

# Adolescents and Education in Africa

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## Discussion Guide

### Executive Summary

**This paper reviews the educational participation, progress and attainment of adolescents in Africa using very current data for 38 countries and age-appropriate developmental markers. The overwhelming majority of adolescents in Africa are not attending a grade appropriate for their age either because they do not attend school or because they are attending a grade that is behind the grade that is appropriate for their age. With sexual maturation, adolescents face new social challenges in school and are at greater risk than their younger classmates of dropout if they are behind grade for their age. Thus, the educational circumstances of adolescents are in part determined by a critical decision parents make on their children's behalf well before their children become adolescents, and that is the age of first enrollment.**

**As a consequence of progress toward EFA, we find that the educational background of out-of-school adolescents is becoming increasingly diverse, with some having attended some or all of primary school before leaving school while others still lack any schooling. Thus, addressing the educational needs of out-of-school adolescents will require accurate and up-to-date information on their educational backgrounds and a diversity of approaches according to past educational experience. In less than a third of the countries are a majority of 15-year olds attending secondary school; in many countries the overwhelming majority of school-going adolescents are attending primary school. Indeed, it is even more striking to note that in almost two thirds of the countries included here, less than 10 percent of 19 year olds have completed secondary school. While gender gaps persist in parts of Africa in school participation rates among adolescents, we find that in many countries female adolescent students are progressing slightly better in school their same age male peers. However, we must keep in mind that this is the a context in which the majority of both sexes are behind grade for their age.**

### Introduction

There is growing recognition in the international community that primary schooling alone will not provide sufficient preparation for adult work and family responsibilities in a rapidly globalizing world even in the poorest countries (NRC/IOM 2005; World Bank 2007). This shift has been signaled by rising rates of return in the labor market for both men and women to

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secondary and post-secondary levels of schooling in all parts of the developing world, including Africa (NRC/IOM 2005) As international attention shifts from primary to secondary schooling, it is natural for attention to also shift from the educational needs of young children to the educational needs of adolescent girls and boys.

However, in many of the most disadvantaged settings, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, substantial percentages of adolescents do not attend school and, among those that do, substantial numbers still attend primary school rather than secondary school. This is because children often get a late start in school and, therefore, become adolescents while still in primary school. Late school-starting-ages are further compounded by high rates of grade repetition due to irregular attendance and weak academic performance leading many adolescents to become discouraged and dropout before gaining entrance to secondary school. Furthermore, many primary students, even by the end of grade 3, are barely literate further compromising their chances of completing primary school much less progressing on to secondary school. Teaching and learning are both more difficult when students of widely different ages, who have little in common with each other developmentally, study together in the same classroom.

The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) identified the learning needs of adolescents as one of its six priorities. Governments in endorsing the Dakar framework agreed to work towards the achievement of all 6 goals including EFA goal #3 in which they pledged to meet the “learning needs of all young people and adults...through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs”. This recommendation has become all the more relevant and important as we gain knowledge about brain development during adolescence. It was previously thought that the brain ceased to grow around age 2; we now know that it continues to grow into adolescence and even early adulthood (Blum 2006 as cited in World Bank 2007). Thus adolescence represents a phase of life when learning can accelerate if built on a sound foundation but also a phase of life during which those who have lacked educational opportunities earlier in childhood, either because of no school or poor quality schooling, can recoup if accelerated learning opportunities are provided to them before taking up adult responsibilities. According to the 2008 EFA monitoring report (UNESCO 2008), this goal has been the most neglected of the six goals by countries themselves as well as by the international community. This is not surprising. Not only are the learning needs of adolescents increasingly complex but the effectiveness of alternative approaches to adolescent learning are essentially unknown. Some adolescents are still in school but have fallen behind, some have never been to school, and some have been to school and dropped out with varying competencies. All are still at an age to benefit from further learning and all will have work responsibilities as adults to support themselves and their families.

## Data

A focus on the educational needs of adolescents in Africa must start with a clear picture of where adolescent boys and girls are currently situated within the schooling system and how their individual characteristics and family circumstances may affect their progress through school. This paper builds from research on trends in schooling during adolescence undertaken for NRC/IOM panel report, Growing Up Global: the Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries. This report, published over 3 years ago, documented the impressive growth in primary school completion particularly for girls in sub-Saharan Africa and the

dramatic narrowing in the gender gap across the continent over the 20 years leading up to the turn of the century (Hewlett and Lloyd 2005).

These paper present results for 38 countries with data on education available either from a Demographic and health Survey (DHS) or a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) during the period 2000-2007. DHS and MICS use the same module and procedures to obtain data related to school participation<sup>2</sup>. Using the most recent data from each country as of mid-decade – either from the MICS or DHS – we present data separately for boys and girls to show

*For all adolescents:*

- an indicator of the percent of 12 and 15 year old girls and boys who are at or above their expected grade level- *net school attendance rate* .

*For out-of-school adolescents:*

- the size and composition of the out-of-school population of adolescents by age and sex according to previous exposure to schooling
- a measure of the extent of illiteracy among older adolescent girls (15-19) who dropped out of school in primary according to last grade attended

*For adolescent students*

- the extent of participation of adolescents in primary and secondary school by age and sex
- the grade distribution of 12 year old students to capture age diversity in the class room
- an indicator of the percent of 12 and 15 year old students who are at or above their expected grade level
- a measure of weekly attendance by sex for the currently enrolled (for a few countries with available data).

These statistics are reflective of the situation around mid-decade for those aged 10-19. 38 countries are included here. Please also note that for the moment certain important Africa countries are not yet included including Botswana, DR Congo, Liberia among others because we have not yet completed the analysis for every country. We include detailed case studies for 6 countries – Ethiopia, Congo, Malawi, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Zimbabwe - as examples for the discussion at the meeting and plan to complete the rest before finalizing the paper.

We choose ages 12 and 15 specifically to highlight critical developmental transitions for adolescents. Age 12 is typically the age of puberty. It is at puberty that the lives of boys and girls begin to diverge as parents, teachers and members of the community convey their expectations to children about traditional gender roles. Age 15 is another developmental marker in that it is an age when many adolescents, particularly girls, begin pathways to marriage which often begin with dating, boyfriends and girl friends and can include sexual debut. This process further reinforces traditional gender role expectations, with implications for school participation and progress.

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<sup>2</sup> For more details about questionnaires, analysis and reports see, [www.measuredhs.com](http://www.measuredhs.com) for the DHS and [www.childinfo.org](http://www.childinfo.org) for MICS.

In interpreting the data it is important to keep in mind that 10-year old children currently entering the adolescent years may not end up in the same place at age 19 as those who are currently age 19 today given rapidly changing circumstances. Thus the figures and charts presented must be seen as a snapshot at a moment in time. However, these data are nonetheless extremely useful in providing a sense of the current situation of adolescents of different ages in the countries under review. To begin to address EFA Goal 3 effectively, we will need to know much more about the educational background of adolescents at each age, as well as about the learning gaps they are experiencing which could be still be addressed during adolescence. As the data are very rich, the charts and tables presented here only skim the surface in terms of the many breakdowns that could be explored by place of residence, household wealth and other relevant categories such as ethnicity, religion etc. These data provide an introduction to the issues and highlight the potential power of data that can look simultaneously at developmental phase in relation to location within the schooling system.

The country specific tables and charts are introduced with a topic by topic discussion of key themes which can guide the discussion at the meeting.

### All Adolescents

A summary indicator – *the net school attendance rate* – captures the extent to which adolescents of a particular age are in the correct grade for their age. Included amongst those who are not at grade for their age are those who are still in school but behind grade for age as well as those who are no longer in school or never attended school to begin with. To allow for age misreporting, the indicator allows an adolescents reported age to be one year older for the grade than would be expected if they had started school at the recommended age. The indicator is adjusted for each country to reflect recommended starting ages which vary from age 6 to age 7.

In 22 of the 38 countries analyzed here, more than two thirds of the children (12 or 15 years old) were attending school at the time of the surveys (see School Attendance – SA in Table 1). In South Africa, for example, over 95% of the 12 and 15 years old were found to be attending school. However many of them are attending school at grades below the ones corresponding to their ages. Table 1 also shows the net school attendance rates (NSA) at ages 12 and 15 for boys and girls separately. In the case of South Africa, we found now that less than 50% of the 12 and 15 years old are in a grade that corresponding to their ages (just 30% for boys). Only in Egypt and Zimbabwe are the majority of boys and girls on time for their age at age 12 (over 80 percent). In two other countries – Namibia and Swaziland – over 60% of girls but not boys are on time as well. Net attendance rates at age 12 range from as low as 7% in Madagascar to as high as 89% in Egypt for boys and as low as 5% in Chad to as high as 85% in Egypt for girls but in most countries rates are exceedingly low; indeed below 30% or lower in 22 countries for boys and 21 countries for girls. In many countries girls are progressing better than boys (e.g. Congo, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, Lesotho and Kenya). In those countries where this is not the case, it is often because of greater dropout rates for girls than because of poor progress in school (see further discussion below). By age 15, net school attendance rates (NSA) are systematically lower both because of dropout as well as because of grade repetition. With exception of Egypt, where NSA is around 70% for 15 years old boys and girls, all the other countries have very low levels of

NSA among 15 year olds. In Chad, Somalia, Guinea Bissau, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Niger, Burundi, Central African Republic, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, the net school attendance is less than 10% for 15 years old boys and girls. Here again, 15 years old girls seem to progress better than boys (see Table 1).

### Out-of-School Adolescents

Along with dramatic progress in many countries toward EFA goal #2 - universal primary education - and goal no 5 - gender equality in educational participation - has come growing diversity in the learning needs of out-of-school adolescents. This is because the term “out of school” cannot be equated with “never in school” and the educational background of the out-of-school population may include a few years of primary, most of primary, primary completion, some secondary schooling or some non-formal alternative education. This is clearly illustrated in Charts 1 and 2 which can be viewed for a selection of countries in the country data sheets for which this discussion provides a guide. At each age, adolescents are sorted into one of 5 and sometimes 6 possible categories: (1) never in school, (2) attended school but dropped out before completing secondary, (3) completed secondary, (4) attending secondary and (5) attending primary, (6) non-formal or koranic schooling. The out-of school population is the sum of categories (1) and (2).

The deep red space show changes by age for boys and girls as well as for rural and urban boys and girls in the percent never in school. First, note the enormous variation across countries in the size of the adolescent population who has never attended school.. Further, note that recent changes in the percent never attending have been overwhelming positive; while the percent of young adolescent girls who have never attended school has been declining in all countries in Africa (i.e. the percent of 10-12 year olds who have never attended is less than the percent of 17-19 year olds that have never attended), this has not consistently true for boys in all countries (e.g. Ethiopia).

For those who have never attended school, second chance programs providing non-formal schooling are likely to be most successful when targeted to the youngest adolescents who still have a chance to be mainstreamed back into the schooling system. Because learning occurs most intensely during childhood and adolescence than during other phases of life, investments in learning either through complimentary or alternative educational programs during early adolescence are likely to yield the highest returns (NRC/IOM 2005).

Amongst out-of-school adolescents, groups whose educational needs are growing in importance are those who have attended some school but subsequently dropped out. The pink space in Charts 1 and 2 show changes in the percent of adolescents who have attended school but dropped out and according to age. The percent of adolescents who are former learners but now out of school rises with age and also varies enormously across countries. In some countries this group represents a minority of those out of school; in others it represents the overwhelming majority. For example contrast Congo and Malawi where most adolescents have experienced school to Burkina Faso and Ethiopia where they have not. What these charts do not tell us is how much these previously schooled adolescents have learned in school and what types of educational

programs would most suits their needs. These are likely to be different from the needs of those who have never been to school. This previously school population is often larger among girls than boys; its relative size varies across countries by urban and rural residence.

We can learn something more about the learning needs of this population by directly assessing the basic literacy of older adolescents who dropped out during their primary school years. Unfortunately, these data are only available for girls. As can be seen from Chart 4, there is an enormous variation across countries in the extent to which adolescents with no more than a third grade education have acquired the basic ability to read a simple sentence which is a very minimal level of literacy. Indeed, the extent to which older adolescents who have dropped out of school can read a basic sentence after 3 grades of school ranges from over 80% in Swaziland, Rwanda, Morocco, Somalia, Lesotho and Burundi to as low as 7% in Ghana (data are not shown for all countries). Basic literacy rises with grade level and by grade 5; we find that basic literacy rates have risen to at least 50% in all countries and to 80% or more in 20 of the 31 countries for which data are available. What these data point out is that learning needs during adolescence cannot just be assessed by grade attained. Among adolescents who are no longer in school, some who previously attended school still need to learn to read while others are ready to put their reading skills to use as they pursue higher levels of learning.

At the other extreme among those who are no longer attending school are those adolescents who have completed secondary school. Among the oldest adolescents at age 19, we can begin to see what percent are actually able to complete secondary school during adolescence. The green illustrates the percent of adolescents at each age that have completed secondary school. In some countries there are essentially no secondary school graduates by that age (e.g. Tanzania, Mozambique, Chad, Mali, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Burundi, Guinea, and Niger) with most percentages well below 10% and in a few, notably percentages are impressive (e.g. Egypt, Ghana and to a less extent Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa; see Table 5).

These charts as well as Table 5 data illustrate the diversity of out-of-school adolescent learning needs. In addressing EFA Goal No 3, countries will be most effective once they have analyzed these data in more depth so as to target programs for adolescents more effectively.

### Adolescent Students

As children transition to adolescence, we expect those who remain in school to be increasingly found in secondary school rather than primary school. However, the extent to which this takes place depends both on the supply of school places as well as families' ability to pay. The ratio of secondary school places relative to the number of primary school graduates varies enormously from country to country but is typically substantially less than one. . The costs of secondary school, which is rarely free, often include substantial fees as well as related expenses representing a substantial portion of family income. The timing of the transition to secondary school depends not only on the school structure which may vary from a typical system with 6 grades of primary school to alternative systems which have as few as 5 grades of primary (Egypt which has a preparatory level with 3 subsequent grades) to countries like Malawi and Kenya which have 8 grades of primary school but also on the timing of school entry and the extent of grade repetition during primary school.

While we can see a consistent decline in the percent of adolescents attending primary school by age, we see enormous variation across countries in the extent to which adolescents transition to secondary school or leave the formal schooling system (Charts 1 and 2). For example in South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Congo, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Cameroon more than half of boys and girls at age 15 are attending secondary school and therefore have been successful in their primary school leaving exams – an indicator that some basic levels of learning have been achieved. More typically a small minority of adolescents are attending secondary school at this age.

It is interesting to note that in a good number of countries (Egypt, Somalia, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Benin, Niger and Zimbabwe) the majority of 12 years old adolescents are still attending primary school (Table 2). In a similar number of countries (Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique, Burundi, and Guinea Bissau) the majority of 15 years old boys (more than 50%) are still in primary school. However in countries like Egypt, very few 12 or 15 years old are still attending primary school; most have progressed on to secondary school which begins earlier than most at grade 6 (over 80% of 12 years old and around 70% of the 15 years old; see Table 2). It is interesting to note that in most of East and Southern Africa (with the exception of South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe) the majority of adolescents attending school are still in primary school (Table 2). While the situation is different in many countries in Western and Central Africa, in that more are in secondary school than primary school, overall levels of enrollment are much lower because of the higher rates of dropout and never attendance.

Adolescents who remain in school are spread across many grades. If we focus on a particular age, such as age 12, this fact comes through very clearly (see Table 3 and Chart 3). In the majority of the countries the percent of 12 years old boys attending the appropriate grade for their age is less than 50%. Most are in grades below where they should be. Interesting, this is less true for girls than boys who tend to progress better than boys as long as they stay in school (in 28 countries for boys compared to 22 countries for girls; see Table 3). At age 15, only eight countries have 50% or more of the girls attending the appropriate grade for their age (5 for boys). At age 15, for example, female students are progressing better than male students in 30 of the 38 countries. In 6 countries (Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Eritrea, Benin and Rwanda) no differences are observed, while in Mauritania and in Chad, 15 years old boys are progressing better than girls (Table 3). To address the learning needs of adolescents will require not only alternative or complimentary programs for those out of school, but much more attention to early grade learning and starting school on time.

We have data on weekly attendance rates for adolescent students for only 12 countries. We measure the percent missing 2 or more days in the past school week. These rates do not show much gender difference and vary widely from a low of 1.4% in Cote d'Ivoire to as high as 21% in Guinea Bissau. Clearly high rates of absenteeism can be another factor affecting learning outcomes and progression rates.

## Discussion

To maximize the capabilities of the next generation and position them to seize the types of opportunities which the global economy will provide, appropriate and effective learning must be

supported and sustained during adolescence. The successes of the past 10 years in extending the reach of primary schooling to the majority of children everywhere has brought with it a new set of opportunities and challenges. The current generation of adolescents is more schooled than prior generations, entering adolescence with a range of learning outcomes and learning needs. This discussion guide provides an introduction to that diversity by first looking at the composition of the out-of-school population in terms of schooling background and learning outcomes and then looking at the distribution of adolescent students by age and sex in terms of levels and grades attained.

One conclusion that comes through very clearly in this data is narrowing of the gender gap. Indeed in many settings, we see girls progressing through school as well or better than boys and often attaining secondary school completion rates equal to those of boys. However, this is in a context of very low net school attendance rates. In many countries most adolescents, and in some cases almost all, lag behind grade for their age. Indeed in many countries, almost no adolescents complete secondary school with dropout rates in mid to late adolescence far exceeding secondary school progression rates. These points to the need for complimentary or alternative education programs designed to address the diverse learning needs of the current generation of adolescents. At the same time there is a the need for improved school quality to address the learning needs of adolescent students so they are able to progress steadily from grade to grade at the appropriate age by learning to read early and then reading to learn in order to build knowledge and critical thinking skills for adulthood.

## Tables

**TABLE 1. School Attendance (SA) and Net School Attendance (NSA) of 12 and 15 years old among boys and girls in Africa**

*Countries are sorted out from lowest to highest NSA for GIRLS*

Country	School attendance in any grade(SA)*		Net School Attendance (NSA)**	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Chad 2004				
12	59.2	39.5	12.6	4.9
15	54.0	38.6	7.8	3.2
Somalia 2006				
12	30.9	20.7	10.1	7.7
15	37.4	11.3	7.7	4.2
Guinea Bissau 2006				
12	69.7	64.6	10.8	8.1
15	62.1	60.4	5.9	3.7
Ethiopia 2005				
12	61.8	56.7	11.9	9.0
15	61.6	50.2	6.8	6.0
Mozambique 2003				
12	82.8	74.2	15.4	12.9
15	66.8	52.3	6.2	6.8
Niger 2006				
12	44.5	31.1	18.6	13.2
15	25.6	13.7	2.5	5.3
Madagascar 2003				
12	75.9	74.5	6.7	13.6
15	44.7	46.3	6.3	11.1
Burundi 2005				
12	73.6	68.7	15.5	13.8
15	55.2	39.2	3.7	3.7
Eritrea 2002				
12	84.5	73.5	18.9	15.5
15	84.2	80.1	10.6	9.1
Mauritania 2007				
12	63.2	61.8	22.7	16.3
15	45.6	46.0	15.5	12.5
CAR 2005				
12	72.9	53.2	19.5	17.3
15	53.5	30.3	5.6	6.4
Guinea 2005				
12	59.9	50.3	25.9	18.5
15	58.2	45.3	12.6	8.9
Tanzania 2004				
12	87.4	87.3	14.0	18.6
15	75.8	68.9	4.0	7.4

Burkina Faso 2006				
12	43.9	34.1	21.5	19.4
15	27.5	23.6	10.2	8.0
Morocco 2003				
12	93.2	87.4	21.3	19.5
15	87.5	78.6	15.5	17.7
Senegal 2005				
12	59.6	41.1	25.8	20.7
15	43.0	14.5	14.1	11.3
Rwanda 2005				
12	84.4	82.5	18.2	22.2
15	53.4	47.2	4.6	4.0
Cameroon 204				
12	88.7	82.5	28.0	26.0
15	73.9	65.1	20.2	27.1
Uganda 2006				
12	93.4	91.0	27.1	26.8
15	73.1	69.2	15.2	20.0
Malawi 2006				
12	88.7	90.5	20.2	27.7
15	74.9	65.6	8.9	14.6
Benin 2005				
12	74.2	59.3	35.7	28.0
15	68.5	50.1	22.8	16.5
Mali 2005				
12	51.5	41.6	37.0	31.7
15	48.5	31.0	26.3	17.6
Sierra Leone 2005				
12	76.1	64.1	21.3	34.1
15	75.0	47.4	1.4	3.4
Togo 2006				
12	84.2	71.9	38.4	37.3
15	75.9	62.8	30.8	29.4
Gambia 2006				
12	61.5	63.6	37.4	37.7
15	57.0	59.0	31.9	36.6
Sao Tome and Principe 2006				
12	85.6	90.3	42.3	41.1
15	58.0	57.2	12.8	14.5
Ghana 2006				
12	84.5	83.2	39.2	42.7
15	73.6	72.6	26.3	31.7
Congo 2005				
12	89.2	90.8	37.6	43.3
15	77.5	69.8	28.5	31.0
Kenya 2003				
12	90.9	86.9	38.8	43.4
15	77.7+B7	71.6	17.7	21.0

South Africa 1998				
12	96.9	99.3	30.1	47.5
15	98.7	98.0	30.2	41.9
Nigeria 2007				
12	70.5	67.0	50.9	47.7
15	58.6	64.6	33.5	42.6
Lesotho 2004				
12	85.7	94.6	29.6	49.2
15	63.5	71.7	13.3	26.2
Cote D'Ivoire 2006				
12	68.8	49.6	34.7	49.6
15	53.1	37.0	20.6	37.0
Zambia 2001/02				
12	81.5	75.3	47.7	51.4
15	71.0	48.9	15.2	16.0
Namibia 2000				
12	87.4	91.7	48.1	59.2
15	78.4	81.9	23.2	35.8
Swaziland 2006				
12	91.7	93.2	43.7	64.0
15	82.4	78.4	29.8	43.3
Zimbabwe 2006				
12	85.1	88.7	69.5	80.5
15	67.9	62.2	39.7	44.8
Egypt 2005				
12	91.8	87.0	88.5	85.2
15	78.3	70.3	70.1	66.7

\* SA or school attendance represents the percentage of children (12 or 15 years old) attending school at the time of the survey regardless of the grade attended.

\*\* NSA or net school attendance represents the percentage of children (12 or 15 years old) attending school at the time of the survey at the right grade for their age.

**Table 2A. Percentage of 12 or 15 years old African boys and girls attending primary education at the time of the survey**

*Countries are sorted out from lowest to highest percent of 12 years old GIRLS attending primary*

Country	12 years old		15 years old	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Egypt 2005	3.2	1.8	0.0	0.3
Somalia 2006	31.8	29.1	31.4	17.6
Chad 2004	45.4	29.5	21.4	9.2
Burkina Faso 2006	33.3	29.7	7.9	6.6
Mali 2005	39.8	30.5	11.0	7.7
Nigeria 2007	34.0	30.6	8.8	6.6
Benin 2005	39.4	32.1	10.8	7.6
Niger 2006	40.8	33.4	11.6	4.3
Cote D' Ivoire 2006	53.3	39.5	12.6	5.2
Senegal 2005	50.1	42.4	15.7	10.7
Zimbabwe 2006	49.2	47.9	8.5	4.3
Guinea 2005	57.7	47.9	36.5	28.0
Ethiopia 2005	54.9	51.7	35.0	29.4
CAR 2005	69.7	53.1	36.8	15.3
Togo 2006	59.2	53.6	24.5	15.4
Mauritania 2007	53.4	55.3	20.5	25.6
Cameroon 2005	60.9	56.7	22.2	10.6
Morocco 2003	62.4	58.5	8.4	4.6
Madagascar 2003	66.5	59.7	21.8	10.6
Ghana 2006	61.2	60.8	17.4	11.5
Congo 2005	66.3	64.4	19.2	11.4
Sierra Leone 2005	65.9	65.6	44.3	34.6
Zambia 2001/02	71.7	65.7	36.4	15.8
Eritrea 2002	79.8	66.9	41.5	35.3
Gambia 2006	65.4	67.7	24.0	19.1
Guinea Bissau 2006	73.7	70.0	57.3	57.1
Sao Tome & Principe 2006	67.8	70.6	12.8	10.0
Burundi 2005	75.1	70.6	53.2	36.7
Mozambique 2003	80.7	71.5	51.8	38.5
Namibia 2000	79.0	76.9	38.2	24.4
Malawi 2006	78.6	77.6	41.3	29.1
Swaziland 2006	85.4	79.5	41.2	19.1
South Africa 1998	79.7	79.8	27.1	12.3
Rwanda 2005	82.4	80.8	46.0	40.5
Lesotho 2004	80.2	81.5	39.2	31.4
Kenya 2003	89.3	84.2	57.7	49.9
Tanzania 2004	85.9	86.0	60.5	42.9
Uganda 2006	90.6	87.8	56.2	47.6

**Table 2. Percentage of 12 or 15 years old African boys and girls attending secondary education at the time of the survey**

*Countries are sorted out from lowest to highest percent of 15 years old GIRLS attending secondary*

Country	12 years old		15 years old	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Burundi 2005	0.3	0.7	5.7	4.6
Somalia 2006	0.6	0.3	8.8	4.6
Guinea Bissau 2006	0.6	0.3	8.7	5.8
Rwanda 2005	1.1	1.0	7.6	6.5
Tanzania 2004	0.0	0.1	6.3	10.5
Chad 2004	11.4	4.8	24.0	12.2
Mozambique 2003	1.4	1.7	13.9	12.9
Sierra Leone 2005	10.6	9.8	20.2	13.0
CAR 2005	5.2	2.0	19.0	17.1
Guinea 2005	2.9	2.3	21.7	18.0
Burkina Faso 2006	10.6	4.5	19.7	18.3
Niger 2006	6.8	5.0	20.0	18.4
Mauritania 2007	11.9	8.0	27.5	21.2
Ethiopia 2005	7.1	5.6	27.1	21.3
Senegal 2005	9.6	7.1	28.0	21.8
Kenya 2004	1.0	1.5	19.5	22.2
Mali 2005	11.3	11.1	36.3	23.3
Eritrea 2003	3.2	4.3	29.7	26.2
Uganda 2006	3.9	4.2	26.3	30.8
Zambia 2001/02	7.8	9.7	32.6	32.4
Cote D' Ivoire 2006	16.6	10.7	42.0	33.8
Madagascar 2003	8.9	15.3	22.1	35.5
Malawi 2006	10.5	13.3	33.8	37.1
Lesotho 2004	4.9	12.9	22.5	38.2
Benin 2005	33.7	26.1	57.8	41.9
Gambia 2006	6.3	5.7	42.5	45.0
Morocco 2003	20.6	18.5	51.3	46.0
Sao Tome & Principe 2006	17.8	19.7	45.2	47.2
Togo 2006	25.6	18.5	53.9	47.7
Cameroon 2005	28.5	26.1	53.4	55.6
Namibia 2000	7.2	14.2	37.8	56.4
Zimbabwe 2006	36.9	41.2	59.7	58.6
Swaziland 2006	6.6	14.0	41.7	59.7
Congo 2005	24.6	27.3	58.0	61.3
Ghana 2006	23.6	23.2	57.0	64.4
Nigeria 2007	37.6	37.0	59.3	67.5
Egypt 2005	88.8	85.4	78.2	69.9
South Africa 1998	12.3	16.0	66.8	77.8

**Table 3. Percent of 12 and 15 years old students attending a grade that is appropriate for their age**  
**Countries are sorted out from lowest to highest percent of 15 years old GIRLS at appropriate grade for age**

Country	Percent of 12 years old students at grade appropriate for age		Percent of 15 years old students at grade appropriate for age	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Guinea Bissau 2006	15.5	12.5	9.5	6.1
Sierra Leone 2005	28.1	53.3	1.8	7.1
Chad 2004	21.3	12.3	14.5	8.2
Rwanda 2005	21.6	26.9	8.7	8.4
Burundi 2005	21.0	20.2	6.7	9.4
Tanzania 2004	16.0	21.4	5.2	10.6
Eritrea 2002	22.4	21.1	12.6	11.3
Ethiopia 2005	19.3	15.9	11.1	12.0
Mozambique	18.6	17.4	9.3	12.9
Guinea 2005	43.2	36.9	21.6	19.5
CAR 2005	26.7	32.5	10.4	21.2
Malawi 2006	22.8	30.6	11.8	22.3
Morocco 2003	22.9	22.3	17.7	22.5
Madagascar 2003	8.8	18.2	14.0	23.9
Sao Tome and Principe 2006	49.4	45.5	22.0	25.4
Mauritania	35.9	26.3	34.1	27.2
Uganda 2006	29.0	29.5	20.8	28.9
Kenya 2003	42.8	50.0	22.8	29.3
Zambia 2001/02	58.6	68.3	21.4	32.6
Benin 2005	48.1	47.2	33.3	32.8
Burkina Faso 2006	49.0	56.9	36.9	33.8
Lesotho 2004	34.6	52.0	21.0	36.6
Somalia 2006	32.6	37.3	20.5	36.9
Niger 2006	41.7	42.4	9.7	38.4
Cameron 2004	31.5	31.5	27.3	41.6
South Africa 1998	31.1	47.8	30.6	42.8
Ghana 2006	46.4	51.4	35.7	43.7
Namibia 2000	55.0	64.6	29.7	43.7
Congo 2005	42.1	47.7	36.8	44.4
Togo 2006	45.6	51.9	40.6	46.8
Swaziland 2006	47.7	68.7	36.1	55.2
Mali 2005	71.7	76.2	54.3	56.8
Cote D'Ivoire 2006	50.4	48.2	38.7	57.3
Gambia 2006	60.9	59.2	55.9	62.1
Nigeria 2007	72.2	71.2	57.1	65.8
Zimbabwe 2006	81.6	90.7	58.5	72.1
Senegal 2005	43.3	50.3	32.8	78.0
Egypt 2005	96.4	97.9	89.5	94.9

\* SA or school attendance represents the percentage of children (12 or 15 years old) attending school at the time of the survey regardless of the grade attended.

\*\* NSA or net school attendance represents the percentage of children (12 or 15 years old) attending school at the time of the survey at the right grade for their age. NSA is calculated by adding the percentages

of school attendance corresponding to the grade before the one to which the student should be attending and above. In the case of Malawi, 12 years old should be in the first grade of secondary, thus the NSA is the sum of the percentages from P6 and above (S3 and above for the 15 years old).

Table 4

**Table 4. Percentage of African 10-19 years old missing 2 or more school days in week before the survey**

*Countries are sorted out from lowest to highest percent of 10-19 years old Female*

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Cote D' Ivoire 2006	1.4	1.5
Sierra Leone 2005	4.8	4.9
Sao Tome and Principe 2006	5.2	5.0
Burkina Faso 2006	8.4	7.5
Nigeria 2007	7.3	7.6
Gambia 2006	8.8	8.6
Togo 2006	9.8	8.8
Cameroon 2005	10.0	11.0
Burundi 2005	8.7	11.3
CAR 2005	15.4	13.7
Malawi 2006	14.5	14.6
Guinea Bissau 2006	20.9	19.1

Table 5

**Table 5. Percent of 19 years old boys and girls with secondary education completed**  
*Countries are sorted out from lowest to highest percent of 19 years old GIRLS*

Country	Percent of 19 years old with secondary education completed	
	Boys	Girls
Niger 2006	0.9	0.0
Tanzania 2004	0.0	0.0
Mozambique 2003	0.2	0.3
Chad 2004	1.7	0.4
Guinea 2005	0.0	0.9
Mali 2005	1.8	0.9
Rwanda 2005	0.4	1.0
Benin 2005	5.4	1.5
Zimbabwe 2006	2.8	1.5
Somalia 2006	4.2	2.2
Burundi 2005	1.7	2.2
Namibia 2000	12.2	2.5
Ethiopia 2005	2.9	2.7
Swaziland 2006	4.8	2.7
Senegal 2005	3.0	2.8
Zambia 2001/02	2.4	3.7
Congo 2005	3.3	4.2
Guinea Bissau 2006	5.1	4.3
Uganda 2006	5.2	4.7
Lesotho 2004	2.6	5.5
Madagascar 2003	3.3	5.7
Mauritania 2007	12.7	6.2
Morocco 2003	8.0	8.3
Eritrea 2002	13.5	8.9
Burkina Faso 2006	4.1	8.9
CAR 2005	11.9	9.2
Cote D'Ivoire 2006	10.3	9.3
Sierra Leone 2005	12.5	10.3
Malawi 2006	11.1	13.9
Sao Tome & Principe 2006	16.2	17.2
Cameroon 2005	13.2	18.3
Togo 2006	19.7	18.8
Nigeria 2007	25.6	21.1
Kenya 2003	20.5	21.9
Gambia 2006	16.0	22.3
South Africa 1998	23.3	30.5
Ghana 2006	38.9	42.3
Egypt 2005	67.5	61.8

# COUNTRY PROFILES

## Ethiopia 2006

### **The school system:**

- Ethiopia has 6 grades of primary schooling and a recommended starting age of 7 , so ideally by the age of 12 a student would be completing grade 5.
- There are no legal guarantees of free education (UNESCO 2008).

### **At the beginning of adolescence:**

- By the age of 10, a little less than 60 % are reported to be attending school, attendance is slightly lower for girls than boys (See Chart 1).
- In rural areas, girls and boys are equally likely to be attending school with attendance a little over 50%; attendance among urban boys is nearly universal and less than 90% for urban girls (see Chart 2).

### **Age 12 is typically the earliest age of puberty, an age when boys and girls often begin to follow different paths. At age 12:**

- 55% of boys and 52% of girls are attending primary school; 6% of boys and 6% of girls have already started secondary school (see Table 1).
- The net attendance rate is 12% for boys, 9% for girls (the percent of all 12 year olds who are in school and attending a grade appropriate for their age) (see Table 2).
- 19% of male students and 16% of female students are at or better than grade level (see Table 3).
- 41% of boys and 39% of girls can be found in grade 4 or below (see Chart 3).

### **Adolescence at age 15 in mid-course:**

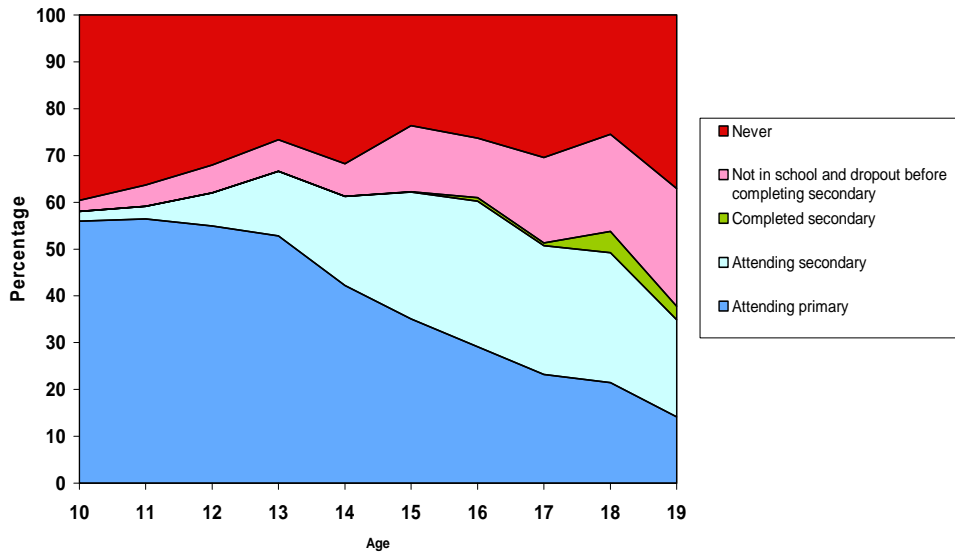
- 35 % of boys and 29 % percent of girls are still attending primary school; 27 % of boys and 21 % of girls are attending secondary school (see Table 1).
- Among out-of-school adolescents, 38% of boys and 22% of girls have been to school.
- The net attendance rate is 7% for boys and 6% for girls (see Table 2).
- 11% of male students and 12% of female students are reported to be at or better than grade level (see Table 3).

### **Adolescent Youth (15-19):**

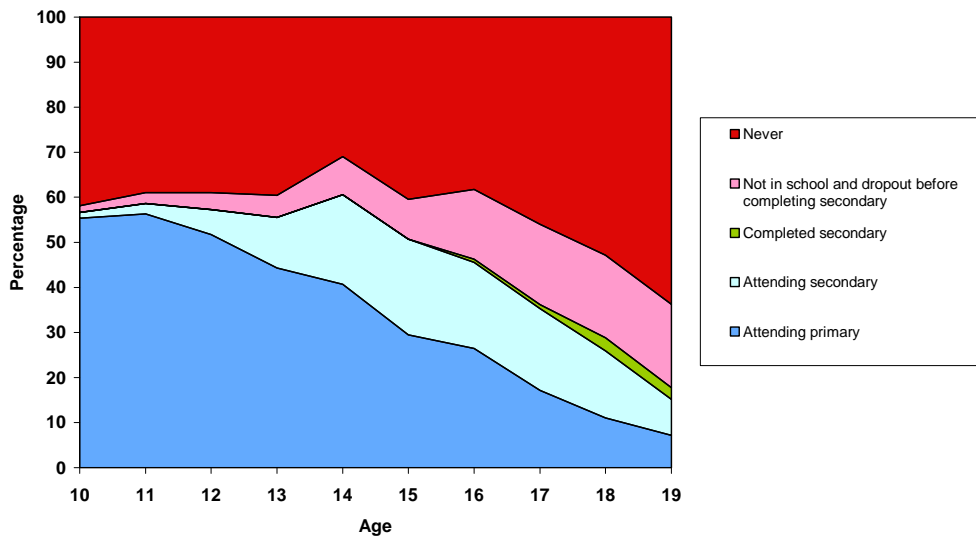
- Among older adolescents (15-19), a greater percent of out-of-school girls than out-of-school boys have never been school (see Chart 1)
- No adolescents complete secondary school in rural areas; At age 19, about 10 percent of girls and 12 percent of boys have completed secondary school. (chart 1)
- Among older adolescent girls who did not complete primary school, 16% of those dropping out after grade 3 and 3% of those dropping out after grade 5 lack basic literacy (ability to read a simple sentence) (see Chart 4).

# ETHIOPIA 2006

School participation of BOYS 10-19 years of age in Ethiopia. 2006 MICS

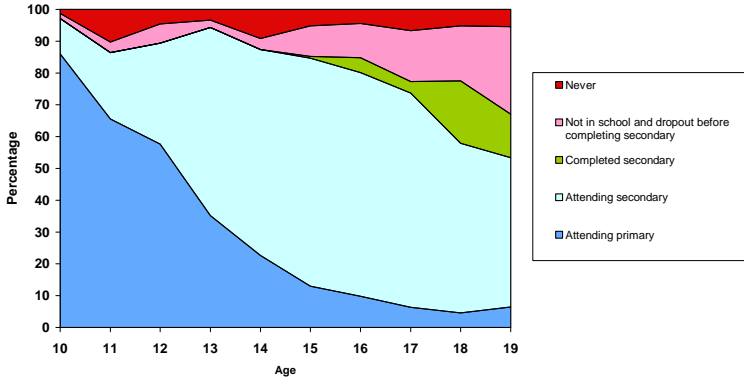


School participation of GIRLS 10-19 years old. Ethiopia, 2006 MICS

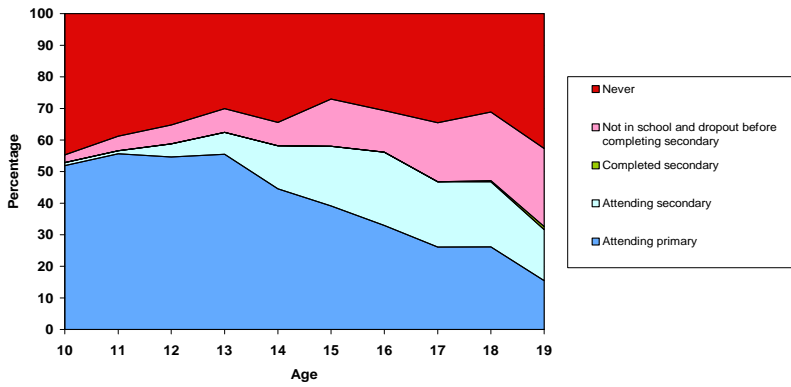


# ETHIOPIA MICS 2006

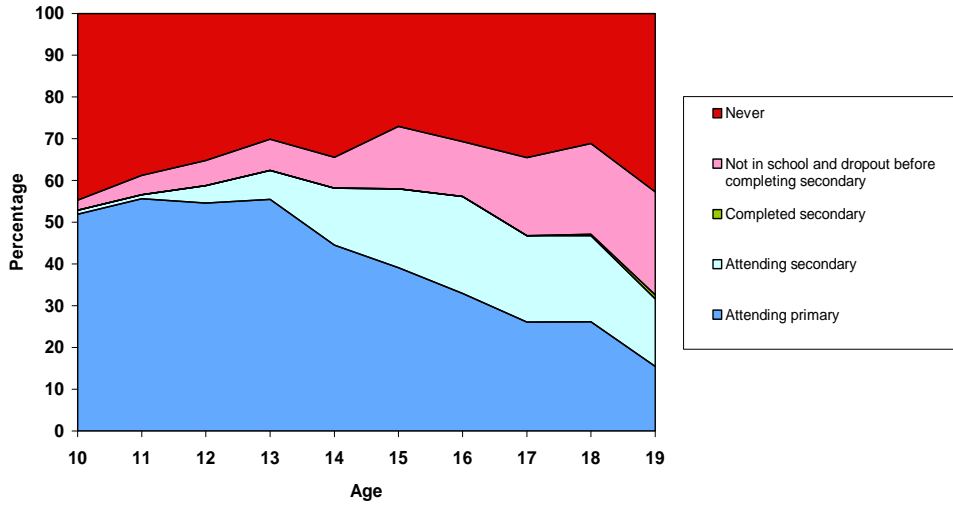
School participation URBAN-BOYS 10-19 years old. Ethiopia, 2006 MICS



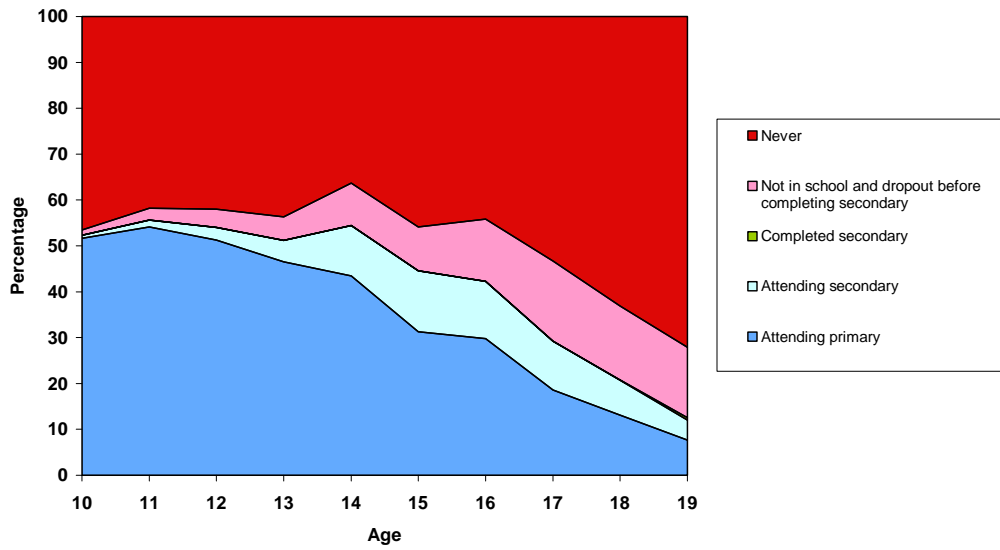
School participation RURAL-BOYS 10-19 years old. Ethiopia, 2006 MICS



School participation RURAL-BOYS 10-19 years old. Ethiopia, 2006 MICS

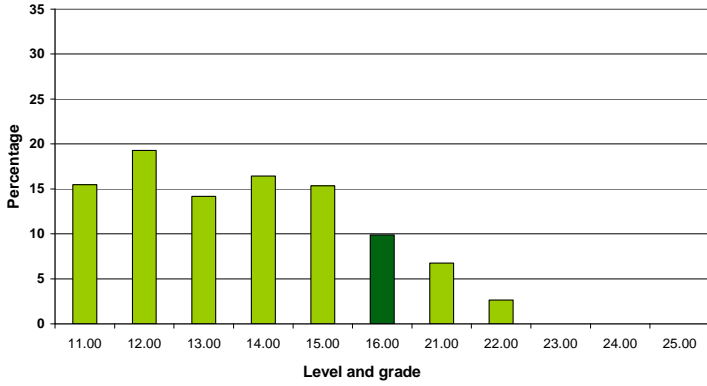


School participation RURAL-GIRLS 10-19 years old. Ethiopia, 2006

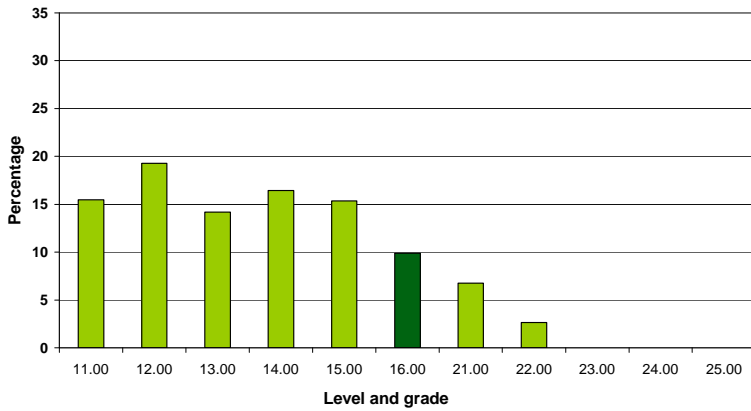


### Chart 3- grade distribution of adolescents age 12 (from country specific charts)

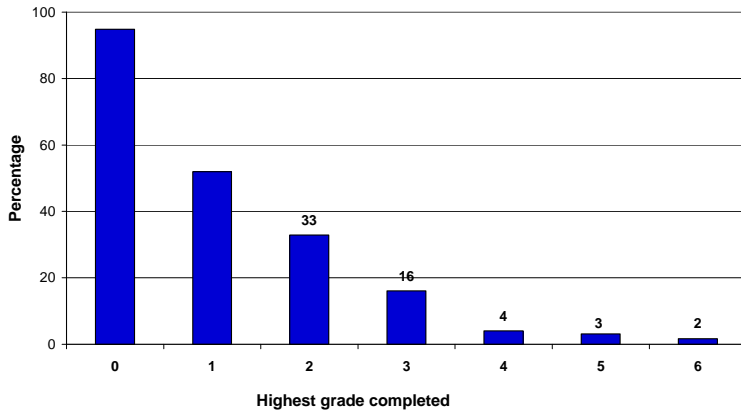
12 years old BOYS according to school participation. Ethiopia 2006 MICS



12 years old BOYS according to school participation. Ethiopia 2006 MICS



Proportion of girls/women 15-19 with less than secondary who are ILLITERATE according to highest grade completed. Ethiopia 2006 MICS



## Congo 2005

### **The school system:**

- Congo has 6 grades of primary schooling and a recommended starting age of 6. By the age of 12, a student who started school on time should be completing grade 6.
- There is no legal guarantee of free education (UNESCO 2008).

### **At the beginning of adolescence:**

- By the age of 10, 96% of boys and 93% of girls are attending school (See Chart 1).
- In rural areas, school attendance rates are high: 93% of boys and 89% of girls (see Chart 2).

### **Age 12 is typically the earliest age of puberty - an age when boys and girls often begin to follow different paths. At age 12:**

- 66% of boys and 64% of girls are attending primary school; 25% of boys and 27% of girls have already started secondary school (see Table 1).
- The net attendance rate is 38% for boys, 43% for girls (the percent who are in school and attending a grade appropriate for their age) (see Table 2).
- 42% of male students and 48% of female students are at or better than grade level (see Table 3).
- 32% of boys and 24% of girls can be found in grade 4 or below (see Chart 3).

### **Adolescence at age 15 in mid-course:**

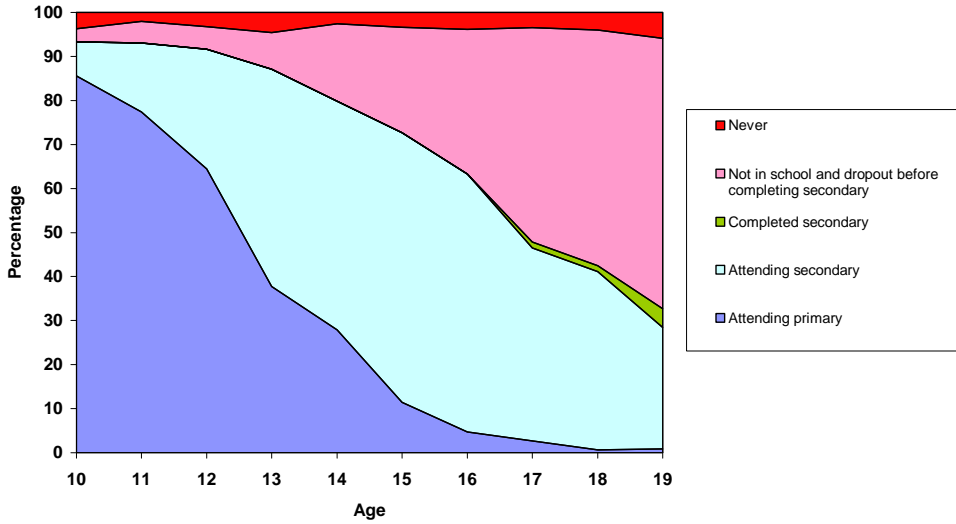
- 19 % of boys and 11 % percent of girls are still attending primary school; 58 % of boys and 61 % of girls are attending secondary school (see Table 1).
- The net attendance rate is 29% for boys and 31% for girls (see Table 2).
- Among out of school adolescents, 91% of boys and 88% of girls have attended some school.
- 37% of male students and 44% of female students are reported to be at or better than grade level (see Table 3).

### **Adolescent Youth (15-19):**

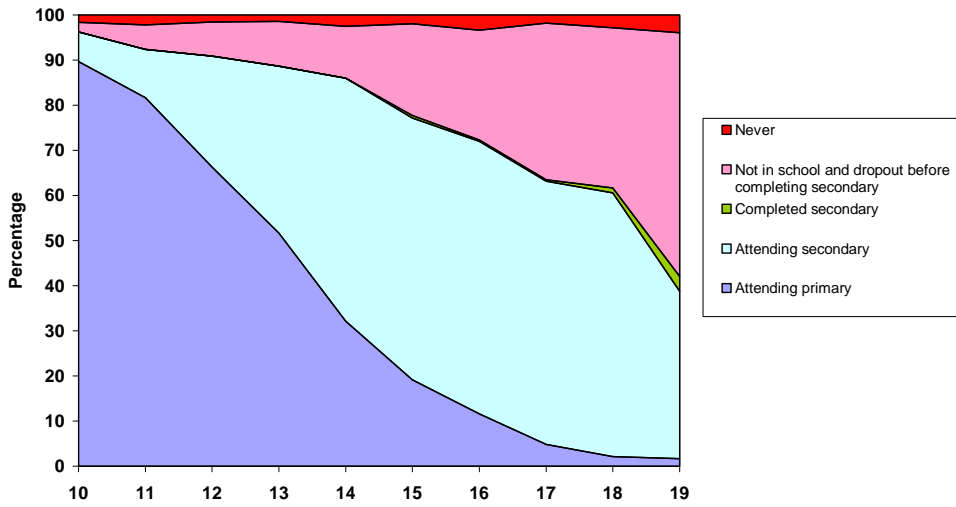
- Among older adolescents (15-19), only a small percent have never been to school (see Chart 1)
- Among those aged 19, 3% of boys and 4% of girls have completed secondary school (chart 1)  
Among older adolescent girls who dropped out before completing primary school, 70% of those dropping out after grade 3 and 31% of those dropping out after grade 5 lack basic literacy (ability to read a simple sentence) (see Chart 4)

# CONGO MICS 2005

School participation of GIRLS 10-19 years old. Congo 2005 MICS

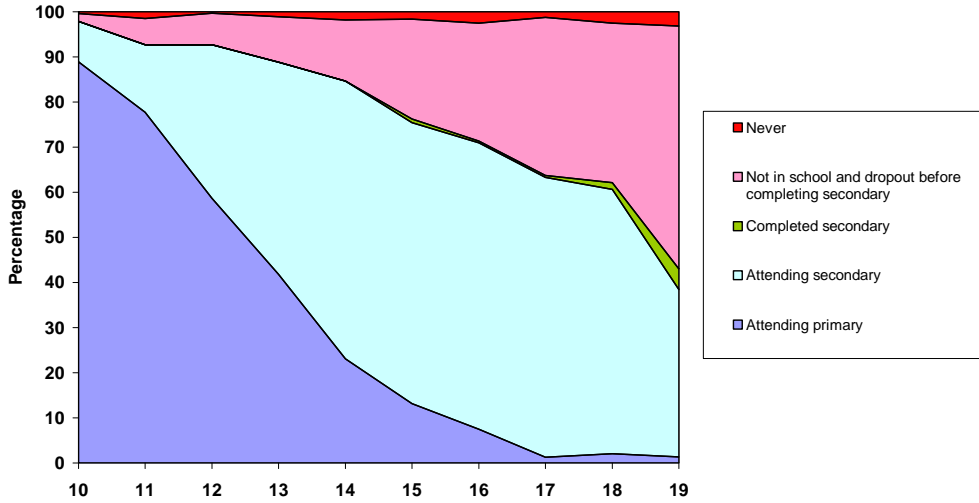


School participation of BOYS 10-19 years of age in Congo 2005 MICS

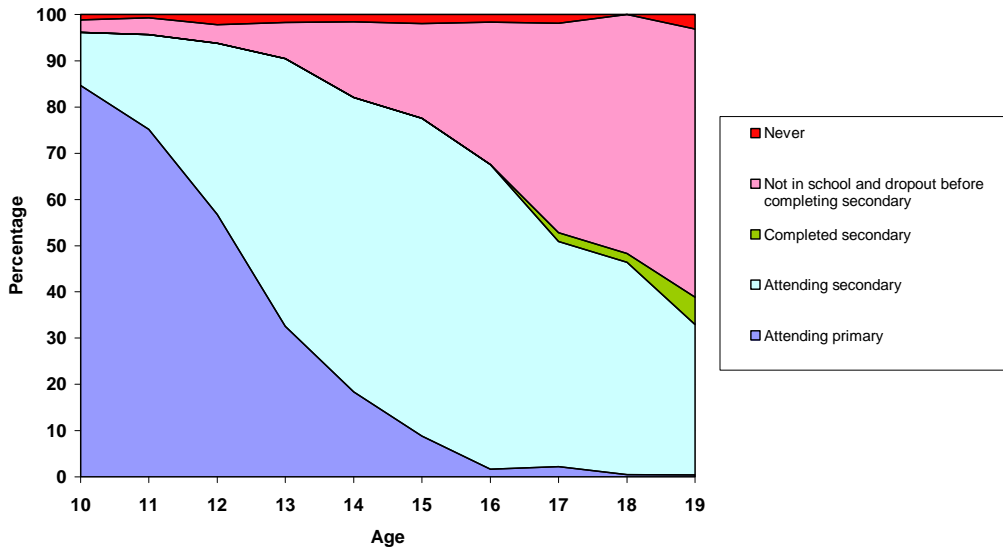


# CONGO MICS 2005

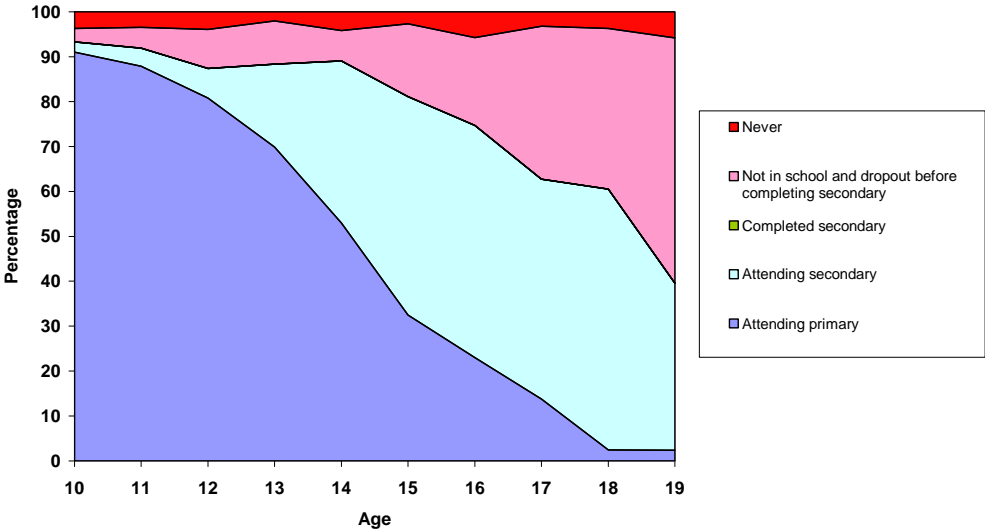
School participation URBAN-BOYS 10-19 years old. Congo 2005 MICS



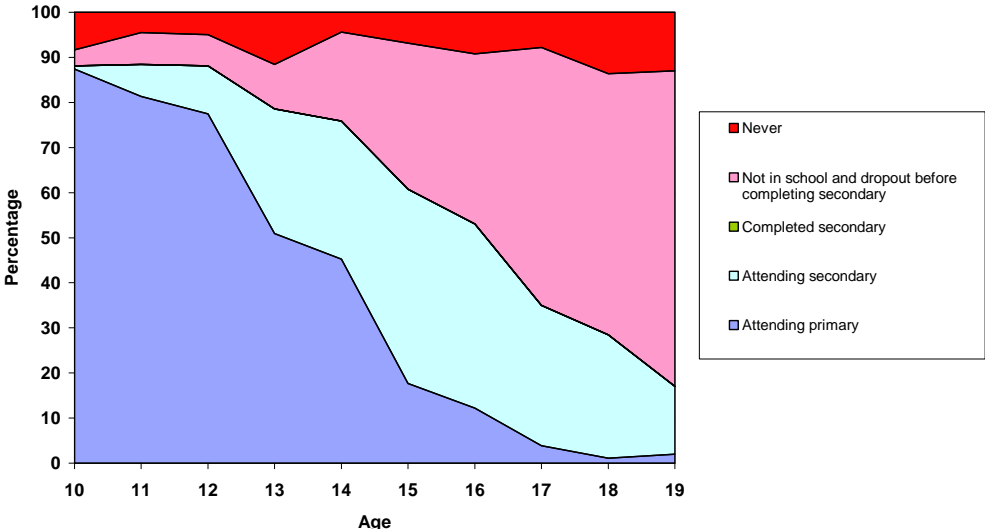
School participation URBAN-GIRLS 10-19 years old. Congo 2005



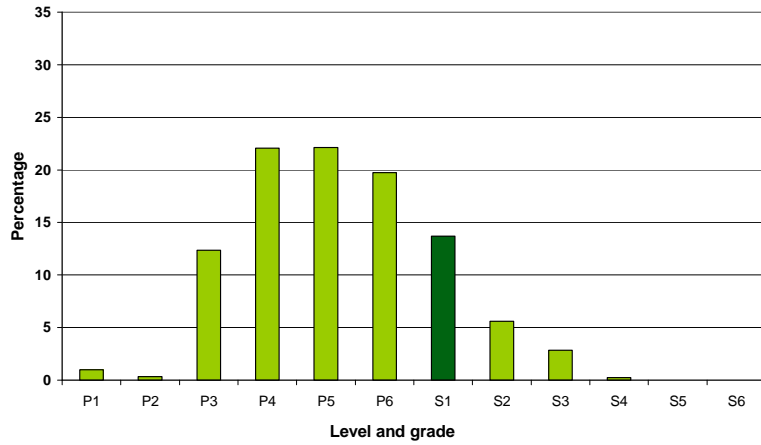
School participation RURAL-BOYS 10-19 years old. Congo 2005 MICS



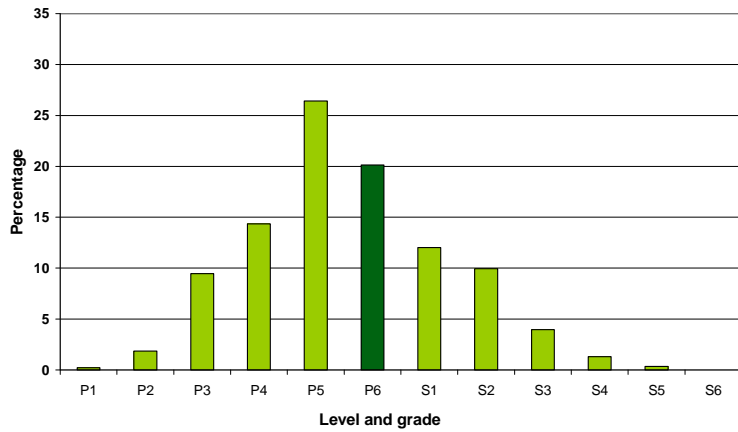
School participation RURAL-GIRLS 10-19 years old. Congo 2005



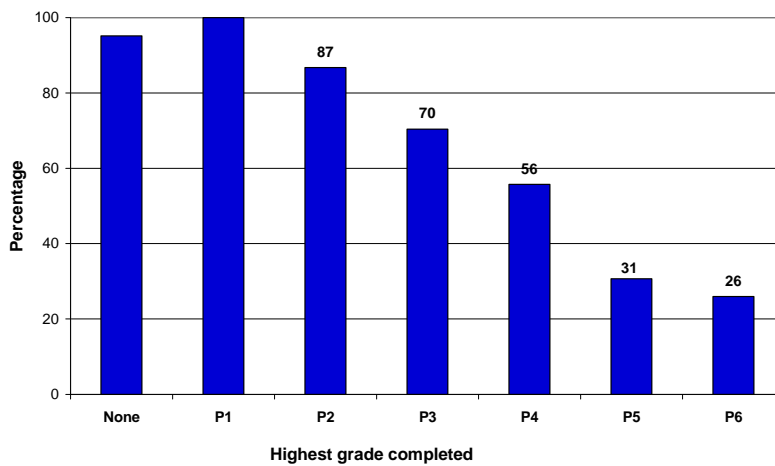
12 years old BOYS according to school participation. Congo 2005 MICS



12 years old GIRLS according to school participation. Congo 2005 MICS



Proportion of girls/women 15-19 with less than secondary who are ILLITERATE according to highest grade completed. Congo 2005 MICS



## Malawi 2006

### **The school system:**

- Malawi has 8 grades of primary schooling and a recommended starting age of 6. By the age of 12, a student who started school on time should be completing grade 5 and by the age of 14 a student should be completing primary school.
- Primary school fees were abolished in 1994.
- 

### **At the beginning of adolescence:**

- By the age of 10, 93% of both boys and girls are reported to be attending school (See Chart 1).
- By age 10, some students in urban areas are reported to be attending secondary school. (see Chart 1).

### **Age 12 is typically the earliest age of puberty - an age when boys and girls often begin to follow different paths. At age 12:**

- 79% of boys and 78% of girls are attending primary school; 2% of boys and 13% of girls have already started secondary school (see Table 1).
- The net attendance rate is 20% for boys, 28% for girls (the percent of all 12 year olds who are in school and attending a grade appropriate for their age) (see Table 2).
- 23% of male students and 31% of female students are at or better than grade level (see Table 3).
- 49% of boys and 46% of girls can be found in grade 4 or below (see Chart 3).

### **Adolescence at age 15 in mid-course:**

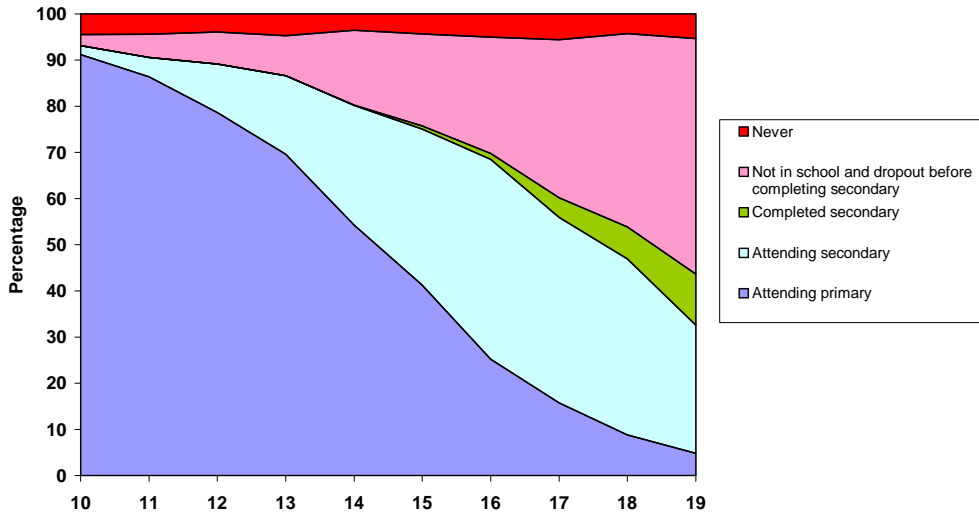
- 41 % of boys and 29 % percent of girls are still attending primary school; 34 % of boys and 37 % of girls are attending secondary school (see Table 2).
- The net attendance rate is 9% for boys and 15% for girls (see Table 2).
- Among out of school adolescents, 82 % of boys and 84 % of girls have attended some school.
- 12% of male students and 22% of female students are reported to be at or better than grade level (see Table 3).
- 15% of students missed 2 or more days of school in the week before the survey (see Table 4)

### **Adolescent Youth (15-19):**

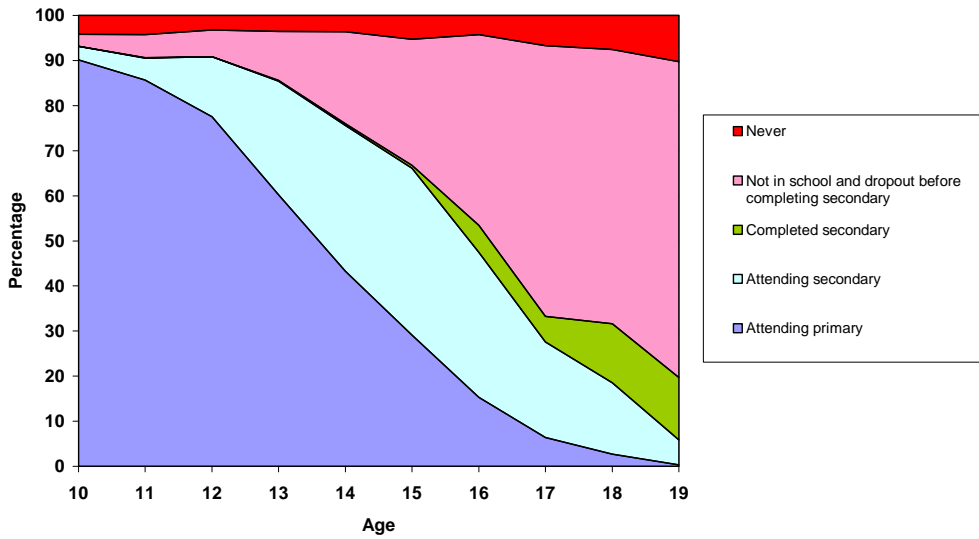
- Among older adolescents (15-19), a greater percent of girls than boys are no longer in school because of higher dropout rates for girls (see Chart 1)
- Among those aged 19, 14% of girls and 16% of boys have completed secondary school (chart 1)  
Among older adolescent girls who dropped out before completing primary school, 49% of those dropping out after grade 3 and 9% of those dropping out after grade 5 lack basic literacy (ability to read a simple sentence) (see Chart 4).

# MALAWI MICS 2005

School participation of BOYS 10-19 years of age in Malawi 2006 MICS

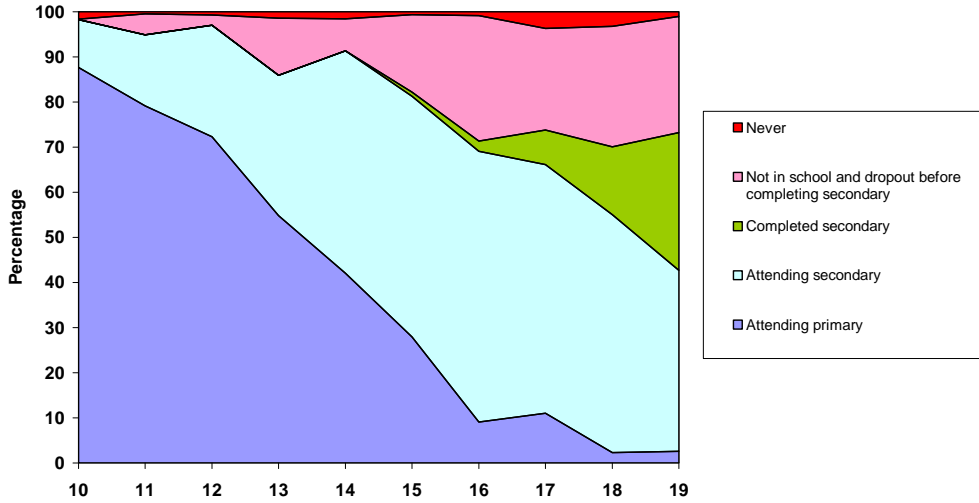


School participation of GIRLS 10-19 years old. Malawi 2006 MICS

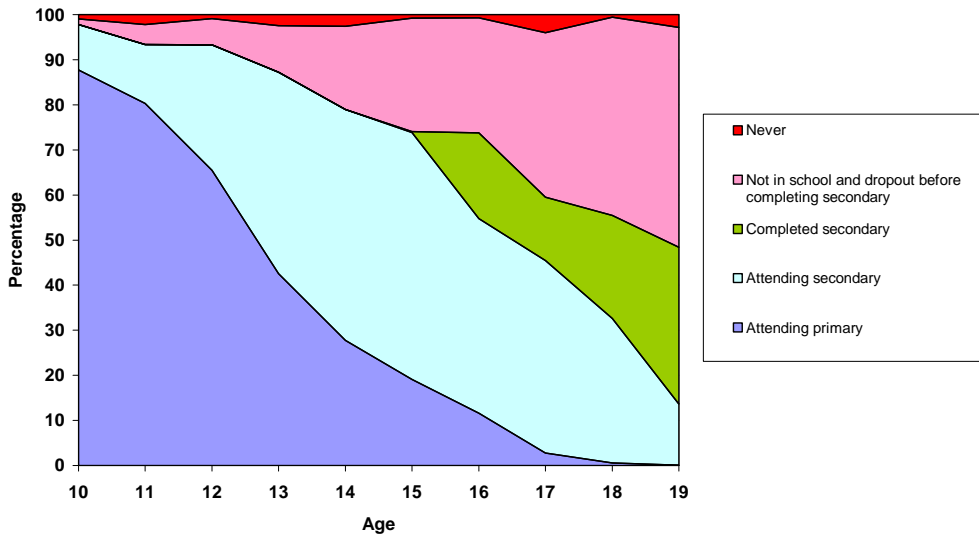


# MALAWI MICS 2006

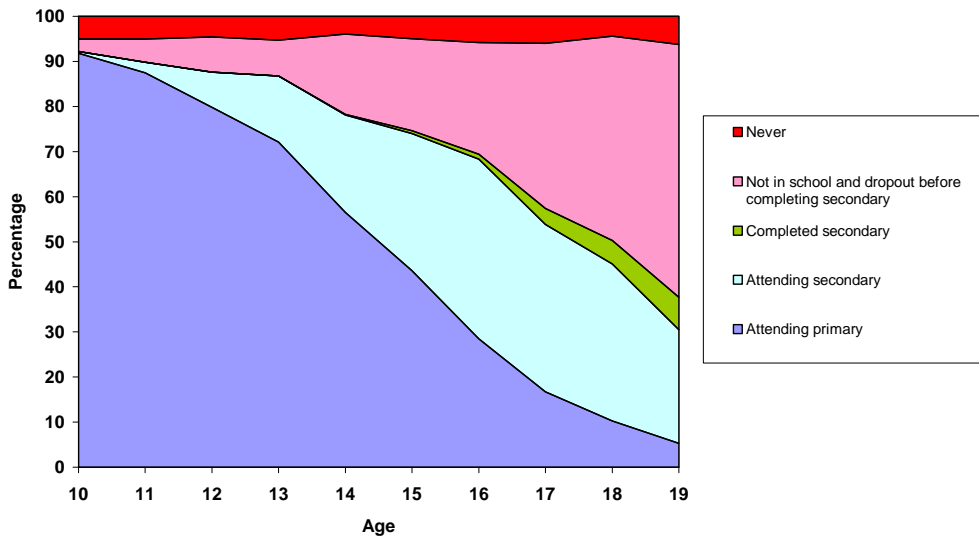
School participation URBAN-BOYS 10-19 years old. Malawi 2006 MICS



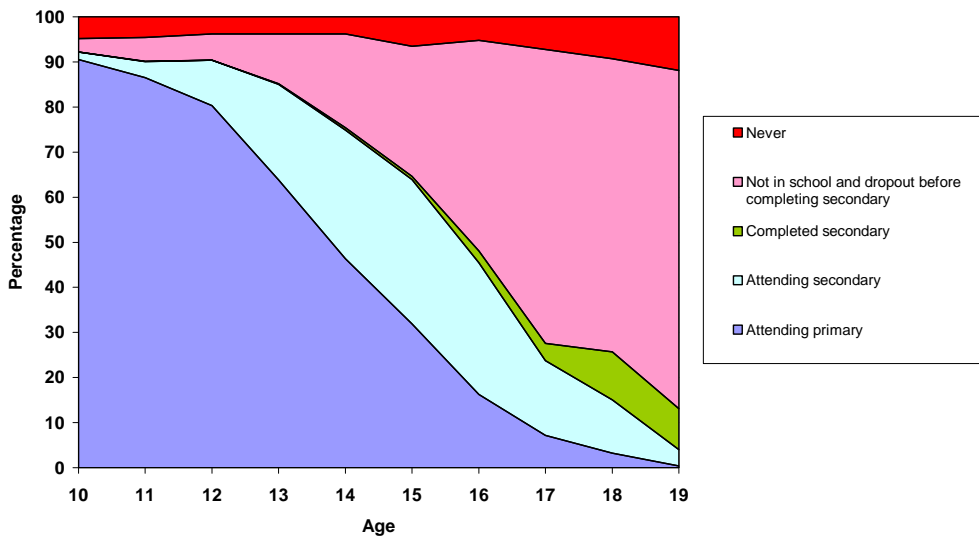
School participation URBAN-GIRLS 10-19 years old. Malawi 2006



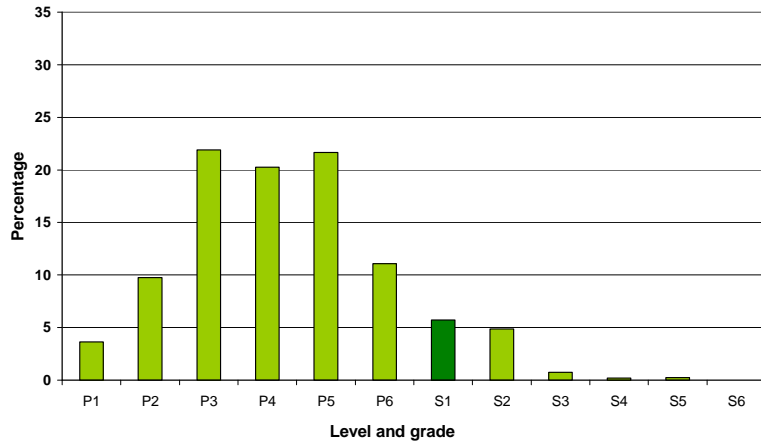
School participation RURAL-BOYS 10-19 years old. Malawi 2006 MICS



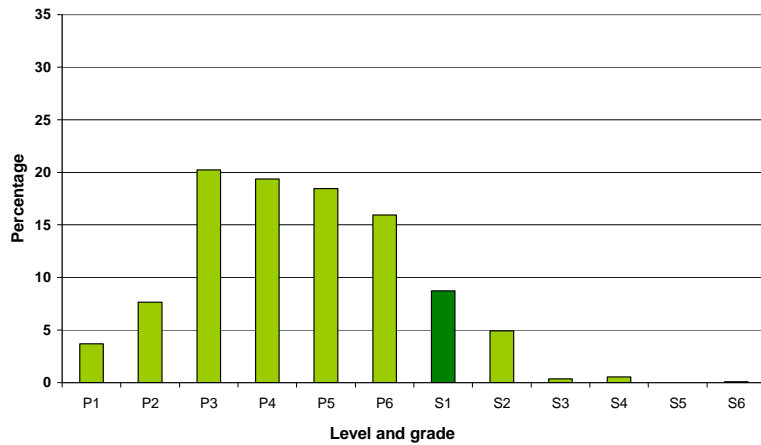
School participation RURAL-GIRLS 10-19 years old. Malawi 2006



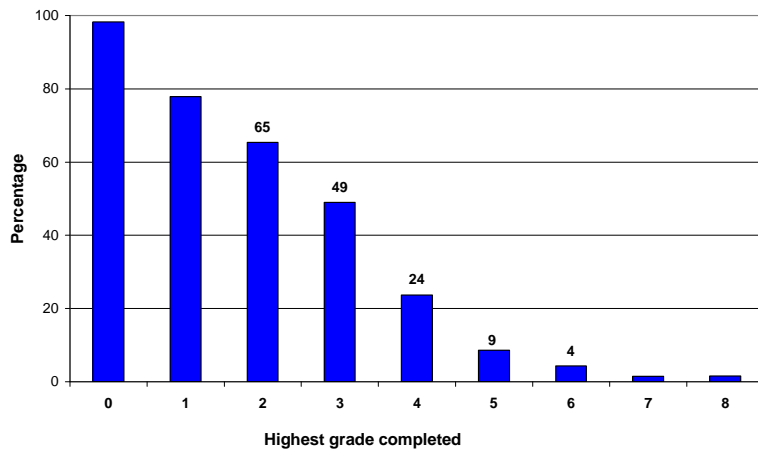
12 years old BOYS according to school participation. Malawi 2006 MICS



12 years old GIRLS according to school participation. Malawi 2006 MICS



Proportion of girls/women 15-19 with less than secondary who are ILLITERATE according to highest grade completed. Malawi 2006 MICS



## Ghana -2006

### **The school system:**

- Ghana has 6 grades of primary school and 3 grades of junior secondary school which together constitute basic education. The recommended starting age is 6 for primary school, so ideally by the age of 12 a student would be completing grade 6.
- Primary school fees removed since Dakar (UNESCO 2008).

### **At the beginning of adolescence:**

- By the age of 10, nearly 90% are reported to be attending school, attendance rates are roughly the same for boys than girls (see Chart 1)
- Of those out of school at age 10, a higher percent of boys than girls had previously attended school and subsequently dropped out (see Chart 1)
- In rural areas, girls are less likely to be attending school than boys; school attendance is near universal for boys and girls urban areas (see Chart 2)

### **Age 12 is typically the earliest age of puberty, an age when boys and girls often begin to follow different paths, At age 12:**

- 61% of boys and girls are attending primary school; 24% of boys and 23% of girls have already started secondary school (see Table 1).
- The net attendance rate is 39% for boys, 43% for girls (the percent of all 12 year olds who are in school and attending a grade appropriate for their age) (see Table 2).
- 46% of male students and 51% of female students are at or better than grade level (see Table 3).
- 45% of boys and 41 percent of girls are attending grade 5 or below (see Chart 3)

### **Adolescence at age 15 in mid-course:**

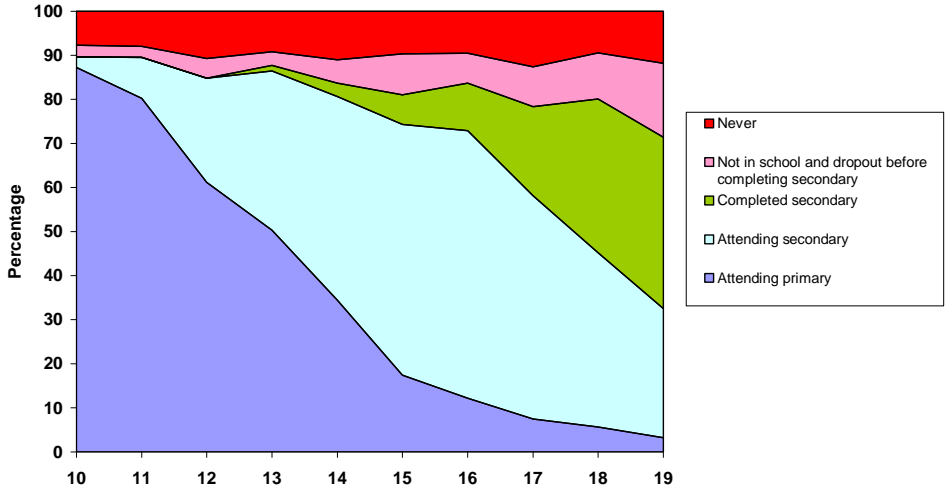
- 17 % of boys and 12 % percent of girls are still attending primary school; 57 % of boys and 64 % of girls are attending secondary school (See Table 1).
- Among out-of-school adolescents, 58% of boys and 63% of girls have been to school
- The net attendance rate is 26% for boys and 32% for girls. (see Table 2)
- 36% of male students and 44% of female students are reported to be at or better than grade level (see Table 3)

### **Adolescent Youth (15-19):**

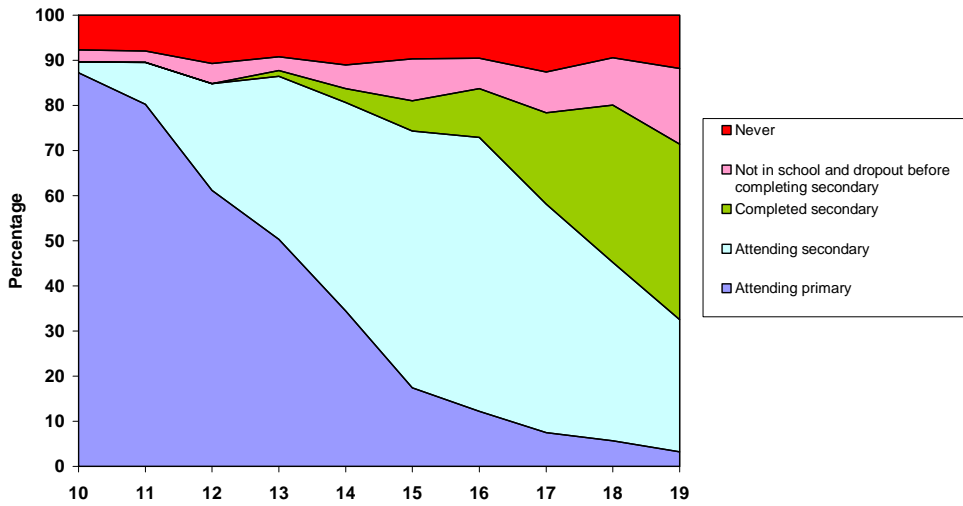
- Among older adolescents (15-19), about half the out-of-school population has attended school but dropped out before secondary school completion. While the percent of older adolescents who are no longer attending school in rural areas is much greater, a substantial percent have had some schooling (see Chart 1)
- At age 19, 39% of boys and 42% of girls have completed secondary school (Chart 1).
- Among older adolescent girls who dropped out before completing primary school, 93% of those dropping out after grade 3 and 50% of those dropping out after grade 5 lack basic literacy (ability to read a simple sentence) (see Chart 4).

## GHANA MICS 2006

School participation of BOYS 10-19 years of age in Ghana, 2006 MICS

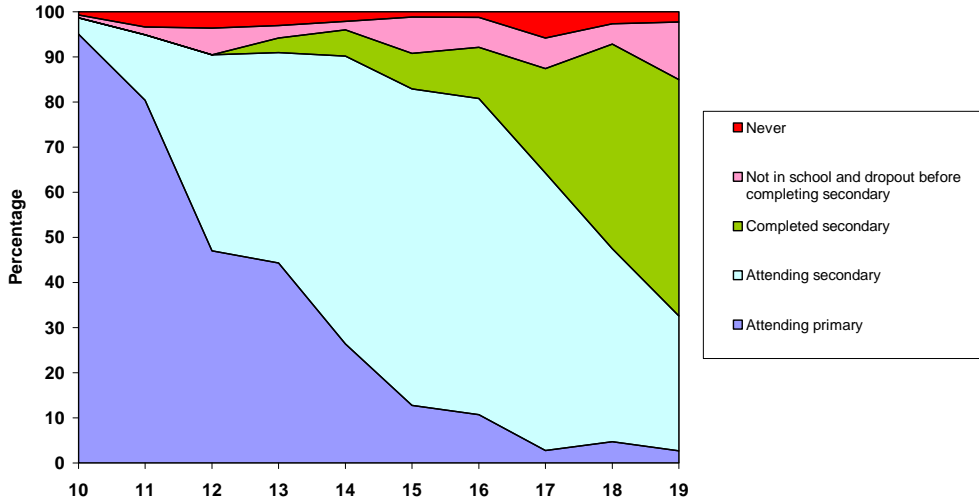


School participation of BOYS 10-19 years of age in Ghana, 2006 MICS

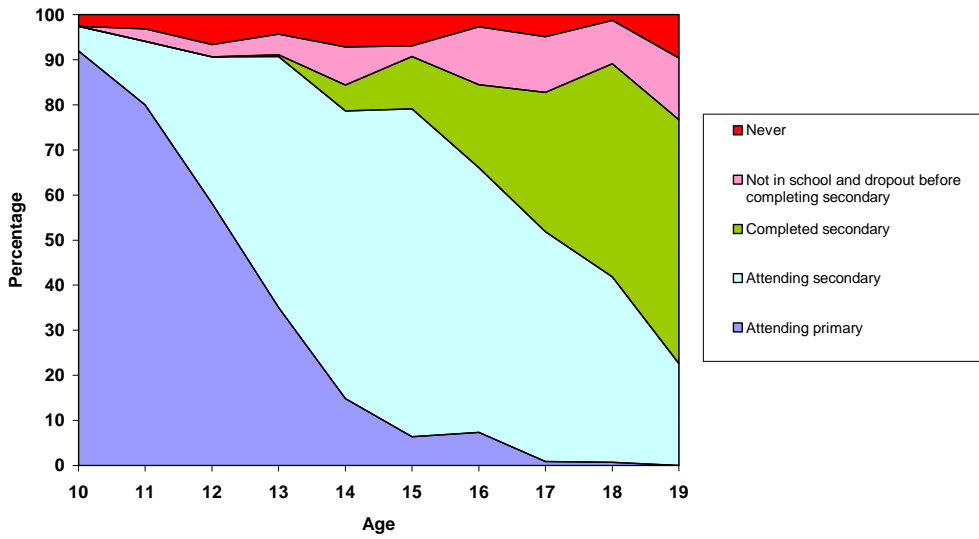


# GHANA MICS 2006

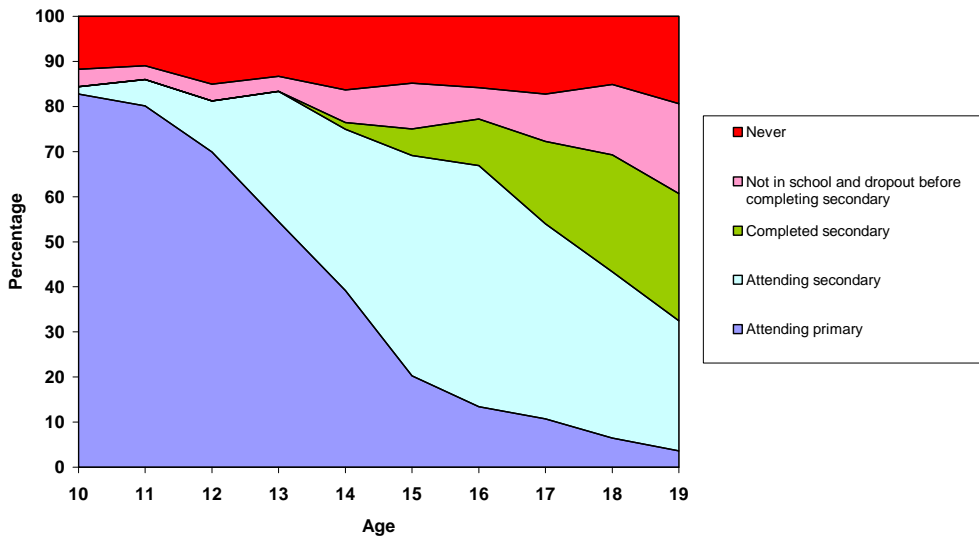
School participation URBAN-BOYS 10-19 years old. Ghana, 2006 MICS



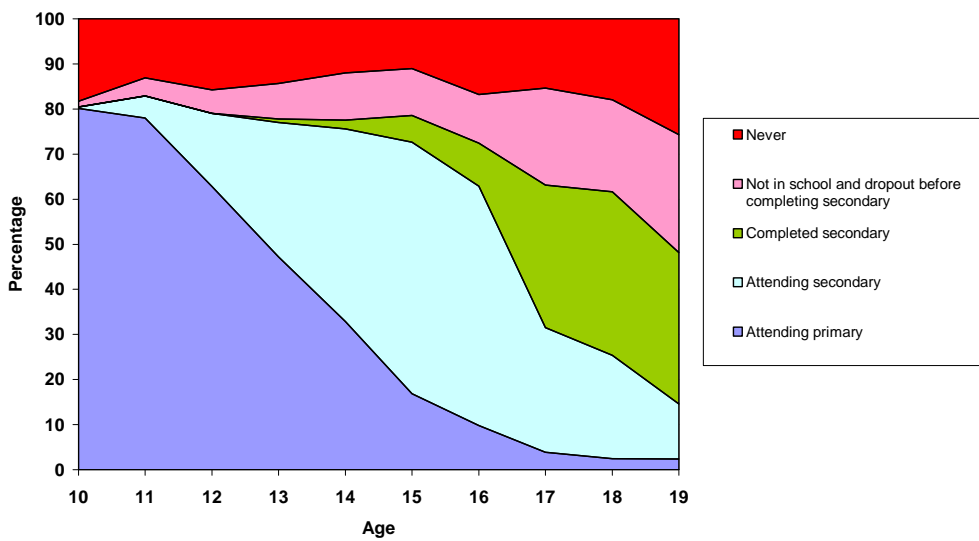
School participation URBAN-GIRLS 10-19 years old. Ghana, 2006



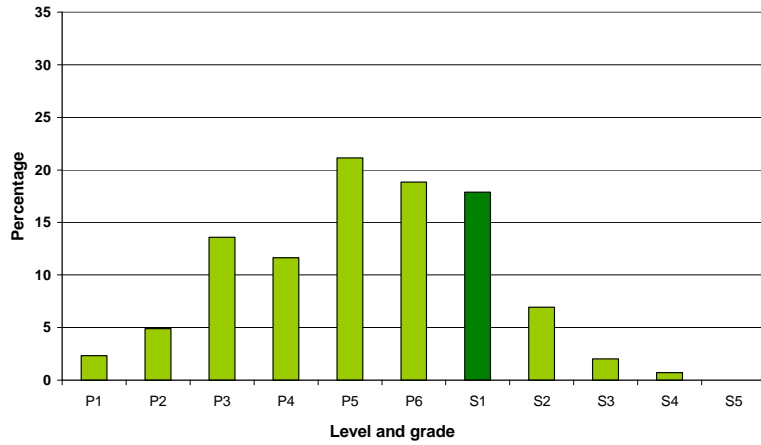
School participation RURAL-BOYS 10-19 years old. Ghana, 2006 MICS



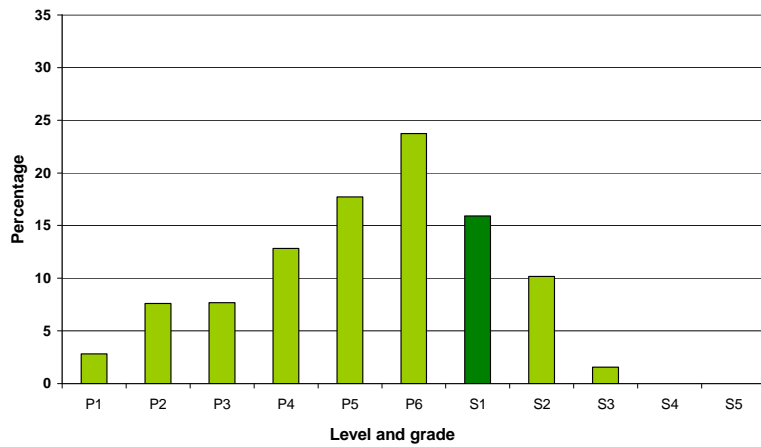
School participation RURAL-GIRLS 10-19 years old. Ghana, 2006



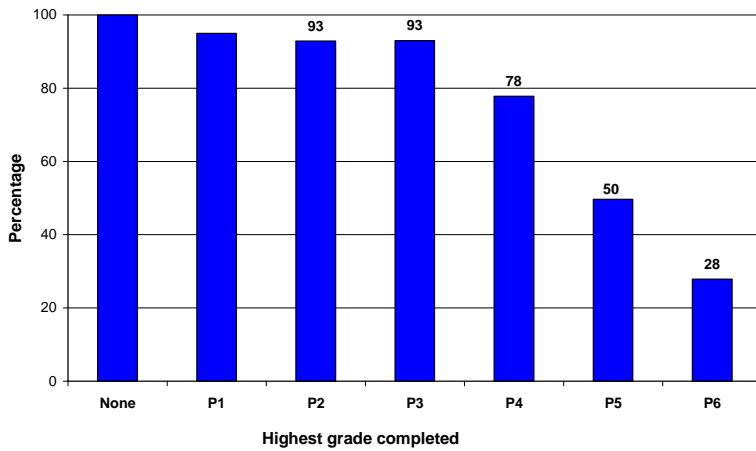
12 years old BOYS according to school participation. Ghana 2006 MICS



12 years old GIRLS according to school participation. Ghana 2006 MICS



Proportion of girls/women 15-19 with less than secondary who are ILLITERATE according to highest grade completed. Ghana 2006 MICS



## Zimbabwe 2006

### **The school system:**

- Zimbabwe has 7 grades of primary schooling and a recommended starting age of 6. By the age of 12, a student who started school on time should be completing grade 6.
- Some primary school fees continue to be charged; there is no legal guarantee of free education (UNESCO 2008).

### **At the beginning of adolescence:**

- By the age of 10, about 94% of boys and 96% of girls are reported to be attending school (See Chart 1).
- In urban areas, over 20% of girls have already dropped out of school; a slightly lower percent of boys has dropped out (see Chart 2).

### **Age 12 is typically the earliest age of puberty - an age when boys and girls often begin to follow different paths. At age 12:**

- 49% of boys and 64% of girls are attending primary school; 37% of boys and 41% of girls have already started secondary school (see Table 1).
- The net attendance rate is 70% for boys, 81% for girls (the percent who are in school and attending a grade appropriate for their age) (see Table 2).
- 82% of male students and 91% of female students are at or better than grade level (see Table 3).
- 40% of boys and 41% of girls can be found in grade 4 or below (see Chart 3).

### **Adolescence at age 15 in mid-course:**

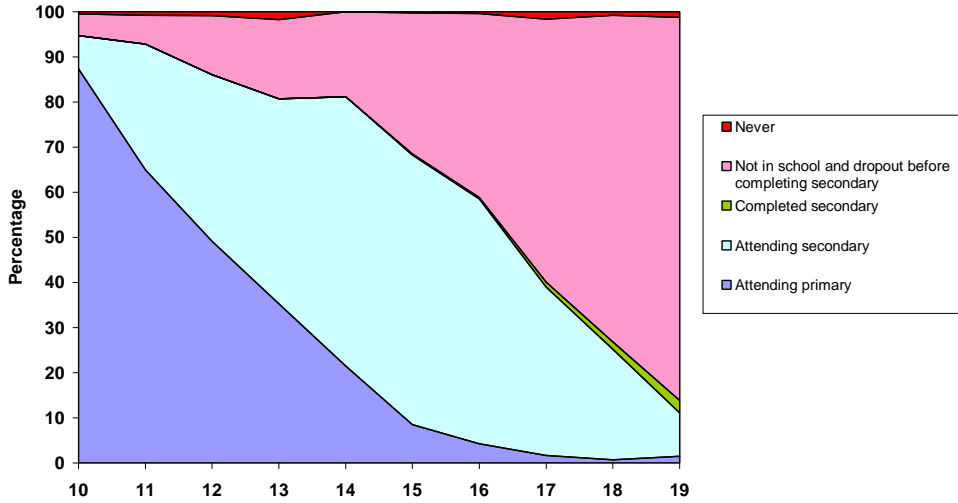
- 9 % of boys and 4 % percent of girls are still attending primary school; 60 % of boys and 59 % of girls are attending secondary school (see Table 1).
- The net attendance rate is 40% for boys and 45% for girls (see Table 2).
- Among out of school adolescents, prior school attendance is near universal.
- 58% of male students and 72% of female students are reported to be at or better than grade level (see Table 3).

### **Adolescent Youth (15-19):**

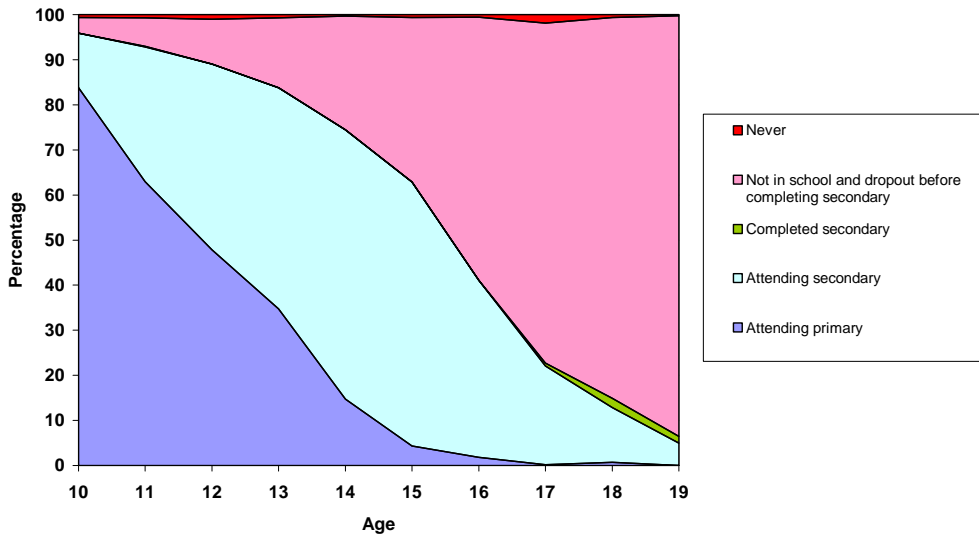
- Among older adolescents (15-19), a greater number of girls than boys are no longer attending school (see Chart 1)
- Among those aged 19, 3% of girls and 1.5% of boys have completed secondary school (chart 1)
- Among older adolescent girls who dropped out before completing primary school, 35% of those dropping out after grade 3 and 27% of those dropping out after grade 5 lack basic literacy (ability to read a simple sentence) (see Chart 4).

# ZIMBABWE DHS 2006

School participation of BOYS 10-19 years of age in Zimbabwe. 2006 DHS

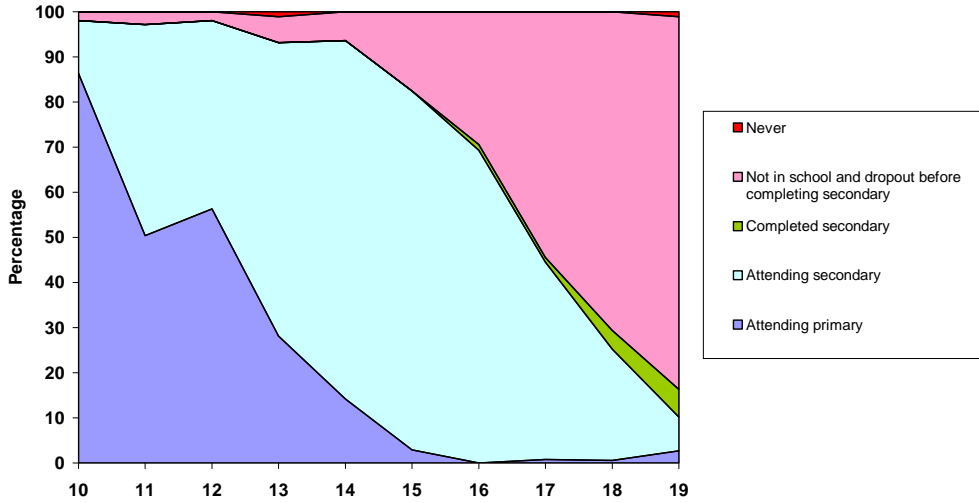


School participation of GIRLS 10-19 years old. Zimbabwe, 2006 DHS

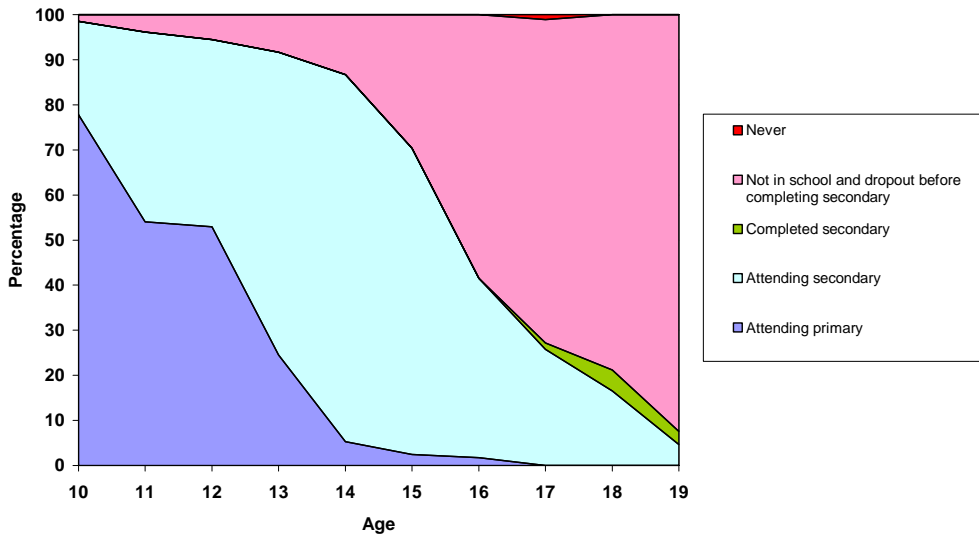


# ZIMBABWE DHS 2006

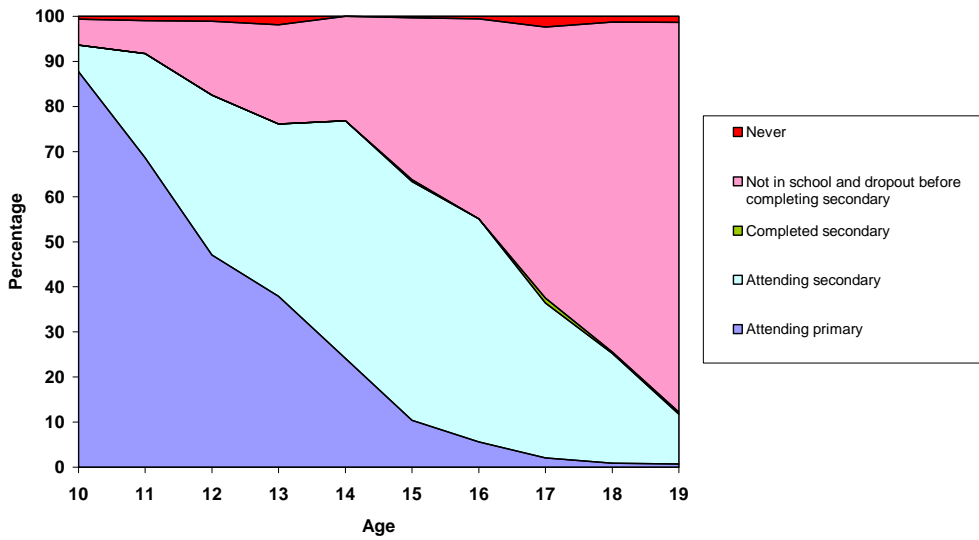
School participation URBAN-BOYS 10-19 years old. Zimbabwe, 2006 DHS



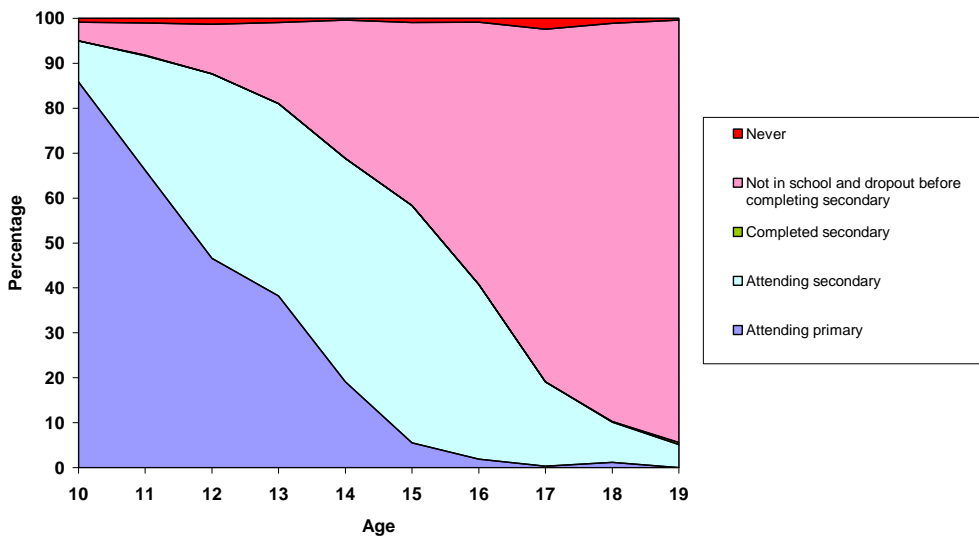
School participation URBAN-GIRLS 10-19 years old. Zimbabwe, 2006

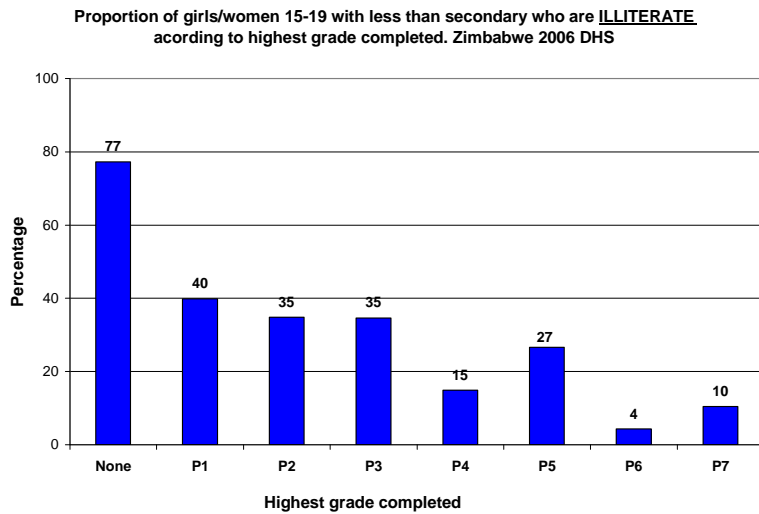
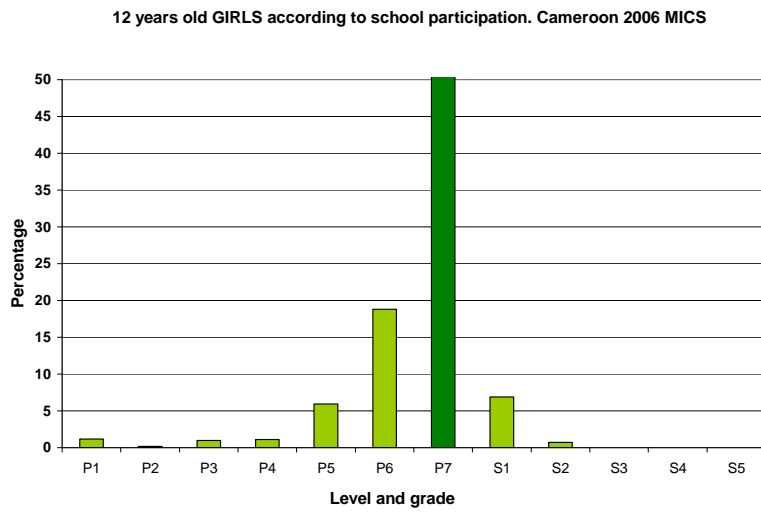
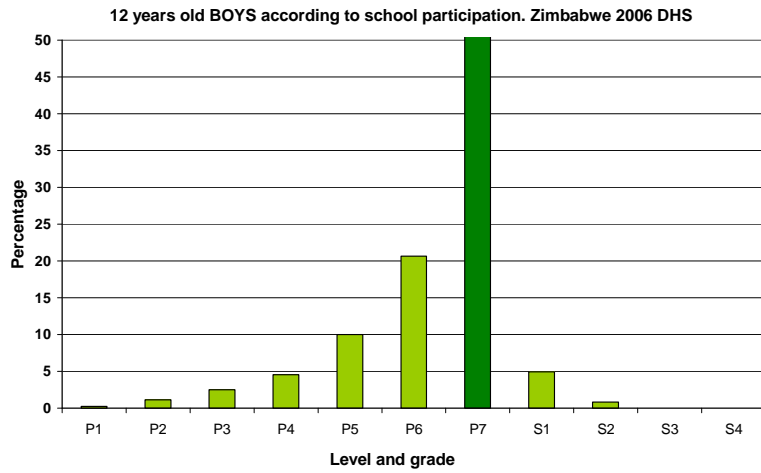


School participation RURAL-BOYS 10-19 years old. Zimbabwe 2006 DHS



School participation RURAL-GIRLS 10-19 years old. Zimbabwe, 2006





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