

# Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children

UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics



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Country	OOSC ('000 + %) (NAR) (Survey Data) (1)	OOSC ('000 + %) (Adj NER) (Admin Data) (2)	Main Type of OOSC (3)	Primary NER (2007) (4)	GPI (Primary NER) (2007) (5)	Youth Literacy Rate (%) (2000-2007) (6)	Child Labor (5-14 years) (1997-2007) (7)	Adolescent Marriage (2000-2007) (8)	Orphanhood (0-17 years) (estimate '000) (2007) (9)
<b>EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC</b>									
Cambodia	-	220 (11%) (2007)	D	89	0.96	86	45%	23%	600
Indonesia	-	507 (2%) (2007)	D	95	0.96	97	4%	24%	4400
Philippines	-	1003 (8%) (2007)	L	91	1.02	94	12%	14%	1800
Timor-Leste	48 (25%) (2003)	71 (37%) (2007)	N	63	0.96	-	4%	-	48
<b>SOUTH ASIA</b>									
Bangladesh	3347 (19%) (2006)	1837 (10%) (2006)	Dn	87	1.08	72	13%	64%	5000
India	20670 (17%) (2005-06)	7142 (6%) (2006)	D	89	0.96	82	12%	47%	25000
Pakistan	8497 (44%) (2006-07)	6821 (34%) (2006)	N	66	0.78	69	-	24%	3900
<b>CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE CIS</b>									
Romania	-	30 (3%) (2007)	L	94	1	97	1%	-	300
Turkey	-	643 (8%) (2007)	N1	92	0.97	96	5%	18%	-
<b>MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA</b>									
Djibouti	26 (21%) (2006)	56 (55%) (2008)	N	45	0.89	-	8%	5%	42
Sudan	2798 (46%) (2006)	-	-	-	-	-	13%	34%	1800
Yemen	-	906 (25%) (2007)	N	75	0.76	80	11%	32%	-
<b>EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA</b>									
Ethiopia	7511 (55%) (2005)	3721 (28%) (2007)	L	71	0.92	50	53%	49%	5000
Zambia	1020 (43%) (2004)	108 (5%) (2007)	L	94	1.01	75	12%	42%	1100
<b>WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA</b>									
DRC	5203 (48%) (2001)	-	N	-	-	-	32%	39%	4500
Ghana	-	930 (27%) (2008)	nL	73	1.01	78	34%	22%	1100
Liberia	-	447 (69%) (2008)	-	31	0.93	72	-	38%	270
Nigeria	-	8221 (35%) (2006)	N	64	0.88	87	13%	43%	9700
<b>LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN</b>									
Bolivia	309 (22%) (2003-04)	70 (5%) (2007)	L	94	1.01	99	22%	26%	300
Brazil	-	901 (6%) (2007)	L	93	1	98	6%	24%	3200
Colombia	-	413 (9%) (2007)	DL	87	1	98	5%	23%	790

**Sources and Notes**

- (1) Source for **numbers and percentages on OOSC** is UNICEF ChildInfo ([http://www.childinfo.org/education\\_outofschool.php](http://www.childinfo.org/education_outofschool.php)) retrieved on March 31, 2010. The numbers and percentages are based on the net attendance rate (NAR) 2000-2007 (most recent year available) from MICS, DHS and other household survey data. Color codes: Dark green: 25% and above; green: between 10% and 25%; light green: below 10% but above 1 million OOSC.
- (2) Source for **numbers and percentages on OOSC** is UIS database, October 2009. Figures are based on the adjusted net enrolment rate (NER), i.e. the share of children of primary school age in primary or secondary school. Color codes: Dark green: 25% and above; green: between 10% and 25%; light green: below 10% but above 1 million OOSC.
- (3) Source for **main type of OOSC** is UIS database, October 2009. Letter codes: n = never enter, l = enter late, d = drop out (uppercase letter: % of group >45%; lowercase letter: % of group >33%).
- (4) Source for **net enrolment rate (NER)** is UIS database (2009).
- (5) Source for primary NER gender **parity index (GPI)** is UIS database (2009).

- (6) Source for **youth literacy rate** is UIS database (2009).
- (7) Source for **percentages of child labor** is UNICEF 2009. *Progress for children. A Report Card on Child Protection*. New York: UNICEF. The percentage of children 5-14 years old involved in child labor is based on MICS, DHS and other national surveys 1997-2007 (most recent year available). **Color codes:** yellow: 10% and above; grey: between 5% and 10%.
- (8) Source for **percentages of child marriage** is UNICEF 2009. *Progress for children. A Report Card on Child Protection*. New York: UNICEF. The percentage of women 20-24 years old who were married or in union before they were 18 years old is based on MICS, DHS and other national surveys 2000-2007. Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified in the column heading (y = refers to year other than that specified in the column heading). **Color codes:** yellow 34% and above; grey: between 22% and 34%.
- (9) Source for **numbers of orphaned children** is UNICEF 2009. *Progress for children. A Report Card on Child Protection*. New York: UNICEF. These are estimated numbers of children (age 0-17) who have lost one or both parents due to any causes as of 2007 (UNAIDS unpublished data). **Color codes:** yellow above 3 million; grey between 1 million and 3 million.

UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) are launching a joint Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children to renew efforts on this issue during the last five-year phase of progress towards Universal Primary Education by 2015. **The goal of the Initiative is to support a quantum leap in reducing the number of out-of-school children.** The Initiative builds on the 2005 UIS/UNICEF joint report *Children Out of School: Measuring exclusion from primary education*, which describes a methodology for estimating the number of children of primary school age who are out of school and presents national, regional and global estimates for this indicator.<sup>1</sup>

The problem of out-of-school children needs to maintain its high priority on the Education for All (EFA) agenda; without bold and sustained action on this issue, Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 will not be realized for an unacceptable number of children. MDG 2 and EFA are also fundamental to the work towards all other MDGs (poverty eradication, gender equality, reduction of child mortality and improvement of maternal health, elimination of HIV and AIDS and other diseases, and environmental sustainability).

The urgency of the challenge has been solidly enshrined in the key **international commitments** made since the international community adopted the six EFA goals in Dakar in 2000. The declaration of the EFA High-Level Group meeting in Addis Ababa in February 2010 makes a strong call for governments to scale up efforts to address the problem of out-of-school children, especially in terms of improved data and statistics and robust national policies. The present Initiative also fits within the framework of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), the overall goal of which is "to develop a culture of evidence-based policymaking and implementation which serves to improve governance and government effectiveness in reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals."<sup>2</sup>

**THE PROBLEM**

**Seventy-two million children of primary school age were still out of school in 2007** (54 per cent of them were girls), despite a reduction of 33 million since 1999.<sup>3</sup> According to UNICEF estimates, the figure rises to 101 million when attendance rates collected from household surveys are factored in. While most out-of-school children live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, high percentages (above 10 percent in some cases and above 20 per cent in others) of children in East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa and Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) are also out of school. Based on current trends, an estimated 56 million will still not be in school in 2015. There are also worrying indications that progress is slowing. Millions of children who enter primary school drop out before completing a full primary cycle. Some 28 million pupils in sub-Saharan Africa drop out each year, and in South and West Asia, 13 per cent of children entering school drop out in the first grade.<sup>4</sup> Where the opportunity cost of education remains high, poor parents are likely to discontinue children's schooling, and also to send them to work.

At the root of such challenges lie the **deeply entrenched structural inequalities and disparities** that out-of-school children face. These are linked to many factors, including income poverty; exposure to child labour, conflict and natural disasters; location (in particular, whether the child lives in an urban or rural area, or a sub-national region), migration and displacement; HIV and AIDS, disability, gender, ethnicity, language, religion and caste. Because of these disparities, even countries with promising national indicators risk falling short of universal primary education.<sup>5</sup> Multiple disparities often intersect with each other, resulting in complex and mutually reinforcing patterns of disadvantage that create barriers to schooling and erode educational opportunities.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Dina Craissati (UNICEF):** [dcrassati@unicef.org](mailto:dcrassati@unicef.org)  
**Albert Motivans (UIS):** [a.motivans@uis.unesco.org](mailto:a.motivans@uis.unesco.org)



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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics and United Nations Children's Fund, *Children Out of School: Measuring exclusion from primary education*, UIS, Montreal, 2005.  
<sup>2</sup> Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, '2009-2010 PARIS21 Work Programme', PARIS21 Steering Committee Meeting, 5-6 June 2008.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010: Reaching the marginalized*, UNESCO, Paris, 2010. Hereafter referred to as *GMR 2010*.  
<sup>4</sup> *GMR 2010*.  
<sup>5</sup> In many countries, national figures mask high disparities that exist at sub-national levels and among particular groups.

UNICEF estimates that 150 million children worldwide, aged 5 to 14 years, were engaged in labour in 2007.<sup>6</sup> Out of the 33 countries with a high prevalence of child labour (over 25 per cent), 28 also have high percentages (over 15 per cent) of children out of school.<sup>7</sup> In many countries, girls in poor households belonging to ethnic minorities in rural or remote areas experience the greatest disadvantage. Also vulnerable are the estimated 150 million children living with disabilities and the 2 million children under 15 living with HIV and AIDS, who are excluded from schooling on account of stigma, social discrimination, economic pressure and orphanhood.<sup>8</sup> Finally, more than half of children not attending primary schools live in 32 conflict-affected countries and territories.

**Policies and programs** to address the problem and reduce inequalities remain inadequate in many countries, and available resources are not always efficiently used. Moreover, there has been no systematic analysis to identify the bottlenecks and explain why well-intentioned policies are not yielding robust results. Despite the movement to abolish school fees worldwide, most of the countries worldwide still charge fees, and poor families continue to bear the burden of a range of educational costs. While non-formal and alternative education strategies are a common route to learning for many out-of-school children, these interventions are of lower quality, have inadequate financial support and lack equivalence to formal education. Furthermore, the multi-dimensionality of disparities makes it extremely difficult for countries to formulate and finance the multi-sectoral policies needed to address them.<sup>10</sup> The most disadvantaged out-of-school children need additional targeted measures and investments, some of which are beyond the field of education and many of which are also costly and difficult to manage. Reaching the 'last 10 per cent' of out-of-school children is not only more difficult, but also more expensive, because these children face multiple disadvantages and may experience forms of social exclusion that are very subtle, often hidden. There are few nationally specific estimates of the costs involved in reaching these children, and education sector budgets continue to assume equal unit costs for all children, without factoring in additional expenses for the disadvantaged. There are also very few analyses of the relative cost-effectiveness of demand-side versus supply-side interventions.



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Underlying the policy gap is a **data gap** stemming from the lack of adequate tools and methodologies to identify out-of-school children, measure the scope of exclusion and multiple disparities, assess the reasons for exclusion, monitor progress

towards universal primary education and inform policy and planning. Above all, greater consensus is needed on the number of children out of school, and this requires improving the consistency of data collected through administrative records and household surveys and making more effective use of such data sources. Education Management Information Systems provide a largely supply-side perspective, which is essential for managing education systems; household surveys provide a needed demand-side perspective. Data reported by governments may understate the number of out-of-school children because of problems in collecting data from schools, or it may overstate the number by leaving out children attending independent private schools that are not registered or recognized. Non-formal learning activities are also poorly covered by existing statistics. Furthermore, extending the scope of the analysis to lower secondary education, which is considered compulsory in most countries of the world, points to further exclusion.<sup>11</sup> On the demand side, disaggregated data of better quality are needed to provide an evidence base for increasing the visibility of the marginalized and for the development of policies targeting disadvantaged groups.<sup>12</sup> More and better information is crucial to reveal who the out-of-school children are, where they live, why they are out of school and what forms of exclusion and disparities affect them.

## THE GOAL

The goal of the Initiative is to address the above challenges and gaps and to support countries in achieving a quantum leap in reducing the number of out-of-school children. The specific objectives are to:

- improve the **statistical information and analysis** regarding out-of-school children and the factors that contribute to exclusion from schooling (including the multiple deprivations and disparities outside the scope education), and strengthen institutional capacities for implementing appropriate statistical and monitoring methodologies;
- analyse existing **policies** related to enhanced school participation, identify bottlenecks and develop context-appropriate, realistic and **robust plans** for accelerating and scaling enrolment and sustaining attendance rates (together with cost estimates and financing strategies).

The Initiative has country, regional and global dimensions and is also designed to have research- and action-oriented and capacity development aspects. It is expected to have a duration of 24 months (from January 2010 to December 2011) and will yield a major report on out-of-school children, together with evidence-based guidance and policy briefs, capacity development, support for education planning and reform, and advocacy activities. In order to achieve its desired impact, the Initiative will feed into ongoing education sector planning and reform processes as well as annual sector and budget reviews. Twenty-one countries from the seven regions of the developing world will participate (*see table*).

**It is hoped that the lessons learned and the tools developed will be taken up by additional countries.**

## ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, MILESTONES

- A project-launch **global methodology workshop (21–25 June 2010)** will gather the country teams, regional and global representatives, as well as experts. The purpose of the workshop is to:
  - (i) Prepare for the work at the country and regional levels;
  - (ii) Ensure a coherent and sound approach in the selected countries and in the regions; and
  - (iii) Strengthen national capacities for data collection and analysis, costing, financing and policy development.
- **Country-level activities (June 2010–February 2011)** will comprise:
  - (i) Research and a study on the two components of the Initiative (data and policy);
  - (ii) Capacity strengthening on statistical methodologies, costing, financing and policy development; and
  - (iii) Support for education sector reform with a view to reducing the number of out-of-school children and accelerating and scaling up progress towards MDG 2.

This last activity will occur within ongoing country-level sector planning and coordination processes.

- A **global report (launched in September 2011)** on out-of-school children will include the country case studies, regional overviews and a global synthesis. It will be available in print as well as electronically, on the websites of UIS, UNICEF and others.
- Other **by-products of the global report and the above activities (September 2010–December 2011)** will include: a user-friendly guidance note on methodology (April 2011); specific policy briefs; web-based country profiles; and advocacy materials with evidence-based messages and human interest stories.
- A **global conference (September 2011)** on out-of-school children will be held to disseminate the results of the report and leverage resources to scale up interventions in the selected countries, as well as in others. The report of the conference will be available in December 2011.
- **Advocacy** will be conducted and presentations made at EFA meetings and conferences and before the media.

## METHODOLOGY AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

The country research and case studies will follow a common template that has **two main components (data and policy)**:

**The data collection and analysis component will include:**

- An introduction to concepts and indicators used in the measurement of children's participation in schooling;
- A systematic review of data sources, including administrative records and sample surveys, and a diagnostic of data collection processes;
- Standard setting (use of harmonized questionnaires in surveys and censuses to collect data on education and child characteristics and to construct baseline indicators in cooperation with PARIS21);

- Development of disaggregated data collection systems to identify excluded and marginalized populations and to analyze multiple and overlapping disparities; and
- Monitoring of progress towards universal primary education.

**The policy development component will include:**

- Application of planning tools to analyze existing policies, identify bottlenecks, improve interventions and coverage, estimate costs and cost-effectiveness and assess budgets and fiscal space; and
- Analysis of social protection measures and systems and the multi-sectoral synergies needed in implementing and financing them.

## THE COUNTRIES

**Twenty-one countries from the seven regions** of the developing world have been selected for the country-level activities, after consultation with national and international partners (*see table*):

- **East Asia and the Pacific:** Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Timor-Leste
- **South Asia:** Bangladesh, India, Pakistan
- **CEE/CIS:** Romania, Turkey
- **Middle East and North Africa:** Djibouti, Sudan, Yemen
- **Eastern and Southern Africa:** Ethiopia, Zambia
- **West and Central Africa:** Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria
- **Latin American and the Caribbean:** Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia

The selection of these 21 countries was made primarily on the basis of the **relevance of the problem of out-of-school children** and disparities in education. A range in the magnitude of out-of-school children has been taken into consideration (*see table*). Five of these countries account for more than half of the global out-of-school population of 101 million, as measured by multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS) and Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) household surveys (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and Pakistan).

Several countries face problems of **deeply entrenched sub-national disparities and overlapping disadvantages** that are masked by national figures and that need to be addressed, such as issues of child labour, child marriage, and high numbers of children who have lost one or both parents (*see table*). The countries in which these three forms of exclusion overlap are Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India and Nigeria; these are also countries with both high numbers and high percentages of out-of-school children.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *Progress for Children: A report card on child protection*, no. 8, UNICEF, New York, September 2009.

<sup>7</sup> These calculations are based on survey data (1999–2007).

<sup>8</sup> *GMR 2010*.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *Machel Study 10-Year Strategic Review: Children and conflict in a changing world*, UNICEF, New York, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Many of the strategies to address the problem of out-of-school children will need to be developed at the interface between education and other development sectors, especially through the field of social protection.

<sup>11</sup> According to UIS, 71 million children of lower secondary school age were out of school in 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Governments also attach little weight to survey data.