

Primary education

Objective 2 To attain universal primary schooling

Goal 3 To strive towards having all children in the world complete the full cycle of primary education

Performance Summary

Status of support conditions for achieving the goal

Weak but improving

Will the goal be achieved?

Possibly

Diagnosis and trends

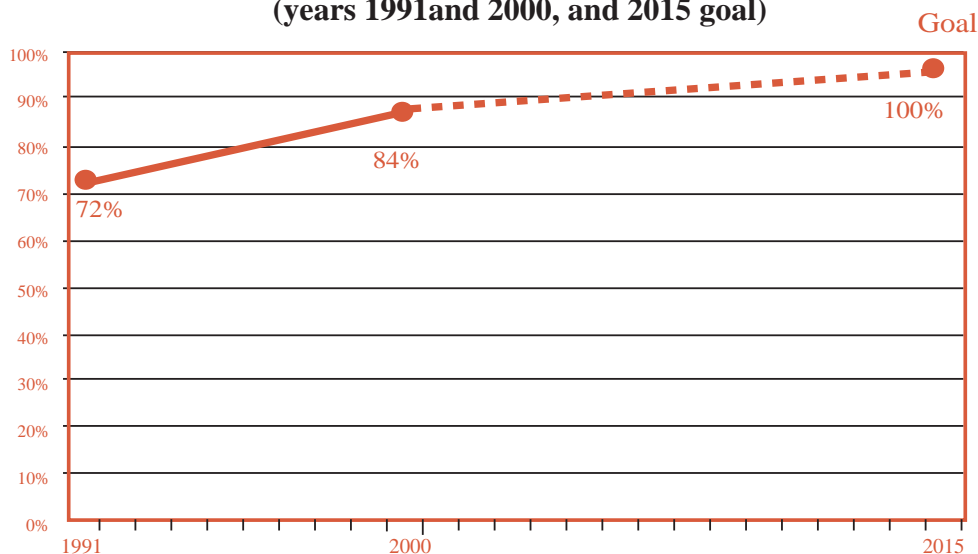
In 2000 the primary school net enrollment rate was 84%,¹³ showing significant progress in comparison with 72%¹⁴ in 1991. If the rate of progress achieved by Guatemala during the decade of the '90s were to be maintained, it could be asserted that, potentially, it will be possible to attain universal primary education coverage by the year 2015. However, in the degree that a country approaches the goal, it becomes more difficult to continue with the same progress rate, as it is more difficult and costly to reach the most remote and widely scattered population.



GRAPH 3

Primary education

Primary School Net Enrollment Rate (years 1991 and 2000, and 2015 goal)



Source: Own estimates from 1991 and 2000 Annual Statistical Reports of the Ministry of Education

There are disparities in the degree of progress. For example, during that same period there were four departments where the primary education net enrollment rate (NER) dropped: El Progreso (from 95% to 86%), Guatemala (from 91 to 85%), Sacatepéquez (from 89 to 78%), and Zacapa (from 82 to 80%).¹⁵ When comparing the primary school NER ratio between boys and girls, the NER for boys is higher (from 72% to 86%) than that of girls (from 71% to 82%) between 1991 and 2000.¹⁶ In 2000 the primary school NER for indigenous students was 71%, while for non-indigenous children the NER was 84% (79% at national level).¹⁷

TABLE 4
Primary School Net Enrollment Rate
As per selected characteristics (in percentages)

Characteristic	1991	2000
Country	72%	84%
Sex		
Male	72%	86%
Female	71%	82%
Region		
Metropolitan	91%	85%
Northern	45%	68%
Northeastern	72%	82%
Southeastern	82%	91%
Central	76%	89%
Southwestern	74%	88%
Northwestern	50%	77%
Petén /1	61%	103%

/1 In 2000 the NER exceeded 100%. This points to inconsistencies in the enrollment and/or population data (in this specific case it may be due to migrations). Source: Own estimates from 1991 and 2000 Annual Statistical Reports of the Ministry of Education.

The percentage of students who started the first grade and reached fifth grade was 30% for boys and girls who were of an age to attend these grades, both in the peer groups that started in 1991 and those that started in 1994.¹⁸ This percentage was 22% and 49% for students who started in the 1994 peer group from the rural and urban areas, respectively. This indicator showed no significant difference between genders.¹⁹

Literacy

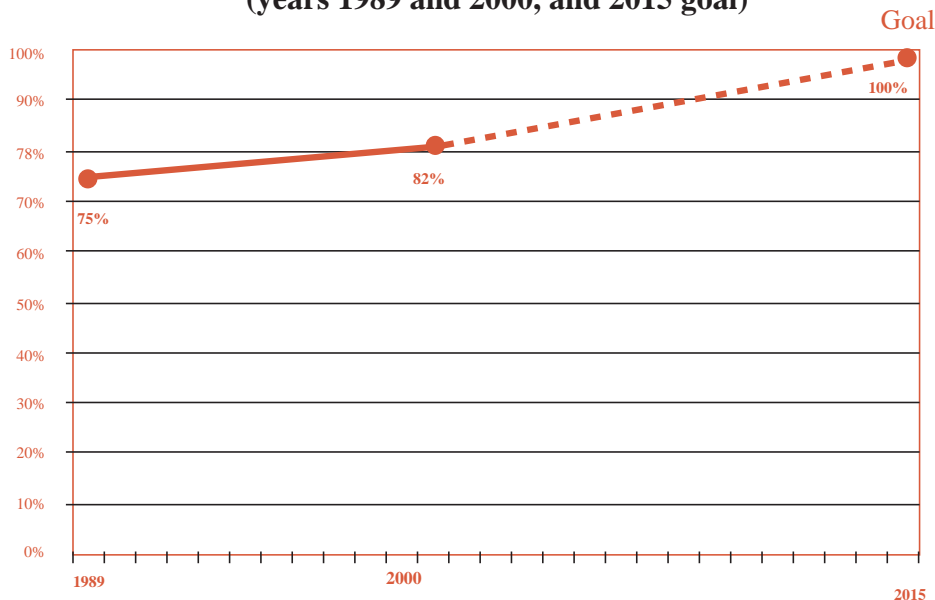
The literacy rate of people between the ages of 15 and 24 increased from 75% to 82% between 1989 and 2000.²⁰ This rate of progress is lower than needed to attain a 100% literacy rate by 2015. Additionally, in the northeastern region the literacy rate dropped from 79% to 75% during this same period. There appear to be significant disparities in the adult literacy rate of both genders (women 76%,

men 88%), of different ethnic origins (indigenous 70%, non-indigenous 89%), and of different geographic areas (rural 74%, urban 93%). The regions with lower literacy rates are the northern (62%) and northwestern (64%) regions.

GRAPH 4

Literacy

Literacy rate of adults between ages 15-24 (years 1989 and 2000, and 2015 goal)



Source: Own estimates from ENS 1989 and ENCOVI 2000

Policies and Programmes

An Educational Reform has been promoted as part of the compliance provisions of the Peace Accords. In 1997 a Joint Commission for Educational Reform was created and entrusted with drafting an initial proposal for this reform. Also created that same year was the Consultative Commission on Educational Reform (CCRE) which groups 22 government and non-government organizations. Priority was given to curricular changes and professional improvement of teachers as the first specific product of the Educational Reform.

Implemented during the decade of the '90s were the New Unitarian School (NEU) and a scholarship program for girls. Both initiatives were assessed and showed positive student retention results. Furthermore, a school textbook program was implemented and the salaries of teachers were raised several times. However, there are no assessments on the impact that the above might have had on the quality and efficiency of the educational system. Also in 1990, the issue of bilingual education was addressed through the creation of the Intercultural Bilingual Educational Programme (PRONEBI), which in 1995 became the General Directorate for Bilingual Education (DIGEBI). The National Programme for Self-Management of Educational Development (PRONADE) is the main strategy undertaken to advance towards the net enrollment rate goal.

Literacy Efforts

The National Literacy Committee (CONALFA) proposed the 1990-2000 National Strategy for Integral Literacy, establishing the goal of reducing the illiteracy rate by half between 1990 and 2000. According to CONALFA statistics, in 1990 the number of illiterate aged 15 or older was 2,123,414. It has been estimated that since the inception of ENCOVI 2000 the number of illiterate aged 15 or older for 2000 is down to 2,013,951.

Challenges and Priorities

Among the main challenges are the determination of policies and programmes that will have the greatest impact in improving the quality of education (learning by the students), and the incorporation and retention of students, especially those who are straggling behind. It is also necessary to define and implement a policy for the decentralization, funding, and permanent assessment of the educational system. It is fundamental for teachers to receive high-level university training from the very beginning.

An exercise was conducted to obtain an initial estimate of the additional resources necessary to attain Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015. It is estimated that there will be an annual average gap of some US\$85 million during the 2002-2015 period. This estimate does not include improvements to the quality of education.

Evaluation and Follow-up Capacity

Evaluation & follow-up capacity elements	Value		
	Very Good	Good	Poor
Amount and regularity of information from surveys			✓
Data Collection Capacity		✓	
Quality of information from recent surveys			✓
Statistical follow-up capacity		✓	
Statistical analysis capacity			✓
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis to policies, plans and mechanisms to allocate resources			✓
Monitoring and Assessment Mechanisms			✓
Reporting and information dissemination capacity			✓