



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

**Doha, QATAR, 9 December 2010<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by UNICEF

## **Background/Rationale**

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

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

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

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

## **I. Regional Context**

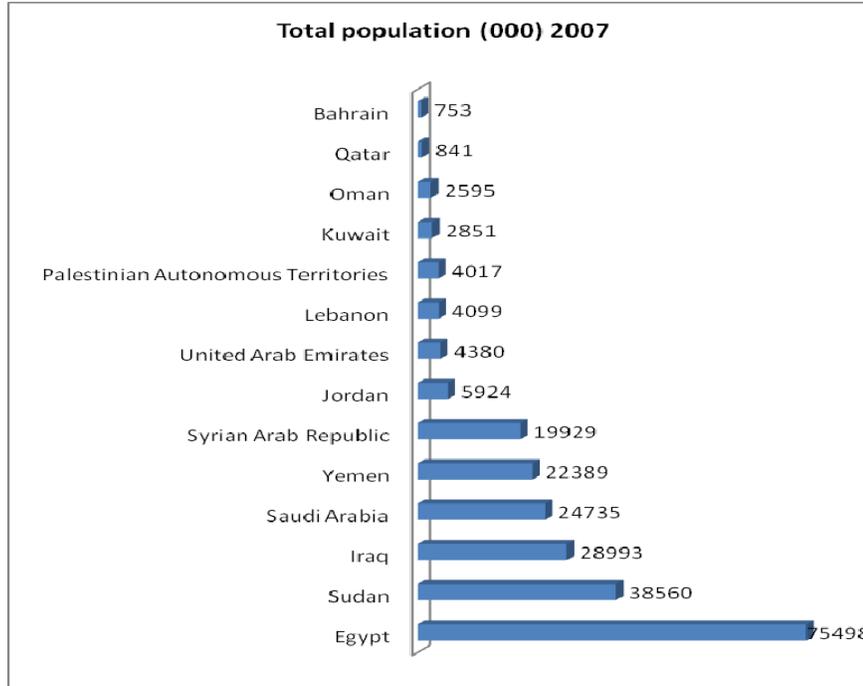
### **I.1 Demography:**

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

#### **I.1.1 Total Population**

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

**Figure 1: Total Population (000s) in 2007**



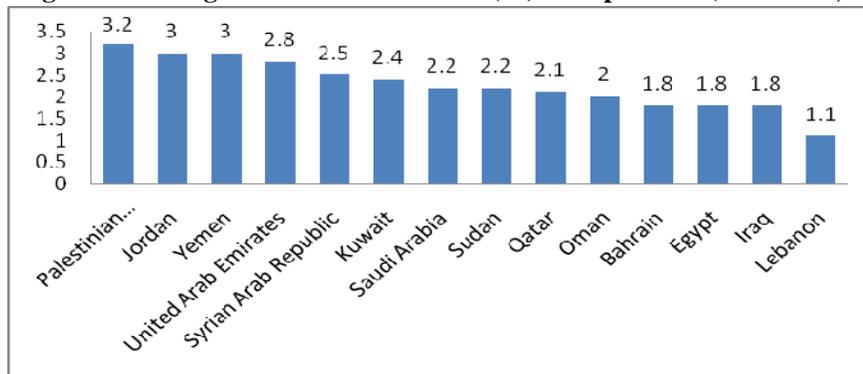
Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, UNESCO GMR 2010

These countries are not still having high population growth rates but also are witnessing a change in the age structure where life expectancy rates are increasing and slight decline in fertility rates. The ESCWA countries are expecting to witness a demographic opportunity if the current trends continue. However, entering and utilizing this demographic opportunity (increase in youth bulge, more people are within the labourforce age) is not spontaneous and carries with it more challenges as the population in these countries will predominately young.

**I.1.2 Average Annual Growth Rate of population in ESCWA Arab countries**

Not only are there significant disparities in terms of population size, and hence in terms of capacity to reach all aspects of society, the differences are also apparent in terms of population growth rates. The population growth rates (2005-2010) are shown in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Average Annual Growth Rate (%) of Population (2005-2010)**



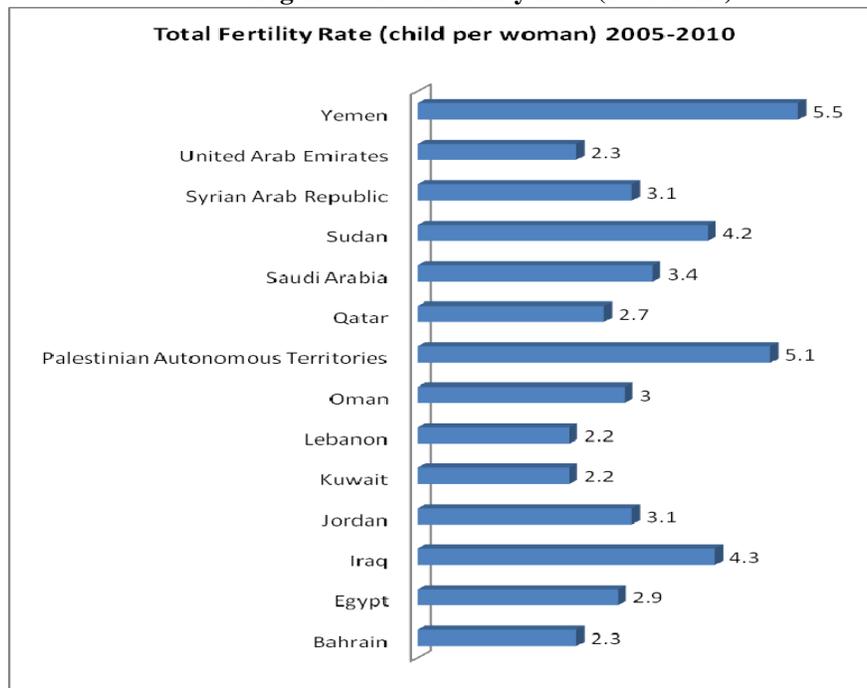
Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, UNESCO GMR 2010

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

### I.1.3 Fertility Rates

According to the Arab MDG report, overall fertility rates are declining for these states for the ESCSW countries<sup>2</sup> hovering between 2.2 and 5.5 children during 2005-2010 per female as shown in Figure 4 below. However, several of the ESCWA countries, rates remain high. In Yemen, at 5.5 children per female, the Palestinian Autonomous Territories at 5.1 children per female, Iraq at 4.3 children, and the Sudan at 4.2 children. The average for all countries under review is 3.3%, which is higher than that for the world (2.6%) and that of developing countries (2.8%).<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 3: Total fertility Rate (2005-2010)**



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics, UNESCO GMR 2010

Higher than average fertility rates are associated with decreased educational attainment and lower quality of life for women. In the long run this double affect of a less skilled female population in general and an increased number of children will fall within school age parameters is to likely to stretch the resources of many countries, especially the poor ones where the state has little resources, and will probably jeopardize the opportunities of maintaining the present enrolment rate.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Arab MDG Report, The Third Arab Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises ,UNDP 2010

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO Institute of Statistics, UNESCO GMR 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Arab MDG Report, The Third Arab Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises ,UNDP 2010

### **I.1.4 Infant Mortality Rate**

The infant mortality rate (IMR) has been halved in most Arab countries during 1990-2008 period, which is particularly true of countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. Yemen has been successful in halving its IMR although it remains relatively high compared to other ESCWA countries.

The highest rates for under 5 mortality are in the poorest countries, which are also suffering from conflict, such as Sudan, Yemen and Iraq. In Iraq, rates are more than ten times as high as those of the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait. The vast majority of under-five deaths take place in the first year of life in most ESCWA countries. This means that more efforts are needed to address the causes of infant mortality, such as: low birth weight, diarrhea and other infections.<sup>5</sup>

### **I.1.5 Displaced Persons and Migration**

Displaced populations in the Arab world are confronted with mounting challenges such as access to food, shelter, health and education on a routine basis. The region hosted 4.7 million Palestinian refugees and 2 million Iraqi refugees Beyond displaced populations, more than 1,600,000 Iraqis (270,000 families) who are internally displaced within Iraq. Iraq, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Yemen, in addition to Israel, were home to almost 3.9 million internally displaced people in 2008.<sup>6</sup>

In 2008 alone, almost 479,000 people were newly displaced, mainly because of the Iraqi and Yemeni conflicts. In Iraq, even though the security and humanitarian situations seemed to be more stable, the number of displaced Iraqis continued to increase to almost 2.8 million. The conflict in northern Yemen displaced 200,000 people in 2008 and 2009. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, house demolitions by the government of Israel are still taking place in the West Bank. In Lebanon, violence in Tripoli triggered the temporary displacement of a few thousand citizens.<sup>7</sup> Table 1 below presents available data on internally displaced people (2005-2008).

**Table 1: Internally displaced persons**

| Country | 2005      | 2006      | 2007      | 2008      |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Iraq    | 1,200,000 | 1,834,368 | 2,385,865 | 2,647,251 |
| Lebanon | ..        | 200,000   | 70,000    | ..        |
| Sudan   | 841,946   | 1,325,235 | 1,250,000 | 1,201,040 |
| Yemen   |           |           | 77,000    | 100,000   |

Source: World Bank Statistical Data Base 2010

Large numbers of displaced persons place a burden on the resources of the host country, in terms of education, traditional fixed building schools and rigid curricula will not work. The modalities of education must be changed to incorporate new approaches that are geared to the life of the displaced: mobile or tent schools, the single school (female school), the implementation of bridging courses for those students who have lost years of school, the use of paraprofessionals to follow the students or even to teach in some cases.

### **I1.6 Rural /urban populations**

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<sup>5</sup> Arab MDG Report

<sup>6</sup> Inter regional Labour Migration IOM, 2010

<sup>7</sup> Inter regional Labour Migration IOM, 2010

Countries with large rural areas must deal with problems that predominantly urban countries in the region - like the GCC countries- do not face. Rural areas tend to be face pastoral, thereby making traditional educational systems ineffective; long distances and or absence of road infrastructure or transport increase the certainty of marginalization and gender disparity especially in terms of security traveling to and from to school.. Low population density makes school infrastructure widely dispersed to meet pupil per teacher quotas; and traditional curriculums and instructional delivery methods may not meet the needs of the population. While population in the rural areas are expected to decreases by 2020, Sudan, Yemen and Egypt will still have approximately half of the population living in rural areas; the Palestinian Autonomous Territories and Iraq, will have over twenty percent. Syria also has a high rural population, but because of its resource endowments; it suffers less from the poverty and marginalization experienced by the other countries with large rural communities.

**Table 2: Rural Population Projections..**

| Rural Population projected 2010, 2020 |      |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|
|                                       | 2010 | 2020 |
| Bahrain                               | 7.8  | 5.6  |
| Egypt                                 | 56   | 51.8 |
| Iraq                                  | 32.3 | 29.9 |
| Jordan                                | 19.9 | 17.8 |
| Kuwait                                | 3.3  | 2.9  |
| Lebanon                               | 7.9  | 6.9  |
| Oman                                  | 19.2 | 16.1 |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories    | 30   | 26.5 |
| Qatar                                 | 5.5  | 4.6  |
| Saudi Arabia                          | 10   | 8.4  |
| Sudan                                 | 55   | 48.2 |
| Syrian Arab Republic                  | 44.6 | 39.4 |
| United Arab Emirates                  | 9.5  | 7.6  |
| Yemen                                 | 71.5 | 65.6 |

Source: DESA, World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision

## I.2 Economy

### I.2.1 GNP per capita

Table 4 below provides a summary of the GNP per capita (current and PPP US\$) for the period 1998-2007 for the countries under review. The lowest Arab country in terms of income per capita in current US\$ is Yemen at US\$ 870 in 2007; however, in terms of purchasing power parity, Sudan is the lowest. The top country in terms of income per capita (measured in PPP) is Saudi Arabia at US\$ 22950, more than 12 times that of the poorest Arab country. The Table below shows that it is Kuwait and UAE with over 36,000 and 43,000 already in 1998. However, the incompleteness of data does not allow for comparisons in terms of income and trends.

**Table 3: GNP per Capita (PPP US\$)**

|                                    | GNP per capita (PPP US\$) <sup>3</sup> |       |
|------------------------------------|--|-------|
|                                    | 1998                                   | 2007  |
| Bahrain                            | 18440                                  | ...   |
| Egypt                              | 3370                                   | 5370  |
| Iraq                               | ...                                    | ...   |
| Jordan                             | 2950                                   | 5150  |
| Kuwait                             | 36960                                  | ...   |
| Lebanon                            | 7350                                   | 10040 |
| Oman                               | 13570                                  | ...   |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories | ...                                    | ...   |
| Qatar                              | ...                                    | ...   |
| Saudi Arabia                       | 17100                                  | 22950 |
| Sudan                              | 1070                                   | 1880  |
| Syrian Arab Republic               | 3260                                   | 4430  |
| United Arab Emirates               | 43690                                  | ...   |
| Yemen                              | 1690                                   | 2200  |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

## I.2.2 Poverty Rates (Urban and Rural) and Poverty Gap

The percentages of those living under the poverty line in five Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Occupied Palestinian Territories, and Yemen) are shown in Table 5 below. Note that data is available for the countries below. The other countries under review have no data.

**Table 4: Poverty rates and poverty gap ratio (per cent) using the lower national poverty line for Selected Arab countries, Rural and Urban, 2000–2009**

|   | Urban        |             | Rural        |             | National     |             | Ratio of rural to urban Index |
|---|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
|   | Poverty rate | Poverty gap | Poverty rate | Poverty gap | Poverty rate | Poverty gap |                               |
| Egypt (2000)                              | 9.2          | 1.7         | 22.1         | 3.9         | 16.7         | 3.0         | 2.4                           |
| Egypt (2009)                              | 10.1         |             | 28.9         |             | 21.6         |             | 2.9                           |
| Jordan (1997)                             | 19.7         | 4.8         | 27.0         | 7.2         | 21.3         | 5.3         | 1.4                           |
| Jordan (2002)                             | 12.9         | 2.9         | 18.7         | 4.7         | 14.2         | 3.3         | 1.4                           |
| Syria (1997)                              | 12.6         | 2.3         | 16.0         | 3.5         | 14.3         | 2.9         | 1.3                           |
| Syria (2007)                              | 9.9          | 1.5         | 15.1         | 2.6         | 12.3         | 2.0         | 1.5                           |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories (1998) | 17.3         | 4.8         | 18.3         | 4.6         | 20.3         | 5.5         | 1.0                           |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories (2007) | 33.1         | 8.8         | 30.3         | 8.7         | 34.5         | 9.8         | 0.9                           |
| Yemen (1998)                              | 32.3         | 8.7         | 42.5         | 13.1        | 40.1         | 12.1        | 1.3                           |
| Yemen (2006)                              | 20.7         | 4.5         | 40.1         | 10.6        | 34.8         | 8.9         | 1.9                           |

*Notes:* Results are reported based on the national lower poverty lines.

*Source:* UNDP The Third Arab Millennium Development Goals 2010 and the Impact of the Global Economic Crises. 2010

Among the sample countries both poverty indicators are lowest in Jordan and Syria. However, even though they are under 20% in all subcategories, they are still high and persistent. Note that even though Sudan is not present in the table due to data limitations, it is expected to be among the lowest performers based on all other indicators.

Rural poverty is double that of urban poverty in Yemen and more than double in Egypt; Egypt has the highest rural to urban poverty among all five countries. As mentioned above, by 2020, Sudan, Yemen and Egypt will still have approximately half of the population living in rural areas; population pressures on resources will not lessen unless the ability of the population to contribute to long-run GDP changes significantly to alter poverty ratios.

## I.2.3 Employment

The region is behind all other regions in indicators of full and productive employment particularly for women and youth. An exceptionally low female employment- to population prevails in the region when compared to other developing regions.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.2.3.1 Employment of women to population ratio.

A high employment of women to the total population ratio means that the employment and participation of women in the labor force is high. Although the population ratio for adult women for the region increased from 21.6% to 24.7% between 1990 and 2008, far more Arab women continue to be out of the labor market than men. Table 6 below shows the ratio of employment of women to population in the ESCWA countries (1991-2008).

**Table 5: Employment of Women to Total Population, 1991-2008**

<sup>8</sup> MDG Report Draft Zero 2010

| Country                            | 1991 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2008 |
|------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Bahrain                            | 25.7 | 27.6 | 30.1 | 30.8 | 31.6 |
| Kuwait                             | 33.6 | 39.2 | 42.1 | 41.6 | 41.8 |
| Oman                               | 17.2 | 18.2 | 20.3 | 21.7 | 22.9 |
| Qatar                              | 29.3 | 31.8 | 33.7 | 37.2 | 39.8 |
| Saudi Arabia                       | 13.5 | 13.9 | 15.6 | 17.1 | 18.0 |
| UAE                                | 25.0 | 30.2 | 33.0 | 36.3 | 38.8 |
| Sudan                              | 21.4 | 24.2 | 26.1 | 26.9 | 28.1 |
| Yemen                              | 13.9 | 16.3 | 17.0 | 19.9 | 20.4 |
| Egypt                              | 16.7 | 15.5 | 16.6 | 17.3 | 19.3 |
| Iraq                               | 9.7  | 10.1 | 10.9 | 12.0 | 12.5 |
| Jordan                             | 9.2  | 11.3 | 11.1 | 12.8 | 13.3 |
| Lebanon                            | 19.0 | 20.6 | 21.4 | 22.3 | 22.6 |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories | 8.1  | 8.4  | 9.3  | 11.2 | 11.5 |
| Syria                              | 16.0 | 19.5 | 17.2 | 15.8 | 16.9 |

Source: Poverty, Employment and Hunger in Arab States Tracking progress towards MDG1, 2009

### I.2.3.2 Women and the labor force

Some countries in the region are progressing in the area of female employment, while others are lagging. In 2006, female unemployment was at least more than double the unemployment rate of men. The least percentage of women working in non-agricultural paid employment is in Yemen, and the highest is in Kuwait, a non-agricultural state. Egypt is the highest among the countries in terms of women being able to rise to senior positions in enterprise. The data indicates that there is a disparity between men and women in terms of engagement in gainful and vulnerable employment opportunities. Table 7 below shows the employment of female labor in the ESCWA countries in 2006.

**Table 6: Characteristics of Female labor, age 15 and above (%) -2006**

| Country      | Female adult unemployment rate (%) | Male adult unemployment rate (%) | Women in non-agricultural paid labor (% of total labor force) | Ability of Women in rise to positions of enterprise leadership (%) |
|--------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Egypt        | 19                                 | 6                                | 19  | 5.14   |
| Jordan       | 24                                 | 10                               | 16  | 4.52   |
| Lebanon      |                                    |                                  | 14  | 4.47   |
| Kuwait       |                                    |                                  | 23  | 4.66   |
| Oman         |                                    |                                  | 22  | 4.92   |
| Qatar        | 13                                 | 2                                | 13  | 4.83   |
| Saudi Arabia | 13                                 | 4                                | 15  | 3.6  |
| Syria        | 21                                 | 8                                | 16  | 4.48   |
| UAE          | 7                                  | 3                                | 20  | 5  |
| Yemen        |                                    | 13                               | 6   |  |
| Bahrain      | 11                                 | 4                                | 10  | 4.91   |

Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Report 2010 (UNDP, ILO, 2007/2009 or latest available.)

### I.2.3.3 Employment by Gender and for Youth

Discrimination across genders is also apparent among youth. Therefore, while youth find little employment opportunities, females face double discrimination in terms of participation in the labor force as youth and as females - the discrimination compounds within this demographic segment.

**Table 7: Employment by Gender among Youth (2007-2008)**

| Country Name                                   | Employment to population ratio, ages 15-24, female (%) |      | Employment to population ratio, ages 15-24, male (%) |      | Employment to population ratio, ages 15-24, total (%) |      |
|--|--|------|--|------|---|------|
|  | 2007   | 2008 | 2007   | 2008 | 2007  | 2008 |
| Bahrain  | 18   | 18   | 42   | 41   | 31  | 30   |
| Egypt, Arab Rep.                               | 13   | 13   | 32   | 33   | 23  | 23   |
| Iraq   | 7  | 7    | 39   | 39   | 23  | 23   |
| Jordan   | 7  | 7    | 32   | 32   | 20  | 20   |
| Kuwait   | 24   | 23   | 37   | 36   | 31  | 30   |
| Lebanon  | 12   | 12   | 45   | 45   | 29  | 29   |
| Oman   | 18   | 18   | 39   | 39   | 29  | 29   |
| Qatar  | 17   | 19   | 55   | 56   | 46  | 47   |
| Saudi Arabia                                   | 7  | 8    | 42   | 42   | 25  | 25   |
| Sudan  | 18   | 18   | 29   | 29   | 24  | 23   |
| Syrian Arab Republic                           | 15   | 15   | 50   | 49   | 33  | 32   |
| United Arab Emirates                           | 25   | 25   | 62   | 61   | 47  | 46   |
| West Bank and Gaza                             | 4  | 5    | 27   | 26   | 16  | 15   |
| Yemen, Rep.                                    | 16   | 16   | 28   | 27   | 22  | 22   |
| Middle East & North Africa (all income levels) | 17   | 17   | 40   | 40   | 29  | 29   |

Source: World Bank Statistical Database 2010

### I.3 Women in Development

Kofi Annan once said “There is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls.”<sup>9</sup> Not only do women comprise half the society and therefore losing their labor is a terrible waste, women bear almost all responsibility for meeting basic needs of the family, yet are systematically deprived of the resources, information and freedom of action they need to perform this responsibility. Consequently, the vast majority of the world's poor are women; two-thirds of the world's illiterates are female; nearly two-thirds of the 70 Million school age children are not in school are girls. Studies show that when women are supported and empowered, all of society benefits.

Contributions to the development process can be viewed in terms of wage equality, parity in official positions and the percentage of women in nontraditional fields of work. In terms of wage equality for similar work, the highest among the countries under review is Egypt and the lowest is Syria, as shown in Table 10 below. As before, the highest in terms of the ratio of representation of women among legislators, senior officials, and managers, Kuwait is by far the highest, followed closely by Syria and the UAE. In professional and technical work, the female-to-male ratio is highest in Lebanon (where it is almost at parity), followed by Syria, then Kuwait and Egypt.

**Table 8: Wage Equality, Senior Level Representation, and Professional and Technical Work**

| Country | Wage Equality for Similar Work (Survey) | Legislators, Senior Officials, Managers (%) | Professional & Technical Workers (%) |
|---------|---|---|--------------------------------------|
|         | Female-to-Male Ratio                    | Female                                      | Female-to-Male Ratio                 |
|         |   |   | Female                               |
|         |   |   | Female-to-Male Ratio                 |

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF Girls Education Initiative

|                     |      |    |      |    |      |
|---------------------|------|----|------|----|------|
| <b>Egypt</b>        | 0.81 | 11 | 0.12 | 34 | 0.51 |
| <b>Jordan</b>       | 0.66 |    |      | 29 | 0.41 |
| <b>Lebanon</b>      | 0.65 | 8  | 0.09 | 48 | 0.93 |
| <b>Kuwait</b>       | 0.66 | 14 | 0.16 | 34 | 0.52 |
| <b>Oman</b>         | 0.67 | 9  | 0.10 | 33 | 0.49 |
| <b>Qatar</b>        | 0.64 | 7  | 0.07 | 20 | 0.24 |
| <b>Saudi Arabia</b> | 0.60 | 8  | 0.09 | 27 | 0.37 |
| <b>Syria</b>        | 0.64 | 10 | 0.11 | 41 | 0.70 |
| <b>UAE</b>          | 0.70 | 10 | 0.11 | 22 | 0.28 |
| <b>Yeman</b>        |      | 2  | 0.02 | 15 | 0.18 |
| <b>Bahrain</b>      | 0.76 | 22 | 0.29 | 18 | 0.22 |

Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Report 2010 (UNDP, ILO, 2007/2009 or latest available.)

#### I. 4. Overview of progress towards education related MDGs in the Arab States:

##### I.3.1 Millennium Development Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE)

Three indicators are utilized to measure progress toward achieving target UPE: 1) Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) in primary education, 2) Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach the last grade of primary school, and 3) the literacy rate of 15–24 year-old men and women (UN 2008).

Utilizing all three factors to analyze the countries capacity to meet the UPE goals, projections for UPE 2015 and in 2025 are given below. Countries marked in gray, Bahrain, Egypt, Qatar, Syrian Arab Republic and the UAE, are considered to be able to reach UPE before 2015; for Sudan, the data is not available.

**Table 9: Prospects for Achieving UPE –Selected Countries**

| Prospects for Achieving UPE by 2015 and 2025 |         |       |           |           |           |            |           |                   |       |              |         |                      |                      |           |
|--|---------|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------------|-------|--------------|---------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| School year ending in                        | Bahrain | Egypt | Iraq      | Jordan    | Kuwait    | Lebanon    | Oman      | Palestinian A. T. | Qatar | Saudi Arabia | Sudan   | Syrian Arab Republic | United Arab Emirates | Yemen     |
| Start year value                             | 2005    | 2005  | 2005      | 2005      | 2005      | 2005       | 2005      | 2005              | 2005  | 2005         | No data | 2002                 | 2005                 | 2004      |
| 2008   |         |       | 90        | 92        | 91        | 96         | 79        | 88                |       | 82           |         |                      |                      | 87        |
| 2009   |         |       | 91        | 91        | 93        | 97         | 80        | 89                |       | 83           |         |                      |                      | 89        |
| 2010   |         |       | 91        | 91        | 94        | 97         | 81        | 90                |       | 84           |         |                      |                      | 91        |
| <b>2015</b>                                  |         |       | <b>94</b> | <b>90</b> | <b>97</b> | <b>99</b>  | <b>83</b> | <b>94</b>         |       | <b>89</b>    |         |                      |                      | <b>96</b> |
| <b>2025</b>                                  |         |       | <b>97</b> | <b>87</b> | <b>99</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>88</b> | <b>98</b>         |       | <b>94</b>    |         |                      |                      | <b>99</b> |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010( Data might not be accurate and projections for some countries are not valid).

Bahrain, Egypt, Qatar, and Syria are projected to reach UPE before 2015. As of 2008, Bahrain was at 98.2 % UPE with a GPI of 1; Egypt was at 95.7 with a GPI or .96, Qatar's NER stood at 93 with a GPI of 1, and Syria held a NER of 91.9 in 1999 with a GPI of 93 (data is not available for 2007). Bahrain also has attained high survival rates to the last grade of primary education for females, 97.4% and total population at 98.7 %

Although Qatar has a Total Survival Rate to Last Grade of Primary School of 88%, see Table 13 below, it has 99% literacy of youth and is expected to reach 100% literacy of youth by 2015, a factor which boosted its overall UPE score. Egypt's 96.8 % survival rate indicates that if enrolled, a student stays in school; however, literacy of youth in Egypt, in total, is expected reach only 93% by 2015.

ESCWA countries have made dramatic strides toward achieving UPE however, over the last two to three years, progress has leveled out. According to the projections, Lebanon is the only country of those who have not yet reached UPE to do so by 2025. This trend is mirrored when addressing the ability of states to attain EFA also. Current education policies are not retaining those who are in school, nor reaching out-of school children that are not documented in the NER statistics.

#### 1) Net Enrolment Ratio:

**Table 10: NER (%) and GPI (%) 2006**

| 2006        | Bahrain | Egypt | Iraq | Jordan | Kuwait | Lebanon | Oman | PAT  | Qatar | Saudi Arabia | Sudan | Syrian Arab Republic | United Arab Emirates | Yemen |
|-------------|---------|-------|------|--------|--------|---------|------|------|-------|--------------|-------|----------------------|----------------------|-------|
| NER %       | 98.2    | 95.7  | 88.6 | 88.6   | 88.2   | 83.2    | 72.7 | 73.3 | 93    | 84.6         |       |                      | 90.9                 | 75.2  |
| GPI % (F/M) | 1       | 0.96  | 0.86 | 1.02   | 0.97   | 0.99    | 1.02 | 1    | 1     | 0.99         |       |                      | 0.99                 | 0.76  |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

A more thorough look at the NER and GPI figures are provided in Section II.

#### 2) Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach the last grade of primary school

Although Iraq stands at 88.6 NER and .86 GPI, the survival rate to last grade of primary education is only 70.1%, while representing a significant increase over a 1999 figure of 49.4 %, reflects that 3/4 of the those who actually began their primary education finish their primary education. Sudan and Yemen have suffered decreases since 1999; Sudan from 77.1 to 62.1 primary education survival rate and Yemen from 79.7% to 59.5% of children completing their primary education.

**Table 11: Survival Rate to Last Grade Primary (%) Total, Female**

|                      | Survival rate to last grade of primary education (%), Total |      | Survival rate to last grade of primary education (%), Female |      |
|----------------------|---|------|--|------|
|                      | 1999  | 2006 | 1999   | 2006 |
|                      | Bahrain   | 92.4 | 98.7   | 93.4 |
| Egypt                | 99.1  | 96.8 | 99.5   | ...  |
| Iraq                 | 49.4  | 70.1 | 47.2   | 61.1 |
| Jordan               | 96.9  | 99.1 | 96.8   | ...  |
| Kuwait               | 94  | 99.5 | 95.1   | 99.1 |
| Lebanon              | 91.3  | 89.2 | 94.8   | 92.7 |
| Oman                 | 91.9  | 97.6 | 92.1   | 98.2 |
| Palestinian AT       | 99.4  | 98.7 | 98.8   | 98.5 |
| Qatar                | ...   | 88.8 | ...  | 88.6 |
| Saudi Arabia         | ...   | ...  | ...  | ...  |
| Sudan                | 77.1  | 62.1 | 81.5   | 60.3 |
| Syrian Arab Republic | 86.9  | 95.2 | 86.8   | 95.7 |
| United Arab Emirates | 89.7  | 100  | 89.3   | 100  |

|       |      |      |     |      |
|-------|------|------|-----|------|
| Yemen | 79.7 | 59.5 | ... | 56.8 |
|-------|------|------|-----|------|

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

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

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

**Table 12: Youth Literacy 2008**

|                                    | Youth literacy rate (15-24) (%), Total |      | Youth literacy rate (15-24) (%), Male |      | Youth literacy rate (15-24) (%), Female |      |
|------------------------------------|--|------|---------------------------------------|------|---|------|
|                                    | 2000-2007 <sup>9</sup>                 | 2015 | 2000-2007                             | 2015 | 2000-2007 <sup>9</sup>                  | 2015 |
| Bahrain                            | 100                                    | 100  | 100                                   | 100  | 100                                     | 100  |
| Egypt                              | 85                                     | 93   | 88                                    | 94   | 82                                      | 92   |
| Iraq                               | 85                                     | ...  | 89                                    | ...  | 80                                      | ...  |
| Jordan                             | 99                                     | 99   | 99                                    | 99   | 99                                      | 100  |
| Kuwait                             | 98                                     | 100  | 98                                    | 100  | 99                                      | 100  |
| Lebanon                            | 99                                     | 99   | 98                                    | 99   | 99                                      | 99   |
| Oman                               | 98                                     | 99   | 99                                    | 100  | 98                                      | 99   |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories | 99                                     | 99   | 99                                    | 99   | 99                                      | 99   |
| Qatar                              | 99                                     | 100  | 99                                    | 100  | 99                                      | 100  |
| Saudi Arabia                       | 97                                     | 99   | 98                                    | 99   | 96                                      | 98   |
| Sudan <sup>10</sup>                | 77                                     | ...  | 85                                    | ...  | 71                                      | ...  |
| Syrian Arab Republic               | 94                                     | 96   | 95                                    | 97   | 92                                      | 95   |
| United Arab Emirates               | 95                                     | 99   | 94                                    | 99   | 97                                      | 99   |
| Yemen                              | 80                                     | 90   | 93                                    | 97   | 67                                      | 83   |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

### . I.3.2 MDG Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Achievement in reaching MDG 3 measured by four indicators:

- Women's Political representation in Arab Countries
- Ratio of female to male primary enrollment (%)
- Ratio of female to male secondary enrollment (%)
- Ratio of female to male tertiary enrollment (%)
- Share of women employed in the nonagricultural sector (% of total nonagricultural employment)

Although the ESCWA states are on track in terms of female education enrollment, other indicators are lagging far behind. In terms of female political representation, Arab States have not progressed far. Bahrain has placed 2 women in parliament. The largest percentage of lower house leadership is in the UAE, where 23% are female, and surprisingly Sudan, where 18% of the seats held are female. Even in the countries that are considered more socially "liberal", such as Jordan and Lebanon<sup>10</sup>, show only a 6% and 5%, representation of female parliament members.

**Table 13: MDG Goal 3 Indicators**

<sup>10</sup> The low rate may be due to past violence against government officials

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

\* 2005 data

Source: World Bank Indicators, 2010

In every country for which there is data, other than Bahrain, the female share of tertiary education exceeds, sometimes by a wide percentage, that of males (based on 2005 data). Although women's access to higher education is growing, they still tend toward gender-based roles of caring for others, such as teachers, which are less valued in the labor market.<sup>11</sup> For female workforce in non-agricultural countries, Egypt, 36.9% (in 2005) ranked first; Jordan, Syria, the UAE and Iraq ranked in the 20% range and Sudan and Bahrain both have 18%. For the Gulf countries of Oman and Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, a negligible percentage is working in other sectors.

#### I.4 Questions for Discussions

- What measures can be employed to mitigate the impact of poverty on education by increasing and stabilizing incomes and food security of poor households?
- Despite the overall progress made in the region, what are the key challenges in helping the marginalized overcome poverty? And what role can education play?
- How can investment within the education sector be better targeted to support poverty reduction?
- What can be done to promote investment in education as part of national development strategies?
- How do we encourage women to enter non-traditional careers such as the scientific professions and technical occupation?
- What structures can organizations put in place to mitigate low survival rates in conflict areas? What policies can governments institute to do the same?
- What innovative educational approaches can be put in place to accommodate displaced and migratory populations?
- What policies can be implemented to reach out to specific populations – e.g. rural and under-served communities, to improve their schooling, especially through non-formal and informal education?

<sup>11</sup> Arab MDG Report UNDP 2010

## II. Education profile

The education profile in terms of progress and issues toward EFA goals in the Arab States revolves around the issues of access, equity, completion rates, out of school children, location, teachers and public expenditures on education.

### II.1 Access and equity:

Equity depends on access: while all of the Arab states have declared equity in the right to education as a goal, access impacts female education greater than it does male education: parents view traveling to school, especially in rural areas, as dangerous for their girls.<sup>12</sup> One of the largest misconceptions surrounding education of girls and the marginalized in the Arab states is that parents do not want their girls to be educated: this is not true- issues of safe access play a large role in getting girls to school.<sup>13</sup>

Access is measured by:

- Net Enrollment Rates Primary education
- Gross Enrolment Rates
- Gender Parity
- Primary Completion Rates

#### II.1.2 NER, GER and Gender Parity

Net Enrollment Rates Primary Education is the enrollment of the official age group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group; i.e., 98% of Bahraini 6 year olds are enrolled in primary school. School age for Primary enrollment varies from 6 to 9 years of age in Syria and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories, to 6-10 years of age in Kuwait and the UAE and 6 – 11 years of age in the rest of the countries under review.

**Table14: NER and Gender Parity Index for Primary Enrollment**

|                                    | NER (%) Total |      |          | Total Enrolment (000) |        | NER GPI (%) (F/M) |      |          |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------|----------|-----------------------|--------|-------------------|------|----------|
|                                    | 1999          | 2007 | % change | 1999                  | 2007   | 1999              | 2007 | %change  |
| Bahrain                            | 96            | 98.2 | 2%       | 76.3                  | 89.7   | 1.03              | 1    | -0.02913 |
| Egypt                              | 93.7          | 95.7 | 2%       | 8086.2                | 9988.2 | 0.93              | 0.96 | 0.032258 |
| Iraq                               | 84.5          | 88.6 | 5%       | 3603.9                | 4430.3 | 0.85              | 0.86 | 0.011765 |
| Jordan                             | 90.9          | 88.6 | -3%      | 706.2                 | 807.7  | 1.01              | 1.02 | 0.009901 |
| Kuwait                             | 86.5          | 88.2 | 2%       | 139.7                 | 211.6  | 1.01              | 0.97 | -0.0396  |
| Lebanon                            | 86.3          | 83.2 | -4%      | 394.5                 | 445.2  | 0.96              | 0.99 | 0.03125  |
| Oman                               | 80.6          | 72.7 | -10%     | 315.6                 | 278.5  | 1                 | 1.02 | 0.02     |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories | 96.8          | 73.3 | -24%     | 368.3                 | 383.6  | 1                 | 1    | 0        |
| Qatar                              | 92.1          | 93   | 1%       | 61                    | 75.5   | 1.01              | 1    | -0.0099  |
| Saudi Arabia                       | ...           | 84.6 |          | ...                   | 3173.8 |                   | 0.99 | ...      |
| Sudan                              | ...           | ...  |          | 2512.8                | 3959.3 | ...               | ...  | ...      |
| Syrian Arab Republic               | 91.9          | ...  |          | 2738.1                | 2310.2 | 0.93              | ...  | ...      |
| United Arab Emirates               | 79.2          | 90.9 | 15%      | 270.5                 | 284    | 0.99              | 0.99 | 0        |

<sup>12</sup> Girls' Education Initiative 2010

<sup>13</sup> Girls' Education Initiative 2010

|       |      |      |     |        |        |      |      |          |
|-------|------|------|-----|--------|--------|------|------|----------|
| Yemen | 55.9 | 75.2 | 35% | 2302.8 | 3219.6 | 0.59 | 0.76 | 0.288136 |
|-------|------|------|-----|--------|--------|------|------|----------|

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

The combined effects of civil conflict, military incursions and restrictions on the movement of goods and people has led to the dramatic decrease in NER from 97% to 73% between 1999 and 2007 in the Palestinian Autonomous Territories.<sup>14</sup> Although Sudan shows an increase in net enrollment over the 1997-2007 time period, its gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 66%, leaves it far away from reaching Universal Primary Education (UPE). Even though Yemen has increased NER%, by 35%, only 75.2% of primary age students have been reached.

Equity is measured by gender parity. Gender parity is reached when the GPI is between 0.97 and 1.03.; a GPI above 1 indicates data in favor of females, while a GPI below 1 indicates data in favor of males. The Gender Parity Index for Primary Enrollment has been achieved for most of the region, with the exception of Iraq and Yemen at .86 and .76 respectively, and Egypt at .96; data is not available for Syria and Sudan.; All of countries within the parity range in 2007 had already achieved parity in 1997 with varying fluctuations in the 103 to 97 range. Kuwait, in 1997, was at 101 GPI, now it is .97, so female enrollment has lost ground, albeit still within parity range; in Jordan, males have lost ground by .01 and Oman by .02; the GPI for both countries is 1.02.

Yemen has increased its gender parity considerably from 1997 when the GPI was .59 to .76 in 2007, an increase of almost 30 percent. While data for Syria is not available in 2007, in 1997 it had already achieved .93 and with no external or internal conflicts or public policies to hinder educational attainment, it would be safe to assume that in the least the range has not derogated over the time period.

## GER

Gross enrolment ratio (GER) helps document the marginalized as it is the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education. Most recommendations for increasing the number of marginalized include that children be allowed into school regardless of whether they are in the age cohort or not.

**Table 15: GER in Primary Education (%) Total and GPI**

|                                    | GER in primary education (%), Total |       | GER in primary education (%), Male |       | GER in primary education (%), Female |       | GER in primary education (%), GPI (F/M) |      |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|-------|---|------|
|                                    | 1999                                | 2007  | 1999                               | 2007  | 1999                                 | 2007  | 1999                                    | 2007 |
| Bahrain                            | 107                                 | 119.5 | 106.5                              | 119.7 | 107.6                                | 119.3 | 1.01                                    | 1    |
| Egypt                              | 102                                 | 104.7 | 106.5                              | 107.5 | 97.3                                 | 101.7 | 0.91                                    | 0.95 |
| Iraq                               | 92.2                                | 99.5  | 101.4                              | 108.8 | 82.7                                 | 89.8  | 0.82                                    | 0.83 |
| Jordan                             | 97.9                                | 95.7  | 97.9                               | 94.9  | 98                                   | 96.5  | 1                                       | 1.02 |
| Kuwait                             | 100                                 | 98.5  | 99.4                               | 99.6  | 100.6                                | 97.4  | 1.01                                    | 0.98 |
| Lebanon                            | 105.2                               | 95.2  | 107.6                              | 96.7  | 102.7                                | 93.7  | 0.95                                    | 0.97 |
| Oman                               | 91                                  | 80.3  | 92.6                               | 79.8  | 89.4                                 | 80.9  | 0.97                                    | 1.01 |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories | 105.5                               | 80.4  | 105                                | 80.4  | 106                                  | 80.4  | 1.01                                    | 1    |

<sup>14</sup> GMR 2010 Regional Overview: Arab States

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

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

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

### II.1.3 Primary Completion Rates Disaggregated By Gender and GPI

Four years is considered as the minimum number of years of schooling needed to acquire the most basic literacy and numeracy skills. A survival rate up to grade 5 ensures that the population is functional within the society. If a 17 or 22 year old possess less than 4 years of education, they are considered to be living in education poverty.<sup>15</sup> As seen in the table above, with the exception of Yemen, Iraq, and Sudan, survival rates range from 90 to 100 percent.

**Table 16: Survival Rate up to Grade 5 Total, GPI**

|                                    | Survival rate to grade 5 of primary education (%), Total |      | Survival rate to grade 5 of primary education (%), Male |      | Survival rate to grade 5 of primary education (%), Female |      | GPI (%) (F/M) |
|------------------------------------|--|------|---|------|---|------|---------------|
|                                    | 1999   | 2006 | 1999  | 2006 | 1999  | 2006 |               |
| Bahrain                            | 97.4   | 98.9 | 96.9  | 100  | 97.9  | 97.7 | 0.977         |
| Egypt                              | 99.1   | 96.8 | 98.8  | ...  | 99.5  | ...  |               |
| Iraq                               | 65.6   | 80.6 | 67.4  | 87.4 | 63.3  | 73   | 0.8352403     |
| Jordan                             | 97.7   | ...  | 98  | ...  | 97.4  | ...  |               |
| Kuwait                             | ...  | 99.5 | ...   | 100  | ...   | 99.1 | 0.991         |
| Lebanon                            | 91.3   | 92.3 | 88.2  | 90.3 | 94.8  | 94.6 | 1.047619      |
| Oman                               | 93.7   | 98.5 | 93.7  | 97.9 | 93.8  | 99.1 | 1.0122574     |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories | ...  | .    | .   | .    | .   | .    |               |
| Qatar                              | ...  | ...  | ...   | ...  | ...   | ...  |               |
| Saudi Arabia                       | ...  | ...  | ...   | ...  | ...   | ...  |               |
| Sudan                              | 84.1   | 70.5 | 80.7  | 71.7 | 88.4  | 69   | 0.9623431     |
| Syrian Arab Republic               | 91.8   | ...  | .   | .    | .   | .    |               |
| United Arab Emirates               | 92.4   | 100  | 92.8  | 100  | 91.9  | 100  | 1             |
| Yemen                              | 87.4   | 66.3 | ...   | 67.2 | ...   | 64.7 | 0.9627976     |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

<sup>15</sup> Global Monitoring Report 2010

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

GPIs for survival rates is a surprising 96% for Yemen, the same number of female students survive as do male students, although only 66% of the total student population survive in the education system up to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In Sudan the same holds true, with only a 70.5% of surviving up to 5<sup>th</sup> grade; girls have almost the same rate of males in staying in school. GPI is the least for Iraq which measures at a little over 85%, under conditions where only 80.6% of students make it to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

ESCWA states have made steady progress in NER and GER; however a leveling off of progress is seen when we address the progress in terms of out-of-school children.

### **II.1.5 Out of School Children**

Correct calculation of out of school children is difficult because data reported by governments for real out-of-school numbers for primary school age children is likely to be understated by as much as one-third higher than those reported by governments.<sup>17</sup> More over there is not a clear definition of the age group.<sup>18</sup>

Out-of school children are categorized into three groups: 1) enrolled late, 2) never-enrolled, and 3) dropped out. The GER for the countries was addressed earlier in the paper; drop-out rates will be presented later under the heading of “Quality”.

In the Arab States, 33% of lower secondary school-age adolescents are enrolled at that level in countries where it is not compulsory. Compulsory age groups range from 6 to 13 years in Sudan 6 to 14 years in Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Syria and Yemen; 6 to 16 years of age in Jordan, 6 to 17 in Qatar. In Saudi Arabia, where the percentage of out-of-school adolescents of lower secondary school age is less than 10%, the compulsory age is only until 11 years; 11 years is also the upper limit in Iraq.

It has been recommended that some countries might consider increasing the duration of compulsory education to include lower secondary education<sup>19</sup>. But if we look at GER rates, a high percentage of lower secondary-age students are enrolled at the primary level in these regions, so achieving full enrolment at this level may not be realistic goal in the short to medium term<sup>20</sup>.

Arab States<sup>21</sup> have high proportions of out of school children, 13.9 percent in primary education and 19.4 percent in lower secondary. Factors that affect out-of school rates are access to schools, pastoral lifestyles, and the need to work, among others.

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<sup>16</sup> EFA Arab States Regional Overview

<sup>17</sup> UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010

<sup>18</sup> UNESCO Out-Of-School Adolescents 2010

<sup>19</sup> UNESCO Out-Of-School Adolescents 2010

<sup>20</sup> UNESCO Out-Of-School Adolescents 2010

<sup>21</sup> Arab states UNESCO: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Palestinian A. T.

**Table 17: Out of school Primary**

|                | School-age population primary (000) 2006 | Out-of-primary-school children (000), Total 2007 | Out-of-primary-school children (000), Female | % Out of school Primary students | Female % of out of school (F/M) |
|----------------|--|--|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bahrain        | 75                                       | 0.4  | 0.1  | 1%                               | 25%                             |
| Egypt          | 9544                                     | 231.9  | 221.7  | 2%                               | 96%                             |
| Iraq           | 4612                                     | 507.5  | 398.1  | 11%                              | 78%                             |
| Jordan         | 844                                      | 60   | 26.1   | 7%                               | 44%                             |
| Kuwait         | 215                                      | 12.7   | 7.4  | 6%                               | 58%                             |
| Lebanon        | 472                                      | 74.1   | 37.2   | 16%                              | 50%                             |
| Oman           | 347                                      | 86.6   | 40.7   | 25%                              | 47%                             |
| Palestinian AT | 477                                      | 107.9  | 52.2   | 23%                              | 48%                             |
| Qatar          | 69                                       | 1.2  | 0.5  | 2%                               | 42%                             |
| Saudi Arabia   | 3234                                     | 496.5  | 252  | 15%                              | 51%                             |
| Sudan          | 5966                                     | ...  | ...  | ..                               | ..                              |
| Syrian AR      | 1830                                     | ...  | ...  | ..                               | ..                              |
| UAE            | 267                                      | 4.7  | 2.8  | 2%                               | 60%                             |
| Yemen          | 3803                                     | 906.4  | 631.7  | 24%                              | 70%                             |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010

More than 60 per cent of the primary school aged children not enrolled in school in the region were girls; for the countries under review the numbers are even more staggering: of the 11% of students out of school in Iraq, 78% are female, of the 16% in Lebanon, 50% are female, of the 25% in Oman, 47% are female and of the 23% in the Palestinian Autonomous Territories, 48% are female, and of the 24% in Yemen, 70% are female.

Fifty three per cent of Arab States female out of school primary children are expected never to enroll, compared with 39 per cent of out-of-school boys.<sup>22</sup> Other enrolment challenges occur because of geographical and rural-urban inequality and conflict. It is estimated that 30 per cent of rural children in the Arab States are out-of-school compared with 18 per cent of those living in cities and towns.<sup>23</sup>

Egypt, Yemen and Iraq report very high percentages of adolescent girls being out of school, totaling 82%, 64% and 61%, respectively.<sup>24</sup> With such high rates of out of school children it is imperative that we rethink our retention and outreach strategies.

## II.2 Quality of Education

The quality of education keeps children in school evening the face of challenging circumstances. How well are educational systems retaining and training children?

### II.2.1 Survival Rates up to Grade 5

<sup>22</sup> Arab MDG Report 2010

<sup>23</sup> Arab MDG Report 2010

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO Out-Of-School Adolescents 2010

As mention above, with the exception of Yemen, Iraq, and Sudan, survival rates range from 90 to 100 percent for the Arab States under review. In Yemen, only 66% of primary school children stay in school up to grade 5; in Sudan 70.5 % and in Iraq 80.6%. Again we see conflict as a determinant, along with poverty in the survival rate of children in school. However, if we are looking at quality, not access, the low survival rates could probably indicate that the curriculum is not relevant or not applicable to the lives of the families the children are from, or not the lifestyle they maintain or the method of curricula delivery may be ineffective in holding the students interest in attending school against the competing demands of work, household duties, and other economic and societal pressures. Teachers may not be engaged in dialogue during the learning process; students are expected to write answers on standardized tests that may have no connections to their background or individual location.<sup>25</sup>

**Table 18: Survival rate to grade 5 of primary education (%)**

| Survival rate to grade 5 of primary education (%) |       |      |        |               |
|---|-------|------|--------|---------------|
|   | Total | Male | Female | GPI (%) (F/M) |
|   | 2006  | 2006 | 2006   |               |
| Bahrain   | 98.9  | 100  | 97.7   | 0.977         |
| Egypt   | 96.8  | ...  | ...    |               |
| Iraq  | 80.6  | 87.4 | 73     | 0.8352403     |
| Jordan  | ...   | ...  | ...    |               |
| Kuwait  | 99.5  | 100  | 99.1   | 0.991         |
| Lebanon   | 92.3  | 90.3 | 94.6   | 1.047619      |
| Oman  | 98.5  | 97.9 | 99.1   | 1.0122574     |
| Palestinian A T                                   | .     | .    | .      |               |
| Qatar   | ...   | ...  | ...    |               |
| Saudi Arabia                                      | ...   | ...  | ...    |               |
| Sudan   | 70.5  | 71.7 | 69     | 0.9623431     |
| Syrian Arab Republic                              | ...   | .    | .      |               |
| United Arab Emirates                              | 100   | 100  | 100    | 1             |
| Yemen   | 66.3  | 67.2 | 64.7   | 0.9627976     |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010 Database

## II.2.2 Repetition Rates Grade 5

With exception of Oman, girls repetition rate is lower than boys which means that if girls are given learning opportunities they tend to survive if not dropped for non-educational factors. GPIs range from 50% in the UAE to an astounding 1.67 GPI in Oman.

**Table 19: Repetition Rates in Grade 5**

| Repetition rates in primary education (%), Grade 2006 |       |      |        |               |
|---|-------|------|--------|---------------|
|   | Total | Male | Female | GPI (%) (F/M) |
| Bahrain   | 2.8   | 3.5  | 2.1    | 0.6           |
| Egypt   | 3.9   | ...  | ...    |               |

<sup>25</sup> Arab women's education and gender perceptions: an insider analysis. Journal of International Women's Studies 01-NOV-06

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

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010 Database

A trend to falling rates continues for Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen in terms of transition to secondary school; however except for Yemen, where rates fell from 91 to 81.8, female transition rates increased for all countries. Fees, distance to school, and labor demands inhibit the transition from primary to lower secondary especially for girls. Recent studies in Yemen show that clearly the main causes for low enrolment and high drop-out rates for girls in Yemen are: 1) lack of accessibility 2) socio-cultural factors and 3) institutional factors.<sup>26</sup> However, some countries are successfully transitioning their girls: Qatar boasts a 100 female transition to a 98.7 transition for all students; Syria increased almost 30 percentage points from 66.8 to 98.5 over the last 10 years<sup>27</sup>.

**Table 20: Transition from primary to secondary**

|         | Female transition to Secondary education |      | Total transition to secondary education |      |
|---------|--|------|---|------|
|         | 1999                                     | 2006 | 1999                                    | 2006 |
| Bahrain | 100                                      | 97.9 | 98.5                                    | 96.3 |
| Egypt   | 87.8                                     | ...  | 83.7                                    | ...  |
| Iraq    | 64.2                                     | 66.4 | 72.6                                    | 70.2 |
| Jordan  | 97.2                                     | 97.5 | 97.1                                    | 97.7 |
| Kuwait  | 96.1                                     | 99.5 | 96.7                                    | 99.8 |
| Lebanon | 87.1                                     | 89.2 | 85.4                                    | 86.3 |
| Oman    | 96.6                                     | 96.6 | 94.6                                    | 96.7 |

<sup>26</sup> UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Accelerating Girl's Education In Yemen: Rethinking Policies in Teachers' Recruitment and School Distribution February 2007

<sup>27</sup> EFA GMR Arab Regional Review

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

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010 Database

### II.2.3 Teacher Stock and Qualifications

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

**Table 21: Percentage of Female Teachers**

| 2007                               | Pre-primary teachers, % Female | Primary teachers, % Female | Secondary teachers, % Female | Tertiary teachers, % Female |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bahrain                            | 100                            | ...                        | ...                          | 41                          |
| Egypt                              | 99                             | 56                         | 42                           | ...                         |
| Iraq                               | 100                            | 72                         | 58                           | 35                          |
| Jordan                             | 100                            | ...                        | ...                          | 23                          |
| Kuwait                             | 100                            | 88                         | 53                           | 27                          |
| Lebanon                            | 99                             | 86                         | 55                           | 39                          |
| Oman                               | 100                            | 63                         | 56                           | 29                          |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories | 100                            | 67                         | 49                           | 17                          |
| Qatar                              | 99                             | 85                         | 56                           | 37                          |
| Saudi Arabia                       | 100                            | 52                         | 53                           | 33                          |
| Sudan                              | 100                            | 64                         | 52                           | ...                         |
| Syrian Arab Republic               | 98                             | ...                        | ...                          | ...                         |
| United Arab Emirates               | 100                            | 85                         | 55                           | 31                          |
| Yemen                              | 97                             | ...                        | ...                          | 16                          |
| Arab States                        | 89                             | 59                         | 51                           | 34                          |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010 Database

<sup>28</sup> UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Accelerating Girl's Education In Yemen: Rethinking Policies in Teachers' Recruitment and School Distribution February 2007

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

**Table 22: Pupil Teacher Ratio**

| 2007                 | Pupil/teacher ratio, pre-primary | Pupil/teacher ratio, primary | Pupil/teacher ratio, secondary |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bahrain              | 16                               | ...                          | ...                            |
| Egypt                | 25                               | 27                           | ...                            |
| Iraq                 | 16                               | 21                           | 19                             |
| Jordan               | 19                               | ...                          | ...                            |
| Kuwait               | 12                               | 10                           | 9                              |
| Lebanon              | 16                               | 14                           | 9                              |
| Oman                 | 19                               | 13                           | 15                             |
| Palestinian AT       | 24                               | 30                           | 25                             |
| Qatar                | 18                               | 11                           | 9                              |
| Saudi Arabia         | 11                               | 11                           | 11                             |
| Sudan                | 17                               | 37                           | 18                             |
| Syrian Arab Republic | 24                               | ...                          | ...                            |
| United Arab Emirates | 21                               | 17                           | 13                             |
| Yemen                | 15                               | ...                          | ...                            |
| Arab States          | 18                               | 21                           | 14                             |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010 Database

While the student teacher ratio may not be as problematic, the need for new teachers to enter the school systems in order to reach UPE by 2015 may well be. Egypt alone will need 346,500 new teachers; even Qatar will require 88,900 new teachers.<sup>29</sup>

#### II.2.4 International Assessment.

Thirteen Arab States participated in the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) testing eighth grade students; of the Arab States under review Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Palestinian National Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates (Dubai) took part in the testing.

**Figure 4: TIMSS Scores (Mathematics)**



<sup>29</sup> UNESCO Teacher Report 2006

Source: TIMSS International Report 2007

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

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

### II.2.5 Drop out Rates

Drop out rates for the Arab States is very telling: In Iraq 29.9 % of school age children drop out of school, 37.9% in the Sudan and 40.5 % in Yemen. Only Yemen has more female dropouts than male-38.8% to 43. As we have seen before, retention is difficult, especially in countries that have heavily rural- poor areas leading to increasing numbers of the marginalized. .

**Table 23: Dropout Rates 2006**

| Dropout Rates        |  |   |   |                       |      |                      |      |                                 |      |
|----------------------|--|---|---|-----------------------|------|----------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|
|                      | in primary education (%), grade 5, Total | in primary education (%), grade 5, Male | in primary education (%), grade 5, Female | all grades (%), Total |      | all grades (%), Male |      | Dropouts all grades (%), Female |      |
|                      | 2006                                     | 2006                                    | 2006                                      | 1999                  | 2006 | 1999                 | 2006 | 1999                            | 2006 |
| Bahrain              | 0.1                                      | -                                       | 0.2                                       | 7.6                   | 1.3  | 8.7                  | -    | 6.6                             | 2.6  |
| Egypt                | -  | ...                                     | ...                                       | 0.9                   | 3.2  | 1.2                  | ...  | 0.5                             | ...  |
| Iraq                 | 11.2                                     | 8.8                                     | 14.6                                      | 50.6                  | 29.9 | 48.7                 | 21.7 | 52.8                            | 38.9 |
| Jordan               | -  | ...                                     | ...                                       | 3.1                   | 0.9  | 3                    | ...  | 3.2                             | ...  |
| Kuwait               | ...                                      | ...                                     | ...                                       | 6                     | 0.5  | 7.1                  | -    | 4.9                             | 0.9  |
| Lebanon              | 3.1                                      | 4.3                                     | 1.8                                       | 8.7                   | 10.8 | 11.8                 | 14.1 | 5.2                             | 7.3  |
| Oman                 | 0.9                                      | 0.8                                     | 0.9                                       | 8.1                   | 2.4  | 8.3                  | 2.9  | 7.9                             | 1.8  |
| Palestinian AT       | -  | -                                       | -   | 0.6                   | 1.3  | -                    | 1.2  | 1.2                             | 1.5  |
| Qatar                | -  | -                                       | -   | ...                   | 11.2 | ...                  | 11   | ...                             | 11.4 |
| Saudi Arabia         | ...                                      | ...                                     | ...                                       | ...                   | ...  | ...                  | ...  | ...                             | ...  |
| Sudan                | 11.5                                     | 10.8                                    | 12.4                                      | 22.9                  | 37.9 | 26.4                 | 36.3 | 18.5                            | 39.7 |
| Syrian Arab Republic | -  | -                                       | -   | 13.1                  | 4.8  | 12.9                 | 5.3  | 13.2                            | 4.3  |
| United Arab Emirates | ...                                      | ...                                     | ...                                       | 10.3                  | -    | 9.9                  | -    | 10.7                            | -    |
| Yemen                | 9.6                                      | 8.4                                     | 11.7                                      | 20.3                  | 40.5 | ...                  | 38.8 | ...                             | 43.2 |
| Arab States          | 2.2                                      | 2.3                                     | 2   | 9.5                   | 5.7  | 10.9                 | 5.8  | 8                               | 5.6  |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010 Database

### II.2.6 Literacy Rates

Adult Literacy tells us how well the educational system works in the long run. An estimated 29% of the adult population in the Arab States, or 58 million people, lack the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed in everyday life. Egypt, Yemen and Sudan have extremely high illiteracy rates; Egypt ranks in the top ten countries in the world for numbers of illiterate adults at 17 million, or a third of its

<sup>30</sup> EFA GMR Regional overview Arab States 2010

adult population. Sudan and Yemen each have 5 million to 10 million adult illiterates. Adult literacy rates are below 60% in, the Sudan and Yemen. Adult literacy rate increased in Egypt from 44% to 66% and in Yemen's from 37% to 59% during 2000 to 2007 and number of illiterate adults increased by nearly 3 million in the region and almost 400,000 in Yemen<sup>31</sup>

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

**Table 24: Literacy Rates 2000-2007, 2015 Projection**

|                                    | Adult Literacy rates ( 15 years +) by age group and gender |      |                        |      |                        |      | Youth literacy rate (15-24) (%) |      |                        |      |                        |      |
|------------------------------------|--|------|------------------------|------|------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|------------------------|------|------------------------|------|
|                                    | Total  |      | Male                   |      | Female                 |      | Total                           |      | Male                   |      | Female                 |      |
|                                    | 2000-2007 <sup>9</sup>                                     | 2015 | 2000-2007 <sup>9</sup> | 2015 | 2000-2007 <sup>9</sup> | 2015 | 2000-2007 <sup>9</sup>          | 2015 | 2000-2007 <sup>9</sup> | 2015 | 2000-2007 <sup>9</sup> | 2015 |
| Bahrain                            | 89   | 92   | 90                     | 93   | 86                     | 90   | 100                             | 100  | 100                    | 100  | 100                    | 100  |
| Egypt                              | 66   | 73   | 75                     | 80   | 58                     | 66   | 85                              | 93   | 88                     | 94   | 82                     | 92   |
| Iraq                               | 74   | ...  | 84                     | ...  | 64                     | ...  | 85                              | ...  | 89                     | ...  | 80                     | ...  |
| Jordan                             | 91   | 95   | 95                     | 98   | 87                     | 93   | 99                              | 99   | 99                     | 99   | 99                     | 100  |
| Kuwait                             | 94   | 96   | 95                     | 96   | 93                     | 95   | 98                              | 100  | 98                     | 100  | 99                     | 100  |
| Lebanon                            | 90   | 94   | 93                     | 96   | 86                     | 92   | 99                              | 99   | 98                     | 99   | 99                     | 99   |
| Oman                               | 84   | 89   | 89                     | 93   | 77                     | 84   | 98                              | 99   | 99                     | 100  | 98                     | 99   |
| Palestinian Autonomous Territories | 94   | 95   | 97                     | 98   | 90                     | 93   | 99                              | 99   | 99                     | 99   | 99                     | 99   |
| Qatar                              | 93   | 94   | 94                     | 95   | 90                     | 93   | 99                              | 100  | 99                     | 100  | 99                     | 100  |
| Saudi Arabia                       | 85   | 89   | 89                     | 92   | 79                     | 85   | 97                              | 99   | 98                     | 99   | 96                     | 98   |
| Sudan <sup>10</sup>                | 61   | ...  | 71                     | ...  | 52                     | ...  | 77                              | ...  | 85                     | ...  | 71                     | ...  |
| Syrian Arab Republic               | 83   | 87   | 90                     | 92   | 76                     | 82   | 94                              | 96   | 95                     | 97   | 92                     | 95   |
| United Arab Emirates               | 90   | 93   | 89                     | 93   | 91                     | 94   | 95                              | 99   | 94                     | 99   | 97                     | 99   |
| Yemen                              | 59   | 70   | 77                     | 85   | 40                     | 55   | 80                              | 90   | 93                     | 97   | 67                     | 83   |
| Arab States                        | 71   | 78   | 80                     | 86   | 62                     | 70   | 87                              | 93   | 91                     | 95   | 82                     | 91   |

Source: UNESCO GMR 2010 Database

## II.2.7 Expenditure on Education

Data is extremely spotty again in an important indicator of how the Arab states are progressing in providing education to children. The share of GNP devoted to education average approximately 5%, ranging from 1.6% in the United Arab Emirates to 6.7 Saudi Arabia which was a decline in the Kingdom's 1999 figure of 7%. The share has little changed from 1999 in Oman, where it remained stable at 4.2 %; in Lebanon, the % share of GDP increased from 2.0% to 2.7%. In 2007, the share of

<sup>31</sup> EFA GMR 2010 Regional Overview Arab States

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

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

### II3.6 Education for All

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

- Goal 1 :Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
- Goal 4: Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

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

**Table 25: EFA Development Index**

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

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

### **II.3 Questions for Discussion**

What of the six EFA goals should take priority in developing policy and programs?  
How can regional cooperation be improved to help those countries lagging behind?

What measures and new approaches can be taken to combat high illiteracy rates in the face of increasing population growth?

What policies can be implemented to increase lower secondary retention?

How can the transition from primary to secondary school be made smoother? Is testing an issue?

What incentives can be instituted that would allow school systems to eliminate indirect school fees?

What strategies can be undertaken to reach all three categories of out-of-school children?

What kind of support can be given to families of children who are not enrolled in the education system? What policies can be promoted to entice enrollment?

How can pre-primary education be implemented in systems as an approach of early preparation for improved primary and secondary retention and quality?

What can education policy-makers do to integrate life-skills based curricula into education planning and practice?

What bridges can be made between formal , non-formal and informal education systems?

What types of education pedagogy and school management practices can be used to promote community collaboration to create better schools and communities?

If UPE is not attainable for some countries, what new or different measures can be taken to maximize primary enrolment?

What of the six goals should take priority in developing policy and programmes?

### **III. Regional best practices and initiatives to meet girls, women and the marginalized needs in the Arab region (2 pages):**

Three initiatives taking place in the region, The Girls Initiative in Egypt, Schools of Respect in Morocco, and ECD in Jordan, exhibit innovative best practices in that they maximize and improve access, equity, quality, efficiency and effectiveness of education especially for women, girls and the marginalized. These programs are successful because they:

- Identify and rectify real barriers for girl non-attendance by asking girls, parents, and the community what these barriers are and not relying on a perceived general consensus as to why girls, women and the marginalized do not attend school.
- Have strong community support and buy-in and community investment in the projects.
- Garner support and buy in for the projects by public authorities.
- Connect curriculum to the realities of their students.
- Tailor outcomes to fit the diverse range of social, cultural and economic conditions.
- Look forward in setting the stage for long-terms educational success.

#### **III.1 The Girls' Education Initiative in Egypt- Girl Friendly Schools**

The purpose of the Girls Education Initiative in Egypt is to build girl friendly schools in rural areas; "building of schools that provide quality education to primary age girls that have hitherto, due to poverty, ignorance, and prejudice, early marriage, fear or some other reason been kept away from formal learning"<sup>32</sup>

A girl friendly school is one that addresses safety, economic, and social concern of parents and rectify situations that keep girls from going to school. The reasons that keep girls in a specific locale from school are identified by each community. The situations that the community identified are:

- 1) Location – schools were too far away from the homes of the girls so there were safety concerns
- 2) Time of school hours- the girls were unable to do chores or their work competed with school hours
- 3) Cost- indirect fees for materials made the cost of schooling prohibitive
- 4) Facilities- facilities did not have appropriate sanitation facilities for girls
- 5) Teaching staff- teaching staff was predominately male and/or from outside the area.
- 6) Curricula was not relevant to the girls life

To counteract these concerns the GEI mobilized community leaders to donate land to build girl friendly schools. The concerns were addressed as follows:

- Schools were built as close as possible to the girls' residences thus overcoming many of the reasons that deprive girls of education.
- School starts later to allow girls to perform their morning chores before going to school
- Schooling is entirely free- no fees, stationary costs or other resource costs.
- Students are taught by female facilitators who come from their home area
- Classrooms are girl only or at least 75% girls.
- Students are fed at school and take rations home to the family
- Curricula encourages active learning, creative and self directed approach to learning.

<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> UNICEF Girls Education Initiative 2010

<sup>33</sup> UNICEF Jordan's Early Childhood Development Initiative, 2010

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

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

Research from the United States tells us that for every dollar spent on pre-primary education, the country gains 4 to 7 dollars in broad individual and social outcome. ECE also promotes school readiness, positively impacts dropout rates, and can overcome the negative effects of disadvantage. In the Arab States, the majority of pre-primary education is private. The ECD initiative works to align the complete pre-primary age environment and integrate EDC into the community. Emphasis is placed on improving home environments through a better parenting program, and promoting ECE to create intuitional environments that fit children. Jordan's ECD Initiative has been successful not only in improving rates of participation in preschool education especially in remote and disadvantaged areas but also in its holistic approach in addressing early childhood care and education. Political commitment by both their Majesties was exemplary and coordination at the national level led by the establishment of the National Council for Family Affairs has been successful in proper policy coordination, program implementation and resource allocation.

### **III.3 Schools of Respect**

The school of Respect Initiative in Morocco is multidimensional and works at community as well as institutional levels to actively promote the idea that innovation of Moroccan education system can come about through community dialogue. As in the GEI, success in achieving open and relevant schools stems from community involvement. The methodology used to start the dialogue is the quality education grid for school improvement which allows communities to draw up their own education improvement plan. The grid is diagnostic and focus group based around six areas: 1) environment/school buildings 2) integration of the school into its environment 3) conditions for learning 4) attitude/demagogy 5) school content and 6) pupil follow-up. The grid is used with each level of the community, beginning with primary pupils who are asked such questions as " Do you like school and why?" "What worries you about school?" "Can you describe what the word respect means to you?"

The tool is also used for a wide range of initiative implementation. Through the focus groups parents, mothers especially can express their needs. For example, in Zoouit, the grid focus group meetings revealed that there was a lack of places for illiterate adult woman to have reading and writing lessons; moreover their ability to have those lessons hinged on whether the program was integrated into the primary school services.

Not merely community involvement, but asking the community to identify what is working or not working in the educational system, looking at the relevancy of curricula content and delivery as in GEI, and participation for women in the learning process, as in ECD Jordan, make the Schools of Respect an initiative that can be replicated through the adaptation of the grid to determine community opinion. The surveying of children from primary on up to out of school children provides clear insight into how children perceive their schooling and what they see should be implemented to make their schooling relevant to their lives.

#### **IV. Recommendations:**

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

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

To meet head-on issues of inaccessibility, cultural demand and social norms, curricula relevance and intuitional concerns in rural areas and or areas that command a large number of marginalized persons. Based on GMR 2010 recommendations, lessons learnt from the GEI and also community surveying of families in Yemen, The following steps should be taken:

- Increase the proportion of female teachers; if possible girls from grade 6 upwards are to be taught only by female teachers.<sup>34</sup>
- Increase number of trained paraprofessionals to conduct activities in lower primary grades in highly marginalized areas.
- Increase construction of small schools close to marginalized areas to improve access
- For adult women: Increase female literacy programs for all ages.

For all areas:

- Eliminate direct and indirect fees.
- Abolish existing policies for school registration in some countries which require official birth certificates and school documents in case of transfer outside the country.
- Implement incentives to attract out-school children and adolescents to come back to school
- Transfers, or other measures for social protection and for an incentive to families to send their girls and marginalized children to school
- Expand pre-school education programs focusing on remote and disadvantaged areas and diversify modalities ( home-based, community-based..etc).
- Curricula relevance in content and delivery
- Increase the duration of compulsory education to include lower secondary education
- Diversify non-formal and informal programs for those who drop school with a view to give them a second chance to schooling. This can include self study, work-based education, afternoon classes..etc.

Recommendations of Arab MDG Report work toward both MDG attainment and the EFA . They mirror the recommendations expressed in numerous treatise and give a basic view of what needs to be done at the individual, community and institutional level. Especially in terms of girls, women, and the marginalized, they provide a clear plan of action. They are:

- Elimination of school fees by the government and reduction in indirect costs associated with uniform, textbooks, and other informal fees is needed for education to be accessible by the poorest. Financial stipend programs can be foreseen for poor families as incentives for encouraging them to send their children to school

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<sup>34</sup> UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Accelerating Girl's Education In Yemen: Rethinking Policies in Teachers' Recruitment and School Distribution February 2007

- For vulnerable groups, special incentives must be given by way of mid-day meals, free textbooks or free uniforms can be tried. Government needs to focus efforts on improving delivery of such incentives with community participation and greater transparency.
- Governments need to institutionalize non-formal education within the Ministry for Education in each country. Adoption of flexible modalities could bring education within reach of the marginalized children living in remote and disadvantaged urban areas, such as slums and refugee camps. Such approaches include mobile school, satellite schools, one classroom schools and multi-grade teaching.
- For children out-of-school or for those who are pushed out of the system or discontinue their studies for any reason, governments need to put in place an accelerated learning process and new learning opportunities, catering to school-aged children and adolescents. These programs must be accredited and recognized by government and employers and enable children to return to school or enter the labor market in the future.
- Infrastructure of schools must cater to disabled children and an inclusive environment must be created to welcome all children into schools.
- The recognition of diplomas that are awarded through non-formal education institutions by governments and employers to adapt the content of programs offered by these institutions with educational content provided by formal education.
- Ministries of Education in the region are invited to collaborate in improving teaching and learning practices. Attention must be given to the use of active and cooperative pedagogic approaches which places the learners at the center of the teaching/learning processes (Child-centered approaches). This means teachers are called to move away from traditional teaching to open-ended instruction and enquiry-based learning.
- The Ministries of Education in the region need to pay attention to the relevancy of the content. There is a need for the right mix between the incorporation of new subjects related to health, human rights, environment, life skills and the core subjects. Given that there is a positive correlation between instruction time and student achievement, policy makers in the region are advised to pay attention to the broadly agreed benchmark of 1,000 effective hours of schooling per year.
- The use of continuous and reliable assessment that can be implemented in a timely manner is essential to improving the quality of education. It is recommended that the use of assessment tools be varied, flexible, and continuous formal evaluation in tandem with midterm and traditional end-of-year exams. These could take the form of, for example, teacher observation, reports or the use of portfolio or project-orientated assessment.
- There is a need to rethink the pre-service and in-service training of teachers as well as improving working conditions. Best practices must be adopted and ongoing professional support should include an incentive structure that lets teachers see the benefit of improving their practices and encourages schools to put better learning at the heart of their educational vision.
- Improving school conditions and ensuring good training for head teachers will influence the quality of education. Investment in working with head teachers will serve to prioritize the decentralization of knowledge and management training. Investment in school administrators will ensure the production of effective schools and encourage them to increase their participation in the development of their communities.