

This snapshot is based on one of the new products in a series produced by EADS to track and compare long term trends in developing countries. Currently we have three products; economic growth, demography, and education. The education snapshot seeks to highlight low income countries that have demonstrated improvements in education from 1970 to 2007. Rankings are for 103 countries listed by the World Bank as Low Income and Lower Middle Income countries.*

Background

Access to quality education is recognized by the international community as a fundamental human right and as essential to the economic and social development of a society. As a country's economy develops, educational opportunities generally expand as a result of greater availability of resources to invest in education as well as greater demand related to increased jobs requiring higher skill levels. Improvements in education occur gradually and have intergenerational impacts that become evident over a long time frame. Analysis of one indicator alone, such as enrollment rates, does not give a complete picture as quality and equality in educational achievement are also critical factors. Nepal and Burundi have demonstrated outstanding improvement from 1970 to 2007 in 6 out of the 9 education indicators presented below.

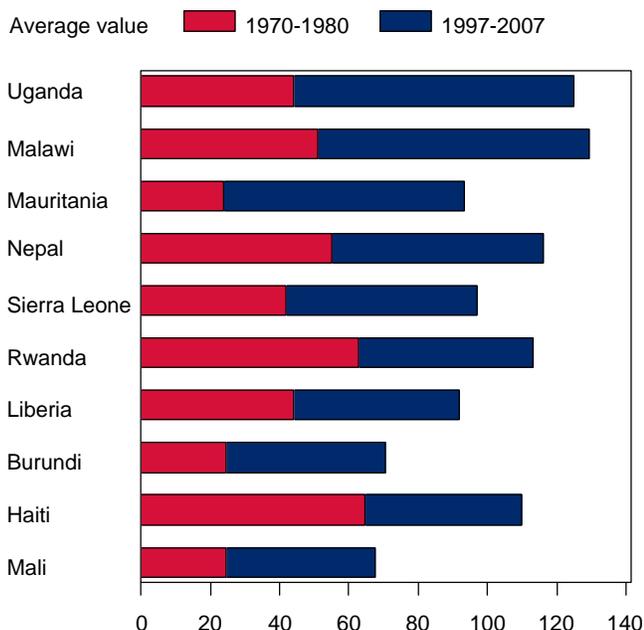
Access

In developed countries, primary school Gross Enrollment Rates (GER) approach 100% and repetition rates are approximately 0%. Increasing primary GER is a central goal in developing countries; however, a high GER may also reflect high repetition rates or over/under-age enrollments since GER does not account for students' age.

While Uganda and Malawi have increased GER from about 50% to over 120% since 1970, their primary school repetition rates have also increased. On the other hand, Mauritania, Nepal, and Mali rank in the top ten for most improved GER and have also decreased their repetition rates since 1970. Burma (Myanmar) and India stand out for decreasing repetition rates by over 17% to reach levels under 5%, demonstrating improved efficiency in their school systems.

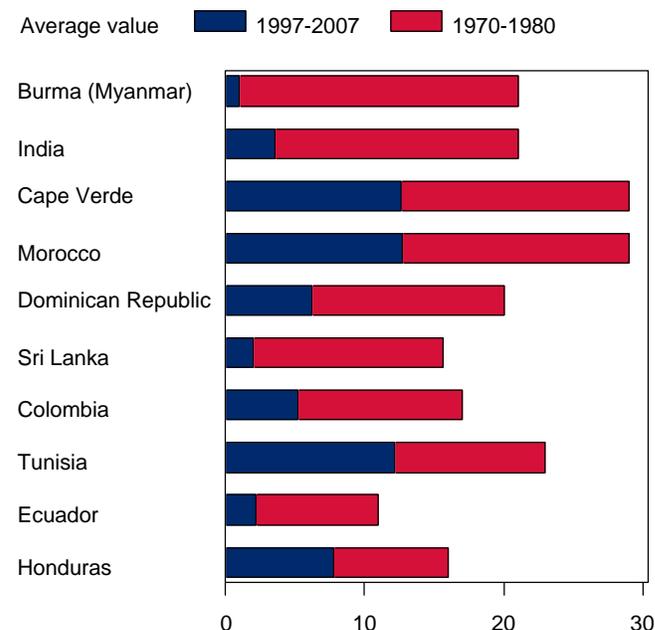
Most Improved Gross Enrollment Rates

Greatest Increased Primary GER (%)



Most Improved Repetition Rates

Greatest Decreased Repetition, Primary (%)



* In 2009, the World Bank classified countries with 2008 GNI per capita below \$975 as Low Income and countries with 2008 GNI between \$976 and \$3,855 as Lower Middle Income countries.



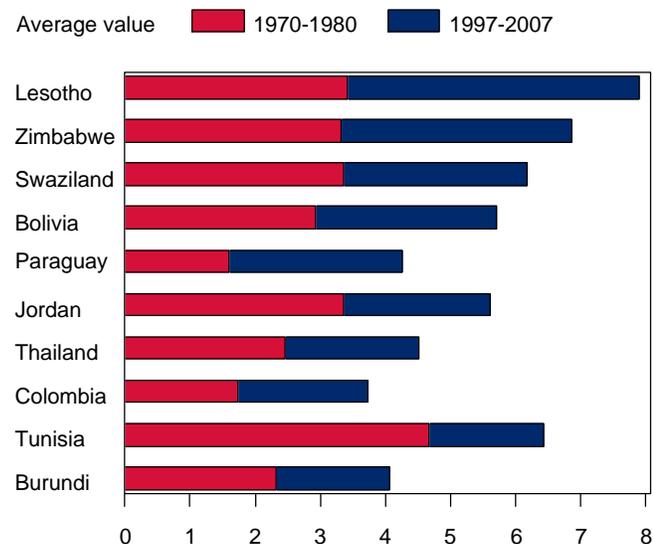
Quality

Public expenditure on education as a percent of GNI indicates a country’s commitment to allocating resources towards education. Each country may prioritize spending on education according to different needs and policies. Nevertheless, one common indicator of effective allocation of resources to promote quality education is the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR). There is substantial evidence that overcrowded classrooms are correlated with lower academic achievement and higher dropout rates.

Tunisia and Jordan rank in the top ten for both the largest increase in public education expenditure and the greatest decrease in primary school PTR reflecting improvement in resources allocated towards enhancing primary education.

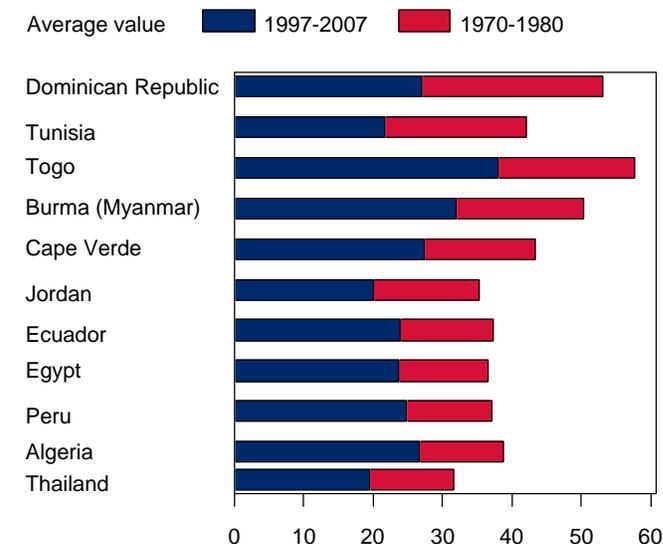
Most Improved Public Edu. Expenditure

Greatest Increased Public Edu. Expenditure (%GNI)



Most Improved Pupil Teacher Ratio

Greatest Decreased Pupil Teacher Ratio, Primary



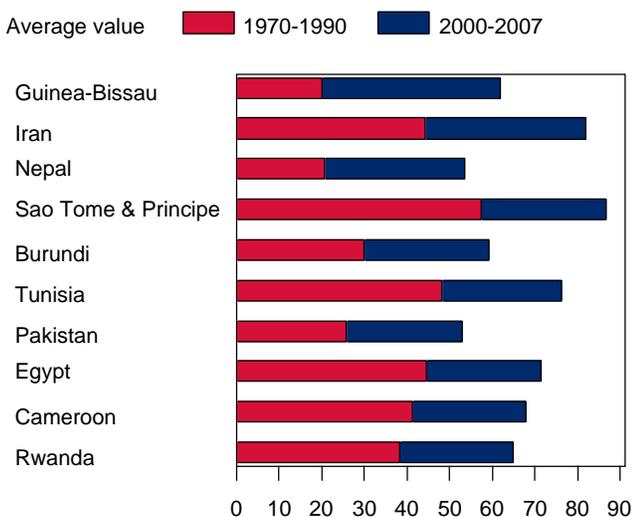
Achievement

Adult and youth literacy rates are clear indicators of the effectiveness of a country’s educational system. There is a positive correlation between adult and youth literacy rates reflecting an intergenerational transfer of human capital as literate parents are more likely to support and invest in the education of their children.

Guinea-Bissau, Iran, Burundi, Nepal, Pakistan, and Egypt all rank in the top ten for the greatest improvement in both adult and youth literacy rates.

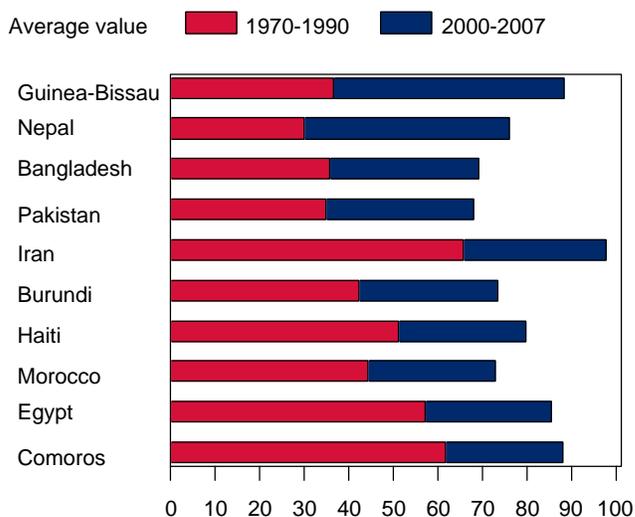
Most Improved Adult Literacy

Greatest Increased Adult Literacy Rates (%)



Most Improved Youth Literacy

Greatest Increased Youth Literacy Rates (%)



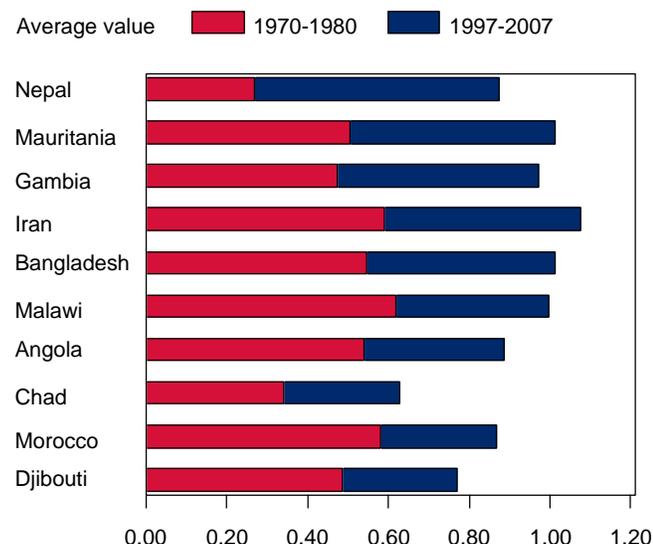
Gender Parity

Achieving gender parity in enrollment rates and literacy rates is critical to improving equality in education. Gender parity is calculated as the ratio of female to male enrollment or literacy rates with a score of close to one being optimal. Girls often face barriers to education related to cultural norms and discrimination. If a parent is unable to send all of their children to school, in many societies boys are given preference while girls stay at home to do chores or care for younger siblings. Empirical evidence suggests that after income increases beyond \$2000 per capita (PPP adjusted) there is a tendency for female educational achievement to catch up to male achievement. In addition, there is evidence that higher female educational achievement may positively affect economic and social development through several factors including negative correlation with under-five child mortality rates and fertility rates and positive correlation with child health and education indicators.

Nepal, Iran, Bangladesh, and Malawi have made substantial improvements in increasing gender parity in all three of the following categories; Gross Enrollment Rates (primary), Adult Literacy, and Youth Literacy.

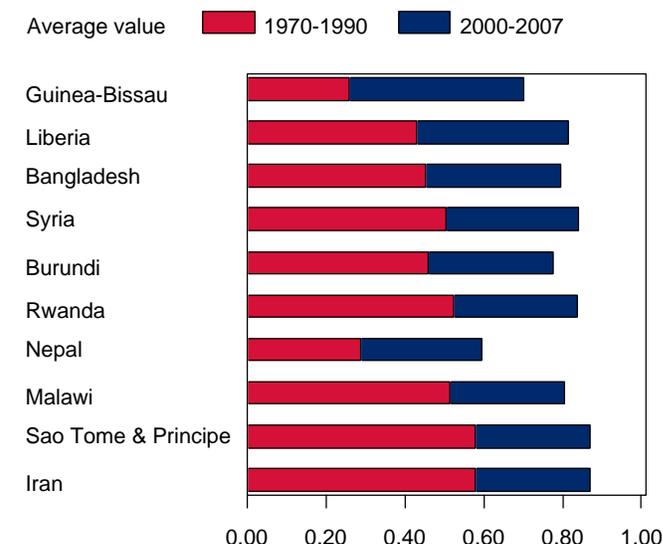
Most Improved GER Parity

Greatest Increased Primary GER Gender Parity Ratio



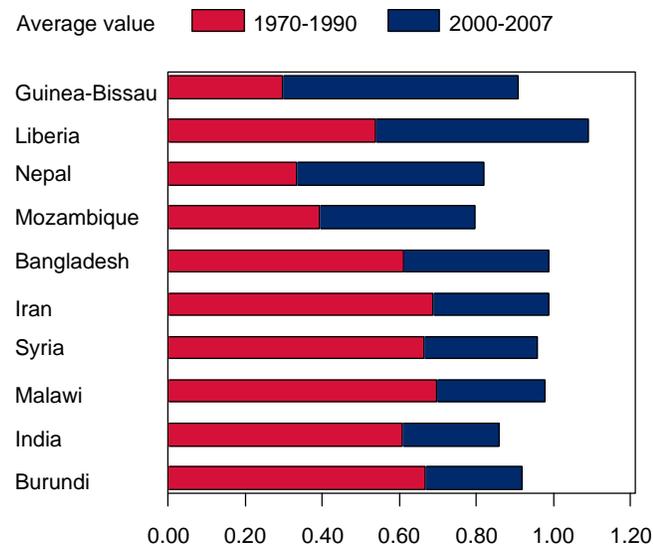
Most Improved Adult Literacy Parity

Greatest Increased Adult Literacy Gender Parity Ratio



Most Improved Youth Literacy Parity

Greatest Increased Youth Literacy Gender Parity Ratio



Conclusion

As the graphs below depict, gaps between developed and developing countries in providing universal access to education and literacy have narrowed significantly; however, indicators focusing on the quality of education continue to reflect wide disparities. While primary school Gross Enrollment Rates in developing countries dramatically increased from 1970 to 2007, this indicator does not reflect issues such as persistently high repetition rates and high pupil/teacher ratios which suggest lower quality education in developing countries compared to developed countries. Developing countries consistently tend to spend one percent less of GNI on education than developed countries. Despite disparities in indicators related to spending and quality of education, developing countries have significantly improved adult and youth literacy rates demonstrating progress towards achievement of universal literacy.

To access more information on a country's Long-term Development Trends in Education, Economics and Demography as well as other country profiles go to <http://esdb.eads.usaidallnet.gov/data/country/profiles.html>.

Summary Dashboard

