

UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

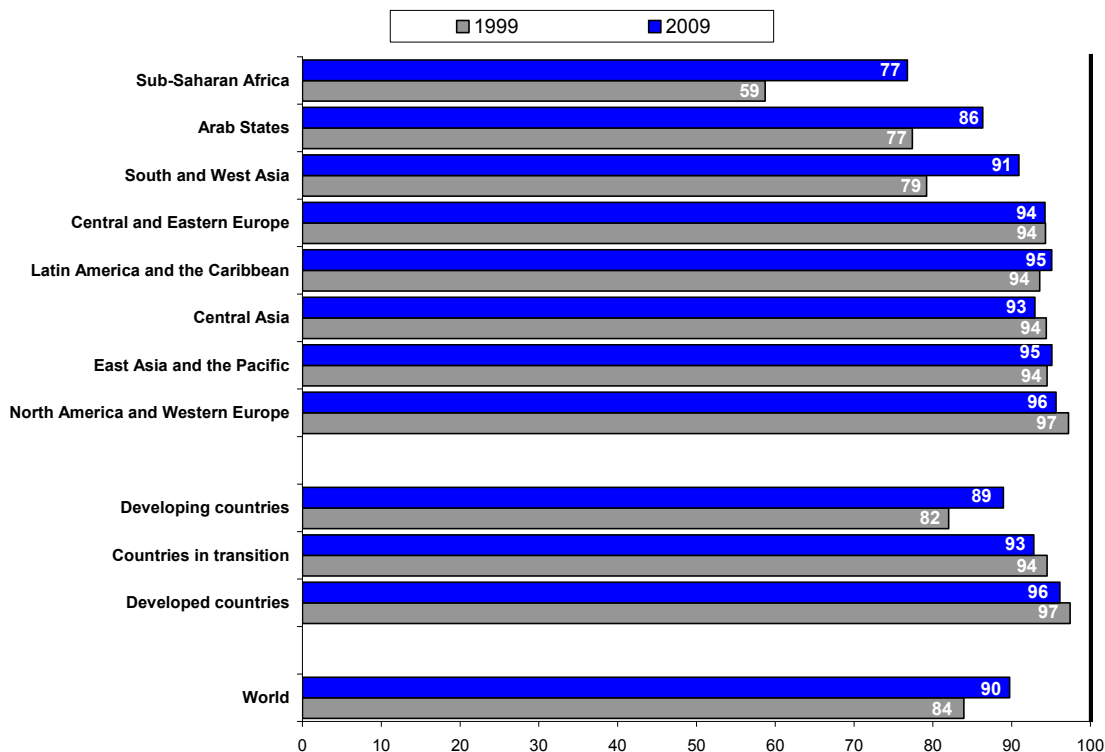
This fact sheet presents the latest UIS education data available as of May 2011.

Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere – boys and girls alike – will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

The international community has pledged to achieve universal primary education (UPE) as part of its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and the targets of Education for All (EFA). This means that all children, boys and girls, will have access to and complete a full cycle of primary education by 2015. This fact sheet summarises the progress made globally and regionally during the period between 1999 and 2009.

Globally, 90% of children of primary school age were enrolled in schools in 2009. The remaining 10% of the targeted population is still excluded from a basic human right – access to education. The adjusted net enrolment rate¹ (ANER) increased by 6 percentage points between 1999 and 2009 at the global level (see **Figure 1**). At this pace, it is unlikely that the world will meet the goal of UPE by 2015.

Figure 1. Adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education, 1999 and 2009 (%)



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, May 2011.

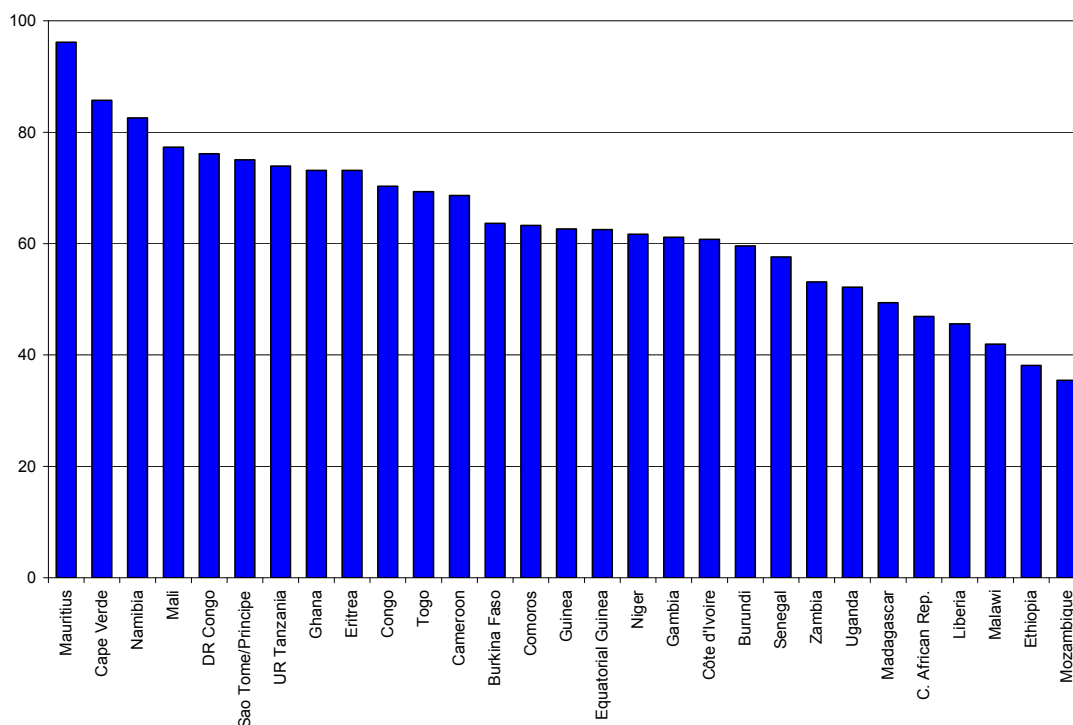
¹ The number of pupils of the official school-age group for primary education, enrolled either in primary or secondary education, expressed as a percentage of the total population of the same age group.

Nevertheless, significant progress has been made in the sub-Saharan African region, where the ANER rose from 59% to 77% between 1999 and 2009. Important strides were also made in South and West Asia and the Arab States, where the ANER increased in these regions by 12 and 9 percentage points respectively during the same period.

Some of the poorest countries, mostly found in sub-Saharan Africa, have made the greatest strides since 1999. Burundi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania have achieved or are nearing the goal of UPE (with an adjusted net enrolment rate above 95%). Considerable progress was also made in Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Mozambique and Niger, where enrolment rates increased by more than 25 percentage points from 1999 to 2009. The abolition of school fees is considered an important driver of rapid progress in many of these countries.

Bringing children to schools is a vital first step, but they must stay in school long enough to benefit from a full course of primary education. In two-thirds of sub-Saharan African countries with available data, more than 30% of primary students who start school are expected to drop out before they reach the last grade of primary education (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2. Survival rate to last grade of primary education in sub-Saharan Africa, 2009*



Note: * In case of missing data, the most available since 2007 were used.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, May 2011.

In order to achieve UPE by 2015, all children at the official entry age to primary education should have started school by 2009 or so, depending on the duration of the primary level and how well schools retain pupils to the end of the cycle. In one-half of sub-Saharan African countries with available data, at least one out of every four children at the intended age for entry to primary school was not in school in 2009.