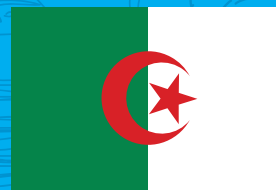


ALL IN SCHOOL كلنا في المدرسة

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN INITIATIVE



RÉPUBLIQUE ALGÉRIENNE DÉMOCRATIQUE
ET POPULAIRE MINISTÈRE
DE L'ÉDUCATION NATIONALE

SUMMARY

ALGERIA

COUNTRY REPORT ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Summary

Since gaining independence in 1962, the education and training of young people has been a consistently high priority for Algeria. The country has always committed a substantial proportion of its resources to the education sector – one of the highest proportions in the world. Because of this, the sector has undergone remarkable development. More than 10 million Algerians currently attend school (28 per cent of the population) and more than a fifth of the State Budget, i.e. 7.5 per cent of GDP, is spent on education and training. The country currently meets its needs for managers in all fields. The upheaval that began in the wake of independence has accelerated change over the last 30 years. From 1984 to 2013, the number of students doubled from 5.1 to 10.1 million and spending on education rose from 20 billion Algerian Dinars (DA) to 1,260 billion DA. Over the last decade, the country's main focus has been on improving the quality of education. In 2003, a new general law governing education triggered a reform of the education system which involved reorganizing educational structures, reworking teaching methods and revising school programmes around a framework in order to ensure quality of learning. Furthermore, in an attempt to deal with the educational disparities that existed, social support measures were put in place to make the education system fairer and increase the chances of achieving equal opportunities for those population groups from the most disadvantaged areas.

The undeniable progress made in terms of the massive expansion of schooling and basic education highlights the importance of state involvement in guaranteeing all Algerian children access to compulsory schooling cycles from ages 6 to 16. Financial and human resources deployed in the national education sector have largely contributed to the drop in illiteracy in those over 10 years old from more than 75 per cent in 1966 to 22 per cent in 2008. The objective of achieving a constitutional principle of compulsory basic schooling has made remarkable progress over the last few years. The net school enrolment rate of 6-16 year olds went from 88.3 per cent in 2006 to 92.9 per cent in 2013 with full parity between boys and girls. In 2013, the population aged 6-16 was estimated at 6.95 million children (3.55 million boys and 3.4 million girls). Out-of-school children aged 6-16 therefore represent a population of 494,000 including 252,000 boys and 242,000 girls. In 2006, the population of 6-16 year olds was estimated at 7.6 million children (3.88 million boys and 3.72 million girls). Out-of-school children aged 6-16 therefore represented a population of 890,000 children including 443,000 boys and 447,000 girls. As such, the number of out-of-school children aged 6-16 was reduced by almost a half between 2006 and 2013.

The Algerian education system is therefore characterized by high rates of school enrolment and rapid growth in numbers for the different educational cycles, resulting in students staying in school for longer. However, this doesn't stop some school-age girls and boys from remaining out of school, or those in school from dropping out due to the persistence of the practice of repeating a school grade, particularly during lower secondary education. As a result, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF are concerned

about the issue of out-of-school children and the trend of dropping out of school and therefore committed, as part of the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI), to carry out this study to improve identification of out-of-school children and those children who are at risk of dropping out of school, as well as analyse the associated constraints and policies in order to make some recommendations.

This study consists of three parts. The first is quantitative and involves analysing various sources of reliable data by carrying out a statistical analysis of the Five Dimensions of Exclusion proposed by the OOSCI. These results will produce numbers, percentages and profiles of out-of-school children in basic and pre-school education as well as those children at risk of dropping out. The second part is qualitative and focuses on identifying the bottlenecks and underlying factors of non-enrolment and early school leaving in Algeria. A review of the measures and strategies implemented by the Algerian government is also being carried out to help counter these issues. Finally, the study suggests some political, structural and pedagogical recommendations to tackle the identified problems with a view to improving the quality of education and retention of school-aged children.

The OOSCI has adopted a model of 5 analytical dimensions to identify different categories of out-of-school children:

- **Dimension 1:** Children of pre-primary school age who are not in pre-primary or primary school.
- **Dimension 2:** Children of primary school age who are not in primary or secondary school.
- **Dimension 3:** Children of lower secondary school age who are not in primary or secondary school.
- **Dimension 4:** Children who are in primary school but at risk of dropping out.
- **Dimension 5:** Children who are in lower secondary school but at risk of dropping out.

Administrative data and data from household surveys have been analysed to give similar results regarding the first three dimensions. The following table gives a general summary of the Five Dimensions.

Summary of the Five Dimensions of Exclusion: Out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out of school

	Girls		Boys		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Out-of-school children						
D1: Children 5 years old (pre-primary)	127,306	33.20%	134,610	33.60%	261,916	33.40%
D2: Children 6 to 10 years old (primary)	60,458	3.70%	40,846	2.40%	101,304	3.00%
D3: Children 11 to 14 years old (lower secondary)	86,625	7.60%	65,254	5.50%	151,879	6.50%
Total out-of-school children	274,390	8.60%	240,710	7.30%	515,100	7.90%
Children at risk of dropping out of school						
D4: Children in primary school	27,028	1.60%	67,243	3.60%	94,271	2.60%
D5: Children in lower secondary school	110,822	8.80%	297,350	21.30%	408,172	15.30%
Total children at risk of dropping out of school	137,850	4.60%	364,593	11.10%	502,443	8.00%

Calculating Dimensions 1, 2 and 3 from the administrative data gives an out-of-school rate of 7.9 per cent for children aged 5-14 or a total of 515,000 children. Dimension 1 is the largest (33.4 per cent) while Dimension 2 concerns 3 per cent of children aged 6-10, or around 100,000 children, and Dimension 3 involves around 152,000 children or 6.5 per cent of children aged 11-14. Dimensions 2 and 3 affect more girls than boys.

Dimension 4, which is the risk of children dropping out of primary school, affects 2.6 per cent of children at primary school; the figure is higher for boys (3.6 per cent) than for girls (1.6 per cent). Dimension 5 presents a higher risk and affects 15.3 per cent of children at lower secondary school. The figure is significantly higher for boys (21.3 per cent) than for girls (8.8 per cent).

An analysis of the development of the Five Dimensions since 2006 shows that out-of-school numbers have decreased for each dimension. This decrease is particularly notable in the case of Dimension 1, which, following the pre-primary education reform, has seen an unprecedented increase in enrolments of children aged five. Dimension 3 also experienced a notable decrease of almost 4 percentage points between 2006 and 2013. Similarly, Dimension 4 shows a decline of almost a half. With regard to Dimension 5, although the trend is decreasing, numbers of out-of-school students remain high and demonstrate the importance of efforts to reduce the risk of school dropout, particularly in boys' colleges.

In terms of progress made to meet the goal of universal and compulsory enrolment for children aged 6 to 16 years, this varies depending on the different regions of the country. The plateau regions and children from poor households where the mother is illiterate have caught up considerably. As a result, in addition to the quantitative progress measured (net rate of enrolment of 6-16 year-olds rose from 88.3 per cent in 2006 to 92.9 per cent in 2013, i.e. an improvement of 4.6 percentage points in seven years), the enrolment of children aged 6-16 has also become less discriminatory and more equitable.

The study shows that around 1 million Algerian children aged between 5 and 14 are affected by the different dimensions of non-enrolment, i.e. around 15 per cent of this age group. Half of these are currently out of school and the other half are at school but at risk of quitting without completing the cycle of primary or lower secondary studies. Although primary education has proved to be the most integrated and least exclusive, it is at the start and end of this stream that issues of non-enrolment are raised. Initially for the pre-primary year, the question of access is raised (a third of children aged five do not have access to pre-primary education) and at the end the question of risk occurs (one in five of those children enrolled in lower secondary school risk dropping out without reaching the last year of the cycle). Therefore, in 2013, the Algerian profile of the Five Dimensions of Exclusion was marked by two major traits related to the first and last dimensions: i) Dimension 1 which affects one third of children aged five who do not benefit from education, ii) Dimension 5 which is a risk for a fifth of children enrolled in lower secondary school.

This study has highlighted the absence of a pre-primary policy and the weak preparation of children for primary education: pre-primary education is not widespread and caters only for children aged five while pre-school aimed at children of three to four years old is provided only by a few private organizations. In addition to a lack of progress in developing pre-school, the major problem for the Algerian education system remains the high number of students who repeat years, particularly at lower secondary school, as this generates children dropping out of school and adds to school wastage, where school resources are expended on students who do not complete their schooling.

Children with disabilities make up a large proportion of out-of-school children. The education system is not responsive to the needs of children with disabilities, for whom the few specialist centres and the attempts at integration into mainstream classes remain completely insufficient. Inclusive education is something that needs to be developed and be implemented. Civil society groups who act on behalf of people with disabilities have demanded that a plan for educational inclusion be drawn up and implemented by all relevant sectors. The plan should use a systematic approach to provide for children with disabilities by developing necessary infrastructure and allocating a budget to the Ministry of Education to provide decent education for these children.

Investments, quantitative successes, the education reform of 2003, the framework law of 2008 and specific measures have all played a part in developing the Algerian education system over the last two decades and have generated an increase in enrolment rates at all levels. However, a number of at-risk children still exist with a significant amount of school wastage and dropout.

Algerian society has undergone such significant changes at the demographic, economic and social levels that understanding the barriers linked to schooling in Algeria is a complex exercise. Numerous bottlenecks have been identified at different levels:

- **At the level of provision:** Unequal infrastructure coverage, problems with facilities, difficult working conditions (lack of classrooms, overloaded classes), absence of pre-school availability;
- **At the governmental and financial level:** Management would be more efficient if it was supported by a modern and reliable information system; a centralized budget and distribution of resources which requires a better understanding of needs;
- **At the level of basic educational quality:** The school system has an internal performance problem due in part to a selective, norm-based grading system (a grading system that identifies how a test taker does in comparison to their peers and not how much material they know) which produces large numbers of children dropping out of school and also to non-differentiated teaching practices which focus on content rather than learning achievements and a lack of involvement of relevant stakeholders e.g. school heads, teachers, parents and students.

A multidimensional analysis has highlighted the complexity of interlinking elements where discriminatory socio-economic factors such as household wealth and the educational level of the mother are predominant. Analysing progress over the last decade demonstrates that there has been a decrease in regional and social disparities. This shows an undeniable improvement in the equity of the Algerian education system.

Since 2012, the Ministry of Education has planned several organizational, pedagogical and social measures, which this study has investigated, but these still need to be developed and expanded:

- At the level of governance: develop an information system and a modern and reliable inter-sectoral statistics collection system; implement a relevant framework of indicators to identify elements of educational dysfunction, their location and needs analysis; strengthen collaboration between the relevant ministries; delegate more to regional structures; improve collaboration between ministries, their management and leaders of the different sectors involved in education.
- At the level of educational provision: develop an early childhood policy at both quantitative and qualitative levels by involving communities and civil society; improve equal access to education in particular for children from vulnerable groups and offer the option of school readmission for children outside the system via accelerated teaching and training offered by a 'second chance' school or vocational training.

- At the level of equal access to education: ensure an equal distribution of schooling conditions to avoid regional disparities; ensure the parity of girls/boys in certain regions and integrate children with disabilities via a comprehensive plan for inclusive pedagogy.
- At the level of educational quality: to counteract school wastage by professionalizing teachers, school heads, inspectors and school counsellors via ambitious and appropriate professional training. This training should develop active, competency-based pedagogical practices that focus on learning achievements, differentiation and remediation. Grading and evaluation practices should be totally overhauled and formative assessment should be used. In addition, infrastructure, facilities and teachers' working conditions should all be improved.

This report puts forward a set of recommendations as a result of analysing the situation and the bottlenecks and barriers:

- **Pre-school:** Carry out an evaluation of the pre-primary school year and initiate a medium term strategy focusing on two specific milestones: i) making pre-primary schooling widespread; ii) developing pre-primary schooling via a partnership of the public and private sectors.
- **Evaluation and remediation systems:** Change the reference points with regard to school failure generated by the normative evaluation system. This will happen by: i) implementing appropriate diagnostic tools, dealing with students' difficulties and evaluating their progress; ii) ensuring teachers have the necessary training to evaluate students and implement pedagogy for learning, success and integration; iii) identify at-risk students and offer them personalized monitoring on both pedagogical and social levels within a care framework, including catch-up sessions and social action in favour of the most disadvantaged. Initially and as a priority, this system could target boys at lower secondary level.
- **Children with disabilities:** Draw up and implement a comprehensive school inclusion plan which will translate the clear commitment from the State's policy of inclusiveness into education and school care for children with disabilities using a systematic approach involving different stakeholders from the public sector and civil society.
- **Second chance reintegration:** School dropout remains a worrying trend. Acting on the causes is the most effective approach for reducing or eradicating dropout. However, despite the improvements made by the Algerian educational system, nearly half a million children aged 6 to 16 are out of school and for the not-inconsiderable number of those who did not want to leave, they are often marked for life by dropping out. Offering these children a second chance at school integration could lead to them being fully reintegrated into the ordinary school curriculum or giving them access to vocational training. Before launching such a large-scale operation, it would be advisable to clarify a set of success criteria and assess its impact and efficacy via a pilot implementation phase.

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