

## Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

In a few economies in the region, total net enrollment ratios in **primary education** are below 80%. More than 10 economies have achieved the target for primary education expected **completion rates**. In slightly over half of the economies for which data are available, over 95% of both male and female youth populations are **literate**. In economies with much lower literacy rates, women are more likely to be illiterate than men.

### Introduction

The target is to *ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling*. Primary education usually starts at 5 or 6 years and continues through to 11 or 12 years, but age requirements differ between countries.

In order to achieve this target, first, countries need to ensure that all primary school age children are enrolled in school; second, that they all complete the course. In the commentary below, these two components are considered separately. In both cases there is a cut-off point of 95%, meaning that the targets are considered to have been achieved if at least 95% of all children of primary school age are **enrolled**, or if at least 95% of those enrolled in the first grade **complete** the full cycle.

One test of the success of primary education is provided by **literacy rates** for persons in the 15–24 age group. These rates show how well the basic reading and writing skills learned in primary school have been retained at the time young persons are either joining the work force or entering higher technical or university education.

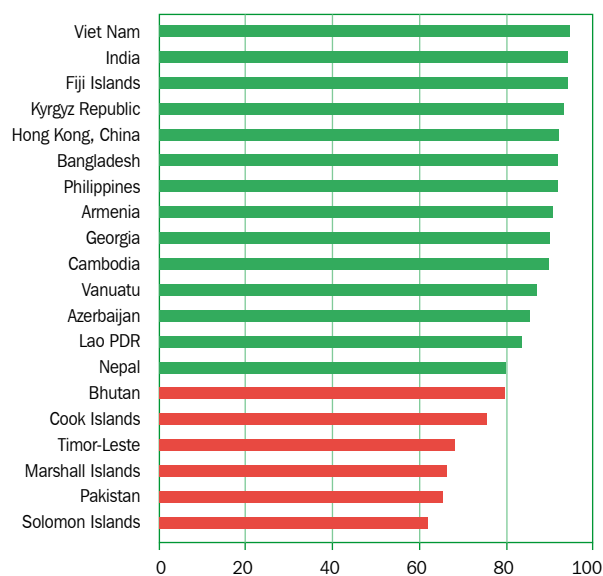
### Key Trends

Figure 2.1 shows economies with total net enrollment ratios in primary education of below 95%. The indicator includes children of primary school age who are enrolled in secondary education. Economies with enrollment ratios of less than 80% are denoted by red bars and include a number from the Pacific. Enrollment ratios in these economies would need to rise by around 2–4.5% per annum from their latest levels in order to reach 95% by 2015.

Box 2.1 classifies economies into four groups.

- Sixteen economies are **early achievers** including Indonesia and a number of Pacific economies.
- A further seven economies are **on track**, including two of the most populous economies—Bangladesh and India—as well as Cambodia and Viet Nam.
- Kyrgyz Republic and Pakistan are making only **slow progress**.
- Ten economies are shown as **regressing**. These include five Pacific economies and three countries of the former Soviet Union.

Figure 2.1 Total Net Enrollment Ratio in Primary Education Below 95%, Latest Year



Source: Table 2.1.

Box 2.1 Progress toward Achieving the Target for Total Net Primary School Enrollment

**Early achievers**

Brunei Darussalam	Myanmar
Indonesia	Palau
Kazakhstan	Samoa
Kiribati	Sri Lanka
Korea, Rep. of	Taipei, China
Malaysia	Tajikistan
Maldives	Thailand
Mongolia	Tonga

**On track**

Bangladesh	Lao PDR
Bhutan	Nepal
Cambodia	Viet Nam
India	

**Slow progress**

Kyrgyz Republic	Pakistan
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**Regressing**

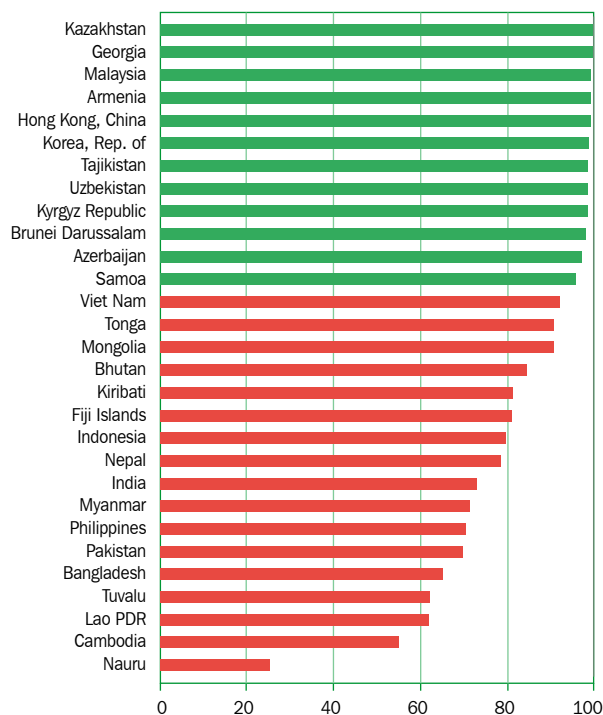
Armenia	Hong Kong, China
Azerbaijan	Marshall Islands
Cook Islands	Philippines
Fiji Islands	Solomon Islands
Georgia	Vanuatu

Source: Derived from Table 2.1.

The survival rates in Figure 2.2 show how many of the children who have enrolled in the first grade of primary education can be expected to reach the last grade. In this figure, economies where 95% or more of children starting Grade 1 are expected to reach the last grade are shown in green. They comprise several countries from the former Soviet Union.

Note that the data shown here are expected rates and not actual completion rates. Actual completion rates may turn out differently as they are affected by economic conditions, e.g., when times are hard, some parents may no longer be able to keep their children in school.

Figure 2.2 Percentage of Children Starting Grade 1 and Reaching Last Grade of Primary, Latest Year



Source: Table 2.1.

Box 2.2 classifies economies into the same four groups used earlier:

- Twelve economies are **early achievers** including seven from the former Soviet Union.
- India and four other economies are **on track** to achieve at least 95% of starters reaching the last grade of primary school by 2015.

Box 2.2 Progress toward Achieving Target for Proportion of Children Starting Grade 1 Reaching Last Grade of Primary

**Early achievers**

Armenia	Korea, Rep. of
Azerbaijan	Kyrgyz Republic
Brunei Darussalam	Malaysia
Georgia	Samoa
Hong Kong, China	Tajikistan
Kazakhstan	Uzbekistan

**On track**

India	Nepal
Mongolia	Viet Nam
Myanmar	

**Slow progress**

Bangladesh	Indonesia
Bhutan	Lao PDR
Cambodia	

**Regressing**

Philippines	Kiribati
Fiji Islands	Tonga

Source: Derived from Table 2.1.

- Bangladesh and Indonesia are improving their survival rates but **slow progress** means they will not meet the target by 2015.
- **Regressing** economies include Fiji, Kiribati, Philippines, and Tonga.

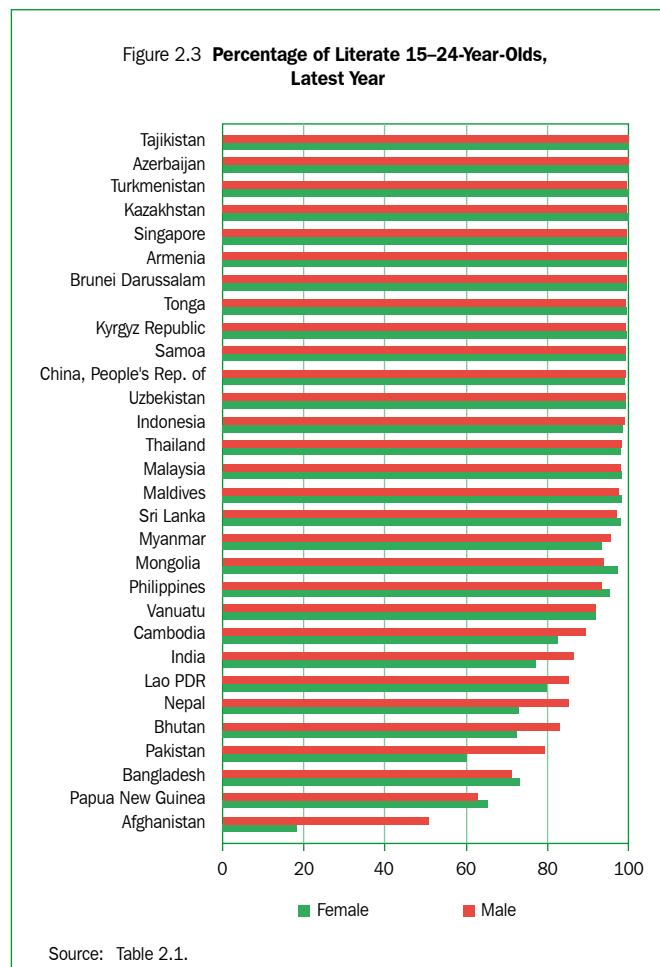
The goal of universal primary education requires that both the enrollment and completion criteria are met. However, completion of primary schooling will only be possible if children are able to reach the last grade. Hence, enrollment rates are considered alongside survival rates.

Based on available data, only 11 economies have either already achieved both criteria or are on track to do so by 2015. These are Brunei Darussalam, India, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nepal, Samoa, Tajikistan, and Viet Nam. Other economies either will miss one or both of the criteria or are able to provide statistics on only one or none of them.

Figure 2.3 shows literacy rates for 30 economies in the region. Rates for males and females are shown separately. Rates are 95% or better for 17 economies (Tajikistan down to Sri Lanka). Both the People's Republic of China and Indonesia are in the top group, while Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan are in the bottom group.

In the top group, the differences between the male and female rates are small and are as likely to favor females as males. In the bottom group, however, there are clear gender differences, with female literacy rates being usually lower than for males. The gender bias is particularly marked in Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

Literacy percentages are close to 100% for all countries of the former Soviet Union for which data are available. This reflects the fact that schooling was compulsory in these countries up to the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1990. In some of these countries, access to education is now more limited and literacy rates may tend to fall in the future.



### Data Issues and Comparability

The statistics for Goal 2 are mostly taken from UNESCO sources, with countries trying to adhere to UNESCO classifications and definitions. Statistics on school enrollment are typically obtained from ministries of education or household surveys. Enrollment statistics are likely to be accurate in many countries, but may be overreported in others. These statistics may also not reflect actual attendance or drop-out rates during the year. The percentages of those starting Grade 1 who will continue on to the last grade of primary school are essentially forecasts based on recent experience on drop-out rates.

Youth literacy rates are sometimes based on household surveys in which reading and writing skills are tested. In other countries they are based on the assumption that persons who have completed a certain number of years of schooling are literate. However, literacy skills may be lost through lack of use, hence the rates may be overstated.

## Goal 2 Target

Table 2.1 **Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling**

	2.1 Total Net Enrollment Ratio in Primary Education (percent)					
	Total		Girls <sup>a</sup>		Boys <sup>a</sup>	
	1991	Latest Year	1991	Latest Year	1991	Latest Year
<b>Developing Member Countries</b>						
<b>Central and West Asia</b>						
Afghanistan	...	...	...	...	...	...
Armenia	92.8 (2001)	90.7 (2006)	93.6	92.5	92.0	89.1
Azerbaijan	88.8	85.4 (2006)	88.6	83.8	89.1	86.9
Georgia	97.1	90.3 (2006)	96.9	91.7	97.2	89.1
Kazakhstan	86.7	99.0 (2007)	...	99.4	...	98.6
Kyrgyz Republic	92.3	93.5 (2006)	92.2	93.5	92.5	93.5
Pakistan	57.2 (2001)	65.6 (2006)	46.0	57.3	67.8	73.5
Tajikistan	76.7	97.3 (2006)	75.9	95.0	77.5	99.4
Turkmenistan	...	...	...	...	...	...
Uzbekistan	78.2	...	77.7	...	78.7	...
<b>East Asia</b>						
China, People's Rep. of	99.1	...	96.7	...	100.0	...
Hong Kong, China	97.5 (2001)	92.2 (2006)	95.5	90.1	99.5	94.2
Korea, Rep. of	99.7	98.5 (2007)	100.0	...	99.3	...
Mongolia	95.7	97.2 (2006)	97.0	99.2	94.4	95.4
Taipei, China	98.7	97.1 (2006)	...	...	...	...
<b>South Asia</b>						
Bangladesh	86.4 (1999)	92.1 (2004)	86.5	93.8	86.3	90.6
Bhutan	56.4 (1999)	79.9 (2006)	53.0	80.1	59.8	79.7
India	84.9 (2000)	94.2 (2006)	77.1	92.2	92.0	96.1
Maldives	98.0 (1999)	98.1 (2006)	98.3	98.1	97.7	98.0
Nepal	67.0 (1999)	80.1 (2004)	58.7	74.6	74.7	85.3
Sri Lanka	99.7 (2003)	96.7 (2004)	100.0	...	99.4	...
<b>Southeast Asia</b>						
Brunei Darussalam <sup>b</sup>	92.7	97.4 (2006)	91.4	97.7	94.0	97.1
Cambodia	75.1	89.9 (2006)	65.9	89.0	78.5	90.9
Indonesia	96.7	98.4 (2006)	95.7	96.6	99.7	100.0
Lao PDR	61.9	83.7 (2006)	57.3	81.2	66.7	86.1
Malaysia	97.7 (1999)	99.9 (2005)	96.7	99.7	98.7	100.0
Myanmar	91.8 (1999)	99.6 (2006)	91.5	100.0	92.1	99.3
Philippines	96.3	92.0 (2006)	95.9	93.1	96.8	90.9
Singapore	...	...	...	...	...	...
Thailand	...	100.0 (2006)	...	100.0	...	100.0
Viet Nam	90.5	94.7 (2000)	86.4	...	94.2	...
<b>The Pacific</b>						
Cook Islands	86.3 (1999)	75.7 (2005)	84.5	77.1	87.9	74.4
Fiji Islands	99.5	94.2 (2006)	100.0	94.4	98.9	94.1
Kiribati	99.2 (1999)	99.7 (2002)	100.0	...	98.4	...
Marshall Islands	88.1 (2001)	66.5 (2007)	88.4	66.3	87.8	66.8
Micronesia, Fed. States of	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nauru	...	...	...	...	...	...
Palau	96.8 (1999)	96.4 (2000)	93.9	94.5	99.4	98.3
Papua New Guinea	...	...	...	...	...	...
Samoa	94.2 (1999)	99.1 (2004)	93.9	100.0	94.5	98.3
Solomon Islands	63.3 (2003)	61.8 (2005)	62.3	61.5	64.2	62.1
Timor-Leste	...	68.1 (2005)	...	66.6	...	69.6
Tonga	88.2 (1999)	98.5 (2005)	86.2	97.0	90.1	100.0
Tuvalu	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vanuatu	91.9 (1999)	87.3 (2007)	91.4	86.8	92.3	87.8
<b>Developed Member Countries</b>						
Australia	99.8	96.6 (2006)	99.8	97.0	99.4	96.2
Japan	99.7	99.8 (2006)	99.9	100.0	99.6	99.6
New Zealand	98.8	99.5 (2006)	...	99.5	...	99.5

continued.

## Goal 2 Target

Table 2.1 **Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling** (continued)

	2.2 Proportion of Pupils Starting Grade 1 Who Reach Last Grade of Primary (percent)					
	Total		Girls <sup>a</sup>		Boys <sup>a</sup>	
	1991	Latest Year	1991	Latest Year	1991	Latest Year
<b>Developing Member Countries</b>						
<b>Central and West Asia</b>						
Afghanistan	...	...	...	...	...	...
Armenia	79.3 (2001)	99.4 (2005)	80.4	99.0	78.2	99.8
Azerbaijan	96.6 (1999)	97.3 (2005)	97.7	94.4	95.6	100.0
Georgia	99.4 (1999)	100.0 (2005)	100.0	...	98.8	...
Kazakhstan	95.9 (2000)	100.0 (2006)	93.3	99.9	98.4	100.0
Kyrgyz Republic	94.5 (1999)	98.6 (2005)	93.9	100.0	95.1	97.2
Pakistan	...	69.7 (2004)	...	72.4	...	67.8
Tajikistan	96.7 (1999)	98.7 (2005)	93.6	97.4	99.7	100.0
Turkmenistan	...	...	...	...	...	...
Uzbekistan	99.5 (1999)	98.6 (2005)	99.4	99.2	99.7	98.1
<b>East Asia</b>						
China, People's Rep. of	86.0	...	...	...	...	...
Hong Kong, China	99.3 (2002)	99.3 (2004)	100.0	100.0	98.7	98.6
Korea, Rep. of	99.3	98.8 (2006)	99.5	99.1	99.0	98.6
Mongolia	87.2 (1999)	90.9 (2003)	89.7	91.3	84.7	90.5
Taipei, China	...	...	...	...	...	...
<b>South Asia</b>						
Bangladesh	64.9 (1999)	65.1 (2003)	70.1	67.3	60.3	63.1
Bhutan	81.3 (1999)	84.4 (2005)	85.7	87.8	77.8	81.2
India	62.0 (1999)	73.0 (2004)	60.4	72.9	63.3	73.1
Maldives	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nepal	51.3	78.5 (2005)	51.2	82.8	51.5	75.0
Sri Lanka	92.2	...	92.6	...	91.8	...
<b>Southeast Asia</b>						
Brunei Darussalam <sup>b</sup>	98.0 (2003)	98.3 (2005)	96.0	98.6	100.0	98.1
Cambodia	48.6 (1999)	55.0 (2005)	45.0	56.7	51.9	53.5
Indonesia	77.9	79.5 (2005)	...	81.4	...	77.7
Lao PDR	54.3 (1999)	62.0 (2005)	53.6	61.7	54.9	62.3
Malaysia	95.7	99.4 (2004)	96.2	...	95.3	...
Myanmar	55.2 (2000)	71.5 (2005)	55.2	71.9	55.3	71.1
Philippines	75.3 (2001)	70.4 (2005)	79.8	75.4	71.1	65.9
Singapore	...	...	...	...	...	...
Thailand	...	...	...	...	...	...
Viet Nam	82.8 (1999)	92.1 (2005)	86.2	...	79.9	...
<b>The Pacific</b>						
Cook Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...
Fiji Islands	82.1	81.0 (2005)	81.7	81.6	82.5	80.4
Kiribati	90.7	81.4 (2003)	...	88.8	...	75.0
Marshall Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...
Micronesia, Fed. States of	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nauru	...	25.4 (2001)	...	30.1	...	21.5
Palau	...	...	...	...	...	...
Papua New Guinea	62.1	...	60.4	...	63.5	...
Samoa	92.4 (1999)	95.9 (2000)	94.1	...	90.9	...
Solomon Islands	78.0	...	...	...	...	...
Timor-Leste	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tonga	94.6 (2000)	90.9 (2005)	...	91.9	...	89.9
Tuvalu	...	62.6 (2001)	...	...	...	...
Vanuatu	68.9 (1999)	...	...	...	...	...
<b>Developed Member Countries</b>						
Australia	98.8	...	99.4	...	98.1	...
Japan	100.0	...	100.0	...	100.0	...
New Zealand	...	...	...	...	...	...

continued.

## Goal 2 Target

Table 2.1 **Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling** (continued)

	2.3 Literacy Rate of 15–24-Year-Olds (percent)					
	Total		Female <sup>a</sup>		Male <sup>a</sup>	
	1990	Latest Year	1990	Latest Year	1990	Latest Year
<b>Developing Member Countries</b>						
<b>Central and West Asia</b>						
Afghanistan	...	34.3 (2000)	...	18.4	...	50.8
Armenia	99.8 (2001)	99.8 (2007)	99.9	99.8	99.8	99.7
Azerbaijan	99.9 (1999)	99.9 (2007)	99.9	100.0	99.9	99.9
Georgia	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kazakhstan	99.8 (1999)	99.8 (2007)	99.9	99.9	99.8	99.8
Kyrgyz Republic	99.7 (1999)	99.6 (2007)	99.7	99.7	99.7	99.5
Pakistan	55.3 (1998)	70.0 (2007)	43.1	60.0	67.1	79.5
Tajikistan	99.8 (2000)	99.9 (2007)	99.8	99.9	99.8	99.9
Turkmenistan	99.8 (1995)	99.8 (2007)	99.8	99.9	99.8	99.8
Uzbekistan	...	99.3 (2000)	...	99.3	...	99.4
<b>East Asia</b>						
China, People's Rep. of	94.3	99.3 (2007)	91.5	99.1	97.0	99.4
Hong Kong, China	...	...	...	...	...	...
Korea, Rep. of	...	...	...	...	...	...
Mongolia	97.7 (2000)	95.4 (2007)	98.4	97.3	97.0	93.7
Taipei, China	...	...	...	...	...	...
<b>South Asia</b>						
Bangladesh	44.7 (1991)	72.1 (2007)	38.0	73.2	51.7	71.1
Bhutan	74.4 (2005)	78.0 (2007)	68.0	72.7	80.0	82.9
India	61.9 (1991)	82.1 (2007)	49.3	77.1	73.5	86.7
Maldives	98.2	98.1 (2007)	98.3	98.4	98.0	97.8
Nepal	49.6 (1991)	79.3 (2007)	32.7	73.0	68.2	85.3
Sri Lanka	95.6 (2001)	97.6 (2007)	96.1	98.1	95.1	97.1
<b>Southeast Asia</b>						
Brunei Darussalam <sup>b</sup>	98.1 (1991)	99.6 (2007)	98.1	99.6	98.1	99.6
Cambodia	76.3 (1998)	86.2 (2007)	71.1	82.7	81.8	89.6
Indonesia	96.2	98.9 (2007)	95.1	98.8	97.4	98.9
Lao PDR	71.1 (1995)	82.5 (2007)	64.1	79.7	78.8	85.3
Malaysia	95.6 (1991)	98.3 (2007)	95.2	98.4	95.9	98.2
Myanmar	...	94.5 (2000)	...	93.4	...	95.7
Philippines	96.6	94.4 (2007)	96.9	95.3	96.3	93.6
Singapore	99.0	99.7 (2007)	99.1	99.8	98.9	99.7
Thailand	98.0 (2000)	98.2 (2007)	97.8	98.1	98.1	98.3
Viet Nam	93.9 (1999)	...	93.6	...	94.2	...
<b>The Pacific</b>						
Cook Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...
Fiji Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kiribati	...	...	...	...	...	...
Marshall Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...
Micronesia, Fed. States of	...	...	...	...	...	...
Nauru	...	...	...	...	...	...
Palau	...	...	...	...	...	...
Papua New Guinea	66.7 (2000)	64.1 (2007)	64.1	65.4	69.1	62.8
Samoa	99.0 (1991)	99.4 (2007)	99.0	99.5	99.1	99.4
Solomon Islands	...	...	...	...	...	...
Timor-Leste	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tonga	99.3 (1996)	99.6 (2007)	99.4	99.6	99.3	99.5
Tuvalu	...	...	...	...	...	...
Vanuatu	80.8 (1994)	91.7 (2007)	79.3	91.7	82.3	91.8
<b>Developed Member Countries</b>						
Australia	...	...	...	...	...	...
Japan	...	...	...	...	...	...
New Zealand	...	...	...	...	...	...

a Figures refer to the same year as indicated in the column for "total."

b Brunei Darussalam is not a developing member country but an unclassified regional member country of ADB.

Sources: Millennium Indicators Database Online (UNSD 2008); for Taipei, China: economy sources.