



# Press Release

## Central Agency for Public Mobilization And Statistics

### On the Occasion of the International Literacy Day

#### 24.1% Decrease of the illiteracy rate in Egypt over thirty years

Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) issued on 8/9 /2021 a press release on the occasion of the International Literacy Day which is held annually on September 8. It was adopted by the Conference of UNESCO at the 14th session in 1965, To celebrate it annually, and this year's 2021 slogan comes ("Literacy for a human-centred recovery: Narrowing the digital divide").

The government is concerned of illiteracy due to the importance of education in building the Egyptian citizen, so the efforts made by the government and the civil society organizations are united in playing their social role, which focuses on the role of youth in achieving sustainable development and eliminating illiteracy in order to achieve a better future for Egypt.

#### • The most important illiteracy indicators are as follows:

##### I- Illiteracy status in the world and the Arab countries, in 2021:

**17% is the world's illiteracy rate,  
Niger and Chad are the highest among countries**

- UNESCO data indicated that about 17% of the world's adult population (15 years and over) still cannot read and write, and that about 127 million young people worldwide cannot read and write, of whom 60.7% are girls, while about 67.4 million children are not enrolled in schools, which predict the problem of seeing a future free of illiteracy.
- Most of illiterate adults (15 years and over) live in South Asia, Western Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, meaning that about 781 million people worldwide cannot read and write, of whom 64% were females .
- Niger witnessed the highest illiteracy rate in the world for young people in the age group (15-24 years), which reached about 81% in 2021, of whom 89% were females, followed by Chad, whose illiteracy rates reached about 78%. This may be due to the escalation of violence in those countries that led to disruption of studies in them.
- There are some countries that have almost complete literacy, with literacy rates reaching 100%, such as: Andorra, Cuba, Finland, Uzbekistan, North Korea, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Ukraine, Russia.
- One out of every five adults (over 15 years old) in the Arab world suffers from illiteracy, and statistics indicate that there are some Arab countries where the illiteracy rate does not exceed 10% (Qatar, Palestine, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait), while the percentage of illiteracy in Somalia is about 62.2%.

## II-Illiteracy rates in Egypt during the period 1986-2017

### **24.1% Decrease in illiteracy rate over the three past decades**

- Illiteracy rates (for individuals 10 years and over) decreased from 49.9% in 1986 to 25.8% in 2017, by 24.1%.
- Urban illiteracy rate decreased compared to rural one, reaching 17.7% and 32.2 percent, respectively, in the 2017 census, compared to urban illiteracy rate by 35.6% and rural 61.9% in the 1986 census.
- Illiteracy rate among females is higher than among male in 1986 and 2017 censuses. Male illiteracy rate reached from 37.6% in 1986 to 21.1% in 2017, compared to female illiteracy rate from 62.8% to 30.8% for the same period. The reason for such decline may be due to customs, traditions and beliefs in girls' marriage And remainig at home.
- More than half of illiterate are elder people, as the age group (60 years and over) recorded the highest percentage of illiterates with 63.4%, while the age group (15-24 years) recorded the lowest percentage among illiterates by about 7%.

### **The most important efforts made to eradicate illiteracy to make Egypt free of illiteracy by 2030:**

- **“Matrouh without illiteracy”**
  - It's an initiative in which the political leadership pays great attention to the illiteracy eradication project, noting that a plan has been drawn up for (6) border governorates to eliminate illiteracy so that all governorates will be free of illiteracy within 5 years, including Matrouh governorate, where illiteracy will be eliminated within two years in light of solidarity and cooperation between the executive bodies, Matrouh Governorate and the General Authority for Adult Education to implement Matrouh Without Illiteracy Initiative in all villages and hamlets.
- **Activities of the General Authority for Adult Education during the Covid-19**
  - Establishing an electronic platform for remote adult education, using some different technological applications and making them available to learners, using the best interactive technical and educational standards to suit target audience.
  - Organizing an online literacy classes for rural areas in the Arab Republic of Egypt, within the framework of cooperation between the General Authority for Adult Education and Ain Shams University in 2021.

### **Data sources:**

- CAPMAS, General Census of Population, Housing and Establishments 2017.
- General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education.
- Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) - Arab region Statistics.
- World Bank databases.