

Education Financing in Mozambique and its Challenges

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ABSTRACT – Education Financing in Mozambique and its Challenges. This article aims to analyze the funding of education in Mozambique at a time when the sector is facing problems of scarcity of funds for the financing and implementation of its policies. As methodology, we conducted a bibliographic research on the subject and analyzed the documents of the education sector – Citizen Account and State General Accounts – from 2015 to 2020. The findings of this research show us that, although government direct funding to the education sector, through an internal source, is growing, this growth is still below the needs of the sector. The funding of education in Mozambique is still largely dependent on external donors' support. **Keywords: Educational Funding. Primary and Secondary Education. Mozambican Education. Education Policies.**

RESUMO – O Financiamento da Educação em Moçambique e seus Desafios. Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar o financiamento da educação em Moçambique numa altura em que o setor está enfrentando problemas de exiguidade de fundos para o financiamento e implementação das suas políticas. Como procedimentos metodológicos, realizamos uma pesquisa bibliográfica sobre o tema e analisamos os documentos do setor de educação – Conta Cidadão e Contas Gerais do Estado – do período de 2015 a 2020. Os resultados desta pesquisa nos mostram que, embora o financiamento direto do governo ao setor da educação, por meio de fonte interna, esteja a crescer, esse crescimento ainda está aquém das necessidades do setor. O financiamento da educação em Moçambique depende, ainda, em grande medida, do apoio externo de doadores. **Palavras-chave: Financiamento Educacional. Educação Primária e Secundária. Educação Moçambicana. Políticas de Educação.**

Introduction

Education funding is one of the problems that most underdeveloped countries face daily. Many of these countries are economically dependent due to their respective States' fragility and postcolonial condition (Crossley, 2001; Williams, 2009). Vieira, Vidal, and Queiroz (2021) argue that "education financing is a key theme of the debate on educational policy. Far from being exhaustively discussed by the literature in the field, it represents a challenge fruitful and permanent to reflection" (Vieira; Vidal; Queiroz, 2021, p. 1)

In the case of Mozambique, since the country's independence in 1975, the Government has faced problems in financing its education. About this reality, Oliveira (1995) states that "enabling democratic and quality public education implies providing financing sources" (Oliveira, 1995, p. 76)

Authors such as Roggero and Silva (2021) state that "adequate educational resources contribute strongly to reduce educational and social inequalities" (Roggero; Silva, 2021, p. 2) Campanha... (2020), Cara (2012), Ximenes (2015), Araújo (2016), and Pinto (2018) are among the authors who emphasize that education financing is one of the axes for a nation's social, economic, and political advance.

The difficulty of financing the Mozambican education caused the country to later choose to ask its international partners to help finance it. In a first phase, external funding came from several countries (bilateral and multilateral), from the period of socialist orientation (1975-1986) and in the later phase of multipartidarism (1990). These financings were directed to the General State Budget until 2001. In 2002, the Education Sector Support Fund (FASE) was created, which is the main instrument for channeling external funds to the sector. "The Common Fund (FASE) is the most aligned instrument for channeling external funds to finance the sector's annual plan, using state procedures and instruments regarding planning, implementation, and monitoring", says the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH, 2010, p. 56).

The Common Fund (FASE), by which most of the external funding to the sector is channeled, contributes to the financing of key programs focusing on funding programs for basic education, such as the textbook, direct support to schools, teacher training, supervision, and accelerated construction of classrooms. Half of the FASE spending is continuous.

Among the many objectives of the FASE, the following stand out: [1] - achieve the Millennium Development Goal; [2] - achieve Universal Primary Education for all; and [3] - ensure the completion of primary education for all children in 2015. The FASE was created by the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI). FTI follows the commitment of the international community established at the 4th World Education for All Forum in Dakar, stating that no country committed to provid-

ing basic education for all and with a credible plan would be limited to achieving this goal due to the lack of financial resources (MINEDH, 2010, p. 8). Therefore, it was by the FTI that the Direct Support to Schools (ADE) was introduced.

Hanlon (1997) considers that “Mozambique has become the country most dependent on foreign aid and probably still is” (Hanlon, 1997, p. 15). Abrahamsson and Nilsson (1994) state that “Mozambique is now in a considerably worse situation than at the time of independence” (Abrahamsson; Nilsson, 1994, 73).

We understand that the country should reduce foreign aid and create its own sources of investment for education and other social and economic areas. As long as partners continue to fund education, they will continue to outline Mozambique’s educational policies and we will hardly leave this external dependence. World Bank documents (1995) highlight this reality. The Education for All Global Monitoring Report tells that “external models of good educational practices, defended without much conviction by different groups of agencies, are generally not sufficiently attuned to local circumstances” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 23).

Unable to manage and finance education, the Mozambican Government has opted for privatizing education since 1990 to get rid of the financial burden. Therefore, Mozambique has forgotten that there is not a single experience in the world that has developed high educational standards with discourses, but with resources. Silva and Oliveira (2020) claims that “[...] when governments rely on privatization to expand access to education, this approach may conflict with the promotion of universal access, especially for the most marginalized populations” (Silva; Oliveira, 2020, p. 14).

This article is therefore divided into four parts. The first part will focus on the modalities of education financing in Mozambique. The second part will analyze the general budget of the Governments in the last five years. The last part will address Mozambique’s financing challenges.

Modalities of Education Financing in Mozambique

In the Strategic Education Plan 2020-2029: for an inclusive, patriotic, and quality education – PEE 2020-2029 (MINEDH, 2020), of the Ministry of Education and Human Development of Mozambique, it reads:

[...] the Financing Strategy adopted in previous years combined fund raising, in a combined manner, in different ways. State Resources, Cooperation Partners’ Resources (in different modalities), Parents’ and Head of Education’s Resources and Contributions of the Private Sector and Non-Governmental Organizations (in kind or in cash) (MINEDH, 2020, p. 174).

Among the largest contributions in the Sector, the State's resources via the State Budget and the Cooperation Partners' resources stood out, channeled by a common fund called the Education Sector Support Fund (FASE).

The external funding sources consists of direct support to the sector budget (or like this modality), bilateral and multilateral projects (which may be implemented jointly either by one of the parties or with different inputs and which vary on a case-by-case basis and depending on the funding entity), contributions and donations in kind, and partnerships with the private sector (still in reduced number and volume) (MINEDH, 2020, p. 176).

About 75% of the funds external to the sector are channeled annually into Mozambique by the FASE. Only 30% of this value are used for school constructions.

In recent years, the FASE group's number of partners and volume of contributions have reduced because some partners who supported the state budget and the financing of the Education sector in Mozambique left the country when the infamous hidden debts of US\$2.2 million were revealed in 2015. Some countries remained and others returned later to exercise their foreign aid commitments. For example, in response to the COVID-19 national economic and social crisis, the European Union (EU) resumed support for the State Budget (OE) via the short-term program called the State and Resilience Building Contract (SRBC). According to the Education for All Movement (MEPT), the program aims to help the Government of Mozambique alleviate the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, with a specific focus on education, social protection, and health, which resulted in the signing of this new program in November 2020, with a financing agreement signed between the EU and the Mozambican government lasting three years. To ensure the efficient and effective use of this fund, the MEPT was entrusted with "monitoring the funds allocated to the Education Sector in the Context of COVID-19".

We should note that the Memorandum of Understanding that guided the FASE financing mechanism ended in 2019 and was extended to a subsequent period, from 2020 to 2029.

External funding also comes from national and international NGOs that directly support schools, by donating supplies, building and reactivating classrooms, training teachers in practice, in the areas of literacy and in the development of early childhood activities (Pre-School Education).

The private sector has contributed slightly to the growth of the Education sector and is especially oriented to the reform of Technical-Professional Education. The Strategic Plan 2012-2019 "contributed in terms of providing educational services, by constructing private technical schools, providing school equipment and materials, and scholarships" (MINEDH, 2020, p. 176).

The Education sector, like other sectors, prioritized or not, complies with the financing modality composed of contributions of internal and external resources. The internal source finances most of the education sector's expenditure (about 83% in 2018 and 89% in 2019), such as salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff and goods and services for the functioning of institutions. The internal contribution (internal source of financing) comes from internal resources, from state tax collections.

The sector's educational policy report points out that "[...] in Mozambique, the current budget represents about 81% of the total education budget, whereas the rest is dedicated to investment" (MINEDH; UNESCO, 2019, p. 89).

The other internal contribution comes from the small contribution of those responsible for the education, which is directed, in certain cases, to the payment of guards. This contribution has created controversies among parents and those responsible for the education, who state: "we do not have an obligation to contribute to the salary of guards, because it is the State's right to pay their salary". Even so, the sector has not yet retreated, claiming that:

These contributions are welcome and should be encouraged, managed, and transparently reported to the school community, but should not be understood by parents and those responsible for the education as an obligation or condition of access to education (MINEDH, 2020, p. 176).

Another internal source of education funding comes from school revenues. Revenues in the Education sector come from the collection of tuition fees, rent of establishments, school production, especially in technical schools, and boarding schools. This value is collected by educational institutions, which are obliged to declare it in the Directorates of Education, and these, in turn, forward the values to finances.

This money collected in educational institutions and later sent to finance has created several constraints in schools. Schools resent the lack of a bit of everything. According to the guidelines given to educational institutions, "those who need it, should ask", a process that has not been easy due to excessive bureaucratization.

Ways to transfer funding to primary and secondary schools in Mozambique

Internal funding in Mozambique's education sector is supported by the State Budget, Direct Support to Schools (ADE), and school revenues. The money to finance educational institutions comes from the State Budget, although it is insufficient to cover the sector's needs. This State Budget for the education sector is transferred only to educational institutions the Assembly of the Republic approves it. The transfer is made by the Ministry of Central Finance of Maputo to the Provincial Directorates of Finance.

In the case of the provinces, the Provincial Directorates of Finance are responsible for transferring the money to the Directorates of Education, which, in turn, transfer the money to the educational institutions, in this case, the schools. For Maputo, the country's capital, it is the city's financial division that transfers the money to the Education Directorate of Maputo, which, in turn, is responsible for transferring the money to the schools. The amount of money transferred is different among educational institutions, as it depends on the number of students enrolled in the school, and is usually transferred before the beginning of the school year.

Another form of internal funding occurring in educational institutions in Mozambique is called Direct Support to Schools (ADE). The ADE is a fund provided with the contribution of education partners. These partners channel the money into a "slush fund" called the Education Sector Support Fund (FASE), managed by the Ministry of Education and Human Development.

The FASE finances several education sector projects in Mozambique, one of which is the ADE. According to Lapucheque (2017), the ADE aims to ensure the full functioning of educational institutions, and it is expected that it will contribute to achieving teaching quality (Lapucheque, 2017, p. 1). It is a value transferred directly from the Ministry of Education to educational institutions for the purchase of teaching materials, projects to support orphaned and vulnerable children and, since 2014, began to finance the "implementation of short-term modular courses" (Lapucheque, 2017, p. 3). Since 2003, it has benefited primary schools and has been covering other levels of education gradually, such as Secondary and Technical Education.

The respective funding policy has an ADE Procedure Manual with all the guidelines to be followed. A survey shows that "there is no regularity in the distribution of ADE funds" (Lapucheque, 2017, p. 49). The lack of knowledge of the exact period that will have the value of the ADE is one of the constraints for its planning. Often, when the amount is made available, if it is at the end of the school year, students are not allowed assistance in the same year in which it is made available.

To further ensure transparency in the management of allocated funds, the sector has established its own body called the Schools Council (CE). Therefore, the money is managed by school managers and the School Councils. The CEs approve the material educational institutions purchase, after a pre-list indicated in the ADE manual and confronted by the list of school directorates. Before its release, the school principal convenes a meeting attended by the School Council, the Head of the Secretariat, the Pedagogical Director, and the representative of teachers and students. After the decision, a record of proceedings is made to justify the funds used.

The participation of the CEs is still limited, because some of the members are incapable of understanding and discussing the issues related to the school, which requires the preparation of the commu-

nities so that they have a better capacity for intervention in school life (MINEDH, 2019).

As Lapucheque highlights (2017, p. 8),

[...] despite the rigorous implementation of the ADE program, transparency by involving school councils, and the continued fund provision, society has complained almost all over the country: schools without desks and teaching materials, libraries without books, lack of equipped laboratories or with minimum conditions.

Analysis of funding for primary and secondary education in Mozambique from 2015 to 2020

Our study analyzed primary education because more internal and external investments are directed to it compared to other levels of education. Despite this investment, thousands of children still sit under trees to attend classes. At this level the discussion about the quality of teaching is very fierce among parents and those responsible for education, academics, managers, public administrators, and other actors. Here is our question: *Where does all the funding being done for this level of education go?*

Regarding secondary education, we found it in a very precarious situation. We observed lack of schools, especially for high school, lack of teachers, of didactic media, among others.

The choice of 2015 is justified by the fact that, according to PEE 2020-2029,

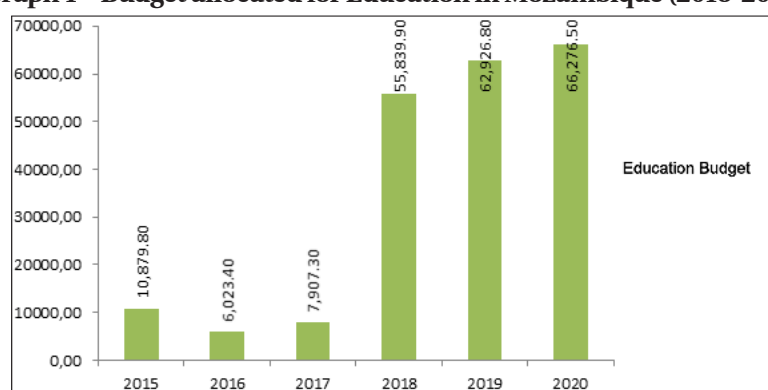
Since 2015, the country's economic growth has slowed down because of the weight of economic debt, drastic reduction of foreign aid, deterioration of commodity prices, and the effects of natural disasters (cyclones, droughts, and floods) that regularly affect the country (MINEDH, 2020, p. 21).

With the reveal of hidden debts in Mozambique, the Education sector's situation worsened even more because the State Budget was supported by external aid, and when the countries realized the debts, they stopped financing the Mozambican State and, consequently, the education sector ended up being affected, according to PEE 2020-2029:

Over the past 15 years, international aid has supported the Mozambican State Budget (OE) significantly, composing more than half of it. This contribution has gradually declined over the years and, more markedly, after the crisis of 'undeclared debts,' contracted by Mozambique without the Parliament's approval. At the same time, despite the government's increased revenue collection capacity, with the cut in foreign aid, the EOs in recent years have been insufficient to cover the activities already underway, which has affected the provision of public services (MINEDH, 2020, p. 22).

In recent years, for example, the Government has allocated between 18% and 22% of total public expenditure to the Education sector, following, in general terms, the reference value of 20% established by the Dakar Commitment (EFA) and the reference value of 22% of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) (MINEDH, 2018). However, this government effort remains quite insignificant for the functioning and improvement of the quality of education in Mozambique, as found in Graph 1.

Graph 1 – Budget allocated for Education in Mozambique (2015-2020)



Source: Conta Cidadão (2015-2020), Direção Nacional de Planificação e Orçamento (MEF, 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020).

Graph 1 shows that the financing of education in Mozambique during the period under analysis decreased in 2016 and 2017. During this period, some education partners left the country and others reduced their funding due to the crisis caused by hidden debts. Since 2018, after a renegotiation, the partners returned to finance the Education sector gradually, as the resources in the chart show. The amount of funding was rising since 2018.

Private education institutions do not receive state support. However, non-profit community schools receive support for the payment of teachers' salaries and receive free textbooks (MINEDH; UNESCO, 2019, p. 91).

Challenges of Education Financing in Mozambique

The challenges of education financing in Mozambique are several and their resolution depends on political will. The Mozambican State must place education as a number one priority for the country's development. As long as it continues to place education in second and third place on the state's budgetary priorities, as shown in the State General Accounts of the period under review, Mozambique will continue to be on the list of the 10 poorest countries in the world.

The full functioning of educational institutions and the improvement of the quality of education depend on the amount the government transfers to educational institutions. For that, the government must increase its funding for the construction of schools, the functioning of educational institutions, the payment of teachers' salaries and for other problems of the sector. The Mozambican State needs to create a specific fund to collect internal contributions to finance its education. The country cannot keep asking for external support while it has sufficient resources that could help finance its education. As Akkari (2011) highlights, "[...] the Sub-Saharan countries appear as the most vulnerable to external influences on their educational policies, but also as the least prepared to regulate them" (Akkari, 2011, p. 16).

Bastos and Duarte (2017, p. 176) state that "for the case of Mozambique and other countries on the periphery, the process of developing public education policies does not only have endogenous components. The participation of foreign actors has been a striking element". In the context of the First Republic, cooperation with the Soviet countries predominated, without neglecting the relative influence of organizations of the United Nations system, such as UNESCO and UNICEF.

After some transformations, first in the economic sphere, and later in the political sphere, new actors, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, began to enter the scene, influencing the process and even defining priorities in terms of financing the different subsystems that compose the National Education System.

Continuing to ask for outside support means limiting the country's ability to develop its educational policies.

The objectives of the educational policies that have been implemented in Mozambique, especially in the last 20 years, aim to respond to the demands of international organizations, so that the country reaches higher levels in the quality and expansion of education. Moreover, for example, the support of the Global Partnership for Education implies the fulfillment of several requirements, including the elaboration of a sectoral plan of education. This is currently happening in the education sector in Mozambique. For the development of its educational policies, the country depends on donor funding.

We believe that a methodological approach based on participatory planning and management should be adopted, involving government and local private sector actors to define education sector policies, in an environment of autonomy and public-private partnership. Establishing partnerships is essential so that the educational networks can accomplish the ideal of education that they want for their students.

The current education funding policy, such as Direct Support to Schools (ADE), needs to improve regarding its management and implementation. The transfer of the values carried out at central level does not coincide with the beginning of the school year. This means that the transferred resources do not benefit those in need, that is, they arrive at an inappropriate time. Although there are precise guidelines for the

implementation of the ADE, its transparency is far from reaching acceptable levels.

The objectives for which ADE was created are not being achieved and, according to Lapucheque (2017), “[...] the lack of teaching materials still prevails in schools for all disciplines, without libraries and when they exist, teaching manuals are scarce; social assistance to students in need is not effective” (Lapucheque, 2016, p. 85).

The numerical criterion adopted for the allocation of value to schools should be reviewed, and should consider the geographical and socioeconomic conditions of the school’s location, to reduce the asymmetries of schools, inside or outside provincial capitals.

Education funding in Mozambique should include the budget of guards’ salaries. The State cannot escape its responsibilities of paying the guards’ salaries, arguing that “the contribution of parents and guardians to the payment of guards is welcome” (MINEDH, 2020, p. 176).

We are thus facing a minimal State. According to Gentil (1999), the minimum State delegates responsibilities and abandons spaces of public activity (fundamentally the space of social policy). Therefore, the State reduces its participation as a central agent in the allocation of resources for the financing of educational services, transferring this responsibility to the individuals themselves, families, or companies.

Harvey (2011), when analyzing recent economic and cultural transformations and their influences in contemporary society, also points out that neoliberalism encourages the reduction of the State’s presence in social investments, via containment, of the reduction of the amounts of resources invested.

In recent decades, the State’s role in education has been constantly questioned in the world’s many educational systems. Regarding all the questioning, Araújo and Pinto (2017, p. 8) point out that “[...] since the last decade of the last century, we have been experiencing the hegemony of the thesis of diminishing the State (of the public sphere) and of redefining its relationship with the private space”.

Another challenge on education financing in Mozambique is the non-compliance or violation of the Decentralization Law (Law no. 1/2018). The decentralization advocated in Law in Mozambique is violated. Deconcentration is applied rather than decentralization.

Martins (2002) clarifies the difference between the terms deconcentration and decentralization. In the deconcentration, measures that transfer responsibilities to smaller units are provided, such as acquiring school material with the money that arrives at the school or even elaborating the political-pedagogical project. However, the central power is reaffirmed in a “top-down” movement, since decision-making power remains in higher bodies.

The schools can acquire the material, but the funds received are defined for determined purposes. The school can also elaborate the

political-pedagogical project, but will be evaluated later according to the contents and parameters that were centrally defined. With decentralization, the efficiency of local power is ensured. The smaller units assume not only most tasks, but also most of the decisions to be made (Garcia, 2010, p. 32).

Final considerations

Education funding is extremely important for the full functioning of any education system in a country. It is also important for improving the teaching-learning process and the quality of a country's teaching. Regarding the specific case of the education system in Mozambique, it ends up not being efficient, because the amount the State transfers to primary and secondary education institutions are usually insufficient. The primary and secondary education funding system in Mozambique creates educational inequalities in their respective education systems, because most of the funding is allocated to primary education rather than to general secondary education. Mozambique's education sector funding policy is therefore more focused on primary education than secondary education.

Although funding for the education sector in Mozambique is insufficient, the sector and its partners, for example, have prioritized the construction of primary schools over secondary schools, thus creating educational inequalities in the system.

The difficulties in financing education in Mozambique caused other problems to the sector. The state privatized educational institutions and, due to that, low-income families began not having access to education. The funding difficulties for education caused problems related to poor quality education. Improving funding for the education sector can be the key pillar for improving the quality of education.

Education funding in Mozambique is provided by two sources (internal and external). Since the country's independence in 1975, the sector has become dependent on external support. This dependency also causes other problems. It makes the country miss the opportunity to develop its own educational policies. Cooperation partners and international agencies have hidden objectives in their aid. They dictate rules to be complied with, which are often not in accordance with the reality of each country's education system.

We believe that the State should set up its own internal fund to finance education with its resources, especially natural gas and domestic revenues. Popular slang says that "you can't build your house depending on your neighbor". No more hand-outs. The country needs big investments and the State has to take responsibility.

As it is said, "the best way to kill a country is not to educate". Giving a clear signal that education is a priority is important, and this priority is only recognized as money is invested in building schools, paying teachers, producing teaching materials, etc.

Received on November 10, 2021

Approved on August 30, 2022

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Editor in charge: Lodenir Karnopp

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