

Primary and secondary education

The foundation for lifelong learning

Enrolment rates in primary schools have risen significantly around the world, from 84% in 1999 to 91% in 2015. However, these figures should not obscure the fact that in low-income countries, in particular school drop-outs continue to be a major problem. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, about 20% of children drop out of primary school early without obtaining a certificate. This disparity has a particularly serious impact on the economies and societies of poorer countries as primary education is the foundation for lifelong learning and the prerequisite for higher-level qualifications. In 2015, the global enrolment rate for secondary education was 84% at lower secondary level and 63% at upper secondary level. However, the regional differences are considerable: in North America and Western Europe, all young people generally transition to secondary school after primary school. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 64% of young people still attend lower secondary school, but only 43% attend upper secondary school. Lower secondary education is often very important as a bridge to vocational education and training, while upper secondary education is a prerequisite for admission to university.

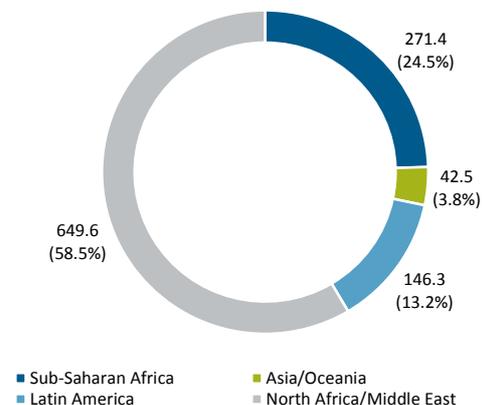
Background

“Education for all” – the vision enshrined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration aimed to provide all children with formal basic education by 2015. But today, despite some successes, this goal still seems a long way off. At present, around 264 million children worldwide do not attend primary or secondary school (Global Education Monitoring Report 2017/18). Accordingly,

primary and secondary education is of fundamental importance in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to ensure that by 2030, all girls and boys receive free and high-quality primary and secondary education on an equal footing, leading to effective learning outcomes.

The causes of the current gaps in primary and secondary education include, amongst others, rapidly growing populations, conflict situations and displacement, marginalisation of different socio-economic groups and lack of political commitment by some countries. Poor learning outcomes are often due to the mediocre quality of teaching, outdated curricula and overall inadequacy of educational institutions. Poor working conditions for teachers, coupled with high rates of absenteeism, often characterize the situation of education systems in emerging and developing countries. The realization of compulsory schooling often overstrains their financial and personnel resources. Particularly in North Africa and the Middle East, but also in Sub-Saharan Africa, the urgency of contributing to poverty reduction through basic education is evident. Especially in the refugee context, providing education is a challenge: currently, more than half of all refugees aged 5 to 17 do not attend primary or secondary school.

Portfolio overview – primary and secondary education
Current projects (incl. promotional loans), volume in EUR millions



Source: Own data

The KfW development approach

Financing primary and secondary education remains a priority for German financial cooperation (FC) and KfW: the aim is to improve access to and the quality of the available education. Therefore, nearly 41% of FC education projects provide funding for primary and secondary education. The 80 FC projects with a total volume of EUR 1.1 billion support almost 16 million schoolchildren worldwide. The MENA region (Middle East/North Africa) is the regional focus, followed by Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America.

To ensure that as many children as possible acquire basic skills in reading, mathematics and writing, KfW Development Bank supports the construction, renovation and equipping of classrooms and teacher centers as well as the provision of teaching and study materials. As the number of schoolchildren grows, support for secondary education also becomes increasingly important. Among other things, KfW promotes this through (better) science education or scholarships for poor, gifted students. KfW, for example, finances the “Wings-To-Fly” scholarship programme launched by the Kenyan Equity Group Foundation. Particularly disadvantaged pupils with an above-average primary school leaving certificate get the chance to attend a good secondary school. The scholarship recipients are not only supported financially, they also receive advice (mentoring) to prepare them to find a good job in the future and to assume leadership positions.

KfW also participates in donor community basket funding in the area of primary and secondary education. In the Palestinian territories, KfW supports the local Ministry of Education to develop a results-based, student-centered and inclusive school system. With these and other projects in the field of primary and secondary education, KfW is making a contribution to alleviating educational poverty and increasing the opportunities for political and social participation.

Guinea – Basic education programme

In Guinea, a key obstacle to development is the low level of education – not even a third of the population can read and write. In the group of 15- to 24-year olds, the figure is around 45%. In addition, the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic in 2014 and 2015 affected the entire economy and had a significant negative impact on the education sector. Many remote areas lack school infrastructure and qualified teachers. As a result, KfW Development Bank is financing the Primary Education Programme Guinea in the Faranah region of central Guinea, which is being implemented by the NGO Plan International in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The FC project involves teacher training as well as the construction and equipping of a total of 141 primary schools and aims to improve the quality of teaching. The project's target group are children of primary school age. Parents and teachers as well as municipalities and local construction companies will also benefit from the planned measures. All schools were completed and handed over to the municipalities as of the 2016/17 school year. This improves access to primary education in the Faranah project region: almost 7,900 pupils have been enrolled in the newly built schools to date. Improving the quality of teaching will primarily be achieved through teacher training. A total of around 1,000 teachers, including about one third women, were trained in mathematics and teaching skills.



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