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### Submitter Information

Abdesslam Boutayeb  
Email: x.boutayeb@menara.ma

### Abstract Information

**Abstract Title:**

Education and Children's wellbeing in North Africa: Socioeconomic inequalities and regional disparity

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**Authors:**

Boutayeb PhD. Professor Faculty of Sciences Oujda Morocco

**Abstract:**

Education and children's wellbeing constitute a cornerstone for human development of nations. In this context, few studies are devoted to North Africa as a region despite the fact that its populations share language, religion and social and cultural custom. Based on data from available literature, different measures and indexes are considered for the comparison between and within countries. Emphasis is put on equity, showing that measurements like Human Development Index, Basic Capability Index, Child Development Index and Millennium Development Goals are average numbers which may hide inter-groups inequalities and regional disparities. Data and studies show that education and children's wellbeing in North African countries are subjected to socioeconomic inequalities and rural/urban and/or regional discrepancies(1,2,3,4). There are great gaps between the poorest and the richest children in school completion, infant mortality and nutrition. Similarly, children living in rural and remote areas are disadvantaged. They are more likely to suffer from under nutrition or to die before their fifth birthday. In particular, an Egyptian rural-poor-girl is nearly five times unlikely to complete school than an Egyptian urban-rich-boy, whereas the ratio reaches 15 in Morocco. Despite the important efforts devoted by North African countries during the last decade in order to improve access to education at all levels and to foster children's wellbeing by generalizing basic immunization to reduce infant mortality, insufficiencies remain among the most vulnerable children belonging to deprived households living in remote areas. It should also be stressed that, despite existence of laws intended to protect children and prohibit their employment and abuse, disadvantaged boys and girls are exposed to child labour and becoming street children at the mercy of drug abuse, violence and sexual tourism. For immunization coverage, inequalities are generally attenuated. Whereas for infant and child mortality, stunting and underweight, unjustifiable gaps exist between rural and urban; poor and rich; developed and deprived regions. In Egypt and Morocco, the poorest children are three times likely to die than the richest children. Stunting and under weight reveal similar levels of inequality. North African nations are among the countries with the highest levels of unintentional injuries with rates over 45 per 100 000 children with more than 17 per 100 000 due to road –traffic injury and mortality(5) This region knows also a high prevalence of violence against women and many studies have stressed the fact that children are often witnesses when violence occurs against their mothers and, as a corollary, they are more likely to be affected for the remaining of their life and, in some cases, willing to reproduce the scene at adulthood especially under the pressure of unemployment and marginalization(6). References 1 Egypt Health. Demographic Health Surveys 2005 2 Morocco Health. Demographic Health Surveys 2002 3 Tunisia Health. Demographic Health Surveys 1988 4 Hameida J, Billot L, Deschamps JP. Growth of preschool children in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya: regional and sociodemographic differences. Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal 2002; 8:1400-1412. 5 WHO and UNICEF. World report on child injury prevention. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2008 6 Rarrbo K. L'Algerie et sa jeunesse: marginalisations sociales et desarroi culturel. Paris: L'Harmattan;

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