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Introduction

Literacy is a word that is usually associated with the positive aspects of human civilization, and of social and economic development. However, the word illiteracy has been, and is still used nowadays to characterize poverty and lack of education in various parts of the world. Literacy as we refer to it in this report is a second chance in basic education and a chance not only to improve youth and adult standard of life and upgrade their basic life skills, but also to contribute to the sustainable development of their societies and to become life-long learners.

Although adult education in the region has begun to take on other characteristics more prevalent in other parts of the world, which include providing people with the skills and knowledge needed to respond effectively to the growing challenges of new technologies and the information age, it is important to point that the “focus of adult education in the Arab region as a whole has been primarily on literacy, and most of the region still deals with adult education as a literacy issue”.

Illiteracy rate in the Arab World is around 35.6% compared with a global rate of 18%. Arab nations have more than 70 million illiterate people and nearly two thirds of them are concentrated in five regional countries, according to the Arab League. The number means the illiteracy rate in the 21-nation Arab League is currently estimated at 35.6 per cent, nearly double the global rate, said the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (Alesco). The problem is underscored in Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, Morocco and Algeria, which have about 48 million illiterates, nearly 68 per cent of the total.

The teaching of reading and writing faces the challenge\(^1\) of the dichotomy in Arabic language between the spoken (colloquial) and the classical language. The latter seems today no longer the “language of conversation”, it is rather the language of reading and writing, while the former is the language of cordial, spontaneous expression, emotions, feelings and everyday communication. Therefore, teaching illiterates reading and writing in classical Arabic faces the crisis of the growing neglect of the functional aspects of (Arabic) language use. On the other hand, another aspect of the crisis is the relation between the Arabic language and the transfer and absorption of technologies which necessitate the renewal of Arabic language by expanding its functional use in everyday life and the strengthening of its relationship with other languages to avoid the risk of being marginalized from new informational and technological developments (Arab Human Development Report, 2003, p.125 - 126).

Many parts of the Arab world have endured, or continue to endure, armed conflict. This has had a strong impact on education. Military spending may often come at the expense of education. Physical and psychological injury sustained by students during these events can have a lasting effect on education.

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\(^1\) Source: UNESCO, 2006/ED/EFA/MRT/PI/38, Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006, Literacy for Life, Illiteracy in the Arab world
The number of illiterates in the 22 countries of the Arab region reached some 67 million in 2002, which accounts for 40 per cent of the total population aged 15 years and over. A recent study conducted by UNESCO-Beirut in 2001, shows that Arab regional efforts contributed greatly in reducing the levels of illiteracy from 48.7 per cent in 1990 to 38.5 per cent. Projections show that if these successful efforts continue, 28 per cent (about 75 million) of the region’s population estimated at 280 million will still be illiterate. However, it is interesting to note that some experts believe that there must now be over 100 million illiterates in the region because official literacy and educational statistics suffer from inadequate data collection and lack of accurate information.

Great variations exist among the Arab states in their literacy rates for the age group 15 and over. The most recent data reveals that such literacy rates range from 80% and above in nine countries (Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, and Libya), which are relatively small states with the exception of Saudi Arabia, to less than 75% in nine other countries with large populations, with Iraq, Mauritania and Yemen standing as low as 40% and 41.2% and 49% respectively.

As John Daniel, former UNESCO Assistant Director General for Education alarmingly warns, "the Arab region has some of the world's lowest adult literacy rates, with only 62.2% of the region's population of 15 and over able to read and write in 2000-2004, well below the world average of [84%] and the developing countries' average of 76.4%".4

As for the age group 15-24 the achievements are greater, whereby eleven countries have attained a literacy rate of 90% and over, well above the world average of 87.6% (Jordan, UAE, Bahrain, Syria, Qatar, Kuwait, Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Tunisia), with Jordan scoring the highest (99.4%). Such "literacy abundant" countries are contrasted to another "literacy deprived" group of five states with the largest Arab population, all scoring below the developing countries' average of 85.2% (Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, and Yemen).

Female illiteracy rates were double digit in all Arab nations except Kuwait, Qatar and Palestine, with Iraqi having the highest rate. It was followed by Yemen, with a female illiteracy rate of 61.4 per cent, according to the report2.

The League’s 2009 socio-economic report, published by the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund, showed Kuwait had the lowest female illiteracy rate in the Arab World as the emirate is one of the first countries to discover oil and launch a massive development programme to transform its desert nature.

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Scope of the Report

Arab nations have more than 70 million illiterate people and nearly two thirds of them are concentrated in five regional countries, according to the Arab League. The number means the illiteracy rate in the 21-nation Arab League is currently estimated at 35.6 per cent, nearly double the global rate, said the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (Alesco). The problem is underscored in Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, Morocco and Algeria, which have about 48 million illiterates, nearly 68 per cent of the total.

The figures showed there was little progress in literacy achievements in Iraq as the country’s development plans have been obstructed by three major wars, including the 1980-1988 conflict with neighbouring Iran, the 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing allied offensive to eject the Iraqi forces out of the emirate, and the 2003 US-led attack that resulted in its occupation. A breakdown showed Iraq’s male illiteracy stood at 43.4 per cent at the end of 2006 and that among women at as high as 74.8 per cent. Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip had the lowest illiteracy rate in the Arab region, standing 5.8 per cent at the end of 2008. The rate was 2.8 per cent among men and 8.9 per cent among women. Kuwait had the second lowest rate of six per cent, followed by Qatar with a rate of 6.9 per cent. Jordan had the fourth lowest rate of 7.9 per cent while the UAE and Bahrain had the fifth and sixth lowest rates of 10.2 and 11.7 per cent.

Despite progress, millions are still denied the chance to go to school. In the Arab States, the primary net enrolment ratio increased from 77% in 1999 to 86% in 2010. Despite this progress, five million children of primary school age are still out of school. Yemen and Morocco are the two states most lagging behind. Yemen is one of the ten countries in the world with the most children out of school. Millions are also likely to be denied the right to education in countries that have suffered from conflict but do not report data, such as Iraq and the former Sudan. The gross secondary enrolment rate increased from 59% in 1999 to 69% by 2010. However, 3.7 million adolescents remain out of school. Despite improvements in adult literacy rates, the number of illiterate adults fell by just 3% between 1985-94 and 2005-2010 due to population growth. As a result, over 50 million adults are illiterate in the region, more than two-thirds of whom are women. Egypt is amongst the ten countries in the world with over 10 million adults unable to read or write. Saudi Arabia has made the greatest advance in women’s literacy in the past decade in the world. As a result, 81% of women are literate compared with 57% a decade earlier, and the country is projected to be close to achieving the target of achieving a 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015.

Fewer girls than boys are in school. Alongside sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States has the widest gender gap, with a gender parity index of 0.93 in primary school and 0.94 in secondary school. Nine out of 15 countries with data have not yet achieved gender parity at the primary level.

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3 Source: UNESCO, Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Regional Fact Sheet January 2013, Education in the Arab States
Gender disparities are further aggravated by wealth and location: In 2005 in Iraq, almost all children from rich households had been to school, whether boy or girl. But 34% of poor girls living in the South had never been to school, with 15% of poor boys in the region in the same situation. There are also wide inequalities in learning. In Qatar, for example, while around 35% of rich boys and girls reach at least level 2 in math, the same is true for only 10% of the poorest boys in the country, and only 8% of the poorest girls.

The Arab States show strong commitment to funding education, but costs can still be excessive for poor households. They allocate 5.5% of GNP to education on average, a proportion that has not changed since 1999. This is still the second highest percentage of any region in the world after North America and Western Europe. There are, however, wide variations in spending within the region. Lebanon, for example, spends just 1.8% of its GNP on education while Tunisia has been spending as much as 6.6%. Poor households are often unable to cover the costs needed for education, particularly when they have to supplement for the low quality of schooling. In Egypt, it has been reported that some teachers withhold curriculum content during the school day, forcing students to attend private tutorials. Recourse to private tuition can reinforce the gap in the quality of education received by rich and poor households: the richest households spending for times more than poorest households on private tuition.

The regional report for the Arab States finds that that the proportion of children attending school has increased, with average enrollment reaching 86%, up from 75% of children in 1999. Yet, six million primary school-aged children remain out of school, the majority of whom are girls. The occupied Palestinian territories have witnessed a huge fall in primary school enrollment of 21%. Between 1999 and 2005, Yemen, one of the world’s poorest countries, has seen a large increase in enrollment. In 2008, it had over one million children out-of-school, the highest number in the region. This increase has slowed over the past few years, however, which means that number could increase before 2015. Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and the Occupied Palestinian territories all had literacy rates above 90%.

According to UNESCO (UIS, 2003) there is a noticeable regional discrepancy in country illiteracy statistics within and across the Arab States. Illiteracy rates vary widely in the region ranging from 10.2 per cent in Jordan to 59.8 per cent in Mauritania. Five countries, namely Yemen (53.6 %), Morocco (51.2%), Egypt (44.7%), Sudan (42.3%), and Algeria (33.3%) account for 49 out of the 67 million of officially recognized illiterate adults in the region, while ten countries, namely Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Djibouti, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, and Mauritania, account for only 3.6 million illiterates.

The Cairo-based Arab League said some regional nations have made progress in literacy campaigns but the rate has remained high in many members, mainly among women.

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UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011: The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education
The Arab region continues to show very alarming illiteracy rates among women and young girls, especially in the rural and underprivileged areas and sectors of society. Women’s illiteracy is linked to other serious indicators of underdevelopment, such as infant mortality and family size. Although illiteracy rates for Arab women reached percentages which varied between 80% and 90% in the fifties and sixties, there has been a marked improvement in the education of girls in the past decades (Maamouri 1999). This improvement in education contributed to a drop in the average female illiteracy rates from 63.3 per cent in 1970 to 49.4 per cent by the year 2000 with a noticeable disparity which varies by age groups across and within most Arab countries. The break-down of the illiteracy rates into age-specific rates shows that the highest proportion of female illiterates are in the 50+ year bracket. While illiterate older women are a feature common to all Arab states with little or no exception, the illiteracy of young girls, who are illiterate because they were left out of the educational system, is highest in Saudi Arabia (44%), Sudan (50%), Morocco (56%), Yemen (66%), and Djibouti (69%).

Eradicating illiteracy was an important mission of the post-colonial Arab world. The Arabs have made a serious dent on that front. Although about 70 million Arabs remain illiterate, that number is quickly decreasing. Yet, there is a difference between educating to achieve literacy and providing quality education. By and large, the Arab world has not yet transformed their educational systems from focusing on literacy into a system with the institutions necessary to integrate their young people into their own labor markets and to push their countries into the competitive global arena.

It was estimated that gender parity in the Arab world stood at .69 in 2004, one of the lowest rates in the world except for South and West Asia. Although progress has been made during the last two decades towards bringing all girls into schools, in the Arab World girls still attend school less commonly than boys. That is not to say that the education of boys is not important. All children, boys and girls, deserve quality education. As the information age advances, illiterates and uneducated children, and the adults they will become, are more likely to fall behind.

Only five countries (United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain) had a gender parity index of .90 and above for the age group 15 and over, well above the world average of .88, with UAE scoring as high as 1.07. While eleven countries (Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Oman, Mauritania, Egypt, Yemen and Morocco) have an index lower than the developing countries’ average parity index of .83, they do correspond to the countries previously labelled as literacy deprived with the exception of Syria and Saudi Arabia.

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Jordan

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is strategically located in the Middle East. Bound by Syria to the north, Iraq to the northeast, Saudi Arabia to the east and south, the Red Sea to the south, and Israel and the Palestinian National Authority to the west, Jordan covers a diversity of landscapes.

Jordan advanced in the fight against illiteracy, which it gradually resulted in a decrease from 67.6% in 1961 to 7.7% in 2008. The ratio distribution is 11.4% for females 4.3% for males. With the result of intensified efforts, the rate has further dropped to become about 6.7% in 2011.

Illiteracy rate dropped in 2012 than it was in previous years for both males and females. In this effort, the Ministry of Education opened 509 literacy centers during the 2011-2012 academic years in collaboration with civil society institutions which played a major role in the eradication of illiteracy.

This table shows the enrolment rate in literacy classes in Jordan until the year 2012:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School-calendar</th>
<th>Classrooms</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Enrolments</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Passes</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999/2000</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>403</td>
<td></td>
<td>6390</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>5542</td>
<td></td>
<td>4691</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>4001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000/2001</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>347</td>
<td></td>
<td>5483</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>4968</td>
<td></td>
<td>3558</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>3279</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/2002</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>306</td>
<td></td>
<td>4469</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>3879</td>
<td></td>
<td>3309</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>2876</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>330</td>
<td></td>
<td>4680</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>4130</td>
<td></td>
<td>3448</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>3143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/2004</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>290</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>3822</td>
<td></td>
<td>3234</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>2772</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/2005</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>291</td>
<td></td>
<td>321</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>3415</td>
<td></td>
<td>2657</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>2556</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/2006</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>245</td>
<td></td>
<td>3560</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>3163</td>
<td></td>
<td>2775</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>2555</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/2007</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>376</td>
<td></td>
<td>5636</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>4809</td>
<td></td>
<td>4279</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>3724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/2008</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>412</td>
<td></td>
<td>6457</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>6002</td>
<td></td>
<td>4345</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>4003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/2009</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>444</td>
<td></td>
<td>6128</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>5580</td>
<td></td>
<td>4680</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>4274</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>444</td>
<td></td>
<td>5583</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>5233</td>
<td></td>
<td>4522</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>4255</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/2011</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>469</td>
<td></td>
<td>5878</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>5523</td>
<td></td>
<td>4901</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>4639</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/2012</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
<td>6150</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>5637</td>
<td></td>
<td>4901</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>4639</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNESCO supports Jordan to reduce the rate of illiteracy among adults by 2015 and this can only be achieved through concerted efforts of national government agencies and civil society organizations. Jordan is classified, by the World Bank, as an "upper middle income country". Education and literacy rates and measures of social well-being are relatively high compared to other countries with similar incomes. One of the most important factors in the government’s efforts to improve the well-being of its citizens is the macroeconomic stability that has been achieved since the 1990s.

Palestine

After years of the establishment of the Palestinian Authority 1997, the illiteracy rate reached 13.9% and taken this percentage decreases until it reached 5.1% in 2010, of which 2.4% males and 7.8% females. In numbers, there are about 120 thousand Palestinians suffer from illiteracy, including 28,478 males and 91,824 females, and distributed them to the urban and rural areas and camps and between the West Bank and Gaza understanding distributed on as 79,548 in the West Bank compared to 40,402 in the Gaza Strip.

The following table provides a picture of what has been accomplished showing the rate of literacy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaced camps</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban areas</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In recent years for the issue of literacy in Palestine, the Ministry of Education took an important and systematic program through public education to run 32 government centers for literacy, including 15 centers for females and 17 centers for males.

Recent Scientific Research shows 93% of all the children of Palestine are enrolled in schools, and more than half of whom are female, while less than the illiteracy rate Palestinian people have about 6%, in addition to the ongoing work within the specific programs to deal with the issues of the quality of school education, adult education, and move forward to better care for children in pre-school, as stated in a press conference at the ministry’s headquarters in Ramallah on 18th April 2013 by the Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Coalition Educational Palestinian, and the Teacher Creativity Center.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) announced the women’s statistics to mark International Women’s Day 2013 on March 8 that literacy among the female Palestinian was three and a half times higher than their male counterparts. The bureau said that illiteracy among Palestinian males was 1.8 per cent compared to 6.4 per cent among Palestinian females in 2012. It stressed that the illiteracy rate for females was 15.3 per cent in 2001.

Source: The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Literacy rate among Palestinian women at 93.6%.
Lebanon

It is true that interest in combating illiteracy is not a priority at the state level. However, there are ways to combat challenges of illiteracy:

1. Application of legislation to modern laws to facilitate implementation of literacy programs along the Lebanese territory.
2. Increased coordination between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the International and/or civil society organizations to combat illiteracy in Lebanon.
3. Increased coordination between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the International and/or civil society organizations to combat illiteracy in Palestine Refugee Camps.
4. Exchange of expertise for use in the development of new quality approaches to combat illiteracy for the benefit of the Lebanese and Palestinian societies.
5. Develop curricula to engage in the process of teaching and learning in literacy.
6. Rehabilitation of government schools in Lebanon to combat school dropout.
7. Linking literacy projects to motivate learners to move forward in the process of learning and teaching.
8. Put pressure on the government to give additional stimulus for learners to pursue formal education.
9. Enable Lebanese Coalition for Global Campaign for Education to intensify the campaign pressure on decision-makers and civil society groups to give utmost importance to the fight against illiteracy.

In Lebanon, volunteers from leading companies go to secondary schools to share their professional experience and teach courses on job-seeking skills and business ethics, as well as advanced programs on economics and entrepreneurship.

The programme increased by 33% the share of students who felt confident about their ability to manage a job interview successfully, compared with students who had not attended the programme. More than 600,000 beneficiaries have been reached through INJAZ Al-Arab since 2004, and the programme in Lebanon is being scaled up to reach all secondary school students.

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8 Source: UNESCO, Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Regional Fact Sheet January 2013, Education in the Arab States
Yemen

The growth in school enrolment in basic education has been significant, increasing of from 73% in 1990 to 87% in 2004, exceeding the average among low-income countries. Similarly, there has been an increase in enrolment of girls, from 28% to 63% in the same period.

The illiteracy\(^9\) rate on average has declined from 47% in 2000 to 28% in 2004. However, it is much higher among females than among males; in 2004 the average illiteracy rate among women was 41.5% declining from 64.1% in 2000, compared to 14.5% among males.

Illiteracy is one of the major impediments of economic and social development of the Country of Yemen. The Government and the civil society have felt the importance of literacy and adult education for integrating population, particularly the poor in development and access of employment opportunities. In 1998, the Ministry of Education issued and approved a National Strategy for Literacy and Adult Education for the period between 1998 and 2020.

With this strategy, there are series of policies to stimulate adults to enroll in literacy programs through modernization of curricula for literacy and adult education. Illiterates will develop their professional skills including automotive engineering, electricity, blacksmith, for males and sewing, tailoring, knitwear, printing, embroidery for women.

Achievements in the field of literacy and adult education include:

1. The number of literacy centers across the country has been doubled from 1889 during 2001/2002 to 3369 centers during the academic colander 2010/2012 by increase of 44%.
2. Enrollment rates in literacy centers increased from 84,441 learners in 2001/2002 to 151,482 learners in 2010/2012.
3. Increase of female enrolment in literacy centers 71,152 learners or 84.2% compared to the calendar year 2010/2011 estimated 145,733 or 96% additional.
4. The total classrooms for 2010/2011 were 6154 in which 5843 of them were female classrooms.
5. The number of schools in literacy program in urban schools was 52,383 in which 2,631 boys’ schools and 49,752 girls’ schools. Compared to rural areas, the number of schools was 107,357 which 3770 were boys’ schools and 103,587 were girls’ schools.
6. Number of life skills training classrooms were 8,258 which 652 males’ classrooms and 7,606 female classrooms.

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Mauritania

Illiteracy among the population of Mauritania rose high above 38% as the number of illiterate adults who over the age of 15 years: 677,527, 75% of whom live in rural areas. These ratios reflected negatively on the standard of living, unemployment, health and other areas of life. The Mauritanian State has been able to reduce the illiteracy rate from 46% to 36%.

The data\textsuperscript{10} set represents the adult literacy rate in Mauritania.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of city</th>
<th>Adult literacy rate, both sexes (% aged 15 and above)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dakhlet-Nouadhibou</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brakna</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaba</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrar</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodh El Gharbi</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidimakha</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodh Ech Chargi</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorgol</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trarza</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagant</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNDP, 2011

"Illiteracy, which affects 38% of our society, is a major social and economic handicap which leads to marginalization and poverty\textsuperscript{11}. The struggle against this phenomenon requires the co-ordination of efforts, on-going activity and the making available of all possible means, in accordance with international provisions," Minister of Islamic Affairs and Original Education Ahmed Ould Neini noted.

\textsuperscript{10} http://cod.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/default/files/mrt_adm1_2011_adult_literacy.xls
Morocco

More than 6 million Moroccans have benefited from literacy programs over the last decade, according to figures unveiled last month. Some 735,000 people benefited from literacy programs from 2011 to 2012. Although illiteracy is slowly being reduced, rates remain very high. In reference to the World Bank statistics, Morocco is still lagging behind many least developing countries. A total of 43 percent of nationals are unable to read an address or write a phone number.

World Bank figures on literacy in Morocco show 56.1% literacy – a steadily but slowly rising line of achievement which still leaves the kingdom 186th out of 205 countries measured. The youth literacy rate in the same sources is 79.5%, suggesting on the face of it that illiteracy is an age-related problem that is being squeezed, albeit slowly, out of the system by increased primary enrollment and steady attrition.

Egypt

Egypt has about 14 million illiterates who are not enrolled in schools, according to the latest statistics and indicators that age group from 10 to 35 years old accounted for 22% of the total population, and two thirds of this percentage is female illiterates, particularly those living in rural areas.

There are significant factors that led to illiteracy in Egypt over the past years are:

1. Most illiterates are adults who did not attend primary schools in the first grade.
2. Increase of school dropouts
3. Low effectiveness of educational processes
4. Lack of awareness of the problematic of illiteracy
5. Insufficient budget allocations for literacy programs
6. Lack of cooperation between civil society organizations and the government
7. Low demand learners to literacy classes

Several parties have taken the initiative for literacy projects and adult education including Vodafone Foundation. The Foundation has launched a community development initiative for literacy in Egypt, which includes 17 million people, at a time plan of five years with a budget of 50 million pounds as a first stage, in partnership with UNESCO.


http://marforioromano.wordpress.com/2013/01/
Sudan

Depending on the source one looks at, the rates of adult literacy in Sudan will differ. UNDP (2012) has estimated it to 62%, but according to the National Council for Literacy and adult Education (NCLAE) there is no accurate literacy rate of Sudan and their estimation is between 60-70%. The number of illiterate\textsuperscript{14} adults (over the age of 15) is above 7.2 million, and about 2/3 of these are women. It must be said, however, that even if the situation is still dire, the rates of literacy have increased a lot since 1990. At that time, less than 20% of the women of north Sudan were literate (UNDP, 2012).

Education in Sudan is free and compulsory for children aged 6 to 13 years. Primary education consists of eight years, followed by three years of secondary education. The former educational ladder 6 + 3 + 3 was changed in 1990. The primary language at all levels is Arabic. Schools are concentrated in urban areas; many in the South and West have been damaged or destroyed by years of civil war. In 2001 the World Bank estimated that primary enrollment was 46 percent of eligible pupils and 21 percent of secondary students. Enrollment varies widely, falling below 20 percent in some provinces. Sudan has 19 universities; instruction is primarily in Arabic. Education at the secondary and university levels has been seriously hampered by the requirement that most males perform military service before completing their education.

The literacy rate is 70.2% of total population, male: 79.6%, female: 60.8%. Following table will show the size of illiteracy in children and young people outside the school in Sudan States by age group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>All Sudan</th>
<th>Illiterate 7-9</th>
<th>Illiterate 10-14</th>
<th>Illiterate 15-24</th>
<th>Illiterate +24</th>
<th>All Illiterate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>30,504,166</td>
<td>1,136,957</td>
<td>1,317,460</td>
<td>1,779,331</td>
<td>5,458,047</td>
<td>9,691,795</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{14} Relation, Methods and Motivation: A Case Study of the Professional Competence of Literacy Trainers in Sudan, http://center.hj.se/download/18.6922637813a30a471df1e84/1349860437327/Relations,+Methods+and+Motivation+-+A+case+study+of+the+Professional+Competence+of+Literacy+Trainers+in+Sudan,++anonymiserad+version.pdf
Somalia

Somalia’s protracted crisis has had a devastating effect on education. Only an estimated 20 percent of the population is literate (13 percent for women). The worst affected areas are the south and central zones of Somalia, where an estimated 1.8 million school-aged children are not in school. It has one of the weakest and most poorly funded educational “systems” in the world. Political fragmentation and ongoing instability, insecurity, the widespread destruction of education infrastructure and lack of learning materials and trained personnel, combined with chronic poverty, pose serious challenges to agencies and organizations working to improve the educational opportunities in the country.

Approximately 1.8 million children aged between 5-17 years are out of school in South and Central Somalia alone, according to rapid assessment conducted by the Education Cluster in ten regions in 2011.

With the support from European Commission and United Nations Agencies, there funded several youth and adult literacy projects and the support to the education sector in Somalia. Since 2010 the European Commission has helped that more than 40,000 students who gained access to basic, primary and secondary education, more than 330 classrooms were built or rehabilitated, 4,000 primary and secondary teachers qualified and 5,280 trainees were enrolled in vocational training, ensuring the development of skills and promotion of employment. In 2012, the Education Cluster only managed to reach 571,067 children (252,228 girls) across the three zones in Somalia as Education remained one of the most underfunded clusters. To date only 18% of the Education Clusters funding target has been met.

Low levels of education and literacy is a major socio-cultural factor. School enrolment remains low, with a gross enrolment in primary school of only 31%. Overall female adult literacy rate is estimated to be 25% (45% in urban areas and 10% in rural areas).

Of concern to the education cluster are reported cases of teachers abandoning the teaching profession in some parts of Somalia due to lack of incentives. The cluster is currently undertaking a rapid assessment to establish the schools affected and the number of teachers who have left.
Challenges and Issues

Female education in the Arab World is facing numerous obstacles and challenges. Out of school girls and illiterate women constitute a majority; due to unfavorable attitudes towards the education of women, seen as less important, particularly in rural areas, and the shortage of resources, preference is given to men. Poverty and the tradition of early marriages, particularly in rural areas, and parents' un awareness of the importance of girls' education, in addition to the shortage of "girls friendly" schools, are the common causes of women's illiteracy. That is not to forget the absence of a strong political commitment to eradicate women's illiteracy.

In Sudan for example, poverty and early marriage are the main reason for families to neglect female education. Yemen's low enrolment of girls in the primary level and the distant location of schools away from home hamper female enrolment. It is worth noting the presence of other problems such as the shortage of resources and funding of schools for girls within the local communities to segregate girls and boys, and the lack of commitment on the part of the educational authorities to promote and raise awareness about the education of girls.

The majority of Arab countries face common and important challenges in universalizing quality basic education and literacy. A survey conducted by UNEDBAS in 1989 in all Arab States on basic education and literacy found that the following nine obstacles impede the spread of education for all:

- Inadequate financial resources and properly trained human resources
- Unfavorable social attitudes of some communities towards girls' education
- Predominant beliefs among the poor and the uneducated of the economic value of child labor over education
- Lack of infrastructure to reach nomadic and rural communities
- Natural and man-made disasters resulting in the destruction of property and dislocation of people
- Lack of well-defined policy regarding the use of existing traditional education institutions
- Lack of appropriate use of mass media to promote education
- The ineffectiveness of some Arab States in managing the education systems along with weak administrative and planning bodies
- Discrepancy between values taught in school and the dominant values in societies.

Despite the significant progress that has been made in adult education, the Arab Region is still below the required level in terms of implementation of the EFA goals. As we look into the available 2004 figures, we realize the intensity of the problem and the numerous challenges the Arab countries are facing. Major obstacles facing education lie in the absence of policies and planning and inappropriate programs.
Recommendations

- Increased financial allocations to the national education budget to support non-formal education opportunities such as literacy classes, vocational/skills training, and/or recreational activities for targeted youth and adults (male and female).
- Support the establishment and strengthening of education systems, structures and policies for sustainability.
- Encourage local organizations and associations to play positive roles in eliminating illiteracy.
- Eliminating illiteracy by increasing school enrolment for basic education, specifically for girls.
Arab Campaign for Education for All

This report was prepared by:

Arab Campaign for Education for All is an independent, non-profit coalition, consisting of networks, coalitions, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, teachers’ unions, associations and other sectors which are interested in education in the Arab countries. ACEA seeks to unite and mobilize the efforts of civil societies to ensure the accomplishment of the goals of Education for All.

The founding of the Arab Campaign for Education for All comes within the framework of the Global Campaign for Education “GCE” that based on Jomtien conference 1990 and Dakar conference in April 2000. The announcement of ACEA was mentioned in Sanaa Declaration during Sanaa Conference that was held in the 27th May 2009. The goal of ACEA is to contribute to the promotion of education as a fundamental human right, and to mobilize efforts to put pressure on governments and the international community to fulfill their promises in general pertaining to ensure free and compulsory basic education of good quality for all especially women and vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Vision: A Citizen has an effective quality education in building the society on democratic basis in which social justice and human rights prevails

Mission: Arab campaign for Education for All; we work to mobilize efforts to put pressure on governments and international institutions to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA)

Objectives

1- Enhance the status of the Arab campaign of education, increase its impact and promote it locally, regionally and internationally:

2- Pressure and influence decision makers to enact and activate laws and regulations to ensure that policies and budgets meet the government’s obligations towards achieving the goals of Education for All.

3- Developing of the institutional structure of Arab Campaign for Education
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