

# Goal 2 Achieve Universal Primary Education

**Target:** Achieve universal access to primary education by 2015.  
**Indicator:** Net primary enrolment rate, proportion of children starting Grade 1 who would reach Grade 5; literacy rate or 15-24 year olds.

## STATUS AT A GLANCE

**Will the Goal/Target be Met**

Potentially Unlikely Insufficient Data

**State of Supportive Environment**

Strong Fair Weak but improving Weak

Tracking improvements in Primary Education: Monitoring and Evaluation Environment

Elements of monitoring environment	Assessment		
	Strong	Fair	Weak
Data gathering capacities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Quality of recent survey information	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical tracking capacities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Statistical analysis capacities	Strong	Fair	Weak
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning and resource allocation mechanism	Strong	Fair	Weak
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	Weak

The proportion of children completing primary education is also on the decline. In 1997, only 61 percent of children who started primary school completed the full primary school cycle, the remainder dropped out due to high repetition rates, above average age and financial difficulties. The completion rate dropped to 60 percent in 2000. In the same year, there were wide gender disparities within the 10-19 age group, where 25 percent of all girls dropped out of school, as opposed to only 15 percent of boys. The high dropout rate for girls is largely due to high pregnancy rates and socio-cultural factors that constrain girls from pursuing education.

The literacy rate is an estimated 80 percent. Literacy rates are higher in urban than rural areas. Males generally have higher levels of literacy and educational attainment than females (80.4 percent males versus 78.1 percent females). The primary school pupil: teacher ratio was 33:1 in 1997. By year 2000, it had increased to 45:1, exceeding the national benchmark of 40:1.

The government is implementing both the Universal Declaration on Education, and the Dakar Declaration.

Table 4 Net Enrolment Ratio, %

1990	88
1997	77
1998	70.1

Source: CCA Report, 2000.

## Status and Trends

The overall primary school enrolment rate was 70.1 percent in 1998, a decline from 79.7 percent in 1990. In the year 2000, more than 20 percent of children who were supposed to be in school were not in school. Education statistics also suggest that in the 1996-2001 period, enrolment rates continue to be higher for boys than girls at the primary level, and that the secondary level enrolment rates are nearly gender equal.

Ratio, %	Combined GER	Primary GER	Primary NER
National	82.8	91.6	70.1
<i>Gender specific</i>			
Male	85.5	95	70.1
Female	80.2	88.4	70.1
<i>Regional</i>			
Hhohho	83.4	90.6	69.7
Lubombo	78.8	89.5	66.6
Manzini	84.5	94.6	73.3
Shiselweni	83.6	91.1	69.7

*Source: CSO (1998) Census 1997*

**B**udget allocation for the MOE continues to dominate government expenditure, averaging 25 percent of the budget and accounting for 7.3 percent of GDP, thereby suggesting a firm national commitment to education.

Despite substantial increases in budgetary allocations in recent years, there are great disparities in terms of quality, access, gender, and between rural and urban areas, and between the rich and poor.

## Major Challenges

- ◆ Reducing high repetition and dropout rates.
- ◆ The inability of households to pay fees may increase due to HIV/AIDS and unemployment.
- ◆ The need to expedite plans for the introduction of informal education at primary level.
- ◆ Updating the existing curriculum to make it more relevant to Swaziland's needs.
- ◆ With the increase in HIV/AIDS prevalence in the country, the number of orphans and vulnerable children who need financial support to be in school is also increasing.

## Supportive Environment

- ◆ The country subscribes to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which stipulates that everyone has a right to education.

- ◆ The NDS attach great importance to education and training as key elements of human resource development.

- ◆ The 1999 National Education Policy formalizes the government's position as firmly supporting the importance of consolidating past achievements as well as addressing crucial issues of quality, relevance and affordability of education. It also underlines the importance of vocational education and special education.

- ◆ Swaziland signed the convention on the rights of the child in 1990 (ratified in 1995) and in 1992 produced the National Programme of Action for the Children of Swaziland (1993-2000). In doing so, the country renewed its commitment to ensuring the improved standards for the education and welfare of children.

- ◆ The PRS aims to provide free primary education and reduce subsidies on post secondary expenditure.

- ◆ Swaziland is a signatory to the Dakar 2000 Declaration on Education for All.

- ◆ Swaziland is gradually moving towards providing free primary education as part of the goal for Education For All.

## Priority Areas For Development Assistance

- ◆ There is need to expand physical infrastructure, to improve the quality of education, and to expand distance education.

- ◆ There is a need for support to expand bursary schemes to needy and orphaned children during the transition period toward free primary education.

- ◆ Diversifying the curricular to incorporate technical subjects and improve/upgrade existing vocational education institutions.

- ◆ Capacity building to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS on education.

- ◆ Consider ICT as a channel for electronic learning.