

Education financing strategies and the neoliberal project in Mozambique

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Abstract

From the early 1990s onwards, education in Mozambique has been caught between the need to articulate social development (as spelled out by both EFA and MDGs) on the one hand and, on the other, the need to address economic development concerns. In order to achieve these two goals, education policy has prioritised issues of quality, access, gender, citizenship, relevance, poverty reduction, decentralisation, private education, public-private partnerships and efficiency. However, current reports on the progress made on EFA and the MDG goals suggest that Mozambique is unlikely to achieve them by 2015 as initially envisaged. This article argues that neoliberal ideals of social and economic development have steered the education system into an erratic articulation of its different components through travelling policies of education financing. This has led to tensions between various aspects of education development, which have brought about contradictory developments in the education system and have constrained the realisation of EFA and the MDGs.

Keywords: education development, Education for All, Millennium Development Goals, neoliberal project, social inequalities, travelling policy

Introduction

Since the end of World War II and the inception of human capital theory in the 1960s, the World Bank (WB) has been championing the importance of education for development and the need to finance it in developing countries. The WB's crusade has not been without contestation, not only because of the reductionism of education to development imperatives, but also because the Bank tends to change the emphasis that it places on different levels of the education sector. In fact, over decades and in different periods, the Bank has shifted emphasis on the significance of the various levels of education (adult education, primary education, secondary education and lately higher education) for economic development, depending on the perceived

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returns on investment at each level (Bloom, Canning and Chan 2005; World Bank 2002). Although Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are initiatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations (UN) respectively, the WB saw these frameworks as a timely opportunity to set its global agenda on education for development, which emphasises education as being instrumental to economic development at the expense of its social and cultural role in society.

The global embracement of the EFA and the MDG agendas led most of us to believe that this was the time to make things happen. However, as we approach the deadline, there is evidence that many countries will not reach the desired goals, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO 2014b). One of the main reasons for this failure is a decline in the financing of education. UNESCO, in its 2015 global monitoring report (GMR) on EFA, identifies the *financing gap* as the main problem because 'neither domestic financing nor aid to education was sufficient to ensure that the six goals would be achieved' (UNESCO 2014a: 8).

We argue, however, that, notwithstanding its overall importance, the *financing gap* has a different impact in different countries, depending on the nature of the strategies and policies adopted by governments. This is because, beyond the *funding gap*, prevailing political discourses, particularly the dominance of neoliberal discourses, influence how budgets are conceptualised and used. Indeed, critics of EFA and MDGs have already voiced concerns not necessarily with regard to their realisation, but because of their neoliberal nature and the consequences for global justice. In this regard, Pogge's (2005) analysis of the first MDG goal is quite revealing. His analysis casts light on how the MDGs and EFA are discourses strongly constructed around neoliberal ideals of the global economy. Similarly, it has been argued that, because the EFA framework is operationalised through neoliberal mechanisms, it sets other goals that, though not made explicit, are harmful to the rights of the people in countries where EFA is being implemented. The argument is based on the idea that the EFA framework is constructed around neo-liberal strategies of control of the 'Other' by global actors who are at the centre of its financing (e.g. the WB, the IMF, the G8, the Asia Development Bank, and the World Trade Organisation) (Tamatea 2005). In line with this reasoning, we locate EFA and MDGs within the broader context of Mozambique's transition from socialism to a neoliberal order. We concede, however, that while education financing strategies and the discourses underpinning them play a critical role in education development, the role of other factors like teacher preparedness, teacher accountability, learner responsibility and the role of the community should not be underestimated.

Starting with an analysis of national education strategies and progress reports on EFA and MDGs, this article investigates how education in Mozambique has evolved under these agendas. We analyse policies adopted and financing strategies pursued in attempting to achieve their goals. More particularly, the article draws attention to the

ways in which education in Mozambique has been reformed through forms of travelling policy (i.e. policies drawn from elsewhere and implemented locally) to achieve universal primary education. It argues that travelling education policies, or aspects thereof in a context of neoliberal reforms for macro-economic stabilisation, have caused tensions in the implementation of EFA and the MDGs, making the country unable to achieve these goals. We suggest that the adoption of a neoliberal agenda, comprising education financing and development strategies, including the principles of decentralisation, privatisation, and deregulation, integrated into the Mozambican macro-economic framework without regard to local complexities, has constrained the achievement of EFA and the MDGs. If this trend continues, we are likely to witness a deepening of education crisis and social inequalities in the country.

The article starts by sketching the neoliberal project in post-socialist Mozambique. After briefly considering our methodology, we present background information on progress made with EFA goals at global, regional and local levels and highlight the challenges that seem to emerge in the case of Mozambique. These challenges prompted us to investigate how education has been financed and the tensions that constrain the education system in fulfilling its goals of universal access and quality education. Before the conclusion, a section is dedicated to what seems to be consequential dimensions of the adopted education financing strategies for the social order at large.

The neoliberal project in Mozambique

The neoliberal project in Mozambique can be located within the broader context of international political changes in the 1980s, with the demise of the socialist model of development. As an economic model, neoliberalism regards the market as a self-regulated entity and central to the advancement of capitalism, in which the state should not interfere (Turner 2008).

In the case of Mozambique, evidence that the socialist project had failed led the Mozambican authorities to turn to the West for guidance. In fact, according to Bowen (1992), the broken economy that led the government to abandon centrally-planned development strategies and adopt capitalist-oriented strategies was not only because the Soviet Union itself was struggling to sustain its model of development, but also because of the civil war in Mozambique. Having affected mainly rural areas, the civil war made it difficult for any development strategy to be effective (Saul 1993b) because of the destruction of the local infrastructure. It was as a result of these difficulties that offers from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help economic recovery were welcomed and were seen as the only way out of the dead end that the country had reached. As a result, as Bowen (1992: 259) puts it, 'Mozambican private capital has remained dependent upon the resources made available by the World Bank, multinational enterprises, regional development banks, NGOs, and so forth'.

It is this dependency that led some critics of privatisation policies such as Hanlon (1996), Mittelman (2000), Plank (1993) and Saul (1993a, 1993b) to interpret the turn to capitalism as capitulation of the Mozambican government to policies from the World Bank and the West at large. This particular perspective has been challenged for not problematising other factors of the transition from a centrally-planned economy to a neoliberal market economy. The process of neoliberalisation is best understood when considered in its interplay with internal factors such as the role of political elites and associated power struggles within government in formulating, shaping and implementing privatisation policies, and pressures from social actors such as unions and non-governmental organisations in the process (Pitcher 2002: 129-131). This endogenous dimension leading to privatisation may explain the almost blind acceptance of what Hall and O'Shea (2013: 8) call the 'common sense' of neoliberalism, i.e. an uncritical form of 'everyday thinking' that provides frameworks of meaning with which to make sense of the world.

As an established 'common sense' philosophy, neoliberalism makes it possible for people to take for granted a set of values about individual and private property, the glorification of the market, freedom of choice for consumers, and the superiority of private services in the face of supposed lack of productivity, ineffectiveness and, in some instances, the inability of the state to steer the economy (Torres 2011: 184-185). In the particular case of Mozambique, and against the legacy of socialist experience, the common sense of neoliberalism emerged as a powerful ideology giving ordinary people a sense of lived democracy, freedom of expression and association, and the restoration of private/individual ownership. As Pitcher (2002: 140-141) has suggested, this ideology was cemented by government discourses in which buzzwords of neoliberalism such as *market*, *competition*, *efficiency* and *private investment* were hailed as the key drivers of the benefits the country could get from the transition from a socialist to a capitalist economy.

It is in this sense that Mozambique followed the neoliberal common path into liberalisation of the economy (agriculture, trade, etc.) and social sectors such as education and health. The most fundamental feature of this move was the reduction of the role of the state (from socialist centrally-planned to neoliberal 'hands off' approaches). In the process, Mozambique embraced several features of neoliberal reforms, including deregulation, decentralisation and privatisation of social services and economic activities, all of which were fuelled by hegemonic discourses around modernisation, increased productivity and global competitiveness (Pitcher 2002: 141). In Mozambique such discourses were initially materialised through structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and later through poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), frameworks for macro-economic policy reforms.

The first SAP, known locally as *Programa de Reabilitação Económica* (Economic Recovery Programme), was introduced in 1987. Among ordinary people, it was referred to through the abbreviation 'PRE', which had a sarcastic connotation associ-

ated with the hardship generated by 'PRE' in social life. The irony was simply because for the majority of urban people SAP measures worsened their living conditions and the level of poverty. In fact, as Hanlon (1996: 69-70) has indicated, the rise in the prices of basic goods and in the cost of living was aggravated by a dramatic fall in minimum wages within a year after the introduction of the first SAP, leaving the vast majority of people with no money to purchase goods, most of them imported as a result of trade liberalisation.

The SAP set three long-term goals. It aimed to increase the country's GNP through increased productivity. It was concerned with the achievement of fiscal stability through restrictive fiscal and monetary policies to align expenditure with available resources. It also envisaged a reduction of poverty by focusing on economic investment and minimising public expenditure on social services, including basic education, primary health care and food subsidies. The central objective of PRSP was a 'substantial reduction of the levels of absolute poverty in Mozambique' through several measures affecting education, health, agriculture and rural development, basic infrastructure, good governance, macro-economic strategy and financial management (GoM 2001: 42). In education, considered to be a basic human right, the expected outcomes included expansion of access, improvement of quality, enhancement of efficiency, reduction of costs and 'promotion of social equity, and equity between the regions, the cities and rural areas, and on the basis of gender' (ibid.: 42).

As flagships of the Washington Consensus for economic growth in developing countries, the SAPs and PRSPs included policies found elsewhere in the world and believed to be effective. The World Bank took the East Asian economic boom of the 1980s and 1990s as a model of how effective neoliberal policies aligned with good governance could be a lesson for other countries, mainly in the sub-Saharan region (World Bank 1993), although Amsden (1989) and Rodan (1989) have demonstrated that the East Asian success was more because of strong state intervention than free-market-friendly policies. It is in this sense that we argue that most reforms in Mozambique from the 1990s onwards were travelling 'reforms that surface in different parts of the world' (Steiner-Khamsi 2012: 3). The consequent flow of travelling policies was 'shaped by globalising trends in pursuit of successful competition in the new knowledge economy' (Ozga and Jones 2006: 1). This notion of travelling policies helps us to evaluate the finance strategies adopted in Mozambique for the achievement of EFA and the MDGs by 2015 and to problematise their role in legitimising the whole macro-economic neoliberal agenda, which in our view has had a negative impact on the education system.

Nonetheless, travelling policies in Mozambique must also be understood in the context of a country in which local government officials and civil society organisations were bargaining for a change of policy (Pitcher 2002) and the political elite of the ruling party FRELIMO responded by turning from socialist ideals of social order to capitalist

markets (Saul 2010) as the solution against poverty. Under the circumstances, the World Bank and IMF offers were perceived as an opportunity for overcoming the economic problems facing the country. It is in the context of this interplay of complex social and political forces that the notion of travelling policies is approached in this article.

Methodological considerations

As a discussion article, our analysis is centred mainly on secondary sources on EFA and the MDGs, SAP and PRSP strategies, namely evaluation and progress reports, including education sector strategic plans and reports, and other relevant studies on education development in Mozambique. Of particular importance are the progress indicators from UNESCO's global monitoring reports (GMRs) for the world and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), with emphasis on the mid-term and the most recent GMRs. These reports provide an account of the progress made and how strategies for achieving EFA and the MDGs have been implemented or have changed as a result of the mid-term reviews in different countries. In the particular case of Mozambique, we gathered progress data from national MDG reports, because figures for Mozambique are not clearly demarcated in UNESCO's GMRs. In the case of UNESCO GMRs, our attention was driven to the 2007 mid-term report, which evaluates progress, acknowledges the difficulties in achieving EFA goals by 2015, and sets new strategies. The 2014 GMR was also important in that it summarises data from other reports since the 2007 mid-term report. In the case of MDG national reports on Mozambique, we tried to cover all reports available since 2002.

Our analytical strategy was to look at main trends in relation to enrolment and completion rates at primary education level. However, we went beyond official figures to explore dimensions of quality such as teacher training and practices in academic progression, which in our view represent in practice a serious threat to the very idea of access to education. An attempt was made to read the reports in the light of evidence from literature in other contexts, not necessarily to compare but to have a sense of the complexities and peculiarities of education development in Mozambique under the EFA framework.

EFA and the MDGs: What progress so far?

Since EFA goals cannot be analysed separately, this article deals with the second MDG, which is to 'ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality' (UNESCO 2000: 15). With reference to this goal, we focus on aspects of universal primary education access, completion and quality of education. A consequential point here is access to secondary education as part of EFA. In fact, access to primary education depends partly on secon-

dary education as graduates from secondary schools supply teacher education programmes. Underlying this analysis is our problematisation of both EFA and the MDGs, not only because of their commonality on the second goal – universal (primary) education – but also because of their assumptions about the functionality of education in terms of development issues, economic growth and employment.

A brief look at some progress made with regard to universal primary education and quality education shows a mixed picture of achievements in Africa and beyond. The UNESCO mid-term GMR (UNESCO 2007) indicates that the number of out-of-school children declined significantly worldwide between 1999 and 2005, with a concomitant increase of net enrolments in sub-Saharan Africa of about 36%. Despite this, it is estimated that around 58 out of 86 countries that had not yet reached universal primary education will miss the target of 2015 (UNESCO 2007: 2). Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest rate of completion for the last grade at primary level. Furthermore, there are still notable differences in terms of access across regions and the rural/urban divide.

Crowded classrooms and short time-spans for children to spend in learning activities are highlighted as major problems in achieving quality education. It is believed that contracting teachers without qualifications to save costs has negative consequences on quality education (UNESCO 2007: 2). Despite the fact that for over a decade global education aid has been declining (Rose, Steer, Smith and Zubairi 2013), the 2007 mid-term GMR was optimistic that international support in developing countries of sub-Saharan Africa has played a major role in increasing enrolments at primary education level. However, the cost of education is still seen as the major obstacle for children to access education, even after the abolition of fees in many countries (UNESCO 2007: 2).

The latest GMR (UNESCO 2014b) seems to be less optimistic; it indicates that around 57 million children were still out of school in 2011, with SSA making the slowest progress from 2007 to 2011 and 22% of primary-school-age children still being out of school. This figure is closer to the United Nation's 2013 MDG Africa Report, which indicates that in 2010 many African countries still fell short of the target by more than 20% (UN 2013: 24), making them unlikely to achieve the goal by 2015. Furthermore, the completion rate for the last grade at primary level dropped from 58% to 56% over a decade. Only 68 out of 122 countries are likely to achieve universal primary enrolment, and only 13 out of 90 countries are expected to achieve universal primary level completion (UNESCO 2014b: 52). Class size is still a major problem in a number of countries, with less than 75% of teachers at both primary and secondary level qualified (*ibid.*: 82).

Although there may be variations from country to country in the region, Mozambique shows no improvement on the overall figures for SSA. In fact, as far back as 2002, the first United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country report on the MDGs in Mozambique indicated that, despite progress made since 1999 on net enrolment,

'Mozambique [would] not achieve the goal of full primary enrolment by 2015' (UNDP 2002: 18). Regional and gender differences were singled out as major obstacles. Completion rates and the quality of education were also major concerns, since 'repetition often leads to drop outs (8%), increasing the number of illiterates in the country' (UNDP 2002: 18). The report recommended further debt relief and an increase in financial support, as well as capacity-building and teacher training as some possible steps to be taken.

Two years later, the possibility of achieving universal primary education by 2015 was still escaping Mozambique, although there was a significant increase of about 16,7% in completion rates from grades 1 to 5 (primary school level 1) between 1997 and 2003 (UNDP 2005: 18). The 2008 report indicates that 'the average net primary school enrolment index was 95,5% in 2007, a considerable increase compared to 2003 (69,4%)' (UNDP 2008: 23), but in the 2010 report the figure came down to 81% (UNDP 2010: 35). The report does not give any explanation for this decrease. In both reports (2008 and 2010), regional and gender disparities in net enrolment rate were highlighted as an apparently unsolvable problem, which has persisted over the years. This suggests that 'the fact that EP1 [primary school – level one] is free does not in itself guarantee the stay of poorer households' children at school until completion' (UNDP 2010: 39), which also amounts to difficulties in achieving significant levels of quality.

Despite the drop in completion rates from 58% to 56% over a decade in the last grade at primary level (UN 2013: 24) in SSA at large and the decrease in the net primary enrolment index from 95,5% in 2007 (UNDP 2008: 23) to 81% in 2010 (UNDP 2010: 35), the overall numbers seem to suggest that some progress was made in Mozambique in relation to targets set at the time of the launch of the EFA framework. However, progress as articulated by numbers may be misleading, because the reports do not tell us the actual dynamics of teaching and learning processes in classroom contexts or how teachers are trained and perform. Classroom size and teacher training are mentioned in the reports as persistent challenges that may contradict the completion rate figures. In line with Jansen's (2005: 375) theory of public policy as political symbolism, one could argue that the statistical exercise for most African governments fulfils primarily symbolic, political and financial ends in their relations with international development agencies (Moreover, Tikly's (2004) idea that education is used as an entry gate of the West in developing countries to pursue a global development agenda as a new form of imperialism – the incorporation of developing countries into a global form of governance dominated by Western standards – may illuminate the real value of these figures and help us question the purported progress made so far in regard to EFA goals in Mozambique.

Persistent challenges and steps forward

Certain challenges have persisted for over a decade in terms of progress towards uni-

versal primary education, completion and quality of education in Mozambique. From the reports, classroom size, pre- and in-service teacher training and low school network coverage (with particular emphasis on rural areas) seem to be the main recurring challenges. Actions taken towards achieving universal access and quality education goals were mostly in the form of debt relief and continued external financing of education, teacher education, the provision of didactic materials to schools and pupils, and capacity-building at all levels, with particular focus on district and school management levels.

The persistent nature of the challenges seems to have exacerbated the difficulties of financing and developing education in the country. In our view, education development can be analysed from different angles. A study based on data from the past two decades approaches education development from the perspective of empowerment of people for active citizenship in a democratic society (Brouwer, Brito and Menete 2010). The authors address issues of access from regional and gender perspectives, considering inter alia the contribution of private schools, the role of vocational education and training for economic development, and education for citizenship. They argue that an education system is effective only if it empowers people to use the learned knowledge in their role as active and responsible citizens. However, in pointing out the challenges faced with regard to access, the authors do not go far enough in exploring the relationship between policy options and unequal levels of access. Instead, they argue that the way forward is to be found through private education (more significantly at secondary than at primary levels) and through public-private partnerships in technical and vocational education and training. Such a position is inscribed in a set of strategies for financing education, which have been hailed as effective solutions for education development in Mozambique.

Other studies on access to education in Mozambique emphasize 'subjective factors' by locating hindering factors in learners themselves, their households and social and cultural issues. This is the case with Roby, Lambert and Lambert (2009), who argue that, although caregivers' level of education, household income, distance from home to school and the divide between urban and rural areas affect most school children, girls are most affected than boys. Another study sees access to education from a retention perspective and argues that children who enter schooling at an older age tend to leave school earlier, before completing a level (Wils 2004). From a cultural perspective Robinson (1993) sees academic achievement as an aspect of education access and argues that it depends on family background: children from Portuguese-speaking families were found to be more successful than those whose mother tongue is not Portuguese. Although much of this research allows for an understanding of access to education from the perspective of the learners themselves and suggests a set of interventions in the community and in households to invert the situation, it does not take into account factors related to the domain of education policies. This article tries to look at access to education from a policy perspective, more specifically financing

strategies as one of the angles to understanding the problem.

The political economy of education financing

The persistent challenges and actions taken all seem to point to what within the EFA and MDG agendas has been termed the 'financing gap'. In fact, it is expected that the forthcoming final GMR on EFA will point to the financing gap as the main problem of the agenda and the chief component in the success of the post-2015 global education framework (UNESCO 2014a). The introduction of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) early in the 2000s was an effort towards financing education strategies in developing countries to achieve the goals.

In the case of Mozambique, 'the reforms proposed by EFA-FTI were incorporated in the Education and Culture Sector Strategic Plan 2006-2011 (ESSP 2006/2011) and implemented during its term' (Lobo 2010: 2). Furthermore, Mozambique has been pursuing neoliberal macro-economic strategies since the introduction of SAPs in the 1980s and PRSPs in the 2000s, which ultimately incorporate the EFA-FTI and its conditionalities (besides debt obligations for decades) in education. The country thus has a PRSP in place to integrate national social development needs and macro-economic stabilisation measures in the form of decentralisation, deregulation and privatisation. It is this integration of development needs and a macro-economic stabilisation measure that seems to be at the heart of the financing gap in extending quality education to all children. It has been suggested that low- and middle-income countries could use national resources to bridge the education financing gap (UNESCO 2014b). However, in some cases, like Mozambique, this may not be as easy as it seems, owing to debt repayments currently required on international loans.

Abolishing fees at primary level

The introduction of the FTI in 2002 was intended to help developing countries accelerate progress towards achieving EFA by 2015. One of the aspects on which the FTI had an effect was alleviation of the fees burden for parents at primary school level. The abolition of fees in a number of countries was seen as a step forward in ensuring that no child is excluded from school because of a lack of funds. In Africa, earlier attempts at abolishing fees were made by Ghana in 1961 and Kenya and Tanzania in 1974. However, these efforts were discontinued owing to economic constraints (World Bank 2009: 1). In Mozambique, fees at primary level were abolished from 2004. Although it is not clear from which countries this policy was borrowed, the fact is that other countries had gone ahead of Mozambique in this regard. In fact, countries such as Malawi and Ethiopia started in 1994, and for the second time Kenya in 2003 and Ghana in 2004 (World Bank 2009). This precedence and concomitance in abolishing school fees suggests that the policy was not entirely home-born, but was a result of influences if not directly from country to country then through one of the donors invol-

ved in such reforms, namely the World Bank.

In Mozambique, one of the ways in which schools could recoup revenues from abolished fees was via a small fund that was introduced for each primary school, the Direct School Support (DSS) programme (Lobo 2010). This intervention makes the process of fees abolition somewhat peculiar to Mozambique, seen against the wave of fees abolition in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, as Takala (2008) suggests, institutional capacity was noted as a weak aspect in the process of decentralising the use of external funds. Other views suggest that the inability of the education sector to absorb external funds was due to a major difficulty in complying with FTI conditionalities and procurement regulations of the donors (Lobo 2010). This point is important in the sense that conditionalities seem to have had two hands: one to give and the other to take back what was given. Within the current EFA-FTI framework, the country is more likely not to meet the intended goals.

The underlying concerns with the abolition of primary school fees seem to be cost-saving and the efficiency of the education system. Increased enrolment rates pose the challenge of throughput and completion. This challenge has resulted in a number of related issues such as the restriction of decision-making at school level, the concomitant increased upward (to government) and downward (to local stakeholders) accountability for school financial matters, and automatic progression. This last issue seems to have led to artificial pass rates, as teachers are very often under pressure to produce high pass rates (Duarte et al. 2012: 93), which jeopardises the quality of primary school graduates and, indeed, EFA goals.

The price of decentralisation

The allocation of funds to schools to compensate for revenues lost owing to the abolition of fees required a transfer of financial management responsibilities to the district and school levels. Following specific regulations, schools are expected to use the Direct School Support funds to purchase materials mainly for orphans and disadvantaged girls and for the improved functioning of the school, among other things. A further effect of this move was to strengthen management capacity in schools and to make them accountable to school councils at the local level. On the basis of the 2012-2016 education strategy, it is expected that an additional fund might be payable, based on each school's performance according to defined indicators (MINED 2012: 70). Clearly, school performance depends on school management, which does not provide equal access to the additional fund, even if schools have similar needs.

However, this level of decentralisation does not offer sufficient autonomy for schools to make decisions in terms of key issues such as teacher recruitment according to the needs of the school. Teacher recruitment is decided at the ministerial level with reference to the government's budget for the public sector as a whole. In fact, if teacher recruitment is subject to the government's central budget, it follows that, within the

EFA-FTI education funding framework, the recruitment of ‘new teachers at a rate of 10 thousand per annum, in line with targets set in [PRSP] II’ (UNDP 2008: 23) is subject to the overall WB macro-economic stabilisation measures.

A problem with this targeted number of new teachers per annum is the need to improve working conditions, at least in terms of salaries. In response to this challenge, Lobo (2010: 5) argues that ‘the [education] sector spends more easily when paying salaries using its own internal funds than in investment due to the capacity to implement procurement regulations and donor process conditionalities’. If teachers are paid from internal funds, improving their salary conditions may not be an easy exercise for the government, owing to its commitments to the WB and the IMF’s overall economic stabilisation measures at the macro-economic level.

An advantage of this process of primary school decentralisation is that it provides some degree of autonomy and stimulates local initiative and efficiency. However, schools have no say in the appointment of teachers, beyond reporting their needs. In this sense, the question of decentralisation is not a simple one, since there are instances in which a strong government presence may be required. In the particular case of Mozambique, the degree of decentralisation and the question of what to decentralise should also be viewed against a legacy of bureaucratic, political and ideological control.

Private education, public-private partnerships and privatisation

The UNESCO outline for the 2015 Global Monitoring Report advocates the diversification of funding sources in the post-2015 global education framework (UNESCO 2014a). In Mozambique, the private sector has been called on to provide education since the liberalisation of the education system in the early 1990s. This offered a unique opportunity for missionary societies to reclaim their schools, which had been nationalised under the socialist regime. The general tendency of private education in Mozambique is that private schools are proliferating more at secondary education level than at primary level, and more in urban than in rural areas, probably owing to the geographic concentration of affluent families and middle- to high-income households.

Unfortunately, data on private education in Mozambique is more consistently available for higher education than for primary and secondary education (Brouwer et al. 2010). Nevertheless, the number of private schools at primary level has increased over the years. By 2009 ‘approximately 2,3 percent of EP1 and 4,2 percent of EP2 schools’ were private (World Bank 2009: 220). Three years later, it was estimated that around 95% of primary school enrolments were in public schools, which means that private primary schools constituted 5% of enrolments (Fox, Santibañez, Nguyen and André 2012: 4).

Although private education was introduced within the context of broader economic

liberalisation, recent developments have entailed new forms of privatising education. The latest education strategy for 2012-2016 encourages public-private partnerships (PPPs) in financing and providing education (MINED 2012) as a way of responding to the growing demand for education that exceeds what public education is able to adequately address. Recent moves have attempted to establish further partnerships with the private sector to provide education over and above the construction of schools, supply of furniture and provision of bursaries (MINED 2012). However, it appears that so far the idea of PPPs in Mozambique remains at the level of a statement of intent. No concrete efforts have taken place in this regard. In fact, a WB study (Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio and Guáqueta 2009) advocates PPPs in education, arguing that, in respect of both quality and access, private education has proved to make a significant contribution. The assumption is that both private education and PPPs would open more opportunities for education access. However, critical voices such as Ron-Balsera and Marphatia (2012: 218) have argued that PPP in education can actually aggravate inequalities and that the fact that dozens of millions of children are still out of school is a reminder of the need to 'strengthen state systems and increase resources for public education rather than seek a substitute in private provision' (218).

Vocationalising the curriculum for entrepreneurship

Many countries have been led to reform their education systems based on EFA assumptions regarding the function of education in enhancing economic growth, increasing employment and reducing poverty (UNESCO 2000). Mozambique followed this trend by making the curriculum at both primary and secondary levels more relevant to the market through vocationalised curriculum components (INDE/MINED 2003: 7; MEC/INDE 2007: 27). At the primary school level, the subject of crafts was introduced so that 'pupils are minimally prepared to face challenges in life and acquire a basis for learning crafts which would make them capable of responding to the labour market' (INDE/MINED 2003: 39). This move is both innovative, in the sense that it brings a new dimension to primary education, and contradictory, because it goes against other approaches to childhood education contained in EFA goals. In fact, the suggestion that Grade 7 children should be able 'to respond to the labour market' seems to be contrary to UNESCO's plea that 'child labour must not stand in the way of education' (UNESCO 2000: 15). If 12-year-old children are expected to do something in the labour market, how can we expect that they proceed to secondary schooling? Our contention in this regard is that vocationalisation remains a narrow approach to skills development and a serious diversion from the provision of solid general education required at primary and secondary levels; it is not at these levels that the emphasis should be placed on preparing students for the labour market.

Education beyond 2015

With these strategies for financing education in mind, we now turn to a number of

aspects that have implications for education development after the 2015 targets. Our analysis of travelling policies focused on aspects of financing education, namely the abolition of primary school fees and the consequent decentralisation of financial management to the school level, and privatisation of education, all of which are allegedly intended to increase children's access to education. However, these strategies, along with vocationalisation moves, reveal some tensions in the education development process that are worth considering.

If the abolition of fees at primary school level should be hailed for benefiting the most disadvantaged children by enabling them to attend school, its shortfalls are that the emergence of a managerial culture at school level, assessable through performance indicators (e.g. pass rates and automatic progression), relegates teachers to mere managers rather than educators. This raises the question of the place of teacher professional identity in an increasingly performative culture. Ball's (2003) view is that performativity and other policy technologies such as market and managerialism are not only about reforming schools as organisations; they are also about changing teachers themselves, their social identity and how they relate to themselves and to others. More specifically, if teachers are 'reformed' according to performativity as 'a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change – based on rewards and sanctions' (Ball 2003: 216), in the long run a cycle will be opened that privileges the best and neglects those that need more support.

The increasing number of private education providers at secondary level points to the issue of unequal access in the sense that the 'education as a service' models that the private sector is being called upon to provide overlook the fact that the social and material conditions of the majority of households are such that they are far from able to afford private education. Evidence from various developing countries combined with a case study in India suggests that even low-fee private education is not only not affordable for poor households, but also, as a consequence, increases social inequalities (Härmä and Rose 2012). Promoting private education as an alternative delegates state responsibility for providing education as a public good into the hands of the private sector/business. Finally, the vocationalisation of both primary and secondary schooling sends an ill-advised signal to graduates that they will be able to access the labour market because of the skills imparted through the curriculum. Not only may such skills be inadequate in enabling graduates to enter the labour market successfully, but they may also be misaligned with opportunities available in the labour market. It has been argued that very often graduates do not find employment related to what they learned from the curriculum not only because 'aligning educational programmes and employment requirements is difficult' but also because in most cases vocationalised education 'has effectively separated work preparation from work itself' (Grubb and Lazerson 2009: 1797). Furthermore, even if the acquired skills were sufficient, the logic of the labour market contrived by socialist and tradit-

ional legacies (e.g. peasant subsistence production) is structured to absorb as little human capital as possible.

A particular dimension of these tensions is that, despite any attempt at appropriation and adaptation, travelling policies are not aligned with the current socio-economic reality of the country. Rather, they seem to play a legitimising role for other policies (Halpin and Troyna 1995); they reflect the battle to modernise the economy, to make it competitive and productive through education. A second important dimension to consider is that because these policies legitimise the neoliberal economic project, they aggravate social inequalities and stratification as well as the divide between rural and urban in terms of access to education.

We argue that a combination of policies based on neoliberal principles of privatisation, rewards based on performativity (additional funding for best-performing schools) and labour-market demands (vocationalisation) do not offer a sound basis for addressing the question of education access in Mozambique. Privatisation in particular is rapidly extending the boundaries of social stratification. This is more the case of urban areas where the emerging middle class tends to choose private schools perceived as offering better education than public schools. Privatisation policies have not only changed the balance between public and private education, but also increased school segregation (Bonal 2002), as is the case in Chile (McEwan, Urquiola and Vegas 2008). The Chilean case makes it plausible to argue that 'what should be clear is that user-fee and other cost-recovery policies for primary education have been very harmful to equity, have not improved quality or efficiency significantly, if at all, and have been inimical to the attainment of EFA and the MDGs' (Klees 2008: 315).

Conclusion

The crisis of the socialist regime warranted an alternative to the former Mozambican development strategy, particularly with regard to the country's education system. The situation was aggravated when neoliberal macro-economic strategies were embraced as the only alternative to socialist regimes. The adoption of EFA and the MDGs offered an opportunity for key international development agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF to intervene and attach their education financing policies to development strategies, informed by their practices elsewhere in the world. This is illustrated in Mozambique, for example, by the emergence of SAPs and PRSPs.

We have argued that this attachment of education financing policies to development strategies without proper re-contextualisation has diverted the path of education development as envisaged by EFA and the MDGs. This is because, on the one hand, economic investment has been privileged at the expense of social sectors, particularly education and health, and, on the other hand, economic problems are considered to find a solution in education by vocationalising the curriculum and leaning general education towards entrepreneurship and the labour market. According to this logic,

the foregrounding of performance has driven the authorities in the country to specific education funding strategies such as privatisation, decentralisation and, more recently, the call for PPPs. A consequence of this logic is the deepening of stratification, inequality and the urban-rural divide, which in turn has compromised the achievement of EFA and the MDGs and poses serious challenges for post-2015 educational development in Mozambique.

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