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**EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND PUBLIC POLICY:
COMPARING RESULTS FROM 16 COUNTRIES**

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Recognising the lack of a common language for discussing the issue of equity in education, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) undertook a study to bring together some of the diverse approaches to equity and to provide a more systematic approach to conceptualising and measuring the equity of countries' education systems.

This report presents the results of the study in three components.

First, it provides a context for understanding the current interest in educational equity through a review of the evolution of international concerns about equity and previous efforts to define and measure equity more systematically.

Second, it presents a framework for measuring educational equity, along with methods for comparing the equity of countries' education systems using a set of standard statistical measures.

Finally, it demonstrates the application of the framework in 16 of the largest, most-populous countries around the world. These include three countries in Africa (Egypt, **Nigeria** and South Africa), five in Asia (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan), five in Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru), along with Canada, the Russian Federation and the United States.

Table A provides an overview of countries' relative standing on horizontal equity, based on the three objects of equity examined in this study: One is **enrolment ratios** (a measure of access) and **(expenditure per pupil and pupil-teacher ratios** (measures of resources allocated to education). Countries that fall at the "top" of the rankings tend to have relatively small disparities across regions; countries in the "bottom" tend to have relatively large disparities; while countries in the "middle" tend to have moderate disparities relative to other countries.

TABLE A

Country	Primary enrolment ratio	Secondary enrolment ratio	Primary and secondary expenditure per pupil	Primary pupil-teacher ratio	Secondary pupil-teacher ratio	Primary and secondary pupil-teacher ratio
Argentina	top	middle	middle	top	bottom	bottom
Bangladesh	bottom	*	*	middle	*	*
Brazil	bottom	bottom	middle	top	middle	middle
Canada	*	top	top	*	*	top
China	top	*	bottom	middle	top	middle
Ecuador	*	*	*	middle	middle	middle
Egypt	middle	middle	bottom	bottom	middle	bottom
India	bottom	bottom	bottom	bottom	bottom	bottom
Indonesia	middle	bottom	*	top	top	middle
Mexico	top	top	middle	top	top	top
Nigeria	*	*	*	bottom	middle	bottom
Pakistan	bottom	*	*	bottom	bottom	middle
Peru	top	middle	top	top	top	top
Russian Federation	middle	middle	middle	*	*	middle
South Africa	middle	top	top	*	*	top
United States	*	top	top	middle	middle	top

* Not available.

Table B provides a summary of findings from the analysis of educational opportunity using the relationship between regional wealth and regional enrolment ratios, expenditure per pupil and pupil-teacher ratios. In the table, a dash ("-") signifies that countries tend to have lower enrolment ratios, lower expenditure per pupil or lower pupil-teacher ratios in wealthier regions; and a plus sign ("+") signifies that countries tend to have higher enrolment ratios, higher expenditure per pupil or higher pupil – teacher ratios in wealthier regions. An asterisk ("*") is used in instances where a country does not have a consistent relationship between regional wealth and a given measure. Where the relationships are strongly positive or negative (greater than +0.50 or less than -0.50), there are no additions to the designated signs. However, parentheses are used to indicate relationships that are statistically weak (between -0.50 and -0.25 or between 0.25 and 0.50).

TABLE B

Country	Primary enrolment ratio	Secondary enrolment ratio	Primary and secondary expenditure per pupil	Primary pupil-teacher ratio	Secondary pupil-teacher ratio	Primary and secondary pupil-teacher ratio
Argentina	(-)	+	+	-	(-)	-
Brazil	-	+	+	(-)	(-)	(-)
Canada	n/a	+	+	n/a	n/a	-
China	(+)	n/a	+	(-)	(-)	(-)
Egypt	(+)	(+)	(+)	(-)	(-)	(-)
India	-	(+)	*	(-)	(-)	(-)
Indonesia	*	(+)	n/a	*	*	*
Mexico	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(-)	*
Nigeria	n/a	n/a	n/a	*	*	*
Peru	(+)	+	(+)	(-)	(-)	-
Russian Federation	*	*	(+)	n/a	n/a	*
South Africa	(-)	(+)	+	n/a	n/a	*
United States	n/a	+	+	*	*	*

n/a: Data not available.

* Not a statistically significant relationship (correlation between -0.25 and +0.25).