SCHOOLING FOR MILLIONS OF CHILDREN JEOPARDISED BY REDUCTIONS IN AID

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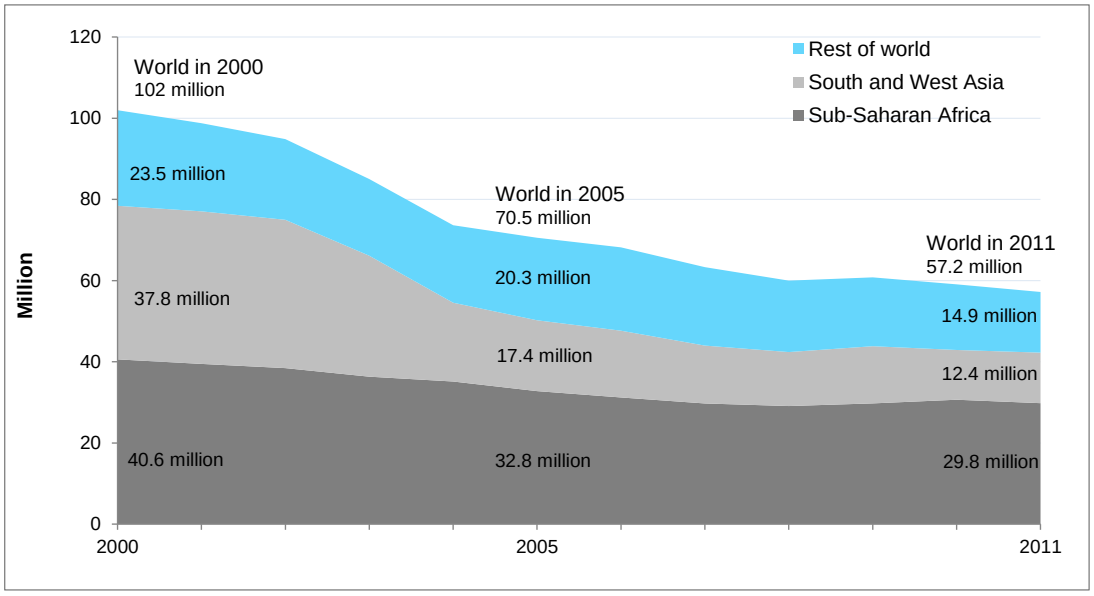
This fact sheet, jointly released by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), shows that progress in reducing the number of children out of school has come to a virtual standstill just as international aid to basic education falls for the first time since 2002.

PROGRESS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION TOO SLOW

As debate continues over the goals of the post-2015 development agenda, new data show that the world is still unlikely to fulfill one of the most modest commitments: to get every child in school by 2015. More than 57 million children continue to be denied the right to primary education, and many of them will probably never enter a classroom.

The momentum to reach out-of-school children has slowed down considerably since 2005, with the global primary net enrolment rate barely moving from 87% to 89%. This marks a stark contrast to progress at the start of the decade, when the international community pledged to achieve universal primary education (UPE) during the World Education Forum in 2000. According to UIS data, there were 57 million out-of-school children of primary school age in 2011 *(see **Figure 1**)*. This marks a slight decline from 2010, when the global total reached 59 million children.[1] This slight dip came after successive years of stagnation. Moreover, even if this rate of change continues over the next few years, the world will still be far from the goal of UPE by 2015.

FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN BY REGION, 2000-2011



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database.

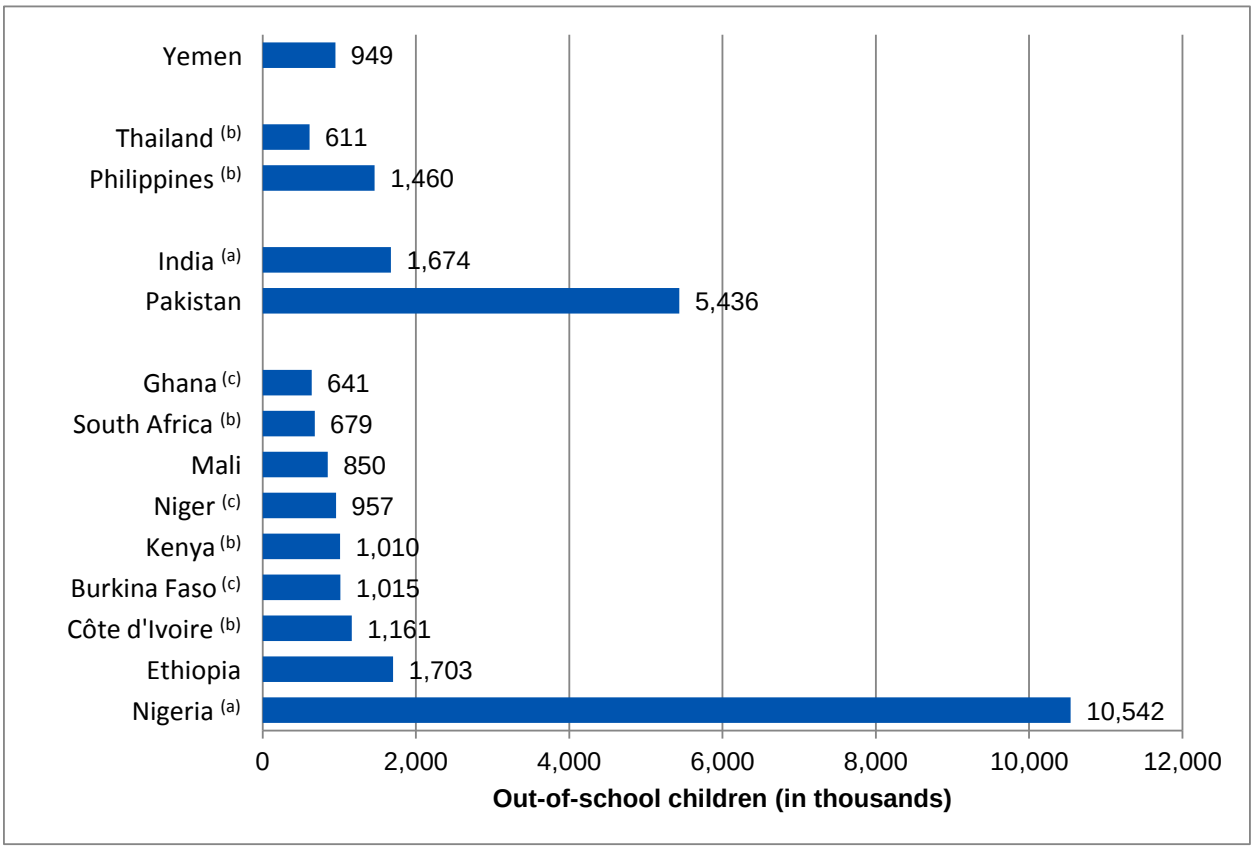
[1] In 2012, the UIS estimated that 61 million children of primary school age were out of school in 2010. In 2013, the Institute revised its estimate for 2010 to 59 million children who are out of school. The difference between the estimates published in 2012 and 2013 is due to the availability of new national data.

Progress has slowed mainly because the number of children out of school in sub-Saharan Africa *(see Figure 1)* has remained at about 30 million over the last five years. As a result, more than one-half of the world's out-of-school children live in sub-Saharan Africa. More than one in five (22%) primary school-age children in the region have either never attended school or left before completing primary school. The region is not able to keep up with the rising demand for education from its growing school-age population. In 2011, there were 32 million more children of primary school age than in 2000.

By contrast, South and West Asia has made considerable gains over the past two decades, reducing the number of out-of-school children by two-thirds from 40 million in 1999 to 12 million in 2011.

In African countries such as Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria, more than one million children are out of school. **Figure 2** presents data for countries facing the greatest challenges, although it is important to note that this list is not exhaustive. Countries such as Afghanistan and Somalia are struggling to provide every child with a primary education but lack the data to provide accurate counts of their out-of-school populations.

FIGURE 2. NUMBER OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN BY COUNTRY, 2011

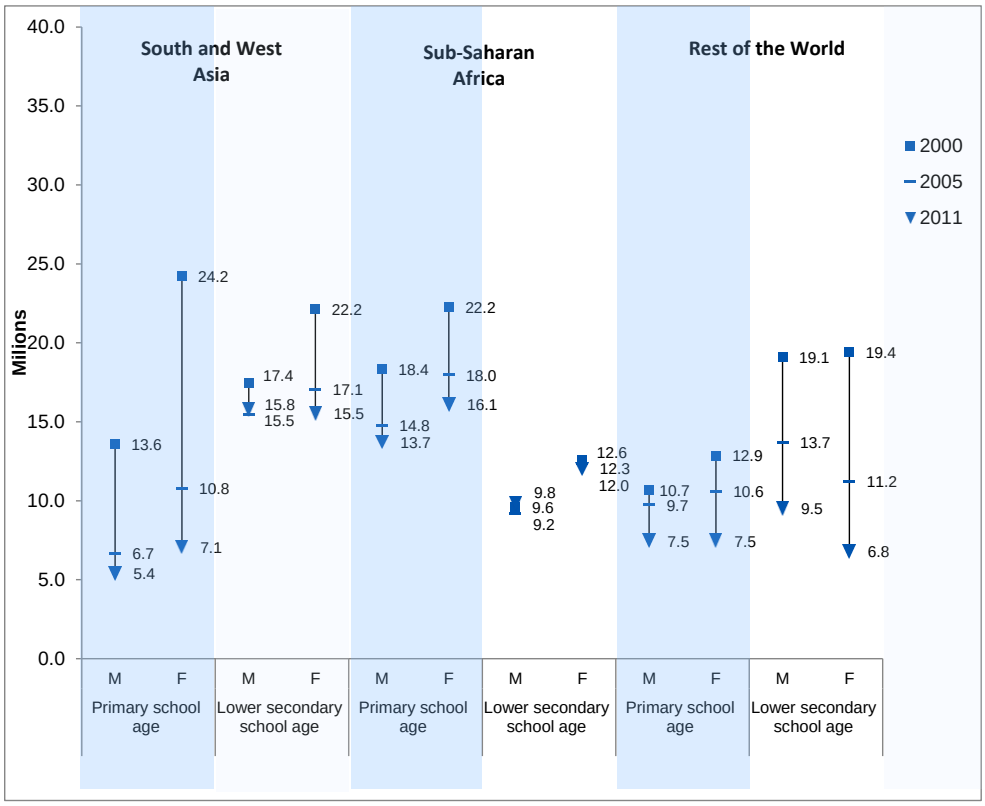


Notes: (a) Refers to data from 2010.
(b) Refers to data from 2009.
(c) Refers to data from 2012.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database.

UIS data also provide some indication of educational exclusion among young adolescents of lower secondary age, typically between 12 and 15 years old. In 2011, 69 million young adolescents around the world were not attending primary or secondary school, compared with 100 million in 2000. South and West Asia has the biggest share of this population with 31 million out-of-school young adolescents, although there has been much progress for girls *(see **Figure 3**)*. The second-highest number is found in sub-Saharan Africa (22 million), where there has been almost no change in participation rates or gender parity over the entire period.

FIGURE 3. NUMBER OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN BY AGE GROUP, GENDER AND REGION IN 2000, 2005 AND 2011



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database.

MANY CHILDREN LEAVE SCHOOL EARLY, WHILE OTHERS NEVER GET A FOOT IN THE DOOR

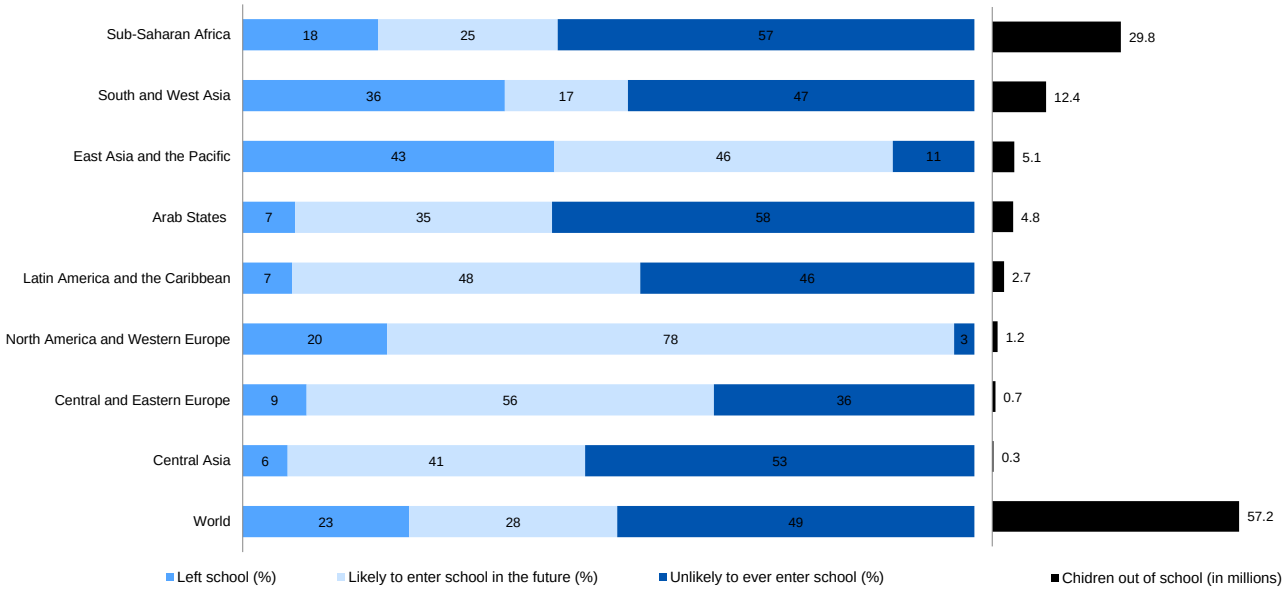
While access to education has been improving globally, there has been little progress in reducing the rate at which children leave school before reaching the last grade of primary education. About 137 million children began primary school in 2011, but at least 34 million children (some older than the official school age) left school before reaching the last grade of primary education. This translates into an early school leaving rate of 25% – the same level as in 2000. To achieve UPE, new interventions are required to reduce this rate and ensure that every child acquires, at a minimum, basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia have the highest rates of early school leaving. Across these regions, more than one in every three students who started primary school in 2011 will not make it to the last grade. .

To better gauge the extent to which early school leaving affects the out-of-school population, the UIS identifies the out-of-school population of primary school age according to children's exposure to education: those who have left school, those who are expected to enter school in the future and those who are expected to never attend school.

Of the 57 million out-of-school children of primary age, almost one-half (49%) will probably never enter school. A further 23% have attended school but dropped out, and the remaining 28% are expected to enter school in the future *(see **Figure 4**).* Data show large variations in regional patterns. In the Arab States, Central Asia, South and West Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, about one-half of all out-of-school children will probably never enter school. In Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America and Western Europe, most out-of-school children will start school late. East Asia and the Pacific and South and West Asia have large shares of early school leavers.

FIGURE 4. SCHOOL EXPOSURE OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE BY REGION, 2011



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database.

The classification of out-of-school children by past and possible future school attendance yields important insights for policymakers. If the majority of out-of-school children in a country attended but left school, programmes and interventions should focus on reducing the dropout rate by improving the quality of education and addressing issues such as the direct and indirect costs of education. For children who are likely to attend school in the future, the goal is to ensure earlier entry into the education system.

Children who are expected to never gain access to schooling – roughly 17 million girls and 11 million boys – pose the most serious challenges to policymakers. One of the first steps in reaching out-of-school children is to better identify who they are *(see **Box 1**)*.

Box 1. The Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children

The Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children (OOSCI) was launched in 2010 by the UIS and UNICEF. Throughout 2013, the initiative will release a number of national and six regional reports representing findings on out-of-school children from 26 participating countries. The reports will profile out-of-school children, identify the barriers to progress, and outline context-appropriate policies and strategies for increasing enrolment and attendance of excluded and marginalised children. These reports provide a range of new data and information on out-of-school populations, for example in Latin America and the Caribbean, where an estimated 22 million children and youth are excluded or at risk of exclusion from early childhood to lower secondary education.

In a number of participating countries, governments are moving to further disseminate the results of studies. For example, in Sri Lanka workshops will be undertaken with education stakeholders at the provincial level and new mechanisms are being introduced to improve the tracking of out-of-school children, especially among disadvantaged groups in Armenia, Georgia and Kazakhstan.

UNICEF and the UIS are continuing the global initiative by working with existing and new partner countries to provide the data required to inform policies aimed at reducing the number of out-of-school children.

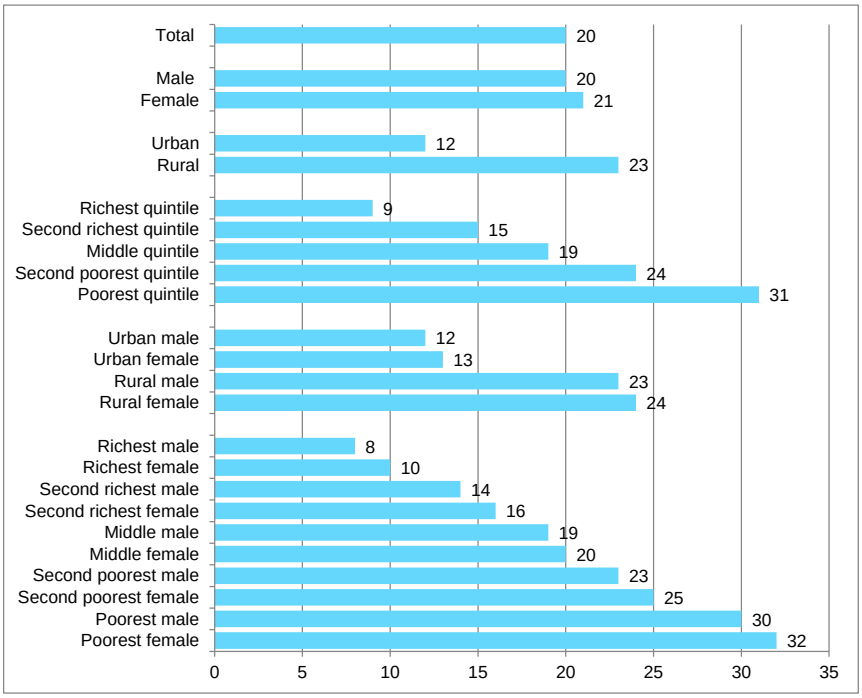
WHICH CHILDREN ARE OUT OF SCHOOL?

While data are regularly collected on the pupils who are attending school, much less is known about out-of-school children who are not always visible in traditional education statistics. New approaches are needed to better develop profiles of out-of-school children and youth and the multiple disadvantages they face. Sample surveys of households help to provide information on the characteristics of out-of-school children, but even these data sources often miss the most disadvantaged children.

Figure 5 presents the share of primary school-age children out of school and disparities by sex, geographic location and household wealth. The figure draws on data from 57 nationally-representative and harmonised household surveys implemented by international agencies and national partners in developing countries during the period 2006-2011.[2]

The most important disparities are related to household characteristics: urban or rural residence and household wealth. The unweighted average out-of-school rates of boys and girls are similar for primary school-age children (20% and 21%), but there are large gaps between children from rural (23%) and urban (12%) areas, and between children from wealthy (9%) and poor (31%) households.

FIGURE 5. AVERAGE RATE OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN BY INDIVIDUAL AND HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS (IN 57 COUNTRIES)

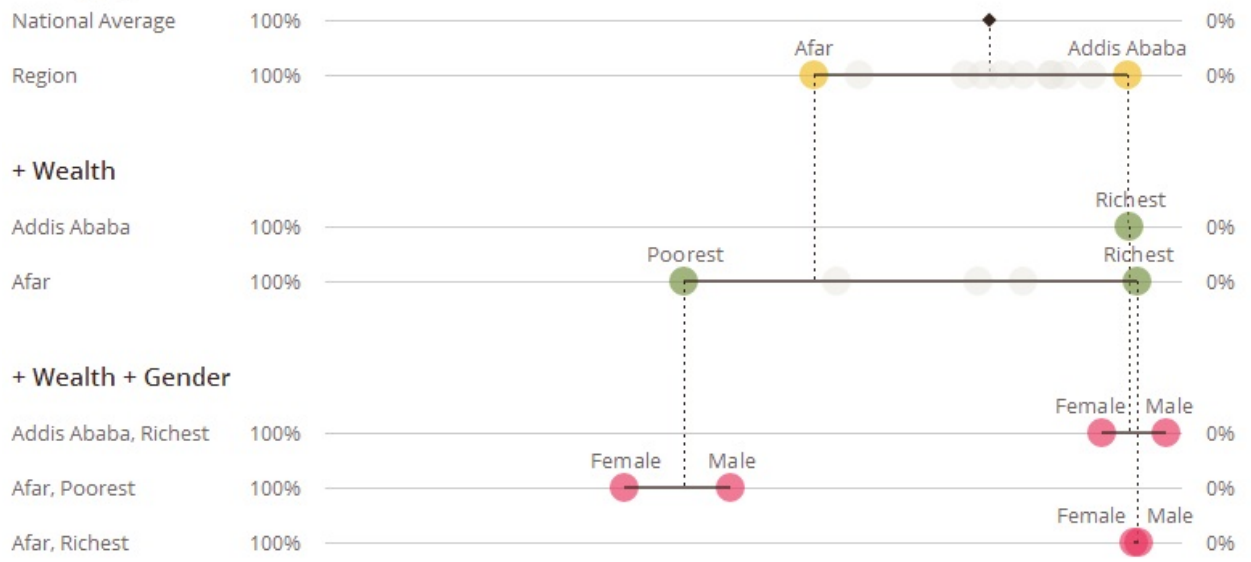


Note: Mean values are unweighted.
Source: UIS calculations based on household survey data from 57 countries, 2006-2011.

[2] *Sources:* Albania 2008-09 DHS, Azerbaijan 2006 DHS, Bangladesh 2011 DHS, Belize 2006 MICS, Benin 2006 DHS, Bhutan 2010 MICS, Bolivia 2008 DHS, Brazil 2006 PNAD, Burkina Faso 2006 DHS, Burundi 2010 DHS, Cambodia 2010-11 DHS, Cameroon 2006 MICS, Central African Republic 2006 MICS, Colombia 2009-10 DHS, Cote d'Ivoire 2006 MICS, Democratic Republic of the Congo 2010 MICS, Dominican Republic 2007 DHS, Egypt 2008 DHS, Ethiopia 2011 DHS, Gambia 2005-06 MICS, Ghana 2008 DHS, Guyana 2009 DHS, Haiti 2005-06 DHS, India 2005-06 DHS, Indonesia 2007 DHS, Kazakhstan 2006 MICS, Kenya 2008-09 DHS, Kyrgyzstan 2005-06 MICS, Lao PDR 2006 MICS, Lesotho 2009-10 DHS, Liberia 2007 DHS, Madagascar 2008-09 DHS, Malawi 2010 DHS, Maldives 2009 DHS, Mali 2006 DHS, Mauritania 2007 MICS, Mozambique 2008 MICS, Namibia 2006-07 DHS, Nepal 2011 DHS, Niger 2006 DHS, Nigeria 2008 DHS, Pakistan 2006-07 DHS, Rwanda 2010-2011 DHS, Sao Tome and Principe 2008-09 DHS, Senegal 2010-11 DHS, Sierra Leone 2008 DHS, Swaziland 2006-07 DHS, Syrian Arab Republic 2006 MICS, Timor-Leste 2009-10 DHS, Togo 2006 MICS, Uganda 2011 DHS, Ukraine 2007 DHS, United Republic of Tanzania 2010 DHS, Viet Nam 2010-11 MICS, Yemen 2006 MICS, Zambia 2007 DHS, and Zimbabwe 2010-11 DHS.

Factors affecting disadvantage rarely act in isolation. Gender often interacts with poverty and place of residence to create even greater disadvantage in learning opportunities within countries. In Ethiopia in 2011, wide disparities were evident between the proportions of girls and boys who had ever been to school *(see **Figure 6**)*. In Addis Ababa, almost all children from rich households have been to school, while 43% from the pastoralist region of Afar have never done so. These disparities become amplified when comparing the situation of girls and boys from the poorest households living in Afar, where more than two-thirds of poor girls (65%) have never been to school compared with around one-half of poor boys (53%).

FIGURE 6. 7- TO 16-YEAR-OLDS WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN TO SCHOOL BY HOUSEHOLD WEALTH, LOCATION AND SEX IN ETHIOPIA, 2011



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report Team calculations based on DHS, 2011 as cited in World Inequality Database on Education.

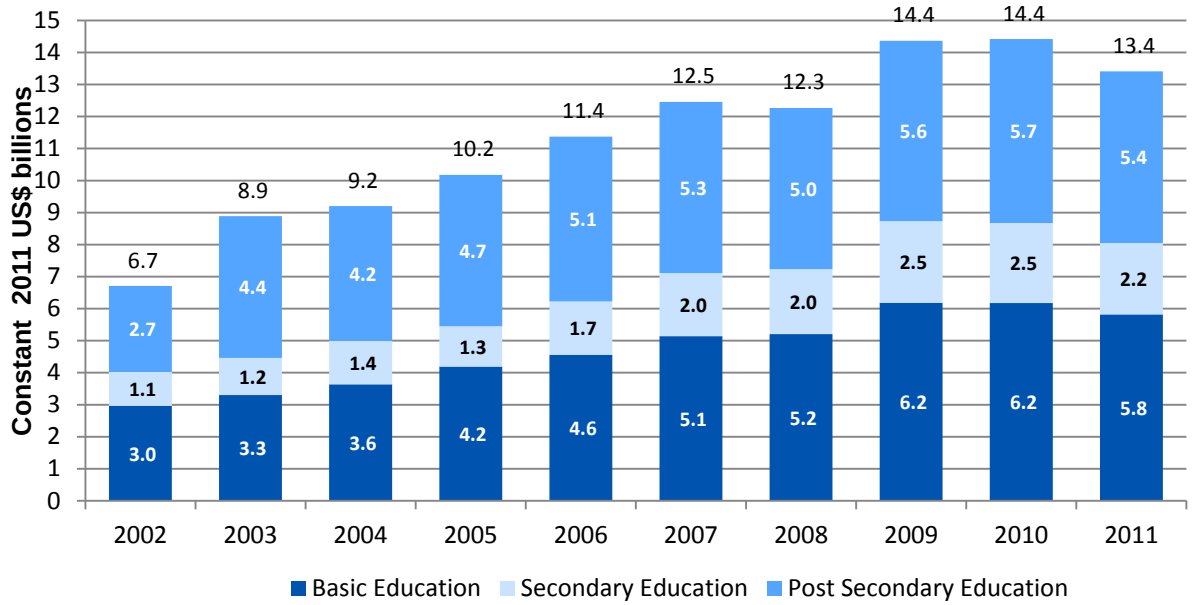
REDUCTIONS IN AID ARE PUTTING CHILDREN'S EDUCATION PROSPECTS AT RISK

Just when a final push is needed to ensure that all children are in school by 2015, particularly as the numbers of out-of-school children are stagnating, aid to basic education is declining. While government spending provides the most important contribution to education, reductions in aid are likely to jeopardise the chances of schooling for millions of children. Donors urgently need to reconsider their aid cuts to ensure they meet their commitment that no child will be out of school in 2015 due to lack of resources.

AID TO EDUCATION HAS BEEN DECLINING SINCE 2010

While aid to education increased steadily after 2002, this trend is now reversing: total aid to education declined by 7% between 2010 and 2011 *(see **Figure 7**)*. This reduction is harming aid to basic education, which fell for the first time since 2002, from US$6.2 billion in 2010 to US$5.8 billion in 2011. This is putting at risk not only the chances of meeting the 2015 goals, but also hopes of extending global goals to include universal secondary education after 2015: aid to secondary education declined by 11% from an already low level.

FIGURE 7. TOTAL AID TO EDUCATION DISBURSEMENTS BY US$ BILLIONS, 2002-2011



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2013).

THE DONOR LANDSCAPE FOR EDUCATION IS CHANGING

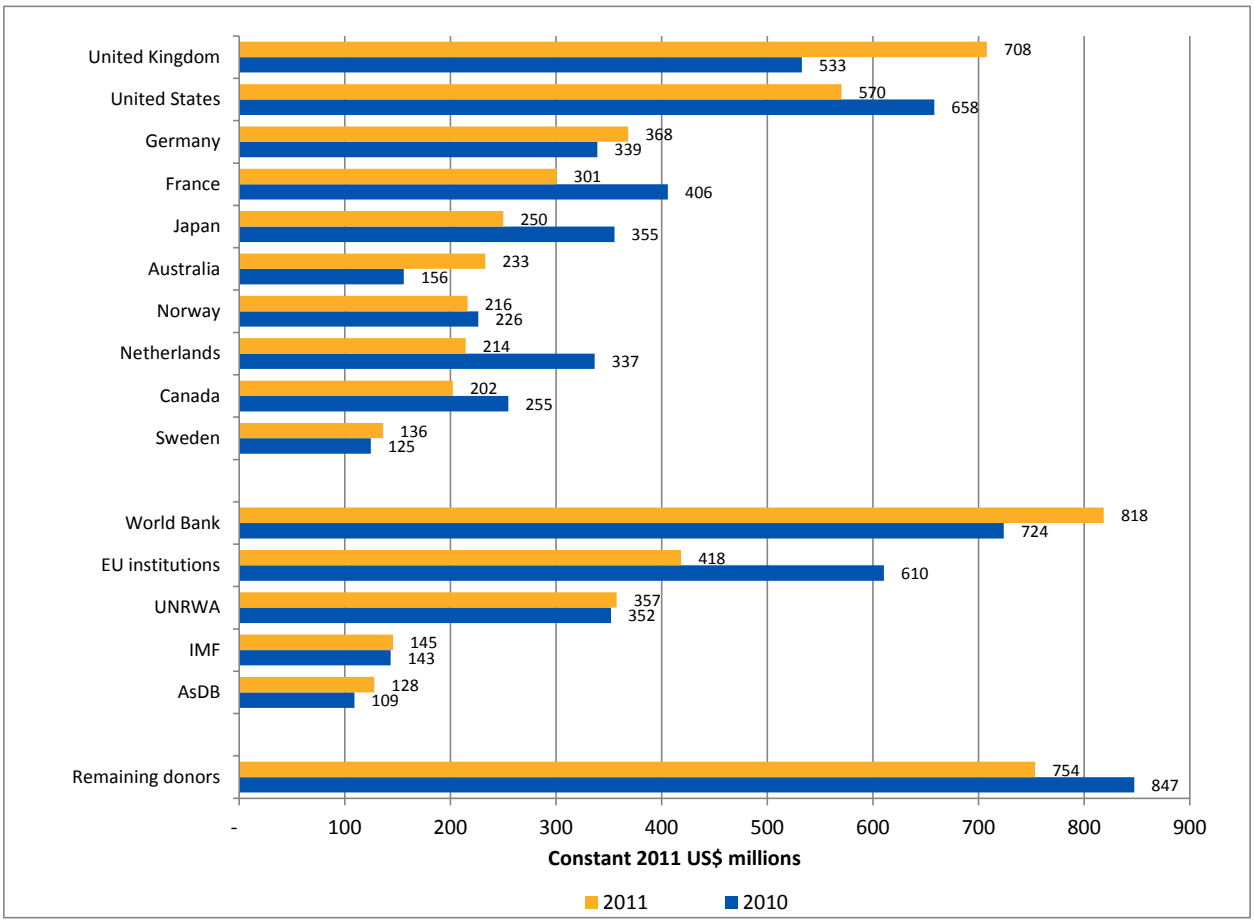
Even before the economic downturn, donors were off-track to fulfill the promise that no country would be left behind in education due to lack of resources. Economic austerity should not be an excuse for donors to abandon their pledges to the world's poorest. Recipient countries need predictable financing for their national education plans. Yet, between 2010 and 2011, of the ten major bilateral donors to basic education, six reduced their aid to basic education: Canada, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States *(see **Figure 8**).*

Reductions in aid to basic education by the United States have moved it from the largest bilateral donor to second place. The Netherlands' decision in 2011 to phase out its education programmes that do not contribute directly to its foreign policy priorities has resulted in its aid to basic education declining sharply, by over one-third between 2010 and 2011. As a result, the country has fallen from being the second-largest bilateral donor to basic education in 2008 to eighth place in 2011. The country's changing priorities are a particular cause for concern as it has been a key funder for education and at the forefront of policy development. France's reduction in aid to basic education was not only related to the financial crisis, but also because as of 2011 the OECD no longer classified Mayotte as an official development assistance (ODA)-eligible country; Mayotte has been the largest recipient of France's ODA disbursements to basic education in previous years. Meanwhile, Japan's aid to basic education was cut by 30% and Canada's by 21% between 2010 and 2011.

Among multilateral donors, the European Union (EU) decreased the amount given to basic education by almost one-third between 2010 and 2011. The EU's diminished spending is a result of a reduction in aid to 74 countries, including dramatic reductions in countries with low education records, including Bangladesh, India, Malawi, Papua New Guinea and South Africa.

Some of these reductions in aid to basic education have been compensated by increases from other donors, including Australia, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Increases in aid from the United Kingdom to basic education between 2010 and 2011 mean that the country is now the largest bilateral donor to the sector, taking the place of the United States. This is partly thanks to the United Kingdom's commitment to increase overall aid to achieve the target agreed by European donors of 0.7% of gross national income by 2015, having reached 0.56% by 2011. By contrast, the United States has not set itself a similar target, and only gave 0.19 % of its gross national income (GNI) to aid in 2011.

FIGURE 8. MANY OF THE LARGEST DONORS CUT AID TO BASIC EDUCATION OVER 2010-11 (IN 2011 CONSTANT PRICES)



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2013).

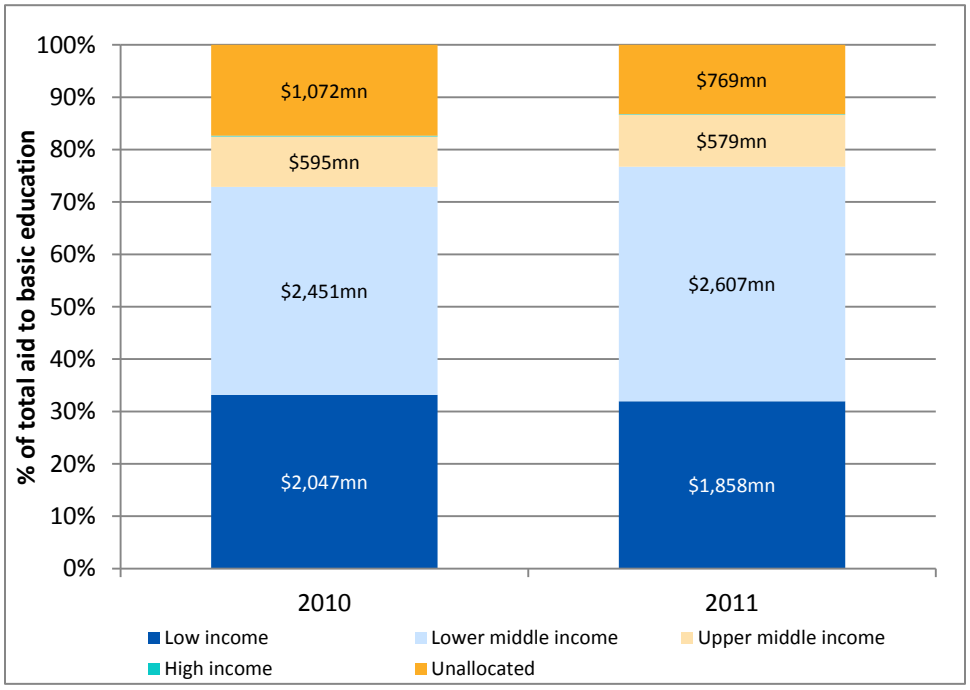
AID IS NOT BEING CHANNELLED TOWARDS THOSE MOST IN NEED

Not only has aid to basic education declined, but the funds that are being allocated are not necessarily going to countries most in need. Of the US$5.8 billion in aid to basic education in 2011, only US$1.9 billion was allocated to low-income countries which face the greatest struggle to achieve UPE *(see **Figure 9**)*. Aggregated aid to basic education in the poorest countries fell by 9% between 2010 and 2011, equivalent to US$189 million, while aid to lower middle-income countries increased by a similar amount over the same period.

For some donors, cuts in aid to basic education for low-income countries have been even more dramatic. The reduction in aid to basic education has been particularly large for the Netherlands, declining by almost one-half between 2010 and 2011. In addition, while the World Bank increased its aid to basic education overall, its allocation to low-income countries declined by almost one-quarter *(see **Figure 10**)*.

The Education for All Global Monitoring Report recently calculated that low-income countries need US$26 billion a year to achieve UPE by 2015. Current aid levels are not only far from filling this finance gap, but the decline will only serve to make the finance gap even wider.

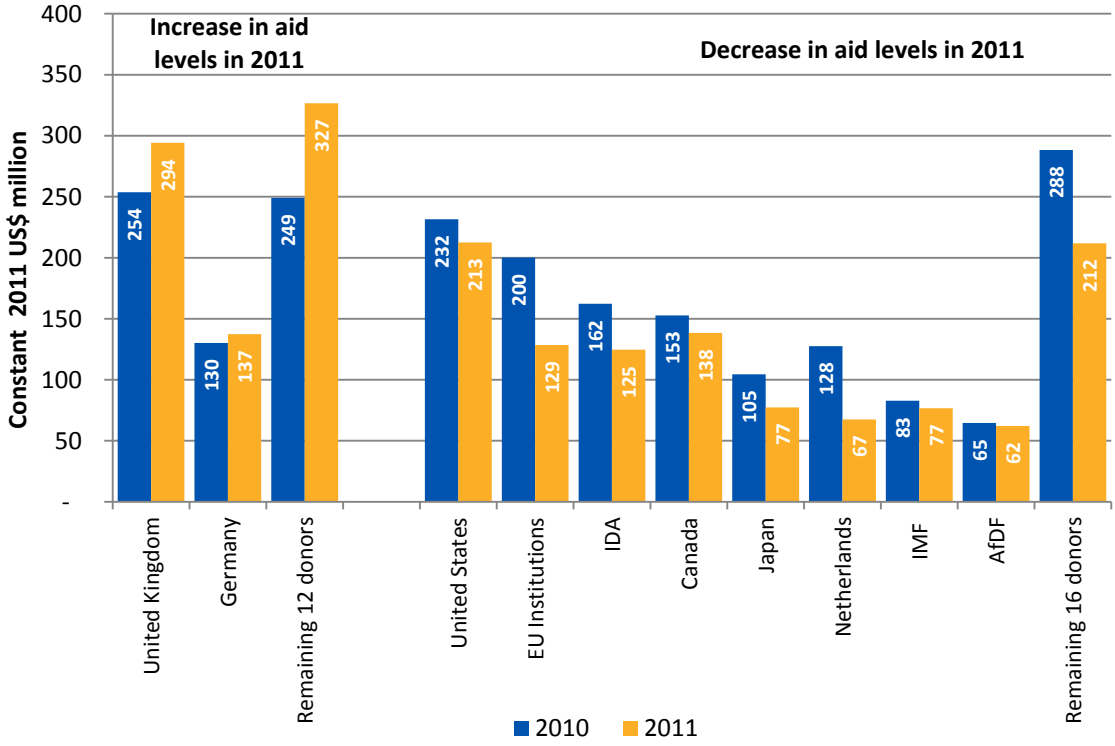
FIGURE 9. TOTAL AID ALLOCATED TO BASIC EDUCATION BY COUNTRY INCOME GROUPS, 2010-2011



Note: 'Unallocated' refers to regional aid unallocated within region and countries which have not been classed by income group by IDA according to July 2012 data.

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2013).

FIGURE 10. AID LEVELS TO BASIC EDUCATION IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES BY THE LARGEST DONORS, 2010-2011

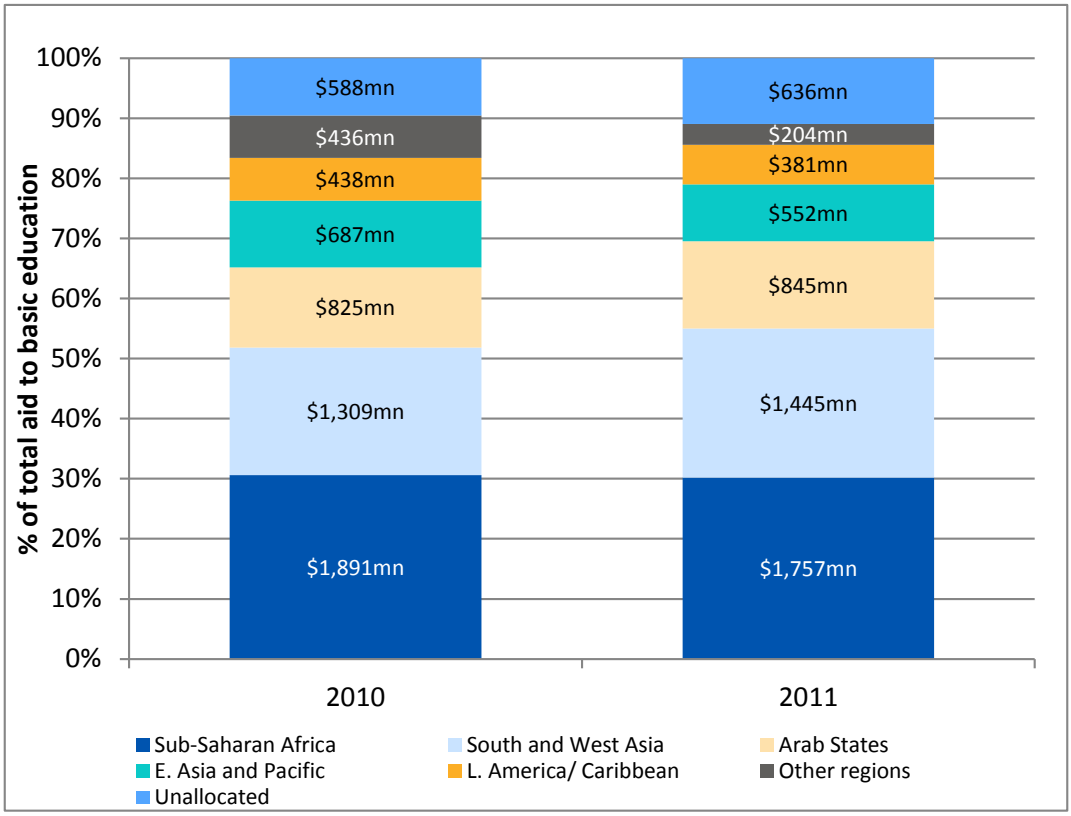


Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2013).

AID TO BASIC EDUCATION NOT REACHING REGIONS AND COUNTRIES MOST IN NEED

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for more than one-half of all out-of-school children worldwide, and yet, aid for basic education to the region dropped by 7% between 2010 and 2011 *(see **Figure 11**).*

FIGURE 11. TOTAL AID TO BASIC EDUCATION BY REGION, 2010-2011



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2013).

This decline was primarily due to cuts in aid allocations to the region from five of the largest donors, with the biggest reductions made by Canada, the Netherlands and the World Bank which cut their contributions by nearly one-third between 2010 and 2011. In addition, EU institutions cut their allocations by over one-quarter.

At the country level, there are also examples of aid not being allocated according to education priorities. Only three of the ten countries in the world with the highest numbers of out-of-school children are among the top ten recipients of aid to basic education: Ethiopia, India and Pakistan. In Pakistan, the number of out-of-school children rose from 5.1 million to 5.4 million in a year and is now three times larger than the number of children out of school in India. While aid to basic education has increased by 6% in Pakistan, the country still receives a smaller share of aid to the sector (5%) than India (10%). While Nigeria is home to the largest population of out-of-school children, it does not figure among the top ten recipients for aid to basic education and has even seen its aid decrease by nearly two-fifths between 2010 and 2011.

CAN WE REVERSE THE TREND BEFORE 2015?

As shown in the 2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report, aid to education generally follows the same pattern as overall aid flows. When aid to development stagnated in 2010, so did aid to education. The latest OECD figures show that total aid fell by 4% in 2012. This latest cut means that the prospects for out-of-school children are likely to suffer further in the time remaining before 2015.

The $26 billion annual finance gap could be filled in time to reach these children, however. If basic education was prioritised in donors' budgets, and donors that have committed to reach the 0.7% target for their ODA actually reached it, an additional $5.3 billion could be provided. Another US$2.4 billion could be raised by reallocating aid currently used to support students from developing countries who pursue their higher education in donor countries.

CONCLUSION

This paper serves as a wake-up call for donors. Aid to education is decreasing at a time when 57 million children are denied their right to education, almost one-half of whom are expected never to enter a classroom.

The finance gap for basic education has increased by US$10 billion over the last three years, primarily because aid donors have not kept their promises. The new aid data presented in this paper show that this year aid donors are still not meeting their commitments.

If we do not get it right by 2015, how can we get it right after that date, and get not just all children but also all adolescents into school? The energies being rallied to consider what plans and targets should be set for the future of our children must ensure sufficient financing to achieve them. This is why we are calling for the post-2015 goals to include a specific target for financing by aid donors. Otherwise, children will continue to pay the price.

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For more information:

Download the data and a short video about out-of-school children at
http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/reaching-oosc.aspx

Education for All Global Monitoring Report at www.efareport.unesco.org