

Experts Group Meeting on Multidimensional Inequality in Arab Countries

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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia



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Souraya Zein

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Main outcomes: Health

Overall improvement in health indicators; persisting gaps in health outcomes across socio-economic characteristics in many Arab countries.

Stunting: decrease for all countries except for Egypt (stagnating high prevalence of stunting), Mauritania and Libya (increase in the prevalence of stunting)

Overweight: mixed patterns, particularly pronounced in Comoros and Libya where overweight is combined with stunting

Skilled birth attendance and infant mortality: significant progress observed

Water and sanitation: significant progress in least developed countries, minor progress in middle income countries, particularly in sanitation.

Inequality in outcomes in health

Declining inequality in health indicators; significant decrease in **overweight** and **skilled birth attendance**.

Stunting: increase in inequality in some countries, particularly in Morocco, Sudan and Yemen (increase in all characteristics).

Infant mortality: inequalities persist in most countries, but not for all characteristics.

Water and sanitation: inequalities persist mainly between rural and urban areas

Inequality in opportunities in health

Wealth of the household and parents' education affect inequality of opportunity in **child's health and nutrition**.

Area of residence (rural vs urban) and mother's education affect inequality of opportunity in **maternal health**.

Main outcomes: Education

Primary school enrollment: Significant improvements across the Arab countries.

Secondary attendance rates: Appreciable improvements across the Arab countries, especially for Sudan and Mauritania.

Enrollment rates in secondary levels are much lower than those of primary levels.

Completion rates: Highest progress are marked at primary levels, significantly reduced at secondary levels, and reduced even further at the tertiary level.

Upward trend in average years of education across all countries, however the region still lags behind with average years of schooling not exceeding 6 years in the majority of countries.

Inequality in outcomes in education

Reduction of inequalities in primary school attendance across the region

Persistent inequality in attending higher education (secondary and more tertiary levels)

Inequality in opportunities in education

Arab countries have made serious progress in reducing inequality of opportunity in **entering school**; Slight improvement over time in **completion of primary education**

In Comoros, Iraq, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Syria and Yemen, wealth affects schools' entrance.

Most countries have regional differences in terms of the probability of entering school, between rural and urban areas namely Yemen and Mauritania (except Syria).

Despite compulsory and subsidized education, many less fortunate children end up dropping out of primary schools after being enrolled.

Reaching secondary education: Girls have higher chances than boys. Algeria & Egypt: increase in this probability over time for both girls and boys, and a remarkable decrease in inequality of opportunity . Jordan & Palestine: Boys with hardest circumstances have less chances to reach secondary over time.

Gender inequality

The gender gap is almost closed in primary and secondary education levels. Most Arab countries achieved gender parity in net attendance at primary level.

Female labor market outcomes in Arab countries are among the lowest around the world, while those for male's are around the world average. Women also more likely to be unemployed than men.

Gender inequality in health and access to health services affect women's health and the health of future generations.

Thank you



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