

421  
c.1

ASSESSING THE UN MILLENNIUM GOALS IN CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN  
EDUCATION IN THE ARAB WORLD

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Arts and Sciences  
of the Lebanese American University

by

Susan Daniel

In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Arts

in

International Affairs

October 20, 2004

NOT TO  
CIRCULATE

Lebanese American University  
School of Arts & Sciences

Assessing the UN Millennium Goals in Closing the  
Gender Gap in Education in the Arab World

We hereby approve the thesis of

Miss Susan Daniel

[Redacted Signature]

Dr. Sami E. Baroudi

Advisor

[Redacted Signature]

Dr. Fawwaz Traboulsi

Committee Member

[Redacted Signature]

Dr. Ahmad Oueini

Committee Member

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
I. Introduction	1
II. Chapter One	4
A. The history of the millennium development goals	4
B. Define gender equality in education	8
1. Defining the gender gap	8
2. Gender equality	9
C. Implications of female education in the Arab world	10
1. Economic	11
a. Productivity and growth	11
b. Employment	12
2. Socio-political	14
3. Health	14
a. Immunization, nutrition, and morality	14
b. Fertility	15
III. Chapter Two: Progress report on the Arab countries in achieving the education millennium goals	18
A. Methodology	18
B. Primary education	20
1. Access to primary education	20
2. Participation in primary education	21
3. The effectiveness of primary education	26
C. Secondary education	27
1. Participation in secondary education	27
2. The effectiveness of secondary education	29
D. Indication of literacy rates for ages 15-24	30
E. Conclusion: Progress and prospects	31
IV. Chapter Three: Comparative analysis of two Arab governments in targeting educational gender parity	33
A. Yemen	33
1. Overview	33
2. Progress: Goal 2	34
a. Challenges	36
b. Supportive policies and programs	37
c. Financial resources needed to achieve the goal	40
3. Progress: Goal 3	41
a. Challenges	41
b. Supportive policies and programs	42
B. Lebanon	42
1. Overview	42
2. Goal 2: Progress	44

a. Challenges	46
b. Policies and programs	47
3. Goal 3: Progress	48
a. Enrolment rates	48
b. Literacy	48
c. Policies	49
4. Conclusion	50
V. Chapter Four: Socio-political determinants of girls' education	52
A. The Arab region's diversity	52
B. Household/community level barriers	54
1. Demand and supply	54
2. Cultural restraints	55
3. Economic constraints	57
C. School cost barriers	59
1. Economics	60
2. Hygiene	61
3. Religious education	61
4. Gender based violence	62
5. Curriculum	62
6. Teacher's role	63
D. Policy level barriers	63
1. Political context	64
2. The rule of law	65
E. Conclusion	66
VI. Strategies to achieve the education targets	67
A. Priorities for the international community	67
B. Priorities for governments	68
1. Adopt the educational MDGs into the national educational plans	68
2. Build political will to reallocate budgets	69
3. Adopt legislative change	70
4. Promote intra-regional networking	71
5. Mobilize partners-develop partnerships that support girl's education	72
6. Promote localization and decentralization	74
C. Priorities for civil society	76
D. Conclusion	79
VII. Conclusion	80
A. Status	80
B. Prospects	81
C. Socio-political determinants	81
D. Solutions	83
VIII. Bibliography	86-92

## **Acknowledgements**

I'd like to thank everyone who made the process of writing this thesis possible. First of all, I would like to thank my family for their support in the frenzy of creating this study. I'd also like to thank the professors from Cairo University for their important input on the development of this study. A prototype of this thesis was first presented at Cairo University on April 18, 2004. The professors' insights allowed me to further embellish the study into a more concentrated work. Moreover, I would like to thank my advisor at the Lebanese American University, Dr. Sami Baroodi for the many hours he extended to me to fine-tune and craft this thesis. Additional thanks also go to Dr. Fawaz Trabulsi and Dr. Ahmed Oueini for agreeing to be on the thesis committee. Lastly, I would like to thank all my AMIDEAST/Lebanon colleagues, especially Hala Caracalla Kaadi, Coordinator for Scholarship and Educational Programs and Country Director, Barbara Batlouni for their support in allowing me time to finalize the details of this work.

Furthermore, I would like to extend my gratitude to all the organizations that made the research of this paper possible. Thanks go to: Director, Mrs. Mona Khalaf and Program Officer, Mrs. Anita Nassar of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at the Lebanese American University, Mr. Ziad Abdel Samad , Director of the Arab NGO Network, Mrs. Nadireh Chamblou, Senior Economic Advisor for the MENA region at the World Bank Washington D.C., the ESCWA Gender Center, Mrs. Nour Dajani of UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut and Ms. Lina Habib of UNICEF-Lebanon.

## **Abstract**

Education has cross-cutting effects on all development areas including economic growth, mortality rates, reproductive health, and over all well being of the human race, especially women (UNFPA 2002). Thus, the United Nations have devoted specific Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to eliminate gender disparities at all levels of education by 2015 (UN 2003). While there has been progress in the Arab World in the last ten years in terms of primary education, there is still much to be done for secondary levels and thus resulting in difficulty in catching up with an ever globalizing world. Several countries lag far behind in accessing education to women and may not close the gender gap in education by 2015. This study will review the progress that the Arab countries have achieved in fulfilling the MDGs in closing the gender gap in education. It will primarily concentrate on the three areas affecting gender education, primary education, secondary education and literacy rates of 15-24. The first chapter will briefly outline the history of the Millennium Development Goals, define the gender gap and highlight the developmental implications. The second chapter will present data on the Arab countries progress and prospects to reaching the educational targets by 2015. The third chapter will provide case studies and analysis on two Arab countries, Yemen and Lebanon, in their pursuit to achieving the educational MDGs. The fourth chapter will analyze barriers to girls' education and the fifth chapter will provide strategies and interventions in order to make these goals a reality. The study concludes by confirming that the region's prospects in fulfilling the educational MDGs are mixed. They can only be realized through international, national, and civil long-term commitments to reach all levels and areas of the Arab region.

## **Introduction**

“If God were to humiliate a human being,” wrote Imam Ali bin abi Taleb in the sixth century, “he would deny him knowledge” (The Economist Online July 2, 2002). Indeed, education has positive implications in terms of economic growth, employment, family planning, reproductive health, and over all well being of individuals, especially women (UNFPA, 2002). Education in particular, girls’ education is a tool for empowerment and sustainable development. This has been recognized in the education and gender UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They advocate the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015, as well as ensuring that, by 2015, all children everywhere will be able to complete primary school. In setting these goals, the UN member states recognized the contributions that women make to economic development and the costs to societies of the multiple disadvantages that women face in nearly every country (UN, 2003).

In the Arab World, access to education has dramatically enhanced over the last three decades. There have also been some encouraging trends in female education. Enrollment levels for primary and secondary education have risen, with universal enrolments in some countries. Moreover, university attendance is a more likely consideration for women in the Arab States than in the past (Fahimi, 2004).

However, great challenges remain. Although the Arabs spend a higher percentage of GDP on education than any other developing region, it is not, it seems, well spent. The quality of education has worsened, with a remarkable mismatch between the labor market and the education system. Adult illiteracy rates have declined but are still very high; 65 million adults are illiterate, almost two-thirds of them women. Some 10million children still have no schooling at all (UNDP 2003a).

Many girls are still excluded from education, while many others are learning too little to equip them for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. In some countries, girls are limited to enrolling in the higher education that may provide them with the skills to enter the labor force (UNDP 2003a). Even when education is available, the quality of education offered is frequently low. And thus, several countries lag far behind in accessing education to women and may not close the gender gap in education by 2015 (UNDP, 2003b).

This study specifically addresses the following questions:

What is the status of girls' education in the Arab States at the primary and secondary levels?

How does this status differ throughout the region? What is the status of literacy in women ages 15-24? Will the Arab region achieve the Education Millennium Goals, thus closing the gender gap in education by 2015? What segments of the Arab female population are not being reached at the primary and secondary levels? What are the constraints that keep them from attending and completing primary and secondary school? What innovative, cost-effective strategies can increase girls' enrolment and persistence in primary and secondary school? What strategies can be used to provide motivation and basic literacy training to those girls who are not in school? What is the responsibility of Arab governments and the international community in achieving gender equality in education according to the UN Millennium Goals?

The first chapter briefly outlines the history of Millennium Development Goals, provide a definition of gender gap in education and discuss the implication of women's education and apply them to the Arab World. The second chapter presents data on the Arab countries, progress and present status towards achieving the Education Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The third chapter presents two case studies of the educational systems of Lebanon



and Yemen, their progress toward achieving the goals, challenges, financial resources needed, and supportive policies and projects. The fourth chapter delineates the determinants of girls' education, including the Arab region's diversity, household/community level barriers, like cultural constraints, school-level barriers, like direct costs of schooling and policy-level barriers such as lack of free and compulsory education laws. The fifth chapter provides strategies on the international, state, and civil platforms for the Arab countries to reach the Education Millennium Development Goals.

## **Chapter One**

This Chapter will introduce the Gender Equality in Education Millennium Goals. First, a brief history of the development of these goals will be outlined. Subsequently, the concepts of gender gap and gender equality will be defined as they pertain to the Gender Equality Millennium Development Goals. The implications of these Education Millennium goals, in terms of economics, social and health benefits will be discussed. Specific examples pertaining to Arab countries will be given to show the importance of the implications of the Education Millennium Goals in the Arab States.

### **The History of the Millennium Development Goals**

The World Conference on Education for All, held in 1990 in Jomtein, Thailand recognized the continual neglect of children's rights to education in the poorest countries, especially the neglect of the rights of girls, which, under structural adjustment in the 1980s, was aggravated rather than alleviated by international intervention and concern. This landmark assembly took a most important initiative toward refocusing global attention, 'making high-quality primary education the cornerstone of the World Conference's renewed drive to put all children in school.' It signified that education was central to development (UNICEF, 2001).

Inspired by the conference, the World Summit for Children, held at the UN Headquarters in New York in September 1990, made a commitment "to increase significantly educational opportunity for over 100 million children and nearly 1 billion adults, two thirds of them girls and women, who at present have no access to basic education and literacy" (UNICEF, 2000). Since the 1990s, the right to education has been reaffirmed internationally. The foundation of this is free and compulsory primary education, with an intended aim to grant greater access to educational opportunities at all levels (UNICEF, 2001).

The increased interest given to girls' education throughout the 1990s can be credited to the intersection of two important human rights based movements: the child rights movement epitomized in the adoption of the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989 and the Women's movement, which culminated in the Platform for Action at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, a platform specifically addressed to the needs and rights of girls (UNICEF, 2004). In 1995, development ministers from the member countries of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) committed themselves to a yearlong process of reviewing past experiences and planning policies into the next century. The resulting report, *Shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation*, published in May 1996, presented their vision for development progress into the next century. Emphasizing a partnership approach, they formulated a broad strategic framework aimed at realizing seven goals drawn from the resolutions of international conferences and summit meetings. Subsequently, a series of expert group meetings jointly sponsored by the OECD, United Nations, and the World Bank, and including representatives of developing countries, NGOs and United Nations funds and programs, helped to establish measurable targets for each goal and identified a set of 21 indicators for measuring progress toward the goals culminated in the publication of *A Better World for All: Progress toward the International Development Goals* in June, 2000 (UN, 2004).

Also in 2000, UNESCO's Education for All Forum in Dakar enunciated goals for attainment by 2015, covering early childhood education, universal primary education, education quality, adult literacy and gender parity. Two of these goals specifically deal with closing the gender gap in education (see Table 1). Developing countries committed themselves to preparing

specific, properly financed and time-bound plans for achieving these objectives (World Education Forum, 2001).

Building on the United Nations global conferences of the 1990s, the Millennium Declaration of 2002 marked a strong commitment to the right to development, to peace and security, to gender equality, to the eradication of the many dimensions of poverty and to sustainable human development. The Declaration, adopted by 147 heads of state and 189 states of the United Nations, mainstreams 8 mutually reinforcing development goals and 18 related targets into the global development agenda. The eight Millennium Development Goals cover a range of development issues (UN, 2004). They include:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

There are also 18 Millennium Development Targets that help monitor progress. Each target is accompanied by a set of measurable indicators to allow countries to identify areas in which they could improve. Most goals are designed to be achieved by 2015, and data from 1990 are used as a benchmark (UNDP, 2004).

The MDG targets for education are cautiously phrased, avoiding the mention of ‘free and compulsory’ primary schooling and confining themselves to ‘seeking the elimination of gender disparities in education’ rather than to attaining the more demanding gender equality championed by the Dakar Framework (Grown, Gupta and Khan 2003). This study will focus on Millennium Goals 2 and 3, to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education. For goal 3, the main concentration will be placed on the education indicators (see Table 1).

**Table 1. The Dakar Framework and Millennium Development Goals**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EFA Dakar Goals</b></p> <p>1. 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.</p> <p>2. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>UN Millennium Development Goals</b></p> <p><b>Goal 2. Achieve Universal Primary Education</b></p> <p>Target 3. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Net enrollment ratio in primary education</li><li>• Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5</li><li>• Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds</li></ul>
---

### **Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women.**

Target 4. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.

- Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education
- Ratio of literate females to males among 15-24 year olds
- Share of women in wage employment in the nonagricultural sector
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004

### **Defining Gender Equality in Education**

#### **Defining the Gender Gap**

The “gender gap” is the difference in school enrolment, retention and completion ratios between boys and girls- in most cases to the disadvantage of girls. The gap has narrowed significantly in recent years in the Arab States- though there is still great room for progress. Again, large disparities persist both among and within countries- the latter often hidden by national averages. Even in countries where quantified gaps are minimal, inequalities in educational content, methods and facilities may exist, resulting in major differences in achievement (World Bank, 2001a). Thus, the lack of an obvious gender gap can still mask great gender inequalities. In regions facing economic decline, where enrolments are falling, girls may fall even further behind. Where traditional beliefs and practices remain strong, girls may be expected to become housekeepers, babysitters and wives at any early age. There are also prejudices regarding the education of girls in co-educational schools, violence against girls in schools and gender stereotypes in school curricula (UNICEF, 2001).

## **Gender equality**

Gender is a social category that largely establishes one's life chances, shaping one's participation in the society and in the economy. The term equality means equality under the law, equality of opportunity and equality of voice. Advancing gender equality to empower women and to liberate their abundantly 'misused' energy and vision is of the utmost importance. At the present time, the financial cost of closing the gender gap in education in the Arab region is estimated at less than 1% Of GDP (World Bank 2001a ).

Both the Millennium Development Goals and EFA goals call for gender parity and gender equality in education (Kabeer, 2003a). Yet, gender parity and gender equality have different meanings. The first is measured numerically. Achieving gender parity would entail that the same proportion of boys and girls in comparison with their individual age groups would enter the education system and partake in its different levels.

Gender equality, however, connotes equal advantages and disadvantages for boys and girls in the "educational access, treatment and outcomes". Since, it can not be easily measured in numbers, equality is more difficult to define and track than parity. (Hutmacher et al.,2003).

The attainment of complete gender equality in education would entail:

Equality of opportunities translates to girls and boys being provided the same chances to access school. With equality in the learning process, girls and boys obtain similar treatment and attention, pursue the same curricula, are provided with teaching methods and teaching tools free of gender stereotypes, are given academic orientation and counseling free of gender biases,

and benefit from an equal number and quality of proper educational infrastructures (UNESCO, 2003).

Equality also precludes equality of outcomes, including learning achievements, school lifespan, academic qualifications and diplomas. This also connotes equality of external results, like job opportunities, time allocation for finding work after the completion of education, and similar earnings for men and women with the same qualifications and experience (Hutmacher et al., 2001).

The last condition, entailed by educational equality, is the continual gender discrimination in the labor market. This hinders the achievement of equality to access, treatment and outcomes in education by affecting the relative costs and perceived benefits of educating girls and boys. Therefore, if absolute gender equality in education were to be realized, labor market discrimination in all its sex-typed forms would most probably be essential (UNESCO, 2003).

### **Implications of Female Education in the Arab World**

Education has cross-cutting effects on all development areas including economic growth, mortality rates, reproductive health, and over all well being of the human race, especially women (UNFPA 2002). The importance of education's developmental implications has been hailed by a number of international bodies and more recently in international conventions and declarations. These include, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Program of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, recognizing the instrumental role of women's literacy to empowering women's contribution in decision making in society and their families' livelihood (UNIFEM, 2000).



By the 1990s, it was recognized that economic growth alone would not be able to deliver human development. In fact, it appeared that it was human development that could foster economic growth (Forbes, 2000). A UNICEF study of 49 nations showed that the countries that achieved the highest average annual growth between 1990 and 2000 were those that had a baseline in 1980 of low child mortality and low-income poverty. The economies that shrank in that decade were the ones that started in 1980 with high child mortality, high income poverty or both. Taking this into consideration, the United Nations has articulated its commitment to education and gender in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include goals for improved education, gender equality, and women's empowerment (see table 1). The implications of education for women are multi-sectorial, vastly impacting on economic growth, productivity, socio-political life, and health (UNICEF, 2003b).

### **Economic**

Evidence from around the world shows that eliminating gender disparities in education is one of the most effective development actions a country can take. When a country educates both its girls and boys, economic productivity tends to rise, maternal and infant mortality usually fall, fertility rates decline and the health and educational prospects of the next generation are improved (Lorgelly & Owen, 1999).

### **Productivity and Growth**

Education contributes directly to the growth of national income by improving the productive capacities of the labor force. As indicated in cross-country studies, if the countries of South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa had closed the gender gap in schooling between 1960 and 1992 as rapidly as East Asia did, it is predicted that their income

per capita would have grown by an additional .5-.9 percentage point per year (Klasen, 1999). In a study of 19 developing countries, with Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia, found that a country's prospective macroeconomic growth rises by as much as 3.7 percent for every year a country's adult population's mean level of schooling increases (UIS, 2002). Thus, education is a key strategy for reducing poverty, especially in the Arab region, where it is not as entrenched as other regions (Summers, 1992) (van Eeghen & Soman, 1997).

In an expanding, globalizing economy, countries with high illiteracy rates and gender gaps in educational achievement do not attract foreign investors who seek inexpensive, skilled laborers (Dwyer & Bruce, 1998). Various global trends pose special challenges to women who are illiterate or have limited education (Doumata, Abdella, Posusney, 2003). Without the proper training and education, women are unable to take part in countries' growing export orientation and create opportunities for themselves by establishing small and medium-sized enterprises (Staudt, 1997).

### **Employment**

As women's educational attainment in Arab countries has increased, more women have moved into the job market. Increases in girls' secondary school enrollment are associated with increases in women's participation in the labor force and their contributions to household and national income (World Bank Senior Economic Advisor MENA Region- Nadireh Chamlou, 2004).

But women's participation in the labor force is still low: Only 20 percent of women ages 15 and older in Arab countries are in the labor force- the lowest level of any world region.

Massive levels of female labor force in Arab countries are found in Lebanon, Morocco, and

Yemen, representing 25 percent of the labor force. These rates, however, are lower than other female labor rates outside the region. In France, for instance, women compose 45 percent of the labor force. Indonesia, which is home to the world's largest Muslim population, has a 38 percent female labor force rate (UN, 2000). The lowest rates of labor force participation are seen among women native to the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Six conservative Arab monarchies, reported that national rates are magnified by the abundance of foreign female laborers in their countries (Fahimi & Moghaddem, 2003).

The agricultural sector is the main work sector for women living in Egypt, Syria, and Yemen. Other Arab countries have successfully placed women into nonagricultural occupations. Morocco and Tunisia, for instance, have employed women in the countries' export-manufacturing sectors (Moghaddem, 1998). Most of the Arab women working outside the agricultural sector are college-educated professionals employed mainly in government (Lebanon is an exception, with a majority of the female labor force found in the private sector) (IWSAW, 1998).

The current high unemployment rates among men in Arab countries make it harder for women to compete in male-dominated job markets, and women's unemployment rates are higher than those of men in the region. In Saudi Arabia, where Saudi women account for only 7 percent of the labor force, the unemployment rate for women in 1999 was 16 percent, more than double the unemployment rate for men (Taecker, 2003). Improving the quality of education, providing more vocational training, developing job-creating programs, and removing obstacles to women's entrepreneurship can help alleviate the high rates of female unemployment (World Bank, 2001).

## **Socio-Political**

Education institutions also play a key role in the democratic process by giving women and men the opportunity, the knowledge and the commitment to influence the nature and direction of society. Individuals cannot develop their full potential without education, nor can they participate fully as citizens. Excluding girls from school badly affects their sense of agency and constrains civic and political life. Educated women are more politically active and better informed about their legal rights and how to exercise them (Floro & Wolf, 1990).

As the educational level of the parents rises, the children benefit with a higher rate of early school enrolment. The children's enrolment rate increases by 50% between illiterate mothers and those with primary or intermediate education and by 67% between mothers with intermediate education and those with secondary education. Hence the educational level of the mother is a major factor that affects the education of children (UNICEF, 2003c).

## **Health**

A very important consequence of society investing more in the education of girls and women is the changes brought about in household behavior and practice. Some of these changes are highly valued by society (Abu Ghaida & Klasen, 2002). For example, the improved sustenance of children has been shown to be more strongly associated with increased levels of education of the mother than of the father.

## **Immunization, Nutrition, and Mortality**

This is so with respect to the birth weight of children, child mortality, nutrition, morbidity, school entry at early ages, and longevity in school (Schultz, 1998). Additionally, a positive

relationship between mother's schooling and child's immunization rates appears to be significant. In the Arab region, it has been observed that immunization rates increase by more than 20 percent when mothers have some form of secondary education. A recent cross-country study of 63 countries also concludes that gains in women's education made the single largest contribution to declines in malnutrition, accounting for 43 percent of the total (Schultz, 1993).

### **Fertility**

As female education rises, fertility, population growth, and infant and child mortality fall and family health improves. Education is the single most important determinant of both age at marriage and age at first birth in Arab countries, since women in the region tend to give birth soon after marriage (USAID, 1990). Amongst married Egyptian women ages 25 to 29, for example, women with no education had married at age 18, on average, and had their first child by age 20. Egyptian women with secondary school or higher education married at an average age of 23 and had their first child by age 25 (El Zanaty & Way, 2000).

Educated women normally desire smaller families and utilize reproductive health and family planning information and services well enough to achieve the family size they want. A study found that Moroccan women with some form of secondary education had, on average, half as many children as women with no education. In the Arab region, most women have some notion about modern contraception, but the more education women are the more likely they are to be informed about various types of contraceptives and how to access them. In Egypt, 69 percent of married women ages 15 to 49 who finished secondary school accounted seeing family planning publications, compared with 32 percent of those who had completed only primary school. More educated women are also more likely to confer with their spouses about family planning (El-Zanaty & Way, 2000).

More educated women are also more inclined to have healthier families (World Bank, 1999). In Egypt, for example, children born to mothers with no formal education were more than twice as likely to die as those born to mothers who had completed secondary school. According to the 2000 DHS, Egyptian women with less education were less likely to received antenatal care: Only 34 percent of Egyptian mothers with no education received antenatal care, compared with 75 percent of those with a high school or college degree (El Zanaty & Way, 2000).

All these direct and indirect benefits indicate that, where females have less access to schooling than males, society loses. In such circumstances, there is a clear case for the extension of greater subsidies to the education of females than of males, and for economic policy and investment to be targeted at that objective (USAID, 1990).

### **Conclusion**

In sum, this chapter has established the history of the education millennium goals. The Education UN Millennium Goals specifically address gender equality, setting out to achieve an equal number of boys and girls in school by the year 2015. Thus, a gender gap in education would be an unequal number of boys and girls enrolled in school. Additionally, UN agencies, international organizations, and scholars have cited the implications of closing the gender gap in education (World Bank, 2003). These include:

- Decrease in fertility, population growth, and infant and child mortality
- Increases in women's participation in the labor force and their contributions to household and national income.

- Women's increased earning capacity, in turn, has a positive effect on child nutrition.
- Children of educated mothers are more likely to be enrolled in school and have higher levels of educational attainment.
- Educated women are more politically active and better informed about their legal rights and how to exercise them.
- Therefore, it is in the Arab countries' interest to invest in implementing the Education Millennium Goals to close the gender gap in education. For, improving access to and the quality of education is the most rewarding investment a country can make. Investing in female education will improve the prospects of the Arab region by enhancing economic and social development, improving human capital, containing population growth, and lessen poverty (World Bank MENA Senior Economic Advisor Nadireh Chamlou, 2004).

## **Chapter Two: Progress Report on the Arab Countries in Achieving the Education**

### **Millennium Goals**

This chapter considers the status of Arab countries in achieving the original MDG target of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and all levels by 2015. Among the most important aspects of achieving this goal is access to education. Therefore, a review of the current educational status will begin with a survey of intake rates in the various Arab countries. The second part of the chapter will provide detailed information about primary and secondary intake rates, enrollments, and completion. Furthermore, a summary of the status of literacy among 15-24 in the Arab States will be reviewed. For, literacy rates are considered to be key indicators for reaching the education millennium goals in the Arab World. Finally, a detailed assessment of progress and prospects for the Arab States region in achieving the goals will be outlined.

### **Methodology**

Two valuable indicators for describing an education system are the gross and net intake rates. “The apparent intake rate (AIR) describes the number of children of all ages entering the first primary grade as a percentage of the population of the official age for primary entrance.” Apparent intake rates above 100% signal that children older or younger than the official age are being admitted to this grade. The net intake rate (NIR) by contrast measures entry into primary education among children of the official entrance age. Major differences between the apparent intake rate and the net intake rate expose a sufficient discrepancy between the official entrance age and the actual ages of entry, and may indicate delays in getting children enrolled. When the apparent intake rate is below 100%, this is an indication that the hypothetical



capability to provide demand is still inadequate and impacts on participation in primary education (UIS, 2002).

Two indicators are used to measure the extent of participation in primary education and secondary education: the gross enrolment ratio (GER) and the net enrolment ratio (NER). The former is the number of children enrolled, whatever their age, as a percentage of the total population of official primary school age. This ratio may be higher than 100% due to younger children being enrolled in primary school, or older ones, including 'repeaters'. The net enrollment indicator is the percentage of the official primary school age group that, in actuality, attends school. The NER, which cannot exceed 100%, is a more useful indicator than the GER, since it provides a measure of the proximity to universal primary education. Unfortunately, schools generally report enrollment statistics at different education levels based on the official age limits for these levels and not on the actual ages of the students. The data on net enrollment ratios are therefore not available for many countries, especially at the secondary level (UNESCO, 2004).

To measure educational disparity among women and men, the GEI is computed in relative terms, namely, as enrollment ratios of girls to boys. This index has been widely used as the measure of the gender gap in studies concerned with women. The main reason for its popularity seems to be the ease of its interpretation. The ratio varies between 0 and 1 and the gender equality is attained when the ratio is equal to 1. However, the serious limitation of this index is that it measures proportions to absolute values. For instance, where the enrollment ratios for both sexes are approximately equal, the index will yield a value that is close to 1 regardless of any net differences in enrollments (ESCWA, 2002).

## **Primary Education**

Primary education is a priority for the countries of this region, all of which have subscribed to the goal of Universal Primary Education by 2015 proclaimed at Dakar in 2000. The Universal Primary Education Goal is generally one component of “basic school education”, which in a great many countries corresponds to compulsory education, the other being the first stage of secondary education (ISCED 2). With the exception of Bahrain, Mauritania, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, compulsory education, covering these two levels of education, exists in all the countries of the region (UIS, 2002).

The availability and quality of data are better for primary education than for the other levels. Most of the region’s countries have provided data on total numbers, the only exceptions being Egypt, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Generally, though, the availability of data giving the breakdown of total numbers by age and grade is limited. Where possible, estimates based on data for the school year 1999/2000 have been used for the purpose of calculating certain country or regional indicators (UIS, 2002).

### **Access to primary education**

The official age for entry into primary education is 6 years old in all the countries of the region, and duration is six years except in Lebanon and Egypt (five years) and Kuwait and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories (four years). In comparing countries’ enrollment ratios, it is important to take account of the differences in the duration of education. Shorter durations generally mean high enrolment ratios, since enrolment is at its highest in the earliest grades (UIS, 2002).

In the region as a whole, just over 5 million children entered primary school for the first time in 1999/2000; this corresponds to an apparent intake rate for the region of 91%. The apparent intake rate for boys was 94% while for girls it was 88%. The highest apparent intake rate (116%) was seen in Iraq and is accounted for by a comparatively large proportion (25%) of new entrants being admitted at an earlier or later age than the official primary entrance age: 9% of new entrants in this country were only 5 years old, and 16% were 7 or over. Morocco's high rate can be explained by the presence of a large proportion (32%) of 7 year olds among the new intake; here, the official age for entry into primary education was lowered from 7 to 6 (UIS, 2002).

Among the countries with apparent intake rates below 100%, the lowest rate was found in Djibouti (32%). In the other countries, apparent intake rates range from 54% in Sudan to 98% in Bahrain. The rate also shows gender parities, with the mean rate for boys being (94%) are 6 percentage points higher than for girls (88%). Some countries, though, report parity between the sexes in access to primary education: Bahrain, Jordan, Oman, the Palestinian Autonomous Territories, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. Djibouti, Sudan and Iraq are the countries where girls' access to primary education is poorest by comparison with that of boys, with gender parity indices of .77, .82 and .89, respectively. As for the other countries, the GEIs are very close to unity (UIS, 2002).

### **Participation in primary education**

Just over 35 million pupils were enrolled in primary education in the Arab region during the school year 1999/2000 of whom 54% were boys. Nearly 94% of the total were enrolled in public schools, but private primary education was well established in Lebanon (66% of all pupils), the United Arab Emirates (45%), Kuwait (31%), Jordan (30%) and to a lesser extent in

Bahrain (19%). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the Arab States Regional Report survey of 19 countries, found that some eight million primary school-age children have remained out of school in the Arab States; with five million of them girls. It was found that gender parity had been achieved in the Palestinian Autonomous Territories, Bahrain, Jordan, and United Arab Emirates. Compared to other regions, the Arab States had better gender parity in terms of access to primary school than countries in Francophone Africa (UIS, 2003).

The region's overall gross enrollment ratio is 91%. However, girls' participation is less at this level of education than is boys'. Their gross enrollment ratio is 12 percentage points lower, averaged at 79%. These regional averages hide great differences among countries, with a range of 50 percentage points between the highest gross enrollment ratio and the lowest. By the year 2000, the Gender Equality Index (GEI) in primary enrollment exceeded .90 in 10 out of 18 Arab countries for which data were available (see Table 2). There was no observable gender gap in Bahrain, Jordan and Palestine. However, even countries with overall high gross enrollment rates and gender equality ratios like Algeria, hide significant gender specific variations. The enrollment rate among girls in remote mountainous areas as well as in the South generally is much lower than boys. The Arab States have some of the lowest GERs (Djibouti and Sudan) and the largest gender disparities (Yemen and Djibouti, with a GPI of .63 and .76 respectively. Not surprisingly, these are the same group of low-income countries for which gender disparities in school access are most pronounced and access levels are themselves the lowest. Even though many countries do appear to be at or very close to gender parity, it does not mean that gender equality has been reached. An example of the distance that can separate the two concepts is given by Saudi Arabia. This country, with a GEI of .96, up from .87 in 1990, is on the verge of reaching gender parity. However, when examining the

national orientation of the education system, one may wonder whether gender equality is progressing in the same way. Thus the country's national report on the development of education (Saudi Arabia, 2001, pp. 17,18) sees the aim of girls' education as follows: "The aim of girls' education is to bring her up in a sound Islamic way so that she can fulfill her role in life as an ideal wife and good mother, and to prepare her for other activities that suit her nature, such as teaching, nursing and medicine" (UNESCO, 2003).

**Table 2**

**Gross enrollment ratios for girls and boys and gender equality index in primary schools in selected Arab countries, 2000 (Percentage and ratios)**

Country	Gross enrollment ratios		Gender Equality index
	Male	Female	Female/Male
Algeria (6-11)	116.4	107.4	0.92
Bahrain (6-11)	103.3	103.1	1.00
Djibouti (6-11)	45.9	34.7	0.76
Egypt (6-10)	102.9	96.1	0.93
Iraq (6-11)	111.4	91.3	.82
Jordan (6-15)	100.6	101.0	1.00
Kuwait (6-9)	94.8	93.3	.98
Lebanon(6-11)	100.6	97.2	.97
Libya (6-14)	114.6	116.6	1.02
Mauritania (6-11)	85.8	80.2	.93
Morocco (7-12)	100.8	87.7	0.87

Oman (6-11)	73.7	70.8	0.96
Palestine (6-16)	107.3	108.5	1.01
Qatar (6-11)	104.8	104.5	1.00
Saudi Arabia (6-13)	68.7	66.2	0.96
Sudan (6-13)	63.5	54.0	0.85
Syrian Arab Republic (6-11)	113.0	106.1	0.93
Tunisia (6-11)	119.8	114.7	0.96
United Arab Emirates (6-11)	99.2	98.9	1.00
Yemen (6-14)	96.5	61.0	0.63

Source: UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004

With a regional net enrollment ratio of 79% in primary education by gender, the indicators change and are only available for a select number of Arab countries. As evidenced by the available data, the potential for achieving gender equality in primary schools varies. As shown in Table 3 considerable progress has been made in countries like Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, and Yemen, with as much as a 35% rise in primary levels. However, some countries like Djibouti, Iraq and Saudi Arabia have experienced declining trends. Led by Bahrain, Jordan, the Palestinian Autonomous Territories, and Libya, nine countries will meet the target. Some countries are already close to gender parity, Algeria and Oman. Another seven need to accelerate their rate of advancement, and two countries need to reverse declining trends (Grown, Gupta, Khan 2003). In Djibouti, Morocco, and Sudan less than eight girls attend primary school for every ten boys. In Yemen, less than 5 girls are enrolled in primary school compared to every ten boys (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Net enrollment ratios in primary education by gender in the Arab States 1990-2000**

	1990		2000	
Arab States	Total	GEI	Total	GEI
Algeria	93.3	0.88	98.3	0.97
Bahrain	99	1	95.9	1.01
Djibouti	33.3	0.71	32.6	0.77
Egypt	85.9	0.86	92.6	0.95
Iraq	100	0.95	92.9	0.86
Jordan	94.1	1.01	93.6	1.01
Kuwait	49	0.93	83.1	0.98
Lebanon	....	....	86.5	0.99
Libya	96.3	0.96	....	...
Mauritania	34.9	0.74	64	0.93
Morocco	56.8	0.7	78	0.91
Oman	70.3	0.94	64.6	0.99
Palestinian Autonomous Territories		...	96.8	1.02
Qatar	89.6	0.98	...	...
Saudi Arabia	62.1	0.82	57.9	0.92
Sudan	...	...	49.5	0.83
Syrian Arab Republic	97.8	0.93	96.3	0.95
Tunisia	93.5	0.92	99.2	0.99
United Arab Emirates	92.4	1.04	86.6	1.02
Yemen	46.2	0.43	67.1	0.58

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report

### **The effectiveness of primary education**

In terms of repetition, only six percent of girls, in the region, repeated a year as against nine percent of boys, although these figures mask vast differences between countries. Jordan, for example, had the lowest overall rate of repetition with one percent and Tunisia the highest with 16 percent. Although female education has increased at all levels in Algeria, more or less doubling, dropout rates among rural girls tend to be higher (ESCWA, 2002). In Egypt, average male dropout rates exceeded those of girls. In Lebanon, dropout rates for girls and boys 6 to 11 years old were equal. But, although female access to education in Lebanon in general has not been a social issue and in fact compares favorably with such access in other developing countries the impact of civil war and related poverty had and continues to have adverse gendered implications (UNDP, 2000).

Achieving gender parity in enrolment rates is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to reach parity in participation in and completion of primary education. Therefore, in order for a country to achieve Universal Primary Education by 2015, intakes to the first grade should reach 100% around the year 2010. Likewise, gender parity in primary enrolment by 2005 would have required enrollment parity by 2000 (UNESCO, 2003).

In the Arab States region, completion rates are generally higher than those in other developing countries, but remained stagnant throughout the 1990s (Bruns, Mingat & Rakotumalala, 2003). At the advent of the millennium, 90 percent of primary pupils throughout the region completed the primary cycle; however, girls had a slight edge in most countries except in the United Arab Emirates, where 93 percent of boys completed primary school compared to 92 percent of girls. According to predictive regional studies for female to male gross primary enrollments, 2005 only three countries from the MENA region are off track to reaching the full enrollment rate. In



terms of completion rates, only two countries (Djibouti and Yemen) lag behind in girls completing primary school (Grown, Gupta, Khan, 2003).

### **Secondary Education**

#### **Participation in secondary education**

Data coverage for secondary education varies according to the type of program. It is relatively good in the case of general education because these programs are organized by the country's Ministry of Education. The data supplied are sometimes partial, however, as they may cover only the public schools or not offer a breakdown by sex or grade. In some countries, technical education does not come under the Education Ministry but under other ministries (Labor, Agriculture, or Trade and Industry, for instance) and this can make it more difficult to collect the data (UIS, 2002).

As of the year 2000, both the level of enrollment in secondary schools and the rate of change of that level were significantly low in a number of Arab States (see table 4). Enrollments were below 40 percent in Djibouti, Iraq, Mauritania, and Sudan, below 50 percent in Morocco, and the Syrian Arab Republic. Djibouti and Yemen recorded the lowest levels with as low as 14 percent for girls and 23.3 percent for boys respectively. In terms of improving enrollments and narrowing the gender gap, a noteworthy increase was found in Tunisia with a 32% increase in total enrollment and a 16-point ratio increase in GEI from 1990 to 2000. Other countries attaining significant progress were Saudi Arabia and Oman, attaining as much as 23% increase in overall enrollments and narrowing the gender gap in education by 10 and 20 ratio points respectively. The highest gross enrollment ratios were in Bahrain both boys and girls, with a ratio above 1 (UNESCO, 2003; ESCWA, 2002).

In general, the gender gap was found to be unsubstantial in a number of Arab countries for the 2000 school year. This was partly as a result of relatively low enrollment ratios for boys. Out of 17 Arab States for which information on gross enrollment was available, 10 had obtained scores of GEI of approximately .90 and above, and two had indices between .87 and .89. The highest gender disparity was found in Yemen where only 26 girls were in secondary schools for every 100 boys (see table 4) (UNESCO, 2003).

**Table 4**

**Gross enrollment ratios for girls and boys and gender equality index in secondary schools in selected Arab countries, 1990-2000 (Percentage and ratios)**

Country	1990	Gender Equality Index	2000			Gender Equality index
	Total	Female/Male	Total	Male	Female	Female/Male
Algeria (12-17)	61	.81	70.8	68.2	73.4	1.08
Bahrain (12-17)	99.8	1.03	101.3	97.8	105.1	1.07
Djibouti (12-18)	13.7	0.64	18.9	23.3	14.4	.62
Egypt (11-16)	76.3	0.81	85.7	88.2	83.1	.94
Iraq (12-17)	49.2	.64	38.3	47.1	29.1	0.62
Jordan (12-17)	63.3	1.04	87.7	86.4	89.0	1.03
Kuwait (10-17)	42.9	.98	55.9	55.0	56.9	1.04
Lebanon (12-18)	*	*	75.7	72	79.4	1.10
Libya (12-17)	86		*	*	*	*
Mauritania (15-17)	13.9	0.47	21.0	22.3	19.6	.88
Morocco	35.5	0.73	39.3	73.6	35.0	0.80

(16-18)						
Oman (15-17)	45.7	.78	68.2	68.9	67.5	0.98
Palestine (17-18)	*	*	82.6	79.6	85.7	1.08
Qatar (15-17)	82.1	1.09	89.0	86.4	80	1.06
KSA (15-17)	46.6	0.80	67.8	71.2	65	0.90
Sudan (14-16)	21.7	0.79	28.8	20	23	0.87
Syrian Arab Republic (15-17)	51.9	0.73	43.3	45.7	45	0.89
Tunisia (15-18)	44.9	.79	78.3	76.3	66	0.95
UAE (15-17)	64.4	1.25	75.1	71.1	77	1.12
Yemen (12-17)	*	*		53	14	0.26

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004

### **Effectiveness of Education**

Repetition rates have been proven to be high for both sexes, it was found to be higher for boys than girls. In Algeria, 31 percent of boys repeated compared to 24 percent of girls. In Tunisia, 20 percent of boys repeated against 17 percent of girls. In Saudi Arabia, 12 percent of boys repeated and only six percent of girls. Thus, when given the chance girls outshine boys in educational performance (UNESCO, 2003).

While admission rates are in most cases lower for girls than for boys, given the gender equality index, the survival rates are more frequently higher for girls. Therefore, the issue to be addressed by educational policy makers committed to the Educational UN Millennium Goals is how to facilitate girls' access to school. Once in school, girls perform in most cases as well as boys, if not better. The situation may be more complex in secondary education, where dynamic

factors may cause girls and young women to leave school before the end of their studies (UNICEF, 2002a; 2003a).

### **Indication of Literacy Rates for Ages 15-24**

The literacy rates and GEI for the 15-24 year-olds are shown in table 5. Out of the Arab countries for which data were available, 10 had either attained gender equality or were approaching it, as illustrated by the figures. Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates had an index greater or equal to 1, while the value of GEI ranged between .91 and .97 for Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. The lowest ratings for literacy were found in Yemen, Djibouti, Mauritania, and Morocco, despite substantial increases in literacy levels, especially with women (ESCWA, 2002).

**Table 5: Literacy rates for those ages 15-24 and the gender equality index in selected Arab countries, 1990-2000**

Arab States	1990		2000	
	Total	GEI	Total	GEI
Algeria	77.3	0.72	88.5	0.82
Bahrain	95.6	0.99	98.4	1
Djibouti	73.2		84	
Egypt	61.3	0.72	69.7	0.82
Iraq	41		44.6	
Jordan	96.7	0.98	99.2	1.01
Kuwait	87.5	0.99	92.4	1.01
Lebanon	92.1	0.93	95.2	0.95

Libya	91	0.83	96.5	0.92
Mauritania	45.8	0.64	48.9	0.69
Morocco	55.3	0.62	67.3	0.76
Oman	85.6	0.79	97.9	0.97
Palestinian Autonomous Territories	*	*	*	*
Qatar	90.3	1.05	94.8	1.05
Saudi Arabia	85.4	0.86	92.7	0.95
Sudan	65	0.72	77.2	0.86
Syria	79.9	0.72	87.2	0.82
Tunisia	84.1	0.8	93.3	0.91
United Arab Emirates	84.7	1.08	90.6	1.08
Yemen	50	0.34	65	0.55

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report

### **Conclusion: progress and prospects**

The gender goal for 2005 specifies the attainment of parity in enrolments between boys and girls at primary and secondary levels by that date. Accordingly in a sample of 20 Arab States eight countries have achieved the goal in terms of primary education, three are close to the goal, seven in a medium position and two far from the goal. In terms of secondary education, only three have achieved the goal, twelve are in a medium position to achieving it, and two far from doing so (see table 6).

**Table 6: Gender parity in primary and secondary education: national prospects for goal achievement in 2015**

<b>School Level</b>	<b>Likely to be achieved in 2005</b>	<b>Likely to be achieved in 2015</b>	<b>At risk of not achieving the goal by 2015</b>
<b>Primary Education</b>	Egypt, Oman, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Qatar, Kuwait	Sudan, Syria, Algeria	Djibouti, Iraq, Yemen, Mauritania
<b>Secondary Education</b>	Egypt, Oman, Jordan, Libya, Lebanon, Mauritania, Kuwait	Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar, Sudan	Bahrain*, United Arab Emirates*, Algeria*, Tunisia*, Yemen, Morocco, Djibouti, Mauritania, Iraq

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report

\*Enrolment disparities at the expense of boys.

Several Arab countries are at risk of not achieving the goal by 2015 due to reverse gender gaps, with girls outnumbering boys. These are Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, and Algeria. Other countries in risk of not achieving the goal due to gender gap in favor of boys are Djibouti, Iraq, Sudan, and Yemen. This picture worsens by the indicator of completion. Six out of nine in the Arab States region are predicted to be off track for achieving gender parity in secondary school completion (Grown, Gupta & Khan, 2003). These countries will require intensive campaigns led by their individual governments, with support from donors and UN agencies to get more girls into school (UNESCO, 2003).

## **Chapter Three: Comparative Analysis of Two Arab Governments in Targeting**

### **Educational Gender Parity**

This chapter will compare the governments of Lebanon and Yemen in their progress with promoting gender equality, as spelled out in the UN education millennium goals. It will examine the countries current status and trends in achieving Target 3 and Target 4. It will also pose challenges, outline supportive policies and programs, priorities for development assistance, elements of assessment and the finance resources needed to achieve the goal. As mentioned earlier in the first chapters, the emphasis will be on gender parity in primary and secondary education, and to a lesser degree literacy levels, outcome of education status.

### **Yemen**

#### **Overview**

Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the Arab World, suffers from some of the worst development indicators in the Middle East. Among the many challenges that Yemen faces are a low per capita GDP of \$465, a high population growth rate of 3.5%, an unemployment rate of 18%, a high infant and child mortality rate, a high maternal mortality rate of 1,400 per 100,000 births, and dwindling oil and water reserves. Furthermore, the country's land base suffers from a list of environmental hazards (CIA World Factbook, 2004).

Geographically, Yemen is located between Oman and Saudi Arabia and borders the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea. It has the area size of 527,831 sq km. Yemen's capital is Sanaa. Its population is 22,605,400.

Present day Yemen was formerly separated into North and South. North Yemen became independent of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. The British, who had set up a protectorate area around the southern port of Aden in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, withdrew in 1967 from what became South Yemen. Three years later, the southern government adopted a Marxist orientation. The massive exodus of hundreds of thousands of Yemenis from the south to the north contributed to two decades of hostility between the states. The two countries were formally unified as the Republic of Yemen in 1990. A southern secessionist movement in 1994 was quickly subdued. In 2000, Saudi Arabia and Yemen agreed to a delimitation of their border (CIA World Factbook, 2004).

Recently, Yemen has embarked on an IMF-supported structural adjustment program designed to modernize and restructure the economy which has led to substantial foreign debt relief and restructuring. International donors, meeting in Paris in October 2002, agreed on a further \$2.3 billion economic support package. Yemen has made the initiative to maintain firm control over expenditure and to execute further components of the IMF program. A high population growth rate and internal political dissension complicate the government's task (CIA World Factbook, 2004).

### **Progress towards Goal 2**

Governmental efforts in the 1990s consequently increased the net enrollment of primary education from 52.7% in 1990 to 59.5% in 2000. However, a considerable proportion of children from 6-14 years of school age are not enrolled in primary education and will likely join the mass of illiterate and impoverished in the near future (ESCWA, 2002b).



Mean net enrolment rates vary from one governorate to another. The majority of governorates have recorded a net enrolment rate of less than 50% in contrast to the national net enrolment rate. An exception to this was Aden, with a net enrolment rate of 85.7% in 2000. Historically, economic activity has been concentrated in the port city of Aden. The city became highly developed under Marxist influence and extensive Soviet aid. Comparatively the Sa'ada governorate, the northern most part of Yemen, bordering Saudi Arabia, registered a 20.8% net enrolment. This massive disparity requires tremendous efforts and resources to bridge the enrolment gap (UNDP, 2003).

Gender disparity is strikingly apparent when evaluating the net enrolment rates for boys and girls. The net enrolment rate among girls for the 6-14 year age group is 44.7% in contrast to 72.2% for boys. Furthermore, discrepancy in enrolment rates for the same age category is evidently greater in rural areas than in urban areas. The enrolment rate among urban girls is 73.2%, as opposed to 29.5% in rural areas. To a lesser extent, the same situation applies to boys, with an enrolment rate in urban areas at 89.2% in comparison to 78.9% in rural areas. Rural girls, who are out of school, are mainly engaged in household chores (UNDP, 2003).

The present data designates that the maximum class repetition rates are found in the fourth primary class, primarily 14%. The percentage of students attaining grade five was 75.1% in 2000. The average of failure and class repetition is estimated at 11%. Therefore, instead of taking nine years to complete the primary stage, it takes boys 11 years to complete this stage, while it takes girl students a longer period. This, in turn is a waste of financial and human resources. Nevertheless, the percentage of successful students progressing from primary to secondary education has augmented from 73.6% in 1990 to 77.1% in 2000. This, alone, signifies a significant attainment in the education system (UNDP, 2003).

In sum, these indicators imply that Yemen is far-off from achieving the Universal Primary Education goal by 2015, unless chief qualitative steps to progress basic education for both girls and boys are implemented. This requires construction development, in terms of school buildings and improvement in infrastructure, increase of female and male teachers, provision of incentives for rural education, and improvement of quality of education and school curricula (UNDP, 2003).

### **Challenges**

Primary Education for all children in Yemen faces a vast number of shortfalls, including (Rihani & Parker 1997; UNICEF, 2003c):

1. Failure to provide adequate educational services: This is reflected in the sharp disparity between urban and rural areas in terms of provision of educational services, particularly among girls, insufficient girls schools, distant location of schools, and lack of awareness about girls education among rural parents.
2. Poverty: The low levels of income result in declining families' spending.
3. Basic Services: Shortage in basic services like water and collection of fire wood has depressively effected girls' education in rural areas
4. Negative outlook towards girl's education: Available data indicates that 55.3% of girls at 6-14 years of school age were not enrolled at schools, in contrast to 22% for boys. This is a result of existing fallacies of the irrelevance of girls' education.

5. **Internal inefficiency:** This is revealed in the form of high dropout rates and class repetition, both of which are chief problems confronting the education system.

6. **Low quality of curricula:** School curricula focus on theoretical fields of knowledge of the expense of skills and practical aspects, thus negatively contributing to the low quality of education and making it irrelevant for future prosperity.

7. **Weak institutional capability:** Incapability of primary education to concentrate on present shortcomings, together with overcrowded classes in urban areas, poorly-equipped school buildings (40% of schools are unsuitable), inappropriate allocation of teachers, lack of female teachers particularly in rural areas, scarcity of classrooms and shortage of financial resources desperately needed to address discrepancies and undertake the necessary maintenance for existing school buildings and classrooms (Republic of Yemen Supreme Council for Women Affairs, 2002).

### **Supportive policies and programs**

The Constitution of the Republic of Yemen considers both men and women equal before the law and demands equality and respect to public right and duties (Republic of Yemen Supreme Council for Women Affairs 2002). Yemen's education strategy focuses on local capacity to achieve the MDGs for the sector, while improving education and addressing the gender gap. Public expenditure on education as GDP increased from 3.4% in 1996 to 8.4% in 2002 and this increase is projected to continue in the coming years (World Bank, 2003).

The Basic Education Strategy delineated the State's pledge to guarantee basic education

for all school children with the expansion and advancement of education in future stages. The Strategy entails the growing enrollment of rural children, particularly girls, in the first six years of basic education. The project is being implemented in the four governorates in which enrollment ratios for girls are lowest. The project seeks to enroll 100,000 additional girls in school (UNICEF, 2003c). This will be done by:

- Construction of smaller schools nearer to villages and rural communities.
- Gaining communities' pledge to enroll girls as a precondition for school construction.
- Including hygienic facilities and border walls in all new schools.
- Providing separate classrooms for girls in grades 7 to 9.
- Constructing girls' only secondary schools in the necessary areas.
- Promoting the recruitment of female teachers and providing more female teachers in the upper basic and secondary school grades.

The Government is reducing the entry standards for female secondary graduates to the faculties of education (FOEs) and piloting a scholarship program for rural women to enroll in the FOEs (World Bank 2000). The Education Sector Investment Project is building 438 preparatory and 59 secondary classrooms of which half are targeted for girls and nine secondary schools for girls in rural areas. In addition, the Social Fund for Development, the Civil Works Project, the Emergency Recovery Project and the Southern Governorates Rural Development Project have completed approximately 2000 classrooms (World Bank, 1994).

The Education Strategy also restated the goal of restructuring and developing basic education. Yemen's Strategic Vision (2025) aims at publicizing basic education and initiating structural modifications to the educational system, with a vision to facilitating it to manage with

scientific and technological developments and to meet the future educational needs of the country. The Second Five-Year Development Plan has committed sustained State support for the education sector, in the course of the financial distribution for schools building, and growing distribution for school operations and maintenance. The plan is also designed to raise the net enrolment rates in the first class by 12% and increase the gross registration rate to 69.1% (UNDP, 2003).

The Poverty Reduction Strategy has also concentrated on basic education and on increasing its access to all as part of fundamental human rights. Moreover, it emphasized the need to raise girls' enrolment rates to 69.1% at the school age by 2005. The strategy advocates a 10% enlargement in public expenditure on basic education and emphasizes the need to pursue the educational division reform (World Bank, 2000).

The Yemen Draft Plan for primary education -the fast-track initiative- gives priority to the education of girls at the primary education level within the scope of a long-term strategy for the development of basic education. For this purpose, the Draft Plan included a series of measures aimed generally at increasing the intake and learning opportunities, particularly in rural areas and deprived areas. The most important of these measures are:

- Building schools for girls in rural areas and providing them with the necessary public facilities.
- Activating the training process of female teachers, allocating them to girls' schools, and giving them incentives such as special dwellings.
- Adopting the two-shift school system and assigning a shift to receive girls.

- Organizing social awareness campaigns and promoting the importance of educating girls.
- Setting a strategy for fighting and reducing poverty, which will have a positive impact on the education of girls (UNESCO 2004).

By adopting these measures and programs, Yemen has committed itself to making every possible effort to achieve Universal Primary education goal, or to come as close as possible by the year 2015, should assistance be forthcoming (UNDP, 2003).

### **Financial Resources Needed to Achieve the Goal**

Yemen faces several challenges in achieving Universal Primary Education goals as described previously. The subsequent cost analysis demonstrates the financial resources necessary to cover the costs of school buildings construction and repair, recruitment of female and male teachers, purchase of textbooks and furniture, and operation and maintenance costs. The table below outlines the sum of resources necessitated for the period 2001/5 and 2006/15.

<b>Resources (in millions \$US Dollars)</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>Annual Average</b>	
	<b>2001-2005</b>	<b>2006-2015</b>	<b>2001-2005</b>	<b>2006-2015</b>
<b>Total resources required</b>	6,873	22,479	1,375	2,248
<b>Total public expenditure</b>	2,193	7,048	439	705
<b>Additional resources required(financial gap)</b>	4,680	15,431	936	1,543

Source: UNDP 2002

### **Progress towards Goal 3:**

**Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by the year 2005, and at all levels by 2015.**

Despite an increase in female enrolment since 1990, male enrolment rates remain higher. Girls' enrolment in basic education increased from 4.6% in 1990 to 55.7% in 2000. In the secondary level, girls' enrolment rates are still low despite the improvements of the 1990s. Girls' enrolment rates in secondary education increased from 13.7% in 1990 to 36.6% in 2000, and so was the case with higher education, with enrolment rates rising from 28% in 1990 to 32.3% in 2000. Nevertheless, indicators show that a significant proportion of girls are still out of school, particularly in the primary education stage, despite the state's commitment to provide equal opportunities for boys and girls alike (ESCWA, 2002b).

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Proportion of girls to boys in basic education</b>	44.6	55.7	100
<b>Proportion of girls to boys in secondary education</b>	13.7	36.6	100

Source: UNDP 2003

### **Challenges**

1. **Poverty:** Low household income and family's inability to meet basic requirements has forced many girls to leave education.
2. **Drop-out:** Drop-out rates among girls in the various education stages are on the increase and peak among the fifth and ninth grades class, and in the secondary stage.

3. Early marriage: Several indicators and social studies have found that early marriage is one of the most important factors contributing to girls dropout from the education system, particularly from secondary education.

4. Lack of female teachers: female teachers only account for 20% of the entire teaching force in the basic and secondary education (16.2% in urban areas and 5.3% in rural areas).

5. Lack of awareness among student's guardians about the importance of girls' education, particularly the post-basic education stage (UNDP 2003).

### **Supportive Policies and Programs**

The government has adopted several strategies, policies and programs emphasizing equality and equal educational opportunities for all. Yemen's Strategic Vision (2025) aims at promoting and ensuring education for girls, particularly in rural areas, and reducing the gender gap with the aim of increasing girls enrolment rate to 95% in line with Poverty Reduction Strategy (World Bank, 2003).

The Girls' Education Strategy aims at providing basic education to girls in the school age group and improving quality of girls' education through the development of programs and activities designed to meet the actual academic and practical needs of girls (UNICEF, 2003).

## **Lebanon**

### **Overview**

Lebanon is located in the Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Israel and Syria. The Republic of Lebanon, established by the Constitution of 1926, won its independence



from France in 1943. Its population is 3,777,218 with a population growth rate of 1.3%.

Twenty-eight percent of the population is below the poverty line. In 2002, Lebanon spent \$541 million on military expenditure (CIA World Factbook, 2004).

The 1975-91 civil war seriously damaged Lebanon's economic infrastructure, cut national output by half, and all but ended Lebanon's position as a Middle Eastern entrepot and banking hub. Peace enabled the central government to restore control in Beirut, begin collecting taxes, and regain access to key port and government facilities. Economic recovery was helped by a financially sound banking system and resilient small- and medium-scale manufacturers. Family remittances, banking services, manufactured and farm exports, and international aid provided the main sources of foreign exchange. Lebanon's economy made impressive gains since the launch in 1993 of "Horizon 2000," the government's \$20 billion reconstruction program. Real GDP grew from 1994 to 1997, only to slow down in 1998 and plummet in 2003. During the 1990s, annual inflation fell to almost 0% from more than 100%. Lebanon has rebuilt much of its superficial infrastructure but still confronts serious economic challenges. It has funded reconstruction by borrowing heavily - mostly from domestic banks. In order to reduce the ballooning national debt, the re-installed Hariri government began an economic austerity program to rein in government expenditures, increase revenue collection, and privatize state enterprises. The Hariri government met with international donors at the Paris II conference in November 2002 to seek bilateral assistance restructuring its domestic debt at lower rates of interest. While privatization of state-owned enterprises had not occurred by the end of 2003, massive receipts from donor nations stabilized government finances throughout 2002 and 2003 (CIA World Factbook 2004).

Lebanon has made progress toward rebuilding its political institutions since 1991 and the end of the destructive 16-year civil war. Since the end of the war, the Lebanese have conducted

several successful elections, most of the militias have been weakened or disbanded, and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) have extended central government authority over about two-thirds of the country. Hizballah, the radical Shi'a party, retains its weapons. Syria maintains about 16,000 troops in Lebanon, based mainly east of Beirut and in the Bekaa Valley. Syria's troop deployment was legitimized by the Arab League during Lebanon's civil war and in the Ta'if Accord. Damascus justifies its continued military presence in Lebanon by citing Beirut's requests and the failure of the Lebanese Government to implement all of the constitutional reforms in the Ta'if Accord. In May 2000, Israel withdrew from its security zone in southern Lebanon (CIA World Factbook, 2004).

### **Progress towards Goal 2**

Lebanon's achievement in educational attainment is significant. Net enrolment in primary education reached 98.3 percent in 2000, up from 97.6 percent in 1996. The percentage of students completing primary education increased from 91.1 percent in 1997, to 95.3 percent in 2000; and recent studies indicate that the literacy rate for those aged 15-24 reached 97.5 percent in 2000 (UNDP, 2003; UNDP, 2003c).

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Net enrolment in primary education</b>	97.6	98.3	100
<b>Proportion of students who have completed grade 5</b>	91.1	95.3	100
<b>Literacy rate of the 15-24 years age group</b>	98.9	97.5	100

Source: UNDP 2003

There has been a notable promotion of basic education at the national level in recent years. Education accounted for 11 percent of GDP in 1999. The share of government expenditure on general education varied from 7 percent in 1993 to 6.31 percent in 1996 and 0.06 percent in

1999, and the budget for primary education increased from 1.6 percent on GDP in 1993 to 2.3 percent in 1998. Expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total government expenditure on education increased from 56 percent in 1993 to 65 percent in 1998 (UNICEF, 2003d).

However, the high primary enrolment rates are mitigated by concerns regarding the quality of education in the country. Only 65 percent of children in grade 4 and 66 percent of those in grade 8 possess the basic set of skills accredited the national level. One consequence of the decline in the quality of public education in the 1980s was increased enrolment in private schools, a trend that has reversed in recent years due to the deterioration of the economic situation; enrolment was 30.6 percent in public schools, 56.1 percent in private schools, and 13.4 percent in private, not-for-profit schools in 1999-2000 (UIS 2002; UNDP 2003).

Gender disparities in access to primary education in the country are minute. Dropout rates are higher for boys (7.8 percent) than girls (5.5 percent), and more girls completed grade 5 with 87.7 percent compared to 79.6 percent of boys in 2000. This is primarily a result of the earlier entry of boys into the labor market due to poverty and socio-economic pressures. On the other hand, the percentage of boys attending private schools is higher (52.4 percent) than that of girls (48.7 percent) (UNICEF, 2003d; UNDP, 2003).

Regional disparities in access to education are characteristic of Lebanon. Illiteracy is higher in deprived regions of the country, 30.5 percent in Akkar, compared to 7.7 percent in Aley. Gross total enrolment rates vary in different regions, reaching 82.5 percent in Mount Lebanon, 80.3 percent in Beirut, 78.5 percent in South Lebanon, decreasing to 74.3 percent in Bekaa, and 74.1 percent in North Lebanon. A higher percentage of private schools are concentrated in Beirut

and Mount Lebanon compared to other regions of the country (18 percent) in South Lebanon and the Bekaa, and 20 percent in North Lebanon. In terms of the distribution of schools per region, Beirut and Mount Lebanon encompass a higher percentage of private schools (58.7 percent and 51.7 percent respectively), while other regions have a higher percentage of public schools (56.2 percent and 52.4 percent in South Lebanon and the Bekaa, respectively). North Lebanon has the greatest percentage of public schools at 66.5 percent (UNDP, 2003).

### **Challenges**

The implementation of a national strategy to ensure primary education for all by 2015 is a challenge to be met. A committee, set up to formulate a national plan of action in agreement with the guidelines of World Forum on Education (Dakar, 2000), was expected to have completed a report on the priority fields of intervention in 2002. However, the draft was found inadequate in key areas and necessitated additional input. Moreover, the law stipulating free and compulsory primary education has not yet been fully implemented. Figures presented by UNICEF in a seminar held at the Lebanese parliament in 2002, showed that 1,200 children aged 6 were not enrolled in any educational institution, and that school dropout rates represented 30 percent of total enrolment. The primary reason was the deterioration of economic standards, with 54.3 percent of non-enrolment due to poor economic conditions. Expenditure on education constitutes 13.1 percent of the family budget, third after expenses related to food and transportation (UNICEF, 2004).

The full implementation of the revised curricula of 1998, delayed due to the lack of adequate human and physical resources, though a teacher-training program had been initiated by the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD), in cooperation with the Directorate General of Education. Problems have resulted from public expenditure

appropriations. Around 82 percent of public expenditure on education is used for salaries, 75 percent of teaching staff and 7 percent for administrative personnel (Lebanon, 2001).

Another challenge is the low correlation between the quality of education and the high teacher/student ratio, estimated at 1:9 compared to a global ratio of 1:15-20. Finally, there is a high proportion of students who leave primary school and move directly to the labor market, rather than continuing in secondary education (UNICEF, 2003d).

### **Policies and Programs**

The Council of Ministers in 1994, adopted the educational system rehabilitation plan, an important step towards reforming the educational system and the implementing of new curricula in 1998 (UNDP, 2003).

In March 1998, the law on compulsory primary education was enacted, following advocacy efforts by UNICEF and several organizations involved in child rights, in coordination with the Parliamentary Committee for the Rights of the Child, providing the basis for ensuring primary education for all. This was a significant milestone and efforts are now required towards the implementation of this law. This may be realized in terms of providing classrooms with proper conditions for all concerned age groups, therefore limiting dropout rates for early entry into the labor market particularly in poor families and in rural areas. The Lebanese government has also ratified the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention of the International Labor Organization #138. Lebanon has also made a commitment to the implementation of the decisions taken by the World Education Forum held in Dakar and has appointed a committee to formulate a national plan for "Education for All" (UNESCO, 2000).

## **Progress towards Goal 3- Target 4**

### **Enrollment rates**

Lebanon has made significant progress towards achieving gender equality in educational attainment. As noted in Goal 2, largely gender inequality is insignificant. The ratio of girls to boys has significantly improved over the past two decades when primary enrolment had been less than 80 percent for girls compared to 90 percent for boys. This gap was wider for other education levels, where enrolment for 15-19 year olds was less than 40 percent for girls, compared to more than 50 percent for boys and secondary enrolment, the age group 20-24 of years, was less than 10 percent for girls and more than 25 percent for boys (UNDP, 2003; ESCWA, 2002b).

Dropout rates increase after grade 5 for girls and boys alike. It has been indicated in a UNICEF Multi Cluster survey that 95.3 percent of students who enter grade one reach grade five, with a reversed gender gap (97 percent for girls compared to 93.7 percent for boys. The Beqaa has the lowest proportion with 90.7. Female enrollment registers 94.8 percent at the intermediate level, and 67.6 percent in secondary level; compared to 95.3 percent in primary, 93.2 percent in intermediate, and 61.2 percent in secondary for male enrolment. The higher dropout rate for boys is the result of many factors, the most important of which is the early entry into the labor market due to family economic needs (UNICEF, 2003d).

### **Literacy Rates**

Despite the general improvement of enrolment rates at the national level, illiteracy among females remains higher than for males (15.4 percent compared to 7.7 percent, respectively with a national average of 11.6 percent). Regional variations in illiteracy rates are evident, with the highest recorded in North Lebanon (20 percent; 15.6 percent males and 24.3 percent females).

In South Lebanon, the illiteracy rate is 14 percent with 9.8 percent males and 18.3 percent for females. In Nabatiyeh the illiteracy rate stands at 18 percent; 10.8 percent males and 25 percent for females. While in Beirut illiteracy averages at 9.5 percent; 6 percent for males and 12 percent for females. While variation in illiteracy levels between males and females for younger age groups is low (illiteracy at 1.7 percent, 2.3 percent, and 3.9 percent for females aged 10-14, 15-19, and 20-24 years, respectively, the incidence increases with older age groups (Lebanon, 2001; UNDP, 2003).

### **Policies**

The Lebanese constitution affirms equality among all citizens, irrespective of gender. Lebanese laws do not include articles that discriminate between men and women in terms of rights and obligations, except those related to personal status and the right of women to confer their nationality to husband and children. Lebanon ratified, in 1996, the Convention on the elimination of all Types of Discrimination Against Women (UNESCO, 2000).

In order to address the national issue of illiteracy the National Literacy Committee was established in 1995. In 1997, an executive office was established to meet the needs of illiteracy and adult learners, by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Ministry also laid out a plan by 2000 to target this developmental problem. However, due to lack of funds and other “priorities” the program has not been implemented. Other efforts to combat illiteracy include a “functional literacy module” for the 10-18 year old age group with the collaboration of the National Literacy Committee and UNICEF. The Social Development Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs and NGO centers have also organized literacy modules for working children (Lebanon, 2001).

## Conclusion

This chapter examined the two differing educational systems of Yemen and Lebanon in achieving progress toward closing the gender gap in education as specified in the UN Millennium Goals. Both countries present initiative towards achieving the goals. Yemen still lags behind in reaching the goals due to other development problems, including poverty, overpopulation, and high mortality rates. Because the developmental issues that Yemen is wrought with are implications that are cross cut by education, especially girls' education, it is in Yemen's interest to take a greater resolve in promoting gender equality in education. Specifically, what is needed is sound gender analysis in governmental policies. Given that gender disparities in education are heavily influenced by socio-economic conditions, a gendered poverty analysis contributes to a much clearer understanding of gender based educational inequalities. At present, policies are often focused on supply side without reference to or analysis of the demand side constraints that inhibit girls' full participation in schooling. This failure may reflect several factors: lack of political will to act on gender inequalities; a lack of capacity to translate policy intentions into actions; weaknesses inherent in the processes of developing policies, specifically Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs); and lack of consultation to ensure that women's perspectives on poverty are understood and incorporated into strategy formulation (World Bank, 2001b).

In summary, in order for Yemen to achieve the Education Millennium Goals, in closing the gender gap in education, it should (UNDP 2003; Yemen Supreme Council of Women's Affairs, 2002):

- Improve Primary level education for boys and girls
- Close the gap between boys and girls' enrolment at the primary level
- Promote girls education through social, cultural, religious and political arenas



- Reallocate educational expenditures to place more emphasis on primary education
- Improve girls' enrollment and persistence at the primary and secondary levels
- Improve adult literacy for teenage and adult women.

Although Lebanon does not have issues in gender disparity, there are impoverished areas of the country that are affected by lack of proper public schools and have a high rate of female illiteracy. Thus, in order to close these gaps, the following must be done (UNICEF, 2004b):

- Implement free and compulsory education laws, especially dealing with child labor
- Reallocate resources from military spending to education and training
- Furbish public school infrastructure, minimizing the gap between private and public education
- Develop educational system especially tailored for drop-outs from ages 13-19 years.
- Provide literacy training for women in rural areas
- Allocate budget to the Ministry of Social Affairs in order to implement the already developed illiteracy and adult learning plan

#### **Chapter Four: Socio- Political Determinants of Girls' Education**

This chapter will provide an overview of the determinants that influence girls' education in the Arab World. The first influence to be discussed is the Arab region's diversity. This entails religion, economy, geography and population which all impact on basic education. The second major influence on girls' education is household/community level barriers. This involves demand and supply, cultural restraints, and economic restraints on the household. The third major factor is school cost barriers, which come in the forms of economic barriers, such as tuition and uniform fees, hygiene, like the absence of school latrines, religious education, gender based violence, curriculum, and teacher's role. Finally, often in the Arab World political visions, priorities and approaches often determine the direction and purpose of educational systems. These educational policy obstacles will be discussed in the last section on policy level barriers.

### **The Arab Region's Diversity**

Despite the region's uniformity in language and religion, the Arab States region is more marked by its diversity. A great number of minority, ethnic and religious groups inhabit the region. Other than the dominant religion, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroasterism also subsist in the area. In addition, a number of them have many minority groups (Rihani & Parker 1997).

Economically, the region is considered a part of the developing world, but national GNPs range from \$319 per capita in Sudan to \$18,430 per capita in the United Arab Emirates. This broad range exists because the region is the supply of more than one fourth of the world's oil production and possesses more than half of the world's known oil reserves. These oil producing countries, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq are among the wealthiest in the world. However, where countries lack oil or marketable exports, people have a meager

subsistence. These economic disparities have resulted in significant differences in the resources that states have been able to devote to education (UNDP, 2003a).

Geographically, the region extends from Mauritania in the west to Iraq in the east, and from the Syrian Arab Republic in the north to Sudan in the south. Twelve of the region's countries belong geographically to West Asia, five to North Africa and three to sub-Saharan Africa. Some of the countries, such as Sudan (2,505,814 sq. km) and Algeria (2,381,753 sq. km), are very large; others like Qatar (22,015 sq.km) and Kuwait (20,720 sq. km ) are very small. National populations range from over 1/2million in Bahrain and Qatar to close to70 million in Egypt. Much of the region is mountainous and difficult to reach. The region has established urban centers, yet about 40 percent of the population lives in non-urban areas, and nomadic groups dominate some regions. Further, diversity exists even within countries. Algeria, Iraq, Egypt and Morocco have both thriving cities with the latest technologies and conveniences and also rural areas with thatched-roofed buildings and no electricity or plumbing (UNESCO 2002; Population World 2004).

The rate of population growth varies considerably from country to country: the estimated mean growth rate over the last decade ranges from 1.5 in Tunisia to 4.8 in Yemen. Overall, the region's population increased relatively quickly, the mean growth rate exceeding 2% in three-quarters of the countries. The fertility rate is also high: more than 3 children per woman in three countries out of four; this rate varies from 2.3 (Tunisia, Lebanon) to 7.6 in Yemen. The region also has a very young population: 39% of the total is less than 14 years of age (UNESCO, 2002).

All of these factors influence basic education. Vast, emerging populations often strain educational systems that are incapable of expanding as quickly as the population they are supposed to serve. Rural areas and hard-to-reach regions pose particular challenges in providing schools that are close enough for children, and particularly girls, to attend. Diversity within countries requires school systems to implement a variety of instructional approaches and technologies in order to meet the needs of particular communities (Rihani & Parker 1997).

### **Household/Community Level Barriers**

#### **Demand and Supply**

Households are the first place of gender socialization, passing along knowledge, skills and social expectations. Allocating resources is one way households shape gender roles. In extreme cases difference in the allocation of food, healthcare, and attention to young boys and girls mean greater female malnutrition, limiting girls' ability to learn and women's capacity to participate productively in society. Even in less extreme circumstances, family decisions about investing in children's education or about involving sons or daughters in gender typed labor (farming for boys, and household maintenance for girls) promote the reproduction and reinforcement of socially accepted gender roles (Alderman & King 1998).

The division of time and tasks has important implications. If, for example, parents consider it improbable that their daughters will join the labor force and earn income as adults, they may see less justification for sending their daughters to school. This is a reality whether or not women become part of their husband's family after marriage (ESCWA, 2002b).

Likewise, the more sensitive demand for investment in girls is due to parent's perception that investing in girls yields lower returns to the household than investing in boys. In societies

where women are not expected to be economically independent and thus have limited ability to transfer resources to their parents, parents may regard investments in daughters as less desirable. Where parents rely on sons for support in old age, they may perceive lower returns to investing in daughters (Alderman & King 1998). The fact that parents' calculations of private returns do not capture the social benefits from investing in girls' education is a market failure that warrants government intervention.

The opportunity costs of children's time in school-related activities may also be higher for girls than for boys, especially in poor and rural areas, where girls tend to work longer hours than boys when both market and non-market work are considered (Hill & King 1995). This would be so where there are strong gender norms for household tasks and no ready market substitutes. In the absence of information on the opportunity cost of time, several studies have estimated the effect of distance to the nearest school as a way to capture the indirect costs of schooling. The results found that school distance is a greater deterrent to schooling for girls than for boys (Kabeer, 2003a).

### **Cultural Restraints**

The most marked gender inequalities are generally found in societies where women are isolated and denied the opportunity of work outside the home. These limitations tend to be linked with values and rituals that further restrict women's life chances, including "patrilineal principles of inheritance and descent, where family line and property is transmitted through men; patriarchal structures of authority, where families are tightly knit and where most resources are under the control of the senior male" (World Bank, 2001). Patri-local systems of marriage entail women to be immersed into their husband's families after marriage, separating them from their natal families' support. The restrictions on women's movements in the public

domain in such societies reflect the importance attached to the biological paternity of children and the need to control women's sexuality. Denied contact to their own resources and constrained in their capacity to provide for themselves, females tend to be looked upon as economic dependents in these societies (Stromquist, 1989).

Such societies have been and many continue to be characterized by marked son-preference and by discrimination against daughters from the early years of life. This occurs to such an extent that such societies often have excess levels of female mortality and a higher proportion of men to women in the population than is considered 'standard' in the rest of the world (Kabeer, 2003b). Countries in which there are strong cultural preferences for sons also tend to have the greatest levels of gender inequalities (UNDP, 2000). Gender inequalities in education in such societies are simply one aspect of a generalized and systematic discrimination against women and girls.

Such is the case for the Arab countries. The role of the woman as wife, homemaker, and mother is of paramount importance and precedes all her other roles. Although other regions of the developing world, boys are also expected to attend school while girls are anticipated to work at home, marry, and have children, this tradition is most deep-rooted and time-honored in the Arab world. Some Middle Eastern cultures anticipate pubescent girls to interact almost completely with other females until they marry. In such subcultures, parents contain the relations of their daughters with males and therefore do not easily accept co-educational schools or male teachers for their teenage daughters. Others fear the effect that western values, taught in school, may affect girls' attitudes and encourage them to defy and /or discard conventional roles and cultural moral standards (Rihani & Parker 1997).

Social norms play a significant role in explaining why and how gender differentiation occurs, how it becomes legitimized through divisions of labor between men and women, and how this division of labor results in the contributions of girls and boys being valued differently. Where female autonomy is considered unstable or risky, early marriage is used as a means of securing daughters' futures. This especially impedes the educational progress of girls in many countries. In many Arab societies, it is believed that the education of a girl is useless for her final outcome is marriage and so the fruits of this education will be for her new extended family instead of her parents' home. Moreover, early marriage of girls' is encouraged in many countries. For, it is not uncommon for poor families to endorse the early marriage of girls to lighten the family's economic burden. In these circumstances, early marriage (at age 15 or 16) becomes a reason to leave school (El- Sanabary, 1989). This is the case for a selection of Middle Eastern countries. In Iraq 28% of girls were found to marry between the ages of 15-19 years old, compared with 25% of girls in the Syrian Arab Republic and 24% in Yemen. These entrenched beliefs, practices, and traditions directly impact girls' enrollment, particularly at the secondary level (ESCWA, 2002b).

In themselves, changes to the legal age of marriage are unlikely to alter local practices if underlying conditions are not changed. Girls may find themselves at risk of kidnapping on their way to school or within the school grounds by the parents of prospective grooms. Aware of these risks, some parents refuse to send their daughters to school (Kim, Alderman, and Orazem 1998).

### **Economic Constraints**

The interaction between the region's economic structure and its conservative culture, in which traditional gender roles are strongly enforced, is largely responsible for the gender

gap in education. In a recent Demographic and Health Survey of Egypt, women with children ages 6 to 15 were asked, "If parents have one son and one daughter and can send only one child to the university, which child should they send?" While 53 percent of the women said that the decision should depend on the children's capabilities, 39 percent said that the son should go the university, compared with only 8 percent who said that the daughter should go. It was also found that mothers of children who had never attended school were more likely to attribute the cost of education as a rationale for not educating their daughters than for not educating their sons (Fahimi & Moghadam 2003). In Lebanon, it was found that approximately 31.4% of families have reported financial hardship that prevented the continuity of education (UNICEF,2003c).

Several studies have revealed that because of the differences in parental perceptions and opportunities, girls are often withdrawn from school before boys in times of economic and hardship. Girls are more likely to be withdrawn from school at primary or secondary level to contribute to household income (World Bank, 2001).

The problem of school education in various parts of the region, particularly in poor marginalized communities, is to some extent linked to the incidence of child labor. One of the most common reasons for children not attending school is their families' need for them to work. Often their work is unpaid and takes place within the household or on the family farm. Although many of these child laborers work for only a few hours per week, more than half of them are estimated to be working full time on the production of marketable output (ILO, 2002b). There are no reliable global estimates for the number of children engaged in domestic chores and other household work that does not lead to marketable output. However, the number of such children is several times larger than those officially described as being



‘economically active’ and thus as comprising ‘child labor’. Moreover, the girls comprising this category significantly outnumber the boys. The actual data on child labor do not classify girls as being heavily active in child labor because they are considered to be ‘inactive’, engaging, instead in household chores, which are not conventionally recognized as an economic activity. (Bhalotra & Heady 2000). A general overview of the present literature reflects that the data for in work and out of school children is greater for girls in Asia.

In Lebanon, child labor in age group 10-14 years is a major obstacle to school enrolment, causing 58% of children to remain out of the educational system and forcing the rest (42%) to dropout at the elementary level. The educational and economic status of the family plays an important role in determining the fate of children. Indeed, all “young” workers are found to belong most often to very modest families where the father is an unskilled laborer and mother illiterate (UNICEF, 2003c).

### **School Cost Barriers**

The first section of this chapter showed that household decisions to send children to school are strongly influenced by the economic, social, and cultural contexts in which they find themselves. They are also, however, affected by the terms on which schooling is made available to them, and by its quality. These issues of ‘supply-side’ that preclude costs, school distance, available school facilities, and school quality and content can significantly impact upon girls’ attendance (USAID, 1990). This section examines the nature and impact of some of these constraints.

## **Economics**

The direct costs of schooling to households are made up of tuition or other fees, and the costs of purchasing books, materials, school uniforms and transport to school. Household decisions to educate the children respond to changes in the cost of these items. Evidence indicates that enrolments among the poor are much more sensitive to cost increases than is the case with richer households (Tomasevski, 2003).

There is strong evidence from more qualitative sources that direct costs are one of the most important causes of non-attendance and early drop-out from school. Studies indicate that girls and boys enrollments rise when school travel costs are reduced (Stromquist, 1987). In lower-income countries and agricultural regions (i.e. Yemen, Sudan, rural Morocco, rural Tunisia, and rural Algeria) the loss of girls' labor in the home and the field is an unaffordable cost. In Algeria, for example the cost of education to the average household and returns on education are crucial factors affecting dropout rates. The existing literature argues that school dropouts and child labor can be decreased by lowering the direct and indirect costs of schooling. The costs of investing in girls' and boys' human capital may differ. Even if tuition is similar for boys and girls, uniform and travel costs may be higher for girls. Transportation costs may be higher if parents want to avoid their daughters to walk long distance or alone, to school. One of the most costly expenditures are uniforms (Khandkher, Lavy and Filmer 1994). Although primary education in Djibouti is free, clothes and school supplies are a financial burden for parents. Not all parents can afford these amenities in a country where about three-quarters of the population are poor (Africa News Service, 2004). Additionally, clothing costs may be higher where parents are reluctant to send girls to school without proper attire. In Egypt and Morocco, direct costs of schooling are considerably higher for girls than for boys (UNESCO, 2003).

## **Hygiene**

Another important component for ensuring girls' full participation in schooling is the provision of gender-aware infrastructure. Parents are less likely to send girls to school if they feel that their children are at risk health wise. The absence of latrines for girls can be decisive.

Deterrents mentioned by parents in Djibouti, include the lack of toilet facilities (Africa News Service 2004). Where enrolments increase rapidly, pressure on school infrastructure can result in overcrowding and in poor sanitation and hygiene if there are insufficient toilets. As with reducing the distance between schools and homes, the case for investing in water, toilets and basic school infrastructure is most persuasively made by governments that have remarkable progress in closing gender gaps and universalizing education (Lockheed & Verspoor 1993).

## **Religious Education- A Double Edged Sword**

Faith based organizations affect the education of girls two-fold- by providing opportunities for them to attend school and by influencing the content of education in ways that reflect local beliefs and practices. Evidence suggests that religious schools have had a positive impact on enrolment (UNESCO, 2003). However, studies show that religious schools partially boost the enrolment of girls due to the sex-stereotyped messages they provide which reflect gender-differentiated community norms. Accordingly, most religious schools tend to reinforce stereotypes of women as submissive and dependent, rather than undermine them. Religious education can contribute strongly to boosting parity for girls, by offering them safe spaces to enter the public domain and receive an education. However, religious schools are often conservative institutions, establishing to preserve and protect traditions, of which many are likely to uphold gender differences between women and men rather than eradicate them. Faith-

based organizations generally lag far behind other non-state providers of education in giving an explicit commitment to gender equality (Haw, 1998).

### **Gender based violence**

Another cause of underachievement and high dropout rates are linked to gender-based violence. These forms of violence may be explicit in the case of excessive corporal punishment, physical assault, verbal abuse and use of pupils for free labor. They may be manifested in forms of sexual intimidation such as sexual harassment or assault, including sexual relationships between teacher and pupil (Leach et al., 2003). Thus, violent schools may have far-reaching consequences for gender relations between men and women later in life. Interventions against gender violence in school are essential to lay the foundations for equitable relations between men and women in society (CAWTAR, 2002).

### **Curriculum**

Expansion of schooling achieved on the basis of conventional notions of appropriate social roles for girls and boys would seriously hinder progress towards the 2015 goals. Sexism in textbooks requires attention, with women often stereotyped in roles of mothers and wives in schoolbooks. In a survey of school textbooks in the Arab States region, it was found that there was an overrepresentation of women in traditional roles such as mother, grandmother, wife, teacher, nurse; women were attributed with traits such as weakness, kindness, and tenderness; and there was an absence of personal names, ages or identification referring to women in the texts. Discriminatory content and bias in textbooks serves to confirm the broader social disparities that hinder girls from benefiting from educational opportunities (Abu Nasr, Lorfing, and Mikati 1983).

### **Teacher's role**

Evidence confirms that the lowest levels of feminization of primary teaching staff are found in countries where overall enrolment levels are the lowest and gender disparities highest. Low levels of female representation are found in some Arab States (Djibouti and Mauritania). In countries where women have low socio-economic status, the feminization of the teaching profession provides a means of empowering women. It also provides encouragement for parents to educate girls and for young women to pursue their studies. Countries with high gender disparities and low levels of education often suffer from low levels of female teachers. Such is the case with Djibouti, where female teachers represent 30% of teaching staff at the primary level and 20% at the secondary level (UNESCO 2003; UIS 2002).

### **Policy Level Barriers**

While it may seem there are certain economic and cultural constraints preventing girls from advancing in education, the heart of the problem may lie at the top, with policymakers. Extensive surveys conducted at the grassroots level found that education was an activity that children stopped only out of a constraint, not because of a lack of desire. Given this demand from the grass roots, the main 'cultural resistance' may be the reluctance of national and international policymakers to make education a priority and to implement measures that can be implemented. The special situation of females has been indiscernible to primarily male policy makers and girls' education as an issue has only lately been focused on (UNICEF, 2004). This section outlines the policymaking constraints that have hindered girls from pursuing their right to an education.

## **Political Context**

The Arab world's political context has generally had a considerable affect on education, particularly girls' education. Political visions, precedents, and approaches often decide the course and function of educational systems. Additionally, the political environment also fundamentally impact on educational systems.

“Major events and activities resulting from the political situation such as civil wars, political violence, armed conflicts, economic sanctions, totalitarianism, and instability have temporary but often serious impacts on female education and specifically on girls' access to and retention in schools” (Rihani & Parker p.23).

Many countries within the Arab region either witnessed or continue to witness prolonged armed conflicts. These countries' educational systems have decreased resources, damaged educational infrastructure, “brain-drain” of teachers, instability affecting the access and retention of school children, and incessant interruptions of the learning process. Moreover, due to the area's political situation, the whole region is conflict-prone, often ensuing in the continuing escalation of violence (Rihani & Parker, 1997).

It is estimated that half of the 104 million out of school children, two-thirds of whom are girls, live in countries in the midst of or recovering from conflict. Of the twenty-five countries with the lowest levels of female adult literacy, ten are either experiencing armed conflict or recovering from it, including Sudan. It is also significant that of the twenty-five countries targeted recently by UNICEF for accelerated action to improve girls' participation in education, eight have experienced recent conflict within their borders. From the Arab countries, these include Djibouti, Sudan, and Yemen (Kirk, 2003). The Machel report provides ample evidence that armed conflict particularly disrupts the education of girls (Machel, 2002).

During conflict, girls may not be allowed to go to school because parents fear attacks on the way. In southern Sudan, the demand that girls care for younger siblings and children has considerably increased during civil war, as adults and particularly women have become more engaged in livelihood activities than during pre-war periods. Recent conflicts have resulted in huge refugee populations, making demands on an already overstretched education system. Among the major concentrations of displaced persons in the Arab countries are in Sudan and Iraq. The majority are women and children (Deng, 2003).

Additionally, the military expenditure of Arab governments in contrast to both industrial and developing countries is much more significant. Developed and industrial countries spend respectively 5.4 and 5.5 percent of their GNP on military while Arab countries spend 12.6 percent of their GNP on the military. In fact, six of the Arab countries were ranked among the top 20 countries in the world in military expenditure, including Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (Nationmaster, 2003). UNESCO ranked two of these countries, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, among the top 20 countries in the world in education expenditure (UIS, 2003).

At a higher level, national economies, political priorities, and budget allocations influence how well educational programs are funded. While funds were available in the 1970s, economic setbacks have stifled and now sometimes threaten previous gains. Countries are seeing the monies become less as the demand for education increases (Tansel & Gungor 1998).

### **The Rule of Law**

Exacerbating the situation for girls' education is that in the Arab countries, gender discrimination is, at times codified in law, mostly in family law or civil codes. Women within

the region must often acquire consent from a male relative, typically her husband or father, before looking for employment, requesting a loan, establishing a business, or traveling. As a result, women inherit smaller shares of family wealth. Thus, families invest in boys' education more than girls' education (Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003).

Moreover, many Arab countries do not hold compulsory and free education laws. As a result, the poor who cannot afford to send their children to schools are left out. Furthermore, the issue of child labor or the phenomenon of street children is not approached by countries where it is most prevalent (CAWTHAR 2002). The State of the Children in Lebanon Report (UNICEF 2003c) estimated that the implementation of the principle of compulsory and free education would eliminate 81.3% of the reasons that prevent school enrolment, notably those related to lack of parental desire, absence of a public school and high cost of education.

### **Conclusion**

As this chapter has indicated, the challenges of achieving parity do not culminate in the achievement of equal numbers of boys and girls in school. Many of the challenges facing girls' equal access and completion of education begin in the home and are further hindered by social norms and cultural restraints, At school, girls also confront other economical, physical, social, and psychological barriers that can deter them from completing their rightful education.

Moreover, lack of political resolve from Arab governments has exacerbated the road to achieving gender equality in education in the Arab world. Thus gender equality is not a purely quantitative goal it relates to the wider issues of equal opportunity, treatment and outcomes of education and society more generally (UNESCO 2004).



## **Chapter Five: Strategies to Achieve the Education Targets**

Achieving the education targets will require governments to place basic education at the heart of their development policies. The international community will also need to give priority to the education targets in their support for national poverty reduction plans and programs. There is no single short-term solution, no one strategy that ensures success. A combination of measures is required, backed by a collective commitment to sustain support of the Education Millennium Goals. There are key priorities that the Arab States must address on the governmental, civil and international levels.

### **Priorities for the international community**

According to the Human Development Report (HDR) 2003 (UNDP 2003b), more and effective aid is needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goal by 2015. Of the 49 least developed countries, 31 receive less aid today (8.5% of their average GDP) than in 1990 (12.9%).

The Human Development Report (HDR) 2003 (UNDP 2003b) urges the international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to put the MDGs at the center of their analytical, advisory and financing efforts for every developing country.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) do not adequately support the MDGs, the HDR cites. When preparing PRSPs, governments are advised to be realistic and as a result, PRSPs fall short of identifying the resources required to meet the goals.

Estimates of the additional cost of achieving the Millennium Development Goal for education-universal primary education completion by 2015-range between \$9.1 billion and \$38 billion per year (UNDP 2003b). Associated with the \$38 billion estimated by the World Bank, most of which would be borne by developing countries themselves, is a \$5 billion to \$7billion funding

gap that would need to be filled by external aid. Between now and 2015 it might mean an additional aid bill of around \$60 billion. In order to reach the Education Millennium Goals, greater financial commitment should be made by the G8 countries, including France, Germany, USA, and UK. They should also collaborate with the multi-lateral agencies, the United Nations organizations, on the Millennium Development Goal initiatives in order to make them a reality (Oxfam International 2001).

The Arab States currently receive approximately 16% of bilateral education aid. They receive more aid per capita, per school-age child, per illiterate, and per out-of-school child than the global average (UNESCO 2003). Several Arab countries, including Yemen, Sudan, Djibouti, and Mauritania are involved in programs with UNICEF Girls Initiative and the World Bank Education for All Fast Track Initiative, aimed at aiding these countries to speed up their progress in achieving gender equality in education by 2015. In order for projects of UNICEF and the World Bank Fast Track Initiative to be fulfilled, additional funding from bilateral aid is needed. Moreover, it is important that this funding be allocated properly by individual governments (UNICEF 2004; World Bank 2003).

### **Priorities for governments**

#### **Adopt the Educational MDGs into the National Education Plans**

Just as Arab governments have adopted EFA plans into their National Education Plan, so it is important that this continue with the Educational MDGs. The state must play the leading role in promoting equal education for all. Certain governments like Lebanon and Yemen have initiated the first steps of adopting the Educational MDGs into their national plans. Legislative changes, reforming curricula, managing incentive schemes, increasing the number of educational facilities in underserved areas and improve teacher training are all endeavors

requiring strong public commitment, albeit with the support of other non-state actors (UNESCO 2003; UNICEF 2004; Fahimi 2003).

### **Build Political Will to Reallocate Budgets**

Fundamental for an effective national plan is the demonstration of education as a national priority. This affirmation includes supporting education for all and highlighting girl's education as a primary target in the national political agenda. In order , for this to be realized, political will must transcend rhetoric and be channeled through the proper allocation and implementation of resources. Qatar, Bahrain, U.A.E, Oman, Jordan, and Kuwait all set literacy and basic education as priorities and achieved at least 95 percent gross primary enrolment by 1988 (Rihani & Parker 1997).

Available Arab States statistics show that countries with successful educational programs generally spend from about 7-15 percent of their government expenditure and from 2-7 percent of their GNP on education. National education budgets should reflect educational priorities. For example, budget allocation should concentrate resources on primary level of education and smaller amounts on secondary and tertiary levels. This is based on the premise that larger numbers of primary students will supply sufficient numbers of secondary and tertiary level students to complete the educational cycles. Unfortunately, certain Arab country education budgets (e.g. Sudan and Yemen) support an inverse relationship, more money allocated for tertiary education than primary (UNDP 2004). Budgets should reflect consideration of the current supply-and demand-side issues. Allocation should include funds for construction, staffing, and materials as well as teacher training, parent involvement, and educational mobilization (UIS 2002).

Many Arab leaders may have demonstrated a commitment to equality and the universal right to basic education. Others may need to be convinced that improving girls' education is important for economic, social and developmental as well as humanistic reasons. Participation in highly visible meetings, group presentations, and international conferences can become the conduit for convincing reluctant leaders to include girls' education as a part of their platform.

Discussions should emphasize the positive implications outlined in Chapter One.

Documentation for these benefits and particularly statistics should be circulated to government and the media, with the media taking an active role in broadcasting the benefits (DFID 2001; Rugh 2000).

### **Adopt Legislative Change**

Two countries with respectively very low and low primary enrolment rates-Sudan and Saudi Arabia- have no law requiring children to attend school. While compulsory education laws are not prerequisites for success (Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman for example have reached universal primary education without compulsory education), the presence of laws intimates the national importance of literacy, therefore hindering reluctance of keeping girls at home. Moreover, laws justify parents and communities to play a role in advocacy and public policy debates. Countries should assess the enforcement of existing compulsory education laws and create modifications to make them more receptive to present priorities (UNICEF, 2004).

Legislative change and reform are essential for gender equality to take root. Property and inheritance rights and the establishment of gender equality in family law are cornerstones for securing economic and social justice for women. These legislative reforms are fundamental for change to evolve in the educational sphere (Fahimi & Moghadam, 2003). Strong supportive frameworks must complement legislation. Ethiopia enacted an overall strategy that pays

attention to gender issues in curriculum design and places emphasis on recruiting and training female teachers. Complementary strategies were adopted such as raising the minimum age at marriage of girls from 15 to 18, ensuring equal employment opportunities and encouraging women to take up jobs in the civil service (UNESCO 2003).

The direct and indirect costs of schooling to households impede access to education.

Abolishing primary-school fees can have a major impact on boosting enrolment of both girls and boys. The need to work is one of the most important causes of under-enrolment.

Accordingly, measures to reduce or remove the need for child labor represent a potentially important means of increasing school enrolments among both boys and girls (Bhalotra and Heady 2000). Legislation banning child labor is desirable, but it has no effect on the numerous children employed by their parents. Because the root of child labor is linked to poverty, pro-poor growth policies and measures to reduce discrimination in employment and wages against women are required. Moreover, investments in the quality and availability of schooling will also likely hamper child labor when the decision to end school is compared to the pay off of work (Rugh 2000).

### **Promote Intra-Regional Networking**

Strong networking and collaboration among the 20 Arab countries will aid the region in the development of a regional body of knowledge, capability and resources that could enhance individual countries and the region in general. Educational linkages, in the form of conferences, workshops, seminars, organized by governments, donors and regional institutions, can develop the vision of girls' education by encouraging collaboration, accumulating and circulating information and connecting diverse groups.

In the past, Egypt, Sudan, and Jordan have had a significant number of teachers migrate to the Arab oil-producing countries. It is evident that in many of these countries these teachers have been the stamina of their educational systems and that their existence promoted the educational advances in those countries. The brain drain of teachers, from Egypt and Sudan, particularly has had a negative impact on the educational development of these two countries. To create more balanced mechanisms and a dual commitment, other exchange avenues could be explored. An example would be a “school twinning” project, where teachers from oil-rich countries could be matched with teachers from least developed Arab countries. This type of exchange mechanism will strengthen the feelings of solidarity in the Arab region and will enhance the intra-regional linkages (Rihani & Parker 1997).

#### **Mobilize Partners: Develop Partnerships That Support Girls Education**

Government and the diverse organizations of the private sector, the media, and the business sector all together need to institute the appropriate environment, incentives, and support that will encourage wider demand for educating girls and women. Each Arab country needs to identify a lead agency that will take the initiative in identifying and mobilizing the partners and creating a Coalition for Education for All. The Coalition should bring together the several actual or potential partners involved in meeting basic learning needs: e.g., family and community organizations, voluntary associations, religious bodies, teachers’ unions, employers, the media, political parties, women’s organizations, cooperatives, universities, and other institutions as well as education authorities and other government departments and services. Through the partners, the Coalition will organize activities that will result in social, economic, and educational policies that are supportive of girls’ education as specified in the UN Millennium Goals (UNICEF 2004).

Additionally, public information campaigns can be utilized to persuade parents of the significance of girls' education and of its individual, family, and societal benefits. As with other campaigns embarked on in many countries to promote health causes, organized and targeted public campaigns can provide information (i.e., explain the benefits of the law) in order to persuade thought and behavior. In the Arab States, these educational public campaigns might be more efficient if they illuminate the Moslem religion's support to basic education. Campaigns should highlight that Islam has with regard to the responsibilities of Moslems to educate themselves. Quotations from the Koran and the Hadith, emphasizing the importance of a woman's education, should be used through different forms of media. Such a quote would be a quotation of the prophet, "Every Moslem, male and female, is requested to seek knowledge." Public campaigns or social and educational mobilization campaigns are more likely to be successful if they are customized to country-specific needs, have clear objectives and messages, and they target well-defined audiences (Rihani & Parker 1997).

Other important collaborative efforts to create the appropriate environment and offer incentives should include:

- Build primary schools closer to communities
- Build latrines wherever schools lack them
- Provide sex-segregated schools in appropriate regions
- Make schools more attractive, stimulating and accommodating places
- Develop/adapt curricula and teacher training that are more gender sensitive
- Provision of scholarships
- School feeding programs

## **Promote Localization and Decentralization**

‘Localization- the involvement of local communities in a particular process- and decentralization- the distribution of powers from a central authority to regional and local authorities- have been promoted as strategies for improving school management and thus enrolment and retention’ (Rihani & Parker, 1997).

Localizing functions in the educational systems is backed up by sound theory. Planned and implemented properly, localization becomes a vital element in successful educational strategies. Localization involves larger contribution by the local community and parents in the planning and management of the local education system. Greater participation and involvement translates into better knowledge of the educational system, closer linkages with the school, and better understanding of the nature of the teaching/learning process. Localization might also translate into improved advocacy and participation in decisions affecting schooling and education. These factors result in greater support to schools. Thus, increased support of parents and communities to schools leads to an increase in their children’s participation in schools. Community and parent participation are positively correlated between with an increased percentage of attendance and retention of children in school (Rihani & Parker 1997).

Decentralization, entails the distribution of power, services and obligations from the central level to the regional and local levels. Decentralization includes localization but also entails regional and local school administrators in designing, implementing, and assessing educational programs and services (UNICEF 2004; UNESCO 2003)

Most Arab States’ ministries of education should make a realistic transition from profoundly centralized systems to systems that create closer ties between people and education. The



decentralized system for primary education and secondary education should be allowed to gradually evolve. Two of the major considerations for any system of decentralization are leadership and unit capacity (e.g., the district, the school) in order to accept responsibilities to be decentralized (Work 2002).

Ministries of education need to:

- Perform capacity evaluations at the regional, district, and local stages
- Attain theoretical and hands-on knowledge in implementing decentralization
- Offer leadership, direction, and training to regional and local staff
- Develop a comprehensive plan for the decentralization of basic education

This plan should include comprehensible, succinct policies for educational decentralization as well as financial, operational, and managerial decentralization. In order to maintain such policies, systems should be designed and implemented. The all-encompassing decentralization plan should consider the following issues:

- Community involvement
- Human resources and infrastructure restraints
- Institutionalized standards
- Specific responsibilities assigned to each level
- Mutual responsibilities among levels
- Training needs at various levels
- Capacity building at various levels

Some positive examples of decentralization in the Arab region include Jordan and Oman. In Jordan, (Work, 2002), the ministry of education has delegated financial and administrative authority to local units, reorganized the ministry to be more responsive to local governments

and allowed decision-makers to promote participatory budget development. District governors advertise, recruit and hire civil service staff through personnel units. In Oman (Oman, 2001), local support councils have been established to contribute to the running of schools, representing the school itself, students and parents. Parents' councils are empowered to make proposals on admission policies and student achievement.

### **Priorities for Civil Society**

The potential role of NGOs is significant. In each one of the Arab countries there are large numbers of NGOs that are involved in improving the quality of life of their communities. Because of their grassroots experiences and their decentralized, independent voices, NGOs are well placed to take advantage of initial moves towards decentralization and in some countries (even though a small number of Arab countries) the growing shift of power from central governments to the people. Their role as intermediaries between the community and the regional and central administrations is key and can be utilized in a most productive way (DFID 2001; UNESCO 2003).

In many countries, NGOs are boosting state efforts to achieve Universal Primary Education in innovative ways. In southern Sudan, CARE's work in sensitizing communities about the importance of sending children to school, in particular girls, is reported to have increased girls enrolment by 96%. NGOs have also played a role in literacy training in the Arab world. For reform efforts on the literacy front to have a deep impact they must be used as a tool to address other human development problems. If literacy programs are to succeed, they must be tied to improved job opportunities that are appropriate to the economies of individual countries. Literacy programs must employ curricula that meet the practical needs of pupils (UNESCO 2003).

In addition, literacy reform can lead directly to the creation of new jobs, not just through the training and employment of new teachers, but also through the construction of new schools and public libraries (especially in rural areas) that are friendly to the norms of conservative, traditional societies. For example, building new schools and libraries that are exclusively for girls (and which are therefore deemed safe places to send daughters) is a good investment. One of the Greater Middle East Initiative's central goals should be to embed the importance of literacy so deeply into a given country's economy and culture that the costs of being illiterate and raising illiterate children become prohibitive (UNESCO 2003).

Literacy training is increasingly combined with the acquisition of skills in the areas of saving and credit, maternity, health and family planning. One recent study found attendance rates of 80% in programmes with an income-generating component, compared with 20% without it (UNESCO 2003). One such example of a literacy program in the Arab States, is run by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at the Lebanese American University. One of the premier programs empowering women is the basic living skills program (BLSP) conducted by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World at the Lebanese American University (IWSAW 2004). This program, a non-formal integrated educational kit in Arabic is geared toward illiterate and semi-illiterate women in the Arab World and has been used by social workers from NGOs, governmental institutions and international organizations in Lebanon and a number of Arab countries, including Morocco, Kuwait, Bahrain, Tunisia, Iraq, Cyprus, and Egypt. According to the Director of IWSAW, Mrs. Mona Khalaf (May 15, 2004), "BLSP has a tremendous impact on women's lives, with 90% of the women who were later interviewed, becoming employed, and 98.5% reporting changes in their daily habits and more than half taking decisive roles."

In Lebanon, the Arab NGO Network, led by its Director Ziad Abdel Samad organized a three day strategic seminar on the UN Millennium Goals, with Gender Equality and Education as special targets. Mr. Abdel Samad (June 30, 2004) criticizes Arab regimes attempt to dominate and prevent civil institutions from working, leading to problems in the relationship between the state and private institutions. He believes that the Arab region is facing a challenge in the lack of democracy and the constant breaches of human rights. Abdel Samad argues that the role of civil society is curtailed with development projects restricted to governmental organizations and departments, which suffer from inefficiency and lack of transparency and international standards.

A strong partnership between civil society organizations and the private sector remains the best guarantee to achieve sustained development and combat poverty, believes Mr. Abdel Samad. Nongovernmental organizations have their particular role to play in proposing appropriate policies and assisting in their implementation. "The lack of a MDG ideal model requires us to launch a regional campaign for the Arab territories," he insists. The expected outcome of the strategic planning workshop is to find a common language about the aims and the scope of the MDG campaign in the Arab region. During this time, a strategic framework and mapping will be identified for the regional campaign. A clear agenda of events in the coming two years and establishment of communications and follow-up mechanisms will also be agreed upon.

Indeed NGOs in the Arab World can play an important role in mobilizing projects to promote girls education in the form of awareness, incentives, and enhancing school environment. As suggested earlier, through coalitions, NGOs can take an active part in awareness campaigns about girls' education, utilizing the media. At the grass roots level, they can establish scholarships, advocate for free and compulsory education, and establish school-feeding

programs in sync with government and international programs, such as the Fast-Track Initiative. NGOs often are more effective than governments in implementing projects that require innovative approaches and methodologies and in coordinating activities that need full cooperation from local leadership. Given these characteristics, they would be among the most appropriate organizations to become involved in the latrine-building campaigns and instilling basic skills in out- of school girls (DFID 2001; Rugh 2000).

### **Conclusion**

As evidenced in the chapter, in order for the gender equality in education millennium goals to be realized by 2015, there should be collaborative efforts on the international, state, and local levels. The international community, including donor countries, international donor agencies, and international organizations such as the UN and affiliates should make a greater financial commitment to achieve the Education Millennium Goals, which are central to achieving all of the eight Millennium Development Goals. More importantly, individual Arab governments should display the political will reallocate budgets, advocate legislative change, mobilize with partners, and utilize localization and decentralization for the sake of promoting girls education. Finally, the role of NGOs is an important part of mobilizing efforts on the ground, especially in terms of awareness campaigns, hands on activities, and training. Indeed, no one approach or agency will assure the achievement of the 2015 goals, it will take a collaborative multi-sector approach to gain strides towards gender equality in education.

## **Conclusion**

The first chapter of this study began by explaining the history of the Millennium Goals and their significance. Indeed, the significance of the Educational Millennium Goals in instilling gender equality is phrased succinctly in this quotation from the Millennium Report (UN 2003):

Short-changing girls is not only a matter of gender discrimination; it is bad economics and bad social policy. Experience has shown, over and over again, that investments in girls' education translate directly and quickly into better nutrition for the whole family, better health care, declining fertility, poverty reduction and better overall economic performance.

### **Status**

The region's overall gross enrollment ratio for primary education is 91% with girls' participation standing at 79%. These regional averages hide great differences among countries, with a range of 50 percentage point between the highest gross enrollment ratio and the lowest. Arab States like Djibouti and Sudan have the lowest gross enrollment rates, while others like Yemen and Djibouti have the largest gender disparities with a gender equality index (GEI) of .63 and .76 respectively. Gender equality was found to be present in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates. Reverse gender gaps favoring girls over boys were present in Libya and Palestine. Both the level of enrollment in secondary schools and the rate of change of that level were significantly low in a number of Arab States. Enrollments were below 40 percent in Djibouti, Iraq, Mauritania, and Sudan; below 50 percent in Morocco and the Syrian Arab Republic. On the brighter side, significant progress was found in Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. An insignificant gender gap was found in the Arab region due to the low enrollment ratios of boys. Thus, certain countries like

Bahrain have experienced a reverse gender gap at the secondary level. In achieving literacy rates for ages 15-24 Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates had an index greater or equal to 1, while the value of GEI ranged between .91 and .97 for Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. The lowest literacy ratings were found in Yemen, Djibouti, Mauritania, and Morocco.

### **Prospects**

Will the Arab countries reach the Education Millennium Goals by 2015? The prospects are mixed among the Arab States. Countries at risk of not achieving the goal due to gender gap in favor of boys are Djibouti, Iraq, Sudan, and Yemen. Several Arab countries are at risk of not achieving the goal by 2015 due to reverse gender gaps, with girls outnumbering boys. These are Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, and Algeria.

### **Socio-Political Determinants**

Specific case studies of Yemen and Lebanon exemplify the discrepancies found between the Arab countries. Although, both countries present initiative towards achieving the Education Millennium goals, Yemen lags behind in reaching the goals due to other developmental problems, including poverty, overpopulation, and high mortality rates. While Lebanon does not present evidence of gender disparity, there are impoverished areas of the country that are affected by lack of proper public schools and have a high rate of female illiteracy. In general, though there are several determinants that have hindered girls from achieving levels of education and prevent their prospects in fulfilling the aforementioned Millennium Goals. The first influence to be discussed is the Arab region's diversity, including religion, economy, geography and population, all impacting on basic education. Large, growing populations often strain formal education systems that are unable to expand as quickly as the population they are

intended to serve. Rural areas and inaccessible regions pose particular challenges in providing schools that are close enough for children, and particularly girls, to attend.

The second major influence on girls' education concerns household/community level barriers involving: demand and supply, cultural restraints, and economic restraints on the household. One of the most common reasons for children not attending school is their families' need for them to work. Often their work is unpaid and takes place within the household or on the family farm. When financially strained, parents in many Arab countries choose to send their son rather than their daughter to school. Moreover, the patriarchal Arab society holds that boys are a better investment than girls, since it is the family inheritance that will be theirs. Thus, it is believed that it is worthless for a woman to continue her education since her fate is ultimately to get married. Therefore, even if she is to pursue her education, the fruits of this education would be passed on to her newly extended family instead of her parents' home.

The third major barrier stems from the school system in the form of tuition and uniform fees, lack of hygiene, gender based violence, stereotyped school curriculum, and sexist staff. Often girls pay the price of their education because parents cannot afford the costs of miscellaneous items such as uniforms, even when primary education is free. Furthermore, many parents feel that sending their daughters to seemingly unsafe schools, out of fear that their daughters will be kidnapped by suitors on the way to school or within the school grounds by the parents of prospective grooms. While others do not send their daughters because they fear they will become victims of gender violence.

The fifth barrier, the policy level barriers, determines the direction and purpose of centralized educational systems in the Arab world. This barrier is probably the most influential and



unpredictable barrier effecting the progress of gender equality in education. Major events and activities resulting from civil wars, political violence, armed conflicts, economic sanctions, totalitarianism, and instability have temporary but often serious impacts on female education and specifically on girls' access and retention in schools. Recent conflicts have resulted in huge refugee populations, making demands on an already overstretched education system. Exacerbating the situation for girls' education is that in the Arab countries gender discrimination is sometimes codified in law, frequently in family law or civil codes. Women often must obtain permission from a male relative, usually a husband or father, before seeking employment or taking any form of responsibility a man can. As a result, women inherit smaller shares of family wealth, which explains why families invest more in boys' rather than girls' education. Furthermore, many Arab countries do not hold compulsory and free education laws. Consequently, a greater divide is created between the classes of society, between those who can afford to send their children to school and those who can't. Aggravating the problem is the dilemma of child labor, which remains unaddressed in those countries where it is most prevalent.

### **Solutions**

As outlined in chapter five, the responsibility of achieving the Education Millennium Goals rests on the trinity of the international community, Arab governments, and civil society. First, in order for countries like Yemen, Djibouti, Mauritania, and Sudan to get on track to achieving the goals, greater financial commitment should be allocated by the G8 countries. Without their initiative and support of bilateral aid, multi-lateral agencies such as UNICEF and World Bank which thrive on bilaterally funded programming, will be unable to help speed up the progress of faltering countries like Yemen.

In terms of government's role, the Arab governments must first and foremost adopt the Educational MDGs into their national education plans. They must demonstrate a commitment to education for all at a national level by including education particularly girls' education as a top priority in the political agenda and supporting that commitment with the necessary resources to make it happen. Additionally, the adoption of legislative change is an important step in realizing the Educational MDGs. This includes establishing and implementing compulsory and free education laws. Property and inheritance rights and the establishment of gender equality in family law are cornerstones for securing economic and social justice for women. Greater promotion of intra-regional networking is needed to enhance the building and sharing of expertise and resources that could bring about the improvements in individual countries and the region as a whole. Furthermore, the Arab governments in addition to diverse organizations, the media, and the business sector all together need to institute the appropriate environment, incentives, and support that will encourage wider demand for educating girls and women. The promotion of localization and decentralization will involve local communities in the educational system and distribute powers from a central system of education to regional and local authorities. These two strategies become successful educational interventions. Positive examples of decentralization among Arab States exist in Jordan and Oman.

Finally, civil society has a central role to play in making the achievement of the Educational Millennium Goals in the Arab world, a reality. NGOs are often more conducive than governments in implementing projects that require innovative approaches and methodologies and in coordinating activities that need full cooperation from local leadership.

Can the Educational Millennium Goals in the Arab World be realized? Yes, these goals can be realized. Proof of the statement is the progress that many Arab countries have made in their

educational systems and the closing of the gender gap in education. Yet, if all of the Arab countries are to realize these goals, a commitment on all parts must be made, including internationally, regionally, and locally. Especially central to achieving these goals at the regional level is the government's commitment to promote gender equality in education. Specifically, what is needed is sound gender analysis in governmental policies. In sum, in order for the Arab States to achieve the Education Millennium Goals, in closing the gender gap in education they should:

- Close the gender gap between boys and girls at the primary and secondary level
- Promote girls education through social, cultural, religious, and political arenas
- Reallocate educational expenditures to place more emphasis on primary education
- Improve girls' enrollment and persistence at the primary and secondary levels
- Improve adult literacy for teenage and adult women
- Establish and enforce free and compulsory education laws
- Expand quality educational systems in rural areas

Finally, this study will end with a quotation from the Executive Director of UNICEF, Carol Bellamy, on the importance of girls' education.

“There can be no significant or sustainable transformations in societies – and no significant or lasting reduction in global poverty – until girls receive quality basic education they need and that is their fundamental right.”

## Bibliography

### Articles

- Africa News Service, *Djibouti: Special Report on Girls' Education*. January 28, 2004.
- Alderman, Harold, and Elizabeth M. King. 1998. "Gender Differences in Parental Investment in Education." *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics* 9: 453-68.
- El Baz, S. (1999). "Development Strategies as Agents for Gender Equality and Inequality". Background Paper for Gender Mainstreaming Training Workshop for United Nations Economic and Social Commission (UNESCWA) Staff, Beirut, Lebanon.
- Bhalotra, S; Heady, C. 2000. *Child labour: theory and evidence*. London, Suntory and Toyota International Centre for Economics and Related Disciplines/London School of Economics (Development Economics Discussion Paper Series No. 24.)
- Bruns, Barbara, Alain Mingat and Ramahtra Rakotomalala, "Achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015: A Chance for every child", World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2003.
- Deng, L.B. 2003. Education in southern Sudan: war, status and challenges of achieving Education for All goals. Background paper for *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004*.
- Doumata, Eleanor Abdella and Posusney, Marsha Pripstein. *Women and Globalization in the Arab Middle East: Gender, Economy and Society*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003.
- Dwyer, Daisy; Bruce, Judith, eds. *A Home Divided: Women and Income in the Third World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988).
- Fahimi, Farzaneh Roudi, "Progress Toward the Millennium Development Goals in the Middle East And North Africa", Population Reference Bureau (March 2004).
- Fahmi, Farzaneh Roudi; Moghaddam, Valentine, "Empowering Women, Developing Society: Female Education in the Middle East and North Africa", Population Reference Bureau, October 2003.
- Floro, Maria and Joyce M. Wolf, "The Economic and Social Impacts of Girls' Primary Education in Developing Countries", Academy for Educational Development, Advancing Basic Education and Literacy Project, USAID, 1990.
- Forbes, Kristin J., "A Reassessment of the Relationship between Inequality and Growth:", in *The American Economic Review*, vol. 90, no. 4, American Economic Association, 2000, pp. 869-887.
- Grown, Caren, Geeta Rao Gupta and Zahia Khan, 'Promises to Keep: Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women', Background Paper of the Millennium Project Task Force on Gender Equality, 2003.
- Hashem, M.H. 1990. *The Role and Status of Women in Social and Economic Development in the Yemen Arab Republic*. Yemen: US Agency for International Development.

Haw, Kaye. *Educating Muslim Girls: Shifting Discourses*. Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1998.

Herz, Barbara; Subharao, K.; Habib, Masosma and Raney, Laura; et al., 'Letting Girls Learn: Promising Approaches in Primary and Secondary Education', World Bank, Washington, D.C. 1991.

Howard, Christine and Shella Bunwaree, eds., "Gender Education and Development: Beyond access to empowerment", Zed Books, London and New York, 1999.

Hutmacher, W., Cochrane, D.; Bottani, N. (eds.) 2001. *In Pursuit of Equity in Education: Using International Indicators to Compare Equity Policies*. Boston, Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Kabeer, N. 2003 a. *Gender inequality in educational outcomes: a household perspective. Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004*.

Kabeer, N. 2003 b. *Mainstreaming gender equality and poverty eradication in the Millennium Development Goals*. Ottawa, Commonwealth Secretariat /IDRC/CIDA.

Kamphoefner, A.M. 1987. "Reshaping Literacy Programming to Fit Beledi Women's Lives: Considering Women's Role in the Household." Middle East Studies Association Meeting.

Kim, Joseop, Harold Alderman, and Peter Orazem. 1998. "Can Cultural Barriers Be Overcome in Girls' Schooling? The Community Support Program in Rural Balochistan." Working Paper Series on Impact Evaluation of Education Reforms 10. World Bank, Development Research Group, Washington, D.C.

Kirk, J. 2003. *Women in contexts of crisis: gender and conflict*. Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004.

Klasen, S. 2002. *Does Gender Inequality Reduce Growth and Development? Evidence from Cross-Country Regressions*. Washington, D.C. World Bank. (Policy Research Working Paper No. 7.).

Knowles, Stephen, Paula K. Lorgelly and P. Dorian Owen. Forthcoming. "Are Educational Gender Gaps a Brake on Economic Development? Some Cross-country Empirical Evidence." *Oxford Economic Papers*.

Leach, F.; Dunne, M.; Humphreys, S. 2003. "Gender and violence in schools. Background paper for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004".

Lockheed, Marlaine and Adriaan M. Verspoor, "Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries", World Bank, Washington, DC, 1993.

Lorgelly, Paula K., and P. Dorian Owen. 1999. "The Effect of Female and Male Schooling on Economic Growth in the Barro-Lee Model." *Empirical Economics* 24 (3): 537-57.

Oxfam International. July 2001. "G8: Failing the world's children".

Moghadam, Valentine M., *Women, Work, and Economic Reform in the Middle East and North Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

Rihani, May and Parker, Cynthia, "Strategies for Female Education in the Middle East and North Africa" (Amman, Jordan: United Nations Children's Fund, 1993).

Rugh, Andrea, "Starting Now: Strategies for Helping Girls Complete Primary", SAGE Technical Report no.1, Academy for Educational Development, Washington, DC, 2000.

El- Sanabary, Nagat. *Determinants of Women's Education in the Middle East and North Africa: Illustrations from Seven Countries*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank, PHREE Background Paper Series, May 1989.

Stromquist, N.P. 1987. "School-Related Determinants of Female Primary School Participation and Achievement in the Developing Countries: An Annotated Bibliography" Discussion Paper, World Bank Report No. EDT83. Washington, DC: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, The World Bank.

Stromquist, N.P. 1989. "Determinants of Educational Participation and Achievement of Women in the Third World: A Review of the Evidence and a Theoretical Critique." *Review of Educational Research* 59 (2): 143-183.

Summers, Lawrence H. 1992. "Investing in All the People. Educating Women in Developing Countries." Seminar Paper 45. World Bank, Economic Development Institute, Washington D.C.

Tansel, Aysit & Gungor, Aydam Deniz. "Schooling Investments and Gender Gap in Schooling in the MENA Countries: An International Perspective." Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 1998.

Work, R. 2002. "Overview of decentralization worldwide: a stepping stone to improved governance and human development. Paper for the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Decentralization: Federalism: The Future of Decentralizing States." 25-27 July 2002. Manila, UNDP.

El-Zanaty, Fatma and Way, Ann, *Egypt, Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2000* (Calverton, MD: Ministry of Health and Population (Egypt), National Population Council, and ORC Macro, 2001).

## Books

Abu Nasr, Julinda; Lorfing, Irene; Mikati, Jameleh. *Identification and Elimination of Sex Stereotypes in and from School Textbooks*. Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World. Beirut University College 1983.

Sabbagh, Suha; ed. Arab Women Between Defiance and Restraint. New York: Olive Branch Press, 1996.

Schultz, T. Paul. 1993. "Returns to Women's Schooling." In Elizabeth M. King and M. Anne Hill, eds., Women's Education in Developing Countries: Barriers, Benefits and Policy. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.

Schultz, T. Paul. 1998. "Why Governments Should Invest More in Educating Girls." Yale University, Department of Economics, New Haven, Conn.

Staudt, Kathleen. ed., 1997. Women, International Development, and Politics: The Bureaucratic Mire. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. Updated and expanded edition.

### Internet

CIA- The World Factbook. Yemen. May 11, 2004, accessed online at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ym.html#Intro> on July 19, 2004.

The Economist. "Self-doomed to failure," (July 2, 2002), accessed online at [www.economist.com/PrinterFriendly.Cfm?Story\\_ID=1213392](http://www.economist.com/PrinterFriendly.Cfm?Story_ID=1213392) on September 20, 2004.

Machel, G. 1996. *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*. [www.unicef.org/graca/women.htm](http://www.unicef.org/graca/women.htm)

Nationmaster. "Military Expenditures-Dollar Figure (per capita) Top 100 Countries". Accessed online at [http://www.nationmaster.com/graph-T/mil\\_exp\\_dol\\_fig\\_cap](http://www.nationmaster.com/graph-T/mil_exp_dol_fig_cap) on July 2, 2004.

Population World. Accessed online at <http://www.populationworld.com> on September 20, 2004.

Taecker, Kevin R., "Myths and Realities About Unemployment in Saudi Arabia," Saudi-American Forum Essay 11 (March 30, 2003), accessed online at [www.saudi-american-forum.org/Newsletters/SAF\\_Essay\\_11.htm](http://www.saudi-american-forum.org/Newsletters/SAF_Essay_11.htm), on April 1, 2003.

Tomasevski, Katarina, "Education Denied: Costs and remedies", Zed Books, London and New York, 2003. United Nations. 1995. The Beijing declaration and Platform for Action. Adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China, 4-15 September 1995. Available online at [gopher://gopher.un.org/00/conf/fwcw/off/plateng/9520p1.en%09%2B](http://gopher://gopher.un.org/00/conf/fwcw/off/plateng/9520p1.en%09%2B)

United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals: About the Goals," accessed online at [www.developmentgoals.org/about\\_the\\_goals.htm](http://www.developmentgoals.org/about_the_goals.htm), on March 15, 2004.

-----, The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics, accessed online at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/ww2000/table5dm.htm>, on March 12, 2004

United Nations Development Programme, "Millennium Development Goals: Progress Report for Yemen 2003-Goal: 2 Achieving Primary Education," accessed online at [www.undp.org/mdg/yemen/4392-Yemen\\_MDG-Report\\_-\\_Goal\\_2.pdf](http://www.undp.org/mdg/yemen/4392-Yemen_MDG-Report_-_Goal_2.pdf) on June 28, 2004.

-----, "Millennium Development Goals: Progress Report for Yemen 2003- Goal: 3 Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women", accessed online at [www.undp.org/mdg/yemen/4392-Yemen\\_MDG-Report\\_-\\_Goal\\_3.pdf](http://www.undp.org/mdg/yemen/4392-Yemen_MDG-Report_-_Goal_3.pdf) on June 28, 2004.

-----, "Lebanon Millennium Development Goals- September 2003, accessed online at [www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html#Lebanon](http://www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html#Lebanon) on June 28, 2004.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, *Financing Education-Investments and Returns, Analysis of the World Education*

*Indicators, 2002 Edition: Executive Summary*, accessed online at [http://portal.unesco.org/uis/TEMPLATE/pdf/wei/WEI\\_ExecSummary\\_ENG.pdf](http://portal.unesco.org/uis/TEMPLATE/pdf/wei/WEI_ExecSummary_ENG.pdf), on March 15, 2004.

Van Eeghen, Willem and Soman, Kouassi, "Poverty in the Middle East and North Africa" (1997), accessed online at [www.worldbank.org/mdf/mdf1/menapoor.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/mdf/mdf1/menapoor.htm), on March 6, 2003.

World Bank, 2003. [www.girlseducation](http://www.girlseducation)

### **Interviews**

Arab NGO Network for Development, Executive Director- Ziad Abdel Samad, Beirut, June 30, 2004.

Institute for Women in the Arab World, Director- Mona Khalaf, Beirut, May 15, 2004.

World Bank Senior Economic Advisor MENA Region, Nadireh Chamlou, Washington D.C. May 22, 2004.

### **Publications**

Center for Arab Women: Training and Research, "Globalization and Gender: Economic Participation of Arab Women", Tunis, 2001.

Department for International Development, "The Challenge of Universal Primary Education: Strategies for achieving the international development targets", DFID, London, 2001.

Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, "Female Labor Force in Lebanon," *Al-Raida* 15, no. 82 (1998): 12-23.

International Labour Organization, 2002 a. *A Future Without Child Labour: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, 2002.

International Labour Conference, 90<sup>th</sup> Session 2002, Report I (B). Geneva, International Labour Organization.

-----, 2002 b. *Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2001-2002*. Geneva, International Labor Organization.

International Monetary Fund, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, United Nations and World Bank Group, *A Better World for All: Progress toward the international development goals*, 2000.

International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, *Achieving the MDGs and Related Outcomes: A framework for monitoring policies and actions*. Background Paper, 2003.

Oman. 2001. *National Report on the Development of Education in the Sultanate of Oman*. Muscat, Ministry of Education

Regional Office for Education in the Arab States, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Education for All-the Year 2000 Assessment: Regional report on Education for All in the Arab States", UNESCO, Beirut, 2000.



Republic of Lebanon, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Lebanese Emigrants, Directorate of International Organizations, Conferences, and Cultural Affairs. *National Report on Follow-up to the World Summit for Children*. Beirut, January, 2001.

Republic of Yemen Supreme Council for Women Affairs. 2002. Social Gender National Strategy Project 2002-2005.

Saudi Arabia. 2001. *Development of Education. A National Report about Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2001*. Riyadh, Ministry of Education.

United Nations Children's Fund, *Defining Quality in Education*, UNICEF, New York, 2000.

United Nations Children's Fund, *We the Children: Meeting the promises of the World Summit for Children*, UNICEF, New York 2001.

United Nations Children's Fund 2002a, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2 (MICS2) Regional Statistical Report*, UNICEF, Amman.

-----, 2002b, *Quality Education For All: From a girls' point of view*, UNICEF, New York.

United Nations Children's Fund, 2003a *Accelerating Action in Girls' Education*, UNICEF, New York.

----, 2003b "Synergies, cost-benefit analysis and child policies", UNICEF, Division of Policy and Planning Global Policy Section.

-----, 2003c "UNICEF and Girls' Education in Rural Areas", UNICEF.

-----, 2003d. *State of the Children in Lebanon 2000*, Beirut, 2003.

-----, 2004. *The State of the World's Children. 2004*. New York: Oxford University Press.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). 2000. *Progress of the World's Women*.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2003a *Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society*, (New York: UNDP, 2003).

-----, 2003b *Human Development Report 2003: Millennium Development Goals: A compact Among nations to end human poverty*, New York: Oxford University Press.

-----, 2003c *The Millennium Development Goals in Arab Countries*, New York: UNDP.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2002a *Arab Women at a Glance*, Beirut: ESCWA.

----, 2002b "Women And Men in the Arab Countries: Education ,Beirut: ESCWA.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2002 "The Challenge of Achieving Gender Parity in Basic Education: A statistical review", 1990-1998, UNESCO, Paris.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Institute for Statistics, "Arab States Regional Report", UNESCO, Quebec, 2002.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004: Gender and Education for All- The leap to equality, UNESCO, Paris 2003.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2004 "Comparative Analysis of Education for All National Plans in the Arab States: Main Working Document -Arab Regional Conference on EFA National Plans: What's Next?" Beirut, 20-23 January 2004.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2002 *State of World Population 2002: People, Poverty, and Possibilities* New York: UNFPA.

USAID Office of Educational Women in Development. *The Economic and Social Impacts of Girls' Primary Education in Developing Countries*. Washington D.C.: USAID, 1990.

World Bank, 1994. Staff Appraisal Report, "Republic of Yemen Education Sector Investment Project."

----- 1999. *The World Bank and Girls' Education*. Washington, D.C.

----- 2000. Staff Appraisal Document, "Republic of Yemen Basic Expansion Education Project."

----- 2001a. *Engendering Development-Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources and Voice*. World Bank Policy Research Report. New York. Oxford University Press.

----- 2001b. *Gender in the PRSPs: A Stocktaking*. Washington, D.C., World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network, Gender and Development Group.

World Education Forum, *Education for All 2000 Assessment-Thematic Studies: Girls' education*, UNESCO, Paris, 2001.