CHAPTER III

EDUCATION AND ILLITERACY
Chapter III: Education and illiteracy

This chapter addresses education in ESCWA member countries. It includes data on student enrolment and teaching staff at various levels, adult and youth illiteracy rates and other related indicators. Definitions of education levels are based on the 1997 version of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 97). Data cover public and private education, and exclude students studying abroad. Data for this chapter were obtained from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) for standardization and methodological comparability.

Table III-1 is on illiteracy and literacy. It presents adult illiteracy rates (15+ years) and youth illiteracy rates (15-24 years), by gender for the periods 2000-2005 and 2006-2010. The table includes the gender parity index (GPI) for literacy during the same time periods. In the ESCWA region, adult and youth illiteracy have decreased in all member countries. Most countries are moving closer to parity in literacy, while several have already achieved equal literacy rates between women and men. During the period 2006-2010, Palestine recorded the lowest adult illiteracy rate (6 per cent), while Yemen recorded the highest (37.6 per cent). Data for the same period indicate that Bahrain recorded the lowest youth illiteracy rate of 0.02 per cent, while Iraq recorded the highest rate of 17.3 per cent. GPI rates for adult and youth illiteracy in Yemen are the lowest in the region at 0.6 and 0.8, respectively.

Table II-2 is on primary education. It presents data on student enrolment and teaching staff at the primary level, including among females, in addition to gross and net enrolment ratios for the period 2005-2011. While the teaching staff category includes full and part-time teachers, it excludes administrators and librarians who do not perform teaching functions. In 2011, Lebanon had the highest gross enrolment ratio of 108 per cent, and the Yemen had the lowest ratio of 91 per cent. The net enrolment ratio is the highest in Oman (96.6 per cent) and the lowest in Yemen (76 per cent).
cent), as per the latest data. The proportion of female students in almost all the countries amounted to some 50 per cent. The lowest proportion, recorded by Yemen, increased from 41.6 per cent approximately in 2005 to 44 per cent in 2011.

Table II-3 is on secondary education for the period 2005-2011. It displays data on student enrolment and teaching staff at the secondary level, including the proportion of female students in public and private education. In addition, it includes data on gross and net enrolment ratios, and provides a breakdown for technical/vocational and general programmes, including information on teachers. In 2011, Oman recorded the highest gross enrolment ratio of 104 per cent and the Sudan the lowest ratio of 38 per cent in 2009. In 2011 Oman recorded the highest net enrolment ratio of 93.7 per cent in secondary education, and Egypt recorded the lowest ratio of 68.2 per cent in 2009. By contrast, latest available data for Yemen show a gross enrolment ratio of only 45.6 and net enrolment ratio not exceeding 37.4. Female students in public secondary education amount to nearly half of the student population in all the countries, except Iraq, the Sudan and Yemen, according to the latest available data. However, female students in private education represent a much smaller population than their male counterparts, except in Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates where they are equal.

Table II-4 is on tertiary education. It presents data on the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education, by gender, for the period 2005-2011. The gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education has been fluctuating over those years for Egypt, Jordan and Palestine, decreasing for Qatar, and increasing for Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. In 2011, Lebanon recorded the highest gross enrolment ratio of 7.7 per cent, with women at a higher rate (61.8 per cent) than men (53.6 per cent), while Qatar recorded the lowest ratio of 11.6 per cent, with around 25 per cent more women enrolled than men.

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Sources:

UNESCO Institute for Statistics database.
http://www.uis.unesco.org