A Survey on EFA Goals
done by ACEA
2012

1. Reaching EFA goals by 2015
Since the adoption of the EFA goals in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000, significant progress has been made especially in increasing enrolment and reducing gender disparities at the primary level. Progress has, however, been uneven both between and within countries and in some cases it has started to wane. Advances made in access have often hidden persistent and significant challenges in other areas, notably the quality and relevance of education. Many countries are not on track to meeting the international goals for education by 2015. In order to accelerate progress towards EFA, successful policies and practices need to be identified and shared to allow others to replicate them as appropriate.

2. Bottlenecks slowing down EFA progress
- Low and unstable budgets allocated for education: In all surveyed countries. In Yemen for example, a study conducted by the Yemeni Education Coalition (2010) shows high spending on running costs as opposed to developmental programmes; decrease in the budget allocated to education; insufficient budget to meet the plans and goals; low rate of budget allocation per student; and lack of contribution of the private sector to the educational budgets. In Palestine the budget goes to the running costs, especially for teacher salaries and only 8% of the education budget is spent on programme development.

- Political instability, crises and wars: Yemen has been under successive crises since 2004. This includes internal armed conflicts, conflicts between the government and the opposition, and the revolution. Iraq is also still undergoing difficult political conflicts that are sometimes accompanied with armed conflict and existence of external forces, which is also the situation in Palestine and Lebanon. These conflicts make education a lesser priority and also make decision making for education a complicated process that is affected by different players and different governments.

- Poverty: In Yemen, the low income and poor socioeconomic status of people forces many of them to compromise education for their children, especially girls. Issues in Jordan include poverty and social circumstances such as early marriage and gender discrimination; low
quality of education; and lack of the appropriate educational infrastructure especially in the rural and marginalized areas.

- **Lack of proper educational environments that support achieving EFA goals**: In Iraq for example, this includes inappropriate and outdated curricula that does not meet modern needs; lack of proper professional development and training programmes for teachers; lack of information on development indicators; social problems; lack of a clear national strategy for educational development; lack of appropriate criteria for qualifications in education; and lack of incentives systems for teachers.

- **Administrative and financial bureaucracy** (in all surveyed countries)

- **Corruption**

- **Politicizing higher education and academic institutions** (for example in Iraq)

- **Poor potential and coordination among the Civil Society** (for example in Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, Sudan, and Morocco), and lack of the civil society’s ability to monitor government’s performance on education.

- **Lack of a culture of social corporate responsibility on education** (Sudan, Yemen, Jordan and Iraq)

- High expectations when planning for reform (such as in Morocco) which affects the clarity of priorities and causes confusion and loss of unified and focused action.

- **Lack of coordination among stakeholders** in all countries.

- No follow-up for reform programmes especially those related to early childhood education (in Morocco for example).
3. Policies and practices that have been successful with regard to progress towards the achievement of EFA goals

YEMEN
In Yemen, there are no recent studies that addressed this issue. At the end of 2010, a formal report mentioned a success in children’s enrolment in basic education, and in reducing the gender gap in enrolment. However, civil society in the Yemen doubts the results of this report, as the indicators still show poor achievement on the two aspects. In Palestine the enrolment is more than 95% for girls and boys.

IRAQ
In Iraq, there have been changes in curriculum content, such as teaching other languages besides Arabic as well as teaching a new subject on human rights for middle stage students. Other changes include private sector’s involvement in primary education through supporting teaching languages and in higher education, expanding scholarships abroad; increasing enrolment; starting doctoral programmes; setting up non-governmental universities and research institutes in different specialties; and opening new departments in universities (for example, quality assurance) that pay attention to conferences and seminars.

JORDAN
In Jordan, there have been achievements regarding literacy programmes, gender equality in access to education, providing education services in marginalized areas and mainstreaming basic education.

MOROCCO
In Morocco, successes include providing social support to poor groups in order to encourage education, providing schools with equipment and resources to support the teaching process, as well as incorporating a large number of school cafeterias and rooms with multimedia equipment. In Palestine despite the high rate of enrolment the quality of education is going down