

TUNISIA COUNTRY PROFILE

Introduction

The prosperity of a country is manifested in the socio-economic and cultural set up. Tunisia is the northernmost country in Africa. It is bordered by [Algeria](#) to the west, [Libya](#) to the southeast, and the [Mediterranean Sea](#) to the north and east. Tunisia's north has a mountainous terrain and the south is desert. The climate is Mediterranean in the north with mild rainy winters and hot, dry summers.

The current global understanding is to relook at education in the lens of the post 2015 era. The Incheon meeting, South Korea in May 2015, brought together countries to have a common front on the targets for the education 2030 agenda. One of the principles of the education 2030 agenda is that countries need to review their policies and targets to ensure achievement of an all-inclusive access to quality education. This country profile describes the status of the socio-cultural, economic and demographic factors followed by the education system. It gives the situation analysis of the education system at all levels and in particular provides benchmark information in participation, equity and quality in education.

Socio- economic and demographic factors

The population rose from 1.56 in 2009 to 2.27 million in 2014, an increase of 45%. The highest annual population growth was 14% in 2009 and it significantly declined to 4% in 2014. Over the years, the total fertility rate remained steady at two births per woman. The life expectancy of the population has stood at 78 in the last four years and it increased to 79 in 2013 with infant mortality declining from 9% in 2009 to 8 % in 2014.

Table 1: Demographic Indicators, 2009-2014

Indicator	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19)	13	12	11	10	9	-
Annual population growth (%)	14	11	9	7	6	4
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	9	9	9	9	8	8
Life expectancy at birth (years)	78	78	78	78	79	-
Population density (people per sq. km of land area)	135	151	165	177	187	195
Prevalence of HIV (% of population aged 15-49 years)	-	-	-	-	-	-

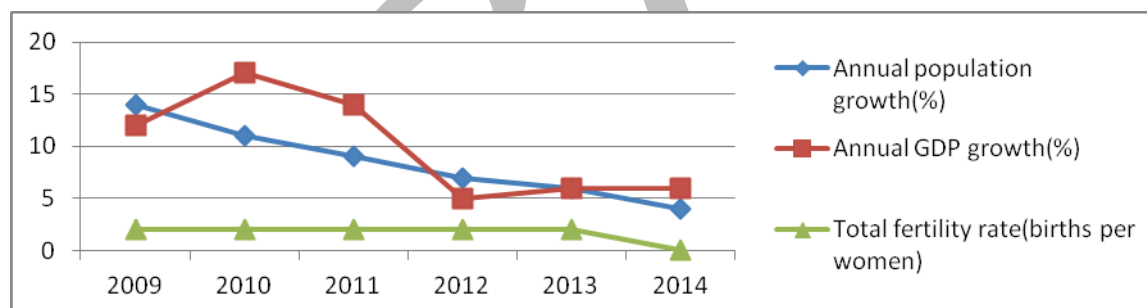
Surface area (sq. km)	11,610	11,610	11,610	11,610	11,610	11,610
Total fertility rate (births per woman)	2	2	2	2	2	-
Total population (in millions)	1.56	1.75	1.91	2.05	2.17	2.27
Urban population growth (annual %)	14	11	9	7	6	5

Table 2: Economic Indicators, 2009-2014

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Annual GDP growth (%)	12	17	14	5	6	6
GDP (US\$ billions)	97798	125,122	169,804	189,945	203,235	211,816
Inflation, GDP deflator (annual %)	-24	10	19	6	1	-2

Tunisia witnessed high growth in economic development and reporting an annual GDP growth of 17% in 2010. It however faced a downward annual GDP growth through 2011 to 2014 recording a 6% annual GDP growth in 2014. The downward trend in 2011 was due to the Arab Spring. Tunisia however, recovered from this. Tunisia is one of the wealthiest countries in Africa and ranks 5th in Africa according to Human Development Index (HDI). The GDP recorded in 2014 was USD 211,816 billions.

Trend in Selected Socio- Economic Indicators



Education System

A country that ensures that all the citizens have quality access to education makes them indispensable and competitive globally. This depends on the organization and management of the education sector. In Tunisia education is considered to be of great importance and is considered mandatory between ages 6 to 14 and the language of instruction is Arabic. Education starts from pre-primary level and students

spend three years here before proceeding to primary school where they complete education at that level in six years. After primary level, they follow a two-track system, either general secondary education or technical education for 4 years. Then they proceed to higher education where they either take a two-year intermediate level course offered by community colleges or four years of university level courses, either in public or private institutions.

Preprimary

The government of Tunisia has shown strong commitment towards pre-school education that is aimed at children from three to five years of age. The existing policy calls for pre-schools to be offered in three settings in Tunisia, which are: kindergartens, kouttabs and preparatory year. Participation levels are tracked through data on GER (proportion of pupils in preprimary irrespective of age). There are no significant gender disparities at the pre-primary education level.

Table 3: Gross Enrolment Ratio (%)

	2013
Male	38.8
Female	41.3
Total	40

Primary Education

Primary school is compulsory in Tunisia and it is taught in Arabic. It runs from October to June and students are examined at the end of each trimester through oral, written and practical tests. Primary education is six years. The country has a **policy** of free and compulsory primary education.

On **access and Participation** is evaluated through GER and NER. The GER faced an upward trend from 2009 to 2013. It was 107.5% in 2009 and 110.3% in 2013. NER also increased between 2009 and 2011 from 98.8% to 99.8%, it however decreased to 98.7% in 2013. This means that as at 2013, 1.3% of the school going children was out of school.

Table 4: Gross Enrolment Ratio (%)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	109.2	110.5	109.9	110.9	111.8
Female	105.8	107.1	106.8	108.4	108.7
Total	107.5	108.8	108.3	109.7	110.3

Table 5: Net Enrolment Rate (%)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-	-	-	-	-
Total	98.8	99.1	99.8	98.9	98.7

The efficiency of an education system can be monitored based on data for retention and completion at primary education. In 2013, the proportion of repeaters was 7.2% while school life expectancy was recorded to be 14.6% in 2013. The country recorded impressive survival to the last grade in primary at 94.1%, with girls standing at 93% compared to 95.3% for boys. The transition rate from primary to secondary in 2012 was relatively high at 94.8% for girls and 90.8% for boys.

Table 6: Progression and completion in education

	Total	Male	Female	Year
School life expectancy ISCED 1-8 (years)	14.6	-	-	2013
Percentage of repeaters in primary (%)	7.2	8.8	5.5	2013
Survival to the last grade of primary (%)	94.1	95.3	93	2012
Gross intake ratio into the last grade of primary (%)	97.8	97.3	98.4	2013
Primary to secondary transition rate (%)	92.8	90.8	94.8	2012

Table 7: Primary to secondary transition rate (%)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Male	94.4	99.1	-	-	92.8
Female	95.1	98.1	-	-	94.8
Total	93.8	100	-	-	90.8

Table 8: Pupil/Teacher Ratio

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Pupil/teacher ratio	17	17.1	17.4	17.1	17.4

The country attained gender parity at primary education level and also had impressive progression of boys and girls to secondary education. This is a demonstration of the effectiveness of the free and compulsory primary education. The information on Pupil Teacher ratio can indicate the extent the quality issues are addressed in Morocco. The PTR has decreased from 1: 17 in 2009 to 1:17.4 in 2013.

Secondary Education

Secondary is divided into two stages: general academic and specialized. Students staying on for four years have a choice to either follow an academic track or a technical track. It targets children between ages 12 and 18. After this level, students join university or the workforce. The participation level for secondary education has improved with the reported GER for 2009 being 89.3% rising to 90.6% in 2013 although it was a decrease from 91.1 in 2011.

Table 9: Gross Enrolment Ratio (%)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	86.1	86	89	-	-
Female	92.6	92.2	93.3	-	-
Total	89.3	89	91.1	-	90.6

The transition from primary education to TVET sector can be tracked by comparing the enrolment at both levels. Over the years, the enrolment in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as % of the total enrolment in secondary education has declined from 11% in 2009 to 9.6% in 2013.

Table 10: Enrolment in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as % of the total enrolment in secondary education

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	16.4	13.8	15.9	-	-
Female	6.2	5.1	5.9	-	-
Total	11	9.1	10.6	-	9.6

Table 11: Pupil/Teacher Ratio

	2009	2010	2011
Pupil/teacher ratio	13.9	13.3	13.6

The Pupil Teacher Ratio at secondary education was 1:13.6 in 2011. The low PTR means that teachers can have enough time to prepare and constantly engage the learner in the classroom.

The number of out of school children (15 years and older) is alarmingly high, particularly because 70.5% in the age group constitute girls.

Table 12: Out-School Children and literacy levels, 2011

	Male	Female	Total
Literacy rate (%)			
15-24	17,681	35,285	52,965
15 yrs and older	496,237	1,184,393	1,680,630

Tertiary including University

The GER for tertiary education dropped from 35.2 in 2011 to 33.7 in 2013. This is an indication of improved access to higher education. The proportion of female population attending higher education stood at 41.9% compared to 25.8% for males in 2013.

Table 13: Gross Enrolment Ratio (%)

	2011	2012	2013
Male	-	27.3	25.8
Female	-	43.4	41.9
Total	35.2	35.2	33.7

Table 14: Gross graduation ratio at ISCED 6 and 7. First degrees (%)

	2013
Male	14.5
Female	33.3
Total	23.7

The gross graduation ratio was 23.7% in 2013. The proportion of male students (14.5%) graduating was lower than female students (33.3%)

Financing of Education

The financing of education is a key issue for any government and development partners. Most of the funding for education comes from domestic budgets. In 2012, the public expenditure on education as a % of GDP was 6.2% while the public expenditure as a % of total government expenditure was 21.2%. The expenditure in education is well above the international benchmark of 4% and 15% respectively.

Table 15: Government expenditure on education

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
as % of GDP	6.3	6.5	6.2	-	6.2
as % of total government expenditure	25.3	26.4	25.6	-	21.2

Table 16: Government expenditure per student (in PPP\$)

	2012	2013
Primary education	-	-
Secondary education	-	-
Tertiary education	5701.1	6295.4

Definitions

Compulsory education: The number of years or age span during which children are legally obliged to attend school.

Expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure: Current and capital expenditure on education by local, regional and central governments (household contributions are excluded), expressed as a percentage of total government expenditure on all sectors (including health, education, social services, etc.).

Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP: Current and capital expenditure on education by local, regional and central governments (household contributions are excluded), expressed as a percentage of GDP.

Government expenditure per student (in PPP\$): Total public expenditure per pupil or student in the specified level of education, expressed in international dollars (current) adjusted in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP).

Gross enrolment ratio: Number of pupils or students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education. For the tertiary level, the population used is the 5-year age group starting from the official secondary school graduation age.

Gross graduation ratio from first degrees programmes (at ISCED 6 and 7) in tertiary education: Number of graduates from first degree programmes (at ISCED 6 and 7) expressed as a percentage of the population of the theoretical graduation age of the most common first degree programme.

Gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary education: Total number of new entrants in the last grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the theoretical entrance age to the last grade of primary.

Net enrolment rate: Total number of pupils or students in the theoretical age group for a given level of education enrolled in that level, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.

Out-of-School population: Total number of primary or lower secondary school-age children who are not enrolled in primary (ISCED 1) or secondary (ISCED 2 and 3) education.

Percentage of repeaters: Total number of pupils who are enrolled in the same grade as the previous year, expressed as a percentage of total enrolment in the given grade of education.

Percentage of technical/vocational enrolment: Total number of pupils or students enrolled in technical/vocational programmes at a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils or students enrolled in all programmes (technical/vocational and general) at that level.

Primary to secondary transition rate (%): The number of new entrants to the first grade of secondary education (general programmes only) in a given year expressed as a percentage of the students enrolled

in the last grade of primary education in the previous year who do not repeat that grade the following year. It measures the probability that a pupil in the last grade of primary education makes the transition to secondary general education.

Pupil-teacher ratio: The average number of pupils per teacher at a given level of education, based on headcounts of both pupils and teachers.

School-age population: Population of the age group theoretically corresponding to a given level of education as indicated by theoretical entrance age and duration.

School life expectancy: The number of years a person of school entrance age can expect to spend within the specified level of education.

Survival rate by grade: The percentage of a cohort of pupils or students enrolled in the first grade of a given level or cycle of education in a given school year who are expected to reach a given grade, regardless of repetition.

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