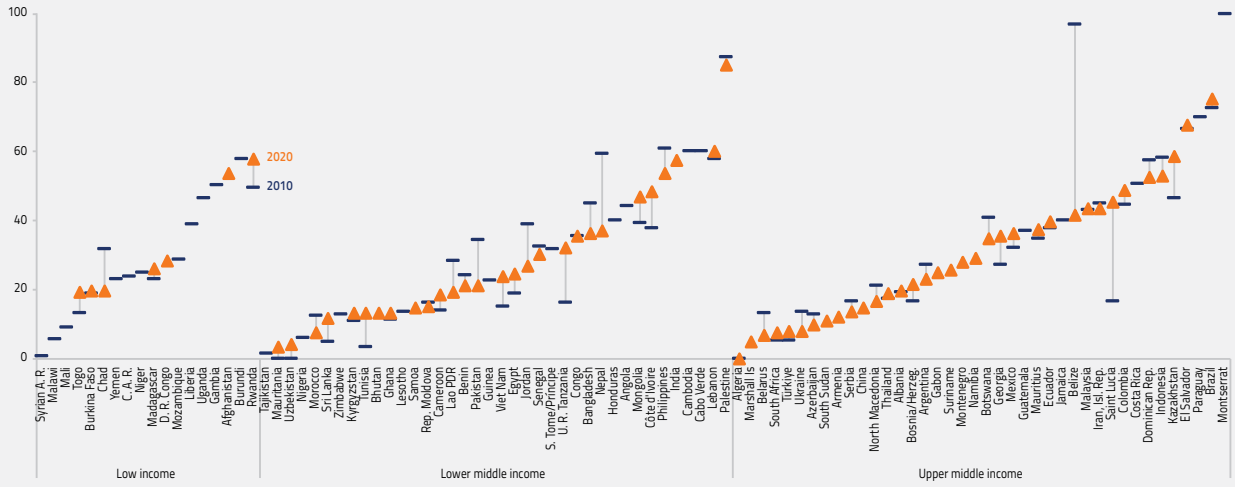
One important public intervention in countries, including the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cuba, China, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua and the United States, has been the establishment of higher education institutions that foster learning environments aligned with indigenous cultural traditions. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, three indigenous universities were created with a 2008 Presidential decree, each representing the main indigenous language and culture groups of the country, each allowing for pedagogy and curricula to reflect their needs. They were funded by the government through the direct hydrocarbon tax (Kearns, 2008). In Mexico, starting in the early 2000s, the federal government prioritized intercultural and bilingual education (Dietz et al., 2019, 2021). New higher education institutions, which were established in the main regions inhabited by indigenous populations, formed the National Association of Intercultural Universities. Unlike other Latin American countries, such as Ecuador and Nicaragua, where indigenous organizations often establish their own universities, in Mexico there were agreements between the state governments and the federal government via the General Co-ordination of Intercultural and Bilingual Education. As public higher education institutions, they follow the same regulations, academic standards and administrative procedures as mainstream universities, and are primarily overseen by the Ministry of Public Education, though some non-governmental involvement exists. By 2016, more than 100,000 students had enrolled in these universities (Dietz et al., 2021). There are currently 10 intercultural institutions and one higher education institution that has joined their network.

Private

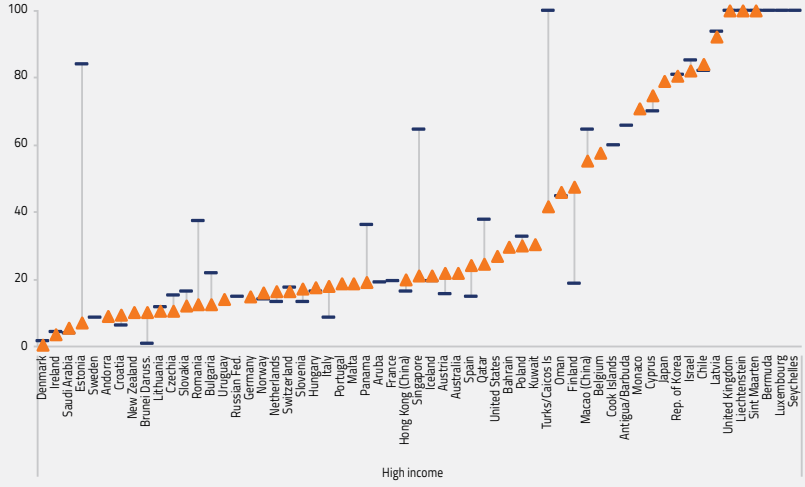
The role of private providers has been important in many countries that expanded tertiary education, but not in all countries. Even where private institutions have grown, the association with the tertiary gross enrolment ratio has been weak overall, albeit stronger in countries with high secondary enrolment and high urbanization rates, as well as in some regions such as Central and Eastern Europe (Buckner and Khoramshahi, 2021). Globally, the share of private institutions did not increase significantly between 2010 and 2020 and remains, as mentioned above, at 35% (**Figure 5.11**).

FIGURE 5.11:
Within each income group, the share of private institutions in tertiary enrolment varies significantly – and has changed little over time
Share of private institutions in total tertiary education enrolment, 2010 and 2020

a. Low- and middle-income countries



b. High-income countries



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_11
Source: UIS database.

In Chile, tertiary education expanded rapidly after reforms in 1981, which opened the sector to private universities, while reducing direct public provision (Brunner, 2015). The gross enrolment ratio grew from 8% in 1980 to 53% in 2015 (Espinoza, 2017), with private institutions accounting for 85% of total enrolment (Delisle and Bernasconi, 2018). Privatization was also supported by the introduction of the State-Guaranteed Student Loan in 2006 (Villalobos et al., 2025). Gratuidad, the tuition-free programme targeted at low-income students, introduced in 2016, covers households at the bottom 60% of the income distribution, shifting from loans to public funding to enhance equity (García de Fanelli and Adrogué, 2019). By 2023, 53% of institutions and 38% of those enrolled were part of the programme (Zamorano Figueroa and Santori, 2025).

In Tunisia, the 2000 Private Higher Education Law recognized private institutions for the first time, against a backdrop of rapid growth in demand for higher education and external influences, such as the World Bank USD 75 million Economic Competitiveness Adjustment Loan, which encouraged private sector participation in the

economy, including in higher education. Enrolment has increased by 70% since 2000, when there were no students in private institutions. By 2023, that share had increased to 15%. Students in private institutions are excluded from scholarships and subsidized accommodation. Foreign students, mostly from sub-Saharan Africa, account for 14% of enrolment in private institutions compared to just 1% in public institutions (Harzallah, 2024).

> By 2024, 87% of countries had established a national quality assurance agency

Governments need to make private provision a credible option as well as protect students, especially those from a disadvantaged background, from institutions of low quality. As universities prioritize market demand over national development objectives, concerns are raised over the potential for the commodification of education and a decline in academic standards. This concern has led policymakers to establish quality standards (Altbach et al., 2009) and quality assurance agencies (Varghese, 2016; Varghese and Martin, 2014). By 2024, 87% of countries had established a national quality assurance agency (UNESCO-IESALC, 2025b). Quality assurance systems with minimum standards, public reporting and institutional improvement support have, in certain contexts, yielded better outcomes (Alarcón and Brunner, 2024).

In Chile, free tuition has only been offered to a few private accredited universities, with student eligibility tied to family income (Olivares, 2025). In Indonesia, where about half of tertiary enrolment is in private institutions, regulatory action to enforce quality standards and combat fraud (e.g. fictitious classes, the sale of degrees, misuse of public scholarship funds) resulted in dozens of licences being revoked. As shutting down institutions has social costs, stricter licensing, consolidation of small institutions and a freeze on new private university approvals have been recommended (Yamin, 2023). In Libya, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research announced in 2021 that only 10 of the 74 private higher education institutions would be allowed to admit new students (El-Galil, 2021). In Togo, where the number of private institutions grew from 4 in 1996 (Akakpo-Numado, 2011) to 93 in 2025 (Togo Ministry of Higher Education and Research, 2025), the government established a national accreditation agency and performance-based licensing, reducing unaccredited institutions by one third.

Accreditation has not always worked smoothly. In Botswana, the quality assurance system has solid foundations but struggles with keeping up with challenges emerging from a wide range of delivery modalities, and it would benefit from stronger internal quality assurance processes (Malau-Modiega, 2023). In Guatemala, the main public university licenses and oversees non-state providers, potentially creating conflicts of interest (Ferreyra et al., 2017). Accreditation is voluntary for non-state institutions in India and Mexico (Gérard, 2020; Ravi et al., 2019).

Financing is another conundrum. Since the mid-1990s, Kenya has been encouraging public and private higher education institutions to compete with each other (Munene and Otieno, 2008). Public universities differentiated admission standards between government-sponsored (higher) and privately sponsored (lower) students. The latter pay full tuition fees or moderate fees if supported by government loans. Meanwhile, universities have been recovering accommodation and boarding costs and expanding income streams. By 2005, privately sponsored enrolment had surpassed government-sponsored enrolment. In 2016, the government began paying 80% of the tuition fees in private universities. This financing has raised sustainability concerns (Kenya Parliament, 2025), just as private universities have been claiming USD 362 million in arrears (Nganga, 2024). At the same time, financial barriers remain for low-income students because public financial support is limited and the means testing mechanism is inefficient.

DIVERSIFYING PROVISION

Another policy for expanding higher education is the diversification of education provision, in terms of types of institutions and delivery modalities, including open and distance learning, short-cycle courses, vocationally oriented programmes and flexible pathways. Such differentiation helps tailor provision to the needs of many, including disadvantaged groups. At the same time, there are concerns that diversification contributes to stratifying the system and entrenching inequality.

A diversified ecosystem with universities, technical institutes, applied science colleges and other institutions increases flexibility and adaptability to changing demographic, economic and social needs. In Brazil, the expansion of a diversified tertiary system, including federal universities, federal institutes of education, science and technology, short-cycle technical programmes, and distance education, enabled rapid

enrolment growth by providing multiple entry points for working adults, first-generation students and learners in non-metropolitan areas (Barbosa, 2024; OECD, 2021). In India, technical and vocational institutions have been established for scheduled castes and rural tribal populations, while distance modalities have improved access to higher education through open universities, evening colleges, correspondence courses and part-time programmes, resulting in increased enrolment (Varghese, 2015; Biswal, 2025).

> Student enrolment in the world's largest open universities accounts for 4% of total higher education enrolment

Open and distance education has made a major contribution to access to higher education. Student enrolment in the world's largest open universities – China (4.6 million) (Xiao et al., 2025), India (3.1 million) (IGNOU, 2024), Indonesia (0.8 million) (Universitas Terbuka, 2025), Nigeria (0.5 million) (NOUN, 2025), Pakistan (1 million) (AIOU, 2025) and Türkiye (1 million) (Anadolu University, 2025) – accounts for 4% of total higher education enrolment. In the Caribbean and the Pacific, distance education modalities are critical. The University of the West Indies Open Campus has 23,000 students (UWI, 2025) out of a total student population in its 17 countries and territories that does not exceed 150,000. More than half of the 30,000 students currently enrolled at the University of the South Pacific study outside its main campus, many online or by other flexible modes of delivery (USP, 2025). Distance learning has been shown to increase higher education participation in the United States, an effect that increased by one fifth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Emara et al., 2025).

Private institutions are often at the forefront of open and distance learning. In Brazil, the number of such courses expanded from 10 in 2000 to 10,500 in 2023 (Barbosa, 2024). Half of tertiary education students are using distance modalities and 97% of these were in private institutions (Marques, 2025). In Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria, private institutions have filled gaps by offering evening programmes or distance programmes and short professional courses that public systems could not provide (Teferra and Tamrat, 2017).

Digital technology has offered huge expansion opportunities, but it is difficult to bypass disparities in internet bandwidth, device access and digital literacy. To ensure inclusivity, governments must invest in digital infrastructure and subsidize internet access. In India, free massive open online courses, which are recognized for course credits, are offered by the SWAYAM government portal for online learning and the National Digital University (India Ministry of Education, 2025). They are good examples of how public digital resources can expand reach while maintaining standards (Raj et al., 2025).

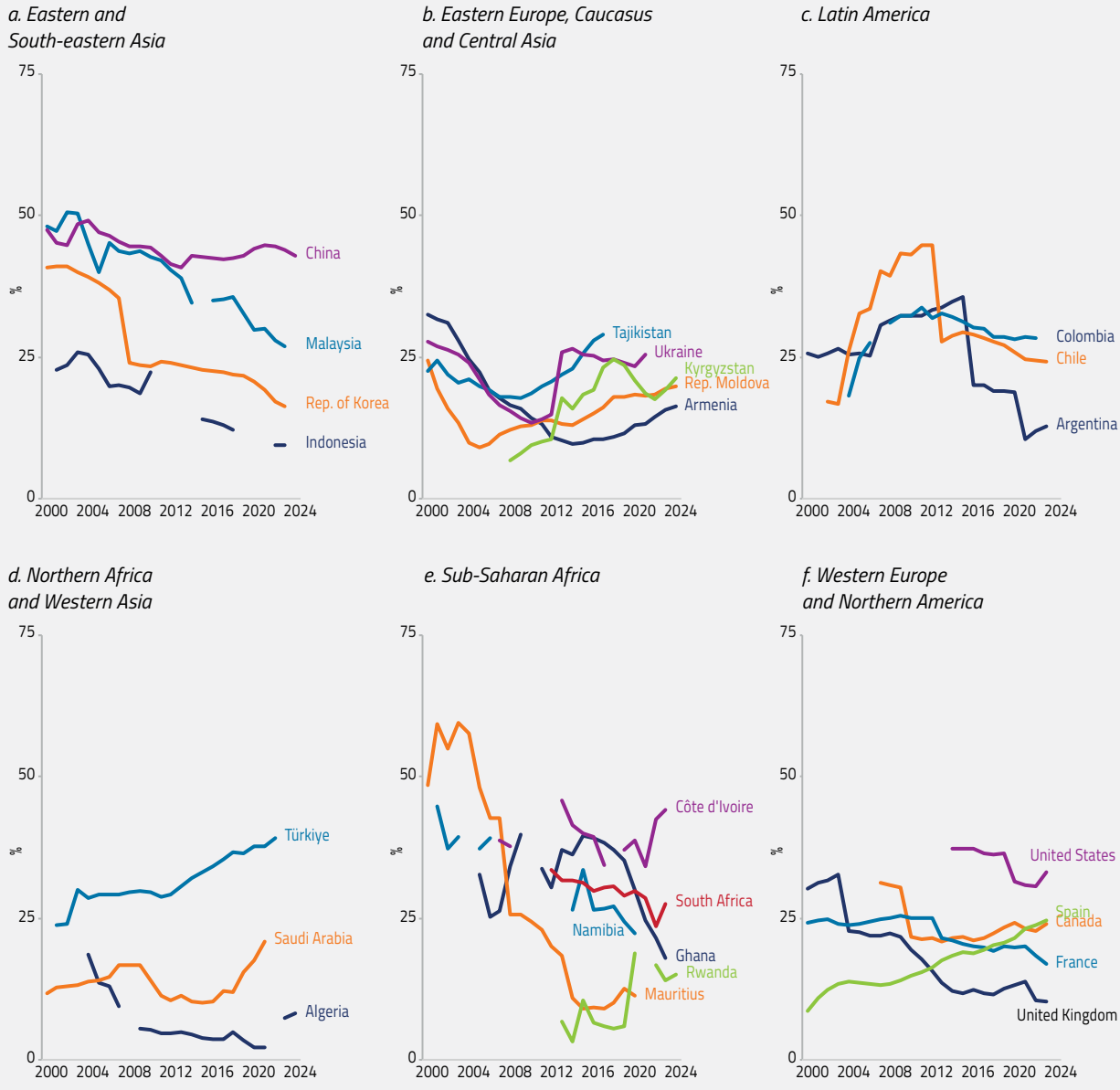
Short-cycle tertiary programmes, known as level 5 of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), offer an applied alternative to academic university tracks that is aligned with the labour market. Global data have gaps but evidence from about 100 countries suggests that the share of ISCED 5 in total tertiary enrolment has remained at about 15% with a tendency towards a weak decline. However, it has been increasing in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia since 2010. Moreover, it remains an important and constant share of enrolment in several countries including China, Côte d'Ivoire and the United States and has grown in countries such as Colombia, Spain and Türkiye (**Figure 5.12**).

Short-cycle programmes are often, though not always, vocationally oriented. In China, post-secondary education enrolment has grown faster in vocational than in general institutions in western provinces such as Gansu, Guizhou and Yunnan. More than half of upper secondary vocational school graduates progress to short-cycle tertiary (3-year) programmes or undergraduate studies for further education (Yu et al., 2024). In Germany, graduates of the dual vocational education and training (VET) system, which combines school-based training with apprenticeships, can enter post-secondary vocational institutions such as Fachschulen (technical schools) or Berufsakademien (vocational academies) to pursue applied science tertiary studies (Hippach-Schneider et al., 2007). This pathway between vocational and higher education has helped ease the transition of disadvantaged youth into tertiary education.

FIGURE 5.12:

Short-cycle programmes have served tertiary education expansion in some countries

Share of total tertiary education enrolment in ISCED 5 programmes, selected countries with high shares, by region, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig5_12

Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database.

Trends in participation at ISCED 5 level must be interpreted with caution. The implementation of ISCED 2011 led to the reclassification of many programmes in Europe, resulting in some abrupt shifts in reported enrolment after its adoption in 2013. In Germany, enrolment at ISCED 5 exceeded 300,000 students in 2002 (the latest year available under the previous classification) but declined to around 11,000 in 2023. This sharp decrease reflects the reclassification of programmes, with some reassigned to post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4), including two- and three-year health-sector school programmes, and others, including Berufsakademien and some Fachschule programmes, reclassified as bachelor's or equivalent (ISCED 6) (UNESCO, 2025).

Post-secondary vocational education is another potential, though sometimes only indirect, route to higher education. Its effectiveness in expanding higher education enrolment depends on the quality and relevance of training, flexible pathways linking vocational and academic strands, and recognition (CEDEFOP, 2017). Post-secondary vocational education can attract students under-represented in academic tracks, such as vocational school graduates (Nikolai and Ebner, 2012). Austria and Switzerland introduced the vocational secondary school graduation certificate, which increased entry into applied science universities for vocational track students (Hoeckel and Schwartz, 2010; Kriesi and Schweri, 2022). In the Netherlands, a pathway between vocational secondary education (MBO) and applied science universities (HBO) has been important, including for adults with prior work experience (Broek, 2017). Flexible admissions, modularisation and new pathways have been changing the perception of VET. In the European Union, 71% of VET students were in programmes granting direct access to tertiary education in 2021 and 40% of VET graduates pursued further studies. Guidance and validation of non-formal learning support further integration (CEDEFOP, 2024). In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, credits and diplomas are transferable, allowing vocational secondary school graduates to pursue science and engineering degrees (Phoumilay and Noonan, 2020).

Post-secondary vocational education also provides an applied learning environment that builds confidence and offers technical skills for students with such background. In Argentina, the NEXOS programme (Tavela et al., 2019) and its successor Seguimos Estudiando (We keep on studying) connected universities with non-university higher education institutes facilitating voluntary student transfers, course changes and exchanges between universities, enhancing flexibility within the framework of the National Academic Recognition System (Fernández Lamarra, 2023). In Australia, vocational paths have improved participation by offering entry points into higher education (Karmel and Liu, 2011). In Canada, college-based post-secondary non-tertiary programmes have served as stepping stones for adults and young people who later can transition to degree studies, particularly in provinces with strong articulation agreements between institutions that recognize such learning (Frenette, 2019; Higher Education Strategy Associates, 2025).

Internationalization of tertiary education is a zero-sum game, since higher enrolment in the receiving country means lower enrolment in the country of origin, but helps explain different rates of expansion between countries. Globally, international mobile students account for nearly 3% of tertiary enrolment but their share is much higher in several systems, particularly in Europe, Oceania and the Gulf countries. Between 2001 and 2023, the share of international students doubled from 21% to 41% in Qatar and from 11% to 23% in the United Kingdom. In Canada, it increased from 3% to 21%. As some countries, including Australia and the United States, are reducing the number of foreign students (Luscombe, 2025; Norton, 2025), others have established deliberate policies to attract them. In 2025, New Zealand announced a policy to double the number of foreign students by 2034 (Craymer, 2025). Türkiye made internationalization a strategic priority in its Higher Education Strategy, aiming to increase the number of international students from 350,000 in 2024 to over 500,000 in 2028 and so increase its share of the global international student population to 6.25% (Türkiye Council of Higher Education, 2025).

> Globally, international mobile students account for nearly 3% of tertiary enrolment

Finally, **advanced tertiary degrees** represent another pathway for tertiary expansion, particularly in high-income countries. Beyond short-cycle and bachelor's programmes, some systems offer long first degrees at the master's level as an entry point into tertiary education. These programmes typically last at least five years and provide advanced academic or professional training in fields such as medicine, law or engineering. In France and Sweden, such programmes account for around 18% of total tertiary enrolment (OECD, 2025b). Globally, most tertiary students are enrolled in short-cycle or bachelor's-level programmes. However, in many European countries with available data, more than 20% of tertiary students are enrolled in master's and doctoral programmes, with shares approaching 40% in Austria, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy and Slovakia (OECD, 2025b). These high proportions partly reflect structural reforms under the Bologna Process, which harmonized degree structures across Europe and replaced longer, single-cycle programmes with a three-cycle system (Bachelor–Master–Doctorate) (European Commission, 2022). The share of Master's students in total enrolment is also high in Algeria and Tunisia, where it increased in the 2010s to reach 37% in 2021.

MAKING PATHWAYS FLEXIBLE

As the examples described in this chapter suggest, it is not enough to diversify provision. It is also important to remove obstacles for youth and adults of all ages to access post-secondary education. For example,

the 2024 Australian Universities Accord recommended an increase in the share of 25- to 34-year-olds with university education to 55% by 2050 and, among those, the share with vocational or technical qualifications to be 40%. It recognizes that access for students from the lowest quartile in terms of socioeconomic background, which currently stands at 17% of total tertiary enrolment, must increase to achieve these goals, including through a unified tertiary system joining VET and universities, a national skills passport, improved credit transfer, recognition of prior learning, and modular options or micro-credentials (Australia Government, 2024).

A key to effective transition is well-designed **qualifications frameworks** that standardize education across types and levels of providers and facilitate credit transfers. In Bhutan, the 2012 qualifications framework enables credit transfer and recognizes formal, non-formal and informal learning (Bhutan Accreditation Council, 2012). China's Vocational Education Action Plan 2020–2023 called for a national qualifications framework, a vocational education 'credit bank' and personal 'credit accounts' to document achievements. The plan also proposes mechanisms for converting prior experience into course credits, supports the open university system for lifelong learning, and encourages vocational colleges to boost training capacity, especially in non-award and short-course programmes (China State Council, 2019).

The concept of **recognition of prior learning** is central to discussions on how to democratize access to higher education and prevent diversification from leading to stratification. It aims to help adults without required formal qualifications to access higher education as well as to reduce the time required and therefore the cost to obtain a qualification. In Malaysia, the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning system enables adults without traditional qualifications, including graduates of post-secondary vocational education, to gain admission into diploma and degree programmes (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2020; UNESCO-IIEP, 2021). But in Bangladesh and South Africa, weak credit transfer mechanisms and strong academic–vocational hierarchies have limited transitions (Groener and Andrews, 2019; Kabir and Ahmed, 2024).

Recognition of prior learning can be used to help students access higher education, obtain credits or even receive a full higher education degree. However, it is yet to become a decisive factor which improves higher education participation, even in Europe, where many countries have taken steps to establish systems through which adults can validate skills gained outside formal education. These efforts build on the 2008 European Qualifications Framework, the 2009 European Credit System for Vocational Education, the 2012 Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning Recommendation and the 2016 Upskilling Pathways initiative. About 10% of students in 25 European countries had accessed higher education through a non-standard route (Hauschildt et al., 2018), although this was mostly a delayed rather than a truly alternative route (Eurydice, 2018). One in two of those who accessed higher education through a non-standard route had regular prior work experience, compared to just one in five among those who used a standard route (Hauschildt et al., 2018). This suggests the high potential of recognizing prior learning but for that potential to be realized the obstacle of costly and labour-intensive processes needs to be overcome (Martin and Godonoga, 2020).

> “Recognition of prior learning is yet to become a decisive factor which improves higher education participation”

The Academic Credit Bank System in the Republic of Korea, operating under the Ministry of Education, is a credit accumulation and recognition system, which allows learners to combine credits from diverse sources (e.g. universities, approved training institutions and recognized prior learning) towards formally accredited degrees. By institutionalizing recognition of prior learning and flexible credit pathways, it supports adult participation in higher education and improves the links between vocational and academic tracks (Academic Credit Bank System, 2025).

Micro-credentials can be defined as a record of learning achievement for self-standing short-duration courses that is 'additional, alternate or complementary to or a component of formal qualifications' (Oliver, 2019), and which 'includes assessment based on clearly defined standards and is awarded by a trusted provider' (Oliver, 2022). As providers may or may not be registered as tertiary education institutions, micro-credentials are not taken into account in international tertiary education statistics. Their potential impact on higher education participation is ambiguous. It may be zero if they are not seen as building towards a higher education qualification, even if they meet learner demands for flexibility. But it may be positive if they are integrated into national qualifications frameworks, as Australia and Malaysia have done, and if they are seen as complementary to formal degrees (Varadarajan et al., 2023).

AMENDING SELECTION CRITERIA

Regulations shape who enters higher education institutions and can have a major impact on how fast a higher education system expands and whether it does so equitably, reducing barriers for disadvantaged population groups.

Admission processes

The characteristics of national school leaving and university entrance examinations, as well as the mechanism by which candidates select and are assigned to courses, affect the pace of tertiary education expansion and the degree to which it is equitable. A focus on competitive examinations rather than broader criteria tends to disadvantage marginalized groups (Amaral, 2022). When VET enrolment fell in Viet Nam, the government responded with the VET Development Strategy 2021–2030 and measures to ease transitions between education levels, including the removal of the national secondary school examination requirement for college entry (BIBB and GIZ, 2023). During COVID-19, universities that eased application requirements or suspended entrance tests saw more rural and first-generation students apply (Case and Monday, 2025).

> Admission processes are a key instrument for expanding tertiary education, particularly through changes in eligibility criteria other than competitive selection

Admission processes are a key instrument for expanding tertiary education, particularly through changes in eligibility criteria other than competitive selection (Oliveri and Wendler, 2020). There has been a shift toward eligibility-based or mixed admission models, in which completion of upper secondary education confers the right to apply and admission rules are standardized and transparent (Michel and Pollard, 2020). Yet entry to higher education continues to be strongly influenced by academic records, social background and gender. High achievers enter more selective programmes, with segregation mostly occurring between institution types rather than through selection. In France, a higher education admission platform (Parcoursup) introduced in 2018 shifted ranking practices but did not significantly change overall academic, social or gender segregation, which largely resulted from applicant preferences (Bechichi et al., 2022). In Scandinavia, broad eligibility through upper secondary qualifications is combined with centralized matching for oversubscribed programmes, as governments try to achieve competing goals (Cohodes et al., 2025).

In 2010, Brazil launched the unified selection system, known by its acronym SISU, a centralized online admissions system using national examination scores for federal and state institutions, with the objective of making access to higher education more democratic (Campos and Emmendoerfer, 2020). However, while it raised the average number of applications, one of the unintended outcomes was that it also increased the admission rate of private school students from other states by five percentage points (Mello, 2022).

In Portugal, a 2006 decree law lowered the mature student entry age to 23, allowing higher education institutions to set entrance examinations and expand the range of prior learning recognized. The reform initially led to a twentyfold rise in mature student admissions, mostly at private polytechnics keen to expand their enrolment, rather than in the more selective public universities. Eventually, the share of mature students fell from 15% in 2006/07 to 8% in 2012/13, but the absolute number remained much higher than before the reform (Amorim, 2018).

Affirmative action

Affirmative action and quotas can help redress long-standing discrimination inherent in traditional higher education examination systems and expand enrolment for targeted students (Bowen and Bok, 2019). For example, the Special College Admission Policy in China reserves key college seats for students from impoverished rural areas. Data from the China Family Panel Study show that this policy has raised educational attainment: eligible individuals average 0.55 more years of schooling, with four-year college attendance up by 8.4 percentage points (Zhao et al., 2026).

> 32% of countries include specific admission criteria for disadvantaged groups in their laws and policies

It has been previously estimated that one in four countries had some form of affirmative action for admissions, at least to public and publicly funded institutions, such as targeted quotas with legal and funding mechanisms (Jenkins and Moses, 2014). An update for this report, which is featured in the PEER country profiles, shows that

32% of countries include specific admission criteria for disadvantaged groups in their laws and policies, ranging from 6% in Oceania and 21% in sub-Saharan Africa to 35% in Latin America and the Caribbean and 46% in Central and Southern Asia.

In Ecuador, the 2009 Plan for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Ethnic Exclusion set a 10% quota for admission to secondary and higher education of Afro-Ecuadorians, indigenous peoples and the Montubios, a mestizo population (Ecuador Ministry of Heritage Coordination, 2009). Universities in Uganda and mainland Tanzania have been awarding extra entrance points to female applicants. In Austria, the 2017 National Strategy on Higher Education aimed to boost second-generation immigrant student participation from 22% to 30% and raise higher education admission rates to 42% (Austria Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy, 2017). Georgia offers adapted admission for students from Armenian and Azerbaijani mother-tongue secondary schools (Tabatadze and Gorgadze, 2017). In Pakistan, the 2014 Government Rules and Disability Act, amended in 2021, established admission quotas for students with disabilities (Pakistan Higher Education Commission, 2021). In Indonesia, the 2012 Higher Education Act required public universities to reserve 20% of seats for exceptional students from disadvantaged or remote areas and the Higher Education Affirmation (ADik) programme was launched, which lowered admission standards for students from the six provinces in western New Guinea and from other underdeveloped, frontier and outermost regions (3T) (Jakarta Post, 2024).

A systematic review that covered affirmative action policies around the world and across sectors, including education, found that two thirds of almost 200 studies in 27 countries had concluded that the outcome had been positive for the targeted groups. The review also pointed at a few studies that looked at the impact of these measures on non-targeted, non-marginalized groups, which tends to be negative, although it is not clear whether this is in relative terms, as would be expected, or also in absolute terms, reducing their access to education (Schotte et al., 2023).

In Brazil, a 2012 law on quotas requires public federal higher education institutions (which account for around 14% of total tertiary enrolment, although several state-level public institutions that account for another 11% adopted similar policies) to reserve half of their seats for applicants who are public secondary school graduates. Within this reserved share, specific quotas apply for Black, indigenous and low-income students. Enrolment of these students increased, as well as that of students with disadvantaged backgrounds not explicitly targeted by the law (Vieira and Arends-Kuenning, 2019). By one estimate, the share of public school students increased by 10 percentage points (Mello, 2022). Students admitted through the quota system show the same level of performance as other students (Wainer and Melguizo, 2018). In 2023, 51% of quota students successfully completed their degree, compared with 41% of non-quota students (INEP, 2024).

In India, reservation policies date back to the 19th century (Basant and Sen, 2020). The 1956 University Grants Commission Act mandates central universities (except minority institutions) to strictly implement reservation policies, while state universities follow reservation percentages as prescribed by their respective state governments. The proportion of students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes increased from 43% in 2010 to 61% in 2022/23 (ETeducation, 2025). Some states such as Bihar also extend quotas to private institutions (Henry et al., 2020). A parliamentary committee recently recommended legislation to establish quotas in private higher education institutions with 15% for Scheduled Castes, 7.5% for Scheduled Tribes and 27% for Other Backward Classes (Harigovind, 2025).

In the early 2000s, Israel implemented an affirmative action policy that assigns an eligibility score to candidates based on factors like neighbourhood and school disadvantage, parental education, family conditions and personal hardships using a confidential algorithm. Eligible applicants received a sizeable admissions boost. Analysis of 12-year data on students who attended one university showed that dropout rates did not differ between the 5% of students who benefitted from affirmative action and those who did not (Rotem et al., 2021).

In Sri Lanka, universities under the University Grants Commission follow a quota system dating from the 1970s and amended in 1991. Of all places, 40% go to top scorers on the all-island merit list. The remaining 60% are allocated according to merit-based scores (40%), district quotas (55%) and who come from 16 disadvantaged districts (5%). Analysis of 56,000 applicants showed that switching to a purely merit-based system would have a negative but small impact on equity. In 2017, 29,700 students were admitted; a merit-only policy would have raised this to 30,100, with some students losing their spots because of the loss of the district quota (de Silva et al., 2021).

In the United States, affirmative action had been credited with making the student body more representative of the population. Excluding non-resident students, the share

of university students increased between 1976 and 2021 from 9.6% to 13.1% among Blacks (although down from 15% in 2010), from 3.6% to 20.6% among Hispanics, and from 1.8% to 7.9% among Asians (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). However, in 2023, the Supreme Court banned affirmative action in higher education admissions, citing violations of the equal-protection clause (Rios, 2023). No nationwide data have been reported following the ruling, although institution-level data from some prestigious universities reported a decline in the share of Black students (Thomas, 2025).

CONCLUSION

Post-secondary education has undergone a profound transformation globally over the past decades. Participation has grown rapidly, although this expansion has not translated proportionately into gains in terms of completion. In addition, unlike pre-primary, primary and secondary education, post-secondary education cannot be framed in terms of universal participation. It is not by chance that SDG target 4.3 emphasizes equity, affordability and quality instead. National objectives are tied to factors such as labour market structure, fiscal capacity and development strategies. In brief, expansion targets, gaps between enrolment and graduation, and large disparities in both participation and graduation are key policy challenges for all governments.

> “Expansion targets, gaps between enrolment and graduation, and large disparities in both participation and graduation are key policy challenges for all governments.”

Robust causal evaluations of the effects of policies and programmes on expansion remain limited. The majority of studies document participation trends, student profiles and transition patterns rather than estimating the long-term impact of specific policies, whether on the demand side, such as loans, or on the supply side, such as admission mechanisms. Policy trade-offs between expansion, cost sharing, targeted aid and institutional accountability are unavoidable. Evidence reviewed in this chapter suggests that targeted financial support, whether through grants or income-contingent loans, tends to be more equitable and fiscally sustainable than universal untargeted subsidies.

Policy interventions which can have a positive impact on an equitable expansion of higher education opportunities include investments in quality, credit recognition and flexible pathways. Diversification – for instance through short-cycle programmes, open and distance learning – offers new opportunities but may also create hierarchies if mobility between different types of higher education institutions is not facilitated. Operational qualifications frameworks and credit transfer systems can play a constructive role in that respect.



FUNAFUTI, TUVALU: Vanessa Talake ferries her son Enoch to school on a motorbike. Due to her son's genetic disability, Enoch is unable to do mundane tasks on his own, including to speak, eat, or stand. Talake hopes one day Funafuti will have teachers specialized in caring for children like Enoch.

Credit: © UNICEF/UNI910608/Highway Child*



CHAPTER

6

Equity



KEY MESSAGES

What do the data show?

Global monitoring has advanced the debate on equity *but* its limits are also now clear.

- The 2030 Agenda drove an unprecedented expansion of disaggregated education data, yet – besides global monitoring – higher priority should be assigned to the national monitoring of inequality.

The parity index is a useful tool *but* is easily misread.

- For most SDG 4 indicators, such as the out-of-school and completion rates, the parity index tends to improve almost as the level of the indicator being disaggregated rises, not necessarily because systems are becoming fairer. It can be informative only if analysed in context.

Progress on gender disparity has been real *but* wealth gaps remain deeply entrenched.

- Between 2000 and 2024, the share of countries with high gender disparity at the expense of girls fell from 20% to 4% at the lower secondary level. Wealth-related disparities, however, remain strong: in the early 2020s, 83% of countries had extreme wealth gaps in pre-primary and 55% in upper secondary education.

The availability of disaggregated data has expanded *but* not enough.

- Since 2000, 44% of countries have at most three survey observations on completion disaggregated by location, and 62% by wealth.

What do we know about policies associated with expansion and equity in the long run?

Financing policies can help redistribute funds to help disadvantaged learners.

- Governments have many policy tools to improve equity, of which financing is a key one. Higher public education spending can benefit disadvantaged groups, but it matters whether resources are intentionally targeted at regions, schools and students held back by poverty, geography and other barriers.

There are five main mechanisms to redistribute education resources, but all are underused.

- *Decentralization*: 58% of countries channel funds to subnational governments, but only half apply equity criteria and just 14% have a strong equity focus.
- *Transfers to schools*: 76% of countries reallocate resources to disadvantaged schools, yet transfers represent less than 0.5% of education spending in at least half of these countries.
- *Transfers to students*: 62% of ministries provide direct financial assistance to disadvantaged learners, but 40% of countries have no equity-oriented student transfers, and where they exist, coverage and benefit levels rarely remove financial barriers fully.
- *School feeding*: 84% of countries have school meal programmes but fewer than one third of primary school students receive free or subsidized meals.
- Social protection transfers: Conditional cash transfers raise enrolment and attainment, but their effectiveness depends on transfers being predictable, easy to access and well targeted.

A new index finds that fewer than 1 in 10 countries have a strong equity focus in their financing.

- The index assesses countries' efforts to redistribute funds to improve equity in education based on the coverage and volume of their programmes: some 8% of countries' efforts were assessed to be advanced, 39% established, 33% emerging and 19% latent. The share of established or advanced systems rises from 12% in low-income to 58% in high-income countries.

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Key trends

Leaving no one behind is the 'central, transformative promise' of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, representing a commitment to 'eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities' (United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2019; p. 12). To understand whether progress is being made, data on development outcome indicators need to be disaggregated by sex, wealth, location and a range of other characteristics – some of which may be comparable between countries and others which may only be relevant for comparisons within countries. With the exception of disparity by sex, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) between 2000 and 2015 did not emphasize disaggregation, but the growing availability of survey data in the 2000s has allowed attention to turn to inequality and how to address it.

The education sector was one of those sectors that used disaggregated data to shed light on large disparities. This commitment was expressed strongly in the 2010 *EFA Global Monitoring Report* on marginalization and the launch of the first version of what was to become the World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE), which helped visualize not only disparity by individual characteristics but also, critically, their intersection. Of course, there is much more to equity in education than disaggregated statistics on education outputs and outcomes: these are only manifestations of the impact of unequal resource distribution (e.g. allocating teachers) and biased structural processes (e.g. streaming students) that exclude and discriminate. Still, these statistics serve as a powerful summary of social injustice.

With the benefit of hindsight, this section reviews the progress and limitations of monitoring education inequality over the past 25 years from a comparative perspective. It begins with a summary of the promise and perils of the belief that monitoring progress towards equity is possible and can yield unambiguous comparative insights between countries and over time. It discusses three key issues that have dampened that initial optimism. It then discusses selected findings that do emerge from internationally comparable data sources, documenting how disparity by sex, wealth and location have evolved over time.

MONITORING EQUITY IN EDUCATION IS NOT STRAIGHTFORWARD

Household survey data sets have already started demonstrating striking disparity between population groups in the 1990s. Around the middle of that decade, three major multipurpose household survey programmes were consolidated and standardized: the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS), the US-funded Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and the UNICEF Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS). As their publicly available data sets accumulated, they started painting a broader picture of inequality. All surveys contained basic information on household members' education participation and attainment that could be linked to individual characteristics. Some characteristics that were less commonly observed and previously hidden, such as ethnicity and religion, suddenly came to the forefront. This situation created optimism and led to the 'leave no one behind' principle in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to targets (such as SDG target 4.5 on equity in education), and to a monitoring framework characterized by explicit references to equity. SDG target 17.18 on statistical capacity called on data to be disaggregated 'by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant to national contexts' (United Nations, 2015; p. 27).

Data disaggregation was also one of the nine principles of the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development initiative: 'No one should be invisible. To the extent possible and with due safeguards for individual privacy and data quality, data should be disaggregated across many dimensions … with due protections for privacy and human rights. Disaggregated data can provide a better comparative picture of what works, and help inform and promote evidence-based policy making at every level' (Independent Expert Advisory Group, 2014; p. 22).

> What matters more than global monitoring is encouraging, if not demanding, that countries put the monitoring of equity at the heart of their governance and policy frameworks

However, it is fair to say that the initial promise appears to have stalled, including in education. Three issues appear key from a global perspective: the relevance of the monitoring framework – and of global monitoring of equity; the availability of appropriate data; and the limitations of comparisons. Ultimately, what matters more than global monitoring – and where global actors can make the biggest contribution – is encouraging, if not demanding, that countries put the monitoring of equity at the heart of their governance and policy frameworks, respecting principles of data quality, integrity, timeliness, transparency, openness, usability, independence, capacity and rights.

INDICATOR RELEVANCE

The focus of monitoring equity in education has been on SDG global indicator 4.5.1, the parity index, which is the ratio of the value of an indicator for one (in principle, disadvantaged) group relative to the value of that indicator for another group (usually privileged). Its value ranges from 0 (extreme inequality at the expense of the disadvantaged group) to 1 (parity) and 2 (extreme inequality at the expense of the privileged group).

This is not a new inequality measure in the global monitoring architecture: it was part of the MDG monitoring framework, where it was used to monitor disparity for one characteristic (sex, i.e. the gender parity index) and two indicators (the gross enrolment ratio in primary, secondary and tertiary education, and the youth and adult literacy rate). But under the SDGs, the use of the parity index has been generalized to more characteristics (mainly wealth and location but also others) and indicators: practically every SDG 4 monitoring indicator that could be disaggregated was included. This meant an unrealistic amount of potential inequality trends to keep track and make sense of. Note that the parity index is only one inequality measure. As the 2016 *Global Education Monitoring Report* showed, for the same education indicator values compared over time, the parity index may suggest that inequality is increasing when another measure (e.g. the range or the concentration index) may suggest that it is decreasing (UNESCO, 2016).

The parity index is appealing because it compresses information into a single, easy-to-compare number. But this strength is also its limitation. First, a parity index can suggest that inequality is increasing or decreasing without explaining if this is because access is improving among disadvantaged groups, if the situation is stagnating or worsening for privileged groups or if both groups are expanding at different speeds. Second, the parity index is mechanically linked to the levels of the underpinning indicator for most of the SDG 4 indicators, which range between 0% and 100%, such as the out-of-school rate and the completion rate.

The parity index must therefore be interpreted cautiously. Its value tends to increase with the level of the indicator: it is low (a high level of inequality) when the value of the indicator is low (and the value for the disadvantaged group is close to 0%) and it is high (a low level of inequality) when the value of the indicator is high (and the value for the disadvantaged group is close to 100%). In other words, it offers limited information: knowing the level of the education indicator helps predict, to a large extent, the level of 'inequality'. Knowing that the parity index improved, most likely only means that the value of the underlying indicator has increased. This can be illustrated by plotting all values of the upper secondary completion rate observed since 2000 against the corresponding wealth parity index values (**Figure 6.1**). It would be wrong to compare the value of the parity index of two countries at different completion rate levels and conclude that the country with a higher completion is less unequal.

> "The parity index must be interpreted cautiously"

However, the index is still useful in two ways. First, it can be used to compare inequality between countries at similar levels of the indicator. For example, in 2001 the upper secondary completion rate in Bolivia was 52% but the wealth parity index was 0.15 (i.e. for every 100 youth from the richest 20% of households who completed secondary school, only 15 young people from the poorest 20% of households achieved the same). For the same value of the indicator (52%), the wealth parity index was 0.29 in El Salvador in 2012 and 0.38 in the Dominican Republic in 2008. It is possible that these index differences suggest the presence of more powerful inequality-generating social and education structures in some countries than in others, but the comparison needs to be made in context.

Second, the index can be used to compare the evolution of a country's disparity levels over time and particularly how it compares to the average pattern, as highlighted in an 'expected' disparity line, indicating the typical range of variation around it (plus or minus one standard deviation). Most country-year observations fall within this band, indicating that wealth parity generally follows a predictable trajectory as completion rises. Yet a subset of observations lies outside the band, suggesting cases where disparity is systematically larger or smaller than would be expected at a given level of an indicator. Bolivia began with high inequality in the early 2000s (the value of the parity index was below the average trend line) but improved quickly and found itself above the average within a decade. There are few examples of such major and visible progress in a short period of time but Bolivia, like some of the other countries featured in this chapter's case studies, clearly indicates that change is possible.

The core message remains that comparisons need to be made in context. Some countries with a low upper secondary completion rate values (e.g. Burundi, Comoros, Niger), medium rate values (e.g. China, Jordan, Mexico) and high rate values (e.g. Australia, Canada and the Russian Federation) have systematically higher wealth parity index values than their peers. The reasons why inequality may be

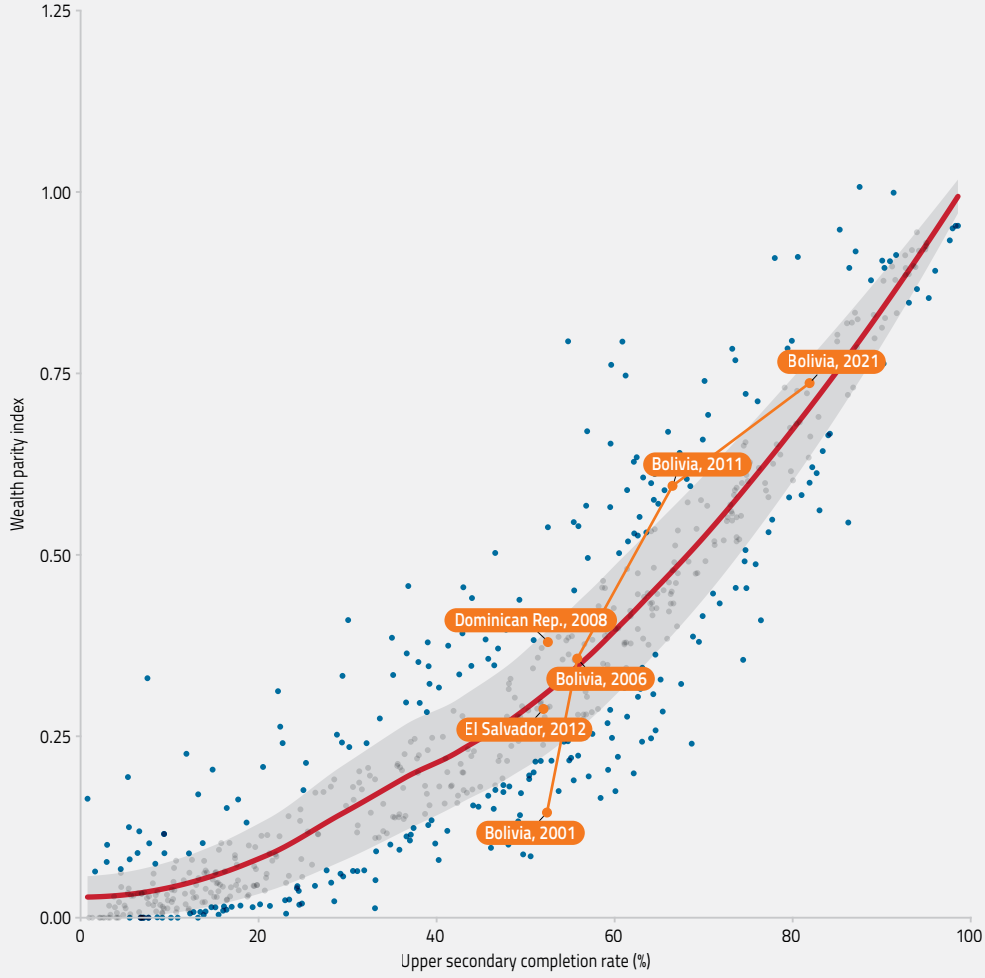
systematically lower than expected can vary and may not be strictly education related. It can be related to economics, history and geography or even to the sensitivity of the data set analysed to distinguish between groups (in this case, between the poorest and the richest).

The same clear relationship between overall completion and the parity index is shown in the case of disparity between rural and urban areas. But there are also differences in the shape of this relationship. The increase of the 'expected' disparity line accelerates as the completion rate comes closer to 100% in the case of wealth but is constant or even slows down as the completion rate comes closer to 100% in the case of location. In fact, there are many countries with high rates of completion where more youth complete upper secondary school in rural areas than in urban areas (**Figure 6.2**).

FIGURE 6.1:

Lessons from the parity index on the level and trend of education inequality in countries are limited without contextual analysis

Wealth parity index of the upper secondary completion rate, all countries with data, 2000–24

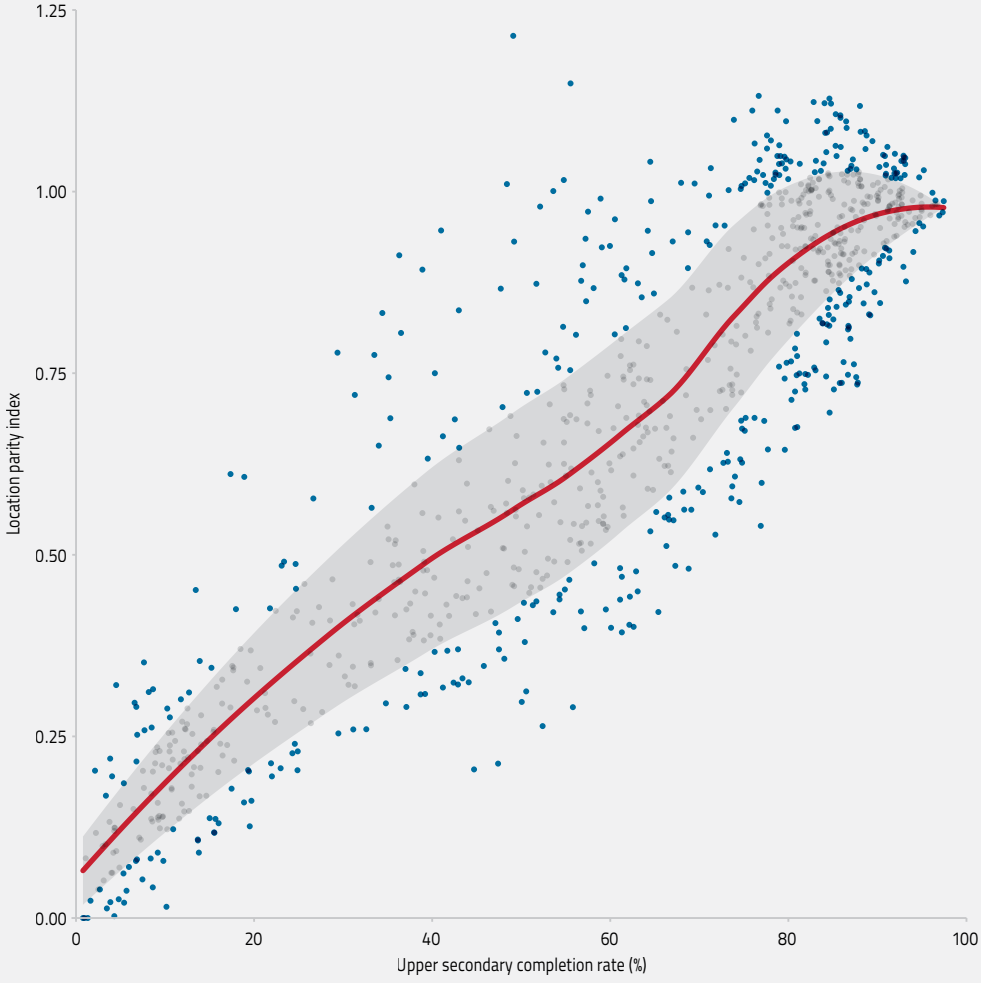


Note: The wealth parity index is the ratio of the indicator value (in this case, the upper secondary completion rate) for the poorest 20% of youth relative to the indicator value for the richest 20% of youth. Each dot represents a country-year observation. The red line shows the expected relationship between completion and wealth parity estimated using a regression. The shaded area indicates ±1 standard deviation around the expected parity level.

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_1

Source: GEM Report team analysis of the UIS database.

FIGURE 6.2:
Rural–urban gaps narrow as upper secondary completion rises
Location parity index of the upper secondary completion rate, all countries with data, 2000–24



Note: The location parity index is the ratio of the indicator value (in this case, the upper secondary completion rate) for youth in rural areas relative to the indicator value for youth in urban areas. Each dot represents a country-year observation. The red line shows the expected relationship between completion and location parity estimated using a regression. The shaded area indicates ±1 standard deviation around the expected parity level.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_2
Source: GEM Report team analysis of the UIS database.

There are at least two reasons for the observed differences in the evolution of disparity by wealth and by location. First, the characteristics being compared are different: on the one hand two equal-sized groups at the extreme end of the wealth distribution are being compared (the poorest fifth and the richest fifth), setting aside the middle 60%, and on the other two groups (rural and urban), which span the entire population, whose size is changing over time, as the urban group grows at the expense of the rural group due to internal migration. Second, sizeable wealth gaps may persist, reflecting multiple overlapping and complex barriers (e.g. direct costs, opportunity costs, household shocks, unequal access to quality services), while rural–urban gaps may be more positively impacted by interventions directly linked to service availability and distance: once schools and transport are in place in rural areas, parity can be achieved more rapidly.

Again, the core message remains that comparisons need to be made in context, comparing like for like. The fact that some countries with low upper secondary completion rate values (e.g. Lesotho, Nepal), medium values (e.g. Costa Rica, Uruguay) and high values (e.g. Slovenia, Spain) have systematically higher location

parity index values than their peers may or may not be related to education interventions. The parity index is a straightforward and essential tool for tracking education inequality among population groups, but it should not be interpreted in isolation. What it tells us depends critically on the value of the underlying indicator but also on contextual information. For this reason, parity indices are most informative when used as part of a broader analytical framework rather than as stand-alone targets.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Administrative sources can disaggregate education indicators by some individual characteristics, such as by sex and by administrative region. They also provide information on the distribution of participation by type of school. But they cannot disaggregate education indicators by socioeconomic status, ethnicity or language. In this context, household surveys – and to a lesser extent censuses – are the primary data source for exploring education inequality.

Education questions on household members are available in all major types of household surveys, including household income, budget and consumption expenditure surveys; labour force surveys (although usually for household members aged 15 and above); and multipurpose surveys (in which the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) programmes broadly belong despite their differences). This means that theoretically most countries have access to disaggregated information on education (Kovesdi and Alkire, 2026), with the potential exception of the poorest countries (which cannot afford to carry out household surveys regularly without external support), Small Island Developing States (for which it makes less sense to collect such information regularly) and conflict-affected countries (which cannot cover their territory and may even lack a sample frame).

Yet many countries still do not report disaggregated information. There are two possible broad reasons for this. First, education ministries may be unaware (or unconvinced) that such survey data can be used for target setting or planning purposes in education. In particular, many education ministries continue to rely exclusively on administrative data because it is the only data source they are familiar with and responsible for. Their collaboration with national statistical offices may be limited as might be their knowledge of the national statistical system's outputs and their trust in the information that sample surveys provide. The lack of collaboration between education ministries and national statistical offices may be explained by education ministries' perception that they are responsible only for students attending schools and not for those who have dropped out (who are covered by surveys). Education ministry staff may also lack the capacity to process and analyse survey data or even to understand the methodology and value of surveys.

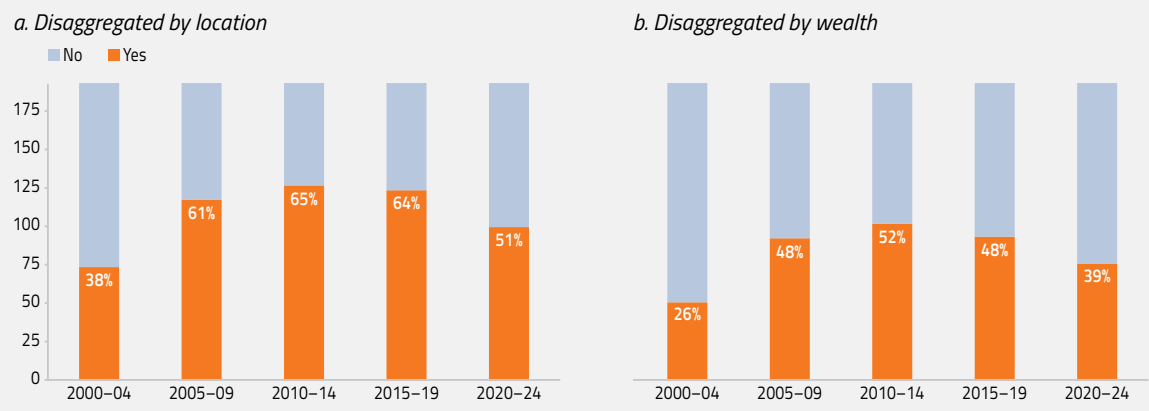
Second, it is possible that countries both understand and use survey data for education purposes but opt not to disclose them because the results are politically sensitive. A statistical performance index developed by the World Bank, not limited to surveys, which includes five data dimensions (use, services, products, sources and infrastructure) shows that while statistical performance is negatively correlated with poverty, which is to be expected and indicates a lack of resources, it is also negatively correlated with inequality, which can be a sensitive national issue (Cameron et al., 2021; Dang et al., 2023).

> “It is possible that countries both understand and use survey data for education purposes but opt not to disclose them because the results are politically sensitive”

Data availability is one thing when it refers to whether countries collect, analyse, use and report data to monitor education inequality for their own national purposes, which can only be partially observed, and another thing when it refers to whether such data are reported internationally.

To answer this latter question, given the multiple education indicators and individual characteristics available, the lower secondary completion rate disaggregated by location and wealth was selected as an indicative example. The past 25 years were split into five-year periods. In the case of rural and urban location, the percentage of countries with at least one observation in each five-year period increased from 38% in 2000–04 to 61% in 2005–09, a level maintained in the 2010s. In the case of the poorest and richest wealth quintiles, the percentage of countries with at least one observation in each five-year period increased from 26% in 2000–04 to 48% in 2005–09, a level maintained in the 2010s. There is a small decrease in the 2020s but this is mainly because of the usual lag in survey availability, the slowdown in the implementation of household surveys because of COVID-19 and the disruption caused by the end of the DHS programme in 2025 (**Figure 6.3**).

FIGURE 6.3:
Disaggregated completion rate data have been reported by at most two thirds of countries on location and one half of countries on wealth
Number of countries with at least one reported data point on the lower secondary completion rate, by five-year periods, 2000–25

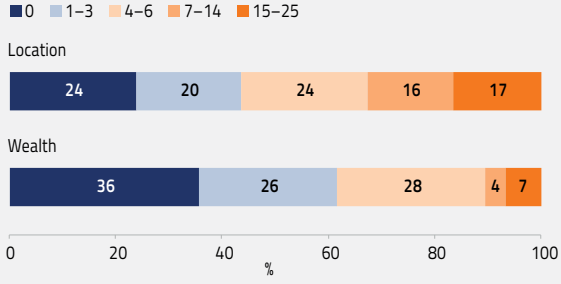


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_3
Source: GEM Report team analysis of the UIS database.

> The number of data points is insufficient to provide inequality trends for most countries

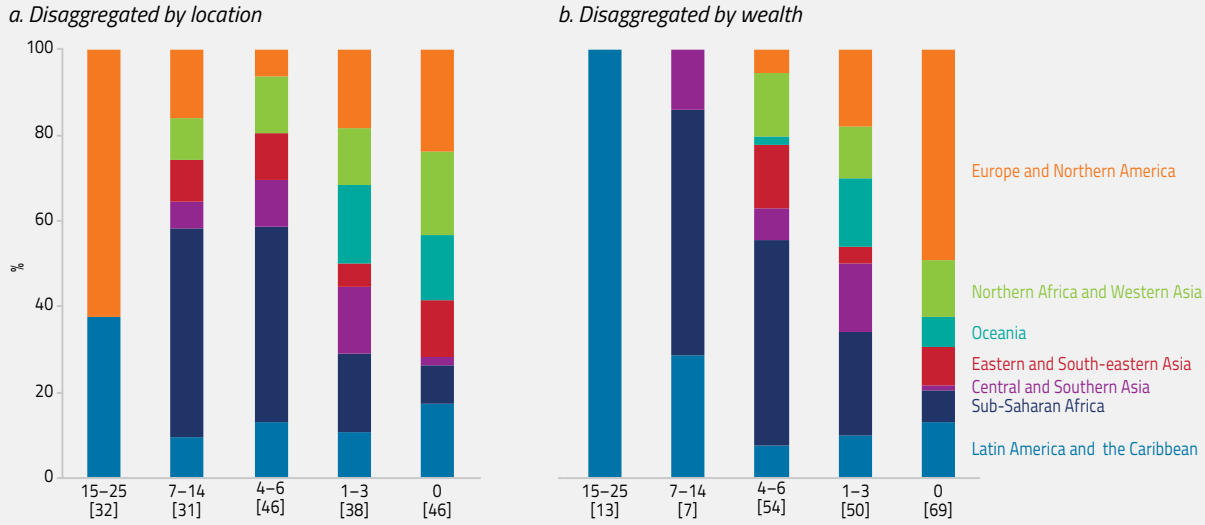
Further analysis shows that the number of data points is insufficient to provide inequality trends for most countries. In the case of location, 24% of countries have no observations at all and 44% have no more than three observations in 25 years. In the case of wealth, 36% of countries have no observations at all and 62% have no more than three observations in 25 years (**Figure 6.4**). Disaggregation of these statistics by region also shows that some regions are under- or over-represented. Sub-Saharan African countries are generally overrepresented among the countries with a sizeable number of observations (between 4 and 14) disaggregated by location and wealth because they are prioritized by international survey programmes; by contrast, Northern Africa and Western Asia and Oceania are overrepresented among the countries with zero or at most 1 to 3 observations. European and Latin American countries are the only ones with more than 15 observations disaggregated by location – and only Latin American countries by wealth (**Figure 6.5**). These patterns are explained below but one conclusion is that the monitoring of education inequality is selective, as certain countries are less likely to be monitored.

FIGURE 6.4:
Since 2000, two thirds of countries have no more than three completion rate observations disaggregated by wealth
Number of countries by the number of reported data points on the lower secondary completion rate disaggregated by location and wealth, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_4
Source: GEM Report team analysis of the UIS database.

FIGURE 6.5:
Latin America is the only region with long-term trends on completion rate inequality by wealth in the global database
Distribution of countries with reported data points on the lower secondary completion rate disaggregated by location and wealth, by region and by number of data points, 2000–24



Note: The number in brackets shows how many countries have that number of data points.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_5
Source: GEM Report team analysis of the UIS database.

It is important to note that while, in principle, countries should be reporting directly on SDG global indicator 4.5.1, the statistics are compiled by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, as part of their collaboration for the WIDE data set. They mainly draw on the publicly available DHS, LSMS and MICS microdata sets, which explains the high coverage rate in sub-Saharan Africa. They also carry out complementary efforts including a collaboration between the UIS and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to process the latter's national household survey database (which explains the high coverage rate of this region); analysis by the GEM Report as part of research projects using resources such as the Luxembourg Income Study and the Eurostat Surveys of Income and Living Conditions and Labour Force Surveys; analysis of census data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) International at the University of Minnesota; analysis of academic research survey data sets; and analysis of national household survey data sets upon direct requests to national statistical offices.

This means that the data that are available are not what countries report directly but are instead the result of some data sets being easily available for analysis to the UIS and the GEM Report – and additional efforts by the two entities to increase coverage by analysing additional available data sets, with a focus on those countries that are critical to be able to estimate reliable regional and global aggregates.

Centralizing the analysis of such data is, to a large extent, necessary to ensure consistency, which each individual country cannot offer on its own. But the process is not as efficient as it should be. There is no systematic process by which countries make their data sets publicly available. In 2004, as part of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics, the International Household Survey Network and the Accelerated Data Program were launched to improve household survey programmes, including through standards and software tools to help national statistical offices produce, document, anonymize, archive and disseminate microdata (Ngo, 2015). National data archives that listed available microdata sets to which users could request access were established in 37 of 65 countries, although by the early 2010s many of the countries still had not activated the features which permitted downloading microdata (Thomson et al., 2013). As the programme wrapped up, many archives stopped operating, as resources were no longer available for their upkeep (Hoogeveen and Nguyen, 2019). The World Bank microdata catalogue is an important resource but much of the survey data sources critical for monitoring education inequality and which are used by the World Bank for other purposes –

mostly poverty analyses – are not publicly available due to agreements between the World Bank and national governments.

A review of 59 countries, for which the last available survey data set analysed by the UIS and the GEM Report dates to 2020 or earlier, shows that 42 countries have already carried out a relevant survey since but access to the microdata is restricted, while 17 countries are expected to have a DHS or a MICS carried out by 2027.

However, even access to established microdata sources has proven fragile. One of the consequences of the decision of the government of the United States to close down the US Agency for International Development in February 2025 was also the closure of the DHS programme, which had been operating since the 1980s and on which a large number of SDG monitoring indicators have depended, including in education. This crisis exposed another major flaw in the global production of survey statistics on which education also depends. The DHS programme was managed by a private company, which controlled access to the data and under the terms that governed such access, users were bound not to redistribute them. While a three-year bridging grant by the Gates Foundation has provided a temporary solution (Abdel Ghany et al., 2026), there is no solution in sight beyond 2027 either to the problems of data production or data access. While this crisis will inevitably have the positive impact of restoring national ownership of household survey programmes, the transition will make the production of and access to data on education inequality more challenging.

There are broader questions about the future of household surveys. These are generally at risk because both domestic and external funds are constrained. There are also concerns over quality due to declining response rates, by households or for specific questions. These started in high-income, urbanized countries but are spreading to low- and middle-income countries as well. Technology is offering solutions but is likely to pose other challenges to the smooth conduct of household surveys in the coming years (Carletto et al., 2022).

DATA COMPARABILITY

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development generated many expectations that education indicators could be disaggregated by a variety of individual characteristics. However, the possibility of doing so on a comparative basis has been overestimated, even for the two seemingly comparable characteristics discussed so far. In the case of location, national definitions of urbanity vary between countries, while some global objective definitions based on the density of the built environment are yet to be applied. Wealth is also difficult to compare. While the asset indices developed for DHS and MICS are valuable for understanding inequality in one country at one point in time, they have clear limitations as a tool for monitoring inequality between countries and over time.

> “Ethnicity, as well as language, race, nationality and religion, are questions of personal identity, which puts these characteristics even more at odds with global monitoring”

These limitations are more obvious for other characteristics which should be disaggregated. Ethnicity, for instance, is not comparable between countries. Moreover, ethnic identity is context specific, socially constructed and politically sensitive, which means that countries treat the issue in very different ways. Even when ethnic groups are recognized in countries' fundamental laws, there is often no expectation that data should be collected. Some countries have explicit rules against identification of ethnicity. Ethnicity, as well as language, race, nationality and religion, are questions of personal identity, which puts these characteristics even more at odds with global monitoring. Even comparisons within countries over time using the same survey tool have not proven conducive for meaningful monitoring. For example, the DHS questionnaire has changed ethnicity classifications. In Ethiopia, the 2000 round recognized 8 ethnic groups but the 2011 round recognized 27. In Guatemala, the 2000 survey distinguished five Mayan linguistic groups alongside a non-indigenous category, whereas by 2015 these distinctions were collapsed into three broad identities.

The same problem applies for migrant or refugee status. While migration is central to education policy debates in many countries, internationally comparable data remain extremely limited both in administrative and survey data systems. In the case of migration, definitions vary widely, and might involve country of birth, citizenship, length of residence, parental origin or legal status. In the case of displacement, data systems have mainly monitored refugees living in camps, which gives a misleading picture of the entire refugee population, as many are dispersed in urban areas. In other words, definitions mean different things in different contexts and characteristics with varied definitions are not suited to global monitoring.

People with disabilities are more likely to be comparable between countries than other groups discussed in this section. Although countries have varied in their identification of disability, ranging from medical and administrative to functional definitions based on activity limitations, standardized instruments based on the Washington Group questions have been recently adopted by 75 countries in their censuses and surveys and are expected to improve the availability of disaggregated, comparable data on education participation and attainment by disability status in the near future. Having said that, monitoring the education status of people with disabilities is also subject to a challenge common to some other groups, in that if they are too small a population group, they may not generate reliable statistics because they are not captured in surveys in sufficient numbers unless the sample size is large enough.

Surveys have been key in highlighting the relative education status of different groups. There is enormous value in recognizing and giving visibility to groups through statistics at the international level. However, this is not about monitoring the global situation, which can only be done imprecisely. Rather, it is about encouraging countries and holding them accountable for ensuring that inequality issues feature explicitly in national education monitoring and policy agendas.

HOW HAS EDUCATION DISPARITY EVOLVED IN THE PAST 25 YEARS?

Having reviewed the benefits and challenges of monitoring education inequality, this final section summarizes aggregate trends, primarily using the parity index as a guide. Gender parity offers the highest level of conceptual clarity and data continuity, as it is the most comparable and stable individual characteristic. The expansion of schooling, combined with targeted policies to promote girls' participation, has substantially reduced gender gaps in most parts of the world. Yet aggregate measures of parity, at the regional and global level, often conceal important differences between countries. To highlight this contrast, a balanced panel of countries was grouped into seven categories according to the level of the gender parity index, defined over participation (gross enrolment ratio) at five education levels (from pre-primary to tertiary) at three points in time (2000, 2015 and 2024).

The analysis shows that the number of countries at parity has increased between 2000 and 2024, for example from 42% to 57% in lower secondary and from 17% to 31% in upper secondary education. It also shows that the share of countries with high disparity at the expense of girls (fewer than 9 girls for every 10 boys enrolled) has fallen drastically, from 15% to 2% in primary, from 20% to 4% in lower secondary, and from 18% to 5% in upper secondary education. This is part of the general trend for young men to be less likely to be enrolled in upper secondary and, especially, tertiary education, which was already present in 2000 (**Figure 6.6**).

While gender allows a broad, system-wide comparison, extending this analysis to location and wealth drastically reduces the number of countries for which this disaggregation can be compared over time. While findings should therefore be interpreted as indicative, the gaps visualized in this way are still strikingly pervasive. Between the mid-2000s and the early 2020s, the number of countries that achieved parity between rural and urban areas increased from 47% to 67% in primary, from 24% to 45% in lower secondary, and from 5% to 19% in upper secondary education. While there is a tendency to close the gaps, the share of countries with extreme disparity at the expense of rural areas (fewer than 8 attending school in rural areas for every 10 attending school in urban areas) is still 16% in primary, 24% in lower secondary, and 43% in upper secondary education (**Figure 6.7**).

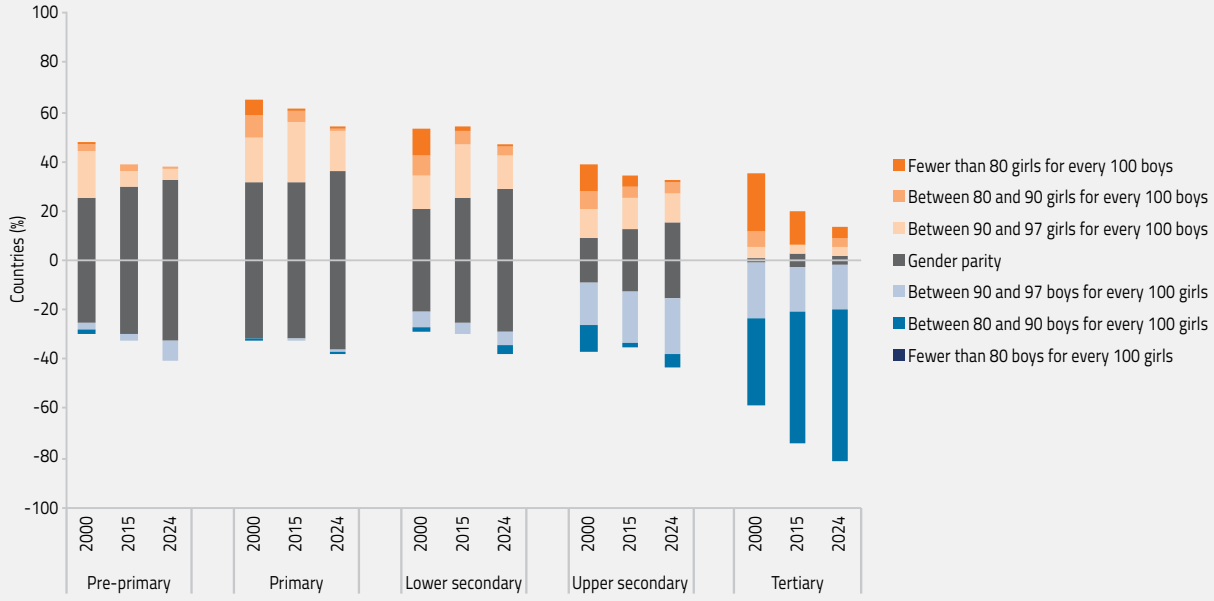
> The share of countries with extreme disparity at the expense of the poorest in the early 2020s was 83% in pre-primary, 21% in primary, 29% in lower secondary and 55% in upper secondary education

Disparity is strongest in relation to wealth. Between the mid-2000s and the early 2020s, only a handful of countries achieved parity in education between the poorest and the richest at any level. A comparative analysis also highlights a very large disparity remaining at the pre-primary education level, as documented earlier (**Chapter 3**), which declines somewhat at the primary and lower secondary level, before increasing again at the upper secondary level. The share of countries with extreme disparity at the expense of the poorest (fewer than 8 attending school among the poorest for every 10 attending school among the richest) in the early 2020s was 83% in pre-primary, 21% in primary, 29% in lower secondary and 55% in upper secondary education (**Figure 6.8**).

FIGURE 6.6:

Gender parity in access to education has improved, but gaps persist at higher levels

Percentage of countries by level of the adjusted gender parity index of the gross enrolment ratio, by education level, 2000, 2015 and 2024



Notes: At the pre-primary level, SDG global indicator 4.2.2 was disaggregated instead of the gross enrolment ratio. The nnmber of countries analysed were 76 in pre-primary, 144 in primary, 129 in lower secondary, 115 in upper secondary, and 83 in tertiary education.

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_6

Source: GEM Report team analysis of the UIS database.

FIGURE 6.7:

Large disparities remain in secondary school completion between rural and urban areas

Percentage of countries by level of the adjusted location parity index of the net attendance rate, by education level, 2003–07, 2013–17 and 2020–24

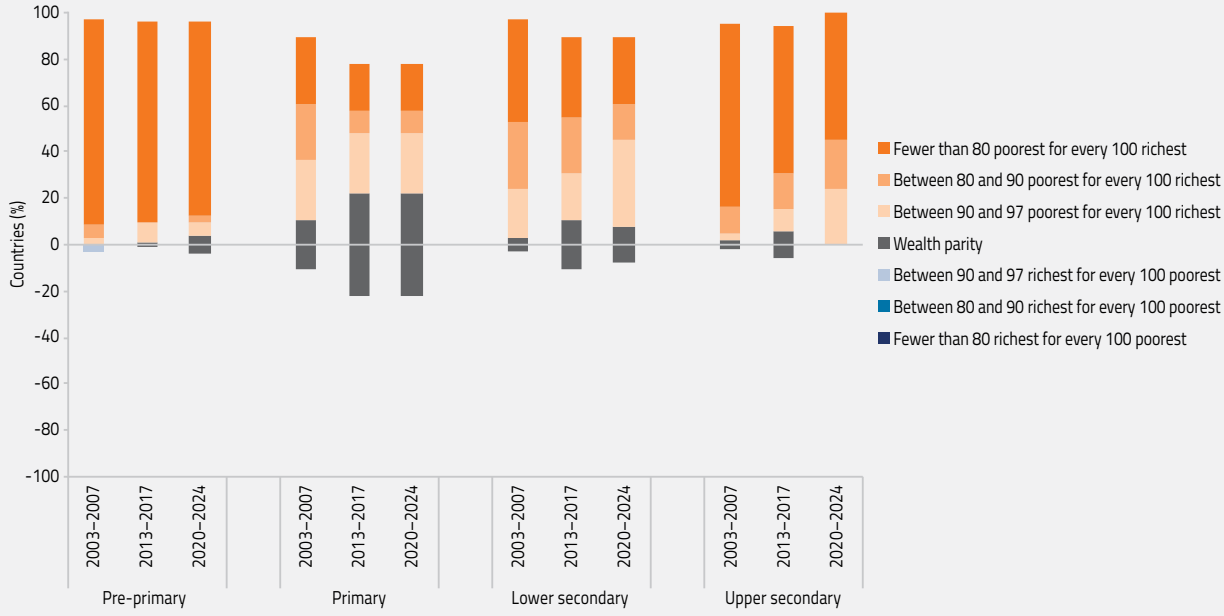


Notes: The number of countries analysed was 40 in pre-primary, 38 in primary, 38 in lower secondary and 37 in upper secondary education.

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_7

Source: GEM Report team analysis of the UIS database.

FIGURE 6.8:
Wealth-related gaps are largest at the pre-primary education level
Percentage of countries by level of the adjusted wealth parity index of the net attendance rate, by education level, 2003–07, 2013–17 and 2020–24



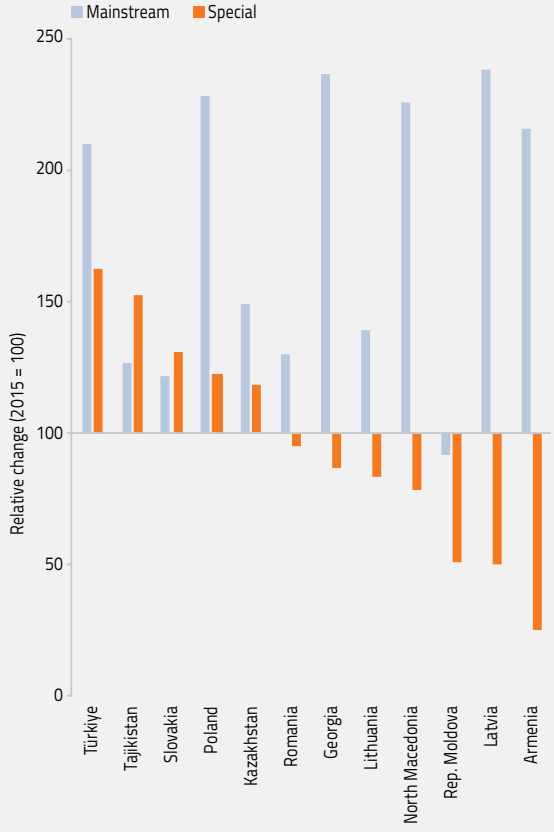
Note: The number of countries analysed was 36 in pre-primary, 34 in primary, 34 in lower secondary and 33 in upper secondary education.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_8
Source: GEM Report team analysis of the UIS database.

THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS IN REDUCING INSTITUTIONAL SEGREGATION IN EDUCATION

As mentioned in the methodology (**Chapter 2**), the parity index has been used to select and showcase countries that have made progress towards eliminating gender, location and wealth inequality. But this approach would not have allowed the selection of countries that have made progress towards another critical area: disability inclusion. As explained above, there are simply not enough reliable observations on trends in access to education for learners with disability to identify countries that have made progress in this area. However, inequality in education is not only about observed outcomes. It is also about processes that shape how education systems organize such access. Streaming students into different types of school is an often inequitable mechanism that characterizes some education systems. An extreme manifestation is assigning students with disabilities to special instead of mainstream schools.

The Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity (TransMonEE) database that UNICEF maintains for European and Central Asian countries compiles harmonized administrative and survey-based indicators on children, including children with disabilities, using as consistent as possible definitions and reporting protocols over time. While its geographic coverage is limited, it offers a rare opportunity for longitudinal analyses of various issues. For example, it is possible to observe how the enrolment of students with disability has grown in mainstream and special schools. In almost all countries, enrolment of students with disabilities has increased in mainstream schools, more than doubling since 2015 in Georgia, Latvia, North Macedonia, Poland and Türkiye. Trends in special school enrolment, however, have been more heterogeneous. In Armenia, Latvia and the Republic of Moldova, it has declined sharply, consistent with national inclusion policies. But in Tajikistan and Türkiye, it increased by more than half, and to a lesser extent in Kazakhstan, Poland and Slovakia, suggesting parallel expansion rather than a move of these students between school types (**Figure 6.9**). This may reflect improved identification of disabilities, demographic changes or institutional inertia, even as inclusive education frameworks gain prominence.

FIGURE 6.9:
Inclusion advances unevenly: enrolment of students with disability in regular and special schools
Relative change in number of students with disabilities enrolled in mainstream and special schools, selected countries, 2015 and 2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_9
Source: GEM Report team analysis of the TransMONEE database.

CONCLUSION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development capitalized on the growing availability of household survey data that gained momentum in the 2000s. Such data fuelled interest in the disaggregation of development outcomes by groups defined on the basis of sex, location, wealth, disability, migration, displacement, ethnicity, language, religion, race and a host of other characteristics. The development of the World Inequality Database on Education was made possible by that rich source of data and also added the interesting – and crucial – view of intersecting characteristics.

> Countries need to embrace the education equity agenda by committing to use their data more effectively, monitoring groups whose disadvantage matters in their societies, and holding themselves accountable

However, after the initial optimism fuelled by the striking visualization of inequality, a pause for consideration is needed, as noted in the stocktaking exercise in this section. The core indicator on education equity in SDG 4, the parity index needs to be analysed with care so that it is clearly an indicator of equity rather than of progress of the indicator. Data availability has been a persistent challenge, even if existing sources could be analysed more efficiently. Last but not least, many of the characteristics which were expected to be used as a basis for disaggregation are not suited to international comparison. In conclusion, despite efforts at the international level, countries need to more actively embrace the education equity agenda by committing to use their data more effectively, monitoring groups whose disadvantage matters in their societies, and holding themselves accountable for reporting on progress.

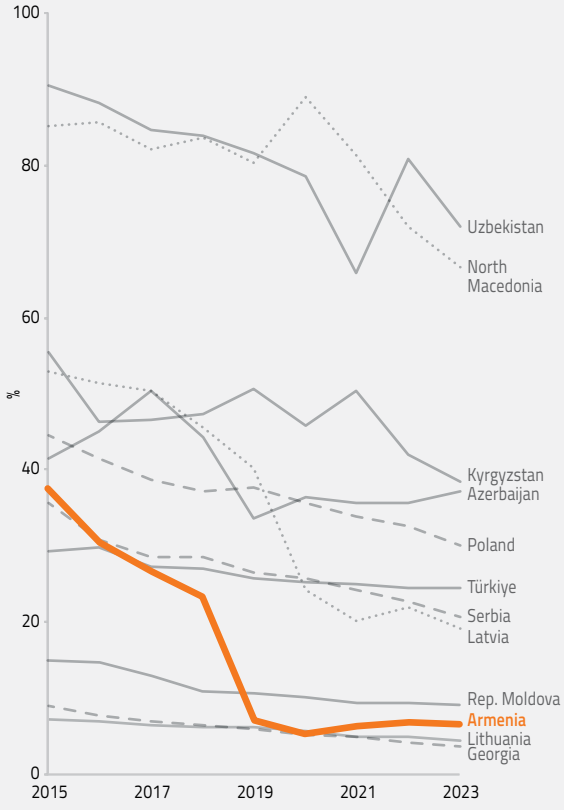


Case studies

Armenia: THE POLITICAL WILL FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION BY 2025

In Armenia, the percentage of children with disabilities who attended a special school fell from 37.5% in 2015 to 6.5% in 2023. This is the largest relative drop observed in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in this period, a region where many countries have been reforming their education systems to shed the legacy of educational segregation of children with disabilities, which was standard during the period of state socialism. Together with Georgia, Lithuania and the Republic of Moldova, Armenia reported fewer than 10% of children with disabilities still being enrolled in special educational institutions in 2023 (**Figure 1**).

FIGURE 1:
The share of children with disabilities in special schools plummeted
Percentage of children with disabilities 0 to 17 years old in education who attended a special school, selected countries in Eastern and Central Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, 2015–23



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Armenia_fig1
Source: TransMONEE database.

Armenia embarked on structural reforms of its public education system in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, embracing inclusive education as a way to move beyond the former medical model of disability and moving towards a pedagogical-psychological approach that responds to diverse learner needs. The 2005 Law on Education of Persons with Special Education Needs introduced the concept of inclusive education and support for students with disabilities at three levels: the school, regional and national. In 2021, the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities promoted accessibility and social inclusion and the Law on Functional Assessment regulated a psychosocial assessment of disabilities (UNICEF, 2022).

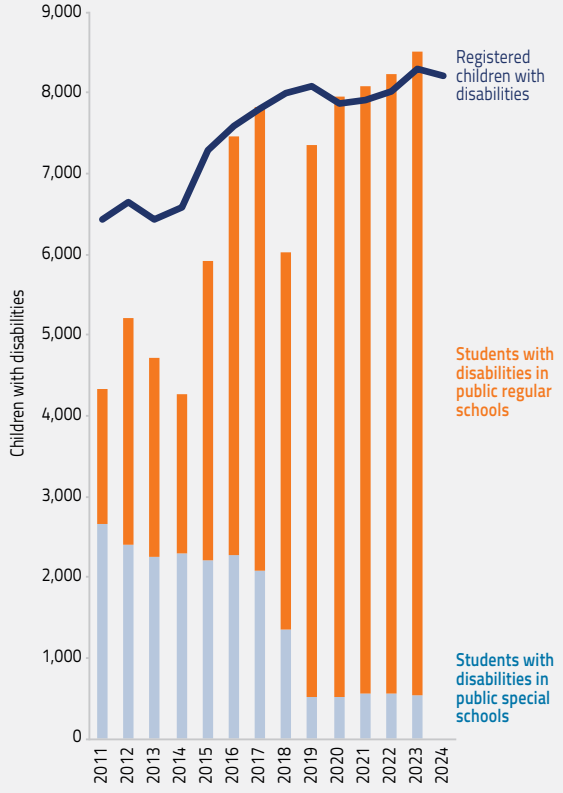
Following a pilot inclusive education project in Tavush province between 2009 and 2012 (Bridge of Hope, 2023a), the general education law was amended in 2014 to pave the way to universal inclusive education (Nazaryan, 2021). In 2016, the Action Plan and Schedule for introducing an inclusive education system were approved, adopting a commitment to make all schools inclusive by August 2025 (United Nations, 2022).

Special schools were gradually converted into pedagogical-psychological support services, offering child and family support. In 2019, 10 of the 18 public special schools, most of them located in rural areas were converted. As a result, the number of students in segregated special schools fell by 75% between 2017 and 2019, whereas enrolment of students with disabilities in public mainstream schools increased by almost five times between 2011 and 2023 (**Figure 2**). While all students are meant to be educated in regular schools (Human Rights Watch, 2021; Mullins et al., 2024), as of 2024, there were seven public special schools with about 500 students (Armenia Statistical Committee, 2024a). In 2020, universal inclusive education was extended to pre-primary institutions. The implementation was staggered in various regions with the aim of covering the entire country by 2023 (Armenia Ministry of Education, 2021).

The process of identification and assessment has also been reformed to better target children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2022). Established in 2017, the Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Centre and its more than 20 territorial units are in charge of assessing disability. The mandate of the centre is to increase accessibility and efficiency in education through advocacy, training and monitoring activities (Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Centre, 2025). Upon family

request, a functional assessment is conducted by a group of three to five multidisciplinary specialists. The procedures have been refined over time to tailor intervention measures (Martirosyan, 2023). Improvements in the identification and assessment process and growing awareness among families have led to an increase of almost 30% in the identification of children with disabilities since 2011 (Armenia Statistical Committee, 2024b; UNICEF, 2022).

FIGURE 2:
Children have been increasingly identified and enrolled in regular schools
Number of children with disabilities 0 to 17 years old in public regular and special schools and number of registered children with disabilities 0 to 17 years old, 2010–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Armenia_fig2
Sources: TransMONEE database and Armenia Statistical Committee.

Civil society and non-governmental organizations have been central to the development and implementation of inclusive education. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports involved them actively through a dedicated working group (OECD, 2024). Since the early 2000s, the NGO Bridge of Hope has influenced policy debate on inclusion. In collaboration with the education ministry, it piloted projects, provided pedagogical and psychological support to local schools and training courses to professionals, supported families and communities through support centres, and organized sensitization campaigns (Bridge of Hope, 2023b).

Nevertheless, despite considerable efforts and the near achievement of the target to universalize inclusive education by 2025, some children are reportedly still kept at home, even if they are officially registered in schools. Teachers may phone or visit them to provide basic literacy and numeracy education and occasionally administer examinations. Home education is legally permitted for health conditions. Yet many students end up only receiving a limited form of education on a long-term basis and cannot benefit from meaningful interaction with their peers (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

This is due to several reasons. First, mainstream schools have not been fully prepared for the transition. School buildings lack basic physical accessibility features, such as ramps, lifts and accessible bathrooms (Human Rights Watch, 2017, 2021). In 2024, it is calculated that one in four public educational buildings would need some form of reparation (Armenia Statistical Committee, 2024c). The now defunct US Agency for International Development funded a project between 2018 and 2021 to strengthen inclusive education that focused on making at least 100 educational facilities more accessible and equipping them with the necessary learning materials (UNPRPD, 2022).

Second, segregation practices persist in mainstream schools. Many children with disabilities may be present in the classroom but not fully benefit from the curriculum. Their education often consists of a reduced schedule based on the availability of professionals (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Children attending mainstream schools are

reportedly taken out of regular classes and provided with one-to-one tuition (Flieger, 2020). Pedagogical materials are not always available or adequate. Textbooks in Braille or adjusted textbooks have been reported to be lacking (Human Rights Watch, 2021). According to the 2023 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, three in five grade 4 schools in Armenia reported being at least somewhat affected in delivering science classes by the shortage of resources for students with disabilities.

Third, professionals have been key to transitioning to inclusion but the lack of a comprehensive teacher preparation reform may contribute to perpetuating stereotypes and a deficit-based approach to disability. The Armenian State Pedagogical University introduced two compulsory and two elective courses for student teachers with support from Bridge of Hope. Yet these courses have been taught by specialists of the former Faculty of Special Education (Bridge of Hope, 2021). In 2020, the Republican Pedagogical-Psychological Centre, which provides training and teaching materials in support of inclusion to educational professionals, organized professional development to more than 4,000 specialists from over 250 institutions and engaged in counselling and advocacy activities. In 2019, UNICEF and the NGO Teach for Armenia piloted a mentorship and training programme for teachers and developed toolkits to support the inclusion of all children in mainstream schools (UNPRPD, 2022). Yet not all teachers have developed the required awareness and non-discriminatory attitudes (Mullins et al., 2024).

Fourth, the number of teacher assistants to provide direct support to children is insufficient (Human Rights Watch, 2017). These assistants may help implement individualized instruction and support an inclusive learning environment. The policy requires teacher assistants to hold an advanced qualification or at least three years of pedagogical experience (O'Connor and Azatyan, 2018). In 2020, there were about 860 teaching assistants and more than 2,200 practitioners, including psychologists, social and special pedagogists, speech therapists and educators, supporting schools in the inclusion of students with disabilities (Nazaryan, 2021). However, teachers reported needing more teaching assistants to support them to make teaching and learning more inclusive (Harutyunyan et al., 2024).

Finally, some families remain skeptical about inclusion. Parents and grandparents of children with disabilities, especially those with severe forms, oppose the education of their children in mainstream schools (Flieger, 2020), arguing that there is not enough support for them (UNICEF, 2022). Disability may carry a social stigma for some families, which may lead them to prefer keeping their children at home (Bayrakdarian, 2018). Some families of other students are also sceptical about including boys and girls with diverse abilities in the same classroom as their children, as they have not received adequate information about inclusive education (Mullins et al., 2024).

The Comprehensive Programme for the Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities 2022–2027 reiterates the commitment to inclusive education and plans to address barriers such as the lack of physical accessibility, limited services and persistent stigma (Mullins et al., 2024). The government has approved the allocation of almost USD 9 million for the renovation and modernization of educational institutions across the country (Armenpress, 2025). More teacher assistant positions are planned to ensure 10% of the student population are reached by them (Armenia Ministry of Education, 2025).

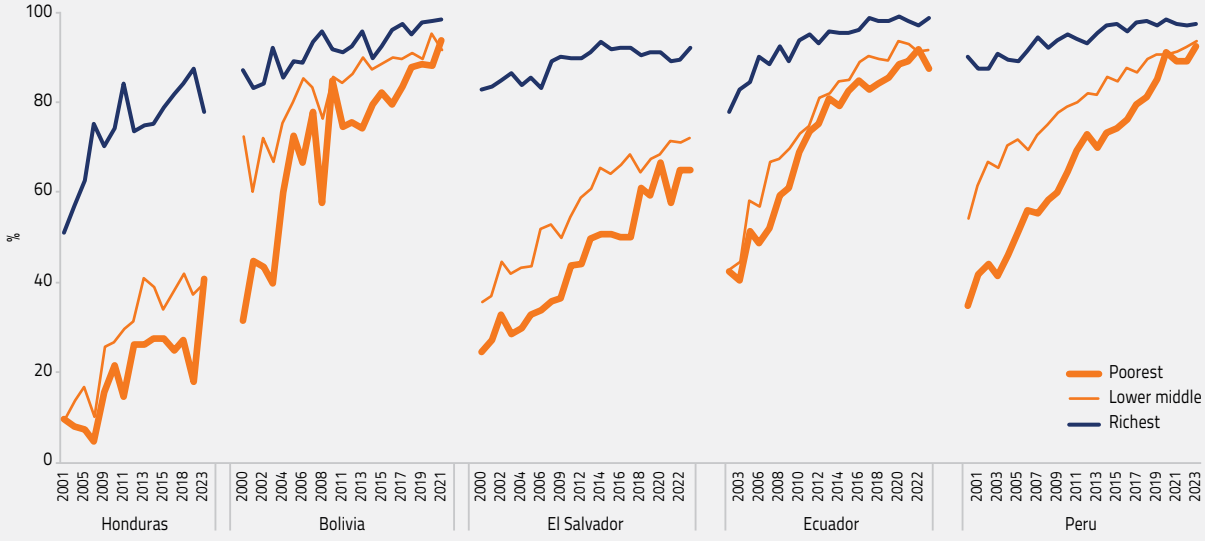
Plurinational State of Bolivia: INCLUSION OF INDIGENOUS AND POOR STUDENTS

Latin America is the region of the world with the highest level of income inequality. And yet the region has made a major effort to monitor household living conditions and to introduce social programmes aimed at reducing socioeconomic gaps. Few Latin American countries have made as rapid and impressive progress in narrowing educational inequality as Bolivia, even though there has been dramatic change in many countries. In 2000, only 31% of adolescents from the poorest households in Bolivia completed lower secondary school, compared to 87% from the richest households. Within just five years, this 56-percentage-point gap was slashed by two thirds to 17 percentage points. As of 2021, 94% of the poorest adolescents were completing lower secondary school. Bolivia's achievement matches that of the other Andean countries but much richer countries of Ecuador and Peru and far exceeds two Central American countries, Honduras and El Salvador (**Figure 1**).

Progress of a similar magnitude has also taken place in upper secondary completion. In 2000, only 10% of youth from the poorest households completed upper secondary school, compared to 87% from the richest households. Within just five years, this 57-percentage-point gap was cut by 40% to 35 percentage points. As of 2021, 65% of the poorest youth were completing upper secondary school compared to 88% of the richest youth. This is a more equitable outcome than what Ecuador, El Salvador and Peru have achieved. And in Honduras, just 21% of the poorest completed upper secondary school compared to 77% of the richest.

The expansion of access to lower secondary education has been accompanied by an increase in the repetition rate in lower secondary, which rose from 3% in 2000 to 6% in 2021, a perhaps hard-to-avoid consequence of inclusion. As access expanded, a growing number of students from not only poor but also rural and indigenous households who might have been the first in their family to progress so far in education entered and remained in school. These newly included groups often face greater learning challenges and are more likely to repeat grades – but in just a few years they were repeating without dropping out. By 2020, only 8% of Bolivians aged 18 to 24 had left school early, one of the lowest figures in the region, compared with 19% across Latin America (Arias Ortiz et al., 2024).

FIGURE 1:
Bolivia drastically reduced socioeconomic disparity in education in a very short time
Lower secondary completion rate, by wealth quintile, Bolivia and selected Latin American countries 2000–23



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Bolivia_fig1
Note: The countries are listed in increasing order of GDP per capita.
Source: UIS database.

Bolivia's education system was historically characterized by an elitist approach until a 1954 reform expanded access to rural and indigenous populations, while preserving linguistic and cultural biases against them. Military rule between 1964 and 1982 froze progress but democracy's return revived debate, culminating in the 1994 Education Reform Law. Backed by international donors, there was a push for universal primary school completion and increased transition to secondary school (IDB, 2002; UNESCO-IIEP, 2025; World Bank, 2007). The education system also introduced bilingual and intercultural education, while it decentralized school management to municipalities (UNESCO-IIEP, 2021).

Ultimately, Bolivia's educational transformation was accelerated by debt relief, wealth redistribution and a political reimagining of the state. At the turn of the century, 63% of all Bolivians and 80% of those in rural areas were poor while 37% were extremely poor (World Bank, 2002). According to the Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development at this time, 23% of 7- to 14-year-olds were working, of which some 60% did not attend school (United States Department of Labor, 2001). Burdened by debt, Bolivia qualified for the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, under which it received USD 1.3 billion in debt cancellation in 2001. This move freed fiscal space for social investment (IMF and World Bank, 2001) and relevant funds went directly to municipalities, of which 20% were earmarked for education (World Bank, 2006).

In parallel, in a context of social unrest over the privatization of municipal water supply in the city of Cochabamba and the exploitation of the country's natural gas reserves, education had become a rallying cry for sovereignty and social justice. The election of the Movement Towards Socialism government in 2006 led to the drafting of a new constitution and the birth of the Plurinational State, which strengthened the rights of the historically marginalized indigenous peoples. It also led to the nationalization of hydrocarbon resources, which helped fund a universal welfare model (Borges, 2022).

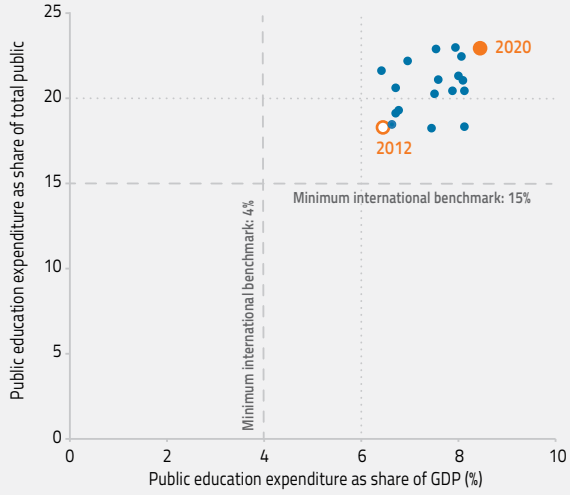
In 2010, the Avelino Siñani–Elizardo Pérez Education Law recast education as a right and state duty and introduced a model that blended indigenous worldviews, community values and productive learning. Supported by teachers, unions and social movements, it was a participatory, state-led education reform (Carrión Justiniano, 2021). The secondary education curriculum was revised to combine scientific and local knowledge in order to decolonize it and thus help prevent dropout by making education more culturally relevant and fostering self-reliance (Ducoing Watty and Rojas Moreno, 2020). Teacher professionalization was promoted through the unification of rural and urban training and the replacement of unqualified 'interim' teachers with certified teachers. Another challenge was that many teachers brought traditional stereotypes into the classroom and needed to adjust to the new educational model (Canessa, 2004). By 2018, over 90% of teachers had received complementary training in intercultural, practice-based education through the Complementary Training Programme for Practising Teachers (Villafuerte Bittencourt, 2021). The establishment of 16 Centres of Comprehensive Pedagogical Support (Centros de Apoyo Integral Pedagógico, CAIP) offered educational and psychological support to children of incarcerated parents.

The equitable increase in lower secondary completion rates also owes much to a multisectoral approach, combining school meals and cash transfers to lower economic and social barriers to schooling. The National School Feeding Programme had reached 87% of public schools by 2012. The Bono Juancito Pinto was launched in 2006 as Bolivia's first nationwide conditional cash transfer. Financed by revenues from the nationalized hydrocarbon industry, it provided all public school students with BOB 200 (USD 28) per year as long as they achieved an 80% attendance record (McGuire, 2013). Initially limited to primary school, it was expanded gradually to cover the entire secondary cycle, reaching almost 2 million students (Terán, 2022). Despite its modest size, the universal design and low administrative costs made it a symbol of Bolivia's inclusive welfare state. By 2009, it reached 70% of those in extreme poverty and 62% of the moderately poor. With the broadest scope of any programme in Latin America, it was described as an initiative that 'comes the closest to the basic income ideal type' (Borges, 2022, p. 145).

An evaluation that used the staggered announcement of the programme's expansion and the changes in age eligibility criteria found that the cash transfer had a 5% impact on enrolment at the grade 9 level, notably in rural areas (Canelas and Niño-Zarazúa, 2019). A more recent analysis found that it had a smaller impact of 2% on child labour, as the amount of the transfer was too small to offset the income children earn through work, particularly for adolescents over 14 (Terán, 2022). Moreover, its real value has eroded by nearly 75% since inception, which also reflected shifting fiscal priorities towards the costlier Renta Dignidad pension scheme (Borges, 2022). Poverty fell to 40% in 2021 (Canavire-Bacarreza et al., 2025). A decomposition analysis has shown that, while increases in labour income explain the largest share of poverty reduction especially between 2007 and 2011, cash transfers played a role, for example, in ensuring that rural areas saw larger poverty declines (Vargas and Garriga, 2015).

Bolivia has turned one of the world's most unequal education systems into one of its most inclusive. In a matter of a few years, it eliminated wealth gaps in lower secondary access and completion, deeply linked to historical discrimination against its majority indigenous people. Debt relief, resource nationalization and redistributive policies made education a central pillar of social inclusion. Bolivia has been allocating one of the highest volumes of public spending on education, exceeding not just the minimum (4% of GDP and 15% of total public expenditure) but also the maximum (6% and 20%, respectively) international benchmarks throughout the period since 2006 (**Figure 2**). But there is concern that spending inefficiency is high (Arias Ortiz et al., 2024) and that more needs to be done to strengthen vocational pathways to align education with the economy the country hopes to build (Andersen et al., 2020).

FIGURE 2:
Bolivia has been spending well above the two high international benchmarks in education
Public education expenditure as share of GDP and as share of total public expenditure, Bolivia, 2006–24

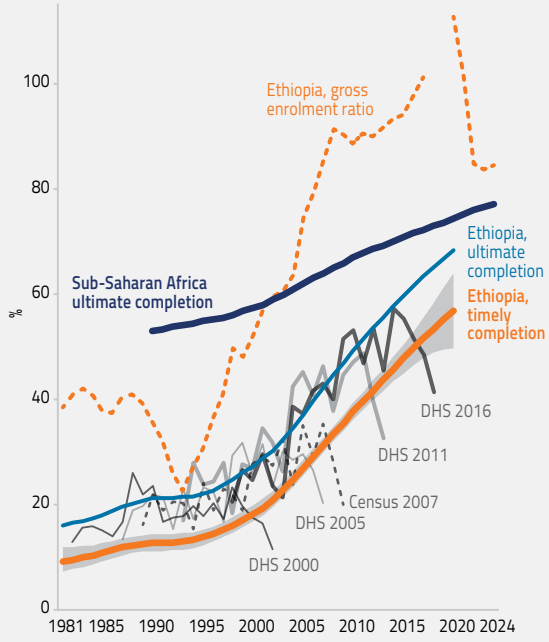


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Bolivia_fig2
Source: UIS database.

Ethiopia: MANAGING REGIONAL EDUCATION DISPARITY THROUGH PROGRESS AND REGRESSION

Ethiopia has long been one of the most educationally disadvantaged countries in the world. Prior to 1974, schooling was limited to a small urban elite (Teshome, 2008). In 1974, a military junta seized power and established the Soviet-inspired Derg regime, which initiated the first major expansion of the schooling system. This saw the primary gross enrolment rate increase from 18% to 42% in 1983. But political repression and the ensuing famine in the mid-1980s ended this growth and ultimately led to the regime's overthrow by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front in 1991. In the mid-1990s, primary education began expanding rapidly and the completion rate increased from 22% in 1995 to 68% in 2020, or by 1.9 percentage points per year, more than twice as fast as the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, reducing the gap from 33 to 6 percentage points (**Figure 1**).

FIGURE 1:
Between 1995 and 2020, Ethiopia achieved major educational expansion
Primary completion rate, modelled estimates and by source, and primary gross enrolment ratio, Ethiopia, 1981–2024



Note: DHS = Demographic and Health Survey.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Ethiopia_fig1
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the VIEW model (completion) and UIS database (gross enrolment ratio).

The expansion was accompanied by a narrowing of disparities between urban and rural areas. The gap fell from 54 percentage points in 2000, when 6% of children in rural areas completed primary school (4% of girls and 8% of boys), to 34 percentage points in 2019, when 34% of children in rural areas completed primary school (with gender parity) (**Figure 2a**). The gap was also reduced among the large regional states established in 1992. For example, for every 100 children finishing primary school in Addis Ababa, there were 22 children in Oromia and in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) who completed primary school in 2000, which grew to 64 children in 2019 (**Figure 2b**).

Three factors are worth noting about the geographically equitable expansion of primary education in Ethiopia: decentralization reforms, investment in health and the efficient use of external financing.

First, decentralization reforms in Ethiopia were introduced as part of broader government efforts to improve service delivery by strengthening public sector efficiency and accountability. The process unfolded in two stages. Between 1991 and 1994, the central government established a four-tier governance structure, comprising the central, regional, zone and woreda (district) levels, and devolved state powers to the newly established ethnolinguistic regions. In 2002, decentralization was extended to the woreda level in four regions that together accounted for about 90% of the population. In these regions, woreda governments assumed responsibility for the bulk of service delivery and received block grants from their regional governments, amounting to almost half of regional public expenditure. As Ethiopia experienced rapid economic growth in the 2000s, federal block grants allocated to regional governments increased significantly and the real per capita share of the regional budget transferred to woredas increased by 2.5% per year (World Bank, 2010). In 2011, it was estimated that 60% of these grants were channelled to education, followed by health and agriculture which received about 20% each (Faguet et al., 2019; Garcia and Rajkumar, 2008; World Bank, 2010).

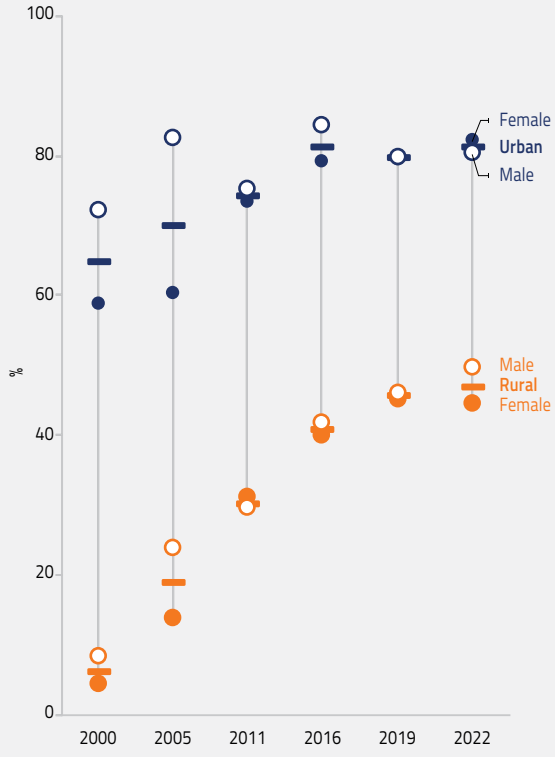
CONFLICT IN ETHIOPIA HAS HAD A DEVASTATING IMPACT ON EDUCATION

Since the late 2010s, Ethiopia has been marred by ethnic violence with disastrous consequences, including the reversal of its educational development. The instability is rooted in the country's 1995 constitution, which promoted ethnicity-based federalism, a politically necessary but also risky arrangement (Taye, 2017). Deteriorating relations between the federal government and the Tigray region culminated in a war between 2020 and 2022, which involved neighbouring Eritrea. All warring parties in Tigray were involved in attacking, pillaging and occupying schools (Human Rights Watch, 2021) with 88% of school infrastructure damaged, and children traumatized including by famine (European Commission, 2025). It is estimated that half of all students in affected areas, notably in eastern Tigray, were unable to attend primary school, and the average walking distance to the closest school increased from 2.2 to 4.8 kilometres (Belay et al., 2023). Further, insurgencies by the Oromo Liberation Army and the Amhara Fano militias mean that conflict has spilled over into the two most populous regional states since 2023.

Between 2020 and 2023, according to the Ministry of Education, enrolment fell by 24% and the primary gross enrolment ratio fell by 29 percentage points. Between 2017 and 2024, the primary completion rate fell by 21 percentage points among girls and by 25 percentage points among boys (Ethiopia Ministry of Education, 2025). The number of out-of-school children of primary school age increased from 1.8 million in 2017 to 4.7 million in 2021 before declining slightly to 4.2 million in 2024. While the government has invested in education on a massive scale, increasing its share in GDP from 2.3% in 1993 to 3.6% in 2002 and 5.5% in 2006, a level which it maintained until 2017, conflict over the past decade has meant that investment in education has plummeted to 3.7% in 2022 and 2.3% in 2024.

FIGURE 2:
Geographic gaps in primary completion decreased significantly in Ethiopia by 2020
Primary completion rate, Ethiopia

a. By sex and location, 2000–22



b. By region, 2000–19



Note: Data for 2022 do not include the Tigray region.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Ethiopia_fig2
Source: UIS database (disaggregation by location) and World Inequality Database on Education based on the Demographic and Health Survey (disaggregation by region).

Within the 1994 Education and Training Policy and as part of a 20-year education sector plan, the first 5-year Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) was launched in 1997 (Ethiopia Government, 1998). It emphasized expanding rural access and decentralization was key, as it aimed to make elected woreda councils more responsive to community needs (Engel and Rose, 2011). Woredas were responsible for establishing and administering basic education services, hiring and deploying school teachers, managing their salaries, planning new school locations, strengthening school supervision, and enhancing community participation in school administration (Engel and Rose, 2011; Garcia and Rajkumar, 2008). A positive result was that the devolution of human resources management to woredas contributed to a gradual decline in the pupil/teacher ratio in spite of rising enrolment rates (Engel and Rose, 2011). Between 2000 and 2020, the number of primary students increased by 3.5 times, while the number of teachers increased by 6.2 times. Decentralization also enabled more efficient teacher allocation. In the SNNPR, one of the four large regions where decentralization was first piloted (which has since been split into four regions), teachers were redeployed from less crowded urban to overcrowded rural schools, helping rebalance the teaching workforce in favour of remote, food-insecure and pastoral areas (Garcia and Rajkumar, 2008).

Second, investment in the provision of health services was also improved by the decentralization reforms until the onset of the crisis over the last decade. As with education, health spending more than doubled between 2005 and 2010 at the woreda level, contributing to expanded access to antenatal care and improved vaccination coverage in rural areas (Faguet et al., 2020). For example, the percentage of children aged 12 to 23 months who were fully vaccinated increased in rural areas from 11% in 2000 to 35% in 2016, but dropped to 22% in 2024/25 (Ethiopian Statistical Service and ICF, 2026).

Health has implications on education. For example, nutrition plays a critical role in children's development while malnutrition undermines physical growth and cognitive functioning. Even short episodes of hunger can impair school enrolment, concentration and achievement, while micronutrient deficiencies further hinder learning capacity. The stunting rate, i.e. the proportion of children under 5 who were too short for their age, a key indicator of malnutrition, fell in rural areas from 53% in 2000 to 40% in 2016, but increased for the first time to 42% in 2024/25 (Ethiopian Statistical Service and ICF, 2026). The Ministry of Education drafted a national school health and nutrition strategy in 2012 to promote the delivery of nutrition services at schools and the ownership and sustainability of school feeding programmes, while in 2021, it developed the national school feeding policy. In 2022/23, some 7 million primary school students benefited from government-sponsored school feeding programmes (Global Child Nutrition Foundation, 2024).

Third, Ethiopia is widely considered to have managed external financing efficiently. Launched in 2008 with support from the World Bank, the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) was implemented in three phases: GEQIP-I (2008–13) focused on providing essential inputs to improve classroom instruction and learning environments; GEQIP-II (2013–18) introduced support for information and communications technology; and GEQIP-E (2018–22) placed stronger emphasis on equity, although it was hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the onset of the war in Tigray (Hoddinott et al., 2019, 2023; World Bank, 2008).

One evaluation reported a shift from half- to full-day school operations and an improvement in the availability of pedagogical resource centres, libraries and toilet facilities, especially in rural areas (Tiruneh et al., 2022). Another evaluation confirmed that, between 2012–13 and 2018–19, large-scale teacher recruitment took place, with average qualification, training and knowledge levels rising notably, particularly in rural areas (Rolleston et al., 2025). Learning outcome levels in mathematics declined, which may not be surprising considering that many first-generation learners were accessing school. Rural students who benefited from GEQIP interventions made greater academic progress, suggesting that this large-scale reform also helped narrow achievement gaps between urban and rural areas (Araya et al., 2023; Rolleston et al., 2025; Tiruneh et al., 2022).

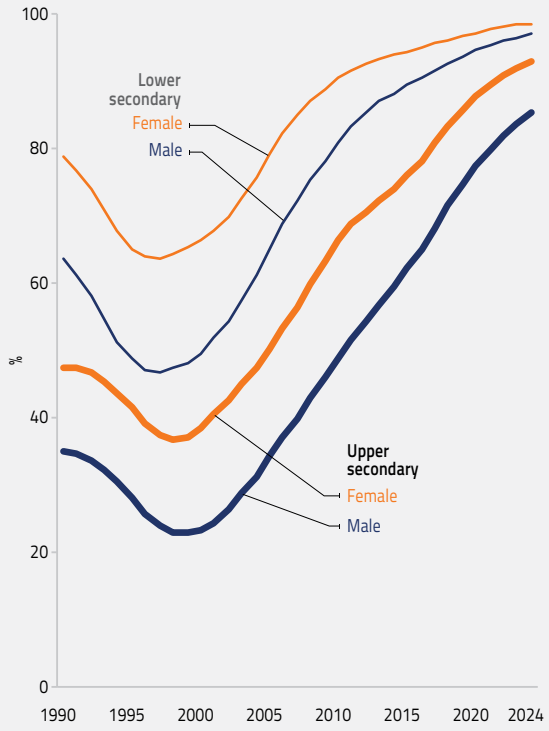
Mongolia: ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS SHAPE BOYS' SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

In Mongolia, girls have consistently had higher secondary school attendance and completion rates than boys. The disparity increased in the 1990s during the years of transition from state socialism and peaked in 2000 when there were just 61 boys for every 100 girls who completed upper secondary school. In 1997, 47% of boys completed lower secondary school compared to 64% of girls. In 2000, just 23% of boys completed upper secondary school compared to 39% of girls. Completion rates have improved markedly since then: by 1.7 percentage points per year in lower secondary education (reaching universal completion and gender parity in 2022) and by 2.4 percentage points per year in upper secondary education, inching closer towards parity (**Figure 1**). In the 2024/25 school year, the percentage of boys among all those enrolled was 51% in primary and lower secondary education and 46% in upper secondary education. The lowest share of boys in total upper secondary enrolment was in the Eastern region (42%) (Mongolia Ministry of Education, 2025b).

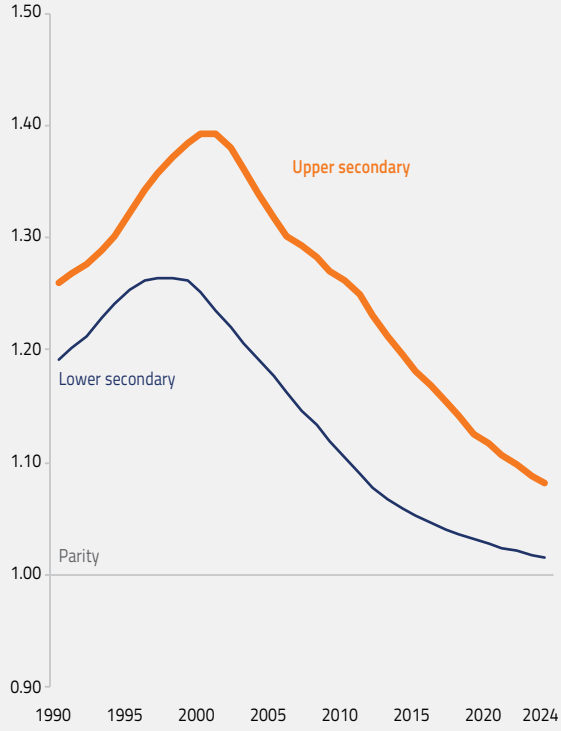
This gender gap can be explained by a variety of contextual factors: as an outcome of nomadic traditions, labour demand and gender norms that privileged boys' work over their schooling. In rural areas, boys have been relied upon for herding, seasonal migration and harvesting. In towns, they have been pulled out of school to work in informal mining, construction or transport. Social norms reinforce this pattern: boys are expected to be resilient, independent and economically useful early on (Mongolia National Coalition of Civil Society, 2024).

FIGURE 1:
In Mongolia, after a period of extreme disparity, boys are catching up with girls in secondary education

a. Secondary completion rate, by sex and level, Mongolia, 1990–2024



b. Gender parity index of the secondary completion rate, by level, Mongolia, 1990–2024



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Mongolia_fig1
Source: UIS database.

Cultural traditions had compounded the problem. In some regions, boys leave school for monastic life or to train as horse jockeys, a practice deeply embedded in national identity. Some 16,000 boys were registered as child jockeys in the horse-racing registry. The National Child Labour Survey shows that 35% of children aged 5 to 17 were engaged in some form of labour in 2022, of which 83% were boys. Among those involved in the worst forms of child labour, boys represented nearly all children working in mining, construction, and lifting and unloading industries (ILO and Mongolia National Statistics Office, 2024). A frequently cited reason for boys' dropout is the perceived irrelevance of schooling, which appears disconnected from the livelihoods that still dominate male employment, particularly manual, extractive and transport-related work.

Mongolia's progress towards gender parity in education appears linked to economic, demographic and climatic transformation that has reshaped livelihoods, migration patterns and the meaning of schooling itself. The 1990s were highly disruptive for Mongolia's education system. The transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-based system, which began in 1991, dismantled the structures that had once guaranteed universal and free primary and secondary education. Public finances collapsed, rural schools went bankrupt and teachers went often unpaid, sometimes compensated with sacks of flour or cuts of meat (Suprunova, 2007).

Since then, there has been a striking economic recovery. Mining and construction surged, overtaking agriculture in their contribution to the national economy (Gombodorj and Pető, 2022). Tax revenue as a share of GDP increased from 8% in 1998 to 29% in 2006, and has remained at about 25% to this date, helping finance public spending. Public expenditure on education remained consistently above 4% of GDP, even though it gradually declined as a share of total public expenditure from 15% in 2015 to 10% in 2020, reaching as low as 7.5% in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022, before increasing above 10% again in 2023 and 2024. Government investment expanded infrastructure, stabilized teacher salaries and restored confidence in schooling. Parental demand for secondary and post-secondary education grew, as returns to education became more visible in a diversifying labour market (Engel et al., 2014).

Economic recovery alone does not explain the shift towards gender parity in education, which has been the result of a broader economic and social transformation. For centuries, Mongolia's sparse population sustained itself through nomadic herding and seasonal migration. That way of life is now under severe strain. Overgrazing has degraded pastureland. Climate change has intensified the frequency of dzud, devastating cycles of summer drought followed by harsh winters that wipe out livestock and livelihoods (Khulan, 2024; Loo et al., 2022). The result has been massive rural-to-urban migration. While nearly 6 in 10 Mongolians lived in rural areas in 1960, barely one third do so today (World Urbanization Prospects, 2025). Many herders abandoned nomadism altogether, moving to Ulaanbaatar in search of work, education and services. Alongside formal migrants, informal 'ger' (tent) districts sprang up on the city's outskirts, home to families who retain traditional dwellings but lack full legal status or access to public services (Batkhuyag and Dondogdulam, 2018; Burchard-Dziubińska et al., 2025).

Education is both a driver and a consequence of this migration. The tradition of sending young children to distant boarding schools often meant moving, incurring new costs or splitting up families: women accompanied young children to administrative centres, while men remained behind to care for livestock (Ahearn-Ligham, 2016). Among 500 surveyed migrant households in 2024, 39% mentioned education as a main reason for migration, relocating to improve access to better secondary or higher education institutions (UNICEF and IOM Mongolia, 2025).

The education system had been designed around rural life. During the Soviet era, an extensive boarding school network allowed nomadic children to access education, while families continued herding. After 1991, however, dormitories deteriorated rapidly. Fees introduced in the mid-1990s to address fiscal shortfalls caused enrolment to plunge, forcing the government to reverse course and re-establish free boarding as a legal right (Batkhuyag and Dondogdulam, 2018). While the number living in dormitories was falling, it stabilized after 2014 and most children requesting dormitory places are now able to get one (**Figure 2a**). While boys exceed girls as boarders in lower secondary education, there are many more girls than boys boarding in dormitories in cities in grades 10 to 12 (**Figure 2b**).

Dormitories remain central to rural needs. Over 75% of children who apply for boarding schools come from herder families (Mongolia Ministry of Education, 2025d). Yet quality remains uneven. Comprehensive standards have been set for the environment of boarding schools, including buildings and facilities for students and teachers, classroom size, food and nutrition, and safety requirements. However, analyses of experiences in dormitory environments consistently show inadequate living conditions. Children living in dormitories reported more stress, anxiety and sleep disturbance compared to those living with their families. Poor conditions contribute to higher dropout rates (Mongolia National Coalition of Civil

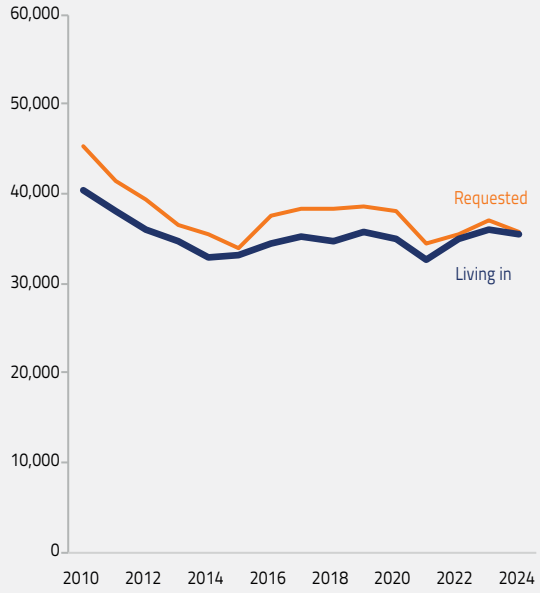
Society, 2024). A study to determine the current state and capacity of dormitories in secondary schools found that management was challenged by insufficient participation and cooperation of parents and guardians, inadequate facilities and budget, and too many children (National Institute of Education Research and UNICEF, 2025).

Efforts have been made to improve rural teaching quality, including through salary incentives and initiatives to attract men into a profession that is now overwhelmingly female. Curriculum reforms have also sought to make schooling more relevant to rural life, incorporating animal husbandry, environmental science, climate awareness and financial literacy. An evaluation of a non-formal education intervention to provide literacy and life skills to herder families found that 5% of learners re-entered formal secondary school and 47% continued primary and secondary education through equivalency programmes (UNESCO, 2022).

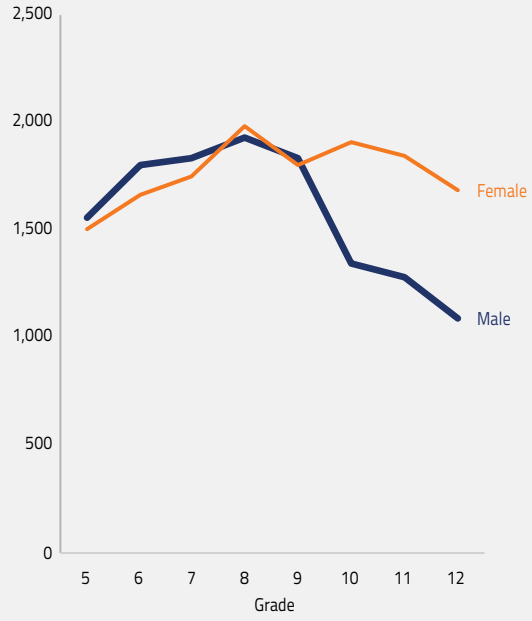
Urban challenges, by contrast, remain inadequately addressed. Mongolia's rapid and largely unplanned urbanization has overwhelmed school infrastructure. In 2024/25, there were 885 general education schools, of which 314 were in the capital Ulaanbaatar. While this represents substantial growth since 2015, there remains a chronic undersupply (UB Post, 2025). Access to schooling is worst for the poorest children who live on the outskirts of the city and may be unable to afford the transport cost to access school (Loo et al., 2022; Terbish et al., 2025). In 2021, a nationally representative migrant needs assessment showed that about half of migrants were concerned about distance to education, school availability or school spaces (IOM Mongolia, 2022). Many schools operate multiple shifts: one third of the nearly 800,000 students in grades 1 to 12 study in two- or three-shift school (Mongolia Ministry of Education, 2025d).

FIGURE 2:
Boarding is a prominent feature of secondary education in Mongolia

a. Number of students who requested to stay and who stay in a dormitory, Mongolia, 2010–24



b. Number of students who stay in a dormitory, by sex and grade, Mongolia, 2024/25



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Mongolia_fig2
Source: Mongolia Ministry of Education (2025b).

Boys are overrepresented in technical and vocational education and training, which aligns more closely with labour market demand and may offer immediate financial incentives. After completing nine years of basic education, students may enter vocational programmes that offer stipends and clearer pathways into employment. Among 15- to 19-year-olds enrolled in these programmes, more than two thirds are boys, especially in the industry, transport, mining and construction fields.

Mongolia's education legislation is progressive. Since the early 1990s, successive laws have affirmed free and compulsory education, gradually extending it to 12 years (Engel et al., 2014). The 2023 Education Law consolidates this commitment, formally defining general education to be acquired over 12 years (Mongolia Government, 2023). However, laws and policies have not focused enough on boys' disadvantage in education. No local government officials responsible for education have received any training, guidelines or materials to mainstream gender in education planning and programming (Mongolia National Coalition of Civil Society, 2024). The 2021–2030 Education Sector Development Plan does not specifically acknowledge boys' disadvantage (Mongolia Ministry of Education and Science, 2020). Gender assessments still primarily focus on girls and women (World Bank, 2024). Existing analyses on advancing equity, efficiency and outcomes in education acknowledge gender disparity at the upper secondary level, but do not prioritize the issue in terms of policy (World Bank et al., 2020). The assumption – arguably incorrect – seems to be that this is a problem that is going to solve itself.

Nepal: A REMARKABLE STORY OF GENDER PARITY IN EDUCATION

Southern Asia receives negative headlines on girls' education because of the plight of Afghan girls. But this neglects the major strides towards gender parity that have taken place in the region in the last 35 years. Nowhere is this more remarkable than in Nepal. In 1990, just 8% of girls completed lower secondary school 'on time' (i.e. according to the global definition, within three to five years from the official graduation age) and 13% ultimately completed with even more delay – compared to 41% of boys. By 2024, there was gender parity with 89% of adolescent girls and boys completing lower secondary school. This is not unique. In India, gender parity has also been achieved, whereas in Bangladesh there have been more girls than boys completing lower secondary school since 2010, with the gap increasing. But what is particular about Nepal is that it is a poorer country, started from a lower point, and has increased faster (by 2.2 percentage points per year) than its peers (1.9 points in Bangladesh, 1.8 points in India and 1.3 points in Pakistan) (**Figure 1a**).

A similar trajectory can be observed in upper secondary education. Nepal has not yet achieved gender parity at this level, as an estimated 44% of girls are completing upper secondary school (up from 1% in 1990) compared to 53% of boys. But since 2005, the female upper secondary completion rate has been growing at 1.9 percentage points per year, on par with India and faster than Bangladesh and Pakistan (**Figure 1b**).

Administrative data confirm that girls and boys have nearly equal access in secondary education. Disaggregated by sector, girls made up 52% of upper secondary enrolment in public ('community') schools and 42% in private ('institutional') schools in 2024/25. Combining the two types of school, there is near parity in secondary (grades 9 to 10) and higher secondary (grades 11 to 12) education. There is also gender parity in secondary and higher secondary enrolment among boys and girls from ethnic groups (janjati) and castes (dalit), who were traditionally perceived as having a lower status in society.

Nepal has undergone major socioeconomic changes in the past 25 years, affected by recurring political upheavals, including a Maoist uprising and revolution (1996–2006), the abolition of the monarchy and declaration of a federal republic in 2008 (Bhandari, 2012), a new Constitution with agreement on representational demands (Breen, 2018) and the establishment of a three-tier governance structure in 2015 (Daly et al., 2020), as well as more recent anti-corruption protests that toppled the government (Chenoweth and Cebul, 2026). The political climate notwithstanding, there have been successive national policy efforts to improve the situation of women and girls. Gender discrimination – in legal systems, wealth and employment opportunities – has been a well-documented issue in Nepal that has also affected education. Gender, caste and ethnicity strongly conditioned entry into schooling (Stash and Hannum, 2001). Households were less willing to pay for girls' education than for boys'. In 2003/04, remittances from migrant workers were spent disproportionately on boys' schooling (Vogel and Korinek, 2012). Analysis based on the Nepal Living Standards Survey showed that sending boys to private schools and girls to public schools was a common biased behaviour (Khanal, 2018).

Three main reasons explain the progress of girls in recent years: political commitment to gender equality expressed in legislation, policy and programming; changes in the examination system; and the direct and indirect impact of domestic and international migration.

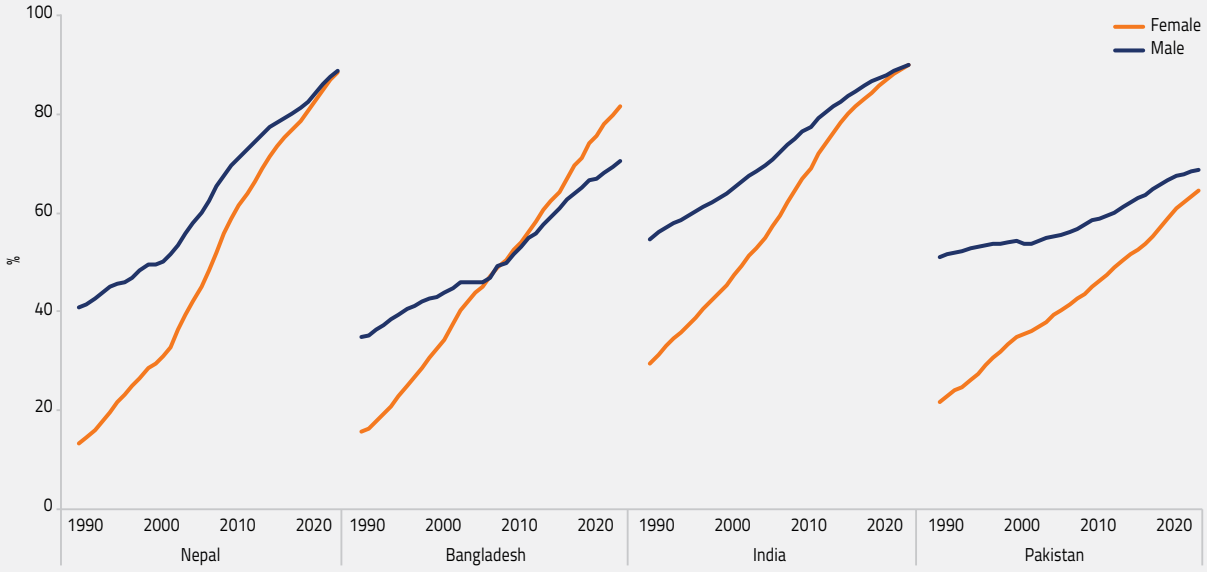
First, the demand for equity was consolidated in the 2015 Constitution, which made education an inalienable right for all, including the marginalized dalits. The 2018 Compulsory and Free Basic Education Act, implementing Article 31 of the Constitution, made basic education free and compulsory, and secondary education free. The establishment of constitutional rights followed from the gradual change in norms regarding girls' education. For years, active advocacy for girls' empowerment had helped broad swathes of society recognize the value of education for girls' own wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families (Ghimire and Samuels, 2014).

Successive sector plans – financially supported by the government and a coordinated group of development partners – had focused on gender equality. The 2009–15 School Sector Reform Plan had supported residential and non-residential scholarships (for dalits, martyrs, students with disabilities, and from the Karnali region) and made special provisions for women to become teachers, including relaxing criteria for the promotion of qualified female, dalit and disadvantaged teachers (Nepal Ministry of Education, 2009). The 2016–23 School Sector Development Programme focused on school construction with improved water and sanitation facilities, including upgrading existing secondary schools to provide education up to grade 12 and establishing at least one secondary

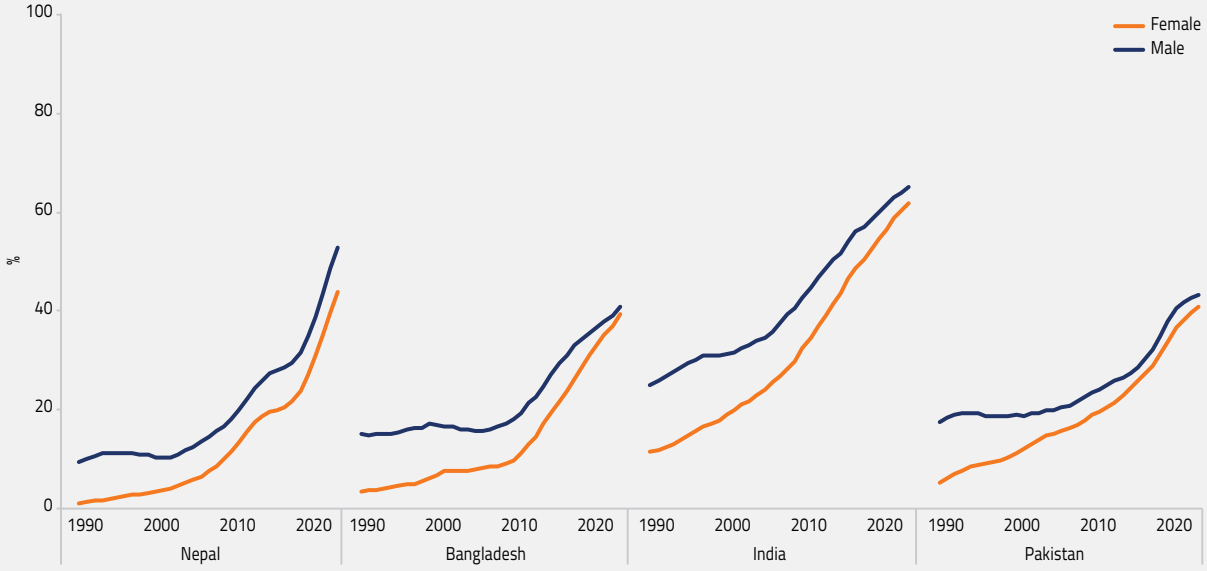
school providing science at grade 11 in each constituency. Free textbooks were provided up to grade 12 and 1,650 science teachers were to be deployed to secondary schools. Targeted programmes were established in districts with low gender parity and enrolment rates, while key targets to be monitored and achieved were set: gender parity in enrolment and survival to grades 9 to 12 (Nepal Ministry of Education, 2016).

FIGURE 1:
Nepal has increased girls' lower secondary completion rates faster than its peers
Ultimate completion rate, by sex, Nepal and selected Southern Asian countries, 1990–2024

a. Lower secondary



b. Upper secondary



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Nepal_fig1
Source: UIS database.

Second, a key change brought by the 2016–23 School Sector Development Programme was the restructuring of secondary education. For more than 40 years until the 2015/16 school year, secondary school ended at grade 10 with the high-stakes School Leaving Certificate examination. In 2016, the Eighth Amendment on education redefined school as grades 1 to 12, shifting the National School Leaving Examination from grade 10 to grade 12 (Bhatta and Mehendale, 2020). The revamped Secondary Education Examination at grade 10 and the first new School Leaving Certificate examination at grade 12 were organized in 2017. An assessment system reform in 2015 had previously changed the system from one based on a pass/fail cutoff to one based on letter grading in a bid to reduce inefficiency, alleviate the high-stakes nature of the examination, ease promotion, reduce stress, and make the system compatible with global practice (Bhattarai, 2019). As the intention of the examination system changed, with the grade 10 examination now becoming far less stressful and more focused on easing entry to grade 11, survival rates to grade 12 improved between 2019/20 and 2024/25 by 9 percentage points for boys and 11 percentage points for girls, which also explains the acceleration of progress in upper secondary completion in recent years.

Third, long-term political and economic uncertainty in Nepal has been associated with accelerated domestic migration from rural to urban areas and especially the capital city area, as well as with international migration since the early 2000s. According to the 2017/18 National Labour Force Survey, more than 40% of households nationwide had at least one migrant, while according to the 2021 Census, more than 80% of international migrants were male. About one third of international migrants had secondary education but only 7% of male migrants and 10% of female migrants had post-secondary education (Bhattarai et al., 2023). Nepal's Foreign Employment Act classifies workers by skill level before issuing labour approval but does not prescribe a minimum education criterion. The majority of male migrant workers were employed in low-skill jobs, suffering difficult conditions and many human rights abuses (National Human Rights Commission of Nepal, 2022), yet earning much higher salaries than at home. These opportunities impacted boys' perceptions, making them believe that upper secondary education was not very important for their employability.

A key positive impact of migration is remittances, which have lowered economic constraints to education over time. In 2012, Nepal ranked third globally for remittances as a share of GDP, reaching 25% of GDP (Sharma et al., 2014), dropping during COVID-19 and recovering afterwards to 27% of GDP in 2023. Analysis of the 2010/11 Nepal Living Standards Survey showed that remittances were positively correlated with education spending (Mishra et al., 2022). An analysis of data collected in rural Nepal between 2016 and 2018 shows that a 1% increase in foreign remittances resulted in a 0.27% increase in household education expenses, potentially helping pay for non-fee related education expenditures (Thapa-Parajuli et al., 2025). Remittances are highly correlated with education spending for rural-to-urban internal migrants, who may place a higher value on education compared to those who are aiming at foreign job opportunities (Bansak et al., 2015). Analysis of 2010/11 household survey data found that received remittances, which up until the early 2000s were more likely to be used for boys' education, had started being used more for girls' education (Raut and Tanaka, 2018).

Nepal has been consistent in its planning to promote girls' education. Efforts to reduce girls' disadvantage in education have included expanding access to public secondary schooling, reducing cost barriers, and targeting efforts to reach the most marginalized girls. The extension of secondary education and the associated assessment reform also made it easier for all students to access grades 11 and 12. Finally, the international, low-skill migration wave, which started in the 2000s, impacted boys' perceptions, making them believe that education is not very important for their employability. Ensuring that all girls and boys complete upper secondary schooling will still require substantial efforts to improve its quality and relevance, in order to boost job prospects. The aspiration to increase secondary enrolment and completion is central to the 2022–31 School Education Sector Plan, which will continue to support free secondary education through targeted scholarships for economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities (Nepal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2022).

Philippines: REDUCING THE EDUCATION GAP IN A CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGION

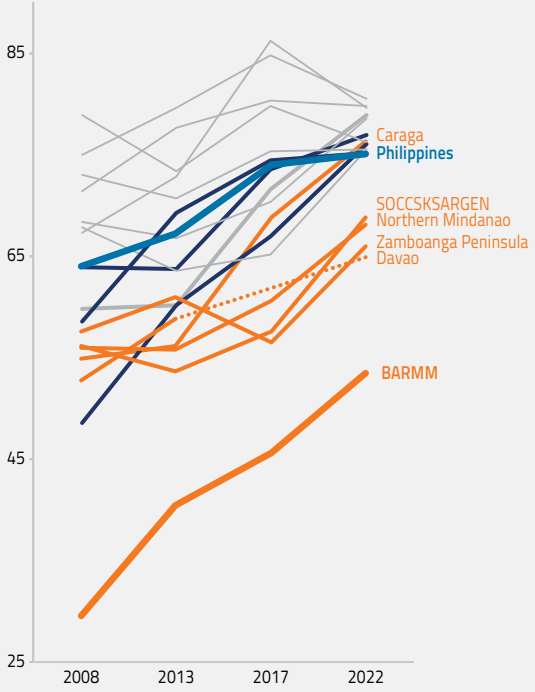
Educational attainment levels have been high in the Philippines. The upper secondary completion rate was 62% in 2000, more than twice as high as its lower-middle-income country peers at the time (25%). But progress has been much slower since compared to those peers: the completion rate increased by 0.6 percentage points per year in the Philippines, reaching 73% in 2024, which was only 40% as fast as those of lower-middle-income countries, which therefore halved the gap.

Despite the slow pace of progress, the Philippines has achieved progress in reducing regional disparity. Of the three major island groups, provinces in Luzon have been above the national average, those in Visayas around the national average, and those in Mindanao well below the national average. While the order has not changed, all six provinces in Mindanao, except Zamboanga Peninsula have increased the upper secondary completion rate faster than the national average. Of those, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), where only 30% of young people completed upper secondary school in 2008 (less than half the national average of 64%) increased at more than twice the national average pace, or by 1.7 percentage points per year, reaching 53% in 2022 (**Figure 1**). This illustrates an interesting story about reducing the education gap in a conflict-affected part of the country.

Bangsamoro was established in 2019 following a plebiscite and the ratification of its basic law. These developments were possible after 10 years of negotiations between the Government of the Philippines and several autonomist groups had led to a framework agreement in 2012, which paved the way for the previous Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao to be replaced by a new Muslim-majority region enjoying more devolved powers. In 2024, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the basic law.

The roots of the conflict go back more than 400 years, as the Moro and Lumad ethnic groups resisted Spanish colonization and conversion to Christianity. But partly in response to resettlement programmes launched after World War II, armed insurgency arose in the late 1960s, which affected about 10% of the national territory and 6% of the population. At the peak of the troubles, 900,000 people were internally displaced. While the main reason was the struggle between an ethnic and religious minority against the central government, other causes of conflict among groups divided by ideology, clan, tribe and elite status, further fuelled violence (Adriano and Parks, 2013).

FIGURE 1:
Upper secondary completion rates have increased and become more geographically equitable in the Philippines
Upper secondary completion rates, by province, Philippines, 2003–22

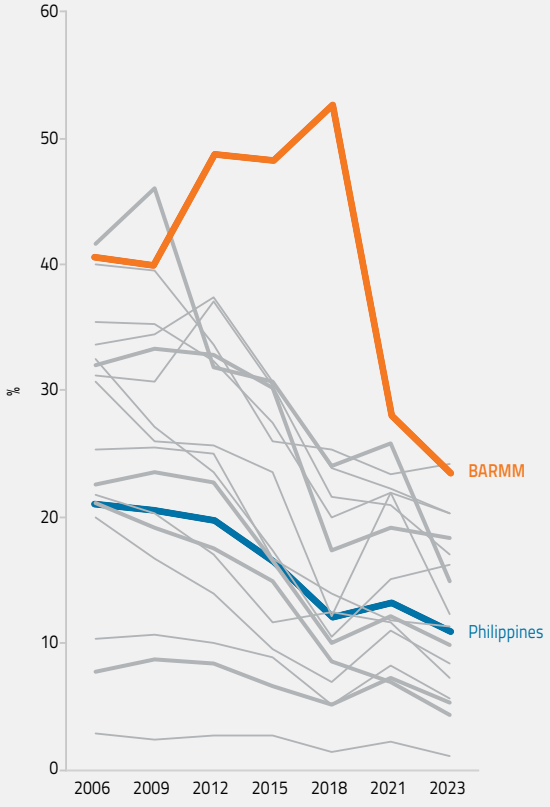


Note: Provinces in Luzon are in light grey, in Visayas in dark blue, and in Mindanao in orange. BARRM stands for Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and SOCCSKSARGEN for South Cotabato, Cotabato City, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City.
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Philippines_fig1
Source: World Inequality Database on Education based on DHS data.

Education issues were central to the conflict. Public education had historically overlooked Muslim history, culture and religion, creating a sense of distance from the national mainstream and scepticism towards schools. Even with increased regional autonomy in the 1990s, people still faced challenges reconciling public education with their daily life (Milligan, 2003). Following the establishment of the region, the Bangsamoro Education Code of 2021 aimed to build an integrated system of education that includes both public schools and the madrasah system (Bangsamoro Government, 2026). Investment in education is needed to overcome the impact of violence, both in material terms, given past damage to infrastructure, and in building the foundations of peace and development (Saycon, 2023; World Bank, 2023).

Armed conflict led to a vicious circle of mistrust that undermined development and exacerbated poverty (Özerdem and Podder, 2012). According to the 2023 National Nutrition Survey, Bangsamoro was the region with the highest stunting rate among children under 5 (34%). In the same year, 24% of households were too poor to buy minimum necessities, more than double the national average of 11%, although more than half below the level in 2018 (53%) (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2024) (**Figure 2**). This suggests that the peace talks and framework agreement ushered in a period of stability that helped the region and Mindanao more generally, to share some of the benefits of national prosperity. Since 2000, the Philippine economy has generally experienced steady growth, and even faster growth since 2010 (World Bank, 2025).

FIGURE 2:
One of the peace dividends in Bangsamoro was rapid poverty reduction
Percentage of households whose income is insufficient to meet basic needs, by region, Philippines, 2006–23

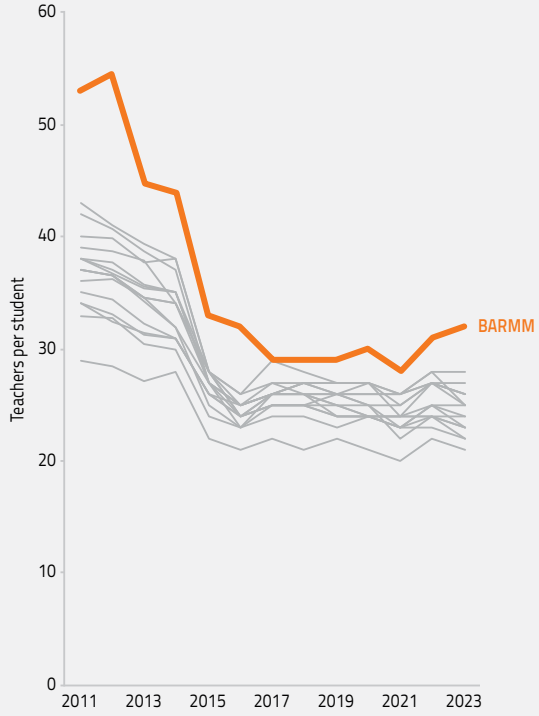


GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Philippines_fig2
Source: Philippine Statistics Authority (2019, 2023).

Economic growth alone does not automatically translate to better social outcomes. The Philippines' large conditional cash transfer Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (Bridging Program for the Filipino Family) (4Ps) provides grants to poor households for up to seven years conditional on compliance with health and education requirements, including enrolment and high attendance rates for all children aged 3 to 18 (Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2021). Launched in 2008 and substantially expanded in subsequent years, it was reaching 4.5 million households in 2023 (Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2023). In Bangsamoro, 376,000 households were benefiting from the programme in 2020 out of a total of 833,000 households, or 45%, compared to a national coverage rate of 16% (Philippines Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2020) and there were 594,000 student beneficiaries from pre-primary to grade 12 (World Bank, 2024). The programme has been credited for a reduction in national poverty of about 1.4 percentage points per year (Acosta and Velarde, 2016). Evaluations have also consistently shown a positive impact on increased enrolment and improved attendance, particularly for older children. The expansion of benefits in 2014 to cover ages 15 to 18 boosted enrolment by 9 percentage points for ages 12 to 17 and by up to 30 percentage points for ages 16 to 17, reducing dropout rates in both urban and rural areas (Orbeta Jr. et al., 2023).

The expansion of upper secondary completion rates in Mindanao owes not only to economic but also to education factors. Following the 2012 Enhanced Basic Education Act, the national education system underwent a major reform in 2013, as compulsory education was extended from 10 to 13 years, including by 1 year of pre-primary and 2 years of upper secondary (grades 11 and 12), on top of the 6 years of primary and 4 years of lower secondary education. The reform aimed to address curriculum congestion, international mismatches in graduate qualifications, and poor employability. The two years of upper secondary education (Senior High School) offer students four specialized tracks: academic, technical-v ocational-livelihood,, sports, and arts and design (Race, 2023). Government expenditure on education increased significantly to fund this reform: between 2000 and 2016, the government spent on average 0.7% of GDP on secondary education; between 2017 and 2023, the share increased to 1.2% of GDP. Part of the increased spending went to a large-scale teacher recruitment programme that decreased student/teacher ratios and considerably lowered the disparity between regions (World Bank, 2019a) (**Figure 3**).

FIGURE 3:
Student/teacher ratios fell in the 2010s
Student/teacher ratio in public lower secondary schools (grades 7 to 10), by region, Philippines, 2011–23



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Philippines_fig3
Source: Philippine Statistical Yearbook, various years.

The Alternative Learning System (ALS) was a major reform launched in 2004 to provide a second chance for out-of-school youth and adults to develop literacy skills and complete basic education. Evidence from a World Bank evaluation indicates that learners who pass ALS equivalency examinations often proceed to college or technical and vocational training, highlighting the programme's potential to expand education and labour market opportunities in regions like Bangsamoro (World Bank, 2019b). Nevertheless, its overall reach and impact remain limited. In 2023, some 29,000 young people in Bangsamoro were enrolled, about 6% of the region's out-of-school youth (Gatchalian, 2023). Moreover, there are large gaps between participation, completion and certification. Nationwide, fewer than half of ALS learners completed the programme in 2024 and only about 17,000 passed the primary equivalency examination in 2025, while some 96,000 passed the lower secondary examination, together representing approximately 17% of total ALS enrolment (Abasola, 2024; Philippines Department of Education, 2025).

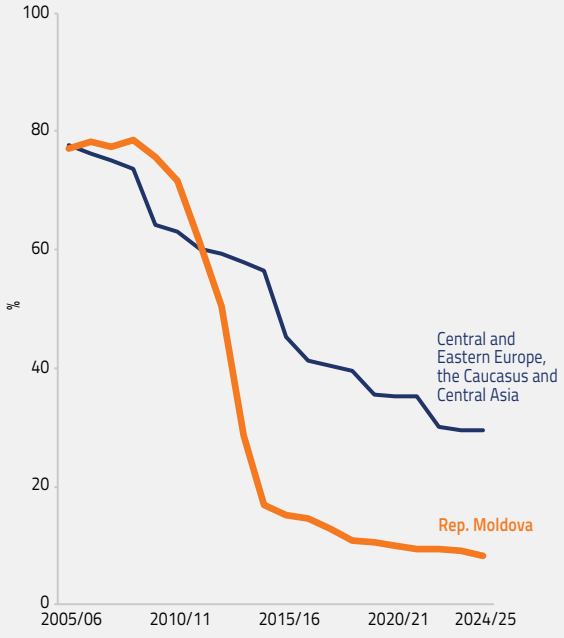
Looking ahead, the main challenge is how Bangsamoro will use its local government potential. In other parts of the Philippines, decentralization in education and the role of local government units has been limited (Laguda et al., 2025). In 2022, local government contributions accounted for only about 6% of total public financing for basic education. As local school boards are financed primarily through a 1% surcharge on local property taxes, local education spending remains highly uneven across regions, with per-student allocations ranging from less than USD 1 in Bangsamoro to approximately USD 120 in the National Capital Region (Equitable Education Fund, 2023). Moreover, persistent governance and record-keeping challenges including inconsistent reporting, weak transparency and limited school involvement in funding decisions further constrain the effectiveness of local governments in education (World Bank, 2016).

Bangsamoro, which now has its own education ministry, has an opportunity to accelerate education progress to converge with the rest of the country. Yet, as the recently published Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) report points out, there are looming challenges. While the Bangsamoro basic law mandates that its education system operates as a 'subsystem of the national education system', it is unclear how this clause is to be interpreted. National programmes (e.g. on remedial education) are sometimes not available or delayed in Bangsamoro because of confusion over funding channels, eligibility and agency jurisdiction. There is no formal coordination mechanism between the Bangsamoro Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education and the Department of Education or other national authorities. Any engagement depends on personal relationships rather than institutional protocols, hampering joint planning, data sharing and policy alignment, with the risk that the region may diverge from national standards or even miss opportunities for technical and financial support (Philippines Senate, 2026).

Republic of Moldova: BRINGING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES INTO MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

In countries that have transitioned away from state socialism in 1990, and notably in the countries of the former Soviet Union, there has been a major effort to change the pedagogical model for children with disabilities and end their educational segregation (UNESCO, 2021). The percentage of children with disabilities who attended a special school in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia has declined from 78% in 2005 to 29% in 2024. Among them, the Republic of Moldova has reported an even faster change in this period with the share falling from 77% to 8% (**Figure 1**).

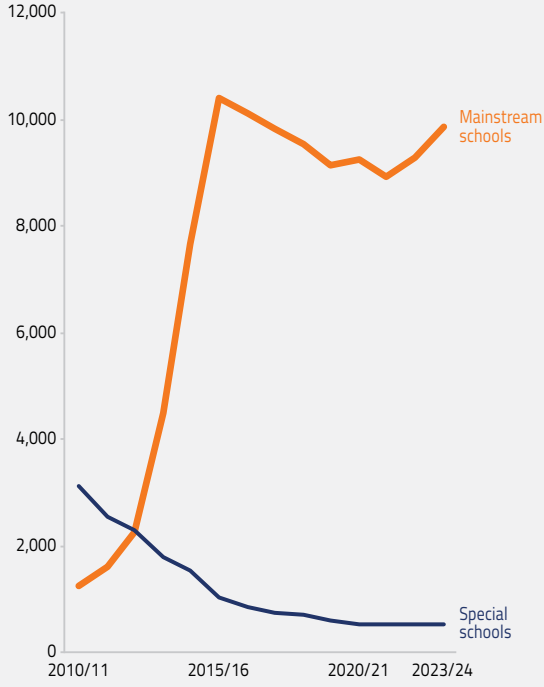
FIGURE 1:
The Republic of Moldova has achieved a rapid decline in the share of students with disabilities attending special schools
Percentage of children with disabilities 0 to 17 years old in education who attended a special school, Republic of Moldova and Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, 2005/06–2024/25



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Moldova_fig1
Source: GEM Report team based on the UNICEF TransMONEE database (2023b).

According to the country's National Statistical Office, the rate of children with disabilities attending mainstream schools more than tripled between 2010 and 2015 (Republic of Moldova National Statistical Office and UNICEF, 2024). Between 2010/11 and 2015/16 , the number of children with disabilities in special schools fell by about 2,000 students, or 67%, while their number in mainstream schools increased by more than 9,000 (**Figure 2**). This large increase can mainly be explained by the reform of the assessment system, which improved the identification of children with special educational needs, enabling more accurate and targeted support. Moreover, the new methodology revealed that a larger share of children required assistance, many of whom would have otherwise attended mainstream schools without adequate support.

FIGURE 2:
More children with special educational needs are being identified in mainstream Moldovan schools
Number of students with disabilities in mainstream and in special schools, Republic of Moldova, 2010/11–2023/24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_Moldova_fig2
Source: Republic of Moldova National Statistical Office and UNICEF (2024).

It should be noted that these numbers reflect the overall distribution of students with disabilities in education; less is known about those who are excluded from the system altogether. Including data on the proportion of children with disabilities who are out of school would offer a more comprehensive picture of the total population with special education needs (United Nations, 2023).

As in other post-Soviet states, the Republic of Moldova inherited a psychological approach to physical and neurological disabilities called 'defectology', which had resulted in educational segregation (Kalinnikova Magnusson, 2021). It was replaced with a commitment to inclusion. The deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities was enshrined in landmark legislation and policies, the result of long-term collaboration between relevant ministries and civil society (LUMOS, 2023). The National Strategy for Reforming the Residential Childcare System 2007–2012 and its action plan led to reorganization and preventive measures that resulted in a significant reduction in the number of children in residential institutions (Evans, 2012).

In 2011, the Programme for the Development of Inclusive Education established children's right to enrol in the nearest schools and to access social assistance. In 2014, the Education Code, amended in 2023, reaffirmed the country's commitment to the inclusion of children with special educational needs (Educational Centre Pro Didactica, 2025). The number of primary and secondary special educational institutions declined from 13 in 2018/19 to 6 in 2024/25 (Republic of Moldova National Statistical Office, 2025). International and regional donors have been key partners in supporting these efforts. The aspiration to join the European Union has also encouraged a closer alignment with its system and objectives, including the promotion of inclusive education, as reaffirmed in the Education 2030 Development Strategy and its Implementation Programme for 2023 (Republic of Moldova Government, 2023a).

Timely and interdisciplinary assessment helps identify appropriate social and educational interventions for students with special educational needs (Ginu, 2021; Grigorenko et al., 2020; Stein and Steed, 2023). Informed by the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the 2012 law on the social inclusion of people with disabilities mandates early assessment by an interdisciplinary team of experts. Regional units of the National Council for the Determination of Disability evaluate the degree of disability (from very severe to moderate), and issue an Individual Programme of Rehabilitation and Social Inclusion with medical and educational recommendations (UNICEF, 2023a), based on the assessment of local Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Services (Trofin et al., 2019).

Integrated assistance services have made schools more inclusive (LUMOS, 2023). In 2013, the Republican Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Centre (the 'Centre') and 35 district-level Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Services (the 'Services') were created to identify children with special needs, coordinate support and promote the inclusion of children with disabilities. Consisting of teams of 8 to 10 qualified specialists, including speech therapists and psychologists, the Services assess children's educational needs and provide methodological support and targeted training to teachers (Trofin et al., 2019). Replacing the medico-psycho-pedagogical commissions, the Centre monitors and provides methodological guidance and assistance to the services, families and schools for inclusive education (Republican Centre for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance, 2017). Support teaching staff and specialized personnel ensure inclusion in schools (Republic of Moldova Ministry of Education et al., 2024).

Lack of availability and overloading of services remains an obstacle (Trofin et al., 2019). In 2023, the system supported more than 10,000 children with special educational needs, including over 4,000 with disabilities, representing about 3% of the total children enrolled in general education (UNICEF, 2025). Yet there was only one support staff member for every 8.2 children with special educational needs in 2021, ranging from 1 for every 6 children in Ungheni district, in the central part of the country, to 1 for every 16 children in Șoldănești district, in the north-east. Frequent staff turnover hampers training provision (Republic of Moldova Government, 2023b). Since 2024, educational institutions can hire school psychologists and support teaching staff based on their needs for better tailoring services to each institution (Republic of Moldova Ministry of Education, 2024).

Since 2012, an Inclusive Education Fund has allocated up to 2% of the total district education budget to inclusive education. The fund is mostly used for teaching staff salaries. This mechanism has contributed to making progress in the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schools (Educational Centre Pro Didactica, 2021). Local governments take better decisions on inclusive education spending based on the needed services (Meijer and Watkins, 2019). Targeted funding proves to be effective if applied early on and within systemic interventions (Eivers, 2024).

Yet the allocation has not been proportional to the number of children with special educational needs. Nor has it been aligned with actual needs and taken into account the gaps between districts (Educational Centre Pro Didactica, 2021). Inadequate funding means that the cost of teaching materials and equipment cannot be fully covered, while the needs of some levels of education are likely to not be addressed, especially early childhood and vocational education (Republic of Moldova Ministry of Education et al., 2024).

An additional complication is that the Republic of Moldova has been experiencing a long-term demographic decline due to fewer births and emigration. The primary and secondary student population has fallen by 13% between 2013 and 2023 (Eurostat, 2025). As the total number of children declines, the fund's allocation decreases accordingly (Republic of Moldova Government, 2023b). To address this, the financing formula to allocate budgets to primary and secondary education institutions is currently under revision (Eurydice, 2025).

A cultural shift towards inclusion takes time. A long legacy of segregation and lack of exposure to inclusive practices continues to stigmatize learners with special educational needs, especially those with severe physical and mental disabilities, among communities, teachers and caregivers. Advocacy, training and awareness campaigns on inclusion have been trying to resolve concerns. Two studies conducted five years apart showed that the proportion of teachers who supported inclusion increased from 40% in 2018 to 60% in 2024, while the proportion of caregivers who expressed support grew from 23% to 40% (Republic of Moldova Ministry of Education et al., 2024). Parents' school academies have also been established as a collaborative space to discuss inclusive practices (Educational Centre Pro Didactica, 2025).

Students with disabilities should have equal access to all levels of education (Eivers, 2024). The I-VET project, funded by the Austrian Agency for Education and Internationalization, aims to promote inclusive technical and vocational education provision through inclusive institutes, targeted training, methodological improvements and new legal frameworks (Austria Agency for Education and Internationalization, 2025).

The pursuit of inclusion is an ongoing process and needs to be sustainable. As part of efficiency measures, school networks have been optimized by the absorption of smaller schools. Larger district schools have been transformed into model schools with inclusive buildings and learning materials. Families will be offered incentives such as free transportation and a monthly allowance to enrol their children in these model schools (Norad and UNDP, 2024). Moreover, the government plans to improve services to children with special educational needs through the allocation of adequate financial resources, an increase in support teaching staff, the implementation of an updated methodology for early intervention, and orientation for students and their families (Republic of Moldova Government, 2023b).



Policy analysis:
financing for equity

The fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) – to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' – is one of the clearest examples of the overall pledge to leave no one behind, contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Yet how to monitor the achievement of the goal is an ongoing question. Monitoring equity outcomes in education, despite the significant challenges discussed in the beginning of this chapter, is still simpler than monitoring the role of public institutions in equity-oriented processes, notably policies and programmes, because of vast differences in context. It has rarely been done systematically.

Globally, one in three young people do not complete secondary school. These early school leavers are overrepresented among groups disadvantaged in terms of income, location and other characteristics. Several policies can be deployed to promote or undermine equity in education (Field et al., 2007). A review of European countries' approaches identified five sets of policies, some of which have already been discussed in this report (**Chapter 4**): limit stratification, promote common standards, provide targeted pedagogical support, expand early childhood services, and use financing mechanisms (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020).

> By making redistribution a central part of financing for education, countries can uphold everyone's right to education, create fairer outcomes, build stronger systems, and boost social cohesion

With respect to financing, it is generally agreed that a higher volume of public spending for primary and secondary education tends to be redistributive in favour of more disadvantaged populations (UNESCO and World Bank, 2023). However, it also matters how public resources are spent and, in particular, the extent to which countries intentionally redistribute resources to help disadvantaged schools and populations overcome challenges related to poverty, geography and other factors leading to exclusion. By making redistribution a central part of financing for education, countries can uphold everyone's right to education, create fairer outcomes, build stronger systems, and boost social cohesion.

Retaining young people in school does require relieving the financial constraints of households and service providers. Resources directly help families that cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket costs or to lose the income a young person can bring; and indirectly, by improving education quality and increasing the perceived value of schooling. Yet variations in the cost of delivering education to a common standard of quality also mean that financing should not be allocated uniformly.

This section is based on a comprehensive review of national approaches to use financing to promote equity in primary and secondary education. The review builds on an earlier attempt (UNESCO, 2021) to monitor SDG thematic indicator 4.5.3, which looks at the existence of funding mechanisms to reallocate education resources to disadvantaged populations. The country profiles of financing mechanisms to promote equity are available on the PEER website. The purpose of the section is twofold: to describe the evolving emphasis that countries have been putting into equity-oriented financing; and to provide examples of country programmes, describing their history and characteristics and, where possible, their impact.

COUNTRIES TRY TO PROMOTE EQUITY IN EDUCATION THROUGH DIFFERENT FINANCING MECHANISMS

For easier comparison between countries' approaches, this analysis identifies five key financing **mechanisms**.

- **To subnational governments**: Many countries allocate funds from the central to lower tiers of government to be used for education, whether earmarked or not. Grants are typically linked to population and service unit cost measures but sometimes they are adjusted, taking factors such as poverty and location into account to promote equity.
- **To schools**: Many countries provide resources directly from the central government to schools, through block grants or other school-level allocations, with some compensating schools that are in a disadvantaged area and/or serve disadvantaged populations.
- **To students and families, through education budgets**: Education ministries may provide resources to disadvantaged students and their families. These may be exemptions from fee payments or subsidies in cash (e.g. scholarships, although many such schemes are merit-based and not equity-oriented) or in kind (e.g. school kits).
- **To students and families, as school meals**: School meal programmes are an example of an in-kind transfer delivered at school to students. Depending on the context, they may help offset food insecurity to promote attendance and learning. They may be funded and managed by education or other ministries.

- **To students and families, through social budgets**: Social protection ministries provide cash to disadvantaged households that help improve education opportunities either explicitly (e.g. by making payments conditional on an education criterion) or implicitly (e.g. unconditional cash transfers and child grants).

TRANSFERS TO SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS ARE SOMETIMES USED TO REDISTRIBUTE EDUCATION FUNDS

Decentralization and devolution have been introduced in many countries to improve the efficiency of resource allocation. In the case of education, local governments can take advantage of their proximity to schools and communities to take better informed decisions, while accountability is stronger, as citizens can more easily monitor the performance of local authorities. But education resources delivered to subnational governments can also improve equity. The extent to which these transfers respond to the different education needs and revenue-raising capacities of subnational governments is critical for the success of decentralization and devolution reforms: poorly planned resource allocations may exacerbate inequality between poor and rich provinces or regions (Al-Samarrai and Lewis, 2021).

Five broad models of how countries channel education resources to subnational levels have been identified, in increasing order of equity orientation (**Table 6.1**). The first model features centralized, single-channel systems characterized by limited fiscal devolution and strong vertical control, in which education or finance ministries manage allocations directly to deconcentrated offices, often relying on historical budgets with little scope for equity adjustments, including Bangladesh, Congo, Jordan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. This structure is also common in small states.

The second model is a dual system where the central level finances salaries and core recurrent costs from a primary channel and infrastructure or complementary programmes from a secondary channel, which may or may not have an equity objective. In Algeria, the central government finances nearly all staff costs, while municipalities manage operational expenses through administrative transfers from the central Solidarity and Guarantee Fund for Local Authorities with no equity dimension (Algeria Government, 2025; OECD and UCLG, 2022a). Italy uses a second channel, the Equalization Fund, which is enshrined in Article 119 of the 2023 Constitution, to pursue redistribution aims through centrally defined criteria. In Mongolia the central government transfers earmarked funds to subnational governments for teacher salaries and recurrent school operations, while infrastructure and development spending are managed through a Local Development Fund, which does not have a clearly defined equity orientation (World Bank, 2016, 2020).

TABLE 6.1:
Five models of transferring education resources to subnational levels

	Category	Characteristics	Selected examples
Equity focus: Lower ↑	**Centralized, single-channel systems**	A central budget (usually via the education ministry) is dominant for transferring resources. Funds flow to deconcentrated offices that are not autonomous. No strong equity formula.	Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic
	Dual-channel systems (central and municipal or development funds)	The primary channel (teacher salaries, recurrent costs) is central, but a secondary channel finances local governments' specific programme or capital costs, often through development funds or investment programmes.	Côte d'Ivoire, Panama
	Per-student allocation systems	Formula-based, mostly enrolment-driven. Some differentiation by school level or type, but weak or minimal pro-poor weighting. Subnational governments act as intermediaries.	Azerbaijan, Namibia
	Formula-based systems (education-specific revenue sharing)	Main mechanism is an earmarked transfer for education, with explicit equity adjustments (e.g. based on poverty, rurality, vulnerability, small schools, minorities).	Brazil, Uganda
↓ Higher	**General fiscal equalization systems (general transfers with education built in)**	Education is financed through general fiscal equalization systems (block grants or revenue sharing). Funds are not earmarked but formulas include education needs, demographics or regional cost factors.	China, Denmark

Source: GEM Report team.

The third model relies on simple per-student allocations that improve predictability but provide limited redistributive power. In Kenya, the main mechanism for financing teaching and learning materials and school operations in basic education is capitation grants, calculated as a fixed amount per enrolled student, without an explicit equity-weighted formula for poverty, remoteness or fiscal capacity (Kenya Office of the Auditor-General, 2025).

The fourth model introduces explicit equity adjustments that combine a per-student amount with weighting for poverty, remoteness, language or other dimensions. In Brazil, the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and Valorization of Education Professionals (FUNDEB) was established in 2007 and made permanent in 2020. It guarantees a national minimum per-student spending level, with federal top-ups for the poorest states and municipalities. It has been estimated that inequality decreased by 12% in five years as a result of the fund (Bertoni et al., 2018) and that this effect continued throughout the 2010s (Becker, 2023; Maciel et al., 2025; Dias Peres et al., 2024). Post-2020 reforms introduced a small performance-related criteria, which may have an inequitable effect (da Silva, 2022). Colombia's Sistema General de Participaciones allocates about 60% of its pooled revenues to education factoring in dropout risk, disability, boarding students and other needs. Although most funds go to payroll and performance-based adjustments are limited, the formula ensures rural municipalities receive higher per-student funding (Colombia Planning Department, 2023).

In Uganda, primary and secondary education capitation grants are allocated to local governments to cover non-wage recurrent expenses. They are calculated per student, mainly based on enrolment, with minimal consideration for hard-to-reach groups, such as refugees, or performance (Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, 2021). The small volume and weak equalization have made it difficult for poorer districts to sustain quality, leading to persistent disparity in access (Datzberger, 2018; Kan and Klasen, 2021; Uganda National Planning Agency, 2018). Primary school allocations for 2025/26 were UGX 18,000 per pupil (USD 5), which means schools depend on parent-teacher association contributions to cover basic expenses (The Independent, 2025).

Under the fifth model, subnational authorities have considerable autonomy and equalization formulas redistribute resources. Canada and Germany use general fiscal transfers to support comparable service standards across jurisdictions (Canada Government, 2024; European Commission, 2025a). China uses general transfers to balance provincial fiscal capacity and sets nationwide standards for compulsory education costs. These are calculated using national per-student expenditure guidelines and regional cost factors, with special consideration given to ethnic minority areas under the 1984 Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (China Ministry of Finance, 2008; Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2024). While these mechanisms have reduced provincial disparities, inequalities remain at the county level (Guo and Li, 2024; Huang et al., 2021; Ma et al., 2022; Xiang and Stillwell, 2023). In Denmark, municipalities finance basic education primarily through local income taxes, while equalization measures cover the gap between tax base and service costs. The central government does not earmark funds for education (European Commission, 2026; OECD and UCLG, 2022b).

> Overall, 121, or 58% of countries allocate funds to subnational governments for education purposes

Overall, 121, or 58% of countries allocate funds to subnational governments for education purposes, ranging from 29% in Oceania and 33% in Northern Africa and Western Asia to 91% in Europe and Northern America. Of these, 57, or 47% of countries include explicit equity elements in their transfer mechanisms, ranging from 13% in Northern Africa and Western Asia and 29% in Latin America and the Caribbean to 67% in Europe and Northern America and 71% in Central and Southern Asia.

Many countries that attempt to redistribute funds through intergovernmental transfers struggle to dent regional inequality. Education financing in Argentina, a federal country, consists of three parts (Claus and Vinacur, 2024). First, provinces fund education from their own revenue, which constitutes the bulk of total education spending (79% in 2024), although it is in decline (90% in 2011) (Silva and Claus, 2025). Second, the federal government transfers a portion of its revenue to provincial governments (19% in 2024) to compensate for provinces' unequal revenue mobilization capacity. These funds are disbursed according to rules set in the 2005 education financing law, which take rural and out-of-school populations into account (Argentina Congress, 2005). These transfers considerably reduce gaps in spending per student between provinces (Claus and Vinacur, 2024), even though they are not sufficient to eliminate them (Rivas and Dborkin, 2018). Third, the education and other federal ministries make non-automatic transfers to provinces and

municipalities to implement nationwide programmes (4% in 2024) but there are calls to review their impact on equity (Claus and Sanchez, 2019). Although the co-participation model improves funding for poorer provinces, it also creates dependency, discouraging local revenue generation and making most spending inflexible (Elacqua et al., 2025).

Ethiopia presents an example of decentralization reform with a strong equity orientation. Following large-scale devolution in the 1990s and the 2000s, regional governments were granted some powers and responsibilities for service delivery, although these were increasingly shifted to districts. Block grants from the central to the regional governments and from the regional to district governments have been the main source of funding, with education taking the largest share. The original formula was based on population (65%), poverty (25%) and revenue collection and sector performance effort (10%) (Garcia and Rajkumar, 2008). In 2008, the formula was revised to ensure equality in the range and level of service delivery and independence of the grant from regional tax effort levels, while at the same time providing incentives for local governments to perform better (Assefa, 2015; Dom and Lister, 2010). The incentives took the form of a conditional grant introduced in 2011/12, which peaked in 2012/13 when it made up as much as 37% of all federal transfers, but declined afterwards, reaching 6% in 2019/20 (Yimenu, 2023). An evaluation argued that the positive effects on education and health have been the result not only of more resources but also of local control over decisions (Faguet et al., 2020).

High-income countries tend to embed equity in intergovernmental fiscal transfers. In Germany, equity-oriented transfers have been a core feature ever since the fiscal equalization system (Finanzausgleich) was put in place in 1969 (European Commission, 2025a). Japan has operated a national equalization framework since 1987, redistributing resources to local governments based on assessed needs, including education, as part of its broader local finance system (National Institute for Educational Policy Research, 2013). In the Republic of Korea, the Local Education Finance Fund has operated since 1972. About 97% supports routine education operations, allocated using indicators including student enrolment, the number of teachers, school facilities and local fiscal capacity, while the remainder addresses special needs. The fund is financed partly through education taxes and adjusted for rurality and other regional characteristics (Republic of Korea Government, 2026).

EQUITY-ORIENTED TRANSFERS TO SCHOOLS ARE COMMON BUT OFTEN SHORT-LIVED

Depending on their governance arrangements, many countries directly transfer resources to schools. While these may serve different objectives, equity is often one of those, with targeted efforts to mitigate the impact of vulnerabilities caused by poverty, ethnicity, disability and location (Chimier and Harang, 2018). Some transfers may be centralized, allocating school budgets using per-student or other rules; based on operational grants to cover non-salary expenses; or related to specific projects or populations, outside core funding structures. Direct grants to schools require continuity, clear and simple objectives, transparent formulas, good administrative capacity, adequate training and accountability mechanisms without excessive regulatory complexity and audit-heavy oversight (Barón et al., 2024; Lee and Barón, 2024).

> “Globally, 76% of countries re-allocate resources in favour of disadvantaged schools”

Globally, 76% of countries re-allocate resources in favour of disadvantaged schools. Equity-oriented school transfers are almost universal in Europe and Northern America (91%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (88%) but less common in Oceania (56%) and sub-Saharan Africa (63%). They are much more common in high- (91%) than in low-income countries (52%). At least half of the countries with such policies and programmes allocated less than 0.5% of their total education expenditure to them.

Benin implemented free basic education in two stages: in 1993, aimed at girls in primary schools in rural areas; and in 2006, extended to all children in pre-primary and primary education. Following a fee subsidy piloted by a donor in one department to compensate schools for lost income, the government extended the programme to the whole country in 2010, rolling it out one grade at a time. Two evaluations showed significant increases in girls' enrolment and progression (Fatoké Dato, 2022; Koumassa and Olapade, 2020).

Bulgaria introduced direct grants for schools with at least 20% of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, notably Roma, in order to finance inclusive measures, such as language support, classroom assistants and educational mediators (Bulgaria Ministry of Education and Science, 2021, 2024; European Commission, 2012, 2022). Total funding has increased from EUR 13 million in 2019 to approximately EUR 19 million in 2025 (Bulgaria

Government, 2025; Bulgaria Ministry of Education and Science, 2025). Key functions, including mediator training, rely heavily on non-governmental organizations (Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance, 2024; Drobenova and Isaev, 2025; Kyuchukova and Popovska, 2023).

In Fiji, Free Education Grants have been paid directly to 738 primary and 176 secondary schools since 2014. In 2022/23, FJD 65.5 million (about USD 30 million), or 13% of education spending, were allocated. In Papua New Guinea, the Government Tuition Fee Subsidy was introduced in 2012, eliminating tuition fees for all registered public schools and compensating them with a direct per-capita grant (Honga, 2020; Walton et al., 2017). However, its implementation faced challenges, such as uneven institutional capacity, redirection through subnational systems, and delays (Papua New Guinea Auditor General's Office, 2022; Walton and Hushang, 2021).

In Indonesia, School Operational Assistance (BOS) was introduced in 2005 as part of an umbrella earmarked grant to subnational governments. Government guidelines for the use of these capitation-based school grants initially established minimum allocations for learning materials and maximum allocations for supplementary teacher salaries, until schools were given full discretion in 2020, when the grant accounted for 11% of total education spending. Reviews have found that subnational government support to schools for the effective and efficient use of the grants is uneven and some school committees are unaware of what standards they need to meet. A further problem has been the parallel operation of a BOS school grant at the district level which could be better coordinated with the national grant. In 2019, the government launched BOS Afirmasi, which provides an extra IDR 60 million (USD 3,500) to schools in underdeveloped, frontier, and outermost (3T) areas, introducing an equity element (Afkar et al., 2020).

A further recurrent challenge in low- and middle-income countries has been that school grants introduced by donors have not been integrated into the government budget and therefore have not been sustained beyond programme cycles. On top of its inter-governmental block grant, the Philippines piloted school-based management grants in selected districts for a number of years (Philippines Department of Education, 2015; World Bank, 2019). Although grant guidelines were issued in 2015, the mechanism did not become part of the regular budget and was discontinued (Laguda et al., 2025). But in Cambodia, two donor-funded types of school grant were gradually integrated into the government budget and processes (World Bank, 2018; UNICEF, 2022).

Ethiopia introduced a school grant in 2009, which was proportional to enrolment (Kedir Kelil et al., 2014) and funded by donors through three successive programmes. A condition of the General Education Quality Improvement Program for Equity was that the government would co-finance the grant through the budget, which the government eventually met (World Bank, 2025a). The equity orientation has remained weak, although some components were added (e.g. extra 5% for disadvantaged regions, extra grants to transform cluster centre schools into inclusive education resource centres) (Ethiopia Ministry of Education, 2015; Yorke et al., 2022). In The Gambia, the School Improvement Grant programme was introduced to mitigate the loss of school income after the abolition of fees in 2013. It was initially funded by donors but the government transferred it into its budget after 2018. Nevertheless, it has faced challenges in the timely disbursement of funds. Some 85% of respondents in a survey in 2021 ranked delayed fund releases as the largest problem (Barón et al., 2024), a problem that persists (Jarju and Ceesay, 2023).

In Zimbabwe, School Improvement Grants have been funded by a range of donors. In 2019, they accounted for 2% of total primary and secondary school income (UNICEF, 2020). In practice, their impact was larger. They reached more than half of all schools, which were targeted according to their (low) income and (rural) location. An independent evaluation confirmed that targeting was equitable and that funds were used for the intended purpose but also that grant levels were inadequate and that school development committees were insufficiently involved (Smith et al., 2021). A more recent review identified delays in notifying schools and that some schools were left unsupported (Education Coalition of Zimbabwe, 2025). However, school improvement grants are not funded by the government, unlike the case of the Basic Education Assistance Module, a grant to disadvantaged students.

TRANSFERS TO STUDENTS INCREASINGLY TARGET NEED OVER MERIT

Although most countries guarantee free primary and secondary education, several education systems also provide scholarships, subsidies for transport or boarding, grants for uniforms or textbooks, and other types of support, often group-specific, to help reduce student and household out-of-pocket costs. Programme design varies: some countries offer universal coverage, while others target disadvantaged groups. Large differences also exist

in the degree to which these initiatives are funded through education budgets, integrated with social protection systems, or backed by development partners.

> 62% of education ministries offer some form of assistance to students

In total, a review of all education systems in the world, which is featured on the PEER website, found that 62% of education ministries offer some form of assistance to students, ranging from 38% in Oceania and 44% in Sub-Saharan Africa to 82% in Europe and Northern America and 94% in Eastern and Southeastern Asia. Overall, 44% of low-income and 76% of high-income countries offer such support, reflecting differences in fiscal capacity.

> Scholarships need to be sufficiently large, well-functioning and well-targeted to have an impact

Scholarships and targeted grants are important at transition points between cycles, when dropout risk is at its highest. Evidence in low- and lower-middle-income countries usually comes from donor-funded rather than publicly funded programmes and therefore lacks wider policy implications. In the Gambia, a donor-funded secondary school fee exemption programme for girls increased the number sitting for the secondary school exit examination by 55% with the largest gains in poor districts where school costs were the highest (Blimpo et al., 2019). In Ghana, a girls' scholarship experiment funded by a philanthropic organization increased the probability of completing secondary school by almost 30 percentage points (Duflo et al., 2024). In Kenya, a randomized trial of a merit-based scholarship funded by a philanthropic organization that covered fees and supplies in two districts increased attendance and transition to upper secondary education (Kremer et al., 2009). In Uganda, a foundation targeted about 5,000 high performing but financially disadvantaged students between 2013 and 2017. Students were guaranteed admission to and had fees paid for an elite school. They received a monthly stipend of UGX 50,000 (USD 15) and school inputs worth UGX 760,000 (USD 230). The programme increased upper secondary completion by 24 percentage points (Lerva et al., 2025).

A donor-funded programme in Cambodia around the turn of the century in 15% of lower secondary schools offered scholarships worth USD 45 to grade 7 female students. This amount corresponded to the average household spending per lower secondary school student and girls' attendance increased by about 30 percentage points (Filmer and Schady, 2008). A follow-up study found that recipient girls attained 0.6 more years of schooling even after no longer being eligible for a scholarship (Filmer and Schady, 2014).

Among publicly funded programmes, in China's Shaanxi and Hebei provinces, scholarships for poor lower secondary school students increased transition into upper secondary education by eight percentage points if scholarships started being given at grade 9 but not if starting at grade 7 (Yi et al., 2015). In Nepal, where households were estimated to contribute 49% of total education expenditure in the mid-2010s, a scholarship scheme supports Dalit students, female students and students with disabilities (NRP 400 to 600 or USD 4 to 6 per year), 'poor and talented' students in secondary education (NRP 1,700 or USD 16), and girls in the Karnali province (NRP 1,000 to 1,500 or USD 9 to 14 per year). The low amount of support, deemed insufficient even for stationery supplies, means this scheme is mainly symbolic. Even so, the large number of recipients (3 million or about 40% of total primary and secondary school enrolment in 2016) meant that the outlay was substantial at some NPR 40 billion (USD 386 million) or 6% of total public education spending (Pradhan et al., 2021).

Scholarships need to be sufficiently large, well-functioning and well-targeted to have an impact. In Mexico, the PROBEMS scholarship programme was introduced by the education ministry targeting poor secondary school students in urban areas. Its coverage increased from less than 300,000 in 2007 to almost 900,000 in 2014 or 24% of the total enrolment with a budget of USD 410 million or 23% of the total secondary school federal budget excluding salaries. There were three scholarship levels, which increased the higher the student's academic performance. However, the average monthly value was MXN 716 (or USD 56), which was just below the extreme poverty line. Moreover, the programme did not improve graduation rates, possibly because it did not reach beneficiaries who were as poor as intended (de Hoyos et al., 2019). More recently, the Beca Benito Juárez, a universal scholarship, has replaced the acclaimed conditional cash transfer programme Prospera. In 2022/23, the number of scholarship recipients was 3.4 million in primary and 1.2 million in secondary education, at a budget of MXN 27 billion (USD 1.5 billion) (CONEVAL, 2024). It has been estimated that boys' upper secondary school

enrolment declined by 12 percentage points as a result of the transition from a conditional to an unconditional payment (Marquez-Padilla et al., 2025).

Malaysia provides various education-related financial aid programmes (Malaysia Government, 2025). The Primary School Assistance programme, originally for low-income students, was expanded in 2023 to all primary and secondary students, reducing its equity focus. In 2026, MYR 794 million (USD 203 million) was allocated to the programme (Humphrey, 2026). Targeted support with an equity focus now consists of 22 smaller measures, mainly for secondary school students, such as need-based assistance, emergency aid, scholarships and a monthly MYR 150 (USD 38) allowance for students with disabilities. Malaysia's broader social protection is also fragmented, and coordination challenges end up excluding many disadvantaged populations. Some two-thirds of social protection assistance reaches the bottom 40%, but benefits are modest at 13% of income for the poorest 10% (Wan and Cheng, 2026; World Bank, 2025b).

National policies and programmes relaxing examination fees for candidates from low-income families in Dominica (Dominica Government, 2025; Dominica News Online, 2023), Ghana (Abugri, 2024), Lesotho (Lesotho Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, 2009), Togo (Togo Government, 2024) and Vanuatu (Vanuatu Ministry of Education and Training, 2025) aim to help reduce dropout risk at key transitions. Transport assistance programmes in Belarus (Belarus Government, 2024), Costa Rica (Costa Rica Ministry of Education, 2025), Georgia (Georgia Ministry of Education, Science and Youth, 2026) and Ireland (Ireland Government, 2025) address geographic inequality beyond per-student allocations.

In-kind support reduces private costs, offering progressive benefits, especially if targeted at poor households. Examples of this support include school uniforms in Grenada (Grenada Ministry of Social Development, Housing and Community Empowerment, 2019) and the Seychelles (Seychelles Agency for Social Protection, 2021), textbooks in Cameroon (Global Partnership for Education, 2024) and materials aid in Mauritius (Le Mauricien, 2025).

Support measures also target other disadvantaged groups. Monetary support has been targeted at girls, either generic, such as stipends in Bangladesh (Asian Development Bank, 2022), or specific, such as transport subsidies in India (Drishti, 2023) and boarding subsidies in Morocco (Morocco Government, 2024). Support for ethnic, linguistic or indigenous minorities addresses specific barriers such as remoteness, language, or cultural marginalization not captured by standard funding formulas. Examples include boarding subsidies for ethnic minority students in Viet Nam (VietNamNet Global, 2026), allowances for minority students in remote areas of China (China Government, 2015; Han, 2018) and extra language resources for Mapuche students in Chile (UNESCO, 2023).

While many programmes intend to target disadvantaged population groups (**Box 6.1**), it is more difficult to assess whether they succeed in reaching them in practice. A module of the UNICEF Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) on social protection offers evidence, albeit imperfect, of programme coverage and targeting effectiveness. It enquires about two broad programme types: one specific (school tuition support) and the other broad (other school-related support). Among the disadvantages is that it is not always straightforward to understand what programme is being captured in the survey (e.g. whether it is a mechanism funded by the education or the social protection ministry), what programme households think they are providing information for, and what level of assistance they receive.

The reported information refers to all household members aged between 5 and 24 years who are in school. The median country reached 5% of its population with tuition support and 6% with other support. However, the average share reached was higher (just over 15%) because some countries have larger programmes. Information is disaggregated by household characteristics, of which the most relevant is wealth, where households are ranked in five groups, from poorest to richest. Countries with a coverage rate of at least 5% were split in two ways: by level of coverage (between 5% and 15% (lower coverage) and above 15% (higher coverage) on average); and by whether at least one of the two programmes appears to be relatively effective in targeting the poorest households.

Among countries with lower coverage, Madagascar's 'other school-related support programme', which probably refers to the provision of school kits through a mix of national, donor and non-government support (Ralaivita, 2022), seems to be well-targeted, benefiting 42% of the poorest and 9% of the richest quintile of households. In contrast, the programmes in the Central African Republic and Chad appear to have a flat distribution (**Figure 6.10a**).

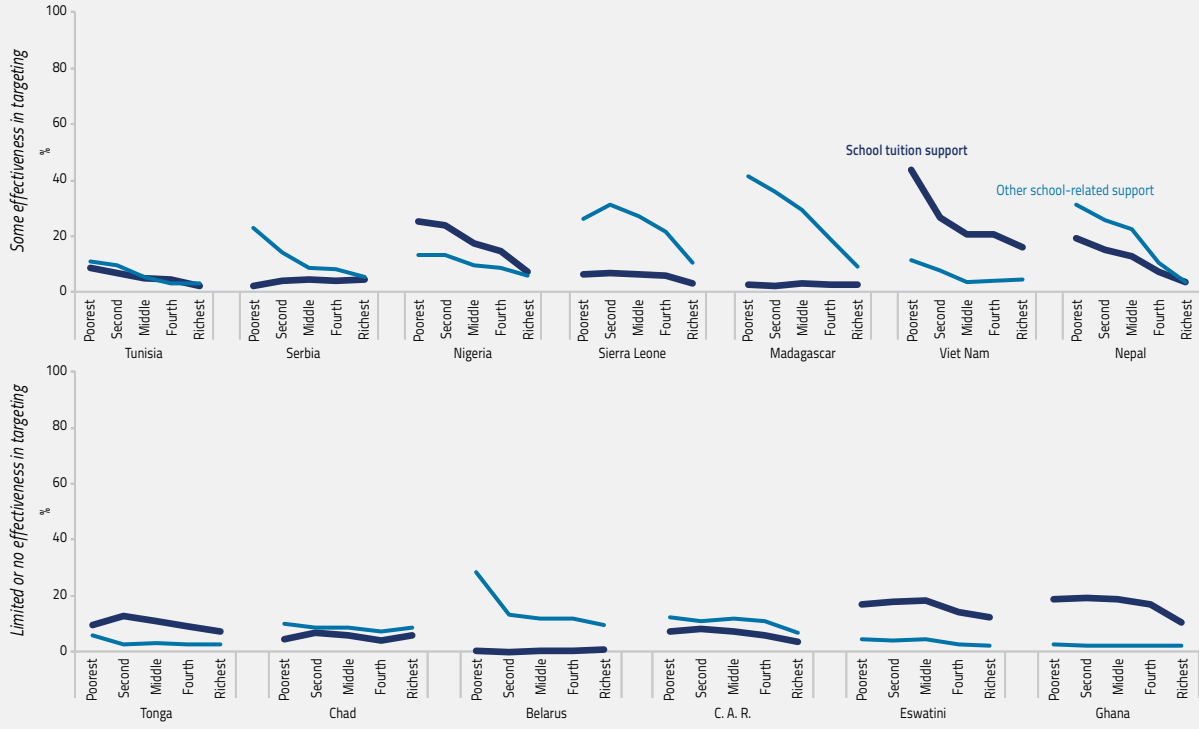
Among countries with higher coverage, Algeria and Benin have good targeting of the poorest even if many are still not benefiting. Other countries' programmes, such as Jamaica and Thailand, often with high or almost universal coverage, disproportionately benefit children from richer households even when they appear to have some success in targeting (**Figure 6.10b**).

FIGURE 6.10:

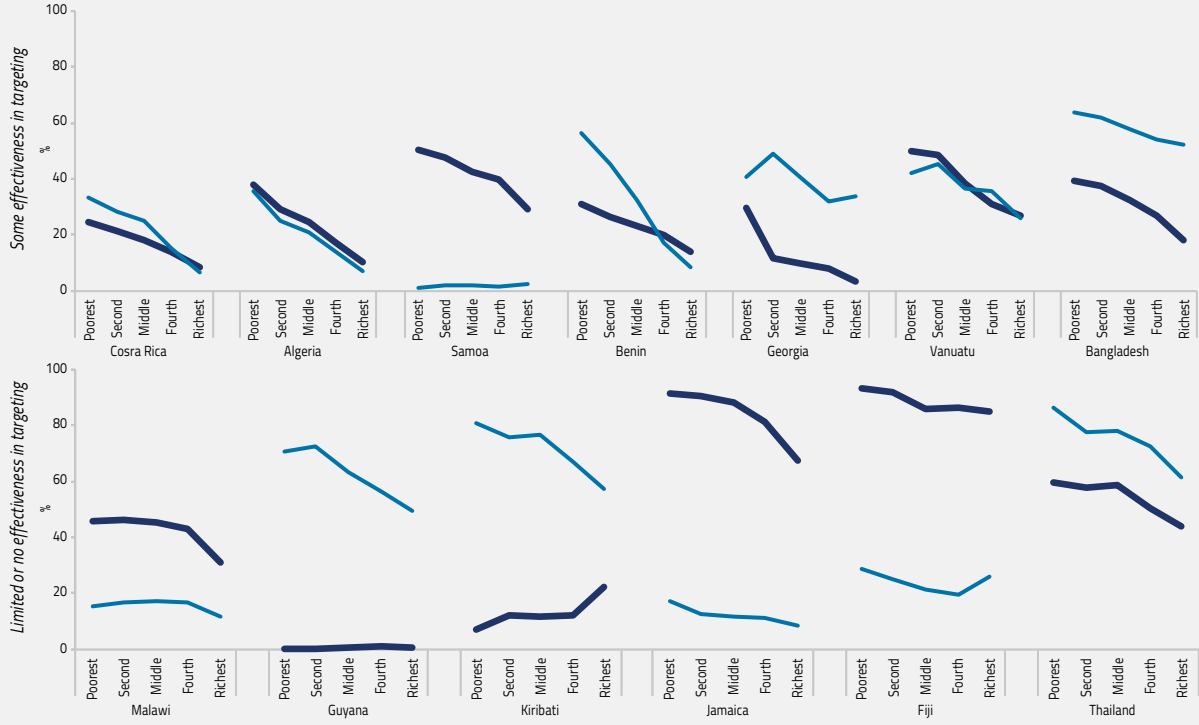
Countries' efforts to reach and support children from poor households vary considerably

Percentage of children and young people age 5–24 years in all households currently attending school who received (i) school tuition support and (ii) other school-related support during the current school year, selected countries, 2017–23

a. Countries with lower programme coverage



b. Countries with higher programme coverage



Notes: Among 44 countries with relevant MICS information, 4 were excluded because the information was incomplete and another 14 because less than 5% of their population was reached on average.

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_10

Source: MICS Survey Findings reports.

BOX 6.1:

It is challenging to design and implement effective, efficient and fair targeting mechanisms

Targeting for redistributive purposes is often justified on fiscal grounds, as limited public resources may need to be directed to those most in need (García-Jaramillo and Miranti, 2015). However, targeting is complex and prone to significant inclusion and exclusion errors, providing benefits to those not eligible while missing many who are (Kidd, 2017).

Targeting may be categorical (e.g. by sex, geographic location, disability status) or may try to capture poverty, either directly (means-tested) or indirectly (through proxy means testing). It can involve different actors (e.g. communities) and processes (e.g. audits) in verifying and validating the information, which is important for improving precision, reducing errors and ensuring credibility. Transparency and simplicity are key for administrators, beneficiaries and society.

A lot depends on administrative capacity. Certain targeting mechanisms are expensive in terms of data collection, processing and updating. Means- and proxy means tested mechanisms require the existence of multiple, up-to-date and well-integrated registries of individuals and households. The objectives of accuracy, transparency and administrative feasibility are occasionally competing with each other, and any design involves trade-offs between them (Jones et al., 2025).

In the case of proxy means testing, income is not actually used because there is no accurate and reliable information; instead, eligibility is based on a prediction using the observable characteristics (proxies) of households that are correlated with poverty. In contexts of widespread poverty, the administrative distinction between the poor and near poor is blurred, especially where administrative systems are weak, generating social tensions based on a sense of injustice. For this reason, broader or universal coverage may lend a programme more social legitimacy (Houssou and Zeller, 2011). Combinations of targeting mechanisms have also been recommended (ILO, 2019).

Last but not least, exclusion may happen not just during the administrative process of identification and registration but also during other operational stages, which depend on how payments are made and conditions are enforced.

SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMMES ARE KEY TO PROMOTING EQUITY

School meal programmes can promote equity by offering an incentive for poor households to send their children to school. By improving nutrition, they help keep children healthy, concentrate, do better academically and stay in school. The programmes have therefore become central to many national education plans. Their impact, though, depends on coverage, targeting and meal quality (GEM Report and Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition, 2025).

> “Feeding programmes have been found to increase attainment by up to half a year per USD 100 invested”

Multi-country evaluations have shown school meal programmes to lead to increases in enrolment, attendance and learning. A Cochrane review of 38 studies in 25 countries found a 3.4% increase in enrolment (though limited effects on attendance) and a 14% increase in mathematics scores (though limited effects in reading) (Kristjansson et al., 2025). A meta-analysis of studies in low- and middle-income countries reported positive impacts on enrolment and attendance (in the order of about 0.12 of a standard deviation) (Mendez Acosta and Bedasso, 2024). Feeding programmes have been found to increase attainment by up to half a year per USD 100 invested (Angrist et al., 2025). An analysis of economic returns to school feeding programmes in 14 countries, of which 9 in Africa, estimated that an annual investment of USD 11 billion generated an estimated USD 156 billion in social benefits through improved lifetime productivity and health (Verguet et al., 2020).

National evaluations provide additional insights. In China, the Nutrition Improvement Programme for Rural Compulsory Education Students was introduced in 2011 in primary and lower secondary schools in deprived rural areas. By 2021, the number of counties covered almost tripled (from 680 to 1,732), 42% of all students enrolled in rural schools were covered, and the government had disbursed more than USD 3 billion per year. An evaluation, which took advantage of the gradual rollout, found that the programme increased enrolment by 10 percentage points (Duan et al., 2024). In India, the Supreme Court issued a directive in 2001 ordering states to introduce midday meals in government primary schools; until then, only

two states had a universal meal programme. The gradual introduction of the programme between 2002 and 2004 helped show that school meals led to an increase in enrolment by 13%, mainly in grade 1 (Jayaraman and Simroth, 2015).

In Ghana, the government's School Feeding Programme, established in 2005, provided daily meals to over 2 million students in public primary schools. A randomized evaluation in food-insecure districts between 2013 and 2016 found that it improved attendance, especially for girls and disadvantaged children (Aurino et al., 2023). In Mali, school meals funded by the World Food Programme in conflict-affected areas increased enrolment by about 10 percentage points and attainment by about half a year, whereas general food aid did not have such effects (Aurino et al., 2019). In high-income countries, the impact is much smaller but not zero. A meta-analysis of 42 studies found a small positive effect on outcomes such as attendance in the order of 0.02 of a standard deviation and stronger gains for targeted programmes (Ayllón and Lado, 2025).

> A global review of national policies and programmes for this report shows that 84% of countries have school meal programmes

A global review of national policies and programmes for this report, featured on the PEER website and informed mainly by the World Food Programme, the Global Child Nutrition Foundation and national reports, shows that 84% of countries have school meal programmes, with above average prevalence in Latin America and the Caribbean (100%), Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (94%), sub-Saharan Africa (92%) and Europe and Northern America (89%). Northern Africa and Western Asia (56%) and Oceania (44%) have the lowest rates. The main funders are overwhelmingly ministries of education (75%), followed by social protection and health ministries (9%) and other organizations (15%). Estimates based on the findings of the 2024 Survey on School Meals suggest that, globally, 29% of primary school children benefit from free or subsidized meals. Coverage is not proportional to income: it is 27% in low-, 18% in lower-middle-, 39% in upper-middle- and 45% in high-income countries (Global Child Nutrition Foundation, 2025).

Since 2020, several countries have introduced new school feeding programmes as integral components of their national budgets to improve education outcomes and advance equity. These initiatives are structured to reach all children but particularly those from disadvantaged populations (**Table 6.2**). In Suriname, a school feeding programme was launched in 2022 as a pilot in 42 schools with high poverty rates and expanded to provide daily breakfast to more than 19,000 students in 180 schools (FAO, 2025a, 2025b; Suriname Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2025a, 2025b). Following a change of government, the programme will see more than 15,000 students receiving a sandwich and 2,900 children a hot meal daily, with a budget of SRD 270 million (USD 7 million) (Caribbean Today, 2025).

In recent years, many countries have continued to strengthen and expand existing programmes. China's above-mentioned Nutrition Improvement Programme for Rural Students was updated in 2022 with new implementation measures that cover issues such as nutritional guidelines, local ingredients and minority diets, as well as management and inspection. Its budget increased to CNY 27.7 billion (USD 4 billion) in 2023 (China Government, 2022; China Ministry of Education, 2023). In the United States, the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, managed by the Department of Agriculture since 1946, serve 30 million children (coverage rate of 57%) in 94,000 primary and secondary schools (91% of public and 15% of private schools) at a cost of USD 23.5 billion in 2024. Meals can be free, at reduced or full price according to household income or other categorical criteria. The programme also includes the Community Eligibility Provision for high-poverty schools. As of 2023/24, eight states had enacted universal free meal legislation covering all students from pre-primary to the end of secondary education (grade 12) (Billings, 2025).

TABLE 6.2:
Selected new school meal programmes implemented since 2020

	Programme (Year)	Funding (Year)	Target population	Targeting
Angola	Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar (2025)	Government USD 435 million (2025)	All pre-primary and primary students 5.4 million	Universal
Argentina	Comedores Escolares (2024)	Federal/Provincial; ARS 38.7 billion USD 43 million (2024)	Students aged 4–14 in vulnerable schools	Equity via decentralized funding
Cayman Islands	Public School Meals Programme (2021)	Government KYD 10.5 million USD 12 million (2023)	All government-school students	Universal coverage; interactive meal management system
Kazakhstan	Free Meals for Primary Students (2023)	Local budgets KZT 162 billion USD 320 million (2024)	All primary students	Universal
Mauritania	National School Feeding Programme (2020)	Government/Donors MRU 214 million USD 6 million (2020/21)	Primary students in poor areas	Targets high-poverty regions; community participation
Netherlands	Programma Schoolmaaltijden (2023)	Education Ministry Youth Education Fund Red Cross EUR 100 million (2023)	Low-income and special schools	Targeted
New Zealand	Ka Ora, Ka Ako (2020)	Government NZD 477.6 million USD 274 million (2025)	240,000 students in targeted schools	Focused via Equity Index; several delivery models
Russian Federation	National Hot Meals (2020)	Federal/Regional RUB 43.6 billion USD 540 million (2021/2)	Grades 1–4 (universal) and vulnerable groups	Universal and extra meals for disadvantaged children
Sierra Leone	National School Feeding Programme (2021)	Government/Donors SLE 69 million USD 3 million (2021/22)	Pre-primary and primary (80% schools)	Targets food-insecure chiefdoms
Sri Lanka	Free School Meal Programme (2024)	Government World Food Programme United States LKR 16.6 billion USD 54 million (2024)	Grades 1–5	National coverage; provincial delivery with local suppliers
Turks and Caicos Islands	National School Nutrition Programme (2023)	Government USD 1.5 million (2024/25)	Vulnerable students	Eligibility via teacher, welfare or parent request
Uzbekistan	National Primary School Meals (2023)	Government UZS 2.3 trillion USD 190 million (2023)	All primary students	Universal; locally sourced

Source: GEM Report team.

> Many governments still struggle to establish and maintain school meal programmes due to unreliable funding, dependence on external donors and weak monitoring systems

However, many governments still struggle to establish and maintain school meal programmes due to unreliable funding, dependence on external donors and weak monitoring systems. In Nigeria, a 2004 pilot of the Home Grown School Feeding Programme in 12 states was discontinued within two years due to funding shortfalls, limited stakeholder engagement, weak infrastructure and insufficient oversight (Nigeria Government, 2016). The programme was relaunched nationally in 2016 and its coverage increased from 1 million students in 2017 to almost 10 million students in 56,000 public primary schools in 2022. It had a budget of NGN 142 billion (USD 374 million) in 2023. Financial management challenges, such as fund diversion risks, irregular budget flows and a centralized payment system, have continued to plague implementation and led to restructuring in 2024 (Eze, 2024; Nigeria Home Grown School Feeding Programme, 2025). Three non-governmental organizations have been engaged to strengthen accountability (MacArthur Foundation, 2025). An analysis of school feeding in western Africa has shown that governments in other countries in the region cannot allocate sufficient budget resources to cover operational expenses, even as they increasingly recognize school feeding as an integral component of their education and social protection strategies (WFP et al., 2024). This challenge became more acute in 2025 after the withdrawal of the United States as a funder of many school feeding programmes in the region, for example in Mali (Rakotoarivony, 2025).

In Yemen, where 2.3 million children under 5 faced acute malnutrition in 2021 (WHO, 2021), the school feeding programme was relaunched in 2018 to reach about 600,000 primary students (WFP, 2019). To strengthen sustainability, the Yemen Interim Country Strategic Plan (2026–2028) of the World Food Programme calls for closer collaboration with local authorities, alignment with national nutrition priorities and predictable long-term financing (WFP, 2025).

Some countries have developed innovative approaches to finance their school meal programmes. The Plurinational State of Bolivia raises funds through a hydrocarbon tax (Sustainable Financing Initiative, 2022, 2025), Guatemala earmarks a portion of value-added tax revenues, and the United Republic of Tanzania combines grants, loans and carbon credits to promote healthier meals and support the use of clean energy (WFP et al., 2024).

SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES WITH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CONDITIONS HAVE BOOSTED RETENTION

Just as education policies are not the only driver for achieving education outcomes, education budgets are far from the sole financing instrument for promoting equity in education. Social protection policy can greatly contribute to overcoming obstacles that disadvantaged children face in accessing and progressing through education (Garcia and Saavedra, 2023). Cash transfer programmes, whether unconditional or conditional on school participation, have been shown to boost school participation. For instance, a meta-analysis of 35 studies found that children receiving conditional cash transfers were 36% more likely to be enrolled in school. The impact tended to be larger for girls and at transition points between cycles (Baird et al., 2014). However, their effectiveness depends on their design, including the nature and clarity of conditionality, the amount, the timing and predictability of the transfer, and the recipient of the money. Schools should also be prepared and supported to accommodate more students.

> Globally, 73% of countries have social policies supporting students and their families

Programmes range from narrowly targeted interventions supporting specific vulnerable groups, such as orphans and children with disabilities, to conditional cash transfers with strong poverty targeting, and to broader schemes, including universal child or family allowances aimed at supporting households with school-age children. A review of education systems around the world for this report, which is featured on the PEER website, found that, globally, 73% of countries have social policies supporting students and their families. The prevalence of these programmes ranges from 38% in Oceania and 58% in sub-Saharan Africa to 85% in Latin America and the Caribbean and 98% in Europe and Northern America. In income group terms, the range is from 36% of low- to 87% in high-income countries.

Latin America has been the hothouse of **conditional cash transfer** implementation, although spending levels are still well below those in high-income countries as a share of GDP. In Brazil, the Bolsa Família Programme

was introduced in 2003 and extended to cover 16- to 17-year-olds in 2008. It has been supporting poor families mainly in the northeastern region with monthly payments for each child attending school, while additional cash was provided for children under 5 who were vaccinated. For girls, it raised participation by 8 percentage points and grade progression by 10 percentage points (and for rural girls aged 15 to 17 by 23 percentage points) (de Brauw et al., 2015). By 2025, it had reached over 20 million families or 55 million people, providing an average of USD 139 per household per month, with a total budget of USD 35 billion in 2023 (Cavalcanti et al., 2025).

In Colombia, Familias en Acción, a cash transfer programme conditional on school attendance and health service use, increased enrolment among rural children aged 8–17 by between one and seven percentage points (Attanasio et al., 2010) and secondary completion by four percentage points (Baez and Camacho, 2011). It serves some 3 million poor families targeted through two complementary mechanisms: registries of the extreme poor, indigenous and displaced populations; and the National Planning Department's multidimensional Beneficiary Identification System for Social Programmes index (Sánchez Prada and Medellín, 2015). Although relatively small in size (0.2% of GDP) and in cash transfer level (22% of the poverty line), it has been the best targeted of all social programmes in the country, with 56% of resources reaching the poorest 20% of households. In 2024, it was consolidated under the Renta Ciudadana (Citizen income) programme that consolidates related programmes with the aim to expand coverage (Garda and Arnold, 2025).

Long-term evaluations highlight the importance of predictable transfers and sustained exposure. In Honduras, the Programa de Asignación Familiar (Family Allowance Programme) increased enrolment by one to two percentage points, attendance by 0.8 days per month and grade promotion by two to four percentage points (Glewwe and Olinto, 2004). Later, beneficiaries were more likely to complete upper secondary school and enter tertiary education, with impacts stronger for girls and poorer households, which suggests that even modest short-term effects can accumulate into meaningful long-term gains (Molina Millán et al., 2020).

In Mexico, between 1997 and 2019, the programme known successively as Progresa, Oportunidades and Prospera, was the most rigorously evaluated conditional cash transfer with education, health and social development components. At the time of its closure, it was serving 26 million people and its education component cost USD 1.5 billion (Aguilar et al., 2025). Randomized trials demonstrated substantial increases in attendance and grade progression, particularly at transition points (de Brauw and Hoddinott, 2011; Dubois et al., 2011; Parker and Todd, 2017). Long-term benefits were also shown in terms of educational attainment, occupational outcomes and economic mobility (Araujo and Macours, 2021).

In other parts of the world, some cash transfer programmes have a long history, while others were inspired by Latin America. The Programme of Advancement through Health and Education in Jamaica has targeted the poorest 40% of households since 2001. Today, there are about 350,000 recipient households. The process starts with an application where households provide information on their socioeconomic status that is used to assess their eligibility. Social workers visit when eligibility needs to be verified. Children are eligible for an education transfer all the way up to secondary school completion if their attendance rate is at least 85%. The monthly transfer per child has been about 9% of the minimum wage. The transfer has a positive and significant effect of up to 6.5 percentage points on the probability of primary and secondary school completion (Beuermann et al., 2025).

In South Asia, programmes have focused on girls' education. In Bangladesh, the Female Secondary School Assistance Programme began in 1994, after 12 years of experimentation, and therefore predates the Latin American programmes. It has been implemented with conditional cash transfer features (e.g. a 75% attendance rate requirement) although it has functioned effectively as a scholarship programme. Its impact on attainment was initially estimated to be an increase of 1.2 years of schooling (Hahn et al., 2018). A longer-term assessment found that beneficiaries gained over three extra years of education and were five percentage points more likely to complete secondary school (Khandker et al., 2021). These improvements were accompanied by delayed marriage, reduced fertility and higher likelihood of participating in skilled employment, demonstrating the multigenerational returns of supporting girls' secondary education.

In Pakistan, the Punjab Female School Stipend Programme was launched in 2004. Quarterly stipends worth PKR 600 (USD 10) (about 3.4% of the median household consumption expenditure) were paid to each female student attending a public secondary school (grades 6 to 10), as long as they attended school at least 80% of the time. About 80% of the stipend should have been enough to cover transport, uniform and textbook costs. An initial estimate is that the stipend increased girls' lower secondary school enrolment by nine percentage

points (Chaudhury and Parajuli, 2010). A longer-term study confirmed the enrolment impact and further estimated the impact on secondary school completion at six percentage points (Musaddiq and Said, 2023).

In a designated poor county in northwestern China, a conditional cash transfer reduced lower secondary school dropout by 60% (Mo et al., 2013). In Indonesia, Program Keluarga Harapan (Family Hope Programme) began providing quarterly cash transfers to very poor households in 2007. While they were initially equivalent to 15% to 20% of income, their real value fell to 7% within six years. Eligible households have certain demographic characteristics, such as children under age 15 or children aged 16 to 18 who have not completed nine years of education. Conditions for payments included an 85% school attendance rate. Enrolment rates among 13- to 15-year-olds increased by up to nine percentage points, equivalent to halving the out-of-school rate, and secondary completion rates by up to seven percentage points (Cahyadi et al., 2020). The government scaled up the programme from 3.5 million to 10 million households between 2016 and 2018 (Indonesia Ministry of Social Affairs, 2020), reaching 15.6% of the population in 2024. But in 2025, this share fell to 14% as part of efforts to improve targeting (Ridwan, 2025).

In the Philippines, after 12 years of implementation, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program conditional cash transfer programme became enshrined in law in 2019. In 2020, it was covering 4.3 million households that included children under 18 and earned less than USD 2.15 per day. Since 2014, it has been complemented by a programme that supports 200,000 households originally not listed because they were homeless, indigenous or in need of special protection. In 2018, it disbursed PHP 89 billion (USD 1.7 billion), of which 78% was covered by the government, corresponding to 0.5% of the GDP or 2.6% of the total public expenditure. It corresponded to just 7% of beneficiaries' income, a low amount compared to comparable programmes (Acosta et al., 2019). The Philippines Institute of Development Studies is mandated to evaluate its impact every three years. So far, there have been three evaluations with the fourth wave delayed by COVID-19. The programme increased enrolment rates by eight percentage points among 12- to 17-year-olds in urban areas (Orbeta et al., 2023).

In Algeria, the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs introduced an annual allowance to help poor families purchase school supplies in 1996. By the mid-2010s, the allowance was worth DZD 3,000 (USD 23) and reached 2.9 million primary and secondary school students (Le Temps, 2016). In 2021, Executive Decree No. 21-61 extended the allowance to DZD 5,000 (USD 37.50) but its implementation suffered from complex administration and inequality in processing applications by province. In 2025, Executive Decree No. 25-168 strengthened the eligibility criteria (families where each parent's monthly income does not exceed the guaranteed minimum wage), clarified and digitized procedures, and created a more rigorous institutional framework (Legal Doctrine, 2025).

In Morocco, the Tayssir (Facilitation) conditional cash transfer programme was first piloted in 2008. For up to three children per household, it offers a monthly payment of USD 7 in grades 1 to 2, USD 9 in grades 3 to 4, USD 11 in grades 5 to 6, and USD 16 in secondary school. These transfers amount to 5% of household consumption. The programme was originally targeted at rural municipalities with poverty rates of at least 30% and dropout rates of at least 8% (Gyori et al., 2017). In 2018/19, the programme was expanded to all rural municipalities in the case of primary education and throughout the country in the case of secondary education. As a result, there was a threefold expansion of both its coverage (from 700,000 to 2.1 million) and its cost (from USD 71 to USD 245 million). As part of the expansion, beneficiaries will need to be listed in the Unified Social Register to enable the application of new poverty-focused targeting criteria. The programme reduced primary dropout by 41% and raised grade 6 enrolment by 9 percentage points, although it also led to overcrowding and increased repetition (Gazeaud and Ricard, 2024).

In North Macedonia, a cash transfer programme was introduced by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in 2010/11 to increase secondary school enrolment and completion of the poorest children, conditional on them attending at least 85% of the time. The programme was offered to beneficiaries of the social financial assistance benefit (the country's largest income support programme, accounting for 0.5% of GDP), which varies with household size and the length of time as beneficiary. The total annual subsidy, if all conditions were met, was MKD 12,000 (USD 240), or up to 7% of targeted households' annual expenditure. The programme raised the enrolment of 17- to 19-year-olds by 12 percentage points (Armand and Carneiro, 2018).

> In low- and middle-income countries, unconditional cash transfers are more commonly poverty-targeted rather than universal

Unconditional cash transfers are also widely used although their design features differ greatly between richer and poorer countries. In high-income countries, they are typically provided to all families with children. Universal child benefit policies are also often adopted to maximize administrative efficiency, reduce targeting errors and strengthen uptake by treating support as a social entitlement rather than as social assistance (OECD, 2011). These transfers do not require school enrolment or attendance, but still result in positive education outcomes (Crosta et al., 2025).

In contrast, in low- and middle-income countries, unconditional cash transfers are more commonly poverty-targeted rather than universal. While enrolment increased across both conditional and unconditional programmes, conditionality produced stronger responses, with the odds of being in school 65% higher for conditional and 42% higher for unconditional cash transfer beneficiaries (Baird et al., 2014). In Burkina Faso, under a pilot cash transfer project in Nahouri province funded by the World Bank, both types of support increased school enrolment, but only conditional approaches improved attendance, grade progression and learning (Akresh et al., 2013, 2024). In Malawi, a cash transfer programme in the Zomba district, also supported by the World Bank, reduced adolescent girls' dropout under both conditional and unconditional modalities, but the unconditional transfer impact size was 57% smaller (Baird et al., 2011). A long-term follow-up study showed that the unconditional transfer produced no lasting educational benefits, whereas the conditional transfer led to persistent improvements (Baird et al., 2019).

In Kenya, an unconditional, one-off cash transfer of USD 150 to adolescent girls in two urban informal settlements increased school re-enrolment after COVID-19, especially among older girls who had dropped out (Maluccio et al., 2023). In Lesotho, the Child Grants Programme reduced poverty and improved nutrition but did not significantly increase school participation (FAO and UNICEF, 2021). In Malawi, under the donor-funded Social Cash Transfer Programme, a four-member household would receive a monthly transfer of MWK 2,400 (USD 5) and a top-up of MWK 300 (USD 0.60) per child compared to an estimated education expenditure of MWK 700 per child. The programme was found to have increased enrolment by 12 percentage points and to have reduced dropout by 4 percentage points (Kilburn et al., 2017). Further analysis showed that those near secondary schools benefited more and that these effects lessened as more households joined the programme (Sirma et al., 2025).

In Ecuador, the Bono de Desarrollo Humano (Human Development Grant) targets households with children under age 18 who are classified as vulnerable according to the Social Registry's socioeconomic index, changes to which have resulted in changing thresholds to determine grant eligibility. The programme's original intention to make payments conditional on school attendance was not enforced. However, an evaluation of effects over 10 years found a significant increase in secondary school completion up to 2 percentage points (Araujo et al., 2017). Over time, the generosity of the grant has increased in real terms, just as the eligibility conditions became stricter. While its impact on poverty reduction was sustained (Jara et al., 2025), there was a negative impact from the loss of the grant to educational outcomes (Merino and Pfutze, 2025).

Despite the disadvantages, unconditional transfers may be needed when it is too costly to distinguish the poorest among the poor. They can play a crucial protective role in humanitarian contexts where administrative capacity is limited and simple delivery can facilitate rapid scaling. In Türkiye, the Emergency Social Safety Net programme supported some 1.8 million Syrian refugees by 2021 and is estimated to have reduced their out-of-school rates by about 60%, lowering child labour by providing a steady household income, even without schooling requirements (Hızıroğlu Aygün et al., 2024).

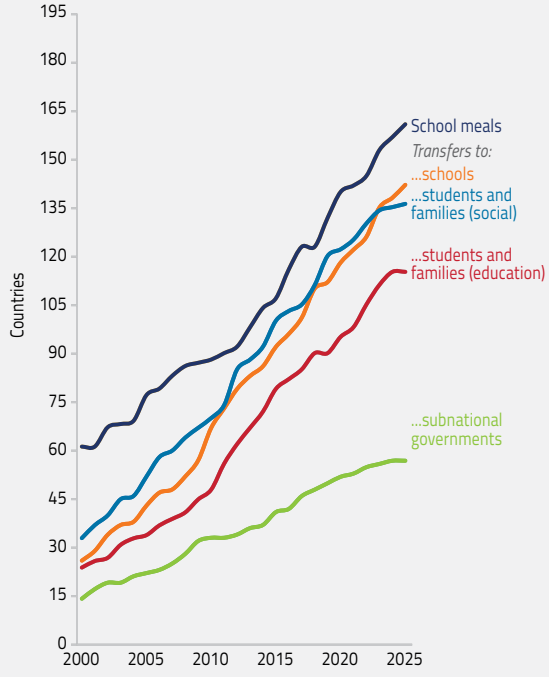
RESPONSIVENESS TO EQUITY CONCERNS IS GROWING BUT NOT UNIVERSAL

Countries may have several programmes within a particular mechanism category. This report has prioritized collecting information from the one policy or programme per mechanism with the greatest scope for improving equity in each country, developing a country profile that is featured on the PEER website. The information provides insights in four respects: the diffusion of equity orientation across national education systems over time; the strength of equity orientation; the criteria used for targeting recipients; and a general classification of country focus on education equity intentions across all mechanisms.

THE ADOPTION OF EQUITY-ORIENTED MECHANISMS HAS BEEN ACCELERATING

For each programme, basic information on their timeline was recorded, including the initial year of implementation for each mechanism at national scale (piloting years were excluded) and, when applicable, the year when the programme was discontinued or replaced, as well as the starting and ending years of previous equity-oriented programmes. These timelines enable diffusion rates to be estimated, indicating the proportion of countries that adopted an equity-oriented programme for each mechanism type over time (**Figure 6.11**).

FIGURE 6.11:
Equity-oriented financing mechanisms in education have become global
Number of countries with equity-oriented programmes in education, by financing mechanism, 2000–25



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_11
Source: GEM Report team analysis of policies and programmes for the PEER website.

Transfers to subnational governments with equity components are less common than other mechanisms as not all countries channel resources through subnational governments and, even if they do, it is not certain they transfer resources for education. Where such transfer mechanisms exist, they are usually long-term commitments and are less subject to annual fluctuations. The share of countries using equity-oriented transfers to subnational government has increased steadily, especially in the late 2000s, at the peak of a trend favouring governance reforms and fiscal decentralization.

> “Transfers to schools are the fastest-growing equity financing mechanisms”

Transfers to schools are the fastest-growing equity financing mechanisms. Unlike intergovernmental transfers, school grants include a heterogeneous set of arrangements, less likely to be a core financing mechanism and more likely to be standalone or block grants. Examples of long-lasting measures, often embedded in inclusive education frameworks, are the quintile ranking in South Africa, introduced in 1998, which allocates more funds to schools in poorer communities, functioning as a core redistributive mechanism (van Dyk and White, 2019). In the Netherlands, since 1985, primary schools are funded on a per-student basis, with different weights attached to whether, for example, a student’s parents are Dutch ‘natives’ with low education or whether they have an immigrant background (Ladd and Fiske, 2011). By contrast, many other school-level transfers are more recent and narrowly targeted, such as programmes targeting rural schools in Djibouti (2022) or students with disabilities or special educational needs in Austria (2012), Bahrain (2005), Benin (2018) and Curaçao (2024).

Transfers to students and their families from education ministries have increased sharply since the 2000s, reflecting a deliberate shift toward demand-side measures aimed at reducing direct and indirect costs of schooling. On average, programmes last for 14 years, with several ongoing for more than two decades. In Ireland, the School Transport Scheme, established in 1967, supported 172,500 students in 2024 with a budget of EUR 451 million. It provides publicly funded transport based on distance, minority language or religion, special educational needs and other criteria (Citizens Information, 2025; Houses of the Oireachtas, 2025). In Kenya, the Elimu scholarship programme supports disadvantaged secondary students since 2005, including orphans, learners from low-income households, refugees and students with disabilities. In 2022/23, it accounted for 1.7% of total public education expenditure (Kenya Government, 2022, 2023; Kenya Ministry of Education, 2023). But one in five programmes only last between two to five years, reflecting changing political priorities. Argentina launched the Vouchers Educativos programme in 2024, which provides temporary monthly vouchers to

over 800,000 students from low-income families in more than 7,000 partially state-funded schools, promoting the government's school choice agenda (Argentina Government, 2024a, 2024b).

School meal programmes are the most widespread of the mechanisms with an equity potential throughout the period, with strong growth from an already high baseline. Their growth reflects their dual role at the intersection of education and social protection, which has made them politically and institutionally resilient. In low- and lower-middle-income countries, such porgrammes have historically been donor-funded, incorporated within broader national food security initiatives, although there is now a growing effort to include them within system-wide financial commitments (UNESCO and LSHTM, 2025).

Transfers to students and their families from social protection ministries have also expanded in many countries. Many initiatives predate major equity-oriented education reforms, highlighting their roots in social policy. In Türkiye, the Conditional Cash Transfers for Education programme was launched in 2003 by the Ministry of Family and Social Services (Ahmed et al., 2006). Since 2021, European Union member states have been moving towards the establishment of a European Child Guarantee, coordinated by the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion General Directorate, appointing national coordinators and establishing interministerial mechanisms (European Commission, 2025b).

WEALTHIER COUNTRIES CAN AFFORD A STRONGER EQUITY FOCUS IN TERMS OF VOLUME AND COVERAGE

Analysis of countries' financing strategies provides more information than just whether a specific mechanism exists in law or policy. It also provides insights on coverage (how many beneficiaries they reach) and volume (what difference does the transfer make to the beneficiaries' income). Taken together, these dimensions help assess the depth of a funding mechanism, in other words, its potential to improve equity. While targeting information (how beneficiaries are selected) has also been recorded, it is not used to support the comparative analysis.

Coverage, the number of beneficiaries as a share of the relevant population (local governments, schools, students or households), can vary by mechanism. For example, in a conditional cash transfer programme, coverage is the percentage of households with school-age children which receive the transfer. In a scholarship programme, it is the share of enrolled children receiving a scholarship.

For mechanisms that are not universal, coverage may be interpreted differently depending on whether it is defined relative to the intended eligible group (for example, in a stipend programme that intends to cover 60% of female lower secondary school students) or relative to the total population. In this analysis, the school-age population is mostly used as a proxy to ensure comparability.

Volume, which is the relative difference a transfer makes to the budget of a school or a household (for example as a share of GDP per capita), is very difficult to capture based on available information. As a result, other measures which are more accessible are used to gauge the programme size. For education transfers, volume is measured by programme expenditure as a share of total (or non-wage recurrent) education expenditure. For social protection transfers and school meals programmes, volume is measured by programme expenditure as a share of GDP.

A three-scale rating of policy or programme depth (low, medium or high) was used based on coverage and volume parameters. In other words, the focus is on their intended rather than their actual impact on equity, as there are very few evaluations globally that prove the latter. Cut-off points have been empirically determined to reflect the distribution of programme coverage and volume across all countries. They should not be interpreted as benchmarks or targets indicative of programme effectiveness (**Table 6.3**). Where financial data were not available, qualitative information was used to classify a programme's depth.

The cut-off points are also informed by the intention of each mechanism. For transfers to subnational governments and for social protection transfers, higher coverage and higher volume are both desirable. For targeted transfers to schools and students, very high coverage can signal a lack of targeting, as resources are spread thinly and benefit groups that are not disadvantaged. For that reason, a programme is classified as having a higher depth when coverage is at an intermediate level (e.g. between 10% and 25% of the population).

For school meals, coverage is classified according to the proportion of primary school children receiving school meals. Countries receive a high score if coverage is at least 80%, a medium score if coverage is between 50% and 80%, and a low score when fewer than half of children are reached. Volume is measured as government expenditure on school meals as a share of total government expenditure. The threshold has been set higher for low-/middle-income than for high-income countries.

TABLE 6.3:
Criteria used to classify the equity focus of basic education financing programmes

		Equity focus rating		
	Dimension	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
1. Transfers to subnational governments	*Coverage* Share of school-age population	<50%	50%–80%	>80%
	Volume Share of total public education spending	< 5% or equalization for fiscal disparity only	≥ 5% and < 10% or equalization for fiscal disparity and poverty and/or rurality	≥ 10% or equalization for fiscal disparity and all other factors
2. Transfers to schools	*Coverage* Share of school-age population	< 2% or > 50%	2%–10% or 25%–50%	10%–25%
	Volume Share of total public education spending	< 2%	2%–10%	≥ 10%
3. Transfers to students (education)	*Coverage* Share of school-age population	< 2% or > 50%	2%–10% or 25%–50%	10%–25%
	Volume Share of total public education spending	< 2%	2%–10%	≥ 10%
4. School meals	*Coverage* Share of school-age population	<50%	≥50% and <80%	≥80%
	Volume Share of total public spending	<0.5% (low-/middle-income) <0.2% (high-income)	≥0.5% and <1% (low-/middle-income) ≥0.2% and <0.6% (high-income)	≥1% (low-/middle-income) ≥0.6% (high-income)
5. Transfers to households (social)	*Coverage* Share of school-age population	< 5%	5%–15%	≥ 15%
	Volume Share of total public spending	< 0.5%	0.5%–1%	≥ 1%

Notes: Transfers to subnational governments (mechanism 1) excludes teacher salaries and other centrally managed personnel expenditures. Only non-salary education resources and general financial transfers that are executed at subnational level are considered. For mechanisms 2 to 5, where quantitative data on coverage or spending volumes were unavailable, the equity focus rating in both the coverage and volume dimensions was based on qualitative criteria. Each recognized disadvantaged population was treated as a distinct equity factor. Programme or policy equity focus was classified as low if they addressed 0 or 1, medium if they addressed 2 or 3, and high if they addressed four or more equity factors. Universal programmes were considered to address all equity factors.

Source: GEM Report team analysis of policies and programmes for the PEER website.

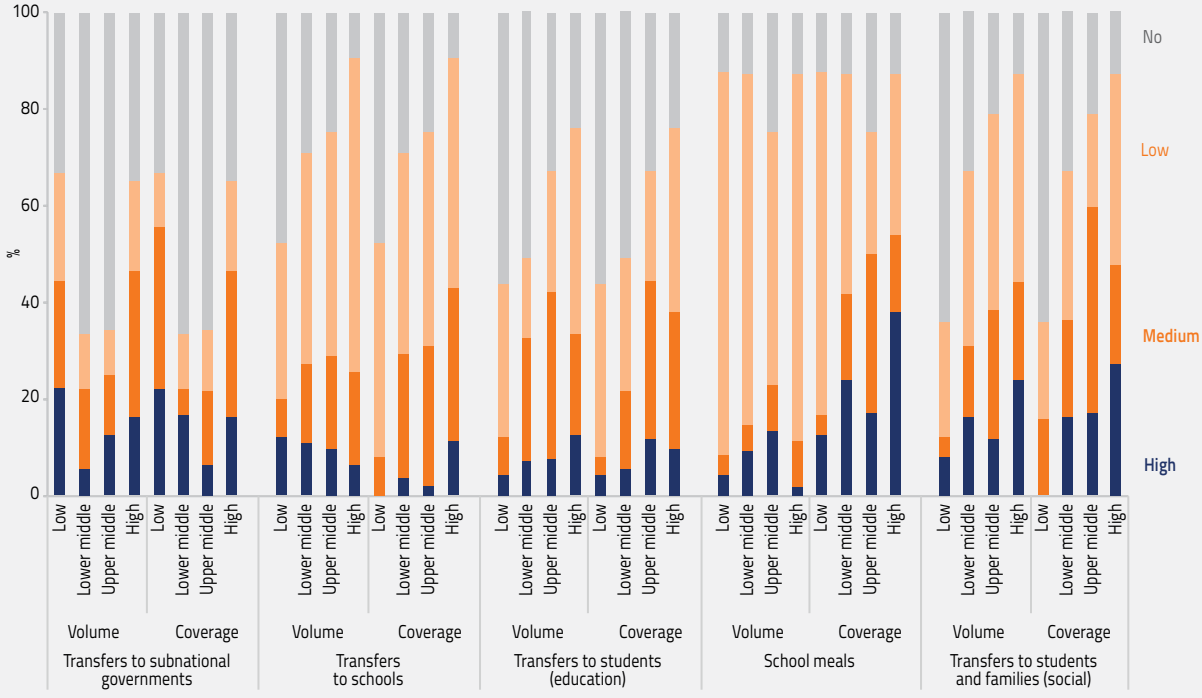
Based on these definitions, there are clear differences in programme equity focus by country income level (**Figure 6.12**). Among countries that allocate resources for education to subnational governments, some 14% were assessed as having a strong equity focus in terms of coverage and volume. Two-thirds of middle-income countries did not have strong evidence of an equity orientation in their intergovernmental transfer mechanisms.

In the case of transfers to schools, low- and middle-income countries are more likely to display a strong equity orientation in volume and less likely in coverage, unlike high-income countries. But countries are more likely to have some equity-orientation in their transfers to schools than in their education transfers to students and households: about 4 in 10 countries have no such orientation in the latter.

FIGURE 6.12:

Wealthier countries have a stronger equity orientation in policies and programmes

Distribution of education equity orientation levels in national financing policies and programmes, by mechanism type, coverage and volume, country income group, 2025



Notes: The assessment of coverage and volume for transfers to subnational governments is limited to countries whose mechanisms involve financing flows for education from the central government.

GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_12

Source: GEM Report team analysis of policies and programmes for the PEER website.

Richer countries are broadly more likely to have a medium or high level of equity orientation than poorer countries in their transfers to students and households, whether funded from education or social protection budgets. This includes the case of school meals, where half of upper-middle and high-income countries have at least medium equity orientation in the coverage of their programmes.

Support for disability and special needs is moderate, mainly via school funding (58%), but less common in transfers to subnational governments (39%) and to students and households (38%). Other groups, such as ethnic minorities and refugees, are less likely to be targeted explicitly in the large programmes analysed in this report, although they may be targeted as part of smaller programmes not covered here.

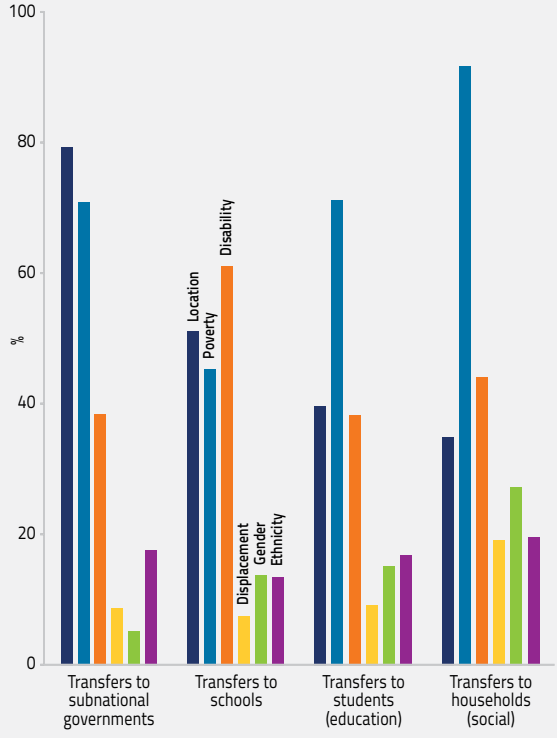
POVERTY AND LOCATION ARE THE MAIN TARGETS OF EQUITY-ORIENTED PROGRAMMES

Education and social support systems mainly target poverty and geography due to ongoing economic and spatial disparities (**Figure 6.13**). Geographic targeting is most common in transfers to subnational governments (79%) and schools (51%), while poverty is mainly addressed through transfers to students and households, whether funded from education ministries (71%) or other ministries (92%).

AN INDEX HIGHLIGHTS THE EQUITY ORIENTATION OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS

It is prohibitively expensive to assess in a comparable way whether countries' education and social financing measures help improve equity. In any case, success cannot just be measured in terms of the outcome, considering the high complexity of achieving an outcome such as equity in education. Wide variation in contexts further complicates cross-country comparison. Yet being able to summarize all this information is helpful for countries to reflect whether they are on the right track.

FIGURE 6.13:
National mechanisms mainly use poverty and geographic location in their targeting
Population groups targeted in national programmes with an equity focus, by mechanism type, 2025 or latest year



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_13
Source: GEM Report team analysis of policies and programmes for the PEER website.

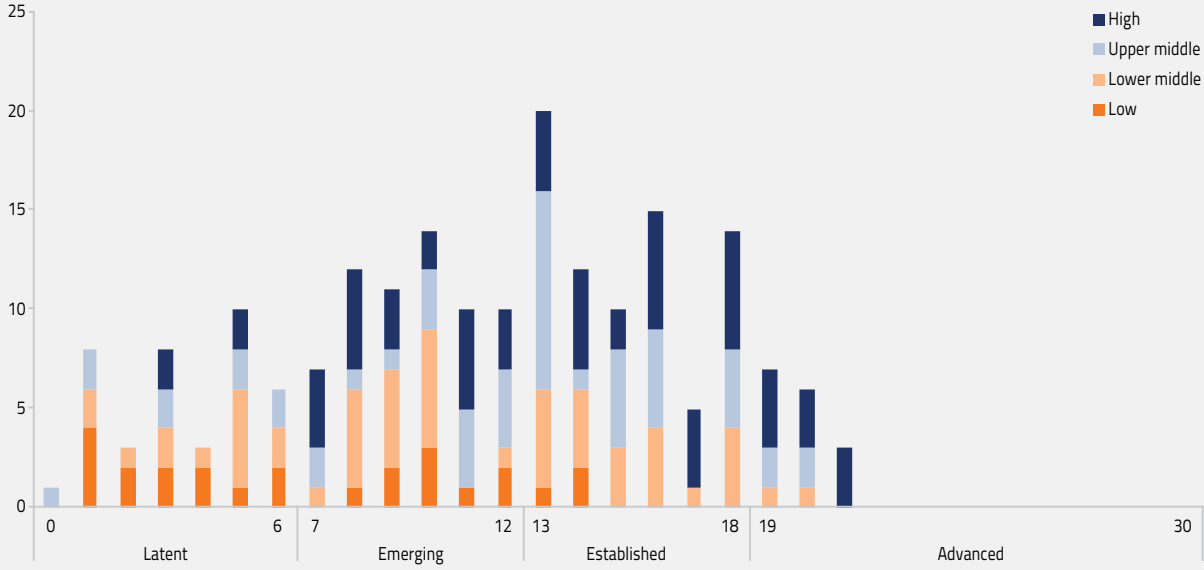
> The index tries to capture variation in policy design, financial effort and beneficiary reach between countries, summarizing information from multiple, institutionally distinct mechanisms

For the purpose of this report, an index has been developed to assess the equity orientation of education and social protection financing mechanisms. The index tries to capture variation in policy design, financial effort and beneficiary reach between countries, summarizing information from multiple, institutionally distinct mechanisms.

A score is assigned to each mechanism using the equity focus definitions of policies and programmes. Each dimension, volume and coverage, receives one point if there is a low equity focus, two points if there is a medium equity focus, and three points if there is a high equity focus using the cutoff points (**Table 6.3**). A zero score is assigned both when a country has no relevant policy or programme at all under each mechanism and when they do have such a policy or programme, but it has no equity orientation. In other words, for a given mechanism, a country can receive a score ranging from 0 to 6 (if it scores high in both coverage and volume). Accordingly it can receive a total score ranging from 0 to 30 when the scores of each of the five mechanisms are added up. In the case of the first mechanism, countries are considered only if they transfer resources for education through transfers to sub-national governments, which means that only 121 of the 195 countries were assigned a score. For these countries, the score for the other four mechanisms was re-weighted by 25% so that their maximum score can also be 30.

The index generates a well-spread distribution of values (**Figure 6.14**). Some 20% of countries score up to 6 and are classified as having a 'latent' focus on equity in education, because their efforts are limited or weakly coordinated. Another 33% of countries score between 7 and 12 and are classified as having an 'emerging' focus on equity in education, reflecting multiple equity-focused initiatives and clear redistributive goals, but inconsistent implementation. Another 39% of countries score between 13 and 18 points and are classified as having an 'established' focus on equity, with robust mechanisms that combine funding with other supportive measures. Finally, 8% of countries are classified as having an 'advanced' focus on equity, reflecting fully integrated, systematic approaches across government.

FIGURE 6.14:
Just one in five countries has a strong equity focus in its financing mechanisms
Distribution of values in index of equity focus in national financing mechanisms, by country income group, 2025



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig6_14
Source: GEM Report team estimates.

The index has an income gradient, with the share of countries with an established or advanced equity orientation increase from 12% in low-, to 43% in lower-middle-, 55% in upper-middle- and 58% in high-income countries. Expressed in terms of the median value, the index increases from 6 in low- to 10 in lower-middle-, 13 in upper-middle- and 14 in high-income countries. By region, Oceania (7), Northern Africa and Western Asia (9) and sub-Saharan Africa (9) have the lowest median values, followed by Central and Southern Asia (11), Eastern and South-eastern Asia (14), Latin America and the Caribbean (14) and Europe and Northern America (15), which has the highest median value. However, given that the median value in the Caribbean (9) is low, Latin America (16) on its own would be the subregion with the strongest equity orientation.

The index assigns equal weight to each of the five mechanisms, reflecting the idea that each represents a distinct and equally legitimate pathway through which governments may pursue equity objectives. This approach has the advantage of transparency, without embedding strong normative assumptions about the relative importance of education-specific versus social policy instruments. Under equal weighting, countries that combine overall redistributive education funding to subnational governments with grants, scholarships or income support mechanisms tend to score higher, even when no single approach dominates the others in terms of volume or coverage. An alternative approach to assigning scores in the index would be to give more weight to the first and second mechanisms to reflect the idea that governments should prioritize equity when allocating resources to subnational authorities and schools, which they fully control. In contrast, transferring resources to households faces more practical challenges. The index's distribution was stable across various weight choices.

The index does not indicate reduced educational inequality or efficient resource use. Many countries do not apply or do not enforce strong targeting criteria. However, there is simply not enough information to evaluate the targeting dimension for enough countries. Moreover, as stated in the beginning of the section, there are many policy instruments beyond financing to generate equitable outcomes. Therefore the index only signals a strong policy commitment to address equity in education through the public funding architecture. It is a tool for comparing equity orientation, not for evaluating equity outcomes.

The index can be used as a basis to update SDG thematic indicator 4.5.3, the existence of funding mechanisms to reallocate education resources to disadvantaged populations, whereby countries that achieve an established or advanced level would be classified as having a mechanism in place and countries falling below this threshold as not having a mechanism in place.

CONCLUSION

Financing policies are key to improving equity in education. In recent years, there has been considerable growth in governments' awareness of the importance of transfers to subnational governments, schools, students and their households to try to improve equity. Nevertheless, only one in five countries was identified as having a sufficiently strong equity intention in their financing mechanisms. This conclusion was reached after a comprehensive review of five financing mechanisms in all primary and secondary education systems in the world, which feature as country profiles on the PEER website.

The index is an analytical tool for comparing equity orientation in national education financing policies. It is a starting point – and imperfect as information on policies and programmes has been unavailable, incomplete and inconsistent. The index does not capture equity outcomes, which depends on national, historical and socioeconomic contexts and on other policy tools beyond financing. Nor does it capture the extent to which existing policies effectively target the most disadvantaged. Various obstacles can get in the way between policy intention, design and implementation. While the section presents valuable evidence of countries' effectiveness in targeting education and social resources to households by socioeconomic status, such evidence is partial and conclusions cannot be drawn.

Nevertheless, the index's information is also accompanied by evidence from selected impact evaluation studies, which show governments have challenges ahead in using funding to improve school enrolment, attendance and attainment but also shows optimism: the combination of policy commitment, sufficient resources, and clear and low-cost targeting can reach disadvantaged populations and make a difference in their education opportunities. The index, which offers a way forward to monitor SDG indicator 4.5.3, which aims to monitor the existence of systems to direct resources toward underprivileged populations, can encourage countries to share their strategies and create policies that better assist those who need help the most.



Credit: UNESCO GEM Report / Rooftop*



CHAPTER

7

Monitoring education in the Sustainable Development Goals



KEY MESSAGES

- **Target 4.1.** Globally, the completion rate was 88% in primary, 78% in lower secondary and 61% in upper secondary education. In learning outcomes, 58% of students achieve minimum proficiency in reading and 44% in mathematics at the end of primary education. At the end of lower secondary education, learning levels in upper-middle- and high-income countries have declined in reading and stagnated in mathematics since the early 2010s.

- **Target 4.2.** The participation rate among children one year prior to the official primary entry age has stagnated globally at about 75% since 2015. After adjusting for early entry into primary school, only about 60% of children attend at least one year of pre-primary education.

- **Target 4.3.** In 2024, the youth and adult participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training was 2.4%. Tertiary enrolment has more than doubled from 19% in 2000 to 44% in 2024.

- **Target 4.4.** In a group of about 70 mainly upper-middle- and high-income countries, 54% of adults could copy and move files, 34% could change privacy settings online, 24% verified online information and 6% had programming skills.

- **Target 4.5.** In low-income countries, for every 100 of those from the richest quintile who completed their education, 40 of those from the poorest quintile completed primary, 20 lower secondary and 13 upper secondary education. Language barriers can be a hindrance to learning, yet, at the end of primary education, only 63% of students were educated in their first or home language.

- **Target 4.6.** Globally, youth literacy increased from 87% in 2000 to 93% in 2024 and adult literacy from 81% to 88%. In low-income countries only 75% of youth and 64% of adults are literate.

- **Target 4.7.** Among 110 countries, climate change keywords are absent from science and social science syllabi of 78 countries in grade 3, 50 countries in grade 6, and 28 countries in grade 9.

- **Target 4.a.** In 2024, globally only about 8 in 10 primary schools had access to handwashing facilities, drinking water and electricity. In addition, 3,909 attacks on education were recorded in 69 countries.

- **Target 4.b.** Globally, 2.8% of students were internationally mobile in 2023 compared to 2.05% in 2000. The amount disbursed for scholarships rose from USD 1B in 2010 to USD 1.7B in 2024.

- **Target 4.c.** About 90% of primary school teachers meet the minimum required academic qualifications and 82% the minimum required professional qualifications. A bachelor's degree is required for primary teachers in 11% of low-income and 79% of high-income countries.

- **Finance.** Overall, 37% of countries spent less than 4% of GDP and less than 15% of total public expenditure on education, the two international benchmarks.

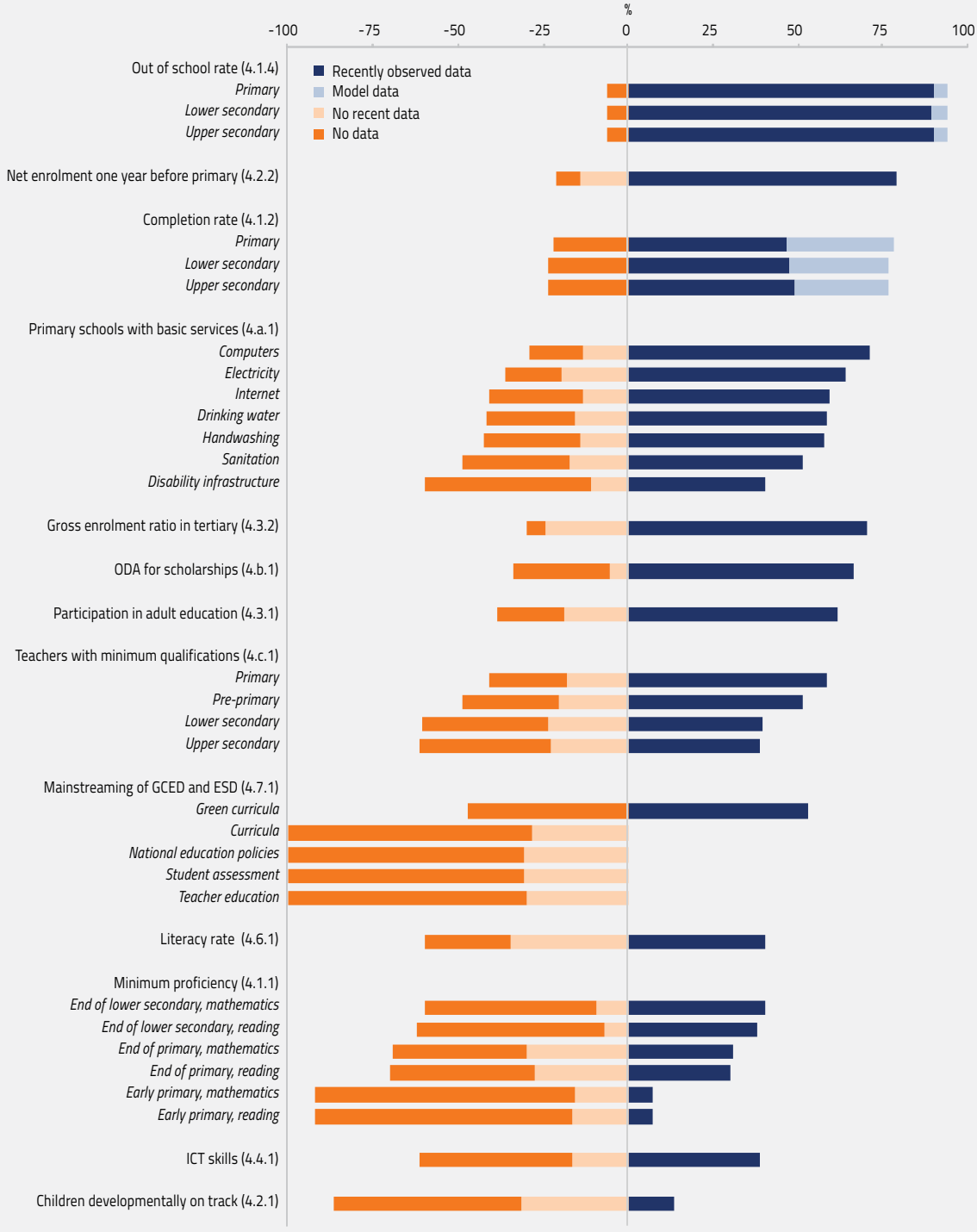
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Five years remain until the 2030 deadline for Sustainable Development Goal 4. The 2023 *Global Education Monitoring Report* already concluded that none of the global targets are going to be achieved. To continue assessing where countries are currently and where they will be by 2030 – in order to set new ambitious but feasible national targets – requires adequate, timely, accurate and comparable data. This is not easy to do. A major exercise was required in 2000 to build the first evidence basis to monitor the Education for All programme and the second Millennium Development Goal. Moreover, SDG 4 has presented additional and substantive measurement challenges, some of which were unprecedented in scope. Its targets span the life course, include sophisticated measures of literacy and numeracy and extend beyond them. And it places equity at its core, which requires a new dimension in data collection: the disaggregation of education indicators by individual characteristics.

Analysis for this report classifies data availability into four categories. No data refers to countries with no available data points since 2000. No recent data means the country has data points between 2000 and 2020 but none from 2021 onwards. The category of recent data indicates that a country has at least one data point from 2021 onwards. The model data category refers to two indicators, the out-of-school and completion rates, and shows where the use of other sources can complement official country reporting.

Data availability varies widely by SDG 4 indicator. Participation-related indicators (e.g. enrolment, attendance and completion), especially those that have been the focus of this report, show the highest levels of coverage. Some 90% of countries have recent data on out-of-school rates. By contrast, the two SDG 4 global indicators with the lowest data availability reflect complex and ambitious objectives: indicator 4.2.1, which measures whether children are developmentally on track (and is based primarily on UNICEF's Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey, MICS); and the original indicator 4.7.1, which tracks the extent to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in national systems (and is based on a UNESCO-led process currently under revision) (**Figure 7.1**).

FIGURE 7.1:
Data availability is highest for education participation indicators
Percentage of countries with data availability, by SDG 4 indicator, 2026



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_1
Note: For indicator 4.4.1 on ICT skills, the share is calculated based on data availability for at least one of the 22 different skills monitored. Availability of basic services for lower and upper secondary schools is very similar to that for primary schools and has been omitted.
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database February 2026 release.

Data availability also differs by income group and region. High-income countries and the SDG region of Europe and Northern America generally have greater data coverage, but this is not the case for all indicators. In some instances, the explanation is straightforward. For example, indicator 4.b.1, which tracks the volume of official development assistance (ODA) allocated to scholarships, is not applicable to high-income countries, which do not receive ODA. In other cases, such as indicator 4.c.1 on trained teachers, the lack of data reflects differences in reporting mechanisms. European Union (EU) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries report administrative teacher data through a joint annual education survey administered by the EU, OECD and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), while other countries report directly to the UIS. The question on minimum required teacher training is included in the UIS survey but not in the joint survey, possibly reflecting these countries' scepticism about the comparability of this indicator.

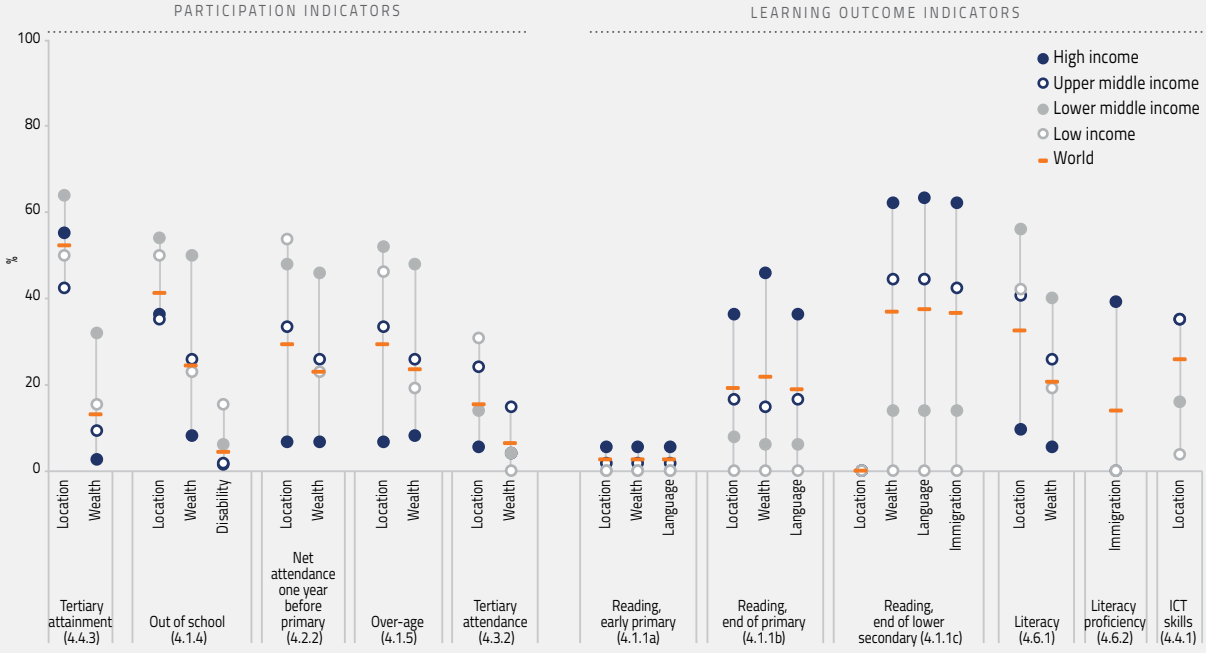
Finally, data availability differs greatly by country within regions and within income groups. The top 10 countries in terms of data availability of global indicators (and selected sub-indicators) are Albania, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, the Philippines, the State of Palestine, Türkiye, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. The countries and territories with the lowest data availability are Bermuda, Central African Republic, Congo, Curaçao, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Liechtenstein, Libya and Sint Maarten. The nature of data unavailability differs considerably between these countries. For example, Guinea has data prior to 2021 for 65% of indicators, while it reported no data at all for 26% of indicators. Libya has no data at all for 96% – or 22 of the 23 – of the indicators.

Issues related to data availability for the parity index (SDG global indicator 4.5.1) were discussed earlier in the report in the case of the completion rate (**Chapter 6**). Extending this analysis to other indicators and other dimensions is complex given that data availability varies by the indicator being disaggregated and by the dimension used to disaggregate – and the large number of indicator–dimension combinations. The UIS currently disaggregates indicators by six dimensions: sex, location, wealth, disability, migration and language spoken (relative to the language of instruction and assessment). The gender parity index is available for all indicators that can be disaggregated (26 indicators in total), as information by sex exists in both administrative and household survey data. Information on other dimensions, however, is only available in household surveys or learning assessments, and therefore availability is substantially lower.

Participation and learning outcome indicators differ in parity index availability by dimension (**Figure 7.2**). For participation indicators, the most widely available parity index is related to location, which captures urban–rural disparities. Wealth is the second most common dimension, although its availability is considerably lower for most indicators. Availability is also higher in low- and lower-middle-income countries, largely because data for these countries often come from international survey programmes (notably the Demographic and Health Survey, DHS, and the MICS), which make their data sets publicly available for analysis and disaggregation. By contrast, high-income countries tend to rely on administrative reporting for indicators such as out-of-school rates, net enrolment and over-age enrolment, which typically do not include information on these dimensions.

For learning outcome indicators, particularly those which rely on international large-scale assessments, availability across parity dimensions is more balanced. Location, wealth and language parity indices are generally collected through student and school questionnaires, resulting in similar levels of availability across these dimensions – with the exception of location which is not reported by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) at the end of lower secondary. As high-income countries are more likely to participate in such learning assessments, parity data for those indicators are more widely available for high-income than for low- and middle-income countries.

FIGURE 7.2:
Disaggregation of education indicators by individual characteristics to monitor equity varies by type of indicator, characteristic and country income group
Percentage of countries with recent data availability, by parity index and SDG 4 indicator, 2026



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_2
Note: Only indicators with at least one data point for parity indices are included.
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the UIS database February 2026 release.

TARGET 4.1. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

Target 4.1 has two core elements: participation in education and minimum learning proficiency in reading and mathematics. Given that this edition of the *Global Education Monitoring Report* is dedicated to participation (**Chapter 3**), this section includes a very concise summary on participation, focusing on changes since 2015. On learning, there have been relatively few updates since the 2024 edition, which also results in a short overview. More results are expected to be released in the coming months, which should provide the first consolidated global picture of progress since 2015; these results will be discussed in detail in the 2027 *Global Education Monitoring Report* on quality and learning.

ENROLMENT AND COMPLETION HAVE MOVED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS SINCE 2015

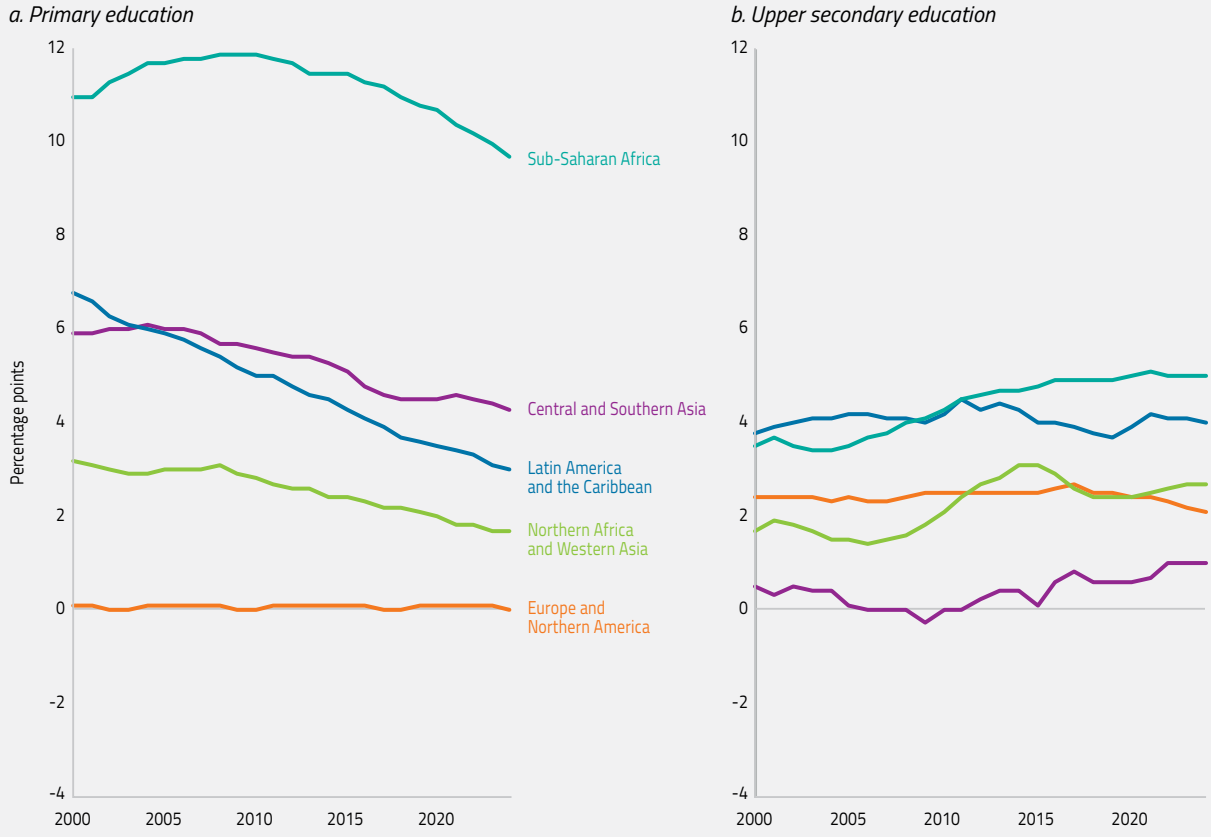
The out-of-school population in 2024 was 273 million, comprising 140 million boys and 133 million girls. By age group, there were 79 million of primary age, 64 million of lower secondary age and 130 million of upper secondary age who were out of school. This population has been rising since 2017, but the rate has remained stable at around 17% since 2015, ranging from 3% in high-income to 36% in low-income countries.

Globally, the percentage of the respective cohorts who completed each level on time (i.e. within three to five years after the official graduation age) in 2024 was 88% in primary (up from 85% in 2015), 78% in lower secondary (up from 73%) and 61% in upper secondary education (up from 53%). In low-income countries, these rates were only 60%, 37% and 20%, respectively, although considering that many reach the last grade with several years of delay due to late enrolment and repetition, it is estimated that ultimately (with up to eight years of delay), the completion rates will be 71%, 46% and 25%.

This gap between 'timely' and 'ultimate' primary school completion is very high in sub-Saharan Africa. While it began declining after 2010, at 10 percentage points it is still twice as high as in Central and Southern Asia, the region with the second highest gap. In upper secondary education, the gap between timely and ultimate completion is much lower on average, as by that age most students who were delayed in their progression were too old to continue their education and had left school. Sub-Saharan Africa is now the region with the largest gap (5 percentage points) which is increasing, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (4 percentage points) (**Figure 7.3**).

The global trends of the out-of-school and completion rates present an apparent paradox. Between 2000 and 2015, the out-of-school and completion rates were moving in tandem. But after 2015, progress in the out-of-school rate has come to a halt or even reversed, while the completion rate has continued to improve, albeit slightly more slowly. For example, in primary education, the out-of-school and completion rates improved by 0.5 percentage points per year between 2000 and 2015; but while the completion rate continued growing by 0.4 percentage points per year between 2015 and 2024, the out-of-school rate stagnated. In upper secondary education, the out-of-school and completion rates improved by about 1 percentage point per year between 2000 and 2015 but between 2015 and 2024, the completion rate improved by 0.9 percentage points and the out-of-school rate by just 0.2 percentage points.

FIGURE 7.3:
Too many complete school too late
Gap between ultimate and timely completion rates, by SDG region, 2000–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_3
Note: The timely completion rate is the percentage of those who complete a level of education within three to five years of the official graduation age – and is the official definition of SDG global indicator 4.1.2. The ultimate rate takes into account those who complete with even more delay (up to eight years above graduation age).
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on the VIEW model.

As explained earlier in the report (**Chapter 4**), the paradox can be explained by changes in repetition rates. While enrolment accelerated in low- and middle-income countries in the 1990s and 2000s, progression through grades slowed down, as a large number of those enrolled were repeaters. As repetition rates have dropped since 2000 (by 62% in primary and by 40% in lower secondary), enrolment numbers have slowed down but students have continued to graduate more or less at the same pace as before.

It has been anticipated that the COVID-19 pandemic will take its toll on enrolment and completion. Concerns about increases in student disengagement and absenteeism have been voiced in high-income countries (OECD, 2024a), while students whose early learning suffered, especially in middle-income countries with long school closures, may struggle to progress. Despite anecdotal evidence, such trends are not yet discernible in aggregate data but may emerge in the coming years.

LEARNING LEVELS IN MATHEMATICS FELL SLIGHTLY IN RICHER COUNTRIES AFTER COVID-19

SDG global indicator 4.1.1 tracks the percentage of students achieving minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics at three stages of schooling (early primary, end of primary and end of lower secondary) in two subjects (reading and mathematics). Despite its central importance, the monitoring of learning outcomes under SDG 4.1.1 remains constrained by limited and uneven data coverage. International large-scale assessments such as PISA and the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) are conducted primarily in upper-middle- and high-income countries, in secondary education and in three- to four-year intervals, while regional assessments, including the Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems of the CONFEMEN (PASEC) in francophone Africa and the ERCE assessment of the Latin American Laboratory for the Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE), are mainly conducted in less wealthy countries, in primary education and in five- to six-year intervals, restricting global comparability.

Despite data gaps, the UIS has estimated that 58% of students reached minimum proficiency in reading and 44% in mathematics at the end of primary education in 2019. At the end of lower secondary education, the shares were 64% in reading and 51% in mathematics.

The lack of data lessens the ability to estimate trends. However, in the upper-middle- and high-income countries covered by PISA and TIMSS, there has been evidence that results are stagnating (in mathematics, mainly as a result of COVID-19) or declining (in reading, in a trend that began about 15 years ago and to which long-term structural factors appear to contribute). The 2024/5 *Global Education Monitoring Report* showed that, according to PISA, the share of students reaching minimum proficiency in reading at the end of lower secondary education fell from 59% in 2012 to 47% in 2022, with larger declines observed in middle-income countries. In mathematics, gains recorded between 2012 and 2018 were reversed by a sharp drop in 2022 (UNESCO, 2024).

The main new evidence published in the last 18 months was the release of the 2023 TIMSS, which permits comparison of the share of students achieving minimum proficiency in mathematics at grade 4 and grade 8 in 2011, 2019 and 2023. In grade 4, around 7 in 10 students in 29 high-income countries reached minimum proficiency, with no change in the 12-year period between 2011 and 2023. Just over 5 in 10 students in 7 middle-income countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Morocco and Serbia) achieved minimum proficiency, with a relatively rapid increase between 2011 and 2019 but stagnation by 2023.

In grade 8, some 60% of students in high-income countries reached minimum proficiency, while only about 30% did so in middle-income countries. The impact of COVID-19 seems stronger in grade 8 than in grade 4, with a decline of three percentage points in high-income countries and seven percentage points in middle-income countries between 2019 and 2023. In total, the percentage of students who achieved minimum proficiency in mathematics increased from 51% in 2011 to 56% in 2019 but fell back to 52% in 2023. (**Figure 7.4**).

A new source of information on primary education in low- and middle-income countries is the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement's Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (LaNA), which was first administered in 2023. Conducted in six countries across Africa and Asia, LaNA is a lighter (e.g. only multiple choice questions), less resource-intensive assessment (e.g. a sample of 100 to 150 schools) aligned with TIMSS and its reading equivalent, PIRLS, and adapted to capture emerging literacy and numeracy skills (IEA, 2025). In Egypt, 29% of grade 5 students reached the minimum level in mathematics and 34% in reading, while in Nigeria, which participated for the first time in an internationally comparable assessment, 20% of grade 6 students achieved minimum proficiency in reading and 11% in mathematics. Contextual findings point to persistent challenges, including shortages of learning resources, classroom disruption and high levels of student hunger (von Davier et al., 2025).

FIGURE 7.4:
COVID-19 appears to have wiped out the progress in grade 8 mathematics learning outcomes achieved in the 2010s
Percentage of students achieving a minimum level of proficiency in mathematics in grade 4 and grade 8, selected middle- and high-income countries, 2011, 2019 and 2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_4
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on 2011, 2019 and 2023 TIMSS data.

Several new data sources are expected to be released in 2026, including the 2025 ERCE, 2024 PASEC, 2025 PISA and 2024 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics, which should make an important contribution to understanding the evolution of learning worldwide. Unresolved questions include whether the declining trend in reading levels in the richest half in the world will persist – and whether it is mirrored in the poorest half of the world, and whether the impact of the pandemic, which was especially visible in mathematics, will persist and how.

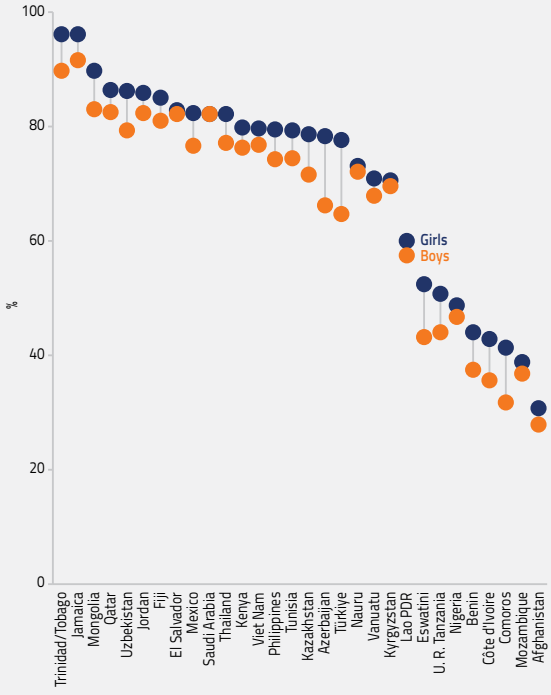
TARGET 4.2. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

The first of two global indicators on early childhood (4.2.1) is unusual in the sense that it is only partially related to education. It monitors the proportion of children under 5 who are 'developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being'. The methodology for this complex outcome indicator based on data collected at the household level was originally developed by UNICEF in the mid-2000s, as part of its Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey, and updated in the late 2010s as the Early Childhood Development Index 2030 (ECDI2030) for the purposes of the then newly proposed SDG indicator. The definition of development covers three domains: health, learning and psychosocial well-being (UNICEF, 2023).

Since 2021, 30 countries have reported data on the ECDI2030, of which all but 4 administered a MICS or a DHS, while El Salvador, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye included a relevant module in a national survey. The share of children who are developmentally on track varies from more than 90% in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago to less than 40% in Côte d'Ivoire and Mozambique – and below 30% in Afghanistan (**Figure 7.5**). Differences by sex are generally small, although in no country are boys more likely to be developmentally on track than girls. The gap is 5 percentage points on average and as high as 9 points in Comoros and Eswatini and 12 points in Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Disparities by household wealth are much more substantial. In Nigeria, for example, 77% of children from the richest quintile are developmentally on track compared with only 30% of those from the poorest quintile (UNICEF, 2022).

FIGURE 7.5:
The share of children developmentally on track varies widely among countries
Percentage of children aged 24 to 59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex, selected countries, 2021–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_5
Note: The age group covered in Afghanistan and Comoros was 36 to 59 months.
Source: UIS database.

Access to early childhood education is an important factor for children's development. The second global indicator (4.2.2), reviewed in depth earlier in the report (**Chapter 3**) measures participation in organized learning activities among children one year prior to the official primary entry age. After some progress in the early 2000s, global participation has stagnated at around 75% since 2015, even though rates in low-income countries have improved from 29% in 2008 to 38% in 2015 and 48% in 2023. Global indicator 4.2.2 is interpreted as a measure of access to pre-primary education, even though children one year prior to the official primary entry age may be prematurely enrolled in primary school without having attended pre-primary. This report has estimated that the share of children who attend at least one year of pre-primary education before entering primary is about 60%.

Currently, 45 countries guarantee at least one year of compulsory pre-primary education and 74 countries at least one year of free pre-primary education. Participation is considerably higher in these countries. Average net enrolment in pre-primary education is 81% in countries with at least one year of compulsory pre-primary education, compared to 49% in the other countries. It is 66% in countries offering at least one year of free pre-primary education, compared to 52% elsewhere. While part of this gap reflects differences in countries' income levels, evidence from individual countries shows clear increases in participation following the introduction of free or compulsory pre-primary education policies (UIS and GEM Report, 2023).

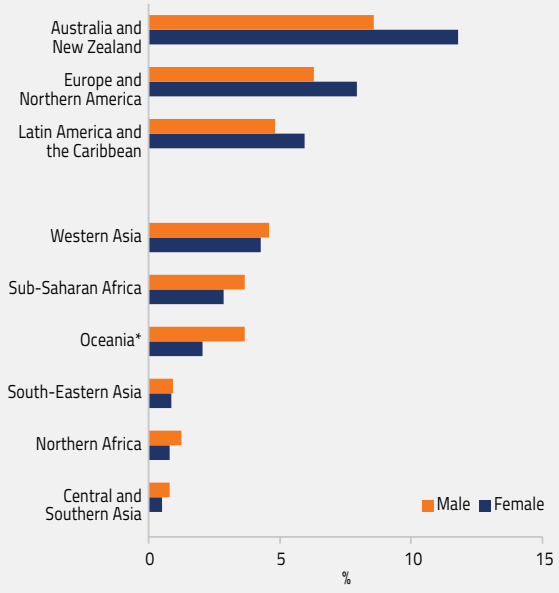
TARGET 4.3. TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL, TERTIARY AND ADULT EDUCATION

By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

SDG global indicator 4.3.1 is the participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months. It aims to reflect access to post-secondary learning opportunities, informed by labour force surveys. Globally, participation levels are low, estimated at 2.4% among 25- to 54-year-olds in 2024. In the three regions where it exceeds 5%, women are more likely to have had a learning opportunity than men, while the opposite is the case in the other regions where participation rates are below 5%. In Oceania, women have a 3.2 percentage point advantage over men in Australia and New Zealand, while men have a 1.6 percentage point advantage over women in the Pacific island states (**Figure 7.6**). Among 25 mostly upper-middle- and high-income countries with observations in 2021 and 2024, Portugal and Spain have both the highest levels of participation (18.5%) and the highest increases (by 3.6 and 1.7 percentage points, respectively). In contrast, participation fell by 2 percentage points in Costa Rica (from 10% to 8%).

Tertiary education participation was analysed extensively earlier in this report (**Chapter 5**). The gross enrolment ratio expanded from 19% in 2000 to 37% in 2015 (or by 1.1 percentage points per year), slowing down slightly to 44% in 2024 (or by 0.8 percentage points per year), ranging from less than 15% in low-income to more than 80% in high-income countries. Growth has continued unabated – and at the fastest and constant pace of 2 percentage points per year – throughout the past quarter of a century in upper-middle-income countries, whereas it has halved in high-income countries, from 1.3 percentage points per year between 2000 and 2015 to 0.65 percentage points per year between 2015 and 2024, when it reached 82%.

FIGURE 7.6:
Adult education opportunities are low but women are more likely to access them in regions with higher participation rates
Participation rate of 25- to 54-year-olds in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by region, 2024



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_6
Note: Oceania excludes Australia and New Zealand.
Source: UIS database.

Significant differences by income group are also observed in participation in vocational education and training among 15- to 24-year-olds, which ranged from 1% in low- to 3% in lower-middle-, 5% in upper-middle- and 10% in high-income countries in 2024. Globally, participation has increased from 2.7% in 2000 to 3.7% in 2015 and 4.2% in 2024.

TARGET 4.4. SKILLS FOR WORK

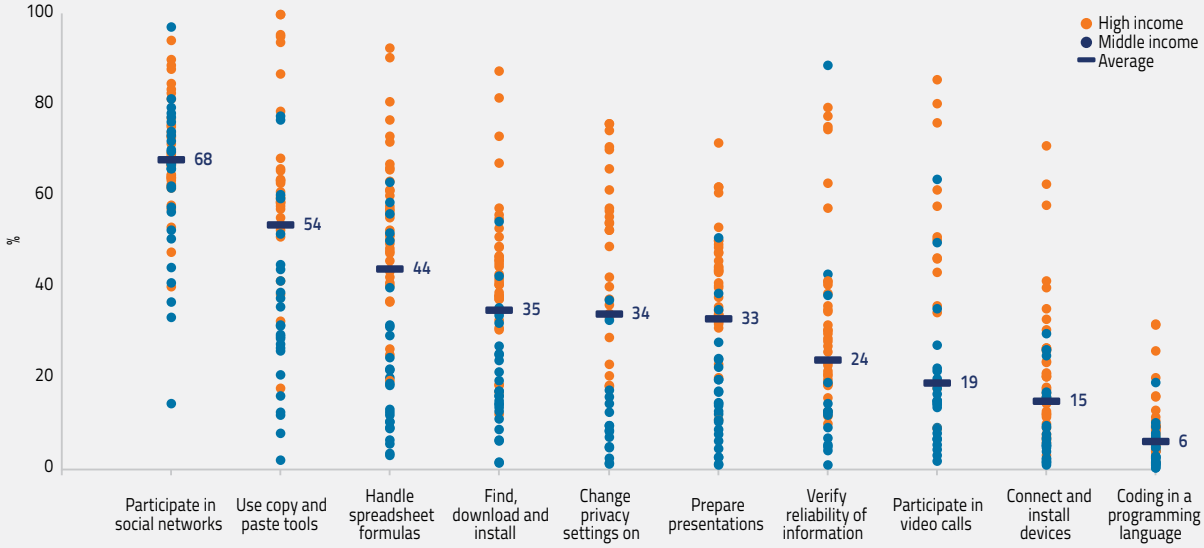
By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

SDG global indicator 4.4.1 provides an indirect measure of information and communication technology (ICT) skills based on self-reported activities carried out in the three months before adults took part in a household survey. The indicator has helped extend measurement of adult skills beyond literacy and numeracy toward competencies increasingly required in the labour market. While originally limited to computer-related activities, the International Telecommunications Union has been expanding the definition as needs evolve, notably to capture smartphone-related and other tasks (e.g. participation in online networks), although relatively few countries have adjusted their household survey questionnaires to include new skill categories to date. This flexibility in updating the definition is a strength, given the rapidly changing digital environment, but at the same time poses challenges in monitoring long-term trends, as the targets keep shifting.

A significant downside is that 85% of countries that report data belong to the upper-middle or high-income categories and are therefore not globally representative. Recent data from some 70 countries provide insights into the large gaps in the distribution of skills in the population – from basic to complex skills. A median of 68% of youth and adults reported using social networks and 54% reported being able to copy or move files. Among medium-level skills, 44% reported that they could handle spreadsheet formulas and 35% that they could download and install software. For higher-order activities, 34% reported being able to change privacy settings on devices and 24% to verify the reliability of online information. Only 6% said they had coding skills (**Figure 7.7**). As skill complexity increases, the gap between high-income and middle-income countries widens. Apart from coding skills, the largest gap between middle-income and high-income countries was observed in changing privacy settings, which indicates that differences are not only due to technical issues but also to cultural and educational issues that affect perceptions of risk.

The difficulty in identifying indicators that compare skills for work beyond literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is reflected in the choice of SDG thematic indicator 4.4.3: the education attainment rate or the distribution of the adult population by highest level of education completed are not clearly related to work, at least not without reference to a country's job structure. International Labour Organization (ILO) data show that the percentage of the population with tertiary qualifications rises from 15% among 45- to 54-year-olds to 24% among 25- to 34-year-olds. As described earlier in the report (**Chapter 5**), this increase is smaller than the 20 percentage point rise in tertiary enrolment between 1994 and 2014, which indicates significant dropout before graduation.

FIGURE 7.7:
Digital participation expands while acquisition of advanced skills lags
Percentage of youth and adults with ICT skills, selected countries, 2022–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_7
Source: UIS database.

TARGET 4.5. EQUITY

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

Universal education cannot be achieved without the inclusion of all, regardless of gender, location and wealth as well as disability, indigeneity and language. SDG global indicator 4.5.1, the parity index, which expresses the ratio of two values of an indicator – corresponding to a disadvantaged and a privileged group – gives a sense of the relative position of different groups. As discussed earlier in the report (**Chapter 6**), the indicator is crude and often does not do much more than describe the level of educational development in a country rather than the magnitude of inequality. Nevertheless, it provides an entry point for communicating the extent of inequality in a concise form despite considerable data gaps.

Gender disparity is small on average but varies considerably by income level: 79 young women complete upper secondary school for every 100 young men in low-income countries, but 106 young women do so for every 100 young men in high-income countries.

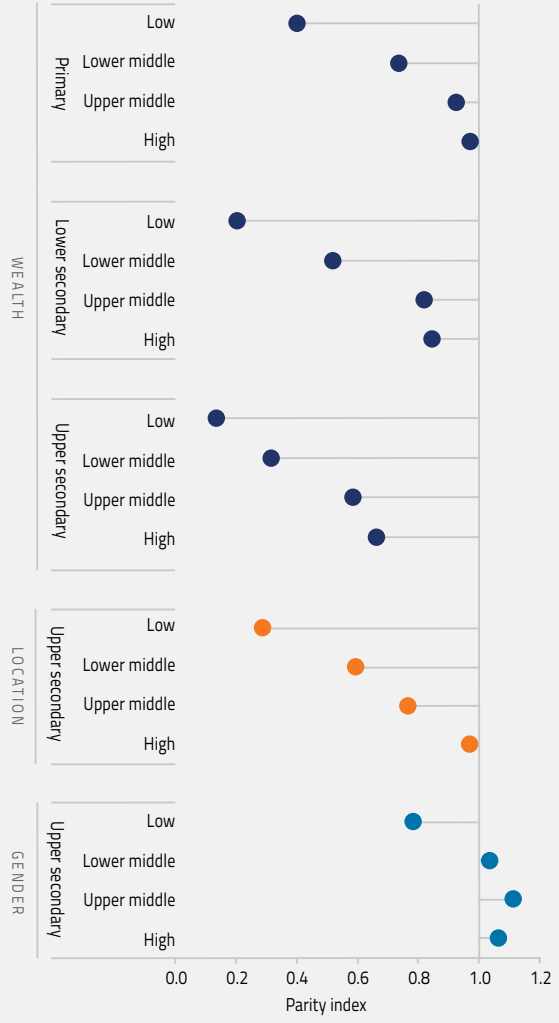
Among the characteristics that are measurable and roughly comparable among countries, wealth remains the factor most strongly related to inequality, although this is also partly affected by measurement. For example, wealth comparisons focus on children from the poorest 20% and the richest 20% of households, leaving out the middle 60%, accentuating the contrast between the most and the least disadvantaged. In contrast, location comparisons are blunted as – unlike wealth comparisons – they include all populations, not excluding those in the middle, while the 'urban' and 'rural' categories incorporate urban and rural settlements with very different characteristics.

Taking the example of the completion rate, in low-income countries, for every 100 children in the richest quintile who complete primary school, only 40 from the poorest quintile do so; the ratio drops to 20 in lower secondary and just 13 in upper secondary. Although disparities narrow with national income, they remain substantial: for every 100 of the richest youth completing upper secondary education, only 13 in low-income, 31 in lower-middle-income, 58 in upper-middle-income and 66 in high-income countries complete.

Location gaps are also pronounced in poorer countries. In low-income countries, only 30 rural youth complete upper secondary school for every 100 urban youth who do so. Gender disparity shows a different pattern.

In low-income countries, young women remain disadvantaged, with 79 completing upper secondary education for every 100 young men. However, the gender gaps are reversed in middle- and high-income countries, where female completion equals or exceeds that of males (**Figure 7.8**).

FIGURE 7.8:
The extent of wealth disparity in the completion rate is large, especially in poorer countries
Adjusted parity index, by characteristic and education level, 2020–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_8
Source: UIS database.

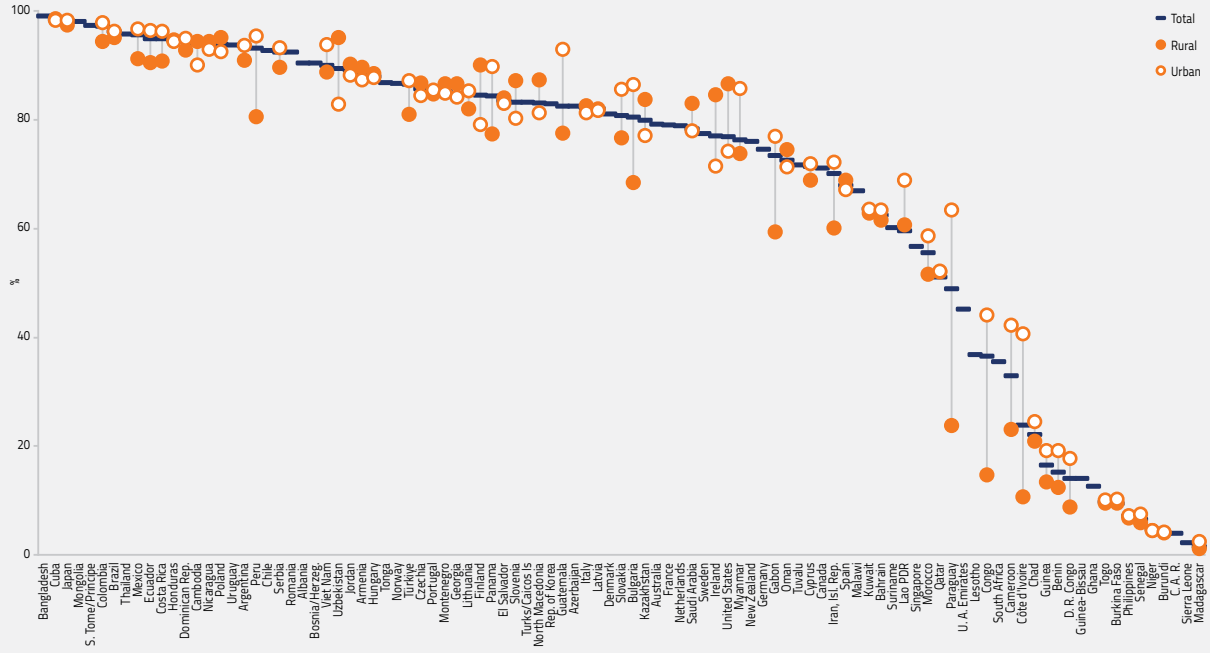
All other indicators in this target are finance-related, except SDG thematic indicator 4.5.2, the percentage of students who have their first or home language as the language of instruction. The lack of opportunity to be educated in one's own language is an underappreciated barrier to progress in the acquisition of a minimum proficiency level, notwithstanding the fact that the contexts in which this problem appears are very different: colonial legacies, the presence of ethnic minorities and the presence of immigrant and refugee populations. The UIS database contains data from household surveys and learning assessments reported by students and their parents for 35% of the global primary school population. At the end of primary education, it is estimated that 63% of students were educated in their first or home language, with the ratio ranging from 15% in low-income to 55% in lower-middle-income and just over 80% in upper-middle- and high-income countries.

The difference in linguistic contexts is reflected in the rural–urban gap. In poorer countries, ethnic minorities tend to reside in rural areas and preserve their linguistic traditions. For example, in Guatemala, 93% of those in urban areas but only 77% of those in rural areas speak Spanish at home. Likewise, urban elites are more likely to speak the (colonial) language of instruction at home, for example, due to living conditions or intermarriage. In Côte d'Ivoire, 11% of those in rural areas but 41% of those in urban areas speak French at home. Conversely, in richer countries, the opposite phenomenon is observed, mostly because immigrant populations tend to be concentrated in urban areas. In Finland, Ireland and the United States, the percentage of those who speak the language of instruction at home in urban areas is lower than in rural areas by 11 to 13 percentage points (**Figure 7.9**).

FIGURE 7.9:

Primary school students face very different linguistic contexts between and within countries

Percentage of students at the end of primary education who have their first or home language as the language of instruction, by location, 2019 or 2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_9

Source: UIS database.

TARGET 4.6. YOUTH AND ADULT LITERACY

By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

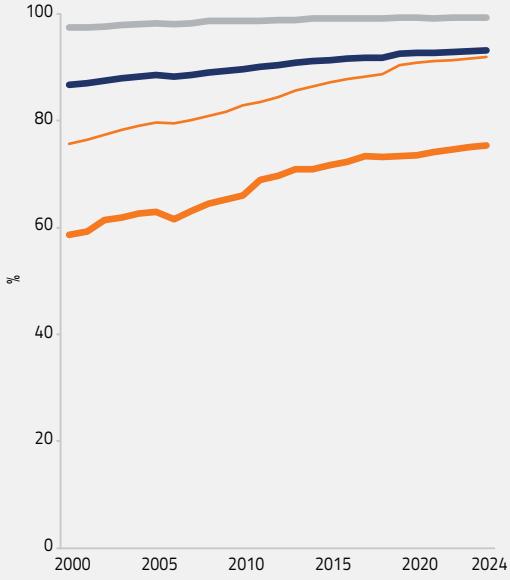
SDG target 4.6 is the only one to have experienced a change in the global indicator following the second comprehensive review of SDG indicators by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators in 2024–25. As very few countries – almost exclusively rich ones – had measured functional literacy and numeracy proficiency, the international community reverted to the historic literacy measure. While the strength of this measure is its large coverage, its weaknesses are also widely recognized. The *Global Education Monitoring Report* is currently working with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis to develop the methodology for measurement. One of the weaknesses is the very low bar set for defining adult literacy, which ignores whether an adult comprehends the texts they may be able to read, that is – for example – embedded in the definition of a minimum level of proficiency in reading adopted for school-age populations, as defined in indicator 4.1.1.

Given available data, youth literacy is estimated to have increased globally from 86.7% in 2000 to 91.4% in 2015 and 93.1% in 2024. Progress was strongest in lower-middle-income countries, which significantly narrowed gaps with upper-middle-income countries (from 22 percentage points in 2000 to 12 in 2015 and 7 in 2024), but the rate in low-income countries was still only 75% in 2024. Adult literacy is estimated to have increased globally from 81.1% in 2000 to 86% in 2015 and 87.7% in 2024. In low-income countries, just 64% of adults were literate in 2024 (**Figure 7.10**).

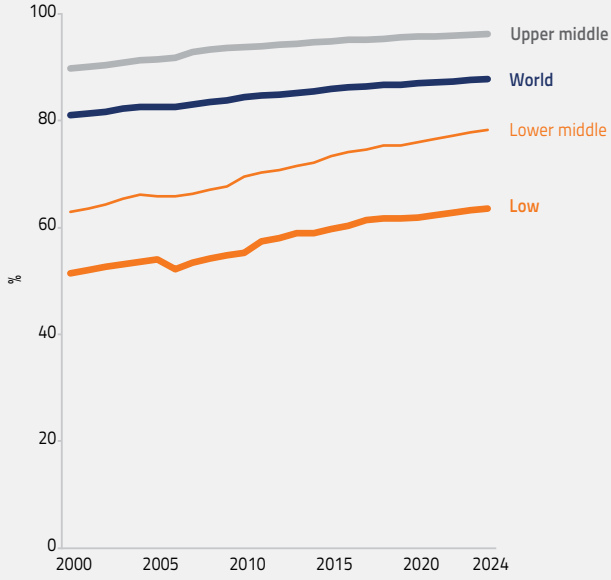
The number of illiterate youth globally is estimated to have fallen by 40% between 2000 and 2024, from 143 to 86 million. In contrast, the number in low-income countries increased from 34 million to 37 million. In other words, the share of low-income countries in the total illiterate youth population has increased from 24% to 43% in this period, reflecting both a slower rate of literacy progress and a faster demographic growth in low-income countries than in middle-income countries. The number of illiterate adults globally is estimated to have fallen by 7% from 802 million in 2000 to 739 million in 2024.

FIGURE 7.10:
In low-income countries only 75% of youth and 64% of adults are literate

a. Youth literacy rate, by income group, 2000–24



b. Adult literacy rate, by income group, 2000–24



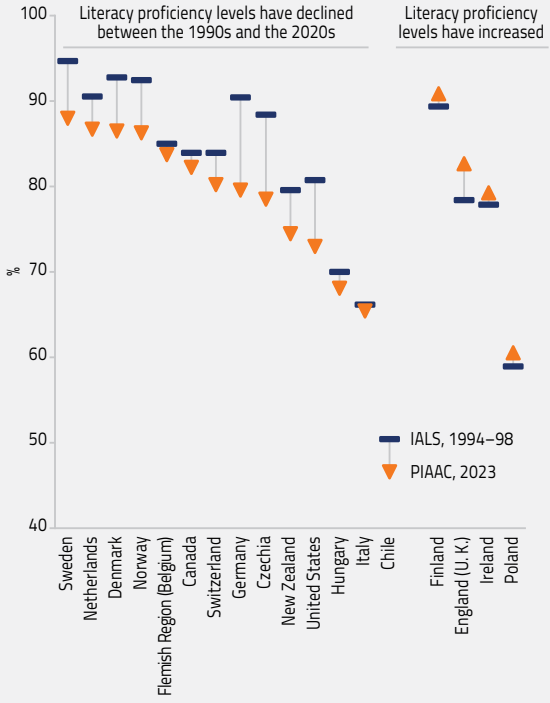
GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_10
Source: UIS database.

However, these results depend not only on a definition of literacy skills that sets the bar very low (e.g. able to read a short sentence), as mentioned above, but also on self-reported and indirect measures, which means that they are likely to be highly misleading. For example, school-level assessments used to monitor SDG global indicator 4.1.1 suggest that only about 10% of primary school age children in low-income countries achieve a minimum level of proficiency in reading, defined to include comprehension skills. This implies that the above-reported estimate of 75% of youth being literate in low-income countries is exaggerating this population's functional literacy skills. Likewise, the level of adult literacy is routinely assumed to be 100% in high-income countries, but successive OECD adult literacy surveys since the 1990s have shown this assumption to be flawed: if the bar for the definition of a functionally literate adult is set high, then many adults fall below it, even in high-income countries.

Results from the 2023 cycle of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), which assessed a continuum of adult literacy and numeracy skills, show that 26% of adults in 29 high-income OECD countries and territories fell below Level 2 in literacy, which means that they were not able to 'access and understand information in longer texts with some distracting information', 'navigate within simple multi-page digital texts to access and identify target information from various parts of the text' and 'understand by paraphrasing or making inferences, based on single or adjacent pieces of information' (OECD, 2024b). Younger cohorts are not outperforming older ones, despite being more educated. At the same time, the gap between the most and least educated is widening, not because top performers are improving but because their skills are eroding more slowly as they age (Schleicher and Scarpetta, 2024).

Analysis of the 2023 PIAAC results also assessed the evolution of literacy skills for 18 countries and territories relative to the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), a predecessor of PIAAC carried out in the mid-1990s. Literacy levels have stagnated or declined in most of these 18 countries and territories over the past three decades, although large demographic changes (e.g. population aging and increasing diversity) need to be taken into account before conclusions can be drawn. Between the mid-1990s and 2023, the percentage of adults above Level 2 fell by the most in Germany (by 11 percentage points to 80%), Czechia (by 10 percentage points to 79%) and the United States (by 8 percentage points to 73%). In England, United Kingdom, the percentage of adults above Level 2 increased by 4 percentage points to 83% (**Figure 7.11**).

FIGURE 7.11:
Among a few countries with robust measures since the mid-1990s, literacy skills in the adult population appear to have declined
Percentage of adults scoring at or above literacy Level 2 in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), selected high-income countries and territories, 1994–98 and 2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_11
Source: OECD (2024).

TARGET 4.7. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

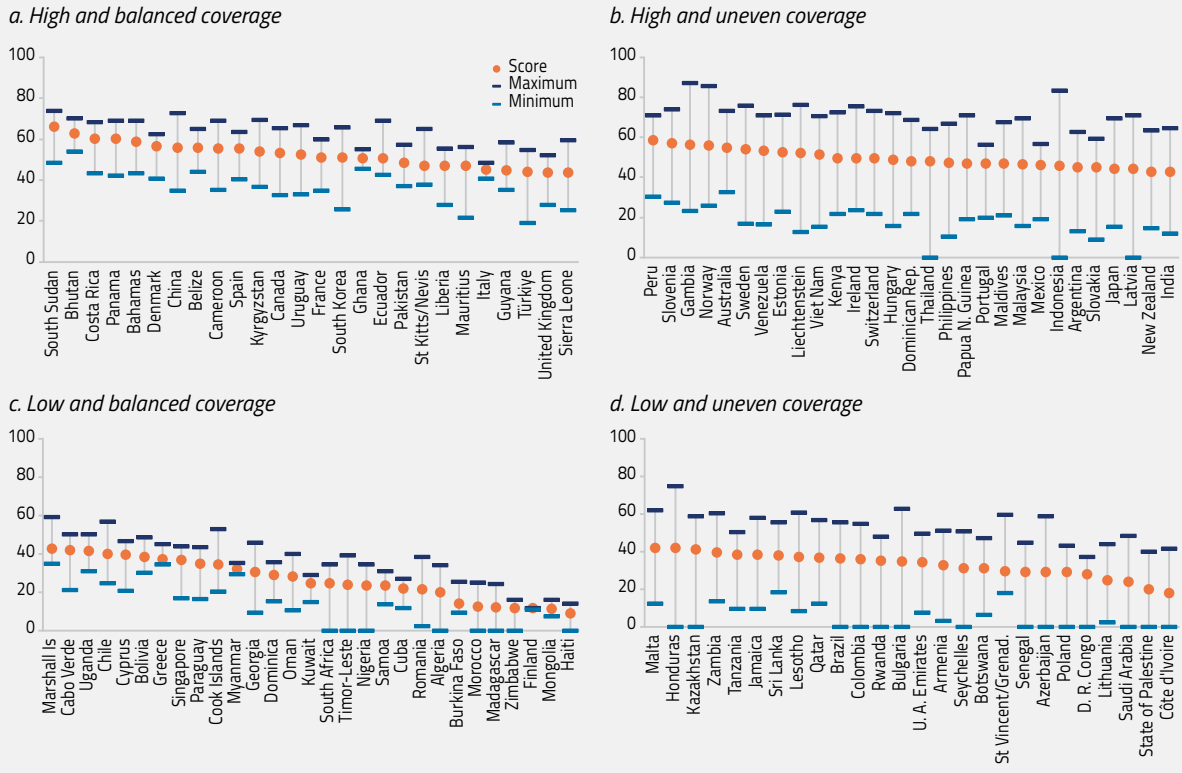
SDG global indicator 4.7.1 has been used to try to assess how well countries integrate global citizenship education and education for sustainable development into national education policies, curricula, teacher education and student assessment. Monitoring this indicator has relied on self-reporting as part of the consultation on the implementation of UNESCO's 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. As part of the 2023 revision of the Recommendation, efforts are underway to strengthen the reporting process and improve data quality, coverage and availability.

As part of the second and final Comprehensive Review of SDG indicators in 2025, SDG global indicator 4.7.1 was expanded to incorporate a new direct measure, which measures the presence of keywords in national curriculum frameworks and in science and social science subject syllabi of grades 3, 6 and 9 in three domains: environment and sustainability, climate change, and biodiversity. The different inputs (keywords on three domains identified in two document types in three grades) are aggregated into a single composite score from 0 to 100. This 'green curriculum' indicator is the result of a collaboration between the *Global Education Monitoring Report* and the Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Communication and Education (MECCE) project.

Findings from 110 countries reveal substantial variation in overall keyword coverage and balance across domains. Variation within countries across domains is greater than the variation between countries, suggesting that countries tend to prioritize specific topics. As a result, countries with similar overall scores often differ markedly in how coverage is distributed across domains. For example, the Gambia and Denmark both recorded an overall score of 57. Yet in the Gambia, the domain scores range from 23 for biodiversity to 87 for environment and sustainability (**Figure 7.12b**), while in Denmark they are more evenly distributed, ranging from 40 to 62 across the three domains (**Figure 7.12a**).

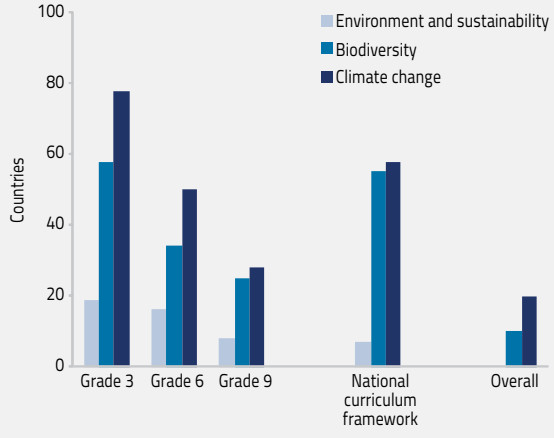
Although patterns vary across countries, climate change had substantially lower coverage than the other two domains. Out of the 110 countries, climate change was entirely absent from the syllabi of 78 countries in grade 3, 50 in grade 6 and 28 in grade 9. By contrast, environment and sustainability was the most frequently included domain. For all three domains, the probability of inclusion increased with the grade level. In national curriculum frameworks, almost all countries with available data referenced environment and sustainability, but more than 50 did not mention biodiversity and/or climate change (**Figure 7.13**).

FIGURE 7.12:
Countries vary both in the level and in the balance of coverage of green keywords in the curriculum
Greening curriculum indicator score and range across topic areas, 2024



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_12
Note: Countries are classified according to the median overall score and the median standard deviation across domains.
Source: GEM Report and MECCE project.

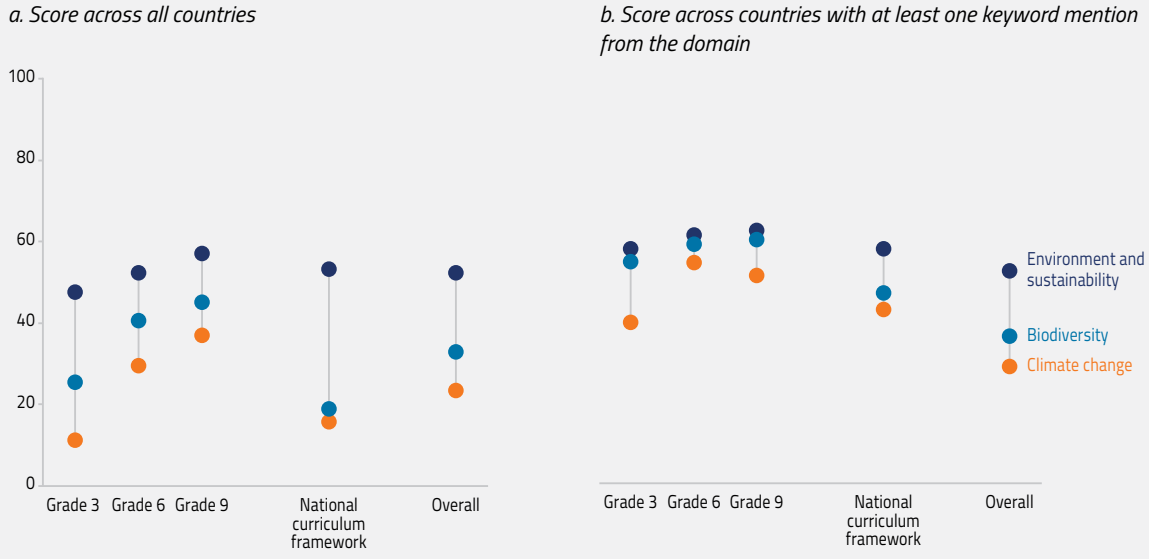
FIGURE 7.13:
Half of countries make no reference to climate change in their late primary curricula
Number of countries that do not include selected keywords, by domain and type of document, 2024



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_13
Source: GEM Report and MECCE project.

The large number of countries with zero keyword mentions for a given domain substantially lowers the domain's overall average score. When the analysis is restricted to countries that include at least one keyword for that topic, differences in average scores narrow considerably (**Figure 7.14**). This indicates that the observed differences across domains are driven primarily by whether countries mention a topic at all, rather than by major differences in the intensity of coverage among countries that include it. Indeed, variation in the share of countries mentioning a topic is much higher than the variation in average intensity among countries with non-zero coverage. Nevertheless, even among countries that include it, climate change tends to receive less extensive coverage than the other two domains.

FIGURE 7.14:
Differences in the green curriculum indicator scores across domains are driven primarily by whether countries include keywords from the domains at all
Greening curriculum indicator score, by domain and type of document, 2024



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_14
Source: GEM Report and MECCE project.

While these indicators assess government efforts to introduce sustainable development and global citizenship into the education process, the ultimate objective is to have an impact on knowledge – and ultimately on attitudes and behaviours. However, the assessments that in the 2010s were a source for two complementary thematic indicators aspiring to assess students' understanding (4.7.4 on environmental science and geoscience and 4.7.5 on global citizenship and sustainability) have not been taken up by countries since then.

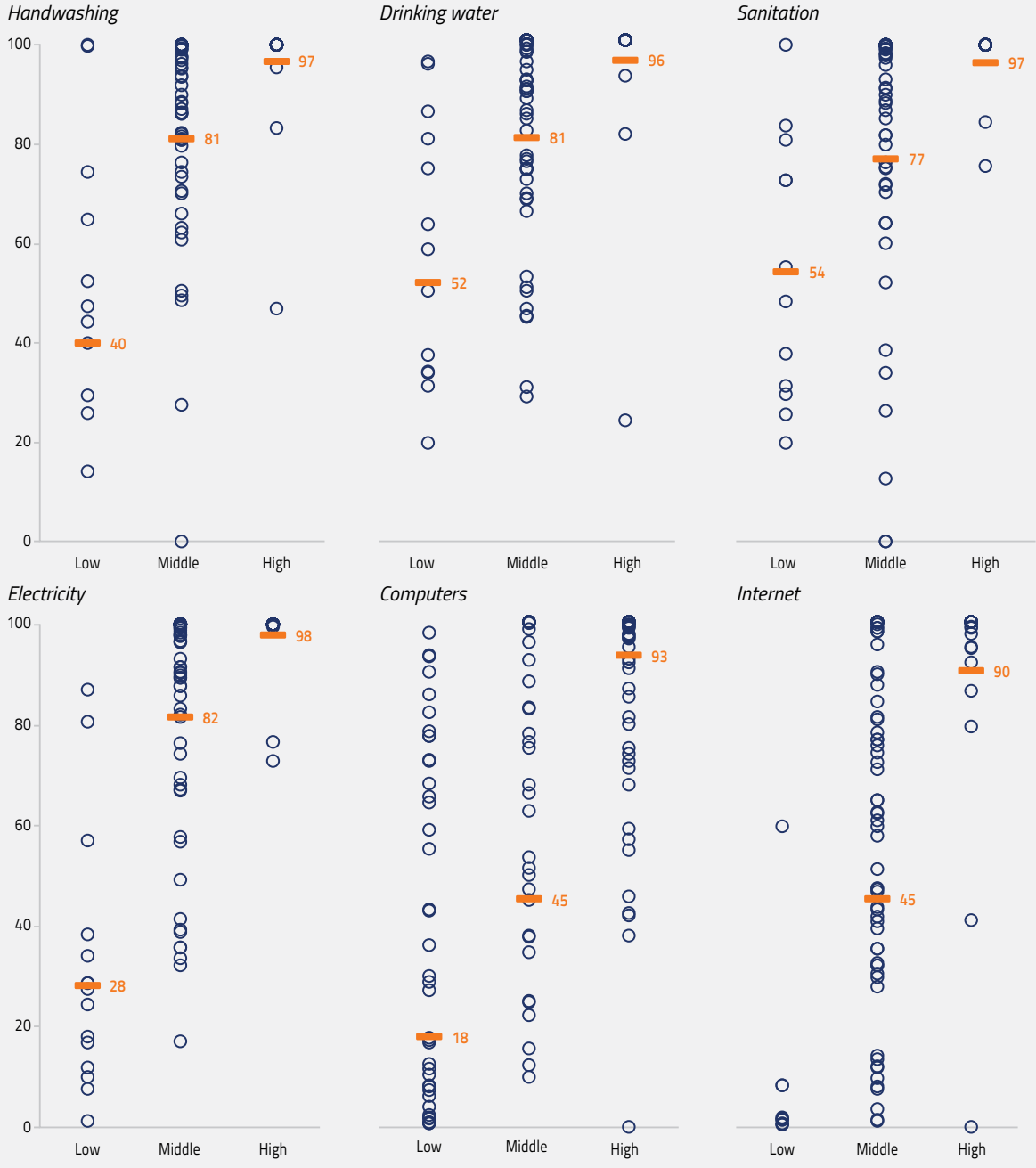
Finally, SDG target 4.7 also monitors the percentage of schools providing life skills–based HIV and sexuality education. Globally, an estimated 43% of primary schools provide life skills–based HIV and sexuality education, compared with some 82% of lower and upper secondary schools. Provision exceeds 90% of secondary schools in Central and Southern Asia and in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia but falls below 70% in Northern Africa and Western Asia and below 55% in sub-Saharan Africa.

TARGET 4.A. EDUCATION FACILITIES AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

Global indicator 4.a.1 monitors the availability of basic infrastructure and services in schools. While access to these services is near universal in high-income countries, large gaps persist elsewhere. In low-income countries, only 40% of primary schools have access to handwashing facilities and fewer than 55% have access to drinking water or basic sanitation facilities. There has been limited progress since 2015: access to drinking water increased by 11 percentage points, to sanitation by 3 and to handwashing by 4 percentage points. Access to electricity, a prerequisite for access to computers and the Internet, has also remained largely stagnant in low-income countries since 2015, at around 28%, while it increased considerably in middle-income countries, from 66% in 2015 to 82% in 2024 (**Figure 7.15**).

FIGURE 7.15:
Primary schools in low-income countries lack access to basic infrastructure
Share of primary schools with access to basic services, by income level, 2024 or latest available year



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_15
Source: UIS database.

In addition to infrastructure, Target 4.a monitors safety and well-being in the school environment. Data on bullying and violence are particularly concerning. Over 50% of lower secondary students reported experiencing bullying in 70 out of the 83 countries with recent available data.

Moreover, in 2024, a total of 3,909 attacks on education were reported across 69 countries, the highest number recorded since monitoring by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack began in 2013.

A new thematic indicator monitors the share of students benefiting from school meal programmes. According to the latest data from the World Food Programme, some 466 million children worldwide received school meals in 2024, a 20% increase since 2020. Much of the expansion took place in low-income countries, where the coverage increased by 60% in two years (WFP, 2025).

TARGET 4.B. SCHOLARSHIPS

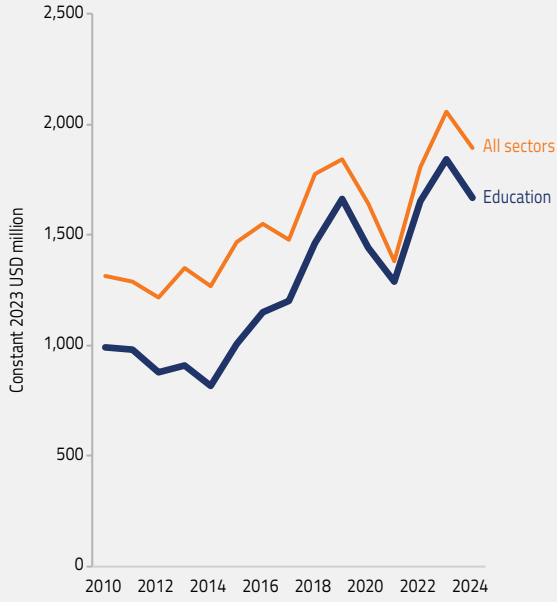
By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing states and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.

The share of tertiary education students who were internationally mobile increased from 2.05% in 2000 to 2.23% in 2015 and 2.75% in 2020. After a 6% fall during COVID-19, it bounced back to the 2020 level in 2024. Among regions referenced in SDG target 4.b, mobility rates ranged from 7.2% in small island developing states to 4.9% in sub-Saharan Africa, 4.7% in least developed countries, and 2.9% in Northern Africa. There is no systematic evidence on how many mobile students receive scholarships, as these are awarded by multiple governmental and non-governmental actors. The global indicator therefore focuses on the volume of aid to education in official development assistance (ODA) allocated for scholarships.

In 2024, USD 1.7 billion of ODA to education was allocated to scholarships, rising to USD 1.9 billion when scholarships across all ODA sectors are included. After stagnating in the early 2010s, scholarship funding increased between 2015 and 2019, declined sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21, and then exceeded pre-pandemic levels in 2022–23. The marked decrease observed in 2024 may signal shifting international priorities, with education at particular risk as several donors have been reducing future ODA commitments (**Figure 7.16**).

In some high-income countries, such as France and Germany where tertiary education is tuition-free, enrolment of international students from developing countries is reported as official development assistance through imputed student costs, which in 2024 amounted to USD 3.6 billion.

FIGURE 7.16:
A dip in scholarship disbursements in 2024 may reflect shifting global priorities in recent years.
Official development assistance disbursements on scholarships, education sector and all sectors, 2010–24, in constant US dollars, millions, 2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_16
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS)

TARGET 4.C. TEACHERS

By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states.

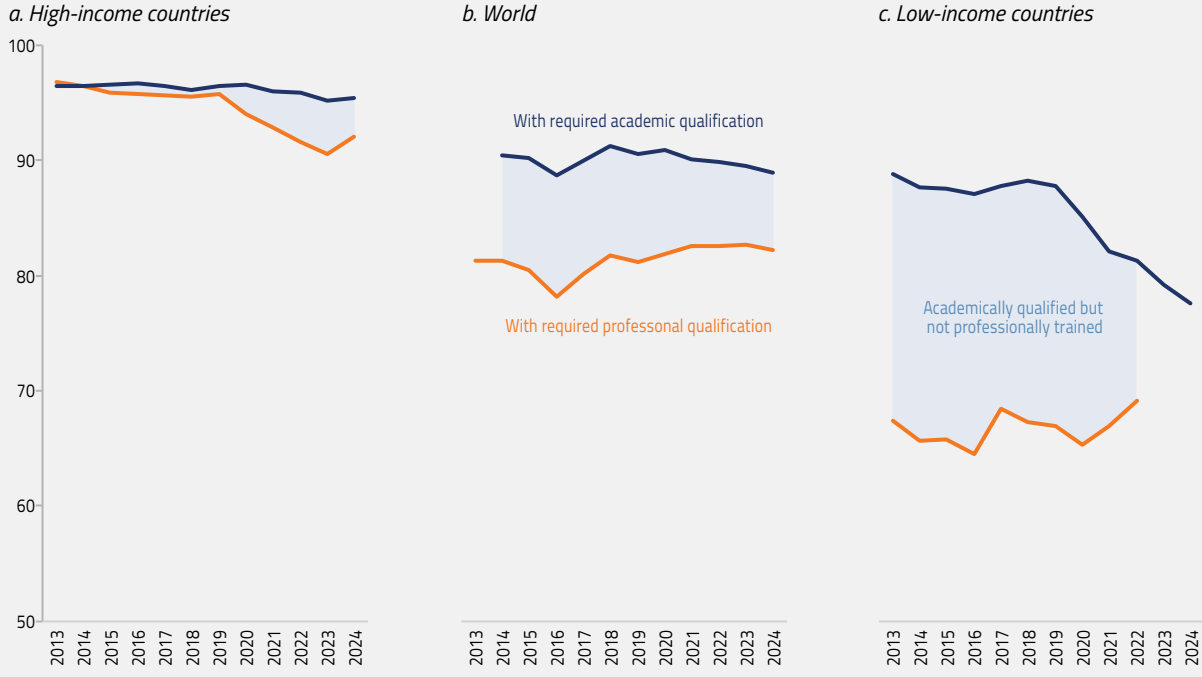
SDG target 4.c emphasizes the importance of teacher quality. Global indicator 4.c.1 measures the share of teachers with the required pedagogical teacher training, while thematic indicator 4.c.3 captures the share with the minimum academic qualifications, in both cases as per national standards. Globally, about 90% of primary teachers meet minimum academic requirements and 82% meet professional requirements. While there has been little change over the past decade, on average, the share of academically qualified primary teachers fell from 89% in 2013 to 77% in 2024 in low-income countries, while the share of professionally qualified primary teachers fell from 95% to 88% over the same period in high-income countries (**Figure 7.17**).

An understanding of national requirements, which vary widely, is necessary for interpreting these statistics. In the case of professional qualifications, requirements are currently impossible to compare in the absence of an international classification. A decision by the Education Data and Statistics Commission, endorsed by the SDG 4 High-level Steering Committee, will lead to mapping these national requirements. In the case of academic qualifications, a recent UIS survey showed that a bachelor's degree is the most common academic requirement globally for teachers at all education levels, from pre-primary to upper secondary. But there is major variation within each level. Only 11% of low-income countries require a bachelor's degree for primary teachers, compared with 79% of high-income countries. A decision has been taken by the Education Data and Statistics Commission to transform this indicator into the share of teachers with a bachelor's degree as a global common minimum standard, which will also become the new SDG global indicator for target 4.c, to allow more transparent comparison of national contexts.

A few thematic indicators are used to try to capture teachers' working conditions, although data coverage is low and the quality is questionable. First, the annual attrition rate is estimated at 6% of primary, 9% of lower secondary and 7% of upper secondary teachers. Second, teacher pay relative to comparable professions, which can play a key role in retention, varies widely across countries but is often lower in high-income countries, falling below 50% in Hungary and Slovakia, a gap which raises concerns about the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

Participation in in-service training varies widely, even among high-income countries. In 2023, the share of lower secondary teachers who had received in-service training in the last 12 months ranged from 36% in Norway to 97% in Lithuania. Not all training is equally effective. According to the 2024 Teaching and Learning International Survey, just over half of teachers in participating upper-middle- and high-income countries reported that their professional learning activities had a significant positive impact on their teaching, with younger and novice teachers more likely to perceive these activities as impactful. In some areas, such as classroom management, less formal learning – such as feedback from colleagues or school leaders – was reported to be as effective as formal professional learning activities (OECD, 2025a).

FIGURE 7.17:
Teacher preparedness is weakening in different ways across income groups
Share of primary teachers who have received (i) at least the minimum organized pedagogical teacher training and (ii) the minimum required academic qualifications, 2013–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_17
Source: UIS database.

FINANCE

Education financing appears in the SDG global monitoring framework not under SDG 4 but under SDG 1 on poverty reduction, in the form of an indicator on public expenditure as a share of total government expenditure as a means for alleviating poverty, alongside spending on health and social protection. A benchmark range for this indicator (15% to 20%) was agreed in the Education 2030 Framework for Action alongside a benchmark range for a second indicator of public expenditure expressed as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) (4% to 6%).

The SDG 4 monitoring framework includes four education financing indicators under target 4.5 on equity, which focus on the following aspects: the strength of public expenditure redistribution efforts (instead of spending adequacy as the two previous indicators), which was analysed extensively earlier in the report (**Chapter 6**); the relationship between public and out-of-pocket (or household) expenditure per student; the relationship between public, household and external (or ODA) expenditure on education as a share of GDP; and the share of total ODA to education allocated to the poorest countries. To summarize, the following indicators refer to education financing in the SDG 4 monitoring framework:

- Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection) (SDG global indicator 1.a.2/Education 2030 Framework for Action indicator)
- Public education expenditure as a share of GDP (Education 2030 Framework for Action indicator)
- Existence of funding mechanisms to reallocate education resources to disadvantaged populations (SDG thematic indicator 4.5.3)
- Expenditure on education per student by level of education and source of funding (SDG thematic indicator 4.5.4)
- Percentage of total aid to education allocated to least developed countries (SDG thematic indicator 4.5.5)
- Expenditure on education by source of funding (public, private, international) as a percentage of GDP (SDG thematic indicator 4.5.6)

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE

Globally, the median public expenditure on education was 4.1% of GDP in 2023, down from 4.3% in 2010, and 12.7% of total public expenditure in 2023, down from 13.4% in 2010. Among 117 countries with comparable data between 2010 and 2023, 60 countries, or 51%, recorded a reduction in public education expenditure as a share of GDP and 65 countries, or 56%, recorded a reduction in public education expenditure as a share of total public expenditure.

In terms of public education expenditure as a share of GDP, the median in 2023 was 3% in low-income countries, 3.8% in lower-middle- and upper-middle-income countries and 3.5% in high-income countries. Relative to 2010, the share fell in all groups except low-income countries. The largest decreases were observed in Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania, while the largest increase was in Central and Southern Asia.

In terms of public education expenditure as a share of total government expenditure, the median in 2023 was 15.5% in low-income countries, 14.7% in lower-middle-income countries, 13.7% in upper-middle-income countries and 12.5% in high-income countries. Relative to 2010, the share fell in middle-income countries, in the context of public debt concerns (Raga, 2025; UIS and GEM Report, 2025; UNCTAD, 2025). As above, the largest decreases were observed in Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania, while the largest increase was in Central and Southern Asia (**Figure 7.18**).

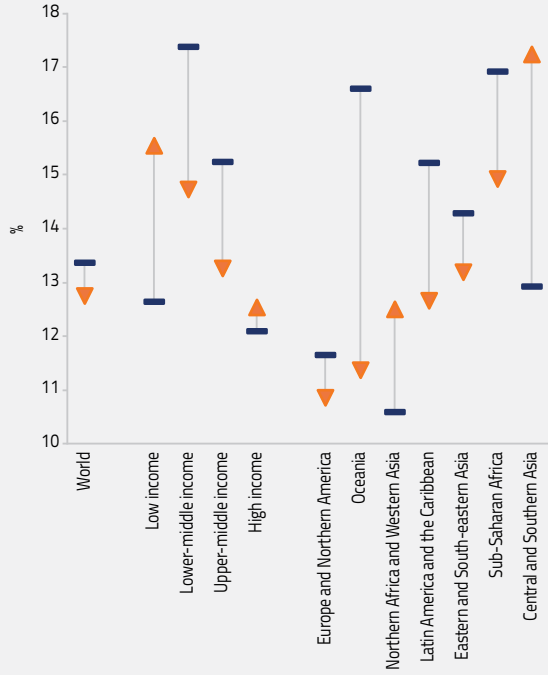
Out of 194 countries with data, 39 countries, or 20%, met both international benchmarks (spending at least 4% of GDP and at least 15% of total public expenditure), while 83 countries met at least one benchmark and 72, or 37%, met neither benchmark. At the primary level, median public expenditure per student was USD 161 in low-income countries, USD 653 in lower-middle-income countries and USD 2,244 in upper-middle-income countries in 2023.

FIGURE 7.18:
The budget share allocated to education has fallen in the past 15 years
Median public education expenditure, by region and income group, 2010 and 2023

a. As share of GDP



b. As share of total public expenditure



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_18
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the Education Finance Watch (2010) and UIS (2023) databases.

AID EXPENDITURE

In a changing geopolitical environment, total ODA declined by 9% in 2024, according to OECD Development Assistance Committee data, preceding funding cut announcements made in 2025 by several major bilateral donors, notably the United States.

Aid to education has been projected to decline by 25% between 2023 and 2027 (UNESCO, 2025). In 2024, it fell just as total aid, although the magnitude of the decline varies depending on the measure used. The first approach, applied by the GEM Report since 2002, combines disbursements to education with general budget support, assuming that 20% of the latter is allocated to education. This assumption reflects the benchmark that 15% to 20% of public expenditure should be allocated to education, although the actual allocation of direct budget support depends in practice on national fiscal priorities. Using this measure, total aid to education declined from USD 19.5 billion in 2023 to USD 18.9 billion in 2024, a reduction of USD 0.6 billion, or just over 3% (**Figure 7.19**). Movements in total aid to education are closely linked to general budget support flows. In 2024, increases in aid to education were highly concentrated in a few countries, notably Ethiopia (USD 1.3 billion) and Ghana (USD 1.28 billion), mainly linked to IMF-supported programmes.

The second approach considers aid explicitly directed to basic, secondary and post-secondary education ('sector-allocable'), excluding imputed student costs and direct budget support. Under this measure, the contraction is more pronounced. Direct aid to education fell from USD 13.3 billion in 2023 to USD 12.2 billion in 2024, a reduction of USD 1.1 billion, or 8%. The largest decline was observed in basic education (by USD 650 million, from USD 3.96 billion in 2023 to USD 3.36 billion in 2024, or 16%). Education's share within overall sector-allocable ODA has also continued to decline. In 2010, education accounted for 10% of total sector-allocable aid. By 2024, its share had fallen to 7.5%, following only brief recoveries in 2019 and 2023 (**Figure 7.20**).

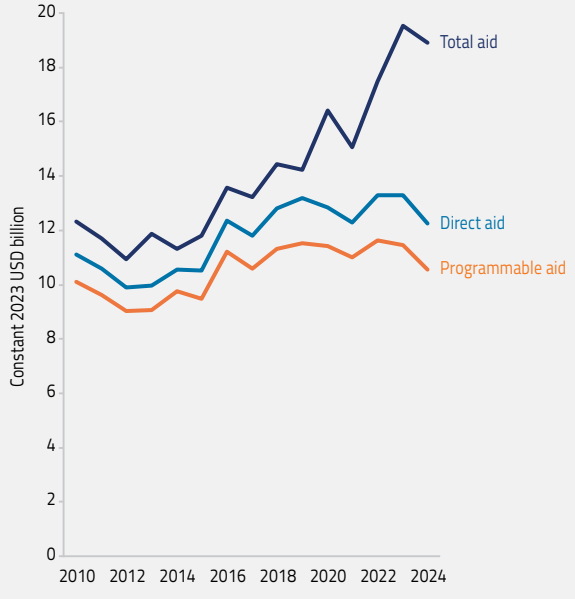
The third approach measures country programmable aid to education, defined as funding considered predictable and available for country-level planning. By excluding donor

spending outside recipient countries, such as scholarships and imputed student costs, this measure provides a clearer view of resources that governments can programme (OECD, 2025b). In 2024, country programmable aid to education amounted to USD 10.6 billion, a decline of USD 0.9 billion, or 8%, relative to 2023. None of these measures include humanitarian aid or debt relief.

As annual aid disbursements fluctuate with project cycles, three-year averages provide a more stable picture of beneficiary countries. Between 2022 and 2024, excluding Pacific Island States, the largest ODA recipient in relative terms was Rwanda, where donor support accounted for almost 40% of total public education spending. In absolute terms, the countries recorded as the largest ODA recipients were Bangladesh, Jordan, the State of Palestine and the United Republic of Tanzania. However, flows recorded as 'unspecified by region' were the single largest item of aid to education. Disbursements from the Global Partnership for Education are an example of flows whose recipients are recorded as 'unspecified' and are reallocated to low- and lower-middle-income countries. After this adjustment, low-income countries account for roughly one quarter of total aid to education, while lower-middle-income countries for just over one half.

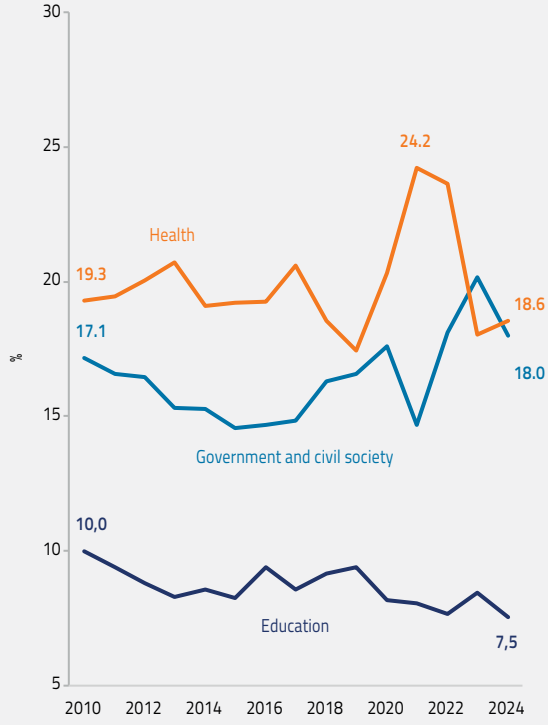
The replenishment cycles of the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait are taking place in an adverse environment. The Global Partnership for Education has launched its 2026–2030 replenishment campaign, seeking up to USD 5 billion in core contributions (GPE, 2025), while the next funding round of Education Cannot Wait is beginning in 2027 (ECW, 2025).

FIGURE 7.19:
Direct and country programmable aid to education fell by 8% between 2023 and 2024
Total, direct and country programmable aid to education, in constant 2023 USD billions, 2010–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_19
Source: GEM report team estimations based on the OECD CRS database (2025).

FIGURE 7.20:
Education received the lowest share in ODA since 2010
Distribution of sector-allocable aid, by selected sectors, 2010–24



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_20
Source: GEM report team estimates based on the OECD CRS database (2025).

HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE

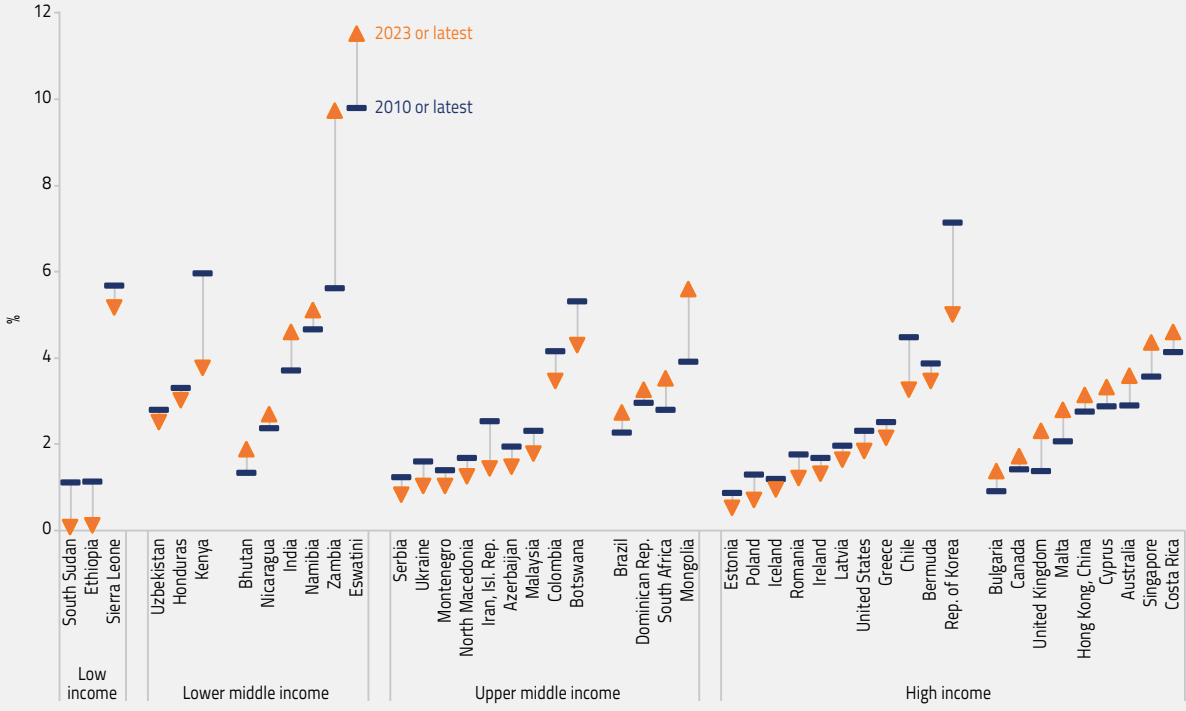
Households account for roughly one quarter of total global education expenditure based on national accounts data reported to the United Nations. While this aggregate share appears broadly stable, the burden on households differs markedly across income groups. The median share of education in total household consumption expenditure is highest in lower-middle-income countries, at around 2.5%, compared with about 1.4% in upper-middle-income countries and 1.3% in high-income countries. In low-income countries, the median is below 0.5%. Dispersion is also widest among lower-middle-income countries, where values range from less than 1% in Senegal to over 11% in Eswatini. Differences in household education spending reflect not only income levels, but also the extent to which states assume financial responsibility for education.

Among countries with comparable data around 2010 and the early 2020s, middle-income countries have seen out-of-pocket expenditure grow as a share of total household consumption expenditure, for example, India (from 3.7% to 4.6%) and South Africa (from 2.8% to 3.5%), while Mongolia and Zambia have seen larger absolute increases. In contrast, other middle-income countries have experienced declines in household contributions, including the Islamic Republic of Iran (from 2.5% to 1.4%) and Kenya (from 6% to 3.8%). In high-income countries, household education spending ranges from below 0.5% of total consumption in Finland, Norway and Sweden to above 4% in Costa Rica and Singapore and 5% in the Republic of Korea.

FIGURE 7.21:

Regardless of country income, different trends have been observed in household spending in recent years

Share of household spending on education, by income group, 2010 and 2023



GEM StatLink: https://bit.ly/GEM2026_fig7_21

Source: Author analysis based on the United Nations National Accounts Official Country Database using the latest data available between years 2010 and 2023 (UN, 2026).



Mental health and psychosocial support after storms and floods in Lang Son province Students from Quyet Thang Secondary School take part in activities on mental health and psychosocial support, guided by experts from the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences (VNIES), on February 2, 2026, in Yen Binh Commune, Lang Son Province, Vietnam.

Credit: © UNICEF/UNI953777/Pham Ha Duy Linh*

Statistical tables[1]

This report presents two sets of statistical tables. The first is an overview table that compares progress between 2015 and 2023 for selected SDG 4 benchmark indicators. The second set comprises Tables 1 to 7, which present the latest information for a range of global, thematic and other education indicators. Table 1 presents basic information on demographic and education system characteristics as well as on domestic education finance. Tables 2 to 7 are organized by each of the seven Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 targets (4.1 to 4.7) and three means of implementation (4.a to 4.c). The tables mainly focus on the SDG 4 monitoring framework of 43 internationally comparable indicators: 12 global and 31 thematic indicators. An additional indicator, 'Proportion of children/young people prepared for the future, by sex', is the product of the two global indicators of SDG target 4.1. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) reported on all indicators in 2026, except indicator 4.a.4 (**Table I.1**).[2,3] The tables also include additional indicators, which are not formally part of the SDG 4 monitoring framework, such as transition from primary to secondary education, and student mobility.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Most data in the statistical tables come from the UIS. Where the statistical tables include data from other sources, these are mentioned in footnotes. The most recent UIS data on pupils, students, teachers and education expenditure presented in the tables are from the February 2026 release and refer to the school year or financial year ending in 2024.[4] These statistics refer to formal education, both public and private, by level of education. The statistical tables list 208 countries and territories, all of which are UNESCO Member States or associate members with the exception of Bermuda and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Most report their data to the UIS using standard questionnaires issued by the UIS itself. For 46 countries, education data are collected by the UIS via the UIS/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) questionnaires.[5]

POPULATION DATA

The population-related indicators used in the statistical tables, including enrolment ratios, number of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth, and number of youth and adults, are mainly based on the World Population Prospects estimates produced by the UN Population Division (UNPD). Single year age data are not provided for countries with a total population of less than 90,000. For some countries, population estimates are derived from Eurostat (Demographic Statistics), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (Statistics and Demography Programme) or national statistical offices.

While the World Population Prospects estimates remain the default source of population data, the UIS has been implementing a new population data policy endorsed by the TCG in March 2023, which was first used for the September 2023 data release.[6] Under this policy, countries for which national population data meet a set of pre-defined standard quality criteria, have the possibility to request UIS to use their national population data for the calculation of their population-based indicators instead. As part of the new population data policy, information requirements are: (i) complete time series data and metadata from 2000 to 2023; (ii) complete sex and age disaggregated data for the 0 to 99 age population; (iii) data compiled and disseminated by recognized international organizations or publicly available; and (iv) data with adequate population coverage and representative of the underlying population to the extent possible. Estimates or counts where more than 5% of the total population is excluded are not eligible for use in calculations. This hybrid approach aims to improve national ownership over education statistics disseminated by the UIS, especially in countries where UNPD data coverage differs from the coverage of education data reported by countries to the UIS.

1 The statistical tables are accessible on the GEM Report website at https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/statistical-tables.

2 The Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators proposed the 11 SDG 4 global indicators. The UN Statistical Commission adopted them at its 48th session, in March 2017. The United Nations Economic and Social Council adopted them in June 2017. The completion rate (indicator 4.1.2) was added to the list in March 2021 following the 2020 Comprehensive Review.

3 The Technical Advisory Group on post-2015 education indicators originally proposed the 43 indicators. The Technical Cooperation Group (TCG), which became the Education Data and Statistics Commission (EDSC) in February 2024, endorsed them, with some changes, to monitor progress towards the SDG 4 targets. Information on indicator methodological developments can be accessed at the EDSC website, https://www.uis.unesco.org/en/data-governance/edsc.

4 This means 2023/24 for countries with a school year that overlaps two calendar years, and 2024 for those with a calendar school year. The most recent reference year for education finance for the UOE countries is the year ending in 2022.

5 The countries concerned are most European countries, non-European Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, and a changing set of other countries.

6 See https://tcg.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/11/2_WG_EMIS_3_UIS_Population_Data_Note.pdf.

ISCED CLASSIFICATION

Education data reported to the UIS are in conformity with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), revised in 2011. Countries may have their own definitions of education levels that do not correspond to ISCED 2011. Differences between nationally and internationally reported education statistics may be due to the use of nationally defined education levels rather than the ISCED level, in addition to the population issue raised above.

ESTIMATES AND MISSING DATA

Regarding statistics produced by the UIS, both observed and estimated education data are presented throughout the statistical tables. The latter are marked with subscript (i). Wherever possible, the UIS encourages countries to make their own estimates. Where this does not happen, the UIS may make its own estimates if sufficient supplementary information is available. Gaps in the tables may arise where data submitted by a country are found to be inconsistent. The UIS makes every attempt to resolve such problems with the countries concerned, but reserves the final decision on omitting data it regards as problematic. If information for the year ending in 2023 is not available, data for earlier or later years are used, and are indicated by footnotes.

AGGREGATES

Figures for regional and other aggregates represent either sums, the percentage of countries meeting some condition(s), medians or weighted averages, as indicated in the tables, depending on the indicator. Weighted averages take into account the size of the relevant population of each country, or more generally of the denominator in case of indicators that are ratios. The aggregates are derived from both published data and imputed values, for countries for which no recent data or reliable publishable data are available. Aggregates marked with (i) in the tables are based on incomplete country coverage of reliable data (between 33% and 60% of the population [or aggregate denominator value] of a given region or country grouping). GEM Report calculated sums are flagged for incomplete coverage if less than 95% of the population of a given region or country income group is represented among the countries for which data are available.

REGIONAL AND COUNTRY INCOME GROUPS

In terms of regional groups, the statistical tables use the SDG regional classification of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), with some adjustments. The UNSD classification includes all territories, whether independent national entities or parts of larger entities. However, the list of countries presented in the statistical tables includes only full UNESCO Member States and associate members, as well as Bermuda and the Turks and Caicos Islands, both of which are non-member states that were included in the statistical tables of the Education for All Global Monitoring Report. The UIS does not collect data for the Faroe Islands, so this territory is not included in the GEM Report, despite its status as a UNESCO associate member. In terms of country income groups, the statistical tables use the World Bank groups, which are updated each year on 1 July.

SYMBOLS USED IN THE STATISTICAL TABLES

± n	Reference year differs (e.g. -2: reference year 2022 instead of 2024)
i	Estimate and/or partial coverage
-	Magnitude nil or negligible
…	Data not available or category not applicable

Notes by indicator (**Table I.2**), footnotes to the tables and a glossary provide additional help to interpret the data.

TABLE I.1: SDG 4 monitoring framework indicators

	Indicator
	Target 4.1
4.1.0	Proportion of children/young people prepared for the future, by sex
4.1.1	Proportion of children and young people (a) in Grade 2 or 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex
4.1.2	Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)
4.1.3	Gross intake ratio to the last grade (primary education, lower secondary education)
4.1.4	Out-of-school rate (one year before primary, primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)
4.1.5	Percentage of children over-age for grade (primary education, lower secondary education)
4.1.6	Administration of a nationally-representative learning assessment (a) in Grade 2 or 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education
4.1.7	Number of years of (a) free and (b) compulsory primary and secondary education guaranteed in legal frameworks
	Target 4.2
4.2.1	Proportion of children aged 24-59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex
4.2.2	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex
4.2.3	Percentage of children under 5 years experiencing positive and stimulating home learning environments
4.2.4	Gross early childhood education enrolment ratio in (a) pre-primary education and (b) and early childhood educational development
4.2.5	Number of years of (a) free and (b) compulsory pre-primary education guaranteed in legal frameworks
	Target 4.3
4.3.1	Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex
4.3.2	Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education by sex
4.3.3	Participation rate in technical-vocational programmes (15- to 24-year-olds) by sex
	Target 4.4
4.4.1	Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill
4.4.2	Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills
4.4.3	Youth/adult educational attainment rates by age group and level of education
	Target 4.5
4.5.1	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated
4.5.2	Percentage of students in a) early grades, b) at the end of primary, and c) at the end of lower secondary education who have their first or home language as language of instruction
4.5.3	Existence of funding mechanisms to reallocate education resources to disadvantaged populations
4.5.4	Education expenditure per student by level of education and source of funding
4.5.5	Percentage of total aid to education allocated to least developed countries
4.5.6	Expenditure on education by source of funding (public, private, international) as a percentage of GDP
	Target 4.6
4.6.1	Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex
4.6.2	Youth/adult literacy rate
	Target 4.7
4.7.1	Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment
4.7.2	Percentage of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education
4.7.3	Extent to which green policy intentions are mainstreamed in curriculum documents
4.7.4	Percentage of students in lower secondary education showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability
4.7.5	Percentage of students in lower secondary showing proficiency in knowledge of environmental science and geoscience
	Target 4.a
4.a.1	Proportion of schools offering basic services, by type of service
4.a.2	Percentage of students experiencing bullying in the last 12 months in a) primary, and b) lower secondary education
4.a.3	Number of attacks on students, personnel and institutions
4.a.4	Proportion of school attending children receiving school meals
	Target 4.b
4.b.1	Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study
	Target 4.c
4.c.1	Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level
4.c.2	Pupil-trained teacher ratio by education level
4.c.3	Proportion of teachers qualified according to national standards by education level and type of institution
4.c.4	Pupil-qualified teacher ratio by education level
4.c.5	Average teacher salary relative to other professions requiring a comparable level of qualification
4.c.6	Teacher attrition rate by education level
4.c.7	Percentage of teachers who received in-service training in the last 12 months by type of training

Notes: Global indicators are highlighted in grey shading.
Source: UIS.

TABLE I.2: Notes of indicators in the statistical tables

	Indicator Notes
	Table 1
A	**Compulsory education by level** Number of years during which children are legally obliged to attend school.
B	**Free years of education by level** Number of years during which children are legally guaranteed to attend school free of charge.
C	**Official primary school starting age** The official age at which students are expected to enter primary school. This is expressed in whole years, not accounting for cutoff dates other than the beginning of the school year. The official entrance age to a given programme or level is typically, but not always, the most common entrance age.
D	**Duration of each education level** Number of grades or years in a given level of education.
E	**Official school-age population by level** Population of the age group officially corresponding to a given level of education, whether enrolled in school or not.
F	**Total absolute enrolment by level** Individuals officially registered in a given educational programme, or stage or module thereof, regardless of age.
G	**Initial government expenditure on education as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP)** Total general (local, regional and central, current and capital) initial government funding of education includes transfers paid (such as scholarships to students), but excludes transfers received, in this case, international transfers to government for education (when foreign donors provide education sector budget support or other support integrated in the government budget).
H	**Expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure** Total general (local, regional and central) government expenditure on education (current, capital and transfers), expressed as a percentage of total general government expenditure on all sectors (including health, education, social services, etc.). It includes expenditures funded by transfers from international sources to government.
I	**Initial government expenditure per pupil by level, in constant 2019 purchasing power parity (PPP) USD and as a percentage of GDP per capita** Total general (local, regional and central, current and capital) initial government funding of education per student, which includes transfers paid (such as scholarships to students), but excludes transfers received, in this case, international transfers to government for education (when foreign donors provide education sector budget support or other support integrated in the government budget).
J	**Initial household expenditure on education as percentage of GDP** Total payments of households (pupils, students and their families) for educational institutions (i.e. tuition fees, exam and registration fees, contribution to parent-teacher associations, and fees for canteen, boarding and transport) and purchases outside of educational institutions (i.e. uniforms, textbooks, teaching materials, or private classes). 'Initial funding' means that government transfers to households, (i.e. scholarships and other financial aid for education) are subtracted from what is spent by households.
	Table 2
A	**Out-of-school children, total number and as a percentage of corresponding age group** Children in the official school age range who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary school (*Source:* UIS and GEM Report analysis of household surveys and administrative data, VIEW database).
B	**Education completion rate by level** Percentage of children aged 3-5 years older than the official age of entry into the last grade of an education level who have reached the last grade of that level. For example, the primary completion rate in a country with a 6-year cycle where the official age of entry into the last grade is 11 is the percentage of 14- to 16-year-olds who have reached grade 6 (*Source:* UIS and GEM Report analysis of household surveys, VIEW database).
C	**Percentage of pupils over-age for grade by level** The percentage of pupils in each level of education whose age is two years or more above the intended age for their grade.
D	**Gross enrolment ratio in primary education** Total enrolment in primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group. It can exceed 100% because of early or late entry and/or grade repetition.
E	**Primary adjusted net enrolment rate** Enrolment of the official age group for primary education either at that level or the levels above, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.
F	**Gross intake ratio to last grade of primary education** Total number of new entrants to the last grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official school entrance age for that grade.
G	**Effective transition from primary to lower secondary general education** Number of new entrants to the first grade of lower secondary education in the following year expressed as a percentage of the students enrolled in the last grade of primary education in the given year who do not repeat that grade the following year.
H	**Lower secondary total net enrolment rate** Number of pupils of the official school age group for lower secondary education who are enrolled in any level of education, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding school age population.
I	**Gross intake ratio to last grade of lower secondary education** Total number of new entrants to the last grade of lower secondary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official school entrance age for that grade.
J	**Upper secondary total net enrolment rate** Number of pupils of the official school age group for upper secondary education who are enrolled in any level of education, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding school age population.
K	**Administration of nationally representative learning assessment in early grades (grade 2 or 3), or final grade of primary or lower secondary** The definition includes any nationally representative, national or cross-national formative, low-stake learning assessment.
L	**Percentage of students achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics** The minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics is defined by each assessment. Data need to be interpreted with caution since the different assessments are not comparable. In the absence of assessments conducted in the proposed grade, surveys of student learning achievement in the grade below or above the proposed indicator grade are used as placeholders.

	Indicator Notes
	Table 3
A	**Percentage of children aged 36 to 59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being** The UNICEF Early Childhood Development Index is collected through the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and is a measure of fulfilment of developmental potential that assesses children aged 36 to 59 months in four domains: (a) literacy-numeracy; (b) physical development; (c) social-emotional development; and (d) learning (ability to follow simple instructions, ability to occupy themselves independently). The percentage of children who are developmentally on track overall is the percentage of children on track in at least three of the four domains.
B	**Under-5 moderate or severe stunting rate** Proportion of children in a given age group whose height for their age is below minus two standard deviations from median height for age established by the National Center for Health Statistics and the World Health Organization (WHO) (*Source:* 2021 UNICEF, WHO and World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates [JME]. Regional aggregates are JME statistical estimates for the reference year, not weighted averages of the observed country values in the country table).
C	**Percentage of children aged 36 to 59 months experiencing positive and stimulating home learning environments** Percentage of children 36 to 59 months old with whom an adult has engaged in four or more of the following activities to promote learning and school readiness in the previous three days: (a) reading books to the child; (b) telling stories to the child; (c) singing songs to the child; (d) taking the child outside the home; (e) playing with the child; and (f) spending time with the child naming, counting or drawing things (*Source:* UNICEF database).
D	**Percentage of children under 5 years living in households with three or more children's books** Percentage of children aged 0 to 59 months who have three or more books or picture books (*Source:* UNICEF database).
E	**Gross early childhood education enrolment ratio in pre-primary education** Total enrolment in pre-primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group. It can exceed 100% because of early or late entry.
F	**Adjusted net enrolment rate one year before the official primary school entry age** Enrolment of children one year before official primary school entry age in pre-primary or primary education, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.
	Table 4
A	**Participation rate in adult education and training** Participation rate of adults (aged 25 to 54) in formal or non-formal education and training in the last 12 months. Estimates based on other reference periods, in particular 4 weeks, are included when no data are available on the last 12 months.
B	**Percentage of youth enrolled in technical and vocational education** Youth (aged 15 to 24) enrolled in technical and vocational education at ISCED levels 2–5, as a percentage of the total population of that age group.
C	**Share of technical and vocational education in total enrolment by level** Total number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in all programmes (vocational and general) at that level.
D	**TVET share of post-secondary non-tertiary (%)** Share of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in post-secondary non-tertiary enrolment (%).
E	**Gross graduation ratio from tertiary (%)** Number of graduates from first degree programmes (at ISCED 6 and 7) expressed as a percentage of the population of the theoretical graduation age of the most common first degree programme.
F	**Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education** Total enrolment in tertiary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the five-year age group above the official graduation age from upper secondary. It can exceed 100% because of early or late entry and prolonged study.
G	**Percentage of adults (15 and over) with specific information and communication technology (ICT) skills** Individuals are considered to have such skills if they have undertaken certain computer-related activities in the last three months: copying or moving a file or folder; using copy and paste tools to duplicate or move information within a document; using basic arithmetic formulas in a spreadsheet; writing a computer program using a specialized programming language.
H	**Percentage of adults (25 and over) who have attained at least a given level of education** Number of persons aged 25 and above by the highest level of education attained, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. Primary refers to ISCED 1 or higher, lower secondary to ISCED 2 or higher, upper secondary to ISCED 3 or higher, post-secondary to ISCED 4 or higher.
I	**Percentage of population of a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional literacy/numeracy skills** The threshold level corresponds to level 2 on the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies scale.
J	**Youth (15 to 24)/adult (15 and above) literacy rate**
K	**Number of youth (aged 15 to 24)/adult (aged 15 and above) illiterates** Number of literate youth (aged 15 to 24) and adults (aged 15 and above), expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. Literacy data include both national observed data from censuses or household surveys and UIS estimates. As definitions and methodologies used for data collection differ by country, data need to be used with caution.
	Table 5
A	**Adjusted gender parity index, by indicator** The gender parity index (GPI) is the ratio of female to male values of a given indicator. If the female value is less than or equal to the male value, adjusted gender parity index (GPIA) = GPI. If the female value is greater than the male value, GPIA = 2 - 1/GPI. This ensures the GPIA is symmetrical around 1 and limited to a range between 0 and 2. A GPIA equal to 1 indicates parity between females and males (*Sources:* UIS database; GEM Report team calculations based on national and international household surveys).
B	**Completion rate, by level**
C	**Percentage of students with a minimum level of proficiency at the end of a given level**
D	**Youth and adult literacy rate**
E	**Percentage of adults (16 and over) achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional literacy and numeracy skills**
	Gross enrolment ratio, by level
F	**Location and wealth disparity** The location parity index is the ratio of rural to urban values of a given indicator. The wealth parity index is the ratio of the poorest 20% to the richest 20% of values of a given indicator.
G	**Completion rate, by level**
H	**Percentage of students with a minimum level of proficiency at the end of a given level**

	Indicator Notes
	Table 6
A	**Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment** Information is collected with the questionnaire for monitoring the implementation by UNESCO Member States of the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. For each of the four components of the indicator (policies, curricula, teacher education and student assessment), a number of criteria are measured, which are then combined to give a single score between zero and one for each component (*Source:* UNESCO, 2020).
B	**Percentage of schools providing life skills-based HIV/AIDS education** Percentage of lower secondary schools providing life skills-based HIV/AIDS education (all institutions).
C	**Percentage of schools with basic drinking water, basic (single-sex) sanitation or toilets, and basic handwashing facilities** Basic drinking water means drinking water from an improved source, and water available at the school at the time of the survey. Basic sanitation or toilets means improved sanitation facilities at the school that are single-sex and usable (available, functional and private) at the time of the survey. Basic handwashing facilities means handwashing facilities with water and soap available at the school at the time of the survey.
D	**Percentage of public schools with electricity** Regularly and readily available sources of power (e.g. grid/mains connection, wind, water, solar and fuel-powered generator) that enable the adequate and sustainable use of ICT infrastructure by pupils and teachers to support course delivery or independent teaching and learning needs.
	Percentage of public schools with internet used for pedagogical purposes Internet that is available for enhancing teaching and learning and is accessible by pupils irrespective of the device used. Access can be via a fixed narrowband, fixed broadband or mobile network.
	Percentage of public schools with computers Use of computers to support course delivery or independent teaching and learning needs, including to meet information needs for research purposes, develop presentations, perform hands-on exercises and experiments, share information, and participate in online discussion forums for educational purposes. The definition includes desktops, laptops and tablets.
E	**Percentage of public primary schools with access to adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities** Any built environments related to education facilities that are accessible to all users, including those with various types of disability, enabling them to gain access to use and exit from them. Accessibility includes ease of independent approach, entry, evacuation and/or use of a building and its services and facilities (such as water and sanitation) by all of the building's potential users with an assurance of individual health, safety and welfare during the course of those activities.
F	**Percentage of students experiencing school-related bullying in lower secondary education** Percent of students subjected to bullying in the past 12 months (or alternative period as available in the source data) at the lower secondary level. The definition of bullying includes, when possible, physical, verbal and relational abuse. This scope reflects current research on bullying as well as the definitions for major international student assessments.
G	**Level of attacks on students, teachers or institutions** Number of violent attacks, threats or deliberate use of force in a given time period (e.g. the last 12 months, a school year or a calendar year) directed against students, teachers and other personnel or against education buildings, materials and facilities, including transport. The indicator focuses on attacks carried out for political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic or religious reasons by armed forces or non-state armed groups.
H	**Internationally mobile students, inbound and outbound numbers enrolled, and mobility rates** Number of students from abroad studying in a given country, expressed as a percentage of total tertiary enrolment in that country. Number of students from a given country studying abroad, expressed as a percentage of total tertiary enrolment in that country.
I	**Volume of official development assistance for scholarships** Total gross disbursement of official development assistance flows (all sectors) for scholarships (all levels). The sum of the values of regions and country income groups does not add up to the global total because some aid is not allocated by country.
	Imputed student costs Costs incurred by donor countries' higher education institutions when they receive students from developing countries.

	Indicator Notes
	Table 7
A	**Number of classroom teachers** Persons employed full-time or part-time in an official capacity to guide and direct the learning experience of pupils and students, irrespective of their qualifications or the delivery mechanism (i.e. face-to-face and/or at a distance). This definition excludes educational personnel who have no active teaching duties (e.g. headmasters, headmistresses or principals), or who work occasionally or in a voluntary capacity in educational institutions.
B	**Pupil/teacher ratio** Average number of pupils per teacher at a given level of education, based on headcounts of pupils and teachers.
C	**Percentage of trained classroom teachers** Trained teachers are defined as those who have received at least the minimum organized and recognized pre-service and in-service pedagogical training required to teach at a given level of education. Data are not collected for UIS/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) countries.
D	**Percentage of qualified classroom teachers** Qualified teachers are defined as those who have the minimum academic qualification necessary to teach at a specific level of education according to national standards.
E	**Teacher attrition rate** Number of teachers at a given level of education leaving the profession in a given school year, expressed as a percentage of teachers at that level and in that school year.
F	**Relative teacher salary level** Teacher salary relative to other professionals with equivalent academic qualifications. Data refer to actual salaries of all teachers relative to earnings for full-time, full-year workers with tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8). The indicator is defined as a ratio of salary, using annual average salaries (including bonuses and allowances) of teachers in public institutions relative to the wages of workers with similar educational attainment (weighted average) and to the wages of full-time, full-year workers aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education.
G	**Percentage of teachers who received in-service training in the last 12 months** For data representative of teachers at a level of education or grade, the proportion of teachers that have received in-service training in the past 12 months (or time period available in the dataset). For data representative of students' teachers, the proportion of students' teachers that have received in-service training in the past 12 months (or time period available in the dataset). For cross-national assessments with more than one assessment in the same level of education, the average of all grades is used.

PROGRESS SINCE 2015: SELECTED INDICATORS

	Participation/Completion														Gender	
	A		B						C						D	
	Adjusted net enrolment rate one year before primary entry (%)		Out-of-school rate (%)						Completion rate (%)							
			Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Gender gap in upper secondary completion rate (Female - Male)	
	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024
SDG indicator	4.2.2		4.1.4						4.1.2							
Region	Weighted average															
World	74	75	11	10	14	15	33	31	84	88	73	78	53	61	0.8	2.8
Sub-Saharan Africa	45	52	22	20	32	34	48	46	59	68	40	47	24	28	-4.3	-2.5
Northern Africa and Western Asia	44	52	16	13	18	14	35	27	85	90	66	71	52	60	2.0	4.0
Northern Africa	44	52	18	13	20	15	39	29	85	90	63	69	52	60	4.9	7.5
Western Asia	43	53	14	14	18	13	31	25	86	90	69	74	52	61	-0.9	0.3
Central and Southern Asia	...	90	12	10	15	14	42	39	84	89	74	82	45	58	-6.2	-2.2
Central Asia	45	58	4	6	6	2	21	12	99	100	98	99	90	96	-3.5	-1.9
Southern Asia	...	92	12	10	15	14	42	40	83	88	73	82	43	57	-6.4	-2.3
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	83	79	4	4	6	7	21	19	96	98	85	90	63	78	8.9	13.8
Eastern Asia	...	...	3	4	3	6	16	16	98	99	90	94	68	89	10.5	17.2
South-eastern Asia	84	77	4	4	11	8	32	25	92	96	77	84	53	63	6.8	10.6
Oceania	80	81	6	7	5	9	21	30	85	87	75	75	60	60	3.0	4.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	91	92	3	4	5	6	21	17	90	94	78	84	57	65	8.0	7.7
Caribbean	...	...	6	8	5	9	22	23	76	79	70	72	50	52	6.0	8.0
Central America	...	...	4	6	11	15	34	34	92	95	75	80	48	56	3.9	5.8
South America	...	...	2	2	3	2	15	8	91	94	80	86	62	70	10.0	8.7
Europe and Northern America	93	90	2	3	2	2	6	6	100	100	98	98	87	89	3.5	3.9
Europe	94	92	2	1	3	1	7	6	100	100	97	98	85	87	4.2	4.8
Northern America	91	86	2	5	2	2	6	5	100	100	99	99	92	93	2.4	2.3
Low income	38	48	26	24	36	42	55	56	50	60	29	37	16	20	-4.3	-1.5
Middle income	78	79	10	8	13	12	34	31	87	91	76	82	52	63	1.2	3.7
Lower middle	74	77	14	11	18	16	42	38	82	87	69	76	43	54	-4.4	-1.3
Upper middle	82	82	4	4	6	6	21	17	95	97	85	90	62	77	8.4	11.5
High income	92	89	2	2	2	2	6	5	100	100	97	98	88	89	3.4	3.8

A Adjusted net enrolment rate (NERA) one year before the official primary school entry age.
B Out-of-school rate by level - model data [*Source:* UIS and GEM Report analysis of administrative data and household surveys available at https://www.unesco.org/en/education/view].
C Education completion rate by level - model data [*Source:* UIS and GEM Report analysis of administrative data and household surveys available at https://www.unesco.org/en/education/view/].
D Gender gap in upper secondary completion rates (female - male) - model data [*Source:* UIS and GEM Report analysis of administrative data and household surveys available at https://www.unesco.org/en/education/view].
E Percentage of students achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics.
F Percentage of schools with internet used for pedagogical purposes.
G Percentage of teachers with the minimum required qualifications (received at least the minimum organized and recognized pre-service and in-service pedagogical training) to teach at a given level of education.
H Initial government expenditure on education as % of GDP.
I Initial government expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure.

Source: UIS unless noted otherwise.
Aggregates represent countries listed in the table with available data and may include estimates for countries with no recent data.
(-) Magnitude nil or negligible.
(...) Data not available or category not applicable.
(± n) Reference year differs (e.g. -2: reference year 2022 instead of 2024).
(i) Estimate and/or partial coverage.

	Learning								Digital		Teachers						Finance			
	E Achieving minimum proficiency (%)								F		G Trained teachers (%)						H		I	
	End of primary				End of lower secondary															
	Reading		Mathematics		Reading		Mathematics		Upper secondary schools with access to Internet for pedagogical purposes (%)		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Government education expenditure (% of GDP)		Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)	
	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024
	4.1.1								4.a.1		4.c.1								1.a.2	
	Weighted average																Median			
	59	58	45	44	63	64	50	51	59	70	80	82	81	82	87	81	4.2	4.2	13.5	12.6
	31	30	12	11	...	...	...	...	25	...	66	69	57	...	58	...	3.6	3.3	16.2	14.2
	...	...	31	32	61	63	30	31	81	84	82	79	83	84	85	86	4.3	4.2	12.7	12.5
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	71	72	83	82	81	87	80	87	6.2	6.7	22.2	17.3$_{i}$
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	87	93	82	76	84	82	...	85	3.7	3.9	11.2	12.1
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	39	66	76	88	84	86	87	85	3.3	4.3	15.7	18.8
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	92	100	96	95	93	95	...	5.2	5.4	16.1	22.0
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	37	65	75	87	82	85	87	83	3.3	3.3	13.2	11.3
	...	...	...	...	56	55	48	47	86	89	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.4	3.5	14.6	12.4
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	92	95	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.3	3.9	13.8	13.8
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	82	84	61	67	60	71	56	62	3.4	2.5	15.1	12.0
	...	...	64	64	83	81	79	76	95	95	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.4	5.5	15.1	12.2
	44	43	39	36	51	52	34	36	63	70	83	82	...	83$_{-3}$	...	78$_{-3}$	4.4	3.8	15.3	13.2
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.2	3.6	13.7	12.6
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.1	3.3	22.3	16.1
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.9	4.8	17.8	15.5
	97	97	76	77	80	81	74	75	98	99$_{-4}$	96	93	...	...	...	...	4.8	4.6	11.5	11.1
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	98	98	94	91$_{-4}$	...	...	...	...	4.8	4.6	11.3	11.1
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	100$_{-4}$	99	98	100	99	99	97	4.7	4.8	12.4	11.0
	18	17	10	10	...	...	...	...	28	...	66	69	...	...	...	...	3.2	2.9	15.0	14.1
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	53	69	78	82	78	81	86	82	4.2	4.1	15.3	13.8
	52	54	...	...	...	...	38	39	39	64	76	83	80	82	82	82	4.1	4	15.4	14.7
	53	52	48	46	55	56	43	44	75	80	...	81	...	...	...	...	4.3	4.3	15.3	13.2
	93	93	71	72	81	81	71	71	96	96$_{-4}$	96	92	93	88$_{-4}$	96	95$_{-4}$	4.5	4.4	12.5	12.0

PROGRESS SINCE 2015: SELECTED INDICATORS: CONTINUED

	Participation/Completion														Gender	
	A		B						C						D	
	Adjusted net enrolment rate one year before primary entry (%)		Out-of-school rate (%)						Completion rate (%)						Gender gap in upper secondary completion rate	
			Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary			
Country or territory	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024
SDG indicator	4.2.2		4.1.4						4.1.2							
Sub-Sarahran																
Angola	68$_{+1i}$	52$_{-1}$	25	32	22	30	36	45	55	64	36	42	20	24	-7.7	-2.0
Benin	81$_{+1}$	...	20	16	31	40	54	68	58	69	27	37	13	18	-10.4	-11.6
Botswana	33$_{-1}$	56$_{-2}$	12	5	11	11	20	32	96	99	85	93	53	64	9.3	15.0
Burkina Faso	9	16	33	37	44	52	72	68	48	71	20	42	8	15	-5.1	-9.4
Burundi	30	28$_{+1}$	17	17	30	45	58	72	43	59	20	32	7	10	-1.4	0.8
Cabo Verde	84	84$_{-2}$	5	3	8	6	25	15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cameroon	51	41	16	7	28	47	50	70	73	77	40	49	17	22	-2.8	0.7
Central African Republic	...	...	42	47	50	55	78	70	28	31	11	14	5	6	-1.8	-0.9
Chad	8	18	45	23	50	58	65	73	29	37	14	19	6	6	-6.5	-6.0
Comoros	54$_{-1}$	41	14	22	29	35	48	44	74	85	47	62	24	35	6.7	16.8
Congo	...	...	22	17	28	35	61	62	81	93	45	62	23	32	-6.8	-5.8
Côte d'Ivoire	7	21	30	22	48	36	68	45	52	77	27	41	12	16	-5.3	-7.7
D. R. Congo	...	...	23	17	16	10	28	20	57	68	45	54	20	26	-6.5	-0.7
Djibouti	...	...	52	40	61	51	73	64	82	89	56	67	25	34	-3.5	7.9
Equat. Guinea	34	...	65	62	65	66	76	77	68	73	28	32	8	9	-5.8	-4.5
Eritrea	26	38$_{-2}$	35	41	37	38	55	46	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Eswatini	...	...	5	4	6	4	18	13	73	82	51	59	33	37	2.5	6.0
Ethiopia	34	63	25	18	41	51	66	70	48	63	21	29	12	15	1.4	4.9
Gabon	...	...	18	28	19	38	37	51	67	74	39	46	18	22	4.3	9.8
Gambia	51	63$_{+1}$	30	17	36	18	56	30	65	74	47	56	27	33	-3.3	3.5
Ghana	94	87$_{-3}$	13	9	17	14	40	33	72	78	55	64	24	45	-1.6	-4.8
Guinea	42$_{-1}$	47$_{-4}$	30	17	48	47	64	64	45	59	30	41	18	24	-12.4	-10.7
Guinea-Bissau	...	...	39	38	30	38	40	52	24	30	13	16	9	12	-5.6	-5.1
Kenya	...	92$_{-1}$	13	15	7	11	22	20	74	87	59	60	37	41	-2.4	0.8
Lesotho	38	31$_{-4}$	14	29	18	32	40	55	65	79	34	43	23	28	6.9	10.7
Liberia	80	65$_{-2}$	19	36	23	48	32	45	29	30	20	22	12	14	-2.9	-1.0
Madagascar	33$_{-1}$	66	10	21	24	46	58	74	48	54	24	28	11	14	-0.7	0.4
Malawi	...	...	10	8	23	27	53	70	48	57	20	29	13	18	-3.0	0.6
Mali	41	29$_{-1}$	42	30	53	58	70	77	43	49	20	26	10	11	-7.7	-6.1
Mauritania	...	...	34	36	42	34	62	52	46	51	35	41	14	22	-6.6	-3.6
Mauritius	90	92	2	2	6	9	18	24	100	100	88	93	30	54	3.4	6.4
Mozambique	...	...	10	29	36	41	63	55	33	52	11	19	5	8	-2.6	-3.8
Namibia	72$_{-2}$	93	2	1	8	1	25	6	80	86	49	55	32	37	6.0	9.4
Niger	22$_{+1}$	20	40	37	69	70	89	85	43	75	14	36	3	5	-2.7	-3.2
Nigeria	...	57$_{-1}$	28	23	28	24	41	36	74	76	61	66	52	57	-11.3	-9.8
Rwanda	44$_{+1}$	80	6	2	15	9	51	39	44	69	22	34	13	22	-0.3	2.7
Sao Tome and Principe	55	...	6	3	10	4	27	11	84	93	66	88	31	54	2.3	10.6
Senegal	18	25	37	31	36	35	50	52	49	64	23	37	9	16	-3.2	-1.8
Seychelles	99$_{+1}$	86	-	0.2	0.3	1	14	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sierra Leone	35	63	25	11	33	10	57	27	60	68	38	46	13	13	-6.6	-6.1
Somalia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26	28	20	23	7	9	-10.6	-11.2
South Africa	70	79$_{-1}$	8	6	11	7	30	17	94	97	86	90	48	54	7.3	11.0
South Sudan	19$_{i}$	9	64	60	57	54	56	58	...	...	10	13	2	2	-1.1	-1.4
Togo	17$_{-1}$	...	11	3	24	23	50	54	72	87	35	48	14	21	-8.8	-12.5
Uganda	...	...	11	14	26	31	64	73	35	30	25	29	16	17	-1.8	2.0
United Republic of Tanzania	44	68	17	15	47	39	79	79	75	76	27	33	7	8	-2.5	-2.3
Zambia	...	47	14	10	18	18	34	49	68	67	46	49	25	28	-4.3	0.1
Zimbabwe	47	57	9	11	29	19	62	50	85	87	71	76	8	8	-3.1	-3.6

Learning								Digital		Teachers						Finance				Country code
E Achieving minimum proficiency (%)								F		G Trained teachers (%)						H		I		
End of primary				End of lower secondary				Upper secondary schools with access to Internet for pedagogical purposes (%)		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Government education expenditure (% of GDP)		Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)		
Reading		Mathematics		Reading		Mathematics														
2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	
4.1.1								4.a.1		4.c.1								1.a.2		
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26_{+1}	...	...	82_{-1}	54	88_{-1}	47	78_{-1}	3.5	2.5_{-1}	8.9	6.5_{+1}	AGO
23_{-1}	46	11_{-1}	19	...	...	...	...	...	5_{-2}	69	75_{-3}	...	...	...	...	3.2	3.2_{-1}	17.5	18.0_{+1}	BEN
68_{-2}	...	37_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	97_{-2}	99_{-2}	100_{-2}	...	100_{-2}	...	...	8.4	8.1_{-4}	23.1	21.5_{-4}	BWA
21_{-1}	33	22_{-1}	25	...	...	...	...	3_{+1}	3	85	91	...	68	...	65	3.7	5.3_{-1}	18.0	20.3_{-1}	BFA
7_{-1}	4	40_{-1}	18	...	...	...	...	7_{+1}	...	100	96_{+1}	100	...	100	6_{-4}	6.4_{i}	4.5_{+1}	27.5_{i}	10.3_{+1}	BDI
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	100_{-2}	96_{-1}	100_{-2}	77_{-1}	70_{-2}	100_{-1}	96_{-2}	4.8	4.3_{-1}	16.7	13.4	CPV
24_{-1}	30	12_{-1}	11	...	...	...	...	29_{+1}	34_{-1}	...	72_{-1}	50	62_{-1}	57	59_{-1}	2.7_{i}	2.8_{-1}	13.2_{i}	13.8	CMR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.9	1.8_{-1}	8.4	10.0_{-1}	CAF
3_{-1}	8	3_{-1}	2	...	...	...	...	...	6	65_{-2}	29	38	79_{-2}	49_{+1}	50_{-2}	2.3	3.2_{-1}	12.5_{-2}	16.5_{-1}	TCD
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26	75_{-2}	75_{-2}	...	...	...	...	2.5	2.3_{-1}	13.4	11.5_{+1}	COM
17_{-1}	34	6_{-1}	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.1_{i}	3.3_{-1}	8.0_{i}	14.7_{-1}	COG
22_{-1}	22	3_{-1}	3	...	...	...	1_{-1}	...	46	100	100	...	...	...	...	3.5_{i}	3.6	21.2_{i}	17.6	CIV
...	9	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	95_{-1}	100_{-3}	...	...	...	...	2.2	2.8_{-2}	14.9	...	COD
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	91_{-1}	100	66_{-1}	100	71_{-1}	100	81_{-1}	3.6_{i}	...	8.6_{i}	...	DJI
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	37	...	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GNQ
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	71_{-1i}	77_{-2}	86_{-2}	...	80_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	ERI
84_{-2}	...	37_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	69_{+1}	23_{-1}	82	68_{-2}	...	...	...	...	5.4	6.0	16.4	19.2_{+1}	SWZ
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11_{-2}	95_{-1}	...	...	...	100	...	4.7	2.3	22.3	16.7	ETH
...	76	...	23	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.8	2.3_{-1}	11.6	13.6_{-1}	GAB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	29_{+1}	86	89_{+1}	90	95_{+1}	94	80_{-3}	2.2	2.8_{-1}	11.0	14.2_{+1}	GMB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	55	89	70	77_{-3}	83	81_{-3}	4.4_{i}	2.9_{-2}	23.8_{i}	13.2_{-2}	GHA
...	22	...	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	76	77_{-4}	...	...	...	...	2.5	1.7_{-1}	11.6	9.2_{+1}	GIN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.0_{-2}	...	16.2_{-2}	...	GNB
...	26_{-1}	...	37_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	53_{-1}	...	100_{-1}	...	100_{-1}	...	100_{-1}	4.7	4.0	17.4	28.5_{+1}	KEN
48_{-2}	11_{-1}	10_{-2}	20_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	79	100_{-1}	...	...	...	...	7.6	6.6	13.9	10.4	LSO
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	47	62_{-2}	62	82_{-4}	60	83_{-4}	2.1	2.3_{-1}	6.8_{-1i}	7.4_{-3}	LBR
4	6	5	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	15	...	22_{-1}	...	17_{-1}	...	2.2_{i}	3.0_{-1}	17.0_{i}	...	MDG
15_{-2}	...	4_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	91_{-2}	95	...	79_{-1}	...	...	3.9	2.7_{-2}	21.8	16.0	MWI
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	57_{-1}	...	37_{-1}	...	44_{-1}	...	37_{-1}	3.2	4.2_{-1}	18.2	17.8	MLI
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	91_{-1}	...	100	93_{-4}	76_{-1}	92_{-4}	2.8	7.6	12.8	31.9	MRT
75_{-2}	...	59_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	99	100	100	100	...	...	...	...	4.8	4.2	19.5	14.2	MUS
36_{-2}	...	15_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	93	99_{-2}	85_{-2}	...	95_{-2}	...	5.9	6.0_{-2}	19.9	20.4_{-3}	MOZ
61_{-2}	...	17_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	92	87	95	94	96	96	96	9.9	9.1	22.6	24.6_{+1}	NAM
2_{-1}	14	1_{-1}	8	...	...	...	...	...	17	56	99	...	52	15	51	4.5	4.1_{-1}	18.5	12.8_{-1}	NER
...	20_{-1}	...	11_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.4	0.3_{-1}	9.3	3.0	NGA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	28	86	94	68	...	78	...	59	3.6_{i}	4.6	12.5_{i}	13.9_{+1}	RWA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	34	...	20_{+1i}	...	...	...	4.7	5.0_{-1}	11.3	18.1	STP
35_{-1}	41	29_{-1}	27	...	...	...	...	...	76	68	77	...	75_{-2}	...	71_{-2}	5.5	6.2_{-1}	23.8	20.9_{+1}	SEN
80_{-2}	...	52_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	100	84	90	...	...	...	...	4.9	4.5_{-1}	15.6	10.7_{+1}	SYC
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	54	70	69	81	73	86	3.2	2.6_{-1}	15.1_{-1}	20.5_{+1}	SLE
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	$-_{-1}$	1.4	8.1_{+1}	SOM
57_{-2}	...	30_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.5	6.0	18.7	19.1_{+1}	ZAF
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.5	...	3.3	-	SSD
16_{-1}	19	20_{-1}	16	...	...	...	...	...	28	73	81	...	38_{-3}	...	28_{-3}	3.7	4.1_{-1}	16.2	11.6	TGO
50_{-2}	...	21_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.3_{i}	2.6_{-2}	13.2_{i}	8.5_{-2}	UGA
61_{-2}	...	8_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	99_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	4.2	3.2	17.6	13.4	TZA
2_{+1}	10_{-1}	4_{+1}	16_{-1}	...	...	...	...	23_{+1}	63	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.6	4.1_{-1}	16.7	14.5_{+1}	ZMB
45_{-2}	...	23_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	61	79	94	98	...	...	...	...	6.1_{-1}	0.4_{-1}	29.5	17.9_{+1}	ZWE

PROGRESS SINCE 2015: SELECTED INDICATORS: CONTINUED

	Participation/Completion														Gender	
	A		B						C						D	
	Adjusted net enrolment rate one year before primary entry (%)		Out-of-school rate (%)						Completion rate (%)						Gender gap in upper secondary completion rate	
			Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary			
Country or territory	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024
SDG indicator	4.2.2		4.1.4						4.1.2							
Northern Africa and Western Asia																
Algeria	...	76_{+1}	1	1	4	3	24	15	94	96	62	73	37	49	20.8	30.9
Armenia	47	32	8	4	8	6	24	11	99	100	99	99	93	94	5.1	4.7
Azerbaijan	28	83	5	3	8	11	7	15	98	98	94	96	90	95	-4.8	-2.5
Bahrain	82	70	2	8	2	1	8	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cyprus	95_{i}	100_{i}	0.2	-	1	0.2	7	2	99	99	95	94	91	93	5.5	5.4
Egypt	35_{-1}	38	13	4	19	8	36	24	92	96	82	88	80	88	3.0	5.3
Georgia	...	...	0.1	-	0.4	-	4	0.2	100	100	98	99	92	92	1.3	2.3
Iraq	...	...	16	18	37	14	56	29	72	83	41	52	30	...	-0.8	-14.7
Israel	100_{i}	97_{i}	2	2	2	2	5	4	100	100	98	99	90	93	7.1	7.1
Jordan	...	69	5	2	9	5	21	18	98	98	90	93	62	69	8.8	11.3
Kuwait	82_{-1}	44_{-3}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lebanon	70	87	25	27	35	33	52	52	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Libya	...	...	48	39	60	45	69	54	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Morocco	49	88	8	1	15	4	35	21	74	84	42	47	23	26	-1.4	0.7
Oman	74	89	5	7	3	14	11	30	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Qatar	94	81	3	5	3	4	13	15	99	100	93	100	80	92	-3.6	-8.1
Saudi Arabia	37	64	2	3	0.2	0.1	2	0.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
State of Palestine (the)	66	69_{-1}	5	9	8	6	32	20	99	100	87	94	64	75	21.1	28.1
Sudan	...	...	44	43	38	43	52	54	70	75	38	40	28	33	-0.8	0.3
Syrian Arab Republic	34_{-2}	47	23	26	37	48	63	74	97	98	46	52	33	36	6.4	10.4
Tunisia	...	...	1	4	8	8	34	20	93	97	70	79	40	47	15.0	23.9
Türkiye	72	98_{-1}	2	2	2	0.4	12	2	96	98	91	97	63	77	-0.2	5.5
United Arab Emirates	...	100	16	1	19	-	27	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Yemen	3_{+1}	...	30	29	40	32	62	57	66	74	48	58	31	39	-11.7	-5.6
Central and Southern Asia																
Afghanistan	...	...	40	53	48	75	66	82	48	54	35	42	25	35	-21.3	-16.8
Bangladesh	...	88	17	6	21	10	50	34	79	90	59	74	22	38	-7.3	-0.5
Bhutan	...	42_{-4}	9	6	14	12	27	29	78	93	70	87	59	75	-1.4	8.5
India	...	94_{-2}	7	6	11	12	41	42	91	96	81	90	49	64	-7.5	-2.7
Iran, Islamic Republic of	47	60_{-4}	4	2	8	2	22	11	94	96	85	92	64	75	8.8	14.3
Kazakhstan	91	74_{+1}	5	7	3	3	11	5	100	100	100	100	96	98	0.2	-0.2
Kyrgyzstan	68	75_{+1}	5	2	9	3	29	17	99	99	98	99	91	93	0.4	-0.4
Maldives	89	81	5	4	17	6	48	25	98	99	87	97	27	39	6.5	17.2
Nepal	83	80	24	8	10	3	33	26	74	90	63	81	15	40	-3.1	-4.1
Pakistan	...	51	29	21	28	18	44	37	52	59	45	55	23	38	-0.1	1.3
Sri Lanka	59	66_{-1}	5	6	5	6	31	18	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tajikistan	11	...	8	24	4	4	25	7	98	99	94	97	70	84	-20.9	-12.5
Turkmenistan	...	35	4	2	19	4	72	20	100	100	100	100	94	95	2.8	2.6
Uzbekistan	29	82	1	0.4	4	1	16	14	100	100	98	99	92	99	-2.0	0.2

	Learning								Digital		Teachers						Finance				
	E								F		G						H		I		
	Achieving minimum proficiency (%)										Trained teachers (%)										
	End of primary				End of lower secondary				Upper secondary schools with access to Internet for pedagogical purposes (%)		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Government education expenditure (% of GDP)		Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)		Country code
	Reading		Mathematics		Reading		Mathematics														
	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	
	4.1.1								4.a.1		4.c.1								1.a.2		
	...	...	...	...	21	...	19	...	...	68_{+1}	100	100_{+1}	...	...	...	...	6.2	9.0	16.1	15.5_{+1}	DZA
	...	...	55	72_{-1}	...	...	50	...	...	100	...	85	...	85	...	86	2.8	2.4_{-1}	10.7	8.7_{+1}	ARM
	81_{+1}	67_{-3}	...	61_{-1}	...	31_{-2}	...	38_{-2}	62_{+1}	89	99	100	92_{+1}	99	...	98	3.0	3.7_{-1}	7.6	11.9_{+1}	AZE
	69_{+1}	71_{-3}	40	45_{-1}	...	...	39	30_{-1}	100_{+1}	100	82	100	83	100	84	100	2.6	1.9_{-1}	7.3	8.3_{+1}	BHR
	...	92_{-3}	74	71_{-1}	64	39_{-2}	57	47_{-2}	...	...	...	100_{-3}	...	100_{-3}	...	100_{-3}	6.3	4.7_{-2}	14.7	12.5_{-2}	CYP
	...	34_{-1}	...	29_{-1}	...	...	21	27	47_{+1}	57	74_{+1}	87	69_{+1}	86	65_{+1}	85	...	...	...	...	EGY
	86_{+1}	87_{-3}	47	63_{-1}	48	33_{-2}	43	34_{-2}	100_{+1}	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.1	4.0	10.1	12.2	GEO
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	IRQ
	91_{+1}	88_{-3}	...	...	73	70_{-2}	68	63_{-2}	85_{+1}	100_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.8	5.9_{-2}	15.5	16.1_{-2}	ISR
	...	47_{-3}	...	32_{-1}	54	20_{-2}	32	17_{-2}	...	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	100	3.7	3.2	13.2	9.8	JOR
	...	...	12	22_{-1}	...	...	18	21_{-1}	...	100_{-3}	79	100_{-3}	...	100_{-3}	...	100_{-3}	6.0_{+1}	6.4	11.3_{+1}	13.8_{+1}	KWT
	...	...	...	...	30	...	35	27	...	93	...	54	...	40_{-1}	...	45_{-1}	2.2_{+1}	1.2	7.1_{+1}	8.6_{+1}	LBN
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LBY
	33_{+1}	41_{-3}	16	22_{-1}	...	19_{-2}	...	18_{-2}	...	81	100	100	...	100	...	100	5.1	6.0_{-1}	22.2	23.3	MAR
	59_{+1}	62_{-3}	32	29_{-1}	...	...	23	24_{-1}	100_{+1}	100	...	100	...	100	...	100	4.4_{-2}	4.4_{-2}	11.1_{-2}	14.2_{-2}	OMN
	66_{+1}	80_{-3}	36	46_{-1}	48	53_{-2}	36	40_{-1}	100_{+1}	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	3.6_{-1}	3.2_{-4}	12.7_{-1}	9.3_{-4}	QAT
	63_{+1}	71_{-3}	16	29_{-1}	...	37_{-2}	...	30_{-2}	100_{+1}	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	4.5_{-1}	...	15.6	SAU
	...	42_{-1}	...	31_{-1}	...	23_{-2}	...	16_{-1}	90_{+1}	99_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	4.7	5.4_{-3}	...	...	PSE
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	66	...	...	...	...	...	SDN
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14	...	38	...	...	92_{-2}	35	...	...	...	...	SYR
	...	...	...	...	28	...	25	...	...	99_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	...	100_{-2}	...	100_{-2}	6.2	6.7_{-1}	22.7	17.3_{+1}	TUN
	...	86_{-3}	57	79_{-1}	60	71_{-2}	42	59_{-1}	100	100_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.3	3.1_{-2}	13.3	11.3_{-2}	TUR
	68_{+1}	75_{-3}	42	60_{-1}	60	52_{-2}	46	55_{-1}	...	100	...	100_{-1}	...	100_{-1}	...	100_{-1}	...	3.9_{-3}	...	14.8_{-3}	ARE
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	95_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	YEM
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.3	...	12.5	...	AFG
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	60	48	78	60_{-2}	55	59_{+1}	55	1.9	2.0	12.0	11.9_{+1}	BGD
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	97	100	100	100	100	100_{-1}	100	96_{-1}	6.9	5.8_{-1}	25.3	22.2_{+1}	BTN
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	40_{+1}	84_{+1}	...	91_{+1}	77_{+1}	92_{+1}	...	93_{+1}	4.1	4.1_{-2}	15.7	14.2_{-2}	IND
	66_{+1}	59_{-3}	33	31_{-1}	...	...	34	29_{-1}	...	100_{-1}	100	...	100	...	100_{-1}	...	2.6	2.8_{-1}	18.6	18.8_{-2}	IRN
	98_{+1}	91_{-3}	80	56_{-1}	59	36_{-2}	...	50_{-2}	...	100_{+1}	100	100_{+1}	...	...	...	...	2.8	4.9_{-1}	12.2	22.0	KAZ
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	48_{+1}	87_{+1}	93	96_{+1}	...	...	...	...	6.0	6.8_{-1}	15.7	19.6	KGZ
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	83	87_{-2}	93	98_{-2}	94	99_{-2}	3.9	5.2_{-1}	11.4	9.6_{+1}	MDV
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	96_{+1}	97	96_{+1}	85	97_{+1}	86	98_{+1}	3.3	3.7	17.0	10.8_{+1}	NPL
	...	24_{-1}	...	17_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	4	82	75	61	59	...	72	2.4	1.9_{-1}	13.2	9.8_{-1}	PAK
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	59_{-1}	86	86_{-1}	86	83_{-1}	77_{+1i}	78_{-1}	2.1	1.8_{-1}	11.0	7.2	LKA
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	...	...	...	...	...	5.0	5.4_{-1}	16.4	19.3	TJK
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	42	...	100	...	99	...	100	...	4.3	...	27.6	TKM
	...	70_{-3}	...	35_{-1}	...	14_{-2}	...	19_{-2}	...	100_{+1}	...	100_{+1}	75	100_{+1}	100_{+1}	100_{+1}	5.5_{i}	5.5_{-1}	22.4_{i}	22.1	UZB

PROGRESS SINCE 2015: SELECTED INDICATORS: CONTINUED

	Participation/Completion														Gender	
	A		B						C						D	
	Adjusted net enrolment rate one year before primary entry (%)		Out-of-school rate (%)						Completion rate (%)							
			Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Gender gap in upper secondary completion rate	
Country or territory	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024
SDG indicator	4.2.2		4.1.4						4.1.2							
Eastern and South-eastern Asia																
Brunei Darussalam	96	77	0.1	-	0.3	0.1	20	23	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cambodia	41$_{i}$	72	9	12	20	20	56	44	69	82	37	59	18	25	0.2	3.5
China	...	...	3	4	3	7	17	17	97	99	90	94	67	88	11.0	17.8
DPR Korea	...	...	-	0.3	5	2	44	30	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hong Kong, China	99$_{+1}$	99	1	2	1	4	6	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Indonesia	...	93$_{+1}$	2	1	8	4	32	25	97	99	84	91	60	72	1.1	6.7
Japan	95$_{i}$	95$_{-1i}$	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	100	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lao PDR	56	66$_{+1}$	10	12	20	32	48	60	63	70	48	54	29	36	-3.3	1.5
Macao, China	99	88	6	17	12	13	16	16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Malaysia	83$_{+1}$	85	8	9	17	16	38	42	99	100	96	98	50	62	13.0	19.1
Mongolia	84	98	3	6	3	5	12	7	98	100	92	98	69	89	13.8	7.6
Myanmar	...	...	5	7	23	13	50	21	76	89	44	53	20	24	5.7	8.7
Philippines	76	77	9	10	13	11	24	21	90	96	74	83	69	73	14.9	16.0
Republic of Korea	93$_{i}$	95$_{i}$	1	1	1	1	2	2	100	100	100	100	99	99	-0.6	-0.5
Singapore	...	95$_{-1}$	0.4	5	0.4	10	1	14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Thailand	...	91$_{+1}$	2	2	4	3	15	9	98	99	86	92	60	72	14.6	15.5
Timor-Leste	74	59$_{-4}$	7	6	12	11	27	22	71	81	56	66	50	56	2.5	9.9
Viet Nam	98	94$_{-2}$	3	1	7	4	36	26	95	98	76	87	40	51	8.3	11.2
Oceania																
Australia	88$_{i}$	95$_{i}$	0.2	0.1	-	0.2	2	1	99	100	98	99	86	89	5.2	5.8
Cook Islands	94	83	0.3	0.1	4	1	34	14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Fiji	53$_{+1}$	90	3	1	5	1	29	15	98	99	92	95	43	57	5.0	11.2
Kiribati	...	...	3	9	14	11	44	21	94	94	77	81	14	21	5.6	11.7
Marshall Islands	74	92	4	1	11	2	27	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Micronesia, F. S.	69$_{+1}$	55	14	26	24	24	39	35	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nauru	98	94$_{+1}$	8	3	20	9	43	25	88	89	66	70	40	48	4.5	7.3
New Zealand	94$_{i}$	86$_{i}$	-	0.4	1	1	5	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Niue	66	25$_{+1}$	4	2	4	4	12	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Palau	91$_{-1}$	91$_{-2}$	32	8	26	4	16	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Papua New Guinea	68$_{+1}$	65$_{-1}$	19	17	18	38	38	59	61	66	34	36	12	14	-3.3	-1.5
Samoa	28	30	3	5	2	3	16	16	98	98	96	97	53	60	15.6	21.1
Solomon Is	61	54	8	26	5	21	30	44	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tokelau	79$_{+1}$	47$_{+1}$	14	27	21	45	47	60	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tonga	...	78	2	2	6	6	32	30	98	98	83	87	82	86	12.4	13.4
Tuvalu	100$_{-1}$	95	7	3	17	7	55	33	98	99	81	84	47	56	13.4	19.8
Vanuatu	...	81	7	3	9	10	38	29	78	80	39	45	9	11	-2.1	-1.5
Latin America and the Caribbean																
Anguilla	...	90$_{-1}$	2	2	2	6	3	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Antigua and Barbuda	94$_{-1}$	...	0.3	0.1	3	1	10	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Argentina	98	94$_{-1}$	1	0.3	1	1	9	4	96	97	77	80	64	68	12.6	14.1
Aruba	96$_{-1}$	...	0.1	0.1	-	0.2	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bahamas	38	47	12	29	10	20	19	25	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Barbados	98	78	4	21	1	9	2	8	99	...	99	100	94	96	6.4	5.6
Belize	90	77	2	11	11	5	36	24	86	90	39	45	17	19	6.3	9.5
Bolivia, P. S.	85	80	9	5	9	6	16	16	97	98	90	95	69	82	0.4	3.9
Brazil	86$_{i}$	93$_{i}$	1	-	2	0.3	14	5	88	93	80	89	60	72	12.3	8.8
British Virgin Islands	99$_{+1}$	83	10	17	6	22	13	39	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cayman Islands	97$_{-2}$	96	4	4	3	4	20	15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chile	93$_{i}$	89$_{i}$	2	1	2	0.4	6	1	98	97	97	98	82	86	5.2	4.7
Colombia	87$_{-1i}$	...	3	4	3	4	14	10	92	95	77	80	68	66	7.3	5.0
Costa Rica	91$_{i}$	100$_{i}$	4	3	8	3	16	5	95	99	67	74	52	57	9.7	10.5

Learning								Digital		Teachers						Finance			
E								F		G						H		I	
Achieving minimum proficiency (%)										Trained teachers (%)									
End of primary				End of lower secondary				Upper secondary schools with access to Internet for pedagogical purposes (%)		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Government education expenditure (% of GDP)		Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)	
Reading		Mathematics		Reading		Mathematics													
2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024
4.1.1								4.a.1		4.c.1								1.a.2		Country code
...	...	...	...	...	58_{-2}	...	58_{-2}	...	...	82	87	92	89_{-1}	90	92_{-1}	3.4_{-1}	...	10.0_{-1}	...	BRN
...	19	...	40	...	8_{-2}	...	12_{-2}	...	67	100	100	100	100	...	100_{-3}	1.4_{-1}	2.2_{-1}	8.8_{-1}	11.6_{+1}	KHM
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	96_{+1}	98	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.9_{-1}	...	11.9_{-1}	CHN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14.1	14.6_{+1}	PRK
99_{+1}	98_{-3}	98	91_{-1}	91	83_{-2}	91	86_{-2}	94_{+1}	100	96	94	...	...	...	...	3.3	3.8	18.6	15.7	HKG
...	...	18	...	45	25_{-2}	31	18_{-2}	...	91_{+1}	...	35_{+1}	...	34_{+1}	...	39_{+1}	3.6	1.3_{-1}	20.4	10.6_{+1}	IDN
...	...	...	...	...	86_{-2}	89	92_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.3	3.3_{-3}	...	...	JPN
...	4	...	17	...	...	...	...	...	...	98	65_{+1}	99	94_{-2}	99_{i}	94_{-2}	2.7	1.2_{-1}	10.5	8.2	LAO
98_{+1}	96_{-3}	...	90_{-1}	88	87_{-2}	93	92_{-2}	100_{+1}	100	96	99	87	95	87	94	3.0	3.5_{-1}	13.4	12.3_{-2}	MAC
...	49	...	52	63	42_{-2}	...	41_{-2}	100_{+1}	100	100	94	...	92	...	91	4.9	3.5_{-1}	19.8	14.1_{-1}	MYS
...	...	...	...	...	36_{-2}	...	49_{-2}	89_{+1}	100	100_{-1}	86	...	38_{-1}	...	...	4.2	5.2	13.5	13.8	MNG
...	31	...	51	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{-1}	...	93_{-1}	...	95_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	MMR
...	14	...	25	...	24_{-2}	...	16_{-2}	73	88	100	100	100_{+1}	100	100_{+1}	100	2.8	4.0_{+1}	15.1	15.2_{+1}	PHL
...	...	97	93_{-1}	86	85_{-2}	85	84_{-2}	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	4.2	5.4_{-2}	...	...	KOR
97_{+1}	97_{-3}	93	93_{-1}	89	89_{-2}	94	89_{-1}	100_{+1}	100_{-1}	99_{+1}	98_{-1}	...	...	...	...	3.0	2.2	17.7	12.0_{+1}	SGP
...	...	...	...	50	35_{-2}	46	32_{-2}	...	100_{+1}	100	100_{+1}	100	100_{+1}	100	100_{+1}	3.9	2.5_{-1}	20.6	12.6_{+1}	THA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	74_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	8.5	5.2_{-1}	8.6	4.3_{+1}	TLS
...	66	...	89	86	77_{-2}	81	72_{-2}	...	93	99	89	100	93	...	100_{-2}	3.4	2.9_{-2}	15.0	15.4_{-2}	VNM
...	...	64	64_{-1}	82	79_{-2}	78	74_{-2}	100	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.1_{-2}	...	12.6_{-2}	AUS
...	75_{-3}	...	63_{-3}	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	100	99	100	...	100	...	99	4.0	4.4_{-1}	10.2	9.2_{+1}	COK
...	60_{-3}	...	66_{-3}	...	...	...	...	...	98	...	89	...	...	...	73	4.8	4.2_{-1}	17.4	13.8_{+1}	FJI
...	14_{-3}	...	53_{-3}	...	...	...	...	...	100	52_{-1}	89	87_{-1}	87	54_{+1}	38	10.8	16.4_{-1}	20.1	20.1	KIR
...	40_{-3}	...	38_{-3}	...	...	...	...	6_{+1}	72_{-3}	...	51	...	68	...	80	...	7.7_{-2}	26.7	11.3_{-2}	MHL
...	39_{-3}	...	45_{-3}	...	...	...	...	...	13	...	27_{-1}	6	24_{-1}	2	30_{-3}	12.4	11.6_{-4}	22.3	18.6_{-4}	FSM
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	100_{+1}	100_{+1}	100_{+1}	100_{+1}	100_{+1}	100_{+1}	6.3	5.8_{-1}	6.2	6.6_{+1}	NRU
90_{+1}	90_{-3}	59	57_{-1}	83	79_{-2}	78	71_{-2}	100	100_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.7	5.2_{-1}	15.6	12.7_{-1}	NZL
...	81_{-3}	...	82_{-3}	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	100_{+1}	100	100	100	71	100	55	...	...	...	5.6_{+1}	NIU
...	94_{-3}	...	92_{-3}	...	...	...	...	...	100	...	100	...	95_{-1}	...	100	...	3.4_{-1}	...	9.1_{+1}	PLW
...	48_{-3}	...	55_{-3}	...	...	...	...	...	100_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.6	0.8_{-1}	7.2	3.5_{-1}	PNG
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	60	...	...	...	...	100_{-1}	55_{-4}	4.4	5.5	14.7	11.7_{+1}	WSM
...	53_{-3}	...	86_{-3}	...	...	...	...	15_{+1}	...	59	...	80	...	63	...	...	8.3_{-1}	...	25.2	SLB
...	72_{-3}	...	67_{-3}	...	...	...	...	...	100	67_{+1}	64_{+1}	75_{+1}	72_{+1}	...	92_{-1}	...	...	...	...	TKL
...	20_{-3}	...	75_{-3}	...	...	...	...	...	91	92	97	...	...	...	...	...	5.3_{-2}	...	9.3	TON
...	32_{-3}	...	55_{-3}	...	...	...	...	50_{+1i}	100_{+1}	77_{+1}	58_{+1}	52_{+1}	60_{+1}	35_{+1}	63_{+1}	...	12.8_{-1}	...	16.8_{+1}	TUV
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	52	21	...	...	...	5.4	7.6	12.7	19.3	VUT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	75	...	...	...	...	...	3.0	2.5_{-2}	12.5	10.3	AIA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	65	...	...	...	...	...	2.0	3.1_{-1}	7.6	5.9_{+1}	ATG
32_{-2}	32	21_{-2}	13	...	45_{-2}	...	27_{-2}	58	73_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.8	5.0_{-1}	14.0	13.2_{-1}	ARG
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.9	3.6_{-3}	23.2	11.0_{-3}	ABW
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	90	89	83	87	86	82	2.3	2.7_{-1}	11.6	10.6_{+1}	BHS
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	66	76	52	54	52	54	5.2	3.6	17.8	14.2_{+1}	BRB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	68	89	50	73	40	64	5.4	4.6	21.6	18.9	BLZ
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	22_{-2}	...	85	94	...	...	...	...	8.1	7.5	18.3	20.2	BOL
37_{-2}	44	17_{-2}	29	49	50_{-2}	30	27_{-2}	...	70	...	88_{-1}	...	77_{-4}	...	84_{-4}	6.2	5.6_{-2}	13.5	12.9_{-2}	BRA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	100	92	97	...	...	...	...	4.7	3.2_{-1}	13.3	13.6_{+1}	VGB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	88_{-2}	100	...	100	...	100	...	1.6_{-1}	...	...	CYM
58_{-2}	...	44_{-2}	...	72	66_{-2}	28	24_{-1}	100_{+1}	99	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.9	4.9_{-2}	19.6	18.4_{-2}	CHL
39_{-2}	38	15_{-2}	17	57	49_{-2}	34	29_{-2}	83_{+1}	84_{-2}	94	98_{-2}	97	98_{-2}	98	98_{-2}	4.5	5.3_{-4}	...	...	COL
50_{-2}	54	21_{-2}	21	60	53_{-2}	38	28_{-2}	51_{+1}	83_{-4}	94	94_{-4}	97	97_{-4}	96	97_{-4}	6.9	5.3_{-1}	23.4	20.4_{-1}	CRI

PROGRESS SINCE 2015: SELECTED INDICATORS: CONTINUED

	Participation/Completion														Gender	
	A		B						C						D	
	Adjusted net enrolment rate one year before primary entry (%)		Out-of-school rate (%)						Completion rate (%)						Gender gap in upper secondary completion rate	
			Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary			
Country or territory	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024
SDG indicator	4.2.2		4.1.4						4.1.2							
Cuba	100	97	1	1	5	5	22	21	99	100	96	96	74	74	5.0	7.2
Curaçao	...	78	3	5	6	5	10	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dominica	71	98$_{-2}$	1	3	2	4	18	12	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dominican Republic	86	93	6	9	4	12	20	31	90	96	83	89	56	64	15.1	17.3
Ecuador	98	94$_{-2}$	3	4	6	6	24	22	95	99	85	96	67	77	5.9	7.8
El Salvador	86	85	8	16	13	26	33	45	88	93	70	77	34	36	4.2	7.7
Grenada	90	75$_{-1}$	2	5	4	8	13	7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Guatemala	81	84	9	8	27	33	57	64	78	86	48	57	33	40	-0.4	1.1
Guyana	...	78$_{-1}$	6	17	11	30	34	42	98	99	90	96	60	70	14.5	17.8
Haiti	76$_{+1}$	...	7	8	4	8	23	18	41	50	31	40	13	18	-0.8	1.8
Honduras	69	59	20	26	36	42	52	60	82	89	45	57	40	47	9.8	10.7
Jamaica	98$_{+1}$	95$_{-1}$	11	10	12	20	23	23	99	99	95	97	87	92	5.3	4.3
Mexico	...	100$_{i}$	1	2	6	9	29	29	96	98	85	89	52	61	3.3	5.2
Montserrat	...	73$_{-1}$	2	3	18	17	54	26	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nicaragua	...	85$_{-1}$	9	12	9	14	22	38	71	77	45	51	34	39	9.7	12.2
Panama	79	77	8	8	13	14	29	27	94	95	75	78	59	64	11.1	12.6
Paraguay	77$_{+1}$	75	5	15	7	19	24	30	91	95	72	81	62	68	5.7	8.2
Peru	100	100	2	-	3	1	15	9	94	98	85	93	78	86	-0.6	0.7
Saint Kitts and Nevis	...	...	0.1	0.1	-	0.4	6	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Saint Lucia	95	92$_{-1}$	6	2	11	9	20	25	99	100	94	98	85	94	15.6	11.9
Saint Vincent/Grenadines	97	98	0.2	0.1	3	1	19	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sint Maarten	...	...	-	-	-	-	-	-	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Suriname	88	87	16	20	25	31	47	59	88	91	57	61	29	34	13.9	17.5
Trinidad and Tobago	...	97	8	15	10	20	26	30	97	98	92	95	84	84	9.8	11.1
Turks and Caicos Islands	92$_{-1}$	98$_{-1}$	8	1	22	2	30	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Uruguay	100	89$_{-1}$	1	0.4	5	2	20	7	97	98	69	71	39	42	11.1	11.9
Venezuela, B. R.	96	...	5	1	11	3	28	15	87	88	65	70	40	44	15.5	19.0
Europe and Northern America																
Albania	86	94$_{-1}$	2	11	3	4	11	7	98	97	96	97	75	88	2.5	5.1
Andorra	87	95	10	3	12	6	20	10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Austria	97$_{i}$	97$_{i}$	1	1	1	1	7	7	100	100	98	98	85	86	3.4	5.8
Belarus	98	98	2	5	0.4	3	2	5	100	100	99	99	91	94	2.6	1.5
Belgium	98$_{i}$	98$_{-1i}$	1	1	2	1	1	1	98	99	87	91	83	86	8.0	8.5
Bermuda	...	...	1	1	14	6	28	22	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bosnia and Herzegovina	20$_{+1}$	37$_{-1}$	6	4	8	4	19	19	100	100	98	99	60	66	9.6	12.2
Bulgaria	94$_{i}$	95$_{i}$	2	5	2	6	11	11	99	99	94	94	84	87	0.1	0.9
Canada	...	93$_{-1i}$	-	2	1	2	10	12	100	100	99	99	86	88	5.8	6.0
Croatia	98$_{i}$	99$_{-1i}$	-	-	-	-	9	7	100	100	98	99	96	98	0.8	0.6
Czechia	91$_{i}$	94$_{-1i}$	2	1	0.3	1	4	4	100	100	96	96	90	90	1.4	1.8
Denmark	99$_{i}$	97$_{i}$	0.4	0.3	1	1	9	6	100	100	100	100	74	76	10.3	11.1
Estonia	93$_{i}$	92$_{i}$	2	2	1	2	6	8	100	100	97	97	84	86	7.6	8.4
Finland	98$_{i}$	96$_{i}$	1	2	1	2	4	3	100	100	100	100	88	90	2.5	2.6
France	100$_{i}$	100$_{i}$	1	0.1	2	0.1	6	2	100	100	98	98	84	87	4.2	5.2
Germany	98$_{i}$	98$_{i}$	1	2	1	1	10	11	100	100	92	93	79	81	2.6	4.8
Greece	96$_{i}$	100$_{-1i}$	2	1	4	2	6	3	99	99	95	96	91	95	3.3	3.2
Hungary	92$_{i}$	95$_{i}$	4	3	1	4	8	20	99	99	96	96	84	86	1.5	3.0
Iceland	98	97$_{-1}$	1	1	1	1	14	15	...	...	99	99	64	66	12.4	17.0
Ireland	97$_{i}$	95$_{-2i}$	-	-	-	-	0.4	-	100	100	98	99	92	95	3.3	2.0
Italy	98$_{i}$	95$_{-1i}$	-	2	0.4	2	7	5	100	100	99	99	81	87	6.4	4.9
Latvia	97$_{i}$	98$_{i}$	1	1	0.2	-	2	1	100	100	98	98	84	87	9.7	9.2
Liechtenstein	98	98$_{-3}$	1	0.2	6	1	11	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lithuania	98$_{i}$	100$_{i}$	-	-	3	0.1	6	1	100	100	99	99	90	92	5.1	4.8
Luxembourg	99$_{i}$	99$_{i}$	3	1	4	2	16	10	98	99	86	89	78	81	6.4	7.8
Malta	100$_{i}$	93$_{-1i}$	1	4	-	3	13	11	98	98	98	98	74	83	10.4	11.6

Learning								Digital		Teachers						Finance				Country code
E								F		G						H		I		
Achieving minimum proficiency (%)										Trained teachers (%)										
End of primary				End of lower secondary				Upper secondary schools with access to Internet for pedagogical purposes (%)		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Government education expenditure (% of GDP)		Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)		
Reading		Mathematics		Reading		Mathematics														
2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	
4.1.1								4.a.1		4.c.1								1.a.2		
...	44	...	21	...	...	...	...	...	56	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	9.0	8.4_{-2}	15.3	17.0_{-2}	CUB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6.0	5.4	17.2	16.4	CUW
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	93_{+1}	100_{-1}	64	66_{-1}	46_{-1}	...	46_{-1}	...	3.1	5.4	10.2	5.8_{+1}	DMA
8_{-2}	16	2_{-2}	2	28	25_{-2}	9	8_{-2}	...	86	87	100_{-3}	88	100_{-3}	79	100_{-3}	3.6	3.8_{-1}	22.3	20.9_{+1}	DOM
24_{-2}	26	14_{-2}	23	...	...	...	...	76_{+1}	88	...	90	...	81	...	76	5.1	3.7	11.6	15.5_{+1}	ECU
...	29	...	8	...	28_{-2}	...	11_{-2}	...	...	96	97	93	96	90	95	3.9	3.3	14.4	15.9_{+1}	SLV
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	64	67	42	...	42	...	4.2	5.1_{-1}	9.9	11.4_{+1}	GRD
19_{-2}	16	9_{-2}	7	...	32_{-2}	...	13_{-2}	59_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.0	3.1	24.1	17.3_{+1}	GTM
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	67	...	82	...	...	...	...	3.9	...	17.9	7.2_{+1}	GUY
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.9	1.0_{-1}	14.6	13.2_{+1}	HTI
16_{-2}	16	7_{-2}	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6.4	4.5_{-1}	24.6	...	HND
...	...	...	...	...	50_{-2}	...	26_{-2}	100_{+1}	100	93	97	...	...	...	...	5.5	5.5	20.1	17.9	JAM
43_{-2}	42	45_{-2}	38	58	53_{-2}	43	34_{-2}	51_{+1}	57_{+1}	84	91_{-3}	...	...	...	...	5.1	4.1_{-2}	19.0	14.2_{-2}	MEX
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	100	72_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	6.4	7.2_{-1}	7.6	5.7_{+1}	MSR
15_{-2}	13	3_{-2}	3	...	...	...	...	...	18_{-2}	...	59_{-1}	...	...	...	...	4.1_{i}	2.9_{-1}	22.3_{i}	11.0	NIC
21_{-2}	18	4_{-2}	3	...	42_{-2}	...	16_{-2}	...	67	99	...	94	...	98_{-1}	...	3.3	2.5_{-1}	15.2	16.3	PAN
16_{-2}	19	6_{-2}	6	...	34_{-2}	...	15_{-2}	28_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.3	3.5	18.2_{+1}	11.7_{+1}	PRY
31_{-2}	49	23_{-2}	39	...	50_{-2}	...	34_{-2}	71_{+1}	80_{-1}	...	13_{-1}	...	...	...	...	4.0	4.4	17.6	19.2	PER
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	100	72	65_{-1}	...	...	...	...	2.5	3.5_{-1}	8.8	11.0_{+1}	KNA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{-1}	...	77_{-1}	...	70_{-1}	...	66_{-1}	3.9	3.8	16.5	12.7_{+1}	LCA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	100	84	76	...	...	...	...	5.0	6.5_{-1}	17.2	12.6	VCT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.1_{-1}	3.9_{-1}	...	23.0_{-1}	SXM
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	98	100_{-3}	84	82_{-3}	50	33_{-1}	5.5	2.9_{-1}	11.4	8.6	SUR
80_{+1}	...	...	...	58	...	48	...	...	100	...	84	...	...	...	...	4.4	3.2_{-1}	12.3	12.6_{+1}	TTO
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{-1}	89_{-1}	99	...	...	...	...	3.1	2.9	14.2	9.8_{+1}	TCA
44_{-2}	44	38_{-2}	38	61	59_{-2}	48	43_{-2}	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	...	...	...	...	4.2	4.8_{-1}	14.7	15.6_{-1}	URY
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	89	...	88	...	88	...	88	...	...	...	10.3	VEN
...	92_{-3}	...	68_{-1}	50	26_{-2}	47	26_{-2}	...	67_{-3}	...	62_{-3}	...	71_{-3}	...	61_{-3}	3.4	3.1_{-1}	11.2	10.9_{-1}	ALB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	100	100	100	...	...	...	...	3.3	1.9_{-1}	10.4	12.1_{+1}	AND
98_{+1}	96_{-3}	...	84	77	75_{-2}	78	75_{-2}	100	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.5	5.3_{-2}	10.7	10.0_{-2}	AUT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	87_{+1}	100	99	99	98	99	91	95	4.8	5.0	11.5	12.3	BLR
97_{+1}	94_{-3}	88	73_{-1}	80	75_{-2}	80	75_{-2}	100	100_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	6.5	6.3_{-2}	12.0	12.0_{-2}	BEL
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	...	100_{-1}	...	100_{-1}	...	100_{-1}	...	1.5	1.9_{-1}	9.0	...	BMU
...	...	...	38_{-1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.0	3.2_{-1}	10.3_{+1}	10.2_{-3}	BIH
95_{+1}	93_{-3}	75	74_{-1}	59	47_{-2}	58	46_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.9	4.5_{-2}	10.4	12.0_{-2}	BGR
96_{+1}	99_{-3}	69	65_{-1}	89	82_{-2}	86	78_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.7	4.8_{-2}	12.4	10.7_{-2}	CAN
...	98_{-3}	67	70	80	77_{-2}	68	67_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.5_{-2}	4.1_{-3}	9.4_{-2}	8.5_{-3}	HRV
97_{+1}	96_{-3}	78	78_{-1}	78	79_{-2}	78	74_{-2}	99	99_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.7	4.3_{-2}	13.7	10.0_{-2}	CZE
...	...	...	...	85	81_{-2}	86	80_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.6_{-1}	6.4_{-2}	13.9_{-1}	14.2_{-2}	DNK
...	...	...	...	89	86_{-2}	89	85_{-2}	100	100_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.1	5.2_{-2}	12.9	13.0_{-2}	EST
98_{+1}	96_{-3}	82	76_{-1}	89	79_{-2}	86	75_{-2}	100	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.1	6.4_{-2}	12.7	12.1_{-2}	FIN
94_{+1}	94_{-3}	58	56_{-1}	79	73_{-2}	77	71_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.3_{-2}	...	9.1_{-2}	FRA
95_{+1}	94_{-3}	77	75_{-1}	84	74_{-2}	83	70_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.8	5.2_{-2}	10.7	10.7_{-2}	DEU
...	...	...	...	73	62_{-2}	64	53_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.7	3.4_{-2}	7.1	6.4_{-2}	GRC
97_{+1}	94_{-3}	75	71_{-1}	73	74_{-2}	67	65_{-1}	95	97_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.5	3.8_{-2}	8.9	7.8_{-2}	HUN
...	...	...	...	78	60_{-2}	76	66_{-2}	100	100_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.5	7.3_{-2}	17.2	15.7_{-2}	ISL
...	...	...	...	90	89_{-2}	85	81_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.6	2.9_{-3}	12.9	12.3_{-3}	IRL
98_{+1}	97_{-3}	69	69_{-1}	79	79_{-2}	62	61_{-1}	92_{+1i}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.1	4.1_{-2}	8.1	7.4_{-2}	ITA
99_{+1}	94_{-3}	...	78_{-1}	82	77_{-2}	79	78_{-2}	100_{+1}	97_{+1}	100	100_{-2}	100	100_{-2}	100	100_{-2}	5.5	4.3_{-2}	14.1	9.9_{-2}	LVA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LIE
97_{+1}	97_{-3}	81	87_{-1}	75	75_{-2}	75	72_{-2}	...	96_{+1}	95	91_{-4}	...	...	...	...	4.2	4.3_{-2}	12.0	11.7_{-2}	LTU
...	...	...	...	74	...	74	...	100	100_{-3}	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.8	3.7_{-2}	9.3	8.5_{-2}	LUX
73_{+1}	90_{-3}	...	69	64	64_{-2}	71	67_{-2}	...	...	85	84_{-3}	...	...	...	...	4.9	4.7_{-2}	13.0	12.5_{-2}	MLT

PROGRESS SINCE 2015: SELECTED INDICATORS: CONTINUED

	Participation/Completion														Gender	
	A		B						C						D	
	Adjusted net enrolment rate one year before primary entry (%)		Out-of-school rate (%)						Completion rate (%)						Gender gap in upper secondary completion rate	
			Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary			
Country or territory	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024
SDG indicator	4.2.2		4.1.4						4.1.2							
Monaco	...	92	1	0.4	4	2	17	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Montenegro	65	84$_{-1}$	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	3	1	99	99	97	98	84	88	4.3	5.7
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	99$_{i}$	98$_{-1i}$	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3	2	1	100	100	89	89	77	80	9.3	9.4
North Macedonia	42	52$_{-1}$	4	3	8	6	30	12	99	100	96	98	77	86	0.5	2.9
Norway	98$_{i}$	98$_{i}$	0.3	0.4	1	1	7	5	100	100	100	100	78	80	7.4	7.5
Poland	96$_{-1i}$	100$_{i}$	4	0.3	3	-	4	1	100	100	98	99	91	92	4.8	4.4
Portugal	96$_{i}$	100$_{-1i}$	-	-	0.1	-	2	0.1	99	100	89	94	71	82	11.3	9.0
Republic of Moldova	99	99$_{-2}$	0.2	-	2	0.1	25	5	99	99	96	97	91	93	4.0	4.1
Romania	89$_{i}$	81$_{-1i}$	7	16	9	16	19	27	99	99	93	93	79	82	-0.8	-1.2
Russian Federation	89	83$_{-1}$	1	0.1	6	0.2	7	3	100	100	99	100	90	91	2.3	3.2
San Marino	...	98	6	6	13	12	44	59	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Serbia	96	86$_{-2}$	-	1	1	1	9	12	100	100	98	99	75	82	11.5	10.0
Slovakia	81$_{i}$	93$_{i}$	6	2	3	3	10	8	100	100	99	99	93	93	0.5	0.4
Slovenia	92$_{i}$	95$_{-1i}$	2	1	2	1	3	1	99	100	99	99	91	93	5.1	4.9
Spain	98$_{i}$	99$_{i}$	1	1	1	2	5	7	98	99	92	95	70	74	11.4	12.6
Sweden	98$_{i}$	99$_{i}$	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	2	1	100	100	99	99	88	89	2.3	3.2
Switzerland	98$_{i}$	98$_{i}$	0.2	0.1	2	1	18	15	100	100	98	99	92	93	1.6	2.5
Ukraine	69	77	3	2	1	1	3	2	100	100	99	99	95	97	2.7	2.1
United Kingdom	99$_{-1i}$	...	1	0.2	1	0.4	2	4	100	100	100	100	88	90	3.3	3.3
United States	91	87$_{-2}$	2	5	2	2	6	4	100	100	99	99	92	93	2.1	2.0

Learning								Digital		Teachers						Finance			
E								F		G						H		I	
Achieving minimum proficiency (%)										Trained teachers (%)									
End of primary				End of lower secondary				Upper secondary schools with access to Internet for pedagogical purposes (%)		Primary		Lower secondary		Upper secondary		Government education expenditure (% of GDP)		Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)	
Reading		Mathematics		Reading		Mathematics													
2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024	2015	2024
4.1.1								4.a.1		4.c.1								1.a.2	

...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100_{+1}	100	...	80	...	72	...	88	1.0_{-1}	1.7_{-1}	5.0_{-1}	7.7_{-1}	MCO
...	87_{-3}	...	53_{-1}	58	47_{-2}	48	41_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MNE
99_{+1}	96_{-3}	83	83_{-1}	82	65_{-2}	83	73_{-2}	100	100_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.3	5.2_{-2}	11.7	12.0_{-2}	NLD
...	70_{-3}	...	51_{-1}	29	26_{-2}	30	34_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MKD
...	...	70	63_{-1}	85	73_{-2}	83	68_{-2}	100	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.5	5.4_{-2}	15.6	14.5_{-2}	NOR
98_{+1}	97_{-3}	80	83_{-1}	86	78_{-2}	83	77_{-2}	100	100_{-3}	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.8	4.3_{-2}	11.5	10.0_{-2}	POL
97_{+1}	94_{-3}	82	70_{-1}	83	77_{-2}	76	70_{-2}	100	97_{-3}	100	100_{-4}	...	100_{-4}	...	100_{-4}	4.9	4.6_{-2}	10.2	10.4_{-2}	PRT
...	...	...	...	54	51_{-2}	50	44_{-2}	88_{+1}	100	...	100	...	100	...	100	5.8	6.6_{-1}	18.2	16.0	MDA
...	...	...	78_{-1}	61	58_{-2}	60	51_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.1	3.3_{-2}	9.1	8.8_{-2}	ROU
99_{+1}	98_{-3}	89	91	84	...	81	...	...	...	99	96_{-1}	...	...	...	...	3.8	4.2_{-1}	10.9	...	RUS
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100	...	100	...	100	...	100	3.1	2.9_{-2}	...	13.0_{-1}	SMR
...	93_{-3}	72	74_{-1}	...	64_{-2}	...	57_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.5_{+1}	3.4_{-1}	8.7_{+1}	8.4_{-1}	SRB
93_{+1}	94_{-3}	65	73_{-1}	68	65_{-2}	72	67_{-2}	100	100_{+1}	96_{-1i}	98_{-2}	96_{-1i}	98_{-2}	95_{-1i}	98_{-2}	4.6	4.7_{-2}	10.3	10.8_{-2}	SVK
96_{+1}	94_{-3}	75	71_{-1}	85	74_{-2}	84	75_{-2}	100	100_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.0	5.3_{-2}	10.0	11.1_{-2}	SVN
97_{+1}	95_{-3}	67	62_{-1}	84	76_{-2}	78	73_{-2}	100	100	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	4.2	4.6_{-2}	9.7	9.9_{-2}	ESP
98_{+1}	95_{-3}	75	77_{-1}	82	76_{-2}	79	73_{-2}	100	100_{+1}	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.5	7.3_{-2}	15.2	15.3_{-2}	SWE
...	...	...	...	80	75_{-2}	84	81_{-2}	97	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.0	4.9_{-2}	15.4	15.4_{-2}	CHE
...	...	...	...	...	59_{-2}	...	58_{-2}	96_{+1}	98	86_{+1}	90	...	...	...	...	5.3	5.1_{-3}	12.4	12.7_{-3}	UKR
97_{+1}	97_{-3}	80	80_{-1}	82	80_{-2}	78	76_{-2}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.6	5.9_{-3}	13.5	11.8_{-3}	GBR
96_{+1}	95_{-3}	79	68_{-1}	81	80_{-2}	71	66_{-2}	100	...	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	100	100_{-1}	4.9	5.4_{-3}	13.5	11.3_{-3}	USA

TABLE 1: EDUCATION SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS AND EDUCATION EXPENDITURE

	Education systems																
	A Compulsory		B Free		C	D Duration (years)				E School-age population (in millions)				F Enrolment (in millions)			
	1 year of pre-primary	9 years of primary-secondary	1 year of pre-primary	12 years of primary-secondary	Official primary school starting age	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
SDG indicator	4.2.5	4.1.7	4.2.5	4.1.7													
Reference year	2024																
Region	% of countries				Median					Sum							
World	25	75	54	56	6	3	6	3	3	346	764	843	616	207$_i$	781$_i$	652$_i$	269$_i$
Sub-Saharan Africa	4	46	24	27	6	3	6	3	3	86$_i$	195$_i$	171$_i$	117$_i$	25$_i$	191$_i$	79$_i$	10$_i$
Northern Africa and Western Asia	8	92	61	75	6	3	6	3	3	26$_i$	65$_i$	68$_i$	47$_i$	9$_i$	62$_i$	55$_i$	24$_i$
Northern Africa	-	83	50	50	6	2	6	3	3	11	35	32	23	5	33	26	9
Western Asia	11	94	65	83	6	3	6	3	3	15$_i$	30$_i$	35$_i$	25$_i$	5$_i$	28$_i$	29$_i$	15$_i$
Central and Southern Asia	21	71	57	50	6	3	5	4	2	100	188	264	189	58	210	193	58
Central Asia	20	100	100	40	7	4	4	5	2	7	7	10	6	4	6	10	3
Southern Asia	22	56	33	56	6	2	5	3	4	93	181	253	183	54	203	183	55
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	22	78	44	44	6	3	6	3	3	69	187	185	144	61	187	170	91
Eastern Asia	29	100	71	57	6	3	6	3	3	46	120	115	90	45	120	110	68
South-eastern Asia	18	64	22	33	6	3	6	3	3	22	67	70	54	15	67	60	23$_i$
Oceania	18	65	58	67	6	2	6	4	3	2	4$_i$	4$_i$	3$_i$	1$_i$	5$_i$	4$_i$	2$_i$
Latin America and the Caribbean	54	83	71	58	6	2	6	3	2	27$_i$	59$_i$	65$_i$	53$_i$	21$_i$	61$_i$	63$_i$	31$_i$
Caribbean	27	82	53	58	5	2	6	3	2	2	4	4	3	...	2$_i$	2$_i$	1$_i$
Central America	100	86	86	57	6	3	6	3	3	9	19	19	16	...	19	17	7
South America	75	83	92	58	6	3	6	3	3	15	35	42	33	...	37	42	19$_i$
Europe and Northern America	37	93	64	74	6	3	5	3	3	37$_i$	66$_i$	87$_i$	63$_i$	31$_i$	66$_i$	89$_i$	52$_i$
Europe	40	93	61	72	6	3	5	4	3	24$_i$	39$_i$	59$_i$	39$_i$	23$_i$	39$_i$	60$_i$	33$_i$
Northern America	-	100	100	100	6	3	6	3	3	13$_i$	27$_i$	29$_i$	24$_i$	9$_i$	26$_i$	28$_i$	19$_i$
Low income	4	46	33	24	6	3	6	3	3	60$_i$	115$_i$	104$_i$	72$_i$	13$_i$	112$_i$	43$_i$	6$_i$
Middle income	22	68	48	49	6	3	6	3	3	248	570	646	471	161	589	511	204
Lower middle	18	54	37	33	6	3	6	3	3	147	326	391	278	81	343	266	76
Upper middle	26	81	59	64	6	3	6	3	3	95	236	242	185	74	237	233	119$_i$
High income	38	93	67	74	6	3	6	3	3	44$_i$	84$_i$	103$_i$	78$_i$	37$_i$	84$_i$	107$_i$	64$_i$

A Years of compulsory education, by level.
B Years of free education, by level.
C Official primary school starting age.
D Official duration of education levels in years.
E Official school-age population by level (for tertiary: the five years following upper secondary).
F Total absolute enrolment by level.
G Initial government expenditure on education as % of GDP.
H Initial government expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure.
I Initial government expenditure per pupil by level, in constant PPP US$ and as % of GDP per capita.

Note: PPP = purchasing power parity.
Source: UIS unless noted otherwise. Data refer to school year ending in 2024 unless noted otherwise.
Aggregates represent countries listed in the table with available data and may include estimates for countries with no recent data.
(-) Magnitude nil or negligible.
(...) Data not available or category not applicable.
(± n) Reference year differs (e.g. -2: reference year 2022 instead of 2024).
(i) Estimate and/or partial coverage.

Finance									
G	H	I							
		Government education expenditure per pupil							
		Constant PPP US$				% of GDP per capita			
Government education expenditure (% of GDP)	Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
	1.a.2	4.5.4							
	2024								
	Median								
4.2	12.6	4,779$_{i}$	4,436$_{i}$	5,313$_{i}$	7,262$_{i}$	15$_{i}$	17$_{i}$	19$_{i}$	22$_{i}$
3.3	14.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
4.2	12.5	3,506$_{i}$	3,651$_{i}$	5,371$_{i}$	7,634$_{i}$	9$_{i}$	15$_{i}$	18$_{i}$	15$_{i}$
6.7$_{i}$	17.3$_{i}$	...	2,380$_{i}$	4,109$_{i}$	...	...	14$_{i}$	24$_{i}$	...
3.9	12.1	3,586$_{i}$	5,560$_{i}$	5,982$_{i}$	7,656$_{i}$	9$_{i}$	15$_{i}$	18$_{i}$	14$_{i}$
4.3	18.8	1,875$_{i}$	1,405$_{i}$	1,729$_{i}$	3,219$_{i}$	11$_{i}$	13$_{i}$	17$_{i}$	19$_{i}$
5.4	22.0	3,112$_{i}$	1,011$_{i}$	1,639$_{i}$	2,500	30$_{i}$	10$_{i}$	19$_{i}$	13
3.3	11.3	195$_{i}$	1,405$_{i}$	1,927$_{i}$	3,967$_{i}$	2$_{i}$	13$_{i}$	17$_{i}$	26$_{i}$
3.5	12.4	...	...	...	9,080$_{i}$	...	...	...	17$_{i}$
3.9	13.8	5,601$_{i}$	14,223$_{i}$	17,101$_{i}$	9,080	14$_{i}$	21$_{i}$	25$_{i}$	17
2.5	12.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5.5	12.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
3.8	13.2	2,080$_{i}$	2,979$_{i}$	3,661$_{i}$	4,345$_{i}$	13$_{i}$	14$_{i}$	16$_{i}$	20$_{i}$
3.6	12.6	...	2,979$_{i}$	4,025$_{i}$	...	...	13$_{i}$	15$_{i}$	...
3.3	16.1	1,593	1,925	1,825	3,929	12	13	15	17
4.8	15.5	3,684	3,062	2,871	3,972$_{i}$	15	15	17	19$_{i}$
4.6	11.1	10,281	10,938	12,839	14,368	18	20	21	26
4.6	11.1	10,291	10,798	12,578	13,507	18	20	21	26
4.8	11.0	10,271$_{i}$	15,990$_{i}$	16,852$_{i}$	21,286	14$_{i}$	22$_{i}$	23$_{i}$	23
2.9	14.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
4.1	13.8	1,669$_{i}$	2,246$_{i}$	2,459$_{i}$	3,967$_{i}$	11$_{i}$	14$_{i}$	17$_{i}$	20$_{i}$
4.0	14.7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
4.3	13.2	2,360$_{i}$	2,901$_{i}$	3,572$_{i}$	4,345$_{i}$	12$_{i}$	15$_{i}$	17$_{i}$	19$_{i}$
4.4	12.0	9,212$_{i}$	10,798	12,578$_{i}$	14,322$_{i}$	18$_{i}$	19	20	24

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Education systems																	
	A		B		C	D				E				F				
	Compulsory		Free			Duration (years)				School-age population (in millions)				Enrolment (in millions)				
	1 year of pre-primary	9 years of primary-secondary	1 year of pre-primary	12 years of primary-secondary	Official primary school starting age	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	
SDG indicator	4.2.5	4.1.7	4.2.5	4.1.7														
Reference year	2024																	
Sub-Saharan Africa																		
Angola	1	9	1	9	6	3	6	3	3	3,660	6,544	5,428	3,601	825	5,384	2,592	343	
Benin	-	6	-	6	6	2	6	4	3	843	2,380	2,315	1,364	170	2,398	929	129	
Botswana	-	-	...	...	6	3	7	3	2	176	362	243	247	42	382	176	53	
Burkina Faso	-	10	-	10	6	3	6	4	3	1,962	3,998	4,087	2,324	154	3,068	1,189	226	
Burundi	-	-	3	9	6	3	6	3	4	1,285	2,500	2,551	1,303	233	2,516	590	83	
Cabo Verde	-	10	-	8	6	3	6	3	3	25	59	59	46	20	61	56	...	
Cameroon	-	6	-	6	6	2	6	4	3	1,715	4,739	4,706	2,776	644	5,290	2,007	448	
Central African Republic	-	10	-	13	6	3	6	4	3	538	983	1,017	578	...	...	...	...	
Chad	-	10	-	10	6	3	6	4	3	2,066	3,551	3,361	1,946	38	3,050	765	68	
Comoros	-	6	3	13	6	3	5	4	3	68	107	134	82	29	102	68	...	
Congo	-	10	3	13	6	3	6	4	3	525	1,010	1,056	576	26	881	...	55	
Côte d'Ivoire	-	10	-	10	6	3	6	4	3	2,716	5,271	5,169	2,934	288	4,818	3,276	347	
D. R. Congo	-	6	-	6	6	3	6	2	4	11,243	19,240	15,406	10,293	838	21,146	7,928	564	
Djibouti	-	10	1	12	6	2	5	4	3	...	...	...	117	7	70	69	...	
Equat. Guinea	-	6	-	6	7	3	6	4	2	148	274	233	157	...	...	...	...	
Eritrea	-	8	-	8	6	2	5	3	4	180	437	613	401	56	398	267	...	
Eswatini	-	7	-	7	6	3	7	3	2	84	192	132	123	...	222	...	...	
Ethiopia	-	8	-	8	7	3	6	4	2	11,018	19,235	17,895	13,758	4,476	15,927	...	...	
Gabon	-	10	-	10	6	3	5	4	3	198	310	375	220	...	...	...	...	
Gambia	-	9	-	9	7	4	6	3	3	300	441	389	269	148	443	370	27	
Ghana	2	9	2	9	6	2	6	3	3	1,667	4,948	4,499	3,314	1,862	4,984	3,334	693	
Guinea	-	6	-	6	7	3	6	4	3	1,262	2,307	2,330	1,404	202	2,108	...	...	
Guinea-Bissau	-	9	...	...	6	3	6	3	3	175	339	310	223	...	...	...	...	
Kenya	-	12	-	12	6	3	6	2	4	4,162	8,163	8,188	6,027	2,886	8,043	6,737	611	
Lesotho	-	7	-	7	6	3	7	3	2	158	386	255	231	47	309	...	...	
Liberia	-	6	-	6	6	3	6	3	3	455	873	820	584	247	570	275	...	
Madagascar	-	5	3	12	6	3	5	4	3	2,706	4,072	5,132	3,194	1,052	5,294	1,624	190	
Malawi	-	8	-	8	6	3	6	4	2	1,825	3,437	3,282	2,346	525	4,748	1,161	95	
Mali	-	9	3	12	7	3	6	3	3	2,355	4,287	3,587	2,375	166	2,973	1,305	...	
Mauritania	-	9	3	13	6	3	6	4	3	474	862	857	489	...	892	259	24	
Mauritius	-	12	-	13	5	2	6	3	4	26	78	107	93	27	85	100	44	
Mozambique	-	-	...	...	6	3	7	3	2	3,333	6,881	4,171	3,440	...	7,656	...	...	
Namibia	-	7	-	7	7	2	7	3	2	158	501	297	260	55	590	236	68	
Niger	-	-	...	...	7	3	6	4	3	2,625	4,763	4,537	2,532	194	3,003	870	...	
Nigeria	-	9	-	9	6	1	6	3	3	6,421	37,733	34,054	24,054	2,314	33,415	15,199	...	
Rwanda	-	6	-	9	6	3	6	3	3	1,018	2,039	1,872	1,500	605	3,007	902	130	
Sao Tome and Principe	-	6	-	6	6	3	6	3	3	18	35	34	25	...	...	...	...	
Senegal	-	11	-	10	6	3	6	4	3	1,444	2,771	3,019	1,856	344	2,351	1,283	280	
Seychelles	-	11	-	11	6	2	6	3	4	4	10	12	8	3	10	8	1	
Sierra Leone	-	9	-	9	6	3	6	3	4	684	1,286	1,389	868	178	2,068	1,162	...	
Somalia	-	8	...	...	6	3	4	4	4	1,981	2,361	3,726	1,886	...	465	116	...	
South Africa	-	9	-	12	7	4	7	2	3	4,710	7,343	5,434	5,098	818	7,521	5,500	1,193	
South Sudan	-	8	-	8	6	3	6	2	4	886	1,779	1,965	1,386	158	1,823	2,352	...	
Togo	-	10	-	5	6	3	6	4	3	792	1,472	1,526	884	231	1,658	915	115	
Uganda	-	7	...	...	6	3	7	4	2	4,691	9,749	7,320	5,230	...	...	...	...	
United Republic of Tanzania	-	7	1	13	7	1	7	4	2	2,041	12,661	9,156	6,478	1,677	11,391	2,831	252	
Zambia	-	7	-	7	7	4	7	2	3	2,460	3,940	2,512	2,111	652	4,489	1,387	...	
Zimbabwe	-	7	...	...	6	2	7	2	4	897	3,133	2,456	1,695	651	2,939	...	128	

Finance										
G	H	I								
		Government education expenditure per pupil								
		Constant PPP US$				% of GDP per capita				
Government education expenditure (% of GDP)	Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Country code
	1.a.2	4.5.4								
	2024									
2.5-1	6.5+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	AGO
3.2-1	18.0+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BEN
8.1-4	21.5-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BWA
5.3-1	20.3-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BFA
4.5+1	10.3+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BDI
4.3-1	13.4	48	1,822	1,274	...	0.5	18	13	...	CPV
2.8-1	13.8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CMR
1.8-1	10.0-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CAF
3.2-1	16.5-1	4-3	29,207	...	2,383-4	0.1-3	1,010	...	85-4	TCD
2.3-1	11.5+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	COM
3.3-1	14.7-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	COG
3.6	17.6	830	767	927	4,660	11	10	12	62	CIV
2.8-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	COD
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	DJI
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GNQ
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ERI
6.0	19.2+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SWZ
2.3	16.7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ETH
2.3-1	13.6-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GAB
2.8-1	14.2+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GMB
2.9-2	13.2-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GHA
1.7-1	9.2+1	...	256-4	...	...	...	6-4	...	...	GIN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GNB
4.0	28.5+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	KEN
6.6	10.4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LSO
2.3-1	7.4-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LBR
3.0-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MDG
2.7-2	16.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MWI
4.2-1	17.8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MLI
7.6	31.9	...	795	590-4	4,165-4	...	11	9-4	63-4	MRT
4.2	14.2	1,530	3,967	9,094	2,727	5	14	33	10	MUS
6.0-2	20.4-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MOZ
9.1	24.6+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NAM
4.1-1	12.8-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NER
0.3-1	3.0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NGA
4.6	13.9+1	594	213	665	2,813	18	6	20	86	RWA
5.0-1	18.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	STP
6.2-1	20.9+1	286-2	674-2	1,490-2	5,017-2	6-2	14-2	32-2	107-2	SEN
4.5-1	10.7+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SYC
2.6-1	20.5+1	--2	341-3	231-3	...	--2	11-3	7-3	...	SLE
--1	8.1+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SOM
6.0	19.1+1	1,139	3,017	3,342	9,131	8	21	23	62	ZAF
...	-	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SSD
4.1-1	11.6	616	200	...	...	19	6	...	...	TGO
2.6-2	8.5-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	UGA
3.2	13.4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TZA
4.1-1	14.5+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ZMB
0.4-1	17.9+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ZWE

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Education systems																	
	A		B		C	D				E				F				
	Compulsory		Free			Duration (years)				School-age population (in millions)				Enrolment (in millions)				
	1 year of pre-primary	9 years of primary-secondary	1 year of pre-primary	12 years of primary-secondary	Official primary school starting age	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	
SDG indicator	4.2.5	4.1.7	4.2.5	4.1.7														
Reference year	2024																	
Northern Africa and Western Asia																		
Algeria	-	10	1	12	6	1	5	4	3	987	5,021	6,011	3,174	604	5,296	6,072	1,659	
Armenia	-	12	3	12	6	3	4	5	3	105	153	320	180	61	161	290	97	
Azerbaijan	-	9	...	11	6	3	4	5	2	421	588	1,180	722	202	604	1,063	289	
Bahrain	-	9	-	12	6	3	6	3	3	58	127	113	97	31	122	109	54	
Cyprus	1	9	1	12	6	3	6	3	3	29i	58i	57i	49i	27	61	61	59	
Egypt	-	12	-	12	6	2	6	3	3	4,719	15,828	14,064	10,164	1,478	15,402	11,563	3,866	
Georgia	-	9	2	12	6	4	6	3	3	194	345	313	213	...	342	307	191	
Iraq	-	6	2	12	6	2	6	3	3	2,200	6,777	6,378	4,471	...	...	...	...	
Israel	3	12	3	12	6	3	6	3	3	553i	1,085i	979i	757i	569	1,048	948	411	
Jordan	-	10	1	12	6	2	6	4	2	418	1,147	1,135	1,193	164	1,116	1,028	421	
Kuwait	-	9	-	12	6	2	5	4	3	115	317	440	248	60	265	...	122	
Lebanon	-	10	3	9	6	3	6	3	3	267	627	665	496	199	534	418	265	
Libya	-	9	2	12	6	2	6	3	3	262	832	838	648	...	...	...	...	
Morocco	-	9	-	9	6	2	6	3	3	1,283	3,921	4,007	3,019	913	4,607	3,573	1,440	
Oman	-	10	-	12	6	2	4	6	2	185	387	606	324	100	358	542	132	
Qatar	-	12	-	12	6	3	6	3	3	97	192	154	139	51	180	151	50	
Saudi Arabia	-	9	-	12	6	3	6	3	3	1,590	3,323	3,076	2,491	430	3,446	3,364	2,010	
State of Palestine (the)	-	10	1	12	6	2	4	5	3	286	575	1,019	522	170	515	868	224	
Sudan	-	8	2	11	6	2	6	3	3	2,929	7,862	6,941	5,055	...	...	...	...	
Syrian Arab Republic	-	9	3	12	6	3	6	3	3	1,367	2,552	3,509	2,900	149	2,172	1,356	...	
Tunisia	-	9	-	11	6	3	6	3	4	548	1,274	1,344	808	...	1,338	...	306	
Türkiye	-	12	3	12	6	3	4	4	4	3,498	5,227	10,570	6,178	2,033	5,536	12,314	6,995	
United Arab Emirates	-	12	2	12	6	2	4	4	4	247	496	874	710	244	586	894	368	
Yemen	-	9	-	9	6	3	6	3	3	3,714	6,462	5,338	3,911	...	...	...	...	
Central and Southern Asia																		
Afghanistan	-	9	1	12	7	1	6	3	3	1,255	6,991	6,008	4,418	...	7,507	3,429	431	
Bangladesh	-	5	-	5	6	3	5	3	4	9,787	15,645	23,115	16,799	3,496	16,687	15,068	3,947	
Bhutan	-	-	-	11	6	3	6	4	2	29	67	78	72	14	92	68	11	
India	-	8	-	8	6	3	5	3	4	66,019	113,590	167,304	127,451	37,890	126,117	133,156	43,899	
Iran, Islamic Republic of	-	9	-	9	6	1	6	3	3	1,291	9,052	8,114	6,004	1,025	9,085	6,618	3,342	
Kazakhstan	-	9	3	11	6	3	4	5	2	1,302	1,620	2,637	1,455	982	1,577	2,575	769	
Kyrgyzstan	1	9	4	11	7	4	4	5	2	649	637	992	552	283	630	910	297	
Maldives	2	10	2	12	6	2	6	4	2	13	43	45	29	14	44	33	17	
Nepal	1	8	1	12	5	2	5	3	4	1,099	2,773	4,012	2,932	1,362	3,565	3,669	633	
Pakistan	-	12	-	12	5	2	5	3	4	12,579	30,360	41,321	25,170	9,948	25,376	19,700	2,683	
Sri Lanka	-	11	-	13	5	2	5	4	4	652	1,676	2,861	1,771	439	1,576	2,537	358	
Tajikistan	-	9	4	11	7	4	4	5	2	1,060	1,062	1,550	847	105	1,008	1,289	304	
Turkmenistan	-	12	3	12	6	3	4	6	2	484	664	1,118	492	157	631	1,003	102	
Uzbekistan	-	11	4	13	7	4	4	5	2	3,247	2,823	4,446	2,608	2,350	3,412	4,362	1,560	

Finance										
G	H	I								
		Government education expenditure per pupil								
		Constant PPP US$				% of GDP per capita				
Government education expenditure (% of GDP)	Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Country code
	1.a.2	4.5.4								
	2024									
9.0	15.5+1	...	3,697	6,643	7,262	...	22	39	42	DZA
2.4-1	8.7+1	4,577-1	2,616-1	2,587-1	1,507-1	21-1	12-1	12-1	7-1	ARM
3.7-1	11.9+1	3,425-1	2,158-1	4,098-1	7,634-1	14-1	9-1	17-1	32-1	AZE
1.9-1	8.3+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BHR
4.7-2	12.5-2	5,232-2	15,147-2	17,488-2	7,677-2	9-2	27-2	31-2	14-2	CYP
...	...	1,239-2	1,062-2	1,575-3	...	7-2	6-2	10-3	...	EGY
4.0	12.2	...	...	...	1,280-3	...	...	...	6-3	GEO
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	IRQ
5.9-2	16.1-2	7,157-2	12,652-2	10,131-2	8,030-2	13-2	23-2	19-2	15-2	ISR
3.2	9.8	123	1,527	1,741	891	1	14	16	8	JOR
6.4	13.8+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	KWT
1.2	8.6+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LBN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LBY
6.0-1	23.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MAR
4.4-2	14.2-2	904-2	7,515-2	7,866-2	33,222-4	2-2	17-2	18-2	80-4	OMN
3.2-4	9.3-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	QAT
4.5-1	15.6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SAU
5.4-3	...	...	...	...	428-3	...	...	...	7-3	PSE
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SDN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SYR
6.7-1	17.3+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TUN
3.1-2	11.3-2	3,586-2	3,605-2	3,630-2	9,049-2	9-2	9-2	9-2	22-2	TUR
3.9-3	14.8-3	...	12,364-3	17,834-3	13,648-3	...	17-3	24-3	18-3	ARE
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	YEM
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	AFG
2.0	11.9+1	...	...	476-4	1,216-4	...	...	6-4	17-4	BGD
5.8-1	22.2+1	...	...	...	3,967-1	...	...	...	26-1	BTN
4.1-2	14.2-2	238-4	1,156-3	1,429-3	4,491-3	3-4	15-3	18-3	57-3	IND
2.8-1	18.8-2	153-4	1,655-4	2,426-4	3,086-2	1-4	11-4	16-4	19-2	IRN
4.9-1	22.0	...	98	...	3,219	...	0.3	...	9	KAZ
6.8-1	19.6	1,875	...	2,029	727	24	...	26	9	KGZ
5.2-1	9.6+1	2,624	3,497	4,795	...	11	14	20	...	MDV
3.7	10.8+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NPL
1.9-1	9.8-1	...	...	...	5,632-1	...	...	...	95-1	PAK
1.8-1	7.2	-	1,024	...	...	-	6	...	...	LKA
5.4-1	19.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TJK
4.3	27.6	6,925	...	...	4,857	35	...	...	24	TKM
5.5-1	22.1	3,112-3	1,923-3	1,249-3	1,782-3	30-3	19-3	12-3	17-3	UZB

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Education systems																	
	A		B		C	D				E				F				
	Compulsory		Free			Duration (years)				School-age population (in millions)				Enrolment (in millions)				
	1 year of pre-primary	9 years of primary-secondary	1 year of pre-primary	12 years of primary-secondary	Official primary school starting age	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	
SDG indicator	4.2.5	4.1.7	4.2.5	4.1.7														
Reference year	2024																	
Eastern and South-eastern Asia																		
Brunei Darussalam	-	9	...	...	6	3	6	2	5	19	40	44	35	12	38	41	13	
Cambodia	-	-	-	9	6	3	6	3	3	1,095	2,107	1,995	1,514	401	2,266	1,172	316	
China	-	9	-	9	6	3	6	3	3	36,567	105,163	105,609	79,223	40,934	108,567	97,983	60,669	
DPR Korea	1	11	1	11	7	2	5	3	3	684	1,674	1,948	1,693	...	...	...	...	
Hong Kong, China	-	9	-	12	6	3	6	3	3	128	309	341	273	138	330	341	292	
Indonesia	-	9	-	12	7	2	6	3	3	9,008	28,578	28,646	22,190	5,188	28,684	27,835	9,852	
Japan	-	9	3	9	6	3	6	3	3	2,621i	5,980i	6,440i	5,916i	2,697	6,246	6,610	3,883	
Lao PDR	-	9	-	9	6	3	5	4	3	476	794	1,053	716	232	740	532	46	
Macao, China	1	9	3	12	6	3	6	3	3	16	40	34	40	16	38	32	56	
Malaysia	-	6	-	11	6	2	6	3	3	941	3,346	3,321	3,014	936	3,055	2,641	1,168	
Mongolia	-	12	4	12	6	4	5	4	3	283	403	488	230	265	380	413	150	
Myanmar	-	5	-	5	5	2	5	4	2	1,764	4,473	5,249	4,394	...	...	...	...	
Philippines	1	12	1	12	6	1	6	4	2	2,152	13,757	14,032	10,867	2,045	13,061	11,866	5,140	
Republic of Korea	-	9	3	12	6	3	6	3	3	885i	2,485i	2,764i	2,440i	847	2,506	2,660	2,730	
Singapore	-	6	...	...	6	3	6	2	2	138	270	180	363	105	239	164	194	
Thailand	-	9	3	12	6	3	6	3	3	2,100	4,414	4,624	4,413	1,475	4,446	4,258	2,166	
Timor-Leste	-	9	-	9	6	3	6	3	3	95	197	183	156	27	228	162	47	
Viet Nam	1	9	-	5	6	3	5	4	3	4,361	8,000	11,480	6,760	4,132	8,876	9,615	2,488	
Oceania																		
Australia	-	11	1	13	5	2	7	4	2	611i	2,279i	2,005i	1,692i	609	2,270	2,645	1,834	
Cook Islands	-	12	2	13	5	2	6	4	3	0.4	1	2	1	0.4	2	2	0.1	
Fiji	-	-	...	...	6	3	6	4	3	49	103	116	76	18	114	114	56	
Kiribati	-	9	-	9	6	3	6	3	4	10	18	19	11	10	17	17	1	
Marshall Islands	1	12	1	12	6	1	6	2	4	1	5	6	4	1	5	5	1	
Micronesia, F. S.	-	8	-	8	6	3	6	2	4	7	14	14	11	2	12	...	...	
Nauru	2	12	2	12	6	2	6	4	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	...	
New Zealand	-	10	2	13	5	2	6	4	3	125i	396i	492i	325i	110	383	562	251	
Niue	-	11	1	12	5	1	6	4	3	-	0.2	0.2	0.1	-	0.2	0.2	...	
Palau	-	12	-	12	6	3	6	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Papua New Guinea	-	-	...	...	7	4	6	4	2	974	1,393	1,292	995	435	1,655	655	...	
Samoa	-	8	-	8	5	2	6	2	5	11	35	36	19	5	35	...	3	
Solomon Is	-	-	...	...	6	3	6	3	4	62	122	125	78	37	99	...	...	
Tokelau	-	11	...	...	5	2	6	5	2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	...	
Tonga	2	13	-	8	6	2	6	4	3	5	14	17	11	2	16	16	3	
Tuvalu	-	9	3	13	6	3	6	4	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0.2	
Vanuatu	-	-	...	...	6	2	6	4	3	18	51	49	27	16	56	61	...	
Latin America and the Caribbean																		
Anguilla	-	12	-	12	5	2	7	3	2	0.3	1	1	1	0.3	1	1	...	
Antigua and Barbuda	-	11	-	11	5	2	7	3	2	2	7	6	6	...	9	7	...	
Argentina	2	12	3	12	6	3	6	3	3	1,670	4,377	4,385	3,477	1,565	4,580	4,562	3,737	
Aruba	2	11	2	11	6	2	6	2	3	2	8	7	7	2	8	8	1	
Bahamas	-	12	2	12	5	2	6	3	3	9	28	33	29	4	27	27	...	
Barbados	-	11	2	11	5	2	6	3	2	6	19	17	18	5	16	18	9	
Belize	-	8	2	8	5	2	6	4	2	14	46	44	39	7	45	38	10	
Bolivia, P. S.	2	12	2	12	6	2	6	2	4	496	1,472	1,444	1,146	334	1,377	1,302	...	
Brazil	2	12	2	12	6	2	5	4	3	5,797i	14,485i	20,641i	15,133i	5,304	15,108	21,496	10,553	
British Virgin Islands	-	12	-	12	5	2	7	3	3	1	3	3	3	0.5	2	2	1	
Cayman Islands	1	11	2	12	5	2	6	3	3	2	5	5	4	1	4	4	...	
Chile	-	12	2	12	6	3	6	2	4	712i	1,478i	1,553i	1,234i	544	1,491	1,633	1,373	

Finance										
G	H	I								
		Government education expenditure per pupil								
		Constant PPP US$				% of GDP per capita				
Government education expenditure (% of GDP)	Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Country code
	1.a.2	4.5.4								
	2024									
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BRN
2.2-1	11.6+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	KHM
3.9-1	11.9-1	1,868-1	3,974-1	5,146-1	4,918-1	7-1	16-1	20-1	20-1	CHN
...	14.6+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PRK
3.8	15.7	7,955	14,223	17,101	18,883	12	21	25	27	HKG
1.3-1	10.6+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	IDN
3.3-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	JPN
1.2-1	8.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LAO
3.5-1	12.3-2	...	...	...	19,471-1	...	...	...	17-1	MAC
3.5-1	14.1-1	1,626-1	6,440-1	6,173-1	6,391-1	4-1	18-1	17-1	18-1	MYS
5.2	13.8	3,248	...	...	582	17	...	...	3	MNG
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MMR
4.0+1	15.2+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PHL
5.4-2	...	14,093-2	19,558-2	25,220-2	9,080-2 i	25-2	35-2	45-2	16-2 i	KOR
2.2	12.0+1	...	18,612-1	22,155-1	20,236-1	...	13-1	15-1	14-1	SGP
2.5-1	12.6+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	THA
5.2-1	4.3+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TLS
2.9-2	15.4-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	VNM
5.1-2	12.6-2	9,308-2	13,242-2	13,103-2	11,025-2	13-2	19-2	19-2	16-2	AUS
4.4-1	9.2+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	COK
4.2-1	13.8+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	FJI
16.4-1	20.1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	KIR
7.7-2	11.3-2	2,135-2	1,652-2	1,192-2	1,000-2	28-2	22-2	16-2	13-2	MHL
11.6-4	18.6-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	FSM
5.8-1	6.6+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NRU
5.2-1	12.7-1	9,173-1	9,879-1	9,238-1	13,145-1	17-1	18-1	17-1	24-1	NZL
...	5.6+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NIU
3.4-1	9.1+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PLW
0.8-1	3.5-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PNG
5.5	11.7+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	WSM
8.3-1	25.2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SLB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TKL
5.3-2	9.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TON
12.8-1	16.8+1	871-1	1,207-1	1,355-1	...	14-1	20-1	22-1	...	TUV
7.6	19.3	255	461	498-1	...	7	13	14-1	...	VUT
2.5-2	10.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	AIA
3.1-1	5.9+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ATG
5.0-1	13.2-1	4,779-1	4,531-1	5,313-1	3,600-1	16-1	15-1	18-1	12-1	ARG
3.6-3	11.0-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ABW
2.7-1	10.6+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BHS
3.6	14.2+1	...	4,436-1	3,699-1	...	...	22-1	19-1	...	BRB
4.6	18.9	2,360-1	2,360-1	2,307-1	2,360-1	18-1	18-1	17-1	18-1	BLZ
7.5	20.2	1,524	3,062	2,531	...	14	28	23	...	BOL
5.6-2	12.9-2	...	3,926-2	4,233-2	4,345-2	...	19-2	21-2	21-2	BRA
3.2-1	13.6+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	VGB
1.6-1	...	...	9,077-1	11,397-1	...	...	10-1	13-1	...	CYM
4.9-2	18.4-2	6,807-2	5,140-2	6,274-2	6,411-2	21-2	16-2	19-2	20-2	CHL

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Education systems																	
	A		B		C	D				E				F				
	Compulsory		Free			Duration (years)				School-age population (in millions)				Enrolment (in millions)				
	1 year of pre-primary	9 years of primary-secondary	1 year of pre-primary	12 years of primary-secondary	Official primary school starting age	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	
SDG indicator	4.2.5	4.1.7	4.2.5	4.1.7														
Reference year	2024																	
Colombia	1	11	3	11	6	3	5	4	2	2,297i	4,005i	5,081i	4,427i	1,901	4,140	4,849	2,466	
Costa Rica	2	11	2	11	6	2	6	3	2	111i	426i	379i	381i	124	460	464	...	
Cuba	-	9	3	12	6	3	6	3	3	304	698	732	606	334	698	662	273	
Curaçao	2	12	...	...	6	3	6	4	2	4	12	13	11	3	10	11	...	
Dominica	-	12	-	12	5	2	7	3	2	1	6	4	4	1	5	4	...	
Dominican Republic	3	12	3	12	6	3	6	3	3	562	1,140	1,128	923	343	1,165	864	533	
Ecuador	3	12	3	12	6	3	6	3	3	835i	1,858i	1,941i	1,548i	580	1,724	1,791	1,093	
El Salvador	3	9	3	12	7	3	6	3	3	298	649	671	574	202	595	417	196	
Grenada	-	12	2	12	5	2	7	3	2	3	10	9	8	4	12	9	...	
Guatemala	3	9	3	12	7	3	6	3	3	1,153	2,401	2,289	1,871	664	2,423	1,130	505	
Guyana	-	6	-	6	6	2	6	3	2	33	97	77	70	31	95	70	18	
Haiti	-	6	-	6	6	3	6	3	4	735	1,468	1,668	1,111	...	...	...	...	
Honduras	1	11	3	11	6	3	6	3	2	680	1,310	1,068	1,060	214	1,028	552	248	
Jamaica	-	6	-	6	6	3	6	3	2	99	211	203	228	104	211	177	...	
Mexico	2	12	2	12	6	3	6	3	3	6,251i	12,900i	13,572i	11,189i	4,254	13,195	13,992	5,393	
Montserrat	-	12	-	12	5	2	7	3	2	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3	...	
Nicaragua	1	6	-	11	6	3	6	3	2	394	800	666	640	264	880	464	191	
Panama	2	9	2	12	6	2	6	3	3	145	465	451	362	94	451	...	192	
Paraguay	1	12	3	12	6	3	6	3	3	407	803	730	574	217	710	571	...	
Peru	3	11	3	11	6	3	6	3	2	1,619	3,267	2,843	2,880	1,515	3,707	3,105	...	
Saint Kitts and Nevis	-	12	-	12	5	2	7	3	2	1	4	3	3	1	5	4	...	
Saint Lucia	-	10	-	10	5	2	7	3	2	4	15	11	13	3	14	10	2	
Saint Vincent/Grenadines	-	12	2	12	5	2	7	3	2	2	10	8	7	3	12	10	2	
Sint Maarten	2	11	2	11	6	3	6	2	3	1	3	3	3	0.2	4	...	0.2	
Suriname	-	6	...	...	6	2	6	4	3	21	65	77	54	18	61	64	1	
Trinidad and Tobago	-	7	...	...	5	2	7	3	2	34	127	95	94	25	126	91	22	
Turks and Caicos Islands	2	11	2	11	6	2	6	3	2	1	3	2	3	1	4	3	1	
Uruguay	2	12	2	12	6	3	6	3	3	135	274	281	247	112	288	338	202	
Venezuela, B. R.	3	11	3	11	6	3	6	3	2	1,260	3,020	2,747	2,653	1,675	3,543	2,699	...	
Europe and Northern America																		
Albania	-	9	3	12	6	3	5	4	3	66	122	187	137	67	141	209	120	
Andorra	-	10	-	10	6	3	6	4	2	1	4	5	5	2	4	5	3	
Austria	1	12	1	12	6	3	4	4	4	266i	364i	702i	478i	276	369	707	442	
Belarus	-	11	-	11	6	3	4	5	2	246	433	787	452	285	444	730	306	
Belgium	1	12	3	12	6	3	6	2	4	365i	790i	838i	679i	432	814	1,183	551	
Bermuda	-	13	1	13	5	1	6	3	4	1	3	5	3	1	3	3	1	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	9	-	9	6	3	5	4	4	79	138	247	168	29	142	227	77	
Bulgaria	3	9	4	12	7	4	4	3	5	235i	246i	512i	281i	217	235	485	196	
Canada	-	10	1	12	6	3	6	3	3	1,186i	2,640i	2,727i	2,584i	565	2,431	2,704	1,837	
Croatia	-	8	-	8	7	4	4	4	4	140i	143i	312i	195i	116	147	326	159	
Czechia	1	9	-	13	6	3	5	4	4	347i	588i	964i	526i	376	579	919	339	
Denmark	-	10	-	10	6	3	7	3	3	188i	433i	416i	368i	183	432	522	291	
Estonia	-	9	-	12	7	4	6	3	3	59i	91i	95i	68i	...	89	103	44	
Finland	1	11	1	12	7	4	6	3	3	199i	364i	382i	307i	183	360	543	339	
France	3	10	3	12	6	3	5	4	3	2,171i	3,989i	6,043i	4,025i	2,334	4,126	6,272	2,879	
Germany	-	13	-	13	6	3	4	6	3	2,373i	3,220i	6,952i	4,266i	2,614	3,305	6,969	3,272	
Greece	1	9	2	12	6	2	6	3	3	167i	557i	654i	538i	174	579	688	873	
Hungary	3	10	3	12	7	4	4	4	4	374i	374i	759i	513i	314	385	815	310	
Iceland	-	10	...	10	6	3	7	3	4	15	32	35	26	13	32	37	20	
Ireland	-	10	...	10	5	2	8	3	2	120i	563i	376i	329i	103	549	457	247	

Finance										
G	H	I								
		Government education expenditure per pupil								
		Constant PPP US$				% of GDP per capita				
Government education expenditure (% of GDP)	Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Country code
	1.a.2	4.5.4								
	2024									
5.3-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	COL
5.3-1	20.4-1	5,743-1	5,724-1	5,630-1	14,275-1	20-1	20-1	20-1	51-1	CRI
8.4-2	17.0-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CUB
5.4	16.4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CUW
5.4	5.8+1	507-4	2,708-4	4,188-4	--4	3-4	14-4	22-4	--4	DMA
3.8-1	20.9+1	2,647-1	5,019-1	3,572-1	...	10-1	19-1	14-1	...	DOM
3.7	15.5+1	4,916-1	1,817-1	1,057-1	2,988-2	31-1	11-1	7-1	19-2	ECU
3.3	15.9+1	1,237	1,925	2,004	1,381	10	15	15	11	SLV
5.1-1	11.4+1	1,226-1	2,481-1	1,957-1	...	6-1	13-1	10-1	...	GRD
3.1	17.3+1	1,669	1,853	819	1,783-1	12	13	6	13-1	GTM
...	7.2+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GUY
1.0-1	13.2+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	HTI
4.5-1	...	1,518	1,511	1,646	...	21	21	23	...	HND
5.5	17.9	875	2,901	3,661	...	8	26	33	...	JAM
4.1-2	14.2-2	3,084-2	3,140-2	3,301-3	4,963-2	13-2	13-2	14-3	20-2	MEX
7.2-1	5.7+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MSR
2.9-1	11.0	271-1	887-1	484-1	2,894-1	3-1	11-1	6-1	35-1	NIC
2.5-1	16.3	...	4,145-1	...	5,189-2	...	10-1	...	14-2	PAN
3.5	11.7+1	2,080	2,263	2,492	...	12	13	14	...	PRY
4.4	19.2	2,603	2,228	2,871	...	15	13	17	...	PER
3.5-1	11.0+1	...	2,011-3	3,862-3	...	...	7-3	13-3	...	KNA
3.8	12.7+1	--1	3,058-1	5,312-1	6,117-1	--1	12-1	22-1	25-1	LCA
6.5-1	12.6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	VCT
3.9-1	23.0-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SXM
2.9-1	8.6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SUR
3.2-1	12.6+1	410-1	3,185-1	4,537-1	...	1-1	9-1	13-1	...	TTO
2.9	9.8+1	7,491-3	2,325-2	4,328-2	10,046-2	35-3	9-2	16-2	37-2	TCA
4.8-1	15.6-1	4,764-1	4,774-1	4,975-1	7,146-1	14-1	14-1	14-1	21-1	URY
...	10.3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	VEN
3.1-1	10.9-1	4,866-1	4,131-1	1,705-1	3,951-1	23-1	19-1	8-1	19-1	ALB
1.9-1	12.1+1	7,606-1	6,316-1	6,692-1	2,571-1	11-1	9-1	9-1	4-1	AND
5.3-2	10.0-2	13,224-2	16,667-2	17,694-2	26,388-2	18-2	23-2	25-2	37-2	AUT
5.0	12.3	11,612	...	11,108	9,859	36	...	34	31	BLR
6.3-2	12.0-2	12,736-2	15,003-2	16,031-2	22,551-2	18-2	22-2	23-2	33-2	BEL
1.9-1	...	...	...	...	21,286-1	...	...	...	20-1	BMU
3.2-1	10.2-3	...	...	...	6,541-3	...	...	...	31-3	BIH
4.5-2	12.0-2	11,657-2	9,259-2	8,641-2	7,533-2	32-2	25-2	24-2	21-2	BGR
4.8-2	10.7-2	...	...	...	14,368-2	...	...	...	23-2	CAN
4.1-3	8.5-3	...	8,325-3	...	7,022-3	...	20-3	...	17-3	HRV
4.3-2	10.0-2	9,249-2	8,621-2	13,420-2	13,452-2	17-2	16-2	25-2	25-2	CZE
6.4-2	14.2-2	9,613-2	14,636-2	14,676-2	30,309-2	13-2	20-2	20-2	42-2	DNK
5.2-2	13.0-2	...	10,571-2	9,030-2	14,420-2	...	22-2	18-2	29-2	EST
6.4-2	12.1-2	13,419-2	12,657-2	14,915-2	16,125-2	21-2	20-2	24-2	26-2	FIN
5.3-2	9.1-2	11,192-2	11,079-2	14,204-2	14,752-2	19-2	19-2	25-2	25-2	FRA
5.2-2	10.7-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	DEU
3.4-2	6.4-2	6,508-2	6,747-2	6,800-2	4,559-2	16-2	17-2	17-2	11-2	GRC
3.8-2	7.8-2	7,937-2	7,191-2	7,082-2	12,630-2	17-2	16-2	15-2	28-2	HUN
7.3-2	15.7-2	21,231-2	19,377-2	14,996-2	17,580-2	28-2	26-2	20-2	24-2	ISL
2.9-3	12.3-3	...	11,813-3	13,175-3	19,431-3	...	9-3	10-3	15-3	IRL

TABLE 1: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Education systems																	
	A		B		C	D				E				F				
	Compulsory		Free			Duration (years)				School-age population (in millions)				Enrolment (in millions)				
	1 year of pre-primary	9 years of primary-secondary	1 year of pre-primary	12 years of primary-secondary	Official primary school starting age	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	
SDG indicator	4.2.5	4.1.7	4.2.5	4.1.7														
Reference year	2024																	
Italy	-	12	-	8	6	3	5	3	5	1,297i	2,477i	4,555i	2,947i	1,288	2,625	4,606	2,217	
Latvia	2	9	4	12	7	4	6	3	3	78i	127i	122i	89i	76	124	124	74	
Liechtenstein	-	10	2	13	7	2	5	4	3	1	2	3	2	1	2	3	1	
Lithuania	1	10	1	12	7	4	4	6	2	109i	120i	233i	133i	30	121	245	101	
Luxembourg	2	10	3	13	6	3	6	3	4	21i	43i	49i	37i	23	43	54	8	
Malta	-	11	2	13	5	2	6	3	4	9i	28i	32i	26i	10	27	32	21	
Monaco	-	11	3	12	6	3	5	4	3	1	2	2	2	1	2	3	1	
Montenegro	-	9	-	13	6	3	5	4	4	22	39	65	39	18	39	57	21	
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	1	12	2	12	6	3	6	3	3	523i	1,092i	1,172i	1,133i	488	1,143	1,611	985	
North Macedonia	-	13	-	13	6	3	5	4	4	58	107	171	103	29	105	150	58	
Norway	-	10	-	10	6	3	7	3	3	170i	441i	404i	331i	166	434	470	316	
Poland	1	8	4	12	7	4	4	4	4	1,521i	1,518i	3,083i	1,727i	1,512	1,600	3,326	1,398	
Portugal	-	12	2	12	6	3	6	3	3	268i	538i	617i	549i	265	599	742	428	
Republic of Moldova	1	9	4	12	7	4	4	5	3	141	131	232	139	114	137	228	80	
Romania	-	10	3	13	6	3	5	4	4	602i	1,042i	1,746i	1,002i	522	873	1,425	539	
Russian Federation	-	11	4	11	7	4	4	5	2	5,919	7,483	12,553	7,663	...	7,555	10,798	4,524	
San Marino	-	10	-	13	6	3	5	3	5	1	1	3	2	1	1	2	1	
Serbia	-	8	-	12	7	4	4	4	4	256	262	528	352	174	252	479	250	
Slovakia	1	10	1	13	6	3	4	5	4	178i	238i	508i	259i	182	245	473	141	
Slovenia	-	9	-	13	6	3	6	3	4	59i	130i	154i	101i	59	133	161	80	
Spain	-	10	3	10	6	3	6	3	3	1,133i	2,752i	3,130i	2,607i	1,110	2,833	3,710	2,444	
Sweden	1	9	1	12	7	4	6	3	3	476i	749i	749i	588i	458	860	988	494	
Switzerland	2	10	2	13	6	2	6	3	4	180i	550i	627i	459i	185	557	636	337	
Ukraine	-	11	-	11	6	3	4	5	2	908	1,454	3,125	1,987	750	1,398	2,627	1,580	
United Kingdom	-	11	2	13	5	2	6	3	4	1,487i	4,784i	5,833i	4,048i	1,621	4,865	6,397	3,198	
United States	-	12	1	12	6	3	6	3	3	11,220	24,471	26,405	22,892	8,479	23,833	25,345	18,050	

Finance										
G	H	I								
		Government education expenditure per pupil								
		Constant PPP US$				% of GDP per capita				
Government education expenditure (% of GDP)	Government education expenditure (% of total government expenditure)	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Country code
	1.a.2	4.5.4								
	2024									
	4.1-2	7.4-2	10,291-2	13,986-2	12,578-2	13,562-2	18-2	24-2	22-2	24-2	ITA
	4.3-2	9.9-2	8,249-2	7,520-2	8,438-2	5,348-2	20-2	19-2	21-2	13-2	LVA
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LIE
	4.3-2	11.7-2	10,669-2	9,140-2	9,334-2	9,858-2	21-2	18-2	18-2	19-2	LTU
	3.7-2	8.5-2	26,378-2	26,139-2	30,715-2	53,590-2	18-2	18-2	21-2	37-2	LUX
	4.7-2	12.5-2	11,530-2	11,244-2	16,447-2	20,148-2	19-2	18-2	27-2	33-2	MLT
	1.7-1	7.7-1	...	...	...	...	6-1	10-1	11-1	2-1	MCO
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MNE
	5.2-2	12.0-2	10,699-2	15,202-2	17,403-2	22,739-2	14-2	19-2	22-2	29-2	NLD
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MKD
	5.4-2	14.5-2	15,420-2	16,202-2	18,083-2	26,844-2	15-2	16-2	18-2	26-2	NOR
	4.3-2	10.0-2	8,495-2	10,448-2	8,342-2	12,041-2	18-2	22-2	18-2	26-2	POL
	4.6-2	10.4-2	7,016-2	10,798-2	13,400-2	9,287-2	15-2	23-2	29-2	20-2	PRT
	6.6-1	16.0	6,083-1	3,887-1	3,982-1	4,946-1	34-1	22-1	22-1	28-1	MDA
	3.3-2	8.8-2	5,738-2	3,738-2	8,468-2	10,843-2	13-2	8-2	19-2	24-2	ROU
	4.2-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	RUS
	2.9-2	13.0-1	...	...	...	...	22-2	21-2	20-2	8-2	SMR
	3.4-1	8.4-1	...	...	...	5,903-1	...	...	...	21-1	SRB
	4.7-2	10.8-2	8,165-2	9,926-2	9,061-2	15,637-2	19-2	23-2	21-2	36-2	SVK
	5.3-2	11.1-2	10,508-2	13,073-2	12,179-2	14,855-2	20-2	25-2	23-2	28-2	SVN
	4.6-2	9.9-2	9,174-2	9,152-2	10,518-2	11,673-2	17-2	17-2	20-2	22-2	ESP
	7.3-2	15.3-2	15,760-2	15,035-2	14,948-2	22,500-2	23-2	22-2	22-2	33-2	SWE
	4.9-2	15.4-2	17,944-2	22,052-2	20,362-2	29,230-2	20-2	24-2	22-2	32-2	CHE
	5.1-3	12.7-3	7,401-3	5,419-3	5,176-3	7,252-3	37-3	27-3	26-3	37-3	UKR
	5.9-3	11.8-3	4,894-3	13,379-3	13,100-3	20,161-3	9-3	26-3	25-3	39-3	GBR
	5.4-3	11.3-3	10,271-3	15,990-3	16,852-3	21,328-3	14-3	22-3	23-3	30-3	USA

TABLE 2: SDG TARGET 4.1 – PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

	Participation / completion																		
	A						B			C		D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
	Out-of-school (in millions)			Out-of-school rate (%)			Completion rate (%)			Over-age for grade (%)									
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	GER primary (%)	NERA primary (%)	GIR last primary (%)	Transition from primary to lower secondary (%)	NERT lower secondary (%)	GIR last lower secondary grade (%)	NERT upper secondary (%)	
SDG indicator				4.1.4			4.1.2			4.1.5				4.1.3			4.1.3		
Reference year	2024											2024							
Region	Sum			Weighted average								Weighted average							
World	79	64	130	10	15	31	88	78	61	10_{i}	9_{i}	102_{i}	92	88_{i}	88	84	78_{i}	66	
Sub-Saharan Africa	39	32	37	20	34	46	68	47	28	25_{i}	30_{i}	98_{i}	82	69_{i}	69	59	44_{-1i}	41_{i}	
Northern Africa and Western Asia	9	5	9	13	14	27	90	71	60	6	9	95_{i}	96	86_{i}	79	83	72_{i}	79	
Northern Africa	4	3	5	13	15	29	90	69	60	6	12	96	97	91	77	74	74	74	
Western Asia	4	3	4	14	13	25	90	74	61	6_{i}	6_{i}	94_{i}	94_{i}	82_{-1i}	82	90	72_{-1i}	84	
Central and Southern Asia	19	16	60	10	14	39	89	82	58	7	7	111	96	91	93	83	81	60	
Central Asia	0.4	0.2	0.4	6	2	12	100	99	96	0.5	1	96	97	96_{i}	99	97	92_{i}	95	
Southern Asia	18	16	59	10	14	40	88	82	57	8	8	112	96	91	93	83	81	59	
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	7	7	17	4	7	19	98	90	78	4_{i}	6_{i}	100	96_{i}	95_{-2i}	92	94_{i}	98_{i}	75_{i}	
Eastern Asia	4	4	9	4	6	16	99	94	89	...	...	100	...	95_{-2i}	95	...	99_{-2i}	...	
South-eastern Asia	3	3	8	4	8	25	96	84	63	3	4	101	96	98_{i}	88	93	95	71	
Oceania	0.3	0.2	1	7	9	30	87	75	60	15_{i}	13_{i}	102_{i}	97	91_{i}	86	88	68_{i}	76	
Latin America and the Caribbean	2	2	5	4	6	17	94	84	65	6_{i}	10_{i}	105_{i}	96	96_{i}	89	92	82_{i}	82	
Caribbean	0.3	0.2	1	8	9	23	79	72	52	6	9	100_{i}	94_{i}	90_{i}	91	88_{i}	84_{i}	73_{i}	
Central America	1	1	3	6	15	34	95	80	56	4	5	100	96	97	85	84	77	65	
South America	1	0.4	1	2	2	8	94	86	70	4	9	104	97	98_{i}	91	96	88_{i}	90	
Europe and Northern America	2	1	2	3	2	6	100	98	89	2_{i}	3_{i}	99_{i}	97	97_{i}	98	98	95_{i}	90	
Europe	1	0.5	1	1	1	6	100	98	87	1_{i}	2_{i}	100_{i}	97	98_{i}	98	98	92_{i}	88	
Northern America	1	0.3	1	5	2	5	100	99	93	4_{i}	4_{i}	97_{i}	96	96_{-1i}	99	99	101_{-1i}	94	
Low income	30	25	27	24	42	56	60	37	20	25_{-2i}	26_{-1i}	98_{i}	79_{i}	63_{-1i}	62	53_{i}	39_{-1i}	31_{i}	
Middle income	47	38	101	8	12	31	90	81	62	8_{i}	9_{i}	103	93	91_{i}	90	84	82_{i}	64	
Lower middle	37	30	80	11	16	38	87	76	54	11	11	105	91	88	88	81	74	58	
Upper middle	9	8	21	4	6	17	97	90	77	4_{i}	7_{i}	101	97_{i}	95_{-1i}	93	91_{i}	93_{-1i}	81_{i}	
High income	2	1	2	2	2	5	100	98	89	2_{i}	3_{i}	100_{i}	97	98_{i}	98	99	96_{i}	91	

A Out-of-school children, total number and out-of-school rate as percentage of the corresponding age group - model data [*Source:* UIS and GEM Report analysis of administrative data and household surveys available at https://www.unesco.org/en/education/view].
B Education completion rate by level - model data [*Source:* UIS and GEM Report analysis of administrative data and household surveys available at https://www.unesco.org/en/education/view].
C Percentage of pupils who are at least two years over-age for their current grade, by level.
D Gross enrolment ratio (GER) in primary education.
E Primary adjusted net enrolment rate (NERA) (%).
F Gross intake ratio (GIR) to last grade of primary education (%).
G Effective transition rate from primary to lower secondary general education (%).
H Lower secondary total net enrolment rate (NERT) (%).
I Gross intake ratio (GIR) to last grade of lower secondary education (%).
J Upper secondary total net enrolment rate (NERT) (%).
K Administration of nationally representative learning assesssment in early grades (grade 2 or 3), or final grade of primary or lower secondary.
L Percentage of students achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics

Source: UIS unless noted otherwise. Data refer to school year ending in 2024 unless noted otherwise.
Aggregates represent countries listed in the table with available data and may include estimates for countries with no recent data.
(-) Magnitude nil or negligible.
(...) Data not available or category not applicable.
(± n) Reference year differs (e.g. -2: reference year 2022 instead of 2024).
(i) Estimate and/or partial coverage.

	Learning									
	K						L			
	Administration of nationally representative learning assessment						Achieving minimum proficiency (%)			
	Early grades		End of primary		End of lower secondary		End of primary		End of lower secondary	
	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics
	4.1.6						4.1.1			
	2024									
	% of countries						Weighted average			
	64	64	78	79	61	63	58i	44i	64i	51i
	85	83	81	81	60	60	30i	11i	...	...
	33	33	67	71	58	71	...	32i	63i	31i
	33	33	50	50	33	33	...	...	...	...
	33	33	72	78	67	83	...	...	...	...
	79	79	86	86	50	57	...	...	...	...
	60	60	80	80	60	60	...	...	...	...
	89	89	89	89	44	56	...	...	...	...
	44	50	78	83	78	78	...	...	55i	47i
	43	57	43	57	86	86	...	...	...	...
	45	45	100	100	73	73	...	...	...	...
	100	100	100	100	35	35	...	64i	81i	76i
	62	62	67	67	43	43	...	...	52i	36i
	39	39	43	43	13	13	...	...	...	...
	100	100	100	100	86	86	...	...	...	...
	83	83	92	92	75	75	...	...	...	...
	48	48	80	80	85	85	97i	77i	81i	75i
	49	49	81	81	86	86	...	...	...	...
	33	33	67	67	67	67	...	...	...	...
	73	69	62	62	54	54	17i	10i	...	...
	71	71	83	84	60	61	...	...	...	...
	86	86	90	90	58	58	54i	...	...	39i
	57	57	75	79	62	64	52i	46i	56i	44i
	49	**50**	**78**	**78**	**69**	**73**	**93i**	**72i**	**81i**	**71i**

TABLE 2: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Participation / completion																		
	A						B			C		D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
	Out-of-school (in millions)			Out-of-school rate (%)			Completion rate (%)			Over-age for grade (%)									
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	GER primary (%)	NERA primary (%)	GIR last primary (%)	Transition from primary to lower secondary (%)	NERT lower secondary (%)	GIR last lower secondary grade (%)	NERT upper secondary (%)	
SDG indicator				4.1.4			4.1.2			4.1.5				4.1.3			4.1.3		
Reference year	2024											2024							
Sub-Saharan Africa																			
Angola	2,045	856	1,123	32	30	45	64	42	24	44-1	37-1	87-1	63-1	48-1	65	78-1	42-1	49-1	
Benin	366	549	629	16	40	68	69	37	18	12-2	25-2	108-2	90-2	62-2	54	53-2	28-2	32-2	
Botswana	18	16	31	5	11	32	99	93	64	11-2	19-2	109-2	99-2	102-2	94	91-2	91-2	69-2	
Burkina Faso	1,463	1,251	1,091	37	52	68	71	42	15	23	51	77	66	52	60	41	28	24	
Burundi	427	505	696	17	45	72	59	32	10	53+1	50-4	101+1	74+1	48-4	55	63+1	28-4	29+1	
Cabo Verde	2	2	4	3	6	15	...	...	...	45-2	78-2	103-2	58-2	99-2	...	34-2	83-2	83-2	
Cameroon	312	1,288	1,319	7	47	70	77	49	22	13	21-1	114	96	75	63	53-1	35-1	35-1	
Central African Republic	465	332	274	47	55	70	31	14	6	...	...	...	...	...	45	...	...	...	
Chad	813	1,140	974	23	58	73	37	19	6	27	15	88	75	42-3	53	41	18-3	20	
Comoros	28	27	23	22	35	44	85	62	35	30	35	97	79	73	73	72	44	53	
Congo	169	222	251	17	35	62	93	62	32	12-1	21-1	88-1	83-1i	71-1	67	...	...	...	
Côte d'Ivoire	1,140	1,091	930	22	36	45	77	41	16	10	20	93	87	80	53	69	71	52	
D. R. Congo	3,138	547	1,958	17	10	20	68	54	26	...	...	118-1	...	76-1	80	...	56-4	...	
Djibouti	45	46	44	40	51	64	89	67	34	5-1	16-1	...	...	...	75	...	...	...	
Equat. Guinea	168	104	54	62	66	77	73	32	9	...	...	...	...	...	44	...	...	...	
Eritrea	181	100	160	41	38	46	...	...	...	56-2	76-2	90-2	60-2	61-2	...	63-2	53-2	56-2	
Eswatini	7	3	7	4	4	13	82	59	37	22-2	45-2	117-1	96-2	94-1	72	93-2	68-1	76-2	
Ethiopia	3,530	6,053	4,108	18	51	70	63	29	15	16	21	84	78	54	46	45	21-1	27	
Gabon	87	84	75	28	38	51	74	46	22	...	...	...	...	...	62	...	...	...	
Gambia	75	35	55	17	18	30	74	56	33	30+1	37+1	100+1	83+1	84+1	76	86+1	61+1	57+1	
Ghana	458	334	941	9	14	33	78	64	45	11	9	101	95	98	82	95	85	42	
Guinea	390	639	596	17	47	64	59	41	24	12-4	22-4	100-4	85-4	60-4	69	...	34-4	...	
Guinea-Bissau	127	60	77	38	38	52	30	16	12	...	...	...	...	...	54	...	...	...	
Kenya	1,195	315	1,096	15	11	20	87	60	41	15-1	23-1	98-1	94-1	...	68	...	101-1	62-1	
Lesotho	112	50	54	29	32	55	79	43	28	27	36	80	68	67-1	55	68	45	42	
Liberia	312	198	178	36	48	45	30	22	14	60-2	66-2	67-2	62-2	58-2	75	56-2	45-2	54-2	
Madagascar	854	1,387	1,559	21	46	74	54	28	14	28	32	133	97	61	52	61	31	31	
Malawi	257	606	729	8	27	70	57	29	18	36	41	139	100-1	70	51	75	24	31	
Mali	1,286	1,080	1,282	30	58	77	49	26	11	1-1	9-1	73-1	66-1	48-1	53	...	28-1	...	
Mauritania	306	170	175	36	34	52	51	41	22	31	-	105	89	73-4	80	70	50-4	45-4	
Mauritius	2	3	15	2	9	24	100	93	54	8	33	107	99	83	93	87	...	81	
Mozambique	1,994	1,056	834	29	41	55	52	19	8	32-2	48-2	119-2	99-2	72-2	36	72-2	...	33-2	
Namibia	4	2	7	1	1	6	86	55	37	22	44	121	99	89	65	99	72	80	
Niger	1,728	1,892	1,507	37	70	85	75	36	5	1	15	65	60	41	48	20	12	12	
Nigeria	8,788	4,211	5,853	23	24	36	76	66	57	...	...	90-1	76-1	...	86	...	...	...	
Rwanda	52	82	371	2	9	39	69	34	22	60	81	150	99	67	49	94	48	72	
Sao Tome and Principe	1	1	2	3	4	11	93	88	54	...	...	...	...	...	95	...	...	...	
Senegal	857	623	635	31	35	52	64	37	16	7	13	85	75	63	58	36	39	19	
Seychelles	-	-	1	0.2	1	12	...	...	...	1	1	93	93	94	...	96	93	76	
Sierra Leone	137	59	208	11	10	27	68	46	13	1	9	162	97-1	99	68	96	57-3	72	
Somalia	...	...	...	...	...	...	28	23	9	...	...	21-1	...	...	80	...	...	...	
South Africa	452	159	540	6	7	17	97	90	54	5-1	17-1	102-1	94-1	95-1	93	90-1	88-1	87-1	
South Sudan	1,083	364	729	60	54	58	...	13	2	...	...	98	35	...	168	...	...	...	
Togo	42	210	325	3	23	54	87	48	21	11	27	114	99	91	55	73	57	45	
Uganda	1,380	1,536	1,684	14	31	73	30	29	17	...	...	...	...	...	94	...	...	...	
United Republic of Tanzania	1,832	2,390	2,284	15	39	79	76	33	8	8	13	93	84	77	44	49	34	15	
Zambia	392	188	710	10	18	49	67	49	28	...	...	116	96	...	73	88	...	34	
Zimbabwe	349	170	770	11	19	50	87	76	8	23	23	93	89	86	88	87	66	50	

Learning											
K							L				
Administration of nationally representative learning assessment							Achieving minimum proficiency (%)				
Early grades		End of primary		End of lower secondary			End of primary		End of lower secondary		
Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics		Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	
4.1.6							4.1.1				
2024											Country code
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	AGO
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		46	19	...	...	BEN
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	BWA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		33	25	...	...	BFA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		4	18	...	...	BDI
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	CPV
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		30	11	...	...	CMR
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	CAF
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		8	2	...	...	TCD
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	COM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		34	8	...	...	COG
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		22	3	...	1-1	CIV
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		9	3	...	...	COD
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	DJI
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	GNQ
No	No	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	ERI
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	SWZ
Yes	No	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	ETH
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		76	23	...	...	GAB
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	GMB
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	GHA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		22	7	...	...	GIN
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	GNB
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		26-1	37-1	...	...	KEN
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		11-1	20-1	...	...	LSO
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	LBR
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		6	6	...	...	MDG
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	MWI
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	MLI
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	MRT
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	MUS
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	MOZ
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	NAM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		14	8	...	...	NER
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		20-1	11-1	...	...	NGA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	RWA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	STP
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		41	27	...	...	SEN
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	SYC
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	SLE
No	No	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	SOM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	ZAF
No	No	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	SSD
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		19	16	...	...	TGO
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	UGA
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	TZA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		10-1	16-1	...	...	ZMB
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	ZWE

TABLE 2: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Participation / completion																	
	A						B			C		D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	Out-of-school (in millions)			Out-of-school rate (%)			Completion rate (%)			Over-age for grade (%)								
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	GER primary (%)	NERA primary (%)	GIR last primary (%)	Transition from primary to lower secondary (%)	NERT lower secondary (%)	GIR last lower secondary grade (%)	NERT upper secondary (%)
SDG indicator				4.1.4			4.1.2			4.1.5				4.1.3			4.1.3	
Reference year	2024											2024						
Northern Africa and Western Asia																		
Algeria	43	122	356	1	3	15	96	73	49	5+1	18+1	105+1	98+1	98+1	75	22+1	79+1	80+1
Armenia	6	12	13	4	6	11	100	99	94	1	1	102	99	98	99	97	98	88
Azerbaijan	19	97	68	3	11	15	98	96	95	5	2+1	106	100	97	98	92	80	78
Bahrain	10	0.4	1	8	1	1	...	...	...	1	1	97	95	94	...	97	100	98
Cyprus	-	0.1	1	-	0.2	2	99	94	93	1	2	105i	99i	102i	95	100-1i	101i	99i
Egypt	668	597	1,571	4	8	24	96	88	88	1	2	97	96	98	92	93	84	70
Georgia	0.1	0.1	0.4	-	-	0.2	100	99	92	1	1	99	94	104	99	98	86	95
Iraq	1,217	449	868	18	14	29	83	52	...	...	...	...	...	...	62	...	...	...
Israel	15	9	17	2	2	4	100	99	93	0.4	1	97i	97i	97i	99	98i	98i	98i
Jordan	26	48	82	2	5	18	98	93	69	1	2	99	98	97	94	98	91	91
Kuwait	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1-3	3-3	82-3	81-3	80-3	...	77-3	85-3	73-3
Lebanon	170	111	166	27	33	52	...	...	...	9	8	82	77	67-1	...	68	53-1	45
Libya	323	191	220	39	45	54	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Morocco	46	86	418	1	4	21	84	47	26	9	24	117	99	106	56	98	77	81
Oman	27	63	36	7	14	30	...	...	...	0.2	1	95	94	92	...	91	95	70
Qatar	10	3	11	5	4	15	100	100	92	1	3	98	95	95	100	93	93	82
Saudi Arabia	91	1	3	3	0.1	0.2	...	...	...	4	4	104	99	99	...	99	104	100
State of Palestine (the)	52	40	69	9	6	20	100	94	75	0.3-1	1-1	91-1	90-1	91-1	95	94-1	91-1	76-1
Sudan	3,336	1,524	1,786	43	43	54	75	40	33	...	...	...	...	...	54	...	...	...
Syrian Arab Republic	668	829	1,325	26	48	74	98	52	36	2	2	81	78	60	53	49	43	27
Tunisia	49	51	141	4	8	20	97	79	47	6-1	17-1	104-1	99-1	94-3	82	...	82-3	...
Türkiye	80	23	110	2	0.4	2	98	97	77	2-1	2-1	102-1	99-1	91-1	99	99-1	92-1	99-1
United Arab Emirates	5	3	2	1	-	1	...	...	...	-	-	108	100	99-1	...	100	104-1	100
Yemen	1,829	881	1,474	29	32	57	74	58	39	...	...	...	...	...	78	...	...	...
Central and Southern Asia																		
Afghanistan	3,646	2,304	2,345	53	75	82	54	42	35	...	14-1	112-1	...	90-1	76	...	62-1	...
Bangladesh	918	945	4,666	6	10	34	90	74	38	4	1	106	94	94	83	76	74	72
Bhutan	5	6	8	6	12	29	93	87	75	24	50	115	90	87	94	90	57	79
India	6,929	9,423	42,500	6	12	42	96	90	64	2+1	3+1	111+1	100+1	90+1	93	86+1	88+1	58+1
Iran, Islamic Republic of	146	58	583	2	2	11	96	92	75	0.1-1	0.1-1	102-1	100-1	97-1	95	92-1	85-1	78-1
Kazakhstan	118	59	36	7	3	5	100	100	98	1+1	2+1	97+1	92+1	98+1	100	96+1	97+1	99
Kyrgyzstan	11	20	42	2	3	17	99	99	93	0.3+1	0.3+1	99+1	97+1	95+1	99	97+1	94+1	67+1
Maldives	2	1	3	4	6	25	99	97	39	0.4	1	100	99	94	98	91	95	57
Nepal	216	55	612	8	3	26	90	81	40	21	25	129+1	99+1	109+1	91	99+1	98+1	86+1
Pakistan	6,236	3,325	8,455	21	18	37	59	55	38	35	34	84	82	74	94	68	56	49
Sri Lanka	106	80	261	6	6	18	...	...	...	0.4-1	1-1	91-1	91-1	95-1	...	93-1	92-1	78-1
Tajikistan	251	46	26	24	4	7	99	97	84	...	...	96	...	...	98	...	...	...
Turkmenistan	13	36	44	2	4	20	100	100	95	...	-	96	96	99	100	97	81-2	87
Uzbekistan	10	20	231	0.4	1	14	100	99	99	-+1	-+1	121+1	99+1	84+1	99	97+1	98+1	99+1

Learning											
K							L				
Administration of nationally representative learning assessment							Achieving minimum proficiency (%)				
Early grades		End of primary		End of lower secondary			End of primary		End of lower secondary		
Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics		Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	
4.1.6							4.1.1				
2024											Country code
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	DZA
No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	72-1	...	...	ARM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		67-3	61-1	31-2	38-2	AZE
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		71-3	45-1	...	30-1	BHR
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		92-3	71-1	39-2	47-2	CYP
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		34-1	29-1	...	27	EGY
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		87-3	63-1	33-2	34-2	GEO
No	No	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	IRQ
No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		88-3	...	70-2	63-2	ISR
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		47-3	32-1	20-2	17-2	JOR
No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes		...	22-1	...	21-1	KWT
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	27	LBN
No	No	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	LBY
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		41-3	22-1	19-2	18-2	MAR
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		62-3	29-1	...	24-1	OMN
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		80-3	46-1	53-2	40-1	QAT
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		71-3	29-1	37-2	30-2	SAU
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		42-1	31-1	23-2	16-1	PSE
No	No	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	SDN
No	No	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	SYR
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	TUN
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		86-3	79-1	71-2	59-1	TUR
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		75-3	60-1	52-2	55-1	ARE
No	No	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	YEM
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	AFG
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	BGD
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	BTN
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	IND
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		59-3	31-1	...	29-1	IRN
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		91-3	56-1	36-2	50-2	KAZ
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	KGZ
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	MDV
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	NPL
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		24-1	17-1	...	...	PAK
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		...	...	...	...	LKA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		...	...	...	...	TJK
No	No	No	No	No	No		...	...	...	...	TKM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		70-3	35-1	14-2	19-2	UZB

TABLE 2: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Participation / completion																		
	A						B			C		D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	Out-of-school (in millions)			Out-of-school rate (%)			Completion rate (%)			Over-age for grade (%)								
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	GER primary (%)	NERA primary (%)	GIR last primary (%)	Transition from primary to lower secondary (%)	NERT lower secondary (%)	GIR last lower secondary grade (%)	NERT upper secondary (%)
SDG indicator				4.1.4			4.1.2			4.1.5				4.1.3			4.1.3	
Reference year	2024											2024						
Eastern and South-eastern Asia																		
Brunei Darussalam	-	-	7	-	0.1	23	...	...	...	2	2	95	96	99	...	97	105	74
Cambodia	248	196	438	12	20	44	82	59	25	15	16	109	96	91	72	82	62	51
China	4,374	3,639	8,501	4	7	17	99	94	88	...	...	100	...	...	95	...	...	...
DPR Korea	5	20	297	0.3	2	30	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hong Kong, China	5	7	14	2	4	8	...	...	...	1	5	103	99	92	...	99	129	99
Indonesia	357	562	3,454	1	4	25	99	91	72	0.1+1	1+1	100+1	99+1	100-1	92	98+1	100+1	72+1
Japan	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	...	...	...	...	101-1i	100-1i	...	...	100-1i	...	97-1i
Lao PDR	99	194	270	12	32	60	70	54	36	4+1	6+1	93+1	90+1	85+1	78	64+1	49+1	34+1
Macao, China	8	3	3	17	13	16	...	...	...	1	6	90	89	94	...	92	94	90
Malaysia	312	274	930	9	16	42	100	98	62	-	-	90	88	88	99	82	81	65
Mongolia	27	13	12	6	5	7	100	98	89	0.4	0.5	92	91	93	98	94-1	89	95-1
Myanmar	322	464	363	7	13	21	89	53	24	...	...	...	...	...	59	...	...	...
Philippines	1,318	1,034	951	10	11	21	96	83	73	8	8	94	88	91	86	87	85	78
Republic of Korea	15	11	25	1	1	2	100	100	99	0.1	0.2	101i	100i	103i	100	97i	97i	95i
Singapore	14	8	14	5	10	14	...	...	...	0.4-1	1-1	100-1	100-1	97-1	...	100-1	102-1	99-1
Thailand	69	67	227	2	3	9	99	92	72	2+1	2+1	101+1	99+1	107+1	92	99+1	96+1	81+1
Timor-Leste	11	10	21	6	11	22	81	66	56	18-1	29-4	120-1	93-1	93-1	82	87-4	88-4	73-4
Viet Nam	58	307	1,189	1	4	26	98	87	51	1	1	106	98	101	88	98	95	68
Oceania																		
Australia	2	3	6	0.1	0.2	1	100	99	89	0.1	0.4	100i	100i	...	99	98i	...	94i
Cook Islands	-	-	0.1	0.1	1	14	...	...	...	0.4	0.2	108	97	98	...	99	120	78
Fiji	1	1	7	1	1	15	99	95	57	3	4	110	98	116	96	97-1	97	85
Kiribati	2	1	2	9	11	21	94	81	21	1	7	95	91	93	85	94	96	87
Marshall Islands	-	0.1	0.2	1	2	9	...	...	...	5	13	102	99	98	...	76	114	79
Micronesia, F. S.	4	1	3	26	24	35	...	...	...	9	13	82	77	79	...	78	75	64
Nauru	0.1	0.1	0.1	3	9	25	89	70	48	0.4+1	2+1	94+1	93+1	86+1	79	97+1	98+1	88+1
New Zealand	1	2	7	0.4	1	4	...	...	...	0.4	0.3	97i	97i	...	...	98i	...	94i
Niue	-	-	-	2	4	7	...	...	...	2+1	-	101+1	92	96+1	...	88	111	85
Palau	0.1	-	0.1	8	4	9	...	...	...	5	9	107	99	100	...	95	92	94
Papua New Guinea	275	169	498	17	38	59	66	36	14	39-1	47-1	121-1	96-3	83-1	55	69-1	42-1	38-1
Samoa	2	0.3	4	5	3	16	98	97	60	11	10	101	98	100	99	99	97	77
Solomon Is	31	12	30	26	21	44	...	...	...	51	84-1	82	70	70	...	77-1	58-1	64-1
Tokelau	0.1	0.1	0.1	27	45	60	...	...	...	1+1	2+1	56+1	36+1	52+1	...	38+1	52+1	30+1
Tonga	0.2	1	1	2	6	30	98	87	86	1	1	109	98-1	108	89	93	99	71
Tuvalu	...	...	...	3	7	33	99	84	56	0.1	0.3	101	99	95	85	88	103	52
Vanuatu	1	3	5	3	10	29	80	45	11	30	53	112	97	113	56	94	65	82

Learning											
K						L					
Administration of nationally representative learning assessment						Achieving minimum proficiency (%)					
Early grades		End of primary		End of lower secondary		End of primary		End of lower secondary			
Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics		
4.1.6						4.1.1					
2024											Country code
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	58-2	58-2		BRN
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	19	40	8-2	12-2		KHM
Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	...	...	...	...		CHN
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		PRK
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	98-3	91-1	83-2	86-2		HKG
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	25-2	18-2		IDN
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	86-2	92-1		JPN
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	4	17	...	...		LAO
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	96-3	90-1	87-2	92-2		MAC
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	49	52	42-2	41-2		MYS
Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	...	...	36-2	49-2		MNG
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	31	51	...	...		MMR
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14	25	24-2	16-2		PHL
No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	93-1	85-2	84-2		KOR
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	97-3	93-1	89-2	89-1		SGP
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	35-2	32-2		THA
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		TLS
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	66	89	77-2	72-2		VNM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	64-1	79-2	74-2		AUS
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	75-3	63-3	...	...		COK
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	60-3	66-3	...	...		FJI
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	14-3	53-3	...	...		KIR
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	40-3	38-3	...	...		MHL
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	39-3	45-3	...	...		FSM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		NRU
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	90-3	57-1	79-2	71-2		NZL
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	81-3	82-3	...	...		NIU
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	94-3	92-3	...	...		PLW
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	48-3	55-3	...	...		PNG
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	...	...		WSM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	53-3	86-3	...	...		SLB
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	72-3	67-3	...	...		TKL
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	20-3	75-3	...	...		TON
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	32-3	55-3	...	...		TUV
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	...	...		VUT

TABLE 2: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Participation / completion																	
	A						B			C		D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	Out-of-school (in millions)			Out-of-school rate (%)			Completion rate (%)			Over-age for grade (%)								
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	GER primary (%)	NERA primary (%)	GIR last primary (%)	Transition from primary to lower secondary (%)	NERT lower secondary (%)	GIR last lower secondary grade (%)	NERT upper secondary (%)
SDG indicator				4.1.4			4.1.2			4.1.5				4.1.3			4.1.3	
Reference year	2024											2024						
Latin America and the Caribbean																		
Anguilla	-	-	0.1	2	6	12	...	...	...	0.4-1	1-1	112-1	98-2	...	...	87-1	...	75-1
Antigua and Barbuda	-	-	0.2	0.1	1	7	...	...	...	1-1	12-1	112-1	98-1	123-2	...	99-1	106-2	91-1
Argentina	14	15	91	0.3	1	4	97	80	68	1-1	7-1	103-1	99-1	99-1	82	99-1	95-1	93-1
Aruba	-	-	-	0.1	0.2	1	...	...	...	...	...	108	...	94-2	...	...	107-2	...
Bahamas	8	3	4	29	20	25	...	...	...	18-3	...	93	84	...	...	84	...	79
Barbados	4	1	1	21	9	8	...	100	96	0.2	4	84	82	85	100	98	97	93
Belize	5	2	4	11	5	24	90	45	19	6	11	96	89	94	50	93	79	63
Bolivia, P. S.	76	28	153	5	6	16	98	95	82	3	7	94	91	91	97	92	89	81
Brazil	72	32	443	-	0.3	5	93	89	72	4	9	104i	98i	...	96	96i	...	92i
British Virgin Islands	0.5	0.3	0.4	17	22	39	...	...	...	2	10	73	73	46	...	82	75	82
Cayman Islands	0.2	0.1	0.4	4	4	15	...	...	...	0.3	0.4	96	95	106	...	97	97	88
Chile	11	2	12	1	0.4	1	...	98	86	2	6	99i	98i	99i	101	99i	102i	99i
Colombia	155	117	148	4	4	10	95	80	66	12-2	20-2	105-2i	93-2i	97-2i	84	96-2i	83-2i	87-2i
Costa Rica	12	7	8	3	3	5	99	74	57	3	9	105i	96i	106i	74	92i	61i	89i
Cuba	9	18	72	1	5	21	100	96	74	1	0.3	98	95	91	96	92	89	77
Curaçao	1	0.2	0.5	5	5	6	...	...	...	10	24	79	72	...	...	77	...	64
Dominica	0.2	0.1	0.2	3	4	12	...	...	...	3+1	12-1	98+1	96-1	91+1	...	93-1	90-1	89-1
Dominican Republic	106	48	244	9	12	31	96	89	64	9	14	102	95	90	93	90	80	69
Ecuador	63	56	214	4	6	22	99	96	77	2	3	97-1	95-1	100-1	97	86-1	90-1	88-1
El Salvador	102	86	151	16	26	45	93	77	36	7	8	90	91	83	83	54	73	47
Grenada	1	0.4	0.2	5	8	7	...	...	...	2	5	111	95	97	...	87	89	57
Guatemala	196	381	488	8	33	64	86	57	40	12	16	101	92	87	66	68	49	34
Guyana	17	14	13	17	30	42	99	96	70	--1	--1	98	82-1	...	97	73-1	...	63-1
Haiti	110	55	172	8	8	18	50	40	18	...	...	...	...	...	80	...	...	...
Honduras	345	266	257	26	42	60	89	57	47	11	16	79	73	72	64	56	37	38
Jamaica	22	24	19	10	20	23	99	97	92	1	3	97	96	84	98	66	86	86
Mexico	312	607	1,966	2	9	29	98	89	61	1+1	1	102i	100i	102i	91	91i	87i	72i
Montserrat	-	-	-	3	17	26	...	...	...	--1	1-1	107-1	93-1	...	...	95-1	...	...
Nicaragua	95	54	99	12	14	38	77	51	39	22-1	...	110-1	93-1	82-2	66	83-1	...	63-1
Panama	38	31	60	8	14	27	95	78	64	5	7	97	92	96	83	80-1	79	72-1
Paraguay	122	70	108	15	19	30	95	81	68	5	8	89	87	89	86	85	76	72
Peru	17	18	107	-	1	9	98	93	86	2	5	113	100	...	95	100i	...	94i
Saint Kitts and Nevis	-	-	-	0.1	0.4	3	...	...	...	0.3-1	1-1	121-1	97-1	124-1	...	95-4	120-1	81-1
Saint Lucia	0.3	1	1	2	9	25	100	98	94	1	3	97	93	97	98	87	83	78
Saint Vincent/Grenadines	-	0.1	0.3	0.1	1	9	...	...	...	1	12	111	...	109	...	96-4	110	93
Sint Maarten	-	-	-	-	-	-	...	...	...	...	...	135-1	93-1	...	...	...	...	...
Suriname	13	14	19	20	31	59	91	61	34	4	26	92	84	75-3	67	60	42-3	44
Trinidad and Tobago	19	11	12	15	20	30	98	95	84	6-1	9	98	93	92-1	97	98	97	93
Turks and Caicos Islands	...	...	...	1	2	3	...	...	...	6	6	125	100	132	...	90-1	117	80
Uruguay	1	2	9	0.4	2	7	98	71	42	2-1	16-2	105-1	100-1	101-1	72	99-1	78-1	89-1
Venezuela, B. R.	25	45	162	1	3	15	88	70	44	8	13	114	98	103	79	99-2	83	78

Learning											
K						L					
Administration of nationally representative learning assessment						Achieving minimum proficiency (%)					
Early grades		End of primary		End of lower secondary		End of primary		End of lower secondary			
Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics		
4.1.6						4.1.1					
2024											
											Country code
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		AIA
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		ATG
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	45-2	27-2		ARG
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		ABW
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		BHS
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		BRB
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		BLZ
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	...	...		BOL
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	50-2	27-2		BRA
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		VGB
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		CYM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	66-2	24-1		CHL
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	49-2	29-2		COL
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	53-2	28-2		CRI
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		CUB
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		CUW
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		DMA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	25-2	8-2		DOM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	...	...		ECU
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	28-2	11-2		SLV
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		GRD
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	32-2	13-2		GTM
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		GUY
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		HTI
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	...	...		HND
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	50-2	26-2		JAM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	53-2	34-2		MEX
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		MSR
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		NIC
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	42-2	16-2		PAN
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	34-2	15-2		PRY
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	50-2	34-2		PER
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		KNA
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		LCA
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		VCT
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		SXM
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		SUR
Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		TTO
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		TCA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	59-2	43-2		URY
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	...	...	...	...		VEN

TABLE 2: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Participation / completion																	
	A						B			C		D	E	F	G	H	I	J
	Out-of-school (in millions)			Out-of-school rate (%)			Completion rate (%)			Over-age for grade (%)								
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Primary	Lower secondary	GER primary (%)	NERA primary (%)	GIR last primary (%)	Transition from primary to lower secondary (%)	NERT lower secondary (%)	GIR last lower secondary grade (%)	NERT upper secondary (%)
SDG indicator				4.1.4			4.1.2			4.1.5				4.1.3			4.1.3	
Reference year	2024											2024						
Europe and Northern America																		
Albania	18	5	7	11	4	7	97	97	88	2	3	112	100	107	99	95-1	104	99
Andorra	...	...	...	3	6	10	...	...	...	2	3	100	98	67	...	93	93	88
Austria	3	4	23	1	1	7	100	98	86	6	10	101i	99i	97i	98	99i	96i	92i
Belarus	23	18	10	5	3	5	100	99	94	2	1	97	96	96	99	96	101	95
Belgium	8	3	8	1	1	1	99	91	86	1-1	3-1	102-1i	98-1i	...	92	98-1i	92-1i	98-1i
Bermuda	-	0.1	1	1	6	22	...	...	...	--1	--1	93-1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6	4	25	4	4	19	100	99	66	1-1	1-1	101-1	98-1	101-1	99	98-1	94-1	77-1
Bulgaria	13	18	30	5	6	11	99	94	87	1	4	95i	94i	95i	95	93i	94i	88i
Canada	50	21	159	2	2	12	100	99	88	...	...	95-1i	95-1i	...	99	99-1i	...	85-1i
Croatia	-	-	11	-	-	7	100	99	98	0.3-1	0.4-1	101-1i	98-1i	101-1i	99	...	100-1i	93-1i
Czechia	4	3	21	1	1	4	100	96	90	5-1	5-1	100-1i	99-1i	99-1i	96	100-1i	95-1i	93-1i
Denmark	1	2	13	0.3	1	6	100	100	76	0.2	0.4	100i	99i	100i	100	99i	99i	91i
Estonia	2	1	4	2	2	8	100	97	86	1	3	98i	97i	100i	97	97i	98i	90i
Finland	5	3	5	2	2	3	100	100	90	0.2	1	99i	98i	97i	100	99i	98i	95i
France	4	5	40	0.1	0.1	2	100	98	87	...	0.4	103i	100i	...	99	100i	99i	96i
Germany	48	65	244	2	1	11	100	93	81	...	...	103i	100i	97i	93	100i	71i	89i
Greece	7	8	11	1	2	3	99	96	95	2-1	5-1	102-1i	100-1i	100-1i	97	99-1i	94-1i	97-1i
Hungary	10	14	80	3	4	20	99	96	86	1	3	103i	97i	109i	97	97i	94i	90i
Iceland	0.4	0.2	3	1	1	15	...	99	66	--1	--1	98-1	98-1	99-1	102	98-1	98-1	81-1
Ireland	-	-	0.1	-	-	-	100	99	95	--2	0.1-2	96-2i	98-2i	94-2i	99	100-2i	101-2i	99-2i
Italy	37	29	155	2	2	5	100	99	87	0.2-1	1-1	104-1i	98-1i	97-1i	99	98-1i	96-1i	94-1i
Latvia	1	0.3	1	1	-	1	100	98	87	1	3	98i	97i	98i	99	97i	93i	92i
Liechtenstein	...	...	...	0.2	1	5	...	...	...	0.1-3	1-3	102-3	99-3	89-3	...	97-3	94-3	90-3
Lithuania	-	0.2	0.4	-	0.1	1	100	99	92	0.3	1	101i	100i	100i	99	100i	99i	96i
Luxembourg	0.3	0.3	3	1	2	10	99	89	81	2	7	99i	100i	77i	91	98i	100i	89i
Malta	1	0.4	2	4	3	11	98	98	83	1-1	0.2-1	98-1i	97-1i	97-1i	100	98-1i	97-1i	90-1i
Monaco	-	-	0.1	0.4	2	6	...	...	...	-	0.2	121	98	135	...	...	148	...
Montenegro	-	-	0.3	0.1	0.1	1	99	98	88	1-1	1-1	106-1	100-1	107-1	99	100-1	97-1	87-1
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	1	1	8	0.1	0.3	1	100	89	80	...	...	104-1i	99-1i	...	89	99-1i	...	98-1i
North Macedonia	3	5	10	3	6	12	100	98	86	1-1	1-1	96-1	96-1	96-1	98	...	93-1	...
Norway	2	2	10	0.4	1	5	100	100	80	-	-	99i	99i	99i	100	99i	99i	92i
Poland	7	7	13	0.3	-	1	100	99	92	1	3	105i	100i	...	99	100i	55i	99i
Portugal	0.1	-	0.3	-	-	0.1	100	94	82	3-1	7-1	111-1i	99-1i	105-1i	94	99-1i	101-1i	100-1i
Republic of Moldova	-	0.2	3	-	0.1	5	99	97	93	0.2	0.3	108	100	108	98	99	104	86
Romania	166	132	240	16	16	27	99	93	82	3-1	5-1	85-1i	84-1i	81-1i	94	84-1i	78-1i	73-1i
Russian Federation	7	22	82	0.1	0.2	3	100	100	91	...	...	98-1	95-1	...	100	100-1	...	55-1
San Marino	...	...	...	6	12	59	...	...	...	0.1	0.2	94	94	93	...	94	93	40
Serbia	2	3	31	1	1	12	100	99	82	0.3	0.5	96	97	96-2	99	95	95-2	76
Slovakia	5	8	18	2	3	8	100	99	93	7	8	103i	99i	98i	99	99i	85i	93i
Slovenia	1	1	1	1	1	1	100	99	93	1-1	1-1	101-1i	99-1i	97-1i	100	99-1i	94-1i	97-1i
Spain	37	35	104	1	2	7	99	95	74	0.1	4	103i	99i	99i	97	98i	93i	94i
Sweden	2	2	4	0.2	0.4	1	100	99	89	-	0.1	115i	99i	100i	99	100i	100i	97i
Switzerland	0.4	2	53	0.1	1	15	100	99	93	4	8	101i	100i	94i	99	100i	96i	91i
Ukraine	33	30	20	2	1	2	100	99	97	2	1	93	87	95	99	90	90	86
United Kingdom	10	9	143	0.2	0.4	4	100	100	90	--1	--1	102-1i	100-1i	101-1i	100	99-1i	98-1i	95-1i
United States	1,226	319	620	5	2	4	100	99	93	4-1	4-1	97-2	96-2	96-2	99	99-2	101-2	95-2

Learning											
K						L					
Administration of nationally representative learning assessment						Achieving minimum proficiency (%)					
Early grades		End of primary		End of lower secondary		End of primary		End of lower secondary			
Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics		
4.1.6						4.1.1					
2024											Country code
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	92-3	68-1	26-2	26-2		ALB
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		AND
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	96-3	84	75-2	75-2		AUT
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		BLR
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	94-3	73-1	75-2	75-2		BEL
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		BMU
No	No	No	Yes	No	No	...	38-1	...	...		BIH
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	93-3	74-1	47-2	46-2		BGR
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	99-3	65-1	82-2	78-2		CAN
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	98-3	70	77-2	67-2		HRV
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	96-3	78-1	79-2	74-2		CZE
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	81-2	80-2		DNK
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	86-2	85-2		EST
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	96-3	76-1	79-2	75-2		FIN
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	94-3	56-1	73-2	71-2		FRA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	94-3	75-1	74-2	70-2		DEU
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	62-2	53-2		GRC
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	94-3	71-1	74-2	65-1		HUN
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	60-2	66-2		ISL
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	89-2	81-2		IRL
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	97-3	69-1	79-2	61-1		ITA
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	94-3	78-1	77-2	78-2		LVA
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	...	...		LIE
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	97-3	87-1	75-2	72-2		LTU
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	...	...		LUX
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	90-3	69	64-2	67-2		MLT
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		MCO
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	87-3	53-1	47-2	41-2		MNE
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	96-3	83-1	65-2	73-2		NLD
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	70-3	51-1	26-2	34-2		MKD
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	63-1	73-2	68-2		NOR
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	97-3	83-1	78-2	77-2		POL
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	94-3	70-1	77-2	70-2		PRT
No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	...	...	51-2	44-2		MDA
No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	78-1	58-2	51-2		ROU
No	No	Yes	No	No	No	98-3	91	...	...		RUS
No	No	No	No	No	No	...	...	...	...		SMR
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	93-3	74-1	64-2	57-2		SRB
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	94-3	73-1	65-2	67-2		SVK
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	94-3	71-1	74-2	75-2		SVN
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	95-3	62-1	76-2	73-2		ESP
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	95-3	77-1	76-2	73-2		SWE
Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	...	...	75-2	81-2		CHE
No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	...	...	59-2	58-2		UKR
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	97-3	80-1	80-2	76-2		GBR
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	95-3	68-1	80-2	66-2		USA

TABLE 3: SDG TARGET 4.2 – EARLY CHILDHOOD

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

	A	B	C	D	E
	Children under 5 developmentally on track (%)	Under-5 stunting (%)	Children under 5 with 3+ children's books (%)	NER pre-primary (%)	NERA one year before primary entry (%)
SDG indicator	4.2.1			4.2.4	4.2.2
Reference year	2024				
Region	Weighted average				
World	...	22$_{-3}$	...	54$_{i}$	75$_{i}$
Sub-Saharan Africa	...	31$_{-3}$	...	23$_{i}$	52$_{i}$
Northern Africa and Western Asia	...	18$_{-3}$	...	32$_{i}$	52$_{i}$
Northern Africa	...	22$_{-3}$	...	38	52
Western Asia	...	14$_{-3}$	...	28$_{-1i}$	53$_{-1i}$
Central and Southern Asia	...	29$_{-3}$	...	54	90$_{-1i}$
Central Asia	...	8$_{-3}$	...	43$_{i}$	58$_{i}$
Southern Asia	...	30$_{-3}$	...	55	92$_{-1i}$
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	...	14$_{-3}$	...	81$_{i}$	79$_{i}$
Eastern Asia	...	5$_{-3}$	...	...	...
South-eastern Asia	...	26$_{-3}$	...	58	77
Oceania	...	44$_{-3}$	...	45$_{i}$	81$_{i}$
Latin America and the Caribbean	...	12$_{-3}$	...	72$_{i}$	92$_{i}$
Caribbean	...	11$_{-3}$	...	76$_{i}$	94$_{i}$
Central America	...	17$_{-3}$	...	62	93
South America	...	9$_{-3}$	...	79	93
Europe and Northern America	...	4$_{-3}$	...	79$_{i}$	90$_{i}$
Europe	...	4$_{-3}$	...	90$_{i}$	92$_{i}$
Northern America	...	4$_{-3}$	...	60$_{-1i}$	86$_{-1i}$
Low income	...	34$_{-3}$	...	19$_{-1i}$	48$_{-1i}$
Middle income	...	22$_{-3}$	...	59$_{i}$	79$_{i}$
Lower middle	...	28$_{-3}$	...	49$_{i}$	77$_{i}$
Upper middle	...	8$_{-3}$	...	73$_{i}$	82$_{-1i}$
High income	...	4$_{-3}$	...	78$_{i}$	89$_{i}$

A Percentage of children aged 24 to 59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being.
B Under-5 moderate or severe stunting rate (%) [*Source:* UNICEF, WHO, World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (JME)].
(Regional aggregates are weighted averages of statistical JME estimates for the reference year, not of the observed country values in the country table; Eastern Asia excludes Japan, Oceania excludes Australia and New Zealand, Northern America is based only on United States.)
C Percentage of children under age 5 living in households with three or more children's books [*Source:* UNICEF database].
D Net enrolment rate in pre-primary education.
E Adjusted net enrolment rate (NERA) one year before the official primary school entry age.

Source: UIS unless noted otherwise. Data refer to school year ending in 2024 unless noted otherwise.
Aggregates represent countries listed in the table with available data and may include estimates for countries with no recent data.
(-) Magnitude nil or negligible.
(...) Data not available or category not applicable.
(± n) Reference year differs (e.g. -2: reference year 2022 instead of 2024).
(i) Estimate and/or partial coverage.

TABLE 3: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A Children under 5 developmentally on track (%)	B Under-5 stunting (%)	D Children under 5 with 3+ children's books (%)	E NER pre-primary (%)	F NERA one year before primary entry (%)	Country code
SDG indicator	4.2.1			4.2.4	4.2.2	
Reference year	2024					
Sub-Saharan Africa						
Angola	...	43-3	...	17-1	52-1	AGO
Benin	41-2	31-3	...	...	...	BEN
Botswana	...	22-3	...	20-2	56-2	BWA
Burkina Faso	...	22-3	...	8	16	BFA
Burundi	...	56-3	...	15+1	28+1	BDI
Cabo Verde	...	10-3	...	68-2	84-2	CPV
Cameroon	...	27-3	...	30	41	CMR
Central African Republic	...	40-3	...	...	...	CAF
Chad	...	33-3	...	2	18	TCD
Comoros	36-2	20-3	2-2	36	41	COM
Congo	...	17-3	...	...	...	COG
Côte d'Ivoire	39-3	21-3	...	10	21	CIV
D. R. Congo	...	41-3	...	...	...	COD
Djibouti	...	20-3	...	...	...	DJI
Equat. Guinea	...	17-3	...	...	...	GNQ
Eritrea	...	51-3	...	28-2	38-2	ERI
Eswatini	48-2	22-3	2-2	...	...	SWZ
Ethiopia	...	35-3	...	41	63	ETH
Gabon	...	14-3	...	...	...	GAB
Gambia	...	14-3	...	44+1	63+1	GMB
Ghana	...	13-3	...	75-3	87-3	GHA
Guinea	...	28-3	...	11-4	47-4	GIN
Guinea-Bissau	...	28-3	...	...	...	GNB
Kenya	78-2	19-3	...	58-1	92-1	KEN
Lesotho	...	32-3	...	21-4	31-4	LSO
Liberia	...	27-3	...	25-2	65-2	LBR
Madagascar	...	39-3	...	37	66	MDG
Malawi	59-4	35-3	1-4	...	...	MWI
Mali	...	24-3	...	5-1	29-1	MLI
Mauritania	...	23-3	...	...	...	MRT
Mauritius	...	9-3	...	79	92	MUS
Mozambique	38-1	37-3	...	...	...	MOZ
Namibia	...	17-3	...	34	93	NAM
Niger	...	47-3	...	7	20	NER
Nigeria	48-3	34-3	4-3	30-1	57-1	NGA
Rwanda	82-4	31-3	2-4	45	80	RWA
Sao Tome and Principe	...	11-3	...	...	...	STP
Senegal	...	17-3	...	21	25	SEN
Seychelles	...	7-3	...	73	86	SYC
Sierra Leone	...	27-3	...	25	63	SLE
Somalia	...	19-3	...	...	...	SOM
South Africa	...	23-3	...	18-1	79-1	ZAF
South Sudan	...	28-3	...	9	9	SSD
Togo	...	23-3	...	28	...	TGO
Uganda	...	24-3	...	...	...	UGA
United Republic of Tanzania	47-2	31-3	...	26	68	TZA
Zambia	...	32-3	...	23	47	ZMB
Zimbabwe	...	22-3	...	39	57	ZWE
Northern Africa and Western Asia						
Algeria	...	9-3	...	61+1	76+1	DZA
Armenia	...	8-3	...	52	32	ARM
Azerbaijan	72-1	14-3	20-1	49	83	AZE
Bahrain	...	5-3	...	51	70	BHR
Cyprus	...	...	...	68i	100i	CYP
Egypt	...	21-3	...	27	38	EGY
Georgia	...	5-3	...	...	...	GEO
Iraq	...	10-3	...	...	...	IRQ
Israel	...	...	...	98i	97i	ISR
Jordan	84-1	7-3	...	40	69	JOR
Kuwait	...	7-3	...	31-3	44-3	KWT
Lebanon	...	8-3	...	70	87	LBN
Libya	...	51-3	...	...	...	LBY
Morocco	...	13-3	...	70	88	MAR
Oman	...	13-3	...	42	89	OMN
Qatar	84-1	5-3	...	52	81	QAT
Saudi Arabia	82	12-3	...	27	64	SAU
State of Palestine (the)	...	8-3	12-4	53-1	69-1	PSE
Sudan	...	36-3	...	...	...	SDN
Syrian Arab Republic	...	26-3	...	11	47	SYR
Tunisia	77-1	9-3	20-1	...	...	TUN
Türkiye	71-2	6-3	41-2	54-1	98-1	TUR
United Arab Emirates	...	...	...	82	100	ARE
Yemen	...	36-3	...	...	...	YEM
Central and Southern Asia						
Afghanistan	29-1	34-3	--1	...	...	AFG
Bangladesh	...	28-3	...	32	88	BGD
Bhutan	...	23-3	...	31-4	42-4	BTN
India	...	32-3	...	57+1	94-2	IND
Iran, Islamic Republic of	...	5-3	...	60-4	60-4	IRN
Kazakhstan	...	5-3	...	70+1	74+1	KAZ
Kyrgyzstan	70-1	11-3	21-1	43+1	75+1	KGZ
Maldives	...	14-3	...	53	81	MDV
Nepal	...	28-3	...	61+1	80	NPL
Pakistan	...	35-3	...	34	51	PAK
Sri Lanka	...	16-3	...	45-1	66-1	LKA
Tajikistan	...	14-3	...	...	...	TJK
Turkmenistan	...	7-3	...	32	35	TKM
Uzbekistan	83-2	7-3	32-2	69+1	82	UZB
Eastern and South-eastern Asia						
Brunei Darussalam	...	11-3	...	56	77	BRN
Cambodia	...	23-3	...	37	72	KHM
China	...	5-3	...	...	...	CHN
DPR Korea	...	18-3	...	...	...	PRK
Hong Kong, China	...	...	...	99	99	HKG
Indonesia	...	31-3	...	50+1	93+1	IDN
Japan	...	5-3	...	92-1i	95-1i	JPN
Lao PDR	59-1	29-3	3-1	49+1	66+1	LAO
Macao, China	...	...	...	88	88	MAC
Malaysia	...	22-3	...	81	85	MYS
Mongolia	86-1	6-3	34-1	90	98	MNG
Myanmar	...	25-3	...	...	...	MMR
Philippines	77-2	29-3	...	76	77	PHL
Republic of Korea	...	2-3	...	96i	95i	KOR
Singapore	...	3-3	...	95-1	95-1	SGP
Thailand	80-2	12-3	36-2	68+1	91+1	THA
Timor-Leste	...	46-3	...	25-4	59-4	TLS
Viet Nam	78-3	20-3	26-3	94	94-2	VNM

TABLE 3: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A Children under 5 developmentally on track (%)	B Under-5 stunting (%)	D Children under 5 with 3+ children's books (%)	E NER pre-primary (%)	F NERA one year before primary entry (%)	Country code
SDG indicator	4.2.1			4.2.4	4.2.2	
Reference year	2024					
Oceania						
Australia	...	3-3	...	86i	95i	AUS
Cook Islands	...	...	...	86	83	COK
Fiji	83-3	7-3	24-3	34	90	FJI
Kiribati	...	14-3	...	92	...	KIR
Marshall Islands	...	31-3	...	68	92	MHL
Micronesia, F. S.	...	...	...	22	55	FSM
Nauru	73-1	15-3	14-1	87+1	94+1	NRU
New Zealand	...	...	...	84i	86i	NZL
Niue	...	...	...	25+1	25+1	NIU
Palau	...	...	...	83-1	91-2	PLW
Papua New Guinea	...	51-3	...	16-1	65-1	PNG
Samoa	73-4	7-3	9-4	23	30	WSM
Solomon Is	...	30-3	...	34	54	SLB
Tokelau	...	...	...	23+1	47+1	TKL
Tonga	...	2-3	...	42	78	TON
Tuvalu	69-4	5-3	24-4	74	95	TUV
Vanuatu	69-1	31-3	11-1	61	81	VUT
Latin America and the Caribbean						
Anguilla	...	...	...	88-1	90-1	AIA
Antigua and Barbuda	...	...	...	...	...	ATG
Argentina	86-4	9-3	48-4	78-1	94-1	ARG
Aruba	...	...	...	...	...	ABW
Bahamas	...	...	...	31	47	BHS
Barbados	...	6-3	...	66	78	BRB
Belize	...	12-3	...	42	77	BLZ
Bolivia, P. S.	...	12-3	...	67	80	BOL
Brazil	...	7-3	...	82i	93i	BRA
British Virgin Islands	...	...	...	56	83	VGB
Cayman Islands	...	...	...	87	96	CYM
Chile	...	2-3	...	69i	89i	CHL
Colombia	...	11-3	...	78-2i	...	COL
Costa Rica	...	9-3	...	99i	100i	CRI
Cuba	...	7-3	...	99	97	CUB
Curaçao	...	...	...	65	78	CUW
Dominica	...	...	...	84-1	98-2	DMA
Dominican Republic	...	6-3	...	61	93	DOM
Ecuador	...	23-3	...	69-1	94-2	ECU
El Salvador	83-3	10-3	17-3	65	85	SLV
Grenada	...	...	...	100	75-1	GRD
Guatemala	...	44-3	...	52	84	GTM
Guyana	86-4	8-3	47-4	65-1	78-1	GUY
Haiti	...	20-3	...	...	...	HTI
Honduras	...	18-3	...	28	59	HND
Jamaica	94-2	6-3	44-2	99	95-1	JAM
Mexico	80-1	13-3	39-1	66i	100i	MEX
Montserrat	...	...	...	79-4	73-1	MSR
Nicaragua	...	15-3	...	66-1	85-1	NIC
Panama	...	14-3	...	62	77	PAN
Paraguay	...	4-3	...	46	75	PRY
Peru	...	11-3	...	93	100	PER
Saint Kitts and Nevis	...	...	...	99-1	...	KNA
Saint Lucia	...	2-3	...	67-1	92-1	LCA
Saint Vincent/Grenadines	...	...	...	69	98	VCT
Sint Maarten	...	...	...	16-1	...	SXM
Suriname	...	8-3	...	81	87	SUR
Trinidad and Tobago	93-2	9-3	65-2	72	97	TTO
Turks and Caicos Islands	91-4	3-3	55-4	89	98-1	TCA
Uruguay	...	6-3	...	83-1	89-1	URY
Venezuela, B. R.	...	10-3	...	...	...	VEN
Europe and Northern America						
Albania	...	9-3	...	93	94-1	ALB
Andorra	...	...	...	99	95	AND
Austria	...	...	...	86i	97i	AUT
Belarus	...	4-3	...	98	98	BLR
Belgium	...	2-3	...	98-1i	98-1i	BEL
Bermuda	...	...	...	...	...	BMU
Bosnia and Herzegovina	...	8-3	...	...	37-1	BIH
Bulgaria	...	6-3	...	88i	95i	BGR
Canada	...	...	...	...	93-1i	CAN
Croatia	...	...	...	79-1i	99-1i	HRV
Czechia	...	2-3	...	85-1i	94-1i	CZE
Denmark	...	...	...	95i	97i	DNK
Estonia	...	1-3	...	...	92i	EST
Finland	...	...	...	92i	96i	FIN
France	...	...	...	99i	100i	FRA
Germany	...	2-3	...	96i	98i	DEU
Greece	...	2-3	...	99-1i	100-1i	GRC
Hungary	...	...	...	83i	95i	HUN
Iceland	...	...	...	96-1	97-1	ISL
Ireland	...	...	...	83-2i	95-2i	IRL
Italy	...	...	...	91-1i	95-1i	ITA
Latvia	...	2-3	...	95i	98i	LVA
Liechtenstein	...	...	...	76-3	98-3	LIE
Lithuania	...	5-3	...	27i	100i	LTU
Luxembourg	...	...	...	96i	99i	LUX
Malta	...	...	...	93-1i	93-1i	MLT
Monaco	...	...	...	85	92	MCO
Montenegro	...	8-3	...	78-1	84-1	MNE
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	...	2-3	...	93-1i	98-1i	NLD
North Macedonia	...	4-3	...	45-1	52-1	MKD
Norway	...	...	...	97i	98i	NOR
Poland	...	2-3	...	97i	100i	POL
Portugal	...	3-3	...	94-1i	100-1i	PRT
Republic of Moldova	...	4-3	...	100	99-2	MDA
Romania	...	8-3	...	75-1i	81-1i	ROU
Russian Federation	...	...	...	...	83-1	RUS
San Marino	...	...	...	98	98	SMR
Serbia	...	5-3	...	66	86-2	SRB
Slovakia	...	...	...	82i	93i	SVK
Slovenia	...	...	...	93-1i	95-1i	SVN
Spain	...	...	...	98i	99i	ESP
Sweden	...	...	...	96i	99i	SWE
Switzerland	...	...	...	74i	98i	CHE
Ukraine	...	14-3	...	80	77	UKR
United Kingdom	...	...	...	...	...	GBR
United States	...	4-3	...	61-2	87-2	USA

TABLE 4: SDG TARGET 4.3 – TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL, TERTIARY AND ADULT EDUCATION

By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

SDG TARGET 4.4 – SKILLS FOR WORK

By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G			H				
							Adults (15+) with ICT skills (%)			Adults (25+) who have attained at least (%)				
	Participation in adult education and training (%)	Youth enrolled in TVET (%)	TVET share of secondary enrolment (%)	TVET share of post-secondary non-tertiary (%)	Gross graduation ratio from tertiary (%)	GER tertiary (%)	Copy and paste within document	Use formula in spreadsheet	Write computer program	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Post-secondary	
SDG indicator	4.3.1	4.3.3				4.3.2	4.4.1			4.4.3				
Reference year	2024						2024							
Region	Weighted average						Weighted average							
World	2_{i}	4_{i}	10_{i}	...	27_{i}	44_{i}	...	28_{i}	7_{i}	84	68	49	24	
Sub-Saharan Africa	3_{i}	1_{-4i}	6_{i}	...	...	9_{-3i}	...	...	...	57	41	27	22	
Northern Africa and Western Asia	3_{i}	8_{i}	12_{i}	...	27_{i}	50_{i}	52	27	8	77	59	50	27	
Northern Africa	1_{i}	7	13	...	29_{i}	38	59_{i}	18_{i}	4_{i}	61_{i}	48_{i}	44_{i}	19_{i}	
Western Asia	4_{i}	8_{-1i}	11_{i}	...	26_{-1i}	59_{-1i}	48	33	10	87	64	53	31	
Central and Southern Asia	1_{i}	3	4	...	23_{i}	31	...	...	...	67	53	42	16	
Central Asia	...	16_{i}	5	...	23_{i}	49	34	26	3	99	97	97_{i}	...	
Southern Asia	1_{i}	2	3	...	23_{i}	30	...	...	...	66	51	40	16	
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	0.3_{i}	...	15	...	41_{i}	63	...	33	8	93	72	39	19	
Eastern Asia	0.1_{i}	...	17	...	52	76	...	35	9	96	75	38	20	
South-eastern Asia	1_{i}	7	12	...	23_{i}	42_{i}	36_{i}	23_{i}	4_{i}	83	59	40	17	
Oceania	8_{i}	9_{i}	22_{i}	...	41_{i}	64_{i}	...	...	...	93	83	70	46	
Latin America and the Caribbean	5_{i}	7_{i}	14_{i}	...	25_{-2i}	59_{i}	36	20	5	82	66	54	21_{i}	
Caribbean	...	...	18	...	...	48_{i}	21	18	5	86_{i}	67_{i}	53_{i}	...	
Central America	...	...	28	...	...	43	30	25	6	82	63	39	17	
South America	...	...	10	...	...	75	40	18	5	82	67	59	...	
Europe and Northern America	7_{i}	10_{i}	14_{i}	...	45_{i}	82_{i}	50_{i}	31_{i}	5_{i}	99	94	82	47	
Europe	9_{i}	18	21_{i}	...	50_{i}	84_{i}	49	31	5	99	93	78	44	
Northern America	4_{i}	2_{-1i}	0.4_{i}	...	...	79_{i}	...	...	...	99	97	91	52	
Low income	3_{i}	1_{i}	8_{i}	...	...	9_{-3i}	...	...	...	39	24	15	7_{i}	
Middle income	1_{i}	4_{i}	10	...	27_{i}	43	...	24_{i}	6_{i}	81	62	40	18	
Lower middle	1_{i}	3	5	...	19_{i}	27	...	...	...	68	52	40	17	
Upper middle	2_{i}	5_{i}	15	...	38_{i}	65_{i}	...	27	8	91	69	40	18	
High income	7_{i}	10_{i}	14_{i}	...	45_{i}	82_{i}	60_{i}	40_{i}	7	99	94	82	46	

A Participation rate of adults (25 to 54) in formal or non-formal education and training in the last 12 months (%).
Estimates based on other reference periods, in particular 4 weeks, are included in the country when no data are available on the last 12 months, but not in regional aggregates.
B Percentage of youth (15 to 24) enrolled in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes (ISCED levels 2 to 5) (%).
C Share of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in total secondary enrolment (%).
D Share of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in post-secondary non-tertiary enrolment (%).
E Gross graduation ratio from first degree programmes in tertiary education (ISCED levels 6 and 7).
F Gross enrolment ratio (GER) in tertiary education.
G Percentage of adults (15 and over) with specific information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
H Percentage of adults (25 and over) who have attained at least a given level of education.
I Literacy rate, among youth (15 to 24) and adults (15 and above).
J Percentage of adults (15 years and above) who have achieved or exceeded a given level of proficiency in (a) literacy and (b) numeracy.

Source: UIS unless noted otherwise. Data refer to school year ending in 2024 unless noted otherwise.
Aggregates represent countries listed in the table with available data and may include estimates for countries with no recent data.
(-) Magnitude nil or negligible.
(...) Data not available or category not applicable.
(± n) Reference year differs (e.g. -2: reference year 2022 instead of 2024).
(i) Estimate and/or partial coverage.

SDG TARGET 4.6 – LITERACY AND NUMERACY

By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

	I		J		K			
	Literacy rate (%)		Adults achieving proficiency (%)		Illiterates			
					Female (%)		Number (in millions)	
	Youth	Adults	Literacy	Numeracy	Youth	Adults	Youth	Adults
	4.6.1		4.6.2					
	2024							
	Weighted average						Sum	
	93	88	...	...	56	63	86	739
	79_{i}	69_{i}	...	...	56_{i}	61_{i}	51_{i}	225_{i}
	93	84	...	...	59	65	7	65
	90	75	...	...	50	62	5	46
	95	91	...	...	76	72_{i}	3	19_{i}
	94	77	...	...	59	64	23	347
	100_{i}	100_{i}	...	...	49_{i}	63_{i}	$-_{i}$	0.1_{i}
	94	77	...	...	59	64	23	347
	99	97	...	...	43	70	2	59
	100	97	...	...	45	74	1	38
	99	96	...	...	43	65	1	21
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	99	95	...	...	42_{i}	54_{i}	1_{i}	26_{i}
	97_{i}	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	98	94	...	...	...	...	...	...
	99	95	...	...	...	...	...	...
	100_{-2i}	99_{-2i}	73	71	52_{-2i}	58_{-2i}	0.4_{-2i}	11_{-2i}
	...	...	73_{i}	74_{i}	...	...	...	...
	100_{-2i}	99_{-2i}	72	66	55_{-2i}	52_{-2i}	0.2_{-2i}	4_{-2i}
	75	64_{i}	...	...	55	61_{i}	37	160_{i}
	95	88	...	...	57	64	48	555
	92	78	...	...	58	63	45	468
	99	96	...	...	45	67	3	87
	99_{-3i}	98_{-4i}	74	73	49_{-3i}	...	1_{-3i}	...

TABLE 4: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A Participation in adult education and training (%)	B Youth enrolled in TVET (%)	C TVET share of secondary enrolment (%)	D TVET share of post-secondary non-tertiary (%)	E Gross graduation ratio from tertiary (%)	F GER tertiary (%)	G Adults (15+) with ICT skills (%) Copy and paste within document	 Use formula in spreadsheet	 Write computer program	H Adults (25+) who have attained at least (%) Primary	 Lower secondary	 Upper secondary	 Post-secondary
SDG indicator	4.3.1	4.3.3				4.3.2	4.4.1			4.4.3			
Reference year	2024						2024						
Sub-Saharan Africa													
Angola	3-2i	7-1	22-1	...	5-1	10	...	...	...	53-1	38-1	27-1	...
Benin	2-2i	2-2	5-2	...	...	10-2	...	...	...	23-2	12-2	6-2	5-2
Botswana	2-1i	...	...	61	...	21	...	...	...	81-1	64-1	43-1	31-1
Burkina Faso	3i	1	5	...	5	10	...	...	...	21	10	5	3
Burundi	2-4i	3+1	17+1	...	...	6+1	...	...	...	...	...	9-4	...
Cabo Verde	...	2-2	3-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	46	34	27	...
Cameroon	...	7-1	22-1	...	8	17	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Central African Republic	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chad	...	0.2	1	...	...	4-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Comoros	3-3i	0.2-2	0.5-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	47-2	32-2	23-2	16-3
Congo	...	...	...	...	...	10-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Côte d'Ivoire	2-2i	2	5	...	...	12	12-1	6-1	5-1	33-3	27-3	17-3	10-3
D. R. Congo	1-4i	...	19-1	...	...	6-4	...	...	...	66-1	54-1	30-1	...
Djibouti	...	...	7-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Equat. Guinea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Eritrea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Eswatini	2-1i	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	71-2	49-2	36-2	19-1
Ethiopia	7-3i	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	31-2	17-2	10-2	9-3
Gabon	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Gambia	3-1i	...	...	...	...	13	...	...	...	46-1	37-1	25-1	11-1
Ghana	2-2i	2	4	...	16	21	...	...	...	67	58	23	10-2
Guinea	...	...	...	...	5-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Guinea-Bissau	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	32-2	21-2	14-2	6-2
Kenya	1-2i	...	2-1	100	...	10	...	...	...	79	66	39	6-2
Lesotho	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	65	37	26	...
Liberia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Madagascar	0.4-2i	1-3	2-3	...	4-1	6-1	...	...	...	41-3	18-3	9-3	...
Malawi	1-4i	--1	...	100-3	...	3-2	2-1	2-1	--1	47-4	19-4	12-4	3-4
Mali	1-2i	...	10-1	100-1	...	...	...	...	...	14-2	10-2	7-2	4-2
Mauritania	...	0.1-4	0.2-4	...	...	6-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mauritius	1-2i	4-4	6	52	...	46	38-4	28-4	3-4	96-1	67-1	51-2	23-3
Mozambique	3-2i	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	32-2	18-2	12-2	3-2
Namibia	...	...	...	...	14-2	26-2	...	...	...	99-1	77-1	37-1	14-1
Niger	1-2i	1	9	...	...	...	8-2	2-2	1-2	17-2	8-2	2-2	1-2
Nigeria	6-1i	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	71	53	48	41-1
Rwanda	1i	4	12	...	7	9	...	...	...	44-2	18-2	16	7
Sao Tome and Principe	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Senegal	2-2i	2-1	4-1	...	...	15	...	...	...	26-1	15-1	8-1	6-2
Seychelles	2-4i	19	12	100	11	15	...	...	...	98-4	...	84-4	19-1
Sierra Leone	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Somalia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	16-2	11-2	10-2	...
South Africa	2i	4-1	5-1	100-1	12-1	23-1	...	...	...	89	85	48	...
South Sudan	...	...	...	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Togo	2-2i	4-1	7-1	100-3	...	15-4	...	...	...	44-2	22-2	11-2	7-2
Uganda	1-3i	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	45	23	13	13-3
United Republic of Tanzania	1-4i	0.1-4	1-3	94-1	3-3	4	...	...	...	67-2	15-2	7-2	...
Zambia	2-1i	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	67	44	24	10-1
Zimbabwe	1-1i	...	...	...	...	8	10-4	5-4	1-4	...	...	...	25-1

	I		J		K				
	Literacy rate (%)		Adults achieving proficiency (%)		Illiterates				
					Female (%)		Number (000)		
	Youth	Adults	Literacy	Numeracy	Youth	Adults	Youth	Adults	Country code
	4.6.1		4.6.2						
	2024								
	81-1	68-1i	...	...	...	...	...	...	AGO
	71-2	51-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	BEN
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BWA
	63-2	42-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	BFA
	88-4	71-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	BDI
	98	88	...	...	52	69	2	44	CPV
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CMR
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CAF
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TCD
	91-3	76-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	COM
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	COG
	67-3	50-3i	...	...	...	...	...	...	CIV
	78-1	68-1i	...	...	...	...	...	...	COD
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	DJI
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GNQ
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ERI
	99-2	91-2i	...	...	...	...	...	...	SWZ
	85-2	60-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	ETH
	94-3	89-3i	...	...	...	...	...	...	GAB
	67-3	52-3i	...	...	...	...	...	...	GMB
	92-3	76-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	GHA
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GIN
	82-2	64-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	GNB
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	KEN
	96	90i	...	...	...	...	...	...	LSO
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LBR
	82-3	75-3i	...	...	...	...	...	...	MDG
	81-4	70-4i	...	...	...	...	...	...	MWI
	50	36i	...	...	...	...	...	...	MLI
	71-4	60-4i	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRT
	100-1	94-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	MUS
	71-2	62-2	...	...	60-4	68-4	1,818-4	6,678-4	MOZ
	92-1	88-1	...	...	41-1	53-1	42-1	226-1	NAM
	54-2	36-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	NER
	81	70	...	...	...	...	...	...	NGA
	90-2	79-2	...	...	39-2	57-2	267-2	1,732-2	RWA
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	STP
	67-1	50-1i	...	...	...	...	...	...	SEN
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SYC
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SLE
	71-2	54-2	...	...	59-2	62-2	1,036-2	4,280-2	SOM
	97	91	...	...	35	54	296	4,169	ZAF
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SSD
	90-2	73-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	TGO
	85	77	...	...	...	...	...	...	UGA
	87-2	78-2i	...	...	...	...	...	...	TZA
	78	72i	...	...	...	...	...	...	ZMB
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ZWE

TABLE 4: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A	B	C	D	E	F	G			H			
	Participation in adult education and training (%)	Youth enrolled in TVET (%)	TVET share of secondary enrolment (%)	TVET share of post-secondary non-tertiary (%)	Gross graduation ratio from tertiary (%)	GER tertiary (%)	Adults (15+) with ICT skills (%): Copy and paste within document	Use formula in spreadsheet	Write computer program	Adults (25+) who have attained at least (%): Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Post-secondary
SDG indicator	4.3.1	4.3.3				4.3.2	4.4.1			4.4.3			
Reference year	2024						2024						
Northern Africa and Western Asia													
Algeria	...	5	7	...	37	54	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Armenia	1-1i	11	9	...	37	53	...	...	...	100-1	99-1	93-1	52-1
Azerbaijan	...	11	7	100+1	33	41	77-1	34-1	...	100-1	98-1	92-1	33-1
Bahrain	...	3	5	100	36	58	94-1	55-1	17-4	90	83	66	40
Cyprus	3-1i	7i	9	...	41i	121i	...	37-1	5-1	97-1	86-1	78-1	45-1
Egypt	0.4-1i	11	20	100	39-1	38+1	60-2	15-2	2-2	69-1	56-1	56-1	22-1
Georgia	2-1i	3	5	100	43-2	89+1	32-1	9-1	1-1	100	99	94	53
Iraq	2-3i	...	...	...	...	...	13-2	6-2	2-2	...	32-3	23-3	17-3
Israel	9-1i	16i	19	...	39-1i	56i	...	...	...	96-1	92-1	85-1	49-1
Jordan	1-1i	2	5	...	29	36	27-1	14-1	3-1	88-1	79-1	43-1	32-1
Kuwait	...	...	...	...	33-4	52-3	58-1	42-1	16-1	...	...	...	...
Lebanon	...	6-2	16	...	...	54-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Libya	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Morocco	...	9	7	100	21	48	56-3	24-3	10-3	...	...	...	...
Oman	...	1	0.2	...	19	42	87	67	20	98-2	...	63-2	25-2
Qatar	...	1	1	...	19	43	54-4	23-4	...	90-2	74-2	51-2	35-2
Saudi Arabia	...	8	1	100	42-2	84	100-1	82-1	32-1	93	86	76	45
State of Palestine (the)	2i	4-1	1-1	100-1	35-1	44-1	29-1	11-1	3-1	92	69-2	46	29
Sudan	2-2i	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	38-2	26-2	21-2	11-2
Syrian Arab Republic	...	2	6	73	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tunisia	2-1i	...	...	...	27-1	38-1	...	...	...	57-1	42-1	19-1	...
Türkiye	9-1i	23-1	19-1	...	33-1	106-1	28-1	17-1	3-1	86-1	54-1	41-1	22-1
United Arab Emirates	1-1i	6-1	5	100	...	64	100-1	88-1	26-1	96	87	77	57
Yemen	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	46-1	34-1	26-1	...
Central and Southern Asia													
Afghanistan	0.4-4i	...	0.3-1	...	11-4	11-4	...	...	...	21-2	15-2	13-2	5-3
Bangladesh	2-1i	4	6	100	...	24	36-1	14-1	--1	55-2	49-3	34-3	8-1
Bhutan	1i	-	5	...	...	13	10-3	6-3	1-3	37-2	28-2	19-2	12-2
India	0.4-2i	2+1	2+1	100+1	28-1	34+1	...	...	...	68-1	53-1	41-1	16-1
Iran, Islamic Republic of	2-1i	9-1	16-1	...	30-3	59-2	17-3	4-3	1-3	87-1	65-1	46-1	46-1
Kazakhstan	...	17	10+1	100+1	65i	53+1	16-1	42-1	5-1	99	96	...	...
Kyrgyzstan	0.2-1i	7	9+1	100+1	35i	54+1	...	...	...	99-1	96-1	...	...
Maldives	...	...	...	...	...	48-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nepal	...	1	1	...	...	21	...	...	...	46-3	34-3	13-3	...
Pakistan	0.4-3i	1	2	100	...	11	4-4	2-4	2-4	49-3	38-3	...	9-3
Sri Lanka	2-2i	3-1	4-1	100-1	12-1	21-1	...	...	...	87-1	83	65	5-2
Tajikistan	...	...	1	...	...	36	...	...	...	97-1	89-1	...	...
Turkmenistan	...	2	...	100-2	1	20	...	...	...	100-2	100-2	98-2	22-2
Uzbekistan	...	7+1	6+1	100+1	...	60+1	45-1	16-1	3-1	100-2	100-2	97-2	...

	I		J		K				
	Literacy rate (%)		Adults achieving proficiency (%)		Illiterates				
					Female (%)		Number (000)		
	Youth	Adults	Literacy	Numeracy	Youth	Adults	Youth	Adults	Country code
	4.6.1		4.6.2						
	2024								
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	DZA
	100-1	100-1i	…	…	40-4	67-4	0.4-4	5-4	ARM
	100-1	100-1	…	…	47-1	65-1	2-1	17-1	AZE
	100	98	…	…	42	60	1	28	BHR
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	CYP
	95-2	79-2	…	…	…	…	…	…	EGY
	100	100	…	…	32	64	1	10	GEO
	92-3	84-3	…	…	…	…	…	…	IRQ
	…	…	64-1	66-1	…	…	…	…	ISR
	99	94	…	…	39	67	29	454	JOR
	99-4	96-4	…	…	28-4	48-4	3-4	126-4	KWT
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	LBN
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	LBY
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	MAR
	100-2	97-2	…	…	40-2	66-2	2-2	98-2	OMN
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	QAT
	100	98	…	…	100	57	6	539	SAU
	99	98	…	…	53-2	76-2	6-2	70-2	PSE
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	SDN
	98-3	94-3	…	…	48-3	75-3	77-3	781-3	SYR
	98-1	86-1	…	…	…	…	…	…	TUN
	92-2	97-3	…	…	78-3	87-3	5-3	1,769-3	TUR
	100	99	…	…	48	44	5	103	ARE
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	YEM
	63-2	37-3	…	…	66-3	62-3	3,709-3	13,925-3	AFG
	93-2	79-2	…	…	45-2	57-2	2,141-2	25,249-2	BGD
	98-2	65-2	…	…	…	…	…	…	BTN
	97	78	…	…	63-1	67-1	7,338-1	190,709-1	IND
	99-1	89-1	…	…	…	…	…	…	IRN
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	KAZ
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	KGZ
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	MDV
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	NPL
	73-3	59-3	…	…	…	…	…	…	PAK
	99	93	…	…	42	57	40	1,298	LKA
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	TJK
	100-2	100-2	…	…	49-2	52-2	1-2	5-2	TKM
	100-2	100-2	…	…	50-2	50-2	--2	--2	UZB

TABLE 4: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A Participation in adult education and training (%)	B Youth enrolled in TVET (%)	C TVET share of secondary enrolment (%)	D TVET share of post-secondary non-tertiary (%)	E Gross graduation ratio from tertiary (%)	F GER tertiary (%)	G Adults (15+) with ICT skills (%) Copy and paste within document	Use formula in spreadsheet	Write computer program	H Adults (25+) who have attained at least (%) Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Post-secondary
SDG indicator	4.3.1	4.3.3				4.3.2	4.4.1			4.4.3			
Reference year	2024						2024						
Eastern and South-eastern Asia													
Brunei Darussalam	1-1i	8-1	13-1	...	19-4	36-1	95-2	73-2	32-2	91-1	89-1	68-1	39-1
Cambodia	0.3-1i	...	2	100-1	...	21	...	...	...	49-1	22-3	10-1	7-1
China	...	...	18	75-3	53	77	...	32-2	9-2	96-4	72-4	32-4	16-4
DPR Korea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hong Kong, China	...	3	1	68	...	120	64-1	47-1	9-1	100	81-2	66	32-2
Indonesia	1-1i	11	18+1	...	29-1	45-1	...	...	...	84-1	57-1	39-1	12-1
Japan	...	...	11-1	...	49-1i	64-1i	66-2	51-2	6-2	100-4	99-4	85-4	42-4
Lao PDR	4-2i	5-1	2+1	100-1	...	15-1	...	...	...	64-1	29-1	21-1	12-2
Macao, China	...	1	3	...	80	142	42-3	35-3	5-3	...	...	...	...
Malaysia	...	3	6	...	15-1	39	78-1	54-1	19-1	95-2	81-2	70-2	26-2
Mongolia	1-1i	7	8-1	100	61-1	69	16-3	20-3	3-3	96	93	84	40-4
Myanmar	0.5-4i	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Philippines	...	7	10	100	...	47	...	...	...	86-2	62-2	34-2	26-2
Republic of Korea	2i	10i	7	...	64i	112i	95-1	57-1	8-1	98	90	81	50
Singapore	2i	23-1	...	70-1	71-1	97-1	57-1	41-1	11-1	90-2	85-2	79-2	63-2
Thailand	0.2i	11+1	14+1	100+1	35	49+1	23-4	15-4	1-4	75	54-2	39	...
Timor-Leste	3-3i	...	9-4	...	...	31-1	...	...	...	98-2	78-2	63-2	24-2
Viet Nam	1-1i	16-2	9-2	100-2	20-2	38	32-1	17-1	1-1	88-1	66-1	39-1	19-1
Oceania													
Australia	10i	14i	28	100	68-1i	108i	...	...	...	99	93	80	52
Cook Islands	...	5	...	100	-	12	...	...	...	99-4	91-4	50-4	...
Fiji	...	1	1	...	...	75	...	...	...	91-3	...	...	...
Kiribati	2-1i	3	3-1	92	...	5	...	...	...	94	77	14	9-1
Marshall Islands	7-3i	1	2-3	81	...	38	...	...	...	93-3	...	...	18-3
Micronesia, F. S.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nauru	5-3i	-	...	41-2	...	...	...	...	...	94-1	71-1	40-1	...
New Zealand	...	15i	17	93	42i	77i	...	...	...	...	82-4	75-4	51-4
Niue	5-2i	-	4-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Palau	1-4i	--1	...	100-1	...	72	...	...	...	96-4	94-4	88-4	...
Papua New Guinea	3-2i	...	5-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	63-2	35-2	20-2	14-2
Samoa	2-2i	...	...	...	4-3	16	...	...	...	95-2	92-2	44-2	23-2
Solomon Is	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tokelau	...	--1	8+1	...	--4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tonga	3-1i	10	2	20-1	...	43-1	...	...	...	96-1	94-3	42-1	24-1
Tuvalu	5-2i	4-1	2	68	...	19-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vanuatu	...	42-1	52-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	71-1	29-1	12-1	6-4
Latin America and the Caribbean													
Anguilla	...	--2	--2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Antigua and Barbuda	1-1i	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	99-1	85-1	74-1	29-1
Argentina	8i	--2	...	...	13-1	108-1	...	...	...	88-2	...	55-2	...
Aruba	...	...	22	...	...	14	...	...	...	96-1	89-1	68-1	...
Bahamas	...	-	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	99-1	96-2	91-1	32-2
Barbados	...	-	...	52	...	51+1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Belize	2-1i	2	7	...	...	25	...	...	...	94-2	52-4	43-2	21-4
Bolivia, P. S.	9-1i	28	63	...	...	...	...	...	...	71	66	53	31-1
Brazil	7i	6i	7	100	...	70i	44-1	14-1	4-1	80	67-1	62	...
British Virgin Islands	...	1	3	100	...	30	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cayman Islands	...	-	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chile	7i	13i	10	...	19i	110i	...	45-1	16-1	93	88	70	31
Colombia	4i	9-2i	8-2	...	32-1i	59-2i	38-1	24-1	7-1	83	63	59	27
Costa Rica	8i	9i	27	...	...	...	...	...	10-1	86	52	43	...

	I		J		K				
	Literacy rate (%)		Adults achieving proficiency (%)		Illiterates				
					Female (%)		Number (000)		
	Youth	Adults	Literacy	Numeracy	Youth	Adults	Youth	Adults	Country code
	4.6.1		4.6.2						
	2024								
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	BRN
	97-1	72-3i	…	…	…	…	…	…	KHM
	100-4	97-4	…	…	45-4	75-4	397-4	38,141-4	CHN
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	PRK
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	HKG
	94-2	96-4	…	…	48-4	68-4	98-4	8,112-4	IDN
	…	…	90-1	90-1	…	…	…	…	JPN
	90-1	76-1i	…	…	…	…	…	…	LAO
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	MAC
	99-2	96-2	…	…	67-2	60-2	72-2	1,112-2	MYS
	99	99	…	…	40-4	47-4	4-4	18-4	MNG
	96-4	94-4	…	…	…	…	…	…	MMR
	100-2	98-4	…	…	43-4	48-4	168-4	1,172-4	PHL
	…	…	69-1	72-1	…	…	…	…	KOR
	100-3	98-3	70-1	78-1	40-3	78-3	0.5-3	79-3	SGP
	98-2	91-2i	…	…	…	…	…	…	THA
	86-2	69-2	…	…	50-2	56-2	41-2	270-2	TLS
	99-2	96-2	…	…	45-2	66-2	125-2	2,925-2	VNM
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	AUS
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	COK
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	FJI
	…	99-4	…	…	…	…	…	…	KIR
	96-3	96-3	…	…	…	…	…	…	MHL
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	FSM
	92-3	97-1i	…	…	…	…	…	…	NRU
	…	…	74-1	72-1	…	…	…	…	NZL
	100-2	99-2	…	…	…	…	…	…	NIU
	100-4	100-4	…	…	…	…	…	…	PLW
	92-2	87-2	…	…	…	…	…	…	PNG
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	WSM
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	SLB
	100-2	100-2	…	…	…	…	…	…	TKL
	100-1	99-1i	…	…	…	…	…	…	TON
	100-2	100-2	…	…	…	…	…	…	TUV
	94-1	88-1i	…	…	…	…	…	…	VUT
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	AIA
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	ATG
	100-4i	99-4i	…	…	19-4i	50-4i	23-4i	294-4i	ARG
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	ABW
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	BHS
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	BRB
	96-2	88-2	…	…	43-2	50-2	3-2	35-2	BLZ
	100	97	…	…	40-1	75-1	11-1	378-1	BOL
	99	95	…	…	…	…	…	…	BRA
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	VGB
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	CYM
	99-2	…	47-1	44-1	…	…	…	…	CHL
	99	95	…	…	35-4	49-4	84-4	1,688-4	COL
	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	CRI

TABLE 4: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A Participation in adult education and training (%)	B Youth enrolled in TVET (%)	C TVET share of secondary enrolment (%)	D TVET share of post-secondary non-tertiary (%)	E Gross graduation ratio from tertiary (%)	F GER tertiary (%)	G Adults (15+) with ICT skills (%) Copy and paste within document	Use formula in spreadsheet	Write computer program	H Adults (25+) who have attained at least (%) Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Post-secondary
SDG indicator	4.3.1	4.3.3				4.3.2	4.4.1			4.4.3			
Reference year	2024						2024						
Cuba	...	12	24	100	...	43	24-4	25-4	6-4	...	...	...	...
Curaçao	...	14	32	...	...	...	...	...	...	99-4	90-4	51-4	...
Dominica	...	--1	...	--1	...	...	...	...	...	80-3	61-3	53-3	...
Dominican Republic	6i	6	12	...	...	58	18-2	12-2	4-2	78	62	49	...
Ecuador	4i	12-1i	15	...	54-1i	68-1	21	13	1	84	54	46	15-3
El Salvador	2-1i	6	16	...	...	33	...	...	...	65-1	49-1	34-1	...
Grenada	1-1i	...	...	50	...	...	...	...	...	97-1	58-1	54-1	27-1
Guatemala	3-1i	8	26	...	...	27-1	...	...	...	55	34	18	4-1
Guyana	...	0.3-1	...	100	...	26	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Haiti	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Honduras	3i	7	39	...	...	23	...	...	...	65	34	22	8
Jamaica	2-1i	-	...	52	...	...	16-3	7-3	2-3	99-1	77-2	56-2	...
Mexico	3+1i	12i	29	...	32-3i	48i	30-1	25-1	6-1	86+1	69	42+1	19-4
Montserrat	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	73-4	65-4	65-4	65-4
Nicaragua	...	2-1	8-1	100-1	...	30-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Panama	7i	...	...	...	14-4	54-1	...	...	...	89	65	49	15
Paraguay	...	5	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	80	57	46	...
Peru	4-2i	1	2	...	...	...	26-1	20-1	3-2	76	64	58	...
Saint Kitts and Nevis	...	1-1	...	100-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Saint Lucia	...	1-1	2-1	43-1	...	15-1	...	...	...	99-4	...	51-4	...
Saint Vincent/Grenadines	...	...	4	...	...	41-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sint Maarten	...	...	...	100-1	1-2	8-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Suriname	...	...	35-1	...	2-3	3	...	...	...	79-2	50-2	27-2	...
Trinidad and Tobago	1-1i	2	...	23	5-1	24	...	...	...	99-1	72-2	63-2	...
Turks and Caicos Islands	...	--2	...	...	2-1	25-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Uruguay	9i	12-1	25-1	...	28-1	80-1	63-2	38-2	10-2	94	63	35	...
Venezuela, B. R.	...	2	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Europe and Northern America													
Albania	1-1i	7	8	100	60	84	29-1	16-1	7-1	99-1	93-1	54-1	20-2
Andorra	...	7	10	100	28	68	...	...	...	99-2	83-2	61-2	40-2
Austria	6-1i	28i	34	100	37i	93i	68-1	...	9-1	100-1	95-3	83-1	31-3
Belarus	16-2i	18	11	100	59	70	41-1	22-1	2-1	100-1	...	98-1	...
Belgium	17-1i	23-1i	40-1	93-1	49-1i	82-1i	66-1	46-1	6-1	96-1	89-1	74-1	39-1
Bermuda	...	1-1	...	...	...	17-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2-1i	25-1	38-1	...	34-1	46-1	52-1	18-3	2-3	91-1	91-2	72-1	19-1
Bulgaria	2-1i	21i	36	100	49-1i	70i	42-1	17-1	1-1	99-1	97-1	80-1	27-1
Canada	5i	7-1i	4-1	...	43-1i	76-1i	60-2	47-2	9-2	96	96	90	69
Croatia	8-1i	25-1i	38-1	...	48-1i	81-1i	79-1	35-1	6-1	99-1	96-1	81-1	26-1
Czechia	2-1i	29-1i	34-1	24-1	42-1i	67-1i	55-1	40-1	6-1	100-1	100-1	91-1	24-3
Denmark	33-1i	11i	21	...	60-1i	79i	...	49-1	12-1	100-1	93-1	78-1	39-1
Estonia	26-1i	11i	21	100	45i	66i	55-3	42-3	8-1	100-1	99-1	87-1	50-1
Finland	29-1i	19i	43	100	66-1i	110i	...	49-1	9-1	100-1	92-1	82-1	40-1
France	3-1i	19i	19	43	56-1i	72i	60-1	19-1	6-1	100-1	92-1	78-1	37-1
Germany	10-1i	20i	18	96	48i	77i	...	38-1	6-1	100-1	95-1	82-1	42-1
Greece	4i	14-1i	17-1	100-1	56-2i	165-1i	59-1	39-1	4-1	98	78	70	37
Hungary	10-1i	23i	30	100	45-1i	61i	...	...	5	100-1	99-1	84-1	32-1
Iceland	28-1i	9-1	19-1	98-1	54-1	77-1	65-3	66-3	10-3	100-1	100-1	80-1	47-1
Ireland	15-1i	8-2i	13-2	100-2	...	78-2i	53-4	36-4	7-4	100-1	92-1	83-1	63-1
Italy	13-1i	20-1i	32-1	100-1	45-1i	76-1i	54-1	34-1	6-1	98-1	84-1	55-1	19-1
Latvia	14-1i	16i	20	100	43-1i	83i	...	31-1	4-1	100-1	99-1	89-1	51-1
Liechtenstein	...	25-3	34-3	...	4-4	46-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lithuania	12-1i	8i	8	100	56-1i	76i	53-1	38-1	6-1	99-1	98-1	92-1	63-1
Luxembourg	20-1i	21i	30	100	9-1i	22i	63-1	43-1	9-1	98-1	91-1	77-1	48-1

I		J		K				
Literacy rate (%)		Adults achieving proficiency (%)		Illiterates				
				Female (%)		Number (000)		
Youth	Adults	Literacy	Numeracy	Youth	Adults	Youth	Adults	Country code
4.6.1		4.6.2						
2024								
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CUB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CUW
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	DMA
98	94	...	...	34	47	33	476	DOM
99	93	...	...	42-2	58-2	12-2	488-2	ECU
98	90	...	...	38	62	21	483	SLV
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GRD
95	82	...	...	...	...	...	...	GTM
99-4	86-4i	...	...	...	...	...	...	GUY
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	HTI
96	88	...	...	...	...	...	...	HND
94-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	JAM
99	96	...	...	45-4	60-4	201-4	4,440-4	MEX
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MSR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NIC
99	96	...	...	...	...	...	...	PAN
99	95	...	...	49-4	54-4	16-4	253-4	PRY
99	94	...	...	57-4	73-4	31-4	1,340-4	PER
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	KNA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LCA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	VCT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SXM
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SUR
92-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TTO
100-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TCA
99	99	...	...	35-2	41-2	4-2	33-2	URY
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	VEN
99-1	98-1	...	...	42-1	61-1	3-1	54-1	ALB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	AND
...	...	71-1	77-1	...	...	...	...	AUT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BLR
...	...	81-1	82-1	...	...	...	...	BEL
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BMU
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BIH
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BGR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CAN
...	...	72-1	73-1	...	...	...	...	HRV
...	...	75-1	79-1	...	...	...	...	CZE
...	...	82-1	83-1	...	...	...	...	DNK
...	...	80-1	84-1	...	...	...	...	EST
...	...	88-1	88-1	...	...	...	...	FIN
...	...	72-1	72-1	...	...	...	...	FRA
...	...	78-1	80-1	...	...	...	...	DEU
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GRC
...	...	68-1	71-1	...	...	...	...	HUN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ISL
...	...	79-1	75-1	...	...	...	...	IRL
...	...	65-1	65-1	...	...	...	...	ITA
...	...	66-1	76-1	...	...	...	...	LVA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LIE
...	...	62-1	68-1	...	...	...	...	LTU
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LUX

TABLE 4: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A Participation in adult education and training (%)	B Youth enrolled in TVET (%)	C TVET share of secondary enrolment (%)	D TVET share of post-secondary non-tertiary (%)	E Gross graduation ratio from tertiary (%)	F GER tertiary (%)	G Adults (15+) with ICT skills (%) Copy and paste within document	G Use formula in spreadsheet	G Write computer program	H Adults (25+) who have attained at least (%) Primary	H Lower secondary	H Upper secondary	H Post-secondary
SDG indicator	4.3.1	4.3.3				4.3.2	4.4.1			4.4.3			
Reference year	2024						2024						
Malta	19-1i	10-1i	17-1	42-1	53-1i	81-1i	52-1	46-1	10-1	100-1	94-1	56-3	39-1
Monaco	...	14	12	100	218	77	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Montenegro	3-1i	23-1	31-1	...	35-3	55-1	...	36-2	8-2	99-4	96-4	82-4	24-4
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	29-1i	21-1i	40-1	100-1	50-1i	87-1i	...	...	...	97-1	90-1	74-1	39-1
North Macedonia	3i	...	30-1	100-1	31-1	55-1	...	...	...	94	69	69	23-2
Norway	26-1i	19i	29	100	61-1i	95i	61-1	56-1	13-1	100-1	99-1	82-1	45-1
Poland	2i	27i	30	100	50-1i	81i	...	31-1	5-1	100	88-3	87-3	32-3
Portugal	19i	15-1i	22-1	100-1	57-1i	78-1i	38-1	38-1	9-1	96	64	49	26
Republic of Moldova	1i	19	13	100	43-4	75	...	...	...	100	98	75	23
Romania	6-2i	18-1i	27-1	100-1	43-1i	55-1i	32-1	19-1	2-1	99-1	93-1	73-1	19-1
Russian Federation	1i	4-1	5-1	...	...	60	39-1	27-1	2-1	100	99-3	93	76-3
San Marino	...	2	4	...	45	58	...	...	...	99-2	88-2	59-2	18-2
Serbia	7i	20	34	100	...	71	60-1	26-1	5-1	99	93-2	77	27
Slovakia	1-1i	26i	28	100	36-1i	54i	59-1	35-1	4-1	100-1	99-1	90-1	27-1
Slovenia	23-1i	34-1i	41-1	...	49i	80-1i	51-1	33-1	5-1	100-1	99-1	82-1	35-2
Spain	18i	18i	22	100	41-1i	94i	64-1	41-1	9-1	94	84-1	56	36-1
Sweden	41-1i	13i	21	75	44-1i	84i	58-1	44-1	9-1	100-1	95-1	85-1	53-1
Switzerland	6i	23i	34	81	64-1i	74i	...	53-1	10-1	100	98	84	42
Ukraine	...	14	6	100	51	87	38-3	12-3	1-3	100-3	...	72-3	...
United Kingdom	6i	16-1i	27-1	...	55-1i	80-1i	...	...	...	100-3	100-3	80-3	...
United States	4i	...	...	100-1	...	79-2	...	...	...	99	97	92	50

	I		J		K				
	Literacy rate (%)		Adults achieving proficiency (%)		Illiterates				
					Female (%)		Number (000)		
	Youth	Adults	Literacy	Numeracy	Youth	Adults	Youth	Adults	Country code
	4.6.1		4.6.2						
	2024								
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MLT
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MCO
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MNE
	...	...	84-1	85-1	...	...	...	...	NLD
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MKD
	...	...	85-1	87-1	...	...	...	...	NOR
	...	...	61-1	62-1	...	...	...	...	POL
	...	...	58-1	60-1	...	...	...	...	PRT
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MDA
	100-3	99-3	...	...	50-3	44-3	1-3	136-3	ROU
	100-3	100-3	...	...	43-3	49-3	12-3	88-3	RUS
	100-2	100-2	...	...	47-2	42-2	--2	--2	SMR
	100-2	99-2	...	...	46-2	71-2	2-2	38-2	SRB
	...	...	76-1	78-1	...	...	...	...	SVK
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SVN
	100-3	100-3	69-1	70-1	45-3	70-3	13-3	121-3	ESP
	...	...	88-1	88-1	...	...	...	...	SWE
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CHE
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	UKR
	...	...	82-1	79-1	...	...	...	...	GBR
	...	...	72-1	66-1	...	...	...	...	USA

TABLE 5: SDG TARGET 4.5 – EQUITY

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access at all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

	Gender											
	A GPIA in completion			B GPIA in minimum proficiency				C GPIA in literacy rate		D GPIA in gross enrolment ratio		
				End of primary		End of lower secondary						
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Youth	Adults	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
SDG indicator	4.5.1											
Reference year	2024											
Region	Parity of regional averages											
World	1,03	1,03	1,04	...	...	...	...	0.98	0.93	0.99$_{i}$	1.00$_{i}$	1.12$_{i}$
Sub-Saharan Africa	1,09	0,99	0,91	...	...	...	...	0.94$_{i}$	0.84$_{i}$	0.98$_{i}$	0.94$_{i}$	0.78$_{-3\,i}$
Northern Africa and Western Asia	1,00	1,06	1,06	1,15	0,99	1,23	1,04	0.97	0.88	0.96$_{i}$	0.98$_{i}$	1.08$_{i}$
Northern Africa	1,02	1,09	1,12	1,21	1,02	...	...	0.99	0.85	0.99	1.02	1.14
Western Asia	0,99	1,02	1,00	1,11	0,97	1,22	1,04	0.94	0.91	0.94$_{i}$	0.94$_{i}$	1.06$_{-1\,i}$
Central and Southern Asia	1,03	1,02	0,96	...	...	...	...	0.97	0.84	0.99	1.01	1.02
Central Asia	1,00	1,00	0,98	1,12	0,91	1,28	0,91	1.00$_{i}$	1.00$_{i}$	0.98	0.98	1.09
Southern Asia	1,03	1,02	0,96	...	...	...	...	0.97	0.83	0.99	1.01	1.02
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	1,02	1,07	1,16	...	...	1,21	1,05	1.00	0.97	1.00	1.01	1.12
Eastern Asia	1,01	1,07	1,18	...	...	...	...	1.00	0.97	1.02	1.02	1.11
South-eastern Asia	1,02	1,08	1,15	...	...	1,24	1,07	1.00	0.98	0.97	1.00	1.19$_{i}$
Oceania	1,05	1,06	1,07	...	0,90	1,10	0,99	...	...	0.98$_{i}$	0.96$_{i}$	1.31$_{i}$
Latin America and the Caribbean	1,04	1,07	1,11	...	...	1,11	0,81	1.00	0.99	1.00$_{i}$	1.06$_{i}$	1.29$_{i}$
Caribbean	1,12	1,11	1,14	...	...	1,34	1,01	...	...	...	...	...
Central America	1,01	1,04	1,10	...	...	1,08	0,79	...	...	...	...	...
South America	1,04	1,08	1,12	...	...	1,12	0,82	...	...	...	...	...
Europe and Northern America	1,00	1,01	1,04	1,02	0,91	1,11	0,97	1.00$_{-2\,i}$	1.00$_{-2\,i}$	1.00$_{i}$	1.00$_{i}$	1.23$_{i}$
Europe	1,00	1,01	1,05	1,02	0,92	1,11	0,98	...	...	1.00$_{i}$	1.00$_{i}$	1.19$_{i}$
Northern America	1,00	1,00	1,02	1,01	0,91	1,09	0,96	1.00$_{-2\,i}$	1.00$_{-2\,i}$	0.99$_{i}$	0.99$_{i}$	1.30$_{i}$
Low income	1,08	0,97	0,93	...	...	...	...	0.93	0.80$_{i}$	0.94$_{i}$	0.84$_{-2\,i}$	0.67$_{-3\,i}$
Middle income	1,03	1,04	1,06	...	...	...	...	0.98	0.93	1.00	1.01	1.11
Lower middle	1,04	1,03	0,98	...	...	...	...	0.97	0.86	0.99	1.01	1.04
Upper middle	1,02	1,06	1,14	...	...	1,17	0,95	1.00	0.97	1.00	1.02	1.16$_{i}$
High income	1,00	1,01	1,04	1,02	0,92	1,10	0,98	1.00$_{-3\,i}$	...	1.00$_{i}$	1.00$_{i}$	1.21$_{i}$

A Adjusted gender parity index (GPIA) in school completion rate by level - model data [*Source:* UIS and GEM Report analysis of administrative data and household surveys available at https://www.unesco.org/en/education/view].
B Adjusted gender parity index (GPIA) in percentage of students with minimum level of proficiency at the end of given level.
C Adjusted gender parity index (GPIA) in youth and adult literacy rate.
D Adjusted gender parity index (GPIA) in gross enrolment ratio by level.
E Adjusted parity index for location (rural-urban) and wealth (poorest to richest quintile) in school completion by level.
F Adjusted parity index for wealth (poorest to richest quintile) in achievement of minimum proficiency.

Source: UIS and GEM Report analysis of household surveys. Data refer to school year ending in 2024 unless noted otherwise.
Aggregates represent countries listed in the table with available data and may include estimates for countries with no recent data.
(-) Magnitude nil or negligible.
(...) Data not available or category not applicable.
(± n) Reference year differs (e.g. -2: reference year 2022 instead of 2024).
(i) Estimate and/or partial coverage.

Location/Wealth																
E													F			
Disparity in primary completion				Disparity in lower secondary completion				Disparity in upper secondary completion				Wealth disparity in minimum proficiency				
Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		End of primary		End of lower secondary		
Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	
4.5.1																
2024																
Median																
0.99$_{i}$	0.91$_{-2i}$	...	...	0.94$_{i}$	0.68$_{-2i}$	...	...	0.76$_{i}$	0.34$_{-2i}$	...	...	...	...	0.53$_{i}$	0.48$_{i}$	
0.66$_{i}$	0.48$_{i}$	38$_{i}$	41$_{i}$	0.47$_{i}$	0.21$_{i}$	12$_{i}$	11$_{i}$	0.29$_{i}$	0.07$_{i}$	5$_{i}$	3$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	
1.00$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.97$_{i}$	0.75$_{i}$	...	...	0.92$_{i}$	0.54$_{i}$	...	...	0.82$_{i}$	0.76$_{i}$	0.43$_{i}$	0.45$_{i}$	
0.91$_{i}$	0.82$_{i}$	86$_{i}$	91$_{i}$	0.74$_{i}$	0.53$_{i}$	57$_{i}$	75$_{i}$	0.55$_{i}$	0.21$_{i}$	38$_{i}$	41$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	
...	...	...	...	1.00$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.96$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.83$_{i}$	0.76$_{i}$	0.44$_{i}$	0.48$_{i}$	
1.00	0.93$_{i}$	97$_{i}$	98$_{i}$	0.98	0.85$_{i}$	95$_{i}$	97$_{i}$	0.78	0.57$_{i}$	85$_{i}$	74$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	
1.00	0.99	99	100	0.99	0.99	97	99	0.98	0.93	90	87	...	...	0.46$_{i}$	0.55$_{i}$	
0.98	0.87$_{i}$	77$_{i}$	83$_{i}$	0.91	0.64$_{i}$	47$_{i}$	56$_{i}$	0.72	0.20$_{i}$	14$_{i}$	11$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	
0.99$_{i}$	0.92$_{i}$	...	...	0.93$_{i}$	0.66$_{i}$	...	...	0.84$_{i}$	0.37$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	0.46	0.43	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.77	0.87	
0.98$_{i}$	0.89$_{i}$	83$_{i}$	95$_{i}$	0.93$_{i}$	0.63$_{i}$	53$_{i}$	71$_{i}$	0.72$_{i}$	0.33$_{i}$	32$_{i}$	28$_{i}$	...	...	0.36	0.32$_{i}$	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
0.99$_{i}$	0.97$_{i}$	96$_{i}$	98$_{i}$	0.91$_{i}$	0.87$_{i}$	81$_{i}$	85$_{i}$	0.79$_{i}$	0.63$_{i}$	52$_{i}$	60$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
0.95	0.94	95	93	0.86	0.79	76	80	0.68	0.51	43	44	...	...	0.33$_{i}$	0.13$_{i}$	
0.99	0.98	97	98	0.95	0.89	84	88	0.83	0.68	57	62	...	...	0.46$_{i}$	0.26$_{i}$	
1.00$_{i}$	...	...	...	1.00$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.99$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.91$_{i}$	0.73$_{i}$	0.57	0.54	
1.00$_{i}$	...	...	...	1.00$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.99$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.90$_{i}$	0.73$_{i}$	0.57	0.53	
...	...	99$_{i}$	99$_{i}$	...	...	98$_{i}$	98$_{i}$	...	...	88$_{i}$	91$_{i}$	0.95	0.71	0.72	0.59	
0.59$_{i}$	0.40$_{i}$	28$_{i}$	33$_{i}$	0.44$_{i}$	0.18$_{i}$	9$_{i}$	7$_{i}$	0.26$_{i}$	0.06$_{i}$	3$_{i}$	2$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	
0.98$_{i}$	0.88$_{i}$	84$_{i}$	90$_{i}$	0.91$_{i}$	0.70$_{i}$	64$_{i}$	70$_{i}$	0.72$_{i}$	0.38$_{i}$	27$_{i}$	34$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	
0.94	0.81$_{i}$	71$_{i}$	82$_{i}$	0.80	0.55$_{i}$	37$_{i}$	47$_{i}$	0.58	0.21$_{i}$	18$_{i}$	17$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	
0.99$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.93$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.80$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	...	0.43$_{i}$	0.34$_{i}$	
1.00$_{i}$	...	...	...	1.00$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.99$_{i}$	...	...	...	0.89$_{i}$	0.74$_{i}$	0.59$_{i}$	0.55$_{i}$	

TABLE 5: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Gender											
	A GPIA in completion			B GPIA in minimum proficiency				C GPIA in literacy rate		D GPIA in gross enrolment ratio		
				End of primary		End of lower secondary						
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Youth	Adults	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
SDG indicator	4.5.1											
Reference year	2024											
Sub-Saharan Africa												
Angola	1,03	0,91	0,92	...	...	...	...	0.84-1	0.65-1i	1.01-1	0.88-1	0.99
Benin	0,92	0,65	0,51	...	...	...	...	0.91-2	0.66-2	0.93-2	0.86-2	0.59-2
Botswana	1,01	1,05	1,21	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.98-2	1.09-3	1.39
Burkina Faso	1,14	0,88	0,53	...	...	...	...	0.93-2	0.73-1	1.03	1.19	0.74
Burundi	1,18	0,73	1,08	...	...	...	...	1.00-4	0.85-4	1.02+1	1.25+1	0.90+1
Cabo Verde	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00	0.91	0.98-2	1.13-2	...
Cameroon	1,08	1,05	1,03	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.92	0.90-1	0.96
Central African Republic	0,93	0,67	0,85	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chad	0,96	0,55	0,36	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.86	0.71	0.39-4
Comoros	1,10	1,27	1,39	...	...	...	...	1.18-2	0.90-3	0.99	1.06-2	...
Congo	0,99	0,69	0,83	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.98-1	...	0.67-1
Côte d'Ivoire	1,02	0,79	0,62	...	...	...	1.78-1	0.77-3	0.67-3i	1.02	0.98	0.98
D. R. Congo	1,09	1,07	0,97	...	...	...	...	0.78-1	0.63-1i	0.95-1	0.63-3	0.59-4
Djibouti	1,01	0,90	1,21	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Equat. Guinea	1,28	0,66	0,59	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Eritrea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.85-2	0.84-2	...
Eswatini	1,13	1,13	1,15	...	...	...	...	1.00-2	0.99-2i	0.93-1	...	...
Ethiopia	1,27	1,31	1,28	...	...	...	...	0.92-2	0.70-2	0.93	...	...
Gabon	1,06	1,19	1,36	...	...	...	...	0.98-3	0.96-3i	...	...	...
Gambia	1,11	1,14	1,10	...	...	...	...	0.87-3	0.62-3i	1.14+1	1.16-3	1.83
Ghana	1,11	1,08	0,90	...	...	...	...	0.92-2	0.89-3	0.99	1.02	1.02
Guinea	0,89	0,81	0,64	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.86-4	...	...
Guinea-Bissau	1,17	1,03	0,66	...	...	...	...	0.91-2	0.67-2	...	...	...
Kenya	1,11	1,17	1,02	1.14-1	1.05-1	...	...	0.98-2	...	0.97-1	1.01-1	0.79
Lesotho	1,25	1,40	1,32	1.28-1	1.27-1	...	...	1.05	1.14i	0.96	...	...
Liberia	1,30	1,13	0,93	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.02-2	0.96-4	...
Madagascar	1,19	1,05	1,03	...	...	...	...	1.00-3	0.92-3i	1.04	1.06-3	1.02-1
Malawi	1,28	1,17	1,03	...	...	...	...	0.99-4	0.80-4i	1.02	1.03-1	0.70-2
Mali	0,97	0,83	0,57	...	...	...	...	0.75	0.61i	0.91-1	0.91-1	...
Mauritania	1,11	0,95	0,85	...	...	...	...	0.89-4	0.74-4i	1.03	1.01-4	0.57-4
Mauritius	1,00	1,07	1,11	...	...	...	...	1.00-1	0.97-1	1.01	1.06	1.00+1
Mozambique	1,02	0,62	0,63	...	...	...	...	0.83-2	0.69-2	0.95-2	...	...
Namibia	1,16	1,28	1,22	...	...	...	...	1.03-1	0.99-1	0.95	1.10	1.42-2
Niger	0,85	0,38	0,50	...	...	...	...	0.70-2	0.54-2	0.96	0.97	...
Nigeria	1,01	0,91	0,84	0.95-1	0.87-1	...	...	1.00	0.80	0.97-1	1.02-1	...
Rwanda	1,13	1,13	1,12	...	...	...	...	1.05-2	0.95-2	0.96	1.17	0.80
Sao Tome and Principe	1,10	1,02	1,18	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Senegal	1,18	1,17	0,89	...	...	...	...	0.95-1	0.68-1i	1.21	1.24-1	1.11
Seychelles	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00	1.06	1.51
Sierra Leone	1,06	0,99	0,62	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.05	1.10-1	...
Somalia	0,73	0,43	0,21	...	...	...	...	0.85-2	0.68-2	0.83-1	0.70-1	...
South Africa	1,02	1,06	1,19	...	...	...	...	1.02	0.99	0.95-1	1.06-1	1.42-1
South Sudan	0,78	0,50	0,50	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.83	0.83	...
Togo	0,99	0,86	0,55	...	...	...	...	0.94-2	0.77-2	0.98	0.87-1	0.57-4
Uganda	1,31	1,02	1,11	...	...	...	...	1.02	0.90	...	...	...
United Republic of Tanzania	1,15	1,11	0,76	...	...	...	...	0.96-2	0.87-2i	1.05	1.07-3	0.82
Zambia	1,14	1,09	1,00	1.33-1	0.98-1	...	...	0.96	0.80i	1.05	1.08	...
Zimbabwe	1,08	1,12	0,64	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.01	...	1.21

Location/Wealth																
E														F		
Disparity in primary completion				Disparity in lower secondary completion				Disparity in upper secondary completion				Wealth disparity in minimum proficiency				
Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		End of primary		End of lower secondary		
Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Country code
4.5.1																
2024																
0.32-1	0.14-1	13-1	11-1	0.16-1	0.05-1	5-1	2-1	0.09-1	0.01-1	1-1	0.3-1	...	...	...	...	AGO
0.65-2	0.28-3	25-3	18-3	0.47-2	0.09-3	7-3	2-3	0.30-2	0.08-3	6-3	0.3-3	...	...	...	...	BEN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BWA
0.67-3	0.47-3	37-3	40-3	0.41-3	0.19-3	12-3	11-3	0.24-3	0.06-3	2-3	2-3	...	...	...	...	BFA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BDI
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.76-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CPV
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CMR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CAF
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TCD
0.90-2	0.78-2	71-2	70-2	0.80-2	0.58-2	39-2	47-2	0.58-2	0.46-2	21-2	23-2	...	...	...	...	COM
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	COG
0.60-3	0.52-3	40-3	42-3	0.29-3	0.14-3	11-3	6-3	0.18-3	0.05-3	3-3	1-3	...	...	...	0.11-1	CIV
0.68-1	0.51-1	52-1	42-1	0.56-1	0.43-1	43-1	32-1	0.29-1	0.15-1	15-1	7-1	...	...	...	...	COD
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	DJI
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GNQ
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ERI
0.84-2	0.80-2	67-2	80-2	0.77-2	0.57-2	36-2	47-2	0.63-2	0.36-2	20-2	17-2	...	...	...	...	SWZ
0.58-2	...	...	...	0.27-2	...	...	...	0.34-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ETH
0.65-4	0.60-4	...	...	0.49-4	0.42-4	...	...	0.29-4	0.18-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	GAB
0.73-1	0.55-4	40-4	46-4	0.53-1	0.33-4	24-4	21-4	0.40-1	0.25-4	8-4	14-4	...	...	...	...	GMB
0.80	0.50-2	45-2	47-2	0.75	0.41-2	37-2	37-2	0.57	0.22-2	19-2	19-2	...	...	...	...	GHA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GIN
0.36-2	...	...	...	0.27-2	...	...	...	0.14-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GNB
0.94	0.83-2	73-2	84-2	0.92	0.69-2	64-2	64-2	0.67	0.27-2	25-2	19-2	...	...	...	...	KEN
0.90	0.71	54	89	0.62	0.23	8	28	0.47	0.08	4	8	...	...	...	...	LSO
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LBR
0.58-3	0.15-3	13-3	13-3	0.31-3	0.03-3	4-3	1-3	0.20-3	0.01-3	--3	1-3	...	...	...	...	MDG
0.59-4	0.33-4	21-4	30-4	0.30-4	0.06-4	5-4	2-4	0.26-4	0.04-4	2-4	2-4	...	...	...	...	MWI
0.58	0.35	23	23	0.33	0.05	4	2	0.24	-	...	0.2	...	...	...	...	MLI
0.40-4	0.15-4	...	...	0.19-4	0.06-4	...	...	0.16-4	0.07-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	MRT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MUS
0.48-2	0.22-2	19-2	19-2	0.24-2	0.05-2	6-2	2-2	0.22-2	0.04-2	3-2	1-2	...	...	...	...	MOZ
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NAM
0.38-2	...	...	...	0.15-2	...	...	...	0.01-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NER
0.79	0.35-3	34-3	34-3	0.84	0.29-3	29-3	24-3	0.76	0.17-3	19-3	13-3	...	...	...	...	NGA
0.79-2	0.43-4	31-4	41-4	0.56-2	0.12-4	6-4	6-4	0.33-2	0.04-4	2-4	2-4	...	...	...	...	RWA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	STP
0.64-1	0.49-1	31-1	39-1	0.48-1	0.22-1	14-1	10-1	0.32-1	0.10-1	5-1	3-1	...	...	...	...	SEN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SYC
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SLE
0.59-1	...	...	...	0.51-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SOM
0.99	...	...	...	0.96	...	...	...	0.75	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ZAF
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SSD
0.82-2	...	...	...	0.51-2	...	...	...	0.25-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TGO
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	UGA
0.79-2	0.48-2	39-2	51-2	0.42-2	0.12-2	7-2	6-2	0.23-2	0.02-2	1-2	0.4-2	...	...	...	...	TZA
0.69	0.46	42	46	0.45	0.22	22	18	0.25	0.07	5	4	...	...	...	...	ZMB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ZWE

TABLE 5: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Gender											
	A GPIA in completion			B GPIA in minimum proficiency				C GPIA in literacy rate		D GPIA in gross enrolment ratio		
				End of primary		End of lower secondary						
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Youth	Adults	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
SDG indicator	4.5.1											
Reference year	2024											
Northern Africa and Western Asia												
Algeria	1,03	1,26	1,48	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00+1	1.03	1.35
Armenia	1,00	1,01	1,05	...	1.01-1	...	...	1.00-1	1.00-1i	0.98	0.98	1.28
Azerbaijan	1,00	0,99	0,97	1.11-3	1.03-1	1.38-2	1.07-2	1.00-1	1.00-1	0.99	0.97	1.22
Bahrain	...	...	...	1.22-3	1.01-1	...	1.06-1	1.00	0.98	1.01	0.98	1.47
Cyprus	1,00	1,03	1,06	1.02-3	0.90-1	...	...	...	...	1.01i	1.00i	1.32i
Egypt	1,03	1,06	1,06	1.19-1	1.05-1	...	...	0.99-2	0.86-2	1.00	0.98	1.03+1
Georgia	1,00	1,01	1,02	1.08-3	0.98-1	1.37-2	1.05-2	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.94	1.16+1
Iraq	0,97	1,10	0,77	...	...	...	...	0.97-3	0.86-3	...	...	...
Israel	1,00	1,02	1,07	1.02-3	...	1.13-2	1.00-2	...	...	1.00i	1.00i	1.30i
Jordan	1,01	1,01	1,15	1.22-3	0.98-1	1.56-2	1.26-2	1.00	0.95	1.00	1.03	1.33
Kuwait	...	...	...	...	0.83-1	...	0.83-1	1.00-4	0.98-4	1.13-3	...	1.39-3
Lebanon	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.99	1.11	...
Libya	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Morocco	0,94	0,96	1,03	1.27-3	0.86-1	1.28-2	0.98-2	...	...	0.98	1.03	1.19
Oman	...	...	...	1.19-3	0.94-1	...	1.11-1	1.00-2	0.96-2	1.02	0.99	1.45
Qatar	1,00	1,00	0,91	1.08-3	0.84-1	1.28-2	0.94-1	...	...	1.02	1.00	1.64
Saudi Arabia	...	...	...	1.19-3	0.94-1	1.36-2	0.91-2	1.00	0.98	1.00	1.00	1.01
State of Palestine (the)	1,00	1,10	1,32	1.34-1	1.08-1	1.58-2	1.15-1	0.99	0.97	0.99-1	1.07-1	1.38-1
Sudan	1,05	1,07	1,01	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Syrian Arab Republic	1,01	1,19	1,25	...	...	...	...	1.00-3	0.94-3	1.00	1.14	...
Tunisia	1,03	1,20	1,40	...	...	...	...	1.00-1	0.86-1	0.98-1	...	1.45-1
Türkiye	1,01	1,01	1,07	1.05-3	0.98-1	1.15-2	1.06-1	0.99-2	0.96-3	0.98-1	0.97-1	1.07-1
United Arab Emirates	...	...	...	1.12-3	0.91-1	1.27-2	0.92-1	1.00	0.99	0.99	0.96	1.22
Yemen	0,92	0,86	0,87	...	...	...	...	1.19-1	...	...	...	...
Central and Southern Asia												
Afghanistan	0,75	0,63	0,61	...	...	...	...	0.54-2	0.43-3	0.78-1	0.62-1	0.38-4
Bangladesh	1,12	1,19	0,99	...	...	...	...	1.02-2	0.94-2	1.11	1.17	0.77
Bhutan	1,09	1,09	1,11	...	...	...	...	0.99-2	0.78-2	1.07	1.16	1.11
India	1,02	1,02	0,96	...	...	...	...	0.99	0.83	0.99+1	1.03+1	1.07+1
Iran, Islamic Republic of	1,01	1,02	1,17	1.12-3	1.03-1	...	0.96-1	1.00-1	0.92-1	1.00-1	1.02-1	1.01-2
Kazakhstan	1,00	1,00	1,00	1.06-3	0.90-1	1.30-2	1.02-2	...	...	0.98+1	0.99+1	1.17+1
Kyrgyzstan	1,00	1,01	1,00	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00+1	1.03+1	1.28+1
Maldives	1,00	1,05	1,35	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.09	1.12-1	1.64-2
Nepal	1,03	1,03	0,90	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.97+1	1.01	1.22
Pakistan	1,05	1,00	1,03	1.37-1	1.12-1	...	...	0.84-3	0.70-3	0.97	0.93	1.03
Sri Lanka	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00	0.98	1.01-1	1.05-1	1.40-1
Tajikistan	1,01	0,99	0,86	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.94	0.91	0.95
Turkmenistan	1,00	1,00	1,03	...	...	...	...	1.00-2	1.00-2	1.00	1.00	1.07
Uzbekistan	1,00	1,01	1,00	1.15-3	0.93-1	1.26-2	0.76-2	1.00-2	1.00-2	0.96+1	0.99+1	1.14+1

Location/Wealth																
E												F				
Disparity in primary completion				Disparity in lower secondary completion				Disparity in upper secondary completion				Wealth disparity in minimum proficiency				
Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		End of primary		End of lower secondary		
Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Country code
4.5.1																
2024																
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	DZA
1.00-1	...	...	...	1.00-1	...	...	...	0.98-1	...	...	...	...	0.95-1	...	...	ARM
1.00-1	0.98-1	98-1	97-1	1.01-1	1.02-1	94-1	96-1	0.87-1	0.76-1	76-1	64-1	...	...	0.44-2	0.48-2	AZE
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.82-3	0.75-1	...	0.38-1	BHR
...	...	...	...	0.97-3	...	...	...	1.06-3	...	...	...	0.85-3	0.63-1	...	...	CYP
0.99-2	0.96-3	95-3	95-3	0.95-2	0.84-3	82-3	81-3	0.88-2	0.72-3	67-3	65-3	...	...	...	...	EGY
...	...	...	...	1.00	...	...	...	0.96	...	...	...	0.91-3	0.85-1	0.37-2	0.42-2	GEO
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	IRQ
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.74-3	...	0.45-2	0.35-2	ISR
1.00-1	0.91-1	88-1	91-1	1.02-1	0.67-1	65-1	65-1	0.99-1	0.36-1	24-1	42-1	0.46-3	0.76-1	0.27-2	0.29-2	JOR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.76-1	...	...	KWT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LBN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LBY
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.52-3	0.27-1	0.30-2	0.20-2	MAR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.74-3	...	...	0.59-1	OMN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.89-3	0.74-1	0.42-2	0.65-1	QAT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.74-3	0.81-1	0.47-2	0.40-2	SAU
1.00-4	0.99-4	...	...	0.97-4	0.87-4	...	...	0.96-4	0.74-4	...	...	...	...	0.35-2	0.56-1	PSE
0.68-2	0.40-2	...	...	0.56-2	0.18-2	...	...	0.55-2	0.16-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	SDN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SYR
0.91-1	0.82-1	77-1	87-1	0.74-1	0.53-1	32-1	68-1	0.55-1	0.21-1	9-1	18-1	...	...	...	...	TUN
...	...	...	...	...	0.93-2	92-2	91-2	...	0.78-2	72-2	61-2	0.84-3	0.74-1	0.71-2	0.73-1	TUR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.88-3	0.85-1	0.45-2	0.72-1	ARE
0.73-1	0.45-1	44-1	37-1	0.66-1	0.36-1	31-1	22-1	0.59-1	0.30-1	22-1	12-1	...	...	...	...	YEM
0.53-2	0.25-2	25-2	14-2	0.47-2	0.18-2	14-2	7-2	0.44-2	0.11-2	11-2	2-2	...	...	...	...	AFG
1.03-2	0.87-2	77-2	87-2	0.98-2	0.59-2	47-2	56-2	0.72-2	0.20-2	14-2	11-2	...	...	...	...	BGD
0.94-2	...	...	...	0.85-2	...	...	...	0.72-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BTN
0.98-4	0.88-4	...	...	0.94-4	0.72-4	...	...	0.72-4	0.25-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	IND
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.53-3	0.41-1	...	0.23-1	IRN
1.00	0.99	98	100	0.98	0.98	95	100	0.97	0.93	93	86	0.90-3	...	0.48-2	0.62-2	KAZ
1.01-1	0.99-1	99-1	98-1	0.99-1	0.98-1	97-1	99-1	0.93-1	0.90-1	85-1	88-1	...	...	...	...	KGZ
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MDV
0.98-3	0.87-3	85-3	83-3	0.88-3	0.70-3	68-3	65-3	0.52-3	0.21-3	17-3	14-3	...	...	...	...	NPL
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PAK
1.00-1	...	...	...	1.03-1	...	...	...	0.83-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LKA
1.00-1	0.99-1	97-1	99-1	1.00-1	1.00-1	97-1	97-1	1.00-1	0.95-1	88-1	74-1	...	...	...	...	TJK
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TKM
1.00-2	1.00-2	99-2	100-2	0.99-2	1.00-2	100-2	99-2	1.00-2	0.93-2	92-2	88-2	...	...	0.43-2	0.47-2	UZB

TABLE 5: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Gender											
	A GPIA in completion			B GPIA in minimum proficiency				C GPIA in literacy rate		D GPIA in gross enrolment ratio		
				End of primary		End of lower secondary						
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Youth	Adults	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
SDG indicator	4.5.1											
Reference year	2024											
Eastern and South-eastern Asia												
Brunei Darussalam	...	...	...	...	...	1.23-2	1.11-2	...	...	1.00	1.03-1	1.35-1
Cambodia	1,12	1,15	1,13	...	...	1.33-2	0.91-2	1.01-1	0.78-3i	0.96	1.13	1.11
China	1,02	1,08	1,18	...	...	...	...	1.00-4	0.97-4	1.02	...	1.14
DPR Korea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hong Kong, China	...	...	...	1.01-3	0.98-1	1.08-2	1.03-2	...	...	0.97	0.97	1.09
Indonesia	1,01	1,04	1,09	...	...	1.29-2	1.11-2	1.02-2	0.97-4	0.97+1	0.97+1	1.20-1
Japan	1,00	...	...	...	...	1.07-2	0.99-1	...	...	1.00-1i	1.00-1i	0.97-1i
Lao PDR	1,07	0,98	1,04	...	...	...	...	0.96-1	0.78-1i	0.99+1	0.98+1	0.75-1
Macao, China	...	...	...	1.01-3	0.96-1	1.06-2	1.00-2	...	...	1.00	1.00	1.11
Malaysia	1,00	1,01	1,26	...	...	1.32-2	1.16-2	0.99-2	0.98-2	1.00	1.03	1.31
Mongolia	1,01	1,02	1,08	...	...	1.28-2	1.07-2	0.99	1.01	1.01	1.05-1	1.41
Myanmar	1,05	1,12	1,31	...	...	...	...	1.00-4	0.98-4	...	...	...
Philippines	1,03	1,16	1,20	...	...	1.39-2	1.24-2	1.00-2	1.00-4	0.96	1.02	1.22
Republic of Korea	1,00	1,00	0,99	...	0.98-1	1.10-2	1.04-2	...	...	1.00i	0.99i	0.89i
Singapore	...	...	...	1.03-3	0.99-1	1.06-2	1.00-1	1.00-3	0.97-3	1.00-1	0.99-1	1.09-1
Thailand	1,01	1,06	1,19	...	...	1.30-2	1.07-2	1.00-2	1.01-2i	0.99+1	1.06+1	1.26+1
Timor-Leste	1,13	1,21	1,16	...	...	...	...	0.99-2	0.90-2	1.02-1	1.10-4	1.04-1
Viet Nam	1,01	1,07	1,20	...	...	1.11-2	0.97-2	1.00-2	0.98-2	0.96	0.94-2	1.16
Oceania												
Australia	1,00	1,00	1,06	...	0.91-1	1.10-2	0.99-2	...	...	1.00i	0.96i	1.31i
Cook Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.05	1.05	1.77
Fiji	1,01	1,03	1,18	...	...	...	...	1.03-3	...	0.94	1.02	1.22
Kiribati	1,06	1,23	1,44	...	...	...	...	...	1.00-4	0.96	1.09	1.56
Marshall Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.02-3	1.01-3	1.01	1.11	1.27
Micronesia, F. S.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.01	...	...
Nauru	1,07	1,16	1,14	...	...	...	...	1.09-3	1.06-1i	1.04+1	1.06+1	...
New Zealand	...	...	...	1.04-3	0.85-1	1.10-2	1.01-2	...	...	1.00i	1.07i	1.38i
Niue	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00-2	1.00-2	1.19+1	0.84	...
Palau	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00-4	1.00-4	1.01	0.98	1.33
Papua New Guinea	1,15	1,23	0,90	...	...	...	...	0.98-2	...	0.97-1	0.87-1	...
Samoa	1,02	1,04	1,30	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.96	...	1.57
Solomon Is	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.97	...	...
Tokelau	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00-2	0.94+1	1.06+1	...
Tonga	1,00	1,11	1,15	...	...	...	...	1.00-1	1.00-1i	1.03	1.07	1.51-1
Tuvalu	1,00	1,22	1,30	...	...	...	...	1.00-2	1.00-2	0.98	1.25	1.60-1
Vanuatu	1,06	1,09	0,88	...	...	...	...	1.01-1	1.01-1i	0.97	1.00-1	...
Latin America and the Caribbean												
Anguilla	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.98-1	0.98-2	...
Antigua and Barbuda	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.94-1	1.00-1	...
Argentina	1,02	1,12	1,19	...	...	1.13-2	0.81-2	1.00-4i	1.00-4i	1.01-1	1.04-1	1.45-1
Aruba	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.03	1.07	1.57
Bahamas	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.97	1.04	...
Barbados	1,00	1,00	1,06	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.98	1.04	1.49+1
Belize	1,09	1,29	1,40	...	...	...	...	1.01-2	1.00-2	0.99	1.02	1.45
Bolivia, P. S.	1,01	1,01	1,05	...	...	...	...	1.00	0.96	0.99	0.99	...
Brazil	1,05	1,07	1,12	...	...	1.14-2	0.83-2	1.00	1.01	1.00i	1.02i	1.36i
British Virgin Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.02	0.95	1.37
Cayman Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.02	0.99	...
Chile	1,00	1,02	1,05	...	...	1.06-2	0.67-1	1.00-2	...	0.97i	0.98i	1.15i
Colombia	1,03	1,06	1,07	...	...	1.10-2	0.85-2	1.01	1.01	0.97-2i	1.04-2i	1.15-2i
Costa Rica	1,02	1,11	1,17	...	...	1.02-2	0.72-2	...	...	1.00i	1.07i	...
Cuba	1,00	1,02	1,09	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.99	1.02	1.49

Location/Wealth																
E												F				
Disparity in primary completion				Disparity in lower secondary completion				Disparity in upper secondary completion				Wealth disparity in minimum proficiency				
Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		End of primary		End of lower secondary		
Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Country code
4.5.1																
2024																
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.46-2	0.48-2	BRN
0.96-3	0.69-3	57-3	73-3	0.78-3	0.37-3	29-3	29-3	0.58-3	0.12-3	6-3	6-3	...	...	0.19-2	0.13-2	KHM
...	0.98-4	...	...	...	0.91-4	...	...	...	1.01-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	CHN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PRK
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00-3	0.90-1	0.87-2	0.87-2	HKG
0.99-2	...	...	...	0.92-2	...	...	...	0.84-2	...	...	...	...	...	0.31-2	0.25-2	IDN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.77-2	0.98-1	JPN
0.88-1	0.70-1	70-1	67-1	0.61-1	0.31-1	32-1	23-1	0.38-1	0.12-1	13-1	7-1	...	...	...	...	LAO
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.96-3	0.92-1	0.92-2	0.89-2	MAC
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.39-2	0.32-2	MYS
1.01-4	...	...	...	0.99	...	...	...	0.89	...	...	...	...	...	0.28-2	0.38-2	MNG
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MMR
0.98-2	0.89-2	83-2	95-2	0.94-2	0.63-2	53-2	72-2	0.93-2	0.40-2	32-2	42-2	...	...	0.27-2	0.20-2	PHL
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.70-2	0.66-2	KOR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.86-3	...	0.75-2	...	SGP
0.99-2	0.97-2	96-2	99-2	0.98-2	0.81-2	74-2	86-2	0.86-2	0.45-2	39-2	49-2	...	...	0.34-2	0.32-2	THA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TLS
1.00-3	0.95-3	94-3	95-3	0.93-3	0.69-3	63-3	71-3	0.61-3	0.33-3	33-3	28-3	...	...	0.75-2	0.70-2	VNM
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.56-1	0.64-2	0.53-2	AUS
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	COK
1.01-3	0.99-3	97-3	100-3	0.94-3	0.82-3	74-3	87-3	0.69-3	0.38-3	27-3	34-3	...	...	...	...	FJI
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	KIR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MHL
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	FSM
...	0.95-1	89-1	...	...	0.79-1	...	...	...	0.32-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	NRU
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.82-3	0.46-1	0.69-2	0.50-2	NZL
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NIU
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PLW
0.78-2	...	...	...	0.62-2	...	...	...	0.41-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PNG
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	WSM
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SLB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TKL
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TON
1.01-4	...	...	...	0.99-4	0.82-4	...	...	0.74-4	0.45-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	TUV
0.88-1	0.62-1	55-1	63-1	0.65-1	0.23-1	11-1	22-1	0.32-1	0.05-1	4-1	2-1	...	...	...	...	VUT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	AIA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ATG
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.44-2	0.26-2	ARG
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ABW
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BHS
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BRB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BLZ
0.99	0.99-3	98-3	98-3	0.95	0.95-3	93-3	95-3	0.67-1	0.74-3	72-3	61-3	...	...	...	...	BOL
0.99	0.97-1	94-1	96-1	0.90	0.86-1	82-1	87-1	0.75	0.59-1	50-1	59-1	...	...	0.47-2	0.22-2	BRA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	VGB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CYM
1.00-2	1.00-2	99-2	99-2	1.00-2	1.00-2	99-2	99-2	0.97-2	0.90-2	85-2	91-2	...	...	0.63-2	0.27-1	CHL
0.97	0.92-1	89-1	94-1	0.83	0.74-1	66-1	77-1	0.71	0.63-1	53-1	63-1	...	...	0.42-2	0.25-2	COL
1.00	0.99	99	100	0.95	0.88	83	85	0.92	0.72	64	71	...	...	...	...	CRI
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CUB

TABLE 5: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Gender											
	A GPIA in completion			B GPIA in minimum proficiency				C GPIA in literacy rate		D GPIA in gross enrolment ratio		
				End of primary		End of lower secondary						
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Youth	Adults	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
SDG indicator	4.5.1											
Reference year	2024											
Curaçao	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.05	1.09	...
Dominica	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.01+1	0.88-1	...
Dominican Republic	1,05	1,11	1,24	...	...	1.36-2	0.87-2	1.01	1.01	0.97	1.10	1.49
Ecuador	1,00	0,99	1,10	...	...	...	...	1.00	0.98	1.03-1	1.03-1	1.21-1
El Salvador	1,03	1,08	1,19	...	...	1.17-2	0.77-2	1.01	0.96	1.01	0.97	1.26
Grenada	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.98	1.02	...
Guatemala	1,00	0,98	1,03	...	...	1.08-2	0.70-2	0.99	0.90	0.98	1.04	1.21-1
Guyana	1,01	1,03	1,23	...	...	...	...	1.00-4	1.03-4i	1.00	1.01	1.57
Haiti	1,38	1,28	1,10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Honduras	1,06	1,19	1,20	...	...	...	...	1.02	1.01	1.01	1.15	1.33
Jamaica	1,01	1,02	1,05	...	...	1.28-2	1.20-2	1.11-2	...	1.00	1.00	...
Mexico	1,01	1,03	1,08	...	...	1.07-2	0.80-2	1.00	0.98	1.00i	1.12i	1.16i
Montserrat	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.95-1	1.09-1	...
Nicaragua	1,15	1,27	1,27	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.97-1	1.01-1	1.29-1
Panama	1,01	1,09	1,18	...	...	1.17-2	0.82-2	1.00	0.99	1.01	...	1.37-1
Paraguay	1,04	1,11	1,11	...	...	1.19-2	0.73-2	1.00	0.99	0.99	1.04	...
Peru	1,01	1,01	1,01	...	...	1.07-2	0.79-2	1.00	0.93	1.01	1.01	...
Saint Kitts and Nevis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.93-1	0.90-1	...
Saint Lucia	1,00	1,03	1,12	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.01	1.08	1.53-1
Saint Vincent/Grenadines	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.99	1.02	1.68-2
Sint Maarten	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.13-1	...	1.78-1
Suriname	1,09	1,26	1,41	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.95	1.00-2	1.27
Trinidad and Tobago	1,01	1,06	1,12	...	...	...	...	1.07-2	...	1.00	1.06	1.39
Turks and Caicos Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00-4	...	0.98	0.88	1.52-1
Uruguay	1,01	1,12	1,25	...	...	1.10-2	0.88-2	1.00	1.01	0.99-1	1.10-1	1.42-1
Venezuela, B. R.	1,09	1,25	1,35	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.04	1.09	...
Europe and Northern America												
Albania	1,01	1,01	1,06	1.04-3	1.00-1	1.47-2	1.21-2	1.00-1	0.99-1	1.00	0.97	1.24
Andorra	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00	0.99	1.09
Austria	1,00	1,00	1,07	1.01-3	...	1.08-2	0.94-2	...	...	1.00i	0.99i	1.23i
Belarus	1,00	1,00	1,02	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00	1.01	1.14
Belgium	1,01	1,02	1,09	1.03-3	0.89-1	1.12-2	1.00-2	...	...	1.00-1i	1.12-1i	1.27-1i
Bermuda	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.01-1	1.13-1	1.34-1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,00	1,01	1,17	...	0.92-1	...	...	...	...	1.02-1	1.05-1	1.40-1
Bulgaria	1,00	0,99	1,01	1.02-3	1.03-1	1.24-2	1.06-2	...	...	1.00i	0.98i	1.29i
Canada	1,00	1,01	1,07	1.01-3	0.88-1	1.09-2	0.99-2	...	...	1.00-1i	1.00-1i	1.27-1i
Croatia	1,00	1,00	1,01	1.01-3	...	1.14-2	1.00-2	...	...	1.00-1i	1.06-1i	1.33-1i
Czechia	1,00	1,00	1,02	1.01-3	0.93-1	1.12-2	1.01-2	...	...	1.00-1i	1.01-1i	1.26-1i
Denmark	1,00	1,00	1,14	...	...	1.09-2	0.98-2	...	...	1.00i	0.99i	1.29i
Estonia	1,00	1,03	1,09	...	...	1.08-2	1.01-2	...	...	1.00i	1.05i	1.34i
Finland	1,00	1,00	1,03	1.02-3	1.00-1	1.16-2	1.07-2	...	...	1.00i	1.11i	1.25i
France	1,00	1,01	1,06	1.03-3	0.82-1	1.10-2	1.00-2	...	...	1.00i	1.01i	1.25i
Germany	1,00	1,01	1,06	1.02-3	0.94-1	1.08-2	0.97-2	...	...	1.01i	0.95i	1.10i
Greece	1,00	1,01	1,03	...	...	1.18-2	0.96-2	...	...	1.00-1i	0.98-1i	1.07-1i
Hungary	1,00	1,02	1,03	1.03-3	0.93-1	1.09-2	0.94-1	...	...	1.00i	0.99i	1.21i
Iceland	1,00	1,00	1,23	...	...	1.21-2	1.02-2	...	...	1.00-1	0.95-1	1.52-1
Ireland	1,00	1,00	1,02	...	...	1.07-2	0.99-2	...	...	1.02-2i	1.08-2i	1.19-2i
Italy	1,00	1,00	1,05	1.01-3	0.87-1	1.10-2	0.88-1	...	...	0.99-1i	0.99-1i	1.29-1i
Latvia	1,00	1,02	1,10	1.04-3	0.98-1	1.13-2	1.00-2	...	...	1.00i	1.02i	1.32i
Liechtenstein	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.98-3	0.85-3	0.65-3
Lithuania	1,00	1,00	1,05	1.02-3	0.96-1	1.15-2	1.01-2	...	...	1.00i	0.98i	1.31i
Luxembourg	1,00	1,02	1,09	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.01i	1.02i	1.16i
Malta	1,00	1,00	1,13	1.02-3	...	1.20-2	1.06-2	...	...	1.00-1i	1.02-1i	1.38-1i

Location/Wealth																
E												F				
Disparity in primary completion				Disparity in lower secondary completion				Disparity in upper secondary completion				Wealth disparity in minimum proficiency				
Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		End of primary		End of lower secondary		Country code
Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	
4.5.1																
2024																
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CUW
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.15-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	DMA
0.98	0.87-1	83-1	90-1	0.91	0.87-1	79-1	85-1	0.85	0.57-1	42-1	47-1	...	...	0.24-2	...	DOM
0.99	0.98-1	98-1	98-1	0.91	0.89-1	87-1	89-1	0.83	0.68-1	60-1	67-1	...	...	...	...	ECU
0.92-1	0.89-1	85-1	87-1	0.84-1	0.71-1	58-1	70-1	0.64-1	0.48-1	41-1	39-1	...	...	0.27-2	0.10-2	SLV
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GRD
0.88	...	...	...	0.60	...	...	...	0.49	...	...	...	...	...	0.33-2	0.15-2	GTM
0.99-4	0.97-4	...	...	0.97-4	0.91-4	...	...	0.97-4	0.93-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	GUY
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	HTI
0.94	0.86-1	78-1	82-1	0.63	0.52-1	44-1	38-1	0.37	0.27-1	18-1	24-1	...	...	...	...	HND
1.00-2	0.98-2	97-2	99-2	0.98-2	0.94-2	90-2	95-2	0.96-2	0.79-2	69-2	82-2	...	...	0.56-2	0.36-2	JAM
0.99-2	0.97-2	95-2	97-2	0.91-2	0.86-2	82-2	84-2	0.74-2	0.53-2	43-2	44-2	...	...	0.50-2	0.38-2	MEX
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MSR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	NIC
0.96-1	0.94-1	95-1	93-1	0.87-1	0.79-1	76-1	80-1	0.72-1	0.51-1	43-1	50-1	...	...	0.34-2	0.10-2	PAN
0.99	0.96	94	96	0.87	0.80	73	80	0.70	0.51	45	47	...	...	0.32-2	0.15-2	PRY
0.99-1	0.99-1	98-1	98-1	0.96-1	0.95-1	92-1	92-1	0.91-1	0.88-1	84-1	83-1	...	...	0.46-2	0.31-2	PER
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	KNA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LCA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	VCT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SXM
0.89-2	...	...	...	0.89-2	...	...	...	0.40-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SUR
0.99-2	0.97-2	96-2	99-2	0.97-2	0.87-2	81-2	95-2	0.96-2	0.79-2	57-2	80-2	...	...	...	...	TTO
1.01-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TCA
0.98	0.98-1	97-1	98-1	1.07	0.72-1	72-1	69-1	1.13	0.30-1	22-1	28-1	...	...	0.55-2	0.37-2	URY
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	VEN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.95-3	0.67-1	0.43-2	0.41-2	ALB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	AND
1.01-3	...	...	...	1.03-3	...	...	...	1.10-3	...	...	...	0.91-3	...	0.54-2	0.51-2	AUT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BLR
...	...	...	...	0.97-3	...	...	...	1.08-3	...	...	...	0.92-3	0.66-1	0.57-2	0.53-2	BEL
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BMU
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.72-1	...	...	BIH
0.99-3	...	...	...	0.98-3	...	...	...	0.80-3	...	...	...	0.83-3	0.45-1	0.30-2	0.31-2	BGR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.98-3	0.78-1	0.70-2	0.62-2	CAN
1.00-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	...	...	...	0.99-3	...	...	...	0.88-3	...	0.71-2	0.56-2	HRV
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.83-3	0.86-1	0.58-2	0.46-2	CZE
1.00-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	...	...	...	0.85-3	...	...	...	...	...	0.59-2	0.56-2	DNK
1.00-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	...	...	...	0.93-3	...	...	...	...	...	0.80-2	0.72-2	EST
1.00-3	...	...	...	1.01-3	...	...	...	1.03-3	...	...	...	0.84-3	0.67-1	0.66-2	0.60-2	FIN
1.00-3	...	...	...	0.99-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	...	...	...	0.89-3	0.54-1	0.57-2	0.51-2	FRA
...	...	...	...	1.03-3	...	...	...	1.02-3	...	...	...	0.87-3	0.66-1	0.65-2	0.57-2	DEU
1.01-3	...	...	...	1.02-3	...	...	...	1.02-3	...	...	...	...	...	0.56-2	0.47-2	GRC
0.99-3	...	...	...	0.98-3	...	...	...	0.86-3	...	...	...	0.78-3	0.37-1	0.49-2	0.34-1	HUN
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.53-2	0.55-2	ISL
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.79-2	0.63-2	IRL
1.00-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	...	...	...	1.02-3	...	...	...	0.94-3	0.73-1	0.69-2	0.64-1	ITA
1.00-3	...	...	...	1.01-3	...	...	...	0.93-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	0.87-1	0.68-2	0.65-2	LVA
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LIE
1.00-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	...	...	...	0.91-3	...	...	...	0.90-3	0.76-1	0.64-2	0.53-2	LTU
1.01-3	...	...	...	1.01-3	...	...	...	1.10-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LUX
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.73-3	...	0.60-2	0.62-2	MLT

TABLE 5: CONTINUED

Country or territory	Gender											
	A GPIA in completion			B GPIA in minimum proficiency				C GPIA in literacy rate		D GPIA in gross enrolment ratio		
				End of primary		End of lower secondary						
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics	Youth	Adults	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
SDG indicator	4.5.1											
Reference year	2024											
Monaco	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.97	1.01	1.43
Montenegro	1,00	1,01	1,06	1.08-3	0.89-1	1.30-2	1.04-2	...	...	1.01-1	1.03-1	1.34-1
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	1,00	1,05	1,11	1.02-3	0.94-1	1.14-2	0.99-2	...	...	1.00-1i	1.05-1i	1.16-1i
North Macedonia	1,00	1,01	1,03	1.11-3	1.00-1	1.31-2	1.09-2	...	...	1.00-1	1.00-1	1.30-1
Norway	1,00	1,00	1,09	...	1.00-1	1.18-2	1.05-2	...	...	1.00i	0.99i	1.34i
Poland	1,00	1,01	1,05	1.02-3	0.97-1	1.13-2	1.02-2	...	...	1.00i	0.99i	1.37i
Portugal	1,00	1,03	1,10	1.03-3	0.89-1	1.10-2	0.98-2	...	...	1.00-1i	1.01-1i	1.18-1i
Republic of Moldova	1,01	1,01	1,04	...	...	1.25-2	0.95-2	...	...	0.99	1.00	1.24
Romania	1,00	1,00	0,99	...	0.99-1	1.18-2	1.00-2	1.00-3	1.00-3	0.99-1i	1.01-1i	1.24-1i
Russian Federation	1,00	1,00	1,03	1.01-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	1.00-3	1.01-1	0.98-1	1.07
San Marino	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.00-2	1.00-2	1.03	0.98	1.01
Serbia	1,00	1,00	1,11	1.02-3	0.97-1	1.18-2	0.96-2	1.00-2	0.99-2	0.95	0.97	1.30
Slovakia	1,00	1,00	1,00	1.01-3	0.91-1	1.17-2	1.03-2	...	...	1.00i	1.01i	1.31i
Slovenia	1,00	1,00	1,05	1.04-3	0.95-1	1.21-2	1.05-2	...	...	0.99-1i	1.02-1i	1.34-1i
Spain	1,00	1,03	1,16	1.01-3	0.89-1	1.11-2	0.98-2	1.00-3	1.00-3	1.00i	1.04i	1.23i
Sweden	1,00	1,00	1,04	1.02-3	0.93-1	1.15-2	1.03-2	...	...	1.07i	1.12i	1.40i
Switzerland	1,00	1,01	1,03	...	...	1.11-2	0.99-2	...	...	1.00i	0.98i	1.12i
Ukraine	1,00	1,00	1,02	...	...	1.17-2	0.96-2	...	...	1.02	1.00	0.85
United Kingdom	1,00	1,00	1,04	1.02-3	0.94-1	1.08-2	0.97-2	...	...	1.00-1i	1.03-1i	1.27-1i
United States	1,00	1,00	1,02	1.02-3	0.91-1	1.09-2	0.96-2	...	...	1.00-2	1.02-2	1.32-2

Location/Wealth																	Country code
E													F				
Disparity in primary completion				Disparity in lower secondary completion				Disparity in upper secondary completion				Wealth disparity in minimum proficiency					
Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		Adjusted parity index		Poorest 20% completing (%)		End of primary		End of lower secondary			
Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Location	Wealth	Male	Female	Reading	Mathematics	Reading	Mathematics		
4.5.1																	
2024																	
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		MCO
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.92-3	1.01-1	0.46-2	0.38-2		MNE
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.90-3	0.70-1	0.50-2	0.56-2		NLD
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.70-3	0.54-1	0.29-2	0.32-2		MKD
1.00-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	...	...	...	0.92-3	...	...	...	...	0.87-1	0.54-2	0.48-2		NOR
1.00-4	...	...	...	1.01-3	...	...	...	0.99-3	...	...	...	0.96-3	0.82-1	0.67-2	0.62-2		POL
0.99-3	...	...	...	0.99-3	...	...	...	0.97-3	...	...	...	0.93-3	0.83-1	0.71-2	0.60-2		PRT
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.43-2	0.37-2		MDA
0.99-4	...	...	...	0.96-3	...	...	...	0.82-3	...	...	...	...	0.77-1	0.42-2	0.32-2		ROU
0.99-2	...	100-2	100-2	1.00-2	...	100-2	100-2	0.99-2	0.91-2	87-2	89-2	0.96-3	...	...	...		RUS
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...		SMR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.90-3	0.73-1	0.55-2	0.45-2		SRB
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.43-1	0.46-2	0.39-2		SVK
1.00-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	...	...	...	1.03-3	...	...	...	0.95-3	0.96-1	0.57-2	0.54-2		SVN
0.99-3	...	...	...	0.99-3	...	...	...	1.02-3	...	...	...	0.89-3	0.59-1	0.68-2	0.60-2		ESP
1.00-3	...	...	...	1.00-3	...	...	...	0.89-3	...	...	...	0.93-3	0.73-1	0.56-2	0.53-2		SWE
1.00-3	...	...	...	0.99-3	...	...	...	1.04-3	...	...	...	...	...	0.55-2	0.60-2		CHE
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.47-2	0.45-2		UKR
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.95-3	0.83-1	0.78-2	0.68-2		GBR
...	...	99-4	99-4	...	...	98-4	98-4	...	...	88-4	91-4	0.92-3	0.64-1	0.75-2	0.55-2		USA

TABLE 6: SDG TARGET 4.7 – EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

	A				B			C
	Extent to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development are mainstreamed				Score on greening education in			
	Education policies/ frameworks	Curriculum	In-service teacher training	Student assessment	Biodiversity	Clima change	Environment anf sustainability	% of schools providing life skills-based HIV/AIDS education
SDG indicator	4.7.1				4.7.1			4.7.2
Reference year	2020				2023			2024
Region	Median							Weighted average
World	...	...	...	...	31 i	21 i	55 i	81 i
Sub-Saharan Africa	...	...	...	...	23 i	25 i	49 i	44 -2i
Northern Africa and Western Asia	88 i	76 i	88 i	83 i	12 i	10 i	46 i	65 i
Northern Africa	...	...	...	...	6 i	- i	30 i	30
Western Asia	88 i	77 i	90 i	92	15 i	11 i	48 i	90 i
Central and Southern Asia	...	74 i	...	...	40 i	21 i	65 i	96
Central Asia	75 i	78 i	90 i	92 i	44 i	18 i	64 i	100 i
Southern Asia	...	66 i	...	...	31 i	21 i	65 i	96
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	94 i	...	92 i	83 i	26	16	66	91 i
Eastern Asia	...	...	...	...	33 i	21 i	68 i	94
South-eastern Asia	94 i	...	92 i	92 i	24	13	65	88 i
Oceania	...	...	...	...	41 i	26 i	41 i	99 i
Latin America and the Caribbean	...	...	...	...	55 i	23 i	46 i	...
Caribbean	...	...	...	...	34 i	20 i	35 i	44 i
Central America	...	...	...	...	60 i	31 i	61 i	...
South America	...	...	81 i	96 i	52	27	45	...
Europe and Northern America	91 i	83 i	85 i	83 i	42 i	22 i	62 i	...
Europe	95	84 i	88 i	88 i	41 i	22 i	62 i	...
Northern America	88 i	78 i	70 i	83 i	49 i	33 i	65 i	...
Low income	...	...	...	...	23 i	37 i	48 i	45 -2i
Middle income	...	...	...	...	30 i	16 i	53 i	82 i
Lower middle	...	...	...	...	27 i	19 i	55 i	87
Upper middle	88 i	...	...	100 i	32 i	16 i	51 i	91 i
High income	91 i	85 i	85 i	83 i	40 i	25 i	59 i	...

A Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development (including climate change education) are mainstreamed at all levels in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment. The closer to 100 the value, the better mainstreamed are ESD and GCED in that component.
B Extent to which green content (related to environment, sustainability, climate and biodiversity) is prioritized and integrated in national curriculum policy frameworks and the intended curricula (syllabi) of science and social science subjects in grades 3, 6, and 9. The closer the value is to 100, the more mainstreamed the topic is in national curriculum frameworks and syllabi.
C Percentage of lower secondary schools providing life skills-based HIV/AIDS education.
D Percentage of primary schools with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH): basic drinking water, basic (single-sex) sanitation or toilets, and basic handwashing facilities.
E Percentage of primary schools with electricity, and computers or internet used for pedagogical purposes.
F Percentage of primary schools with access to adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities.
G Percentage of lower secondary students experiencing bullying in the last 12 months.
H Number of attacks on students, teachers or institutions [*Source:* Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack].
I Internationally mobile students, inbound and outbound numbers enrolled (thousand) and inbound and outbound mobility rates (as a percentage of total tertiary enrolment in the country).
J Volume of official development assistance flows (all sectors) for scholarships (all levels) and imputed student costs, total gross disbursements (million constant 2023 US$). Region totals include flows unallocated to specific countries. World total includes flows unallocated to specific countries or regions.

Note: ICT = information and communication technology.
Source: UIS unless noted otherwise. Data refer to school year ending in 2024 unless noted otherwise.
Aggregates represent countries listed in the table with available data and may include estimates for countries with no recent data.
(-) Magnitude nil or negligible.
(...) Data not available or category not applicable.
(± n) Reference year differs (e.g. -2: reference year 2022 instead of 2024).
(i) Estimate and/or partial coverage.

SDG MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION 4.A – EDUCATION FACILITIES AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

By 2030, build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments

SDG MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION 4.B – SCHOLARSHIPS

By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries

	D			E			F	G	H	I				J	
	Schools with WASH facilities (%)			Schools with ICT for pedagogical purposes (%)						Internationally mobile tertiary students				Official development assistance, in US$ (in millions)	
										Mobility rate (%)		Number (000)			
	Basic drinking water	Basic sanitation or toilets	Basic handwashing	Electricity	Internet	Computers	Schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities (%)	Students experiencing bullying (%)	Number of countries with at least 5 attacks on education	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Scholarships	Imputed student costs
	4.a.1							4.a.2	4.a.3					4.b.1	
	2024									2024					
	Weighted average								Count	Weighted average		Sum			
	80_{i}	77_{i}	79_{i}	78_{i}	48_{i}	49_{i}	49_{i}	...	43	2.8_{-1}	2.8_{-1}	$7{,}288_{-1}$	$7{,}288_{-1}$	$1{,}156_{i}$	$3{,}567_{i}$
	55_{i}	56_{i}	47_{i}	36_{i}	...	35_{i}	...	...	18	1.8_{-3i}	4.9_{-3i}	188_{-1i}	590_{-1}	210	478
	94_{i}	93_{i}	98_{i}	93_{i}	62_{i}	80_{i}	49_{i}	84_{i}	8	3.9_{-1i}	3.5_{-1i}	884_{-1i}	804_{-1}	255_{i}	$1{,}078_{i}$
	92_{i}	91_{i}	96_{i}	89_{i}	46	75	38_{i}	...	1	1.5_{-1}	2.9_{-1}	125_{-1}	237_{-1}	98	516
	96_{i}	95_{i}	99_{i}	97_{i}	79_{i}	85_{i}	...	83_{i}	7	5.2_{-1i}	3.9_{-1i}	759_{-1i}	567_{-1}	157_{i}	562_{i}
	85	79	87	81	38	38	58	...	7	0.3_{-1}	2.9_{-1}	192_{-1}	$1{,}629_{-1}$	246	885
	100_{i}	96	100_{i}	100_{i}	87	98	35_{i}	72_{i}	1	5.9_{-1i}	16.0_{-1i}	113_{-1i}	307_{-1}	63	50
	85	79	87	80	36	37	58	...	6	0.1_{-1}	2.4_{-1}	79_{-1}	$1{,}322_{-1}$	182	835
	88	80	83	92	77	56	...	59_{i}	3	1.0_{-1}	1.8_{-1}	864_{-1}	$1{,}638_{-1}$	202_{i}	534_{i}
	98	97	98	98	94	90	...	...	...	0.9_{-1}	1.9_{-1}	612_{-1}	$1{,}261_{-1}$	37_{i}	373_{i}
	82	70	74	89	67	35	29_{i}	59	3	1.1_{-1i}	1.7_{-1}	252_{-1i}	378_{-1}	164_{i}	161_{i}
	94_{-2i}	91_{-2i}	88_{-2i}	92_{-2i}	68_{-2i}	75_{-2i}	...	88_{i}	...	25.0_{-1}	1.5_{-1}	511_{-1}	31_{-1}	47_{i}	0.2_{i}
	86_{i}	87_{i}	72_{-2i}	89_{-1i}	44_{-1i}	53_{-1i}	35_{-2i}	69	4	1.0_{-1}	1.4_{-1}	320_{-1}	453_{-1}	62_{i}	232_{i}
	...	...	...	...	...	...	4_{i}	60_{i}	1	2.2_{i}	2.8_{i}	...	40	8_{i}	18_{i}
	80	87	...	...	...	...	27	48	1	2.0	0.9	97	69	11	59
	90_{i}	...	...	...	...	...	63	79	2	0.8	1.3	...	340	42_{i}	154_{i}
	99_{-2i}	100_{-4i}	100_{-2i}	100_{-2i}	96_{-4i}	99_{-4i}	...	73	3	8.3_{-1}	2.4_{-1}	$4{,}328_{-1}$	$1{,}226_{-1}$	...	...
	99_{-1i}	99_{-2i}	100_{-1i}	100_{-1i}	...	...	...	69_{i}	3	9.3_{-1}	3.3_{-1}	$2{,}982_{-1}$	$1{,}055_{-1}$	...	...
	100_{-4i}	100_{-4i}	100_{-4i}	100_{-4i}	100_{-4i}	100_{-4i}	...	80	...	6.8_{-1}	0.9_{-1}	$1{,}346_{-1}$	171_{-1}	...	...
	52_{i}	54_{i}	40_{-1i}	28_{i}	...	18_{-2i}	...	...	14	1.3_{i}	5.2_{-3i}	...	357_{-1}	163	335
	81_{i}	77_{i}	81_{i}	82_{i}	45_{i}	45_{i}	47_{i}	...	25	1.0_{-1}	2.3_{-1}	$1{,}914_{-1}$	$4{,}631_{-1}$	987	3,219
	80	76	81_{i}	74	36	37	...	...	19	0.6_{-1}	3.1_{-1}	429_{-1}	$2{,}259_{-1}$	523	1,559
	82_{i}	79_{i}	81_{i}	95_{i}	61_{i}	59_{i}	...	69_{i}	6	0.9_{-1}	1.9_{-1}	$1{,}126_{-1}$	$2{,}284_{-1}$	465	1,660
	96_{-2i}	97_{-3i}	97_{-2i}	98_{-2i}	90_{-4i}	93_{-4i}	...	72	4	8.9_{-1}	2.3_{-1}	$5{,}634_{-1}$	$1{,}440_{-1}$	...	...

TABLE 6: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A: Extent to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development are mainstreamed				B: Score on greening education in			C
	Education policies/ frameworks	Curriculum	In-service teacher training	Student assessment	Biodiversity	Clima change	Environment anf sustainability	% of schools providing life skills-based HIV/AIDS education
SDG indicator	4.7.1				4.7.1			4.7.2
Reference year	2020				2023			2024
Sub-Saharan Africa								
Angola	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Benin	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Botswana	...	...	...	...	23-1	6-1	47-1	29-2
Burkina Faso	88	88	90	83	13-1	25-1	9-1	17
Burundi	62	62	62	62	...	...	...	...
Cabo Verde	...	...	...	...	50-1	21-1	48-1	...
Cameroon	...	...	...	...	35-1	49-1	69-1	82-1
Central African Republic	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chad	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	-
Comoros	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Congo	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Côte d'Ivoire	...	...	...	...	42-1	--1	15-1	74
D. R. Congo	88	80	90	83	--1	37-1	37-1	34-3
Djibouti	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	--1
Equat. Guinea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Eritrea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100-2
Eswatini	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	16-1
Ethiopia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Gabon	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Gambia	...	...	...	...	23-1	28-1	87-1	42+1
Ghana	...	...	...	...	46-1	46-1	55-1	...
Guinea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Guinea-Bissau	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kenya	...	...	...	...	22-1	32-1	73-1	...
Lesotho	...	...	...	...	8-1	19-1	61-1	...
Liberia	...	...	...	...	28-1	49-1	56-1	15-2
Madagascar	...	...	...	...	--1	--1	24-1	...
Malawi	100	91	90	100	...	...	...	100-1
Mali	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2-1
Mauritania	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mauritius	...	80	90	83	22-1	54-1	56-1	-
Mozambique	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Namibia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	98
Niger	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	43
Nigeria	...	...	...	...	--1	25-1	34-1	...
Rwanda	...	...	...	...	--1	45-1	48-1	100
Sao Tome and Principe	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Senegal	...	...	...	...	28-1	--1	45-1	19
Seychelles	...	...	...	...	23-1	--1	51-1	81
Sierra Leone	...	...	...	...	31-1	25-1	59-1	32
Somalia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
South Africa	...	...	...	...	30-1	--1	35-1	...
South Sudan	...	...	...	...	48-1	74-1	71-1	...
Togo	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1-3
Uganda	...	...	...	...	31-1	50-1	43-1	...
United Republic of Tanzania	...	...	...	...	9-1	43-1	50-1	68-3
Zambia	...	...	...	...	23-1	13-1	60-1	...
Zimbabwe	...	...	...	...	--1	15-1	16-1	100

	D			E			F	G	H	I				J		
	Schools with WASH facilities (%)			Schools with ICT for pedagogical purposes (%)						Internationally mobile tertiary students				Official development assistance, in US$ (in millions)		
										Mobility rate (%)		Number (000)				
	Basic drinking water	Basic sanitation or toilets	Basic handwashing	Electricity	Internet	Computers	Schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities (%)	Students experiencing bullying (%)	Number of countries with at least 5 attacks on education	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Scholarships	Imputed student costs	Country code
	4.a.1							4.a.2	4.a.3					4.b.1		
	2024									2024						
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	3.6-1i	...	12-1i	5	3	AGO
	53-2	...	51-4	34-2	...	...	...	...	3	3.1-2	7.9-2i	4-2	11-1i	5	27	BEN
	100-2	100-2	...	98-2	62-2	51-2	56-2	...	1-4	3.8	5.1-1i	2-1	3-1i	1	0.4	BWA
	74	48	40	28	0.4	1	60	...	12	1.9	3.8-1i	4	8-1i	4	9	BFA
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	10.7+1	5.8-1i	9+1	4-1i	2	6	BDI
	100-2	92-2	100-2	92-2	35-2	53-2	38-2	...	...	...	...	...	8-1i	2	3	CPV
	45-2	39-2	82-2	36-2	...	17-2	...	...	125	1.8-1	8.1-1i	7-1	34-1i	13	77	CMR
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17	...	...	...	3-1i	2	2	CAF
	34	20	29	1	1	1	14	...	3	--4	29.3-4	--4	19-1i	4	12	TCD
	76	80	81	49	14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6-1i	9	8	COM
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1-3	...	25.5-1i	...	14-1i	5	23	COG
	68	-	49	67	1	8	31	90-1i	6	2.2	5.9-1i	7	19-1i	9	30	CIV
	37-1	73-1	...	10-1	...	...	...	...	217	0.4-4	2.9-4	2-4	20-1i	7	9	COD
	88-1	88-1	88-1	81-1	43-1	43-1	1-1	...	...	...	...	...	4-1i	1	2	DJI
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2-1i	0.3	0.2	GNQ
	...	...	...	29-2	...	...	...	...	1-4	...	...	...	2-1i	3	1	ERI
	68-2	...	66-1	99-1	12-1	27-1	17-1	...	5-2	...	...	...	3-1i	0.1	0.1	SWZ
	20-1	30-1	14-1	27-1	...	...	...	...	1,223	...	...	...	11-1i	21	8	ETH
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1-1	...	...	...	17-1i	3	15	GAB
	96+1	84+1	47+1	57+1	8+1	10+1	31+1	...	1	...	...	...	3-1i	4	1	GMB
	...	...	...	39-3	...	...	...	...	2-2	0.7	3.4-1i	5	24-1i	11	22	GHA
	31-4	75-4	81-4	17-4	...	...	...	...	8	...	...	1-1	10-1i	6	15	GIN
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	10-1i	2	2	GNB
	75-1	...	...	70-1	32-1	65-1	...	...	18	...	...	...	23-1i	11	11	KEN
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2-2	...	...	...	3-1i	0.2	0.1	LSO
	63-2	55-2	44-2	24-2	...	8-4	...	...	2	...	...	...	2-1i	1	0.3	LBR
	34	38	...	12	...	4	2	...	8	0.3-1	3.2-1i	1-1	6-1i	4	11	MDG
	95-1	...	...	34-1	2-1	2-1	...	...	3-1	...	...	...	3-1i	2	1	MWI
	...	...	65-1	18-1	1-1	6-1	6-1	...	15	...	...	...	10-1i	5	10	MLI
	45-4	13-4	...	39-4	...	...	...	...	10	1.4-4	24.8-4	0.4-4	8-1i	2	3	MRT
	100	100	100	100	100	92	53	...	...	7.0	14.5-2i	3	7-1i	1	9	MUS
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	31	...	...	...	6-1i	3	4	MOZ
	94	60	...	90	62	64	25	...	...	3.1-2	5.2-2i	2-2	4-1i	0.5	1	NAM
	31	32	26	8	0.4	2	4	...	6	...	...	...	9-1i	2	4	NER
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26	...	...	...	146-1i	16	40	NGA
	80	100	100	81	59	98	67	...	1-4	6.2	6.1-1i	8	7-1i	5	4	RWA
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2-1i	1	1	STP
	85	64	62	57	28	13	96	...	4	29.9	6.8-1i	84	19-1i	7	64	SEN
	100	100	100	100	100	100	6	...	...	-	71.4-1i	-	1-1i	...	...	SYC
	50	73	52	17	1	2	20	...	3-3	...	...	...	2-1i	2	1	SLE
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	43	...	...	...	17-1i	4	1	SOM
	...	...	...	...	...	39-1i	...	98-1i	4	3.2-1	1.1-1i	38-1	13-1i	4	5	ZAF
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17	...	...	...	3-1i	0.4	0.1	SSD
	58	26	75	38	2	11	23	...	1-3	...	6.4-4	41-3	9-1i	3	21	TGO
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	7-1i	6	5	UGA
	...	...	...	68	...	93-3	...	...	...	0.4	2.5-1i	1	8-1i	7	3	TZA
	92	...	86	58	32	29	...	...	2-4	...	...	...	5-1i	2	1	ZMB
	92	99	80	74	35	50	36	...	6-2	0.5	...	...	24-1i	2	4	ZWE

TABLE 6: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A: Extent to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development are mainstreamed				B: Score on greening education in			C
	Education policies/ frameworks	Curriculum	In-service teacher training	Student assessment	Biodiversity	Clima change	Environment anf sustainability	% of schools providing life skills-based HIV/AIDS education
SDG indicator	4.7.1				4.7.1			4.7.2
Reference year	2020				2023			2024
Northern Africa and Western Asia								
Algeria	62	73	65	75	12-1	--1	34-1	--4
Armenia	88	70	85	83	26-1	3-1	51-1	100
Azerbaijan	...	...	...	...	--1	--1	59-1	99
Bahrain	100	94	100	100	...	...	...	100
Cyprus	100	92	95	67	47-1	21-1	45-1	...
Egypt	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7
Georgia	100	...	...	100	21-1	10-1	46-1	...
Iraq	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Israel	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Jordan	88	75	95	100	...	...	...	...
Kuwait	62	88	80	83	15-1	26-1	29-1	100-3
Lebanon	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Libya	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Morocco	...	...	...	...	--1	--1	25-1	...
Oman	81	73	85	83	22-1	11-1	40-1	100
Qatar	...	...	...	67	12-1	22-1	57-1	100
Saudi Arabia	75	...	...	100	--1	--1	48-1	100
State of Palestine (the)	88	71	80	83	--1	--1	40-1	80-1
Sudan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Syrian Arab Republic	...	77	90	100	...	...	...	100
Tunisia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Türkiye	100	88	90	100	19-1	49-1	55-1	...
United Arab Emirates	...	...	...	...	7-1	32-1	50-1	...
Yemen	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Central and Southern Asia								
Afghanistan	...	61	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bangladesh	81	66	82	83	...	...	...	61
Bhutan	...	...	...	...	58-1	54-1	70-1	...
India	100	92	95	100	30-1	12-1	65-1	100+1
Iran, Islamic Republic of	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kazakhstan	...	...	...	...	48-1	--1	59-1	...
Kyrgyzstan	62	74	90	83	40-1	37-1	70-1	...
Maldives	...	...	...	...	31-1	21-1	68-1	...
Nepal	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10-2
Pakistan	...	...	...	...	43-1	37-1	57-1	...
Sri Lanka	...	...	...	...	23-1	18-1	56-1	100-1
Tajikistan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Turkmenistan	88	83	90	100	...	...	...	100-4
Uzbekistan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100+1
Eastern and South-eastern Asia								

	D			E			F	G	H	I				J		
	Schools with WASH facilities (%)			Schools with ICT for pedagogical purposes (%)						Internationally mobile tertiary students						
										Mobility rate (%)		Number (000)		Official development assistance, in US$ (in millions)		
	Basic drinking water	Basic sanitation or toilets	Basic handwashing	Electricity	Internet	Computers	Schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities (%)	Students experiencing bullying (%)	Number of countries with at least 5 attacks on education	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Scholarships	Imputed student costs	Country code
	4.a.1							4.a.2	4.a.3					4.b.1		
	2024									2024						
	91+1	100+1	99+1	100+1	61+1	68+1	...	...	1-3	0.3	2.3-1i	6	38-1i	21	133	DZA
	98	91	98	100	100	100	...	...	2	8.4	5.1-1i	8	5-1i	6	15	ARM
	100	100	100	100	77	100	2	76-1i	1-1	2.7	18.2-1i	8	51-1i	9	29	AZE
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	81-1i	...	10.8	8.6-1i	6	5-1i	...	...	BHR
	...	...	...	...	...	80-1i	...	82-1i	...	21.6	44.5-1i	13	24-1i	...	...	CYP
	...	...	...	...	33	78	1	...	1	3.2+1	1.8-1i	125	68-1i	21	93	EGY
	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	56-1i	...	19.5+1	5.6-1i	37+1	9-1i	7	20	GEO
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10	...	...	...	44-1i	10	14	IRQ
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	...	22i	3.1	4.6-1i	13	19-1i	...	...	ISR
	100	...	...	100	100	73	...	79-1i	1-2	10.2	8.9-1i	43	34-1i	19	23	JOR
	100-3	100-3	100-3	100-3	100-3	100-1i	100-3	80-1i	...	...	19.7-3i	...	22-1i	...	...	KWT
	...	89	95	100	84	68	20	...	87	12.9-1	11.3-1i	34-1	30-1i	10	52	LBN
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	8-1i	4	5	LBY
	82	85	82	98	75	82	26	90-1i	4	1.9	5.3-1i	27	75-1i	23	180	MAR
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	86-1i	...	2.7	13.8-1i	4	16-1i	...	...	OMN
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	79-1i	...	41.7	13.0-1i	21	6-1i	...	...	QAT
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	68-1i	2-3	5.7	2.8-2i	115	42-1i	...	...	SAU
	99-1	100-1	99-1	100-1	98-1	90-1	65-1	81-1i	402	--1	14.2-1i	--1	32-1i	23	18	PSE
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	36	...	...	...	18-1i	12	7	SDN
	86	81	100	87	8	55	12	...	63	...	...	...	105-1i	30	158	SYR
	90-1	98-1	98-1	100-1	81-1	93-1	...	...	2-2	3.1-1	9.6-1i	9-1	29-1i	17	98	TUN
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	91-1i	13	4.3-1	0.7-2i	302-1	67-1i	27	195	TUR
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	78-1i	...	65.0	5.7-1i	239	19-1i	...	...	ARE
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	70	...	...	...	38-1i	17	39	YEM
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	116	--4	7.7-4	--4	35-1i	17	18	AFG
	98	75	98-1	96	71	77	49	...	10	0.1-2	1.9-1i	2-2	76-1i	21	61	BGD
	99	...	99	99	88	86	...	...	...	34.2-3	94.6-1i	4-3	10-1i	3	0.1	BTN
	99+1	98+1	95+1	91+1	54+1	53+1	84+1	...	126	0.1-1	1.9-1i	46-1	834-1i	57	432	IND
	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	...	86-1i	2	3.9-2	2.6-2i	131-2	99-1i	29	183	IRN
	...	93+1	...	100-4	100+1	100+1	...	72-1i	1-4	4.1+1	10.8-4	30	75-1i	28	25	KAZ
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	24-2	16.7+1	5.7-1i	56	16-1i	13	6	KGZ
	100	100	100	100	100	100	28	...	...	...	...	...	3-1i	2	0.3	MDV
	77+1	34+1	63+1	83+1	78+1	59+1	20+1	...	9-1	...	18.7-1i	...	108-1i	9	22	NPL
	51	52	...	41	2	1	0.4	...	41	...	4.2-1i	...	115-1i	32	107	PAK
	90-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	41-1	77-1	...	...	8	0.5-1	11.6-1i	2-1	42-1i	12	11	LKA
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	32-1i	5	3	TJK
	100	100-4	100	100	42	99	1	...	1-4	0.1	64.5-1i	0.1	62-1i	2	2	TKM
	100+1	98+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	91+1	72-1i	...	0.8+1	21.3-3i	11	121-1i	15	14	UZB

TABLE 6: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A: Extent to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development are mainstreamed				B: Score on greening education in			C
	Education policies/ frameworks	Curriculum	In-service teacher training	Student assessment	Biodiversity	Clima change	Environment anf sustainability	% of schools providing life skills-based HIV/AIDS education
SDG indicator	4.7.1				4.7.1			4.7.2
Reference year	2020				2023			2024
Brunei Darussalam	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cambodia	100	82	90	100	...	...	...	...
China	...	...	...	...	43-1	35-1	73-1	97
DPR Korea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hong Kong, China	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100
Indonesia	...	...	...	...	17-1	--1	83-1	...
Japan	...	...	...	...	24-1	15-1	69-1	...
Lao PDR	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Macao, China	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100
Malaysia	88	88	90	83	31-1	16-1	70-1	100
Mongolia	88	75	85	83	14-1	16-1	8-1	100
Myanmar	100	90	100	83	29-1	29-1	35-1	...
Philippines	...	...	...	...	45-1	10-1	67-1	100
Republic of Korea	100	88	100	83	47-1	26-1	66-1	...
Singapore	...	...	...	...	17-1	44-1	44-1	90-1
Thailand	84	...	95	100	64-1	--1	64-1	100+1
Timor-Leste	...	...	...	...	18-1	--1	39-1	20-1
Viet Nam	...	...	...	...	15-1	50-1	71-1	77
Oceania								
Australia	...	...	...	...	40-1	33-1	73-1	...
Cook Islands	...	...	...	...	53-1	44-1	20-1	100
Fiji	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kiribati	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	81
Marshall Islands	...	...	...	...	41-1	59-1	35-1	...
Micronesia, F. S.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	37
Nauru	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	-
New Zealand	35	...	60	...	63-1	15-1	47-1	...
Niue	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100+1
Palau	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100
Papua New Guinea	...	...	...	...	27-1	19-1	71-1	100-1
Samoa	...	...	...	...	19-1	13-1	31-1	100
Solomon Is	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tokelau	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	--1
Tonga	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100
Tuvalu	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100+1
Vanuatu	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Latin America and the Caribbean								
Anguilla	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100+1
Antigua and Barbuda	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Argentina	...	...	...	...	41-1	13-1	63-1	...
Aruba	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100
Bahamas	...	...	...	...	69-1	43-1	62-1	...
Barbados	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Belize	...	...	...	...	49-1	44-1	65-1	...
Bolivia, P. S.	...	...	78	75	49-1	45-1	30-1	...
Brazil	100	94	100	92	56-1	--1	45-1	...
British Virgin Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100
Cayman Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100
Chile	...	...	...	...	57-1	25-1	39-1	...
Colombia	100	88	85	100	55-1	--1	44-1	...

	D			E			F	G	H	I				J		
	Schools with WASH facilities (%)			Schools with ICT for pedagogical purposes (%)			Schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities (%)	Students experiencing bullying (%)	Number of countries with at least 5 attacks on education	Internationally mobile tertiary students				Official development assistance, in US$ (in millions)		
	Basic drinking water	Basic sanitation or toilets	Basic handwashing	Electricity	Internet	Computers				Mobility rate (%)		Number (000)		Scholarships	Imputed student costs	
										Inbound	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound			
	4.a.1							4.a.2	4.a.3					4.b.1		
	2024									2024						
	...	100-4	100-4	100-4	...	...	...	71-2i	...	4.7-1	17.2-1i	1-1	2-1i	...	...	BRN
	92	87	86	91	10	7	30	60-2i	...	0.3-3	3.0-1i	1-3	8-1i	17	3	KHM
	99	99	99	99	99	96	...	...	3	0.3	1.8-1	194	1,076-1	22	365	CHN
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1-1i	0.1	0.4	PRK
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	72-1i	...	25.3	14.4-1i	74	41-1i	...	...	HKG
	90+1	64+1	61+1	98+1	81+1	12+1	...	52-2i	20	...	0.7-1i	...	70-1i	51	52	IDN
	...	...	...	...	...	100-1i	...	52-1i	...	4.7-1	0.9-1i	182-1	34-1i	...	...	JPN
	...	...	...	67+1	12+1	18+1	...	...	...	0.6-4	7.6-1i	1-4	8-1i	15	0.4	LAO
	100	100	100	100	100	100	79	55-2i	...	72.5	4.4-1i	40	2-1i	...	...	MAC
	100	100	100	100	100	100	49	90-1i	...	12.5	4.1-1i	129	47-1i	6	18	MYS
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	54-2i	...	3.0	11.9-1i	5	17-1i	15	7	MNG
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	171	...	...	...	16-1i	15	3	MMR
	47	70	94	98	74	73	41	77-2i	5	0.5	0.9-1i	26	41-1i	19	7	PHL
	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	64-1i	...	5.3	3.2-1i	144	90-1i	...	...	KOR
	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	95-1	83-1i	...	...	...	71-1	20-1i	...	...	SGP
	100+1	...	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	40-2i	3-1	2.3+1	1.6-1i	41	33-1i	8	10	THA
	96-1	100-1	97-1	100-1	58-1	29-1	10-1	...	2	...	6.0-1i	...	3-1i	5	1	TLS
	85	96	82	97	95	95	37	47-2i	...	0.3	4.6-2i	8-2	128-1i	27	68	VNM
	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	88-1i	1	31.6	0.8-1i	580	13-1i	...	...	AUS
	100	100	100	100	100	100	67	...	...	1.8	1,724.1-1i	-	0.2-1i	...	...	COK
	100	...	81-2	97	90	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3-1i	4	0.1	FJI
	74	72	89	88	13	30	...	...	...	-	...	-	1-1i	4	-	KIR
	70-1	72-1	71-1	86-1	30-3	25-1	40-1	...	...	1.3	22.6-2i	--2	0.2-1i	0.3	...	MHL
	86	82	86	82	8	36	36	...	...	...	...	...	0.1-1i	0.1	-	FSM
	-	100+1	100+1	100+1	-	-	25+1	...	...	...	...	...	0.1-1i	2	...	NRU
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	87-1i	...	17.6	1.9-1i	44	5-1i	...	...	NZL
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	...	...	...	...	0.1-1i	0.3	...	NIU
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	...	9.4	...	...	--1i	0.4	-	PLW
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1-1	...	...	...	1-1i	12	-	PNG
	100	100	70	100	51	94	56	...	...	5.2-1	39.3-1i	0.1-1	1-1i	8	-	WSM
	50	27-1	28	36-1	8	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	3-1i	5	-	SLB
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	...	--4	...	--4	0.1-1i	-	...	TKL
	100	98	95	100	77	83	5	...	...	0.9-4	26.5-1i	--4	1-1i	5	-	TON
	90+1	90+1	90+1	100+1	90+1	10-1	90+1	...	...	...	...	...	0.4-1i	2	...	TUV
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2-1i	4	0.1	VUT
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	...	...	...	...	0.1-1i	...	...	AIA
	100-1	...	...	100-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1-1i	...	...	ATG
	...	...	74-1	98-1	65-1	62-1	63-1	68-2i	2	3.4-1	0.3-1i	127-1	12-1i	3	8	ARG
	100	100	100	100	98	98	43	...	...	7.2	...	...	0.3-1i	...	...	ABW
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4-1i	...	...	BHS
	100	100	100	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1-1i	...	...	BRB
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.9	9.9-1i	0.2	1-1i	0.2	-	BLZ
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	21-1i	1	4	BOL
	95	...	...	98	38	66	70	91-1i	8	0.3	0.9-1i	28	89-1i	23	56	BRA
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	...	23.1-4	53.1-1i	0.2-4	0.3-1i	...	...	VGB
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	...	...	...	...	1-1i	...	...	CYM
	100	100	100	99	93	80	50	90-1i	2	1.6	1.5-1i	22	21-1i	...	...	CHL
	...	...	...	88-2	47-2	78-2	...	59-2i	121	0.2-2	2.5-2i	5-2	63-1i	7	45	COL

TABLE 6: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A: Extent to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development are mainstreamed				B: Score on greening education in			C
	Education policies/ frameworks	Curriculum	In-service teacher training	Student assessment	Biodiversity	Clima change	Environment anf sustainability	% of schools providing life skills-based HIV/AIDS education
SDG indicator	4.7.1				4.7.1			4.7.2
Reference year	2020				2023			2024
Costa Rica	...	...	...	...	61-1	43-1	68-1	80-4
Cuba	100	100	95	100	22-1	12-1	27-1	100
Curaçao	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dominica	...	...	...	...	36-1	15-1	32-1	100-2
Dominican Republic	97	87	82	100	32-1	22-1	69-1	-
Ecuador	...	...	...	...	69-1	43-1	45-1	100
El Salvador	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Grenada	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	22
Guatemala	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Guyana	...	...	...	...	35-1	59-1	42-1	100
Haiti	...	...	...	...	8-1	--1	14-1	...
Honduras	...	...	...	...	75-1	--1	46-1	...
Jamaica	...	...	...	...	9-1	28-1	58-1	...
Mexico	75	...	80	100	57-1	19-1	54-1	...
Montserrat	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100
Nicaragua	88	79	90	100	...	...	...	61-2
Panama	...	...	...	...	60-1	42-1	69-1	...
Paraguay	...	...	...	...	36-1	16-1	44-1	...
Peru	100	81	20	100	71-1	30-1	66-1	...
Saint Kitts and Nevis	58	61	80	83	65-1	48-1	38-1	100
Saint Lucia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100-1
Saint Vincent/Grenadines	...	...	...	...	59-1	18-1	21-1	...
Sint Maarten	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Suriname	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Trinidad and Tobago	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100
Turks and Caicos Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100-1
Uruguay	...	...	...	...	33-1	43-1	67-1	100-2
Venezuela, B. R.	...	...	...	...	55-1	16-1	71-1	32
Europe and Northern America								
Albania	72	...	68	83	...	...	...	85-3
Andorra	100	94	78	92	...	...	...	100
Austria	83	...	70	...	...	...	...	...
Belarus	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Belgium	95	88	80	100	...	...	...	...
Bermuda	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bosnia and Herzegovina	58	...	...	50	...	...	...	...
Bulgaria	56	65	72	71	--1	13-1	63-1	...
Canada	88	78	70	83	49-1	33-1	65-1	...
Croatia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Czechia	84	47	55	...	...	...	...	...
Denmark	...	68	78	83	62-1	41-1	62-1	...
Estonia	88	83	95	83	45-1	23-1	71-1	...
Finland	88	81	85	...	11-1	12-1	12-1	100
France	100	99	100	100	60-1	35-1	55-1	...
Germany	100	90	95	92	...	...	...	...
Greece	...	...	...	...	45-1	34-1	35-1	...
Hungary	100	86	92	79	16-1	35-1	72-1	...
Iceland	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ireland	88	81	85	83	24-1	24-1	75-1	...
Italy	88	88	80	83	41-1	48-1	46-1	...
Latvia	100	86	95	100	34-1	--1	71-1	...

	D			E			F	G	H	I				J		
	Schools with WASH facilities (%)			Schools with ICT for pedagogical purposes (%)						Internationally mobile tertiary students				Official development assistance, in US$ (in millions)		
										Mobility rate (%)		Number (000)				
	Basic drinking water	Basic sanitation or toilets	Basic handwashing	Electricity	Internet	Computers	Schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities (%)	Students experiencing bullying (%)	Number of countries with at least 5 attacks on education	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Scholarships	Imputed student costs	Country code
	4.a.1							4.a.2	4.a.3					4.b.1		
	2024									2024						
	93-4	76-4	96-4	99-4	86-4	97-4	72-4	58-2i	...	...	...	...	5-1i	1	4	CRI
	100-2	...	100	100	39	100	...	...	...	2.2	1.5-1i	6	5-1i	2	2	CUB
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.1-1i	...	...	CUW
	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-2	...	...	...	...	...	1-1i	0.1	0.4	DMA
	...	...	86	90-1	65	25	-	59-2i	3-2	1.9	1.0-1i	10	6-1i	1	1	DOM
	66	...	87	93	59	76	...	...	2-2	0.7-1	3.3-1i	7-1	37-1i	3	13	ECU
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	62-2i	...	0.5-1	2.5-1i	1-1	5-1i	1	3	SLV
	100	100	100	100	100	22	10	...	...	...	...	...	0.5-1i	0.1	0.1	GRD
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	44-2i	3-2	0.4-1	0.8-1i	2-1	4-1i	1	3	GTM
	81	84	83	77	79	46	20	...	...	...	...	...	1-1i	1	0.3	GUY
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	125	...	...	...	11-1i	5	14	HTI
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	4.8	...	12	7-1i	1	3	HND
	...	...	98	98	97	81	...	65-2i	...	...	...	...	6-1i	0.2	1	JAM
	82+1	93+1	87+1	96+1	47+1	48+1	28+1	47-2i	2	2.0	0.7-1i	73-1	39-1i	7	44	MEX
	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	--1i	...	...	MSR
	29-2	--2	--2	32-2	3-2	17-2	--2	...	...	1.7-1	2.2-1i	3-1	4-1i	0.4	1	NIC
	83	...	87	85	49	42-1	...	49-2i	6-2	2.5-1	2.7-2i	6-2	6-1i	1	1	PAN
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	61-2i	1	...	...	...	15-1i	1	1	PRY
	...	...	50-1	91	47	75	93	54-2i	4	...	...	...	42-1i	3	18	PER
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100-1	...	...	...	...	...	0.5-1i	...	...	KNA
	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	...	...	19.2-1	38.6-1i	0.4-1	1-1i	0.2	0.2	LCA
	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	...	...	...	...	...	1-1i	0.1	0.1	VCT
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	85.0-1	...	0.2-1i	...	...	SXM
	50	...	...	77	58	...	...	...	...	--3	31.1-2i	--3	1-1i	0.4	0.1	SUR
	100	100	100	100	100	100	12	...	...	...	...	1-1	3-1i	...	...	TTO
	100	100	100	100	100	100	82	...	...	41.3-2	38.7-2i	0.2-2	0.2-1i	...	...	TCA
	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-1	100-2	62-2i	...	2.1-1	2.8-1i	4-1	6-1i	...	...	URY
	76	76	76	76	47	47	1	...	2-2	...	...	...	32-1i	1	7	VEN
	72-3	82-3	100-3	100-3	72-3	15-1i	8-4	56-2i	...	1.9	12.4-1i	2	15-1i	9	43	ALB
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	...	10.1	62.3-1i	0.3	2-1i	...	...	AND
	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	88-1i	...	20.8	6.2-1i	92	27-1i	...	...	AUT
	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	...	...	6.6	8.7-1i	20	27-1i	6	39	BLR
	100-2	100-2	100-2	100-2	100-2	100-2	...	59-2i	...	10.4-1	3.2-1i	57-1	18-1i	...	...	BEL
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.4-1	166.7-1i	--1	1-1i	...	...	BMU
	...	...	...	...	...	35-1i	...	...	...	7.9-1	20.0-1i	6-1	15-1i	2	34	BIH
	...	...	...	...	...	72-1i	...	49-2i	...	7.9	8.2-1i	15	18-1i	...	...	BGR
	...	...	...	...	...	87-1i	...	54-2i	3	21.2-1	2.8-1i	389-1	52-1i	...	...	CAN
	...	...	...	...	...	42-3i	...	44-2i	...	3.7-1	6.1-1i	6-1	10-1i	...	...	HRV
	100-2	100-2	100-2	100-2	99-2	85-1i	100-2	85-1i	...	16.6-1	3.3-1i	56-1	11-1i	...	...	CZE
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	69-2i	...	9.9	2.0-1i	29	6-1i	...	...	DNK
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	63-2i	...	9.8	7.4-1i	4	3-1i	...	...	EST
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	69-1i	...	10.5	2.6-1i	36	9-1i	...	...	FIN
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	55-1i	...	85-1i	...	9.9	4.0-1i	285	115-1i	...	...	FRA
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	91-1i	...	62-2i	1	13.4	3.8-1i	438	128-1i	...	...	DEU
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	58-2i	5	3.0-1	4.3-1i	26-1	38-1i	...	...	GRC
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	99+1	99+1	...	84-1i	2-1	13.9	4.7-1i	43	14-1i	...	...	HUN
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	46-2i	...	10.3-1	12.7-1i	2-1	3-1i	...	...	ISL
	...	...	...	...	...	75-1i	...	80-1i	...	11.0-2	6.9-2i	27-2	17-1i	...	...	IRL
	...	...	...	...	...	74-1i	...	88-1i	4-2	4.8-1	3.9-1i	106-1	87-1i	...	...	ITA
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	95+1	95+1	...	70-2i	...	14.1	6.1-1i	10	5-1i	...	...	LVA

TABLE 6: CONTINUED

Country or territory	A: Extent to which global citizenship education and education for sustainable development are mainstreamed				B: Score on greening education in			C
	Education policies/ frameworks	Curriculum	In-service teacher training	Student assessment	Biodiversity	Clima change	Environment anf sustainability	% of schools providing life skills-based HIV/AIDS education
SDG indicator	4.7.1				4.7.1			4.7.2
Reference year	2020				2023			2024
Liechtenstein	...	...	...	...	43-1	13-1	76-1	...
Lithuania	100	85	90	100	10-1	2-1	44-1	...
Luxembourg	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Malta	84	72	90	92	31-1	12-1	62-1	...
Monaco	88	79	85	67	...	...	...	100
Montenegro	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
North Macedonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Norway	...	...	...	...	26-1	27-1	86-1	...
Poland	100	80	90	100	30-1	--1	43-1	...
Portugal	...	...	...	...	56-1	20-1	56-1	...
Republic of Moldova	86	76	75	83	...	...	...	...
Romania	100	97	100	100	7-1	2-1	38-1	...
Russian Federation	100	...	90	...	...	...	...	...
San Marino	100	94	90	100	...	...	...	100
Serbia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Slovakia	51	64	...	25	52-1	9-1	59-1	...
Slovenia	100	93	85	100	54-1	27-1	74-1	...
Spain	100	91	95	100	54-1	41-1	64-1	...
Sweden	100	80	...	83	47-1	17-1	76-1	...
Switzerland	...	...	...	...	29-1	22-1	73-1	...
Ukraine	100	92	95	100	...	...	...	...
United Kingdom	41	59	...	83	43-1	28-1	52-1	...
United States	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

	D			E			F	G	H	I				J		
	Schools with WASH facilities (%)			Schools with ICT for pedagogical purposes (%)						Internationally mobile tertiary students				Official development assistance, in US$ (in millions)		
										Mobility rate (%)		Number (000)				
	Basic drinking water	Basic sanitation or toilets	Basic handwashing	Electricity	Internet	Computers	Schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities (%)	Students experiencing bullying (%)	Number of countries with at least 5 attacks on education	Inbound	Outbound	Inbound	Outbound	Scholarships	Imputed student costs	Country code
	4.a.1							4.a.2	4.a.3					4.b.1		
	2024									2024						
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	85.6-3	124.5-3i	1-3	1-1i	...	...	LIE
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	97+1	97+1	88+1	80-1i	...	11.4	6.9-1i	11	7-1i	...	...	LTU
	100-3	100-3	100-3	100-3	100-3	100-3	90-3	...	...	51.5	167.2-1i	4	13-1i	...	...	LUX
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	87-1i	...	29.6-1	5.0-1i	6-1	1-1i	...	...	MLT
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	...	86.7	40.8-1i	1	0.5-1i	...	...	MCO
	...	...	...	...	...	45-1i	...	47-2i	...	...	24.8-1i	...	5-1i	1	3	MNE
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	47-2i	4	13.7-3	1.9-1i	136-3	19-1i	...	...	NLD
	...	...	...	...	...	38-1i	...	44-2i	...	10.6-1	9.6-1i	6-1	6-1i	2	12	MKD
	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	77-1i	...	4.2	4.6-1i	13	14-1i	...	...	NOR
	100-3	100-3	100-3	100-3	100-3	97-1i	...	51-2i	...	6.8	1.7-1i	95	23-1i	...	...	POL
	100-3	100-3	100-3	100-3	99-3	71-1i	...	86-1i	1	13.3-1	3.9-1i	57-1	17-1i	...	...	PRT
	...	...	96	...	98	100	47	67-2i	...	7.1	23.9-1i	6	19-1i	58	5	MDA
	...	...	...	...	...	100-1i	...	86-1i	...	6.7-1	5.3-1i	36-1	28-1i	...	...	ROU
	...	...	...	...	...	38-3i	...	...	25	0.4	0.9-1i	336-1	65-1i	...	...	RUS
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	...	87.1	58.3-1i	1	1-1i	...	...	SMR
	...	...	...	...	...	66-1i	...	39-2i	...	4.6	5.8-1i	12	14-1i	6	25	SRB
	100+1	100-3	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	89+1	54-2i	...	15.6	21.2-1i	22	30-1i	...	...	SVK
	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	47-2i	...	10.6-1	3.6-1i	8-1	3-1i	...	...	SVN
	100	100	100	100	100	100	...	52-2i	1-2	4.6	2.1-1i	114	51-1i	...	...	ESP
	100+1	...	100+1	100+1	100+1	100+1	...	75-1i	...	7.2	3.0-1i	36	14-1i	...	...	SWE
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	59-2i	1	20.1	5.9-1i	68	20-1i	...	...	CHE
	...	...	92	99	99	88	67	...	576	2.2	6.6-1i	35	96-1i	49	198	UKR
	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	66-2i	1	23.4-1	1.3-1i	748-1	41-1i	...	...	GBR
	...	...	...	...	...	100-1i	...	83-1i	...	5.3-1	0.7-1i	957-1	118-1i	...	...	USA

TABLE 7: SDG MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION 4.C – TEACHERS

By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

	Pre-primary						Primary							Secondary						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Classroom teachers (000)	Pupil/teacher ratio	Trained teachers (%)	Qualified teachers (%)	Relative teacher salary level	Teacher attrition rate (%)	Classroom teachers (000)	Pupil/teacher ratio	Trained teachers (%)	Qualified teachers (%)	Relative teacher salary level	Teacher attrition rate (%)	% receiving in-service training	Classroom teachers (000)	Pupil/teacher ratio	Trained teachers (%)	Qualified teachers (%)	Relative teacher salary level	Teacher attrition rate (%)	% receiving in-service training
SDG indicator			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7
Reference year	2024						2024							2024						
Region	Sum	Weighted average					Sum	Weighted average						Sum	Weighted average					
World	13,809$_{i}$	22	79$_{i}$	88$_{i}$	...	12$_{i}$	34,104$_{i}$	28	82$_{i}$	89$_{i}$	...	6$_{i}$	...	41,850$_{i}$	18	81$_{i}$	87$_{i}$	...	5$_{i}$	...
Sub-Saharan Africa	775$_{i}$	38	58$_{-2i}$	65$_{-1i}$	...	...	4,936$_{i}$	43	69$_{-2i}$	73$_{i}$	...	4$_{i}$	...	3,729$_{i}$	25$_{i}$	59$_{-3i}$	66$_{-2i}$	...	...	...
Northern Africa and Western Asia	479$_{i}$	20$_{i}$	79$_{i}$	81$_{i}$	...	6$_{i}$	3,022$_{i}$	23	79$_{i}$	81$_{i}$	...	5$_{i}$	88$_{i}$	3,394$_{i}$	18	85$_{i}$	84$_{i}$	...	9$_{i}$	73$_{i}$
Northern Africa	198$_{i}$	24$_{i}$	78$_{i}$	76$_{i}$	...	3$_{i}$	1,297	28	82	80	...	3$_{i}$	95$_{i}$	1,328$_{i}$	20	87$_{i}$	73$_{i}$	...	10$_{i}$	...
Western Asia	282$_{i}$	18$_{i}$	80$_{i}$	85$_{i}$	...	...	1,725$_{i}$	16$_{i}$	76$_{i}$	83$_{i}$	...	...	78$_{i}$	2,067$_{i}$	16$_{i}$	83$_{i}$	91$_{i}$	1.31$_{i}$	...	74$_{i}$
Central and Southern Asia	4,287	13	86	94	...	14	7,040	32	88	95	...	5	...	11,292	18	85	94	...	2	...
Central Asia	342$_{i}$	13$_{i}$	72$_{i}$	72$_{i}$	...	...	336	23	96	91	...	...	91$_{i}$	1,355	10$_{i}$	96	100	...	...	91$_{i}$
Southern Asia	3,945	13	88	96	...	14	6,703	32	87	95	...	5	...	9,938	18	84	93	...	2	...
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	4,392	17	57$_{i}$	95	...	14	10,737	18	69$_{i}$	98	...	7	...	11,210	16	69$_{i}$	96	...	5	...
Eastern Asia	3,341	14	...	98	...	18	7,462	16	...	99	...	7	...	8,433	13	...	95	...	6	...
South-eastern Asia	1,051	22	58	86$_{i}$	...	4	3,274	21	67	95	...	6$_{-4i}$	...	2,777	21	67	97	...	4	...
Oceania	...	39	...	...	1.06$_{i}$	...	...	33$_{i}$	...	...	1.06$_{i}$	...	85$_{i}$	...	...	...	...	1.05$_{i}$	...	89$_{i}$
Latin America and the Caribbean	1,128$_{i}$	25$_{i}$	79$_{-2i}$	77$_{i}$	1.26$_{i}$	...	3,335$_{i}$	20$_{i}$	82$_{i}$	75$_{-1i}$	1.23$_{i}$	...	...	4,367$_{i}$	19	75$_{i}$	...	1.41$_{i}$	...	91$_{i}$
Caribbean	...	...	97$_{i}$	91$_{i}$	...	42$_{i}$	...	13$_{i}$	98$_{i}$	91$_{i}$	1.39$_{i}$	7$_{i}$	...	...	10$_{i}$	97	92	...	...	...
Central America	...	...	80	77	1.10	...	...	...	90	90	1.10	...	...	...	...	87	...	1.39	...	...
South America	...	...	...	...	1.42$_{i}$	...	...	20	81	72$_{i}$	1.35$_{i}$	...	78$_{i}$	...	20	74	...	1.42$_{i}$	...	91
Europe and Northern America	2,675$_{i}$	15$_{i}$	86$_{-4i}$	95$_{i}$	0.69$_{i}$	...	4,827$_{i}$	15	93$_{i}$	94$_{i}$	0.74	...	81	7,645$_{i}$	12	87$_{i}$	90$_{i}$	0.78	...	84$_{i}$
Europe	2,118$_{i}$	16$_{i}$	...	...	0.70$_{i}$	...	2,787$_{i}$	16	91$_{-4i}$	88$_{i}$	0.78$_{i}$	...	77	5,752$_{i}$	10	83$_{i}$	87$_{-1i}$	0.83$_{i}$	...	83$_{i}$
Northern America	557$_{i}$	15	100$_{i}$	100$_{i}$	0.67	...	2,040$_{i}$	13	98$_{i}$	99$_{i}$	0.70	...	86	1,893$_{i}$	15	98$_{i}$	99$_{i}$	0.72	...	86
Low income	402$_{-1i}$	36$_{i}$	57$_{-4i}$	60$_{-1i}$	...	4$_{i}$	2,878$_{i}$	44	69$_{-2i}$	78$_{i}$	...	...	...	1,902$_{i}$	26$_{i}$	56$_{-3i}$	72$_{-3i}$	...	...	...
Middle income	11,101	19	77$_{i}$	90	...	13$_{i}$	25,106	27	82$_{i}$	90	...	6$_{i}$	...	32,020	18	81$_{i}$	87	...	4$_{i}$	...
Lower middle	5,191$_{i}$	22	84$_{i}$	91$_{i}$	...	12$_{i}$	11,301	33	83	88$_{i}$	...	6$_{i}$	...	14,693	19	82	89	...	3$_{i}$	...
Upper middle	5,242	15	...	90	...	15$_{i}$	13,413	18	81$_{-2i}$	91	...	7$_{i}$	...	15,913	16	81$_{-2i}$	86	...	5$_{i}$	...
High income	2,878$_{i}$	17$_{i}$	88$_{-4i}$	100$_{i}$	0.73$_{i}$	...	6,160$_{i}$	15	92$_{i}$	95$_{i}$	0.79	...	80	9,056$_{i}$	12	88$_{i}$	94$_{-1i}$	0.82$_{i}$	...	84$_{i}$

A Number of classroom teachers.
B Pupil/teacher ratio, headcount basis.
C Percentage of teachers with the minimum required qualifications (received at least the minimum organized and recognized pre-service and in-service pedagogical training) to teach at a given level of education.
D Percentage of teachers qualified according to national standards.
E Ratio of actual teacher salaries to comparable workers.
F Percentage of teachers at a given level of education leaving the profession in a given school year (%).
G Percentage of teachers (primary/lower secondary) who received in-service training in the last 12 months

Source: UIS unless noted otherwise. Data refer to school year ending in 2024 unless noted otherwise.
Aggregates represent countries listed in the table with available data and may include estimates for countries with no recent data.
(-) Magnitude nil or negligible.
(...) Data not available or category not applicable.
(± n) Reference year differs (e.g. -2: reference year 2022 instead of 2024).
(i) Estimate and/or partial coverage.

TABLE 7: CONTINUED

	Pre-primary						Primary							Secondary							
	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	G % receiving in-service training	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	G % receiving in-service training	Country code
SDG indicator			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7	
Reference year	2024						2024							2024							
Sub-Saharan Africa																					
Angola	19-1	45-1	80-1	54-1	2.10-3	...	96-1	56-1	82-1	53-1	2.10-3	...	...	91-1	28-1	84-1	53-1	2.10-3	...	...	AGO
Benin	7-3	...	53-3	53-3	1.69-2	2-3	60-2	40-2	75-3	75-3	1.69-2	28-2	...	57-2	16-2	36-2	94-2	...	...	...	BEN
Botswana	3-2	13-2	92-2	86-2	...	...	17-2	23-2	100-2	98-2	...	...	...	15-3	11-3	...	...	...	...	...	BWA
Burkina Faso	8	19	25	25	1.35-1	2-1	92	33	91	91	1.35-1	9-1	...	69	17	67	76	2.16-1	8-1	...	BFA
Burundi	4+1	57+1	92+1	92+1	...	...	43+1	58+1	96+1	96+1	...	...	...	28+1	21+1	66+1	66+1	...	...	...	BDI
Cabo Verde	1-2	14-2	37-2	37-2	...	...	3-2	20-2	100-2	100-2	...	3-4	...	4-2	16-2	82-2	97-2	...	4-4	...	CPV
Cameroon	33	20	69-1	57	...	...	121	44	72-1	69	...	1	...	118-1	17-1	60-1	41-1	...	...	...	CMR
Central African Republic	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CAF
Chad	1	28	78	78	...	-	55	56	29	64	...	-	...	24	32	49	57	...	45	...	TCD
Comoros	1	26	...	40	...	...	4	26	75-2	75-2	...	...	...	8-2	9-2	...	...	...	...	...	COM
Congo	2-1	13-1	...	100-1	...	...	23-1	38-1	...	50-1	...	...	...	38-1	...	...	69-1	...	...	...	COG
Côte d'Ivoire	12	23	100	100	...	1	104	46	100	100	...	12	...	103	32	100	100	...	...	95-1i	CIV
D. R. Congo	38-1	22-1	86-1	14-1	...	--3	561-1	38-1	100-3	87-1	...	--3	...	622-1	13-1	...	...	...	...	...	COD
Djibouti	0.3-1	24-1	...	100-1	...	...	3-1	25-1	66-1	100-1	...	1-1	...	4-1	20-1	76-1	100-1	...	4-1	...	DJI
Equat. Guinea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GNQ
Eritrea	2-2	29-2	40-2	69-2	...	...	12-2	33-2	77-2	85-2	...	...	...	10-2	27-2	...	88-2	...	...	...	ERI
Eswatini	...	...	...	...	...	...	9-1	25-1	68-2	68-2	...	...	...	7-2	...	61-2	61-2	...	...	...	SWZ
Ethiopia	76	59	...	87	...	...	339	47	...	91	...	...	...	273	...	...	78	...	...	...	ETH
Gabon	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GAB
Gambia	5+1	30+1	76+1	76+1	...	2+1	13+1	33+1	89+1	89+1	...	4+1	...	12-3	30-3	72-3	72-3	...	...	...	GMB
Ghana	42	45	88	88	...	...	123	41	89	89	...	...	...	174	19	83	83	...	...	...	GHA
Guinea	5-4	38-4	35-4	66-4	...	...	44-4	48-4	77-4	64-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GIN
Guinea-Bissau	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	GNB
Kenya	78-1	37-1	100-1	100-1	...	...	282-1	29-1	100-1	100-1	...	6-1	...	168-1	40-1	100-1	100-1	...	...	...	KEN
Lesotho	...	...	...	...	...	...	10	30	100-1	100-1	...	...	...	6-1	...	98-1	100-1	...	...	...	LSO
Liberia	28-2	9-2	34-2	34-2	0.77-4	...	37-2	15-2	62-2	24-2	0.77-4	...	...	18-4	15-4	83-4	89-4	0.89-4	...	...	LBR
Madagascar	44	24	...	31	...	...	139	38	...	22	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MDG
Malawi	35-3	...	...	...	...	...	88	54	95	100-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MWI
Mali	6-1	26-1	17-1	59-1	...	...	60-1	50-1	37-1	24-1	...	...	...	80-1	16-1	41-1	41-1	...	...	...	MLI
Mauritania	...	...	...	...	...	...	25	36	...	91	...	16-4	...	9-4	29-4	93-4	...	...	2-4	...	MRT
Mauritius	2	14	100	100	1.08-1	15-3	6	14	100	100	0.89-1	6	...	9	11	59	100	1.17-1	9	...	MUS
Mozambique	...	...	...	...	...	...	134-2	57-2	99-2	100-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MOZ
Namibia	2	24	93	93	...	...	21	28	95	95	...	1-1	...	11	22	96	96	...	--2	...	NAM
Niger	6	33	98	100	1.13-1	11-2	70	43	99	100	1.13-1	2	...	28	31	52	84	1.44-1	11	...	NER
Nigeria	...	...	...	...	...	...	913-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	912-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	NGA
Rwanda	11	56	53	99	...	18-1	68	44	68	100	...	3	...	34	26	69	85	...	4	...	RWA
Sao Tome and Principe	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	STP
Senegal	16-1	...	39-1	95-2	...	...	72	33	77	100	...	...	...	56-1	23-1	73-1	96-1	...	...	...	SEN
Seychelles	0.2	17	88	92	...	2-1	1	14	90	96	...	6-2	...	1	11	91	99	...	5-1	...	SYC
Sierra Leone	7	27	63	66	0.53-3	15	47	44	70	72	0.61-3	13	...	38	...	83	63	0.68-3	14-3	...	SLE
Somalia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SOM
South Africa	...	...	...	...	...	...	287-1	26-1	...	...	...	...	90-1i	182-1	30-1	...	...	...	6-1	88-1i	ZAF
South Sudan	4	38	...	47	...	...	32	57	...	48	...	...	...	19	121	...	31	...	...	...	SSD
Togo	6	36	83	50	1.79-1	20	37	45	81	53	1.79-1	10	...	51-1	18-1	34-3	69-3	2.25-1	...	...	TGO
Uganda	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	UGA
United Republic of Tanzania	20	83	...	80-1	...	...	230	50	...	98	...	0.1-3	...	106-4	...	...	99-4	...	...	...	TZA
Zambia	10	65	...	...	...	...	117	38	...	...	...	...	...	43	33	...	...	...	...	...	ZMB
Zimbabwe	21	31	80	81	...	...	90	33	98	99	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ZWE

TABLE 7: CONTINUED

	Pre-primary						Primary							Secondary							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
	Classroom teachers (000)	Pupil/teacher ratio	Trained teachers (%)	Qualified teachers (%)	Relative teacher salary level	Teacher attrition rate (%)	Classroom teachers (000)	Pupil/teacher ratio	Trained teachers (%)	Qualified teachers (%)	Relative teacher salary level	Teacher attrition rate (%)	% receiving in-service training	Classroom teachers (000)	Pupil/teacher ratio	Trained teachers (%)	Qualified teachers (%)	Relative teacher salary level	Teacher attrition rate (%)	% receiving in-service training	Country code
SDG indicator			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7	
Reference year	2024						2024							2024							
Northern Africa and Western Asia																					
Algeria	22+1	27+1	100+1	77+1	...	2	248+1	21+1	100+1	94+1	...	0.2-1	...	391	16	83	18	...	...	...	DZA
Armenia	9	7	76	100	...	3	8	21	85	100	0.91-2	5	90-1i	23	13	86	100	0.91-2	6	...	ARM
Azerbaijan	12	17	92	96	...	2-1	39	16	100	100	...	4	80-1i	116	9	99	100	...	5	81-1i	AZE
Bahrain	2	13	100	100	...	3	9	13	100	100	...	4	83-1i	9	12	100	100	...	5	88-1i	BHR
Cyprus	2-1	...	100-3	100-3	...	...	5-1	...	100-3	100-3	...	...	80-1i	8-1	...	100-3	100-3	...	...	80-1i	CYP
Egypt	64	23	82	100	...	3-4	483	32	87	100	...	4	98-3i	507	23	86	100	...	11	...	EGY
Georgia	...	...	...	...	...	...	32	11	...	...	...	3	94-1i	32	10	...	...	...	...	95-1i	GEO
Iraq	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	IRQ
Israel	...	...	...	...	0.76-2	...	93	11	...	...	0.68-2	...	92-2i	...	...	...	...	0.73-2	...	91-1i	ISR
Jordan	10	16	100	100	...	12-3	64	17	100	100	...	1	69-1i	73	14	100	100	...	7-3	75-1i	JOR
Kuwait	9-3	7-3	100-3	92-4	...	...	33-3	8-3	100-3	75-4	...	...	95-1i	47-3	...	100-3	...	...	...	95-1i	KWT
Lebanon	13	15	48	52	...	17	37	15	54	46	...	3	...	45-1	...	42-1	58-1	...	...	...	LBN
Libya	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	LBY
Morocco	43-2	...	100-2	100-2	...	...	190	24	100	100	...	1-1	81-1i	183	19	100	100	...	5-3	66-1i	MAR
Oman	6	16	100	100	...	38-3	35	10	100	100	...	4-2	86-1i	44	12	100	100	...	...	78-1i	OMN
Qatar	3	15	100	100	...	11	15	12	100	100	...	9	93-1i	12	12	100	100	...	5	93-1i	QAT
Saudi Arabia	28	16	100	100	...	...	245	14	100	100	...	...	78-1i	242	14	100	100	...	...	81-1i	SAU
State of Palestine (the)	10-1	17-1	100-1	32-1	1.63-2	47-3	25-1	21-1	100-1	39-1	1.63-2	5-1	...	51-1	17-1	100-1	36-1	1.63-2	4-1	82-1i	PSE
Sudan	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SDN
Syrian Arab Republic	6	26	11	59	...	3-3	145	15	38	74	...	...	...	55	25	35	94	...	...	...	SYR
Tunisia	4-1	...	100-1	100-1	1.38-1	...	85-1	16-1	100-1	100-1	1.38-1	3-2	...	90-1	...	96-1	96-1	1.55-1	0.2-2	...	TUN
Türkiye	122-1	17-1	...	...	1.32-2	...	300-1	18-1	...	...	1.32-2	...	72-1i	788-1	16-1	...	...	1.34-2	...	64-1i	TUR
United Arab Emirates	13	19	100-1	100	...	...	40	15	100-1	100	...	...	94-1i	106	8	100-1	100-1	...	...	96-1i	ARE
Yemen	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	YEM
Central and Southern Asia																					
Afghanistan	...	...	...	...	...	...	163-1	46-1	...	85-1	...	...	...	88-1	39-1	...	85-1	...	...	...	AFG
Bangladesh	...	...	...	...	...	...	384	43	78	100-1	...	2-3	...	572	26	55	100	...	...	...	BGD
Bhutan	1	14	100	100-2	...	...	3	27	100	100	...	4-2	...	7-1	...	98-1	98-1	...	...	...	BTN
India	3,075+1	12+1	91+1	99+1	...	14-1	5,191+1	24+1	91+1	96+1	...	3+1	...	7,314+1	18+1	92+1	94+1	...	2+1	...	IND
Iran, Islamic Republic of	...	...	...	...	...	...	372-1	24-1	...	100-1	...	...	90-1i	406-1	16-1	...	100-1	...	...	87-1i	IRN
Kazakhstan	110+1	9+1	100+1	100+1	...	2+1	113+1	14+1	100+1	100+1	...	3+1	88-1i	252	...	100	100	...	...	91-1i	KAZ
Kyrgyzstan	12+1	24+1	92+1	...	...	...	27+1	23+1	96+1	...	...	...	...	63-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	KGZ
Maldives	1	12	65-2	56	...	...	5	9	87-2	77	...	...	...	3-2	...	98-2	100-2	...	...	...	MDV
Nepal	57+1	24+1	38+1	98+1	...	1-1	157+1	23+1	96+1	98+1	...	5+1	...	124+1	...	97+1	95	...	9-1	...	NPL
Pakistan	3	...	...	...	...	...	446	57	75	...	...	...	...	2,040	10	69	...	...	...	...	PAK
Sri Lanka	34-1	13-1	41-1	68-1	...	32-3	73-1	21-1	86-1	98-1	0.87-4	3-2	...	156-1	16-1	80-1	95-1	0.87-4	...	...	LKA
Tajikistan	10-1	10-1	...	...	...	...	38	27	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TJK
Turkmenistan	12	13	...	100	...	...	25	25	100	100	...	...	...	89	11	99	100	...	...	...	TKM
Uzbekistan	132-1	...	100-1	100-1	...	...	131+1	26+1	100+1	100+1	...	...	93-1i	452+1	10+1	100+1	100+1	...	...	90-1i	UZB
Eastern and South-eastern Asia																					
Brunei Darussalam	1	14	69	59	...	13-1	4	10	87	74	...	5	...	5-1	8-1	91-1	91-1	...	...	...	BRN
Cambodia	5	74	100	100	...	...	46	49	100	100	...	...	...	107-3	...	100-3	...	...	...	...	KHM
China	3,120	13	...	98	...	18	6,739	16	...	99	...	7	...	7,408	13	...	95	...	6	...	CHN
DPR Korea	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PRK
Hong Kong, China	12	12	98	100	...	14	28	12	94	100	1.41-3	6	90-1i	32	11	89	100	1.55-3	6	89-1i	HKG
Indonesia	381+1	14+1	12+1	79+1	...	6-1	1,510+1	19+1	35+1	97+1	...	4-1	...	1,353+1	21+1	37+1	98+1	...	4-1	...	IDN
Japan	96-1	28-1	...	...	...	...	441-1	14-1	...	...	...	...	68-1i	628-1	11-1	...	...	...	...	79-1i	JPN
Lao PDR	1+1	180+1	11	...	...	4-3	22+1	34+1	65+1	...	...	5-3	...	36-2	...	94-2	...	...	5-3	...	LAO
Macao, China	1	12	100	100	1.39-1	4	3	13	99	100	1.39-1	2	95-1i	3	11	95	100	1.44-1	0.5	99-2i	MAC
Malaysia	70	13	37	95	0.91-3	1-1	274	11	94	93	0.91-3	4-1	...	217	12	91	94	0.91-3	9	69-1i	MYS
Mongolia	10	27	98-2	90	...	3-2	12	32	86	89	...	1-3	...	26	...	39	92	...	...	...	MNG
Myanmar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	MMR

TABLE 7: CONTINUED

	Pre-primary						Primary							Secondary							
	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	G % receiving in-service training	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	G % receiving in-service training	Country code
SDG indicator			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7	
Reference year	2024						2024							2024							
Philippines	69	29	100	100-2	1.09-4	3	528	25	100	100-2	1.09-4	2	...	496	24	100	100-2	1.09-4	3-2	...	PHL
Republic of Korea	77	11	100	100	1.33-2	...	173	14	100	100	1.33-2	...	69-1i	233	11	100	100	1.33-2	...	82-1i	KOR
Singapore	...	...	...	...	...	...	17-1	14-1	98-1	100-1	1.44-2	...	93-1i	14-1	12-1	98-1	100-1	1.44-2	...	92-1i	SGP
Thailand	151+1	10+1	100+1	100+1	...	...	305+1	15+1	100+1	100+1	...	...	...	244+1	17+1	100+1	100+1	...	...	...	THA
Timor-Leste	1-4	35-4	...	33-4	...	...	7-1	32-1	...	76-4	...	...	...	6-4	26-4	...	85-4	...	...	...	TLS
Viet Nam	286	14	91	91	...	1	381	23	89	89	...	2	...	456-2	21-2	91-2	91-2	...	...	...	VNM
Oceania																					
Australia	...	...	...	...	1.07-2	...	...	...	...	...	1.08-2	...	86-1i	...	...	...	...	1.08-2	...	88-1i	AUS
Cook Islands	-	16	100	23	...	5	0.1	16	100	46	...	15	...	0.1	13	99	55	...	4	...	COK
Fiji	1	13	85	100	...	22-1	6	18	89	100	...	2-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	FJI
Kiribati	1	13	93	94	...	...	1	24	89	99	...	...	...	1	17	62	97	...	...	...	KIR
Marshall Islands	0.1	7	55	74	1.08-2	9-2	0.4	12	51	64	1.08-2	8	...	0.4	12	74	79	1.08-2	8	...	MHL
Micronesia, F. S.	0.2-1	...	17-1	92-1	...	...	1-1	...	27-1	88-1	...	2-4	...	1-3	...	31-3	92-3	...	11-3	...	FSM
Nauru	-+1	17+1	100+1	100+1	...	...	0.1+1	26+1	100+1	86+1	...	2+1	...	-+1	35+1	100+1	92+1	...	4+1	...	NRU
New Zealand	16	7	...	...	...	...	27	14	...	...	0.94-2	...	83-1i	36	15	...	...	0.94-2	...	91-1i	NZL
Niue	-	...	31	100	...	...	-	...	100	100	...	...	...	-	6	58	75	...	...	...	NIU
Palau	-	23	100	59	...	3	0.2	7	100	60	...	38-2	...	0.2-1	...	91-1	78-1	...	...	...	PLW
Papua New Guinea	9-1	46-1	...	...	...	...	41-1	40-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PNG
Samoa	0.4-1	...	...	100-1	0.40-4	...	2-1	...	...	100-1	0.97-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.97-4	...	...	WSM
Solomon Is	1	37	...	...	...	...	5	19	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SLB
Tokelau	-+1	8+1	57+1	100+1	...	--3	-+1	6+1	64+1	64+1	...	5+1	...	--1	...	95-1	100-1	...	--3	...	TKL
Tonga	0.2	13	93	92	...	13	1	19	97	96	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	TON
Tuvalu	0.1+1	...	75+1	100+1	...	25	0.1+1	...	58+1	65+1	...	4+1	...	0.1+1	...	61+1	69+1	...	11+1	...	TUV
Vanuatu	2	10	39	100	...	...	2	30	52	78	...	7-2	...	1	...	48	73	...	...	...	VUT
Latin America and the Caribbean																					
Anguilla	--2	...	...	...	...	...	0.1-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.1-2	7-2	...	...	...	...	...	AIA
Antigua and Barbuda	...	...	...	...	...	...	1-1	8-1	...	90-1	...	...	...	1-1	8-1	...	...	...	...	...	ATG
Argentina	...	...	...	...	1.00-2	...	...	...	...	...	0.97-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.78-2	...	...	ARG
Aruba	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ABW
Bahamas	0.4	12	93	93	...	...	1	18	89	89	...	...	...	2	12	85	89	...	...	...	BHS
Barbados	0.4	12	72	100	1.15-3	...	2	10	76	100	1.15-3	...	...	1	15	54	100	1.15-3	...	...	BRB
Belize	0.4	17	77	23	0.82-4	...	2	18	89	11	1.14-4	...	...	2	17	71	29	...	...	...	BLZ
Bolivia, P. S.	12	27	90	...	1.37-1	6	77	18	94	...	1.37-1	4	...	72	18	93	...	1.56-1	4	...	BOL
Brazil	290	18	...	...	...	...	697	22	88-1	...	...	...	78-1i	1,022	21	72-1	...	...	...	90-1i	BRA
British Virgin Islands	0.1-4	...	49-4	--2	...	...	0.2	7	97	64	...	22	...	0.2-1	...	73-1	37-1	...	...	...	VGB
Cayman Islands	0.3	5	100	100	...	60-2	0.3	13	100	100	...	12	...	0.4	11	100	100	...	1-3	...	CYM
Chile	27	20	...	...	0.78-4	...	95	16	...	...	0.77-4	...	76-1i	96	17	...	...	0.77-4	...	73-1i	CHL
Colombia	47-2	40-2	97-2	97-2	1.94-2	10-3	181-2	23-2	98-2	98-2	1.94-2	6-3	...	191-2	25-2	98-2	98-2	1.94-2	3-2	95-2i	COL
Costa Rica	12	10	90-4	97-4	0.96-2	2-4	43	11	94-4	98-4	0.97-2	10-4	...	37	13	97-4	99-4	1.00-2	6-4	91-2i	CRI
Cuba	20	17	100-1	75	...	...	83	8	100-1	74	...	...	...	79	8	100-1	83	...	...	...	CUB
Curaçao	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	CUW
Dominica	0.2-1	7-1	54-1	46-1	...	27-2	1-1	...	66-1	74-1	...	--2	...	1-1	9-1	44-1	57-1	...	--2	...	DMA
Dominican Republic	20	17	100-3	100	1.40-1	39-3	80	15	100-3	100	1.40-1	8-3	...	92	9	100-3	100	1.42-1	...	98-2i	DOM
Ecuador	34	17	91	95	1.50-1	8-1	77	22	90	96	1.50-1	9	...	94	19	78	97	1.50-1	5	...	ECU
El Salvador	7	28	97	100	1.00-1	10	22	27	97	100	1.00-1	11	...	18	24	96	100	1.00-1	11	...	SLV
Grenada	0.3	12	44	44	...	23-1	1	19	67	67	...	9-1	...	1	11	44	44	...	24-1	...	GRD
Guatemala	51	13	...	...	...	...	122	20	...	...	...	...	...	123	9	...	...	...	...	...	GTM
Guyana	3	11	75	25	...	...	6	15	82	18	...	...	...	7	10	83	17	...	...	...	GUY
Haiti	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	HTI
Honduras	3	77	...	18-3	...	...	50	21	...	73-2	...	12-2	...	31	18	...	72-2	...	6-2	...	HND
Jamaica	9	11	70	84	...	82-2	12	18	97	100	...	4-4	...	11	16	100	100	...	4-1	...	JAM
Mexico	230-1	...	81-3	81-3	1.11-2	...	572-1	...	91-3	91-3	1.11-2	...	...	869-1	...	88-3	...	1.42-2	...	...	MEX

TABLE 7: CONTINUED

	Pre-primary						Primary							Secondary							
	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	G % receiving in-service training	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	G % receiving in-service training	Country code
SDG indicator			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7	
Reference year	2024						2024							2024							
Montserrat	--4	5-4	...	...	...	...	--4	...	...	...	...	...	...	--4	...	...	...	...	...	...	MSR
Nicaragua	3-1	79-1	55-1	96-1	...	...	30-1	30-1	59-1	89-1	...	...	...	13-1	36-1	18-1	87-1	...	...	...	NIC
Panama	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	97-2i	PAN
Paraguay	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	PRY
Peru	92	16	...	...	...	...	200	19	13-1	81-1	...	...	...	225	14	29-1	63-1	...	...	98-2i	PER
Saint Kitts and Nevis	0.1	...	17-1	83-1	...	...	0.4-1	13-1	65-1	35-1	...	...	...	1-1	7-1	52-1	48-1	...	...	...	KNA
Saint Lucia	0.2-2	...	...	...	...	...	1	13	77-1	76	...	...	...	1	10	68-1	69	...	...	...	LCA
Saint Vincent/Grenadines	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	12	76	76	...	...	...	1	11	59	59	...	...	...	VCT
Sint Maarten	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.4-1	10-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	SXM
Suriname	1-3	...	100-3	99-3	...	7-4	5-3	...	100-3	99-3	...	...	...	5-1	14-1	80-3	58-3	...	...	...	SUR
Trinidad and Tobago	2	11	100	100-3	...	2-4	8	16	84	100	1.35-3	...	...	8	11	91-4	100	1.64-4	...	...	TTO
Turks and Caicos Islands	0.1	22	92	10	...	26	0.3	14	99	74	...	35	...	0.3	11	96	93	...	33	...	TCA
Uruguay	5-1	24-1	...	100-2	0.80-2	...	19-1	15-1	100-1	100-1	0.80-2	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.80-2	...	...	URY
Venezuela, B. R.	91	18	88	12	...	22	353	10	88	12	...	...	...	285	9	88	12	...	26	...	VEN
Europe and Northern America																					
Albania	5	13	53-3	100	0.81-1	1-3	9	15	62-3	100	0.84-1	5-3	83-1i	23	9	67-3	97	0.88-1	8-3	...	ALB
Andorra	0.2	12	100	100	...	9	0.4	10	100	100	...	7	...	1	9	100	100	...	16	...	AND
Austria	26	10	...	...	...	...	36	10	...	...	0.65-2	...	84-3i	75	9	...	...	0.66-2	...	76-1i	AUT
Belarus	44	6	96	56	...	4	22	20	99	100	...	6	...	72	10	97	100	...	6	...	BLR
Belgium	39-1	11-1	...	...	...	...	81-1	10-1	...	...	...	...	...	138-1	9-1	...	...	...	...	...	BEL
Bermuda	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	BMU
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2-1	12-1	...	...	...	...	10-1	15-1	...	...	...	...	46-1i	27-1	8-1	...	...	...	...	...	BIH
Bulgaria	19	11	...	...	0.65-2	...	23	10	...	...	0.65-2	...	76-1i	44	11	...	...	0.65-2	...	...	BGR
Canada	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.18-3	...	76-1i	...	...	...	...	1.18-3	...	...	CAN
Croatia	11-1	11-1	...	...	...	...	13-1	11-1	...	...	...	...	93-3i	53-1	6-1	...	...	...	...	...	HRV
Czechia	...	...	...	...	0.50-2	...	...	...	...	...	0.55-2	...	73-1i	...	...	...	...	0.55-2	...	79-1i	CZE
Denmark	20	9	...	...	0.63-2	...	42	10	...	...	0.74-2	...	41-1i	51	10	...	...	0.75-2	...	...	DNK
Estonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	9	10	...	...	...	...	...	9-3	...	...	...	...	...	...	EST
Finland	22	8	...	...	0.59-2	...	31	12	...	...	0.76-2	...	37-1i	43	13	...	...	0.81-2	...	54-1i	FIN
France	...	...	...	...	0.64-2	...	...	...	...	...	0.64-2	...	74-1i	...	...	...	...	0.69-2	...	74-1i	FRA
Germany	369	7	...	...	...	...	284	12	...	...	0.96-2	...	58-1i	619	11	...	...	1.04-2	...	98-2i	DEU
Greece	21-1	8-1	...	...	0.72-2	...	71-1	8-1	...	...	0.72-2	...	...	83-1	8-1	...	...	0.72-2	...	...	GRC
Hungary	26	12	...	...	0.40-2	...	37	10	...	...	0.40-2	...	45-1i	79	10	...	...	0.40-2	...	50-1i	HUN
Iceland	3-1	4-1	...	...	...	...	4-1	9-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	ISL
Ireland	...	...	...	...	...	...	42-1	...	...	...	0.98-2	...	68-1i	33-1	...	...	...	0.99-2	...	93-1i	IRL
Italy	124	...	...	...	0.63-2	...	251	...	...	...	0.63-2	...	76-1i	424	...	...	...	0.68-2	...	74-1i	ITA
Latvia	7	10	100-2	...	...	...	10	12	100-2	...	...	...	92-1i	12	10	100-2	...	...	...	...	LVA
Liechtenstein	0.1-3	7-3	...	...	...	...	0.3-3	7-3	...	...	...	...	...	0.3-3	10-3	...	...	...	...	...	LIE
Lithuania	4	8	83-4	83-4	1.10-2	...	9	14	91-4	91-4	1.10-2	...	96-1i	27	9	95-4	95-4	1.10-2	...	97-1i	LTU
Luxembourg	3	9	...	...	1.21-2	...	6	7	...	...	1.21-2	...	...	7	8	...	...	1.30-2	...	...	LUX
Malta	1	...	92-3	...	...	...	2	...	84-3	...	...	...	89-3i	5	...	68-3	...	...	...	88-1i	MLT
Monaco	0.1	15	77	83	...	15-1	0.2	11	80	87	...	1	...	1	7	80	91	...	18-1	...	MCO
Montenegro	2-1	12-1	...	100-1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	80-1i	...	...	...	100-1	...	...	...	MNE
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	32	...	...	...	0.84-2	...	99	...	...	...	0.84-2	...	65-1i	118	...	...	...	0.90-2	...	...	NLD
North Macedonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	8-1	14-1	...	...	...	...	70-1i	19-1	8-1	...	...	...	...	...	MKD
Norway	16	11	...	...	0.64-2	...	52	8	...	...	0.69-2	...	23-1i	59	8	...	...	0.69-2	...	36-1i	NOR
Poland	116+1	...	...	...	0.60-2	...	135+1	...	...	...	0.60-2	...	95-1i	323+1	...	...	...	0.60-2	...	...	POL
Portugal	17-1	16-1	100-4	100-4	1.21-2	...	52-1	11-1	100-4	100-4	1.21-2	...	72-1i	...	...	100-4	100-4	1.21-2	...	92-1i	PRT
Republic of Moldova	10	11	100	90	...	...	7	18	100	99	...	...	...	19	12	100	96	...	...	...	MDA
Romania	37-1	14-1	...	...	0.74-2	...	48-1	18-1	...	...	0.74-2	...	67-1i	125-1	11-1	...	...	0.74-2	...	79-1i	ROU
Russian Federation	...	...	...	...	...	...	327-1	23-1	96-1	96-2	...	...	94-3i	1,336-1	8-1	80-1	80-2	...	...	...	RUS
San Marino	0.1	6	100	64	...	...	0.2	6	100	66	...	...	...	0.3	6	100	95	...	...	...	SMR
Serbia	16	11	...	100	...	...	17	15	...	100	...	...	80-1i	68	7	...	100	...	...	...	SRB

TABLE 7: CONTINUED

	Pre-primary						Primary							Secondary							Country code
	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	G % receiving in-service training	A Classroom teachers (000)	B Pupil/teacher ratio	C Trained teachers (%)	D Qualified teachers (%)	E Relative teacher salary level	F Teacher attrition rate (%)	G % receiving in-service training	
SDG indicator			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7			4.c.1	4.c.3	4.c.5	4.c.6	4.c.7	
Reference year	2024						2024							2024							
Slovakia	16	12	98-2	100-2	0.40-2	...	19	13	98-2	100-2	0.48-2	...	78-1i	38	13	98-2	100-2	0.48-2	...	...	SVK
Slovenia	4-1	16-1	...	...	0.82-2	...	...	...	...	...	0.85-2	...	76-1i	...	...	...	...	0.85-2	...	...	SVN
Spain	102	11	100-1	100-1	1.06-2	...	248	11	100-1	100-1	1.06-2	...	79-1i	344	11	100-1	100-1	1.18-2	...	...	ESP
Sweden	38	12	...	...	0.73-3	...	72	12	...	...	0.80-3	...	80-1i	78	13	...	...	0.81-3	...	83-1i	SWE
Switzerland	16	11	...	...	...	...	58	10	...	...	...	...	...	68	9	...	...	...	...	...	CHE
Ukraine	118	6	70	29	...	...	106	13	90	10	...	...	...	273	10	95	5	...	...	...	UKR
United Kingdom	31-1	52-1	...	...	...	...	281-1	17-1	...	...	...	...	...	389-1	16-1	...	...	...	...	...	GBR
United States	559-1	15-1	100-1	100-1	0.67-2	...	1,780-1	13-1	100-1	100-1	0.65-2	...	87-1i	1,742-1	15-1	100-1	100-1	0.68-2	...	86-1i	USA



In Mongolia, more than 36,000 children are required to live away from their families for up to nine months each year in order to attend school, staying in dormitories or with relatives.

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Aid tables

INTRODUCTION

Data in the following four tables on official development assistance (ODA) are derived from the International Development Statistics (IDS) database of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The IDS database records information provided annually by all members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), as well as a growing number of non-DAC donors. Figures for ODA come from the DAC database, while figures for aid to education from the Creditor Reporting System (CRS), a database of individual projects. Figures in the DAC and CRS databases are expressed in constant 2023 US dollars. The DAC and CRS databases are available at www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idsonline.htm.

In 2019, the methodology of defining ODA changed:

- The cash-flow approach, used for Tables 2-4, includes both grants and loans that (a) are undertaken by the official sector, (b) have promotion of economic development and welfare as their main objective and, for loans, (c) are at concessional financial terms (having a grant element of at least 25%).
- The new grant-equivalent approach, which is used for Table 1, counts only grants and the grant element of concessional loans as ODA.

The DAC glossary of terms and concepts is available at www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/dac-glossary.htm.

AID RECIPIENTS AND DONORS

The DAC list of ODA recipients consists of all low- and middle-income countries, based on the World Bank income classification. For further information, see www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/historyofdaclistsofaidrecipientcountries.htm.

Bilateral donors are countries that provide development assistance directly to recipient countries. Most are DAC members. Bilateral donors also contribute substantially to the financing of multilateral donors through contributions recorded as multilateral ODA.

Multilateral donors are international institutions with government membership that conduct many or all of their activities supporting development and aid recipient countries. They include multilateral development banks (e.g. World Bank, regional development banks), UN agencies and regional agencies.

- 'Bilateral flows' refers to bilateral donors contracting with multilateral donors to deliver a programme.
- 'Multilateral flows' refers to bilateral donor contributions pooled with other contributions and disbursed at the discretion of the multilateral donor to fund its own programmes and running costs.

For a list of bilateral and multilateral donors, see the 'Donors' worksheet at https://webfs.oecd.org/oda/DataCollection/Resources/DAC-CRS-CODES.xls

TABLE 1: DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

ODA comprises bilateral and multilateral development assistance, both sector allocable and non-allocable (e.g. general budget support, humanitarian aid, debt relief). ODA disbursements are reported as follows:

- Total ODA
  - As volume, in million US dollars
  - As share of gross national income (GNI)
- Contributions to multilateral donors (a subset of total ODA)
  - As volume, in million US dollars
  - As share of total ODA disbursements.

Reported humanitarian assistance is a subset of total ODA from the OECD CRS database. It has been estimated using the cash-flow approach.

TABLES 2 AND 3: DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION BY DONOR AND BY RECIPIENT

Direct aid to education is aid reported in the CRS database as direct allocations to the education sector. Four education levels are distinguished:

- *Basic* education covers early childhood, primary, and lower secondary education; basic life skills; school meals; and primary education equivalent for adults. Lower secondary education and school meals are recently added.
- *Secondary* covers upper secondary education and vocational training. Since the separation between lower and upper secondary education was implemented about two years ago, some reports may still reference general secondary education, reflecting this transition period.
- *Post-secondary* covers tertiary education as well as advanced technical and managerial training.
- *Level unspecified* refers to any activity that cannot be attributed solely to the development of a particular level of education, such as education research and teacher training. General education programme support is often reported in this subcategory.

Total aid to education adds to direct aid a component of general budget support (i.e. aid provided to governments without being earmarked for specific projects or sectors). It is reported as follows:

- *Total aid to education* is direct aid to education plus 20% of general budget support.
- *Total aid to basic education* is direct aid to basic education plus 50% of 'level unspecified' and 10% of general budget support.
- *Total aid to secondary education* is direct aid to secondary education plus 25% of 'level unspecified' and 5% of general budget support.
- *Total aid to post-secondary education* is direct aid to post-secondary education plus 25% of 'level unspecified' and 5% of general budget support.

For better comparability across donor countries, the amount of development assistance to education excludes imputed student costs (in other words, the cost of tuition in donor countries for nationals of ODA recipient countries in countries in cases where education systems are tuition-free or where fees do not cover the full cost of tuition). The *share of education in total ODA* is calculated using total ODA as reported in Table 1.

TABLE 4: DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION BY DONOR – TOP 3 RECIPIENTS

This table reports the amount and share of bilateral and multilateral donor assistance to education and to basic education allocated to the top three recipients of assistance from each donor.

TABLE 1: Development and humanitarian assistance

Donor	OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA)**** Disbursements																TOTAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE		
	Total								Of which, contributions to multilaterals										
	Constant 2023 USD millions				As a share of gross national income (%)				Constant 2023 USD millions				As a share of total grant equivalents (%)				Constant 2023 USD millions		
Country	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**
Australia	3516	3022	3253	3326	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	475	458	533	667	13	15	16	20	334	388	346
Austria	1498	2025	1959	1777	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	800	841	929	874	53	42	47	49	118	170	149
Belgium	2670	2855	2814	3174	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	1292	1449	1408	1716	48	51	50	54	186	212	235
Bulgaria*	104	258	170	134	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	88	104	142	128	85	40	84	96	6	2	2
Canada	6400	7675	7965	7291	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	1394	1993	1797	1344	22	26	23	18	784	973	688
Croatia*	97	159	178	211	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	71	74	80	100	73	46	45	47	1	4	11
Czechia	420	1196	810	555	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	319	360	314	320	76	30	39	58	18	44	20
Denmark	2798	2738	3057	3118	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	869	748	899	1002	31	27	29	32	386	436	404
Estonia*	69	224	110	81	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	41	49	50	51	59	22	46	63	4	5	5
Finland	1444	1726	1586	1381	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	740	637	688	612	51	37	43	44	84	100	142
France	15412	17342	15081	15062	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	6174	7191	6593	6582	40	41	44	44	92	336	444
Germany	34261	38897	37905	31783	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	8749	7991	10706	8026	26	21	28	25	2970	3731	2639
Greece	351	392	334	359	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	275	284	277	296	78	72	83	82	3	4	4
Hungary*	489	449	268	182	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	204	93	54	41	42	21	20	23	5	64	7
Iceland	75	98	111	105	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	14	23	24	20	19	23	22	19	8	16	16
Ireland	1173	2577	2817	2493	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	541	626	671	746	46	24	24	30	155	212	220
Israel	392	469	464	300	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	86	45	42	30	22	10	9	10	0	32	18
Italy	6096	7216	6121	6700	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3790	3612	3371	3625	62	50	55	54	230	433	230
Japan	14361	16997	19600	17291	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	3190	2547	3619	2858	22	15	18	17	840	603	1155
Kuwait*	451	276	82	254	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	31	2	44	54	7	1	54	21	25	19	5
Lithuania*	100	273	213	189	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	78	115	89	97	78	42	42	51	2	56	42
Luxembourg	542	565	580	579	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	176	167	157	171	32	30	27	30	67	88	101
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	5510	7141	7361	7158	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	1561	2391	2263	2184	28	33	31	31	313	370	513
New Zealand**	662	526	764	770	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	102	102	124	92	15	19	16	12	35	30	53
Norway	4340	4177	5548	5336	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	1106	852	1021	1067	25	20	18	20	498	534	952
Poland	1094	4073	2580	1684	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	765	970	878	1039	70	24	34	62	27	261	102
Portugal	472	574	529	628	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	300	342	312	451	64	60	59	72	4	40	18
Qatar	687	872	696	687	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	64	104	42	82	9	12	6	12	374	448	366
Rep. of Korea	2611	2831	3160	4032	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	640	593	835	843	25	21	26	21	148	164	144
Romania*	480	476	548	539	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	381	357	338	404	79	75	62	75	4	19	10
Saudi Arabia	7363	6947	5471	5435	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	498	317	341	497	7	5	6	9	453	95	196
Slovakia	168	195	175	188	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	128	149	137	156	76	76	78	83	1	8	3
Slovenia	125	191	164	161	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	75	92	96	107	60	48	58	67	3	8	13
Spain	3704	4670	3880	4225	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	2225	2260	2360	2566	60	48	61	61	155	197	217
Sweden	5388	5528	5622	4864	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	1832	1999	2272	1627	34	36	40	33	547	573	644
Switzerland	4137	4821	5219	4451	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	1028	890	1041	935	25	18	20	21	393	548	626
Türkiye	9475	8337	6843	6446	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	102	167	36	83	1	2	1	1	8337	6210	6050
United Arab Emirates*	1509	1479	2068	2040	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40	100	26	43	29	7	2	2	1	575	291	1137
United Kingdom**	16064	17053	19073	17025	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	6015	4196	6638	3396	37	25	35	20	1050	1497	968
United States	53056	62700	64572	63947	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	10320	8627	5248	6452	19	14	8	10	13609	12790	15086
EU Institutions	19395	24541	26873	27521					35	18	88	4	0	0	0	0	3147	3206	3341
TOTAL* **	**229582**	**265410**	**267578**	**254275**	**0.37**	**0.41**	**0.42**	**0.38**	**56916**	**54174**	**56735**	**51508**	**25**	**20**	**21**	**20**	**33094**	**39308**	**48328**

Source: OECD-DAC (2026) and CRS (2026).

* Not part of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) but included in its Creditor Reporting System (CRS) database.

** Includes funds disbursed to overseas territories.

*** Includes ODA from other bilaterals and multilaterals not listed above.

**** ODA disbursements and contributions to multilaterals are calculated using a new grant-equivalent methodology.

(...) Data not available.

TABLE 2: Development assistance to education by donor

Donor	TOTAL ODA								DIRECT ODA								SHARE					
	Education		Basic education		Secondary education		Post-secondary education		Education		Basic education		Secondary education		Post-secondary education		Education in sector allocable ODA		Basic education in total ODA to education		Secondary education in total ODA to education	
	Constant 2023 USD millions								Constant 2023 USD millions								%					
Country	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**
Australia	213	239	115	120	39	57	58	62	195	148	66	36	14	15	34	20	9	7	54	50	18	24
Austria	51	52	8	7	20	23	23	22	51	52	6	4	19	21	21	20	13	11	16	14	39	44
Belgium	116	112	26	31	29	36	61	45	116	112	20	22	26	32	58	41	18	17	22	27	25	32
Canada	333	322	178	178	103	100	51	44	332	310	97	121	63	71	11	16	13	7	54	55	31	31
Croatia*	3	3	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	5	13	6	2	9
Czechia	7	7	1	1	1	1	5	6	7	7	0	1	1	0	5	5	15	15	13	14	16	10
Denmark	78	82	38	39	16	16	24	27	78	82	9	9	1	0	9	12	8	8	49	48	20	19
Estonia*	5	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	5	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	40	19	42	32	23	34
Finland	55	49	31	28	14	11	10	10	55	49	21	22	9	8	5	7	13	17	57	56	25	23
France	866	881	269	159	287	458	310	264	846	856	163	101	234	429	257	235	10	11	31	18	33	52
Germany	1126	613	397	222	477	286	252	105	1126	613	229	140	394	244	168	63	6	3	35	36	42	47
Greece	2	4	0	1	0	1	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	81	48	0	38	0	19
Hungary*	107	99	1	2	0	1	106	96	107	99	0	0	0	0	106	95	51	65	0	2	0	1
Iceland	4	5	3	4	1	1	0	0	4	5	2	4	0	0	0	0	8	10	72	81	17	10
Ireland	50	56	31	36	5	6	13	14	50	56	27	30	3	3	11	11	13	13	63	64	11	11
Italy	241	213	69	42	33	32	139	140	241	203	44	19	21	20	127	128	30	19	29	20	14	15
Japan	723	533	267	168	98	81	358	284	569	522	105	66	16	30	276	233	3	3	37	32	14	15
Kuwait*	6	19	3	9	1	6	2	4	6	19	0	1	0	2	0	1	9	4	48	46	23	30
Lithuania*	16	7	5	1	3	0	8	6	16	7	0	0	0	0	6	5	37	17	32	9	17	5
Luxembourg	57	61	16	19	35	31	6	11	57	61	7	4	30	24	1	3	22	25	29	31	61	51
Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	65	20	15	2	5	2	44	16	65	20	14	1	5	1	44	15	2	1	24	12	8	9
New Zealand**	73	76	18	16	10	9	45	51	56	66	5	5	3	4	39	45	13	13	24	21	13	12
Norway	210	206	147	136	24	29	39	42	204	206	122	105	12	13	27	26	8	8	70	66	12	14
Poland	10	12	1	2	1	2	7	8	10	12	1	1	1	1	7	8	4	5	13	14	14	15
Portugal	59	63	16	17	11	12	32	34	59	59	3	2	4	5	25	26	34	47	28	27	18	19
Qatar	153	193	79	87	1	4	74	102	153	193	77	80	0	1	73	98	61	40	51	45	1	2
Rep. of Korea	240	278	61	65	59	55	121	158	240	278	39	44	48	44	110	147	11	10	25	23	24	20
Romania*	72	74	3	1	2	1	67	73	72	74	0	0	0	0	66	72	87	90	4	2	2	1
Saudi Arabia	1182	1001	429	415	216	211	536	375	398	257	9	4	6	6	326	170	41	27	36	41	18	21
Slovakia	3	3	0	0	1	1	2	3	3	3	0	0	1	1	2	3	12	25	6	3	20	19
Slovenia	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	49	17	4
Spain	90	90	37	41	23	24	30	25	90	90	15	20	12	14	19	14	12	11	41	45	26	27
Sweden	99	85	45	37	21	15	33	33	99	85	26	24	11	9	24	26	5	4	45	43	21	18
Switzerland	175	167	73	73	74	66	28	28	175	167	47	52	61	56	15	17	10	10	42	44	42	40
Türkiye	242	323	19	71	9	37	214	214	242	323	6	2	2	3	208	179	56	57	8	22	4	12
United Arab Emirates*	132	165	45	73	22	39	66	53	90	59	4	2	2	3	45	17	15	9	34	44	16	23
United Kingdom**	417	865	172	405	80	188	166	272	416	850	107	88	47	29	134	113	9	14	41	47	19	22
United States	1638	1776	1173	1177	145	224	320	374	1607	1505	1018	887	68	79	242	229	6	5	72	66	9	13
TOTAL bilaterals	**9061**	**8868**	**3837**	**3705**	**1889**	**2080**	**3335**	**3083**	**7987**	**7566**	**2296**	**1902**	**1119**	**1178**	**2564**	**2182**	**21**	**20**	**32**	**31**	**19**	**19**
African Development Fund	44	23	17	4	18	17	9	2	17	23	0	0	10	15	1	0	1	1	38	19	41	72
Asian Development Bank	268	496	59	203	164	152	44	141	268	317	41	82	155	92	35	81	9	11	22	41	61	31
EU Institutions	5634	5296	2616	2536	1477	1419	1541	1341	1501	1409	162	326	250	314	314	236	10	9	46	48	26	27
International Monetary Fund (Concessional Trust Funds)	895	1222	447	611	224	306	224	306	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees	693	487	693	487	0	0	0	0	693	487	693	487	0	0	0	0	71	67	100	100	0	0
UNICEF	62	61	33	32	13	12	17	16	62	61	12	12	2	2	7	6	17	16	52	53	20	20
World Bank (International Development Association)	2637	2269	1239	970	940	854	458	445	2637	2269	699	483	670	610	188	202	11	9	47	43	36	38
TOTAL multilaterals* **	**10466**	**10043**	**5224**	**4955**	**2896**	**2808**	**2346**	**2280**	**5325**	**4675**	**1668**	**1454**	**1118**	**1058**	**568**	**530**	**12**	**8**	**47**	**51**	**40**	**34**
TOTAL	**19527**	**18910**	**9061**	**8660**	**4785**	**4887**	**5680**	**5363**	**13312**	**12240**	**3964**	**3357**	**2236**	**2236**	**3132**	**2712**	**8**	**7**	**46**	**46**	**25**	**26**

Source: OECD-DAC, CRS database (2026).

* Not part of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) but included in its Creditor Reporting System (CRS) database.

** Includes funds disbursed to overseas territories.

*** Includes ODA from other multilaterals not listed above.

TABLE 3: Development assistance to education by recipient

Region	TOTAL ODA								DIRECT ODA								SHARE					
	Education		Basic education		Secondary education		Post-secondary education		Education		Basic education		Secondary education		Post-secondary education		Education in sector allocable ODA		Basic education in total ODA to education		Secondary education in total ODA to education	
	Constant 2023 USD millions								Constant 2023 USD millions								%					
Country	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**
Sub-Saharan Africa	**5168**	**5391**	**2507**	**2531**	**1571**	**1643**	**1091**	**1217**	**4251**	**4101**	**1466**	**1205**	**1050**	**980**	**571**	**554**	**9**	**8**	**48**	**47**	**30**	**30**
Unallocated within the region	*100*	*116*	*42*	*51*	*30*	*18*	*28*	*47*	*94*	*114*	*26*	*35*	*22*	*10*	*20*	*39*	*4*	*6*	*42*	*44*	*30*	*16*
Angola	23	23	4	4	3	4	16	15	23	23	2	1	2	2	15	13	10	8	19	18	12	16
Benin	90	94	27	28	44	51	18	15	64	77	11	15	36	45	10	9	7	7	31	30	49	54
Botswana	47	3	22	1	13	1	12	1	5	3	0	0	2	0	1	1	6	4	47	41	28	18
Burkina Faso	173	135	71	58	52	46	50	31	151	122	46	31	40	33	37	18	12	10	41	43	30	34
Burundi	43	26	19	16	15	7	10	3	31	26	8	14	9	6	5	2	6	5	43	63	34	26
Cabo Verde	17	16	6	6	5	5	5	5	12	12	1	1	2	3	2	3	10	9	38	36	31	32
Cameroon	95	75	39	23	36	37	20	15	80	70	27	17	30	34	14	12	10	7	41	31	38	49
C.A.R.	63	28	20	14	33	8	10	7	51	20	5	5	25	3	2	3	12	6	32	48	53	27
Chad	98	177	56	99	21	42	21	35	66	79	29	38	8	12	8	5	12	11	57	56	21	24
Comoros	24	21	4	4	8	7	12	10	20	17	2	1	6	6	11	9	15	12	17	18	32	32
Congo	72	25	35	9	18	9	19	6	33	21	12	7	7	8	8	5	14	10	48	38	25	37
Côte d'Ivoire	316	258	156	88	106	116	54	54	234	181	88	13	72	79	20	16	12	10	49	34	34	45
D. R. Congo	301	314	209	230	55	41	38	42	220	266	159	185	30	19	13	20	8	10	69	73	18	13
Djibouti	32	25	18	15	6	5	9	6	30	24	11	11	2	3	6	4	15	14	55	59	17	19
Equat. Guinea	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	20	12	51	16	16	46
Eritrea	19	7	2	2	1	1	16	4	19	7	0	0	0	0	15	3	16	5	10	26	7	18
Eswatini	4	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	4	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	2	30	44	17	29
Ethiopia	316	492	187	238	81	133	47	121	316	224	158	62	66	45	33	33	9	5	59	48	26	27
Gabon	20	19	8	7	5	5	7	7	20	19	1	1	2	2	4	4	26	27	38	36	26	27
Gambia	28	34	10	15	3	8	15	11	22	22	4	6	0	4	12	6	7	8	35	44	11	24
Ghana	225	381	97	180	59	90	69	111	93	124	19	33	20	16	30	37	7	7	43	47	26	24
Guinea	64	41	36	19	9	8	18	14	64	27	27	7	5	2	14	8	12	4	56	46	15	19
Guinea-Bissau	21	22	10	11	4	5	7	6	17	16	6	2	2	1	5	2	10	12	50	49	18	22
Kenya	143	240	55	103	42	65	47	72	122	163	30	40	29	33	34	40	5	6	38	43	29	27
Lesotho	7	10	5	8	1	1	1	1	7	10	4	6	0	0	0	1	4	5	75	78	11	9
Liberia	59	51	29	35	23	9	7	7	59	50	22	30	20	6	3	4	11	11	49	69	40	18
Madagascar	61	63	33	37	17	16	11	9	48	53	21	28	11	12	5	4	4	5	54	59	28	26
Malawi	180	140	105	66	38	31	36	42	173	135	71	46	21	21	19	32	11	9	58	47	21	22
Mali	106	69	51	38	41	24	15	8	106	69	40	32	36	21	9	5	10	7	48	54	39	34
Mauritania	56	30	33	18	14	7	10	6	53	24	21	13	8	5	4	3	12	6	58	58	24	23
Mauritius	6	5	2	0	3	4	1	1	6	5	2	0	3	4	1	1	4	6	28	6	50	74
Mozambique	174	228	101	126	38	48	36	54	158	205	69	84	22	27	20	33	6	8	58	55	22	21
Namibia	17	12	8	4	4	4	5	5	17	12	4	2	3	3	3	4	6	4	46	30	25	30
Niger	103	78	53	43	27	20	23	15	96	73	21	19	11	8	8	3	11	8	51	55	26	26
Nigeria	437	292	169	73	204	164	65	55	437	292	130	46	184	150	45	42	13	7	39	25	47	56
Rwanda	214	287	111	115	69	129	34	43	196	252	72	53	50	98	14	12	15	18	52	40	32	45
S. Tome/Principe	7	26	4	13	1	6	2	6	7	21	3	3	1	1	1	1	9	24	59	53	19	22
Senegal	233	146	106	58	74	46	53	43	182	146	38	30	40	32	19	29	11	11	46	39	32	31
Sierra Leone	77	87	42	47	22	26	14	13	69	75	25	26	13	16	5	3	14	15	54	54	28	30
Somalia	98	100	59	56	18	28	21	17	87	94	41	32	10	16	13	5	8	8	60	56	19	28
South Africa	32	35	8	12	13	12	11	11	32	35	5	5	11	8	9	8	2	2	26	34	40	34
South Sudan	99	63	65	48	17	8	16	7	76	63	43	36	6	2	5	1	10	9	66	76	18	13
Togo	80	86	33	40	32	24	15	22	76	57	15	9	23	9	6	6	13	9	41	46	40	28
Uganda	162	122	88	62	36	33	38	28	90	99	44	29	14	16	16	11	5	5	54	51	22	27
U. R. Tanzania	472	622	200	281	178	211	94	130	411	563	85	117	120	129	36	47	14	18	42	45	38	34
Zambia	130	249	59	123	43	75	28	51	51	94	14	31	21	30	6	5	4	6	45	49	33	30
Zimbabwe	20	14	9	7	7	4	4	4	20	14	4	2	4	1	2	2	3	2	43	46	34	26
Northern Africa and Western Asia	**3041**	**3019**	**1784**	**1662**	**532**	**687**	**725**	**670**	**2591**	**2555**	**1293**	**1180**	**287**	**446**	**480**	**429**	**15**	**14**	**59**	**55**	**17**	**23**
Unallocated within the region	*62*	*53*	*29*	*29*	*13*	*12*	*20*	*12*	*62*	*53*	*21*	*22*	*8*	*8*	*16*	*9*	*6*	*5*	*47*	*54*	*20*	*22*
Algeria	36	28	3	2	5	4	29	22	36	28	2	0	4	3	28	22	16	13	7	6	13	14
Armenia	22	47	7	17	6	14	10	16	22	34	1	2	3	6	7	8	7	10	30	36	25	30
Azerbaijan	19	34	2	9	1	6	16	19	19	34	0	0	0	2	14	15	10	29	13	26	7	18

TABLE 3: Continued

Region	TOTAL ODA								DIRECT ODA								SHARE					
	Education		Basic education		Secondary education		Post-secondary education		Education		Basic education		Secondary education		Post-secondary education		Education in sector allocable ODA		Basic education in total ODA to education		Secondary education in total ODA to education	
	Constant 2023 USD millions								Constant 2023 USD millions								%					
Country	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**
Egypt	129	344	26	133	27	85	76	126	129	134	21	24	24	30	73	72	6	7	20	39	21	25
Georgia	33	39	16	16	7	13	11	10	33	39	11	13	5	11	8	8	5	10	47	41	21	33
Iraq	69	42	32	15	10	11	27	17	69	42	25	10	6	8	23	14	3	2	47	35	14	25
Jordan	660	544	461	421	98	52	101	71	582	514	324	343	30	13	32	32	24	21	70	77	15	10
Lebanon	270	243	171	134	39	53	60	55	270	242	156	119	32	46	52	48	26	27	63	55	15	22
Libya	13	11	3	3	2	2	8	6	13	11	1	0	1	1	7	5	6	5	22	25	15	20
Morocco	211	268	69	56	74	166	67	46	203	247	50	29	65	153	57	32	13	13	33	21	35	62
State of Palestine (the)	569	410	513	336	24	30	33	44	559	401	494	313	15	19	24	33	37	22	90	82	4	7
Sudan	29	29	10	14	4	1	15	14	29	29	10	12	4	0	15	14	6	5	34	48	13	3
Syrian A. R.	124	148	80	99	8	12	36	36	124	148	78	89	7	7	35	31	17	20	65	67	7	8
Tunisia	212	123	99	58	53	29	61	36	111	80	28	32	17	16	26	23	9	6	46	47	25	23
Türkiye	158	405	50	211	56	141	52	53	158	405	15	152	39	112	35	23	9	21	31	52	36	35
Yemen	424	252	213	110	105	56	105	86	170	115	56	18	27	10	27	40	12	10	50	44	25	22
Central and Southern Asia	**2234**	**2268**	**883**	**925**	**639**	**635**	**711**	**708**	**1719**	**1454**	**364**	**340**	**380**	**342**	**451**	**416**	**8**	**7**	**40**	**41**	**29**	**28**
Unallocated within the region	*25*	*29*	*4*	*7*	*10*	*6*	*12*	*15*	*25*	*29*	*2*	*2*	*9*	*4*	*11*	*12*	*5*	*8*	*15*	*25*	*38*	*22*
Afghanistan	139	80	75	36	21	14	43	30	135	80	62	30	15	11	37	27	9	9	54	45	15	18
Bangladesh	747	578	305	219	324	236	118	123	669	460	155	138	249	195	43	83	11	9	41	38	43	41
Bhutan	16	21	7	7	4	4	4	11	6	13	1	1	1	1	1	8	5	14	44	31	28	17
India	140	134	24	30	14	22	102	82	140	123	17	15	11	15	99	74	2	2	17	22	10	17
Iran, Isl. Rep.	33	33	2	3	1	2	30	28	33	33	2	2	1	2	30	28	15	13	5	9	2	6
Kazakhstan*	47	35	1	2	1	1	45	32	47	35	1	0	0	1	44	32	40	33	3	5	2	3
Kyrgyzstan	91	81	36	43	14	13	41	25	91	71	18	23	6	3	32	15	18	17	39	53	16	16
Maldives	5	7	1	3	1	1	3	3	5	3	1	0	0	0	3	2	2	2	29	39	13	19
Nepal	192	138	95	75	58	32	39	31	171	130	42	36	31	13	13	11	13	10	50	54	30	23
Pakistan	663	871	284	401	158	233	220	236	260	282	26	52	29	59	91	62	9	10	43	46	24	27
Sri Lanka	42	106	10	33	12	25	20	48	42	86	8	11	11	14	19	37	4	7	23	31	29	23
Tajikistan	33	47	17	22	8	14	8	11	33	37	11	11	4	8	4	5	6	9	53	47	23	30
Turkmenistan	4	4	1	1	0	0	3	3	4	4	1	0	0	0	3	2	11	5	24	26	5	10
Uzbekistan	58	103	22	43	14	30	22	30	58	65	18	18	13	18	20	18	4	2	37	41	25	29
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	**964**	**759**	**312**	**223**	**244**	**211**	**408**	**324**	**889**	**730**	**158**	**123**	**167**	**161**	**330**	**274**	**8**	**7**	**32**	**29**	**25**	**28**
Unallocated within the region	*25*	*33*	*10*	*9*	*7*	*7*	*8*	*16*	*24*	*33*	*1*	*1*	*3*	*3*	*4*	*12*	*6*	*10*	*39*	*28*	*29*	*22*
Cambodia	141	148	52	50	33	62	56	36	141	129	32	24	23	49	46	22	8	8	37	34	24	42
China	144	79	24	4	75	51	44	25	144	79	0	0	63	49	32	23	14	10	17	4	52	64
DPR Korea	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	1	0	0	0	0
Indonesia	113	92	23	15	9	10	81	68	113	92	17	6	6	5	78	63	4	3	20	16	8	11
Lao PDR	97	88	46	40	25	25	26	23	97	88	30	28	17	18	19	17	16	15	47	46	26	28
Malaysia	13	10	2	1	1	2	9	7	13	10	1	0	1	1	9	6	19	12	18	14	10	17
Mongolia	28	42	6	12	4	8	18	22	28	33	3	4	3	4	16	17	7	6	20	29	16	19
Myanmar	75	66	37	22	15	17	23	28	75	66	27	13	10	13	18	24	8	8	50	33	20	26
Philippines	68	64	32	31	5	5	31	28	68	64	26	25	2	2	28	26	3	4	47	48	8	7
Thailand	27	24	5	6	3	3	19	15	27	24	2	3	2	1	17	14	9	15	19	27	11	11
Timor-Leste	37	42	22	25	7	7	8	9	36	41	14	15	3	2	4	4	14	19	61	60	18	18
Viet Nam	196	70	54	8	58	15	84	48	125	70	5	4	34	13	60	46	7	4	27	11	30	21
Oceania	**329**	**681**	**125**	**299**	**104**	**192**	**100**	**190**	**254**	**268**	**24**	**22**	**53**	**54**	**49**	**52**	**11**	**11**	**38**	**44**	**32**	**28**
Unallocated within the region	*45*	*58*	*12*	*18*	*7*	*10*	*26*	*30*	*44*	*56*	*2*	*3*	*2*	*2*	*21*	*22*	*7*	*11*	*27*	*32*	*16*	*16*
Fiji	26	47	9	23	4	11	12	13	18	27	1	2	0	0	8	2	14	12	35	49	17	23
Kiribati	10	10	4	4	2	2	3	3	8	8	0	1	0	0	1	2	9	11	46	46	22	21
Marshall Is	22	136	11	67	6	36	5	33	7	11	0	1	0	3	0	0	15	17	49	49	26	26
Micronesia F.S.	27	131	13	65	8	33	7	33	13	14	0	0	1	0	0	0	31	23	48	50	28	25
Nauru	2	5	2	4	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	6	8	85	76	5	9
Niue	3	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	48	47	22	24
Palau	2	33	1	17	0	8	1	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	57	50	20	25
Papua N. Guinea	54	117	25	58	13	27	15	32	42	27	7	6	4	1	6	6	6	4	47	50	25	23
Samoa	20	19	8	7	4	3	8	9	12	12	2	1	1	0	4	6	14	14	42	38	20	18

TABLE 3: Continued

Region	TOTAL ODA								DIRECT ODA								SHARE					
	Education		Basic education		Secondary education		Post-secondary education		Education		Basic education		Secondary education		Post-secondary education		Education in sector allocable ODA		Basic education in total ODA to education		Secondary education in total ODA to education	
	Constant 2023 USD millions								Constant 2023 USD millions								%					
Country	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**	**2023**	**2024**
Solomon Is	17	21	10	8	3	3	4	9	15	13	6	2	1	0	2	6	7	6	58	41	16	15
Tokelau	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	17	24	41	39	38	42
Tonga	13	14	4	4	5	6	4	4	9	10	0	0	4	4	2	3	9	8	28	27	43	41
Tuvalu	6	6	3	3	1	2	2	2	4	5	0	1	0	0	1	1	7	6	47	45	25	25
Vanuatu	22	21	8	6	8	9	6	6	20	20	1	1	5	6	3	4	15	14	34	29	36	42
Wallis and Futuna	57	58	12	11	39	41	6	5	57	58	1	0	34	36	0	0	35	39	21	19	69	71
Latin America and the Caribbean	**733**	**540**	**351**	**271**	**203**	**129**	**179**	**140**	**650**	**515**	**237**	**197**	**147**	**92**	**122**	**103**	**7**	**5**	**48**	**50**	**28**	**24**
Unallocated within the region	*38*	*41*	*8*	*12*	*4*	*6*	*26*	*23*	*38*	*41*	*4*	*8*	*3*	*4*	*24*	*21*	*6*	*5*	*21*	*29*	*12*	*15*
Argentina	18	13	2	3	2	5	13	6	18	13	2	1	2	3	13	5	5	14	14	22	10	35
Belize	4	4	1	1	2	2	2	1	4	4	0	0	1	1	2	0	12	9	17	34	37	42
Bolivia	15	15	5	4	7	7	4	4	15	15	3	2	6	6	3	2	2	4	33	29	42	48
Brazil	45	44	10	9	9	10	26	25	45	44	4	3	6	7	23	22	5	6	23	20	20	23
Colombia	33	31	17	11	6	9	10	10	33	31	12	5	4	6	7	7	4	2	52	37	19	30
Costa Rica	10	10	3	3	3	3	4	4	10	10	1	0	2	2	3	3	7	7	32	29	27	30
Cuba	7	2	2	0	1	0	4	2	7	2	0	0	0	0	3	2	6	2	26	10	19	13
Dominica	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	0	6	71	68
Dominican Rep.	10	10	4	5	3	2	3	3	10	10	2	3	2	1	2	2	1	3	39	48	26	23
Ecuador	47	12	22	3	12	4	14	5	14	12	3	1	2	3	4	3	5	3	46	25	25	37
El Salvador	38	47	28	33	6	6	4	8	38	47	23	28	3	4	2	6	7	14	73	70	15	12
Grenada	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	9	2	12	94	47
Guatemala	66	55	51	41	9	11	6	3	66	55	49	39	8	10	5	2	17	14	77	75	14	20
Guyana	44	16	13	4	24	11	6	1	44	16	3	2	20	10	2	1	28	9	29	25	56	67
Haiti	115	84	85	66	14	9	16	9	92	82	67	58	5	5	7	5	12	10	74	79	12	11
Honduras	112	65	52	41	53	15	7	9	104	47	41	26	47	7	2	2	17	7	46	63	47	23
Jamaica	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	0	0	1	1	1	0	5	4	31	40	42	37
Mexico	20	21	8	6	5	8	7	7	20	21	6	5	4	7	6	6	3	2	40	31	26	36
Montserrat	1	7	0	3	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	50	50	25	25
Nicaragua	31	11	7	6	23	4	2	2	31	11	6	5	22	4	2	1	4	2	21	51	72	35
Panama	3	3	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	43	42	12	23
Paraguay	42	13	20	7	10	4	12	2	22	13	2	4	1	3	3	1	13	8	48	51	24	31
Peru	17	18	7	5	4	3	7	9	17	18	4	3	2	2	5	8	3	3	41	29	21	20
St Lucia	4	4	0	0	4	3	0	1	4	4	0	0	3	3	0	1	13	6	7	6	87	78
Saint Vincent/Grenadines	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	2	38	6	23	3
Suriname	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	4	10	31	38
Venezuela, B. R.	7	8	4	4	1	2	2	2	7	8	3	4	1	2	2	1	5	7	53	53	18	27
Europe and Northern America	**4545**	**4124**	**2140**	**1913**	**1113**	**997**	**1292**	**1214**	**446**	**499**	**25**	**50**	**55**	**65**	**235**	**282**	**2**	**3**	**47**	**46**	**24**	**24**
Unallocated within the region	*128*	*161*	*25*	*27*	*20*	*27*	*84*	*107*	*113*	*153*	*11*	*11*	*13*	*19*	*77*	*99*	*7*	*9*	*19*	*17*	*15*	*17*
Albania	46	35	11	6	18	18	17	11	29	33	1	2	13	16	12	9	7	8	24	16	39	53
Belarus	18	13	1	1	1	0	16	12	18	13	0	0	0	0	16	12	12	10	7	5	3	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	26	13	11	4	6	4	9	5	13	13	1	1	2	2	5	3	3	3	40	33	24	30
Rep. Moldova	160	145	50	37	27	22	83	86	87	90	3	1	4	4	60	69	13	14	31	25	17	15
Montenegro	16	18	7	8	3	4	5	5	10	8	0	0	0	0	2	1	7	4	44	46	22	23
North Macedonia	29	22	11	9	9	6	9	7	14	11	1	1	4	2	4	3	3	4	39	42	30	27
Serbia	86	42	34	5	21	6	31	31	54	42	1	1	5	4	15	28	6	5	39	13	25	14
Ukraine	4034	3675	1990	1816	1007	909	1037	950	109	135	7	33	16	17	46	58	1	1	49	49	25	25
Unspecified by region	*2513*	*2128*	*959*	*835*	*379*	*394*	*1174*	*900*	*2512*	*2119*	*397*	*241*	*98*	*96*	*893*	*603*	*9*	*7*	*38*	*39*	*15*	*18*
Low income	3193	3117	1731	1654	783	771	680	692	2585	2378	1105	917	470	402	367	323	9	9	54	53	25	25
Lower middle income	7516	7550	3654	3504	2051	2174	1811	1872	6160	5488	2165	1770	1306	1307	1066	1006	10	9	49	46	27	29
Upper middle income	5748	5477	2549	2463	1409	1392	1790	1623	1529	1673	219	337	245	329	625	560	5	5	44	45	25	25
High income	61	68	21	29	28	23	13	16	60	34	7	6	21	12	6	5	9	5	34	42	46	34
Unspecified by income	*3008*	*2699*	*1107*	*1010*	*513*	*528*	*1387*	*1161*	*2977*	*2666*	*467*	*326*	*194*	*186*	*1067*	*819*	*9*	*7*	*37*	*37*	*17*	*20*
TOTAL	**19527**	**18910**	**9061**	**8660**	**4785**	**4887**	**5680**	**5363**	**13312**	**12240**	**3964**	**3357**	**2236**	**2236**	**3132**	**2712**	**8**	**7**	**46**	**46**	**25**	**26**

Source: OECD-DAC, CRS database (2026).

Notes: The country groupings by level of income are as defined by the World Bank but include only countries shown in the table. They are based on the list of countries by income group as revised in July 2022. Imputed student costs are excluded. All data represent gross disbursements.

Sector allocable ODA does not include budget support.

TABLE 4: Development assistance to education by donor – top 3 recipients, annual average 2022-2024

		EDUCATION			BASIC EDUCATION		
	Donor	Recipient	Constant 2023 USD millions	Recipient %	Recipient	Constant 2023 USD millions	Recipient %
Bilateral	Australia	Papua New Guinea	30	16	Indonesia	9	16
		Oceania, Unallocated	24	13	Myanmar	8	14
		Vanuatu	17	9	Philippines	6	11
	Austria	Europe and Northern America, Unallocated	8	18	Mexico	3	71
		Türkiye	6	12	Republic of Moldova	1	15
		Ukraine	5	12	Europe, regional	0	5
	Belgium	Unspecified by region	62	53	Bilateral, unspecified	8	39
		Democratic Republic of the Congo	15	13	Democratic Republic of the Congo	3	16
		Uganda	5	4	South Africa	1	7
	Canada	Unspecified by region	67	22	Africa, regional	18	16
		Jordan	45	15	Mozambique	9	9
		Bangladesh	23	8	Bangladesh	9	8
	Denmark	Unspecified by region	63	80	Western Africa, regional	9	86
		Northern Africa and Western Asia, Unallocated	9	12	Lebanon	1	8
		Niger	2	2	Asia, regional	0	3
	Finland	Unspecified by region	11	20	Ethiopia	3	14
		Mozambique	7	13	Mozambique	3	14
		Nepal	7	12	Bilateral, unspecified	3	14
	France	Unspecified by region	120	14	Lebanon	22	15
		Morocco	89	11	Haiti	10	7
		Wallis and Futuna	55	7	Chad	9	6
	Germany	Unspecified by region	319	30	Jordan	40	20
		Jordan	108	10	Yemen	18	9
		China	71	7	Syrian Arab Republic	18	9
	Hungary	Jordan	9	7	Jordan	0	59
		Syrian Arab Republic	6	5	Pakistan	0	13
		Viet Nam	6	4	Kenya	0	11
	Ireland	Unspecified by region	19	39	Bilateral, unspecified	13	50
		Uganda	5	11	Mozambique	4	15
		State of Palestine (the)	5	9	Uganda	3	10
	Israel	India	27	47			
		China	9	16			
		Ukraine	3	5			
	Italy	Ukraine	78	27	Jordan	8	30
		Unspecified by region	41	14	Bilateral, unspecified	4	13
		Islamic Republic of Iran	19	7	Lebanon	1	5
	Japan	Unspecified by region	134	24	Morocco	44	39
		Morocco	45	8	Burkina Faso	4	4
		India	36	6	Bilateral, unspecified	3	3
	Kuwait	China	5	26	Côte d'Ivoire	1	100
		Iraq	4	19			
		Gambia	3	14			
	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	Unspecified by region	49	85	Bilateral, unspecified	17	87
		Burkina Faso	3	4	Burkina Faso	2	11
		Senegal	2	3	Burundi	0	1
	New Zealand	Oceania, Unallocated	10	18	Timor-Leste	3	69
		Samoa	5	10	Oceania, regional	1	21
		Solomon Islands	5	9	Samoa	0	3
	Norway	Unspecified by region	58	29	Bilateral, unspecified	41	37
		Ethiopia	12	6	Malawi	8	7
		Malawi	12	6	South Sudan	8	7
	Poland	Belarus	3	26	United Republic of Tanzania	0	22
		Ukraine	2	18	Burundi	0	19
		Georgia	1	5	Georgia	0	12
	Portugal	Brazil	12	21	Sao Tome and Principe	2	90
		Timor-Leste	11	19	Mozambique	0	6
		Mozambique	9	17	Angola	0	2
	Qatar	Unspecified by region	20	12	Bilateral, unspecified	14	18
		Pakistan	12	7	Kenya	5	7
		State of Palestine (the)	12	7	Bangladesh	5	6

TABLE 4: Continued

	Donor	EDUCATION			BASIC EDUCATION		
		Recipient	Constant 2023 USD millions	Recipient %	Recipient	Constant 2023 USD millions	Recipient %
	Rep. of Korea	Ghana	18	7	Cambodia	5	15
		Kenya	15	6	U. R. Tanzania	3	7
		Uzbekistan	12	5	Indonesia	2	6
	Romania*	Republic of Moldova	55	79	Rep. Moldova	0	82
		Ukraine	3.9	5.6	South Africa	0	10
		Serbia	2.2	3.1	Serbia	0	6
	Saudi Arabia	Indonesia	34	12	Yemen	4	52
		Yemen	31	11	Niger	2	25
		Unspecified by region	29	10	Sierra Leone	1	10
	Spain	Unspecified by region	16	19	North of Sahara, regional	3	16
		Morocco	7	8	South America, regional	2	11
		Latin America and the Caribbean, Unallocated	5	5	Guatemala	1	7
	Sweden	United Republic of Tanzania	15	16	South of Sahara, regional	8	29
		Sub-Saharan Africa, Unallocated	12	13	Afghanistan	6	22
		Unspecified by region	12	12	South Sudan	2	8
	Switzerland	Unspecified by region	35	20	Bilateral, unspecified	9	19
		Benin	9	5	Syrian A. R.	4	8
		Chad	7	4	Niger	3	7
	Türkiye	Europe and Northern America, Unallocated	70	25	Bilateral, unspecified	2	47
		Kazakhstan*	24	9	Syrian Arab Republic	0	9
		Unspecified by region	22	8	North Macedonia	0	9
	U. A. Emirates	Unspecified by region	30	39	Colombia	2	58
		Yemen	13	16	Uganda	0	9
		Eritrea	5	6	Africa, regional	0	8
	United Kingdom	Unspecified by region	341	59	Bilateral, unspecified	23	21
		Ethiopia	33	6	Ethiopia	19	18
		Nigeria	27	5	Jordan	13	12
	United States	Unspecified by region	258	18	Bilateral, unspecified	124	14
		Jordan	117	8	Jordan	115	13
		Egypt	61	4	Guatemala	34	4
Multilateral	Asian Development Bank	Bangladesh	127	42	Bangladesh	40	97
		Nepal	37	12	Mongolia	0	1
		Cambodia	27	9	Micronesia F.S.	0	1
	EU Institutions	Unspecified by region	491	34	Türkiye	105	41
		Türkiye	243	17	Lebanon	13	5
		Morocco	44	3	Morocco	12	5
	Inter-American Development Bank Special Fund	Haiti	11	35	Haiti	11	86
		Nicaragua	11	34	Guyana	1	5
		Honduras	4	13	Brazil	0	2
	Islamic Development Bank	State of Palestine (the)	11	32	Burkina Faso	1	26
		Nigeria	3	10	Djibouti	0	17
		Niger	3	9	Benin	0	15
	OPEC Fund for International Development	China	12	49	Côte d'Ivoire	1	63
		Sri Lanka	5	19	Zimbabwe	0	37
		Uganda	3	10	Chad		
	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees	State of Palestine	364	64	State of Palestine	364	64
		Jordan	115	20	Jordan	115	20
		Lebanon	57	10	Lebanon	57	10
	UNICEF	State of Palestine	7	11	India	1	8
		Democratic Republic of the Congo	4	7	Ethiopia	1	5
		India	4	7	Côte d'Ivoire	1	5
	World Bank (International Development Association)	United Republic of Tanzania	362	14	D.R. Congo	170	26
		Nigeria	289	11	United Republic of Tanzania	67	10
		Bangladesh	206	8	Nigeria	65	10

Source: OECD-DAC, CRS database (2026).

Glossary

Attainment rate. Number of persons in a particular age group by the highest level of education attained, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group (see *Completion rate*).

Age-specific enrolment ratio. Enrolment of a given age or age group, regardless of the level of education in which pupils or students are enrolled, expressed as a percentage of the population of the same age or age group. An example is global indicator 4.2.2, the participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age).

Completion rate. Percentage of children aged three to five years older than the official age of entry into the last grade of an education level who have reached the last grade of that level. For example, the primary completion rate in a country with a 6-year cycle where the official age of entry into the last grade is 11 years is the percentage of 14- to 16-year-olds who have reached grade 6.

Conflict-affected country. For a given year, any country with 1,000 or more battle-related deaths (including fatalities among civilians and military actors) over the preceding 10-year period and/or more than 200 battle-related deaths in any 1 year over the preceding 3-year period, according to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Battle-Related Deaths Dataset.

Constant price. Price of a particular item adjusted to remove the overall effect of general price changes (inflation) since a given baseline year.

Early childhood care and education. Services and programmes that support children's survival, growth, development and learning – including health, nutrition and hygiene, and cognitive, social, emotional and physical development – from birth to entry into primary school.

Early Childhood Development Index 2030. Index of fulfilment of developmental potential that assesses children aged 24 to 59 months in 20 questions across 3 domains: health, learning and psychosocial well-being. The information is collected through the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys. A child is 'on track' if they meet age-specific cut scores.

Education levels according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), which is the classification system designed to serve as an instrument for assembling, compiling and presenting comparable indicators and statistics of education both within countries and internationally. The system, introduced in 1976, was revised in 1997 and 2011.

- *Pre-primary education (ISCED level 0).* Programmes at the initial stage of organized instruction, primarily designed to introduce very young children, aged at least 3 years, to a school-type environment and provide a bridge between home and school. Upon completion of these programmes, children continue their education at ISCED 1 (primary education).
- *Primary education (ISCED level 1).* Programmes generally designed to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics, and an elementary understanding of subjects such as history, geography, sciences, art and music.
- *Secondary education (ISCED levels 2 and 3).* Lower secondary education (ISCED 2) is generally designed to continue the basic programmes of the primary level but the teaching is typically more subject-focused, requiring more specialized teachers for each subject area. The end of this level often coincides with the end of compulsory education. Teaching in upper secondary education (ISCED 3) is often organized even more along subject lines and teachers typically need a higher or more subject-specific qualification.
- *Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED level 4).* It provides learning experiences building on secondary education, preparing for labour market entry as well as tertiary education.
- *Tertiary education (ISCED levels 5–8).* It builds on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialized fields of education. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialization. It comprises:
  - Level 5: Short-cycle tertiary education, often designed to provide participants with professional knowledge, skills and competences. It is practically based and occupationally specific, and prepares students to enter the labour market.
  - Level 6: Bachelor's, often designed to provide participants with intermediate academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competences, leading to a first degree or equivalent qualification.

- Level 7: Master's or equivalent level, often designed to provide participants with advanced academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competences, leading to a second degree or equivalent qualification.
- Level 8: Doctoral or equivalent level, designed primarily to lead to an advanced research qualification.

Education for Sustainable Development. A type of education that aims to enable learners to constructively and creatively address present and future global challenges and create more sustainable and resilient societies.

Global Citizenship Education. A type of education that aims to empower learners to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world.

Gross domestic product (GDP). The value of all final goods and services produced in a country in one year.

Gross enrolment ratio. 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. It can exceed 100% because of early or late entry and/or grade repetition.

Gross intake rate. Total number of new entrants to a given grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official school entrance age for that grade.

Gross national income. The value of all final goods and services produced in a country in one year (GDP) plus income that residents have received from abroad, minus income claimed by non- residents.

Information and communication technology skills. Individuals are considered to have such skills if they have undertaken certain computer-related activities in the last three months: copying or moving a file or folder; using copy and paste tools to duplicate or move information within a document; sending emails with attached files; using basic arithmetic formulas in a spreadsheet; connecting and installing new devices; finding, downloading, installing and configuring software; creating electronic presentations with presentation software; transferring files between a computer and other devices; and writing a computer program using a specialized programming language.

Literacy. According to UNESCO's 1958 definition, the term refers to the ability of an individual to read and write with understanding a simple short statement related to his/her everyday life. The concept of literacy has since evolved to embrace several skill domains, each conceived on a scale of different mastery levels and serving different purposes.

Literacy rate. Number of literate people in a particular age group, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.

- **Adult.** Aged 15 and above.
- **Youth.** Aged 15 to 24.

Minimum proficiency level. Benchmark of basic knowledge in mathematics and reading, measured through learning assessments. Until such time as common standards are validated by the international community or countries, the definitions of minimum proficiency published by agencies specialized in cross-national learning assessments are being used.

Net attendance rate. Number of students in the official age group for a given level of education who attend school at that level, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

Net enrolment rate. Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group. There are two additional variations of this indicator:

- Adjusted net enrolment rate. Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education *either at that level or the levels above*, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.
- Total net enrolment rate. Enrolment of the official age group *in any level of education*, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

New entrants. Students entering a given level of education for the first time; the difference between enrolment and repeaters in the first grade of the level.

Never been to school rate. Percentage of children aged three to five years older than the official entrance age into primary education who have never been to school. For example, in a country where the official entrance age is 6 years, the indicator is calculated over the age group 9 to 11 years.

Out-of-school number. Those not enrolled, defined over the following populations:

- Children of official primary school age.
- Adolescents of official lower secondary school age.
- Youth of official upper secondary school age.

Out-of-school rate. Those of the official age group for a given level of education not enrolled, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

Over-age for grade rate. The percentage of students in each level of education (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary) who are two years or more above the intended age for their grade.

Parity index. A measure of inequality defined as the ratio of the values of an education indicator of two population groups. Typically, the numerator is the value of the disadvantaged group and the denominator is the value of the advantaged group. An index value between 0.97 and 1.03 indicates parity. A value below 0.97 indicates disparity in favour of the advantaged group. A value above 1.03 indicates disparity in favour of the disadvantaged group. An adjusted parity index is symmetrical around 1 and limited to a range between 0 and 2. Groups can be defined by:

- Gender. Ratio of female to male values of a given indicator.
- Location. Ratio of rural to urban values of a given indicator.
- Wealth/income. Ratio of the poorest 20% to the richest 20% of a given indicator.

Private institutions. Institutions that are not operated by public authorities but are controlled and managed, whether for profit or not, by private bodies such as non-government organizations, religious bodies, special interest groups, foundations or business enterprises.

Public expenditure on education. Total current and capital expenditure on education by local, regional and national governments for public and private institutions.

Pupil/teacher ratio. Average number of pupils per teacher at a specific level of education.

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

Qualified teacher. Teacher who has the minimum academic qualification necessary to teach at a specific level of education in a given country.

Teacher attrition rate. Number of teachers at a given level of education leaving the profession in a given school year, expressed as a percentage of teachers at that level and in that school year.

Technical and vocational education and training. Programmes designed mainly to prepare students for direct entry into a particular occupation or trade (or class of occupations or trades).

Trained teacher. Teacher who has fulfilled at least the minimum organized teacher-training requirements (pre service or in-service) to teach a specific level of education according to national policy or law.

Transition rate. Number of new entrants to the first grade of an education level in a given year, expressed as a percentage of the number of students who were enrolled in the final grade of the previous education level in the previous year and who do not repeat that grade the following year.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMPL	Assessment for Minimum Proficiency Level
BRACE	Building the Climate Resilience of Children and Communities through the Education Sector
C	Celsius
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CTE	College of teacher education
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EEA	European Economic Area
EU	European Union
FONERWA	National Environment Fund (Rwanda)
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEM Report	Global Education Monitoring Report
GNI	Gross national income
ICCS	International Civic and Citizenship Education Study
ICT	Information and communication technology
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCED-T	International Standard Classification of Teacher Training Programmes
ISPP	International Study of Principal Preparation
MECCE	Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Communication and Education
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Japan)
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPQEL	National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders
NSW	New South Wales
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PASEC	Program for the Analysis of Educational Systems of CONFEMEN
PEER	Profiles Enhancing Reviews in Education
PIAAC	Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TOSSD	Total Official Support for Sustainable Development

TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
US	United States
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

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CHAPTER 3

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CHAPTER 6

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Access and equity

COUNTDOWN TO 2030

As the 2030 deadline approaches and multilateralism is under strain, there is a need to use data and narratives to understand the diverse pathways countries have taken towards SDG 4. This edition of the *Global Education Monitoring Report* is the first in the three-part Countdown to 2030 series, designed to take stock of education progress in access and equity (2026), quality and learning (2027) and relevance (2028/9). Together, these three editions will assess how education systems open doors, nurture knowledge and prepare learners for a world full of uncertainties – and thus help frame the debate on the post-2030 education agenda.

Accordingly, the 2026 *Global Education Monitoring Report* identifies countries that have improved faster than peers – but also countries that appear not to have done as well – over the past 25 years in terms of participation in pre-primary, primary and secondary, and post-secondary education, including by reducing disparity by sex, location, wealth and disability.

It then examines the education and non-education factors associated with such performance through a representative sample of country case studies that span different geographic and country-income contexts. A closer examination tends to corroborate the official statistics but also reveals alternative interpretations, offering an entry point to propose ways in which monitoring can be improved in the coming years.

Finally, the report combines the case study findings with broader research insights. Rather than searching for best practice, which may be isolated and context-specific, this report argues for understanding what sustains change at scale over long periods of time. Such progress emerges from coherence between domestic policies, responsiveness to external circumstances, and a long-term commitment to equity.

Two in-depth country-by-country reviews for the PEER website examine how legislation and policy have evolved in the past 25 years: first, how countries deliberately reallocate education and social protection resources to subnational governments, schools, students and their households to promote equitable outcomes – proposing an index of policy intent; and second, how countries have adopted and adapted laws and policies on inclusive education.

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