UNICEF in EAST ASIA and PACIFIC

EDUCATION,
EARLY CHILDHOOD	
DEVELOPMENT,
ADOLESCENTS	
AND CHILDREN
WITH DISABILITIES
Acknowledgements

This factsheet on Education, Early Childhood Development, Adolescents and Children with Disabilities in the East Asia and Pacific was developed by Eunwoo Kim, Education Officer for Communications and Knowledge Management under the leadership of Jim Ackers, Regional Education Adviser at UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (UNICEF EAPRO). Much appreciation goes to the former and current members of the UNICEF EAPRO Education Team – Camilla Woeldike, Chemba Raghavan, Devashish Dutta, Fernando Balmaceda, Hyunjeong Lee, Jessica Aumann, Laura Katirayi-Devos, Teija Vallandingham, Tippawan Na Lumpoon, Vilasa Phongsathorn, and Woranan Thoophom - for their support, advice and inputs. The content of the factsheet is updated according to the latest available data as of July 2015. To all those too many to name who have helped make this a better publication, the EAPRO Education team extends its grateful thanks.
The East Asia and Pacific region encompasses one-third of the world’s population and more than one-quarter of the world’s children – around 580 million children in total. The region possesses a stunning variety in geography, culture and political and economic systems and significant diversity can be seen within countries in terms of wealth, ethnicity and language. The East Asia Pacific is also diverse in terms of provision of education. While some countries have achieved the Millennium Development and Education For All commitments, many have not. Significant, sometimes widening, disparities, both between and within countries, in enrolment, retention, progression, and learning outcomes, often on the basis of socio-economic status, geographical location, disability, ethnicity, language and gender persist. Demand for post-basic education and pre-primary education is rapidly increasing, urging government and other stakeholders to increase equitable access to all levels of education. The quality of teachers and teaching often results in variable learning outcomes with again high levels of inequality within and between countries. The disconnect between what is taught in school and what is needed for effective participation in the rapidly changing world is an emerging challenge. A lack of long-term commitment to and sustained and well-resourced action for education, and poor and opaque governance of education are also persistent challenges in the region (Source: 2015 Asia-Pacific Regional Education For All Report).

The region has achieved substantial economic growth since 1990, with several countries transitioning to middle-income status. Despite this, income inequality is a growing concern, and widening disparities and social inequity negatively affect vulnerable and hard to reach populations. The Gini index, a standard measure of inequality, has also been increasing for most countries in Asia and the Pacific. A significant portion of the population continue to experience multiple deprivations: in access to education, basic sanitation, health care and food security. Income inequality and the associated consequences are expected to rise further due to the ongoing global economic crisis. At the same time, governments are making efforts to achieve ‘inclusive growth’ and working to distribute the benefits of economic development to all sections of society. Many are increasingly recognising education as a pivotal component of inclusive growth.

The EAP region remains on track to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG2) target on universal primary education. Gross Enrolment in primary school has risen to 117 per cent in 2012 from 104 per cent in 1999, and Adjusted Net Enrolment in primary school was estimated at 96 per cent in 2012 (Source: EFA GMR 2015). Nevertheless, enrolment rates only illustrate part of the picture; retention and completion of primary school and the quality of education remain challenges. Disparities in both enrolment and completion of primary education also persist within countries—with poor children in poor communities receiving low quality education. Additionally, the region suffers from a high level of natural hazards and disasters. Emergency situations are a fact of life for many children and UNICEF works to provide education, as well as other essential services, to those who are unable to go to school following a disaster. The region is also on track to reach MDG 3 targets on gender parity in primary education. Many of those countries who have not yet reached gender parity at primary level are very close to doing so, but secondary education remains more of a challenge, with boys disadvantaged in many countries. Successful transitions from primary to secondary education and from school to work can be hampered by gender stereotypes and norms.

To address the complex issues of inequity in education, the UNICEF EAPRO Education Programme focusses on inequity in terms of access to education and learning. The focus also encompasses children with disabilities, gender in education, Early Childhood Development, Education in Emergencies, Peacebuilding, youth and adolescent development, including life skills and Social Emotional Learning.
Overview

The East Asia and Pacific region has achieved substantial economic growth since 1990, with several countries transitioning to middle-income status. Despite this, income inequality is a growing concern, and widening disparities and social inequity negatively affect vulnerable and hard to reach populations.

Enrolment: 53,344,000
Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): 68

Number of Out Of School Children: 6,923,000

Enrolment: 184,382,000
Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): 117
Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate (ANER): 96

Number of Out Of School Adolescents: 7,409,000

Enrolment: 157,771,000
Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): 84
Transition from primary to secondary general education:
East Asia: 95% Pacific: Unknown

Adolescents face a number of challenges ranging from violence, early deaths from accidents, suicides, early marriage, early pregnancies, alcohol and substance use, dropping out of schools, HIV, human trafficking, and exploitation and more.

Pre-Primary
Critical early interventions to support health, educational and socio-emotional well-being can improve the life chances of all children.

Primary
The region is on track to meeting the Millennium Development Goal on universal primary education. Nevertheless, enrolment rates only illustrate part of the picture; retention and completion of primary school and the quality of education remain challenges.

Secondary
Enrolment: 184,382,000
Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): 117
Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate (ANER): 96

Adolescents face a number of challenges ranging from violence, early deaths from accidents, suicides, early marriage, early pregnancies, alcohol and substance use, dropping out of schools, HIV, human trafficking, and exploitation and more.

Number of Out Of School Adolescents: 7,409,000

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Overview

UNICEF country offices manage and implement programmes supporting children’s rights in 28 countries throughout the East Asia and Pacific region.

Country Offices
The heart of UNICEF’s work is in the field. Each country office carries out UNICEF’s mission through a unique programme of cooperation developed with the host government and other key partners.

UNICEF has offices in the following locations in East Asia and the Pacific: Cambodia, People’s Republic of China, Indonesia, Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar and the Pacific Islands (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Niue, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu), as well as in Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam.

National Committees
Many people in non-programme countries first hear about UNICEF’s work through the activities of the National Committees. These non-governmental organizations promote children’s rights, raise funds, sell UNICEF greeting cards and products, create key corporate and civil society partnerships, and provide other invaluable support. Examples from this region are: Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any opinion on the part of UNICEF concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delineation of its frontiers or boundaries.
UNICEF EAPRO Education promotes equity in education with partners

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) addresses the inequity issues in the region by facilitating and supporting regional initiatives and partnerships such as the below:

- Asia-Pacific Technical Working Group on Education For All which UNICEF co-chairs with UNESCO
- The East Asia and Pacific United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (EAP UNGEI) with multiple partners
- Out Of School Children Initiative (OOSCI) with UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and host governments
- Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO)
- Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)
- Pacific Regional Forum for ECCE (PRC4ECCE)
- Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education (MLE) Working Group
- Asia-Pacific Coalition for School Safety (APCSS), particularly in the development of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework
- Regional partnership on the rights of children with disabilities with the Australian Government (DFAT)
- School Grants Policy with IIEP
- East Asia and Pacific Early Childhood Development Scales (EAP ECDS)
- Multi-country research initiative on Language, Education and Social Cohesion (LESC)
All children have the right to learn. Learning is not only a right in itself it is also fundamental to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the development of the individual.

UNICEF and its partners are committed to focusing on learning in Post 2015. The global Muscat Agreement and Bangkok Statements both see learning equity and inclusion as fundamental. The over-arching goal for Post 2015 is: ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ (Source: UNICEF Issue Brief)

There are huge inequalities in learning outcomes in the region. Seven of Asia and Pacific countries are among the top global top performers in mathematics, science and literacy, but many others fall well behind and inequalities vary considerably within countries. In the Philippines, 24% of grade 3 children in Mindanao (southern region) cannot read a single word in a paragraph compared to only 1% in Manila (capital city).

There are huge gaps in terms of data on learning and understanding of causalities. Only a few countries participate in international surveys. There is global understanding that teaching has a key role to play but low capacity to analyse teaching and learning and many teacher education systems fail to produce teachers with the requisite competencies.

Inequalities in learning outcomes can be attributed to numerous factors. Factors relate both to policy and implementation include: variable quality due to unequal distribution of resources and inputs and issues of poverty, location, gender, language and disability.

Inequalities in learning are apparent even before children start primary school. Hence, our focus on enhancing school readiness within an holistic approach to early childhood development.

Social and emotional learning is a growing area of concern. This domain of learning is generally given little due attention in the region. In some countries child suicide rates are high due to the competitive stress of school. There are growing concerns over children’s capacity to engage socially and over other competencies including problem solving.

The UNICEF Regional Office supports the learning agenda through support to:

- **advocacy and capacity development** to promote holistic approaches to education, based on the principles of Child Friendly Education and through specific initiatives on inclusive education, gender and education and mother tongue education and social cohesion.
- **development of standards** in early learning and basic education and their application to policies, planning and monitoring and evaluation.
- **development of a regional assessment**: the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) to ensure greater focus on learning (including global citizenship) in participating countries and enable the comparison of learning standards across ASEAN.
- **roll out of the Out of School Children Initiative (OOSCI)** across 10 countries to identify factors causing drop-out. Viet Nam has published its national and provincial reports, leading to issuance of Prime Minister’s Directive #09 CT-TTg dated May 22, 2015 on strengthening preschools and kindergarten classes in industrialized zones. The Directive instructed line ministries to allocate resources and find solutions to improve learning conditions for children in industrialized zone.
- **enhanced partnerships and analysis around learning and quality**, including co-chairing the EFA Technical Working Group with UNESCO and joint publications such as the Asia-Pacific End of Decade Notes on EFA (2012) and Flexible Learning Strategies (2013); also partnership with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization on SEA-PLM and inclusive education and many others.
- **identification of high quality technical assistance** to enhance analyses around teaching and learning at the country and regional levels, including a new Long Term Agreement to support bottleneck and barrier analyses.
- **quality assurance, capacity development and knowledge management** to enhance capacity of UNICEF Country Offices to address learning, quality and equity.
Learning, Quality and Equity

UNICEF in Action at the Country Level – Enhancing learning through a collaborative approach to partnership

Support for:
- **Standards in early learning** and across basic education in terms of learning and service delivery
- **Curriculum and assessment**, teacher related national policy development
- **Pre and in-service training** based on the concept of continuous professional development
- **Capacity development of education managers** at all levels, including school management committees and PTAs
- Promotion of social and emotional learning and life-skills in several countries

**Concepts around Learning**

**Learning Metric Framework**

- Literacy & communication
- Learning approaches & cognition
- Numeracy & mathematics
- Science & technology

- Culture & the arts
- Postprimary
- Primary
- Early Childhood
- Social & emotional
- Physical well-being

**Child-Friendly School / Education**

- Effective Learning
- Rights based & Inclusive
- Safe & Protective
- Enabling Environment
- Teaching
- CHILD
- Learning
- Community Engaged
- Health Promoting
- Sensitive
- Gender

**Learning Outcomes in Selected Countries**

Figure 23: 15-year olds’ achievement in PISA in selected countries, 2012

- **Reading**, **Math**, **Science**

Figure 3: Average scores for reading, math and science in the Asia-Pacific region, selected countries/economies, 2009

- Level 1: 300
- Level 2: 407
- Level 3: 480
- Level 4: 553

**Notes:**
- OECD refers to Taiwan Province of China as Chinese Taipei.
- Source: OECD, Programme for International Student Assessment 2012 database.
- Source: OECD, 2010b.
Children with Disabilities and Inclusive Education

Many children with disabilities (CWD) are denied the rights to live in dignity and reach their full potential in East Asia and Pacific (EAP). These children are among the most marginalized, excluded and vulnerable children in the region.

An estimated 190 million CWD live in the region. Many are invisible as they are not even issued birth certificates. Many have limited access to basic services, such as education, protection and psychosocial support. Many governments and other stakeholders assume that the needs of CWD are best addressed by segregation into separate schools. This is rarely necessary with perhaps the exception of extreme or multiple disabilities and leads to social exclusion. UNICEF supports the principle of inclusion as expressed in the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). Every child regardless of disability, income, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation or cultural origin, should wherever possible, be able to attend a school that fully nurtures their potential to learn within their own communities.

Currently many governments under-estimate the number of CWD. Data is unreliable due to stigmatisation and other issues. Much needs to be done therefore to enhance data on CWD, as well as policies and strategies to ensure their inclusion and access to quality education.

UNICEF works to ensure that countries are sensitive to the rights of CWD and respond to their needs through policies and plans that are cross-sectoral in nature as CWD may also need support from Child Protection and Health and through Social Policy measures if their rights are to be satisfied and their full potential realized (Source: UNICEF Disabilities).

UNICEF in Action in East Asia and the Pacific

In July 2015, UNICEF EAPRO supported the SEAMEO Special Education Needs and Thai Ministry of Education in organizing the first International Conference on Special Education, held in Bangkok. Contributions included a key note address on inclusive education and a session on communication strategies.

In early 2014, UNICEF EAPRO formed a Cross-Cutting Working Group on Disability that brings together different sectors of the organization to develop cross-sectoral approaches to address the needs of CWD.

In 2014, UNICEF EAPRO undertook a regional review of the situation of CWD, which analysed existing bottlenecks and barriers to prevention and care, as well as the effectiveness of current policies, services and programmes.

In November 2014, UNICEF EAPRO and UNICEF Cambodia, organized a regional consultation on Responding to the Needs of Children with Disabilities in East Asia and Pacific. The key findings of the regional review were shared with participants, including UNICEF HQ, Country Offices, government officials and civil society organizations.

UNICEF co-chairs the Education For All Technical Working Group for Asia and the Pacific with UNESCO and uses this structure to ensure greater attention to the rights of CWD.

Global Results on Inclusive Education (IE)

UNICEF supported an Experts’ Group on Inclusive Education (IE) that built the IE pillar of the Global Declaration to be adopted during the Oslo Summit on Education for Development (Oslo, Norway, July 2015), following the World Education Forum (WEF) in Incheon, South Korea.

UNICEF is coordinating a Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Technical Reference Group on IE with the Governments of the UK, Australia and Norway. This commitment was clearly stated during the WEF in the Ministerial Statement on Education Financing, in preparation for the Addis Ababa Conference.

UNICEF HQ and the CEE/CIS region produced a series of 14 Webinars and Companion Technical Booklets on themes related to inclusive education to introduce UNICEF Education staff, government counterparts and development partners to the principles of IE and how they can be applied to practice.

Towards realizing Article 24 of the CRPD and achieving concrete results for CWD under Sustainable Development Goal 4, UNICEF is introducing an innovative initiative, designed to ensure all printed textbooks are produced in accessible digital formats, including sign language, audio/DAISY and simplified language.

In July 2015 UNICEF agreed to start a new multi-country programme in EAP in collaboration with the Australian Government (DFAT) to accelerate regional commitments to address the rights of CWD in the region.
Children with Disabilities and Inclusive Education

Violence against CWD

CWD are almost four times more likely to experience some forms of violence. CWD are almost three times more likely to be victims of sexual violence than their peers without disabilities. Girls with disabilities are at a much higher risk of emotional and sexual abuse. Children with mental or intellectual disabilities are 4.6 times more at risk of sexual violence than those without disabilities.

Results for Children

Research, Evidence and Policy Dialogue

Pacific
UNICEF Pacific and the Vanuatu National Statistics Office conducted a study on the situation of CWD and persons with disabilities (PWD) based on a Census analysis, DHS and educational data sets. The study assesses disparities across a range of outcomes based on disability status.

Myanmar
UNICEF Myanmar developed a new social protection strategy that includes a focus on CWD and PWD.

Partnerships and Advocacy

Malaysia
UNICEF Malaysia supported the establishment of the Malaysian Partnerships of CWD that brings together governments, civil society organizations and experts, to address a significant gap in advocacy work for CWD.

Papua New Guinea
UNICEF PNG’s advocacy with the government helped ensure a strong focus on children in the government’s new disability policy. The Office also supported the Department of Community Development to strengthen birth registration, especially for CWD.

Capacity Development

Mongolia
UNICEF Mongolia provided partners and parents of CWD with capacity building trainings on inclusive approaches to effectively support the implementation of an IE project in two mainstream school. These two schools are currently operating as guiding centers for others schools to support IE for CWD.

Papua New Guinea
UNICEF PNG supported the Ministry of Education in reviewing IE policy launched in 2013. UNICEF PNG supported disability inclusive school drills to prepare all children in an event of an emergency.

(Sources: Country Office Annual Report 2014)
Early Childhood Development

All children including the youngest have rights to holistic development. To help children achieve their full potential, UNICEF supports Early Childhood Development (ECD) that combines education, health care, nutrition, protection and cognitive stimulation, from the period of pregnancy to 8 years of age.

Children are central to sustainable development. Because of poor health, under nutrition and learning environments that fail to provide adequate responsive stimulation and nurturance, too many children around the world are not developing their learning capacities, entering school late, performing poorly at school and not achieving their full potential. In East Asia and Pacific, 40% of children are still compromised by malnutrition and the prevalence of physical abuse is estimated to be between 40-66%.

ECD can have a positive effect on children. There is burgeoning evidence that high quality ECD for all children is associated with high returns in brain development, learning, and social, emotional and economic outcomes. Additionally, there are indications that there could be a trans-generational impact in fostering social cohesion through sustained interactions with parents and families, communities, practitioners and policy makers. In this region, data from the education sector show that high quality education and learning opportunities increases the likelihood of children completing primary education.

Quantitative data indicate that access to pre-primary education is improving in the region, but challenges persist. Although numerous countries in the region, including Cambodia, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, have ECD policies and legal frameworks, the implementation still needs to be improved. Inequities in terms of wealth, access, caregiver quality, and language continue to exist. For example, in Lao PDR, the attendance rate in early childhood education programmes among 36-59 months old in 2005-2012 was 73% for the richest but only 5% for the poorest section of the population. In Viet Nam, 91% of the richest quintile but only 59% of the poorest attend such programmes (source: The State of the World’s Children 2014). Ethnic and linguistic communities, children with disabilities and indigenous minorities appear to be under-researched and underserved. Gender and wealth also have significant impact.

UNICEF in Action

- In 2007, UNICEF EAPRO supported the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC), promoting holistic ECD in partnership. Now, UNICEF continues to partner with ARNEC in the development and utilisation of culturally and contextually appropriate ECD metrics and assessment tools relevant to countries in the region, and leading the emerging ECD and Peacebuilding/Social Cohesion initiative.

- In partnership with ARNEC and Hong Kong University, UNICEF developed the East Asia and Pacific Early Childhood Development Scales (EAP ECDS) based on the Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) from 10 countries of the region. The EAP ECDS provides a regionally-relevant assessment tool for holistic development of a child. The EAP ECDS report won the 2015 Best Of UNICEF Research (BOUR) with special recognition. A key finding from the validation study was that ECD has significant effect on all domains of child development in five countries – Cambodia, China, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu.

- In 2014, UNICEF EAPRO established the Cross-Cutting Working Group on ECD, with co-chairs from Education and Nutrition sections and members from Child Protection, Emergencies, Health, and WASH sections, to reinforce a holistic ECD through alignment with and conceptualization of global ECD strategies, initiatives, and movements; networking; knowledge management; and advocacy.

- UNICEF continues to strengthen equity in ECD by providing technical support to countries in the region on issues relating to access, quality, and governance in ECD, issuing policy briefs and providing technical support and capacity building for governments in the region, in addition to organizing policy fora, and high level inter-governmental meetings for South-South cooperation through evidence based advocacy.

- UNICEF facilitates knowledge sharing and strengthening of disaggregated EMIS and other relevant data, as well as organizing webinars and e-learning opportunities.
## Early Childhood Development

### Results for Children

#### Policies and Legal Frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>A multi-sectoral National ECCD Council was established under the Prime Minister's leadership, with the Ministry of Education leading, involving 11 line ministries in 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>In Myanmar, the ECCE Policy was endorsed in 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education (ECE) was included as part of the new education structure recently approved by the National Executive Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>A key policy document, the National Policy Framework for Pre-School Education was approved by the Council of Ministers.</td>
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</table>

#### Metrics, Standards, and Curriculum

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>Early Learning and Development Guidelines for children aged 3-6 years old was released, laying a solid foundation for developing national guidelines for assessing the quality of ECD centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Roll out of Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) and in-service training benefited 5,225 kindergarten teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philippines</td>
<td>Kindergarten model for indigenous communities (Teduray) was developed, benefitting approximately 825 three- to five-year-old children. Kindergarten curriculum for Muslim children (Tahderiyyah) was officially recognized by the government and introduced in conflict-affected areas, benefitting 12,000 three- to five-year-olds</td>
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</table>

#### The Pacific

In the Pacific, UNICEF was instrumental in supporting the establishment of the Pacific Regional Council for ECCE (PRC4ECCE), a vibrant and innovative network of senior level government and development partners. A pioneering effort of this Council has been the recent Launch of Regional Guidelines for the Development of National Quality Frameworks in Fiji. Children from 14 Pacific Island Countries are expected to benefit from these guidelines.

#### Training and Capacity Building

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>A resource package for the large scale training of rural ECD teachers to improve the quality of ECD was completed and is available to teacher training institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Training sessions on “Alternative training programmes of ECE” and “ECD in the family” were conducted for 215 teachers and parents, benefitting 10,919 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>A fully revised kindergarten curriculum and package of student and teacher materials produced. 394 four- and five-year-old children participated in formal early leaning and development activities as part of a community-based school readiness programme implemented in 27 remote communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender Equality in Education

All children have the right to education. Educating girls delivers huge social and economic benefits to the individual, her community and country. When a girl is educated she marries later, has fewer, healthier children and is less likely to die in childbirth, and when 10 per cent more girls go to school, a country's GDP increases on average by 3 per cent.

Yet, girls continue to be denied their right to education because of attitudes to their roles; because they bear the burden of domestic work, sibling care and early marriage, and pregnancies; and because they experience violence at or on the way to school. Our research in the East Asia and Pacific region has also indicated that transitions from primary to secondary education and from school to work can be hampered by gender stereotypes, and that boys find education is not relevant to their futures.

To overcome these gender inequalities we need to ensure girls and boys experience the same high quality education and learning. Issues such as discrimination in the classroom, physical and sexual violence, and classroom materials that promote negative gender stereotypes must be addressed. Issues around the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) also remain sensitive in the region.

The East Asia and Pacific region remains on track to meet the MDG 3 target on gender parity in primary education by 2015. Gender parity is achieved if the Gender Parity Index (GPI) is between 0.97 and 1.03 and many of those countries who have not yet reached gender parity at primary level are very close to doing so. Secondary education remains more of a challenge, with boys disadvantaged in many countries.

UNICEF in Action

UNICEF has co-hosted and chaired the East Asia and Pacific UN Girls' Education Initiative (EAP UNGEI) since 2002. EAP UNGEI is a network of experts and organizations promoting the right to education and gender equality for all. The regional group aims to strengthen programmes for girls’ education by ensuring national education plans are gender responsive. This is done through policy advocacy, sharing best practices, information and data, and building partnerships at the regional and country level. This network brings various partners including UN bodies, CSOs, and individual experts.

Through the EAP UNGEI, two new working groups on School-Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV) and Marginalisation were established in 2013 to take forward global policy advocacy agenda at the regional level and country-level. Engagement on addressing SRGBV has begun in Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Fiji.

The EAP UNGEI produces newsletters bi-annually, providing a platform for partners to share their best practices and experiences. It also contributes to and invites partners to produce articles and publications on their areas of expertise, particularly celebrating international days such as International Women’s Day, World Day Against Child Labour, and International Day of the Girl Child.

Results for Children

In Lao PDR, UNICEF contributed to the formation of the Gender, Inclusion, and Disability Technical Working Group (GID TWG), the first technical working group of its kind in the region. The GID TWG was appointed by Ministerial Decree and is chaired by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and currently co-chaired by a CSO, Plan Lao PDR. In Papua New Guinea, UNICEF introduced key issues around SRGBV, contributing to increased understanding of SRGBV within the Ministry of Education and in selected provinces.

In August 2014, UNICEF supported the East Asia and Pacific Regional Forum on Gender Equality in Education, hosted by the EAP UNGEI. The forum invited various partners including members of Global UNGEI Advisory Committee (GAC), providing a regional overview and a platform to discuss and share experiences and knowledge on issues such as SRGBV, disability, migrant children, child labour, and child marriage. Countries such as China, Fiji, Indonesia, Micronesia, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste also shared their work on SRGBV and marginalization.

Several resources have been published and disseminated through the EAP UNGEI, providing an overview on gender in education in the region and recommendations to address major challenges on topics such as disabilities in education, SRGBV, and boys’ underperformance. A key resource that has been developed is the SRGBV regional curriculum template in collaboration with the University of Melbourne and core EAP UNGEI partners.
Gender Equality in Education

Boys’ Disadvantage does not mean Girls’ Advantage

Specific Barriers to Girls’ Education
- Domestic Work & Taking care of siblings
- Early Marriage
- Adolescent pregnancy
- SRGBV: Sexual harassment, teasing, verbal abuse

Common
- Negative gender stereotypes in textbooks (i.e. perceptions of boys’ responsibilities for economic contribution)

Specific Barriers to Boys’ Education
- SRGBV: Entrenched violence such as corporal punishment
- Unsupportive classroom environments for boys
- Irrelevance of curricula for work

Note: The size of the figures do not necessarily reflect exact Gender Parity Index. Smaller figure means “disadvantaged”. Star means achieved.

Source: EFA GMR 2014
Education in Emergencies and Peacebuilding

In East Asia and Pacific, despite unprecedented advances in development in recent years, the benefits of rapid economic growth have not been shared equally, nor equitably. Many countries are facing significant problems of poverty, high unemployment, social exclusion and marginalization, which have led to violence and social unrest, with substantial impacts on children. After Africa, the region has the second largest number of fragile and conflict-affected states and regions. And often times, education has even become the target of attack in several countries.

Many countries in the region are also under overwhelming pressures to adapt to new challenges resulting from population growth, rapid urbanization, migration, climate change and natural hazards. In fact, East Asia and Pacific is the most hazard-prone region in the world. The impact of such emergencies does not only threaten human life, but also derails development gains and profoundly places children’s right to education at risk.

Education is not only a basic human right, but also a preparedness and recovery tool. When children are taught about natural and man-made hazards, they can better prepare themselves, their families and communities to prevent, reduce and cope with various risks and shocks. When schools are safe, they can offer protection to children and provide them with a sense of normalcy, dignity and hope in the midst of crisis. In times of emergency and post-crisis situations, there is also an opportunity to reconstruct education systems to act as catalyst for building peace and social cohesion through creating inclusive and equitable quality education with policies that fight discrimination and injustice, and designing learning environment and curricula that demonstrate positive values, overcome stereotypes and prejudice, and foster respect and tolerance.

UNICEF considers education an integral part of humanitarian interventions that can help countries transform and rebuild the institutions and systems destroyed during an emergency. It is a key priority for UNICEF to strengthen the capacity of governments and institutions in the region to effectively prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises in order to ensure the continuation of quality education for all during emergencies and post-crisis transition.

UNICEF in Action

UNICEF has been engaging in knowledge generation and advocacy to support programmes in early childhood development (ECD) and peacebuilding, multilingual education (MLE), participatory conflict analysis with adolescents, school-related gender based violence and social cohesion, and conflict-sensitive education sector plans.

UNICEF has been an active partner in the Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group (MLE WG) since 2012 and has made significant contributions towards removing barriers of access to quality education for ethno linguistic communities through the promotion of mother tongue-based multilingual education.


UNICEF supported the establishment of a regional ECD and Peacebuilding Working Group that explores and promotes the added value of ECD on peacebuilding and vice versa.
Education in Emergencies and Peacebuilding

Results for Children

“Back to Learning” Campaign (Philippines)
UNICEF supports the government’s “Back to Learning” campaign as part of the inter-agency response to Typhoon Haiyan

Over 28,000 Community members reached to encourage all children to come back to school

Over 624,783 3-17 years old children received learning materials and supplies

213,200 Children gained access to 2,132 temporary learning spaces

3,470 Education service providers trained on topics such as psychosocial support, disaster risk education, and continuing education during emergencies

Education in Emergencies and Peacebuilding (Myanmar)
UNICEF supports the government on EiE and PBEA since the Cyclone Nargis

Technical Assistance
UNICEF has been providing technical assistance to the government on Education Emergency Preparedness and Response

Children First
UNICEF supported development of school-based disaster risk reduction programme that puts children first in emergency preparedness and response mechanisms

Education in Conflict
UNICEF supported children in Rakhine and Kachin states to have access to temporary learning spaces with safe water, sanitation, and hygiene

23,100 Children
UNICEF’s EiE response in Rakhine and Kachin benefited total of 23,100 Pre-primary and primary school aged children

Language, Education and Social Cohesion (LESC)
UNICEF supports a multi country research initiative on LESC in Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand

Research-Based Evidence
Explores the relationship between the issues of language, conflict, and social cohesion

Regional Guidelines
Develops guidelines to enhance understanding on how language policies and practices in education can undermine or promote social cohesion

Tool for Policy Makers
Fosters effective language policy planning relevant for peacebuilding and national unity

The Three Pillars of Comprehensive School Safety

Comprehensive school safety is addressed by education policy and practices aligned with disaster management at national, regional, district, and local school site levels. It rests on three pillars:

1. Safe Learning Facilities
2. School Disaster Management
3. Risk Reduction and Resilience Education

Multi-hazard risk assessment is the foundation for planning for Comprehensive School Safety. Ideally, this should be part of Educational Management Information Systems at national, subnational, and local levels. It is part of a broader analysis of education sector policy and management in order to provide the evidence base for planning and action. (source: Comprehensive School Safety brochure, 2014)
Adolescents

Approximately 329 million adolescents reside in this region and constitute a quarter of the world’s adolescent population. They face a number of challenges ranging from violence, early deaths from accidents, suicides, early marriage, early pregnancies, alcohol and substance use, dropping out of schools, HIV, human trafficking, and exploitation and more.

To address these complex issues and respond to the needs of adolescents more effectively for adolescent well-being and transition to adulthood as educated, socially well adjusted global citizens, UNICEF promotes cross-sectoral approaches.

Adolescents who are better informed and more involved in decision-making processes that affect their lives, can better protect themselves, grow and develop to their full potential; UNICEF strongly encourages adolescent participation, as a right, in planning, analysis and programs.

With an emphasis on equity, UNICEF EAPRO encourages specific attention to adolescents from the most disadvantaged groups, such as those who are stateless, migrants and those with disabilities.

UNICEF in Action

- Organized a regional Adolescent Development and Participation training in collaboration with UNESCO and UNFPA in 2013, to provide participants with in-depth knowledge on adolescent development and skills needed for adolescent policy advocacy and programing.

- Organized a regional Multi-sector Consultation on Addressing Adolescent Pregnancies in 2013 to assess the problem of adolescent pregnancy in the region and make cross-sectoral recommendations, strengthening international connections and providing specific instructions for action.

- In Mindanao Philippines, UNICEF supported the consultation with adolescents to seek their views and perceptions on the drivers of conflicts and peace, as part of a larger peace building process in the conflict affected areas. The findings of this process was shared with the various stakeholders who suggested specific actions to be undertaken as part of the peace building processes.

- In 2014, UNICEF EAPRO established the Cross-Cutting Working Group on Adolescence.

- Support to country specific process with UNICEF country offices to advocate and encourage adolescent specific interventions/actions to be included and addressed in the plans.

Results for Adolescents

- UNICEF country offices provide support to various ministries on a range of issues relating to adolescents: strengthening juvenile justice systems for children in conflict with the law, advocating for child sensitive and CRC based approaches for children and adolescents who are sexually exploited, specific measures to address the unique needs of adolescents living with HIV etc.

- In China, UNICEF supports the efforts of the government in providing life-skills-based education for adolescents, on financial management, reproductive health and climate change through online and offline channels. Between 2011 and 2013, over 10,000 adolescents took part in the trainings.

- In Mongolia, UNICEF supports the ministries of Education and Health in promoting adolescent health, HIV/AIDS-prevention in schools and in the training of teachers. UNICEF also supports adolescents through counseling and development of materials that promote behavioral changes. Additionally, approximately 12,400 children received training in community projects on climate change, where they wrote response plans and recommendations through UNICEF-convened partnership.

- The adolescent birth rate (per 1,000) in Thailand is now 60 among girls aged 15-19, with the poorest income quintile most affected, with 85 per 1,000. UNICEF works with partners to reduce unwanted adolescent pregnancies by developing and enhancing strategies to understand the drivers of vulnerability, the impacts on adolescent girls, their partners and their children, and the potential of effective strategies to reduce unwanted adolescent pregnancies.
Adolescents

Adolescent Birth
Births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years old (2012)

- Lao PDR: 65
- Papua New Guinea: 62
- Timor-Leste: 52
- Philippines: 47
- Cambodia: 44
- Fiji: 43
- Thailand: 41
- Viet Nam: 29

Time to Pay More Attention to Our Adolescents

Transition to Secondary Education
Transition from primary to secondary general education (%). Total

- Malaysia: 99.5 (2011)**
- Indonesia: 96.4 (2011)**
- Fiji: 94.3 (2011)**
- Cambodia: 80.2 (2012)**
- Lao PDR: 86.7 (2012)**

Violence and Unintentional Injury
Percentage of students aged 13-15, who were in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months

- Mongolia: 43.8 (2013)
- Philippines: 37.7 (2011)
- Thailand: 34.1 (2008)
- Indonesia: 33.7 (2007)
- China*: 15.8 (2003)
- Myanmar: 14.6 (2007)

Sexual Behavior
Percentage of students aged 13-15 who ever had sexual intercourse (2013)

- Cambodia: 13
- Mongolia: 10

Suicide
Percentage of students aged 13-15 who ever seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months

- Mongolia (2013): 21.3
- Philippines (2011): 16.3
- Indonesia (2007): 14.3
- Myanmar (2007): 0.7
- China* (2000): 8.5

Alcohol Use
Percentage of students aged 13-15 who drank at least one drink containing alcohol one or more of the past 30 days

- Indonesia (2007): 15.6
- Mongolia (2013): 13
- China* (2000): 10
- Thailand (2008): 7

Sources:
Transition to Secondary Education: EFA GMR 2014 (UIS)
Adolescent Birth Rate: World Development Indicators 2014 (World Bank)
All others: Global School-Based Health Survey (WHO)
* Data only from Beijing are included.
** The end of school year