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“INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE WAY OF THE FUTURE”



**A TYPOLOGY OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN
TO IMPROVE POLICIES THAT ADDRESS EXCLUSION**

Prepared by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics

There are an estimated 75.3 million children out of school around the world (UIS, 2006). But their situations and the factors related to their schooling status vary widely. Some children who are out of school can be expected to enter school late, some have some contact with schooling but will drop out and others will never enter a school. Policies that aim to address access to those out of school must take these different situations into account in order to be effective.

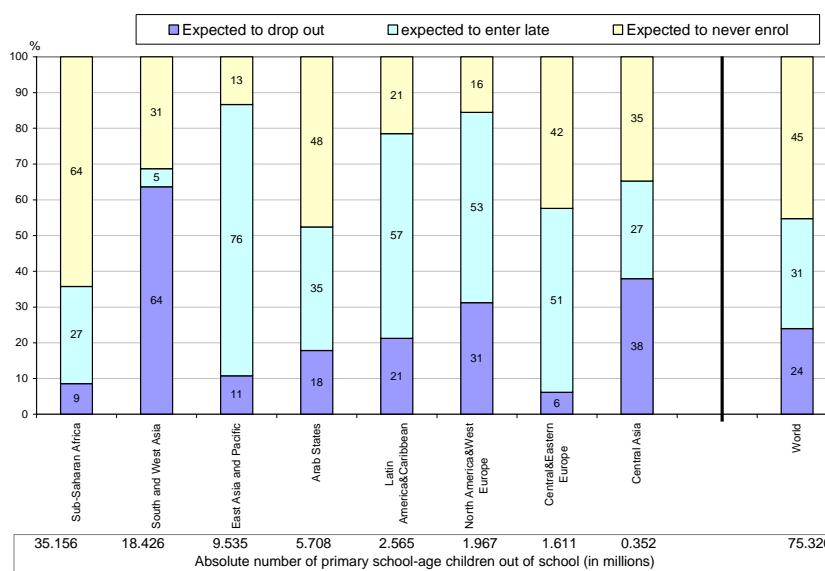
With a methodology developed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, it is possible to examine the prevalence of out-of-school children of primary school age by three main groups¹ with respect to their exposure to education:

- children who were in school but have since dropped out
- children not yet in school but still expected to enter beyond the official starting age
- children not yet in school and not expected to ever enrol (at least at primary school age)

Figure 1 shows the distribution of out-of-school children by region. In 2006, 45% of children who were not in school will probably never attend (at least during their primary school-ages), assuming that current enrolment patterns do not change. In other words, if no specific action is taken to enrol older children who have never been to school, almost every second primary school age child currently not in school will never enter a classroom.

On the other hand, the majority of out-of-school children (55%) will receive or have already received schooling. In these cases, the education system connects with the majority of out-of-school children but not at the intended age or for the intended duration. Late-starters account for 31% of the total number of out-of-school children while children who drop out make up 24%. It should be emphasised, however, that leaving school without completing a full cycle of primary education is much more widespread than reflected by these figures. Because dropout occurs mainly among older children, it is not captured by statistics that focus specifically on primary school-age children.

Figure 1 Distribution of out-of-school children by school exposure and region, 2006



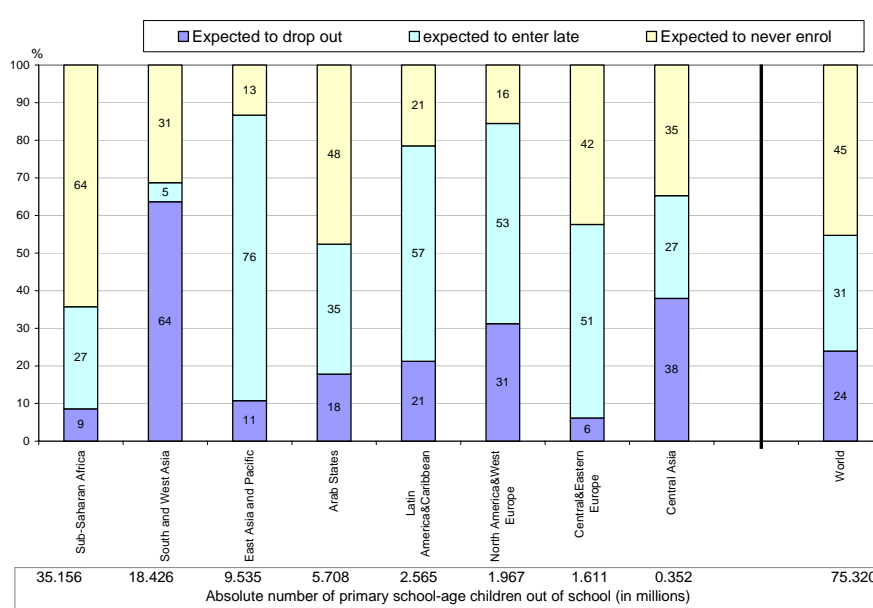
Note: Regions are ordered in descending order of absolute numbers of out-of-school children.

¹ A framework for classifying out-of school children was proposed in the UIS/UNICEF report: *Children out of school: measuring exclusion from primary education* (2005). The methodology used in the report has been further developed to produce the country level estimates presented here.

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On the other hand, the majority of out-of-school children (55%) will or have already had some contact with schooling. The education system connects with the majority of out-of-school children but not at the intended age or for the intended duration. Late-starters account for 31% of the total number of out-of-school children. Children who drop out make up 24%. However, it should be emphasised that leaving school without completing a full cycle of primary education is much more widespread than reflected by these figures. Because dropout occurs mainly among older children, it is not captured by statistics that focus specifically on primary school-age children.

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Figure 1 shows that children are more likely to never enrol in school in regions with the highest rates of out-of-school children. Without policy changes, almost two out of three out-of-school children can be expected to never attend school in Sub-Saharan Africa and the same is true of 47% of out-of-school children in the Arab States. Yet the phenomena of late entry or early drop-out, which still accounts for 35% to more than 50% of out-of-school children in these regions, should not be overlooked.

The largest share of drop outs is reported in South Asia, mainly in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh where they account for two-thirds of all out-of-school children. Though countries in the region report almost universal enrolment for children at the age of school entry, the enrolment rates drop sharply as children get older, especially from ages 7 to 10 years. This is an indication that although children have been enrolled, it is frequently for less than a year.

In contrast, children who are out of school but still expected to enter are more prevalent in regions with low out of school rates. It is estimated that in East Asia and the Pacific three out of four children currently not in school can be expected to enrol late. In Latin America and the Caribbean and North America and Western Europe this is the case for about one in two out-of-school children. While it is unusual for children in these regions to be completely excluded from education, this problem still exists. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 22% of out-of-school children can be expected to never enrol compared to about 15% in the other two regions.

Trends in the composition of out-of-school children since 2003

Crude estimates² allow for comparisons in the composition of out-of-school children between 2003 and 2006, a period during which time the global number of out-of-school children dropped sharply - from 92 to 75 million. Not surprisingly, the decrease in out-of-school children was mainly related to the drop in numbers of children who were expected to never enter school. Globally, this group decreased by more than 14 million since 2003. The share of this group in the total number of out-of-school children also fell from 52% to 45%.

The number of drop outs and children entering school late remained stable over this period and their share of the total increased slightly. The proportion of drop outs in 2006 rose by 3 percentage points compared to 2003 while the proportion of children expected to enter late grew by 4 percentage points in this period. Since school age populations since 2003 often increased in countries with out-of-school children, the stable pattern may reflect a positive trend.

When more children enter school, the number of children in early grades goes up and there are more children at risk of drop out as a consequence. As expected, the number of drop outs increases when more children enrol. Overall there may be a balance between improvements in drop out rates in some countries versus increasing numbers of drop outs in others, (e.g., in Pakistan the number of drop outs increased by 1.3 million from 2005 to 2006).

Table 1 Trends in the distribution of out-of-school children, 2003, 2005 and 2006

Absolute numbers (in millions) and distribution (in percentages)

	Girls			Boys			Total		
	Drop out	Expected to enrol	Not expected to enrol	Drop out	Expected to enrol	Not expected to enrol	Drop out	Expected to enrol	Not expected to enrol
2003	6,768	11,580	32,613	12,547	13,136	16,211	19,312	24,715	48,827
2005	7,373	10,049	25,026	8,290	12,308	13,966	15,667	22,363	38,983
2006	9,000	10,381	21,886	9,042	12,823	12,189	18,033	23,180	34,108
2003	13.3	22.7	64.0	29.9	31.4	38.7	20.8	26.6	52.6
2005	17.4	23.7	59.0	24.0	35.6	40.4	20.3	29.0	50.6
2006	21.8	25.2	53.0	26.6	37.7	35.8	23.9	30.8	45.3

Source: UIS database.

As shown in Table 1, countries with higher rates of out-of-school children tend to have a higher share of those who will never enrol. A similar pattern is observed when comparing girls and boys. The rate of girls who are out of school is generally higher compared to boys, and the share of girls who are expected to never enrol tends to be higher than among boys. This trend can be observed globally, regional and for most countries.

At the global level, 53% of all out of school girls will never enrol in school compared to 36% of out of school boys, if current trends are maintained. Overall girls account for 67% of the out-of-school children who are expected to never attend school.

The share of drop outs or late entrants among out of school girls is lower than among out of school boys. Yet, this does not mean that boys are more likely to drop out than girls. In absolute numbers almost as many girls are drop outs as boys, according to reports. However, the number of out of school boys that are expected to enter school late exceeds the same number for girls. Among out of school boys, 12.8 million are expected to enter school in the years to come compared to 10.4 million out of school girls given current patterns.

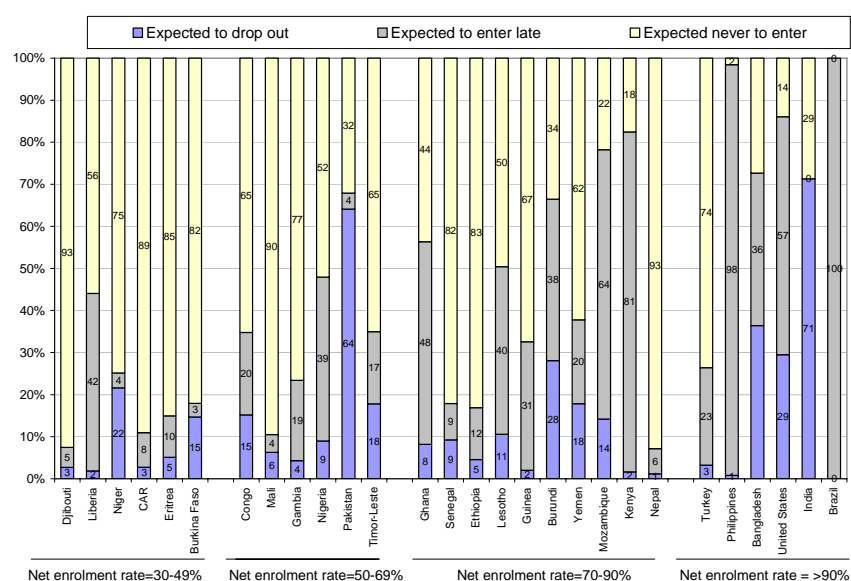
² The method to estimate the numbers of out-of-school children who were previously enrolled and are classified as drop outs depends on the use of time series data. The enrolment and entry rates for each age cohort are monitored during primary school ages (age 9 and younger) across the broader age cohort.

Composition of out-of-school children in countries facing the greatest challenges

Although the typology used here was originally developed to provide global and regional statistics, further development that draws on time series data allows for more robust estimates at the country level. It should be noted that this provides only a rough indicator of the distribution of out-of-school children and depends heavily on certain assumptions.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of out-of-school children by school status for 28 of the countries facing the greatest challenges (<75% adjusted net enrolment rate in 2006 or more than 500,000 out-of-school children in 2006). The chart confirms that amongst countries with a high rate of out-of-school children, most children can be expected to never enter school. They represent more than 50% of all out-of-school children in 18 of the countries.

Figure 2. Out-of-school children by school exposure in low UPE countries, 2004



Note: Countries are grouped in descending order of the rate of out-of-school children.

At the country level, three main patterns emerged: First, that in low enrolment countries, the majority of out-of-school children can be expected to never attend school. In Djibouti, Central African Republic, Eritrea, Burkina Faso, Mali, Gambia, Senegal, Ethiopia and Nepal, over 75% of children currently out of school are expected to never enrol. In these countries, policies aimed at achieving UPE must focus on children who have never been reached by the school system. The reasons for this exclusion are less likely to be temporary or related to school failure and more likely to be linked to cost barriers, lack of schools, low levels of demand and tend to raise issues of children's security.

As these projections assume that current patterns will continue if no action is taken, countries must re-think the ways they reach out to children and their families in order to achieve universal primary education. Countries must adopt policies aimed at older children who are currently out of school and who don't have much of a chance to ever enrol. Special programmes for older or working children, among others, are needed to address their specific needs.

Second, in another group of countries, the majority of out-of-school children are younger and can be expected to enter late. This is the case of Liberia, Ghana, Mozambique, Kenya, Philippines, United States and Brazil, where many children who enter school are older than the intended entry age. In these countries it is estimated that 40% of young children currently out of school are likely to enrol in the years to come. For example, in Kenya four out of five out-of-school children who have already missed two years of school would still be expected to enrol even though they will be three or more years over-age.

If current patterns are maintained, the majority of out-of-school children will eventually be reached by the school system. Here, factors related to being out of school are likely to be temporary and often related to the age of the child (e.g., parents believe that their child is still too young for school, too great a distance to schools, etc.). Policies aiming to decrease the number of out-of-school children should aim to change patterns of school intake (although not exclusively). Late entry is also a major reason for just over one-third of out-of-school children in Chad, Ghana and Namibia.

In a third set of countries, a large number of out-of-school children had been enrolled but had dropped out before completing primary school. In Niger, Pakistan, Burundi, Yemen, Bangladesh, United States and India more than 40% of the current out-of-school children were reported as being in school in previous years, but having dropped out.

The most extreme cases are India and Pakistan, where more than 9 million school age children were reported as having dropped out, or half of the world total. In 2003, India reported 99% enrolment rates for 7-year-olds. In 2006 only 85% were in school indicating that 14% of this age group dropped out. While the group of out-of-school children that will never enter school is rapidly diminishing, early school leavers remain an important group of out-of-school children in India. The share of drop out is even higher in Pakistan. In 2002, 81% of the school age cohort in 1st grade were enrolled. By 2006 the age specific enrolment rate for this group of children dropped to just 50%, indicating that 31% of the cohort dropped out.

Obviously policies aimed at children who already dropped out should be very different from those designed to improve timely access to education. It is important to note that a number of countries have very negligible shares of out-of-school children who have dropped out. In Djibouti, Liberia, Central African Republic, Guinea, Kenya, Nepal and Philippines, they account for less than 3% of all out-of-school children.

Policy discussions about out-of-school children tend to focus on children of primary school age. Yet the majority of children dropping out are older than the official ending age of primary education and they represent a less visible group of those out of school due to their age. An increasingly large group of out-of-school children, missed by statistics, and policy efforts to achieve universal primary education may pass them by.

Technical note: The methodology is in part a projection because it combines data on past years with a projection of current entry rates into the future. This is important when interpreting the groups of out-of-school children classified as 'expected never to enrol' and 'expected to enter late'. The sum of these two groups is based upon observed data. However, the two groups can only be distinguished from one another on the basis of projections. The underlying assumption is that current entry rates will remain the same. However, the size of this group cannot be predicted - it is subject to policy efforts to reach UPE. While it is desirable to design policies so that children about to reach primary school-age start school on time, interventions must also aim to reach the group of children who never participate in school and seek to bring them into the education system even as overage pupils.