

Scale and Nature of Existing Education Provision

In order to see what is currently being financed, and what future needs will be, it is necessary to chart the scale and nature of existing education provision. A starting point is with statistics on enrollment rates. These of course provide only a partial picture. Even setting aside questions about the accuracy of the figures on the numbers of pupils and school-age populations, from which the enrollment rates are calculated, the statistics say nothing about actual attendance of pupils. Nevertheless, they do provide a useful point of departure.

Table 2 shows that some countries are far from achieving universal primary education, let alone substantial enrollment rates in secondary and tertiary education. Most obvious in this category are Afghanistan, Pakistan, and

Papua New Guinea, though other countries have primary school gross enrollment rates exceeding 100 percent, presumably because of the existence of underage and overage children in primary schools. At the secondary level, reported enrollment rates were as low as 14 percent in Papua New Guinea, though reached 101 percent in the Republic of Korea. Reported tertiary enrollment rates ranged from 1.0 percent in Kiribati to 52.0 percent in the Republic of Korea. These figures show substantial gaps around the region. The peoples of most countries would like to have enrollment rates that approached those of the Republic of Korea, but their economic and human capacities are too limited even to contemplate that.

Table 2: Gross Enrollment Rates in Selected Developing Member Countries, by Level (percent)

<i>Economy</i>	<i>Preprimary</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>
Afghanistan	—	49	22	—
Cambodia	6	90	78	1.6
China, People's Republic of	29	104	27	5.7
Cook Islands	64	111	85	9.0
Fiji Islands	15	106	64	—
Hong Kong, China	90	100	75	21.9
India	5	91	49	6.4
Indonesia	19	114	48	11.1
Kazakhstan	10	100	83	32.7
Kiribati	—	98	32	1.0
Korea, Republic of	37	98	101	52.0
Kyrgyz Republic	8	98	81	12.2
Lao People's Democratic Republic	7	107	25	1.5
Malaysia	—	94	57	10.6
Maldives	59	123	49	—
Marshall Islands	15	133	81	—
Mongolia	27	103	59	15.2
Myanmar	—	103	30	5.4
Nepal	—	122	37	5.2
Pakistan	—	84	—	—
Papua New Guinea	73	63	14	3.2
Philippines	14	118	79	27.4
Samoa	38	94	47	—
Singapore	—	108	70	33.7
Solomon Islands	—	90	17	—
Sri Lanka	—	107	75	5.1
Tajikistan	4	95	22	—
Thailand	69	91	55	20.1
Tonga	10	90	95	5.0
Tuvalu	91	100	45	10.0
Uzbekistan	24	89	93	31.7
Vanuatu	34	97	20	—
Viet Nam	40	108	47	4.1

— Data not available.

Note: Data refer to the most recent year available – in most cases around 1997.

Sources: UNESCO 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d; various national sources.

Statistics on preprimary education are generally more scarce than those on primary, secondary, or tertiary education. This is partly because in many countries preprimary education is dominated by the private sector, and governments have incomplete data on the sector. In general, enrollment rates at the preprimary level are low, though they are about 90 percent in Hong Kong, China, for example. In that society, the authorities have insisted that preprimary education is not an essential component of the education system. However, the majority of parents consider it essential, and primary schools in that society generally assume that children have learned basic literacy and numeracy in preprimary education.

Alongside the quantitative patterns indicated by the statistics on enrollment rates should be placed a commentary on qualitative variations. This is done in the booklet in this series on the quality of education (Chapman and Adams 2002), and need not be repeated. It is sufficient here to note that in some countries expenditure produces education with good quality (albeit always with room for improvement), while in other countries quality is very low. The latter again indicates gaps that need more financing and/or more efficient use of existing resources.