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## C H A P T E R 2

# The evolution of primary education

Can the goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE) on the 2015 horizon be reached? This chapter offers to establish a quantitative assessment of the five years following the Dakar Forum based on the latest available data, i.e. 2004/05, both in terms of intake capacity and of access, but above all of primary completion. It transpires that all the education indicators have significantly improved since 1990, with much more pronounced dynamics over the recent period than between 1990 and 2000, a sign that the Dakar Forum has instilled new momentum into the scaling-up of enrolments. These results lead to revising upwards the perspectives of reaching UPE by 2015. Nevertheless, although the latest tendencies are more optimistic than before, this will not be enough for guaranteeing achievement of the EFA goal n°2 in a number of countries, unless considerable progress is made in primary survival.

Chapter 1 has shown that the Dakar Forum definitely instilled fresh dynamics into the promotion and monitoring of education in Africa: nevertheless, the question is raised as to how this has translated in concrete terms. The latest data from 2004/05 now makes it possible to draw up a true quantitative assessment seven years on from the Dakar Forum, and to examine the mobilization that ensued, both at country level and with the international community. What is the current situation of primary education in Africa, and more particularly that of the different countries, as to the Dakar goal n° 2? Did the Dakar Forum enable the different countries step up their progress towards UPE? Can this goal be reached on the 2015 horizon?

The first part of this chapter closely examines the current situation of primary education in the African countries, in the light of the results observed in 2000. Several indicators are put into play, such as the gross enrolment rate, the apparent (gross) intake rate and, above all, the completion rate, directly referred to in the second Dakar goal. Completion levels are seen to greatly vary on the continent, highlighting the variety of tracks already followed and of challenges still to be taken up by the countries. The second part of the chapter compares the increase in intake capacity, and in primary intake and completion, registered over the 1990-2000 and the 2000-2005 periods, in order to reveal whether the institutional changes introduced since the Dakar Forum have resulted in a modification to dynamics. It can then be asked if present trends, in terms of primary intake and survival, will enable the African continent to enrol all theoretical school-age children in primary school in 2015. This leads to reviewing, in the third part of this chapter, the projections made earlier as to the perspectives of achieving UPE by 2015, on the basis of the most recent possible information.



# 1. The evolution of education indicators in primary education between 1990/91 and 2004/05

## 1.1 High expansion in intake capacity since 1990/91

Significant progress has been made in terms of intake capacity in primary education since 1990/91, measured by the evolution of the gross enrolment ratio (GER). On average, the GER was 98% in 2004/05 compared to 78% in 1990/91<sup>1</sup>. Recent progress is manifest, since out of the 20% gained in the overall period, 12% were gained between 1990/91 and 2000/01 and 8% between 2000/01 and 2004/05. Table 2.1 presents the situation of the different countries in this respect according to GER rates in 1990/91 and 2004/05.

**Table 2.1: Situation of African countries according to gross enrolment rates in 1990/91 compared to 2004/05 (or closest year)**

		GER 2004/05 (%)					
		< 50	50 - 70	70 - 90	90 - 100	> 100	Not available
GER 1990/91 (%)	< 50	Niger, Djibouti	Sudan, Eritrea, Burkina Faso	Mali, Guinea, Ethiopia			
	50 - 70			Senegal, Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad	Mauritania, Benin	U.R. of Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, Morocco, Malawi	Guinea-Bissau
	70 - 90			Comoros, CAR, Burundi	Nigeria, Ghana	Egypt	DRC, Angola
	90 - 100					Algeria, Zambia, Togo, Botswana, Swaziland, Madagascar, Cameroon, Kenya	
	> 100				Namibia, Zimbabwe	Tunisia, South Africa, Sao Tome and Principe, Lesotho, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cape Verde, Congo Mauritius, Seychelles	
	Not available					Sierra Leone, Libya	Somalia, Liberia

Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

Five countries still have coverage levels below 70% in 2004/05. On the one hand, Niger and Djibouti, with a GER of 47% and 40% respectively, are the two countries with the lowest coverage. On the other hand, significant progress has been made when taking into consideration the average African situation or that of specific countries: Niger had a GER of 26% in 1990/91. The current situation is therefore the result of substantial progress made since the early 1990's.

Moreover, in 2004/05, 25 countries had a GER exceeding 100% and 6 more a GER of between 90 and 100%: this means, on the one hand, that these countries, taking into account their current schooling conditions, do theoretically have the capacity to accept all children of the official age-group population in primary school. It does not on the other hand mean that these countries have reached, or are close to reaching, UPE, as the GER is not suitable as an indicator for measuring this goal: it describes an average enrolment situation and is very much dependent upon the repetition level practised in the system<sup>2</sup>. It does not take into account the intake level and above all the completion level of primary education. Now, the goal of UPE as initially formulated in the Dakar Forum framework and then restated in the MDGs, implies that all children should complete primary education.

<sup>1</sup> When, instead of the simple average, the weighted GER average is taken into consideration for each country per the total school-age population, these values are 95% in 2004/05 compared to 73 % in 1990/91.

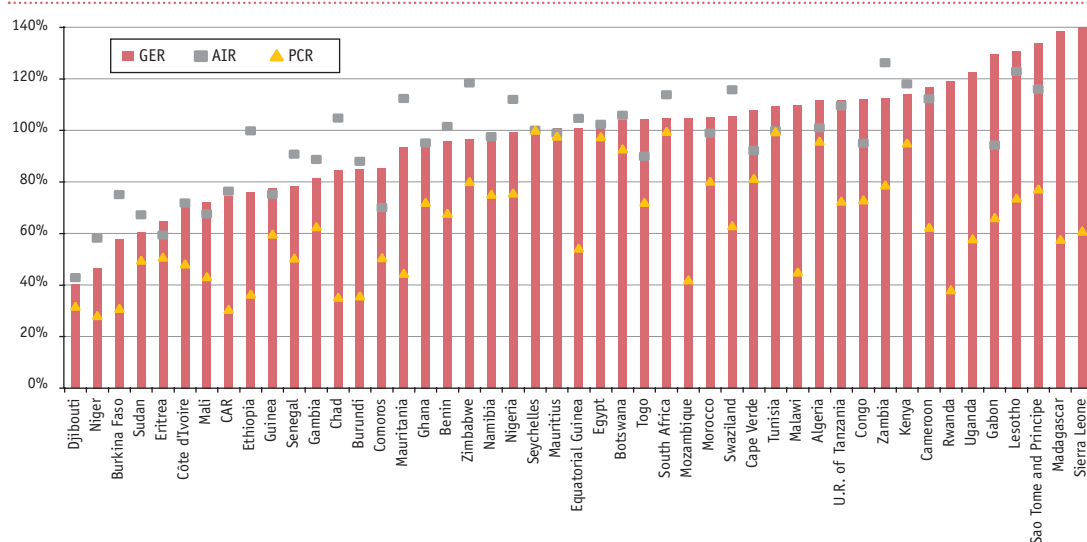
<sup>2</sup> cf. Reuge (2004a).

## 1.2 Coverage, intake and completion

Evolution in the apparent (gross) intake rate (AIR) and the ratio of access to the last year of primary education (PCR) which measures approximately the completion of primary education<sup>3</sup> is just as remarkable: the AIR, which was 85% in 1990/91, registered at 105% in 2004/05<sup>4</sup>, with once again a more significant increase over the more recent period (10 points for each of the two sub-periods). Between 1990/91 and 2004/05, the PCR rose from 48% to 65% on average. While in all the countries studied, only one out of two pupils completed primary education at the beginning of the period, this has risen to two out of three today.

Graph 2.1 summarizes the situation of a number of African countries with regard to the gross enrolment rate, the apparent (gross) intake rate and the access rate to the last year of primary education for the year 2004/05. While a low GER is generally associated with a low level of primary completion, as is the case of Niger for example, a high GER can be the consequence of varied situations both in terms of admission and completion. Thus, although Botswana and Swaziland show comparable GER levels (105%), Botswana, with a PCR of 93% in 2004/05, is close to universal completion, whilst Swaziland still has a relatively low completion level (PCR of 63% in 2004/05).

**Graph 2.1: Situation of African countries with regard to gross enrolment rate, apparent (gross) intake rate and primary completion rate, 2004/05 (or closest year)**



Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

The rate of access to the last year of primary education, even if this constitutes a slightly biased estimation of the level of primary completion, is undoubtedly the best indicator for reporting progress made in terms of UPE and so measuring progress towards goal 2 of the Dakar Forum.

Table 2.2 presents the situation of African countries as to their level of completion in 1990/91 and 2004/05 (or closest years).

<sup>3</sup> It is indeed calculated on new entrants to the last year of primary education, which implicitly supposes that there is zero loss during the last year.

<sup>4</sup> 94% and 129% respectively for the weighted averages.

**Table 2.2: Situation of African countries according to the level of their access rates to the last year of primary education in 1990/91 compared to 2004/05 (or closest year)**

		PCR 2004/05 (%)				
		< 30	30 - 50	50 - 80	> 80	Not available
PCR 1990/91 (%)	< 30	Niger	Chad, Djibouti, Mali, Mozambique, Malawi, Ethiopia	Benin, Eritrea, Guinea		Guinea-Bissau
	30 - 50		Burkina Faso, Burundi, CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Rwanda, Sudan	Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Madagascar, Senegal, Togo, Uganda, U.R. of Tanzania	Morocco	Angola, DRC
	50 - 80			Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Lesotho, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Swaziland	Algeria, Cape Verde, Kenya, Tunisia	
	> 80			Namibia, Zambia	Botswana, Egypt, Mauritius, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Seychelles	
	Not available			Sierra Leone	Libya	Liberia, Somalia

Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

There has been considerable evolution over the period under consideration. In 1990/91, 19 countries had a low primary completion rate (under 50%), and 11 of them were even below a PCR of 30%. By 2004/05, only Niger was still very much behind with a PCR of 28%, which must not however overshadow the progress made by this country, which showed a PCR of 17% in 1990/91. At the present time, there are still 13 more countries with a completion rate lower than 50%: Chad, Djibouti, Mali, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Malawi, Burkina Faso, Burundi, CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Rwanda and Sudan.

While the evolution in terms of completion is generally on an upward trend, it should be noted that there are four countries with a completion level in 2004/05 below than that registered in 1990/91: these are Burundi (36% compared to 46%), Namibia (75% compared to 83%), Zambia (79% compared to 93%) and Zimbabwe (80% compared to 94%). The case of Namibia is peculiar insofar as it was considered to be close to UPE in 2002/03, with a PCR higher than 90%<sup>5</sup>.

Finally, some countries already show a completion level of over 90% and can therefore be considered as being close to UPE: Botswana, South Africa, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Kenya<sup>6</sup>, Libya, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

5 cf. UNESCO BREDIA (2005).

6 International classification for education indicates duration of six years for primary education in Kenya.

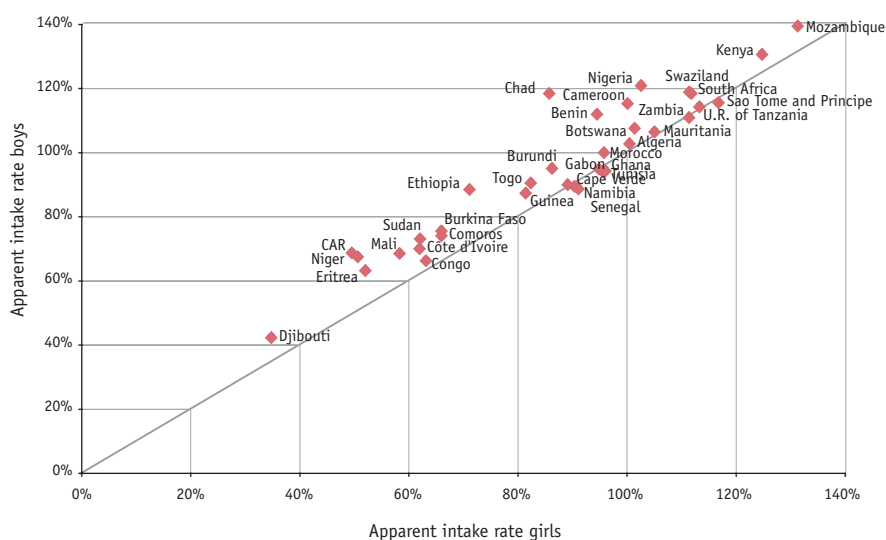
## 1.3 Persistent gender disparities in 2004/05

A number of countries remain far from the gender parity goal, both in terms of intake and completion.

### 1.3.1 From the intake point of view

For the 41 countries where data for calculating the parity index according to AIR is available, the simple average registers at 0.92 in 2004/05, which means that in these countries, there are only 92 girls for every 100 boys getting access to school. 14 countries have a parity index of under 0.9, and 3 of these are under the threshold of 0.8: Niger (0.75), Chad (0.72) and Central African Republic (0.72). 7 countries have, on the contrary, an index higher than or equal to 1: Ghana, Senegal, Sao Tome and Principe, Tunisia, Gambia, Namibia and finally Malawi, which have the maximum value observed on the continent overall (1.08). Graph 2.2 illustrates the diversity of situations, which also reflects the fact that disparities can be just as great in countries with a high intake level as in countries with a low intake level.

**Graph 2.2: AIR for girls vs. AIR for boys, Africa region, 2004/05 (or closest year)**



Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

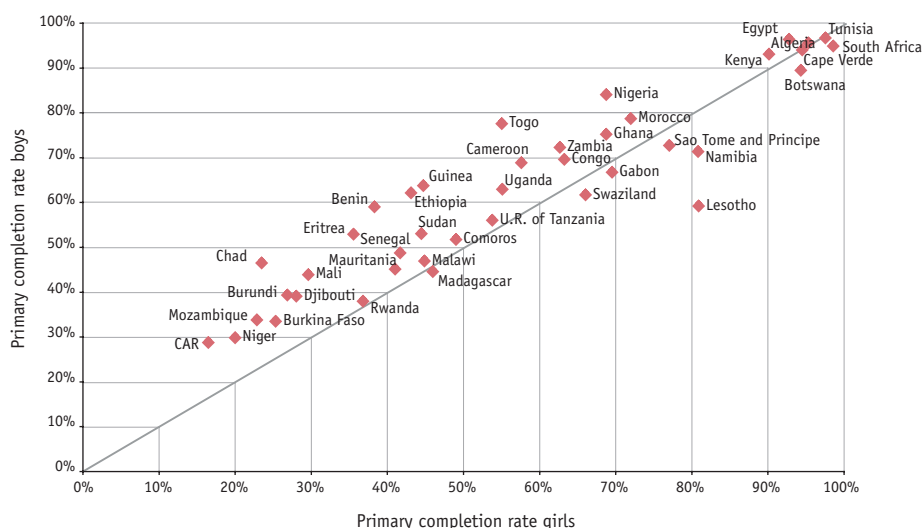


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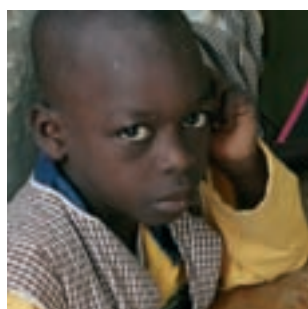
### 1.3.2 From the completion point of view

The gender parity index calculated on the basis of the Primary Completion Rate (PCR) has also been obtained for 41 countries. Showing an average of 0.88 in 2004/05, this has remained stable since 2002/03<sup>7</sup>. 13 countries are still under the 0.8 mark. The minimum value is observed in Chad (0.51), followed far behind by the Central African Republic (0.64) and Benin (0.66). 9 countries have an index of over 1: Botswana, Gabon, Lesotho<sup>8</sup>, Mauritius, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, Tunisia and Madagascar. The parity index calculated on the PCR (0.51 - 1.36) has thus a much wider range than that calculated on the AIR (0.72 - 1.08)<sup>9</sup>. Graph 2.3 illustrates the diversity of situations observed in Africa on completion levels for boys and girls. Dispersal around the parity line appears greater than that observed earlier on the AIR.

**Graph 2.3: Comparison of the boy-girl primary completion rate, 2004/05 (or closest year)**



Source Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data



7 The gender parity index, calculated in the UNESCO BRED (2005) report, was based on data from 42 countries in 2002/03 and registered at 0.87.

8 The case of Lesotho is unique in that the parity index is particularly high (1.36) : for 100 boys completing primary education, there are 136 girls in the same situation.

9 In addition, the linear correlation between the apparent (gross) intake rates for the different countries, according to gender, is higher than that between the different primary completion rates.



### 1.3.3 Compared parity indexes

Graph 2.4 compares the parity indexes in terms of AIR and PCR, independent of the absolute level of intake or completion.

This graph calls for several comments:

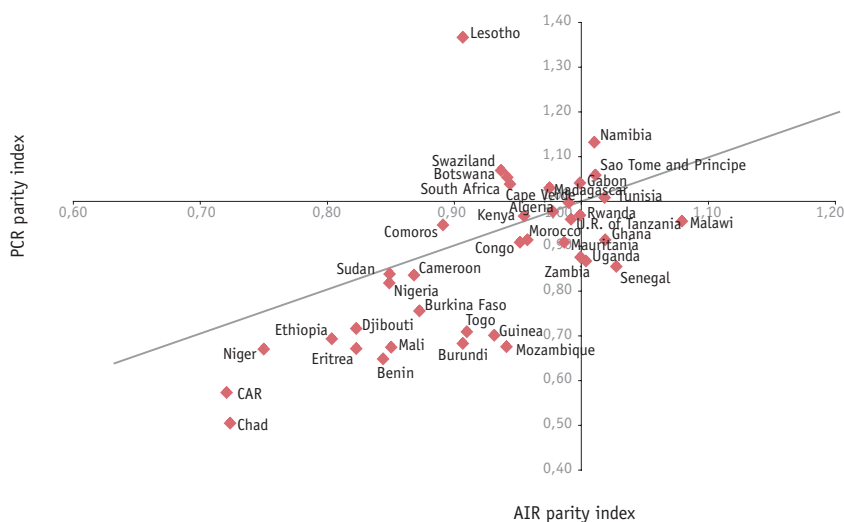
- The nearer the parity index, calculated on the basis of the gross intake rate, is to the unit, the smaller the disparities measured on the basis of the completion rate are. Thus, higher gender equity on entering primary education is followed by higher equity at the end of primary education.
- Most African countries are in a situation where gender disparities are accentuated on moving from admission to completion (countries below the 1<sup>st</sup> bisector on the graph, «equi-disparity» line between the AIR and the PCR). This suggests that most of the effort put in to reduce gender disparities has had an effect on admission but that difficulties remain at survival level, and therefore for completion.
- There are a number of situations where disparities in terms of completion are more in favour of girls. All of them concern countries where, concomitantly, the parity index on access is to the advantage of boys. This is the case particularly for five countries in Southern African: South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and above all Lesotho. These results suggest that in these countries, while, on the one hand, fewer girls than boys gain access to school, they do, on the other hand, survive better in the system.

10 For more information on these aspects, please refer to Mingat (2003).

Gender disparities both in terms of primary access and completion must not overshadow the existence of more significant disparity criteria such as geographical location or the families' resources<sup>10</sup>.



**Graph 2.4: Gender parity indexes calculated on the basis of AIR and PCR, 2004/05 (or closest year)**



Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

## 2. The Dakar Forum in 2000 marked a turning point in the dynamics of primary education in Africa

In 2000, the International Community renewed its commitments to UPE and it seems clear that there has been a positive evolution since that date. While it appears difficult to assess the true impact of the Dakar Forum and of the Millennium Summit, it is possible, even so, to examine in more detail how this date has marked a turning point in the rate of expansion of the education systems in the period following the commitments taken at these summits. It is proposed to look at this from three different angles: evolution of total pupils enrolled, evolution of intake and evolution of primary completion. The two sub-periods taken into consideration are 1990/91 - 2000/01 and 2000/01 - 2004/05<sup>11</sup>.

### 2.1 A significant change in the average annual increase in pupil numbers

Table 2.3 enables comparison of the rates of average annual increase in pupil numbers observed in the two periods under consideration, which are 1990/91-2000/01 and 2000/01-2004/05. It is clear that the trends observed cannot be explained by educational policy changes alone insofar as there are a number of exogenous factors which may have significant consequences on schooling coverage.

**For the period following 2000/01, twenty-five countries experienced a higher annual rate of increase in pupil numbers than between 1990/91 and 2000/01.** For these countries, the average annual increase in pupil numbers between 2000/01 and 2004/05 was multiplied, compared to that observed between 1990/91 and 2000/01, by a factor fluctuating between 1.1 and 30.8. For most of these countries - i.e. 14 - the multiplying factor was between one and two, for four of them between two and three, and for seven of them over three. While it appears difficult to make an observation for countries that have been through a period of crisis, it can however be noted that among the countries with low schooling coverage at the present time, some of them have expended considerable energy, visibly more so over the recent period; this is the case of Niger, where the average annual increase in pupil numbers has increased very significantly since 2000/01 : the number of additional pupils accepted each year was around 29 000 before 2000/01 and this rose to almost 102 000 per year after that date, i.e. multiplied by 3.5. To a lesser extent, Burkina Faso has shown an increase in the annual average shifting from 41 000 to 92 000 additional pupils. In relative terms, these two countries have also intensified their efforts; for Niger, this represents a relative average annual increase in pupil numbers of 13% (in comparison with 2000/01) compared to 6% (in comparison with numbers in 1990/91) before 2000/01. For Burkina Faso, there has been a rise from 6% to 9%. Out of the 24 countries that have experienced, since 2000/01, a higher increase in average annual pupil numbers than during the period 1990/91 - 2000/01, 17 have also experienced a relatively faster rate of increase for the recent period.

Twelve countries have registered a slower rate of increase for the period 2000/01, with the multiplying factor fluctuating between 0.2 (Namibia) and 0.9 (Sao Tome and Principe). Six of these countries, mostly in Southern Africa, had a GER of over 90% in 1990/91 and over or equal to 100% in 2000/01: Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland but also Togo and Sao Tome and Principe. The remaining six countries had coverage lower than 90% in 1990 but some of these deployed considerable effort between 1990/91 and 2000/01 to reach, or even exceed 100% GER in 2000/01: this is notably the case of Morocco, a country which has in addition made its demographic transition.

<sup>11</sup> The years taken into consideration may fluctuate slightly from one country to another depending upon the structure of data available.

**Table 2.3: Increase in pupil numbers in primary education**

	Average annual increase in pupil numbers in absolute value			Average annual increase in pupil numbers in relative value		Rate of increase over the period	
	1990-2000 (1)	2000 - 2004 (2)	Ratio (2)/(1)	1990-2000	2000 - 2004	1990-2000	2000 - 2004
South Africa	46 164	10 242	0.2	0.6%	0.1%	6.6%	0.4%
Algeria	53 180	-89 802	-1.7	1.2%	-2.0%	12.7%	-7.6%
Angola	18 833	ND	ND	1.8%	ND	19.0%	ND
Benin	56 481	65 801	1.2	8.0%	5.7%	115.2%	24.9%
Botswana	4 594	-253	-0.1	1.5%	-0.1%	16.2%	-0.2%
Burkina Faso	41 253	92 387	2.2	6.1%	9.0%	70.1%	41.0%
Burundi	11 750	71 540	6.1	1.7%	8.4%	18.6%	38.1%
Cameroon	69 033	127 754	1.9	3.0%	4.6%	38.7%	9.4%
Cape Verde	1 837	-2 286	-1.2	2.4%	-2.6%	32.5%	-7.6%
CAR	14 899	8 457	0.6	4.0%	1.8%	48.3%	7.4%
Comoros	2 459	2 249	0.9	2.9%	2.2%	29.3%	9.2%
Côte d'Ivoire	73 691	-32 419	-0.4	4.3%	-1.5%	45.8%	-3.1%
Djibouti	1 099	1 990	1.8	3.0%	4.4%	34.6%	18.6%
Egypt	42 719	47 944	1.1	0.6%	0.6%	7.0%	2.4%
Eritrea	18 960	19 705	1	10.6%	6.0%	173.8%	26.4%
Ethiopia	452 954	1 051 295	2.3	9.9%	11.3%	157.8%	71.0%
Gabon	5 892	8 392	1.4	2.5%	3.1%	25.3%	6.4%
Gambia	7 355	5 999	0.8	6.3%	3.7%	73.0%	11.5%
Ghana	53 257	130 517	2.5	2.4%	4.8%	27.4%	26.3%
Guinea	50 682	80 883	1.6	9.4%	8.1%	146.1%	47.4%
Equatorial Guinea	389	-2 874	-7.4	0.5%	-3.9%	3.6%	-14.6%
Guinea-Bissau	-6 586	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Kenya	-44 435	390 726	-8.8	-0.9%	7.4%	-9.1%	23.9%
Lesotho	6 338	2 787	0.4	1.7%	0.7%	18.0%	2.7%
Liberia	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Libya	ND	-11 178	ND	ND	-1.5%	ND	-7.3%
Madagascar	73 678	322 558	4.4	3.9%	11.7%	46.9%	55.9%
Malawi	163 168	42 059	0.3	8.0%	1.4%	116.5%	5.5%
Mali	73 203	89 810	1.2	11.0%	7.4%	185.2%	23.9%
Morocco	135 731	45 400	0.3	4.5%	1.2%	54.6%	4.7%
Mauritius	-341	-2 631	7.7	-0.3%	-2.0%	-2.5%	-7.8%
Mauritania	19 345	20 735	1.1	8.0%	5.3%	115.7%	23.0%
Mozambique	156 957	278 261	1.8	8.4%	8.6%	124.5%	39.3%
Namibia	8 393	1 685	0.2	2.4%	0.4%	26.8%	1.7%
Niger	28 786	101 867	3.5	5.9%	12.8%	78.1%	62.1%
Nigeria	555 119	650 756	1.2	3.5%	3.3%	40.8%	10.2%
Uganda	408 901	166 217	0.4	10.3%	2.4%	165.5%	10.1%
U.R. of Tanzania	150 259	664 905	4.4	3.7%	11.5%	44.5%	54.5%
DRC	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Congo	700	21 541	30.8	0.1%	4.0%	1.4%	17.2%
Rwanda	37 514	80 496	2.1	3.0%	5.3%	34.1%	10.9%
Sao Tome and P.	725	668	0.9	3.1%	2.3%	40.2%	9.6%
Senegal	45 127	71 111	1.6	5.1%	5.6%	63.7%	24.5%
Seychelles	-12	-201	16.6	-0.1%	-2.0%	-1.1%	-4.0%
Sierra Leone	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Somalia	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Sudan	75 704	119 577	1.6	3.2%	4.0%	37.1%	17.1%
Swaziland	4 561	2 096	0.5	2.5%	1.0%	27.4%	3.0%
Chad	45 906	69 542	1.5	6.5%	6.4%	87.4%	28.3%
Togo	29 814	12 901	0.4	3.9%	1.3%	46.1%	5.5%
Tunisia	-3 176	-47 401	14.9	-0.2%	-3.6%	-2.3%	-13.8%
Zambia	13 617	243 969	17.9	0.9%	12.7%	11.5%	61.4%
Zimbabwe	33 283	-24 995	-0.8	1.5%	-1.0%	15.7%	-2.0%

Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

There has been a reversal in the trend for some countries since 2000/01: after an expansion which led to over 100% GER in 2000/01, a decrease rather than a slow-down in the annual increase in pupil numbers has been observed: this is the case for Algeria, Botswana, Cape Verde or Equatorial Guinea<sup>12</sup>.

While analysis of the evolution in pupil numbers gives an initial idea of the efforts made to increase the intake capacity of the systems, it proves to be insufficient for measuring the progress made toward reaching the Dakar goal, for each period. It is therefore appropriate to define the trends observed in terms not only of intake, but, also and above all of primary completion.

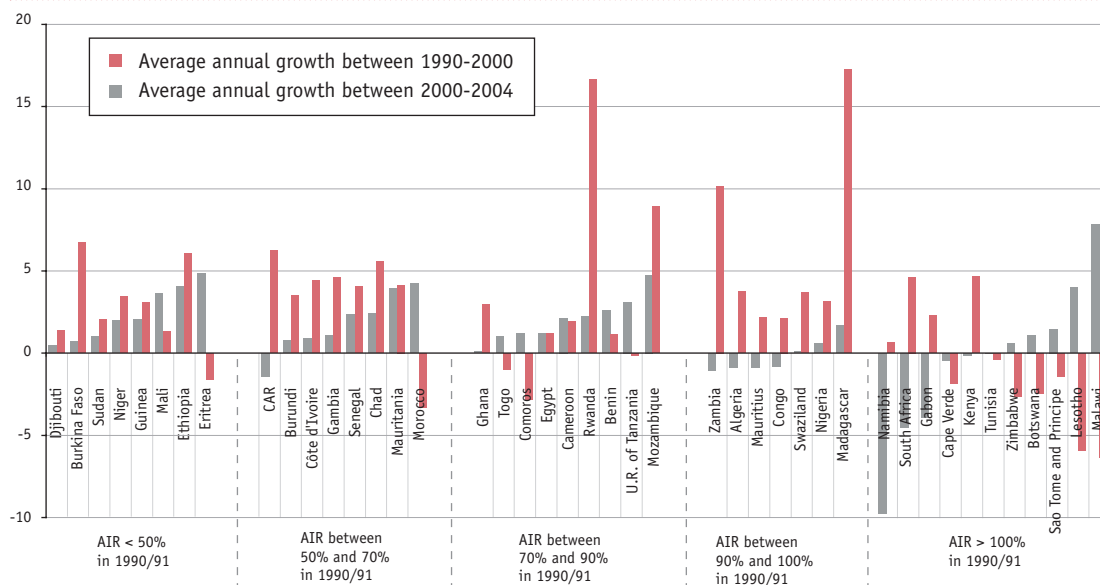
## 2.2 Confirmation of efforts made at intake level...

A simple approach is used here, comparing the annual increase in terms of percentage points on the apparent (gross) intake rate for the two sub-periods considered<sup>13</sup>. Graph 2.5 presents the situation of the different countries comparing the average annual increase for the 1990-2000 and 2000-2004 periods, and taking into account the AIR in 1990/91.

<sup>12</sup> The cases of Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe are apart, on account of the events these countries have faced over the recent period.

<sup>13</sup> For a given period, the average annual increase in terms of percentage points is calculated as follows:  $(\text{GIR at end of period} - \text{GIR at beginning of period}) / \text{Period}$ .

**Graph 2.5: Average annual increase in AIR: 1990-2000 and 2000-2004, Africa region**



Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

Hereunder, the figures specified in brackets for each group of countries correspond to the simple average of the average annual increases calculated for all the countries in the group for the 1990-2000 and 2000-2004 periods.

• **Countries with an AIR of under 50% in 1990/91**  
**(Average 1990-2000: 2.35; average 2000-2004: 2.80)**

As a simple average, the annual increase in AIR for this group of countries rose from 2.35 before 2000/01 to 2.80 percentage points afterwards. Only Mali and Eritrea experienced a less sustained rate of increase for the 2000-2004 period compared to the 1990-2000 period : in Eritrea there was even a fall in AIR after 2000/01 (from 66% in 2000/01 to 59% in 2004/05); as for Mali, while efforts put in over the 1990-2000 decade enabled the country to move from an AIR of 26% in 1990/91 to 62% in 2000/01, this trend does not seem to have continued over the 2000-2004 period, taking into account the current AIR of 68%. For the other countries, the rate of increase in AIR has been multiplied by a factor ranging from 1.5 for Guinea to over 9 for Burkina Faso, where the average annual increase has risen from 0.71 before 2000/01 to 6.7 afterwards. It should be noted that efforts in Ethiopia have been constant since 1990 where the average annual gain has risen from 4.1 to 6.1 percentage points.

• **Countries with an AIR of between 50 and 70% in 1990/91**  
**(Average 1990-2000: 1.78; average 2000-2004: 3.65)**

The trend has also been confirmed in this group of countries as to sustained efforts for increasing intake: the average increase has indeed risen from 1.78 to 3.65 percentage points. Morocco is the only country in the group with a reverse tendency but this is also the only country to have exceeded universal intake starting 2000/01, and with fewer children to enrol (demographic transition). As for Mauritania, an average annual increase of around 4 percentage points has been maintained, which made it possible to reach an AIR of 96% after 2000, peaking at 112% in 2004/05. Trends noted for other countries in the group show more significant increases in the recent period than between 1990-2000: the average annual increase in the AIR has thus been multiplied by a factor ranging from 1.7 in Senegal to almost 5 for Côte d'Ivoire<sup>14</sup>. The case of the Central African Republic is atypical in that the downward trend in the 1990's has given way to an average annual increase of over 6 percentage points.

• **Countries with an AIR of between 70 and 90% in 1990/91**  
**(Average 1990-2000: 2.04; average 2000-2004: 3.20)**

With the exception of Mozambique and Rwanda, which have been through very difficult situations in the 1990's, with even so a level of intake of over 100% in 2000/01, a slow-down in the increase in intake can be noted in most of these countries (Benin, Cameroon, and Egypt, three countries with an AIR of 100% in 2000/01, or very close to same) or even a decrease. If, on the one hand, this situation appears natural for the United Republic of Tanzania, which had an AIR of 110% by 2000/01, it proves, on the other hand, to be of greater concern for Comoros and Togo, which are faced with a drop in intake level at primary school. Finally, Ghana is the only country in the group showing significant expansion, after a time of long stagnation - the AIR had only risen from 82% to 83% between 1990 and 2000 - enabling it to reach the threshold of 100% intake. For the countries in this group as a whole, the simple average increase has been higher since 2000/01 (average annual gain of 3.2 percentage points for 2000-2004 compared to 2.04 for 1990-2000).

<sup>14</sup> Period before the events of September 2002.  
 The most recent data for Côte d'Ivoire are for the 2002/03 school year.

- **Countries with an AIR of between 90 and 100% in 1990/91**  
(Average 1990-2000: **-0.18**; average 2000-2004: **6.05**)

The tendency is once again for a sustained increase: the average annual progress observed for the 2000-2004 period is indeed higher than that for the 1990-2000 period for all six countries in the group. For Congo, Zambia and Algeria, there has been a move from a period of decline to a revival leading them to universal intake. For Madagascar, Nigeria and Swaziland, there is a trend to acceleration whereas these three countries already had an AIR of over 100% in 2000/01. The average increase for the countries as a whole in this group is the maximum average observed on all countries under consideration: 6.05 percentage points as an annual average against a deficit (stagnation) of - 0.18 before 2000/01.

- **Countries with an AIR of over 100% in 1990/91**  
(Average 1990-2000: **-0.35**; average 2000-2004: **-0.80**)

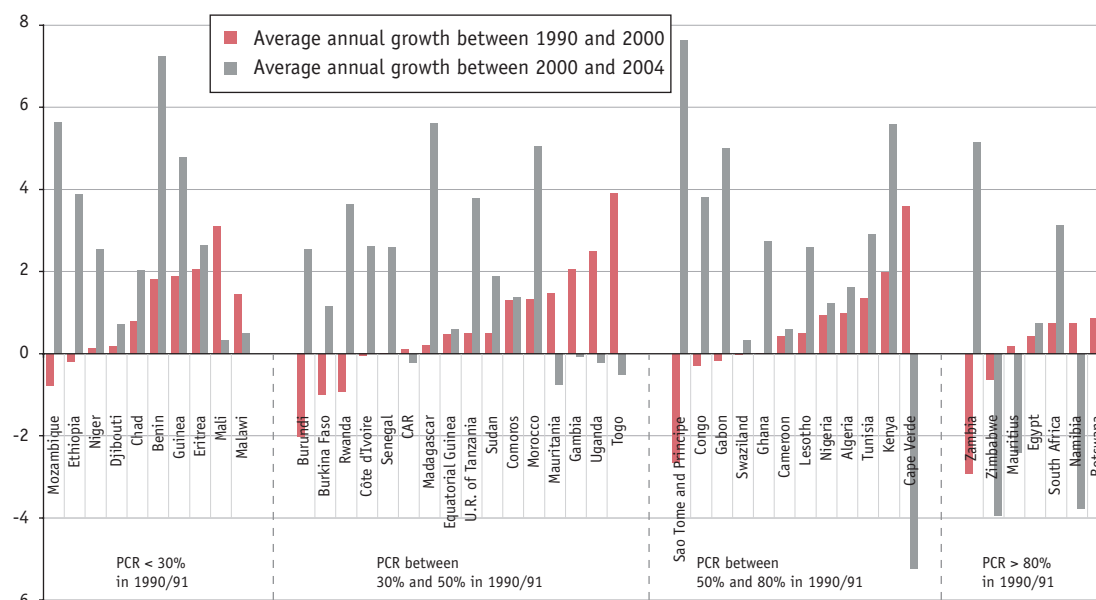
The results for this group are difficult to interpret insofar as these countries already had a universal level of intake in 1990/91 and were still mostly beyond the 100% mark in 2004/05. When recent evolution results in a drop in the value of the indicator, this usually goes along with a stabilization of the intake level in primary school. Within this group, it is to be noted that Namibia, Cape Verde and Gabon are again under the symbolic 100% mark, while maintaining high intake levels. The average annual increases for these countries, as a whole, shifted from -0.35 to - 0.8 after 2000/01.

## 2.3 ...and at completion level

Trends at completion level, due in particular to the time spans adopted here, must be interpreted with care insofar as completion, at a given time, results mainly from decisions taken several years earlier. We have nevertheless used the approach adopted for analysis in terms of intake, comparing average annual increases in PCR registered before and after 2000/01. This is presented in graph 2.5. Again, the countries are to be differentiated according to their initial completion level.



Graph 2.6: Average annual increase in PCR: 1990-2000 and 2000-2004, Africa region



Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

Once more, the simple average of the annual increase in percentage points registered on the PCR is specified in brackets for each group of countries, before and after 2000/01.

• **Countries with a PCR below 30% in 1990/91**  
**(Average 1990-2000: 1.05; average 2000-2004: 3.03)**

Amongst the countries with a very low completion level in 1990/91, only two registered a drop in the progression towards UPE starting 2000/01. After showing the highest increase, on annual average between 1990/91 and 2000/01, Mali has been faced with a distinct slow-down shifting from an annual increase of over 3 points to 0.3 on the recent period. The same goes for Malawi.

The other countries made substantial progress with regard to their evolution over the 1990-2000 period: thus Mozambique moved from an annual decrease of 0.77 points to an annual increase of over 5 points after 2000/01. Niger experienced a definite change: after stagnating around 18%, the average annual increase in PCR was multiplied by almost 19 to arrive at an annual increase of 2.6 points. Niger's PCR has in this way increased by around 60% between 2000/01 and 2004/05 rising from 18 to 28%. Ethiopia is in a similar position. Other countries, such as Benin or Guinea have registered a radical change in rate of increase (x 7 for Benin and x 4 for Guinea), whereas Eritrea and Ethiopia have registered a more modest change.

The group's annual average increase has risen substantially, from 1.53 before 2000/01 to 2.71 afterwards, with a higher average observed on the recent period.

• **Countries with a PCR of between 30 and 50% in 1990/91**  
(Average 1990-2000: **0.65**; average 2000-2004: **1.82**)

Amongst those countries with a low completion rate at the start of the period, there are several possible scenarios: on the one hand, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda and Burundi moved from an annual decline for the 1990-2000 period<sup>15</sup> to a marked revival; on the other hand, Mauritania, Gambia, Uganda and Togo moved from a period marked by high increases to a more or less significant annual drop. The upward trend has been confirmed for Equatorial Guinea and Comoros. It has been amplified for countries such as Madagascar, Senegal and Morocco and, to a lesser extent, Sudan, with the first three countries registering average annual increases that have changed radically from one period to another. Senegal registered the biggest change in rate of progression insofar as its completion level, which had remained stable between 1990/91 and 2000/01 (40%), registered an increase of 10 percentage points on the recent period. For the group as a whole, the average annual increase registered on the PCR has been multiplied by almost three after 2000/01 shifting from a simple average of 0.65 for the 1990-2000 period to 1.82 for 2000-2005.

• **Countries with a PCR of between 50 and 80% in 1990/91**  
(Average 1990-2000: **0.55**; average 2000-2004: **2.40**)

Out of all the countries that had what could be qualified as an intermediary completion level in 1990/91, Cape Verde is the only one to register an average annual fall of over 5 percentage points since 2000/01 (current PCR is 81%), following a period of high growth, which enabled an increase in PCR from 54% to 97% between 1990/91 and 2000/01 (average annual gain slightly over 3.5 percentage points). In the other countries, there is either a transition from a period of stagnation to a high increase in terms of completion (Congo, Gabon and Ghana), or an intensification in the annual increase registered since 1990/91: this is the case for Lesotho and Kenya, but also for Algeria and Tunisia. The last three countries had a PCR close to 100% in 2004/05.

The global trend for this group of countries was also for a sharp change in rate of increase in PCR insofar as the average annual increase registered was multiplied by 4 after 2000/01, rising from 0.55 for the 1990-2000 period to 2.4 between 2000 and 2004.

• **Countries with a PCR of over 80% in 1990/91**  
(Average 1990-2000: **-0.08**; average 2000-2004: **-0.06**)

The six countries with a high primary completion level in 1990/91 have recently followed a variety of trends. Three countries do, however, stand out due to the unexpected trend observed from 2000-2004. Egypt and above all South Africa first of all, with completion levels of over 90% in 2000/01, have seen a rise in their annual increase (multiplied respectively by 1.5 for Egypt and 4 for South Africa), enabling them to reach the symbolic threshold of 100%. For South Africa, this represented a total increase of 10 percentage points between 2000/01 and 2004/05, which is equivalent to the total growth for the 1990-2000 period. On the other hand, a country like Namibia, which was at the same level as South Africa in 2000/01, underwent a fall in its PCR of around 15 percentage points between 2000/01 and 2000/05 (from 90% to 75%).

*The simple observations that have just been made regarding the average annual increases at completion level show that these have been, globally, more substantial since 2000/01. Some groups of countries have experienced a considerable change of pace, with their average increase multiplied by 3 or 4. Finally it is noted that the group of countries with a low completion level in 1990/91 has registered the highest average increase (3.03) over the recent period.*

<sup>15</sup> Connected, for Rwanda and Burundi, to the socio-political events that these two countries have been through in the 1990's.



## 2.4 A word on repetition

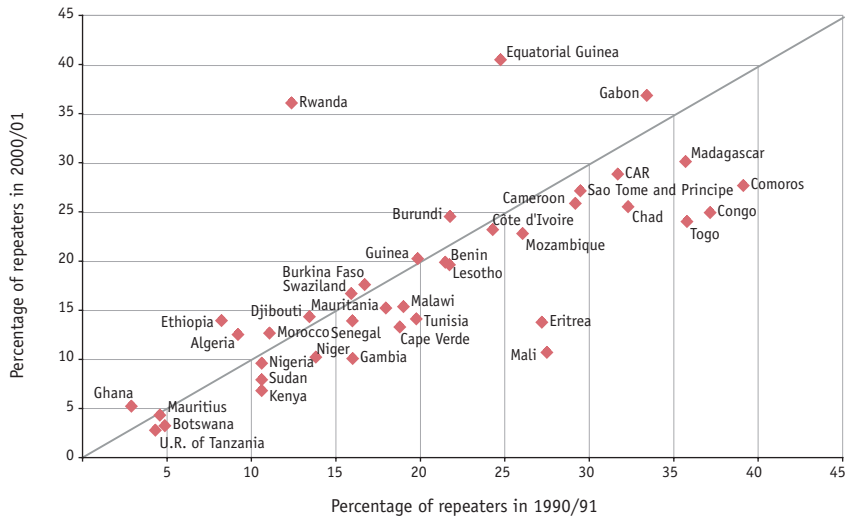
We have just seen then that the quantitative expansion of the African education systems has brought about substantial increases in intake and completion, with an upward trend for these indicators at a more sustained pace starting 2000/01 (or closest year), for a variety of PCR and AIR levels initially. It is interesting to note that on a parallel with this progress, there has been a general decrease in repetition since 1990/91. This is what is suggested by graphs 2.7 and 2.8 setting out the percentages of repeaters observed on the African continent in 1990/91, 2000/01 and 2004/05 or closest years.



Over and above the average and continual decrease suggested, it is interesting to notice that amongst the countries with a higher percentage of repeaters in 2004/05 than in 2000/01, there are:

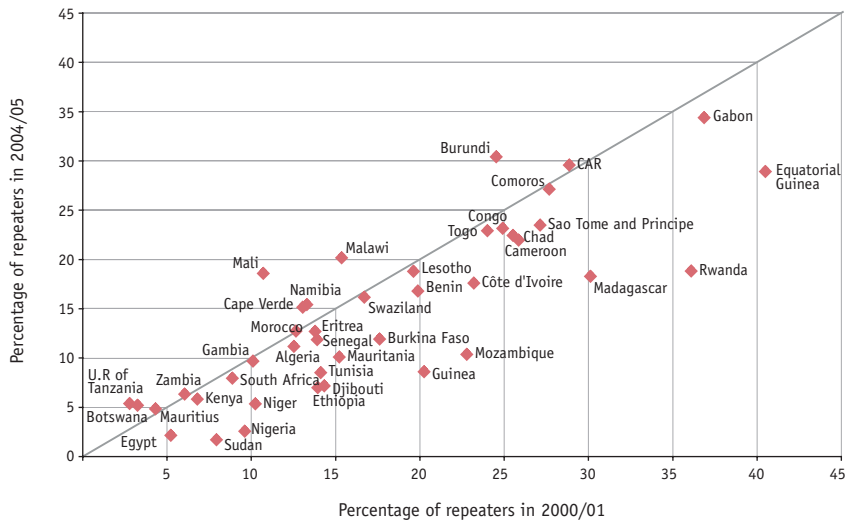
- Countries with a 2004/05 completion level lower than in 2000/01 (Central African Republic, Togo, Malawi, Cape Verde and Namibia);
- Countries where the PCR growth rate has slowed down over the 2000-2004 period (Mali and to a lesser extent Botswana);
- Countries where the trend accumulated since 1990/91 has led either to a stagnation in completion (Comoros) or to a fall in completion (Burundi, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia).

**Graph 2.7: Percentage of repeaters in 1990/91 and 2000/01 (or closest years)**



Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

**Graph 2.8: Percentage of repeaters in 2000/01 and 2004/05 (or closest years)**

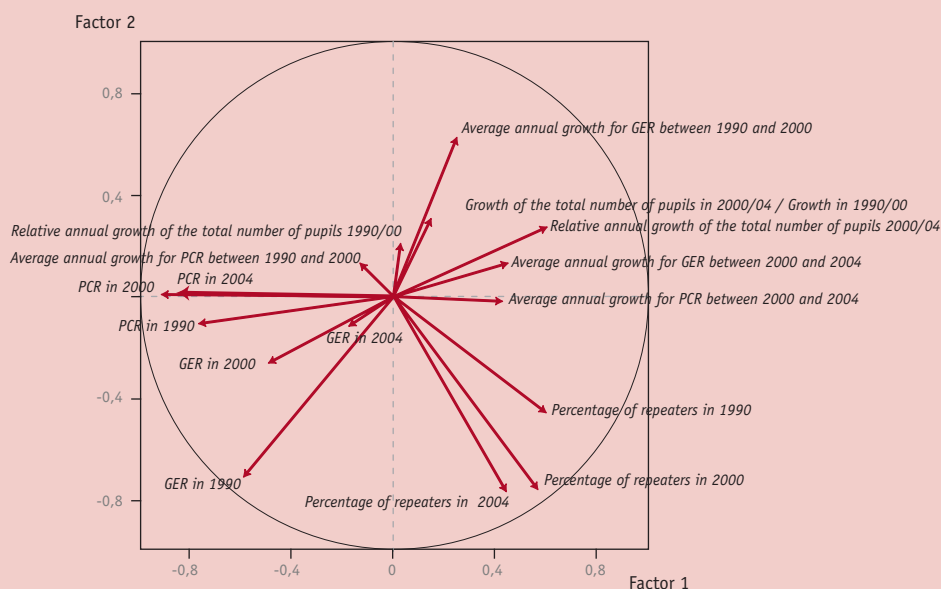


Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

Box 2.1 compares these results with the intake and completion trends observed by using more complex statistical techniques.

**Box 2.1: The global description of the evolution in primary enrolments**

Using factorial techniques, it is possible to examine globally the evolution in primary enrolments for the two periods 1990-2000 and 2000-2004, for all the African countries.



The graph above summarizes the features characterizing the evolution of primary enrolment in Africa between 1990/91 and 2004/05. On this graph, the variables represented explain 45% of the variance observed. The indicators near the circle (correlation circle), on the one hand, are those that bring in the most differences between countries. On the other hand, the differences between countries according to the indicators situated close to the centre of the circle are smaller.

**First of all, a progressive convergence in terms of primary intake can be observed.** Indeed, although there were very marked differences between countries according to the AIR level in 1990/91, these have been progressively reduced, and appear to be much less marked at the present time. The opposition between the 1990/91 AIR and the average annual increase in intake between 1990/91 and 2000/01 confirms this trend: countries that have made the most progress are those with a low level of access in 1990/91. **Finally, it is to be noted that structural efforts are a condition of evolution in access :** countries with a high AIR in 2000/01 and 2004/05 are either those that already had high access in 1990/91 or else those which made the most progress between 1990/91 and 2000/01.

From a point of view of primary completion, the differences between countries in 2000/01 and 2004/05 are seen to be just as distinct as in 1990/91. There is therefore not the same convergence as on access. **This indicates that in average, retention deteriorated in the countries where access increased the most, over the 1990-2004 period.**

Finally, concerning the level of repetition, an initial observation is that the differences between countries appear to be structural. Countries with the highest levels of repetition in 1990/91 are also those where repetition was the most frequent in 2000/01 and 2004/05. Moreover, the relationship between primary completion and the level of repetition is negative: countries with the highest completion levels are on average those with the least repetition.

### 3. Looking back at the projections regarding the perspectives of reaching universal education by 2015

This section looks back at the projections made in 2005<sup>16</sup> for primary completion on the horizon of the 2014/15 school year, and which it is appropriate to update in the light of the latest school statistics<sup>17</sup>. The method used here is quite different from the one used in 2005 as it is based on the most recent possible (2004/05 or closest year) schooling conditions (intake, completion and survival), as far as the information is available<sup>18</sup>.

Next, this is a simpler method (cf. box 2.2). It is just as sensitive to short term evolution with regard to both intake and survival, which results in some extensive differences as it will be seen later on.

The only countries not included in the present exercise are those for which information in terms of intake, survival and/or completion fluctuates too much from one year to another, or is simply not available: Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Rwanda and Libya.

The exercise was thus conducted on 43 countries, including those that could be considered close to UPE, i.e. with a primary completion rate of over 90%<sup>19</sup> in 2004/05. Indeed, the hypothesis by which those countries close to UPE can be considered as having durably reached the Dakar goal has shown its limits in the specific case of some countries like Namibia for example.

#### Box 2.2: A simplified method of projection

This takes into account a full course of primary education, of  $d$  duration, in an attempt to forecast the access rate to the last grade on the horizon of 2014/15, on the basis of the most recent schooling conditions.

The method used is based on:

- primary completion rate in 2004/05, or closest year ( $PCR_{2004/05}$ )
- primary apparent (gross) intake rate in 2004/05, or closest year ( $AIR_{2004/05}$ )
- the most recent survival rate (SR) calculated using the pseudo-longitudinal method<sup>20</sup>.

$$SR_{t,t+1} = \prod_{i=\text{second grade of primary education}}^{\text{last grade of primary education}} \frac{\text{New entrants in a given grade } i, \text{ school year } t,t+1}{\text{New entrants in previous grade } (i-1), \text{ previous year } (t-1,t)}$$

Once the survival rate has been calculated, it is applied to the apparent (gross) intake rate, to provide an initial estimate of the access rate to the last grade of primary education for the base year + the duration of that level of education (for example, if the latest AIR available is the one for 2002/03 and the full course of primary education lasts 6 years, this gives an estimate of the PCR for 2007/08):

$$PCR_{2004/05+d-1} \approx AIR_{2004/05} \times SR$$

The estimated progression between this basic year and the first projected year is then applied (in a linear manner) to the remaining period up to 2014/15:

$$PCR_{2014/15} = PCR_{2004/05+d-1} + (2014 - (2004+d-1)) \times \left[ \frac{PCR_{2004/05+d-1} - PCR_{2004/05}}{2004+d-1 - 2004} \right]$$

This relatively basic method proves however to be extremely sensitive to the variations in intake and survival rates in the short term.

16 Cf. UNESCO BREDAR +5 Report (2005).

17 Data used was for 2002/03, or closest school year.

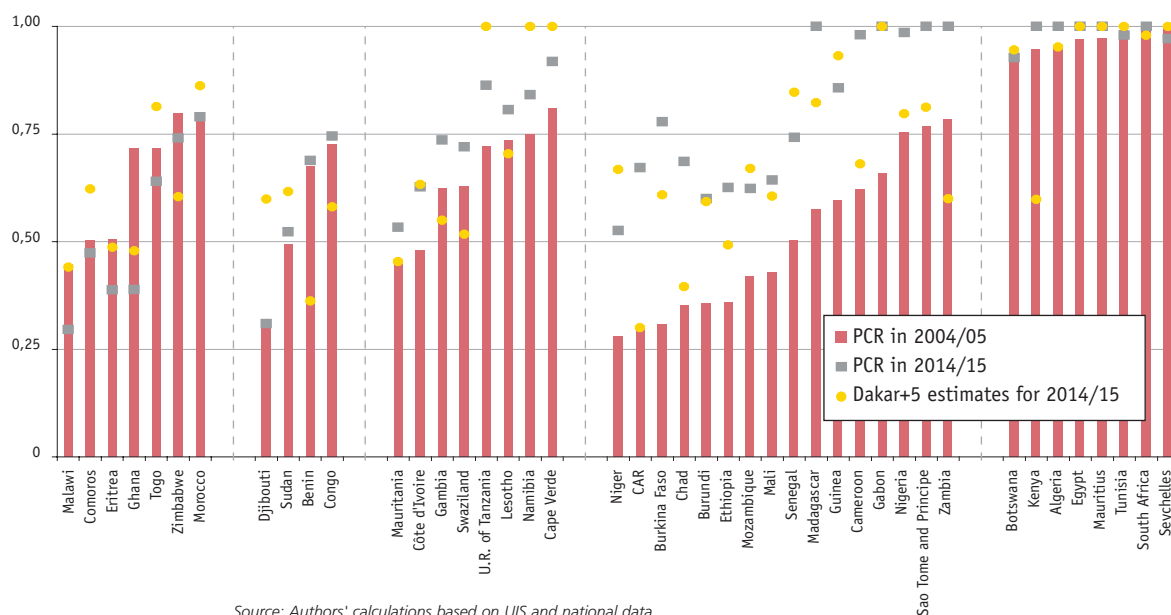
18 The method employed in the Dakar +5 Report used the average survival conditions, in favour thus of countries where a drop in survival was noted in primary education, and at the disadvantage of countries where substantial progress had been made in terms of survival.

19 The hypothesis by which countries with over 90% completion could be considered as having reached UPE has shown its limits, particularly in the case of Namibia: this country was considered as close to the goal in 2005, but has experienced a marked fall in terms of completion between 2002/03 and 2004/05.

20 For more information, cf. Reuge (2004b).

The results are shown in graph 2.9 and compared with the projections made in 2005. We shall revert to the differences between these two estimates later.

**Graph 2.9: Primary completion rate on the 2014/15 horizon, revised estimates**



Source: Authors' calculations based on UIS and national data

Four groups are obtained by ranking countries as to expected trends in evolution. However, as countries with a PCR of over 90% have to be handled differently, we have chosen to rank them in five groups:

- Countries where a fall is expected in completion rate, seeming to lead them away from the goal of UPE by 2014/15: this trend has been confirmed for Zimbabwe, Ghana and Malawi. Countries for which this trend was not expected in 2005 are also to be found in this group: Comoros, Togo, Eritrea and Morocco; for the latter two countries, it is more a question of stagnation rather than a downward trend;
- Countries where there is very little evolution (under five percentage points between now and 2014/15), with the situation therefore virtually stagnating between now and 2014/15. This is cause for concern insofar as this group's current completion level is under 75%. The scenario does appear more optimistic, in spite of everything, for Benin and Congo than it was in the projections made in 2005;
- Countries with an increase of between 5 and 15 percentage points, insufficient for all countries in the group to reach the Dakar goal by 2014/15. The current scenario is more optimistic for all countries in the group, with the exception of Cape Verde and the United Republic of Tanzania, which have experienced a large drop in their AIR levels in recent years: for example, in the United Republic of Tanzania it fell from 129% in 2002/03 to 110% in 2005/06, with no significant improvement in retention;



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- Countries where the increase is expected *a priori* to be high, over 15 percentage points, allowing some of them to reach the goal by 2014/15. This is the case, for example, for Zambia, Cameroon or Madagascar, where the scenario is more optimistic than in the earlier report due to a substantial increase in their intake level in recent years. It can be noted that while the trends in countries such as Niger, CAR, Chad or Burkina Faso will probably not enable them to be on time for the Dakar goal, the pace of their evolution should enable them, by then, to multiply their current primary completion level by two, which obviously represents considerable progress ;
- Countries with a PCR of over 90% and which should theoretically all be on time for the 2015 goal, as previously forecast, with however the exception of Kenya<sup>21</sup>.

Table 2.4 also indicates the differences observed between the 2005 projections and current projections. It can be observed that:

- for 12 countries, the gap between the two projection dates is relatively small, below 5 percentage points in absolute value: most countries where the PCR is currently over 90% are to be found here. The case of Côte d'Ivoire is peculiar in that the information structure has not changed since 2002/03. For the other countries, trends in evolution remain modest, upward or downward, both in terms of intake and survival;
- 17 countries, on the one hand, show more optimistic primary completion levels in 2014/15 than forecast in 2005. For the most part, this can be explained mainly by a very high increase in intake since 2002/03 (Madagascar + 30 percentage points, Burkina Faso + 20 points, Mauritania + 10 points, Chad + 15 points), with no significant modification to survival over the same period<sup>22</sup>.
- 14 countries, on the other hand, now show less optimistic trends than those envisaged in 2005. In most cases, this is the result of a deterioration in intake indicators (Cape Verde and United Republic of Tanzania) or survival indicators like for example Senegal, Guinea or Niger. The case of the latter three countries well illustrates the fact that progress in terms of intake is not enough and that it is necessary to identify the conditions of optimum retention in order to be able to achieve the UPE goal.

21 The difference in projections can be explained in this case by a purely technical criterion insofar as in 2005, the international classification indicated duration of seven years for a full course of primary education in Kenya, whereas duration of six years is more appropriate.

22 The differences noticed for the Central African Republic, and to a lesser extent Congo, can be partially explained by a better knowledge of the sector and an adjustment in administrative statistics conducted in the framework of the CSR exercises finalized early 2007.

**Table 2.4: Comparison in projections 2005 and 2007**

	Number of countries	Countries (in brackets, projection gaps in absolute percentage point values)
Projection 2007 = Projection 2005	12	Côte d'Ivoire (1), Burundi (1), Mozambique (5), Mali (4), Gabon(0), Botswana (2), Algeria (5), Egypt (0), Mauritius (0), Tunisia (2), South Africa (2), Seychelles (3)
Projection 2007 > Projection 2005	17	Mauritania (8), Lesotho (10), Ethiopia (13), Zimbabwe (14), Congo (16), Burkina Faso (17), Madagascar (18), Gambia (19), Swaziland (19), Sao Tome and Principe (19), Nigeria (19), Chad (29), Cameroon (30), Benin (33), Central African Republic (37), Zambia (40) Kenya (40),
Projection 2007 < Projection 2005	14	Morocco (7), Guinea (7), Cape Verde (8), Sudan (9), Ghana (9), Eritrea (10), Senegal (11), United Republic of Tanzania (14), Niger (14), Malawi (15), Comoros (15), Namibia (16), Togo (17), Djibouti (29)
	43	Absolute gap simple average = 5

Source: Author's calculations based on UIS and national data

Finally, it is noted that, according to current projections, 28 out of the 43 countries for which data is available may not manage to reach UPE on the horizon of 2015 (their PCR would still be under 90% in 2014/15), with 22 showing particularly low completion levels (under 75%). These projections are however more optimistic than those made in 2005, when it was forecast that 31 countries would not be on time for the 2014/15 goal (cf. table 2.5).

**Table 2.5: Situation of African countries with regard to the 2014/15 UPE goal**

		Projections based on 2004/05 data or closest year			
		PCR 2014/15 over 90%	PCR 2014/15 between 75% and 90%	PCR 2014/15 under 75%	Number of countries
Projections based on 2002/03 data or closest year	PCR 2014/15 over 90%	Cape Verde, Gabon, Botswana, Egypt, Algeria, Mauritius, Tunisia, South Africa, Seychelles	United Republic of Tanzania, Namibia, Guinea		12
	PCR 2014/15 between 75 and 90%	Madagascar, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe	Morocco	Togo, Senegal	6
	PCR 2014/15 under 75%	Zambia, Cameroon, Kenya	Lesotho, Burkina Faso	Comoros, Eritrea, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Djibouti, Sudan, Benin, Congo, Mauritania, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Gambia, Swaziland, Niger, Central African Republic, Chad, Burundi, Mozambique, Mali Ethiopia	25
	Number of countries	15	6	22	43

Source: Author's calculations based on UIS and national data

## 4. Conclusion

Intake capacity in primary education varies tremendously throughout Africa and even when there are sufficient places - 28 countries had a GER of over 100% in 2004/05 - many children are not able to attend a full course of primary education. Africa therefore still has some distance to cover in order to reach UPE, with progress necessary both in terms of intake and, above all, in managing pupil flow (repetition and survival). Data on recent evolution suggests better dynamics since 2000/01 for both primary intake and completion: some countries have even made considerable progress, as a result of effective mobilization towards the Dakar goal. However, these dynamics will not suffice for achieving UPE: indeed, if current schooling conditions continue, both in terms of intake and survival, then it is estimated that 27 countries will have a primary completion rate of below 90% in 2014/15 and 21 would even be under the threshold of 75%. These projections are, due to recent trends, more optimistic than the 2005 projections insofar as it was estimated that 31 African countries would be under the 90% completion mark. They are nonetheless cause for concern as they mean that at least 25% of children belonging to the official age group for the final grade of primary school will be unable to complete primary education. These projections are valid however under current schooling conditions: there is therefore some possible leeway and improvements in terms of intake and survival could act as a springboard for Africa to reach more optimistic scenarios.

