

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

In its last Universal Periodic Review in 2010, Egypt accepted six recommendations related to eradicating illiteracy, particularly in rural areas, and one on enhancing the quality of its education system. Despite some overall improvements since then, stark disparities in educational achievement remain. Decreasing public investment in education disadvantages students who cannot afford to attend private schools and exacerbates the problem of unequal access to education.

DESPITE SOME IMPROVEMENT IN LITERACY AND SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, EGYPT HAS WITNESSED INCREASING DROP-OUTS AND NON-ATTENDANCE. Overall, the youth (ages 15-24) literacy rate increased marginally—from 85% in 2005 to 87% in 2010 (World Bank, 2014). While net primary school enrollment remained high over this period (averaging between 95% and 99% from 2006 to 2013), the number of drop-outs almost doubled—from 267,087 in 2005 to 644,717 in 2010 (UNICEF, ND).

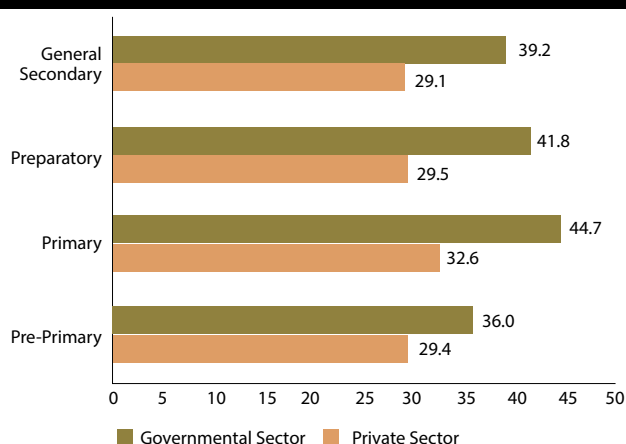
THERE ARE LARGE DISPARITIES IN ILLITERACY, AS WELL AS SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, COMPLETION AND ACHIEVEMENT.

The illiteracy rate is considerably higher among the rural population; in 2012 it was 30.7%, in contrast to 17.7% among urban populations (World Bank, 2014). With regard to gender, more than five times as many females in rural Upper Egypt (22.1%) than males (4%) had never attended school in 2009. Children from lower-income families are also hindered from reaching their full education potential. They made up only 3-5% of achievers in the preparatory stage, and only 0.5% in the general secondary stage. Furthermore, of the two million school-age children with disabilities, only 37,000 are enrolled in schools (Ministry of Education, 2012).

Suggested Question: Please provide updated statistics on literacy, school enrollment, completion and achievement, disaggregated on the grounds of gender, geography and disability status.

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN EGYPT IS POOR. The Global Competitiveness Report for 2013-14 ranked Egypt last out of 148 countries in terms of the quality of primary education (World Economic Forum, 2013). Particular concerns regarding the quality of education in Egypt relate to higher student-teacher ratios (as shown in the graph below), as well as poor infrastructure. UNICEF has estimated that less than 10% of schools meet the national standards for quality education, and that one in five buildings are not fit for use and lack functional water and sanitation facilities, for example (UNICEF, ND).

Private and Governmental Sector Student-teacher ratios by Educational Stage, 2012/2013



Source: CAPMAS, 2014

THERE HAS BEEN UNDERINVESTMENT IN TEACHERS. Teachers have held that their salaries are inadequate and held numerous protests, sit-ins and intermittent strikes over the past few years. Further, Egypt does not appear to be investing resources where these are most needed. Per capita spending on wages and compensation is lowest in governorates where the student-teacher ratio in primary school is highest.

Education budget allocations to wages and compensation 2013/14 vs. Student-teacher ratio, by governorate, 2011/12

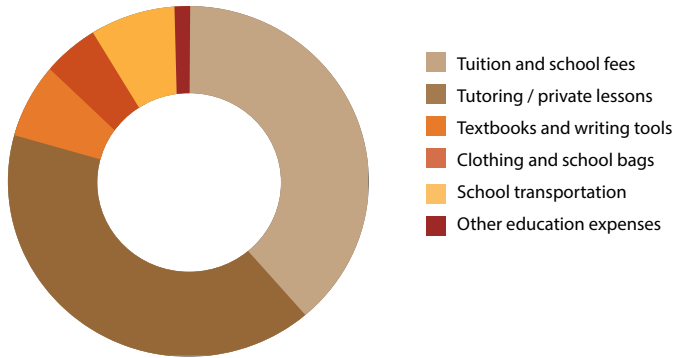


Source: Own calculations based on Ministry of Finance, 2013 and CAPMAS, 2012



THE INCREASE IN HOUSEHOLD SPENDING ON EDUCATION HAS BEEN BURDENSOME. Due to the poor quality of the education system, families have turned to private tutoring. As shown in the graph below, tutoring and private lessons made up more of households' total expenditure on education than school tuition and fees in 2012/13 (CAPMAS 2014).

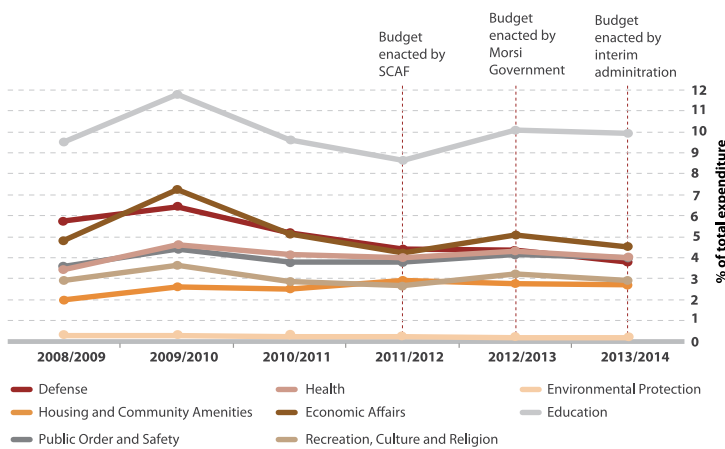
Household Expenditure on Education, 2012/2013



Source: CAPMAS, 2014

PUBLIC SPENDING ON EDUCATION IS INADEQUATE. Over time, the state has been decreasing its role in the education sector. This is particularly apparent in the state's decreasing budget commitment to education. The percentage of the budget allocated to education decreased from 16-17% of total state expenditure in the early 2000s to 10-12% in the past five years (Ministry of Finance).

Percentage of total expenditure on selected social sectors, 2008 - 2013



Source: Ministry of Finance

Suggested Question: What have been the reasons for Egypt's low investment in the education sector?

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON EDUCATION MUST BE EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED. Article 19 of the 2014 Constitution states that Egypt shall 'provide free education in the various stages of the State's educational institutions according to the Law' and will commit a minimum of 4% of GDP to education, gradually increasing budget expenditures to meet international norms. This expanded protection of the right to education is a positive development. Nevertheless, much depends on its implementation. To date there has not been a clear articulation of how education sector reforms will be pursued in line with the objectives of Article 19.

Suggested Question: How will Egypt give effect to Article 19 of the Constitution?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure all children can enjoy the right to free and compulsory primary education, without discrimination, and that secondary education is progressively made free, available and accessible to all.

Increase its investment in education, so as to guarantee high quality public education.

Strengthen efforts, including through the fairer distribution of resources, to reduce disparities in education on the basis of gender, socioeconomic group or governorates.

Increase its monitoring over the condition of students and teachers through creating adequate legislation that would protect both.

ABOUT THIS FACTSHEET SERIES

This Factsheet was prepared by the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) and the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECECSR) in light of Egypt's appearance before the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review in 2014. The 11 factsheets in this series accompany the joint submission on economic, social, and cultural rights in Egypt endorsed by 130 non-governmental organizations and labor unions.

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