

Characteristics of Grade 6 Pupils, their Homes and Learning Environments

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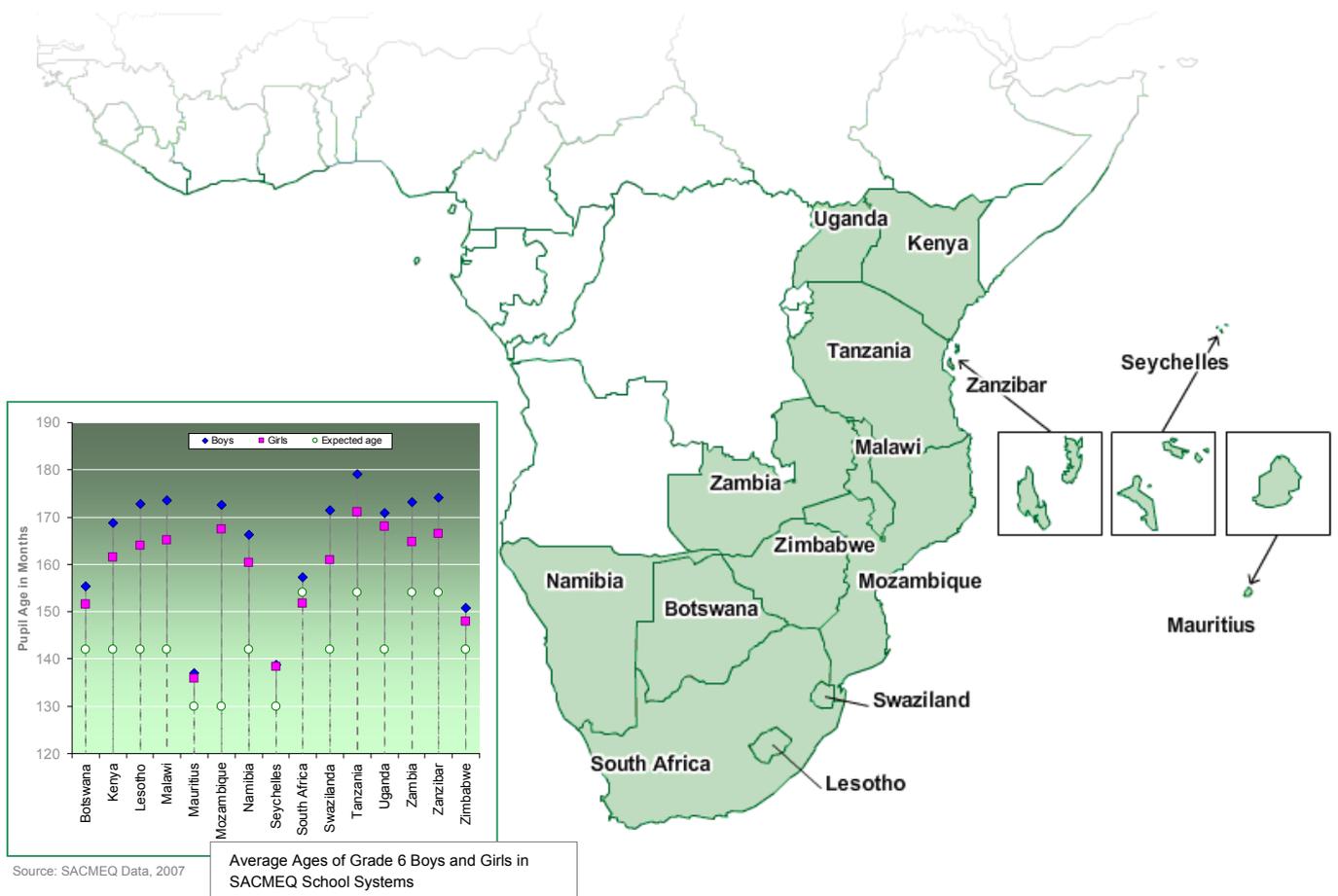
ABSTRACT

In this paper, the author examines the characteristics of Grade 6 pupils, their homes and learning environments in 15 African schools systems (Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe). The data for this study were collected in 2000 and 2007 as part of the major SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III Projects, respectively. The SACMEQ projects sought to examine the quality of education offered in primary schools in these countries. (SACMEQ is an acronym for the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality.)

The results revealed large variations in characteristics of Grade 6 pupils among these school systems in terms of their personal characteristics (age, days absent, grade repetition, and preschool attendance), home environment (socioeconomic background, parents alive, and speaking the language of instruction at home) and learning environment (possession of textbooks and basic learning materials, such as exercise books, pencils and erasers).

KEYWORDS

Absenteeism; Distance travelled to school; Grade repetition; Homework; Household tasks; Learning materials; Orphans; Parents alive; Preschool; Pupil age; Pupil textbooks,



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Introduction

Studies have consistently linked pupil characteristics with pupil achievement and school performance. Indeed results from the first two SACMEQ studies clearly revealed the importance of pupil characteristics in explaining the variation in learner achievements across SACMEQ school systems.

In this paper, selected information about the characteristics of Grade 6 pupils in SACMEQ school systems is presented. The focus is mainly on the SACMEQ III (2007) data, but where applicable information is also provided for SACMEQ II (2000) for purposes of comparison.

Information in this paper is presented in three main sections. The first two sections focus on pupils' personal characteristics (such as gender and age) and their home environment (such as socio-economic scores (SES), number of siblings, and the tasks or duties undertaken by pupils at home). The third section focuses on the pupils' learning environment at school (such as the amount of homework given and whether this homework is corrected by their teachers, textbook ownership or use during reading and mathematics lessons, and possession of learning materials such as exercise books, pencils, and rulers).

It should be noted that the pupil SES data used in this paper were obtained using Rasch measurement techniques from pupils' responses to questions about their home possessions, parental education, quality of the materials used to build their homes, number of books at home, and the source of lighting at home. Rasch scores on these items from all the 14 countries that took part in the SACMEQ II study were transformed so that the combined mean of the scores for 14 countries was 500 with a standard deviation of 100 (Dolata, 2005).

Pupil personal characteristics

Data on personal characteristics (sex, age, number of days absent, grade repetition, and preschool attendance) of the pupils were analysed, and the results are given in *Table 1*. The results for SACMEQ II are presented in the first panel of *Table 1* while the results for SACMEQ III are presented in the second panel of the table.

In the second panel, green is selected to indicate a desirable trend between 2000 and 2007. For example, for Kenya, the number of days absent in 2000 was 2.0 and the number of days absent in 2007 was 1.3 (presented in green because a trend towards less absenteeism is desirable).

It should be noted that data on preschool attendance were not collected in SACMEQ II, and that Zimbabwe did not participate in the SACMEQ II study.

Percentage of girls

In a pupil population, it is usually the goal of most education systems that half of the pupils are girls and the other half are boys. In a sample this gender balance may vary a little, but it should be within reasonable sampling error limits in a 'gender-equitable' situation. It can be seen from the results in *Table 1* that about half the Grade 6 pupils in SACMEQ II (49.7 per cent) and also about half the Grade 6 pupils in SACMEQ III (50.9 per cent) were girls. It can also be seen that, when the associated sampling errors are considered, these percentages are near 50 per cent, which indicates reasonable equity in gender participation at this grade level. However, there were some variations in gender participation between countries. For example,

in SACMEQ III the percentages of girls were significantly high in Zimbabwe (56.4 per cent), Zanzibar (57.3 per cent), and Lesotho (54.6 per cent), while the percentage of girls was noticeably low in Mozambique (45.7 per cent).

Table 1 Percentages and means for girls, age, number of days absent, grade repetition, and preschool attendance

| For 2000 (SACMEQ II) | Girls | | Age | | Days absent ¹ | | Repetition ² | | Preschool ³ | |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------|
| | % | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | % | SE | % | SE |
| Botswana | 51.0 | 0.64 | 13.2 | 0.04 | 0.4 | 0.03 | 31.4 | 1.07 | xx | xx |
| Kenya | 50.3 | 1.19 | 14.0 | 0.07 | 2.0 | 0.10 | 64.1 | 1.67 | xx | xx |
| Lesotho | 55.6 | 0.96 | 14.1 | 0.06 | 1.3 | 0.09 | 60.8 | 1.62 | xx | xx |
| Malawi | 47.8 | 1.33 | 14.5 | 0.10 | 2.0 | 0.15 | 66.1 | 2.03 | xx | xx |
| Mauritius | 48.1 | 0.61 | 11.3 | 0.01 | 1.8 | 0.09 | 18.7 | 0.84 | xx | xx |
| Mozambique | 40.3 | 1.30 | 14.7 | 0.06 | 2.7 | 0.10 | 78.2 | 1.07 | xx | xx |
| Namibia | 51.9 | 0.63 | 13.9 | 0.05 | 1.5 | 0.08 | 54.1 | 1.21 | xx | xx |
| Seychelles | 50.1 | 1.30 | 11.6 | 0.01 | 0.9 | 0.04 | 10.3 | 0.77 | xx | xx |
| South Africa | 52.5 | 1.00 | 13.1 | 0.06 | 1.6 | 0.13 | 42.3 | 2.04 | xx | xx |
| Swaziland | 51.6 | 0.87 | 13.9 | 0.05 | 0.8 | 0.05 | 59.3 | 1.39 | xx | xx |
| Tanzania | 52.2 | 0.94 | 15.0 | 0.07 | 2.1 | 0.17 | 23.3 | 1.86 | xx | xx |
| Uganda | 44.5 | 1.66 | 14.3 | 0.08 | 1.9 | 0.08 | 52.9 | 1.90 | xx | xx |
| Zambia | 48.4 | 1.21 | 13.9 | 0.12 | 2.5 | 0.12 | 51.5 | 1.59 | xx | xx |
| Zanzibar | 51.7 | 1.23 | 14.9 | 0.03 | 2.0 | 0.07 | 27.6 | 1.05 | xx | xx |
| Zimbabwe | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| SACMEQ II | 49.7 | 0.30 | 13.7 | 0.02 | 1.7 | 0.03 | 45.8 | 0.44 | xx | xx |

| For 2007 (SACMEQ III) | Girls | | Age | | Days absent | | Repetition | | Preschool | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | % | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | % | SE | % | SE |
| Botswana | 50.2 | 0.63 | 12.8 | 0.03 | 0.4 | 0.03 | 31.3 | 1.15 | 39.8 | 2.07 |
| Kenya | 49.3 | 0.94 | 13.8 | 0.06 | 1.3 | 0.11 | 48.2 | 1.43 | 94.5 | 0.51 |
| Lesotho | 54.6 | 0.89 | 14.0 | 0.05 | 1.5 | 0.08 | 51.7 | 1.36 | 61.8 | 1.45 |
| Malawi | 49.2 | 1.06 | 14.1 | 0.07 | 1.7 | 0.09 | 60.3 | 1.65 | 27.6 | 1.85 |
| Mauritius | 48.9 | 0.81 | 11.4 | 0.01 | 1.8 | 0.07 | 22.3 | 1.10 | 97.9 | 0.32 |
| Mozambique | 45.7 | 1.06 | 14.2 | 0.08 | 1.1 | 0.07 | 59.6 | 1.26 | 26.0 | 1.40 |
| Namibia | 52.0 | 0.52 | 13.6 | 0.04 | 1.0 | 0.06 | 43.2 | 1.13 | 75.6 | 1.31 |
| Seychelles | 49.0 | 1.30 | 11.5 | 0.01 | 1.7 | 0.06 | 2.2 | 0.38 | 96.4 | 0.47 |
| South Africa | 50.8 | 0.61 | 12.9 | 0.03 | 1.0 | 0.11 | 28.5 | 0.98 | 73.6 | 1.11 |
| Swaziland | 50.1 | 0.69 | 13.9 | 0.05 | 0.4 | 0.03 | 56.4 | 1.26 | 66.4 | 1.65 |
| Tanzania | 50.9 | 0.74 | 14.6 | 0.07 | 2.1 | 0.12 | 20.4 | 1.25 | 60.2 | 2.20 |
| Uganda | 50.7 | 0.87 | 14.1 | 0.05 | 2.4 | 0.09 | 52.7 | 1.49 | 47.9 | 1.84 |
| Zambia | 48.7 | 1.05 | 14.1 | 0.07 | 2.5 | 0.11 | 33.6 | 1.42 | 30.8 | 1.84 |
| Zanzibar | 57.3 | 1.07 | 14.1 | 0.05 | 1.8 | 0.09 | 15.3 | 0.85 | 33.7 | 1.63 |
| Zimbabwe | 56.4 | 1.03 | 12.4 | 0.04 | 1.7 | 0.11 | 31.4 | 1.54 | 70.1 | 2.35 |
| SACMEQ III | 50.9 | 0.24 | 13.4 | 0.02 | 1.5 | 0.02 | 37.1 | 0.36 | 60.2 | 0.54 |

NOTES:

¹ Number of days absent in one month.

³ Pupils who attended preschool for a few months or more.

² Pupils who repeated a grade one or more times.

Numbers in green indicate that a desirable trend was recorded between 2000 and 2007

Among these countries, Mozambique had the lowest girls' participation levels in both SACMEQ II (40.3 per cent) and SACMEQ III (45.7 per cent). Importantly, in ten countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) there were trends towards gender balance. However, in Zanzibar the

proportion of girls went up by around 6 per cent (51.7 to 57.3), which further distorted the gender balance.

The message here is clear. Authorities and parents in countries like Zimbabwe, Zanzibar, and Lesotho need to encourage more boys' participation in education at this primary school grade level. In contrast, authorities and parents in a country like Mozambique need to encourage more girls' participation at this grade level.

Pupil age

From *Table 1* it can be seen that the average ages of the Grade 6 pupils in SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III were 13.7 and 13.4 years respectively. The Seychelles and Mauritius had the youngest pupils in both studies (around 11.5 years) while Tanzania had the oldest pupils in both the SACMEQ II study (15.0 years) and the SACMEQ III study (14.6 years). It can further be seen that, with the exception of three countries (Mauritius, Swaziland, and Zambia), the average pupil age generally dropped in all the countries between these two studies, especially in Botswana, Malawi, Zanzibar, Mozambique, and Tanzania.

Further analyses of the distribution of the pupil age among the countries in the SACMEQ III study were undertaken, and the results are presented in the box plots in *Figure 1*. The box plots represent the age of pupils in different percentiles of the pupil population. The top bar and the bottom bar of the box plot show the 90th and the 10th percentiles respectively, while the upper edge and the lower edge of the box show the 75th and 25th percentiles respectively. The bar inside the box plot shows the 50th percentile (median). The green dot shows the expected average age for Grade 6 pupils, assuming that all pupils entered school at the official age and there is no grade repetition.

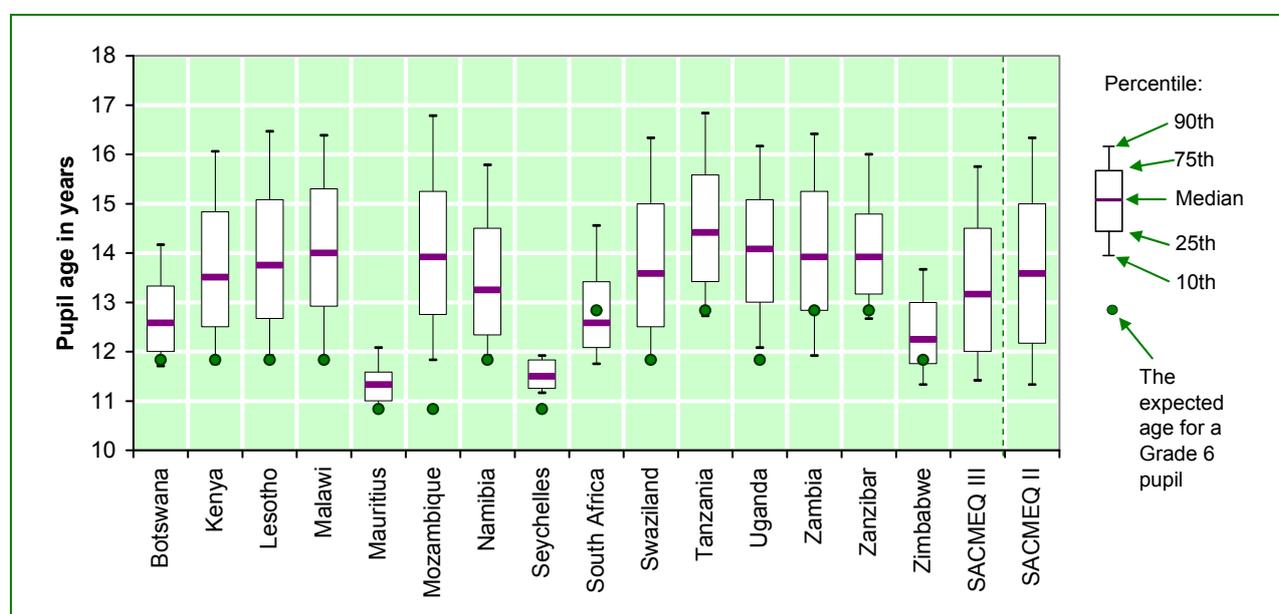


Figure 1 Distribution of pupil age (SACMEQ III)

For example, for Zanzibar, the top bar corresponds to 16, indicating that 90 per cent of the pupils in this school system were aged 16 years or below. In other words, 10 per cent of Grade 6 pupils in Zanzibar were more than 16 years old. The bottom bar corresponds to 12.7, implying that 10 per cent of the Grade 6 pupils in Zanzibar were less than 12.7 years old. The

lower and upper edges of the box correspond to 13.2 and 14.8 respectively, meaning that between 25 and 75 per cent of the pupils were between 13.2 and 14.8 years old. Finally, the bar inside the box corresponds to 13.9, implying that half of the pupil population was less than 13.9 years, and the other half was more than 13.9 years old.

In Zanzibar, for example, the official school entry age is 7 years. This means that pupils enter school if they have turned 7 by 31 December of the previous year. If all Grade 6 pupils in Zanzibar entered school at the official age and there was no grade repetition, the expected average age in Grade 6 in the month that the SACMEQ III data were collected would be 13.8 years (shown by the green dot in *Figure 1*). Thus, it can be seen from *Figure 1* that at least 75 per cent of the pupils in most countries were above the expected average age, with the exception of pupils in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Thus, from *Figure 1* it can be seen clearly that Mauritius and the Seychelles had the youngest Grade 6 pupils in the SACMEQ III study. Importantly, 90 per cent of the Grade 6 pupils in some SACMEQ countries were older than the oldest 10 per cent of pupils in Mauritius and the Seychelles. In general, boys tended to be older than girls, while pupils in rural schools tended to be older than their counterparts in urban schools. (More information regarding age distribution of pupils, gender and pupil achievement can be found in *Appendices 1 to 4*.)

One of the main contributing factors to the age of the pupil at a particular grade is the age at which the pupil started schooling – the other factor being grade repetition. The ministries of education in SACMEQ countries could consider harmonizing their school starting policies with a view to reducing the age differences among the pupils in these nations. In each country, the parents and the authorities concerned should ensure that children start school at the official age of entry. In addition, those interested in analysing or interpreting SACMEQ data should be aware of the age differences between Grade 6 pupils across these nations.

Pupil days absent from school

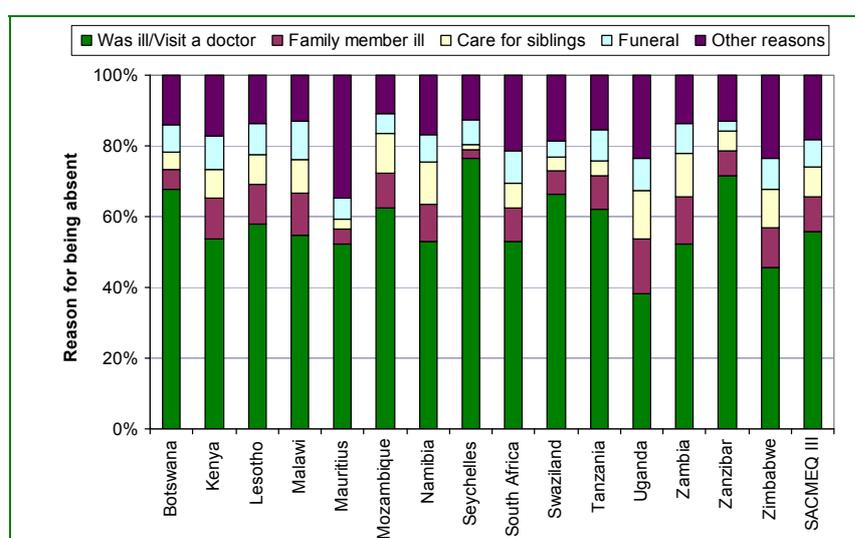
Absenteeism has been associated with undesirable outcomes such as poor academic achievement, low school internal efficiency (high repetition rates and high dropout rates), and discipline problems. Obviously, pupils who are regular absentees receive fewer hours of instruction and therefore are highly likely to achieve at lower levels than their classmates. It is not hard to see that regular absentees could eventually become less engaged in schoolwork and therefore less motivated to continue with schooling.

In the SACMEQ studies, the pupils were asked how many days they had been absent in the month before the SACMEQ data collection, and the pupil responses were verified by comparing them with the official class registers. It can be seen from *Table 1* that, on average, pupils were absent for 1.7 and 1.5 days per month for SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III respectively. Over a year of schooling this can add up to a substantial number of days absent.

There were large variations in numbers of days absent between these school systems. For SACMEQ III, Botswana had the lowest levels of absenteeism (0.4 days per month), while Zambia had the highest (2.5 days per month). With a few exceptions, absenteeism levels in SACMEQ III followed closely the levels in SACMEQ II. The clear exceptions here were Mozambique, South Africa, Kenya, and Namibia, where absenteeism levels went down by at least half a day, and the Seychelles and Uganda, where these levels went up by at least half a day.

Pupils who had been absent for one day or more were given a list of possible reasons for absenteeism and asked to tick those applicable to them. The responses were analysed, and the results are presented in *Figure 2* for SACMEQ III. For SACMEQ III, over 55 per cent of these pupils said they were absent because they were ill or had to visit a doctor. Around 15 per cent reported they were absent because of family reasons: that is, a need to take care of a sick family member or of siblings. These family reasons were given by around 25 per cent of the absent pupils in Zambia and Uganda.

Regardless of the reasons given for absenteeism, the number of learning days lost because of absenteeism should concern the authorities in most of the SACMEQ countries, especially in Zambia, Uganda, and Tanzania, where on average two days or more were lost per month in both SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III.



Most pupils said they were absent because they were ill or they had to visit a doctor.

Figure 2 Reasons why pupils were absent from school (SACMEQ III)

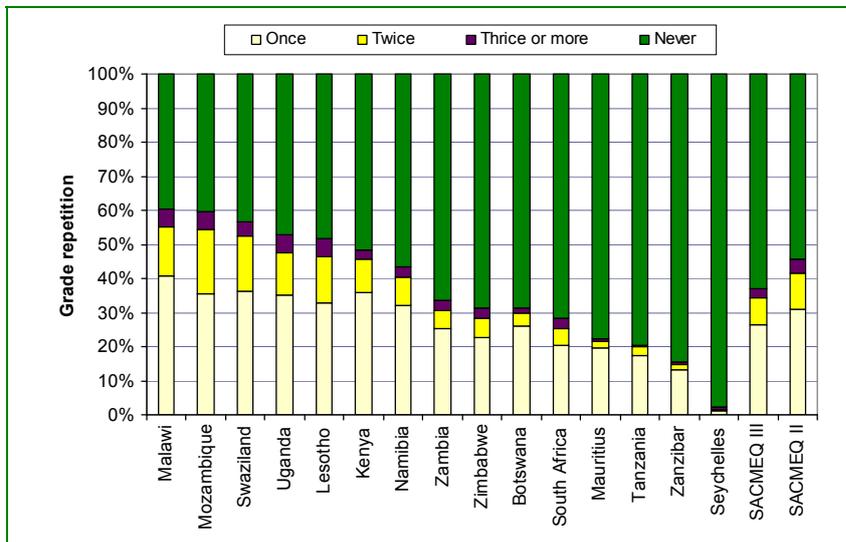
Grade repetition

Grade repetition has been linked with poor pupil achievement in SACMEQ countries (see, for example, Hungu and Thuku, 2010a) and also in other countries. Others have linked grade repetition with low academic motivation in the repeating pupil (Brophy, 2006), and it is likely that low academic motivation could lead to other problems such as indiscipline and dropping out of school.

Pupils were asked how many times they had repeated a grade since they started school, including Grade 6. These grade repetition data were analysed, and the results are presented in *Table 1*. The percentages of pupils who had repeated a grade once, twice, or more times are shown in *Figure 3* for SACMEQ III.

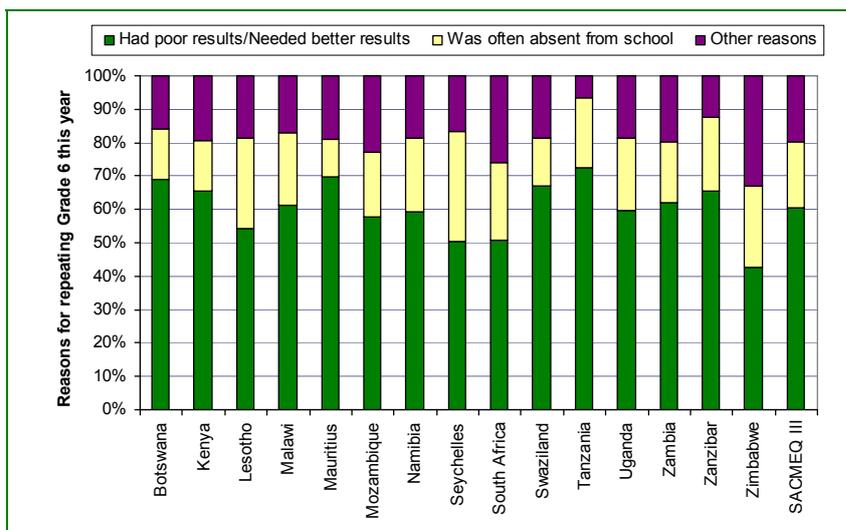
From *Table 1* and *Figure 3*, it can be seen that Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Uganda, and Lesotho had the highest grade repetition rates in SACMEQ III, with over 50 per cent of the pupils in these countries reporting that they had repeated a grade one or more times since they started school. The grade repetition situation appeared worst in Malawi and Mozambique, with around 60 per cent or more of the pupils in these two countries reporting they had repeated a grade at least once in both SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III. In addition, multiple grade repetition levels appeared worst in these two countries (and also in Swaziland),

with around 20 per cent or more of the pupils in these three countries reporting that they had repeated grades more than once. On the other hand, the Seychelles had the lowest grade repetition rates in both SACMEQ II (10.3 per cent) and SACMEQ III (2.2 per cent), and also the lowest multiple grade repetition rates in SACMEQ III (1.0 per cent).



Over 50 per cent of Grade 6 pupils in Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Uganda, and Lesotho in 2007 said they had repeated a grade one or more times since they started school.

Figure 3 Percentages of pupils repeating grades multiple times (SACMEQ III)



Around 60 per cent of the grade repeaters in the SACMEQ III data said they were repeating Grade 6 because they had poor results or they needed better examination results.

Figure 4 What pupils said made them repeat Grade 6 (SACMEQ III)

Except in Mauritius, grade repetition levels generally went down between SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III in all the countries. In Mauritius, grade repetition went up by around 4 per cent (18.7 to 22.3).

The pupils who were repeating Grade 6 in the year of SACMEQ III data collection (2007) were presented with a list of possible reasons for grade repetition, and asked to tick those applicable to them. The three options were ‘I had poor school results or I needed better results in the examination’, ‘I was absent from school’, and ‘Other reasons’. Data on the reasons indicated by these pupils were analysed, and the results are presented in *Figure 4* for SACMEQ III.

From *Figure 4*, it can be seen that around 60 per cent of these pupils in SACMEQ III said they were repeating Grade 6 because they had poor results or they needed better examination results. Around 20 per cent of these pupils blamed absenteeism for grade repetition.

Research evidence indicates that grade repetition does not help to improve academic achievement (Brophy, 2006), and therefore ‘poor school results or need for better examination results’ are not good justifications for grade repetition. Brophy (2006) has recommended several alternative strategies that could be employed to assist pupils at risk of grade repetition, such as early intervention, collaboration with parents, and supplementary instruction.

High grade repetition rates are indications of system inefficiency and wastage in general. Clearly, these rates were high in most SACMEQ countries. In some countries, three out of five pupils reported that they had repeated a grade at least once. Therefore, the ministries of education in SACMEQ nations should find ways of discouraging grade repetition.

Preschool attendance

Data on preschool attendance were not collected in SACMEQ II. It is generally expected that attending preschool will equip pupils with the basic foundation skills required for learning, especially at the lower primary school level.

From *Table 1* it can be seen that around 60 per cent of the pupils in the SACMEQ III study reported that they had attended a preschool before Grade 1. However, there were large variations between these countries on preschool attendance. For example, over 90 per cent of the pupils in the Seychelles, Kenya, and Mauritius reported that they had attended a preschool, while less than 30 per cent of the pupils in Malawi and Mozambique had done so. Interestingly, Malawi and Mozambique were also among the countries that had high incidences of grade repetition, which could suggest a link between preschool attendance and grade repetition, especially at the lower primary school grades.

Pupil home environment

Data on some selected home environment variables (speaking the language of instruction at home, pupil SES level, meals per week, parents alive and number of siblings, pupil tasks at home) were analysed, and the results are given in *Table 2*. The results for SACMEQ II are presented in the first panel of *Table 2* while the results for SACMEQ III are presented in the second panel. The numbers in green in the second panel indicate desirable trends between 2000 and 2007. Results of the household tasks undertaken by the pupils are presented later in *Table 3*. It should be noted that data on parents alive, number of siblings, and pupil household tasks were not collected in the SACMEQ II study.

Speaking the language of instruction

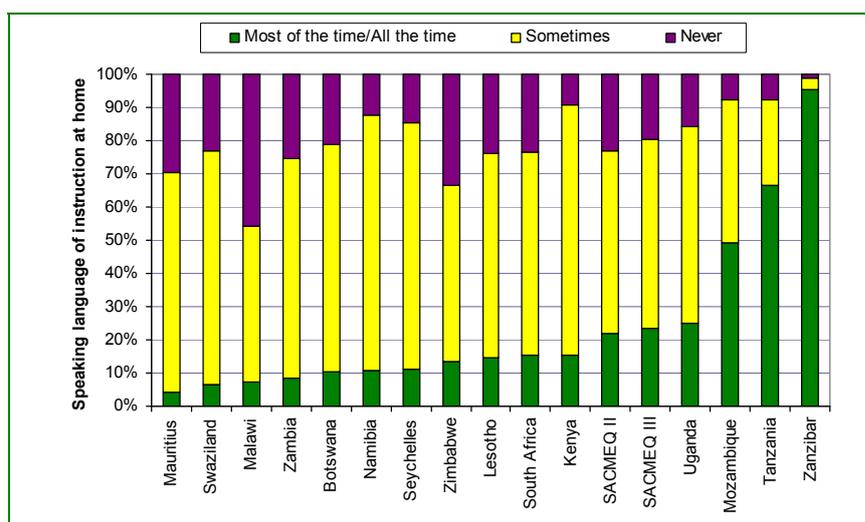
English is the language of instruction in most SACMEQ countries, except in Tanzania and Zanzibar, where Kiswahili is used, and Mozambique, where Portuguese is used. A few schools in South Africa use Afrikaans. It is of interest to note that past analyses of SACMEQ II data showed strong positive correlations between speaking the language of instruction and pupil achievement, especially in reading, across all SACMEQ countries (see, for example, Hungu and Thuku, 2010a).

Table 2 Percentages and means for selected home environment variables

| For 2000 (SACMEQ II) | Spoke the language of instruction at home | | Pupil SES index | | Meals per week | | Number of siblings | | Both parents alive | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| | % | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | % | SE |
| Botswana | 74.0 | 1.37 | 507.2 | 5.16 | 17.5 | 0.16 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Kenya | 86.4 | 1.22 | 470.2 | 3.97 | 18.8 | 0.16 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Lesotho | 70.7 | 2.43 | 471.6 | 2.83 | 17.7 | 0.22 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Malawi | 40.8 | 2.98 | 443.0 | 5.31 | 19.2 | 0.17 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Mauritius | 64.5 | 2.36 | 643.0 | 3.48 | 20.0 | 0.11 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Mozambique | 94.5 | 0.52 | 464.7 | 4.18 | 17.3 | 0.15 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Namibia | 78.0 | 1.26 | 484.1 | 4.03 | 17.7 | 0.16 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Seychelles | 83.5 | 0.94 | 625.6 | 1.50 | 16.5 | 0.12 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| South Africa | 76.5 | 1.85 | 555.8 | 7.52 | 17.2 | 0.19 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Swaziland | 63.8 | 2.14 | 516.2 | 4.27 | 18.3 | 0.18 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Tanzania | 89.9 | 1.20 | 450.0 | 4.94 | 17.7 | 0.21 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Uganda | 82.4 | 2.01 | 440.8 | 3.73 | 16.2 | 0.24 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Zambia | 73.4 | 2.28 | 471.2 | 4.90 | 17.8 | 0.17 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Zanzibar | 96.2 | 0.46 | 456.6 | 1.41 | 19.1 | 0.08 | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| Zimbabwe | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| SACMEQ II | 76.7 | 0.52 | 500.0 | 1.36 | 17.9 | 0.05 | xx | xx | xx | xx |

| For 2007 (SACMEQ III) | Spoke the language of instruction at home | | Pupil SES index | | Meals per week | | Number of siblings | | Both parents alive | |
|--------------------------|---|-------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | % | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | % | SE |
| Botswana | 78.7 | 1.51 | 551.3 | 5.07 | 17.9 | 0.13 | 3.2 | 0.06 | 72.4 | 1.42 |
| Kenya | 90.9 | 0.96 | 466.8 | 3.60 | 18.6 | 0.16 | 5.3 | 0.14 | 79.5 | 1.15 |
| Lesotho | 76.2 | 1.63 | 475.5 | 3.01 | 19.2 | 0.10 | 3.0 | 0.07 | 62.2 | 1.07 |
| Malawi | 54.0 | 2.67 | 436.3 | 3.43 | 18.0 | 0.15 | 4.7 | 0.07 | 73.2 | 1.07 |
| Mauritius | 70.5 | 1.56 | 636.3 | 2.95 | 19.3 | 0.10 | 1.8 | 0.04 | 94.6 | 0.43 |
| Mozambique | 92.2 | 0.93 | 444.3 | 4.55 | 17.9 | 0.15 | 4.6 | 0.07 | 73.3 | 0.90 |
| Namibia | 87.8 | 0.88 | 491.9 | 4.15 | 17.1 | 0.15 | 4.5 | 0.09 | 68.1 | 1.31 |
| Seychelles | 85.2 | 0.91 | 628.7 | 1.42 | 18.0 | 0.10 | 1.7 | 0.04 | 97.0 | 0.45 |
| South Africa | 76.4 | 1.31 | 565.6 | 3.96 | 18.0 | 0.10 | 3.2 | 0.07 | 72.3 | 1.24 |
| Swaziland | 76.9 | 1.59 | 527.5 | 3.77 | 18.5 | 0.12 | 4.8 | 0.08 | 62.2 | 0.92 |
| Tanzania ¹ | 92.3 | 1.06 | 434.2 | 2.99 | xx | xx | 4.2 | 0.10 | 77.4 | 0.92 |
| Uganda | 84.4 | 1.38 | 443.6 | 3.32 | 15.4 | 0.20 | 6.1 | 0.10 | 77.9 | 0.86 |
| Zambia | 74.8 | 1.91 | 464.1 | 4.57 | 17.3 | 0.18 | 5.7 | 0.13 | 72.0 | 1.04 |
| Zanzibar | 98.9 | 0.24 | 473.5 | 3.06 | 18.6 | 0.14 | 5.5 | 0.09 | 87.9 | 0.72 |
| Zimbabwe | 66.5 | 2.73 | 498.0 | 5.00 | 17.1 | 0.21 | 3.8 | 0.19 | 64.8 | 1.31 |
| SACMEQ III | 80.4 | 0.44 | 502.5 | 1.35 | 17.9 | 0.04 | 4.1 | 0.03 | 75.7 | 0.29 |

NOTE: ¹There were some technical issues with Meals per week for Tanzania in SACMEQ III. Numbers in green indicate that a desirable trend was recorded between 2000 and 2007.



The levels of speaking the language of instruction most of the time or all the time were quite high in Zanzibar, Tanzania, and Mozambique compared with the levels in the other SACMEQ school systems.

Figure 5 Categories of pupils who spoke the language of instruction at home (SACMEQ III)

Pupils were asked how often they spoke the language of instruction at home. For the purposes of reporting in *Table 2*, if pupils reported that they spoke the language ‘sometimes’, ‘most of the time’, or ‘all the time’, they were considered as having spoken the language of instruction at home. Thus, it can be seen that 75 to 80 per cent of the pupils in these two studies spoke the languages of instruction at home. In Zanzibar, Tanzania, and Mozambique, around 90 per cent or more of the pupils spoke the languages of instruction. Malawi had the lowest levels of speaking the language of instruction at home in both SACMEQ II (40.8 per cent) and SACMEQ III (54.0 per cent). Except in two countries (Mozambique and South Africa), the proportion of pupils speaking the language of instruction at home went up in all countries between SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III, especially in Malawi, Swaziland, and Namibia, where it increased noticeably.

Further analyses were undertaken on this variable by separating the pupils who said they spoke the language of instruction ‘most of the time’ or ‘all the time’ from those who reported that they spoke the language ‘sometimes’. The results are displayed in *Figure 5* for SACMEQ III. From *Figure 5*, it is clear that the levels of speaking the language of instruction most of the time or all the time were quite high in Zanzibar (95.5 per cent), Tanzania (66.6 per cent), and Mozambique (49.3 per cent), compared with the levels in the other school systems.

Pupil SES and number of siblings

Pupil SES is considered to be an important predictor of pupil achievement because pupils from high-SES backgrounds are likely to receive adequate learning materials and more parental support than pupils from low-SES backgrounds. Indeed, pupil SES has been associated with pupil achievement in all SACMEQ countries as well as in other countries. For example, Hungu and Thuku (2010a) reported significant positive association between pupil SES and pupil achievement in reading across the 14 countries that took part in the SACMEQ II study.

The number of siblings is also thought to be an important predictor of pupils’ achievements because the more siblings children have, the less likely they are to receive sufficient parental attention in their school work, and to have adequate learning materials, especially in poor families.

The mean scores of the pupil SES index (Dolata, 2005) and the mean numbers of siblings for each country are given in *Table 2*. Information about the number of siblings was not collected in SACMEQ II.

It can be seen from *Table 2* that Mauritius and the Seychelles had the highest pupil SES levels in both studies (with mean SES scores over 600), followed by South Africa, Botswana, and Swaziland (with mean scores of around 500 to 550). Tanzania, Malawi, and Uganda had the lowest pupil SES levels, with a mean score below 450 for both studies. These variations among SACMEQ countries in pupil SES levels are quite large compared with the variations in pupil SES levels recorded among developed countries.

Pupil SES levels remained almost the same in most countries, except in Botswana and Zanzibar, where they increased noticeably, and Tanzania and Mozambique, where they dropped substantially. The decrease in the levels of pupil SES in Mozambique and Tanzania could be explained by the increased enrolment of pupils at Grade 6 in these countries following structural or policy changes in these school systems.

It can further be seen that pupils in Mauritius and the Seychelles had the lowest average number of siblings (around two), while pupils in Uganda had the highest average number of siblings (around six) for SACMEQ III.

The distributions of pupil SES and number of siblings in the school systems researched for SACMEQ III are presented in the box plots in *Figures 6* and *7* respectively. It is clear that Mauritius and the Seychelles had the highest pupil SES levels in SACMEQ III. It is also clear that the lower-SES pupils in the Seychelles and Mauritius were at a higher SES level than the average-SES pupils in some of the other countries. Interestingly, the patterns of the box plots in these two diagrams suggest some link between SES levels and family sizes in these countries, with higher-SES countries tending to have smaller families.

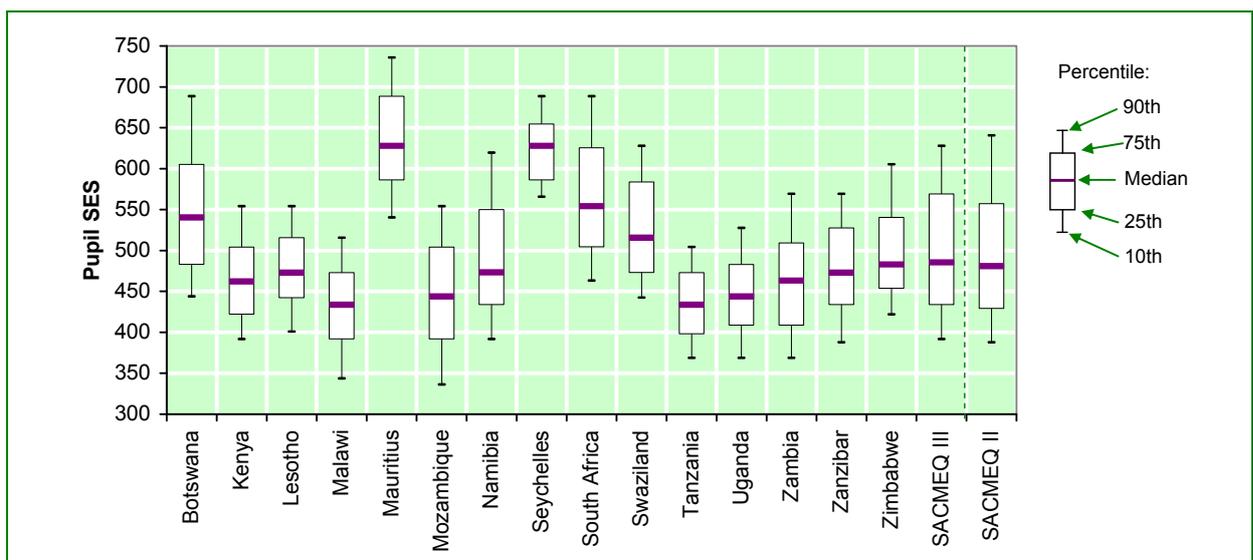


Figure 6 Distribution of pupil SES (SACMEQ III)

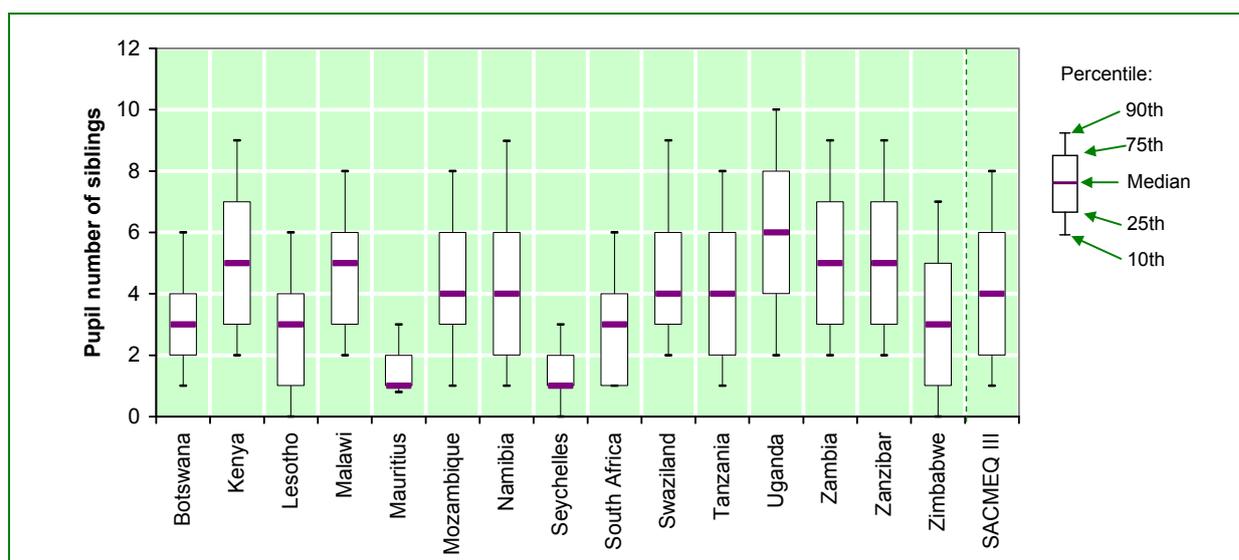


Figure 7 Distribution of pupil number of siblings (SACMEQ III)

For SES, the important message here goes to those wishing to analyse and compare pupil achievement or school performance across SACMEQ countries: they should at least control for the differences in pupil SES. For number of siblings, the important message goes to education planners and teachers that they should be aware of the numbers of children parents have to deal with when planning for parental involvement in educational activities such as homework help at home.

Meals per week

Some studies have reported a positive association between the number of meals taken by a pupil and academic achievement. For example, Hungu and Thuku (2010*b*), analysing Kenyan data from the SACMEQ II study, reported that pupils who ate more meals per week were likely to achieve better results in reading and mathematics than pupils who ate fewer meals per week. A study by Mukudi (2003) reported improved pupil achievement with improved nutrition among Kenya primary school pupils.

Pupils were asked how often they took breakfast, lunch, and supper. These data were analysed and the results are given in *Table 2*. If all the pupils took all three meals (breakfast, lunch, and supper) each day of the week, the average number of meals would be 21. However, as can be seen from the results in *Table 2*, the average meals per week across the SACMEQ nations in both studies was 17.9, which means that not all pupils in these nations ate all three meals each day of the week. Mauritius had the highest meals per week in both SACMEQ II (20.0) and SACMEQ III (19.3), while Uganda had the lowest meals per week in both SACMEQ II (16.2) and SACMEQ III (15.4). Between the SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III studies, the number of meals per week went up slightly in five countries (Mozambique, Botswana, South Africa, the Seychelles, and Lesotho), and went down slightly in six countries (Uganda, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi, Zanzibar, and Mauritius). The meals situation remained almost the same in Kenya and Swaziland.

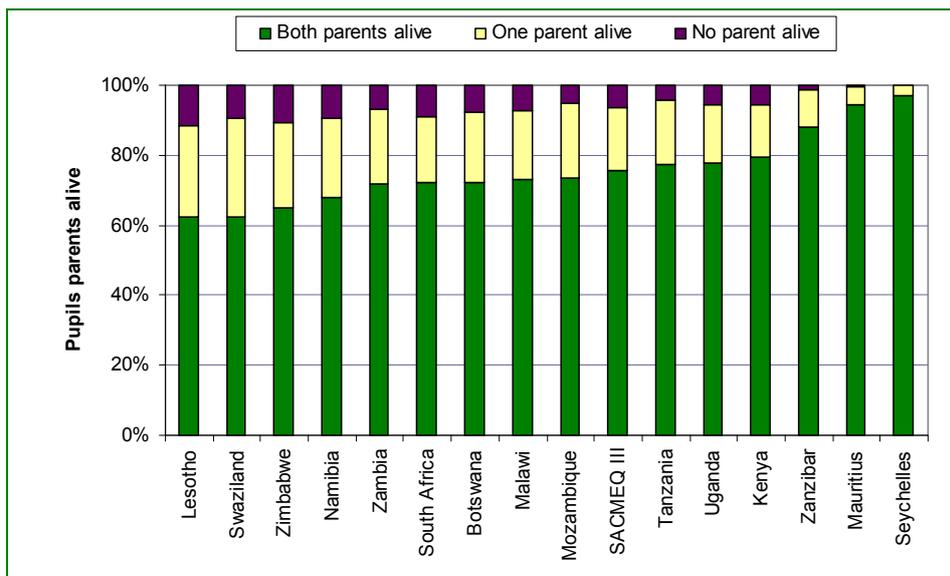
Parents alive

In the SACMEQ III study, the pupils were asked whether their mothers and fathers were alive. Orphan status is thought to be an important predictor of pupil achievement because orphans are more likely to lack educational support than those pupils with both parents alive.

The results in *Table 2* reveals that only about three-quarters (75.7 per cent) of the pupils in the SACMEQ III study had both parents alive, which means that a quarter of the pupils had lost one or both of their parents. This is shocking. The percentages of pupils with one parent alive (single-orphaned) or no parent alive (double-orphaned) are displayed in *Figure 8*.

The percentages of orphans were worryingly high, particularly in Lesotho and Swaziland, where about two in every five pupils (37.8 per cent) had lost one or both of their parents. Almost equally worrying were the percentages of orphans in Zimbabwe and Namibia, where over 30 per cent of the pupils reported that they had lost one or both parents. Except for the Seychelles, Mauritius, and Zanzibar, in all the other countries there were more than 20 per cent of children with at least one parent dead at the Grade 6 primary school level.

Clearly these percentages of orphaned children cannot be ignored, and these statistics need to be investigated independently. If they are confirmed, the orphan situation for each country should be taken into consideration in education planning and policy.



In 2007, about one in every five Grade 6 pupils in Lesotho and Swaziland reported that they had lost one or both parents.

Figure 8 Percentages of pupils with both, one and no parents alive (SACMEQ III)

Pupil tasks at home

In the SACMEQ III study, the pupils were presented with a list of household tasks and asked to tick how often they did each at home during the school week. Arguably, for pupils to participate in a few household tasks could be healthy for their general discipline, sense of responsibility, and time management. However, it is likely that too much involvement in household tasks would reduce pupils' focus on academic activities, especially homework and revision.

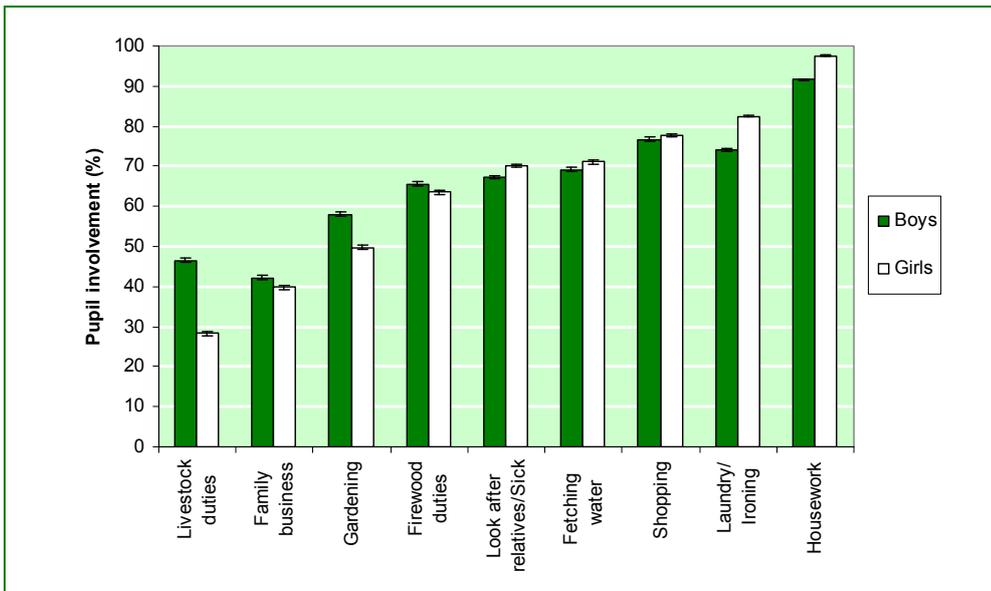
For this report, if the pupils reported that they did a particular task on 'some days' or 'most days', they were deemed to have undertaken that task.

The frequencies with which pupils undertook each of the household tasks were analysed, and the results are presented in *Table 3* and *Figures 9* and *10*. In general, pupils were involved more in housework tasks such as cooking, house cleaning, and sweeping outside the house (94.7 per cent), and less in care of livestock (37.2 per cent) and helping in a family business (40.9 per cent). Boys were involved more than girls with livestock, while girls were involved more than boys in housework duties, laundry, and ironing (*Figure 9*). However, based on the average numbers of tasks undertaken, there was little difference between boys and girls except in Swaziland, where boys appeared to have performed more tasks than girls (*Figure 10*). Rural pupils appeared to have performed more tasks than urban pupils in most countries, especially South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, and Malawi.

Table 3 Percentages for pupil household tasks in SACMEQ III

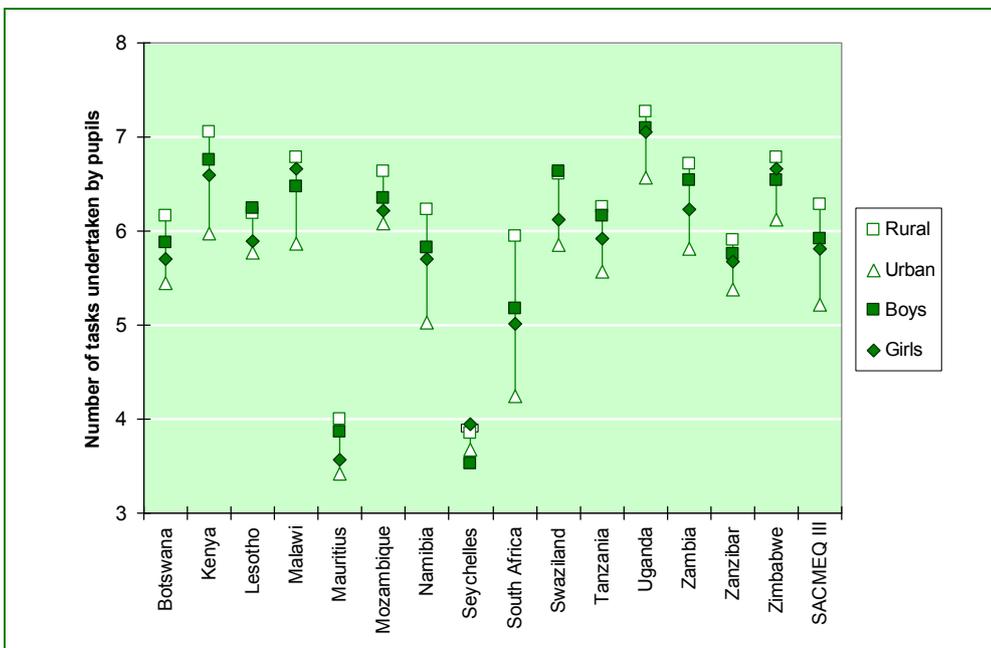
| | Looking after relatives/sick | | House-work | | Laundry/ironing | | Fetching water | | Collecting/chopping firewood | | Shopping | | Gardening | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE |
| Botswana | 67.9 | 1.34 | 95.4 | 0.45 | 80.5 | 0.98 | 67.1 | 1.82 | 65.2 | 1.95 | 86.0 | 0.86 | 42.6 | 1.11 |
| Kenya | 74.0 | 1.58 | 96.2 | 0.76 | 84.4 | 1.02 | 85.8 | 1.21 | 77.9 | 1.96 | 76.5 | 1.45 | 69.2 | 1.92 |
| Lesotho | 61.0 | 1.20 | 91.2 | 0.65 | 81.1 | 0.94 | 83.3 | 0.98 | 70.0 | 1.92 | 70.4 | 1.23 | 71.8 | 1.02 |
| Malawi | 70.3 | 1.90 | 97.5 | 0.38 | 86.0 | 0.97 | 78.9 | 1.39 | 81.9 | 1.33 | 79.1 | 1.33 | 66.5 | 1.97 |
| Mauritius | 59.4 | 1.42 | 88.2 | 0.86 | 36.7 | 1.24 | 16.8 | 0.92 | 15.7 | 1.04 | 72.5 | 1.47 | 40.4 | 1.56 |
| Mozambique | 87.9 | 0.88 | 97.8 | 0.35 | 81.4 | 1.10 | 75.8 | 1.32 | 67.4 | 2.03 | 78.5 | 1.20 | 56.5 | 1.93 |
| Namibia | 69.9 | 1.02 | 97.2 | 0.29 | 80.4 | 0.88 | 68.4 | 1.61 | 73.2 | 1.63 | 73.3 | 1.10 | 40.2 | 1.15 |
| Seychelles | 56.3 | 1.28 | 95.7 | 0.52 | 51.8 | 1.29 | 12.7 | 0.85 | 7.6 | 0.68 | 83.3 | 0.96 | 30.6 | 1.18 |
| S. Africa | 62.8 | 1.13 | 92.2 | 0.44 | 67.2 | 1.24 | 54.2 | 1.61 | 48.5 | 1.68 | 75.4 | 0.84 | 45.9 | 1.06 |
| Swaziland | 63.0 | 1.14 | 98.5 | 0.23 | 92.9 | 0.52 | 83.1 | 1.35 | 81.3 | 1.53 | 72.9 | 1.24 | 55.3 | 1.05 |
| Tanzania | 52.2 | 1.64 | 96.2 | 0.54 | 91.0 | 0.69 | 90.1 | 0.80 | 76.6 | 1.64 | 84.4 | 0.93 | 45.7 | 1.56 |
| Uganda | 85.3 | 0.93 | 97.5 | 0.31 | 90.5 | 0.69 | 89.8 | 0.68 | 84.0 | 1.18 | 73.1 | 1.33 | 79.0 | 1.18 |
| Zambia | 81.7 | 1.19 | 95.9 | 0.47 | 86.8 | 0.90 | 83.2 | 1.16 | 74.3 | 2.19 | 70.6 | 1.38 | 55.7 | 1.67 |
| Zanzibar | 68.5 | 1.40 | 85.9 | 0.84 | 90.8 | 0.80 | 82.8 | 0.95 | 59.9 | 1.50 | 88.5 | 0.74 | 31.2 | 1.23 |
| Zimbabwe | 72.0 | 1.97 | 94.8 | 0.62 | 75.1 | 1.37 | 80.7 | 1.37 | 84.9 | 1.32 | 74.6 | 1.62 | 76.8 | 1.48 |
| SACMEQ III | 68.8 | 0.36 | 94.7 | 0.17 | 78.4 | 0.29 | 70.2 | 0.44 | 64.6 | 0.53 | 77.3 | 0.32 | 53.8 | 0.40 |

| | Livestock duties | | Family business | | Number of pupil tasks | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | | | | | Overall | | School location | | | | Pupil sex | | | |
| | | | Rural | | | | Urban | | Boys | | Girls | | | |
| | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE |
| Botswana | 33.0 | 1.40 | 41.8 | 1.25 | 5.8 | 0.06 | 6.2 | 0.07 | 5.4 | 0.09 | 5.9 | 0.07 | 5.7 | 0.07 |
| Kenya | 56.3 | 1.96 | 47.2 | 1.57 | 6.7 | 0.09 | 7.1 | 0.07 | 6.0 | 0.19 | 6.8 | 0.09 | 6.6 | 0.10 |
| Lesotho | 39.6 | 1.30 | 36.7 | 1.20 | 6.1 | 0.06 | 6.2 | 0.06 | 5.8 | 0.10 | 6.2 | 0.07 | 5.9 | 0.07 |
| Malawi | 43.8 | 1.84 | 52.8 | 1.43 | 6.6 | 0.08 | 6.8 | 0.08 | 5.9 | 0.15 | 6.5 | 0.10 | 6.7 | 0.09 |
| Mauritius | 18.5 | 1.20 | 23.8 | 1.03 | 3.7 | 0.07 | 4.0 | 0.10 | 3.4 | 0.08 | 3.9 | 0.07 | 3.6 | 0.07 |
| Mozambique | 27.2 | 1.43 | 56.4 | 1.30 | 6.3 | 0.08 | 6.6 | 0.13 | 6.1 | 0.09 | 6.3 | 0.08 | 6.2 | 0.08 |
| Namibia | 37.9 | 1.39 | 35.7 | 1.14 | 5.8 | 0.06 | 6.2 | 0.06 | 5.0 | 0.09 | 5.8 | 0.06 | 5.7 | 0.06 |
| Seychelles | 15.2 | 0.92 | 19.6 | 1.03 | 3.7 | 0.04 | 3.9 | 0.07 | 3.7 | 0.05 | 3.5 | 0.06 | 3.9 | 0.05 |
| S. Africa | 27.5 | 1.02 | 35.8 | 1.01 | 5.1 | 0.07 | 5.9 | 0.08 | 4.2 | 0.08 | 5.2 | 0.07 | 5.0 | 0.07 |
| Swaziland | 39.6 | 1.26 | 50.9 | 1.11 | 6.4 | 0.05 | 6.6 | 0.05 | 5.9 | 0.09 | 6.6 | 0.05 | 6.1 | 0.06 |
| Tanzania | 34.7 | 1.65 | 32.9 | 1.69 | 6.0 | 0.07 | 6.3 | 0.07 | 5.6 | 0.14 | 6.2 | 0.08 | 5.9 | 0.07 |
| Uganda | 57.4 | 1.49 | 51.1 | 1.42 | 7.1 | 0.05 | 7.3 | 0.06 | 6.6 | 0.10 | 7.1 | 0.06 | 7.1 | 0.06 |
| Zambia | 44.0 | 1.73 | 47.0 | 1.44 | 6.4 | 0.07 | 6.7 | 0.09 | 5.8 | 0.10 | 6.5 | 0.08 | 6.2 | 0.09 |
| Zanzibar | 31.7 | 1.36 | 31.6 | 1.16 | 5.7 | 0.05 | 5.9 | 0.06 | 5.4 | 0.09 | 5.8 | 0.07 | 5.7 | 0.06 |
| Zimbabwe | 51.5 | 1.86 | 50.6 | 2.18 | 6.6 | 0.08 | 6.8 | 0.09 | 6.1 | 0.10 | 6.5 | 0.09 | 6.7 | 0.08 |
| SACMEQ III | 37.2 | 0.42 | 40.9 | 0.38 | 5.9 | 0.02 | 6.3 | 0.02 | 5.2 | 0.03 | 5.9 | 0.02 | 5.8 | 0.02 |



Boys were involved more than girls in livestock duties while girls were involved more than boys in housework duties, laundry, and ironing.

Figure 9 Pupil involvement in household tasks (SACMEQ III)



Based on the average numbers of tasks undertaken, there was little difference between boys and girls except in Swaziland, where boys appeared to have performed more tasks than girls.

Rural pupils appeared to have performed more tasks than urban pupils, especially in South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, and Malawi.

Figure 10 Average number of tasks undertaken by pupils at home (SACMEQ III)

The average number of tasks per pupil varied from country to country, as can be seen from Table 3. Pupils in Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Malawi were involved in more of these household tasks than pupils in the Seychelles and Mauritius. It is likely that these variations in number of tasks from country to country are related to the differences in family SES levels and in pupil age that were discussed earlier in this report. Perhaps families in the Seychelles and Mauritius, who were on average on a better SES level, could afford paid domestic labour which most families from less wealthy countries could not afford. It is also likely that the pupils from these two countries were still too young to be actively involved in these household duties.

The ministries of education in the countries where pupils were heavily involved in household tasks (for example Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Malawi) should take note of this, because these tasks could be affecting the time spent on academic work. These ministries could launch campaigns to encourage parents (especially low-SES parents in rural areas) to reduce the time pupils are expected to spend on household tasks, and at same time encourage them to spend more time on academic activities such as homework and revision of school work.

Pupil learning environment

Data on some selected issues concerning the pupil learning environment (ownership of learning materials such as exercise books, pencils, and rulers, ownership of reading and mathematics textbooks, distance travelled to school, and homework) were analysed, and the results are presented in *Tables 4 to 6*.

Pupil learning materials

Pupils were given a list of eight learning items and asked how many of them they had to work with at that time. The items were exercise books, notebooks (which are not marked by the teachers), pencils, pencil sharpeners, pencil erasers, rulers, fountain pens or ball-point pens, and files or folders. Multilevel analyses of the SACMEQ II data revealed that there was a positive association between the possession of these learning items and pupil achievement (Hungu and Thuku, 2010a).

The percentages of pupils who reported that they had at least one of a particular learning item are given in *Table 4*. The numbers in green in the second panel indicate that there was an increase in the ownership of that learning item between 2000 and 2007.

The changes in the general levels of possession of these items between the SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III studies are also displayed in *Figure 11*. Thus, it can be seen from *Table 4* and *Figure 11* that there were general improvements in access to these learning items between these two studies. It is also apparent that exercise books, pens, and pencils were common, with over 80 per cent of pupils in SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III reporting that they had these items. In contrast, folders or files were rare, and more than half the pupils in both studies reported that they did not have them. For SACMEQ III, exercise books were rather scarce in Mozambique (only 76.9 per cent possessed them), pens and pencils were not accessible to a significant number of pupils in Zimbabwe (79.5 per cent and 76.6 per cent respectively had them), while files were more common in South Africa (79.4 per cent) than in other countries. Among these countries there was less variation in the more common items such exercise books, pens, and pencils than in the items fewer pupils possessed, such as files, pencil sharpeners, and notebooks.

The totals of materials possessed by pupils in these two studies are summarized in *Figure 12*. It is clear that possession of these learning items generally went up in most school systems, especially in Malawi, Tanzania, Lesotho, Zanzibar, South Africa, Swaziland, and the Seychelles.

Table 4 Percentages of pupils with at least one of the various learning materials

| For 2000 (SACMEQ II) | Exercise book | | Notebook | | Pencil | | Sharpener | | Eraser | | Ruler | | Ball pen | | File/ folder | | Average pupil learning materials | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|----|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Overall | | Rural | | Urban | | |
| | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | |
| Botswana | 98.9 | 0.26 | 92.4 | 1.03 | 87.3 | 1.34 | 48.5 | 2.27 | 65.3 | 1.82 | 81.8 | 1.44 | 87.0 | 1.18 | 47.6 | 2.27 | 6.1 | 0.07 | 6.0 | 0.11 | 6.2 | 0.10 | |
| Kenya | 96.0 | 0.93 | 71.3 | 2.12 | 92.8 | 1.05 | 66.0 | 1.81 | 67.6 | 1.76 | 81.3 | 1.37 | 83.6 | 1.45 | 30.8 | 2.09 | 5.9 | 0.09 | 5.9 | 0.09 | 5.8 | 0.17 | |
| Lesotho | 96.0 | 0.90 | 93.1 | 1.16 | 89.7 | 1.07 | 60.3 | 2.02 | 62.8 | 2.13 | 86.0 | 1.21 | 88.4 | 1.12 | 8.9 | 1.38 | 5.9 | 0.07 | 5.9 | 0.08 | 5.8 | 0.12 | |
| Malawi | 99.8 | 0.09 | 96.2 | 1.26 | 62.2 | 2.77 | 14.6 | 1.29 | 34.1 | 2.24 | 57.2 | 2.12 | 92.7 | 0.99 | 2.1 | 0.39 | 4.6 | 0.06 | 4.5 | 0.07 | 4.8 | 0.14 | |
| Mauritius | 97.7 | 0.88 | 76.1 | 2.21 | 96.9 | 1.09 | 77.1 | 1.56 | 95.1 | 1.16 | 93.1 | 1.13 | 87.5 | 1.33 | 54.7 | 2.65 | 6.8 | 0.09 | 6.9 | 0.07 | 6.7 | 0.15 | |
| Mozambique | 94.3 | 0.58 | 34.9 | 1.63 | 81.4 | 1.50 | 41.8 | 1.64 | 55.4 | 1.68 | 69.0 | 1.45 | 91.2 | 0.71 | 36.6 | 1.47 | 5.0 | 0.07 | 4.8 | 0.12 | 5.2 | 0.09 | |
| Namibia | 95.9 | 0.70 | 78.9 | 1.54 | 80.9 | 1.22 | 48.4 | 1.55 | 60.3 | 1.46 | 77.4 | 1.28 | 82.7 | 1.28 | 24.0 | 1.44 | 5.5 | 0.07 | 5.4 | 0.07 | 5.7 | 0.14 | |
| Seychelles | 92.3 | 0.68 | 69.4 | 1.14 | 93.2 | 0.64 | 74.6 | 1.11 | 82.4 | 0.97 | 90.7 | 0.75 | 87.5 | 0.84 | 61.7 | 1.19 | 6.5 | 0.05 | 6.5 | 0.10 | 6.5 | 0.05 | |
| S. Africa | 78.9 | 2.48 | 58.3 | 3.24 | 76.3 | 2.44 | 56.8 | 2.69 | 62.1 | 2.65 | 76.4 | 2.37 | 75.3 | 2.55 | 35.8 | 3.26 | 5.2 | 0.17 | 4.4 | 0.27 | 5.8 | 0.18 | |
| Swaziland | 98.9 | 0.36 | 91.3 | 1.73 | 91.6 | 1.39 | 65.3 | 2.17 | 67.6 | 1.78 | 86.8 | 1.12 | 94.6 | 0.63 | 17.7 | 1.94 | 6.1 | 0.06 | 6.0 | 0.07 | 6.4 | 0.10 | |
| Tanzania | 96.6 | 0.55 | 43.4 | 2.27 | 85.8 | 1.20 | 58.1 | 2.24 | 70.3 | 2.02 | 73.3 | 1.81 | 93.3 | 0.93 | 24.5 | 1.92 | 5.5 | 0.09 | 5.3 | 0.09 | 5.8 | 0.16 | |
| Uganda | 90.7 | 1.12 | 60.3 | 2.16 | 81.5 | 1.51 | 49.5 | 2.25 | 53.0 | 2.12 | 73.5 | 1.98 | 78.5 | 1.72 | 34.1 | 2.24 | 5.2 | 0.11 | 5.2 | 0.13 | 5.3 | 0.16 | |
| Zambia | 88.0 | 1.56 | 41.6 | 3.01 | 75.4 | 1.95 | 28.9 | 3.32 | 47.8 | 3.15 | 52.5 | 2.89 | 76.1 | 2.23 | 8.9 | 1.01 | 4.2 | 0.14 | 4.0 | 0.11 | 4.3 | 0.25 | |
| Zanzibar | 89.4 | 0.68 | 46.2 | 1.06 | 90.0 | 0.67 | 49.3 | 1.11 | 68.8 | 1.07 | 76.1 | 0.99 | 91.1 | 0.62 | 36.2 | 1.01 | 5.5 | 0.04 | 5.3 | 0.04 | 5.7 | 0.09 | |
| Zimbabwe | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| SACMEQ II | 93.8 | 0.30 | 68.1 | 0.62 | 84.6 | 0.41 | 52.8 | 0.56 | 63.8 | 0.50 | 76.8 | 0.42 | 86.4 | 0.37 | 30.2 | 0.52 | 5.6 | 0.02 | 5.4 | 0.03 | 5.8 | 0.04 | |

| For 2007 (SACMEQ III) | Exercise book | | Notebook | | Pencil | | Sharpener | | Eraser | | Ruler | | Ball pen | | Files/ folder | | Average pupil learning materials | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Overall | | Rural | | Urban | |
| | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE |
| Botswana | 96.2 | 0.60 | 89.0 | 1.19 | 92.2 | 1.13 | 63.7 | 1.93 | 73.4 | 1.64 | 83.6 | 1.48 | 87.0 | 1.40 | 43.6 | 2.03 | 6.3 | 0.08 | 6.3 | 0.09 | 6.3 | 0.13 |
| Kenya | 97.9 | 0.30 | 61.6 | 2.67 | 91.9 | 1.34 | 67.1 | 2.58 | 71.0 | 2.35 | 79.4 | 2.39 | 90.2 | 1.09 | 30.0 | 2.16 | 5.9 | 0.10 | 5.8 | 0.11 | 6.0 | 0.18 |
| Lesotho | 99.1 | 0.22 | 96.6 | 0.62 | 97.2 | 0.50 | 83.8 | 1.45 | 82.7 | 1.37 | 87.1 | 1.35 | 95.3 | 0.59 | 10.2 | 1.25 | 6.5 | 0.04 | 6.5 | 0.06 | 6.5 | 0.07 |
| Malawi | 98.9 | 0.30 | 95.8 | 0.74 | 81.8 | 1.70 | 48.9 | 2.65 | 55.9 | 2.63 | 74.0 | 1.96 | 93.3 | 0.73 | 6.3 | 1.03 | 5.5 | 0.09 | 5.5 | 0.11 | 5.7 | 0.12 |
| Mauritius | 90.5 | 1.25 | 74.2 | 1.67 | 92.4 | 1.11 | 85.9 | 1.15 | 90.6 | 1.19 | 88.2 | 1.16 | 82.3 | 1.31 | 51.3 | 1.92 | 6.6 | 0.09 | 6.5 | 0.12 | 6.6 | 0.13 |
| Mozambique | 76.9 | 2.30 | 39.1 | 2.07 | 83.6 | 1.50 | 54.4 | 1.68 | 67.5 | 1.70 | 71.0 | 1.64 | 87.9 | 1.48 | 36.2 | 1.81 | 5.2 | 0.09 | 5.0 | 0.15 | 5.2 | 0.13 |
| Namibia | 97.2 | 0.40 | 75.2 | 1.56 | 86.4 | 1.15 | 59.7 | 1.66 | 67.9 | 1.47 | 75.5 | 1.46 | 81.4 | 1.38 | 40.0 | 1.88 | 5.8 | 0.08 | 5.4 | 0.09 | 6.5 | 0.12 |
| Seychelles | 99.5 | 0.19 | 74.9 | 1.09 | 99.5 | 0.18 | 94.9 | 0.57 | 96.8 | 0.46 | 98.2 | 0.35 | 98.8 | 0.29 | 68.4 | 1.16 | 7.3 | 0.02 | 7.2 | 0.04 | 7.3 | 0.03 |
| S. Africa | 91.1 | 0.84 | 71.0 | 1.59 | 90.0 | 0.88 | 77.4 | 1.19 | 78.4 | 1.21 | 85.7 | 0.91 | 90.3 | 0.81 | 79.4 | 1.31 | 6.6 | 0.07 | 6.6 | 0.09 | 6.6 | 0.10 |
| Swaziland | 100.0 | 0.00 | 96.6 | 1.52 | 98.3 | 0.33 | 88.7 | 1.12 | 86.5 | 1.19 | 94.1 | 0.64 | 98.8 | 0.22 | 19.3 | 2.17 | 6.8 | 0.04 | 6.8 | 0.04 | 7.0 | 0.08 |
| Tanzania | 98.3 | 0.33 | 49.0 | 2.30 | 93.1 | 0.79 | 70.4 | 1.97 | 81.5 | 1.56 | 87.3 | 1.11 | 97.6 | 0.42 | 37.7 | 2.37 | 6.1 | 0.07 | 6.0 | 0.09 | 6.4 | 0.12 |
| Uganda | 92.7 | 0.91 | 45.5 | 1.95 | 87.7 | 1.11 | 67.3 | 1.80 | 65.6 | 1.74 | 78.5 | 1.54 | 88.3 | 0.96 | 46.1 | 1.87 | 5.7 | 0.09 | 5.6 | 0.10 | 6.1 | 0.13 |
| Zambia | 85.6 | 1.65 | 43.5 | 2.18 | 79.9 | 1.76 | 39.2 | 2.14 | 53.4 | 2.03 | 63.0 | 1.82 | 79.3 | 1.71 | 15.5 | 1.60 | 4.6 | 0.11 | 4.6 | 0.12 | 4.5 | 0.23 |
| Zanzibar | 97.8 | 0.35 | 64.5 | 1.65 | 95.1 | 0.61 | 63.4 | 1.50 | 75.4 | 1.33 | 85.6 | 0.97 | 98.0 | 0.38 | 72.6 | 1.79 | 6.5 | 0.06 | 6.3 | 0.08 | 6.9 | 0.07 |
| Zimbabwe | 82.6 | 2.29 | 69.4 | 2.42 | 76.6 | 2.24 | 49.1 | 2.58 | 57.3 | 2.53 | 70.8 | 2.25 | 79.5 | 2.19 | 17.5 | 1.65 | 5.0 | 0.15 | 4.9 | 0.20 | 5.4 | 0.20 |
| SACMEQ III | 93.6 | 0.30 | 69.7 | 0.48 | 89.7 | 0.35 | 67.6 | 0.52 | 73.6 | 0.46 | 81.5 | 0.39 | 89.9 | 0.31 | 38.3 | 0.59 | 6.0 | 0.02 | 5.9 | 0.03 | 6.3 | 0.04 |

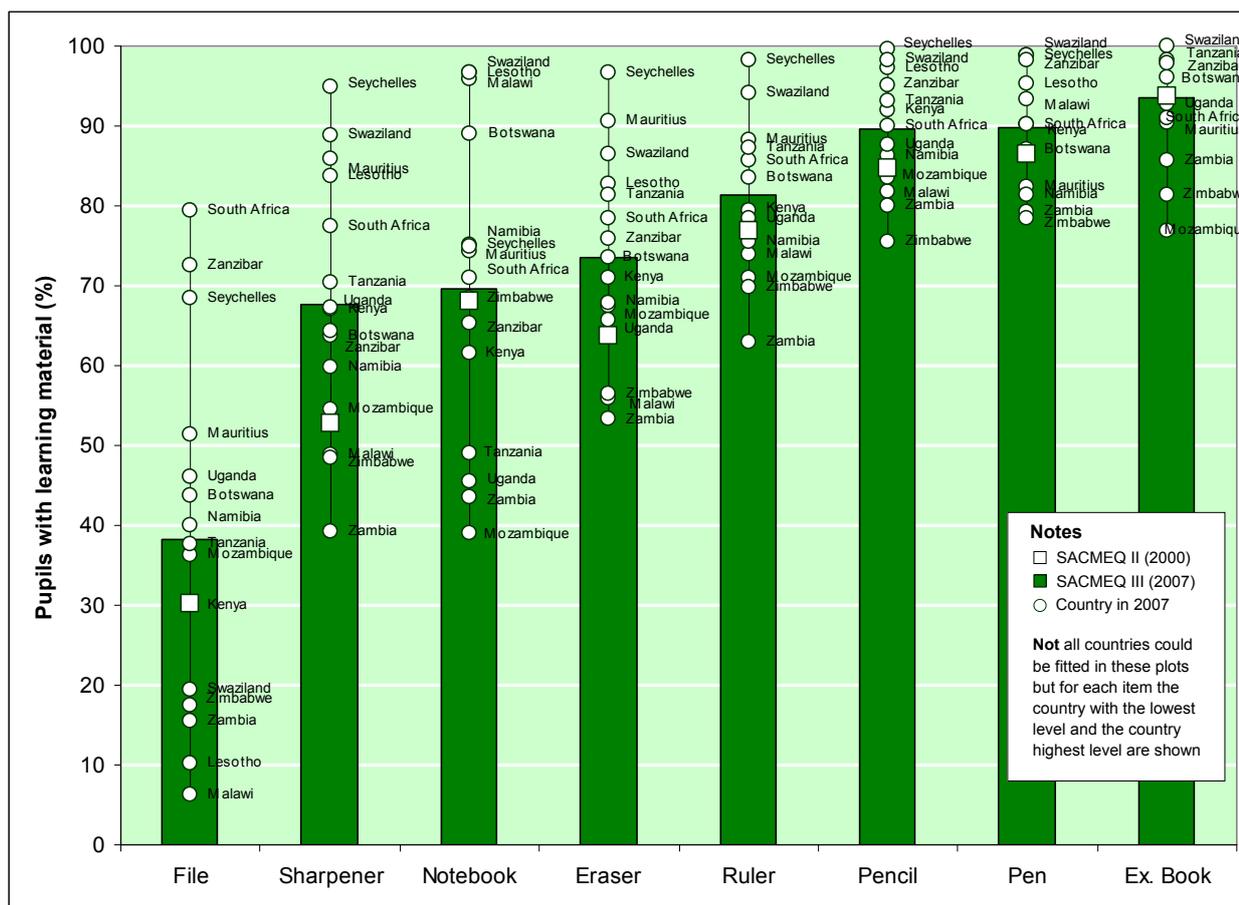
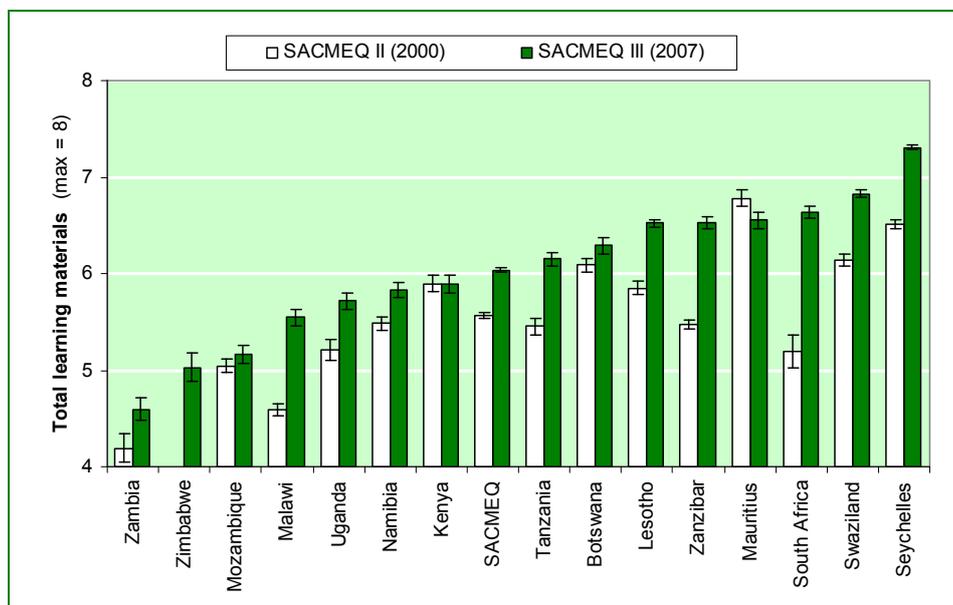


Figure 11 Levels of pupil possession of various learning materials (SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III)



Between 2000 and 2007, the possession of learning items generally increased in most SACMEQ school systems, especially in Malawi, Tanzania, Lesotho, Zanzibar, South Africa, Swaziland, and the Seychelles.

Figure 12 Levels of total pupil possession of learning materials (SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III)

Pupil textbook ownership

Pupils were asked how they used reading and mathematics textbooks during these lessons. For this report, if the pupils reported that ‘there are no textbooks’ or ‘only the teacher has a textbook’, the pupils were considered to have ‘no textbook’. If the pupils reported that they shared the textbook ‘with one pupil’ or ‘with two or more pupils’, they were classed as ‘share textbook’. If the pupils said they used the textbook by themselves, they were considered to ‘own textbook’. The percentages of pupils in these three categories of textbook ownership are given in *Table 5* for SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III studies. These percentages for SACMEQ III are also depicted in *Figure 13*.

The numbers in green in the second panel of *Table 5* indicate situations where desirable trends were recorded between 2000 and 2007. Reduction in the levels of having no textbook or sharing a textbook were considered desirable, while an increase in the level of pupils having their own textbook was considered a desirable trend.

From *Table 5*, it can be seen that only about 40 per cent (or about two in every five pupils) in these two studies reported that they had their own textbooks for reading and mathematics. However, the levels of pupils with their own textbooks varied greatly across these countries. For example, for SACMEQ III, almost all the pupils in Swaziland reported they had their own reading textbooks (99.2 per cent) and almost all pupils reported that they had their own mathematics textbooks (99.8 per cent). In Mauritius, over 85 per cent of the pupils said they had their own reading textbooks and around 90 per cent said they had their own mathematics textbooks. On the other hand, the levels of textbook ownership were quite low in some countries. In Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Kenya, less than 20 per cent of the pupils had their own reading textbooks, and also less than 20 per cent of the pupils in these countries (and in Zambia) had their own mathematics textbooks.

Between these two SACMEQ studies, the levels of ‘own textbook’ for both subjects generally went down considerably in most countries, especially in Malawi, Namibia, and Botswana. The obvious exceptions here were Zanzibar and Swaziland, where the levels of textbooks ownership went up substantially.

In general, it would appear that most pupils in SACMEQ countries had access to textbooks when the levels of sharing are also considered. Nevertheless, the ideal situation is one where all pupils have their own textbooks.

Table 5 Percentages for textbook ownership in class

| For 2000 (SACMEQ II) | Reading textbook | | | | | | Mathematics textbook | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | No textbook | | Share textbook | | Own textbook | | No textbook | | Share textbook | | Own textbook | |
| | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE |
| Botswana | 2.3 | 0.31 | 20.3 | 1.76 | 77.4 | 1.81 | 2.0 | 0.39 | 18.0 | 1.69 | 80.0 | 1.78 |
| Kenya | 2.8 | 0.44 | 70.4 | 2.60 | 26.8 | 2.62 | 4.5 | 0.96 | 72.1 | 2.53 | 23.4 | 2.47 |
| Lesotho | 12.1 | 1.56 | 32.6 | 2.54 | 55.3 | 2.82 | 11.4 | 1.45 | 43.1 | 2.69 | 45.6 | 2.87 |
| Malawi | 4.5 | 1.48 | 38.5 | 4.05 | 57.0 | 4.14 | 5.5 | 1.69 | 38.0 | 4.04 | 56.5 | 4.16 |
| Mauritius | 0.0 | 0.00 | 8.5 | 1.57 | 91.5 | 1.57 | 0.1 | 0.07 | 4.0 | 0.95 | 95.9 | 0.99 |
| Mozambique | 6.3 | 0.67 | 40.5 | 1.85 | 53.2 | 2.02 | 5.8 | 0.86 | 35.8 | 1.81 | 58.3 | 2.03 |
| Namibia | 5.1 | 0.58 | 48.2 | 2.03 | 46.6 | 2.03 | 5.6 | 0.91 | 46.1 | 2.25 | 48.3 | 2.29 |
| Seychelles | 8.0 | 0.68 | 45.1 | 1.22 | 46.9 | 1.21 | 4.2 | 0.52 | 20.2 | 0.98 | 75.6 | 1.05 |
| S. Africa | 16.6 | 1.71 | 37.9 | 2.85 | 45.5 | 2.79 | 29.3 | 2.56 | 29.6 | 3.06 | 41.0 | 2.97 |
| Swaziland | 5.8 | 1.15 | 19.9 | 2.72 | 74.3 | 2.86 | 4.0 | 1.16 | 21.3 | 3.32 | 74.7 | 3.38 |
| Tanzania | 35.9 | 2.12 | 58.1 | 2.17 | 6.0 | 0.57 | 32.9 | 2.08 | 60.3 | 2.17 | 6.8 | 0.68 |
| Uganda | 20.6 | 2.21 | 64.7 | 2.41 | 14.7 | 1.25 | 33.4 | 2.40 | 54.4 | 2.58 | 12.2 | 1.10 |
| Zambia | 14.0 | 1.74 | 71.7 | 2.27 | 14.2 | 1.51 | 17.3 | 1.96 | 70.0 | 2.32 | 12.7 | 1.69 |
| Zanzibar | 24.6 | 0.82 | 71.6 | 0.86 | 3.8 | 0.34 | 47.9 | 0.95 | 47.1 | 0.97 | 5.1 | 0.36 |
| Zimbabwe | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx | xx |
| SACMEQ II | 11.3 | 0.38 | 44.9 | 0.63 | 43.8 | 0.67 | 14.6 | 0.44 | 40.0 | 0.68 | 45.4 | 0.73 |

| For 2007 (SACMEQ III) | Reading textbook | | | | | | Mathematics textbook | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| | No textbook | | Share textbook | | Own textbook | | No textbook | | Share textbook | | Own textbook | |
| | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE |
| Botswana | 3.8 | 0.84 | 32.8 | 2.40 | 63.4 | 2.48 | 5.1 | 1.16 | 32.7 | 2.54 | 62.1 | 2.66 |
| Kenya | 2.2 | 0.33 | 80.0 | 1.92 | 17.8 | 1.88 | 2.6 | 0.40 | 82.3 | 1.77 | 15.1 | 1.74 |
| Lesotho | 7.2 | 0.96 | 36.9 | 2.63 | 55.9 | 2.71 | 7.6 | 1.11 | 36.2 | 2.63 | 56.3 | 2.68 |
| Malawi | 7.9 | 2.04 | 65.1 | 3.74 | 27.1 | 3.53 | 15.2 | 2.89 | 60.5 | 3.80 | 24.3 | 3.38 |
| Mauritius | 5.2 | 0.69 | 7.1 | 0.94 | 87.7 | 1.37 | 4.1 | 0.56 | 6.2 | 0.83 | 89.7 | 1.17 |
| Mozambique | 8.2 | 0.83 | 39.0 | 1.79 | 52.8 | 1.94 | 9.5 | 0.92 | 38.7 | 1.81 | 51.8 | 1.99 |
| Namibia | 5.6 | 0.75 | 62.4 | 2.12 | 31.9 | 1.99 | 12.9 | 1.62 | 54.8 | 2.42 | 32.3 | 2.28 |
| Seychelles | 3.6 | 0.43 | 54.1 | 1.14 | 42.3 | 1.11 | 4.9 | 0.25 | 32.3 | 0.96 | 62.8 | 0.97 |
| S. Africa | 10.7 | 0.99 | 44.3 | 1.98 | 45.0 | 1.93 | 28.0 | 2.07 | 35.6 | 2.01 | 36.4 | 1.93 |
| Swaziland | 0.0 | 0.03 | 0.8 | 0.58 | 99.2 | 0.58 | 0.0 | 0.03 | 0.2 | 0.08 | 99.8 | 0.08 |
| Tanzania | 23.1 | 1.81 | 73.4 | 1.90 | 3.5 | 0.42 | 22.8 | 1.82 | 74.3 | 1.88 | 2.9 | 0.36 |
| Uganda | 20.4 | 1.67 | 62.1 | 1.88 | 17.4 | 1.35 | 32.8 | 2.09 | 53.1 | 2.04 | 14.1 | 1.23 |
| Zambia | 17.2 | 1.98 | 59.7 | 2.41 | 23.1 | 1.98 | 34.8 | 2.78 | 53.7 | 2.69 | 11.4 | 1.18 |
| Zanzibar | 2.2 | 0.48 | 49.7 | 2.39 | 48.1 | 2.43 | 9.6 | 2.03 | 43.0 | 2.31 | 47.4 | 2.40 |
| Zimbabwe | 19.2 | 2.25 | 65.6 | 2.58 | 14.7 | 1.63 | 22.8 | 2.56 | 64.8 | 2.65 | 12.0 | 1.64 |
| SACMEQ III | 9.1 | 0.34 | 48.9 | 0.65 | 42.0 | 0.64 | 14.2 | 0.47 | 44.6 | 0.68 | 41.2 | 0.66 |

NOTE: Numbers in green indicate that a desirable trend was recorded between 2000 and 2007.

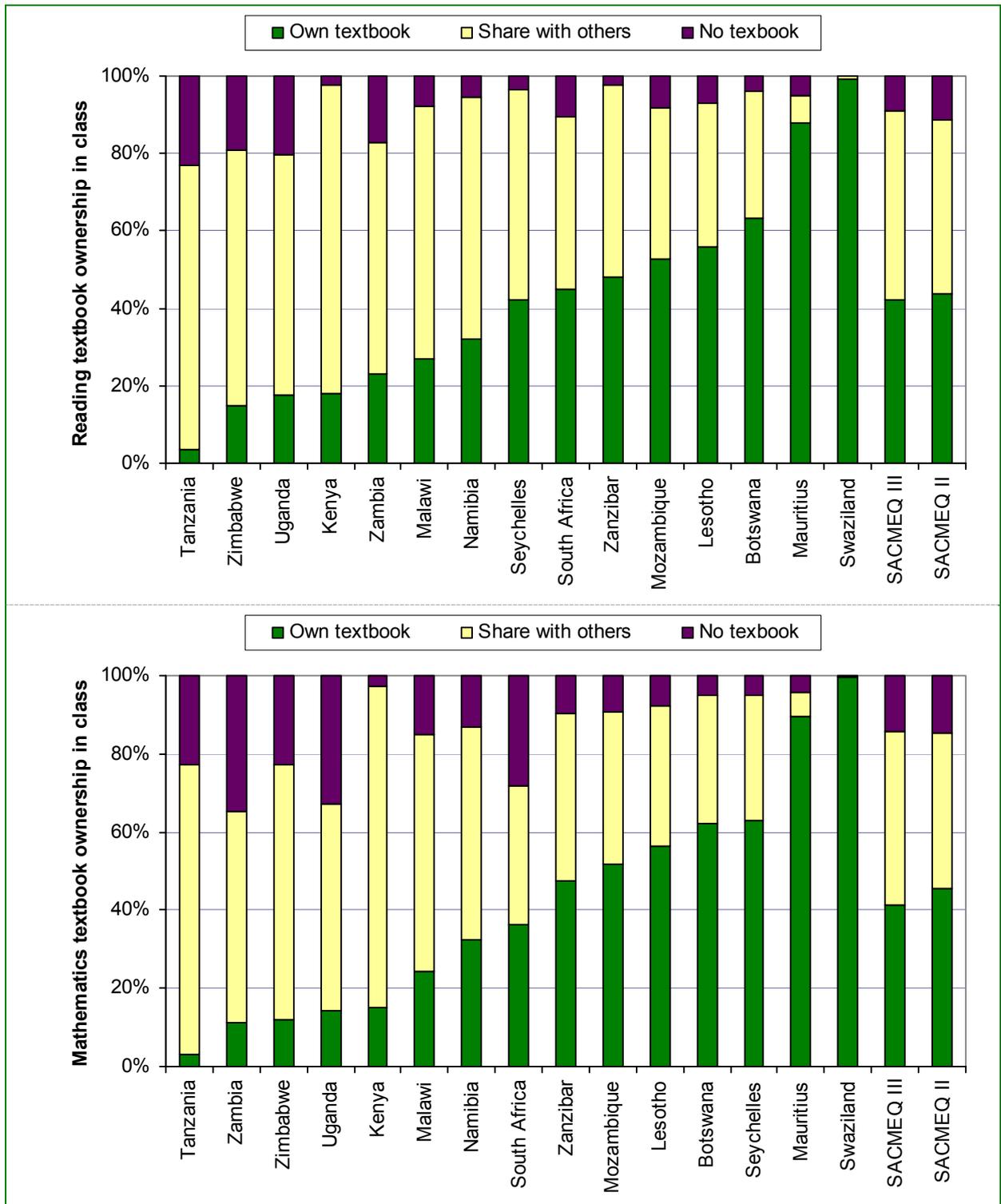


Figure 13 Percentages of pupils with their own reading and mathematics textbooks in class

Homework

Amounts of homework given and homework corrected have been associated with pupil achievement in past SACMEQ studies as well as in other studies. In the SACMEQ III study, pupils were asked to report on four aspects of homework. Specifically, pupils were asked (a) how often they were given homework – called ‘homework given’, (b) how often a person at home helped them with their home – called ‘homework help at home’, (c) how often their

homework was corrected by the teacher – called ‘homework corrected’, and (d) how often the teacher explained the answers to the homework – called ‘homework explained’.

For homework given in this report, if pupils reported that they ‘do not get any homework’ or were given homework ‘once or twice each month’, they were classed as not having been given homework. Those reporting that they were given homework ‘once or twice each week’ or ‘most days of the week’ were classed as having been given homework. For homework help at home, if the pupils said they ‘do not get any help’ or reported ‘never’ or ‘sometimes’, they were classed as having received no help with their homework at home. Those who said ‘most of the time’ were considered to have received help at home. For homework corrected and homework explained, if the pupils said that they ‘do not get any homework’, or reported ‘never’ or ‘sometimes’, they were rated as not having had homework corrected or explained by the teacher. Those answering ‘most of the time’ or ‘always’ to these aspects of homework were deemed to have had their homework corrected or explained by the teacher.

Table 6 Percentages for various aspects of homework in SACMEQ III

| | Homework - given by teacher | | Homework - help at home | | Homework - corrected by teacher | | Homework - explained by teacher | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE |
| Botswana | 87.3 | 1.53 | 41.0 | 1.67 | 63.5 | 1.80 | 51.9 | 1.98 |
| Kenya | 90.8 | 1.22 | 22.3 | 1.38 | 71.2 | 2.15 | 56.8 | 2.37 |
| Lesotho | 85.1 | 1.45 | 30.2 | 1.59 | 63.1 | 2.16 | 54.0 | 2.24 |
| Malawi | 71.2 | 3.53 | 16.5 | 1.94 | 62.7 | 3.71 | 54.0 | 3.83 |
| Mauritius | 95.8 | 0.47 | 16.7 | 1.41 | 78.4 | 1.80 | 67.0 | 2.22 |
| Mozambique | 84.5 | 1.23 | 35.6 | 1.80 | 49.8 | 1.74 | 40.8 | 1.75 |
| Namibia | 93.9 | 0.61 | 31.2 | 1.31 | 70.4 | 1.71 | 58.5 | 1.93 |
| Seychelles | 98.0 | 0.37 | 40.9 | 1.24 | 87.6 | 0.76 | 61.3 | 1.10 |
| S. Africa | 87.7 | 0.87 | 34.0 | 1.28 | 66.5 | 1.50 | 54.9 | 1.57 |
| Swaziland | 99.1 | 0.66 | 21.0 | 1.78 | 66.1 | 3.56 | 50.8 | 3.81 |
| Tanzania | 56.7 | 2.27 | 22.5 | 1.46 | 49.2 | 2.35 | 20.5 | 2.07 |
| Uganda | 80.0 | 1.40 | 23.4 | 1.44 | 59.2 | 1.96 | 48.4 | 2.05 |
| Zambia | 79.5 | 2.01 | 34.3 | 1.96 | 54.3 | 2.46 | 36.8 | 2.45 |
| Zanzibar | 83.3 | 1.24 | 18.0 | 1.15 | 68.0 | 1.90 | 34.9 | 2.25 |
| Zimbabwe | 78.2 | 2.02 | 37.9 | 1.79 | 51.8 | 2.14 | 39.7 | 2.14 |
| SACMEQ III | 84.8 | 0.45 | 28.4 | 0.40 | 64.1 | 0.60 | 48.7 | 0.59 |

From *Table 6*, it can be seen that, on average, 84.8 per cent of the pupils in SACMEQ III reported that they were given homework at least once per week, but only 28.4 per cent of the pupils reported that a person at home helped them with their homework most of the time. In addition, it can be seen that 64.1 per cent of the pupils said that their homework was corrected by the teacher most of the time or always, while 48.7 per cent reported that their homework was explained by teacher most of the time or always. Put in another way, this means that about 15 per cent of the pupils in the SACMEQ III study received little or no homework, over 70 per cent received little or no help at all with their homework at home, around 40 per cent did not have their homework marked, and around 50 per cent did not have their homework explained by their teachers. Given the importance of homework in promoting pupil achievement, these are worrying statistics, and should concern policymakers and interested parties in these nations.

The levels of homework given were highest in Swaziland (99.1 per cent) and lowest in Tanzania (56.7 per cent), while the levels of homework help were highest in Botswana (41.0 per cent) and the Seychelles (40.9 per cent), and lowest in Malawi (16.5 per cent) and Mauritius (16.7 per cent). For homework corrected, the levels were highest in the Seychelles (87.6 per cent) and Mauritius (78.4 per cent), and lowest in Tanzania (49.2 per cent) and Mozambique (49.8 per cent). Mauritius (67.0 per cent) and the Seychelles (61.3 per cent) recorded the highest levels for homework explained, while Tanzania (20.5 per cent) and Zanzibar (34.9 per cent) recorded the lowest levels for this aspect of homework.

Distance travelled to school

In some developing countries the distance travelled by pupils to school has been associated with pupil achievement (for example, in Laos: Hungi and Postlethwaite, 2009; and in Viet Nam: Hungi, 2008), with pupils travelling shorter distances to school performing better than others. Distance travelled to school is thought to be important because of the time taken to travel. Pupils living near school spend only a short time travelling and thus have plenty of time left to concentrate on academic activities. Pupils who live near school can also access facilities such as a school library more often and for more hours than pupils who have to travel long distances to school.

In the SACMEQ III study, pupils were asked how far they had to travel to school each day from where they stayed during the school week. There were 11 options to this question, and the responses were coded as follows:

| <i>Option</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>recode</i> |
|---------------|--|---------------|
| 1 | Up to 0.5 kilometres | 0.5 |
| 2 | Over 0.5 kilometres and up to 1 kilometre..... | 1.0 |
| 3 | Over 1 kilometre and up to 1.5 kilometres..... | 1.5 |
| 4 | Over 1.5 kilometres and up to 2 kilometres | 2.0 |
| 5 | Over 2 kilometres and up to 2.5 kilometres | 2.5 |
| 6 | Over 2.5 kilometres and up to 3 kilometres | 3.0 |
| 7 | Over 3 kilometres and up to 3.5 kilometres | 3.5 |
| 8 | Over 3.5 kilometres and up to 4 kilometres | 4.0 |
| 9 | Over 4 kilometres and up to 4.5 kilometres | 4.5 |
| 10 | Over 4.5 kilometres and up to 5 kilometres | 5.0 |
| 11 | Over 5 kilometres | 5.5 |

An index of the distance travelled to school was then calculated using these codes. As can be seen, values on this index roughly correspond to the distances travelled to school in kilometres.

The percentages for pupils who travelled various distances to school are presented in *Appendix 5* together with the mean values for the index of distance travelled to school.

Figure 14 depicts the percentages of pupils who travelled to school from various distances. For clarity, distances above 3 kilometres were grouped together in this figure. From *Figure 14*, it can be seen that on average, around 45 per cent of the pupils reported that they travelled at most 1 kilometre to school, while around 20 per cent of the pupils reported that they travelled over 3 kilometres to school each day. Around 34 per cent of the pupils reported that they travelled over 2 kilometres.

Zanzibar (55.7 per cent) and Mauritius (55.4 per cent) recorded the highest percentages for pupils travelling at most 1 kilometre, while Swaziland (33.6 per cent) and Mozambique (35.4

per cent) recorded the lowest percentages for this category. On the other extreme of distance travelled to school, Mozambique (29.4 per cent) and South Africa (28.7 per cent) recorded the highest percentages for pupils travelling over 3 kilometres to school, which must be worrying for the authorities in those countries. Zanzibar (13.8 per cent) and Kenya (14.5 per cent) recorded the lowest percentages of pupils travelling more than 3 kilometres.

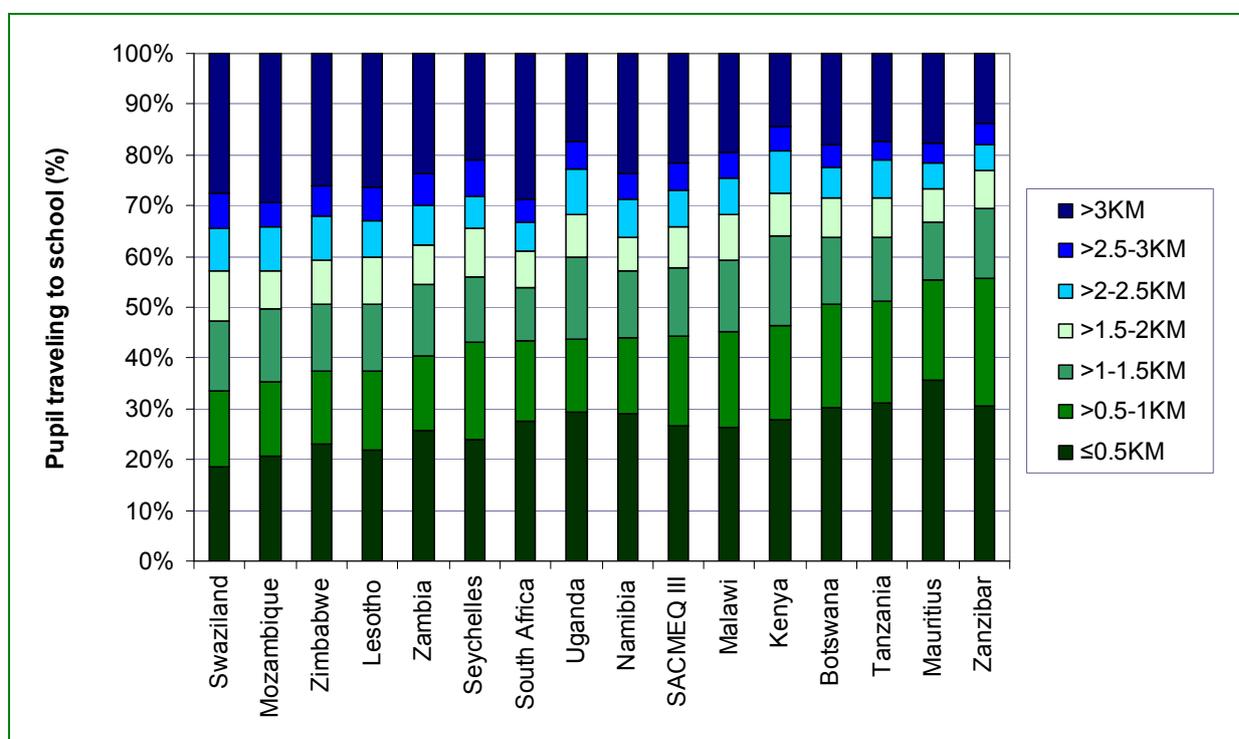
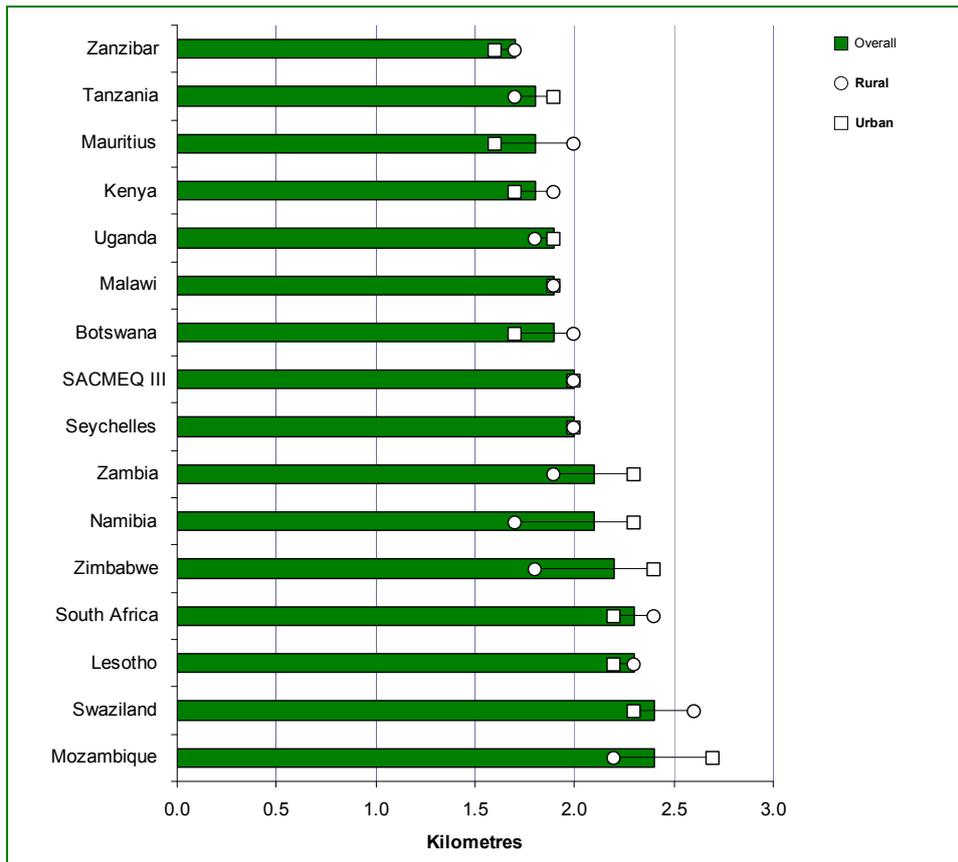


Figure 14 Percentages of pupils travelling various distances to school

The averages values for the distance travelled to school index are displayed in *Figure 15*. Zanzibar had the lowest value on this index (1.6), which means that on average, pupils travelled around 1.6 kilometres to school in Zanzibar. On the other hand, Mozambique and Swaziland had the highest values on this index (2.4). Overall, Grade 6 pupils in SACMEQ countries travelled around 2 kilometres to school.

With a few exceptions, pupils in rural areas travelled roughly the same distances to school as their counterparts in urban areas. There clear exceptions were Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Mozambique – where pupils in rural areas travelled noticeably longer distances to school than pupils in urban schools – and Mauritius, where pupils in urban schools seemed to have travelled longer distances to travel to school than their rural counterparts.

The distance travelled to school has implications for school mapping. Therefore, it might be of interest to the authorities in SACMEQ countries to take note of the travel distances reported here.



Grade 6 pupils in most SACMEQ school systems travelled around 2 kilometres to school.

Figure 15 Estimated mean travel distances to school

Summary

In this paper, selected information about the characteristics of Grade 6 pupils in SACMEQ school systems was presented. It is evident from this paper that the pupils from the different SACMEQ countries differed greatly in terms of their personal characteristics, and home and learning environments. In some aspects such as age and home background (pupil SES), the differences were enormous. These differences in pupil characteristics should be taken into account when formulating policies, designing programmes, and analysing SACMEQ data.

The main points from this paper are summarized in *Table 7*. In this table, information is given about each pupil characteristic in 2007 (SACMEQ III) and changes that took place in the characteristic between 2000 and 2007. It will be remembered that, in the SACMEQ II study, data were not collected for some pupil characteristics (for example, preschool attendance and number of siblings) and therefore information about changes for these characteristics was not available.

Table 7 Summary of the situation in 2007 and changes in pupil characteristics between 2000 and 2007

| | Situation in 2007 (SACMEQ III) | Changes between 2000 and 2007 (SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III) | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS | <i>Percentage of girls</i> | Sex balance in school participation at Grade 6 level in most SACMEQ countries except in Zimbabwe, Zanzibar, and Lesotho (where the percentages of girls were significantly high), and Mozambique (where the percentage of girls was noticeably low). | In ten countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) there were trends towards gender balance. In Zanzibar the proportion of girls went up by around 5 per cent, worsening the gender balance. |
| | <i>Pupil age</i> | Mauritius and the Seychelles had the youngest Grade 6 pupils (around 11.5 years). Notably, 90 per cent of the Grade 6 pupils in some SACMEQ countries were older than the oldest 10 per cent of pupils in Mauritius and the Seychelles. In most countries, 75 per cent (or more) of the Grade 6 pupils were above the expected average age, with the exceptions of South Africa and Zimbabwe. | Average pupil age dropped in all countries except Mauritius, Swaziland, and Zambia, especially in Botswana, Malawi, Zanzibar, Mozambique, and Tanzania. |
| | <i>Days absent</i> | Botswana had the lowest levels of absenteeism (0.4 days per month) while Zambia had the highest (2.5 days per month). | Absenteeism levels remained about the same in most countries except in Mozambique, South Africa, Kenya, Swaziland, and Namibia, where they went down markedly, and the Seychelles and Uganda, where they went up noticeably. |
| | <i>Grade repetition</i> | Grade repetition ranged from 2.2 per cent in Seychelles to 60.3 per cent in Malawi. Multiple grade repetition was worst in Malawi, Mozambique, and Swaziland with around 20 per cent or more of the Grade 6 pupils in these three countries reporting that they had repeated grades more than once. | Grade repetition levels went down in all countries except Mauritius, where they increased by around 4 per cent. |
| | <i>Preschool attendance</i> | Around 60 per cent of the Grade 6 pupils had attended a preschool before Grade 1. Over 90 per cent of the Grade 6 pupils in the Seychelles, Kenya, and Mauritius had attended a preschool, while less than 30 per cent of the pupils in Malawi and Mozambique had attended a preschool. | |
| | HOME ENVIRONMENT | <i>Speaking the language of instruction</i> | Over 80 per cent of the Grade 6 pupils spoke the language of instruction at home. In Zanzibar, Tanzania, and Mozambique, over 90 per cent of the pupils spoke the language of instruction at home. Only about half the pupils in Malawi spoke the language of instruction at home. |
| <i>Pupil SES</i> | | On average, Grade 6 pupils in Mauritius and the Seychelles (followed by pupils from South Africa, Botswana, and Swaziland) were from higher SES home backgrounds than pupils from other SACMEQ countries. Notably, the bottom 10 per cent pupils by SES in Mauritius and the Seychelles were from higher SES backgrounds than the average Grade 6 pupils in most countries. | With exceptions of Tanzania and Mozambique - where the levels of pupil SES decreased substantially – the levels pupil SES went up in most countries especially in Botswana and Zanzibar where the levels increased noticeably. |
| <i>Siblings</i> | | Pupils in Mauritius and the Seychelles had the lowest average number of siblings (around two) while pupils in Uganda had the highest average number of siblings (around six). | |

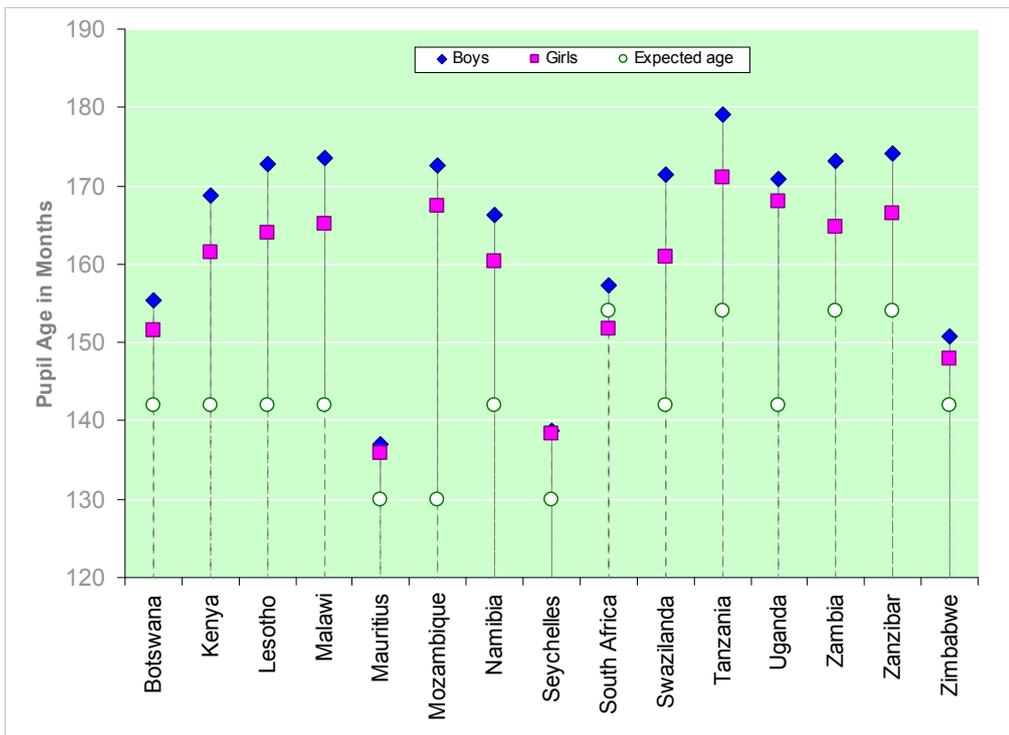
| | | Situation in 2007 (SACMEQ III) | Changes between 2000 and 2007 (SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III) |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| HOME ENVIRONMENT | <i>Meals per week</i> | Mauritius had the highest number of meals per week (19.3) while Uganda had the lowest (15.4). (The expected number of meals per week was 21.) | Levels of meals per week remained almost the same in Kenya and Swaziland; went up slightly in Mozambique, Botswana, South Africa, the Seychelles, and Lesotho, and went down slightly in Uganda, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi, Zanzibar, and Mauritius. |
| | <i>Both parents alive</i> | On average, only about three-quarters of the Grade 6 pupils in SACMEQ countries had both parents alive. In Lesotho and Swaziland about two in every five pupils (37.8 per cent) were orphans. Except for the Seychelles, Mauritius, and Zanzibar, all other countries had more than 20 per cent of pupils who had lost one or both parents at the Grade 6 primary school level. | |
| | <i>Household tasks</i> | Grade 6 pupils in Mauritius and Seychelles were involved in fewer household tasks than pupils in other countries. Rural pupils were involved in more tasks than urban pupils in most of the countries, especially in South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, and Malawi. There was little difference between boys and girls, except in Swaziland, where boys appeared to perform more tasks than girls. | |
| LEARNING ENVIRONMENT | <i>Learning materials</i> | The average Grade 6 pupil in SACMEQ countries had at least six of each of the following eight learning items: an exercise book, a notebook, a pencil, a sharpener, an eraser, a ruler, a fountain pen or a ballpoint pen, and a file or folder. | Levels of access to learning materials generally improved in most countries, especially in Malawi, Tanzania, Lesotho, Zanzibar, South Africa, Swaziland, and the Seychelles. |
| | <i>Textbooks</i> | About two in every five Grade 6 pupils (40 per cent) in SACMEQ countries had their own reading and mathematics textbooks. Over 80 per cent of the pupils in SACMEQ countries had access to reading and mathematics textbooks when the levels of textbook sharing were considered. | Levels of textbook ownership for both subjects generally went down in most SACMEQ countries (especially in Malawi, Namibia, and Botswana), except in Zanzibar and Swaziland, where these levels went up substantially. |
| | <i>Homework</i> | About 15 per cent of the Grade 6 pupils in SACMEQ countries received little or no homework, over 70 per cent received little or no help at all with their homework at home, around 40 per cent did not have their homework marked, and around 50 per cent did not have their homework explained by their teachers. | |
| | <i>Distance travelled</i> | On overall, around 45 per cent of the pupils reported that they travelled at most 1 kilometre to school while around 20 per cent of the pupils reported that they travelled over 3 kilometres to school each day. Mozambique (29.4 per cent) and South Africa (28.7 per cent) recorded the highest percentages for pupil travelling over 3 kilometres to school, which must be worrying for the authorities in those countries. On overall, Grade 6 pupils in SACMEQ countries travelled around 2 kilometres each day to school. | |

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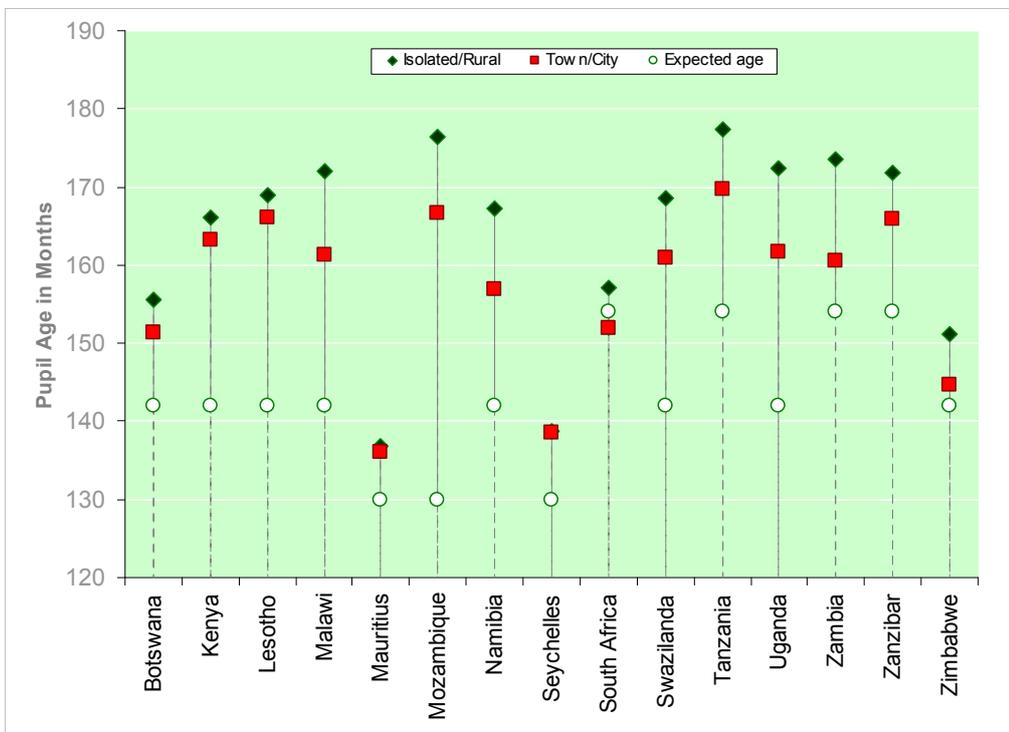
Appendices

Appendix 1: Mean ages of Grade 6 pupils by gender and school location



Boys were generally older than girls

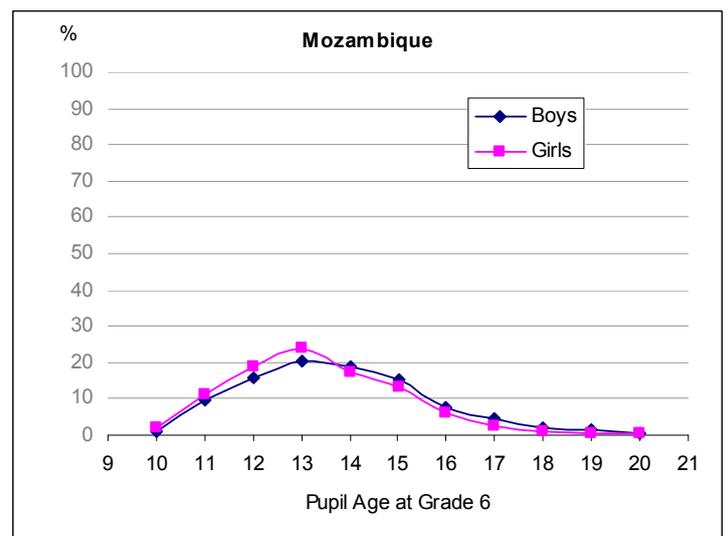
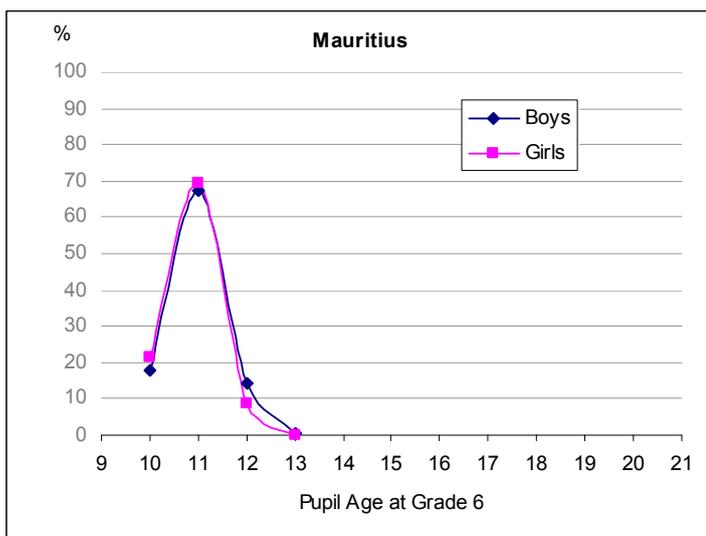
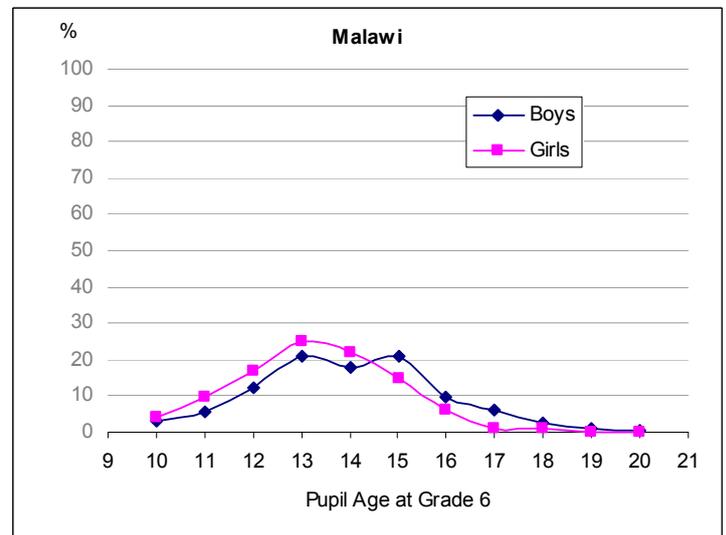
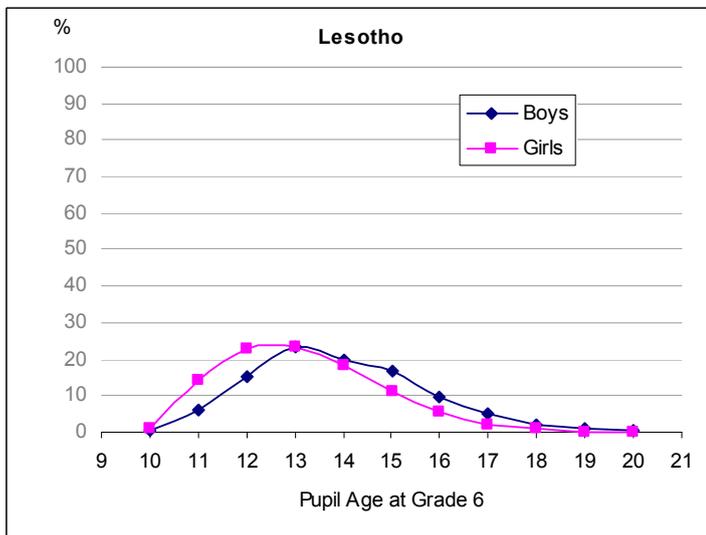
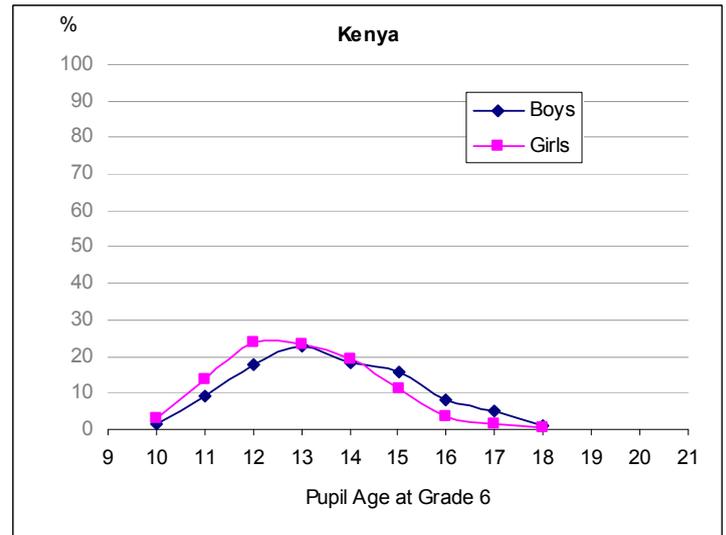
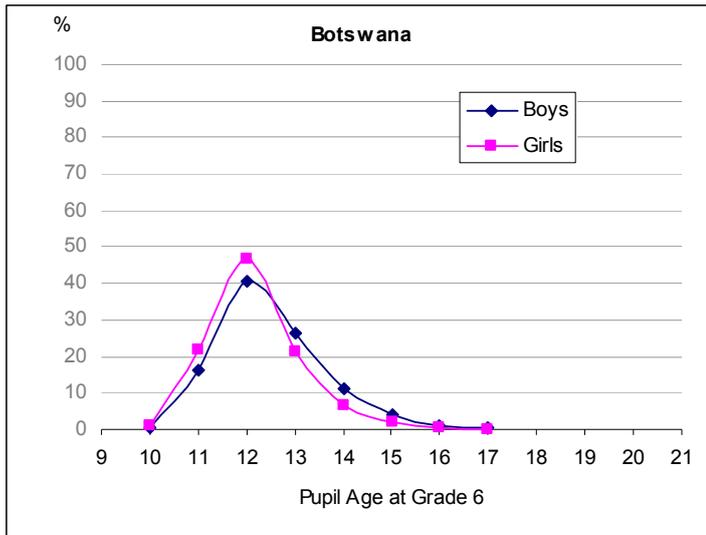
Figure A1: Mean ages of Grade 6 boys and girls (September 2007)



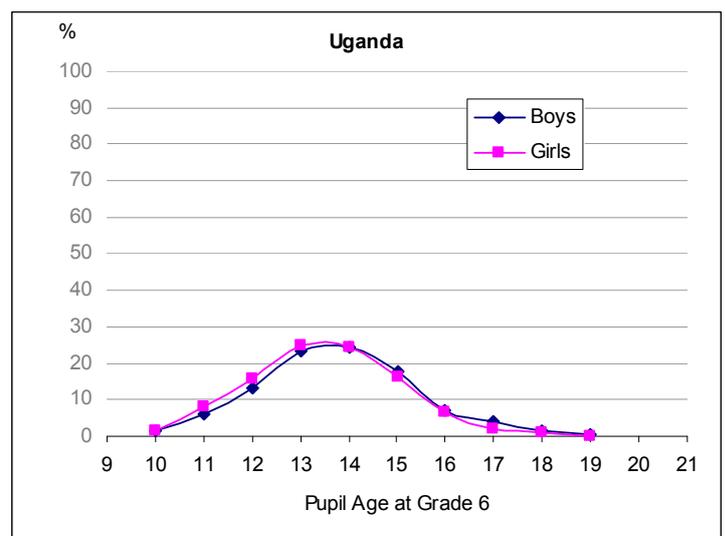
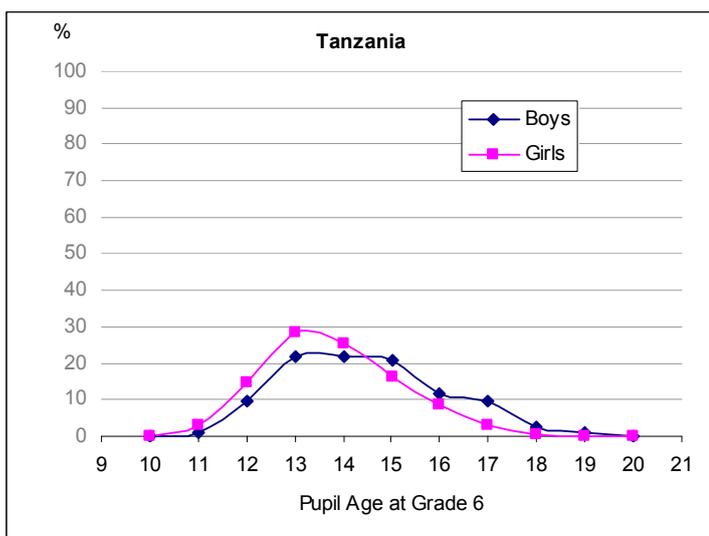
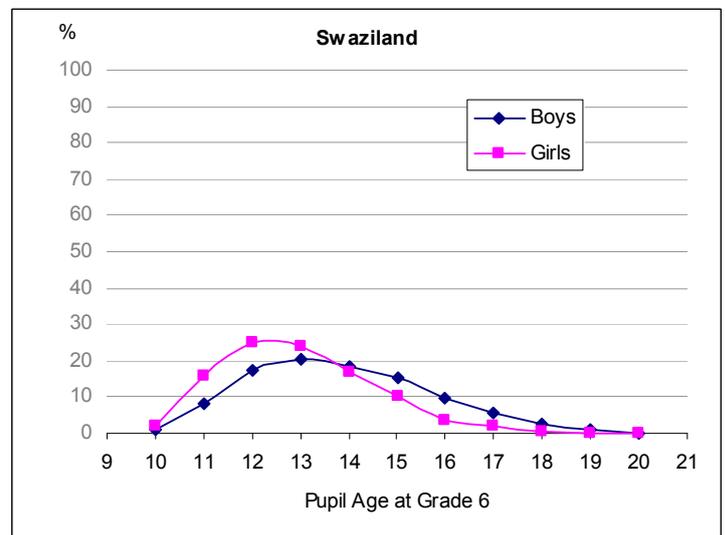
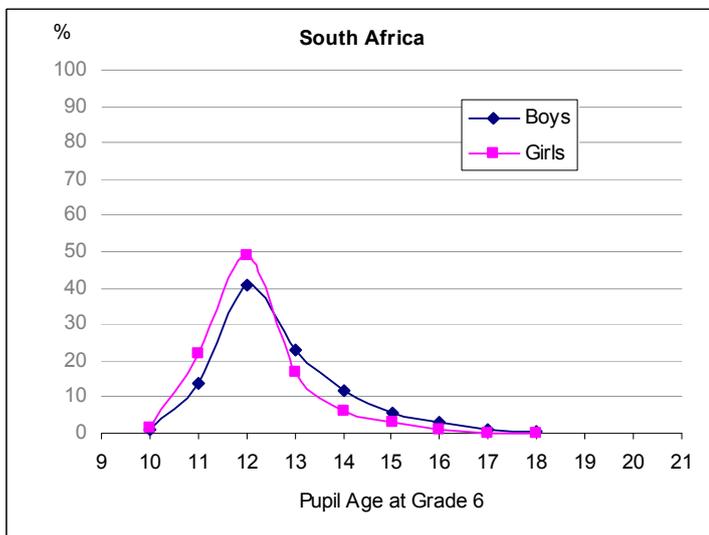
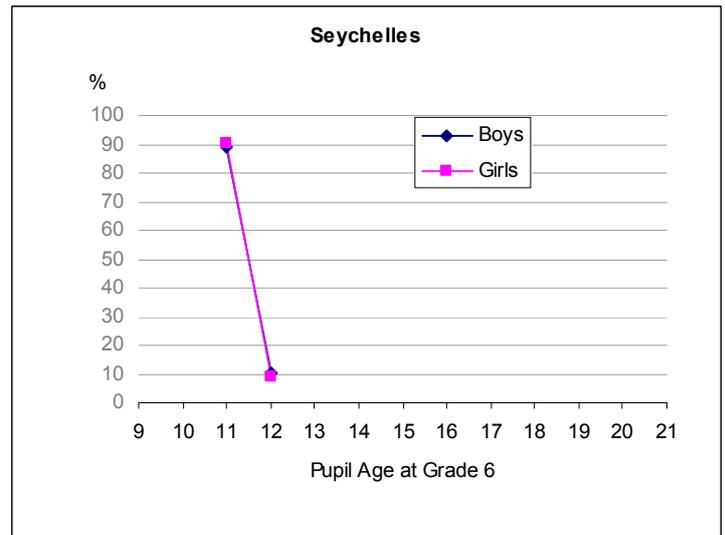
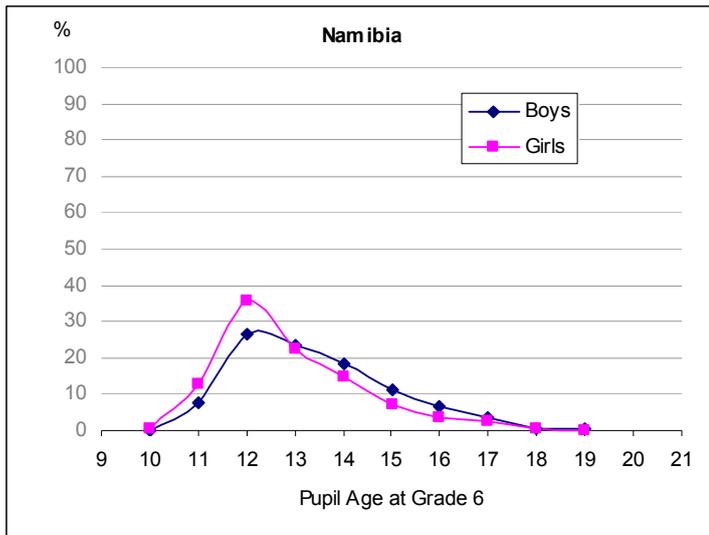
Grade 6 pupils in schools in rural and isolated areas were generally older than their counterparts in schools located in cities and towns

Figure A2: Mean ages of Grade 6 pupils by school location (September 2007)

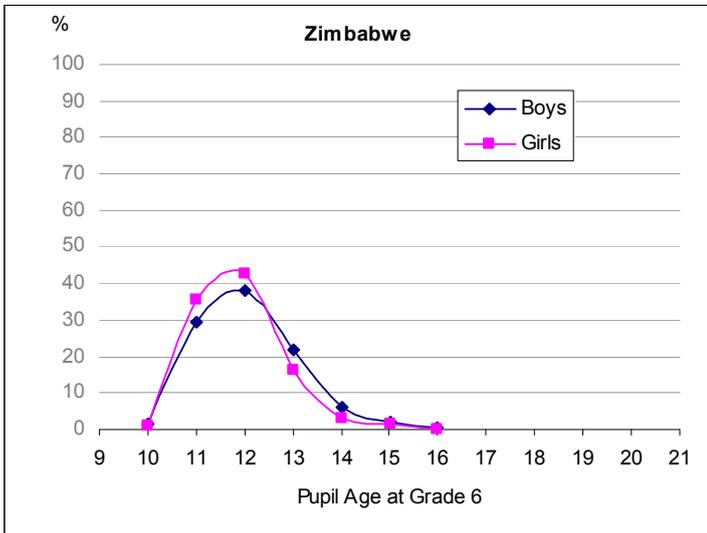
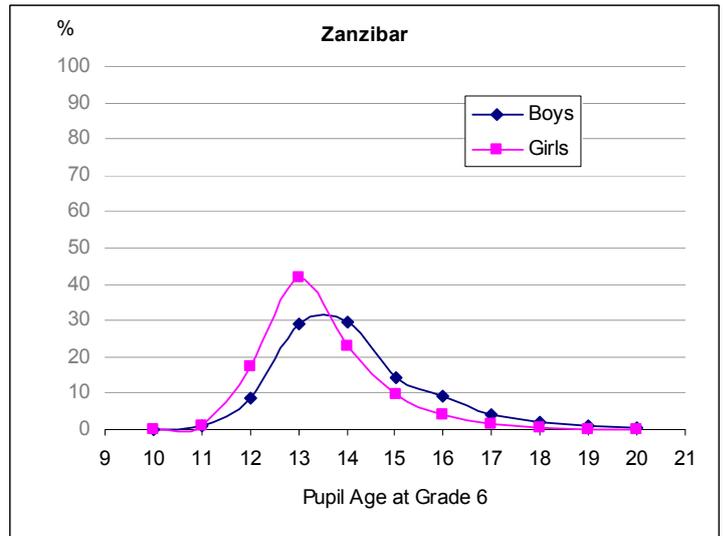
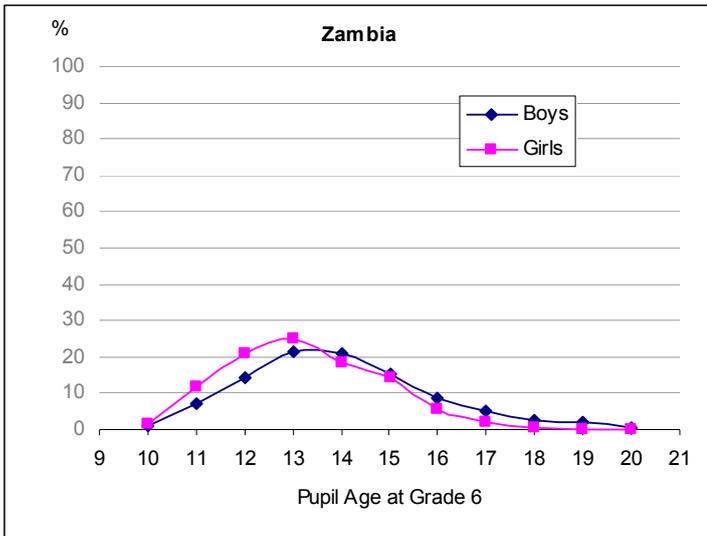
Appendix 2: Age distribution of Grade 6 pupils by gender (SACMEQ III)



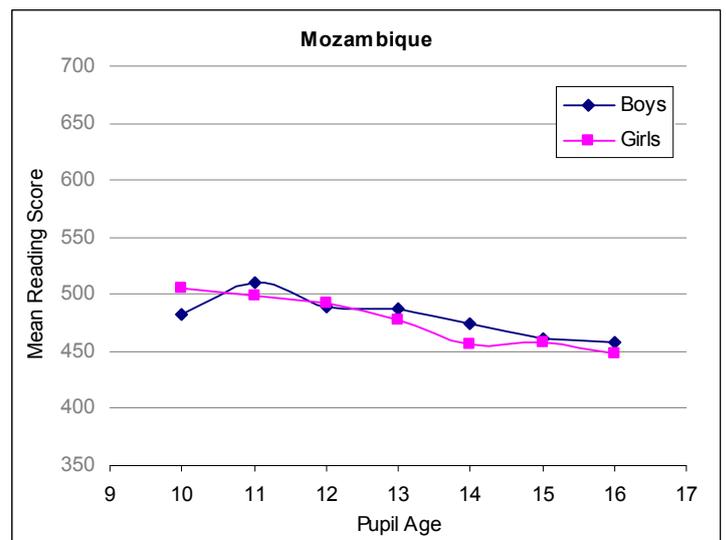
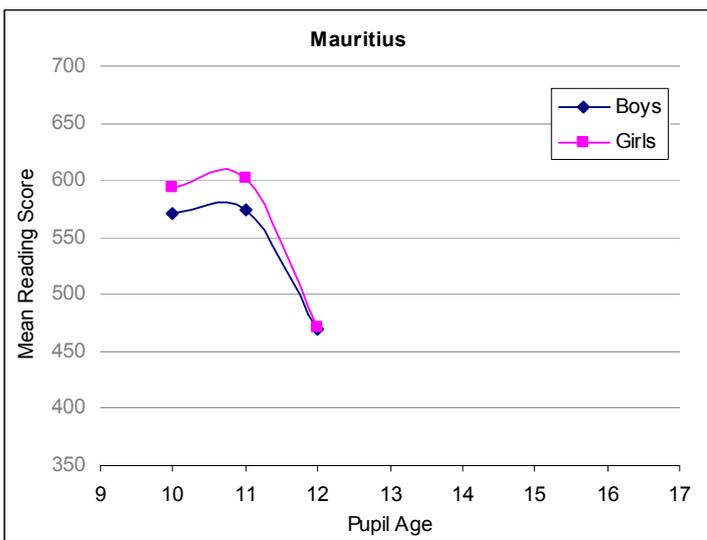
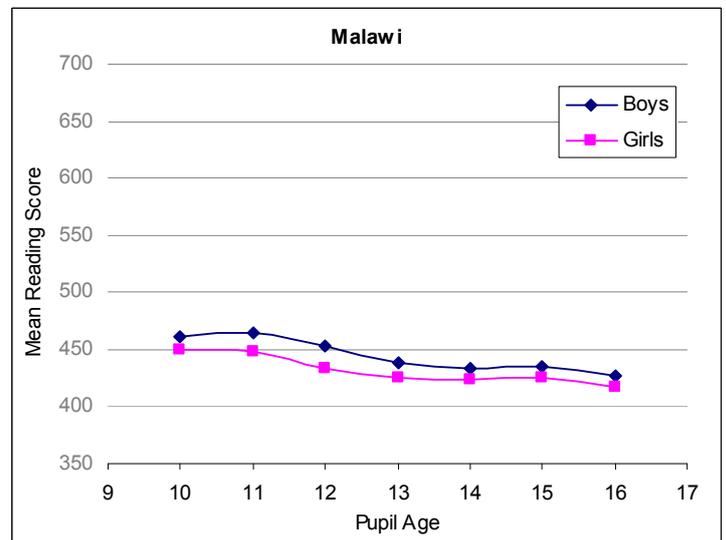
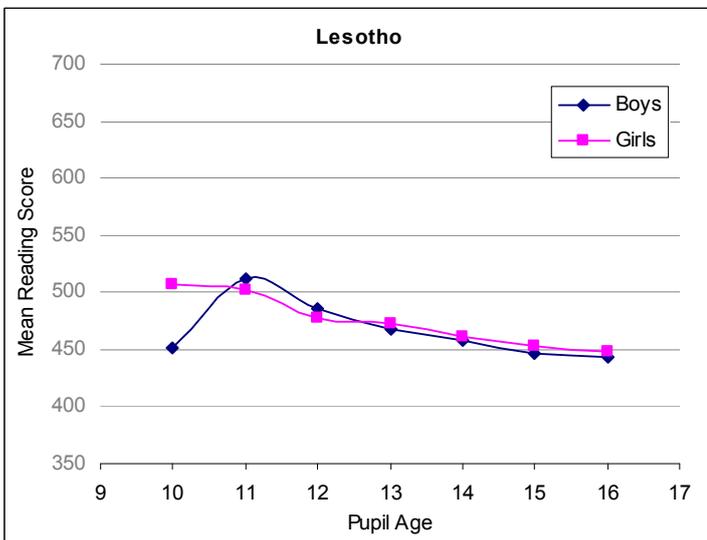
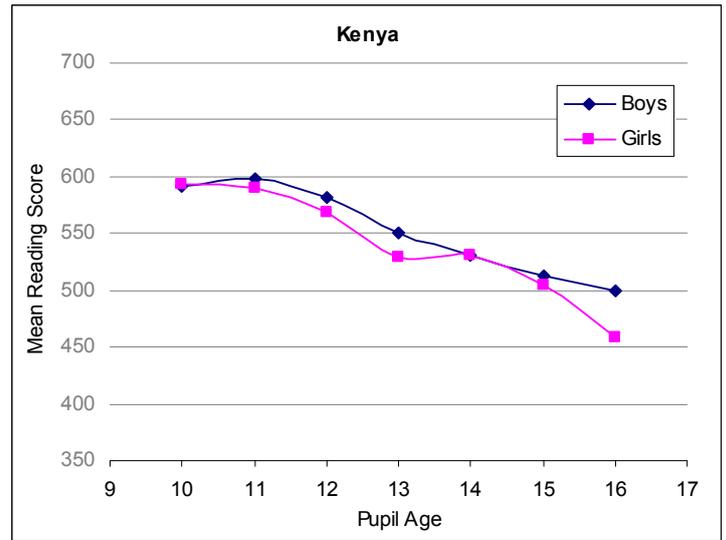
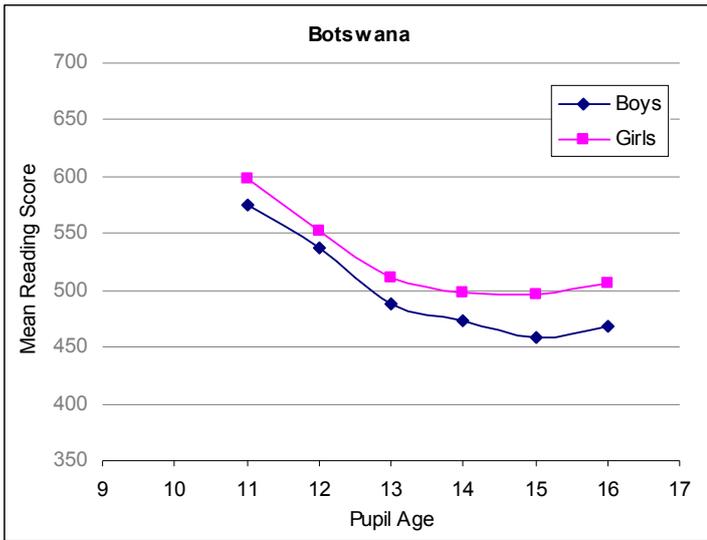
Appendix 2: (continued)



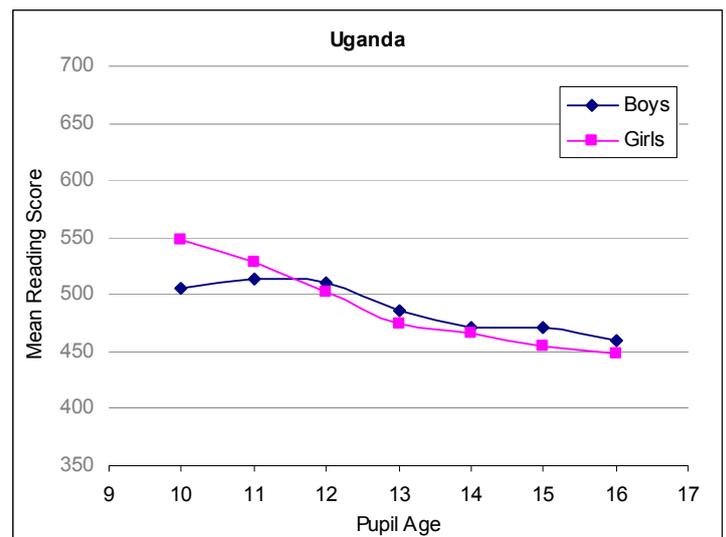
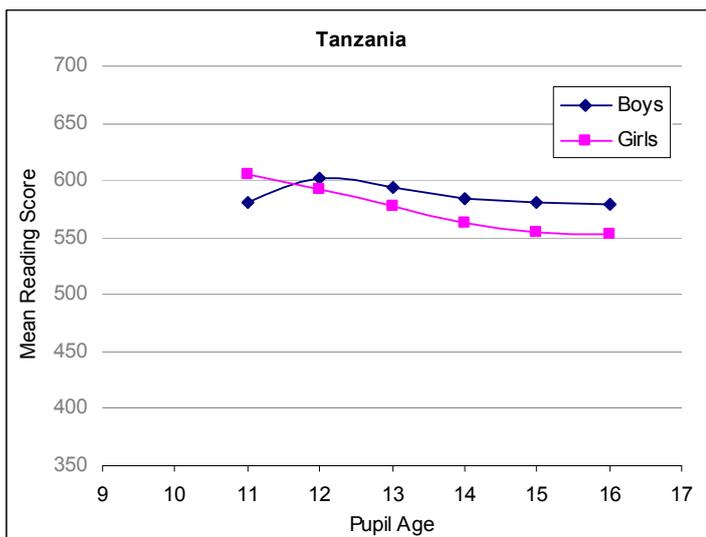
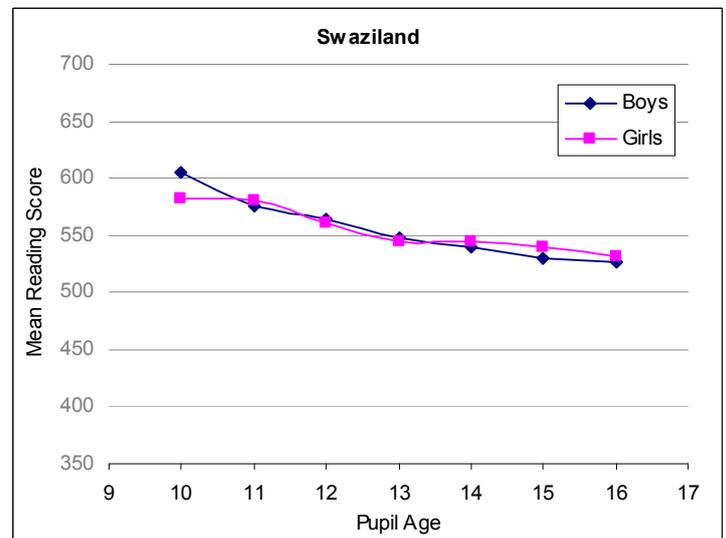
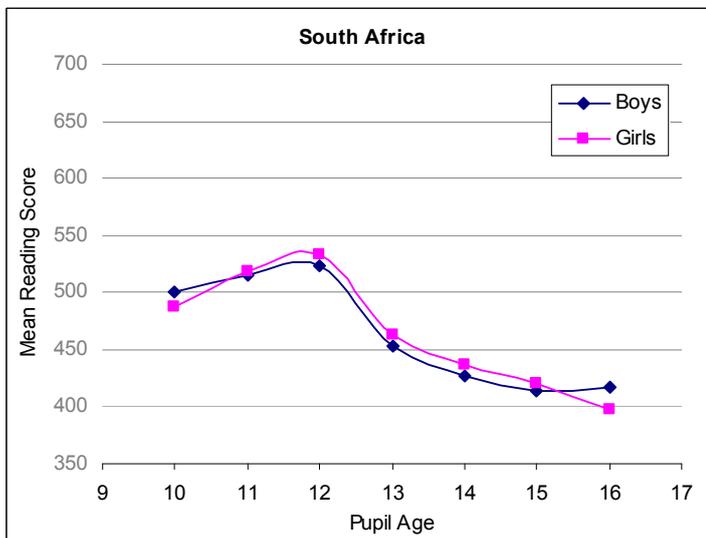
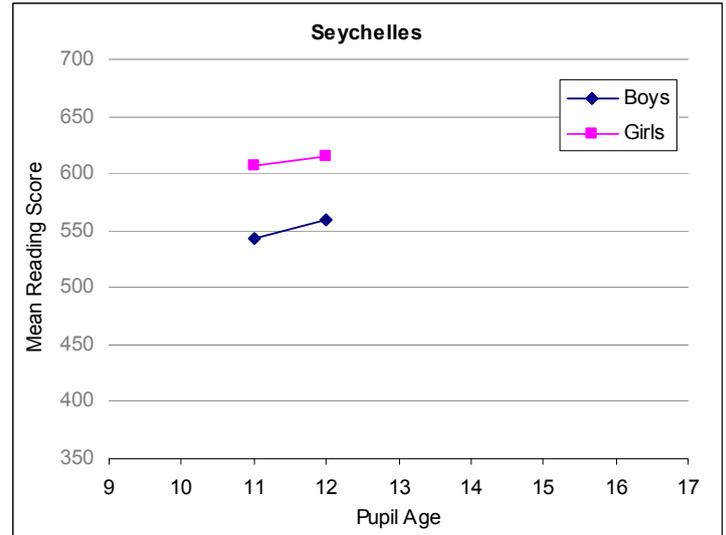
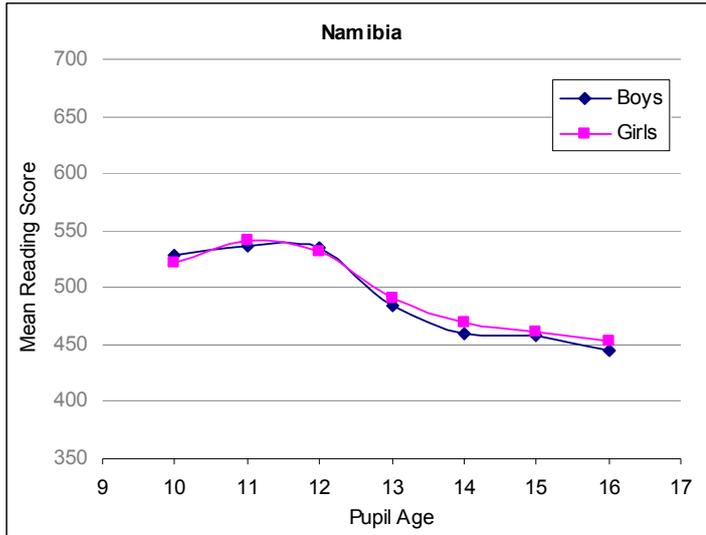
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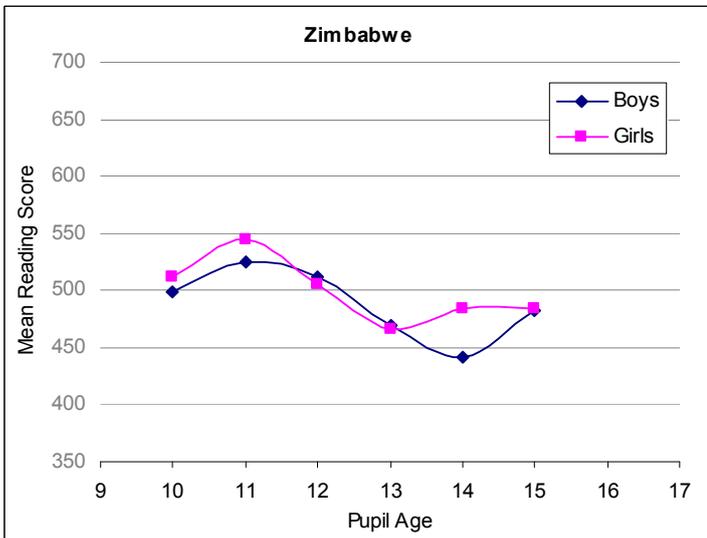
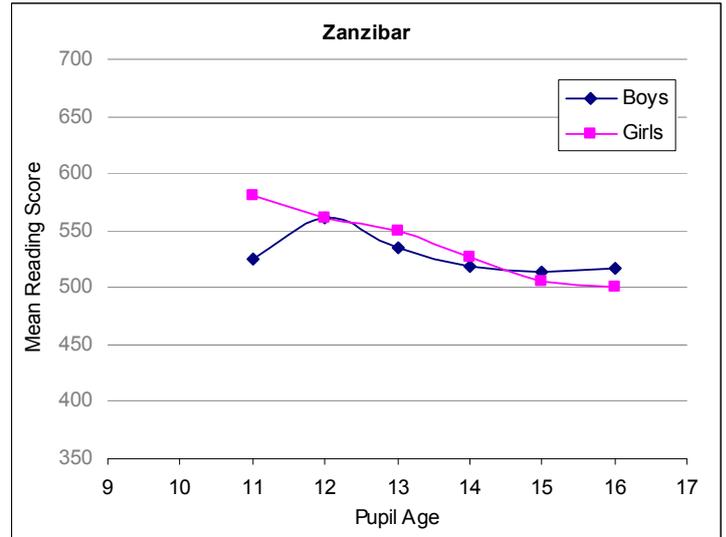
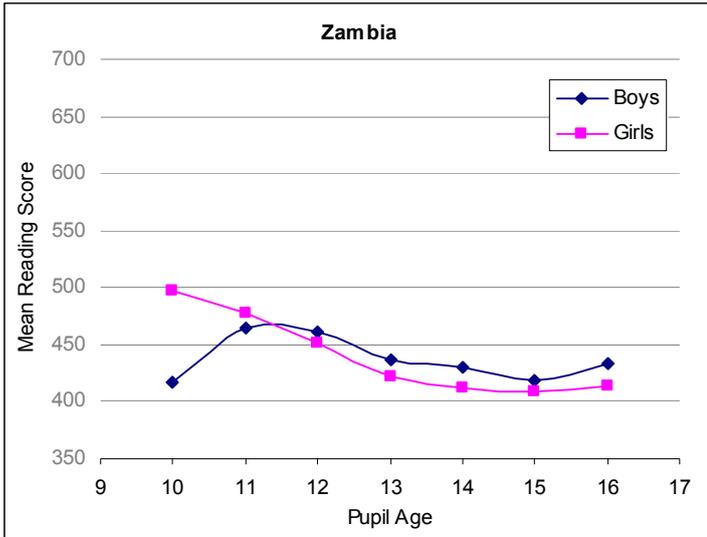
Appendix 3: Mean reading score by pupil age and gender (SACMEQ III)



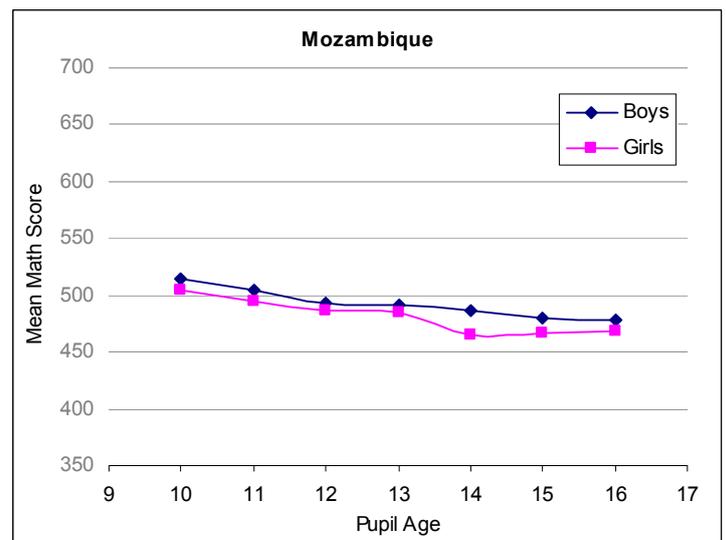
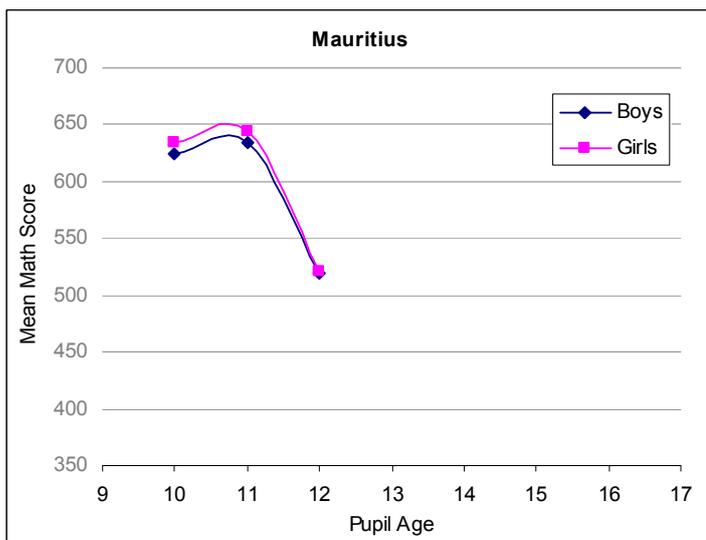
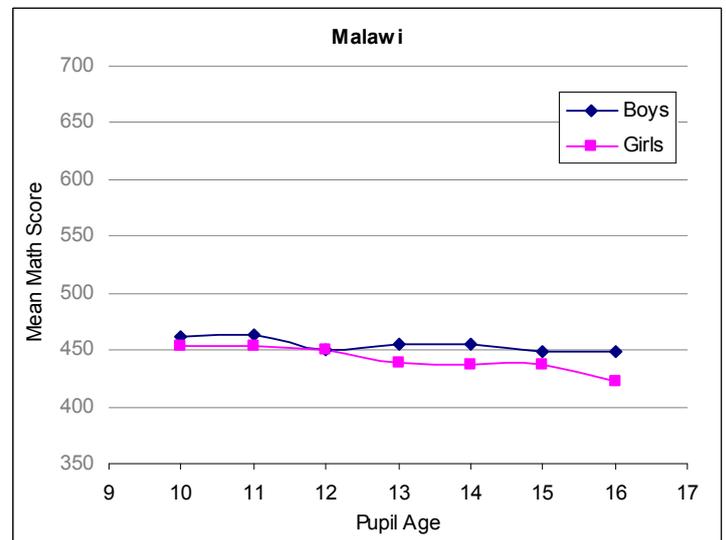
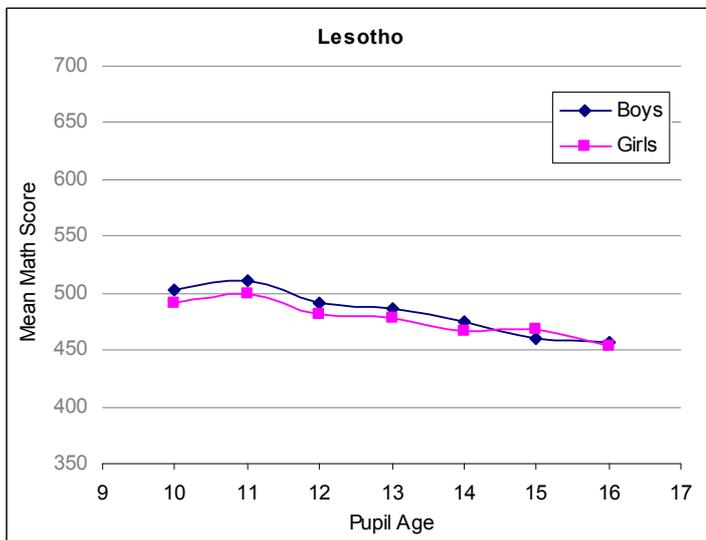
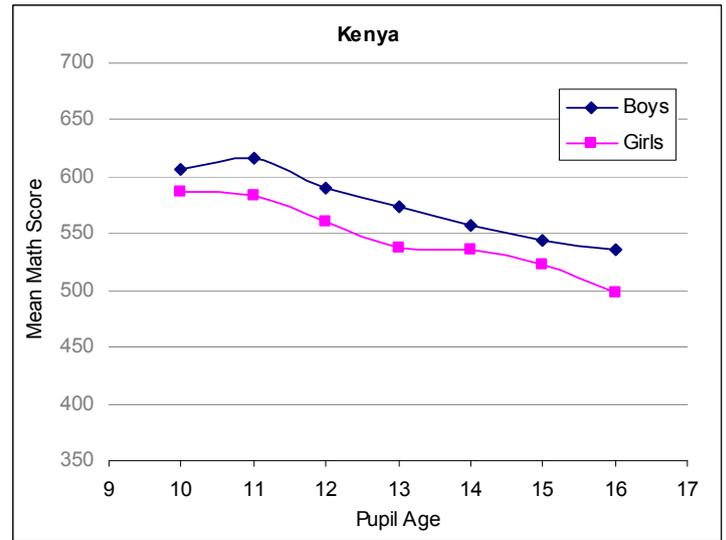
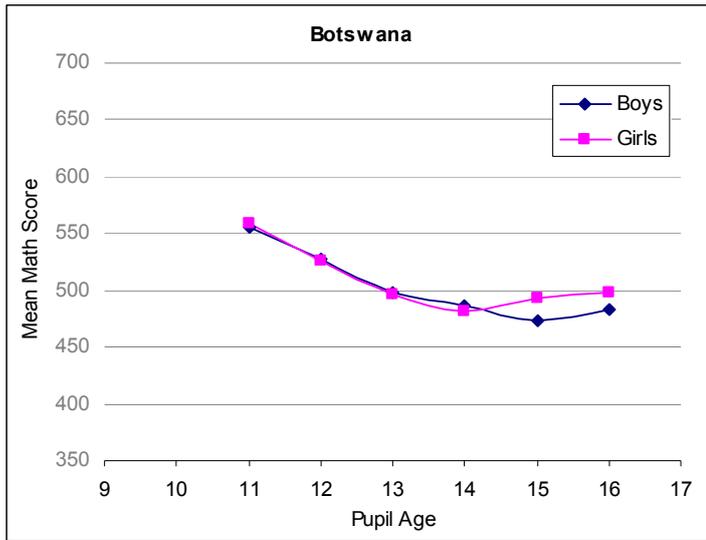
Appendix 3: (continued)



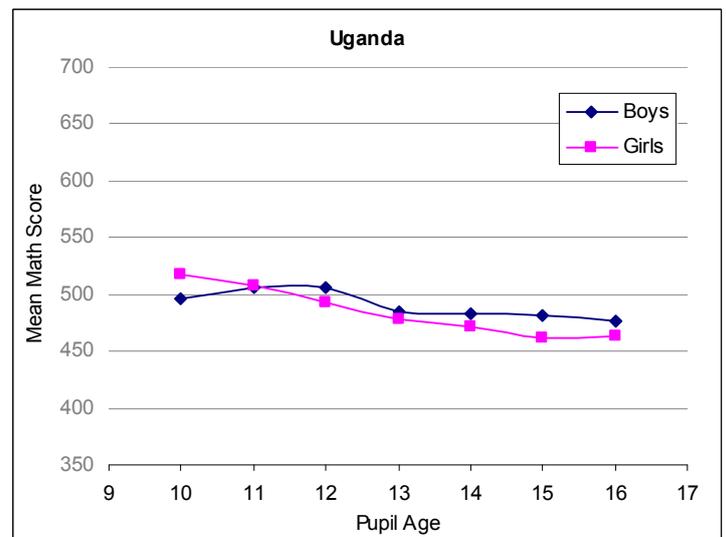
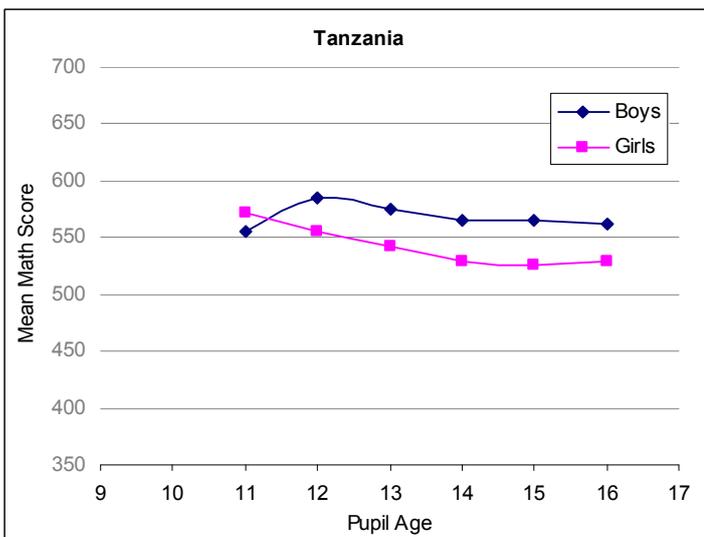
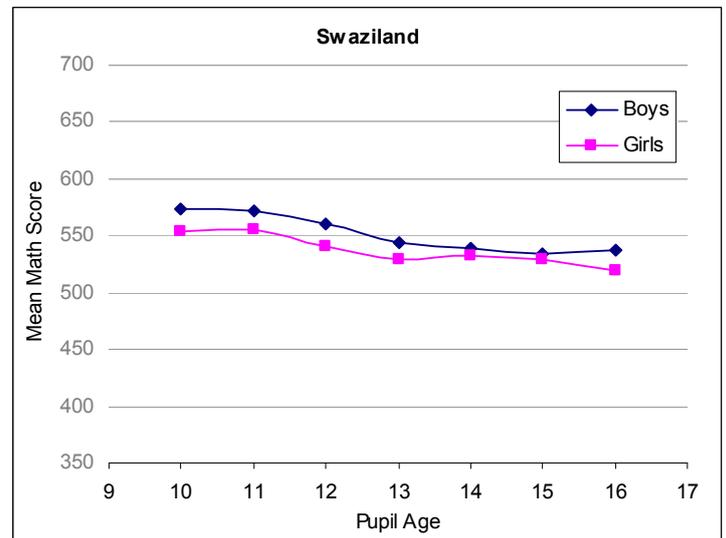
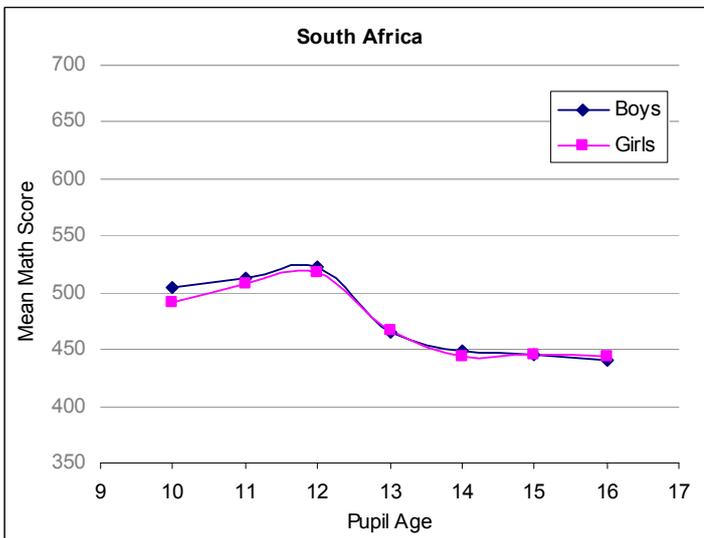
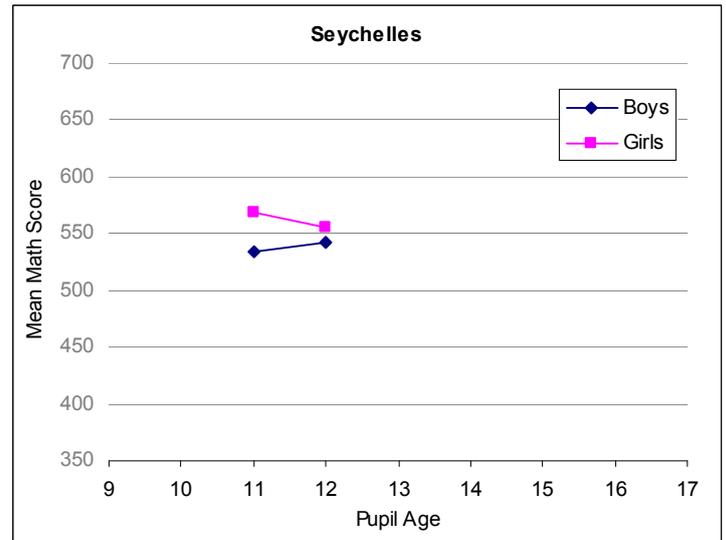
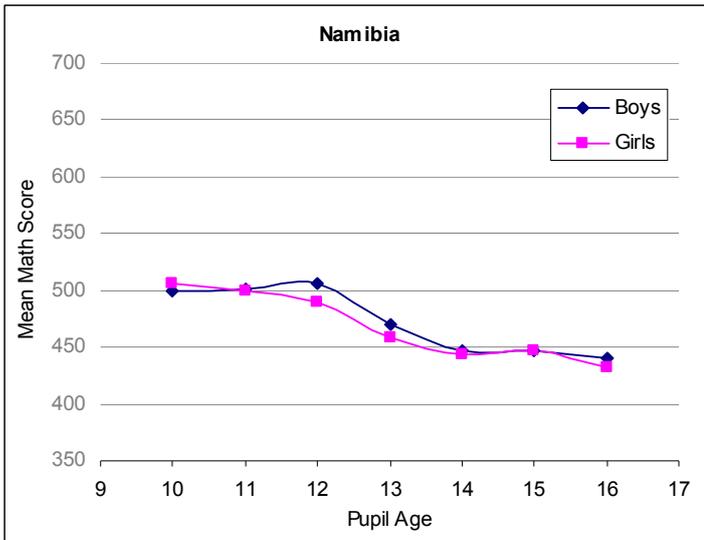
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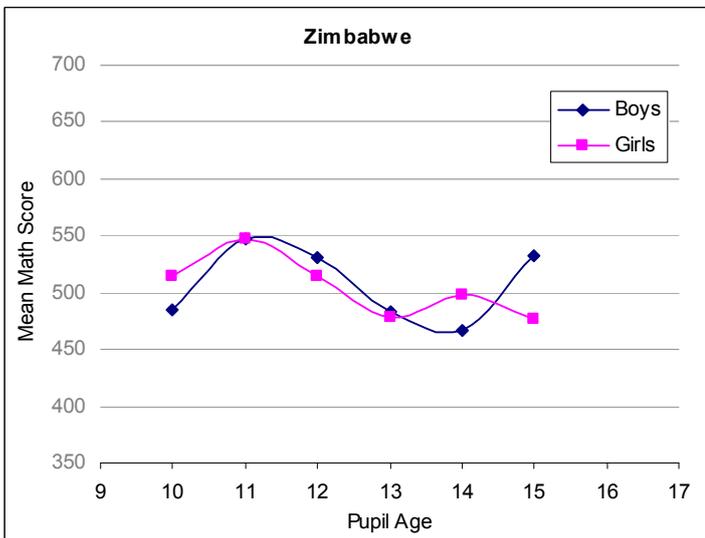
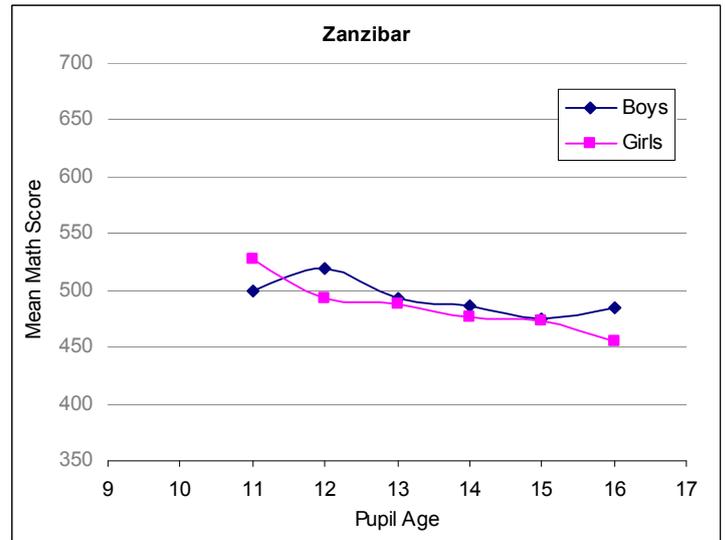
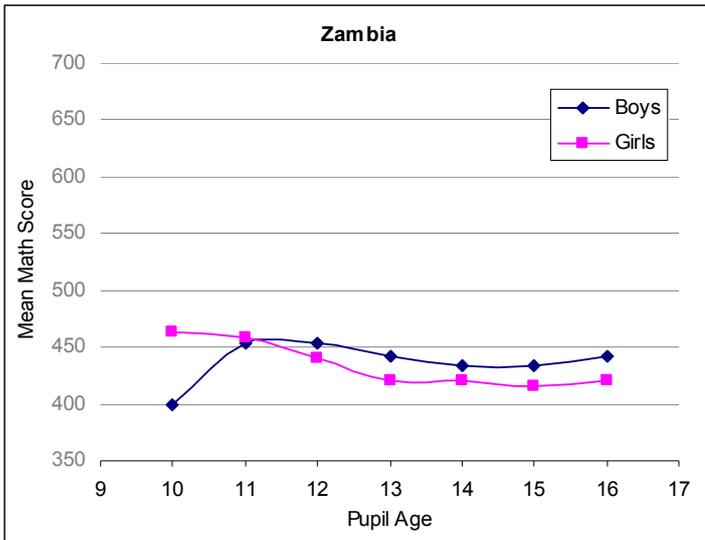
Appendix 4: Mean mathematics score by pupil age and gender (SACMEQ III)



Appendix 4: (continued)



Appendix 4: (continued)



Appendix 5: Percentages and means for distances travelled to school

| | Distance travelled to school | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | ≤0.5KM | | >0.5 to 1KM | | >1 to 1.5KM | | >1.5 to 2KM | | >2 to 2.5KM | | >2.5 to 3KM | | >3 to 3.5KM | |
| | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE |
| Botswana | 30.2 | 1.17 | 20.4 | 0.93 | 13.3 | 0.69 | 7.8 | 0.51 | 6.0 | 0.44 | 4.4 | 0.41 | 2.7 | 0.31 |
| Kenya | 27.8 | 1.59 | 18.7 | 1.01 | 17.6 | 0.82 | 8.3 | 0.58 | 8.5 | 0.53 | 4.6 | 0.42 | 4.1 | 0.42 |
| Lesotho | 21.8 | 1.05 | 15.7 | 0.83 | 13.1 | 0.65 | 9.4 | 0.63 | 7.2 | 0.53 | 6.5 | 0.61 | 4.7 | 0.46 |
| Malawi | 26.4 | 1.39 | 18.9 | 1.36 | 13.9 | 0.96 | 9.2 | 0.91 | 7.1 | 0.67 | 5.2 | 0.59 | 3.9 | 0.40 |
| Mauritius | 35.6 | 1.53 | 19.8 | 0.96 | 11.3 | 0.79 | 6.7 | 0.51 | 5.1 | 0.46 | 3.9 | 0.39 | 2.7 | 0.34 |
| Mozambique | 20.5 | 1.12 | 14.9 | 0.93 | 14.3 | 0.75 | 7.3 | 0.54 | 8.7 | 0.60 | 4.8 | 0.43 | 4.6 | 0.40 |
| Namibia | 28.9 | 1.20 | 15.0 | 0.70 | 13.2 | 0.66 | 6.8 | 0.53 | 7.4 | 0.45 | 4.9 | 0.41 | 5.0 | 0.42 |
| Seychelles | 24.1 | 1.04 | 19.0 | 0.99 | 12.9 | 0.86 | 9.7 | 0.74 | 6.3 | 0.63 | 7.1 | 0.64 | 5.1 | 0.56 |
| South Africa | 27.5 | 1.00 | 15.9 | 0.94 | 10.6 | 0.66 | 7.0 | 0.41 | 5.7 | 0.37 | 4.6 | 0.29 | 3.6 | 0.29 |
| Swaziland | 18.7 | 1.01 | 14.9 | 0.70 | 13.6 | 0.72 | 10.0 | 0.56 | 8.4 | 0.55 | 6.8 | 0.60 | 5.3 | 0.45 |
| Tanzania | 31.0 | 1.55 | 20.2 | 1.07 | 12.5 | 0.85 | 7.8 | 0.73 | 7.4 | 0.64 | 3.6 | 0.39 | 3.5 | 0.39 |
| Uganda | 29.3 | 1.44 | 14.3 | 0.78 | 16.2 | 0.83 | 8.6 | 0.66 | 8.7 | 0.61 | 5.5 | 0.72 | 3.9 | 0.34 |
| Zambia | 25.7 | 1.33 | 14.6 | 0.90 | 14.1 | 0.88 | 8.0 | 0.66 | 7.8 | 0.67 | 6.2 | 0.65 | 4.5 | 0.54 |
| Zanzibar | 31.0 | 1.59 | 26.6 | 1.39 | 13.3 | 0.98 | 8.0 | 0.71 | 4.8 | 0.52 | 4.1 | 0.49 | 2.1 | 0.32 |
| Zimbabwe | 23.2 | 1.61 | 14.4 | 1.09 | 13.1 | 0.98 | 8.8 | 0.83 | 8.7 | 0.76 | 6.0 | 0.55 | 5.1 | 0.62 |
| SACMEQ III | 26.8 | 0.36 | 17.6 | 0.26 | 13.5 | 0.21 | 8.2 | 0.16 | 7.2 | 0.15 | 5.2 | 0.14 | 4.0 | 0.11 |

| | Distance travelled to school | | | | | | | | Distance travelled to school index | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | >3.5 to 4KM | | >4 to 4.5KM | | >4.5 to 5KM | | >5KM | | Rural | | Urban | | Overall | |
| | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | % | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE | Mean | SE |
| Botswana | 2.1 | 0.27 | 1.6 | 0.22 | 2.7 | 0.33 | 8.9 | 1.09 | 1.7 | 0.06 | 2.0 | 0.10 | 1.9 | 0.06 |
| Kenya | 2.0 | 0.29 | 1.9 | 0.26 | 1.8 | 0.27 | 4.7 | 0.53 | 1.7 | 0.05 | 1.9 | 0.09 | 1.8 | 0.05 |
| Lesotho | 3.7 | 0.34 | 3.3 | 0.32 | 5.9 | 0.47 | 8.7 | 0.73 | 2.2 | 0.06 | 2.3 | 0.07 | 2.3 | 0.05 |
| Malawi | 3.1 | 0.45 | 2.7 | 0.37 | 3.5 | 0.46 | 6.2 | 0.66 | 1.9 | 0.06 | 1.9 | 0.08 | 1.9 | 0.05 |
| Mauritius | 1.9 | 0.27 | 2.0 | 0.30 | 2.6 | 0.30 | 8.4 | 0.86 | 1.6 | 0.07 | 2.0 | 0.08 | 1.8 | 0.06 |
| Mozambique | 2.6 | 0.35 | 4.1 | 0.42 | 5.7 | 0.55 | 12.4 | 0.99 | 2.7 | 0.10 | 2.2 | 0.06 | 2.4 | 0.06 |
| Namibia | 3.5 | 0.35 | 3.0 | 0.28 | 4.0 | 0.38 | 8.3 | 0.68 | 2.3 | 0.06 | 1.7 | 0.06 | 2.1 | 0.05 |
| Seychelles | 3.0 | 0.44 | 3.2 | 0.45 | 2.2 | 0.38 | 7.4 | 0.63 | 2.0 | 0.06 | 2.0 | 0.04 | 2.0 | 0.04 |
| South Africa | 3.3 | 0.31 | 2.7 | 0.23 | 4.6 | 0.31 | 14.5 | 1.09 | 2.2 | 0.07 | 2.4 | 0.08 | 2.3 | 0.05 |
| Swaziland | 3.5 | 0.36 | 3.8 | 0.41 | 4.3 | 0.39 | 10.7 | 0.81 | 2.3 | 0.05 | 2.6 | 0.10 | 2.4 | 0.05 |
| Tanzania | 2.2 | 0.33 | 3.5 | 0.41 | 3.2 | 0.38 | 5.1 | 0.62 | 1.9 | 0.06 | 1.7 | 0.08 | 1.8 | 0.05 |
| Uganda | 2.4 | 0.33 | 3.3 | 0.43 | 2.5 | 0.30 | 5.2 | 0.44 | 1.9 | 0.06 | 1.8 | 0.07 | 1.9 | 0.05 |
| Zambia | 3.1 | 0.58 | 3.0 | 0.44 | 4.4 | 0.45 | 8.6 | 0.70 | 2.3 | 0.06 | 1.9 | 0.08 | 2.1 | 0.05 |
| Zanzibar | 1.6 | 0.26 | 2.5 | 0.38 | 2.1 | 0.34 | 3.8 | 0.46 | 1.6 | 0.05 | 1.5 | 0.06 | 1.6 | 0.04 |
| Zimbabwe | 4.3 | 0.55 | 4.5 | 0.74 | 4.2 | 0.66 | 7.7 | 0.86 | 2.4 | 0.07 | 1.8 | 0.13 | 2.2 | 0.07 |
| SACMEQ III | 2.8 | 0.10 | 3.0 | 0.10 | 3.6 | 0.11 | 8.0 | 0.19 | 2.0 | 0.02 | 2.0 | 0.02 | 2.0 | 0.01 |

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For more information about SACMEQ, visit website: www.sacmeq.org

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