

EDUCATION

Information society vs. hundreds of millions of illiterate people

References

CURRENT SITUATION (latest available data)

- Better situation
- Above average
- Below average
- Worse situation
- Insufficient data

EVOLUTION (since 1990 or closest available year)

- Significant progress
- Slight progress
- || Stagnant
- ← Slight regression
- ← Significant regression

Complete table at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2007

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	LITERACY (15-24 years old) (%)	PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net) (%)	CHILDREN REACHING 5TH GRADE (%)	SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net) (%)	TERTIARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT RATE (gross) (%)
—	Afghanistan (—)	34.3				1.1
→	Albania (95)	99.4 →	95.6		73.9 →	16.4 →
→	Algeria (95)	90.1 →	96.7 →	96.2 →	66.2 →	19.6 →
	Andorra (—)		88.5 ←		71.4 →	9.4 →
—	Angola (—)	72.2				0.8
—	Anguilla (—)		88.3		92.9	
→	Argentina (94)	98.9	98.8	84.3 ←	80.8 →	61.1 →
→	Armenia (96)	99.8	93.7 →		88.7 →	26.2 →
	Aruba (—)	99	96.6 ←	96.3	74.3 ←	28.6 →
→	Australia (99)		94.8 ←	98.7	85.3 →	72.2 →
—	Austria (99+)				89.2	48.7 →
	Azerbaijan (91)	99.9	83.8 ←		77 →	14.8 ←
—	Bahamas (—)		83.7 ←		73.8 ←	
→	Bahrain (99)	97	96.8	99.8 →	89.9 →	34.4 →
→	Bangladesh (57)		93.8	65.1 →	48 →	6.5
→	Barbados (99)		97.2 →	96.8 →	95.1 →	
→	Belarus (97)	99.8	89.9 →		87.3 →	60.5 →
→	Belgium (99+)		98.6		96.9 →	62.5 →
→	Belize (91)		95.2	91 →	71.4 →	2.6
	Benin (73)	45.3 →	82.6 →	69.4 ←		
—	Bermuda (—)			93.4 ←		62.3
—	Bhutan (69)			91 →		
→	Bolivia (80)	97.3 →	95.2	86.4 →	73.6 →	40.6 →
—	Bosnia and Herzegovina (—)	99.8				
→	Botswana (91)	94 →	82.1	91.2 →	60.9 →	6.2
→	Brazil (89)	96.8 →	92.1 →	83 ¹	74.5 →	20.1 →
	Brunei Darussalam (97)	98.9		93 ←		14.7 →
→	Bulgaria (97)	98.2	94.2 →		88.3 →	40.8 →
→	Burkina Faso (71)	31.2 →	40.5 →	75.8 →	9.5	1.7
→	Burundi (56)	73.3 →	57 →	63 →		2.3
→	Cambodia (59)	83.4 →	97.6 →	59.7 →	25.8 →	2.9
—	Cameroon (70)			63.7 ←		5.3
—	Canada (99)					57.2 ←
	Cape Verde (92)		91.8	91.2 ←	55 →	5.5 →
—	Cayman Islands (—)		87.2 ←	93.4 *	90.9 →	
—	Central African Republic (—)	58.5 →				
	Chad (43)	37.6 ←	56.9 →	45.8 ←	10.8 →	1.2
→	Chile (99)	99		99	77.8 →	43.2 →
—	China (93)	98.9 →		99 ³		19.1 →
→	Colombia (89)	98 →	83.2 →	77.5 →	54.9 →	26.9 →
—	Comoros (72)			62.7		2.3 →
—	Congo, DR (—)	70.4				

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—	Congo, Rep. (80)			66.3		3.6
	Costa Rica (96)	97.6		92.4 →	50.2 →	19 ←
→	Cote d'Ivoire (77)	60.7 →	56 →	87.6 →	20 →	
→	Croatia (97)	99.6	87.3 →		85 →	38.7 →
→	Cuba (99)	100	96.2 →	97.7 →	86.6 →	33 →
→	Cyprus (99+)	99.8	96.1 →	99.2 →	92.8 →	32 →
→	Czech Republic (99)			98.4	90.4 →	36.9 →
→	Denmark (99+)		99.9	100	94.6 →	66.8 →
→	Djibouti (78)		32.8 →	87.7 ³ →	18.7 →	1.6 →
—	Dominica (94)		87.7	84.3 ←	90.4	
→	Dominican Republic (85)	94.2 →	86 →	59.2 ←	49.3 →	32.9
=	Ecuador (81)	96.4	97.7	76.3 ←	52.2 →	
→	Egypt (90)	84.9 →	94.3 →	98.6	79.1	28.5 →
→	El Salvador (80)		92.3 →	72.8 →	48.1 →	18.5
—	Equatorial Guinea (59)	94.9	85.3 ←	32.6		
=	Eritrea (67)		46 →	80.3 ←	23.6 →	1.1
→	Estonia (99)	99.8	94.6 ←	98.6	87.9 →	64.5 →
→	Ethiopia (50)		56.3 →	61.1 ² →	27.8 →	2.5
→	Fiji (99)		96.2 ←	98.7 →	82.6 →	15.3 →
→	Finland (99+)		99.5	99.9	94	86.9 →
→	France (99+)		99.1	98 *	95.3 →	56 →
—	Gabon (82)			69.3		
→	Gambia (70)		75.2 →		44.9 →	1.2
=	Georgia (95)		92.8 ←		80.7 →	41.5 →
=	Ghana (66)	70.7 ←	65 →	63.3 ←	37 →	3.1
→	Greece (99+)	98.9	97.7 →		84.5	72.2 →
—	Grenada (92)		83.9	79	78.2	
→	Guatemala (72)	82.2 →	93 →	77.9 →	33.7 →	9.6
→	Guinea (68)	46.6	63.8 →	82	21.2 →	2.2
—	Guyana (81)		93.5 →	64.3 ←		9.1
→	Honduras (76)	88.9 →	90.6			16.4 →
=	Hong Kong (China) (—)		93 ←	99.9	77.7 →	32.1 →
→	Hungary (97)		89		91.6 →	51.9 →
→	Iceland (99+)		99	99.7	86.3 →	61.7 →
→	India (71)	76.4 →	87.4 →	78.9 →		11.5 →
→	Indonesia (85)	98.7 →	94.6	92.1 ←	55 →	16.2 →
←	Iran, Islamic Rep. (91)		88.6 ←	87.8 ←	78.1	22.5 →
→	Iraq (79)	84.8 →	87.7 ←	77.4 →	37.9 →	15.4 →
→	Ireland (99+)		96 →	99.8 →	85.2 →	55.3 →
→	Israel (99+)	99.8	98.1 →	99.9	88.6 →	57 →
→	Italy (99)	99.8	98.6	96.5	91.2 →	63.1 →
=	Jamaica (95)		88.5 ←	89	75 →	19 →
→	Japan (99+)		99.9		99.8 →	54 →
→	Jordan (99)	99.1	92.8	98.8 →	82.1 →	35 →
→	Kazakhstan (95)	99.8	92.6 →		92.1 →	48 →
—	Kenya (68)	80.3 ←	76.4 →	75.3	40.1	2.9
—	Kiribati (88)			81.9 →	70.4	
→	Korea, Rep. (99)		99.6	98.1 →	88.3	88.5 →
→	Kuwait (99)	99.7 →	86 →		77.6 ←	22.3
—	Kyrgyzstan (96)	99.7	90.1			39.7 →
→	Lao, PDR (58)	78.5 →	84.4 →	62.6 →	37.1 →	5.9 →
→	Latvia (99)	99.8			87.4 →	71 →
→	Lebanon (96)		93.2 →	97.6 →		47.6 →
=	Lesotho (69)		85.9 →	63.4 ←	23.1 →	2.8
—	Libya (—)					56.2 →

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—	Liechtenstein (—)			88.2				65.2		25.1	
→	Lithuania (97)	99.7		92.4	←			94.1	→	69	→
←	Luxembourg (97)			90.3	←	92	←	80		12.4	→
→	Macao (China) (—)	99.6		89.2	→	99.7		76.8	→	68.8	→
	Macedonia, FYR (97)	98.7		90.9	←			81.1	→	27.4	→
→	Madagascar (63)	70.2		88.8	→	57	→			2.5	
→	Malawi (63)	76	→	95.3	→	43.8		24.7			
→	Malaysia (98)	97.2		93.2	←	98.4	→	69.9		28.8	→
	Maldives (86)	98.2		89.7	←			51.3	→		
	Mali (66)	24.2	←	46.5	→	78.6				2.1	
	Malta (99+)	96		94.3	←	99.3		85.9	→	29.9	→
—	Marshall Islands (94)			89.6				74.4		17	
→	Mauritania (75)	61.3	→	74.3	→	81.6	→	14.1		3.5	
→	Mauritius (99)	94.5	→	94.5	→	98.9		82.5	→	17.2	→
→	Mexico (94)	97.6		97.6		92.6	→	62.4	→	22.5	→
←	Moldova (96)	99.5		77.5	←			68.7		31.7	←
→	Mongolia (96)	97.7		84.2	←			82.3	→	38.9	→
—	Montserrat (—)			94.3				100			
→	Morocco (78)	70.5	→	86.1	→	75.6	←	35.1	→	10.6	
→	Mozambique (61)			71	→	49.2	→	4	→	1.2	
→	Myanmar (73)	94.5	→	87.6	←	69.9	→	37.6	→	11.3	→
→	Namibia (86)	92.3	→	73.7		88.1	→	37.5	→	6.1	→
—	Nauru (—)					30.8					
→	Nepal (55)	70.1	→	79.2		60.8	→			5.6	
→	Netherlands (99+)			99.2	→	99.6		88.9	→	58	→
	Netherlands Antilles (—)					88.5	→	76.9	←	23.6	
→	New Zealand (99+)			99.3				92.3	→	71.6	→
→	Nicaragua (74)	86.2	→	87.9	→	58.8	→	40.7	→	17.9	→
→	Niger (55)	36.5	→	39.2	→	73.6		6.8		0.8	
—	Nigeria (63)			60.1		72.6		27.3		10.2	
→	Norway (99+)			99.5		99.6		95.4	→	80.3	→
→	Oman (97)	97.3	→	77.9	→	97.6	→	74.7	→	12.9	→
→	Pakistan (60)	65.5	→	66.2	→			21.8		3.2	
—	Palau (—)					84.2 *				40.2	→
→	Panama (91)	96.1		98.2	→	84.3	←	63.7	→	45.8	→
—	Papua New Guinea (73)	66.7				67.8					
→	Paraguay (85)					81.5	→	51.1	→	25.9	→
	Peru (86)	96.8		97.9	←	89.7	→	69.2	→	31.5	
→	Philippines (77)	95.1		93.8	←	75.3	→	59.2	→	29.4	
→	Poland (99+)			97.9		99.7	→	91.5	→	59.5	→
→	Portugal (99+)			98.9				82.3		55.5	→
→	Qatar (97)	95.9	→	96.1	→			87.2	→	17.8	←
→	Romania (96)	97.8		90	→			81.1	→	36.3	→
	Russian Federation (97)	99.7		89.1	←			75.6		68.2	→
→	Rwanda (51)	77.6	→	73.2	→	45.8				2.7	→
	Samoa (97)			90.4	←	93.8	→	65.7	←		
—	Sao Tomé and Príncipe (78)			98.2		66.5	→	26			
→	Saudi Arabia (95)	95.9	→	53.1	←	93.6	←	52.4	→	27.7	→
→	Senegal (72)	49.1	→	66.1	→	78.2	→	15.3		4.9	
←	Seychelles (—)	99.1		96.4	←	98.7	←	93.1	←		
—	Sierra Leone (—)	47.6								2.1	
—	Singapore (—)	99.5									
—	Slovakia (—)							88	→	34	→
→	Slovenia (99)			96.4				95.3	→	70.1	→

Summary: CURRENT SITUATION (colour) EVOLUTION (arrow-icon)	COUNTRIES (BCI value, 0-100)	LITERACY (15-24 years old) (%)	PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net) (%)	CHILDREN REACHING 5TH GRADE (%)	SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATE (net) (%)	TERTIARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT RATE (gross) (%)
—	Solomon Islands (—)		79.6		26.4 →	
→	South Africa (87)	93.9 →	88.8 ▬	84.1 →		15.3 →
→	Spain (99+)		99.5 ▬		94.8 →	65.7 →
—	Sri Lanka (—)	95.6 ▬	98.6			
—	St. Kitts and Nevis (99)		94	86.5	98.3	
→	St. Lucia (96)		97.6 ▬	90.1 ▬	62.6 →	14.4 →
→	St. Vincent and the Grenadines (95)		93.9 →	88 →	62.3 →	
—	Sudan (81)	77.2 →		91.9 →		
—	Suriname (85)	94.9	92.4 →		63.2 ▬	12.4
▬	Swaziland (77)	88.4 →	76.7 ▬	76.8 ←	29 ▬	5.2 ▬
→	Sweden (99+)		99.5 ▬		98.3 →	81.8 →
→	Switzerland (99+)		94.3 →		82.6 →	47 →
→	Syrian Arab Republic (87)	92.2 →	91.8 ▬	92.4 →	58.1 →	
→	Tajikistan (86)	99.8 ▬	96.7 →		79.4 →	16.4 ←
▬	Tanzania (70)	78.4 ←	91.4 →	75.8 ←		1.2 ▬
—	Thailand (—)	98 ▬				41 →
—	Timor-Leste (—)					10.2
→	Togo (70)	74.4 →	78.8 →	76 →		
▬	Tonga (94)	99.3	92.7 ▬	92.5	67.7 ▬	6.1 →
▬	Trinidad and Tobago (98)		92.2 ▬	100 ▬	71.9 ▬	11.9 →
→	Tunisia (95)	94.3 →	97.2 →	96.5 →	64 ←	26.2 →
→	Turkey (92)	95.6 →	89.5 ▬	94.6		28 →
—	Turkmenistan (—)	99.8				
—	Turks and Caicos Islands (—)		81.5 ←	45.9	77.7 ←	
—	Tuvalu (89)			69.9 ←		
→	Uganda (63)	76.6 →		63.6 →	13 →	3.4 ▬
▬	Ukraine (97)	99.8 ▬	82.1 ▬		83.5 ←	65.5 →
▬	United Arab Emirates (98)		71.2 ←	94.7 →	62.4 →	22.5 →
→	United Kingdom (99)		100 ▬		95.5 →	60.1 →
▬	United States of America (99)		93.9 ←		88.7 →	82.4 →
→	Uruguay (95)			88.4 ▬	73.2 →	37.8 →
—	Uzbekistan (—)					15.3 ←
→	Vanuatu (85)		93.9 →	72.1 ²	39.3 →	5 ▬
→	Venezuela (94)	97.2 ▬	92 →	91 ▬	61.2 →	39.3 →
→	Viet Nam (90)	93.9 ▬	92.9 →	86.8 →	64.8 →	10.2 →
—	Virgin Islands (UK) (—)		94.7 ▬	96.2	79.5 ▬	
→	West Bank and Gaza (96)	99	86.3 ←		89.4 →	37.9 →
▬	Yemen (64)		75.3 →	73.2 ←		9.4 ←
→	Zambia (75)	69.5 ←	79.8 →	98.5 →	23.7 →	
←	Zimbabwe (76)		81.9 ▬	69.7 ←	33.9 ←	3.7 ▬

Note: (*) Data refers to years or periods other than those specified in the indicator definition.

Sources: UNESCO Website Database (www.uis.unesco.org/), February 2007.

Except for:

- (1) Ministério da Educação e Cultura, 2006, Brazil.
- (2) Education for All - Global Monitoring Report 2006, UNESCO.
- (3) Education for All - Global Monitoring Report 2007, UNESCO.

For more detailed information on the reference years of the data see complete tables at: www.socialwatch.org/statistics2007

DEFINITION OF INDICATORS:

Literacy (15-24 years old, %): Percentage of people aged 15-24 who can, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life.
Last available data: 2000-2005; evolution since 1990.

Primary school enrolment ratio (net, %): Number of children enrolled in primary school who belong to the age group that officially corresponds to primary schooling, as percentage of the total population of the same age group.
Last available data: 2003-2005; evolution since 1991.

Children reaching 5th grade of primary school (%): Percentage of children entering first grade of primary school who eventually reach grade five.
Last available data: 2000-2004; evolution since 1999.

Secondary school enrolment ratio (net, %): Number of children enrolled in secondary school who belong to the age group that officially corresponds to secondary schooling, as percentage of the total population of the same age group.
Last available data: 2003-2004; evolution since 1991.

Tertiary education enrolment ratio (gross): Ratio of total enrolment, regardless of age, to the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the level of education shown. Tertiary education, whether or not to an advanced research qualification, normally requires, as a minimum condition of admission, successful completion of education at secondary level.
Last available data: 2004; evolution since 1991.

EDUCATION

Information society vs. hundreds of millions of illiterate people

The paradox lingers on: while large swathes of the world's population are engaged in new educational challenges to join the information society, there are still millions of people on the planet who are illiterate.

Not only are there 77 million children who do not go to school, but there are 781 million adults who cannot read and write. Two thirds of these people are women, which goes to show how gender inequity in education is still very much with us. In fact, 30% of the countries in the world have not achieved gender equity even at the level of primary education.¹ But while a significant proportion of the world's population is deprived of this basic necessity, the number of years that people in the developed countries spend in education is increasing progressively.

Illiteracy is overwhelmingly concentrated in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. In recent years the total number of people in these regions who are illiterate has increased, so a greater global effort is needed to remedy this situation.

One essential factor for achieving universal literacy and primary education (global enrolment today stands at 86%) is the strong political will to channel national and international resources towards educational goals. There are serious challenges to be addressed to reach even these minimum targets, notably the school dropout rate and cultural differences within countries.

These resources should be supplemented with programmes geared to early childhood. As was stated by UNESCO in its 2007 Education For All Report, "Holistic early childhood programmes have a leading role to play in any strategy to attain basic education for all and to reduce poverty, the overarching objective of the Millennium Development Goals. Programmes of good quality improve health and nutrition, combat HIV/AIDS and prepare children for a smooth transition to primary school."²

Taking the world's population as a whole, progress has been made, especially as regards enrolments in primary education, but the most pressing inequalities in literacy, school dropout, educational quality and enrolment at all levels have to be tackled to be able to reach an acceptable level from which to make progress towards fulfilment of rights for all.

The group of countries in the better relative situation are well established on the road to the full exercise of the right to education. Literacy stands at nearly 100%, enrolment in primary education and the proportion of children who reach the 5th grade are

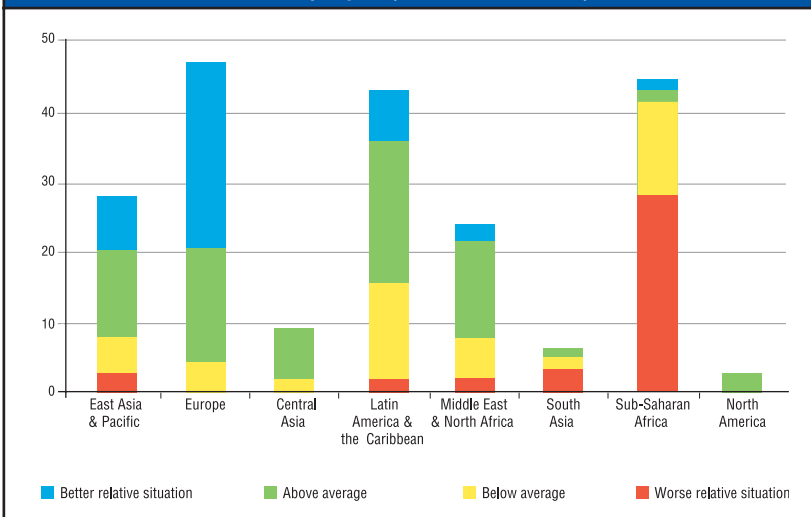
1 UNESCO (2007). "Highlights of the EFA Report 2007". Available from: <www.unesco.org/education/GMR/2007/highlights.pdf>.

2 UNESCO (2007). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007. Strong foundations - Early childhood care and education*. Available from: <unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001477/147785E.pdf>.

Averages by indicator of countries in better and worse relative situations in education

		Literacy (15-24 years old) (%)	Primary school enrolment rate (net) (%)	Children reaching 5th grade (%)	Secondary school enrolment rate (net) (%)	Tertiary education enrolment rate (gross) (%)
Worse relative situation	Average	59	69	69	25	4
	Number of countries	19	30	29	23	29
Better relative situation	Average	99	97	98	89	60
	Number of countries	13	33	25	34	32
Total	Average	88	87	84	66	29
	Number of countries	96	149	119	140	140

Current situation in education by region (number of countries)



Current situation and evolution in education (number of countries)

	←	↔		→	→	Total
Countries in worse situation	0	1	7	12	8	28
Countries below average	0	1	6	12	9	28
Countries above average	0	2	17	30	5	54
Countries in better situation	0	1	1	28	3	33
Total	0	5	31	82	25	143

both above 97%, enrolment in secondary education is just under 90%, and almost 60% of the population have tertiary education. But at the other end of the scale, in the group of countries in the worse situation, inequality is the rule rather than the exception. Only 60% of the people can read and write, and all the other indicators show a reality that falls far short of current world education development goals. These countries face deficiencies in all the dimensions covered by education indicators.

More than half the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are in the worse education situation group, and there is only one country from this region, the Seychelles, in the better relative situation group. In contrast, no North American, European or Central Asian country is in the worse relative situation group. The panorama in the other regions of the world is not homogenous, and the situation varies widely from country to country.

Most countries have made progress (107 of the 143 countries for which there is sufficient information available to calculate the evolution of education), but only 25 have made significant progress and a considerable number of countries have stagnated in this respect. There are also five countries that have recently regressed, and the worst case is Zimbabwe which is regressing and in the worse relative situation group. ■