

Policy Brief

Intergovernmental Authority on Development Reviewing the Region's Progress in Reaching the Goals of the Second Decade of Education for Africa



Introduction

This brief on the educational performance of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Regional Economic Community tracks the status of the eight components of the African Union's Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education. The coverage of education statistics for the associated member states is notably poor and hence much remains to be learned about the region. However, this brief serves as a basis for review until the opportunities arise to investigate and learn more about the region's education and training sector.

Established in 1996, IGAD has as its educational mission to facilitate, promote and strengthen cooperation in research development and application in science and technology. Its eight member states have a total population of over 236 million, representing 22 per cent of Africa's population. The school age population for the region represents 17 per cent of the continent's school population although wide variations can be seen across countries. In 2010, the GDP growth rate was 6.1 per cent which is relatively higher than the Sub-Saharan growth rate of 5.1 in the same year.

Education has the potential to address the challenges of socio-political, economic and environmental instability in the region if policies and programmes are designed to mitigate vulnerability and build the values of peace and citizenship. In recognition of this, IGAD has established a division devoted to Economic Cooperation and Social Development under which education has been identified as a thematic area. Recognizing the importance education can play in stabilising and promoting peace, at least four of the region's countries participate in the ADEA Inter-Country Quality Node (ICQN) on peace education which is championed by the Ministry of Education, Kenya.

Scope of the Challenge

All eight member states have experienced civil war with Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda still witnessing internal conflict. Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti experienced one of the worst crises in 60 years between 2011 and 2013 caused by a combination of drought, escalating food prices and armed conflict and whose impact is still being felt.

IGAD member states are by no means homogenous. Kenya and Uganda, for example, stand apart as being better resourced educationally. They all, however, share difficulties associated with extreme environmental conditions, internal conflicts, low skills, employment and income. With more than half of the IGAD region classified as arid and semi-arid land, these areas are characterised by limited income opportunities and food insecurity. Communities also tend to be nomadic. Regionally, education financing levels are below continental norms. The region has also struggled

to produce and retain qualified teachers. These factors are compounded by low regional literacy rates of 58 per cent among adults in the decade ending 2014.

Achievement of primary education for all is challenged by the continuous displacement of communities through either their nomadic lifestyle or internal conflicts. Consequently, the region records high school dropout rates and absenteeism as well as low completion levels. Only six in every ten learners can expect to survive to the last grade of primary education. Rapid population growth will no doubt continue to squeeze scarce education resources. Further, achieving equity in the face of social and gender differences has proved challenging. In some instances, parents resist sending their children to school and children in remote and rural communities are often educationally disadvantaged with insufficient resources.



Key Regional Trends

Gender and Culture

As indicated, access to basic education is a challenge for some children in this region. Except for Kenya and Uganda which reported 115 per cent participation rates at the primary level in 2012, all the other member states are among countries with the highest out of school children rates in the world.

In Somalia only 710,860 children out of an estimated 1.7 million of primary school-aged children are enrolled in school despite efforts to increase numbers. Thus, only about 37 per cent of boys and 22 per cent of girls are in primary school. In South Sudan where it is estimated that only 2 per cent of the population have completed primary school, the number of primary school learners more than doubled between 2006 and 2010, from 700,000 to 1.6 million. Demand, however, remains huge. In Djibouti, 42 per cent of girls are not in school. This is compared to 35 per cent of boys. Since 2006 the rate of children enrolling in primary school in Eritrea has decreased, with out of school children growing from 56 per cent to 66 per cent of their age group in 2012. Ethiopia has the second highest number of primary out of school children on the continent at 3 million in 2012, some one million more than in 2009. This represents 16 per cent of the country's primary school-age population. Huge efforts need to be focused on the IGAD region to ensure children access basic education as their chances presently, although improving, remain uncertain.

The girl child faces an additional disadvantage in that some communities in this region resist sending their girls to school as they are perceived as more valuable in the kitchen or working in the fields. Parents in such communities believe that a girl's value is enhanced at home, in preparation for marriage and the dowry.

A girl growing up in South Sudan, the world's newest nation, is twice as likely to die in childbirth as she is to finish her primary education and begin secondary school. This shocking statistic not only reveals the dire health risks facing women, but also exposes the insurmountable challenges facing schoolgirls in South Sudan. In Djibouti and Eritrea, the proportion of females in secondary schools is still lower than that of males despite some positive growth in the proportions of girls accessing secondary education in these



two countries since 2006. Gender Parity in primary school in Ethiopia in 2012 averages 0.93 and 0.91 in secondary. The same index declines to 0.46 at the tertiary level indicating fewer women in schools as the level of education increases.

IGAD countries have been the birthplace of many ancient, as well as modern, cultural achievements in several fields including agriculture, architecture, art, cuisine, education, and literature. Fifty three per cent of the population of IGAD is Muslim and Madrasa or Qur'anic schools are a common community feature in the region. As such, Islamic educational institutions offer vast potential for education provision. Qur'anic schools have gained recognition for their resilience and ability to adapt to changes in society. Nevertheless, many do not engage in the formal state curricula and have a tendency to exclude girls beyond a certain age.

Arabic and Swahili are the primary languages of the region. Some of the IGAD countries have shifted in and out of using these as the medium of instruction in schools. Recently, South Sudan dropped Arabic in favour of English in schools. In Kenya and Uganda, the East African Swahili Commission promotes the development of Swahili for 'political, economic, social, cultural, educational, scientific and technological development'. Cultural differences have played a part in the development of conflict in the region. Education therefore has the potential to use culture as a unifying force. It is important for the region to see how best to increase the synergy between culture and education.

Education Management Information Systems (EMIS)

This region has one of the poorest profiles in terms of providing education statistics to international bodies such as the African Union or UNESCO. Despite the existence of the AU strategy for the harmonization of statistics whose goal is to generate timely, reliable and harmonized statistical information, aimed at integrating all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural sectors continentally, only three IGAD member states-Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia- consistently provide education data over the six year period. Kenya and Uganda provide data on the internet under the auspices of the East African Community (EAC). This limits the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF) reporting, where regional economic communities are expected to report on progress in implementing the Second Decade's Plan of Action using national and internationally sourced data.

Persistent significant data blanks suggest that the IGAD region may not yet have the capacity to regularly and comprehensively provide education statistics to UIS, particularly in the priority areas of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, and Higher and Tertiary Education.

Despite not submitting data to UIS, both Sudan and South Sudan have initiated EMIS projects. In South Sudan, this project makes evidence based decisions on education financing using current but cost effective technology such as smart phones and low cost tablets for data entry and review right-down to the county level. The Sudanese EMIS project which began in 2008 and ended in 2010 covered all 15 states (this was before the split into South Sudan and Sudan). Some of the findings of the evaluation of the project indicate that

Ministry staff are in need of further training on EMIS concepts and that there is a need for the creation of an EMIS home within the Ministry.

Teacher Development

IGAD member states struggle to recruit an adequate supply of qualified school teachers although in recent years, there have been significant improvements. Both Djibouti and Eritrea report increased numbers of teachers at the primary and secondary levels with the former reporting an increase of over 100 per cent in the six years under review. Despite the positive developments in the two countries, pupil teacher ratios in both primary and secondary education are still significantly above internationally recommended levels. Marked improvements in the supply of primary teachers tend to be at the expense of female teachers who remain in the minority.

Teacher numbers in Somalia increased from 14,000 in 2007 to just over 16,000 in 2011. Of these, 15 per cent are female and the majority of these are unqualified. Primary pupil teacher ratios at 33 learners per teacher are below the international recommended levels. The Ministry of Education in Somalia has plans to recruit an additional 2,000 teachers between 2013 and 2016 under the Global Partnership for Education. In addition to increasing teacher numbers, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction in South Sudan has been running the South Sudan Teacher Education Program since 2011, whose objectives are to improve pedagogy and create support networks for educators. Only 8 per cent of teachers in South Sudan have a teaching diploma. The Government allocates 16 per cent of its national budget to education and, at that rate, cannot pay all its teachers. Kenya and Uganda report an increase in the percentages of trained teachers over the six year period with both countries reporting figures above 80 per cent, but no country has a 100 per cent qualification profile. The primary pupil teacher ratio is 57:1 in Kenya and 48:1 in Uganda, whereas both countries recorded a ratio of 30:1 at the secondary level.

In sum the region needs to focus on producing adequate numbers of qualified teachers at all levels.

Curriculum Development, Teaching and Learning Materials

It has been a challenge to find information on how IGAD member states are progressing in renewing their curricula to address the changing learning needs of their populations and the skill needs of their contexts; providing instruction in appropriate languages suitable for learning, and ensuring learners access to high quality teaching and learning materials.

A key indicator on quality of education is the provision of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials but information is scarce. In Kenya, on average, only one out of six learners had English and Math textbooks in grades 3, 4, and 5 whereas in grades 6 and 7, one in four had these textbooks. Controversially, a recent randomized evaluation in rural Kenya finds, contrary to the previous literature, that providing textbooks did not raise average test scores: textbook provision increased the scores of the best pupils

(those with high pre-test scores) but had little effect on other learners. Textbooks are written in English, most pupils' third language, and many pupils could not use them effectively. The results are consistent with a hypothesis that the Kenyan education system and curricular materials are oriented to the academically strongest learners rather than to typical learners.

Research has indicated that children learn better and are able to acquire knowledge and skills when they are taught in their mother tongue. Language of instruction in schools can be leveraged for increased access or used for further marginalization. All IGAD countries, except Somalia and Ethiopia, have adopted a neo colonial language, Arabic, French or English as the official medium of instruction from upper primary levels onwards. The successful use of Somali as a medium instruction in primary and secondary schools is cited as a convincing example about the resilience of the Somali language and creativity of Somali educators and language specialists. Similarly in Ethiopia, Amharic is the language of instruction at all levels. These are among the few countries which have consciously shifted from a neo-colonial language to offering mother instruction for all levels of schooling in a widely spoken African language.

In contrast, the education system in neighbouring Djibouti is greatly influenced by the French. The medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools is French and the system and curriculum are patterned after that of the French system. This has some impact on local languages and learning outcomes particularly for students with limited access to French speaking environments.

Arabic is the primary language in Sudan and South Sudan and the official medium of instruction in schools used to be Arabic for both. However, South Sudan is extremely linguistically and ethnically diverse, with more than 60 tribes and 53 languages spoken throughout the country. The switch to English as the official medium of instruction in 2006 has created a problem for education in this country. Many teachers throughout South Sudan lack English language skills and can therefore not effectively instruct using the medium. Because of this, most rural and small village schools use mother tongue instruction in practice.

Kenya and Uganda under the guidance of the East African Community are in the process of developing a harmonised education curriculum. This harmonisation will aid the regional integration process and the free flow of human resources across country boundaries. In the first three years of primary in Kenya and four years in Uganda, schools use mother tongue instruction and then shift learning into English.

Critical new subject areas that have dominated the curriculum reform discourse include the introduction of ICTs, life skills and peace education. Some countries have made huge strides to invest in ICTs in schools, in particular Ethiopia and Kenya. As of 2007, Microsoft has begun working on offering software products in African languages one of which is Amharic. Ethiopia has developed a Schools Net initiative which seeks to put pedagogical computers in all schools. The vision of the Government of Kenya is to facilitate ICT as a universal tool for education. Many countries established of comprehensive life skills education covering a range of

health issues, including basic health and nutrition, the physiology of reproduction, reproductive and sexual health, family planning, STD, and HIV/AIDS prevention. The ADEA ICQN on Peace Education has, together with partner states, been advocating for the development of curricula which mitigate against conflict, help avoid violence and build back better society. It has also been involved in the development of the first education sector policy on peace education for Kenya and hopes to achieve a similar milestone in other countries.

Higher and Tertiary Education

There is very little UIS statistical information available on higher and tertiary education in the region. Varied sources seem to indicate that the regional profile of higher and tertiary education is highly privatised. Somalia has close to 50 higher education institutions, many of which are privately run, enrolling 50,000 learners. Similarly in Kenya and Uganda, private universities account for more than 50 per cent of tertiary education providers. The main source of funding for such institutions is learner fees. Consequently, in Somalia, such institutions are likely to have poor infrastructure, neither is it likely that they would engage in research and knowledge production. The Sudan stands out for running several female only universities. Meanwhile, South Sudan has, through the Ministry of Education secured 1,050 scholarships for learners wishing to study abroad in the 2014-2015 academic year. The tertiary sector is particularly short-staffed. Prior to the split, most universities were based in Sudan and with most lecturers coming from Sudan. South Sudan's independence saw it establish new campuses within its boundaries but without the added benefit of lecturers. Unfortunately, there are no formal universities in Djibouti and learners who wish to have tertiary education go to France or elsewhere.

IGAD has established a school and centre of veterinary studies in Somaliland as agriculture forms the mainstay of the region's income generating activities. The school, IGAD Sheikh Technical Veterinary School and Reverence Centre, is affiliated to Makerere University in Uganda and the University of Nairobi in Kenya. IGAD has also established a permanent programme for Dry land Agricultural Research and Technology. The objective of the research programme is to enhance food security in the dryer parts of the IGAD region through cooperation, integration and exchange of technologies and information concerning promotion of production in the arid and semi-arid lands.

The IGAD Commission has established a Knowledge Management System (KMS) with its development partners to facilitate learning within member states, whose objective is to enhance, generation, access, use and integrated management of research knowledge, technology and innovations in IGAD Region. While this KMS is primarily for drought and disaster management, it represents enormous potential and is inter-linked with sectors such as education.

The region has also initiated plans to establish a consortium of IGAD Universities. This is expected to enhance staff and student exchange programmes and promote competitiveness. A steering committee made up of seven officials from the region's seven main universities has already been constituted.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training

IGAD has a regional policy on the importance of vocational training as a key strategy for job creation. The new continental discourse on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) however, recognises the need to have multiple training pathways which give learners the opportunity to acquire skills from different learning and work situations and this includes skills development in the non-formal sector, particularly pertinent to the region. Ministers of Education from member states such as Ethiopia and Kenya recently joined the ADEA Inter-Country Quality Node on Technical and Vocational Skills Development conference, hosted by Cote d'Ivoire, which reviewed best practices in promoting skills development.

Data coverage on this priority area remains thin with only three countries – Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia – making UIS information available in 2012. All three countries enrol learners in TVET programmes at the total secondary level with Ethiopia reporting a marginal increase of 2.4 per cent, Djibouti a decline and Eritrea remaining constant over the six year review period. It is notable that girls represent half of all learners enrolled in TVET programmes in Ethiopia but less than 40 per cent in Djibouti and 44 per cent in Eritrea.

Efforts to expand access in South Sudan have seen enrolments more than double between 2008 and 2009, from 81,000 to 217,000 learners through the country's Alternative Education Programme (AEP) which has a vocational component. AEP targets disadvantaged children of all ages such as dropouts, orphans, former child soldiers. Unfortunately, females remain at a disadvantage with only 16 per cent of South Sudanese women over the age of 15 being literate.

TVET education includes promoting literacy, which offers numerous life-long benefits. A literate mother or father is more likely to send her or his children to school and support them. Regionally, youth literacy rates are among the lowest on the continent and in some countries are declining, particularly among females in Ethiopia and Kenya. Youth literacy rates decreased in Kenya for both males and females over the six years of review. Ethiopia and Uganda, however, reported increased youth literacy rates of 5 and 6.6 percentage points respectively. Despite coming from a low base, female literacy in these two countries increased at a faster rate than that of males.

In Sudan, the adult literacy rate is 86.6 per cent which is relatively high for the continent. In contrast, South Sudan is believed to have the worst literacy rate in the world at 27 per cent as of 2009. This highlights the diversity of education challenges facing the region.



Quality Management

Assessing member states capacity for quality management of education refers to their ability to effectively and efficiently deliver quality management and training with the resources they are allocated given their differing contexts.

Survival rates in primary school are low in most countries in IGAD. South Sudan has in recent years undergone one of the fastest reconstruction programmes in education. The recent growth after a long period of stagnation has resulted in a concentration of learners in the early grades, a high proportion of overage learners, repetition, and dropout. The improvements since 2005 are admirable, but the primary school completion rate is just 26 per cent and there are significant barriers to South Sudan attaining universal primary school access in the near future. More than a million, or 53 per cent, of all South Sudanese children are denied education as they face chronic obstacles to access, exacerbated by recent instability. With more than 83 per cent of South Sudanese living in sparsely populated rural areas with little access to main roads, many children simply do not have a school to attend. Where there is high demand, classroom shortages are pervasive, with most learners learning under trees and a very high national classroom ratio of 134:1.

On the other range of the scale, Kenya and Uganda also face challenges. In 2012, although both countries reported primary Net Enrolment Rates of 90 per cent and above, for secondary it was 24 and 33 per cent respectively indicating the failure of large numbers of children to transition into the next level of learning. In Kenya, some 96 per cent of children survive to the last grade of primary education. Countries like Uganda and Kenya report figures between 50-60 per cent of the education budget going towards primary education.

Early Childhood Development

Recent research indicates the high comparative value of governments investing in quality early childhood development, particularly in the first thousand days of a child's life. Additionally, the provision of pre-primary education needs to become a priority for African Ministries of Education as it ensures children are more likely to survive to the end of primary schooling and achieve higher learning outcomes. Young children are usually the most vulnerable when disasters strike. Experiencing what is referred to as "toxic stress" in early childhood exposes children to greater risk of developing cognitive, behavioural and emotional difficulties. Environmental pressures coupled with rapid population growth do not bode well for the region.

Children in the IGAD region, given the high levels of internal conflict, food insecurity and displacement in some areas are often subject to high risk of infant mortality, acute malnutrition and stunting. In the horn of Africa, some 566,000 children are currently facing severe malnutrition and their survival is at risk. In Somalia, the 2011-2013 crisis has left as many as 1.85 million children in need of humanitarian assistance. An estimated 3,500,000 people in Northern Kenya were affected by drought and in need of food assistance over the same period with Turkana, Wajir, Mandera, Isiolo,

Marsabit, and Moyale being the most affected regions. In Ethiopia, approximately 4.5 million people were in need of food assistance between July and December 2011. In particular, nearly 159,220 children were at risk of severe acute malnutrition. A similar situation obtained in Djibouti where 120,000 people, including 17,000 refugees, required emergency assistance. A shortage of clean drinking water exacerbated high malnutrition levels is putting children at risk.

Experts indicate that a damage done to a child's body and brain through acute malnourishment, known as stunting is irreversible. This affects the child's performance in school as well as putting the child at risk of other diseases that might affect the early stages of development. Ethiopia and Somalia report very high percentages of stunting at 44 and 42 per cent respectively. This is followed by Kenya with 35 per cent. The regional average of 30 per cent of children affected by stunting is alarming.

Despite the humanitarian crisis in some parts of the region, populations continue to grow rapidly. In Somalia and South Sudan, a woman is likely to have more than five children. The remaining IGAD countries have approximately 4 children per woman. Nevertheless, fertility rates, infant mortality and under five year old mortality rates are on the decline. In the past decade, Ethiopia reports the highest of 19.6 per cent followed by Uganda of 15.7 per cent. This simply means that the population is increasing at a decreasing rate and the region will need to continue to plan for the large number of future entrants into its education system. Stunting and malnutrition in general will also need to be addressed if the region is to give its children the best possible physiological start in life.

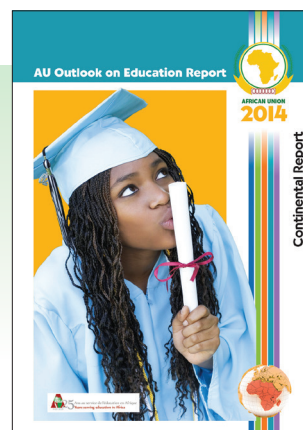


Recommendations

- a) Establishing an education officer post to be in charge of the Education Desk within the IGAD Secretariat with links to IGAD member states specialized offices. The education desk will have to coordinate educational developments in the region including planning, statistics and research initiatives in the regions.
- b) Collaborate with institutions of higher learning to establish crop experimental centers in member countries to introduce and promote adaption of drought tolerant crops. The centers can be used as trial grounds and exchange of research results.
- c) Given the acute degree of data education paucity, and similar to the work of other regional economic communities, IGAD needs to develop a regional EMIS capacity building strategy.



- d) The member states of IGAD, through its peace and security division, engage in the ADEA ICQN on Peace Education, hosted by Kenya on curriculum development for peace.
- e) Promote local languages in education involving entities such as the African Centre for Languages (ACALAN) and the Swahili Language Commission.
- f) Prioritize health and education among the respective various Ministries to address early childhood cognitive development .
- g) Expand formal education to Quranic learners through an innovative means such as the non-invasive Quranic Cluster Schools model and Islamic integrated schools.
- h) Support the delivery of education through diverse approaches in remote nomadic and semi-pastoralist communities. Research on what models work best and how is absolutely crucial.



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