

Low quality of public schools drives parents towards private education in Mozambique

Policy Paper



Based on a study by ActionAid, this policy paper shows how the right to education in Mozambique is undermined by the low quality of public education. The Government of Mozambique has the duty to ensure the right to free, public education of good quality for all but the low quality of public schools is driving parents to pay for private education. Privatisation aggravates existing inequalities and marginalisation of vulnerable groups and children from poor families. The Government of Mozambique must fulfil its duty to ensure free, public education of good quality for all.

Education is a human right and the responsibility of the Government of Mozambique

The right to free, quality education is established by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*,¹ and reaffirmed with the *Sustainable Development Goals*.² The right to education in Mozambique is recognised in the Constitution as well as in the Education Law and the government should ensure free education of good quality to all citizens. But a recent study by ActionAid shows that the government does not live up to this, and leaves a large part of its responsibility to the private sector (ActionAid, 2017b).

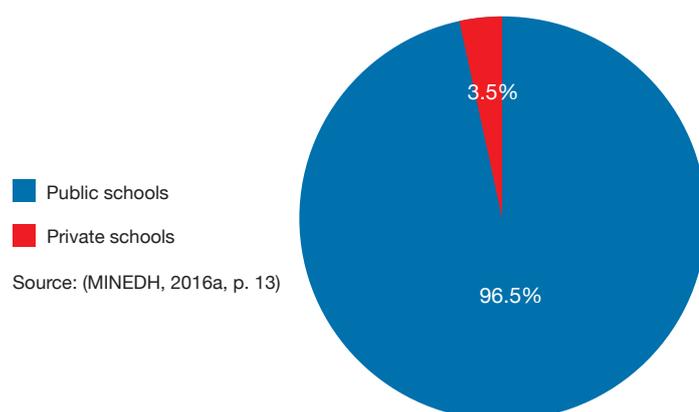
The government is not fulfilling its responsibility

Primary education has been officially free and compulsory in Mozambique since 1994. Since then, the number of students has grown rapidly with millions of children enrolling at a fast rate. From 2004 to 2011, the growth rates were 42% for grades 1-5, 77% for grades 6-7, 166% for grades 8-10, and 319% for grades 11-12 (MINEDH, 2012, p. 25). This expansion has put enormous pressure on the public education sector and the government has not responded adequately to the increasing demand, failing to provide enough teachers, classrooms, teaching and learning materials or sanitation facilities. As a result, quality has been declining: a survey conducted by the National Institute for Educational Development (INDE) in 2015 indicated that only 6.3% of students in Grade 3 could read. There are insufficient classrooms, teacher absenteeism is very high, students' attendance is low, and the exam results are poor in public schools. Civil society representatives agree that policies that exist on paper are not implemented, respected or enforced.

Low quality drives wealthier parents to pay for private schools

The search for better quality is driving an increasing number of parents to pay for private education. As a consequence, private education has grown considerably in recent years, especially in Maputo and other urban areas.

Figure 1: School types (primary and secondary) Mozambique 2016



In 2016, private schools accounted for 3.5% of all primary and secondary schools. At primary level, the share of private schools is low, with just 1.5% of students. However, the number of students in private primary schools increased by 66% between 2011 and 2016. Private and community schools teach 10% of students in lower secondary education and 25-30% in higher secondary education. The expansion of private schools in secondary education was slowed by the economic crisis in 2015 but their number still increased by 69% between 2011 and 2016. By 2016, 10.53% of secondary schools were private.

Figure 2: Primary enrolment per type of school Mozambique 2016

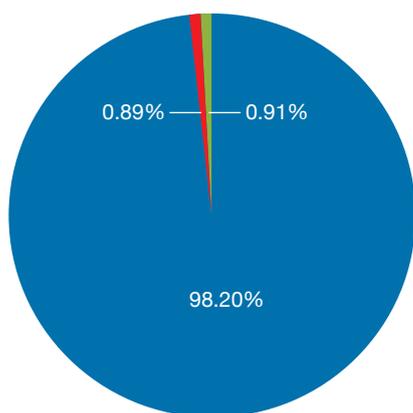
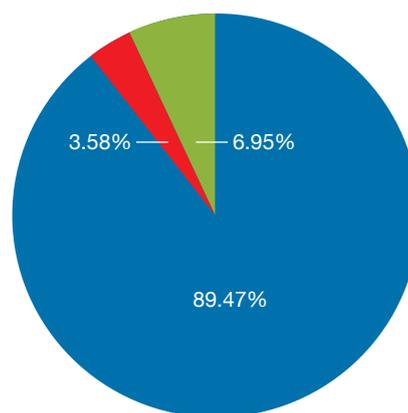


Figure 3: Lower secondary enrolment per type of school Mozambique 2016



■ Public schools
 ■ Private schools
 ■ Community schools

Source: (MINEDH, 2016a, p. 13)

There are different types of private schools. Community schools which often belong to religious groups, and where the government pays the teachers' salaries and some expenses, can only charge low fees (6,000 MT/year, about \$70).³ Private international schools charge around MT 190,000 (\$2,220) per year in primary education and around MT 210,000 to 230,000 (\$2,425-\$2,650) per year for secondary education. Private schools using the Mozambican curriculum charge MT 60,000 to 80,000 (\$700-\$925) per year. These fees mean that private schools are out of the reach of the majority of the population.

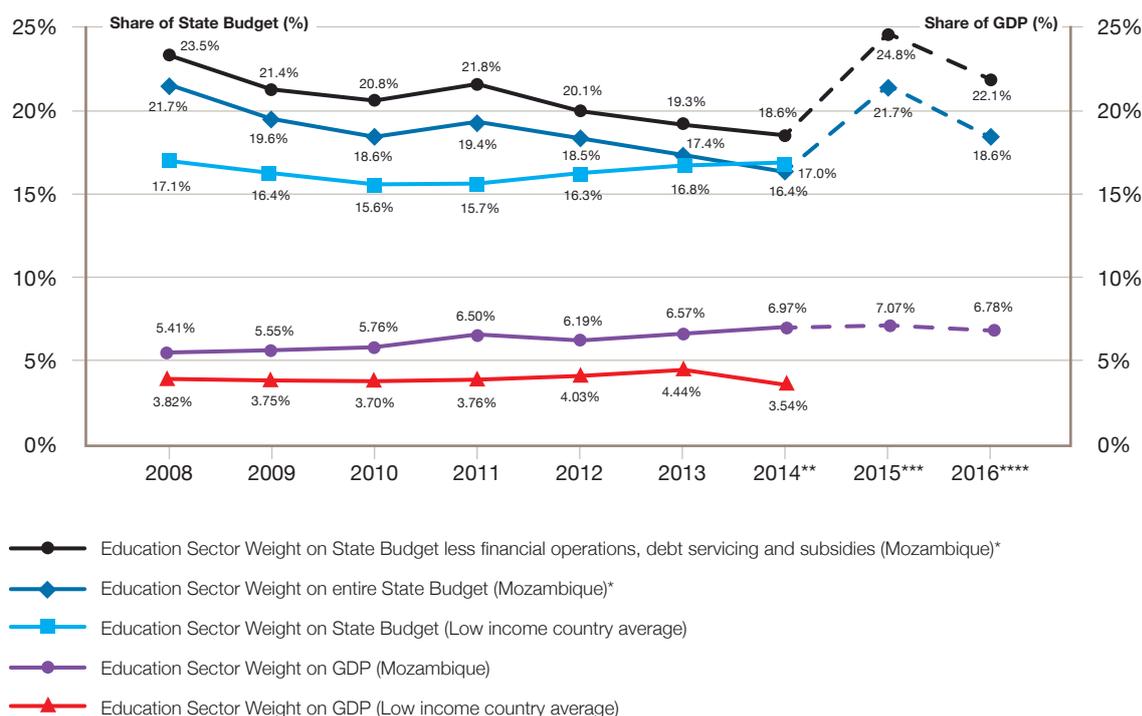
Private education sector and segregation in Mozambique

Due to the government's failure to provide quality public education, the middle classes have lost confidence in public schools. This is creating a polarisation in Mozambican society, where public education is becoming stigmatised and seen as catering only for poor people. This situation could lead to the State's disengagement from its obligations in education, without the push from the middle class that tends to be more confident and vocal to demand the State's accountability. If the Government of Mozambique is not capable of improving the quality of public education, the expansion of the private sector could accelerate and exacerbate this polarisation.

Funding of public education is at risk and inefficient

The education sector has not been spared the consequences of the financial crisis in Mozambique. The education budget declined from 2008 to 2014 and, after a significant increase in 2015, fell again in 2016. The 2016 budget allocation for education was 18.6% of the national budget (UNICEF, 2016a, p. 4). It's possible that the education budget will be further reduced in the coming years if the country does not manage to overcome the crisis quickly and restore donor confidence.

Figure 4: Trends in the weight of the Education Sector



Source: UNICEF, 2016: 4

Despite a free education policy in primary education, indirect costs are high for poor families, as they have to pay for items such as exam fees, uniforms, guards and maintenance. In many cases, children from families that cannot afford to make those payments are excluded from school.

The government should ensure free, public education of good quality for all

The Government of Mozambique should take appropriate steps to ensure equitable access to education and equality of learning opportunities, by eliminating direct and indirect school costs and improving the quality of education in public schools. The government must allocate sufficient resources to meet the minimum education standards (such as pupils-qualified teacher ratio, safe facilities, etc.) and ensure effective monitoring of schools and the improvement of data collection. Adequate resources should be allocated to improve the quality of learning by attracting, training and retaining good teachers, and investing in infrastructure and learning materials. Investment is also needed to expand access to secondary education, ensuring that there are enough places for all children to continue from public primary to public secondary schools.

The education budget needs to increase to meet international targets of a minimum of 20% of total public expenditure or 6% of GDP. The national budget should also be expanded through more progressive and effective taxation. A recent study estimated that in 2014 the country lost \$561 million in revenues from tax incentives (corresponding to 2.3% of GDP). This amount could increase the education budget by 31% (ActionAid, 2017, p. 48). The education budget should promote equity and improve the learning opportunities of disadvantaged groups such as girls and children from poor families. The allocation and utilisation of the education budget should be scrutinised (through participation in decision making processes and constant monitoring) at all levels by civil society organisations and parent teachers associations, among other stakeholders.

Recommendations

The Government of Mozambique should:

- **Right to education** - Guarantee the right to free quality education for all children as stipulated in the Constitution. Primary (and progressively secondary) education must be free and compulsory, not only in law but also in reality. The government should not delegate its responsibility for ensuring the right to education to the private sector.
- **Education financing** - Increase the share of the education budget to 20% of the national budget or 6% of GDP; increase the size of the overall budget by expanding the tax base through progressive and effective taxation; increase the sensitivity of the budget by allocating more resources to promote equity, and increase scrutiny to ensure that the budget is allocated and utilised efficiently.
- **Cost of education for parents** - Ensure that primary (and progressively secondary) education is free, not only in law but also in reality. This means abolishing all compulsory direct and indirect costs (e.g. enrolment and exam fees, uniforms and learning materials amongst others) to parents and ensuring that the State education budget adequately covers all these costs.
- **Quality education** - Improve the quality of public schools so that parents do not feel the need to pay for private education. Allocate sufficient resources to attracting, training and retaining qualified teachers, to providing sufficient learning materials and to improving school infrastructure such as classrooms, toilets and playgrounds.
- **Teachers** - Ensure that all children are taught by a properly trained and qualified teacher with a pupil-teacher ratio of not more than 40:1 investing more in female teachers, better quality training, more equitable deployment and incentives for working in remote areas. Improve the accountability of school teachers, in particular to prevent absenteeism.
- **Regulation and monitoring of schools** - Strengthen the regulation of private schools, inspecting them regularly to ensure that they comply with national education standards. Impose sanctions if private schools do not comply with requirements relating to teacher salaries and conditions, level of fees, etc. Ensure transparency by reporting accurate and detailed data on private schools (including on school owners, profits, categories of schools etc.).
- **Gender equity** - Take action to achieve gender parity and equality in education by ensuring appropriate policies are funded and implemented in order to tackle persistent barriers to girls' education, including but not limited to: gender-related school-based violence; lack of sanitation facilities; lack of female teachers and gender bias in teaching and learning materials. Engage with communities, civil society and policy-makers to shift deep-seated discrimination against girls at all levels.

Civil society organisations in Mozambique should:

- **Right to education** - Raise citizens' awareness and hold the government to account for delivering the right to free, compulsory, quality education. Expose violations of the right to education arising from the privatisation of education.
- **Education financing** - Raise awareness and support citizens to advocate for the government to increase the size of the overall budget to 6% of GDP by expanding the tax base through progressive and effective taxation; increase education's share of the budget to at least 20%, increase the sensitivity of the budget by allocating more resources to promote equity and increase scrutiny to ensure that the budget is allocated and utilised efficiently.
- **Cost of education to parents** - Raise awareness and support citizens to carry out participatory budget monitoring and analysis in order to fully understand what is spent on education by government and by households and to campaign for an end to compulsory direct and indirect costs to parents for public education.

- **Quality education** – Hold government to account for providing quality education for all children, making the case for the financing of sufficient quality trained teachers, improved school infrastructure and learning materials.
- **Regulation and monitoring of schools** – Hold the government to account for ensuring that private schools are properly regulated and regularly inspected to ensure that they comply with national education standards.
- **Gender equity** – Engage with communities and policy makers to raise awareness and shift deep-seated discrimination against girls. Identify, highlight and oppose issues such as violence against girls in schools and child marriage. Promote positive alternatives of quality inclusive and equity-focused education.



Mozambique Marracuene,
Tres de Fevereiro.
PHOTO: ACTIONAID

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Notes

1. United Nations, 1948, Article 26. http://www.un.org/en/udhr-book/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf
2. <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>
3. Interview with MINEDH Permanent Secretary, Maputo, March 2017.



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 Kakaran 79yct शिक्षा DZIDZO MmATA
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EDUCATION
A RIGHT IN EVERY LANGUAGE
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