

# Strengthening Education in the Muslim World

## *Country Profiles and Analysis*

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
Afr. Dev. Bank	African Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
Comm. Sec.	Commonwealth Secretariat
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DEO	District Education Officer (Pakistan)
DFID	Department for International Development (U.K.)
EU	European Union
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
FMG	Federal Ministry of Education (Nigeria)
GNI	Gross National Income
GTZ	German Aid Agency— <i>Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>
HDI	Human Development Index
HuT	<i>Hizb-ut-Tahrir</i> (Uzbekistan)
IAIN	State Institute of Islamic Studies
ICG	International Crisis Group
IESAB	Islamic Education and Social Affairs Board (Nigeria)
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JUI	<i>Jamiet-e-Ulema-e-Islam</i> (Pakistan)
LEAP	Literacy Enhancement Assistance Project
MNE	Ministry of National Education (Morocco)
NEP	National Education Philosophy (Malaysia)
NWFP	North West Frontier Province (Pakistan)
ppp	purchasing power parity
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RFA	Request for Assistance (USAID)
SDF	Social Development Fund (Yemen)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SO	Strategic Objective (USAID)
UBE	Universal Basic Education (Nigeria)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme





# Preface

To advance USAID's understanding of how better to support the educational needs of the Muslim world, the Office of Development Evaluation and Information in USAID's Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC) undertook a three-month desk study to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of secular and Islamic educational systems in 12 Muslim countries. Its methodology was based on secondary research and interviews with a small sample of experts. The major findings and conclusions of this study appeared in *Strengthening Education in the Muslim World: Summary of the Desk Study* (PN-ACT-009) by Sharon Benoliel.

The country profiles in this report are based on research and a preliminary report prepared by Matt Seymour, Uzma Anzar, Nina Etyemezian, and Victor Farren. Revisions were made by Sharon Benoliel, Maxine Pitter Lunn, Emily Gosse, and Katie Croake. Revisions included correcting some inaccuracies found in the country profiles in the preliminary report and providing additional information on Islamic schools. Time constraints and the desk study format limited the amount of data that could be collected and analyzed, the extent of revisions, and the comprehensiveness of citations. Nevertheless, the report contains information and analyses that may be very useful to USAID field missions. For further information, contact [SBenoliel@usaid.gov](mailto:SBenoliel@usaid.gov).

Editorial, design, and production assistance was furnished by IBI-International Business Initiatives, Arlington, Va.

*Sharon Benoliel*



# 1. Uzbekistan

Table 1.1. Uzbekistan Country Profile

## Demographic Indicators

Total population (millions) . . . . .	24.8
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	88
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	39
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	63.1
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$2,360
Total fertility rate . . . . .	2.6
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.7

## Education Indicators

### Primary

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	100
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	–
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	100
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	–
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	–
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	–
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	–

### Secondary

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	95
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	–
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	–
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	–

### Tertiary

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	–
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	–

### Literacy

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	–
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	–
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	–

### Finance

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	7.7
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	21.1
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	–

## Introduction

Of the 15 new countries that became independent from the Soviet Union in 1991, Uzbekistan has the third largest population (25 million) and the fourth largest land area. About 45 percent of the population is under 20. Ethnically, the country's population is approximately 80 percent Uzbek, 5.5 percent Russian, 5 percent Tajik, 3 percent Kazakh, 2.5 percent Karakalpak, 1.5 percent Tatar, and 2.5 percent "other." Some ethnic minorities live in enclave areas with native-language institutions such as schools. Most Uzbeks—88 percent—are Muslim, primarily Sunni, while 9 percent are Eastern Orthodox.<sup>1</sup>

The Uzbek Government's program to restructure a Soviet-era centralized education system is hampered by declining budgets, crumbling infrastructure, teacher attrition, and declining public confidence. In 2001, there were 5.6 million students at the primary level and 364,971 at the secondary level, but these numbers are dropping.<sup>2</sup> State investment in education as a percentage of the GDP is also dropping, though not as precipitously as in other Central Asian Republics.<sup>3</sup>

## Public Education System

The education system in Uzbekistan is well developed and accessible to all. The country's literacy rate is nearly 100 percent and nine years of basic education is compulsory for both boys and girls. However, quality is definitely on the decline. Fewer children attend preprimary education than in the Soviet era due to fewer opportunities, changing family dynamics (resurgence of traditional gender roles), and economics (fewer state enterprises willing to finance preschools). Schooling in years 10–12 is available at academic *lycées* (university-oriented high schools), technical colleges, and specialized and vocational schools. The languages of instruction are Uzbek and Russian. For minority schools, Uzbek and Russian are compulsory, in addition to the minority language of the school. In 1993, the law transferring written Uzbek to Latin script came into effect; Latin script was introduced to all first graders during the 1996–97 academic year.

## Characteristics

One year after independence, the Government of Uzbekistan introduced new curricula and textbooks, a new testing system, and new accreditation methods for colleges and universities. The Education Act of 1992 also mandated compulsory education for nine years. Although UNESCO notes that the National Program of Personnel Training is working toward 12 years, other sources say the government has no plan to mandate more than nine. In addition, a new emphasis was placed on courses in Uzbek history and culture and increasing the supply of Uzbek language textbooks in many fields.

Recently, two new types of schools have been introduced in Uzbekistan: a three-year lyceum (or *lycée*) that prepares students for higher education and a three-year professional college. The college trains students for professional careers in industry and services, leaving open the possibility of further higher education. The government has invested significant sums in building new specialized and vocational schools, though some claim this comes at the expense of basic education. An estimated 7 million pupils will enroll in these new schools over the next 10 years. In sharp contrast with the past, the European Union (EU) reports an unprecedented 90 percent of these pupils will enroll in vocational education and training.<sup>4</sup> Other sources feel this is an overly optimistic projection, given real and perceived problems with modernizing the vocational education curricula.

## Challenges

*Access.* There are access challenges at all levels of the system. Old buildings are deteriorating and lack adequate sanitation, but money to upgrade them is in short supply. In 1992, about 8,500 schools in rural areas ran on double shifts because money to build new schools was not available.<sup>5</sup> Traditionally, state-owned enterprises—not the education ministries—funded preprimary schools. As state enterprises privatized and cut back on such activities, enrollments dropped to one-half the 1990 level, with fewer and fewer opportunities for rural children.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, even though there is universal basic education coverage, the Ministry of Public

Education reports that some rural and poor children are dropping out of school in order to work and increase family incomes.

*Quality.* The quality of public school education in Uzbekistan has been declining. According to a USAID education system assessment report,<sup>7</sup> curriculum changes in Uzbekistan and other Central Asian republics have failed to introduce new methods of teaching and learning. The curriculum remains encyclopedic and information-based, allowing for few question-and-answer sessions. In fact, it is usually considered impolite for students to ask questions in class or interrupt their teachers. The teaching-learning environment in most classrooms therefore fails to nurture a positive student attitude toward learning. In addition, curriculum changes have not been matched by needed changes in teacher training. The decline in educational quality is also related to the decline in teachers' status and salaries.

*Management.* With support from the EU, USAID, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and other donors, Uzbekistan is moving toward decentralization of the education system. However, funding at local levels remains problematic, with limited opportunities to raise revenues. In principle, fiscal and curriculum management authority will rest eventually with local education officials and head teachers of schools. In practice, however, Uzbekistan is still the least advanced of the Central Asian republics along this path. Additionally, decentralization raises the possibility for regional disparities based on local economic conditions.

*Policy Reforms.* Over the years, the Government of Uzbekistan has placed a strong emphasis on reforming the educational sector through curriculum and textbook revisions, improved and equitable access for rural and lower economic groups, and staff training. The introduction of new textbooks with special emphasis on economics, language, and environmental education demonstrates the government's interest in preparing Uzbekistani youth for greater participation in the global economy. The government also adopted a number of equity measures. It provides free textbooks to all grade 1 children and textbook

leasing to help needy families cut costs. In addition, to improve the financial situation of teachers, the government relieves them from paying utility bills. According to UNESCO's "Education For All" country reports, Uzbekistan is also committed to restructuring staff training system to align it with the country's social and economic development needs, the latest achievements in science, and new technological advancements.<sup>8</sup> To supplement the current education budget, the government also plans to develop and launch certain fundraising mechanisms, such as encouraging foreign investment in the continuous education and staff training systems.

## Donor Assistance

The following donors have been implementing programs to support Uzbekistan's education sector.

- The ADB has taken a lead role in supporting primary and secondary education, and is providing support for vocational and technical education.
- The U.K. Government's Department for International Development (DFID) invited the British Council to manage an academic partnership project that helps higher education institutions in Central Asia prepare their degree programs to match the needs of the region's emerging new economies. Five of 16 partnerships are in Uzbekistan. The project has been running for about five years. The followon project began in January 2001, and focused on disseminating the materials developed to a wider selection of higher education institutions.<sup>9</sup>
- The EU has also provided significant support to the education sector, focusing on vocational and technical education.
- The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has provided substantial sums for educational exchanges and training programs.
- The Korean Government has provided some aid to the Uzbek Government to improve teacher education.
- The five Central Asian countries are invited to take part in Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)-financed regional training pro-

Table 1.2. Donor Assistance to Education in Uzbekistan

Donor	Level				Focus		Type of Educational Intervention						
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Access	Quality	Teacher training	Curricula/textbooks	Improved management system	Decentralization	Girls' education	Distance learning	Nonformal education	Vocational/technical
World Bank*											■	■	
USAID*	■	■				■							
UNICEF													
ADB*	■	■			■	■	■	■	■			■	■
EU					■	■	■	■	■			■	■
UNESCO*	■					■				■			
CIDA													
GTZ/KFW													
JICA						■						■	
Korea						■							
DFID				■			■						
SIDA*				■									

\* Denotes active involvement in project or planned work

grams, including journalism and democracy, conflict solution, water management, and seed production. With financing from SIDA, the Swedish Institute is managing a scholarship program for academic studies in Sweden for, among others, students from the Central Asian countries.<sup>10</sup>

- UNESCO has done work in special education, training teachers to educate students about HIV/AIDS. UNESCO also held a regional forum on distance education, hoping to engage Uzbekistan in the future.
- USAID announced a program supporting basic education in January 2003.
- The World Bank is planning to support a distance learning program.

### Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* Uzbekistan no longer has a command economy. Although slowly and gradually moving in the right direction, until 1998 the country had not done much to improve education for employment in a free market. Only recently, with support from donors under the decentralization programs, are colleges and universities being encouraged to create partnerships with local entrepreneurs to open job opportunities for college graduates.<sup>11</sup>

*Civic Participation.* No information emerged in the literature review indicating that the government's public school curriculum includes courses that promote civic participation. However, some students

are being prepared for civic responsibilities through their participation in civic education and democracy building programs implemented in Uzbekistan by several donors.

One example is described as follows:

In January 1998, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) formally opened an office in Tashkent. With funding provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), this on-site presence allowed IFES to serve as a dependable source of information for the Central Election Commission, the *Oliy Majlis* (Parliament), NGOs, and others working in the areas of electoral sector reform and civic education. In July 1999 IFES and its local NGO partner, the Public Education Center (PEC), conducted a 10-day Summer Democracy Camp in Syr-Darya for students representing all regions of Uzbekistan. The project promoted greater engagement in democracy building among the country's young and future leaders, and encouraged these young leaders to take an active interest in the peaceful and democratic development of their country. After the Camp, IFES continued to play an important role in the development of civil society in Uzbekistan through civic and voter education projects. IFES was able to contribute to OSCE's Education for Women project by providing information on Civic and Voter Education and by publishing and distributing a brochure on women's rights for regional training sessions.<sup>12</sup>

## Islamic Schools

### Levels and Types

There is very limited reliable information available about Islamic schools in Uzbekistan: many sources are problematic because of data inconsistency or political agendas. Generally, most Islamic schools appear to teach only religious subjects and are therefore considered as a supplement to public or private secular schooling. Reportedly, there are two types of Islamic schooling in Uzbekistan: formal and informal.

The formal network includes madrasas that begin as Koranic education for children of primary school age and continue to include more specialized Islamic subjects for students of secondary school age. These schools are available to boys and girls, taught separately. There are also two higher education institutes that teach Islam: the Tashkent Islamic Institute, which produces Islamic scholars who generally become imams; and Tashkent Islamic University, a secular institute that grants standard university diplomas.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, loose networks of informal religious study are reportedly organized and convened by religious leaders within communities, notwithstanding that religious education outside the formal network is illegal. Amendments made to the law on religion, adopted in May 1999, outlawed private religious teaching, including teaching in mosques, except with the special permission of the muftiate. These restrictions were reportedly in response to government fears that imams were teaching Wahhabi ideologies or were sheltering *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (HuT) activities. According to the International Crisis Group (ICG):

In the absence of formal education in mosques, an old tradition of informal (and illegal) learning has reemerged. This traditional form of learning, known as *hujra*, was widely practiced in Soviet times, and came from an older tradition of family learning of Islam. In some cases *hujra* groups are conducted by imams or by men who know the Koran well, sometimes with religious education. There are also women's groups led by traditional teachers of Islam, known as *otin-oyi*, or by wives of imams. There are also *hujra* where children learn the basic prayers and fragments from the Koran.<sup>14</sup>

Given the government's concerns about the Islamic revival taking place in Uzbekistan, most religious education is provided in a subdued manner with low visibility. In a similar vein, the sources of funding for Islamic education in Uzbekistan are not clear. While some portion likely comes from the local community and expatriates, some analysts maintain that funding is increasingly coming from foreign sources, including the Gulf States.



## Trends

Though the exact number of religious schools in Uzbekistan is not available, several sources confirm that it is on the rise. In a June 3, 1995 *Los Angeles Times* article “Taking an Eager Step Back,” Carol Williams reported: “In the three years since Uzbekistan proclaimed independence from the shattered Soviet Union, 15,000 mosques and madrasas—segregated schools for religious education—have been built in Uzbekistan by foreign Islamic benefactors.”<sup>15</sup>

## Influences—Sects

Close to 90 percent of Uzbekistan’s population is Muslim. During the Soviet era, the central government strictly regulated all religious practices, though some people managed to practice their religion privately.

According to a 1999 Human Rights Watch report,

With independence in 1991 came the opportunity for Muslims in Uzbekistan to practice freely and openly in accordance with their beliefs. Mosques were built with community donations and foreign aid, religious schools were opened, and young people began to learn more about Islam. Outside observers predicted a “Muslim renaissance.”

The revival of Islamic adherence came in a variety of forms not easily grouped together. Many citizens continued to follow a primarily secular path, adopting the Muslim appellation and identity without corresponding religious practice... Some, particularly younger Muslims, chose a stricter form of religious practice: they undertook religious education and adopted religious dress and other obligations prescribed by a conservative interpretation of Islam. Still others saw Islam as the basis for an alternative political system.<sup>16</sup>

Even though the government regulated religious institutions, some communities opened their own mosques with private and foreign funding, appointed their own imams, and followed what the community perceived to be appropriate religious practices.

In light of the radicalization of neighboring Afghanistan, the Uzbek Government viewed its own Islamic revival as threatening. In 1992, the government banned the opposition party, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) claiming it was affiliated with terrorism and later with an assassination attempt against President Karimov.

The campaign against “unofficial” Islam began in 1994–1995, with the harassment and arbitrary detentions of men wearing beards and the “disappearance” of popular independent Muslim clerics, and intensified in 1997, with the closing of mosques and a broader crackdown on Islamic leaders and other practicing Muslims not affiliated with officially sanctioned Islamic institutions. The media, under the thorough control of the government, stigmatized strictly observant Muslims as terrorists and fanatics. At least one university closed its Islamic studies department. Symbols of religious piety, including beards and headscarves, became signs of political partisanship.<sup>17</sup>

Currently, Uzbekistan officially embraces Sufism, the more mystical and less political form of Islam that originated in Central Asia. As the government clamped down on unofficial religious movements, external influences—such as money from Gulf States and Saudi Arabia—countered the government’s actions by funding more religious schools and clandestine groups who want to practice a particular version of Islam. Over the years, Wahhabism has expanded in Uzbekistan, especially in the Ferghana Valley.<sup>18</sup>

## Affiliation with Radical Groups

According to a report from Human Rights Watch, extensive foreign funding is available from potentially violent Wahhabi sects in the Gulf for militants to open clandestine religious schools, fund teachers, and purchase weapons.<sup>19</sup> However, despite evidence documenting the existence of extremist Islamic groups based in Uzbekistan, it is unclear if and to what extent they are affiliated with the country’s religious schools.

The possibility exists because at least two extremist Islamic groups—the IMU and the HuT—are native



to the region and have deep-pocketed funding sources. Now headquartered in Tajikistan, the IMU operates in all three Central Asian republics. Some of its operatives allegedly launched crossborder incursions into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1999. The HuT, established in 1952 and based on the Egyptian branch of the “Muslim Brotherhood,” emerged in Central Asia in 1999.<sup>20</sup> The Ferghana Valley, straddling Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, has been a popular launching pad of operations for both the IMU and the HuT. Both groups have swelled their ranks with followers and contributed to ethnic tensions.

## Governance

Islamic schools and informal religious study groups fall outside the government’s public education system. Government regulation of Islamic education is strict, taking place through a special agency in the Office of the Presidency or through the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

## Parental Incentives

In free Uzbekistan, people could practice their religion openly. This enthusiasm to practice and learn about Islam is perhaps the most important precursor to the rise in the number of madrasas and religious study groups.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

Uzbekistan’s Islamic schools focus mostly on religious topics. Secular and civic subjects are generally not taught, although some entrepreneurial schools may have begun offering such enrichment subjects as computer skills or English.

## Donor-Funded Work with Islamic Schools and Results

Apart from some suggestion of Gulf-based funding sources, no reliable information on donor work with Islamic schools emerged from the literature review. ■

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2 UNESCO/ADB, *Monitoring of Educational Reforms* (Tashkent: UNESCO/ADB, 2001).

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12 International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), “Regional Activities: Uzbekistan.” <[www.ifes.org/reg\\_activities/uzbekistan-reg-act.htm](http://www.ifes.org/reg_activities/uzbekistan-reg-act.htm)>

13 International Crisis Group (ICG), *Central Asia: Islam and the State* (July 10, 2003), 8. <[http://www.crisisweb.org/library/documents/report\\_archive/A401046\\_10072003.pdf](http://www.crisisweb.org/library/documents/report_archive/A401046_10072003.pdf)>

14 Ibid., 8.

15 Carol Williams, “Taking an Eager Step Back,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1995.

16 Human Rights Watch, “Uzbekistan—Class Dismissed: Discriminatory Expulsion of Muslim Students,” *Human Rights Watch Report* 11 (12D) (1999). <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/uzbekistan/uzbek-02.htm>>

17 Ibid.

18 “Wahhabism” is used here as a customary term for all fundamentalist sects in Central Asia, not necessarily those strictly aligned with the Wahhabi sect. See Islamic Supreme Council of America, *Invitation to Uzbekistan*, 2001. <[http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.org/country\\_reports/CentralAsia/Uzbekistan2001-Report/default.htm](http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.org/country_reports/CentralAsia/Uzbekistan2001-Report/default.htm)>

19 Ibid.

20 Central Asia Caucasus Institute. “Is Hizb-ut-Tahrir Going Public in Its Struggle?” *Central Asia Caucasus Analyst* (Johns Hopkins University) (July 18, 2001). <<http://www.uzland.uz/2001/july/24.htm#religion>>

## 2. Egypt

Table 2.1. Egypt Country Profile

### Demographic Indicators

Total population (millions) . . . . .	64
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	94
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	37
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	54.8
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$3,670
Total fertility rate . . . . .	3.28
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.64

### Education Indicators

#### Primary

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	100.20
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	0.92
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	92.36
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	90.00
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	6.9
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	6
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	24

#### Secondary

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	81.02
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	0.93
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	67
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	10.5

#### Tertiary

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	1,895
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	4.3

#### Literacy

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	56.9
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	45.9
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	67.8

#### Finance

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	4.27
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	14.9
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	–

## Introduction

Egypt operates two parallel education systems: the secular system and the Al-Azhar (Islamic) system. Concerted efforts by the Government of Egypt and donors have resulted in universal primary education throughout the country. Education is compulsory until grade 8. The net enrollment ratio of 67 percent at the secondary level is also impressive. Nevertheless, overall adult illiteracy remains high—43 percent—and the rate for women is even higher at 54 percent. Quality remains an issue at all educational levels.

## Public Education System

A Library of Congress Country Study summarizes the history of education in modern Egypt:

Prior to the nineteenth century, the *ulama* [religious leaders] and Coptic clergy controlled Egypt's traditional education. The country's most important institutes were theological seminaries, but most mosques and churches—even in villages—operated basic schools where boys could learn to read and write Arabic, to do simple arithmetic, and to memorize passages from the Koran or Bible. Muhammad Ali established the system of modern secular education in the early nineteenth century to provide technically trained cadres for his civil administration and military. His grandson, Ismail, greatly expanded the system by creating a network of public schools at the primary, secondary, and higher levels. Ismail's wife set up the first school for girls in 1873. Between 1882 and 1922, when the country was under British administration, state education did not expand. However, numerous private schools, including Egypt's first secular university, were established. After direct British rule ended, Egypt adopted a new constitution that proclaimed the state's responsibility to ensure adequate primary schools for all Egyptians. Nevertheless, education generally remained accessible only to the elite. At the time of the 1952 Revolution, fewer than 50 percent of all primary-school-age children attended school, and the majority of the children who were enrolled were boys. Nearly 75 percent of the population over ten years of age was illiterate.

More than 90 percent of the females in this age group were illiterate.

The Free Officers [who led the 1952 Revolution] dramatically expanded educational opportunities. They pledged to provide free education for all citizens and abolished all fees for public schools. They doubled the Ministry of Education's budget in one decade; government spending on education grew from less than 3 percent of the gross domestic product in 1952–53 to more than 5 percent by 1978. Expenditures on school construction increased 1,000 percent between 1952 and 1976, and the total number of primary schools doubled to 10,000.<sup>1</sup>

## Characteristics

Egypt's secular education system is organized as follows<sup>2</sup>:

*Preprimary, Elementary, and Preparatory.* Preprimary, a new type of school, enrolled 328,142 students in 1999. Elementary education, also known as “primary,” covers the first five years of state-sponsored schooling. “Preparatory” referred to three years of postprimary education when elementary education consisted of two stages—primary and preparatory. Now, for all practical purposes, they are combined as a result of a 1984 law that extended the number of years of compulsory education from five to eight.

*General Secondary.* This category covers three additional years, dividing students between three-year general academic secondary schools and three- or five-year vocational schools. While academic schools are the preferred placement, increasing numbers of students are enrolling in vocational schools. At the beginning of grade 10, academic school students must choose whether they will study the arts or sciences through grade 11.

*Higher Education.* This category comprises universities, which now contain teacher training colleges that were once separate institutes.

## Challenges

*Access.* Egypt has done remarkably well at the basic education level: net enrollment ratios are about 92 percent. At the secondary level, net enrollment

**Table 2.2. Classrooms and Students in Egypt, 2001**

Level	Classrooms	Students
<b>General</b>		
Elementary	173,700	7,142,000
Preparatory	100,880	4,279,000
General Secondary	266,500	1,087,500
<b>Total General</b>	<b>541,080</b>	<b>12,508,500</b>
<b>Technical</b>		
Industrial	25,110	894,900
Commercial	24,660	953,600
Agricultural	24,660	203,400
<b>Total Technical</b>	<b>74,430</b>	<b>2,051,900</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>615,510</b>	<b>14,560,400</b>

Source: Egyptian State Information Services, <<http://www.sis.gov.eg/lyb2001f/ehtml/fram1.htm>>

rates are an impressive 67 percent. Despite these improvements, the regional disparity in educational access is hampered by poverty, inappropriate allocation of funds, and long distances between the center and villages. Both boys and girls have lower enrollment rates in governorates such as Assyuit, Beni-Suef, and Minya.<sup>3</sup> The gender gap is especially high at the secondary and tertiary level. The government and the donor community hope to bridge this gap with a special focus on girls' education in ongoing and new education reform projects.

*Quality.* The quality of primary education is declining. The teacher-focused learning and authoritarian teaching styles that prevail in most Egyptian classrooms promote passive learning. Thus, even though more than 90 percent of primary school-aged children enroll in schools, the poor teaching-learning environment means that learning achievements are not optimized. The quality problems are even more pronounced at the secondary level, where an increasing number of students are entering. It is clear that Egypt will need a more sophisticated education system that produces students with critical thinking skills and the ability to enter the competitive job market. Thus far, the increased investment in the education sector has not translated into an improved quality of secondary education. Its inadequacy is reflected in the shortcomings of the cur-

riculum and examination system and in deficient pedagogical skills.<sup>4</sup> Another factor contributing to poor quality is that teachers must organize their lessons according to national directives on lesson planning instead of the learning needs of their students. In addition, strategies that incorporate good science and technology programs at the higher education level are not yet in place.<sup>5</sup>

*Management.* During the past decade, the resources and attention devoted to the education sector have been impressive. Education expenditure rose from 12 percent of the national budget in 1991 to about 20 percent in 2001.<sup>6</sup> Though expenditures have increased, the highly centralized nature of Egypt's management of education presents an obstacle to more effective utilization of funding. Although Egypt has been trying to decentralize its schooling authority for decades, little independent responsibility has devolved to district or regional officials. As a consequence, management tends to be weak at the local level, and many administrative details are referred back to central ministry offices. Program quality is particularly impervious to local changes because policy guidance and standard instructional inputs all emanate from central institutions.

*Policy reforms.* Since 1991, the Government of Egypt has given special emphasis to making schools available to rural populations. The 25.2 percent increase in the number of secondary schools (preparatory level) between 1991 and 1998 is impressive.<sup>7</sup> Egypt has also invested heavily in educational technology by providing computer labs, satellite computer learning centers, and distance education through the internet. Under bilateral agreements with donors such as the World Bank, the Government of Egypt has committed to reform its educational structures by investing in the capacity of education department employees and enhancing sector planning and decisionmaking.

## Donor Assistance

During the past 10 years, the World Bank and USAID have been the most significant contributors to education sector development in Egypt. Donors and the government focused mainly on access and quality at the primary level and attained more than 90 percent enrollment rates. The World Bank also

Table 2.3. Donor Assistance to Egypt's Public Education Sector, 1993–2003

Donor	Level				Focus			Type of Educational Intervention					
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Access	Quality	Teacher training	Curricula/textbooks	Improved management system	Decentralization	Girls' education	Distance learning	Nonformal education	Vocational/technical
World Bank	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■
USAID	■	■		■	■	■	■		■	■		■	
UNICEF	■	■		■	■	■	■			■		■	
ADB													
EU	■			■	■	■		■	■	■		■	■
UNESCO													
CIDA	■			■	■	■		■		■		■	
GTZ/KFW	■												■
JICA													■
DFID						■							■
DANIDA, FINNIDA, SIDA													

\* Information not available.

invested in technical education development. UNICEF's programs in Egypt are mostly community based and tend to have a significant impact on girls' education. Japanese Government assistance in Egypt's education sector is mostly concentrated in facility construction and technical skills exchange programs. Although many donors are focusing on improving educational quality, much remains to be done, especially at the secondary level, which also needs concerted efforts and resources.

### Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* The issue of employment in Egypt is not so much of production of a labor force than the absorption of educated people into the labor market. Between 1988 and 1998, the number of workers increased by 523,000 per year but the system could absorb only 435,000. Annually, 88,000

potential workers joined the ranks of the unemployed.<sup>8</sup>

*Civic Participation.* A consensus that students are not learning civil society building skills in most Arab countries is reflected in the UNDP *Arab Human Development Report*. It states:

The most worrying aspect of the crisis in education is education's inability to provide the requirements for the development of Arab societies. This could mean not only that education loses its power to provide a conduit for social advancement for the poor within Arab countries but also that Arab countries become isolated from global knowledge, information and technology. If the current situation is allowed to continue, the crisis can only worsen—this at a time when accelerated acquisition of knowledge and formation of advanced human skills are becoming prerequisites for progress. If the steady deterioration in the



quality of education in the Arab countries and the inability of education to meet the requirements of development are not reversed, the consequences for human and economic development will be grave. Comprehensive action to reform education systems is therefore urgent.<sup>9</sup>

The authorities in Egypt also claim to be “threatened” by active civil society participation. The threat of perceived Islamization of the masses is keeping the government from opening up the public debate on social and political issues or encouraging such debate in schools or colleges. As Amnesty International reported:

In the last few years, the Egyptian authorities have managed to muzzle civil society by threatening with detention and imprisonment those who oppose or publicly criticize the government’s policies. Journalists, writers, human rights defenders, nongovernmental organization (NGO) activists and political activists have been and continue to be particularly at risk of being detained in connection with “offences” which merely amount to the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association. Over the past decade new laws and decrees have curtailed rights to freedom of expression and association. Human rights activists have been detained on the basis of dubious charges, such as “disseminating false information abroad that would harm Egypt’s interests.” Journalists have been imprisoned for libel of officials.<sup>10</sup>

## Islamic Schools

### Levels and Types

With the advent of Islam in Egypt, the reading of the Koran became an integral part of a Muslim’s life. The study of the Koran was carried out in mosques, homes, under trees, and in open places, following ancient traditions of the Arabian Peninsula. The congregations served socialization and educational purposes. Once students memorized the Koran, they could attend higher instructional classes where they learned the Koran in terms of Islamic law, logic, and the Prophet’s traditions. Koranic schools were the only means of primary education for children until the introduction of the Western form of education in late 1800s.

The Shiite or Fatimid version of Islam was most prevalent in Persia and Egypt. Al-Azhar University was established to propagate this version through higher level scholarship and schooling. When the Sunni Seljuks conquered Egypt, they abolished the Shiite system of education, reformed teachings at Al-Azhar University, and introduced the Sunni version of Islam throughout the country.

The Al-Azhar education system maintains separate facilities for male and female students. It is responsible for religious education as well as other components of the secular curriculum. Primary school extends over the first six years, and preparatory school extends over the next three. Students who

**Table 2.4. Registered Students and Existing Classrooms in Egypt’s Al-Azhar Education System**

Levels	No. of Admitted Students		No. of New Classrooms	
	1981–82	1994–95	1981–82	1994–95
Primary	128,048	701,979	3,355	19,780
Preparatory	66,344	187,326	1,783	5,816
Secondary	99,757	168,830	2,519	5,684
Teacher Education	3,241	9,445	–	224
Koranic Recitations	1,428	6,497	–	224
<b>Total</b>	<b>298,818</b>	<b>1,074,077</b>	<b>7,657</b>	<b>31,728</b>
Al-Azhar University	83,034	102,300	31 faculties	49 faculties

Source: <http://www.sis.gov.eg/public/achieve/html/ach04.htm>

**Table 2.5. Expected Number of New Students in Government and Al-Azhar Systems of Education in Egypt, 2001–02**

Level	New Al Azhar School Students	New Public School Students
Elementary	118,961	708,431
Preparatory	119,982	331,444
General Secondary	110,332	268,058
<b>Total</b>	<b>349,275</b>	<b>1,307,933</b>
University Level	126,000	420,037
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>475,275</b>	<b>1,727,970</b>

Source: Egypt State Information Services, <<http://www.sis.gov.eg/yb2001f/ehhtml/fram1.htm>>

successfully complete four years of secondary school can enroll at Al-Azhar University. Like mainstream students, those who do not go to secondary school can attend vocational schools that operate under the Ministry of Education. Supervision and administration of the Al-Azhar educational system is the responsibility of the Central Administration of Al-Azhar Institutes. This is a department of the Supreme Council of Al-Azhar, which is responsible for the development of general policy and planning to ensure the propagation of Islamic culture and the Arabic language in these schools.<sup>11</sup>

As shown in Table 2.5, in 2001–02, 26 percent and 29 percent of new students were expected to choose the Al-Azhar system for general and university education, respectively.

In addition to the Al-Azhar religious schools, there are private religious schools that function under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. In 1998, there were 206 such Islamic education institutions in Egypt.<sup>12</sup> They follow the government-prescribed curriculum but try to make the daily life more “Islamic” by enforcing certain dress codes. Despite the Ministry’s ban of *nigab*—face covering—many female teachers and students in these schools continue the tradition.

## Trends

The number of religious schools has increased. State Information Service statistics for 2001 show a large number of students enrolling in religious schools: 25 percent at the school level, and 29 percent at the university level. In addition to the Al-Azhar school system, 6 percent of all private schools are religious schools in which girls also enroll.

## Influences—Sects

Sunni Islam is the only form of Islam taught in Al-Azhar schools.

## Affiliation with Radical Groups

There is no evidence that students enrolling in Al-Azhar education system are affiliated with any radical groups. However, according to Bradley J. Cook’s 1999 doctoral dissertation, these private schools do not celebrate the national day of independence. Instead of the national anthem, the song of the Muslim Brotherhood initiates the morning assembly. The brotherhood is considered a radical Islamic group and is banned by the government.<sup>13</sup>

## Governance

The Islamic education system in Egypt is governed by Al-Azhar, which, in turn, is financed and governed by the government. There is no information about foreign or private funding sources for religious schools in Egypt.

There is no divergence between Islamic schools that operate under Al-Azhar system and the regular public schools. Students from either system can transfer to the other.

## Parental Incentives

There are different views on the underlying reasons associated with the “going back to the religion” phenomenon in Egypt. Some believe that it is rooted in the Six-Day War with Israel: the humiliation suffered by Arabs and the annexation of Jerusalem helped precipitate the demand to return to an Islamic way of life. Arabs and Muslims blamed themselves and their leaders for the defeat. Most Arabs—especially Egyptians—argue that Israel triumphed because of the country’s religious conviction, and they believe that Arabs will regain strength



and take charge once again by going back to Islam. In addition, graphic coverage of events in Palestine, Iraq, Bosnia, Kashmir, and other parts of the world where Muslims tend to be victims prompts some Arabs to ask whether the secular system of the government and education is the answer to their survival. The idea of returning to an Islamic way of life continues to provide some consolation. For many, obtaining religious education and becoming well versed in Islam is one way of achieving that goal.

Some even think that strict secular education makes one a slave of the West. The “democratic” dictatorship in Egypt is viewed as a secular, educated puppet of the West, which does not allow true democracy to prevail and riches to flow to the needy.<sup>14</sup> Many Egyptians are increasingly questioning their affiliation to the state instead of religion. Many believe that by returning to their Islamic roots they may be able to lift themselves up from poverty and submission to their government.<sup>15</sup>

Though many people in the Muslim world believe that the growing Islamic resurgence is largely rooted in the perception that “Arabs are losing,” others suggest that internal forces play a much greater role. Richard Bulliet, a social historian of Islam, writes:

Many have argued, for example, that the failure of these regimes to defeat Israel or secure the material blessings of modernization sapped their ideological legitimacy and made an Islamic resurgence possible. I would not point to these undeniable failures, but to the regimes’ success

in instituting brutal and all-pervasive internal security structures as a root cause of Islamic opposition.<sup>16</sup>

Adding to this turmoil is the increase in the number of students at the tertiary level and limited job opportunities in the labor market. Many agree that the deteriorating social conditions and the widening gap between rich and poor have greatly contributed to radicalism on Egyptian university campuses. This radicalism is reflected in the demands by students—interestingly, a vast majority of whom *did not attend* any religious school—to give Islam a chance.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* The Islamic education system is no better prepared than the secular system to produce students who will be absorbed into the job market. However, students who graduate from higher levels of Islamic schooling at least have a greater chance of employment in the religious sector. Some Al-Azhar University graduates become renowned scholars and serve as muftis (Islamic teachers and scholars) and spiritual leaders within and outside the country.

*Civic Participation.* No information was available.

## Donor-Funded Work with Islamic Schools and Results

No information was available. ■

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12 Bradley J. Cook, "Egyptian Higher Education: Inconsistent Cognition," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Oxford, 1999).

13 Ibid.

14 Several sources confirm this view: see Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001); Geneive Abdo, *No God But God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

15 Cook, op. cit.

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# 3. Morocco

Table 3.1. Morocco Country Profile

## Demographic Indicators

Total population (millions) . . . . .	28.7
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	99
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	34
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	43.9
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$3,450
Total fertility rate . . . . .	2.89
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.6

## Education Indicators

### Primary

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	97.04
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	0.81
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	79.45
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	92
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	–
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	12.00
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	28

### Secondary

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	39.54
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	0.79
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	–
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	–

### Tertiary

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	1,180
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	–

### Literacy

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	50.8
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	38.3
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	63.4

### Finance

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	6.24
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	24.9
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	34.6

## Introduction

Morocco has one of the largest populations among North African countries. It contends with complex socioeconomic and demographic issues, including rapid urbanization, an increasing dichotomy between rural and urban areas, growing income disparities, and a young population, almost 50 percent of which is under 20.

The government's concerted efforts over the past five years have improved the educational landscape overall; however, enrollment rates, even at the primary level in rural areas, continue to exhibit high gender disparities. At the secondary level, the problem is more acute, and is compounded by the distance of secondary schools from most rural areas and the general shortage of secondary schools. Literacy levels remain very low: 63 percent for men and 38 percent for women. Illiteracy is a particular problem for women in rural areas, where nine out of 10 women are illiterate. In comparison with other lower middle-income countries, Morocco's social indicators are low: the UNDP's *2003 Human Development Index* ranks Morocco at 126 out of 175 countries.<sup>1</sup>

Although Morocco is considered an Arab country, it is actually over 50 percent Berber. Berbers speak a language that bears little resemblance to Arabic. Many Berbers, particularly rural women, do not speak any Arabic. Berber children, therefore, are unlikely to speak or understand Arabic when they enter the first grade of the public school system, where all subjects are taught in classical Arabic.

## Public Education System

### Characteristics

Morocco's education system consists of six years of primary school, three years of lower-middle school, three years of secondary school, and a tertiary (higher) education system. Primary education begins at age 6 and is free and compulsory. However, the out-of-pocket costs of sending children to school (such as fees for schoolbooks and uniforms) as well as the opportunity costs (loss of a child's labor at home) make schooling unaffordable for poor rural families.

Preschool education has traditionally been the domain of Koranic schools (also known as *kuttab*), although the Ministry of National Education (MNE) has been introducing a preschool level into the public primary school system.<sup>2</sup> Vocational and technical training institutes are also available, but their usual locations in urban or semiurban areas constrain access for rural youth.

### Challenges

*Access.* Geographical and gender disparities persist in Morocco. Enrollment in primary school is almost universal in urban areas, but not in rural areas. In the past five years, the Government of Morocco, with assistance from the donor community, has undertaken an aggressive campaign to increase primary enrollment rates in rural areas, particularly for girls. The gross enrollment rate in rural areas reached 77 percent in 2000–01 and rural girls' enrollment reached 47 percent—a large improvement from 28 percent in 1992. The number of Moroccan girls enrolled in primary education increased by 6.6 percent between 1999–2000 and 2000–01. In rural areas, the number of girls in school increased by 10.3 percent.<sup>3</sup> Access to middle and secondary schools is limited and inequitable because of shortages in the number of schools and their distance from most rural communities.

*Quality.* Assessments of learning achievement show declining student performance in basic subjects in all schools. The problem is particularly acute among students in rural schools. The MNE spends most of its budget on salaries and other recurrent costs, resulting in poorly maintained schools and an inadequate supply and quality of instructional materials and textbooks. The poor quality of education is exacerbated by Arabic-Berber language issues. Since the Moroccan Government and the donor community are concentrating their efforts on education in rural areas, the rapidly expanding urban and periurban education sector is not receiving much attention. Although access to primary level education in urban areas is almost universal, schools suffer from overcrowding and poor quality.

*Management.* The MNE is decentralizing its functions to regional levels created in 1999, when 72 provinces were subsumed into 16 regional adminis-

trative units. Responsibility for provision of health and education services has been slowly devolving to the regional level, which has an administrative structure resembling a mini-ministry. This decentralization process is supposed to be accompanied by more local autonomy for the regions in ensuring that education programs are responsive to regional needs and realities and the budget is administered locally. Each region has a Regional Academy for Education and Training and a regional director who is senior to provincial delegates within the region.

Although the MNE's central level will continue to have responsibility for the school curriculum, teacher training curriculum, national examinations, and education policy development, the regional academies are slated to take over teacher recruitment, training, and assignment. The regional academies will also be responsible for developing 30 per-

cent of the curriculum so that it is locally relevant. The central level of the MNE continues to manage the other 70 percent.<sup>4</sup>

*Policy Reform.* The Moroccan Government and King Mohammad VI are strongly committed to social development and, in particular, to improving public education services. In 1999, the Royal Education Council, appointed by the late King Hassan II, provided the government with recommendations for reforming the system. The council's recommendations included: 1) increasing the participation of rural girls, 2) improving quality, 3) allowing Berber to be used in grades 1 and 2 to help students make the transition to learning in classical Arabic, and 4) introducing a countrywide preschool education system. The recommendations were adopted by the government and are currently being implemented by the MNE.

**Table 3.2. Donor Assistance to Morocco's Public Education Sector**

Donor	Level				Focus		Type of Educational Intervention						
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Access	Quality	Teacher training	Curricula/textbooks	Improved management system	Decentralization	Girls' education	Distance learning	Nonformal education	Vocational/technical
World Bank	■			■	■	■		■		■			
USAID	■			■	■	■		■	■	■			
UNICEF				■						■	■		
ADB													
EU													
UNESCO	■												
CIDA													
French Cooperation	■	■	■	■	■			■	■				■
GTZ/KFW													
JICA													
DFID													
DANIDA, FINNIDA, SIDA													



## Donor Assistance

A number of donors and partners are implementing programs supporting the MNE's basic education priorities. Since 1996, USAID/Morocco has been working in basic education on an integrated primary education program targeting rural girls. The program elements include

- delivering preservice and inservice teacher training
- strengthening the local capacity of the MNE in eight provinces
- supporting the development of parent-teacher associations and strengthening community participation in pilot school catchments
- promoting public-private partnerships with the NGO community and the private sector

USAID is also coordinating with UNICEF to support the MNE's new approaches: the Agency at teacher training colleges and UNICEF at the school level. The World Bank continues to provide assistance for infrastructure upgrades and teacher training, using, for the most part, USAID-trained personnel from the MNE as trainers. France provides the most education assistance, with programs that support primary, secondary, and tertiary education. UNESCO has the lead in working with the Moroccan Government to followup on recommendations from the Dakar "Education for All" conference.<sup>5</sup>

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* There is a discrepancy between the education system's outputs and the development and labor market needs of the country. For example, the tourism industry is a burgeoning sector of the economy, but hotels, restaurants, car rental companies, and other tourist industry staples are poorly managed and lack qualified and properly trained staff. The high illiteracy rates show the education system is not reaching all Moroccans, especially in rural areas. Many children drop out of school—or never enroll—because of a prevalent apprenticeship tradition that can be classified as child labor. Morocco has a wide range of traditional arts and

crafts (such as pottery, rug weaving, and jewelry making) that are popular with tourists. Young children—some as young as 9 or 10—usually apprentice with master craftsmen and craftswomen to learn trades such as rug weaving. Consequently, many children never enter or complete primary school or develop adequate literacy or numerical skills to participate in Morocco's growing modern economy. Furthermore, the country's education system is based on a highly theoretical model, which means that university graduates often lack the practical skills needed to compete successfully in the labor market.<sup>6</sup>

*Civic Participation.* The curriculum for all levels includes a class on civic participation. This subject is lumped in with history and geography and taught beginning in the grade 3 of the primary system. The objectives of civic education, as stated by the MNE, are to educate children on 1) their national and social responsibilities, 2) the different institutions that make up the nation and the government, and 3) how to use and understand different government documents, such as edicts, administrative procedures, and laws.<sup>7</sup> The literature review did not reveal any information on the impact of this class on civic behavior.

## Islamic Schools

### Levels and Types

Moroccan Islamic schools are divided into two main categories: Koranic preschools and "Original Education," a limited Islamic school system that covers grades 1–12. Koranic schools were initially established to teach the Koran, the Islamic religion, and the Arabic language. After independence, their role changed to the provision of preschool education in rural and urban areas. In recent times, their function has been to safeguard the basic precepts of Islam by teaching the Koran to children—both boys and girls—and prepare them for entry into the public primary school system.<sup>8</sup> Although the public school system was modernized half a century ago, Koranic schooling remains very popular: approximately 80 percent of all children attend some form of Koranic school for a portion of their school years.<sup>9</sup>

Through Koranic schools, children learn the basic Arabic alphabet and begin the process of becoming literate in Modern Standard Arabic. Studies conducted in Morocco on the pedagogical impact of Koranic schools found that children attending Koranic preschools outperform non-preschooled children in Arabic reading achievement.<sup>10</sup> Although Koranic preschooling has a positive impact on literacy achievement in the early years of elementary education, this difference diminishes by the time children reach grades 4 and 5. For Berber children, Koranic preschool is their first exposure to the national language of their country and any form of written script.

Original Education schools teach Islamic religion, tradition, and the Arabic language to those who want to enter the religious sector. These schools are also three-tiered: four years of primary, three years of middle school, and a secondary level that requires specialization in particular areas of Islamic studies. There are approximately 45 of these schools throughout Morocco. They combine a religious and secular curriculum that includes Islamic studies; Arabic language; history, geography, and civic education; philosophy and Islamic thought; mathematics and sciences; languages (French, English, or Spanish); and physical education.<sup>11</sup>

One additional type of Islamic school is worth noting, though there is little available information. The *msid* Islamic schools are typically found in rural areas underserved by the public education system. *Msid* schools are privately funded, and vary widely in size and scope. Generally, students attend these schools to complement traditional schooling.

## Trends

Although the Government of Morocco is committed to universalizing preschool education, budget constraints make this objective extremely difficult to achieve. To provide preschool education, the ministry is therefore relying on private schools, particularly in urban areas, and Koranic and other types of community schools in rural areas. It is hard to gauge whether Koranic preschools have been increasing in number or simply maintaining their current levels because local NGOs and other community-based organizations are also providing preschool education.

## Influences—Sects

Morocco is a religiously homogenous country. With the exception of an extremely small minority of Christians and Jews, Moroccans adhere to the Sunni Muslim faith.

## Affiliation with Radical Groups

The literature review did not yield any information on possible affiliation between radical movements and Original Education schools or Koranic schools. This is not surprising, since Koranic schools are only at the preschool level and Original Education schools are government-run and part of the public education sector.

## Governance

Koranic schools in urban areas fall under the control of the MNE. In rural areas, they are managed by the communities, with loose oversight from the MNE and the Ministry of Religious Affairs.<sup>12</sup> In its informational materials, the MNE combines preschools with primary schools in terms of educational objectives and the rights of children. The MNE outlines the objectives of preschool education as follows:

- learning a number of Koranic verses
- initiating students into the principles of an Islamic education
- preparing for access to the primary education level
- acquiring educational habits and notions of spatial organization and orientation
- learning attention and expression aptitudes
- developing manual competencies<sup>13</sup>

Original Education schools are official public schools and are managed by the Division of Original Education in the MNE's Directorate of Curricula.

## Parental Incentives

The incentive for sending children to Koranic schools is clear. Alternative preschools are not widely available, so parents want to give their children some preparation for the public school system and

provide the beginning of a religious education opt to enroll them in Koranic schools.<sup>14</sup> Parents also consider Koranic memorization to be particularly beneficial to the spiritual and emotional development of the child. They want their children to adhere to the path of Islam and grow up to be productive community members. Parents believe Koranic verses serve as points of reference, guiding children in the right direction as they grow up.<sup>15</sup> The Arab proverb “memorizing in youth is like engraving on stone, and memorizing when old is like engraving on water” illustrates the popular perception that this type of education is important at a young age.

### Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* Original Education schools couple an Islamic education with almost all the secular subjects taught in the public school system. Original Education schools also place great emphasis on acquisition and mastery of foreign languages. The graduates of these schools have the skills to be employed both in the labor market and in the religious sector. Koranic preschools, on the other hand, are only for children under 6, making the employment factor irrelevant.

*Civic Participation.* Since Koranic schools are only for children under 6, there is little room for formal civic education. However, today’s Koranic schools represent a continuation of traditional Moroccan

Koranic schools by providing students with a link to the past and a sense of cultural and national identity.<sup>16</sup> Some Koranic schools teach national songs, which also contributes to the formation of a national identity. Overall, preschool education prepares young children for the formal school system and allows them to acquire some learning and studying skills. The curriculum in Original Education schools includes social studies, encompassing civic education along with history and geography.

### Donor-Funded Work with Islamic Schools and Results

There is extensive interest in the donor community in working with Koranic and other preschools in Morocco. The MNE is extremely open to programs targeting this level of education, as it lacks the funds to do so and preschool education is part of its mandate. Recently, Children’s Resources International, Inc., met with MNE officials to discuss preschool programs that might be undertaken by the organization. The Bernard van Leer Foundation has also worked with preschools in Morocco, but in a limited capacity and only in urban areas. The literature review did not yield any information on donor support to Original Education institutions. ■

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# 4. Yemen

Table 4.1. Yemen Country Profile

## Demographic Indicators

Total population (millions) . . . . .	17.5
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	100
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	48
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	75.3
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$770
Total fertility rate . . . . .	6.16
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.47

## Education Indicators

### Primary

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	77.92
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	0.55
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	61.02
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	–
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	–
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	–
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	30

### Secondary

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	45.3
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	0.36
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	35.22
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	–

### Tertiary

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	419
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	–

### Literacy

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	48.9
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	28.4
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	69.5

### Finance

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	7
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	–
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	–

## Introduction

North Yemen became independent of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. The British, who had set up a protectorate around the southern port of Aden in the 19th century, withdrew in 1967 from what became South Yemen. Three years later, the southern government adopted a Marxist orientation. The massive exodus of hundreds of thousands of Yemenis from the south to the north contributed to two decades of hostility. The two countries were formally unified as the Republic of Yemen in 1990. A southern secessionist movement in 1994 was quickly subdued. In 2000, Saudi Arabia and Yemen agreed to a delimitation of their common border.<sup>1</sup>

Yemen is the only low-income country in the Arab Middle East and North Africa region: its economic and social indicators are comparable to those of sub-Saharan Africa. Literacy rates are 70 percent for men and 28 percent for women, and gender disparities are prevalent throughout Yemeni society, including the education system. Yemen's 3.5 percent population growth rate means that the country will experience the highest population growth in the world between 2000 and 2015. The country's population, currently almost 18 million, is projected to reach 49.4 million by 2031. Three-fourths of Yemen's population live in rural areas. However, the urban population is growing at twice the national rate—a result of rapid urbanization caused by internal migration.<sup>2</sup>

Yemen lacks a diversified economy and the human resources to support its development: it is heavily dependent on oil exports and remittances from Yemenis abroad. The UNDP *2003 Human Development Index* ranks Yemen 148 of 175 countries. The country's geography also contributes to high poverty levels and low social indicators. Yemen is arid, with severe water shortages and a mountainous terrain difficult to penetrate, particularly for social services that the government may be able to provide. Northern Yemen is extremely rugged, contributing to its relative isolation and tribal characteristics. The south, historically a trade route for caravans and ships, is more open to the world.<sup>3</sup>

## Public Education System

### Characteristics

The education structure in the Republic of Yemen consists of three tiers: basic, secondary, and higher. The basic education system is divided into a primary level (grades 1–6) and a preparatory level (grades 7–9). The secondary level is three years (grades 10–12). Higher and university education follow. At the basic education level, boys and girls study together, but at the secondary level the sexes are segregated: girls and boys study in separate facilities. After their first year of general secondary level education, students choose a scientific or literary track for the remaining two years.

Yemen has some technical secondary schools and three vocational training institutions. There are also religious institutes that focus on Islamic education only. The government finances and supervises all schools through the Ministry of Education (MOE).

### Challenges

*Access.* Yemen's constitution stipulates that educational opportunities should be provided to all citizens on an equitable basis. Unfortunately, poor people living in isolated parts of the country do not have access to education. This is especially true for girls, who tend to drop out even when there are schools near their homes. Additionally, at the secondary level, the number of schools for boys outstrips those for girls, making equal access impossible. Thirty-eight percent of school-age children are still out of school, and girls constitute 56 percent of that number.<sup>4</sup> Urban and rural disparities in access to education are especially wide. Poverty, need for children's labor, and inaccessibility are widely cited reasons for non-attendance at school.

*Quality.* Inequitable distribution of qualified teachers has resulted in uneven educational quality and poor educational attainment. Qualified teachers prefer the better living conditions in urban areas. In rural areas, teacher absenteeism is quite high.<sup>5</sup> Drop-out and repetition rates have been increasing steadily over the past five years. In a 1998 standardized achievement test for fifth graders, satisfactory levels were achieved by only 3 percent in

mathematics, 14 percent in science, and 5 percent in Arabic.<sup>6</sup>

Until 1994, a large number of teachers, especially at the secondary level, were “imported” from other Arab countries such as Sudan, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, a strategy that burdened the government’s scarce resources for education. In 1988, approximately 60 percent of the teaching labor force was foreign.<sup>7</sup> After unification, the government placed a heavy emphasis on hiring teachers with a secondary education and expanding teacher training programs, which included training at the college and university level. This ambitious program has resulted in a surplus of teachers, many of whom are not properly qualified. About 25 percent of teachers were designated “unqualified.” More women than men fell into that category, along with, surprisingly, a slightly

higher percentage of urban teachers than rural teachers.<sup>8</sup> The MOE is currently training almost 100,000 teachers in new basic education curricula developed during the last three years.<sup>9</sup>

*Management.* The government is undertaking a decentralization strategy. For development planning, resource allocation, and management decisions, the new Local Authority Law decentralizes authority to governorate and district levels. The government is also streamlining its operations by delegating more responsibilities to the governorate level of education management. Since the MOE lacks a comprehensive management information system with reliable data, it is working with donors on improving the education management information system’s data gathering, dissemination technology, and procedures.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 4.2. Donor Assistance to Yemen’s Public Education Sector**

Donor	Level				Focus			Type of Educational Intervention					
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Access	Quality	Teacher training	Curricular/textbooks	Improved management system	Decentralization	Girls’ education	Distance learning	Nonformal education	Vocational/technical
World Bank	■	■		■	■	■	■						
USAID	■				■	■				■		■	
UNICEF													
ADB													
EU													■
UNESCO													
CIDA													
French Cooperation	■							■		■			■
Islamic Dev. Bank	■			■									
GTZ/KFW	■			■									
JICA	■									■			
DFID													
DANIDA, FINNIDA, SIDA													

*Policy Reform.* In a letter to the president of the World Bank dated September 6, 2000, the MOE stated the government is placing high priority on basic education, with special emphasis on girls' education. In the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) developed with the World Bank, the government sets out its education priorities as

- improving the educational environment
- improving the management of the sector and its orientation toward decentralization
- giving priority to basic education
- focusing on the education of girls

### Donor Assistance

Yemen is fortunate to have a comprehensive program of donor-funded support that is planned and being implemented within the education sector. A significant amount of donor funding is channeled to the Social Development Fund (SDF), an autonomous body that has adopted a holistic approach focusing on community-driven development. The SDF does not implement programs directly, but works through partner organizations, including civil society and government agencies.

Most other donor support targets improved access to basic education through school construction and rehabilitation, particularly in rural areas. The World Bank has a secondary teacher training project. USAID has supported the development of new texts and teacher manuals, and has promoted quality improvement initiatives, especially in training head teachers. USAID has also supported training for female teachers in rural primary schools, non-formal education programs, and adult literacy programs for women. In 2002, USAID issued a Request for Assistance (RFA) for an integrated health and education program with an education objective of "Improved Quality and Increased Enrollment, Especially of Girls in Basic Education in Targeted Districts." This program's main components are to

- improve educational quality and relevance through training of teachers, school administrators, and education officials

- stimulate parent and community support for schools and female education<sup>11</sup>

### Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* The current state of Yemen's education sector is not conducive to producing outcomes that respond to the country's development needs. Growth of the basic education sector is not keeping up with population growth, and the sector will be hard pressed to meet expected educational needs during the population explosion predicted over the next three decades. The absorptive capacity of vocational and technical training institutions needs to be expanded, and the existing institutes and centers require development and modernization.

The Yemeni unemployment rate of 18 percent will surely increase because almost half the population is under 20. High unemployment is due to low productivity, stemming, at least in part, from a lack of appropriate skills. Because access to education is limited and the quality of existing schools is low, rural Yemenis in particular lack the human capital to diversify the sources of their income or enter professions in which they would be less economically vulnerable.

*Civic Participation.* No information on civic education programs emerged during the study.

### Islamic Schools

#### Levels and Types

Yemen was once considered the center of Islamic learning. The southern city of Tareem had numerous libraries that provided Islamic education to students from all over the Arabian Peninsula. Although information from Yemen on the subject is sparse, it is clear that madrasas at the primary and secondary level exist. Their exact number and distribution are unknown.

## Trends

Madrasas have proliferated over the past 20 years. Sectarian tensions between Sunnis and Shiites and between Salafis and Zaydis and other groups have led to a growth in madrasas that reflect these different Islamic orientations.<sup>12</sup>

## Influences—Sects

Yemen is divided into two general religious streams: the Shiites in the northern highlands and the Sunni Shafiis on the Red Sea Coast and in the southern mountains of the highlands and Aden. Recently, a new Islamic political party, the Islah Party, has been established with strong roots in the Wahhabi and Muslim Brotherhood streams of Islam.<sup>13</sup> This reformist Islamic movement has become increasingly popular: it has a strong following in the northern Province of Sadah (which borders Saudi Arabia), and has been spreading steadily throughout the country, particularly among young Yemenis.

## Affiliation with Radical Groups

Information on the affiliation of Yemeni madrasas with radical Islam is limited, but several reports suggest links between some schools and militants and radicals. In the 1980s, a Salafi movement—conservative and orthodox—was introduced to the Province of Sadah by local men who had converted to the Wahhabi stream of Islam while studying in Saudi Arabia or fighting with the mujahidin in Afghanistan. During the past two decades, Salafis established many madrasas (number unknown) in Yemen.<sup>14</sup> One report describes students armed with Kalashnikov rifles at one Salafist school. Another report from the ICG draws a clear connection between the roots of Yemeni militant Islam and the system of religious schools.<sup>15</sup>

## Governance

*Relationship to Government.* The curriculum of the Yemeni madrasas is controlled by the Islah Party, as is the appointment of imams at government-run mosques.<sup>16</sup> The party and the government do not have purview over private madrasas such as those in Sadah and Tareem, but the government has been working to modify the public madrasa curriculum to prevent fueling extremist ideology.

The government is also keeping a watchful eye for trouble, and is wary of the kind of mistakes made in Pakistan with “runaway” madrasas. Anxiety over the possibility that the country might be seen as a breeding ground for radical groups may also explain a recent crackdown on visa violations by foreign students studying Islam. Already, 100 foreign students (including six U.S. citizens) have been sent home because they lacked documentation.<sup>17</sup> The government has also shut down hundreds of religious schools with suspected links to Islamic militants.<sup>18</sup> Despite these efforts, the government continues to face difficulties exerting control over both private and public religious schools.<sup>19</sup>

*Relationship to Public School System.* Information on the subjects taught in Islamic schools in Yemen is limited, and further study in this area is needed. It is unclear whether any or some madrasas teach the same secular subjects as the public school system.

## Parental Incentives

Many factors make Yemeni religious schools viable—and perhaps desirable—options for parents. Sectarian tension that has plagued the country has resulted in the establishment of more madrasas. Parents who want to ensure that their children learn their sect’s values, precepts, and traditions send them to the madrasa that corresponds to their sect.

A 1998 ethnographic study on Koranic schooling in Yemen showed that public schools are viewed as a route to economic development, whereas Koranic schools serve a supplemental function.<sup>20</sup> Koranic schools facilitate intergenerational discourse, promote spiritual and emotional growth, and instill a sense of confidence and autonomy in students that serves them well in the public schools. The people interviewed in this study emphasized that Koranic education provides a common educational experience for children and parents since many Yemeni parents have not attended modern schools. The curriculum and teaching methods fill a void that many parents feel exists in public schools—Islamic values and respect for their culture. While modern schooling is viewed as benefiting students in this life, Koranic education prepares them for the afterlife.



Another key factor is unavailability of public schools, particularly in rural Yemen. Parts of the country such as the northern mountains are hard to reach and sparsely populated. Establishing schools in these areas presents the government with a difficult resource allocation problem. Yemen has been undergoing drastic economic deterioration due to the costs of unification, the aftermath of the Gulf War, and the costly 1994 civil war. Madrasas may simply be filling the void that the public education system cannot fill.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* Although Islamic schools may prepare some Yemenis for professions in the religious sector,

it is unclear whether they prepare their students to enter the national labor market.

*Civic Participation.* No information on civic education programs emerged during the study.

## Donor-Funded Work with Islamic Schools and Results

Although several donors, including the World Bank, are active in Yemen, available information suggests the international development community has carried out few direct or indirect programs with the country's Islamic schools. ■

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# 5. Bangladesh

Table 5.1. Bangladesh Country Profile

## Demographic Indicators

Total population (millions) . . . . .	131
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	83
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	38
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	75.5
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$1,590
Total fertility rate . . . . .	3.13
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.47

## Education Indicators

### Primary

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	122.42
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	0.96
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	103.93
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	–
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	9
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	–
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	–

### Secondary

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	47.46
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	1.09
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	–
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	4

### Tertiary

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	–
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	1.4

### Literacy

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	42.6
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	31.2
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	53.4

### Finance

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	2.3
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	–
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	44.8

## Introduction

Bangladesh has outperformed its South Asian neighbors on all social indicators, including education. It has near universal primary education and high enrollment rates for girls at the secondary level. This strong performance is the result of the government's commitment to education reforms and an active NGO sector that is encouraged by the government to deliver social services, especially education, to rural and underserved populations. Tempering this optimistic assessment, however, is the fact of unreliable data, along with the absence of the requirement to collect birth registrations and other basic data. These shortcomings underscore the importance of observation and eyewitness accounts in assessing development progress in Bangladesh. And despite impressive educational achievements, poverty poses challenges to all development plans, including those for education. The World Bank Country Strategy Paper for Bangladesh states that the country has the highest incidence of poverty in South Asia and the third highest number of poor in the world, after India and China. Unless concrete measures are taken to reduce poverty by opening up the job market and diversifying the country's economy, problems in every social sector will persist.

## Public Education System

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in 1971 after a bitter war with Pakistan. In the aftermath, separatist groups, poverty, and poor infrastructure posed severe challenges to the new government. Under British and, later, Pakistani rule, education had been mostly limited to urban and rich people, with few educational facilities for the rural poor. The effort to recover from the war and put the country on track took considerable resources, energy, and time. In 1981, only 19.7 percent of the Bangladeshi population was literate. Only half as many women as men qualified as literate, and there were also large rural-urban literacy discrepancies.<sup>1</sup>

These low literacy rates and tremendous population increases hampered governmental efforts to bring about significant economic change. Only when civil society infrastructure was strengthened in the mid-

1980s did literacy and population growth see some positive changes. Between 1981 and 1995, the adult literacy rate increased to 43 percent and the population growth rate declined—from roughly 2 percent in the 1980 to 1.59 percent by 2002.<sup>2</sup> Close to 50 percent of children in all types of schools are girls. Despite economic constraints, Bangladesh has performed exceptionally well in expanding educational access during the last two decades. The role played by civil society in all aspects of development is commendable.

## Characteristics

There are four principal types of school systems in Bangladesh.

- *Public Schools.* The large public school education system predominates, serving roughly 90 percent of all students. Based on the colonial educational model, the system covers primary, secondary, and higher education. Early childhood education is a relatively new emphasis. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 show government schools and students by province.
- *Private Schools.* These are mostly confined to urban centers and operated by private entrepreneurs and educators. The small but expanding private “English medium” schooling system—around 1 percent of all schools—uses English as the language of instruction. These schools are referred to as kindergarten primary schools by Education Watch.
- *NGO-Managed Schools.* This category includes NGO-managed, low-cost private schools and nonformal education centers that mostly serve rural areas and urban slums. Estimates of enrollment range from 4 to 8 percent of total primary school-aged children. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee's (BRAC) Non-Formal Education Program is one example. It covers more than 2.1 million children at the primary level.<sup>3</sup> Nonformal education ranges from up to three years of basic education—which may conclude an individual's schooling—to a more comprehensive curriculum that integrates with either nonprofit or government schools and prepares students to continue their studies.

Some evidence suggests that girls' attainment is somewhat stronger in nonformal and NGO-managed settings, though overall achievements in all settings are low due to class size, low attendance, poor learning environments, and other factors.<sup>4</sup>

- *Religious Schools.* Depending on the source, the estimated percentage of Bangladeshi students who attend religious schools—the madrasa system—varies considerably, ranging from 4 to 12 percent. All madrasas provide a religious education to boys and for a smaller percentage of girls, who account for about 38 percent of enrollment at the primary level, according to the Ministry of Education. Aliya madrasas—an estimated 75 percent of madrasas—also provide a secular education that follows the national curriculum approved for public schools. Quomi madrasas—the remaining 25 percent—are private madrasas that provide only religious education.

## Challenges

*Access.* Enrollment increases during the past decade are encouraging. In 1991, the number of students at the primary level was 12,635,000, which increased to 17,227,000 by 1998 and has continued to rise steadily.<sup>5</sup> The number of schools at all levels has increased as well. Despite improvements in educational access, however, inequities between rich and poor and urban and rural children are evident. About 3 million children 6–10 years old are still out of school. About 40 percent of recent entering-grade cohorts dropped out before completing grade 5. Most children who do not attend primary schools are from the poorest communities in urban and

**Table 5.2. Government Schools in Bangladesh, 1998**

Province/Division	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Colleges
Barisal	5,813	1,192	151
Chittagong	11,391	2,270	417
Sylhet	4,830	551	97
Dhaka	19,145	3,302	1,674
Khulna	7,696	2,145	269
Rajshahi	17,360	3,959	736
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,235</b>	<b>13,419</b>	<b>3,344</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>82,989</b>		

Source: Bangladesh Development Gateway <<http://www.bangladeshgateway.org/sdnp/education/documents/database/number-madrasa.html>>

**Table 5.3. Students Enrolled In Government Schools,\* 1998**

Province/Division	Primary Students	Secondary Students	College and University
Barisal	1,346,000	428,000	91,556
Chittagong	3,891,000	1,280,000	339,980
Sylhet	751,000	264,000	41,914
Dhaka	4,613,000	1,843,000	1,577,175
Khulna	2,010,000	873,000	164,986
Rajshahi	4,616,000	1,601,000	497,938
University Students**			105,598
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,227,000</b>	<b>6,289,000</b>	<b>2,819,147</b>

\* Does not include students enrolled in NGO schools under BRAC and other programs.

\*\* There are 10 universities in Bangladesh. The number of university students by region is not available.

rural areas.<sup>6</sup> Though public education is free, parents must bear such ancillary costs as uniforms and books. Many poor parents therefore send their children to madrasas that have minimal or no cost implications, or to NGO-run nonformal education centers and schools.

*Quality.* Though efforts to increase access to the government education system have improved student enrollment, the low quality of education at all levels results in poor learning achievements. A 1998

survey found that only 29 percent of all Bangladeshi primary students had basic competencies in reading, writing, and mathematics.<sup>7</sup> The survey also noted considerable variation in learning achievement by gender, rural-urban residence, and type of school. Boys performed better than girls, and children from urban areas did better than their rural counterparts.

Several factors are associated with the poor quality of Bangladeshi public school education.

- Teachers are not fully trained for their jobs and 90 percent are poorly supervised. And while a teacher-student ratio of about 1:63 would be difficult for even a well-trained teacher, managing such a large group of students is particularly challenging for poorly trained teachers.<sup>8</sup> They also have to meet this challenge with an inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials.
- A shortage of teachers has affected education quality. Approximately one-third of sanctioned teacher posts are vacant. Teacher shortages are especially severe in remote areas, including those where indigenous populations live, and in urban slums.
- Without enough teachers to meet the demand for education, many schools shortened the school day to provide two shifts. This strategy helped the education system meet the demand but compromised the learning environment by restricting classroom teacher-student contact—already the lowest in the world at only 2.5 hours in primary schools. The strategy also diminished teacher preparation time. Requiring teachers to prepare for two different classes each day places a huge constraint on their time, leaving them little to get the additional training that most sorely need. Even those fortunate enough to get such training have limited time to incorporate and apply what they have learned.
- Head teachers carry a full teaching load in addition to other responsibilities. This restricts their ability to provide the support and oversight that are especially important for new or less qualified teachers.

- Poor learning achievement is also the result of poor student and teacher attendance. Underlying factors include inadequate school facilities, long travel distances to schools, the requirement for students to work in the fields, and weather calamities such as the cyclones and floods that disrupt thousand of lives every year.

*Management.* According to the 1998 World Bank Project Appraisal for the Bangladesh Primary Education Project, the government had allocated substantial resources—16 percent of the budget—to the education sector. In 2000, roughly 45 percent of the government's total education budget was spent on primary education.<sup>9</sup> However, the resource use was poor at all levels, resulting in problems with infrastructure, sanitation, professional training, books, and materials. The low efficiency of expenditures is reflected in the poor quality of education provided, which, in turn, results in high dropout and low completion rates. In addition, the government's institutional capacity to prepare, implement, and monitor programs and projects remains weak throughout the system.

*Policy Reform.* Social Watch's 2000 Country Report on Bangladesh stated:

The constitution of Bangladesh enshrines the right of the child to free and compulsory primary education. The Compulsory Primary Education Act was passed only in 1990, however, and was implemented for the first time in 1992. The government has undertaken several measures to enhance enrolment and retention of students. These include: establishment of satellite schools managed by female teachers to help disadvantaged children, especially girls, enter school; establishment of less expensive community schools in the areas with no schools; and the institution of the Food For Education (FFE) programme in 1993–94 under which children of selected poor families are given wheat and rice for attending. The government is also involved in non-formal education with participation of NGOs. The Hard-to-Reach Project deals with education of slum children in major cities.<sup>10</sup>

The Female Secondary School Assistance Program, funded jointly by the World Bank and the government, demonstrates an effective strategy for enrolling girls in secondary education. Under this program, every Bangladeshi girl who wants to pursue secondary education is provided a stipend—in the form of school fees, books, and uniforms—whose continuation of the stipend is conditional on performance at a certain grade level. As a consequence of the stipend, the number of girls enrolling in secondary education has increased. In some areas, it has even surpassed the number of boys enrolling in secondary education. Due to the financial incentive, girls and their parents are making sure that they do better in classes and exams. In addition, the government’s strategy of encouraging the NGO sector to implement education programs and reach difficult to reach populations has also resulted in increased community involvement in education,

access to information, additional training, and social services for all.

## Donor Assistance

Donors providing assistance to Bangladesh’s education sector include

- The World Bank, which has been funding activities expanding access to primary schools and improving the quality of education. The World Bank is also supporting activities to improve girls’ access to secondary education in rural areas. Its innovative Post-Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development Project in Bangladesh aims to increase the functional application of literacy skills by providing postliteracy and continuing education to neoliterates through a more comprehensive and enhanced system of nonformal education.

**Table 5.4. Donor Assistance to Bangladesh’s Public Education Sector**

Donor	Level			Focus		Type of Educational Intervention							
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Access	Quality	Teacher training	Curricula/textbooks	Improved management system	Decentralization	Girls’ education	Distance learning	Nonformal education	Vocational/technical
World Bank	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	
USAID		■	■	■	■	■	■						
UNICEF	■			■	■	■	■			■		■	
ADB	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■
EU	■			■	■			■		■		■	
UNESCO													
CIDA	■			■	■	■	■		■	■		■	
GTZ/KFW													
JICA													
DFID	■			■	■	■	■		■	■			
DANIDA, FINNIDA, SIDA													



- CIDA is supporting the BRAC nonformal primary education program, which is the single largest nonformal program for the poor in the world.
- The ADB is providing assistance to strengthen access and quality in primary, secondary, and postliteracy education, and has implemented several multipronged projects that target the poor and disadvantaged.
- USAID has had limited involvement in the education sector. Most activities related to infrastructure and were funded through the monetization of donated food commodities (P.L. 480 Title II). USAID also supported a Gender Equity in the Classroom activity, providing technical assistance and training to promote effective pedagogical practices and leadership skills to increase participation and achievement of girls and other marginalized children. The Agency has recently prepared a new education strategy that concentrates resources at the pre-school and early primary levels. It seeks to expand learning opportunities in school, after school, and at home. Working outside the formal system, these activities will focus on education through mass media and on strengthening teachers' skills.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* Public enterprises offer the majority of jobs in Bangladesh, in such sectors as electricity, gas, and water; railway; airlines and civil aviation; petroleum; telecommunication; and banks and insurance.<sup>11</sup> Government employment is usually restricted to people with advanced educational skills and university degrees. While students from urban and private schools may acquire credentials and skills that qualify them for such jobs, rural students cannot enter specialized fields because of poor educational quality and limited access to secondary and tertiary educational institutions. In rural areas, the labor market is restricted to fisheries and agriculture, but students do not get training relevant to improving local production. The NGO sector is one of the largest employers in rural areas. Through nonformal functional literacy programs, employment opportu-

nities for rural women and men have been created by NGOs such as BRAC and Grameen Bank. However, students who do not complete primary school have limited livelihood possibilities, thereby continuing the cycle of poverty and underdevelopment.

*Civic Participation.* NGO programs and schools encourage people to vote and participate in local elections. A visit to rural areas in Bangladesh demonstrated that NGOs and other private organizations have mobilized the masses for civic participation and improving their living conditions on a self-help basis. Government schools, however, with limited time to teach even basic academics, do not provide the kind of education that promotes civil society participation.

## Islamic Schools

### Levels and Types

The estimated percentage of primary pupils educated by madrasas ranges from 4 to 12, depending on sources consulted. It is generally recognized that the proportion decreases at higher education levels, but, overall, it is thought to be on the rise. At lower levels, the number of boys and girls is roughly balanced, as in the secular system, but the number of girls declines at more advanced levels. In addition, many young children attend Koranic schools to supplement their secular schooling.

There are two madrasa systems in Bangladesh: Aliya and Quomi (also known as Dars-e-Nizami). Aliya madrasas teach secular as well as religious subjects; Quomi madrasas teach only religious subjects. The Aliya madrasa system has five levels.<sup>12</sup>

- *Ebtedayee* is equivalent to primary school grade 1–5. Religious education is mainly focused on reading and recitation of the Koran.
- *Dakhil* is equivalent to grades 6–10. Beginning at this level, students are required to complete government examinations after completing their coursework.
- *Alim* is equivalent to grades 11–12, the final years of high school. Students learn other tenets

of Islam, such as interpretation of the Koran and the Prophet's traditions and sayings.

- *Fazil* is equal to the lower college level. At this stage, the intensity of religious instruction increases with the addition of subjects such as Islamic logic, law, Arabic literature, and history.
- *Kamil* is the highest level of religious education, equivalent to a master's degree in Islamic studies from a regular university. At completing this stage, a student is expected to have gained knowledge of all aspects of Islam and lead large congregations.

The Aliya madrasa system can be considered the formal Islamic education system. Although supported financially by the government, Aliya madrasas do not function under the Ministry of Education, but under a separate Religious Education Board. Government-supported Aliya madrasas follow the secular curriculum prescribed by the Ministry of Education. For religious education, they follow the curriculum set by the Department of Arabic of Calcutta madrasa in India. Students in the Aliya madrasa system have to pass exams, administered by the Religious Education Board, before they move on to the next level.

Students under the Aliya madrasa system take 16 years to complete their education. Five years at the primary level are followed by four or five years at the secondary level. Students then must pass an examination to receive an Alim certificate that is equivalent to a secondary school certificate. In the exam, 400 marks are attributed to Arabic, religious theory, and other Islamic subjects. The remaining 600 marks are for English, math, science, history, and so on. An additional two years leads to the Fazil exam, equivalent to the Higher School Certificate (lower college level). Two years of study after the Fazil exam qualifies a student to take the Kamil exam, equivalent to the bachelor's degree in secular education. Students of Aliya madrasas prepare themselves for employment in government and the private sector like other college or university students.

Quomi madrasas follow a curriculum prescribed by Darul-Uloom in Deoband, India, an important

madrasa established in 1866 by private contributions of the “men of God” and sustained by public contributions.<sup>13</sup> Quomi madrasas do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Bangladeshi Religious Education Board. These schools are privately funded.<sup>14</sup> They generally do not teach any secular subjects or keep enrollment records. Unlike Aliya madrasa students, students enrolled in Quomi madrasas do not take any exams administered by the government.<sup>15</sup>

Under the Quomi madrasa system, students take 16 years to complete their education. At the lower levels, students learn Urdu, Persian, and Arabic with grammar. From classes I until VIII, students learn various Islamic subjects; a few madrasas even teach English, math, and Bengali. After this level, these subjects are dropped and the focus is strictly Islamic education. Classes IX and X are termed *Sanavia Amma* (secondary school) and classes XI and XII as *Sanavia Walia* (higher secondary). Classes XIII and XIV are called *Fazilat* (college), while XV and XVI are termed *Kamil* (university). However, the government does not recognize these levels as equivalent to the secular education system.

## Trends

According to Ministry of Education data, there were at least 7,729 madrasas in Bangladesh in 2000.<sup>16</sup> Although it is difficult to quantify the growth in all madrasas—formal and informal—the growth trend in available statistics through the latter half of the 1990s indicates that the number schools is growing faster than the population. Journalistic accounts confirm these schools' growth in number and influence.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 1 compares the growth of the Bangladeshi population from 1995 to 2000 with the growth in the number of madrasas.

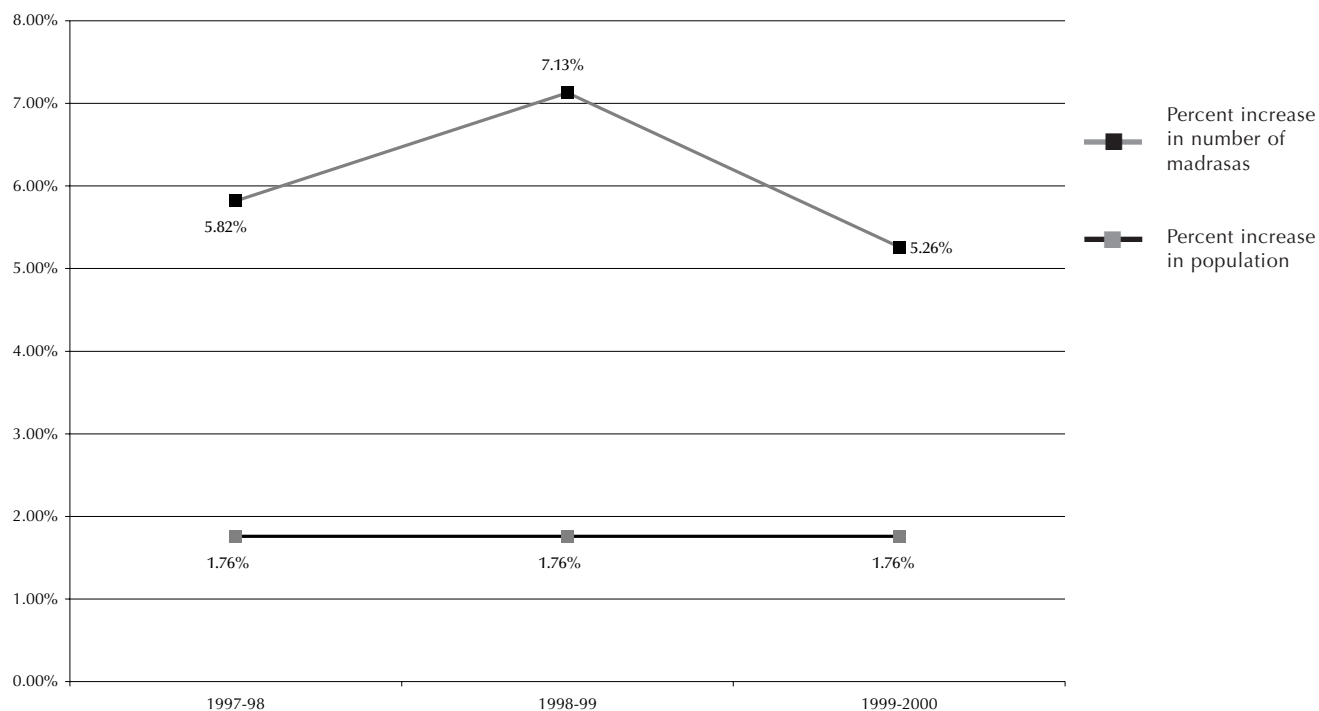
Tables 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7 indicate schools at each level in Bangladesh in 1995–2000, and how many students were enrolled in each level.

## Influences—Sects

Both Quomi and Aliya madrasas follow the Sunni sect of Islam. Quomi madrasas, however, receive funding from private sources and follow the



**Fig. 1. Population Growth and Growth of Officially Documented Madrasas, 1997–2000**



Source: Ministry of Education, Bangladesh Development Gateway <http://www.bangladeshgateway.org/sdnp/education/documents/database/number-madrassa.html>

Deobandi curriculum, which is associated with Wahhabism. Much Quomi madrasa funding reportedly originates from sources in the Gulf, such as the Rabitat Al Alam Al Islami (Muslim World League), which is based in Saudi Arabia. According to one report, private madrasas are appearing in increasing numbers on the Indian and Myanmar borders, fed by impoverished rural youth and Muslim minorities such as the Rohingyas.<sup>18</sup>

### Affiliation with Radical Groups

Historically, Bangladesh has been considered a moderate Islamic country, and many observers continue to consider it as such. Only recently have articles begun appearing that challenge that characterization. They point to the growing influence of radical elements, some of which are closely tied to some schools in the madrasa education system. Reports cite as evidence of the increasing power of radical groups the emergence of militant political parties, recruitment for terror networks such as al Qaeda, and links to radical groups in neighboring countries. During 2001 elections, the winning Bangladesh

National Party's electoral alliance included Jamat-e-Islami, which won an unprecedented 17 seats (out of 300) in Parliament. As a result, two party members gained powerful ministerial appointments: Agriculture and Social Welfare. This win seems to have emboldened more radical elements in Bangladeshi society, and is a worrisome trend. Particularly worth monitoring is the relationship of radical elements with religious schools. Most reports concede that the level of radicalism has not nearly reached that prevailing in Pakistan, but it is certainly of concern.

### Governance

Aliya madrasas function under the Religious Education Board, though they follow the government's secular curriculum and include secular subjects. These madrasas also get most of their funding from the government: approximately \$3.7 million was allocated to them in 1995–96.<sup>19</sup>

The Quomi madrasas function outside of the government system with their own curricula and finan-

**Table 5.5. Types and Levels of Madrasas in Bangladesh, 1998**

Level of Madrasa	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1999–2000*
Dakhil/Ebtedayee*	4,206	4,487	4,839	5,015
Alim (middle to high)	894	949	997	1,087
Fazil (higher secondary)	890	899	953	1,029
Kamil (college and postgraduate)	110	120	126	148
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>6,455</b>	<b>6,915</b>	<b>7,279</b>

\* Dakhil and Ebtedayee are combined because of lack of data on Ebtedayee.

**Table 5.6. Number of Students in Madrasas in Bangladesh**

Level of Madrasa	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98
Dakhil/Ebtedayee*	1,174,000	1,296,000	1,370,000
Alim (middle to high)	292,000	307,000	333,000
Fazil (higher secondary)	350,000	352,000	358,000
Kamil (college and postgraduate)	59,000	65,000	65,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,875,000</b>	<b>2,020,000</b>	<b>2,126,000</b>

\*Dakhil and Ebtedayee are combined because of lack of data on Ebtedayee.

## 5.7. Secular and Religious Schools in Bangladesh: A Comparison

Level	Secular System		Religious System	
	Schools	Students	Schools	Students
Primary	66,235	17,227,000	4,839	1,370,000
Secondary	13,419	6,289,000	1,950*	691,000*
College	3,344	2,819,147	126	65,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,998</b>	<b>26,335,147</b>	<b>6,915</b>	<b>2,126,000</b>

\* Alim and Fazil are combined for comparison purposes.

Source. Bangladesh Development Gateway <<http://www.bangladeshgateway.org/sdnp/education/documents/database/number-madrasa.html>>

cial resources. They collect their funds through private sources and follow their own educational modus operandi. A small number of private Quomi madrasas cater to rich Muslims in the cities. The Badshah Faisal Institute, one of the first such madrasas in Bangladesh, was established in 1976 with Saudi money. King Khaled Institute, Badshah Fahed Institute, Manarat Dhaka, and Shah Waliullah seminary came later.<sup>20</sup>

### Parental Incentives

Bangladeshi parents are increasingly sending their children to Islamic schools, which are expanding in size and number. In urban areas, parents send their children to madrasas to strengthen their religious identity. In many rural areas, parents primarily enroll their children in Islamic schools because there are no secular, affordable schools nearby and madrasas typically provide free boarding and

lodging. Another powerful incentives to parents is that madrasas inculcate moral values, are usually considered safe, and are located near children's homes.

Active government support for some of these institutions may be another reason for their popularity. The Female Secondary School Assistance Project, supported by the World Bank and Government of Bangladesh, provides scholarships for girls to attend secondary schools and stipends to those who want to attend madrasas.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* Graduates of Aliya madrasas, having learned science and other secular subjects, are employable in the labor market. However, students graduating from Quomi madrasas find joining the mainstream workforce challenging because they do not possess adequate knowledge of secular subjects and cannot pass competitive exams on such sub-

jects. In addition, their degrees are not recognized by the government. They normally become imams, muazzens of mosques, or teachers at nongovernment madrasas.<sup>21</sup>

*Civic Participation.* Madrasas encourage participation only in religion-based society and do not tend to encourage civic participation.

## Donor-Funded Work with Islamic Schools and Results

The Government of Bangladesh supports Aliya madrasas directly and has encouraged other donors to support educational reforms in these madrasas. For example, ADB was requested to allocate funds to build science laboratories in 200 Aliya madrasas in the mid-1990s. UNICEF in Bangladesh is also working with some madrasas.<sup>22</sup> The government has also introduced English, Bengali, and science in these madrasas. Donors such as the ADB, UNICEF, and UNDP have also assisted madrasas in spreading literacy to the masses in rural areas. ■

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12 These are explained on the Ministry of Education website: <<http://dns3.bdc.com/iactive/moe/mansys.html>>

13 <<http://www.darululoom-deoband.com/english/>>

14 Ground Work Inc., op cit.

15 Salahuddin Babur, "Madrasa in Focus" (2002).

<<http://www.bccbd.org/probe/madrasas.htm>>

16 The figure from Ministry of Education website excludes primary-level (Ebtedayee) madrasas, many of which may be attached to Dakhil-level schools.

17 Bertil Lintner, "A Cocoon of Terror," *Far Eastern Economic Review* (April 4, 2002). <[http://www.asiapacificms.com/articles/bangladesh\\_terror/](http://www.asiapacificms.com/articles/bangladesh_terror/)>

18 "Is Religious Extremism on the Rise in Bangladesh?" *Jane's Intelligence Review* (May 2002). <[http://www.asiapacificms.com/articles/bangladesh\\_extremism/](http://www.asiapacificms.com/articles/bangladesh_extremism/)>

19 Abdul Momen, "*Madrasa Education in Bangladesh: Background, Present Scenario and the Position of Women*" (Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha, 1997).

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# 6. Pakistan

Table 6.1. Pakistan Country Profile, 1995–2000

## Demographic Indicators

Total population (millions) . . . . .	138.1
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	97
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	42
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	63
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$1,860
Total fertility rate . . . . .	4.68
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.5

## Education Indicators

### Primary

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	86.16
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	0.57
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	–
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	–
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	8.3
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	–
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	–

### Secondary

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	37.22
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	0.66
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	–
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	13.9

### Tertiary

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	–
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	1.5

### Literacy

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	44.9
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	29.7
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	59

### Finance

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	2.6
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	7.1
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	51.8

## Introduction

Only 45 percent of Pakistan's population is literate, compared to the South Asian average of 49 percent and 53 percent in low-income countries worldwide. While India and Bangladesh have reached universal primary school enrollment, Pakistan lags behind with a primary gross enrollment ratio of 86 percent. In addition, compared to their counterparts in India and Bangladesh, fewer Pakistani students complete primary school (only 8 percent) and enroll in secondary school. Pakistan is also far from achieving gender equity. Educational challenges for Pakistani females are particularly acute: illiteracy is extremely high at 70 percent—even higher than in Bangladesh and India. With weak performance on most educational indicators and almost half the population under 15, Pakistan faces daunting educational challenges. Successfully meeting these challenges will require a huge financial investment in the education sector, far more than its current 7 percent share of the national budget. This figure is far lower than in many countries with a similar or lower GNI per capita.<sup>1</sup>

## Public Education System

After achieving independence in 1947, Pakistan faced tremendous economic and educational challenges. Reversing years of a colonial system that encouraged education only for the elite would require an enormous level of resources. Because of economic and political constraints, no substantive measures were taken to provide mass education during the first two decades of independence. While attempting to expand education in the 1970s, the government realized it did not have the capacity to provide education to the poor. With support from international donors, the government took additional measures to expand education but the demand far exceeded the supply. The resulting inadequate coverage and low quality of education for the poor further widened the gap between the rich and the poor.

After the 1990 “Education for All” Conference in Jomtien, international donors and the government launched a comprehensive effort to expand primary education. The educational administrative system was decentralized, but fiscal authority still rested

with Islamabad. This created more administrative problems, and access to and quality of education continued to decline. Only in recent years has the current government taken steps to decentralize considerable administrative and fiscal authority to provinces and districts. However, the impact of these measures remains to be seen.

## Characteristics

Similar to other South Asian countries, Pakistan has four state-financed levels of education: primary (grades 1–5), middle (grades 6–8), secondary (grades 9–10) and tertiary (college). Tertiary education starts at grade 11, usually in a college facility. To meet the educational needs of students in rural areas, the government converted about 25,000 Koranic schools into mosque primary schools by adding some secular subjects to their religious curriculum. The Ministry of Education finances and manages these schools. The curriculum in public schools is predominantly secular, but the government long ago added a course on Islamic religion and history at all grade levels to appease religious leaders who wanted the educational system to be inspired by the Islamic ideology.<sup>2</sup>

Tables 6.2 and 6.3 provide a synopsis of the number of government-financed schools and the students enrolled in each province during 1999–2000. These figures do not take into account students enrolled in mosque and private schools. According to some estimates, 13 percent of primary school students in urban areas attend private schools, and a vast number of such schools are in all cities in Pakistan.

## Challenges

*Access.* While Pakistan has experienced some improvements in access to education over the past two decades, progress remains slow and challenges daunting. Roughly 37 percent of the country's 138.1 million people live in urban areas.<sup>3</sup> Even without school data disaggregated by urban and rural areas, it is quite clear that rural children face challenges due to poverty and the unavailability of “appropriate” schools nearby. The government also faces special challenges in providing equal educational access to girls. In 1998–99, only 44,602 out of 163,746 primary schools were for girls. Similarly, girls' schools numbered 5,841 at the middle and



**Table 6.2. Number of Educational Institutions in Pakistan, 1999–2000**

Province	Mosque	Primary	Middle	High
Punjab	8,229	96,579	5,974	4,425
Sindh	13,107	64,663	2,073	1,449
NWFP	3,318	39,434	1,930	1,353
Balochistan	575	19,061	696	424
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,229</b>	<b>219,737</b>	<b>10,673</b>	<b>7,651</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>263,290</b>			

Source: Pakistan Ministry of Education

**Table 6.3. Number of Students in Pakistan, 1999–2000**

Province	Primary		Middle		High	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Punjab	3,968,934	2,690,856	1,070,398	645,746	428,183	253,862
Sindh	1,447,572	787,573	311,402	208,730	108,877	290,759
NWFP	1,310,675	718,643	368,462	138,036	163,294	51,740
Balochistan	415,212	237,250	68,443	28,313	30,480	10,170
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,142,393</b>	<b>4,434,322</b>	<b>1,818,705</b>	<b>1,020,825</b>	<b>730,834</b>	<b>606,531</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15,573,610* (Boys 9,691,932; Girls 6,061,678)</b>					

\*This number does not include students enrolled in mosque and private schools. According to some estimates, 13 percent of Pakistan's total primary student population in urban areas attend private schools.

Source: Pakistan Ministry of Education

3,397 at high levels, compared to 11,166 and 7,122, respectively, for boys.<sup>4</sup> Gender disparities in education remain significant: only about 69 percent of girls are enrolled in primary school, compared to 98 percent for boys.<sup>5</sup> The gender gap widens at secondary and tertiary levels.

*Quality.* The increase in enrollment during the last two decades has not been met with equivalent improvements in the quality of the classroom teaching-learning experience. The deteriorating quality of public school education is due to deficiencies in teacher qualifications and performance, especially in rural schools. Student dropout in rural areas remains a serious problem. The most dramatic dropout takes place in *kachi* (kindergarten) and *pakki* (grade 1). For example, in Balochistan, approximately 50 percent of all children entering *kachi* leave the system

by the second grade.<sup>6</sup> This statistic is reflected in other rural areas of Pakistan. A large part of the problem may be due to the developmentally inappropriate kindergarten curriculum, which is essentially the same as the grade 1 curriculum. Equally demoralizing for young children are teacher-centered methods. Young children are expected to sit still all day and learn almost entirely by rote. Teachers are not educated about developmental stages and appropriate learning environments.

The situation at higher levels of primary education (grades 3–6) is exacerbated by poorly trained teachers, many of whom cannot read and teach from primary-level books. A study of teacher training colleges financed by USAID/Pakistan in the early 1990s showed that the teachers' mastery of the content barely exceeded that of the students.

Reasons for the high dropout level and discontent with the public education system include

- a weak and centralized education management system that has led to ineffective supervision of schools and teachers at the district and local level, especially in remote areas that have a severely deficient communication infrastructure
- underqualified and undertrained teachers
- inappropriate, irrelevant, and inadequate learning materials
- parents and communities unprepared to provide educational support (with homework and the like) to children outside of the school
- unavailability of postprimary education for many rural children
- old and irrelevant educational curricula at middle and secondary schools

- overcrowded school facilities ill-suited for any kind of constructive learning, especially at the primary level

*Management.* Pakistan Ministry of Education guidelines provide that all public schools operate under the general supervision of district education officers (DEOs), with additional staff at the subdistrict level. School head teachers report to DEOs, who, in turn, report to the Directorate of Primary or Elementary Education, depending on the province.<sup>7</sup> DEOs are responsible for hiring, transferring, training, and supervising teachers.

Schools follow the federally prescribed curriculum, which is developed in Islamabad but published at the provincial levels. Because most DEOs operate from district headquarters, they are unable to provide regular supervision to all rural schools. The result is a high rate of teacher absenteeism and a large number of defunct schools that close down

**Table 6.4. Donor Assistance to Pakistan's Public Education Sector, 1993–2003**

Donor	Level				Focus			Type of Educational Intervention					
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Access	Quality	Teacher training	Curricula/textbooks	Improved management system	Decentralization	Girls' education	Literacy	Nonformal education	Vocational/technical
World Bank	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
USAID	■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
UNICEF	■			■	■	■				■			
ADB	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
EU	■			■	■			■		■		■	
UNESCO													
CIDA	■			■	■	■				■		■	
GTZ/KFW	■			■	■	■	■	■		■		■	
JICA									■		■		
DFID	■			■	■	■				■			
DANIDA, FINNIDA, SIDA													

\* Includes building the capacity of NGOs for better social service delivery.

when students and teachers stop attending. In addition, poor investment in teacher skill building means many rural teachers remain underqualified and untrained. Regular inservice teacher training is something of a luxury, enjoyed only by some urban teachers.

Financial mismanagement has often occurred at provincial and district education levels. School construction occasions the most leakage. Education officers often choose school construction sites unilaterally, without consulting community members, and award contracts for personal and political reasons. Schools are often constructed in the wrong places and with the cheapest materials, leading to rapid school building deterioration.

### Donor Assistance

As shown in Table 6.4, most donor-funded programs concentrate on improving access and quality in primary education, with a special focus on girls. The World Bank and ADB usually focus on province-wide programs that serve many beneficiaries. The EU has also financed the Aga Khan Institute of Education Development, the state-of-the-art teacher training facility that caters to building the capacity of rural and poor teachers.

Though many donors and private NGOs are operating in Pakistan, only the ADB is focusing on improving secondary education. This is where the problem of radicalism actually begins. Recently, the World Bank has shown interest in tertiary education funding reforms and a greater focus on information technology training. And only the ADB is investing in vocational training to provide students with skills relevant to the labor market.

### Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* It is widely acknowledged that Pakistani public schools are failing to provide basic literacy and numeracy skills—the minimal requirements for employment in most public or private sector jobs. Many students either do not stay in school long enough to develop these skills—only 8 percent complete primary education—or they develop only rudimentary skills because of poor educa-

tional quality. Fierce competition from private school students has further marginalized public school students. Students attending “somewhat better” public schools in city centers tend to get lower-level (secretarial or clerical) government or private sector jobs. Only students from the rich and middle-income strata assume leadership and other high-level jobs in public and private sectors, while poor and rural students remain without jobs or end up in lower-level posts.

*Civic Participation.* Pakistani schools do not prepare students for civic participation or building democratic society. The schools are characterized by authoritarian teaching styles, absolute adherence to “how lessons should be taught,” and zero tolerance of independent reasoning by students or teachers. This is not the environment that supports or guides the development of skills needed for civic participation or contributes to the development of a free-thinking society. Only in the last 15 years has Pakistani civil society, supported by international donors, begun to address some of these issues and mobilize masses to assume greater civic roles.

*Policy Reforms.* Over the past decade, the Government of Pakistan has implemented several educational development programs that have had a positive impact on school enrollment rates. However, most of these efforts have been confined to increasing access rather than improving quality. The Primary Education Development Program, funded by USAID in 1989–94 in Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), placed heavy emphasis on community participation in education and had a significant impact on parental attitudes toward girls’ education. It increased the supply of primary schools for girls and shaped it to meet the needs of parents and their daughters. Between 1990 and 1998, girls’ enrollment in Balochistan increased by 151 percent.<sup>8</sup> However, poor quality persisted.

Some recent innovations have targeted quality. Based on an open advertisement and screening performed by a private firm, the Sindh Education Department recently hired 3,500 teachers. This was, perhaps, the first time that such a large, open recruitment had taken place. This procedure curbed political pressure to appoint unqualified or uncom-

**Table 6.5. Secular and Religious Schools in Pakistan, 2000, 2002\***

Province or Category	Secular Schools	Madrasas operating under the religious education board	Students in Secular Schools (male and female)	Students in Madrasas (data by province not available)
Punjab	115,207	3,155	9,057,979	
NWFP	81,292	1,776	3,154,913	
Sindh	46,035	905	2,750,850	
Balochistan	20,756	692	789,868	
Mosque schools under Ministry of Education**	25,229			
<b>Total</b>	<b>288,519</b>	<b>6,528</b>	<b>15,753,610</b>	<b>1,197,427</b>

\* The data on secular schools are derived from the Ministry of Education for the year 2000. Data on religious schools are from the Ministry of Religious Affairs for the year 2002.

\*\* Mosque schools operating under the Ministry of Education are usually considered as secular schools.

mitted “ghost” teachers (who are paid but never show up to teach) and allowed new and more qualified candidates to become teachers and have a steady income.

Reviving Pakistan’s local government structure is the policy reform that would have the most meaningful impact on district-level operations and accountability in all sectors, especially education. In August 2001, Pakistan’s chief executive decreed a government decentralization plan under which local elections were held to revitalize the role of communities in district- and subdistrict-level management. The purpose of the plan was to shift district management responsibilities, including fiscal ones, from provincial operatives to locally elected representatives. Thirty-three percent of local council election seats were reserved for women. Devolution rules provided that if a woman could not be elected to a dedicated seat, it would remain vacant. This encouraged unprecedented participation of women in Pakistan’s local elections, which allowed many new, young, nonpoliticized, and energetic men and women to represent their areas. Though many new district manager (*nazims*) posts went to powerful politicians from previous governments, the new system of checks and balances is in place whereby *nazims* are chosen by assistant managers (*naib-nazims*), and only for three years. Local councilors elect *naib-nazims*, many of whom are young and, according to many accounts, aspire to change the old political

power system. Human development, especially education expansion, is the key responsibility of *nazims* and their associates.

Future educational improvements are also expected to result from USAID’s new Education Sector Reform project in Pakistan. Its key components are

- strengthening local education departments
- creating local learning centers
- improving educational quality
- fostering functional literacy for out-of-school youth
- expanding primary education

## Islamic Schools

### Levels and Types

Table 6.5 shows the number of secular and religious schools in each province and the number of students enrolled in 2000 (in secular schools) and 2002 (religious schools).

The three main types of religious institutions in Pakistan are Koranic schools, where only the Koran is taught; mosque schools, where both Koranic and secular subjects are taught; and madrasas, where only Islamic learning takes place.

*Koranic schools.* Every Muslim child in Pakistan is expected and encouraged to read the Koran, either in a mosque or at home. Koranic schools usually function in a mosque, where the mullah teaches the Koran to children, both boys and girls. At the basic level, only the words of the Koran are taught; no translation or interpretation is provided. The objective is that all Muslims be able to read the Koran in Arabic, even if they do not understand the language. Students are expected to try to understand the Koran when possible, but not much is actually done to bring this knowledge to the student. Koranic schools offer classes at various times—evenings, mornings, and afternoons—to accommodate the needs of teachers and students.

*Mosque Primary Schools.* A lack of resources to provide schools in every village in the mid-1980s led the Government of Pakistan to experiment with converting some rural Koranic schools into mosque primary schools. The plan was to add additional subjects, such as basic Urdu and mathematics, to be taught by the local imam. The plan faced serious challenges because the local imams were not academically prepared to teach these subjects: many had not attended formal secular schools and the government did not provide any training.

*Madrasas.* The mission of most Pakistani madrasas is to prepare students for religious duties. Adhering to strict religious teachings, madrasas teach Islamic subjects such as the Koran, Islamic law and jurisprudence, logic, and the Prophet's traditions. The concentration of religious teaching increases with the level of the madrasa—primary, middle, or high. Lower levels of madrasas produce *hafiz-e-Koran* (one who memorizes the Koran fully) or *qari* (one who can recite the Koran with good pronunciation and in a melodic tone). Higher level madrasas produce *alim* (Islamic scholar or teacher). An alim certificate from a madrasa is equivalent to a master's degree in Islamiyat or Arabic from a regular university. Since very few madrasas supplement religious education with secular subjects, students who enroll fulltime do so with the knowledge that they will become well versed only in religious studies and find jobs in the religious sector.

## Trends

For most of Pakistan's history, madrasas numbered in the low hundreds and focused on training the next generation of religious leaders. The number of madrasas began to grow in the mid-1970s, with the rise of Jamat-e-Islami and political Islam and the active support of Prime Minister's Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. With government financing, they grew at an even greater rate in the mid-1980s under the regime of President Zia ul-Haq, when large theological seminaries were established to create a cadre of religiously motivated mujahadin to fight in Afghanistan.

The defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan resulted in the fall of Pakistan's military dictatorship. Subsequent governments were unable to fully support these madrasas financially, so funds started flowing in from private individuals and Islamic charities in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Gulf states. The situation in Afghanistan kept the madrasa system alive in Pakistan: more and more mujahadin were recruited to fight for the ouster of the corrupt Afghan government. In addition, sectarian madrasas flourished (such as those run by the Ahle-Hadith and Shia sects), not as much to fight foreign wars as to guard and spread their version of Islam.

Many recent articles and reports point with alarm to the increase in the number of madrasas in Pakistan. The 2002 ICG Report states that the Ministry of Education estimated there were 3,906 Pakistani madrasas in 1995 and 7,000 in 2000.<sup>9</sup> In September 2002, the *Dawn* newspaper cited Ministry of Religious Affairs reports that there were 6,528 registered madrasas that had enrolled about 1.2 million students.<sup>10</sup> However, in April 2002, Pakistan's minister for religious affairs had told the ICG that 10,000 madrasas existed. He suspected there were more, and as many as 1–1.7 million students attending madrasa classes, at least for short periods.<sup>11</sup> Some analysts believe the number of madrasas is higher than 10,000—perhaps as high as 33,000.<sup>12</sup>



## Influences—Sects

There are five major Islamic sects in Pakistan: Deobandi, Bareili, Ahle-Hadith, Salafi, and Shia. Each has its own madrasas that teach its own version of Islam. The two main Sunni sects—Deobandi and Bareili—dominate Pakistan’s madrasa system.<sup>13</sup> The Deobandi and Bareili sects originated in the colonial Indian subcontinent in response to a perceived imperial plot to destroy Islam and its followers by means of education. Of these sects, the Deobandi is considered to be the most anti-Western.

## Affiliation with Radical Groups

The current religious extremism in Pakistan has its roots in the Afghan war. After the Soviet invasion, the call for jihad was raised by the predominantly Sunni Jamat-e-Islami, then the largest religious party in Pakistan and considered by some to be an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Abiding by the call of their leader that Muslims must take up arms to defend the religion, party operatives started recruiting young men to oust the infidels (*kafirs*) from Afghanistan. Some were recruited from madrasas operated by the Jamat-e-Islami.

Deobandi madrasas also participated in the war. Sunni, but opposed to Western-type governments, these madrasas were operating under the Jamiet-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) and involved mostly Pashto-speaking people from the NWFP and Balochistan.<sup>14</sup> Most JUI madrasas were concentrated along the border with Afghanistan. Even though JUI opposed the Zia regime, it had ethnic and tribal loyalties in Afghanistan. Because helping was a sacred duty, the number of JUI madrasas increased, and they became much fiercer in their resolve to cleanse Afghanistan of all “nefarious infidels.” The increase kept pace with the increasing number of Afghan refugee men in such Pakistani border towns as Peshawar, Quetta, Chaman, and Landikotal. Later, JUI madrasas spread to other parts of the country.

In the beginning, according to the ICG report,

These madrasas did not necessarily conduct military training or provide arms to students but

encouraged them to join the mujahadin inside Afghanistan. Madrasas affiliated with the Haqqaniya chain and the JUI faction led by Fazlur Rahman also established networks for jihad in Pakistan’s major urban centers. Jihadi seminars with Afghan and Arab volunteers spread to Karachi and later to the Punjab.

The proxy battle between Saudi Arabia and Iran—between Wahhabism and Shiaism respectively—also played a role in giving rise to sectarian and jihadi culture in Pakistan. Thus, madrasas established to produce religious leaders to establish law, order, and accountability attracted holy war recruits for all battles involving Muslims.

Most Pakistani madrasas continue to serve only as centers of learning for future Islamic scholars and clerics. The concern, however, is with the much smaller portion that have been associated with militant groups. In November 2001, Peter W. Singer reported:

Around 10–15 percent of the schools are affiliated with extremist religious/political groups, who have co-opted education for their own needs. These schools teach a distorted view of Islam. Hatred is permissible, jihad allows the murder of innocent civilians including other Muslim men, women, and children, and the new heroes are terrorists. Martyrdom through suicide attacks is also extolled. Many of the radical religious schools also include weapons and physical training in their regimen, as well as weekly lessons on political speechmaking (where anti-American rhetoric is memorized). The students are uneducated, young, dependent on the schools, and cut off from contact with their parents for years at a time, and thus highly susceptible to being programmed toward violence.

These schools have become the new breeding ground for radical Islamic militants, where the next generation is trained and groomed. Their graduating classes form an integral recruiting pool for transnational terrorist and conflict networks. For example, both the Taliban and the more extreme Kashmiri terrorist groups found their roots in the young boys from crowded refugee

camps taught at radical Madrassahs. The 55th Brigade, made up of foreigners recruited by Usama bin Laden's Al Qaida terrorist organization to fight in Afghanistan, also drew from the schools.<sup>15</sup>

Singer also points out an added concern:

[T]he student pool in many of these radical madrasas is made up of foreigners as well, and thus lays the seeds of conflict elsewhere. This internationalizes their virulent influence. As much as 10–50 percent of the students in certain madrasas are from abroad, coming from regions at war such as Afghanistan, Chechnya, and the Philippines. These students return with new influence and a changed outlook, helping to worsen the levels of violence in their home states.<sup>16</sup>

A majority of Pakistani madrasa graduates have received no career-oriented education and face fierce competition for limited jobs. Some have resorted to violence to influence the country's internal and external policies. Right-wing religious leaders provide free transportation and sometimes food when these students attend rallies and other demonstrations against the government or the West.

## Governance

*Relationship to the Government.* During the early years of the rise of madrasa education and the threat of Islamization, the Ayub Khan government created a religious endowment (*Auuqaf*), which provided money for the operations of the religious institutions. The Auuqaf reforms demanded that madrasas add secular subjects to their curricula. All major religious political parties rejected this stance. Seeking to gain political support, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto put in the 1973 constitution that Pakistan would be an Islamic state that would enable Muslims to live their lives according to the Koran and Sunnah. He also created the Council of Islamic Ideology to guide moves that would make Pakistan a more religious state.<sup>17</sup> Thus began the glory days for madrasas in Pakistan. Bhutto made all private schools public, but madrasas remained autonomous in deciding what to teach. Under President Zia ul-Haq, madrasas continued to flourish. Arabic was

### *A Glimpse into the Financial Status of a Large Madrasa in Pakistan\**

A Deobandi residential madrasa in a province enrolls 2,500 fulltime students and its annual costs, according to a 2001 audit report, are \$100,000—\$40 per year per student.

In 2001, the government's education budget for all levels was \$939.3 million. Even if, quite generously, 30 percent of this amount were allocated to primary and secondary education, the total amount per student is \$16.7, less than half of the amount per student spent in an average residential Pakistani madrasa.

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\* Interview with an anonymous madrasa principal.

introduced as a compulsory subject in all public schools, and teachers from madrasas were hired to teach it. In addition, Islamic tax (*Zakat*) funds were directed to support madrasas.<sup>18</sup> Under Zia's regime, military chaplains were hired from the Deobandi sect, giving further strength to the most anti-Western sect of political Islam.

Currently, the religious board, run by religious leaders under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, manages and controls the operations of madrasas. In addition to government funds, much money comes from private philanthropists in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Gulf states, who also attach strings to madrasas' curricula. During an informal interview, a principal of a madrasa in Sindh, which receives both government and foreign funding, said that their nongovernment benefactors strictly prohibit them from introducing any subjects in their school that can help "open the minds of students to things that fall outside the realms of religious teachings." The principal in question has a degree in English literature.

During the summer of 2002, the government promulgated a madrasas registration ordinance that also called for major reforms and addressed curricular



and pedagogical issues. Registration was to be done on a voluntary basis, and the law included no mechanisms for enforcement or punishing violators. However, apparently under the pressure of Islamic parties and other antireform constituencies, President Pervez Musharraf indicated he would no longer pursue madrasa reform as a top priority.

*Relationship to Government Schools.* Other than mosque primary schools operating under the Ministry of Education that teach secular subjects in addition to the Koran, there is no formal relationship between a madrasa and a regular public school. Curriculum design and pedagogical methods do not converge in any way. A madrasa student in grade 8 would feel out of place if transferred to a regular public school, and vice versa.

### Parental Incentives

During the last two decades, as access to and quality of public education deteriorated, Pakistan's elite increasingly sent their children to the expanding number of private schools. Poor parents could not afford private school, and, with no better alternatives, they began sending their sons to madrasas. According to Singer, some madrasas provide food, clothes, and even pay parents to send their children, further increasing their enticement.<sup>19</sup> This is especially appealing for destitute Afghan refugees who need schooling for their children.

Nevertheless, some families who are not poor and have access to public schools opt to send their children to madrasas. The poor quality of public school teaching may be one factor, but the choice may also be inspired by religious affiliation and the preservation of religious identity, which is perceived to be under threat by the invading popular culture of MTV and ZeeTV (from India). Every now and then, people write letters to *Dawn* lamenting obscenity on Pakistani TV, which is following Western models of programming and dress codes. Many parents, regardless of economic status, therefore prefer to send their children to religious schools where they will be taught how to be good Muslims and be protected from the immoral, non-Muslim influences of the modern world.

### Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

The following draws heavily from Tariq Rahman's article, "Language, Religion and Identity in Pakistan: Language Teaching in Pakistan Madrassas."<sup>20</sup>

*Employment.* Madrasas study Islam, as a particular sect interprets it. The main languages of instruction are Arabic, Persian, and Urdu. In madrasas located along the Afghan border and in Sindh, the languages of instruction are Pashto and Sindhi. In 1997, only 2.8 percent of madrasas were also teaching English. Urdu remains the most prevalent language of instruction: students become well versed at least with spoken Urdu by the end of their studies. At the end of the highest level of madrasa education, the student has to pass an exam to be formally inducted in the religious sector as an alim. In 2002, the ICG reported that only a small percentage—perhaps 2–5 percent of students—actually reach this level. What happens to the rest is not known.

Most of the Arabic books taught in madrasas are from medieval times and focus primarily on grammar and syntax. Students are taught Arabic, based on difficult classical texts, and they are encouraged to memorize the texts rather than internalize their meaning. Similarly, when Persian is taught in Pakistani madrasas, students tend to memorize lessons and fail to gain functional literacy. Even Urdu translations of some ancient works are heavily Arabicized, leaving little room for students to understand what they are reading or hearing.

Rahman states that books in Persian (which is closer to Urdu in grammar than Arabic) approved to be taught in Pakistani madrasas include Attar's *Pand Nama*, *Nam-e-Haq*, and Sa'adi's *Karima*.

These books are didactic and in rhymed couplets. Although they are 'safe' from the ulema's point of view, being about morality, this morality is strictly medieval and patriarchal. Both *Pand Nama* and *Karima* approve of hospitality and condemn miserliness. In both silence is a virtue and spontaneous talking is not. In both women are inferior,

untrustworthy and alluring, as, indeed, are beardless boys. Both belong to a male world confident in its superiority. Women are faithless and the wise must suspect them.

Most madrasas teach no secular subjects. Religious leaders who decide the madrasas' curriculum contend that every aspect of knowledge that a Muslim needs to know was revealed to the Prophet and is contained in the Koran. Given this resistance to secular knowledge or even a progressive interpretation of the Koran, most religious schools are not designed to prepare students for employment. Nevertheless, a graduate of a madrasa has the right to a high-level (grade 16) civil service job in a government office.

It is worth pointing out that many students graduating from secular public schools or colleges are not better off academically. Because of the poor quality of the education system, most secular students display only limited knowledge of their subjects. Still, their chances of obtaining a job, particularly in the private sector, are higher than for their counterparts in the madrasa system.

Madrasa students, however, are better prepared for employment than those who have received no education. At least the higher level madrasas add to a student's language comprehension. Compared to a person with no education, a madrasa student's advantage is the basic literacy and socialization skills developed in a school environment.

*Civic Participation.* Based on the information collected for this study, there is no evidence that Pakistani religious schools prepare their students for civic participation.

## Donor-Funded Work with Islamic Schools and Results

Until recently, no donor agency supported reforms in Pakistan's religious education sector. In September 2002, the EU announced its support for religious institution reform. "The EU has made a firm commitment to provide some \$4 billion to Islamabad for the rehabilitation of seminaries in the country," a senior official in the religious affairs ministry disclosed. He said the proposed package would be for 10 years.<sup>21</sup> ■

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1 Comparable figures are Ethiopia, 15 percent; Gambia, 21 percent; Guinea, 27 percent; Niger, 13 percent; Nigeria, 12 percent; Senegal, 33 percent; Uganda, 21 percent.

2 Aziz Talibani, "Pedagogy, Power, and Discourse: Transformation of Islamic Education." *Comparative Education Review*, 40, no. 1 (February 1999), 66–82.

3 World Bank, "Data by Country, Pakistan," 2002. <[www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata/countrydata.html](http://www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata/countrydata.html)>

4 Government of Pakistan, "1998/99 Economic Survey."

5 UNESCO. Statistical CD-Rom—2000.

6 Balochistan Education Management Information System (BEMIS), 2000.

7 Each Pakistani province has its own system of school management. For example, the Directorate of Elementary Education is responsible for primary schools in Punjab while the Directorate of Primary Education is in charge in the Northwest Frontier Provinces. The Directorate of Secondary

Education supervises middle and high schools in all provinces except Balochistan, whose small number of schools all fall under one Directorate of Education.

8 Balochistan Education Management Information Statistics, 1998.

9 ICG, "Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism, and the Military," *Asia Report*, 36 (29 July 2002), 2. <[www.crisisweb.org/home/index](http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index)>

10 Zulfiqar Ali, "EU Ready to Help Madrasas," *Dawn*, September 2, 2002.

11 ICG, op. cit., 2.

12 K.P.S. Gill, "Politics of Islam in Pakistan," *The Pioneer*, March 2001. <<http://www.hvk.org/articles/0301/11.html>>

13 ICG, op. cit.

14 Ibid.

15 P. W. Singer, "Pakistani Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education Not Jihad," Analysis Paper No. 14 (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, November 2001). <<http://www.brookingsinstitution.org/dybdocroot/views/papers/singer/20020103.htm>>

16 Ibid.

17 Christele Dedebant, "'Mughal Mania' under Zia ul-Haq," *ISIM Newsletter*, 8 (2001), 11. <<http://www.isim.nl/newsletter/8/>>

18 ICG, op. cit.

19 Singer, op. cit., 2.

20 Tariq Rahman, "Language, Religion and Identity in Pakistan: Language Teaching in Pakistan Madrassas," *Ethnic Studies Report*, 16 (2) (July 1998).

21 *Dawn*, op. cit.

# 7. Indonesia

Table 7.1. Indonesia Country Profile, 1995–2000

## Demographic Indicators

Total population (millions) . . . . .	210.4
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	88
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	32
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	–
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$2,830
Total fertility rate . . . . .	2.49
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.68

## Education Indicators

### Primary

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	113
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	96
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	95
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	–
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	17.3
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	6
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	22

### Secondary

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	56
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	87
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	–
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	8.4

### Tertiary

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	1,157
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	0.5

### Literacy

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	87.9
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	83.4
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	92.5

### Finance

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	1.6
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	7.9
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	–

## Introduction

Indonesia has made significant strides in educating its citizens: it has a relatively high literacy rate of 88 percent, a high primary net enrollment of 95 percent, and relative gender equity in both primary and secondary schools. However, with low secondary enrollment rates, deteriorating quality of education in primary and secondary schools, and one-third of its population under 15, Indonesia faces formidable educational challenges. Providing high quality education for such a large cohort of school-aged children will require the government to significantly accelerate its efforts to strengthen the education system. This, however, will be difficult, given that spending on education amounts to only 1.6 percent of Indonesia's GNP and just under 8 percent of total government expenditure.<sup>1</sup>

## Public Education System

### Characteristics

Basic education in Indonesia consists of six years of elementary school and three of lower secondary school. There is no tuition for basic education, but students and their families have to purchase books and official uniforms. Indonesia also provides non-formal education through programmed learning packets to out-of-school youth or school dropouts. After basic education, the school system offers three years of upper secondary school and four years of university. However, after basic education, promotion is determined by selective examinations that narrow the option for higher education.

Despite the predominantly secular curriculum in government schools, students are given the option of taking two hours of religious instruction—usually in Islam, Christianity, or Hinduism.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the planning and execution of education. The ministry has four directorates: primary education, secondary education, higher education, and out-of-school education and culture. While management of education is essentially centralized, increasingly district education offices across the 27 provinces are assuming

more power and initiative regarding local policies and teacher training.

The vast majority of school-aged children in Indonesia enroll in public schools. In 2000–01, 43.4 million students were enrolled in public primary and secondary schools, 29.2 million in primary and 14.2 million in secondary.

### Challenges

*Access.* Enrollment in primary education has been almost universal for the past 20 years. Although primary enrollment rates are high, access levels differ markedly between Java and outer provinces such as West Timor. The economic crisis of the late 1990s resulted in a slight and temporary decrease in school enrollment by poor and rural students. For many poor families, the costs associated with public schooling are unaffordable. Because of the difficult labor market, such students tend not to continue to secondary school. Thus, while enrollments have steadily increased in primary schools, they have leveled off in secondary schools.

*Quality.* Indonesian students have consistently experienced low quality of learning in classrooms, resulting in low academic achievement. Assessments report relatively low scores on reading competency tests by Indonesian students by international standards.<sup>2</sup> They also performed at lower standards in science and mathematics than students in Malaysia and other countries in the region. A major constraint to achieving higher quality education is a shortage of qualified teachers, due to low salaries and lack of incentives. Finding qualified personnel to teach in rural areas is a serious problem. Providing textbooks and other school equipment throughout the far-flung archipelago continues to be another significant challenge.

*Management.* In 2001, Indonesia decentralized some educational management functions to provincial and district governments. The central government develops policies, manages the national curriculum, and conducts national examinations. Provincial and district governments define policy on student selection, provide instructional materials, and manage special institutions, including those for

teacher training. However, limited capacity at local levels impedes this decentralization because local units cannot adequately meet the educational needs of large populations of out-of-school youths or improve teaching through better school management and training programs.

*Policy Reform.* Indonesia's educational priorities for 2001–04 focus on

- improving quality of instruction and relevance of the curriculum
- reducing inequities within and among the provinces
- enhancing educational management through more efficient financing and information usage and continued decentralization of functions

## Donor Assistance

USAID has been supporting democracy and education initiatives in government primary and secondary schools and in Islamic institutes. The Agency is planning to strengthen its assistance to basic education in Indonesia, and is currently finalizing its strategy.

As shown in Table 7.2, several other donors have implemented programs to support Indonesia's education sector. Most have been assisting the government to expand access, improve primary and secondary education, and strengthen institutional capacity at provincial and district levels.

- The World Bank has been supporting education projects throughout the archipelago. They are designed to expand access to primary and junior secondary education; improve the quality of primary and junior secondary education; and

**Table 7.2. Donor Assistance to Indonesia's Public Education Sector**

Donor	Level			Focus			Type of Educational Intervention						
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Access	Quality	Teacher training	Curricula/textbooks	Improved management system	Decentralization	Girls' education	Literacy	Nonformal education	Vocational/technical
World Bank	■	■		■	■	■	■	■			■		
AusAid	■	■	■	■	■	■		■			■		
UNESCO/ UNICEF	■			■	■	■	■	■			■		
ADB	■				■	■	■	■					
EU													
Dutch (World Bank Admin.)	■	■		■	■	■	■	■			■		
New Zealand (UNESCO Admin.)		■		■	■	■	■	■			■		
JICA	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■		
GTZ	■				■	■	■	■					
JBIC		■					■	■					

\* Includes building the capacity of NGOs for better social service delivery.



decentralize and improve educational planning, management, and institutional capacity at provincial and district levels.

- UNICEF has been providing support to a project that focuses on improving the educational status of girls throughout Indonesia.
- JICA is currently supporting a project to improve primary and secondary science and mathematics teaching by improving the educational content of faculties in charge of science and mathematics education at three national universities.
- The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) has been providing scholarships at primary and junior secondary levels to children from poor families. AusAID has also supported technical and vocational education in Indonesia.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* The major strength of the Indonesian public school system is the widespread enrollment of primary school students. The basic literacy, numeracy, and analytical skills taught prepare most primary educated youth to be “trainable,” regardless of whether they continue to secondary school, enter training programs, or need to learn skills on the job. Students can also take vocational subjects in lower secondary school, and they may specialize in technical, vocational, or business education in upper secondary school. There are also life skills subjects that all students take as electives. This is an attempt to make the curriculum more relevant to the locale, with special attention given to health prevention (HIV/AIDS), environmental protection, and practical skills training. For students who never attended or dropped out of school, nonformal or out-of-school education prepares them to concentrate on practical skills in commerce, trades, and business.

A major weakness of formal vocational training in lower secondary school is that the skills taught may be outdated or disconnected to market realities: job skills learned may not correspond to those required

by the job market. In addition, the secondary school curriculum is usually overloaded to the point that subjects may not be taught effectively. Finally, primary school quality problems mean that basic literacy, numeracy, and analytical skills may not be learned well. Hence, some students are less likely to be adequately prepared to be “trainable” later on.

*Civil Participation.* Indonesia’s public school system is based upon the state philosophy of the five principles (*Pancasila*): 1) belief in one god; 2) just and civilized humanity, including tolerance to all people; 3) unity of Indonesia; 4) democracy led by wisdom of deliberation among representatives of the people; and 5) social justice for all. This state ideology, taught in public schools, may be considered a form of civic education.

Since the 1998 overthrow of the Suharto regime, *Pancasila* has taken on a more democratic emphasis. Some donors are undertaking pilot efforts to replace traditional *Pancasila* teachings with civic education courses that cover such topics as the principles and practices of conflict resolution, tolerance of differences, respect for individual rights, and participatory instruction. USAID/Jakarta has funded democracy education pilot projects that involve students in analyzing public policy issues through democratic educational processes. Students involved in the instructional models have demonstrated abilities to analyze problems, interpret and draw conclusions from data, debate issues, accept and criticize each other’s opinions, and propose relevant solutions. However, traditional teacher-centered instruction in primary and secondary schools tends to dilute these innovations by perpetuating an authoritarian classroom atmosphere. Thus, efforts will be needed to help teachers create a teaching-learning environment that supports these innovations.

## Islamic Schools

### Levels and Types

The two types of Islamic schools in Indonesia are madrasas, or day schools, and pesantrens, or boarding schools.



Table 7.3. Madrasa Schools in Indonesia, 2000–01

Level	Private	Public	Total	Teacher:Students	Students
Upper Secondary	3,130 (84%)	575 (16%)	3,705	1:44	576,000
Lower Secondary	9,624 (89%)	1,168 (11%)	10,792	1:10	1,900,000
Primary	20,554 (93%)	1,481 (7%)	22,035	1:18	2,900,000

Source: Ministry of Religious Affairs Educational Statistics, “Indonesia School Year 2000–2001;” Education Management Information Service (EMIS), Jakarta, Indonesia, 2001.

Madrasas provide education at primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels. They teach the national education curriculum and use extended hours to teach basic Islamic education and principles. Students who graduate from the upper secondary level of accredited madrasas are qualified to enter a university. The great majority of madrasas are privately owned and operated, while others operate under the Ministry of Religion. Madrasas are less expensive than public secondary schools and provide access to basic education in rural and low-income urban communities. They widen access to basic education through affordable schooling and supply Islamic teaching.

Pesantrens operate as independent Islamic self-governing schools, outside of the national madrasa and public education system. They exist as a community, with a compound, mosque, and boarding system where students and teachers eat, sleep, learn, and generally interact throughout the day. Most are located in rural areas. Pesantrens vary considerably in size, from only a few hundred students to 4,000 or more. The majority of pesantrens have a customized curriculum that consists mainly of Islamic teachings based on the interpretation of the headmaster (*kyai*). Religious subjects include Islamic theology, philosophy, jurisprudence, and ethics; Koranic exegesis, recitation, and memorization; and Arabic literature, grammar, or astronomy. A few pesantrens include a curriculum that follows the government curriculum. Pesantrens have roughly the same three levels as the madrasas, but they are more staggered and not as clearly defined.

Many pesantrens have businesses that make them self-supporting, and they provide training for stu-

dents in trading, farming, cottage industries, and other community-based and income-generating activities. Thus, many pesantrens attempt to blend traditional Indonesian values—such as Islamic brotherhood, selflessness, simplicity, social justice, and self-sufficiency—with selected modern ones—such as entrepreneurial business management with English language and computer training.<sup>3</sup>

Though comparable enrollment data for public and Islamic schools is unavailable, it is estimated that Islamic schools enroll 10–15 percent of the total school-age population.

### Trends

In 2001, there were 11,312 pesantrens in Indonesia, an increase of 13.2 percent from the previous school year. For a variety of reasons discussed below, an increasing number of students attend them.

### Influences—Sects

The historical spread of Islam throughout the archipelago was far from consistent or uniform, and strict lines between different sects or approaches to Islam today are not always clear. Most Indonesian Muslims follow the Sunni sect or the orthodox teachings and traditions of Islam. Coastal groups in Java and some of the outer islands accepted Islam in its orthodox form and continue to practice it, while interior groups in Java adopted some of Islam’s precepts and practices while maintaining their Javanese and Hindu-Buddhistic traditions. In other outer islands, animist beliefs and practices underlie overt expressions of Islam. Many Javanese remain suspicious of orthodox political Islam and, together with Christian and Hindu minorities, identify more with the secular state of Indonesia than with an Islamic state.

Very broadly, the vast majority of orthodox Indonesian Muslims are either traditionalists or modernists. Traditionalists follow religious teachings handed down over the centuries, including traditions derived from Java. Modernists contend that the only true basis of Islam is the Koran and the example of the prophet Mohammad. These two macroinfluences are expressed through Indonesia's two largest Muslim organizations: the traditionalist Nahdatul Ulama, based in Java, and the urban-based modernist Muhammadiyah, which runs a network of schools, hospitals, and other welfare organizations. Paradoxically, traditionalist Muslims in Indonesia are generally regarded as more liberal and comfortable with the secular state, while modernists are generally regarded as more conservative, supporting a larger role for Islam in government. Nevertheless, both are regarded as moderate, and both are against an Islamic state that uses Sharia or traditional Islamic law as a basis for common law. In addition, the leaders of both organizations have expressed discontent with how Islam has been politicized by certain radical groups. Both organizations have appealed to the Indonesian government to take harsh measures against groups that break the law.

### Affiliation with Radical Groups

The existence of militant Muslims in Indonesia is not new. There were radical groups during the Sukarno and Suharto periods that attempted to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia and replace Pancasila. However, all these attempts failed, not only because of the repressive measures imposed by the government, but also because they failed to gain support from the mainstream Muslim population. The recent rise of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia is considered by Indonesian analysts to be the result of the sudden collapse of the Suharto's authoritarian regime, the newfound openness that followed, and the demoralization of the police.

Though radical groups claim to have large numbers of members, it appears that their membership and influences are very limited. Radical groups share, more or less, the same ambitions or beliefs<sup>4</sup>:

- establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia or even among Muslim collectivities within Southeast Asian countries

- adoption of *Sharia* or traditional Islamic law
- adherence to puritanical Islam and an aversion to secularism
- suspicion of or opposition to Christian churches and proselytizing
- opposition to Israel
- increasing anti-Americanism
- prohibition of prostitution, gambling, and alcohol

Since September 11, 2001, many analysts have been trying to determine the extent to which Islamic schools in Indonesia are affiliated with radical groups. While most are not, there is concern, especially among government officials, that some pesantrens are potential breeding grounds for terrorist activity. Although far more research is needed, several analysts have documented evidence that appears to link a few Islamic schools in Indonesia with Islamic extremist groups. The following are some examples.

- According to Leonard Sebastian,<sup>5</sup> there are two broad groups of Indonesian madrasas: 1) government-controlled madrasas that adopt a liberal education curriculum and private madrasas under the tutelage of tolerant Islamic leaders, and 2) privately run madrasas that adopt a more radical agenda propagated by Islamic clerics with radical intentions. Privately run madrasas outnumber those run by the government by a ratio of 9 to 1. Sebastian contends that some private madrasas have recruited members for terrorist groups. He refers to an article that describes links between madrasas recruiting for Laskar Jihad, a militant Indonesian Islamic group, and other groups advocating an Islamic state for Indonesia. Jafar Umar Thalib, the founder of Laskar Jihad, is also the founder of a pesantren in Central Java.<sup>6</sup> Recently, some Indonesian analysts speculated that Laskar Jihad may have ties to al Qaeda. In interviews with journalists, Jafar has admitted being visited by al Qaeda representatives but denies a direct relationship. Despite compelling evidence that Thalib's Laskar Jihad is a militant Islamic group,

it is unclear to what extent his pesantren serves as a recruiting ground for Laskar Jihad or other groups.

- According to the ICG, the Front to Defend Islam, one of the most prominent radical Islamic organizations in Indonesia, has a paramilitary wing, Laskar Pembela Islam, whose members come from rural religious schools and unemployed youth.<sup>7</sup>
- According to several articles, Abubakar Baasyir is the spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiyah, a Southeast Asian militant Islamic network whose hub is Pondok Ngruki Pesantren, a religious boarding school in Indonesia cofounded by Baasyir that is said to have about 2,000 students. According to an al Qaeda operative arrested in the summer of 2001, Baasyir was al Qaeda's senior representative for Southeast Asia and was instructed to plan attacks on U.S. interests in the region with operatives and resources from Jemaah Islamiyah. While Baasyir denies any connection to these plots, he admits to inspiring students to fight for Muslim causes in Bosnia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, and the Philippines. "The students who absorb my teaching and finally understand Islam completely want to implement the teaching of jihad," he stated.<sup>8</sup> One of those students is jailed Indonesian Al-Ghozi, who attended Baasyir's Ngruki Pesantren. How many more were recruited, trained, and deployed for Islamic causes or terrorist activities is unknown.
- A *New York Times* correspondent who interviewed students at a pesantren in East Kalimantan Province found they lived austerely and modeled themselves on Islamic values and traditions. But they also had jaundiced views of the United States, Israel, and world capitalism. As an antidote, the U.S. State Department invited 80 Islamic educators from Indonesian pesantrens to courses at the Institute for Training and Development in Amherst, Mass., that show the "good" side of the United States.<sup>9</sup>

While concerned about extremist elements infiltrating Islamic schools, the government has yet to clamp down systematically. Since recent terrorist

attacks and with increasing pressure from the United States, Indonesian officials say they are keeping a close watch on the activities of certain schools. However, they are reluctant to move too aggressively against them without absolute proof of criminal activity because they fear such actions would prompt widespread protests.

## Governance

The Ministry of National Education (MONE) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) have established a national curriculum that is compatible with both a Western-style and an Islamic education. MORA sets the Islamic component of the curriculum while MONE does the same for all other components. The government's unique effort thus combined both elements into a national education curriculum. However, the extent to which the ministries regulate Islamic schools is unclear.

Officials in both ministries express alarm at the growth of overt anti-Western and anti-U.S. teachings in unregulated schools, usually those with a customized curriculum. These officials recommend

- assisting MORA to increase the number of pesantren schools with official curricula (now 5 percent of the total) and decrease the number with individualized curricula (66 percent of the total) through provision of secular textbooks, instructional materials, and teacher training
- improving the quality of madrasas so that they attract students who would otherwise attend a pesantren
- providing additional funding for monitoring and tracking pesantren activities

## Parental Incentives

In Indonesia, parents send their children to primary and secondary schools to prepare them for modern life and to provide opportunities for further education, training, or a salaried job. An increasing number of children attend both secular and Islamic schools. Without sacrificing public education, most parents want to give their children a religious education and for them to be good Muslims.

Because of low academic achievement among public school students and decreases in job opportunities, some may see the practical skill training and traditional religious training offered in Islamic schools as an attractive alternative. Pesantrens, in particular, offer an accessible and practical means of obtaining job training and strengthening an Islamic identity. Parents from poorer and more isolated communities may see pesantrens or madrasas as the only affordable educational opportunities for their children, especially if they are not academically gifted.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment**

*Employment.* The greatest strength of some Islamic schools is that they teach some marketable skills that enable graduates to assume jobs. Community-based pesantrens are probably more sensitive to job market needs than more inflexible and established formal technical and vocational schools. In addition, more students can attend pesantrens of their choosing at less cost than those who attend public vocational schools at the secondary level.

Because the government and MONE have long recognized that madrasas and some pesantrens provide opportunities to develop basic literacy, numeracy, and analytical skills in the primary grades and skill training in the secondary grades, they have directly or indirectly supported MORA's efforts to build and maintain madrasas.

However, many madrasas and pesantrens do not teach basic subject matter and secondary science and math as well as public schools do. Many madrasas are hampered by a lack of qualified teachers in English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. As a result, madrasa students tend to be poorly educated in science and technology. Further, pesantrens not regulated by the ministry may emphasize religious training to the exclusion of teaching marketable job skills. Students at pesantrens that breed extremist activities may be sidetracked from pursuing job-related skills.

*Civic Participation.* Some Islamic organizations and institutes are benefiting from donor-sponsored civic education interventions that are bound to benefit students pursuing Islamic studies. These efforts, being implemented on a small scale, will need to be replicated on a larger scale to ensure that alternative ways of thinking and group problem-solving spread to a critical mass of students educated in Islamic institutions.

### **Donor-Funded Work with Islamic Schools and Results**

USAID has been supporting democracy and education initiatives in government primary and secondary schools and in Islamic institutes. USAID's new education strategy focuses on strengthening the quality of secular education provided in government schools and some Islamic schools.

The Asia Foundation, with USAID funding, has been working extensively with more than 25 Islamic organizations and groups in civic education. Perhaps the most notable single effort is the assistance provided to 47 State Institutes for Islamic Studies (IAIN). CIDA has recently funded a McGill University fellowship program, which, since the 1960s, has assisted IAIN to improve staff qualification and infuse IAIN with information, methodologies, research interests, concepts, and new ideas for graduate study. A CIDA-funded study states that IAIN has had a positive influence on the modernization of all levels of Islamic education, a system that serves over 6 million young people.<sup>10</sup>

The Asia Foundation is continuing the effort by supporting IAIN's development of a new civic education course for postsecondary students. This includes expansion of education and training on democracy, human rights, religious tolerance, and other civil society issues through curricular and materials development. Following a successful pilot program in Jakarta, the civic education course was expanded to reach 8,000 students nationwide. The objective is for the course to replace ideological indoctrination courses left over from Suharto's New

Order with a new curriculum designed to strengthen long-term tolerance and responsible citizenship.

Among other activities, the Asia Foundation assists

- the Indonesia Society for Pesantren and Community Development, by training student in principles and practices of democracy
- the Institute for Islamic and Social Studies, by providing training in human rights and con-

ducting courses to promote the understanding of democracy from an Islamic perspective

- the institutes of the main Islamic parties (Muhammadiyah and Nadhatul Ulama) on curricular and materials development on democratic principles and processes
- the Institute for Social Institute Studies, through workshops on Islam and programs on education and democracy from an Islamic perspective ■

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1 This is far lower than many countries with a lower GNI per capita, including Ethiopia, 14 percent; Gambia, 21 percent; Guinea, 27 percent; India, 12 percent; Mauritania, 16 percent; Niger, 13 percent; Senegal, 33 percent; Uganda, 21 percent.

2 World Bank, Staff Appraisal Report, "Central Indonesia Junior Secondary School Project," (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1996). <<http://www-wds.worldbank.org/>>

3 Ronald A. Lukens-Bull, "A Peaceful Jihad: Javanese Islamic Education and Religious Identity Construction," Ph.D., Arizona State University, 1997.

4 ICG, "Indonesia: Violence and Radical Muslims," *Indonesia Briefing*, October 10, 2001. <[www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=1776&l=1](http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=1776&l=1)>

5 Leonard Sebastian, "Getting to the Root of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia," *The Straits Times* (Singapore), August 6, 2002. <[http://www.ntu.edu.sg/idss/Perspective/research\\_050212.htm](http://www.ntu.edu.sg/idss/Perspective/research_050212.htm)>

6 Asia Foundation, "Islam in Modern Indonesia," report on a joint conference sponsored by the United States-Indonesia Society and the Asia Foundation, February 7, 2002. <<http://www.usindo.org/Briefs/Islam%20in%20Indonesia.htm>>

7 ICG, op. cit., 12.

8 Ellen Nakashima and Alan Sipress, "An Inspiration for Muslim Fighters," *Washington Post*, September 23, 2002, A10.

9 Jane Perlez, "U.S. Tries to Win Over Angry Indonesian Muslims." *New York Times*, June 22, 2002, A3.

10 McGill University and State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN), "Impact on the Development and Modernization of Islam in Indonesia," study submitted to CIDA, May 31, 2000. <<http://www.mcgill.ca/indonesia-project/impact/>>





# 8. Malaysia

Table 8.1. Malaysia Country Profile

## Demographic Indicators

Total population (millions) . . . . .	23.3
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	53
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	35
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	–
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$8,330
Total fertility rate . . . . .	3.01
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.77

## Education Indicators

### Primary

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	98.62
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	1
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	98.25
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	–
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	26
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	19

### Secondary

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	97.89
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	1.11
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	92.89
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	13.5

### Tertiary

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	1,048
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	2.9

### Literacy

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	88.4
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	84.7
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	92.1

### Finance

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	5.03
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	15.4
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	32.7

## Introduction

Malaysia has an impressive record in economic and educational development and the highest GNI per capita of the countries reviewed. In addition, Malaysia has very high primary and secondary enrollments and relative gender equity. Its relatively low university enrollment reflects the selective nature of the education system, which controls student flow through external examinations. One reason for this impressive educational development is the relatively large amount the government spends on education: 15 percent of the total budget.

## Public Education System

### Characteristics

As an upper middle-income country, Malaysia expects to achieve developed nation status by 2020. Since independence, educational development and reforms have been characterized by the government's efforts to adapt education to meet national economic and human resource development needs. Its heavy investment in education is based on the belief that the quality and efficiency of schools make a difference in educational achievement and subsequent opportunities for employment and career development. Education is a federal responsibility. While administered centrally under the Ministry of Education, states and districts also have decision-making responsibilities regarding educational personnel, substance, and process.

The school system consists of six years of elementary, three years of lower secondary, two years of upper secondary, two years of postsecondary or pre-university, and four years of university education. School-based assessment is administered at all grades and levels. At the end of each secondary level, students sit for common public examinations. Promotion during the first nine years is automatic, but subsequent promotion is determined by examinations, and higher education is very selective. Successful completion of upper secondary education can lead to opportunities for further study and training at postsecondary and tertiary levels at uni-

versities, colleges, and other educational training institutions.

### Challenges

*Access.* The Malaysian Government has been successfully implementing its policy of providing 11 years of basic education to all. Universal primary education has been a reality since 1990. From 1960 to 1995, enrollment rates for lower secondary rose dramatically, from 18 percent to 83 percent, and upper secondary rose from 10 percent to 56 percent. Although university enrollment rates rose only from .04 percent to 3.7 percent during the same period, the tertiary rate would be double this if students in private and foreign universities were included. Despite these impressive increases, enrollment rates in remote and sparsely populated regions, particularly in the east Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah, continue to lag behind those in west Malaysian states and urban areas.

*Quality.* While the quality of Malaysian education is relatively good, the delivery system needs greater teacher competence, more relevant curricula, and more effective use of technology and multimedia. More specifically, the qualifications of secondary school teachers need to be upgraded to a university degree. The academic thrust of the secondary curriculum also needs adjustment to facilitate the school-to-work transition for students entering the workforce upon graduation.

*Management.* Previous staff development programs were biased toward school pedagogy, at the expense of system planning and management. In addition, the existing education management information system has not been as effective as anticipated. As a result, collected data is not reviewed or used systematically for decisionmaking, and the use of resources has been inefficient. More policy assessments and greater staff development are needed to address strategic planning and management needs.

*Policy Reform.* Since 2000, the government has focused on overcoming the country's economic downturn of the late 1990s; this has weakened educational investment. Nevertheless, the government continues to

- improve access to and quality of basic education, especially in Eastern Malaysia
- rationalize investments in secondary, technical, and vocational education to make institutions more responsive to market demands
- increase access to high-quality polytechnical education
- strengthen the education sector's planning and managerial capacity

## Donor Assistance

The German Cooperative Agency for Development provides training to middle-level industrial workers to upgrade their skills through intensive basic, advanced, and specialized training. The development objective is to assist the country's shift from an exporter of raw materials toward an export-oriented industrialized nation. The technical objective is to improve the Malaysian Tertiary Vocational and Education Training system through curriculum development and teaching aids, preservice and inservice technical teacher training, and job linkages with training.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* Malaysia has a well developed system of technical and vocational education and over 60 vocational and technical schools. In addition, vocational subjects are incorporated in the secondary school curriculum, in line with the policy of allowing students in general academic schools to study vocational subjects. Students in vocational schools follow either an academic or skills training program. Those with the interest and aptitude are streamlined after grade 10 into the two-year skills training course. Technical and vocational education at higher levels is offered at the polytechnics, teacher education colleges, the MARA Institute of Technology, and the Tunku Abdul Rahman College, where professional courses leading to certificates and diplomas are available.

Notwithstanding, Malaysia's technical and vocational system needs to diversify. With donor assistance,

the government is converting limited vocational schools into more diversified secondary technical schools. While positive, the technical curriculum of some technical and vocational schools could be more in line with and responsive to market demand, and could include private secondary participation in development, operations, and financing. The polytechnic system also needs expansion and diversification to produce more qualified and better trained graduates to fuel Malaysia's growing technology needs. Measures needed include more financing, higher quality instruction, and industrial linkages to market realities. Training efforts should take advantage of the proximity to industries that can provide exposure and facilitate on-the-job training for students.

Since the quality of the primary education is relatively high, most students develop reasonable literacy, numeracy, and analytical skills. These skills prepare most primary educated youth to be employable or "trainable," whether or not they go to secondary school, enter training programs, or need to learn skills on the job. However, those who complete only primary education are minimally qualified for the decreasing pool of low-level jobs and need additional education to compete for higher level and higher salaried jobs.

*Civic Participation.* The public school system allows limited religious instruction in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism, the main religions of Malaysia. For students who choose not to take religious studies, there is instruction in ethics and morals that includes some civic education at the secondary level. Government primary schools have adopted a child-centered learning approach to include flexible groupings and greater attention to individual needs. Through participatory teaching and learning methods, children have more opportunity for individual expression and group exposure. In addition, the primary and lower secondary curriculum attempts to integrate the teaching of knowledge, skills, and values, as well as explicit teaching of moral values.

In practice, teachers may not always apply more participatory methods, particularly in rural and iso-

Table 8.2. School Attendance in Malaysia

Level	Government		Islamic*	
	Number of schools	Number of students	Number of schools	Number of full-time students
Primary	7,084	2,870,667	2,171	656,168
Secondary	1,538	1,794,515	420	203,010

\* Fardhu 'Ain, a separate type of Islamic school, trains primary public school students—1,032,841 of them—after school hours in school buildings, mosques, or private buildings. They are, in effect, Koranic schools, but their students would be double-counted if they were included in the above list.

Source: Malaysia Ministry of Education website and "Islamic Schools in Malaysia" (September 20, 2002), Department of Islamic and Moral Education, Ministry of Education.

lated schools. Some teachers may pay only lip service to participatory methods and practice more authoritarian methods, especially those preparing students for crucial external examinations.

## Islamic Schools

### Levels and Types

The two parallel streams of schools in Malaysia—government (national) schools and Islamic schools—are subject to the supervision and management of the Department of Education. Both are divided into three levels: elementary (grades 1-6), lower secondary (grades 7-9), and upper secondary (grades 10-11). Roughly, there is one Islamic school for every 10 government schools. Approximately 22 percent of primary students attend Islamic schools and 11 percent of secondary students attend Islamic schools.

Islamic schools can be divided into three categories:

- national religious schools (*Sekola Agama Kebangsaan*)
- state religious schools (*Sekola Agama Negri*)
- Islamic private schools (*Sekola Agama Rakyat*)<sup>1</sup>

National religious schools are fully funded by the federal government, but they are prestigious and selective: students must pass entrance exams to attend. State religious schools are fully funded by state governments, with supplementary funding

from the federal government. Islamic private schools are built and maintained by private individuals, but with funding from sources that include federal and state government grants, Islamic councils (*Yayasan Agama*), and parental school fees. These are akin to Indonesian madrasas.

Islamic schools use the Malaysian language as the language of instruction and follow the curriculum taught in government schools, where English is a compulsory subject. However, the Islamic schools at the primary level are less structured. They emphasize learning the Koran in basic Arabic. In many states, primary schooling is provided for a few hours daily to supplement the national curriculum. As in Indonesia, many primary students (mostly Malay) attend government schools in the morning and early afternoon and Islamic schools later in the afternoon.

Islamic schools begin formally and fulltime only at the secondary level. In addition to the national curriculum, they provide instruction in advanced Arabic and education in *Taswurr* (correct thinking), the Koran (*Al-Quran*), *As-Sunnah*, and Islamic law (*Syri'ah*). Teachers in Islamic schools are government trained. Some of the schools provide boarding services.

Most Islamic schools, particularly private ones, have a written philosophy that mirrors that of the Ministry of Education, with the exception of explicit references to Islam. The emphasis is cognitive growth, skill development, and producing students

with balanced personalities who are anchored in Islamic values and Malaysian national society. For Muslims and non-Muslims, moral education is central in primary education. It is designed to “develop self-esteem, independence, ethical values, the sense of truth, spirituality, self-discipline, self-actualization, and love for knowledge; and to train students to apply what they have learned in their daily life.”<sup>2</sup>

Islamic school physical facilities reflect their funding sources: those funded federally and by the state are quite good by Malaysian standards. Private schools that rely heavily on private funding often have below-standard school buildings; recreational facilities; and science laboratories, libraries, and resource centers. They also have less qualified teachers. In national and state schools, more teachers are university graduates than in private schools, where the majority are secondary school graduates.<sup>3</sup>

While national and state Islamic schools compare favorably with public government schools, private Islamic schools do not. They promise an alternative to secular education, but suffer from ill-equipped buildings, limited financial resources, and less than qualified teachers. Research findings suggest that Islamic private schools could be improved by adopting a “business mentality” and raising funds for systematic upgrades by using Muslim practices such as endowments (*waqf*), donations, and alms (*zakah*).

## Trends

While data on enrollment trends in Islamic schools are not available, parental interest has increased in the past decade. Apparently, more parents are interested in a firm grounding in religion for their children. In addition, the reputation of Islamic schools for providing a good education has grown just as some have begun to question the quality of government schools. Financial contributions to private Islamic schools—from government grants, donations from parents or Islamic organizations, and school fees—have increased in an effort to keep pace with the rising demand for Islamic schooling.

## Influences—Sects

Most Malaysian Muslims follow the Sunni or orthodox teachings and traditions. The second largest

political party (after the United Malaysian National Organization) is the Islamic Party. To some extent, the party helps ensure the persistence of orthodox teaching in the Islamic schools. It receives significant support from Western Malaysia, where more traditional versions of Islam are based.

## Affiliation with Radical Groups

Reportedly, several madrasas have been closed by the police because they contained alleged extremist elements. The government took swift action under the Internal Security Act. In addition, President Mahathir stated emphatically that he would not tolerate extremist elements in Islamic schools.<sup>4</sup> It should also be noted, however, that Abu Bakar Baasyir, founder of Pesantren Ngruki in Indonesia, spent several years in exile in Malaysia.<sup>5</sup>

## Governance

*Relationship to Government.* All public and Islamic schools in Malaysia are regulated by the Ministry of Education. They must be registered and meet ministry standards, including those relating to their finances, locations, and teacher qualifications. Within the ministry, the Department of Islamic and Moral Education oversees the curriculum of Koranic study and teachings to ensure they are organized, taught, and assessed according to national standards. This is important because national standards are set and administered for religious studies in all Islamic schools and this oversight and control makes it difficult for extremist elements to emerge and spread. There is also political control: radicals of all kinds come under the fierce scrutiny of Malaysia’s draconian National Subversive Act, and Islamic extremist groups are not exempt from its coverage.

*Relationship to Public School System.* All schools (public and Islamic) that come under the Ministry of Education provide religious education. In Islamic schools, Koranic and Islamic moral instruction are provided at the primary level and specialized Islamic studies at the secondary level. Of the three types of Islamic schools, however, only national religious schools have compared favorably with public schools; they are seen as selective and somewhat elitist in student composition and background. Traditionally, state and, especially, private Islamic



schools have not compared favorably with government schools. This is changing, as the public and the Islamic community in Malaysia make efforts to mobilize resources and improve school quality. Of the countries studied, Malaysia seems to have made the most progress toward a convergent and national integration of religious and secular education.

## Parental Incentives

Until recently, Malaysian Islamic schools were reputed to be second class. Their improved quality, the growing influence of Islamic education worldwide, and Malaysia's outstanding economic growth have caused more parents to regard these schools as viable alternatives to government schools. The motive is primarily religious: parents simply want their children to be securely grounded in Islam through religious instruction. At the same time, parents want to ensure that their children are prepared for modernity. By sending their children to national or state Islamic schools, they get both. Some parents may see Islamic schools as cheaper or more accessible, but most Malaysian parents whose children attend private Islamic schools are from the middle class.<sup>6</sup> As such, economics does not seem to be what motivates them to send their children to Islamic schools.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

Muslim parents in Malaysia face a dilemma when deciding how to educate their children. While they want to send their children to Islamic schools (preferably the national religious schools) to receive rigorous and lasting grounding in the knowledge, practices, and values of the Islam, they fear that these schools do not impart the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that would allow their graduates to participate effectively and productively in modern Malaysia. Government and business careers require knowledge of science, mathematics, English, and commerce. This kind of knowledge is not commanded by students from the Islamic school system and is best learned in government secondary schools and universities. Parents also fear that graduates from the religious system are lagging because components of higher-order thinking—analysis, inter-

pretation, synthesis, and coherency—are not sufficiently emphasized, particularly in late primary school and lower secondary school. Parents are also aware that secularized Muslims with degrees from public secondary schools and universities assume sought after positions with ease.

The Ministry of Education has attempted to resolve this dilemma by incrementally integrating the traditional and religious educational system with the national and secular one. President Mahathir, the former Minister of Education, and his successor, Anwar Ibrahim, attempted to bring the two systems closer through primary and secondary curriculum reforms and the development of a National Education Philosophy (NEP). They upgraded the content of social and natural sciences in secondary Islamic schools to resemble that of the national schools. They also improved the teaching methodology in secondary Islamic schools, giving more attention to individuals and emphasizing inquiry and discovery methods, Socratic discussion, projects, and group work. The objective was to produce more critical and creative thinkers—not only for a scientific and technological society, but to solve pressing social problems from an Islamic perspective. As learning became more participatory and less authoritarian, students also learned “democracy” in the classroom.

Mahathir and Ibrahim also brought the two systems closer together by highlighting moral instruction and ethical values in the national curriculum—many of which are similar to those of Islam and taught in Islamic schools without being explicitly labeled as such. Thus, the NEP characterized a Malaysian citizen as one who: 1) has a firm belief in and obedience to God; 2) is knowledgeable and skillful; 3) possesses high moral standards; 4) is responsible to himself or herself, society, religion, and nation; and (5) has a balanced personality. As noted above, instruction in religion, ethics, and morals for Muslims and non-Muslims alike was introduced into government primary and secondary schools as required learning.<sup>7</sup>

Lessons learned from Malaysia's experience of the past several decades include



- attempts to harmonize traditional and religious with modern and secular education systems can lead to a convergence of the systems
- housing the two systems under one bureaucratic roof (the Ministry of Education) enables government to facilitate this convergence for mutual advantage

## Donor-Funded Work with Islamic Schools and Results

The Government of Malaysia apparently initiated Islamic school reforms and developments with little, if any, outside intervention. While there have been UNESCO-sponsored activities and World Bank education projects, no single donor appears to drive educational innovation. ■

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1 A. Atari, "Islamic Private Schools in Malaysia and the Philippines," *Muslim Education Quarterly*, 15 (1) (1997),

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Citation unavailable.

5 Citation unavailable.

6 Atari, op. cit., 79.

7 R. Hashim, "Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Progress and Problems Toward Integration," *Muslim Education Quarterly*, 41 (1994).



# 9. Nigeria

**Table 9.1. Nigeria Country Profile**

## Demographic Indicators

Total population (millions) . . . . .	126.9
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	50
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	44
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	–
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$800
Total fertility rate . . . . .	5.28
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.46

## Education Indicators

### Primary

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	81
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	91
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	55
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	–
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	65
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	–
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	38

### Secondary

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	–
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	–
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	–
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	–

### Tertiary

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	–
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	–

### Literacy

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	49
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	–
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	–

### Finance

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	2.3
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	7
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	–

## Introduction

Nigeria has a population of 122 million and a wealth of natural resources. During its colonial period, it had one of the best educational systems in Africa. Today, the country has a low GNI per capita of \$800, and spends just 7 percent of the total government budget on education. The adult literacy rate of 49 percent is low, but other statistics are more encouraging. Nigeria has managed to achieve near gender equity, a gross primary education enrollment of 81 percent, and an adult primary completion rate of 65 percent. The north is predominantly Muslim and the south mainly Christian, a dynamic that partly explains regional differences in types of schools and gender-related enrollment issues.

## Public Education System

### Characteristics

Nigeria's formal education system is known as a 6-3-3-4 system: six years of primary school, three years of lower secondary school, three years of senior secondary school, and four years of university education (for a bachelor's degree). Primary education at government schools is free, although school fees are charged for lower secondary school and at successive levels. In addition, technical and vocational schools and training colleges for primary school teachers offer alternative secondary education. Tertiary education comprises universities, polytechnics, colleges of technology, and training colleges for teachers for primary and lower secondary schools.

The Nigerian educational pyramid still reflects the selective system of British colonial education, though it has widened at primary and secondary levels. Student promotion depends upon continuous assessment (school grades) and performance on external examinations organized by state education ministries. In this determination, national policy dictates that continuous assessment is weighted at 30 percent and the formal examination is weighted at 70 percent.

Responsibility for education is shared among three tiers of government. Primary education is directly

controlled by local governments and indirectly by state governments. Secondary schools are predominantly controlled by state governments, and tertiary education is controlled jointly by federal and state governments.

Nigeria's educational system expanded after independence in 1960, particularly when the universal primary education policy was implemented in the 1970s. This expansion gave way to contraction in the 1980s, when global oil prices declined. For the remainder of the century, prolonged neglect and decay under successive military regimes contributed to Nigeria's educational decline.

After Nigeria's return to civilian rule in May 1999, the newly elected government declared that rebuilding and revitalizing education was one of its three top priorities. The government's main focus is universal basic education (UBE), covering six years of primary school and three years of lower secondary school. The government is also planning to incorporate adult literacy into the nine-year basic education program.

The challenges are daunting. Approximately 44 percent of the population—53.6 million people—are under 15, yet education's share of the national budget remains one of the lowest in Africa. Furthermore, the net primary attendance rate is estimated at only 55 percent—57 percent for boys and 53 percent for girls.

### Challenges

*Access.* There are about 29.5 million primary school-age children in Nigeria; 23.8 million (81 percent) are enrolled in school. Enrollment rates are higher in the south than the north. Until recently, female enrollment rates in the north were lower than male rates, on par with male rates in the southwest, and higher than male rates in the southeast. Primary enrollment rates in urban areas are higher than in rural areas. The supply of schools in urban areas has yet to meet the demand and results in overcrowded classrooms.

At the secondary level, enrollments have declined markedly over the past several years. This is due to

inadequate public financing, increasing private costs, serious decline in quality, and stagnating demand for secondary graduates in the labor force. Secondary schools need renovation, teachers need better support, classrooms need more and better materials and equipment, and school management needs strengthening.

*Quality.* The quality of the teaching-learning experience in public school classrooms is low. Most teachers are poorly trained, and there is a dearth of textbooks and instructional materials. There is an absence of teacher professional support, and few teachers have the opportunity to upgrade their skills through inservice training—fewer than 10 percent received it in the last two years. Until recently, teachers were relatively unmotivated as a result of recurrent strikes and low salaries, but large salary increases have brought their income in line with that of other civil servants. It is too early to determine whether this has contributed to higher teacher morale or improved the quality of student learning.

In addition, there has been a noticeable decrease of civil society and community involvement in the education sector, due, in part, to dwindling education budgets, mismanagement, corruption, and neglect. Declining public participation has probably contributed to a decrease in school accountability at the community level, which has likely contributed to the declining quality of teaching and learning.

*Efficiency.* Average primary school completion rates are estimated at 65 percent for girls and 64 percent for boys. Reasons cited for dropping out include high educational costs for parents, a resource-poor school environment, minimal relevance of an overloaded curriculum, and teacher absenteeism.

*Financing.* Primary education is hugely underfunded, with serious impact on the availability of instructional materials, provision and maintenance of infrastructure, and until recently, on teacher remuneration. Revenue generation at the local government level is minimal. Local and state governments rely heavily upon the federal government's statutory allocations to cover primary education costs. Federal outlays are highly dependent on oil revenues, and when funding is reduced, teachers go

unpaid and other expenditures go unmet. The best current estimate is that about 1 percent of GDP is allocated to primary education annually, compared to 1.5 percent in 1990.

*Management.* Administrative staff make use of outdated practices and procedures, and administrative training is too theoretical. There is no well-established enabling culture of teacher professional and administrative support within the schools or from district and state educational authorities. The inspectorate is a supervisory body, not one that is advisory, supportive, and capable of capacity building. At the federal level, planning capacity is weak, and educational data collection, processing, and publication have deteriorated.

*Policy Reform.* The Government of Nigeria's educational priority is achievement of UBE through a nine-year basic education program. To meet this goal, the government reorganized high-level educational management. Strategies include increasing access, particularly for girls and disadvantaged groups; raising quality; improving equity; and strengthening delivery through community organizations, NGOs, and distance learning.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) has taken steps to enforce reform measures to improve quality. For example, the FME has assisted states in developing inspectorate services and strengthening their capacities to collect, analyze, publish, and disseminate educational data to improve supervision and management of schools. It also provides training and orientation to remedy inadequacies observed in inspected schools.

## Donor Assistance

Currently, eight donors—the World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, African Development Bank, EU, UNESCO, DFID, and the Commonwealth Secretariat—are helping the FME to improve all levels of the Nigerian education system. Information is available on only some of these donor activities:

- USAID recently launched its first full education program in Nigeria in 30 years. It includes the Literacy Enhancement Assistance Project (LEAP), which will assist Nigeria in completing its Education Sector Assessment and improving

Table 9.2. Donor Assistance to Nigeria's Public Education Sector

Donor	Level				Focus		Type of Educational Intervention						
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Access	Quality	Teacher training	Curricula/textbooks	Improved management system	Decentralization	Girls' education	Distance learning	Nonformal education	Vocational/technical
World Bank	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■				
USAID	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	
UNICEF	■			■	■	■	■			■			
Afr. Dev. Bank	■												
EU	■												
UNESCO	■			■	■	■	■						
CIDA													
GTZ/KFW													
JICA													
DFID	■			■	■	■	■				■		
Comm. Sec.	■			■	■			■		■			
DANIDA, FINNIDA, SIDA													

\* Includes building the capacity of NGOs for better social service delivery.

the quality of basic education and civic participation. The project's objective is to improve literacy and numeracy by providing teacher training and core content (secular) knowledge through interactive radio instruction, strengthening PTA groups, and improving the use of information for resource allocation decisions. LEAP is targeting 330 primary schools (200 government-run and 130 Islamic); three local government authorities; nearly 2,000 teachers (roughly two-thirds from government schools and one-third from Islamic schools); and a projected student population of 50,000. The project will run through December 2003 and cost \$10.7 million. USAID also funds the youth skills development program, which comprises life skills training such as conflict mitigation, HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, and vocational training. Courses designed for unem-

ployed youth aim to provide relevant and practical preparation for the workforce beyond purely technical training.

- The World Bank has three projects, including a community education program for nomadic groups. The bank's UBE project seeks to upgrade the education management information system, school buildings, teaching training, and learning materials. It also seeks to strengthen community schools and educational institutions at all levels. The World Bank's Second Primary Education Project trains school teachers, administrators, and state and local staff, funds local self-help projects, and seeks to enhance the information database and increase HIV/AIDS awareness through the schools. DFID collaborates with the World Bank in implementing the UBE project.



- The Commonwealth Secretariat's Education Fund supports capacity building efforts at federal, state, and local levels to help civil society organizations work with governments toward Education for All, and, in particular, to improve educational access for girls.
- UNESCO, as part of the Education For All initiative, cooperates with the International Reading Association to provide skills workshops for trainers of reading instructors.
- UNICEF joined the African Girls' Education Initiative to enhance awareness of girls' education, build girl-friendly schools, make curricula more gender-sensitive, promote employment of women teachers, and develop pedagogical skills to include girls more in classroom activities.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* Nigerian students who graduate from primary school with certificates are minimally qualified for low-level training and salaried jobs. Those with secondary certificates (after lower or upper secondary school) are more qualified for training and salaried jobs at higher levels. However, it is unclear what percentage of primary school graduates go on to secondary school: current statistics are unavailable, but 1994 data indicated fewer than 50 percent continued on to secondary education.<sup>2</sup>

Vocational education takes place in upper secondary school institutions<sup>3</sup> that teach as many as 40 trades. The duration ranges from four months (welding) to three years (auto mechanics). In 1990, there were 350 such schools and almost 100,000 enrolled students. The National Directorate of Employment organizes apprenticeship schemes for secondary school leavers, who are attached to skilled craftspersons for periods ranging from six months to several years. In addition, there are a variety of certificate job skills programs in universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, government ministries, and private business that provide training. However, it is not clear that these programs adequately reflect the needs of the modern workforce.

*Civic Participation.* While public schools do not explicitly train students for civic participation, USAID's LEAP interventions in government and Islamic primary schools emphasize participatory learning with student-centered classroom activities. This means students engage in learning more actively through asking questions and participating in group projects, discussions, and teamwork. While the objective is to enhance student learning and cognitive development, this participatory approach also develops democratic processes of give-and-take, sharing ideas, open discussion, and consensus-building. In addition, LEAP introduces democratic decisionmaking processes to local education authorities to facilitate data gathering, discussion, analysis, and dissemination.

## Islamic Schools

### Levels and Types

Though Islamic schools coexist with government schools, the system is difficult to compare because it is less clear cut and does not conform to a standard primary-secondary-tertiary description. The terms "Koranic" and "Islamiya" are widely used in Nigeria to refer to Islamic schools, and their curricula range along a continuum from purely religious to both religious and secular. Older students who have already received some religious education and want to become more advanced can attend madrasas, the third type of Nigerian Islamic school. While there is no standard Nigerian definition for the kinds of schools where students begin their education, LEAP has created definitions that will be used here: Koranic schools provide only religious training. Islamiya schools have incorporated secular material in addition to religious subjects. Children of any age (including adolescents) can attend Koranic schools, and are free to start school and drop out as they wish. Islamiya schools follow the public school convention of primary and secondary divisions.<sup>4</sup>

Koranic schools have existed in Nigeria for almost 1,000 years.<sup>5</sup> During colonial times, they were largely left alone. The British supported the spread of European mission schools in the nineteenth century and government primary schools in the twentieth

eth century. Koranic schools continued their religious traditions: children learned one or more chapters of the Koran by rote from a local religious teacher (*mallam*) before the age of 5 or 6. Religious studies included learning the Arabic alphabet and developing the ability to read and copy texts in the language, including those texts required for daily prayers. Islamic communities supported regular instruction in a mallam's house, under a tree on a thoroughfare or in a local mosque. A smaller number of more capable or motivated Muslim youth, usually boys, went on to examine the meanings of the Arabic texts under specialized tutorials with the mallam.

During the colonial era, madrasa secondary schools emerged where specialist teachers taught Arabic grammar and syntax, arithmetic, algebra, logic, rhetoric, jurisprudence, and theology. Madrasas attract students who have already learned the Koran—probably at a Koranic school—and want to pursue in-depth studies. After the madrasa level, a few select students continue their study in one of the famous (tertiary-level equivalent) Islamic centers of learning in Kano or elsewhere in North Africa or the Middle East.

Islamiya schools also emerged during the colonial period. These are formal Muslim schools originally modeled on European lines, with classrooms organized by age of students and level of learning and one or more teachers instructing students in various secular subjects. Islamiya schools, established in almost all major Nigerian cities, were notable in Kano, where Islamic brotherhoods developed an impressive number. The schools catered to devout and well-to-do parents who wanted essential Islamic instruction for their children as well as education in the new and secular subjects of English language, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Like Koranic schools, Islamiya schools today continue to teach Islamic subjects through a heavy focus on Koranic memorization. Like public schools, they also teach secular subjects such as English, math, technology, and science. While Islamiya schools retain memorization as the primary method of instruction, less didactic and more student-centered

methods may be used, especially in schools influenced by UNICEF and other proponents of child-centered pedagogy. It should be noted, however, that Koranic schools have traditionally employed such child-centered, “modern” methods as the teacher's one-on-one coaching of individual students, group learning, and peer group tutoring.

There is no current data on the number or breakdown of Koranic, madrasa, and Islamiya schools, but they probably number in the tens of thousands in northern Nigerian states where Islam is predominant. It is believed that Islamic schools provide the only source of learning for nearly 7 million children in Nigeria.

## Trends

In recent years, the number of Islamic schools in the north has increased. This is probably due to a combination of factors. As noted, public schools deteriorated in the 1980s and 1990s, and many school structures are in extreme disrepair. Government schools are not as attractive as they once were, especially in northern states where the independent government has not actively promoted the development of public schools.<sup>6</sup> Modern Islamiya schools offer what some parents believe is a higher quality alternative, and appeal to the desire of some parents to provide their children with a religious education.

The number of girls in Islamiya schools has also increased. In 2002, USAID/Nigeria reported that girls' enrollment in Islamiya schools exceeded that of boys, in contrast with public schools, where boys' enrollment is higher. A USAID consultant attributes this to parental perceptions that Islamiya schools are safe environments for girls.<sup>7</sup>

## Influences—Islamic Sects

Muslims in Nigeria can be grouped in one of three loose categories: traditionalist, modernist, and fundamentalist.<sup>8</sup> Traditionalists are in the majority; they believe in keeping with the “great traditions” of Islam: officiating in Islamic public rituals, instructing Muslims in Islamic precepts, and interpreting and administering Islamic law. Islamic modernists, however, disapprove of “traditionalist” Islam. Modernists espouse a legal positivism whereby Islam

strictly complies with Koranic rules of belief and the teachings of Mohammad. While traditionalist leaders arise from Koranic schooling and work in loosely structured networks, modernist leaders are well educated, and from well-known Islamic schools of higher education, such as the Kano School of Arabic Studies. The modernist leaders operate in a clear, modern organizational format, replete with elected officers, a written constitution, and formal registration as a legal body. A notable element of modernist institutes in northern Nigeria is the enrollment of women. Modernists have attempted to expand Muslim women's access to Arabic and Islamic learning, contrasting sharply with traditionalists who argue that mixing the sexes contravenes Islamic teaching.

A factional outgrowth of the modernists consists of highly educated Nigerians who studied abroad in the Muslim world and define themselves as fundamentalists. They oppose the secularity of the Nigerian state and identify with Islamic republics such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. Many fundamentalists espouse Shiite doctrines from Iran. Factions within the fundamentalists advocate the necessity of struggle and suffering to establish an Islamic society and state in Nigeria. Some carry this doctrine to an extreme, emphasizing martyrdom as a central tenet.

The fluidity of these classifications further complicates a description of trends in Nigeria. Recently, traditionalists seem to be shifting more toward modernism, and modernists seem to be moving toward a more fundamentalist interpretation. There is clearly a trend among the Muslim population in northern Nigeria to embrace Islamic fundamentalism in varying stages. This helps explain the adoption of Islamic law (*Sharia*) in the north.

### Affiliation with Radical Groups

There do not appear to be radical influences within Koranic and Islamiya schools in Nigeria today. During the economic downturn that began in the 1980s, however, riots were staged by Islamic fundamentalists who were products of the Koranic school system in northern Nigeria. These fundamentalists felt alienated from Western-educated and salaried modernist Muslims whose greater wealth had

enabled them to cope with the downturn. These extremist elements appeared to dissipate as economic stability returned.<sup>9</sup>

### Governance

There is no clear-cut governance of Koranic and Islamiya schools. To retain the goodwill of the northern emirates, the British colonial government found it expedient to maintain the dichotomy in education systems between north and south, with the result that the north lagged behind in Western education—and still has minimal government supervision. Traditionally, Koranic schools operated as community-based institutions with little if any government oversight. What control existed over Islamic (mainly Koranic) schools came from centralized religious authorities, more as spiritual and moral guidance than administrative control.

Currently, the governmental Islamic Education and Social Affairs Board (IESAB) at the state level is beginning to regulate Koranic and Islamiya schools, although there is still no formal or explicit control. The IESAB's mandate is to assist with standardization and quality improvement, mainly through the curriculum. An objective is to raise Koranic and Islamiya schools to government primary school standards, enabling them to become primary schools, should they wish to do so. In reality, governance of Koranic schools in the north varies from school to school and from state to state. Some of the more traditional Koranic schools continue to operate independently, while more urbanized ones come directly under the IESAB or even the State Primary Education Board. Other agencies, such as the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, also claim to have authority over some Koranic schools. In short, the governance of Koranic schools is politically sensitive and in a state of flux.

### Parental Incentives

Islamic schools in Kano had noticeably higher numbers of girls than boys (2:1 ratio). Helen Boyle believes that this may be due to “the notion that these schools are safer for girls and will keep them close to their religion.” There is less concern that boys will be “influenced away from their religion.” Moreover, “parents [may] feel that an Islamiya edu-

cation serves girls better because their primary role will be to marry and have children,” making it unnecessary or perhaps unwise to make the greater investment in public schooling for girls.<sup>10</sup>

On a broader level, it would appear that parents believe that both government and Islamic schools have advantages—one prepares children for the secular world, the other for the heavenly world. Hence, parents are likely to follow a tandem approach: their children attend regular classes at government schools and supplement them with religious classes in Koranic schools at the beginning or end of the day.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* In general, students who receive strictly religious education are prepared for religious but not secular jobs. Thus, by offering math, science, and other subjects, Islamiya schools provide better preparation for the secular workforce than Koranic schools. The great variation in the quality of schools makes it impossible to generalize whether public or Islamiya schools make students more employable,

though the highest quality public schools are probably the best in this regard. Where Islamiya schoolteachers have had some secular training, it is likely that they can better prepare students for secular jobs. It is possible that USAID’s LEAP will build the capacity of some Islamiya schools to educate students for the secular job market.

*Civic Participation.* As in government schools, the recently begun LEAP interventions in Islamiya schools emphasize student-centered learning. The participatory approach builds upon such “modern” learning styles embedded in Koranic classrooms as individual pacing, self mastery, peer teaching, and learning circles. As a result, Islamiya students in participating LEAP schools are exposed to “democratic” group activities, though they are not necessarily labeled as such.

## Donor-Funded Work with Islamic Schools and Results

Approximately one-third of the schools participating in USAID’s LEAP are Islamic. There is no information regarding other donor interventions in Nigerian Koranic schools. ■

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2 Torsten Husén and T. Neville Postlethwaite, eds., *International Encyclopedia of Education*, 2nd ed. (New York: Elsevier, 1994), 4127.

3 Ibid., 4128.

4 Material for this section comes from USAID/Nigeria and educational consultant Helen Boyle, author of “*Quranic School Strategy and Mini Needs Assessment. Trip Report*” (Washington, D.C.; USAID, February 25, 2002).

5 Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Nigeria: A Country Study*, 5th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1992).

6 Ahmed Dahuru, *The Modernization of Islamic Education in Nigeria* (1998).

7 Boyle, op. cit.

8 Muhammad S. Umar, “Education and Islamic Trends in Northern Nigeria: 1970–1990s,” *Africa Today*, 48 (2) (Summer 2001), 127–150.

9 Clyde Ahmad Winters, “Koranic Education and Militant Islam in Nigeria,” *International Review of Education*, 33 (2) (1987).

10 Boyle, op. cit.

# 10. Guinea, Mali, Senegal

Table 10.1. Guinea Country Profile

## Demographic Indicators

Total population (millions) . . . . .	7.5
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	85
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	45
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	–
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$1,930
Total fertility rate . . . . .	5.22
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.4

## Education Indicators

### Primary

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	58.89
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	0.63
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	45.67
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	–
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	–
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	28
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	49

### Secondary

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	14.72
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	0.36
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	12.69
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	–

### Tertiary

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	112
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	–

### Literacy

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	–
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	–
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	–

### Finance

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	1.82
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	26.8
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	35.1



Table 10.2. Mali Country Profile

**Demographic Indicators**

Total population (millions) . . . . .	10.8
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	90
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	47
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	–
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$780
Total fertility rate . . . . .	6.3
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.38

**Education Indicators**

**Primary**

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	53.1
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	0.7
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	41.71
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	–
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	2.4
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	16
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	–

**Secondary**

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	14.23
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	0.52
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	–
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	0.7

**Tertiary**

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	133
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	0.3

**Literacy**

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	44.8
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	37.9
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	52

**Finance**

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	2.9
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	–
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	45.9



Table 10.3. Senegal Country Profile

**Demographic Indicators**

Total population (millions) . . . . .	9.5
Muslim population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	92
Population under age 15 as a percentage of total population . . . . .	45
Rural population as a percentage of total population . . . . .	–
GNI per capita (ppp, current international \$) . . . . .	\$1,480
Total fertility rate . . . . .	5.1
Human Development Index . . . . .	0.42

**Education Indicators**

**Primary**

Primary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	69.73
Primary gender parity index . . . . .	0.82
Primary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	58.81
Apparent gross intake rate . . . . .	–
Adult primary completion rate . . . . .	8.3
Primary repeaters as a percentage of total enrollment . . . . .	13
Primary student/teacher ratio . . . . .	56

**Secondary**

Secondary gross enrollment ratio . . . . .	19.55
Secondary gender parity index . . . . .	0.64
Secondary net enrollment ratio . . . . .	–
Adult secondary completion rate . . . . .	1.5

**Tertiary**

Tertiary students per 100,000 inhabitants . . . . .	–
Adult tertiary completion rate . . . . .	1.1

**Literacy**

Adult literacy rate . . . . .	39.2
Female adult literacy rate . . . . .	29.7
Male adult literacy rate . . . . .	49.1

**Finance**

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP . . . . .	3.46
Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure . . . . .	33.1
Public expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure . . . . .	34.2

## Introduction

This section concentrates on public and Islamic schools in the francophone West Africa countries of Guinea, Mali, and Senegal. They are discussed together because of the similarities in their public and Islamic schooling outweigh differences. As Table 10.4 indicates, all three countries have made significant progress in economic growth and educational attainment during the past 20 years.<sup>1</sup> However, much remains to be done. Although literacy rates have increased, more than half the populations in these countries are illiterate.<sup>2</sup>

## Public Education System

### Characteristics

Educational systems in Guinea, Mali, and Senegal are variants of the selective system established by the French. Primary education consists of five to six years of schooling, and is followed by three to four years at the lower secondary level and three years at the upper secondary level. Universities or technical institutes are also available in each country. However, selection begins after grade 6, when students must pass an external exam. Students face another exam to advance to upper secondary school. As a result, fewer than half the students continue to lower secondary school: secondary gross enrollments (only 15–20 percent of the secondary school population) are half of primary gross enrollments (40–60

percent of the primary school-age population). Only a fraction (fewer than 1 percent) continue to tertiary-level universities or technical institutes.<sup>3</sup>

All three countries are committed to the development of six years of primary education for all youth. This priority is reflected in funding levels: all countries spend 34–45 percent of total education expenditures on primary education. This is significant, considering that public expenditure on education is only 2–3 percent of GNP.

### Challenges<sup>4</sup>

Despite economic growth and increased school enrollment, public education faces several challenges.

*Access.* There are gender and urban-rural enrollment disparities in all three countries: more boys and more urban children attend school.

- *Guinea.* The gap between boys' and girls' primary gross enrollment is 29 percent, while the urban-rural gap is even higher. Conakry, for example, has a primary gross enrollment rate of 99 percent, while eight of 38 prefectures have rates under 35 percent.
- *Mali.* Gross enrollment rates are under 53 percent, with average rural enrollments at 30 percent and only 25 percent for rural girls. Overall, there is inadequate coverage of primary schools for rural and periurban populations. The admis-

Table 10.4. Population, Literacy, Income, and School Enrollments in Guinea, Mali, and Senegal, 1980–2000

	1980						2000							
	Population (millions)	Population growth	Percent literate	GNI per capita	Enrollment: male	Enrollment: female	Total enrollment—%	Population (millions)	Population growth	Percent literate	GNI per capita	Enrollment: male	Enrollment: female	Total enrollment—%
Guinea	4.5	1.7		48	25	36		7.4	2.2		\$1,930	62	33	48
Mali	6.6	2.2	14	\$480	34	19	26	10.8	2.4	41.5	\$780	49	32	41
Senegal	5.5	2.8	21	\$780	55	37	46	9.5	2.6	37.3	\$1,480	72	57	64

Source: UNESCO.

sion rate is about 52 percent: 60 percent for boys and 43 percent for girls. In some areas, this rate is as low as 25 percent for boys and 19 percent for girls.

- *Senegal.* The gross primary education enrollment rate in Dakar is about 92 percent, but the average for other provinces is only about 55 percent. Girls are less likely to attend and finish school than boys. In addition, there is an inadequate number of places in schools, and they are poorly distributed. This prevents many children from entering the school system.

*Quality.* Overall, the quality of school inputs, teaching processes, and learned outcomes has declined in all three countries. Students are learning less at greater cost. In addition, teacher absenteeism, strikes, and low salaries indicate low motivation and morale, which negatively affect learning.

- *Guinea.* Standardized achievement tests show low learning levels, which fall even further as students progress through the system. For example, over 50 percent of grade 2 students achieve minimal competencies at grade level in French and mathematics, but this figure drops to about 30 percent by grade 6.
- *Mali.* Passing rates on external exams have been declining, from 64 percent to 56 percent at the end of primary and lower secondary levels in urban and rural areas. The quality of teaching and learning is poor, and, for the most part, few resources are allocated for improving the quality of learning. The pupil to textbook ratio is very low in French and national languages; the national curriculum is not very well adapted to the linguistic, social, and economic context; and teaching methods and classroom practices are inadequate and outdated.
- *Senegal.* Low levels of learning continue to characterize the system and limit the number of well-qualified students graduating from each level. Only about 30 percent pass grade 6 examinations and only 50 percent pass in grade 9. Only about 10 percent of poor rural people can read and write. The system does not meet the special needs of students with learning disabilities and

gifted students. In addition, private provision of schooling is underdeveloped, with no consistent government strategy for financial or pedagogic support.

*Efficiency.* In all countries, dropout and repetition rates are high and completion rates relatively low, thus driving up unit costs per child. Reasons cited for dropping out include high educational costs for parents, resource-poor school environments, minimal relevance of an overloaded curriculum, and teacher absenteeism.

*Management.* Despite attempts to decentralize primary education by strengthening local supervision or promoting community schools, current systems are still too centralized. As a result, local level education managers are overloaded and ill-equipped to supervise and visit schools. Planning is weak, with inadequate systems for gathering educational information for monitoring, evaluation, and review. In addition, the managerial culture, especially in rural areas, is still more akin to that of an inspectorate rather than one that provides advice and support for poorly trained, underpaid, and isolated teachers.

*Policy Reform.* All countries have embarked on programs to increase access, improve quality, and diminish inequities in their education systems, especially at the primary level. Of note are attempts to enhance girls' education through promotion of "girl-friendly" schools that encourage more women to become teachers and provide safe boarding facilities for girls at rural schools. Mali, in particular, has experimented with different models of community schools to make education more cost effective and more accessible to the community by recruiting and managing teachers to be more responsive to community needs. Senegal has accelerated teacher recruitment: contract teachers now constitute about 25 percent of the teaching force. At the macro level, Guinea sustained its educational growth in the 1990s through economic and political reforms that liberalized the economy, targeted public sector spending, controlled inflation, and stabilized the exchange rate.

## Donor Assistance

### Guinea

The Government of Guinea's primary education reform program (PASE II) aims to improve the quality and equity of educational delivery and increase the involvement of local communities in school-level educational management.

- USAID supports PASE II through Strategic Objective 3 (S03) Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels activity. This activity has three components: 1) improving educational planning and decentralized management, 2) improving primary level instruction using interactive radio instruction and materials development, and 3) improving opportunities for regional and gender equity in primary education.
- The World Bank's Education for All Project seeks to support the government's objective of

ensuring equitable access to a high-quality education through school construction and rehabilitation, improved teaching and learning interventions, and management training to accelerate decentralization.

- UNICEF is involved in nonformal education through community outreach programs and in formal education through school-based curricular and materials development interventions.
- The African Development Bank supports quality improvement and support for girls' schooling through construction, curricular and materials development, teacher training, and community outreach interventions.
- The French Government provides assistance in school administration training, monitoring and evaluation, curriculum reform, school construction, and personnel management.

Table 10.5. Donor Assistance to Guinea's Public Education Sector

Donor	Level			Focus			Type of Educational Intervention						
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Access	Quality	Teacher training	Curricula/textbooks	Improved management system	Decentralization	Girls' education	Distance learning	Nonformal education	Vocational/technical
World Bank	■			■	■	■		■	■				
USAID	■				■		■	■		■			
UNICEF	■				■		■					■	
Afr. Dev. Bank	■			■	■	■	■			■			
EU													
UNESCO													
CIDA													
GTZ/KFW	■				■	■							
JICA													
French	■			■			■	■					
DFID													
DANIDA, FINNIDA, SIDA													

- Other donors active in the education sector include CIDA, the EU, the German and Japanese international agencies, and the United Nations World Food Programme.

### Mali

USAID’s SO for education is to Improve Social and Economic Behaviors among Youth. The program aims to improve education-related youth behavior by providing increased access to quality primary education and strengthened institutional capacity to deliver social and economic services. The program emphasizes girls’ education and development of community schools through teacher training; strengthened administration; curriculum development with emphasis on life skills, health awareness, and HIV/AIDS prevention; and PTA and community organizational development.

The World Bank has two projects. The Education Sector Expenditure Project seeks to improve access

and quality through teacher training, curriculum and materials development, madrasa improvement, strengthening of school facilities and increasing school construction, and decentralizing educational management. The World Bank’s Improving Learning in Primary Schools Project seeks to develop and assess bilingual education through materials development and the training of teachers and supervisors, management training to improve monitoring and evaluation, and community outreach to strengthen PTAs and related groups.

UNICEF’s program seeks to improve access and quality through teacher training, school renovation, and community outreach that centers on child- and girl-friendly schools.

The African Development Bank Education Project III strengthens educational planning, improves teacher training, and widens girls’ education.

**Table 10.6. Donor Assistance to Mali’s Public Education Sector**

Donor	Level				Focus		Type of Educational Intervention						
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Access	Quality	Teacher training	Curricula/textbooks	Improved management system	Decentralization	Girls’ education	Distance learning	Nonformal education	Vocational/technical
World Bank	■			■	■	■	■	■	■				
USAID	■			■	■	■	■	■		■			
UNICEF	■			■	■	■				■			
Afr. Dev. Bank	■			■	■	■		■		■			
EU													
UNESCO													
CIDA													
GTZ/KFW													
JICA													
French													
DFID													
DANIDA, FINNIDA, SIDA													

## **Senegal**

USAID's Strategic Objective for education in Senegal is Increased Girls' Access and Retention in Targeted Primary and Vocational Schools. This is to be achieved through school environment improvement, practical and life skills training, and community development.

The World Bank's Quality Education for All Project aims to improve the quality of basic education by 2009. The project consists of three components: 1) increasing access through construction and renovation, curriculum diversification, and technical and vocational training; 2) improved quality through early childhood development, curriculum and materials development, and teacher training; and 3) management strengthening through financial training, community development, and program monitoring and evaluation.

UNICEF's emphasis is on girls' education, with a program that combines social mobilization, community development and support, gender equitable curricula, and income generation activities.

GTZ emphasizes girls' literacy programs through training, community mobilization, income generation, and organization of women's groups.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment**

*Employment.* Students who graduate from primary school are minimally qualified for low-level training and salaried jobs. Those who complete lower or upper secondary school are more qualified for training and salaried jobs at higher levels. However, the percentage of students who go on to secondary school is generally well below 20 percent.



As a result of French influence, there is a significant vocational training subsector within the education sector. Most of this is formal training, which is concentrated at the secondary level in urban areas. It generally consists of subjects or streams (such as business, industry, or commerce), either in schools or as separate training institutes. Increasingly, small private sector institutes are emerging to train urban youth with at least three years of secondary education for salaried jobs in business, accounting, or computers. These institutes also offer courses in mechanics, electricity, metal construction, boiler-making, carpentry, office work, and trade. In rural areas, various departments related to development (such as agriculture, water and forests, environmental protection, animal husbandry, fishing, and primary healthcare) provide farmers with relevant skills to increase productivity or improve their livelihoods. Often, especially in Mali, skill training is provided in conjunction with adult literacy programs in a regional or national language.

Rigidity is one weakness of these training programs, especially those provided in government lower secondary or training schools. Courses and equipment stay the same year after year, despite changes in the job market. This helps explain the rise of small training institutes in the private sector, but the capital and recurrent costs (instructors' salaries) are high and do not always justify their operations. Moreover, training in secondary schools and separate public institutes tends to be geared to producing graduates to operate in the public sector. Meanwhile, economic and political policies and programs are being developed to shrink the public sector and accelerate the private sector. While training in public sector schools and institutes is technically good, it needs to be more oriented to the changing job market in the private sector.

*Civic Education.* The literature search did not yield any information on the status of a civic education program in public education.

## Islamic Schools<sup>5</sup>

### Levels and Types

In Islamic Africa, Islamic schools are pervasive: there are many and different types of schools, and large populations have experienced some level of Islamic instruction. It is also safe to say that no one knows how many schools, teachers, or students there are. This is because a contradiction permeates the study of Islamic schools in Africa: on one hand, widespread opinion admits to the pervasiveness and efficacy of Islamic education; on the other, few teachers, learned scholars, or government administrators know—or show much interest in knowing—precisely how widespread or effective these schools are. From the beginning of the colonial era until recently, the visibility of these schools had declined to the point of being on the fringe of formal education, eclipsed by the rise of government schools. Islamic schools have become visible again with the deterioration of government schools and the Islamic revival sweeping the world. In Senegal, for example, the proportion of the population reporting itself as Muslim grew from under 50 percent in 1950 to over 90 percent in 1990.

The teacher and the Koran form the heart of Islamic schooling in francophone West Africa. Usually, the teacher has studied the Koran in depth, emulates the life of Muhammad, and understands the basics of Islamic law. Teachers, usually male, are known by various terms, depending on geographic location and educational level. Some experts refer to the francophone West African Koranic teacher as a *marabout*, while others refer to the *mallam*. Since the teacher receives paltry compensation from the parents of students, he usually depends on agriculture, artisanry, trade, commerce, or business to make a living. Hence, the community Islamic school may be the teacher's home, the mosque, under a shade tree, vacant quarters, or a shed.

The two basic types of Islamic schools are traditional and modern.

- At the elementary level in traditional Islamic schools, teachers instruct students in the Koran

through group chanting or individual repetition of verses, along with writing them in Arabic. Pupils also learn how to observe daily prayers, study the Prophet's life, and learn various aspects of Islam through graded courses. Elementary modern schools teach subjects in addition to the Koran, some of which may be secular.

- Students at the secondary level in traditional schools (madrasas) learn the meaning of the Koran, including the traditions surrounding the Prophet. This is a more selective level: most students have dropped out by this time, and those who continue may want to become teachers. At the secondary modern level, religious and secular courses are mixed, and Arabic and French are taught.
- At traditional higher level schools, instruction becomes specialized, and is usually a special and extended affiliation (tutorial or apprenticeship) with a learned scholar (perhaps an imam). Modern higher-level schooling means attending an Islamic institute of higher learning, taught in Arabic or even in French, with specialized religious science (*ilmu*) and secular courses.

*Koranic Schools.* The Koranic school is the most widespread in Islamic Africa. In some areas, mostly urban, preschool Koranic schools prepare the young for government primary schools or for continued Koranic schooling. Dropout rates in the initial Koranic instructional sequence are high: 85–95 percent of students never fully complete the primary cycle of courses that concludes with memorization of the entire Koran and receipt of a diploma. Though students may not have completed the cycle, some attendance is important because the exposure means most have been socialized into the essential tenets and duties of Islam.

*Language.* Because Koranic schooling focuses on learning the Koran, which is written and recited in Arabic, achieving literacy is difficult for African students whose first language is not Arabic. Teachers explain lessons and manage students in their first language or a regional language such as Wolof, Peul, or Hausa. In some cases, teachers switch their lan-

guage usage in class by using an African language understood by students for explanatory, managerial, and disciplinary functions and using Arabic for presentation and instruction of Koranic verses, phrasing, or recitations. Thus, students come to understand spoken and written Arabic through memorization and repetition, as well as through explanation and application in African languages. In other cases, teachers use an adapted version of Arabic script as a phonetic technique for teaching reading and writing. Formerly, teachers transcribed several of West Africa's most widespread languages into Arabic script by inventing or combining letters to represent special sounds peculiar to African languages. Through this code, African students in Koranic schools become literate in Arabic even if they never attain a level that would permit them to communicate easily in writing.

*Learning Processes.* Instruction in Koranic schools includes a number of common features:

- oral memorization of the Koran
- emphasis on accurate and aesthetic oral recitation
- training in Arabic (or a closely related) script
- disciplined instruction

Unlike public or secular primary schools, Koranic teaching provides no opportunity for age-graded vocabulary or grammatical structures. In addition, illustrations are strictly forbidden for religious reasons. Simply put, learning to read by using the Koran as a primer is not a trivial task for any child. Memorization is by rote: pupils recite their lessons aloud until the teacher approves. They also write passages from the Koran on a wooden slate with a pen, using locally made black ink and washing their slates clean for the next lesson. Teachers point out sections of the Koran as important for religious belief or practical for daily living. Teachers are highly esteemed as a source of knowledge. Their task is to lead and educate with discipline, vigilance, and often a bamboo cane to back up their authority.<sup>6</sup>

Koranic schools teach learning in a structured setting; respect for an authority figure (usually not a

kinsman); use of language, individually or in group recitation; the encoding and decoding a written alphabet; and how to be a moral person and good citizen.<sup>7</sup>

It would seem that early Koranic schooling provides a preparatory payoff to subsequent, progressive, and more difficult schooling, be it religious or secular. Evidence from educational psychology strongly supports the notion that background information, basic learning, and language and social skills in the classroom are the building blocks upon which much subsequent school learning is based. If these skills are obtained prior to or along with secular school learning (as is the case now in some urban areas of Africa), there should be substantial transfer, even if some of the content (Koran) is different from classroom texts. Naturally, comparisons of the two types of schools must be in similar geographical and cultural contexts.

*Learned Outcomes.* Limited empirical evidence indicates that students learn the following:

- *Literacy.* Some empirical evidence suggests that more Koranic students than might be expected achieve and sustain a working level of literacy. Usually, these individuals have either been prepared by Koranic schooling for commercial, government, or NGO jobs that require minimal literacy; or their schooling has enabled them to become literate through formal or on-the-job training in an international language besides Arabic. Limited evidence from self-reporting samples of school graduates in Guinea indicates that over 90 percent of males claimed reading and writing abilities in Arabic script. In Senegal, 25–75 percent of all male adults and 10–25 percent of women in villages contacted claimed this level of literacy.<sup>8</sup>
- *Numeracy.* Numeracy skills are not explicitly taught in Koranic schools in Africa, although some are beginning to do so, and all refer to numbered pages in Koranic usage. Hence, students are at the least familiar with numbers and, by implication, multiples of numbers. Numeracy is taught, however, at the secondary and higher levels. While 93 percent of respon-

dents in the Guinea study cited above considered themselves literate, only 26 percent considered themselves numerate.<sup>9</sup> However, most marabouts and imams are considered numerate, and they are sought for accounting responsibilities in their communities. In addition, Koranic graduates are likely to seek out opportunities to develop or improve their numeracy skills through formal or on-the-job training.

- *Leadership Roles.* Students who continue their Koranic schooling beyond the initial phase often become leaders in various fields, whether religious, societal, entrepreneurial, or political. Through role modeling, tutorials, apprenticeships, and related superordinate-subordinate relationships, Koranic students appear to be more prepared and motivated to seek positions of influence than those who did not attend any school.
- *Intellectual Development.* A synthesis of empirical evidence from Liberia and Morocco as well as from the above studies suggests that disciplined and systematic memorization and literacy training in Koranic schools have practical applications in management, developing inventories, and organizational reconstructions.<sup>10</sup> Koranic graduates excel in serial memory or memorizing the content and sequence of different elements presented in order. This learned outcome has applications to basic understanding in law, local administration, and business management. In Morocco, Berber-speaking rural students who attended Koranic school actually increased reading achievement in public schools.<sup>11</sup>
- *Moral Development and Citizenship.* Koranic training is intended to reinforce the strict moral teachings of the faith and is a generally accepted reference for future public service. On a related note, a student must respect and obey the teacher, who usually lies beyond the student's kinship network. As an authority figure in the local community, this payment of respect contributes to students' acceptance of the norms of civic society.

## Trends, Influences, Affiliation with Radical Groups

There have been madrasas or Franco-Arabic schools since colonial times that combine Islamic teachings with the Arabic language, along with the study of secular subjects in French or a regional language. The French attempted to mute the religious impact (and perceived threat) of Koranic schools through these alternative bilingual and religio-secular schools in urban areas. Unlike Koranic schools, these schools resemble the Western model, with classrooms, textbooks, exams, formal administration, and secular subjects that include science and social studies. Schooling also continues to the secondary and tertiary levels. Since the 1970s, Arab NGOs armed with substantial funds from the oil boom have poured into Islamic Africa to strengthen and Arabize madrasas. This trend continues, as the quality of public schools has deteriorated and African states became more fragile, buffeted by global economic forces.

In effect, there has been a growth and spread of modernized forms of Arabic education. Graduates emerge from madrasas that are influenced by the religious Wahhabist movement and form a modernist cohort of educated Muslims. In some cases, they are bent on reforming various social and political institutions: schools, legal systems, gender relations (elevation of women's status), local religious hierarchies, and the meaning and status of Islamic knowledge itself. They are modernist insofar as they appeal to the principles of law, reason, and science in the construction of the new Islamic society they envision.

However, these madrasas have not delivered what they promised in terms of salaried jobs and enhanced social status. Graduates from these schools cannot compete with French-speaking government school graduates with baccalaureates who can obtain jobs, training, or further education. Hence, they become discontented and vulnerable to extremist or subversive influences sometimes conveyed in these madrasas.

It is not clear from literature who these modernists are: little mention is made of numbers, ethnic

groups, age, or socioeconomic background. Neither the identities nor the larger economic and social forces behind the revolutionary ideology of this visible and recognized force were elucidated by francophone Africa literature reviewed.

## Parental Incentives

In general, parents have three choices regarding their children's education: Koranic schools, madrasas, and public schools. Most parents, especially those in rural areas, choose Koranic schools because they want their children to learn classical Islam and their attendance signifies a commitment to the religion of Islam. This tradition has existed for a thousand years and is rooted in the community. The choice may also be pragmatic, in that no other school alternative is available or parents see the value of Arabic literacy for trading purposes, as reported among the Hausa.<sup>12</sup> The motive may also be ideological, if the public school is a perceived threat to their child's religious identity and status. Parents may prefer religious schools to reaffirm their children's identity as Muslims and insulate them from pervasive modern and secular influences.

If parents have access to a government primary school, they will send, simultaneously or in sequence, their children to Koranic school and then to the government school as initial preparation for a salaried position. It is likely that they consider each school to have a different function: the Koranic school strengthens and legitimizes their children's understanding and commitment to the religion of their ancestors and as such is a part of the community; the government public school is a preparation for government or related white collar jobs beyond the community and as such is from the urban world. Despite efforts in Mali to bring public schools closer to parents' lives through community-managed schools, these schools still remain more a symbol of government than of the community itself.

Parents' third option is to send their children to primary and/or secondary madrasas. Parents who want the "best of both worlds" tend to do this. This choice may also be pragmatic if the madrasa is the



best, most affordable, and available school around; or it may be ideological as in the case of the modernist madrasas.

An observation among the Hausa from Niger (a neighboring francophone country) that may be relevant to many West African Muslim parents regarding motivations for sending their children to school:

Many families make financial investments in both Koranic and state education for their children. Most children who go to public school also attend Koranic school. More children attend public than Koranic schools, although the public schools have very high dropout rates. School attendance has continued to grow...and many more boys than girls attend school, although the relative proportion of girls attending school has risen over the past 20 years. Literacy programs are an increasingly important component of the overall education system, and women are key beneficiaries. Girls generally leave school when they get married.

The main purpose of getting an education for most families...is not to get a particular type of work, but more simply, in order to become better educated, and therefore better able to deal with the wider world. In addition...one's knowledge and status are strongly linked. Agents of the state are the main sources of agricultural innovations in the study villages, and the youth are important sources of non-environment-related innovations (clothes, bikes, radios, style, etc.).<sup>13</sup>

## Governance

The literature review did not reveal explicit reference to the oversight, regulation, and control of the Islamic schools. Under colonial and independent rule, Islamic groups or funding organizations usually carried out this function under the watchful eye of local or regional administrators. It is unclear how the Ministry of Education regulates the operations of Islamic schools, if it does so at all.

## Strengths and Weaknesses for Preparing Students for Civic Participation and Employment

*Employment.* The primary purpose of Islamic—

especially Koranic—schools is religious: to teach the Koran to the faithful. However, there are learned outcomes that are similar to those of elementary schooling in terms of cognitive development, social adjustment, civic responsibility, and leadership training. While not explicitly oriented to development, Koranic schools do provide children some of the cognitive, attitudinal, and social building blocks necessary for further schooling. Older students may have selected apprenticeships with marabouts and other religious leaders prominent in local commerce, trade, or business. Hausa Koranic school graduates (men and women) may use Arabic literacy for trade purposes. While some practical training is probably included in a few madrasas, no explicit reference was found on how this is done. It is therefore difficult to assess whether Islamic schools prepare students for employment to the same degree that public schools do.

Whatever training exists for employment in Koranic schools is a byproduct of Islamic schooling. Traditionally, to mix religious and practical training in Koranic schools was unheard of, even blasphemous. Whether job-related training can be introduced in this type of school is questionable at best. It would have a better chance of succeeding if practical aspects of agricultural or business subjects were taught as secular subjects in the madrasas. Students might be induced to see such materials as real-life alternatives to the modernist rhetoric they may receive at Arabized madrasas.

*Civic Participation.* In addition to religious teachings that inculcate and strengthen students' Muslim identity, students are socialized into the routines and exercises of their institutional environment. This includes respect for the teacher as an authority figure, good manners, civility among peers, and loyalty to and identification with the local community, nation, and Muslim people worldwide. It does not appear that Islamic education in the Koranic schools does much else in the way of civic participation. Most likely, madrasas provide some form of civic education through social studies, morals, and religious teachings. The Arabized madrasas, however, may also provide threatening or even subversive teachings about secular government.

## **Donor-Funded Work with Islamic Schools and Results**

Research on assistance from donors to Islamic education systems in the three countries revealed very little information. ■









