DevInfo

Facts. You decide.
Good practices in DevInfo implementation
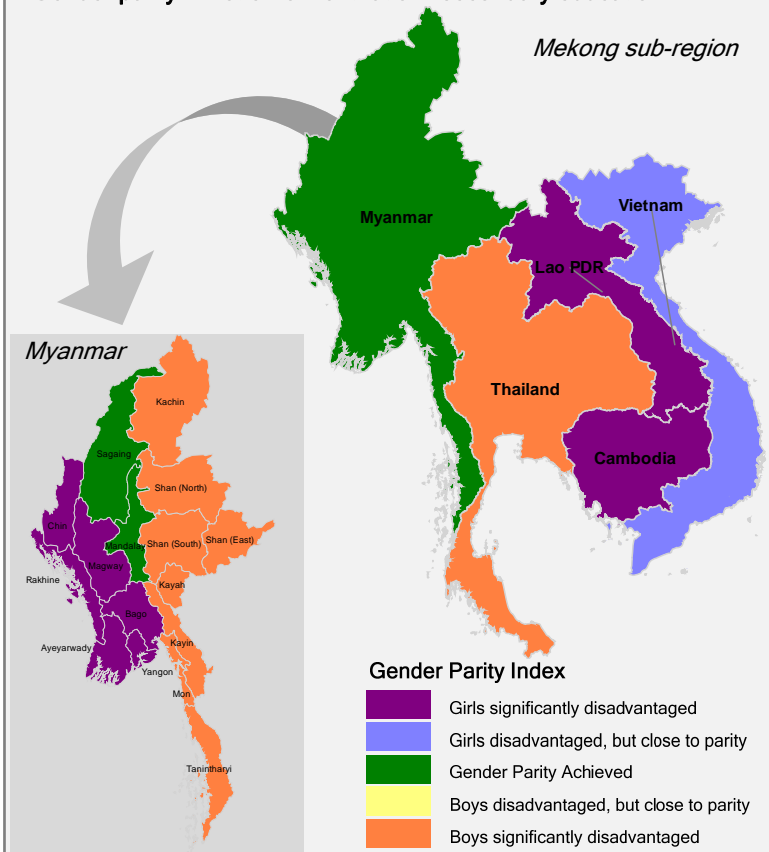
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Helping to plan appropriate interventions to achieve the Education for All goals

Article prepared by Karen Emmons, journalist

A resourceful database system recently launched by UNESCO and UNICEF enables governments in Asia and the Pacific to better identify which of their population's children are not in school or not learning and why.

EFAInfo, as this DevInfo adaptation is called, has the potential to pinpoint where religion, caste, disability, extreme poverty or other challenging issues inhibit children's access to school or academic performance. It can expose possible misreads and intra-country disparities, such as in the case of Myanmar, which at first glance is the only country in the Mekong sub-region to achieve gender parity in net school enrollment. But on closer inspection through the sub-national information and with a clarifying map that the system can instantly produce, it becomes evident that girls are significantly disadvantaged in a large western swath of the country while boys are heavily disadvantaged on the eastern side. Hence, while the national average suggests all is well, the sub-national data reveal how two "wrongs" can give the appearance of a "right".

Gender parity in net enrolment ratio in secondary education

Mekong sub-region

Myanmar

Vietnam

Lao PDR

Thailand

Cambodia

Myanmar

Kachin
Sagaing
Shan (North)
Chin
Mandalay Shan (South) Shan (East)
Magway
Rakhine
Kayah
Bago
Kayin
Ayeyarwady
Yangon
Mon
Tanintharyi

Gender Parity Index

■	Girls significantly disadvantaged
■	Girls disadvantaged, but close to parity
■	Gender Parity Achieved
■	Boys disadvantaged, but close to parity
■	Boys significantly disadvantaged

The Asia and Pacific countries recently conducted a mid-decade assessment to identify problems, issues, policies and strategies of education reform in order to reach the disadvantaged groups. In this context, EFAInfo's primary purpose is to help education ministries gauge their midway achievements in the Education for All (EFA) initiative, which runs from 2000 to 2015, and plan appropriate interventions to meet the goals.

Just over a third of the world's countries has achieved or is on track to achieve the six Education for All goals related to: early childhood care and education, universal primary education, adult literacy, gender parity, quality education and life skills. EFAInfo, which contains data for the indicators that follow the six EFA goals, is designed to help the remaining two-thirds of countries get on a similar course.

The depth and breadth of information in EFAInfo make it a tool with various uses. For instance, agencies and nongovernment organizations involved in education support can use EFAInfo to better target their programming. The system also can clarify why certain programs work, which is valuable for replicating them and reaching more children. Journalists can use it to identify trends on a regional, sub-regional or national basis and create their own maps, graphs and tables to illustrate their reporting.

Wherever possible, disaggregated data are available to spotlight disparities in access to different levels of quality education across various strata and groups within a country. The EFAInfo data cover religious, linguistic and ethnic minority groups; castes, socio-economic classes and other social stratifications; women and girls; persons with disabilities, residents of remote areas and border regions; undocumented persons and the extremely poor.

The software system, available online or on CD-ROM, supports the compilation, dissemination, analysis and presentation of education outcomes across the Asia and Pacific region. It can link to existing national development and education databases. The system also can be adapted to any country context.

UNESCO and UNICEF launched EFAInfo in a series of workshops attended by education ministry officials and others in East Asia and South East Asia, providing training on how the system works and what they can do with it by actually applying it to their specific country situation.

Participants at recent workshops

EFAInfo is available online at: www.devinfo.info/efainfo.

Visit www.devinfo.org

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