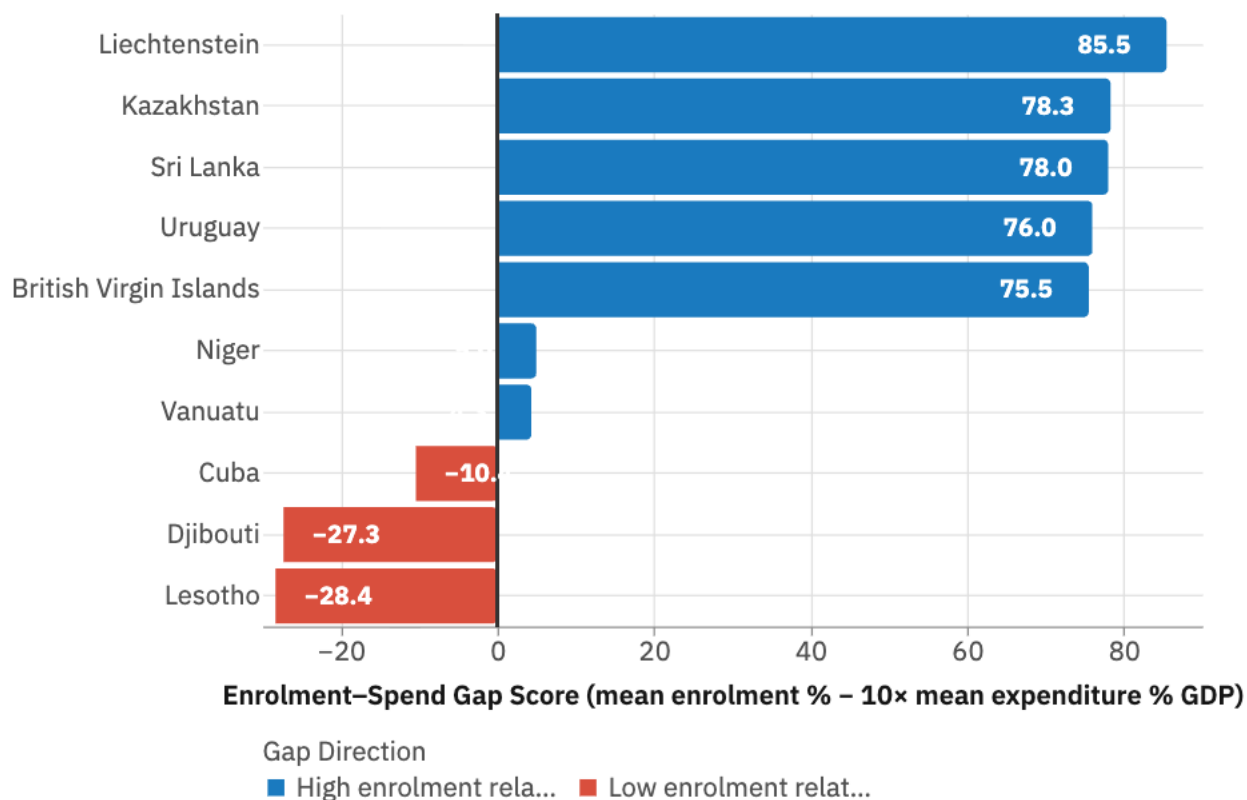


# High Spending, Low Enrolment: Countries Where Education Budgets Don't Match Access

Several countries spend relatively high shares of GDP on education yet show enrolment ratios far below the global mean, while others achieve high enrolment on modest budgets - revealing a...



Gap between government education expenditure (% GDP) and average gross enrolment ratio (primary + secondary average), averaged across all available years per country.

## Key Insight

Several countries spend relatively high shares of GDP on education yet show enrolment ratios far below the global mean, while others achieve high enrolment on modest budgets - revealing a stark efficiency gap. American Samoa recorded 14.6% of GDP on education (a single-year outlier) with no enrolment data, making it an extreme spending anomaly. Countries like Chad and early-demographic-dividend nations show secondary enrolment below 25% despite measurable spending, suggesting structural access barriers. High-enrolment countries (Central Europe, Brunei, Cuba) tend to cluster around 3-6% GDP spending, suggesting diminishing returns above that band. Practical read (decision): The gap metric flags where additional spending is unlikely to improve access without structural reform - policymakers should investigate countries with spending > 4% GDP but enrolment < 70% as priority cases for efficiency audits.

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## Why This Matters

- Countries with high spend but low enrolment may have systemic inefficiencies, conflict, or data gaps that warrant targeted intervention.
  - Countries achieving high enrolment on low budgets offer replicable policy models worth studying.
  - The gap metric provides a single actionable signal for prioritising education aid or reform efforts.
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## Supporting Chart

A diverging horizontal bar chart ranks the top 5 and bottom 5 countries by gap score, with bold white numeric labels placed inside the end of each bar with a comfortable inward offset for full visibility.

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## Dataset Snapshot

World Bank education dataset, 7,072 rows covering ~272 countries/regions across 2000-2025, with 4 education indicators including enrolment ratios and government spending.

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## Confidence and Limits

Both enrolment columns are MIXED TYPE with heavy missingness (~65% null for expenditure, ~78% null for literacy); averages are computed only over years with valid data, so country-level means may reflect different time windows. Correlation between spending and enrolment is not causation.