

# Inequality of Opportunity in MENA

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## Abstract

Most recent academic inequality analysis has been focused on inequality of opportunity, since inequality of outcome such as inequality in distribution of income and wealth does not account for individual responsibility for such outcomes. In contrast, there has been a growing consensus that societies seeking social and economic justice or equity in living standards should promote equality of opportunity by compensating the inequality arising from ‘circumstances’ beyond the control of the individual, while letting individuals bear the consequences of actions or “efforts” for which they can be held responsible (See Roemer, 1998, 1993; and Roemer and others, 2003).

The wealth of data available in the surveys<sup>1</sup> on MENA countries is used in the construction of selected health and education indicators used in the inequality of opportunity analysis.

In health, the analysis focuses mainly on factors that have a direct effect, such as water and sanitation, as well as on child health outcomes, such as infant mortality rates and malnutrition.

In education, the wealth of data is used to assess evolution of inequality in attendance rates, completion rates and average years of schooling over time. Generally, the analyses of both outcomes and opportunity inequality focus on evolution of inequality across the region over time.

Researchers expect that the outbreak of Covid-19 may have caused the deterioration of inequality of opportunity. We will then use the available post-covid data to study the post-Covid situation of inequality of opportunity in MENA.

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<sup>1</sup> Main sources of data are: the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and the Pan Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM)