

Results achieved by sector – Reading Comprehension

One indicator included within level 1 of the DRF was not an official MDG indicator. This is the indicator ‘proportion of children that can read with sufficient fluency for comprehension in early grades’, which DFID used to measure progress against MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education.

DFID puts learning at the heart of its support to education, with a specific focus on early grade reading as a foundation to further learning. This requires an understanding of how and what children are learning in our priority countries. To address this we have increased efforts to assess learning outcomes both globally and in country. Globally, DFID is part of the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning, provides support to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics to develop global learning data sets, and supports a pilot to implement the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in developing countries. DFID is also focusing on early grade learning through the Girls’ Education Challenge (GEC) Fund. Each of the 36 GEC projects is conducting regular early grade reading assessments, covering over 1 million girls in total.

Results achieved by country/department

Out of the 19 DFID countries which focus on education, all but 2 (Afghanistan and South Sudan) have conducted at least 1 assessment of early grade learning in the last 5 years. Eleven countries have at least 2 comparable assessments over this time period [1]; and of these 6 suggest an improvement in the percentage of early grade children that can read with fluency [2]. The change from last year’s report is one additional country with a positive trend, Rwanda. In two-thirds of countries with data, girls perform better than boys.

The results reflect both the time lag for establishing and reporting quality learning data, and for translating higher quality education into improvements in learning outcomes at scale ([evidence shows](#) the latter is often 5-10 years). In some countries it also reflects an increase in enrolment, which may temporarily decrease average learning outcomes in school.

[1] Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe. These assessments use comparable methods over time, but do not always use modelling methods to ensure direct comparability over time.

[2] Bangladesh, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe. We have reported any increase, regardless of statistical significance, consistent with other Level 1 indicator reporting.