Improving Education Quality in Tunisia

By the mid-1990s, Tunisia had succeeded in enrolling almost all of the country’s six-year-olds in first grade. Despite this effort, the school system was still burdened with high drop-out and repetition rates in later grades. As part of a larger reform project, the Tunisian government requested World Bank assistance to build on a UNICEF-supported “learning improvement” project.

The Bank’s $99 million funding has contributed to the development of new school curricula, the creation and distribution of new textbooks, and the implementation of new tools to measure students’ performances. In addition, an extensive training program for teachers was created to equip them with the skills they need to incorporate new teaching methods in their daily instruction. The new methodology aims to provide each child with basic competencies in a range of core subjects, and requires teachers to focus on each student’s needs and be accountable for the pupil’s progress.

The Priority Schools Program now covers some 600 primary schools and 100 middle schools, and kindergarten classes have been created in over 400 schools to cater to the most disadvantaged children.