Effective Use of Large-Scale Assessment Results for Equity Purposes

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Outline

- Framework for understanding impact of Assessment on Equity
  - Large scale assessment surveys - LSAS
  - Equity v Equality
- Assessment and Equity
- Examples of reporting results
- Challenges

Acknowledgements

- UNICEF – commission paper on Learning Outcomes, Assessment and Equity

- Gauteng Department of Education (SA) – project on development of a national framework for reporting assessment scores

Large-scale assessment surveys

- Conducted at different levels
  - International
  - Regional
  - National
- Provides information to:
  - Identify subgroups in need of resources and/or interventions
  - Monitor context of learning and teaching
  - Track student performance
  - Review effects of policies
  - Evaluate programs and research projects

Equity vs Equality

- Equality: principle of **fairness** for the individual -

  - means every individual has an equal chance of success and should not be treated differently.

- Equity: principle of **fair allocation** for the group –

  - means every group should have a fair stake in education according to proportion.

Assessment & Equity

- It is **<u>only</u>** when teaching and learning does not adequately meet the needs of learners that problems arise in the pursuit of equity in the assessment of diverse populations (Gordon, 1995)

- Equity is about the performance of the "*weakest*" learners and not how well the best learners perform

- In learning terms - its about raising the platform for the "*weakest*"

- That is, while challenges of equity in education are best addressed within the context of society at large, or within the context of the entire education system, assessment **CAN** contribute towards improving (or sometimes exacerbating) problems relating to equity in education.

Levels of assessment impact

- Technical Level

- Application level

- Systemic

- Impact both Policy and Practice

1. Technical level

- Comprises item writing, test development, administration and marking of instruments, analysis, reporting and dissemination of data as well as issues of reliability and validity.

2. Application Level

- Comprises the effective use of assessment information to improve learning of specific individuals or groups of individuals.

3. Systemic Level

- Comprises the use of assessment information to effect changes at the level of national, provincial/state or district –

Potential impact on equity

- Impact can be positive or negative
- High - implies that impact is substantial
- low - implies that the impact is negligible
- can be both high and low – depend on context and application

Impact on equity is **<u>relatively low</u>** due to:

- Use of sampling

- Technical procedures applied is **often** very rigorous.

  - especially true for regional and international surveys

LSAS: Systemic Level

Potential impact on equity – **<u>High</u>**

- Report on performance levels of:
  - different sub-groups within population of learners and
  - different levels of an education system, i.e. district or region,
- Provide information to policy makers for allocating resources on more equitable resources,
- Identifying learning and teaching needs of marginalised and disadvantaged groups
- Monitoring specific sub-groups
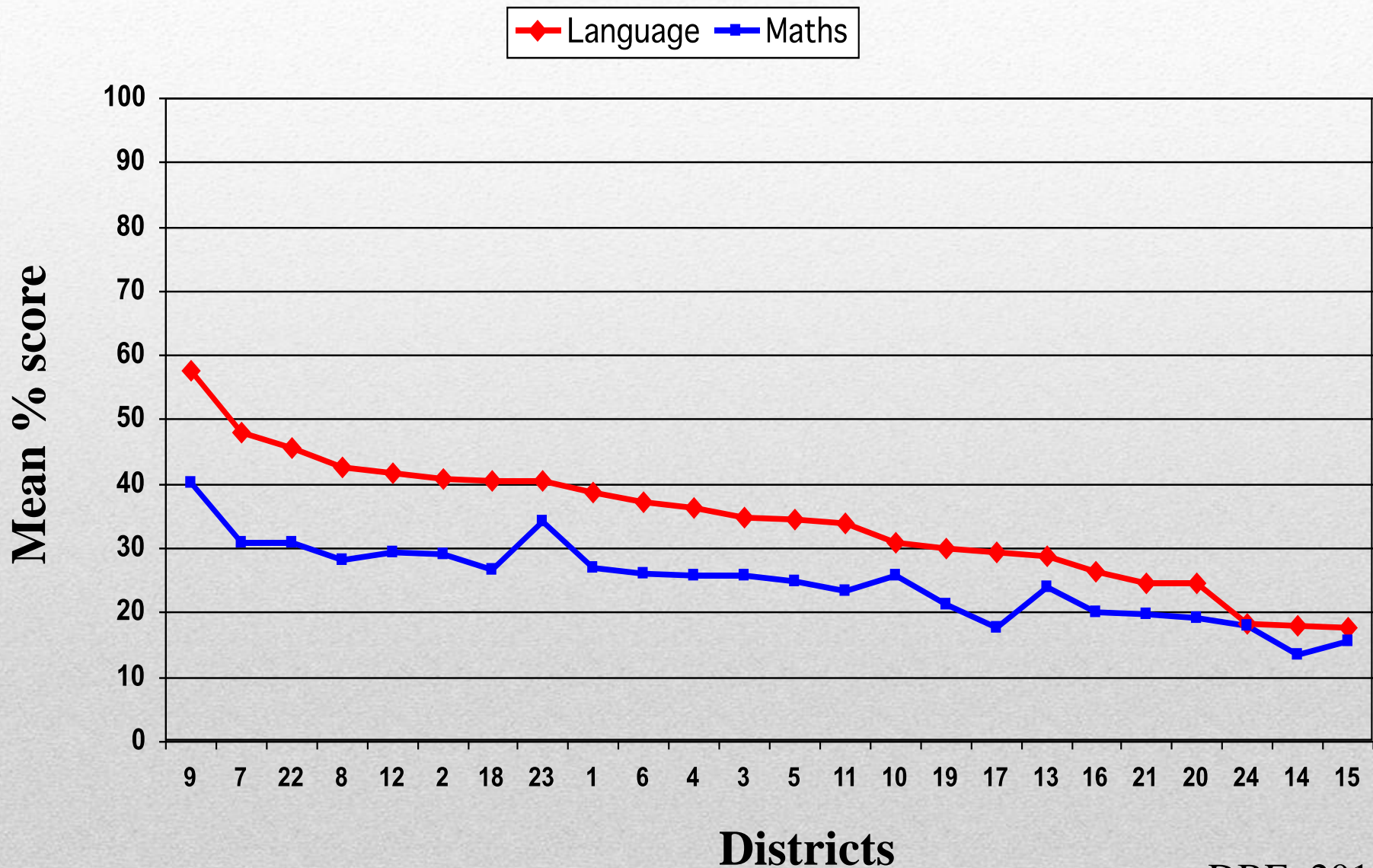
SA TIMSS 2003 Gender Results

Boys	Girls
262 (6.2)	264 (6.4)

School Type	Boys	Girls
Ex-DET	226 (3.2)	228 (3.4)
Ex-HoA	464 (24.3)	472 (19.0)

(Reddy et al, 2006)

Curriculum coverage: Maths

School Type	Percentage > 25 Topics
Type 1	26
Type 2	25
Type 3	38
Type 4	75

JET, 2011

Differences by wealth, location - SACMEQ 2007

Differences in learning achievement are related to wealth and location

Percentage of grade 6 students scoring from level 5 to level 8 in the SACMEQ reading assessment, 2007
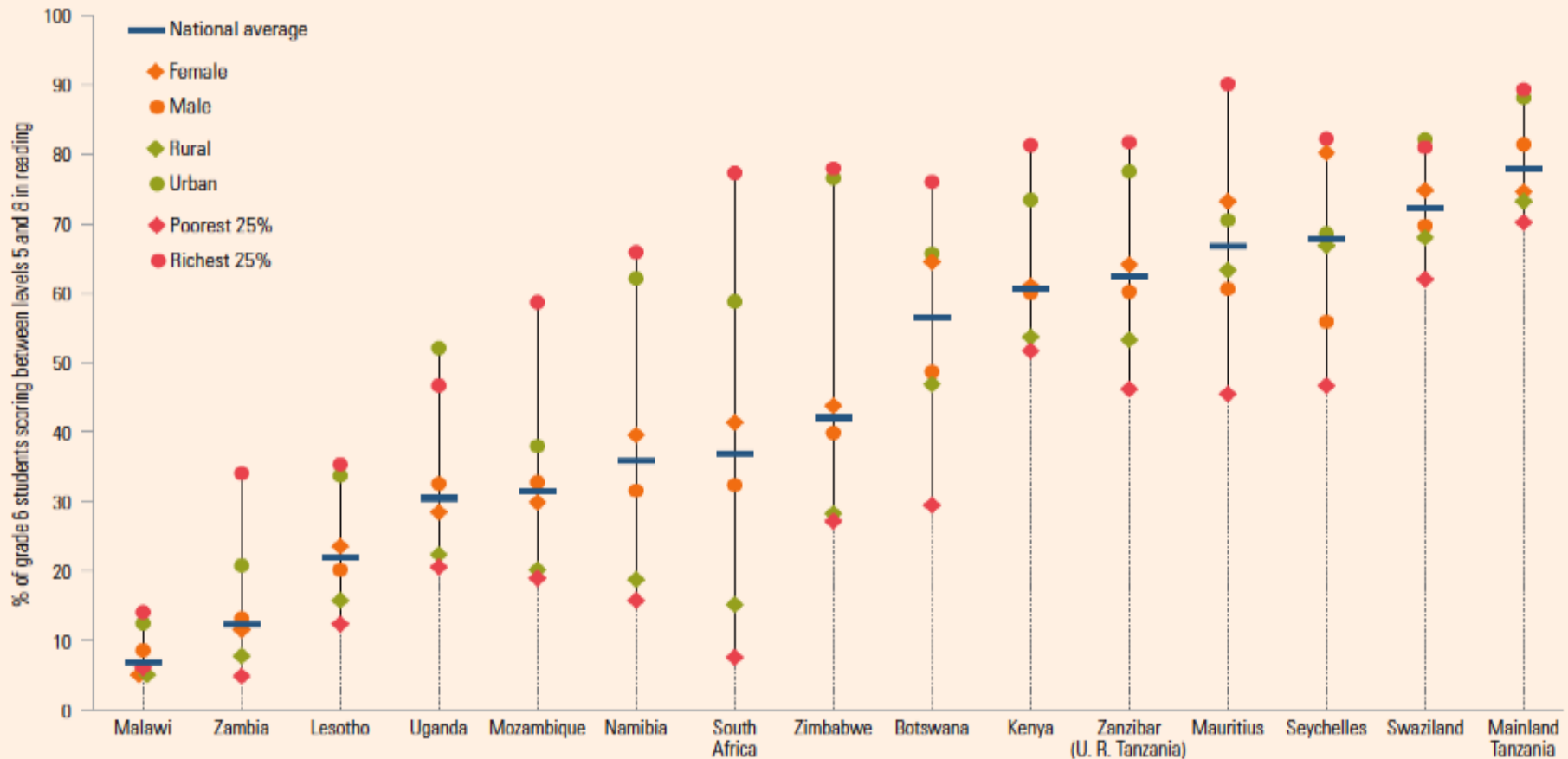
Note: SACMEQ uses eight levels to rank grade 6 reading skills. Level 1 students are classified as having only pre-reading skills. Level 5 students are classified as having interpretive reading skills and level 8 students are assessed as having obtained critical reading skills.
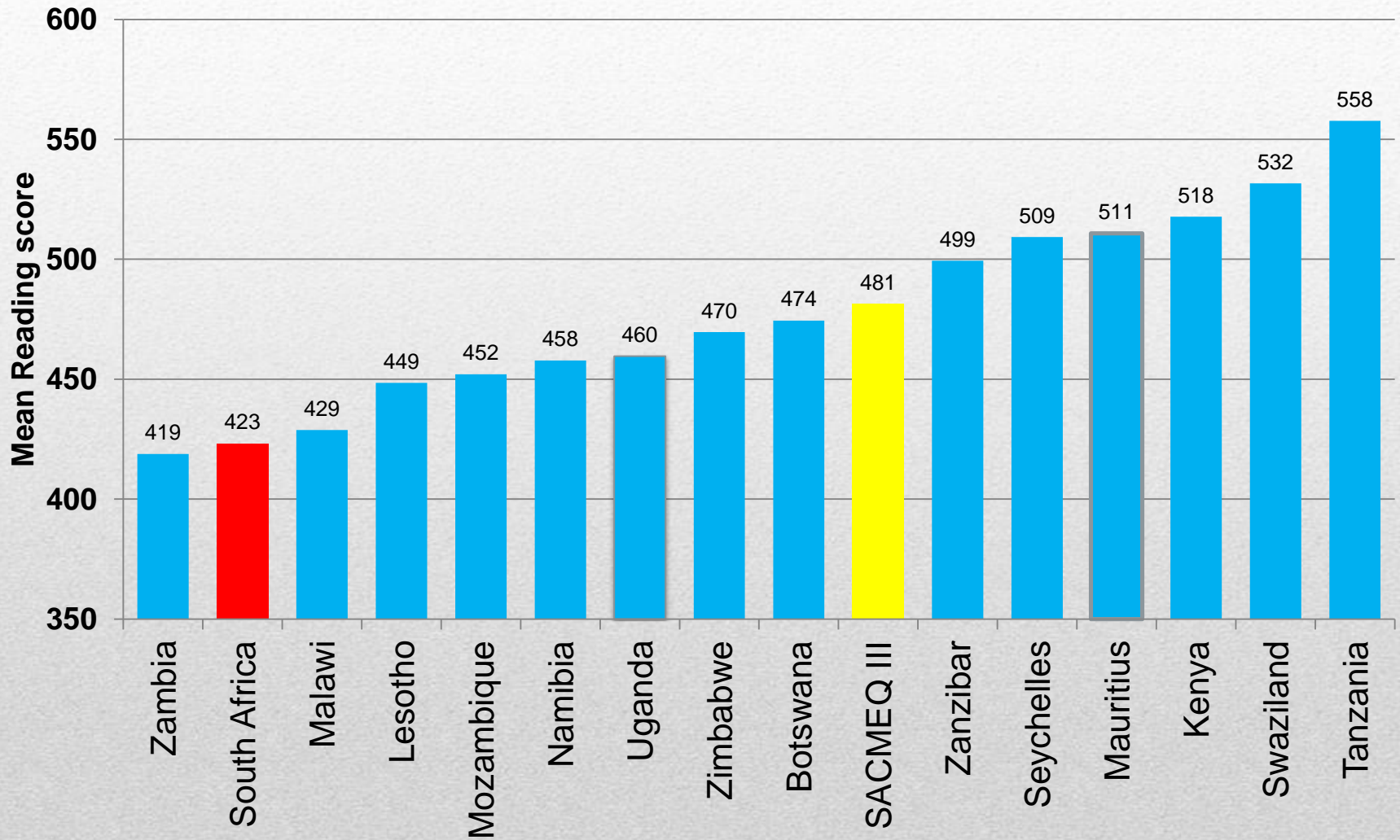Source: Hungi et al. (2010).

Hungi, 2011

Mean Reading scores (SACMEQ 3)
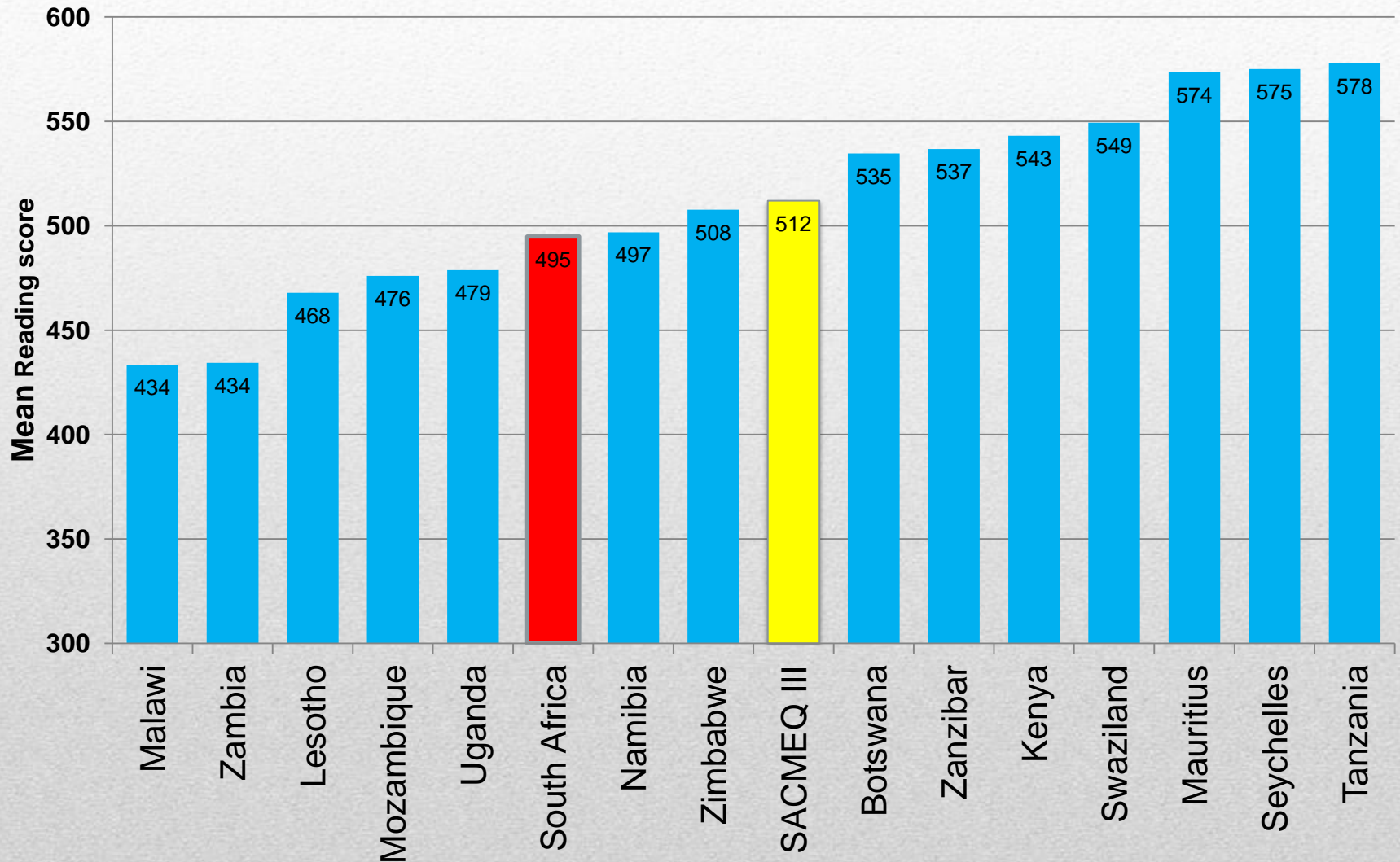
v d Berg, 2011

# Reading scores for poorest 25% (SACMEQ 3)

v d Berg, 2011

Census based national surveys

- information on the performance of **all** learners at specific level - available to teachers, parents and school heads,

- can be used to identify, and implement relevant interventions, for **specific individual**, schools and/or districts

- Successful implementation of such interventions has had huge benefit for poor and marginalised learners.
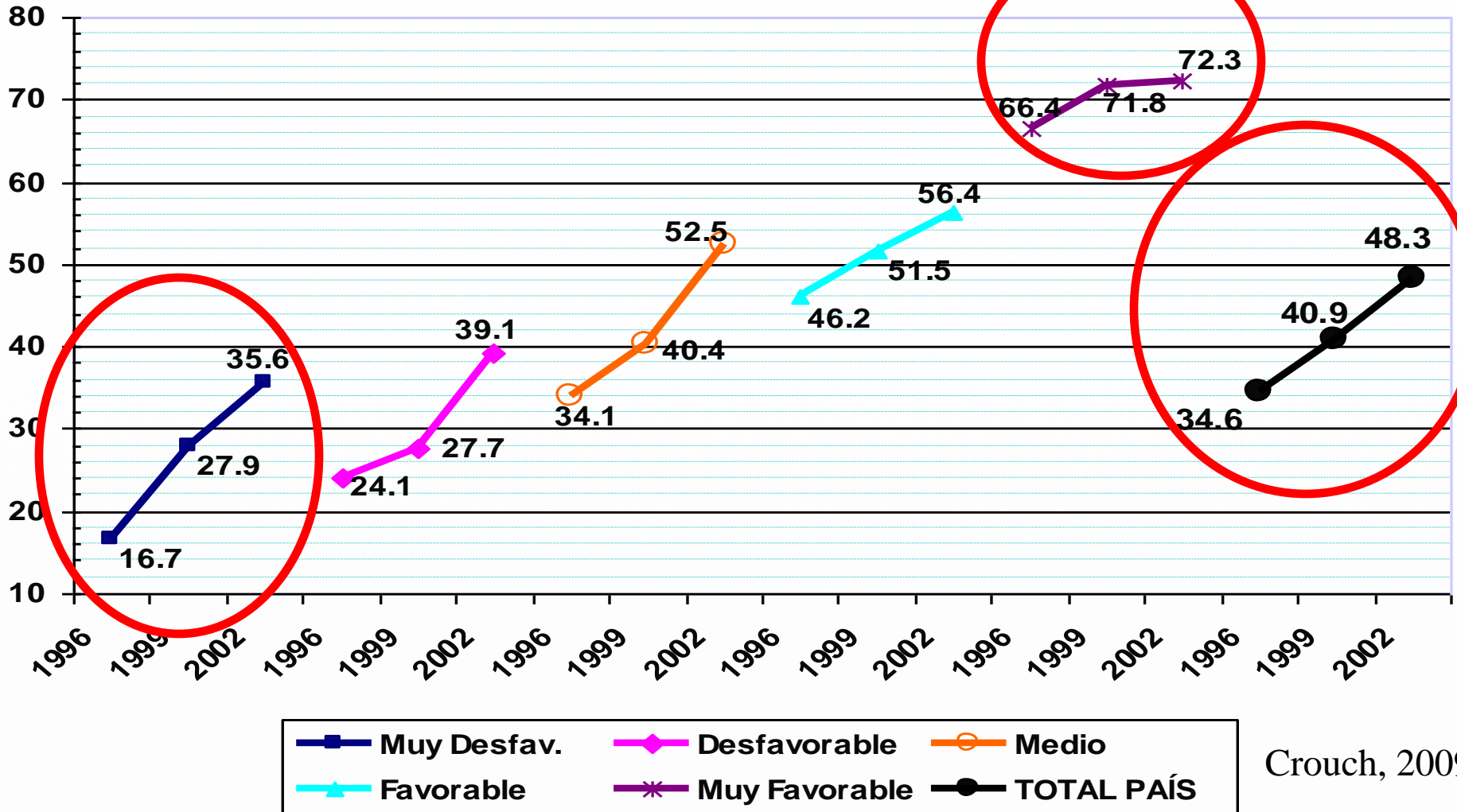
Results by poverty level - Language

Change by poverty level in % students with "sufficient" knowledge, language

Note origin is truncated

Crouch, 2009
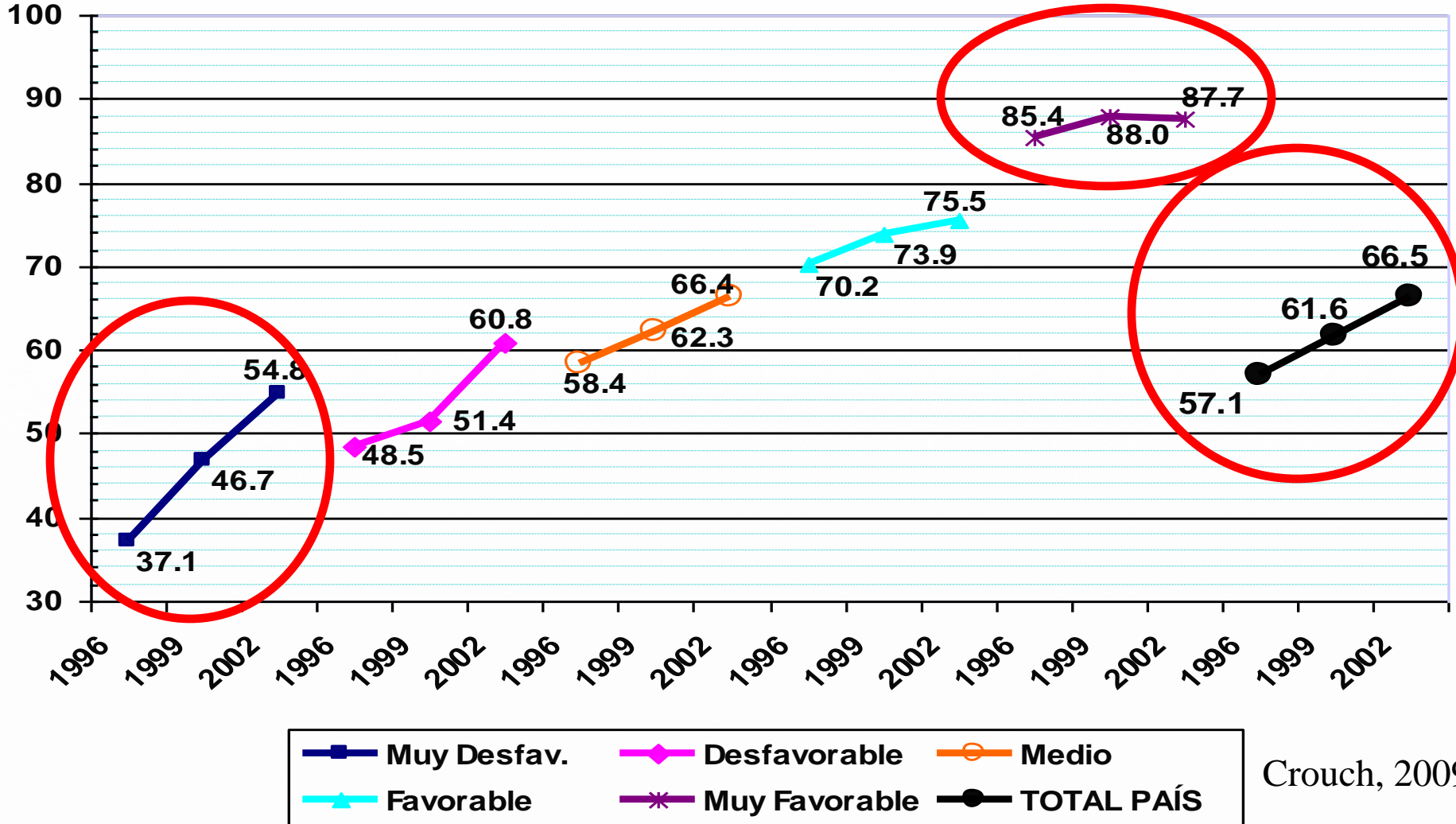
Results by poverty level - Maths

Results by poverty level in % of students with "sufficient" knowledge - math

Crouch, 2009

Key Challenges

- Data must be used to support decision making
- Explicit focus on addressing needs of poor and marginalized children

- How to balance needs of all children in the context of limited resources:
  - Boys & Girls
  - Poor & Wealthy backgrounds
  - Rural & Urban

Thank You

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

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