

# **Education and the Poor: Eradicating the Plague of Illiteracy**

European Launch of the WDR 2000

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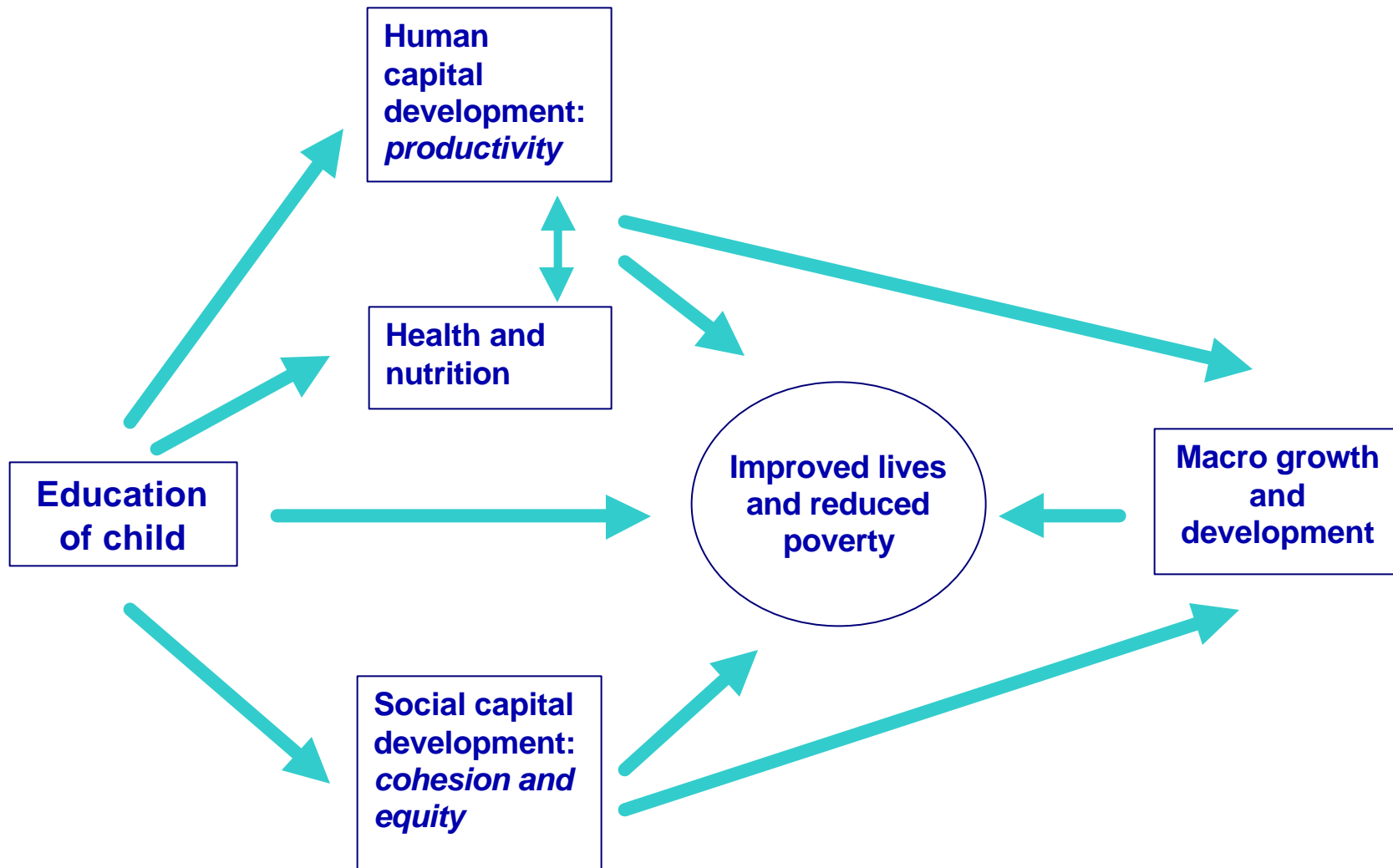
# Outline

- New times - new prospects for EFA?
- Education and the poor
- Room for maneuver to increase literacy
- An action plan is needed

# New times?

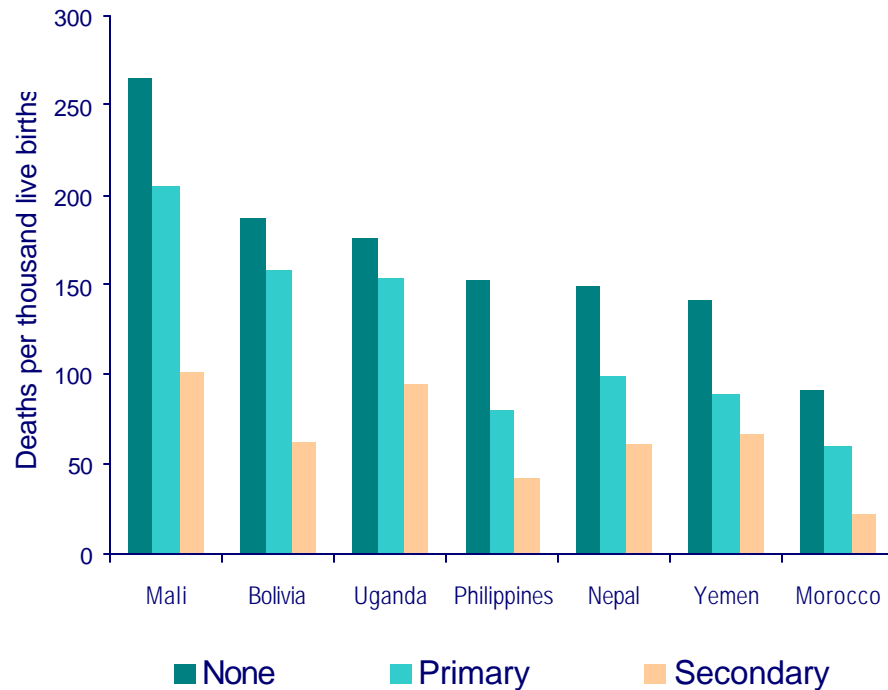
- “Education For All” initiatives
- Success will depend on
  - commitment and leadership at the national level
  - a supportive international community
- History counts, but change is possible

# The impact of education on people's lives

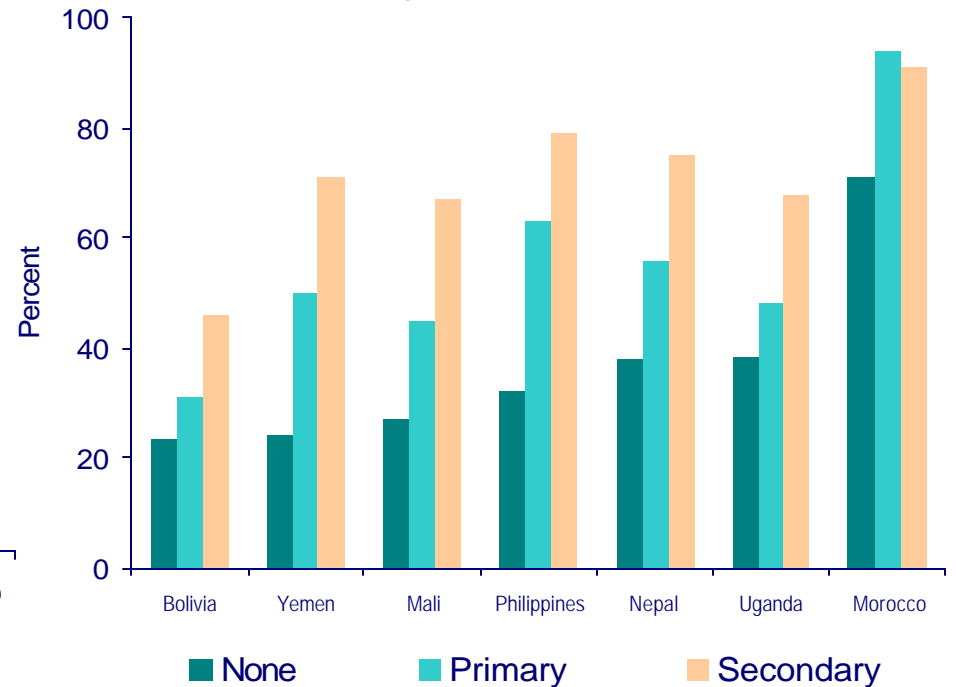


# Mother's education and child outcomes

## Under-5 mortality by mother's education



## Percent of children with all vaccinations by mother's education

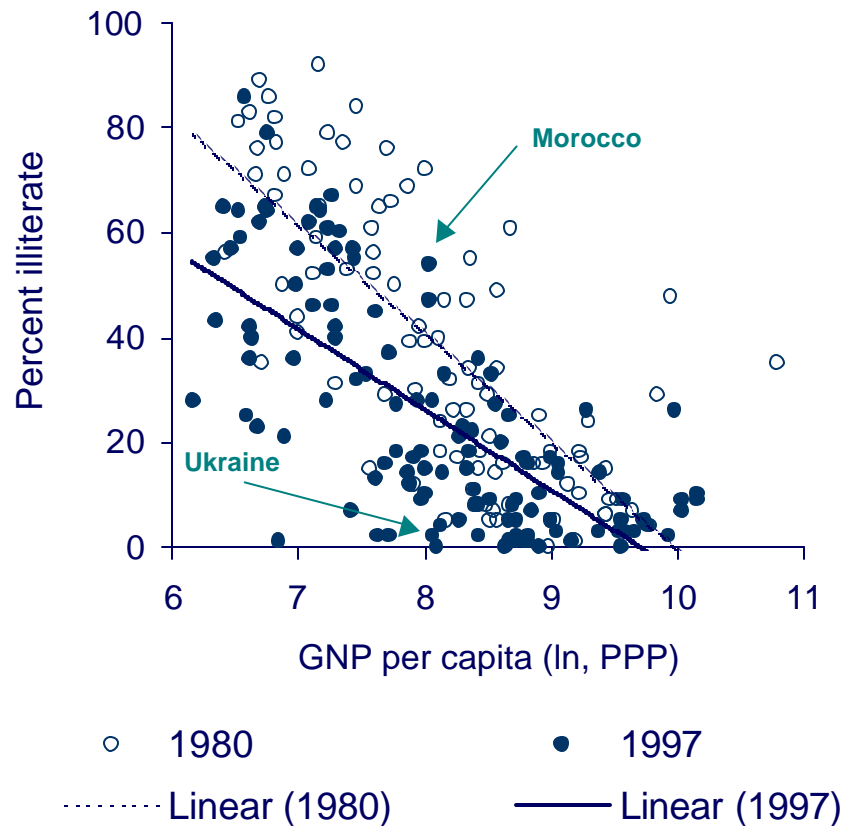


## **Education access of children of the poor is too limited**

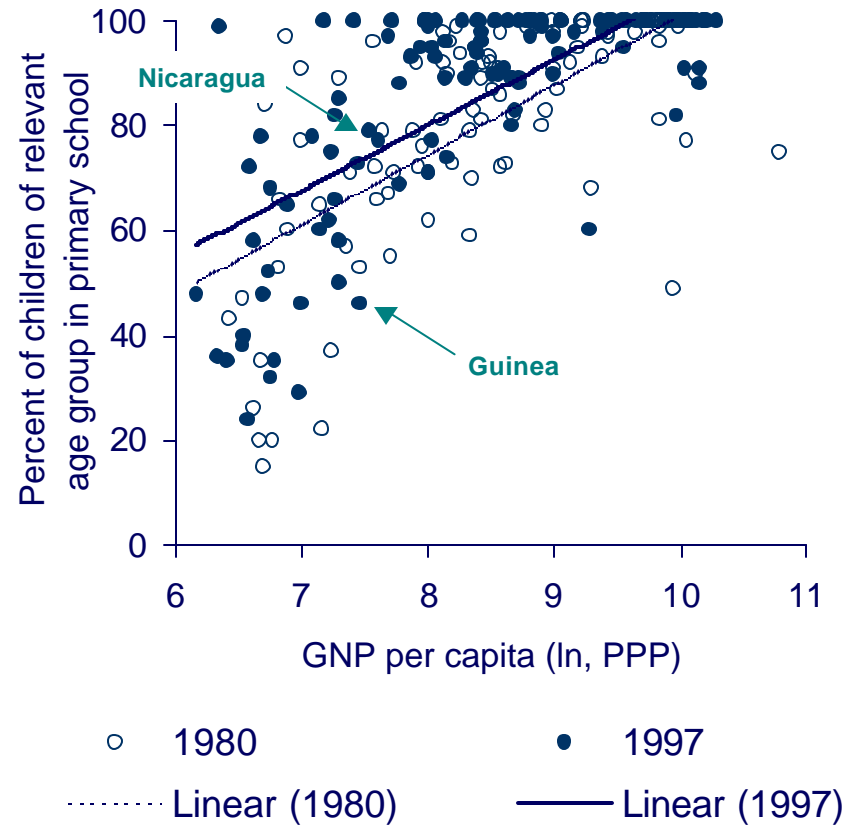
- Heterogeneity in what countries are able to achieve at a given level of income
- Within countries the poor often have dramatically lower outcomes
- Additional dimensions of inequalities, for example
  - functional literacy
  - quality of education
  - the “attainment profile”

# National income and education outcomes

Adult illiteracy and GNP per capita, 1980 and 1997



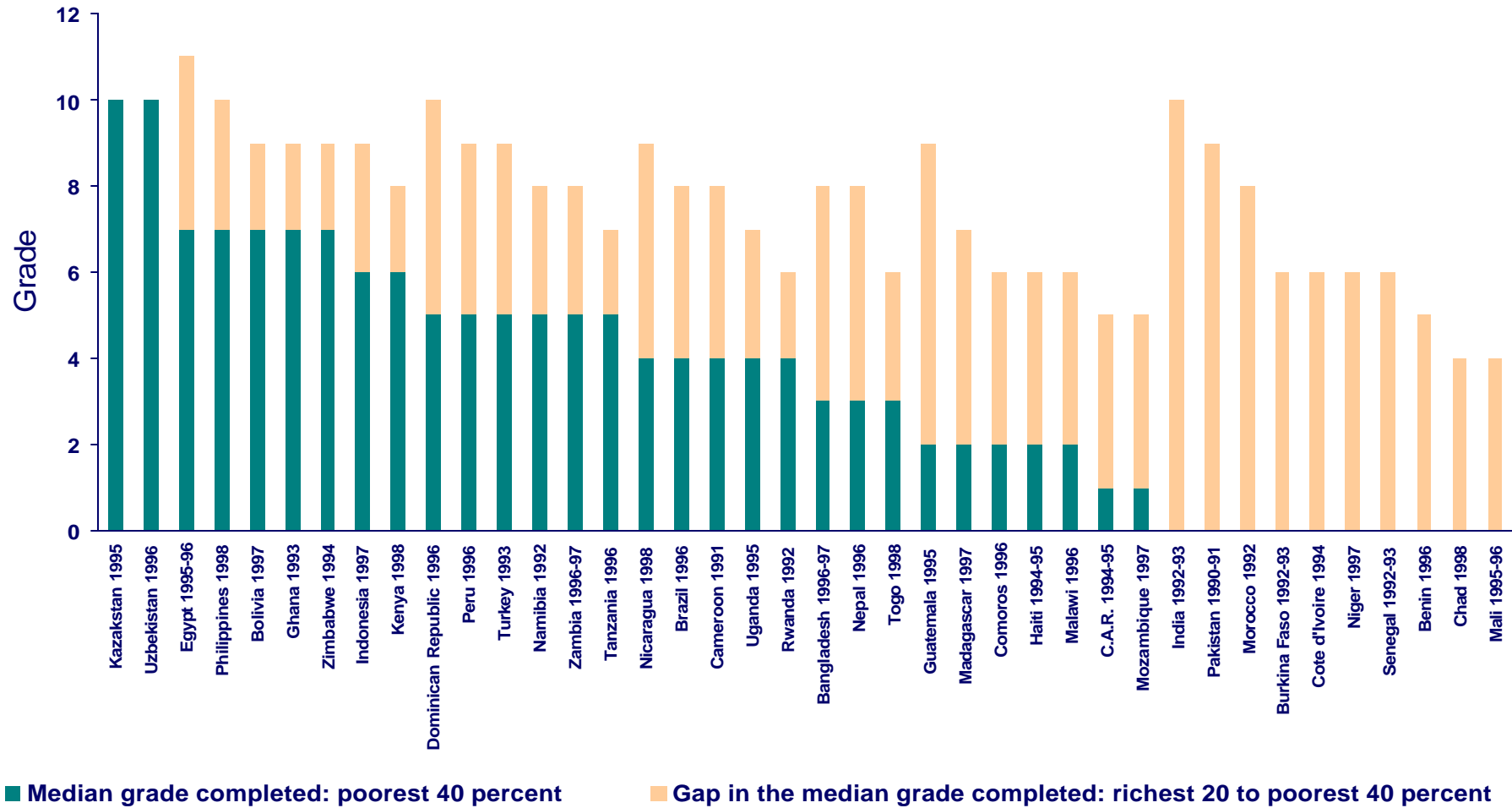
Primary net enrollment rate and GNP per capita, 1980 and 1997



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# Rich-poor differentials in median grade attained



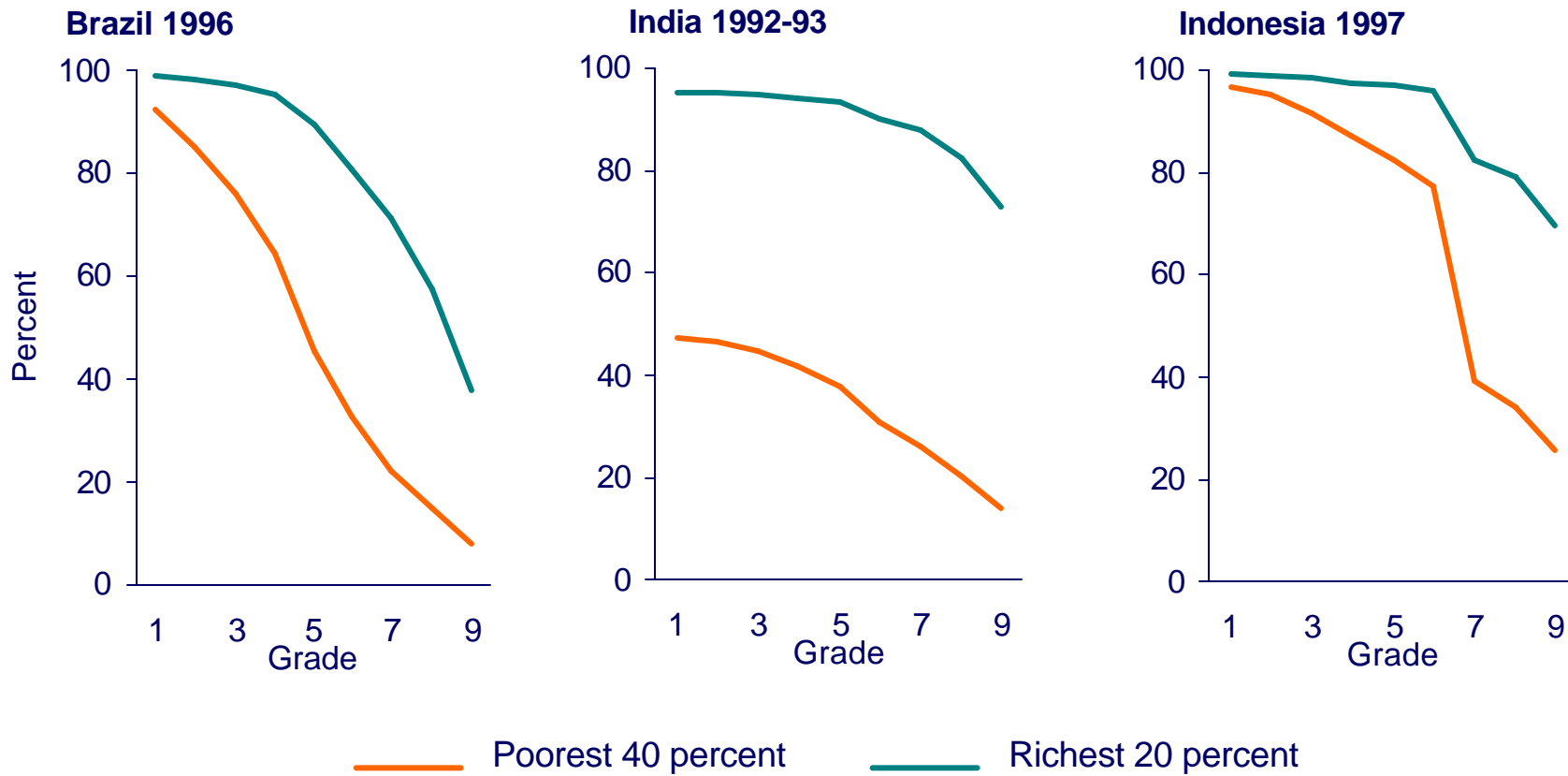
Source: Updated from Filmer and Pritchett (1998)

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# Differences in the entire “attainment profile” across and within countries

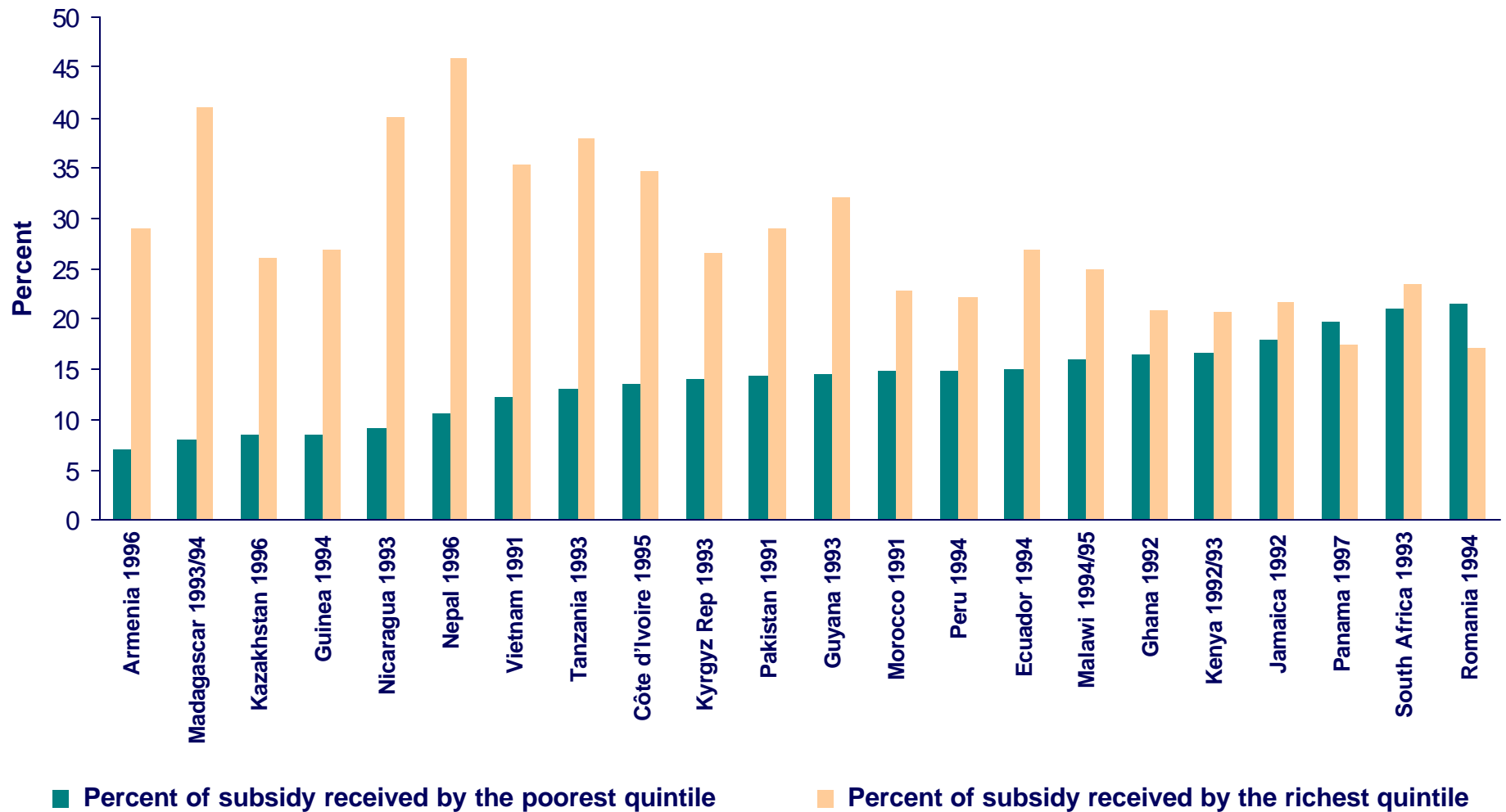
Percent of the 15 to 19 year old cohort that has completed each grade



## **Public spending on education is often regressive**

- The poor frequently receive less of the public spending on education than do the rich

# Percent of public subsidy received by the richest and poorest quintiles



Source: Li, Steele, Glewwe (1999)

# Room for maneuver

- Rapid change is possible, for example...
  - Uganda's Universal Primary Education initiative
  - El Salvador's *Education con Participacion de la Comunidad (EDUCO)* program

# Room for maneuver

- National systems can learn from international experience
- Strategies for learning from good practice
  - school autonomy
  - transparency
  - parental involvement and choice

# Room for maneuver

- A supportive international community
  - information about comparative performance
  - debt relief and other long-run finance
  - information about worldwide experience
  - cross-agency coordination

# An action plan ...

- EFA goals will not be reached without effort
  - country ownership
  - country-level constraints (vested interests, tradeoffs, ...)

# An action plan ...

- International cooperation can help create room for maneuver
  - transparency of international comparisons
  - evaluative research
  - comparisons of quality of education *policy*
  - financial room for maneuver (debt relief, grants, and loans)

