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The Meaning of School. Repetition and Drop Out in the Mozambican Primary School

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INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM, THE METHODS AND THE LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Drop out and repetition are heavy burdens on the Mozambican primary school.[2] According to recent estimates, only 5 out of every 1000 pupils who enter Grade 1 survive by the end of Grade 7.[3] As will be illustrated in this study, an average of one quarter of the pupil population disappear at each step upwards from Grade 1. Part of this drop out occurs in between school years. Pupils leave school at the end of the year and never come back. Another and more manifest type of dropout takes place during the school year. In 1989, an average of 9 percent of the pupils can be estimated to have dropped out during that school year.[4] As for repetition, almost one third of all pupils at all levels are repeaters. Of the ones that survive to the end of a school year, around 35 percent fail to pass at the end of year. The average failure rate goes as high as 50 percent if all registered pupils in the beginning of the year are included.

Needless to say, this enormous wastage represents an equally enormous cost for the country. Much of the effort and money put into the education system seem to be have no visible result. It is often said, for example, that it requires four years of education to obtain literacy. In Mozambique, less than half of all pupils who start school finish Grade 4. According to this definition of literacy, the majority of pupils never learn to read and write sufficiently to keep their literacy skills alive. Other examples of the impact of this wastage can also be discerned. In all major cities of the country for instance, families not only struggle to get their children into overcrowded schools, but often have to bribe teachers in order to obtain the school places. If the rate of repeaters could be substantially reduced countrywide, the situation would improve considerably. So what could or should be done about school failure, repetition and drop out? At the end of this report, some measures will be recommended that could probably contribute to the improvement of the situation. But it should be emphasized that the aim of the present study has been to explore and discuss the complex mechanisms that produce school wastage, not to present a plan of action. The author's hope is therefore that the study can be useful for the understanding of these mechanisms and that it can serve to point at some directions where action is possible and needed.

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[2] "Drop out" means that pupils leave school prematurely, without completing the final grade of the level in which they once entered. In this study, focus will be put on grades 1 to 5, i.e. lower primary school ("LP1"), although the perspective occasionally will include also grade 6 and 7, upper primary ("LP2"). This represents a limitation, since the passage from lower to upper primary school is one of the most selective in the Mozambican school system. As shall be seen, drop out can be temporary. In Mozambican primary schools, and especially rural ones, it is far from unusual that pupils disappear from school during one year or more and come back a later year. "Wastage" is a more ambiguous term. It might be used to refer to all kinds of ineffectiveness in the education system. In this report "wastage" will be used as synonymous to drop out and repetition.

[3] Duvieusart, Bandouin: A financial feasibility study of the National education system in Mozambique, UNESCO consultancy report, 1986, mimeo.

[4] It should be remembered, though, that some of this drop out was due to terror activities; schools were burned or had to be closed and pupils did not have possibilities to register at another school before the end of the year.

Any serious attempt to analyse causes of drop out and repetition must include an effort to answer a number of basic questions. The very fact that children drop out from school in such large numbers and at such early ages leads us back to the fundamental questions of what meaning education has or what role it plays in different social settings. Why should families make efforts to keep their children in school at all? What is the importance of education in their lives or, to use a more sociological term, in their reproduction strategies? And how does going to school, the educational project, fit together with other, perhaps more urgent, things to do in life?

This leads to a number of other basic questions. In order to understand the significance of education for different social groups, we must know something about the capacity of these groups to make use of the education system. What, then, are the economic, social and cultural resources that different families or social groups have at their disposal when they try to make use of school? Economic resources include such things as having money to pay for schooling (school fees, text books, clothes, in urban areas nowadays also bribes, etc.) and being able to do without the labour force of children during the time used for school. Social resources are such things as having useful contacts (for example close relatives in town when children have to be sent away from home in order to continue school), or being of such a renown family that teachers would not dare to make life sour for the children by, for instance, not giving them priority in the struggle to get access to school. Cultural resources, finally, means the kind of cultural competence a family can have that normally only comes with high education, such as being able to read and write or knowing what goes on in school and in the education system.[5] This cultural competence both enables the children to survive in the classroom, and makes it possible for their parents to deal with school problems when they occur. By far the single most efficient cultural capital of this kind in the Mozambican context, is speaking Portuguese as one's mother language.[6] [7]

Once the meaning of school in specific social and cultural settings has been understood, more specific questions can be asked. For instance, to what extent does school as an institution favour or disfavour school success? What is the impact, first of all, of the content of curricula and text books, and of existing teachings methods, including the fact that pupils are taught in what normally is a foreign language? Furthermore, what is the impact of such things as the level of organization of the

[5] An even stronger cultural capital, which is the privilege of the most educated fractions of the dominating strata in Mozambican society, would among other things include the mastering of a form of Portuguese recognized as being educated and of a "general culture" which includes familiarity with Western culture and languages (European culture and American, the latter being heavily valorized in recent times, from the English language to models of marketing and management). One should not, however, forget the symbolic value attributed to being familiar with the old colonial metropolis. An interesting question in the analysis of the Mozambican elites is up to what point these forms of cultural capital are challenged by other species of capital, either accumulated in the Mozambican liberation struggle and linked to the Frelimo party (political capital which has recently been strongly devalorized) or based upon the adherence to African culture, as opposed to non-African, and the fact of having a proper African origin.

[6] Having Portuguese as one's mother tongue of course almost always implies other important ressources, such as a relatively high level of education, proximity to the modern sector, useful contacts, etc.

[7] The scientific notions in use here are borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu's notion of capital. See for example "Les trois états du capital culturel" in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, No 30, 1979, and "Le capital social. Notes provisoires", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, No 31, 1980, or later major works, such as *La Distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*, 1979, *Le sens pratique*, 1980, or *La noblesse d'état. Grandes écoles et esprits de corps*, 1989.

school, the relation between school and the local community, the level of preparation of teachers, or conditions for teaching such as the number of pupils or the time available for teaching?

Admittedly, these are very general questions and attempting to answer them would imply an enormous research study. Nevertheless, the problem of drop out and wastage has to be understood within a context indicated by questions of this kind. Identifying individual "causes" for drop out without situating them within such a context would not only be insufficient. It would reduce the complexity of the reality covered by such terms as "drop out" and, thus, suggest simplistic or mistaken interpretations, which in their turn would most likely lead to mistaken decision making.

As there is little or no research in Mozambique at this moment that is focussing on the functioning of school in different social contexts[8], and since knowledge of this kind is a prerequisite for understanding drop out and wastage, it seemed necessary for this study to give priority to this perspective. Initially, the intention was to make a tracer study in two or more primary schools, i.e. to trace a sample of drop out pupils and find out the reasons for their disappearance from the school system. However, time constraints, especially the short time available for field work (4 weeks in Maputo and 3 weeks in Nampula) made it necessary to abandon this strategy. Tracing children who had dropped out from school and their families proved to be too time consuming. The time available would not have been sufficient to conduct thorough interviews which could enable the understanding of the complex mechanisms which determine the role assigned to education in different social contexts and by different social groups. Without in-depth interviews, it would be just as hard to determine or to analyse the possibilities which families with different kinds of material and cultural resources have in making use of the education system. A study of such kind probably would have resulted in little more than a list of badly understood "causes" of drop out.[9] Another strategy had to be opted for, which necessarily gave priority to what is normally called "qualitative" information. The plan of the research was roughly as follows:

1.Statistical data available at the Planning and External Relations Department were analysed in order to construct an over all picture of drop out and repetition. Later during the research, data from specific regions and even particular schools were re-analysed for specific purposes.

2.In Maputo, visits were made to eleven primary schools in different areas and interviews conducted with the headmaster, with teachers and in some cases with pupils. These interviews touched a wide range of topics such as: the situation of the teachers (training, place of residence, working conditions etc.),

[8] A study that probably will turn out to be useful when it is published is the ongoing study made by anthropologists at the Departamento de arqueologia e antropologia at the Eduardo Mondlande University entitled "A dissociação - Um estudo do perfil sóciocultural de alunos das escolas primárias do grande Maputo".

[9] It should be emphasized that collecting data through ready made questionnaires would have been a doubtful strategy. Questionnaires of this kind demand that the sociologist is sufficiently familiar with the object of study to be able to elaborate meaningful questions. They also presuppose conditions of realization which permit that the questionnaire is carried through meaningfully, including a target population capable of and willing to answer to the questions.

the social characteristics of the surrounding bairro and the recruitment of pupils, the relation between the school and the local community, school achievement, drop out, repetition, etc. The objective of these visits was to get a more elaborate picture of drop out and repetition problems and to get a general idea of the social differences between schools in the Maputo area.

3.On the basis of these visits, two suburban bairros were then chosen for more extensive field work. One, Polana Caniço "B", represented the typically new, overpopulated areas inhabited mainly by refugee peasant families. The other, Xipamanini, represented an old suburban environment, characterized by the existence of a big marketplace and by the fact of its function as a transitory zone between the inner cement city and surrounding areas, including the countryside. Contacts were made with the local schools, and with the help of the local administration, families with school aged children were also selected for interviews according to a few basic principles[10]. The major part of the field work consisted of interviews of around one and a half hours duration, and sometimes more, with the selected families. The questionnaires used to accompany these interviews were basically "open", giving much space for unexpected information. However, a basic structure consisting of five parts was drawn up to permit comparability between the results of the interviews. The first part dealt with the social history of the extended family. The aim here was to derive a fairly accurate picture of the material, social and cultural resources created by this history. The second part concerned the present situation of the family, including means of survival. The third part of the interviews focussed on the ways of understanding the family education of the children. A fourth part highlighted the relation to school and included a detailed discussion of the school career of the children. In the final part, the future was discussed. Altogether 50 interviews were conducted (25 in Polana Caniço "B", and the other 25 in Xipamanini).

4.With the help of the *Sede dos bairros comunais*, an attempt was made to administer questionnaires in four "quarterãoes"[11] in four different *bairros* of the capital. The objective of this questionnaire was to collect information on children of different ages who stayed out of school and gather a few simple indicators on the social character of their family. The questionnaire was answered by each "chefe de quarterão", who made a small census in his area of jurisdiction. Unfortunately, the quality of the collected data was so bad that no analysis could be made and no conclusions drawn.

[10] Interviews with the secretary of the "círculo" or with "chefes de quarterão" made it possible to get a general idea of the social structure of the *bairro*. On the basis of this picture, individual families were selected who represented either extremes (such as "poor/rich", "educated/not educated", "newcomer/locally established", "family with both parents present/single mother", etc.) or specific social circumstances such as being refugees. Much could be said about the social mecanism influencing a selection process of this kind and about possible ways to escape from the most determining ones. One obstacle, among others, was the tendency among officials either to try to create a positive impression of the "quarterrão" or the "círculo" or to exaggerate existing problems, in both cases by influencing the chocie of families to interview.

[11] A "quarterão" is the lowest administrative unit in Mozambican administration. In the cities a "quarterão" normally includes 100 to 200 households. It is headed by its "chefe de quarterão", an elected member of the local population who is not payed for his or her work.

5.In order to extend the research scope beyond the urban/suburban environments of the predominantly patrilineal south, a rural *bairro* (Matibane), situated close to the old mission of Anchilo on the road leading to the coast some 25 kilometers outside the province capital of Nampula in the north of the country, was chosen for the second stage of the field work. About 30 families and some 15 pupils were interviewed. Additional interviews were also conducted with the teachers at the primary schools of Matibane and neighbouring Naholoco. A one day visit was also made to the more distant and much poorer village of Matarone, located at the opposite side of the main road leading from Nampula to the coast, during which interviews were conducted. The field work in Matibane, which lasted three weeks, included much more direct observation since entire days were spent in the village. This made it possible to have much more informal meetings with the interviewed families, and enabled follow-ups to be made. These interviews embraced a wider range of topics than was the case in Maputo.

The overall research task, then, was an attempt to find out,ão in the three areas where field work was done, the meaning people attached to school, the role of education in their lives, the kind of means they possessed to make use of school in order to satisfy their needs, and what difficulties they were facing in relating to the school.

As has been pointed out earlier, the limited time available for the field work implied that this task could never be carried through in as deep a way as would have been necessary. In so far as peoples' relation to school depends on their entire culture, this culture cannot be separated from the analysis. An understanding of, for example, a peasant society like the one in Matibane should be an undertaking probably lasting several years. The field work upon which this study is based, then, calls for cautiousness particularly when it comes to conclusions and interpretations. I am well aware of the fact that some of the descriptions or attempts to reach an analysis that will follow are vague and much too general in character. Moreover, some details and some of the hypotheses may be more or less mistaken because they are based on "bad" information, inadequate information, or just mistaken interpretations.[12] Nevertheless, it seemed necessary to at least make a start in the direction of an anthropological or sociological approach in order to find out how the "school" functions in different social contexts. Despite these shortcomings, it is the authors' hope that the present report can contribute to a better understanding of the complex phenomena of drop out and repetition.

[12] One point should be specifically mentioned. This text was written in 1991, before I had the opportunity to read Christian Geffray's excellent work on the matrilinear society of the Makuas (see particularly *Ni père, ni mère. Critique de la parenté: le cas makhuwa*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1990). In the light of Geffray's analyses, the attempts, in the present text, to understand how schooling, and especially schooling for girls, was conceived in this matrilinear society, appeared to be rather superficial, if not directly incorrect. In the present English version of this study, I have tried to take account of Geffray's work in contexts where it was most appropriate, without rewriting other passages. These changes do not appear in the Portuguese version, published at INDE, Mozambique, in late 1992.

2. RURAL MOZAMBIQUE: MATIBANE AND THE CASE OF MARIA

A basic and perhaps understandable assumption embedded in educational policy is that schooling and literacy is something desirable, and that it should embrace the whole population. One of the fundamental problems educational policy has to face, and one of the most important reasons for its failure however, is the fact that this conviction is not equally shared by all social groups and for good reasons.

The case of Maria Assane that will be outlined below, reveals some of the contradictions of schooling in rural Mozambique. Maria was 14 years old when I met her in August 1990. The year before, in Grade 5, she had received the highest possible marks (20 in mathematics and 19 in Portuguese). These were incredibly good results. Maria wanted to continue to Grade 6, but she was not allowed to. In 1990 she stayed home.

Maria Assane lived in Matibane, not far from the Mission of Anchilo some 20 kilometers outside Nampula. Matibane was a rather rich village[13] and certainly a socially stable one. The abundance of cashew and mango trees were signs of stability and wealth. The harvest from the family machambas was generally enough for the families to survive throughout the year. There was no lack of land for anyone who wanted to produce more. The Monapo river watered the plantations. The dominant *nloko*[14] had been strong enough to impose the rule that women, who are the fortune of the extended family, should never leave the area when getting married. The men who married into the family had to build their houses for the new household in the neighbourhood. Thus, over the years family ties in Matibane had grown extremely strong and many families counted themselves as related to each other.

The Assane homestead always presented the same scenery when we came by for our interviews. Cassava plants surrounded the hut. A cashew tree gave shadow and protection at the spot where Papa Assane used to sit down and rest in early afternoon when he returned from the fields. Twice a day, Maria cleaned up the sandy yard outside the hut. It was always clean. Chickens strutted around, picking up seeds that had been left. The family dog slept in the shadow of the cashew tree, stretched out at a respectful distance from his master.

Early in the mornings, Maria fetched water and helped her mother to prepare breakfast. Then she accompanied her parents to the *machamba*, returning with her mother somewhat earlier than the men in order to prepare another meal. Domestic activities of this kind were seen as an important part of Maria's education, preparing her to assume future responsibility for her own household as a married woman.

The Assane family had little money to spend. The *machamba* produced cassava, peanuts, tomatoes, cabbage and bananas, but these products were rarely commercialized. There was nowhere Papa Assane could, except on few occasions,

[13] The notion of village is not totally appropriate. Villages in the sense of a physical conglomerate of houses are rare in Mozambique, if we don't consider the communal villages. Matibane is a *bairro* in administrative terms, or an extended village in socio-cultural terms.

[14] In this matrilinear society, *nloko* refers to an extended family group unified by the fact of being descendants from the same female ancestor (*piamwene*) and belonging to the same clan. The *nloko* does not go beyond seven generations. Its chief is the elder brother of the current *piamwene* or his elected substitute, the *mwene*. Since genealogy is counted on the side of the woman, the husband marries into an *nloko* but traditionally cannot separate his wife from this family structure. Divorce means that the man leaves. The education of the children is mainly the responsibility of the mother's family and especially of her elder brothers.

sell his labour. Since all the families in Matibane were peasants, no one needed and no one could afford paid labour. In any case, working for others was not well paid and not a desired state of affairs for a man who felt pride in being a peasant and cultivating his own field. The annual income in cash for the family might have been between 50 000 and 100 000 metical, coming from sold agricultural products and occasional paid jobs. This money was used for buying such things as clothes, kitchen oil, salt, some kerosene to keep the family oil lamp burning after sunset, and school books. A rough calculation of yearly spending, made on the basis of discussions with Papa Assane[15], did not explain how the family economy could reasonably work out. The family consumption amounted to at least 110 000 Metical a year (in current prices).[16]

Expenditure on schooling was considerable in relation to income and other costs of living. Books cost 250 metical each in primary school, which amounts to a minimum of 1500 metical per child and year including the exercise books. The Assane family had four children of school age. The family also had to pay school fees. But what is perhaps the most important expenditure in relation to school were clothes. In the higher grades, for example in Grade 6, it would be considered a disgrace for the family to send their children to school too badly dressed. For Maria, a second hand dress of modest quality would cost some 5000 to 10 000 Metical and last one year. Shoes, of course, were a luxury, but would probably be required beyond grade 6. No one in the family had ever possessed a pair of shoes.

Papa Assane had withdrawn his daughter from school after Grade 5, in spite of her high marks. He declared that this was contrary to his wish, but argued that he simply could not afford her going on studying. His greatest concern was the need to buy new clothes. "Where and how would I arrange this money?" he asked rhetorically each time the question was brought up during the interviews.

But even though this financial argument seemed to be strong enough considering the family economy, there were other, probably more important considerations behind his refusal, reasons that Papa Assane seemed less inclined to discuss openly.

For both boys and girls in Matibane education was a contradictory project.

Sending the children to the local primary school seemed to be a question of honour. If a family failed to do so, this was seen as a sign of either economic or marital problems within the family. It is not accidental therefore, that annual drop out

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[15] In the Makuan matrilinear society the woman most often keeps care of the household money and controls actual spendings, even though her husband formally should decide on which spendings to make. This was the case of the Assane family, which made exact information on actual household spendings difficult to get. Neither does a traditional peasant family "plan" expenditures in a way that Westerners would consider rational. Exact calculations of yearly expenditures are therefore extremely difficult to make.

[16] Distributed in the following way:

diesel, 1 litre per week at 250 MT/litre	12 000 MT
soap, 1 piece a month at 1200 MT/piece	15 000 MT
clothes, for six persons	60 000 MT
kitchen oil, 1 litre per 2 months at 1 500 MT/litre	10 000 MT
salt, 30 kilos a year at 300MT/kilo	10 000 MT
hoe, 2 per year at 1 500MT	3 000 MT
sickle, 2 per year at 2 500 MT	5 000 MT
SUM	114 000 MT

Other likely expenditures, such as medicine, paying traditional doctors or buying school books, are not included.

(drop out during the school year) was rare in Matibane. In the previous year, 1989, only three children in a school of some two hundred and fifty pupils were reported to have "disappeared" from school, and in the current year (1990), two had dropped out so far by November, when the school was revisited.

This should be compared with the neighbouring school of Naholoco, some three kilometers away. In this school, the school classes this year had been reduced, by November, to two thirds of their size in relation to the beginning of the school year. These differences obviously had to do with the social characteristics of the two *bairros*. The stability in Matibane was in sharp contrast to the instability in Naholoco. In the latter village, circulation of families and the fact that the *bairro* during the last years had received many refugee peasant families, had resulted in weakened relations of interdependence and a weakened traditional power structure. No *mwene* could claim that the area stood under his exclusive supervision. In addition, many of the refugee families came from regions where, for many years, war had made schools impossible and some of their children did not even know what school was. The tendency among refugee families to move out of the village to join other family members who lived elsewhere increased the annual number of children who disappeared from school.

Yet another difference should be pointed out. It is likely that the stability of people and traditions in Matibane also meant that the historic influence from the neighbouring catholic mission in Anchilo continued to exert considerable influence as regards attitudes to school. It is true that elders, in interviews, often criticized the colonial mission school as being part of the oppressive colonial system. During those times, they said, school meant more physical labour in the teachers' *machambas* than school work, and studies were not serious, but limited to catechism. But they would also talk about the old mission school and its teachers with much respect. The mission seemed to have created an acceptance of the school as an institution in the village and to have contributed to the generally acknowledged moral rule that children should go to school. In particular, the mission school seemed to have strengthened the belief that it was worthwhile concluding four or five grades in elementary education. In colonial times, this represented a considerable achievement and corresponded to a real possibility of, at least modestly, changing one's social condition.[17]

In Matibane, school at this level was, in part, understood as complementary to family education[18] and stress was put on moral aspects, such as learning to behave, to show respect for the teachers and to be in time for lessons. The families also, of course, thought that learning a minimum of Portuguese and eventually learning to

[17] The historic role of the mission schools in Mozambique is, of course, an enormous topic that cannot be entered upon here. In Matibane, the complexity of the relation between local population, or, more correctly, distinctive groups within the local population, and the mission included the fact that the majority of families were muslims. The limited time available for field work did not permit entering into such fundamental questions as the impact of the existence of parallel school institutions, the formal school and the coranic school, differences between the Muslim and the Christian communities as regards attitudes to school, or the coexistence of christianism and islam with traditional religious beliefs and practices (a coexistance that probably meant a more or less radical transformation of the former religions).

[18] This, obviously, is a simplistic way of describing a relation that without doubt was extremely complex and often contradictory. With the exception for school teaching of the secrets of sexual life, however, families in Matibane seemed to accept school as an agent for education. Most reluctant and sometimes openly hostile were families belonging to the muslim community, partly because school in their case parallelled another educational institution and its pretentions, the coranic school.

read and write basic things was desirable.[19] But beyond the five grades in the local primary school, the project of education became less evident and more problematic.

On the one hand, getting educated meant the possibility of leaving the peasant condition, of getting employment and a salary, and eventually of being able to live in the city where signs of wealth such as electricity, running water, cars and even television sets, at least according to rumor, were so abundant. Having a son or a daughter achieving this would not only be an honour for the family, but secure its well-being in future. Villagers thought, in a general way, that having access to school would improve their conditions in future and, more specifically, that education was one of the few available means for individual social mobility upwards.

On the other hand, the peasant families in Matibane knew from experience that the road to success was long, costly and insecure. It would be far from enough to send the children to the neighbouring school of Anchilo, at walking distance from Matibane, where Grade 6 was taught. Leaving school at the end of Grade 6 would not be sufficient and it would be necessary to arrange for continued studies in the suburbs of the city. This implied finding a house where the son or daughter could stay. Arrangements of this kind could only be made using the extended family and its network of solidarity ties. The educational ambitions of most peasant families had to stop here. They had no contacts whatsoever in the cities and boarding schools had been getting increasingly rare when state expenditure for education was cut down. A family with the good fortune of having close relatives in town would be well off. More often, the children, if they could be sent to anyone at all, had to stay with distant relatives and in households where they might be treated as servants. In Matibane, we interviewed three young men who had returned to the village after a year of humiliation and starving in the city when staying with distant relatives. No one had been able to complete Grade 7.

Sending one's daughter to town in order to continue her studies could turn out to be a most dangerous strategy. Separated from the extended family, which in normal circumstances would function as a moral safeguard, the young woman might be unable to confront the radically different social environment that town life offers. Probably (no interviews have been made which support this hypothesis), the fact that moral values and teachings of traditional rural family education were too distant from town life reality to be adequate in the new surrounding, might lead to a moral confusion that resulted in pregnancy and forced school drop out. (On this point, see discussion on pregnancy below.) It should not be forgotten that when a peasant family sends a child to town it will in a sense loose the child to an unknown society whose "secrets" are unfamiliar to the parents themselves and within which they do not feel at

[19] In general, families spoke with respect of the teachers as possessors of the "secrets" of a knowledge most people ignored. These "secrets" were seen as embeddied in books or any written texts. Knowing to read, then, was having access to or possessing unknown powers. In the case of teachers, these powers were considered of good nature, although exceptions existed (the most clear one being sexual education for uninitiated children). For the Christian community in Matibane, the desirability of learning to read and write was linked to a high appraisal of the competence to read religious texts (especially the Bible), thus coming closer to the "secrets" kept in these texts, otherwise understood only by the priests at the mission. Getting to know these secrets through reading meant access to a salutary force capable of radically changing human destiny. The little information that was possible to collect on similar subjects during the short field work suggest that the whole question of the uses of literacy in given social contexts would be a profitable approach to a deeper understanding of mechanisms determining the rate of literacy in the population. On this point, see the discussion in Don Kulicks and Christopher Strouds article "Christianity, Cargo and Ideas of Self: Patterns of Literacy in a Papua New Guinean Village", *Man*, 25, 1990, pp-70-88.

ease. The picture of the humble peasant father waiting for hours outside a suburban school to get a word with the teacher about his child being expelled for alleged truancy or some other problem, is an illustrative one. Finally, sending children to town in order to continue school meant economical sacrifices that could be substantial. The family not only lost a productive member, but had to send food (and money) to town, which was a time consuming and often expensive undertaking.

However, the educational project was not only costly and hazardous. It was contradictory. Receiving education meant leaving the peasant conditions and finding the way to modern society and its fortunes, which would, in turn, give the means to support the original group, the family, in future. But those who managed to succeed usually changed. From the point of view of the village, a person of the city, an educated or a rich person, someone who belonged to the modern, urban world and who automatically would be considered to have many profitable contacts, was named a *mkunya*, a "white person", regardless of his or her colour of skin. This expression was often used both ironically and critically, but basically expressed both superiority and the fact of the city person being different, "not one of us" as an interviewed peasant put it. Getting one's daughter married to a *mkunya* was an honour because it meant getting connected to another and probably superior world where wealth was available. But the undertone of irony or criticism in the use of the notion of *akunya* (plural form) was equally important. In traditional peasant society there is little room for individuality: the individual cannot exist alone, outside the pattern of family relations to which he belongs and where his position to a great extent is defined from birth. Education, though, by definition puts the individual in the unknown community of *akunya*, a world out of control from the original group, transforming him into something different. This transformation did not necessarily threaten solidarity ties to the group of origin - at least not according to harmonious ideals set up by some interviewed peasant families - but was far from unproblematic, as witnessed by numerous stories of ungrateful relatives whose behaviour, once they had disappeared to the city, showed little respect for their group of origin and its needs. The "secrets" of school and of formal education, to which the educated young man (or woman) were considered to be initiated, then, also represented a potential danger to moral values which guaranteed the unity of the group.

This transformation might be accepted for boys but represented a considerable risk for girls. An educated girl would not be able to marry a man with less education than herself. Uneducated men would not dare to approach her and in any case such a marriage was generally seen as unhappy and unstable, since the woman would know secrets that her husband did not know. This would severely limit the range of potential suitors and put the family in a situation where it became dependent on unknown suitors whose intentions and behaviour were equally unknown. Matrilinear tradition in Matibane had it that the married woman should stay in the area of her family of origin and her husband build the family hut there. This was seen as a guarantee for stability and future reproduction, since children were to be brought up in proximity to the extended family to which they belonged, i.e. that of the mother. The educated woman, then, might either continue as unmarried (and be a burden and a shame for her family) or marry men who were likely not to respect tradition, but without representing any other visible advantage such as wealth or high social position. In either case, the whole base upon which family reproduction rested was put at risk. It was also generally thought that the educated girl would change her attitudes, become less respectful to her parents and to traditions and rituals, and loose

her taste for manual labour in the fields. The education of girls, thus, threatened social reproduction and since the perspective of any real advantage coming out of schooling was so uncertain, families were less inclined to go for continued education.

In order to understand these facts, we must consider the structure of the Makua matrilinear society, clarified by Christian Geffray in his analysis of the crucial role of girls or young women in the whole logic of social reproduction in this society[20]. Traditionally, family economy is based upon the labour force provided by the young men who marry into the family, even though the wealth produced by this labour is not understood as a product of their work but as the rightful property of their mothers-in-law, who "feed" the family and see to its well being, i.e. redistribute the products of labour to family members.[21] The household of the senior mother - the "mother of mothers" - is the central one in the family network, even if the real chief of the family conglomerate would be her brothers or maternal uncles. As her own children grow up and her daughters get married, the young woman passes from being junior - which implies subordination to her own mother (and her mother's brothers or uncles) - to the group of senior women who, benefitting from the labour of their sons-in-law, can guarantee the well being of their family network. It is also important for her to give birth to daughters at an early stage of her social career, since she later on in life, as Geffray shows, can rightfully "adopt" one or several of her granddaughters, thus reproducing a situation in which, by marrying off these adopted daughters, she can benefit from the suitors' labour force, without which she would find it difficult to survive. Becoming a respected and influential senior woman is the accomplishment of the social career of a young woman.

It is crucial, then, that a family conglomerate (comprising several generations) produces girls and that these girls as future women stay closely attached to the family in order to guarantee the inflow of new suitors or husbands and their labour force. The status of the woman, then, makes her immobile. If she were to leave with her husband, she would not fulfill this function, neither would she later on in life benefit from her position as a senior woman.

Thus, it is in the interest of the elder generation[22] that a young girl marries and starts giving birth to children (daughters). But it is also very much in her own interest, namely if she wants to gain social respect and simultaneously create conditions for her social and material survival as a senior and, later, elder woman. School, then, does not fit well with the conditions for social promotion of women. This was probably the way Maria's father saw the matter, although he certainly would have phrased it

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[20] Christian Geffray: *Ni père, ni mère. Critique de la parenté: le cas makhuwa*, Paris, 1990. (See also footnote 12.)

[21] This is the image of the (often) maternal head of family or clan shown in many Makonde "family tree" sculptures: the head of the female ancestor appears on top of a "tree" of bodies that cling to her, representing the dependence of family members on the (female) ancestor as the physical incarnation of the family/clan itself, outside of which they cannot socially exist, as well as their physical dependence on her as "feeder".

[22] Geffray (op.cit.*)* means that whereas production is controlled by women, reproduction is the domain of men, especially through their role as *maîtres du mariage*. By orchestrating the alliances between families and by seeing to it that junior women with a specific hierarchical status in one family marry junior men with a specific hierarchical status in the other, the *maîtres* of marriage, normally the maternal uncles on both sides, secure hierarchical positions within the world of men.

differently. It was probably also the way Maria herself more or less clearly understood her own future.[23]

For boys, education was a less contradictory project. The main responsibilities of husbands in Matibane were to secure the reproduction of their wife's lineage by making them pregnant, constructing a house for the family and securing its material well-being. Within their own lineage, for example as brothers (to their sisters) and uncles (to their sisters' children) or as nephews (to their maternal uncle), they assumed wider responsibilities. They would supervise the education of children (including their integration in rituals and ceremonies guided by the local *mwene* or his substitutes) and protect the interests of the family in questions of marriage or disputes on land. Belonging to "the same stomach", the same *nloko*, meant considering nephews and nieces as one's own children, thus assuming full moral and material responsibility for their well being and future. Being both husband and brother (nephew, uncle, etc), the man must procure the means for the survival of the group.[24] This, of course, was normally accomplished through agriculture[25], but might very well include such things as selling his labour, travelling, or getting educated and entering into modern society. In doing this, the man should, traditionally, act as a representative of the group, contrary to being an individual fortune seeker, and act on its behalf and for its benefit. Individual achievement, either in education or in professional careers, was ideally an accomplishment of the group itself. The educational project, then, became less contradictory as such. Educating sons, male nephews or male grandchildren, was to educate an organic member of the group and a means for the group to secure its future well being.

This was, roughly[26], the ideal representation of things. However, peasant families were aware that reality often was different. The transforming force of education was a visible one. School leavers from higher grades who had returned to the village because of lack of opportunities had a more or less openly problematic relationship to their social surrounding of origin. They had been forced to return and they wanted nothing else other than getting away once again. They had lost much of their faith in the values that build up traditional peasant life. They questioned or ridiculed the secrets of the elders which were transmitted through initiation and other rituals. New

[23] It should be added that the Assane family in one respect was not typical of Matibane. The absence of a family and of elder brothers or their substitutes on the side of the mother, had strengthened the role of the father, who was, in contradiction with matrilinear tradition, the main person responsible for the education for his children.

It should also be pointed out that Geffray describes a traditional, "pure" state of the matrilinear social system. It is an interesting question how much these social forces are counterbalanced by new ones, especially considering that Matibane was at least partly integrated into the urban economy of the neighbouring town of Nampula. Urbanisation and nuclearisation of the households undoubtely weaken matrilinear ties, since the woman and her children would tend to be disconnected from their family of origin. The complex orchestration of marriages, directed by the men occupying the positions of chiefs of the family conglomerates, and the accompanying immobility of women and circulation of men in their role of husbands, fecundating males and labour force, would be increasingly difficult to achieve.

[24] Geffray (op.cit.) shows that marriage strategies are often oriented towards a strenghtening of the alliance between the family conglomerate of the man, where he as brother or uncle can influence the marriages of his sisters or his nieces, and the family into which he has himself once been married, thus uniting two groups and extending the sphere of influence of the man himself.

[25] As a junior (suitor or newly married man) his labour would, however, primarily be put at the disposal of the family into which he is married.

[26] It should, once again, be stressed that the anthropological field work underlying these reflections was far too short to produce anything else than general descriptions. I am well aware that details may be wrong or put into a somewhat badly understood context.

categories of thinking had entered their minds and they would typically express themselves, at least in the social situation that the interviews constituted[27], using oppositions such as "old fashioned"/"modern", "superstition"/"science", "local"/"universal", "eventless"/"eventful", etc. The uneasiness they felt embraced all aspects of daily life, such as the lack of taste and variety of traditional food, the poor houses, the hard and never ending work in the fields, the unattractiveness of local women, the dullness of entertainment activities, the oldfashionedness of rituals, etc. They were, to use an expression by Pierre Bourdieu, people whom school had put in a warped position in history (*une position en porte-à-faux*). They belonged neither to the peasant society they came from, nor to the modern world they aspired to. Facing the sociologist, as a impersonation of modern society, they had to conceal the extent of their participation in traditional beliefs and practices. Being back in their village of origin, they equally had to keep under cover some of the beliefs or attitudes acquired in the city because of their blasphemous or irreverent character. Their doubt of the values of traditional peasant society, in particular the belief in the cult of the ancestors, put indirectly into question its very base, the unity of the group, by challenging the way of understanding solidarity ties between members of the same group. Hence, education, as the vehicle for this transformation, tended to threaten the whole base upon which traditional society rested, and give way for an individualism which was its very opposite.[28] Thus, peasant families were aware of the changing force of education. The contradictions of the educational project was perhaps most openly visible in this double attitude: wanting education as an instrument to improve the condition of the group, but mistrusting the effect of education as a danger to the solidarity of the group.

[27] An interview, being a social meeting between the anthropologist as a representative for modern society and, particularly, from the highest possible levels of the educational system, and the interviewee, produces its proper social effects, for example, in this case, the tendency of the interviewee to adapt his discourse to what is experienced to be a dominating, "modern" thinking.

[28] Christian Geffray tells about all young men he met in distant rural villages during his research, young teenagers who had finished school and wanted nothing else than to get out of the village, at any price. See Christian Geffray: *La causes des armes au Mozambique*, Paris, 1991. It is interesting, that some of these young men, who had been eliminated from secondary school (or at the edge of entering secondary school), were the only persons in Matibane who at least talked about making agriculture in a new way with paid mannual labour and regular commercialization of products.

3. SCHOOL IN A SUBURBAN CONTEXT: POLANA CANIÇO "B" AND XIPAMANINI

Urbanization means a gradual - or dramatic, as in the case of the refugee peasant families - disappearance of the conditions for traditional family education. It creates a vacuum as concerns forms for education and transmission of moral values within families. And it assigns a new role to school in family reproduction.

The contrast between the meaning of school in a rural society and in an urban or suburban social context became particularly evident in Polana Caniço "B", a new suburban *bairro* in Maputo, dominated by refugee peasant families. In interviews, refugee peasants complained about the corrupt city school where discipline was weak and teachers often had to be bribed. This criticism was basically moral and contrasted the rural, much respected teacher, to whom local people confidently could come with their problems, and the young urban teachers who neither knew how to show respect for the parents nor were able to put themselves in respect among the pupils. But the refugee peasant families also experienced a new and unknown relationship between school and the local community. Above all they had suddenly been thrown into a previously unknown state of dependence on education as perhaps the only means ever to improve their present state of degradation.

These families all told about the emptiness and confusion which took the place of the *machamba*, around which all their previous life had been centered. Children no longer were engaged in important daily domestic or agricultural activities which were part and parcel of their civic education. There was no future, at least no familiar future in which they could put trust. The network of solidarity ties represented by the extended family had been critically reduced and some families even found themselves in a severe state of isolation, forcing them to depend on total strangers. Refugee families would typically try to reconstruct the countryside household in the impoverished environment of the suburban *bairro*, giving much attention to cleaning and decorating the small yard in front of the hut, to keeping their children at home and away from the streets and the market and giving them domestic work to keep them occupied.

However, the protection of traditional family education was a difficult and even contradictory project. In many households men were absent because of migration work to South Africa or Swaziland. Their absence imposed on the woman the double necessity of guaranteeing the material survival of the family and of educating the children - a contradictory task since the search for money, normally through selling at the market, implied her absence from home. The extremely harsh economical conditions, under which most families in suburban or semi-urban Maputo live, also tended to favour the abandoning of fundamental principles of traditional education (respect for elders, control of the children's movements and whereabouts, etc.), a disregard which was most openly expressed in the act of sending the children to work at the *dumba nengue* (the black or, at least, parallel market). Using children for similar activities would be a shameful behaviour with old moral standards. Interviewed refugee peasant families claimed that it was only with grief in their hearts they could engage in commercial activities at all. Dealing with money was not proper by their moral yardstick.

The absence of the mother from home and the necessity of using the children in the struggle for daily survival by sending them to the market as vendors created a

previously unknown discontinuity between children's activities and experiences and the ones of their parents. By necessity, children learnt to move around on their own and to get to know the city world through contacts with their peers. This distance between children and their parents constituted yet another threat to traditional family education. The content of this education and the control of the children's movements and experiences it presupposes did no longer correspond to reality. Perhaps the most clear expression of this process was the teaching of sexual secrets, which traditionally should be the monopoly of the elders and transmitted through the initiation rituals, but in the suburban *bairro* inevitably passed from child to child.

It should be added here that, in the patrilinear south, the nuclearization of the family probably has imposed new, and sometimes confusing roles on family members. When the field work for the present study started in Polana Caniço "B", interviews were mainly conducted with mothers. Many of them seemed to be strangely uninformed about the activities in which their children were involved. The reason was that the education of the children was the total responsibility of the paternal grandmother, not of the mother herself. These grandmothers, who represented a traditional point of view, i.e. an old state of family education, unanimously claimed that all present problems in the education of the young generation were due to the fact that they (the grandmothers) and their likes were not allowed to assume the roles traditionally assigned to them and that mothers simply were not able to replace them. The gradual disappearance of the paternal grandmother from the household of one of her eldest sons, which is just an expression of a process of nuclearization of the extended family, is, then, probably an example of the kind of confusion in family education that results from this process. It should be said that some of the interviews support the accusation of the grandmothers; since they were not educated to take full responsibility for their children's moral education, some single mothers in nuclearized and newly urbanized families apparently did not try to control the whereabouts of their children.

Refugee peasant families in Polana Caniço "B" represented one extreme in the urbanization process. Xipamanini represented another state of the same process. Xipamanini is an old suburban *bairro* which includes one of the biggest marketplaces of Maputo. It also serves as a transitory zone between the inner city, peripheral Maputo and the countryside. It is socially complex and heterogeneous, a *bairro* of intense activity. Most of the interviewed families in Xipamanini also had a much longer urban history and they were much more familiar with the conditions of urban life. But even if they in many respects contrasted against peasant refugee families in Polana Caniço "B", they shared some of their conditions.

Perhaps the most striking difference concerned the authority patterns within the families. Refugee peasant families made their best to uphold the functions of the traditional family under new and unfavourable conditions, including the parental control of the children. In many families interviewed in Xipamanini, this was different. Even though the authority of the father or mother was perhaps not often openly challenged, children engaged in activities out of control from their parents. The number of children, and especially boys, who contributed to the family economy by selling at the market was probably much higher in Xipamini than in Polana Caniço "B". According to teachers in the local school *21 de Outubro* and the local party secretary, a majority of all primary school aged children were engaged as street vendors after, or during, school time. In Xipamanini, many of these children apparently had a commercial activity of this sort of their own. That they were not

subordinated to their family was confirmed when some parents stated that they had no idea that their sons had not turned up in school for a week or two.

The lack of parental control was above all due to the fact that control was difficult or impossible. Interviewed parents maintained that they did all in their power to educate their children and to get their daughters married. Even so, almost all these families were crowded with children who had dropped out from school and with unmarried daughters with babies. Most parents had no means to secure the reproduction of the family as they imagined it should be functioning. An extreme but probably not at all rare case of this forced abandoning of moral standards was given by an interviewed father who admitted that his daughters were prostitutes. He explained that the first time his daughters appeared at home with new clothes, he had punished them and burned the clothes in an attempt to restore authority and moral rules. But in the end he had had no other choice than to accept, since he was not able to present any alternative. He was not able to sustain his family.

But even if the physical absence of the educational instructors (father and mother, paternal grandfather, grandmother or aunts, etc.) is one of the factors behind the kind of moral confusion in which suburban youth is brought up, it is far from being the only one. Old moral values - that were so much defended in the discourse of the paternal grandmothers - seemed to be badly ajusted to the realities of the situation in which families fought for survival and for securing their social reproduction. The utmost poverty in which many suburban families were living and the gradual abandoning of old practices and customs originating from the peasant society, reinforced by this poverty, (for example of the *lobolo* as an ideal model in marriage customs, that is the practice of compensating. economically and symbolically, the family of the bride for the the loss of one of its family members who henceforth will "belong" to the family of the bridegroom) seemed to create a situation in which old moral rules simply were not applicable and for that reason lost their credibility. For an increasingly large number of girls, the perspectrive of a traditional marriage through *lobolo* was simply not realistic. Neither did the family of the bridegroom, to which the young bride should traditionally be handed over, represent the strong and stable family network that, according to traditional ideals, should guarantee her well being and justify the rupture of the links to her family of origin. Moreover, the widespread prostitution, imposed by poverty, in itself put in question the belief in old moral standards according to which any sexual relationship before marriage is forbidden. Perhaps the search, through prostitution, for the irresistable symbols of modernity and the good life (symbols that are so visible in the urban environment of the capital: clothes, all consumer goods, from the comfortable and brinkling cars to tinned cool drinks and icecream[29]) would be less common if the alternative represented by old moral values were to be more realistic.[30] [31]

[29] In socialist times, cool drinks were only available in bottles, produced within the country, and icecream was non-existant. According to interviews made in 1992 by the INDE research group in sociology, it happens that young suburban girls prostitute themselves for an icecream or a Coca-Cola. It must be stressed that the basis of this prostitution is the extreme poverty of these children; what is discussed here, however, is the strong attraction of an in practice unreachable "modern" urban life and the parallel weakness of alternative moral standards according to which this kind of modernity should not be procured at any price.

[30] Everything works as if the harmonic transformation of old values into more "modern" forms, adapted to suburban and urban life, is the privelege of the etsablished urban middle class, whose social and economic resources make this transformation possible (as in the case of the transformation of the

The collapse of an old moral order and of traditional family education that goes with the collapse of the conditions to reproduce it, was the fundamental reason behind the kind of forced drop out of girls that comes from pregnancy. In this sense, pregnancy was a parallel phenomena to the commercial activities of boys which often equally led to drop out but because of truancy. Initiation rituals and the teaching of sexual secrets to the young girls being less frequent (or even ridiculed by a young urban generation) without being replaced by other forms of instruction, young girls often did not know how to prevent pregnancy when loosened family ties were unable to prevent them from seeing boys. It is not surprising that the moral vacuum these suburban families confronted, and the crisis in moral education they lived through, was the basis for the resurgence of fundamentalist religious movements: the desperate search for a moral foundation of the world.[32]

What, then, was the role of formal education in these two social contexts? Among refugee peasant families in Polana Caniço "B", the urgent crisis in social reproduction encouraged an unrealistic faith in education as a salutary force: school was for many families the only imaginable hope of ever improving their situation. This belief corresponded badly to the weak cultural and economic resources of the families, which most often resulted in an unhappy experience of the school in which they had put trust (failure, repetition and drop out). The cultural incapacity of the poor families in relation to school was expressed in their total incapacity to help their children in their school work or to support them when problems occurred at school. The overcrowded urban schools also put parents, and of course in particular parents who had no local position and no useful contacts, in a disadvantageous position in relation to school. Often they found themselves at the mercy of capricious teachers.

The faith in education often expressed by parents did not correspond to most children's personal experience of failure and repetition, which much more encouraged a pessimistic and disheartened view. Parents' attitudes towards education were often formed at an earlier stage of affairs, in the case of the grandmothers in Polana Caniço "B" even back in colonial times, when school exams were worth much more. Children's discouraging relation to school was also fed by their experience from the *dumba nengue*, in which so many of suburban and semiurban children participate: the immediate and visible profit of the commercial activity was more enchanting than the insecure and delayed return on school investment.

The new dependence on education as an instrument of social reproduction also tended to create a contradiction in the way of understanding the social career of girls. On the one hand, girls should study, with the same right as boys, in order to make a better future. On the other hand girls should also prepare themselves for the much

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lobolo into a pure symbolic manifestation devoid of any economic content, keeping however some of the more expensive components of a traditional marriage, such as the invitation of all family members).

[31] Clearly there is a risk of confounding the transformation of old moral values, even if this transformation could be violent for the most #utsatta families (which is shown by the dramatic expansion of prostitution and delinquincy), with a general moral chaos: evidently the great majority of suburban girls are not prosituting themselves and the majority of suburban families manage to survive with a set of moral standards that are more or less adapted to their social condition.

[32] The adherence to some of the many small church communities could sometimes take the form of a conscious or deliberate choice: some single mothers confessed not being religious themselves, but in need of a substitute for the missing husband for bringing up their children. Clearly, many of these churches function as substitutes for the extended family, families often pay a percentage of their salaries to the church, which, in turn, will support them, for example in constructing houses.

more probable future of being a married woman. When girls grew up, the latter ambition often got into conflict with the demands of the school and led to truancy, failure and drop out. Even suburban girls tended to anticipate their own destiny and devalue education as they grow older and the perspective of marriage was valorized. It should not be forgotten that this change of attitude also was encouraged by school itself through the constant experience of failure and repetition.

In Xipamanini, too, education was regarded as perhaps the only hope to improve the present condition. Families here however, were more pragmatic in their attitudes. In most interviewed households, at least two or three children or teenagers with experience from repetition and drop out could be found. Often education, including adult education, seemed to be a never ending project: boys and girls repeated several times or were absent from school a year or two (in the case of girls often because of pregnancy), and finally tried to win back what they had lost at evening courses in adult education. Even young children seemed to be aware that at least Grade 9 was necessary if education would be of any help. These families, too, had few possibilities to prevent school failure by helping their children in their school work, even if chances seemed to be slightly better here, since primary school children often had elder sisters or brothers who also had been to school. Only in rare cases did the interviewed families seem to give, or be able to give, help to the children with such things as homework.

The single most important factor that contributed to bad school achievement was work for the survival of the family. Almost all children were engaged in activities that were more or less vital to the family economy. Survival in suburban Maputo is a complex art. Knowing how products can be arranged, legally, semi-legally or illegally, and knowing how and where a small profit could be made out of them, demands an expertise that only develops with time.

4. "CAUSES" OF DROP OUT AND REPETITION

So far, the general social setting of school in two specific contexts, that of Matibane and that of suburban Maputo, has been discussed. Within these contexts, which were the main reasons for drop out and repetition? It should be stressed right from the beginning however, that single factors behind drop out - such as marriage or poverty - cannot be understood or treated in isolation. They exert their influence within a general social context, a structure of factors, to which they owe their effectiveness. The list of "causes" for drop out that is provided below is, in this sense, therefore artificial. These factors do interact.[33]

4.1. School's importance as an educational agency is limited.

In almost all examined cases of drop out in Matibane and neighbouring Nacholoco drop out was not a sudden or dramatic event that unexpectedly broke the young girl's or young boy's ties to school, but the result of a process that had been slowly going on since grade 1.

These rural children lived in a world dominated by the cycles and the demands of agriculture. Work, family education, religious ceremonies, initiation and other rituals, and often semi-institutionalized educational agencies such as Koranic schools educated the children and prepared them for the future. Even though school was regarded as an educator, in the broad, moral sense of the word, it was just one of several educational agencies - and in reality by no means the most important one. For the few ones who had success in school, continued formal education was an alternative. For all the other ones, leaving school was not a dramatic event. Their future was well prepared for and their participation in important activities much needed. Going to school meant, in a way, prolonging the state of childhood and postponing such things as contributing more fully to the survival of the family through work, getting one's own *machamba* or getting married. In this sense there was nothing abnormal in not going to school after having passed a few years in primary school. When school came into conflict with more trustworthy and impelling principles for social reproduction, such as marriage or working for the survival of the family, it was abandoned - and for good reasons.

If formal school can be of doubtful interest in the eyes of parents or families, it is of course even more so for the children themselves. Being able to read and write, the most basic goal in formal education, is not of an obvious value in rural societies where not only children very well can survive without this competence but also have very little or no use of it since there is so little to read and so little to write. If rural children were surrounded by texts and reading competence had an immediate user's value, things would be different.

In Maputo, the situation was in one sense the reverse. Far from being just an alternative way of preparing for the future, school and educational degrees had

[33] This is why studies of wastage that are limited to statistical analyses of ready made questionnaires normally come to the not very surprising result that indicators of social background or the social context "explain" more than other indicators.

become a necessary means in the struggle for survival. For middle class families, education of course was indispensable in order to uphold their positions. But also for families who belonged to the great mass of the suburban population, school was the most important force through which people were selected to and within the limited labour market.

It should be remembered, however, that the vast majority of social groups or families had little hope that school would bring them any real advantages. They would try to make use of the education system, in spite of repetition, failure and drop out, but in the meantime they would have to survive through other means, through work, which in turn made the educational project even more difficult.

It should also be remembered that even in this suburban environment, reading and writing competence probably was of limited value to the children. By far the most important use of literacy still was to be found within school itself, not outside.

4.2. Work

Peasant children began to assume important tasks in every day family life at an early age. They learned to work at the family machamba and to guard the family herd of goats, and they did a considerable amount of domestic work. This participation was not only a contribution of labour, but represented a vital part of family education. Learning to cultivate the machamba, to cook, to clean the hut, to construct houses, to look after younger members of the family - all was part of a conscious moral education whose content differed between the two sexes. Since so much time was spent in school, these activities had to be coordinated with school work. Normally, such a coordination was possible, with the exception of especially labour intensive periods when, according to teachers, many pupils stayed out of school. However, for poor families, which often also were small families with a reduced number of family members[34], children represented a source of labour which had to be used much more frequently in order to guarantee the material survival of the family. Some cases of early drop out were due to the impossibility of combining school with this kind of child labour, which could include such things as caring for, and protecting younger sisters and brothers when the mother went to the *machamba*, taking part in agricultural work, herding family animals or selling charcoal or other products[35]. In rare cases, poor families even had to send their children away in order to work as houseboys in city households, just to lessen the burden of having to feed them.

When boys grew up they also tended to have their own *machamba*, or in some rare cases their own commercial activity.[36] The profit of these occupations went to the

[34] The poorest families in Matibane were families which were separated from their extended family, which lived in another area, and often at the same time reduced through divorce or the death of one of the parents.

[35] It is probably due to stability and relative wealth that involving children in commercial activities were viewed very negatively in Matibane. In neighbouring areas, and especially closer to the main road, this seemed to be much more common.

[36] In 1992, when the bairro Polana Caniço "B" was revisited, three years after the fieldwork was done, families' economic condition had aggravated. A larger number of school-aged girls, mainly from desintegrated refugee families, some of them only 9-10 years old, were prostituting themselves, either in the streets or at small brothels run by adults.

parents, but the activity as such represented an important step towards being an adult and seemed to profoundly threaten the commitment of going to school. In suburban Maputo, many children in primary school age took part in some economic activity or the other, mostly as street vendors. This was a necessity for the survival of the family. Work competed with school and increasingly so as children grew up.

4.3. Mobility and instability in the local community

Especially in Naholoco, many children were registered as drop outs because their family had moved out from the village, often without giving notice to school or the local administration, or because they themselves had moved to live with other relatives than before. The causes for mobility of this kind were many, from divorces to reunification of war torn families. Probably many of these children registered once again in their new area, most probably loosing one year in school in the process.

This sort of instability was particularly aggravated by war (see below). It was also influenced by other mechanisms that contributed to make it difficult for families to live for a long time in the same place, such as degradation of the soil they cultivated or insufficiency of land, drought, nuclearization of the family unit through death or divorces, poverty of small households, or social discontentments arising for example from disputes linked to tribal divisions. There was a general tendency in areas close to the town of Nampula to move in direction of the town and of the main road leading to the city, thus coming closer to imagined or real advantages, such a commerce or commodities belonging to modern society. Marital strategies also seemed to be directed towards the city, so that women rarely accepted suitors who came from the opposite direction.

Probably, the stability of Matibane was a strong factor in favour of school. Inversely, instability in the local society, as in Naholoco, will constitute a problem for efforts to reduce school wastage. Disappearance or non-disappearance of pupils is just one aspect. Stability normally is a sign of a relative wealth. It also implies the presence of families who are more likely than elsewhere to engage in such things as school-community committees. Stability also means better conditions for good relations between teachers and the local society (see below).

In the Maputo suburbs similar instability existed. In many cases, family problems were found to cause drop out. Pupils disappeared from school because they moved with one parent in cases of divorce, because they went to stay with relatives or because they were sent back to their families of origin after staying with relatives in town. Some cases of drop out depended on the fact that the divorced or abandoned mothers - who are many in number in suburban *bairros* - were unable to keep their children from the street, especially since they had to be absent from home all day in order to guarantee a minimum income for the family. In other cases boys had abandoned school and chosen a life in the street because of ill treatment by a new stepmother (*madrasta*) or stepfather.

4.4. Poverty

Peasant families in Matibane had little money to spend. School fees and expenditure for school books represented a considerable cost for almost all of them and especially so when they had many children. A comparison should be made here with the more distant Matarone, which was poorer and probably much more representative for rural Mozambique. Paying 5000 meticals for school fees and for books - as in the case of one peasant father with four children in primary school - was simply impossible. In addition, keeping the children in school in upper primary meant important spending for clothes. The reluctance many of the peasant families in Matibane showed to send their children to grade 6 had a clear economic dimension.

Peasant families in Matibane rarely planned their economy. When spending was necessary, they tried to arrange money, which sometimes turned out to be possible and sometimes not. In relation to school this meant that some families simply were not able to raise money for school fees, text books or school materials in the beginning of the school year, which often resulted in a temporary drop out that in most cases lasted for the whole year.

For most interviewed families, it was unimaginable to send their children to town in order to complete grade 7 or to continue to secondary school. They had no possibility of finding a place for the children to live in the city or its suburbs and they were not able to regularly send money or food for their survival. Neither were they capable of supplying money for clothes, shoes or text books. Moreover, for poor families, sending children to school when they were getting older implied the loss of a labour force that sometimes was necessary for the survival of the family.

Poverty, then, was one of the major reasons for drop out and especially as concerns grade 5 and grade 6 leavers. The case of Matibane, and of the more distant and poorer village of Matarone, show that an increase of the price of school books and of school fees most probably would lead to a parallel increase of drop out in rural areas. This would in particular affect girls, since peasant families first of all would choose to send their sons to school.

Things were not very different in the Maputo suburbs. Many of the interviewed families were extremely poor and seldom knew how they would be able to arrange food the next day. It goes without saying that such poverty was strongly linked to school failure and drop out. The parents - often a single mother - could not raise money to pay school books, school fees or clothes. Neither were they capable of paying the bribes to teachers that often were necessary to get their children accepted into school or to pay for the extra, private lessons, the "explicacão", that many teachers made a condition for giving positive marks at the end of year. The labour of the children was necessary in the struggle for survival. The parents had few possibilities to defend their interests in relation to school, for example when their children were expelled because of truancy. It is true that spending money on school books represented a smaller cost for these urban families in relation to other costs of living than was the case in Matibane. The price of one text book in primary school is not high compared to the price of other necessary goods. But for families who had no regular income and who were living under the daily threat of starvation, buying text books or paying school fees were not always the first priority.

Even for families with a small regular income, poverty of course had a negative effect on school achievement. When so much of the daily energy of the parents, and even of their children, is used for a never ending struggle to satisfy the basic

necessities of life, then, needless to say, time and effort put into school get very much reduced. It must not be forgotten that economically poor groups are normally poor also in other ways. They have little legitimate culture that might help their children in school and they have few profitable contacts. The peasant society, especially, is in a sense excluded from the modern world to which school ultimately belongs.

4.5. Marriage

After their first menstruation and after having passed through the initiation rituals, girls in Matibane became women. As we have seen above, families who insisted on sending their daughters to school even a long time after the first menstruation in a sense also kept them in a state of artificial childhood. This represented a risk, since traditional and still well functioning principles for social reproduction were abandoned and replaced by a much more uncertain promise that a continued school career would bring something good. In this matrilinear society, the future well-being of the extended family depended on its capability of producing young women who, through marriage, would bind men and fresh labour force to the family, thus securing its material and social reproduction.

It is not surprising, then, that many parents in rural Matibane took their daughters out of school when time had come for marriage. In the Maputo suburbs no such clear case was found. But both in the rural society and in the suburbs girls prepared themselves, mentally and in concrete activities, for a future as married women. In Matibane and among refugee peasants in Maputo, domestic activities became an increasingly important part of girls' education as they grew up. Rural teachers testified that girls in grade 5 became increasingly absentminded in school. One could guess that girls in suburban schools undergo the same process but a bit later, when they are sufficiently mature to attract the interest of men.

4.6. Pregnancy

In Matibane, pregnancy which was not linked to marriage or future marriage was extremely rare - which was yet another sign of the stability and social control existing in the village. Teachers couldn't tell about any example of drop out due to pregnancy of this kind. This does not mean that young girls did not get pregnant. They often did. But pregnancy was just an aspect of the transition in which young girls became young married women. In this matrilinear society, the husband played a role of secondary importance. He could disappear from the scene after a year or two. This did not change much in the situation of his former wife, since she in any case was firmly linked to her own family and surveilled by her elder brothers, not by her husband.

In the Maputo suburbs, on the contrary, pregnancy was a common reason for drop out among girls. In almost half of the interviewed families, unmarried young women were found who had had to abandon school because of pregnancy. In these cases, pregnancy without marriage was an expression of changing conditions for family

education and social reproduction. Girls got pregnant without their parents' knowledge or consent.

4.7. Over-age

One of the major immediate factors behind drop out was the fact that children had reached an age that was considered too high either by the family or by the school itself. In rural schools, the age distribution within a class or a grade is much wider than in urban schools[37]. In classrooms in grades 4 or 5, some of the pupils normally look almost grown up, while others appear still to be small children. From the point of view of school, accepting too old pupils would mean preventing others from getting into school. Furthermore, it would mean accepting classes with enormous age differences and corresponding pedagogical and social difficulties.

From the point of view of the families, higher age meant that the reasons for taking the child out of school were strengthened. A boy of more than fifteen would almost certainly already be engaged in work activities that competed with school. A girl of the same age, especially if she was physically mature, would necessarily face the possibility of marriage. Furthermore, at least a few families were sufficiently well informed to know that the high age of their child implied that the educational project as such had less chances of giving any concrete result since the door to grade 6 would be closed. If higher age, as was normally the case, went along with repetition, reasons for quitting school were quite strong.

But why were so many children in primary school overaged? There are several reasons for this. The most obvious one is repetition, which will be discussed below. Another is a late school start. In spite of good efforts from school and the local administration to enroll all children of school age in the village of Matibane in Grade 1, it was not unusual that children entered for the first time at the age of 8, 9 or sometimes 10 years. A census was made and a list of beginners worked out in December each year. The teachers in Matibane claimed that they always personally visited the families whose children did not appear for registration. Even so, some children always seemed to escape from the census. Sometimes this happened because they were absent at the moment of control. In other cases, families had moved into the area after the census was made.

A third reason that will be briefly discussed here is the fact that it was not uncommon that children (and much more so in unstable Naholoco than in Matibane), stayed out of school for one year or more even after having registered in Grade 1, and came back a later year. In some cases the family had moved from one place to another. In others, the mother had divorced and in the turbulence the child had lost one year. In still other cases, the child for various reasons just had not registered in school. At the moment of registering, the child might have participated in agricultural work, taken part in a journey, or been ill, or by ignorance the family simply had not

[37] In fact, a wide age distribution functions as a good indicator of rural schools. It is illustrative that the headmaster of Nampula Secondary School, one of the biggest schools in the country, complained that many of the pupils sent to the school from smaller primary schools outside town for enrolment in grade 6 was older than 14 and thus should not had been sent at all. Similar problems did not exist for town schools. See Tables 7A and 7B above.

turned up in time. Often families claimed that they had not had money enough for paying the school fees or buying the school books at the moment of the school start and thus had to let the child stay out of school for the whole year.[38]

4.8. Lack of possibilities to continue beyond grade 5 or grade 6 or entering into secondary school

In general, peasant families valued educational exams according to standards that were valid many years ago. But this overestimation sometimes paradoxically went side by side with a more realistic and pessimistic view, based on the current experiences of relatives or neighbours. Some interviewed families emphasised that sending their children to grade 6 was of no use since they in any case would not be able to continue to grade 7 or to secondary school.

The devaluation of educational exams and the limited availability of (or access to) schools where higher levels are taught, in this sense threatens the logic of educational investment. Since peasant families have few or no possibilities of sending their children to secondary school, in order to obtain exams that have real market value, they might choose to stay out of competition.

A similar problem existed among suburban families. Parents who tried to convince unwilling children to accept repeating yet another year in school sometimes met the well founded argument that it was not worthwhile, since anything less than Grade 9 was of no real value.

4.9. Nature of the relationship between school and the local community; rural and urban schools and the level of organization of the individual school

The social mechanisms governing the relationship between school and community differ considerably between rural areas and urban or suburban ones. Living in the midst of the families whose children he is educating, the rural teacher is an integrated member of local society. In most cases he cultivates his own *machamba* (using his pupils as auxiliary work force) and he often marries locally. He has to pay respect to people and traditions and he is himself normally a much respected person. The fact that teachers for years have been able to stay on in areas heavily affected by war activities testifies to the respect normally paid to them by local population.

For peasant families in Matibane, school had a moral foundation. It educated their children by bringing to them the secrets and insights that are kept in books and which in colonial times were denied to ordinary people. But as an educator it (the school) must itself function as a moral standard. When interviewed peasants sometimes ventured to criticize the behaviour of a teacher, they always made it clear that this behaviour was divergent, deviating from the moral standard that school itself

[38] Of course, in several of interviews it was obvious that the family tried to find a legitimate excuse for what really had been a conscious choice of considering school in second place and other activities in the first.

represented. A typical example from Matibane was the story of one of the cases of drop out from the local school. This pupil had been ordered by one of the new teachers to sell cigarettes which the teacher himself had brought from town in order to make a small profit. To sell cigarettes would have been too great a shame for a teacher. The young boy sold the cigarettes, but never got the payment people had promised him and could not pay the teacher his money. He then refused to go back to school, arguing that the teacher would beat him up and give him low marks. This story became a local scandal and the teacher became an object of public shame. Peasant parents said that they never had heard of teachers turning themselves into simple street vendors.

In town, things are different. No close contact exists between teachers and families. In suburban schools they most often belong to different social groups and often do not live at the same place. Teachers often walk or travel long distances to get to their jobs. Mobility among teachers is high. Many suburban schools have extremely high rates of untrained teachers. Many of them are young. Some are women who at the same time have to assume their responsibilities as mothers and housewives, whereas the typical rural teacher normally has a wife who takes care of his household. Salaries are far from sufficient for living and urban teachers, unlike their rural colleagues, do not have *machambas* of their own. Schools are often overcrowded, which makes it even more difficult for the teachers to take interest into the fate of each one of their pupils. All these factors contribute to make the relationship between school and the local community very different from what is normally the case in rural social settings.

The present decline in the morale of teachers in urban and suburban environments should be understood against this background. The habit of selling the entry to school or of demanding private and paid extra lessons from pupils who want to pass at the end of year, or even of, as might sometimes happen, demanding to sleep with girls who are sufficiently grown up, are unlikely to occur in rural contexts.

Some of the factors influencing drop out rates can be either reinforced or lessened by the local school itself. Since families outside middle class areas, and of course especially peasant families, have so little of legitimate cultural competence, they rarely feel they are in a position to criticize school or take action when conflicting views exist on problems linked to school. Even in the well organised school of Matibane, some cases of drop out were due to simple misunderstandings between school and the family of the pupil, for example as regards registration or school fees. A well organised school, where little space is given for arbitrary and hazardous action on the part of the teachers and where efforts are made to sustain well functioning forms of contact with the local community, for example through meetings or school-community committees, is probably more able to reduce this kind of misunderstandings.

4.10. War

The impact of war on the Mozambican primary school cannot be underestimated. Its most visible forms are burned down schools, murdered teachers and children without access to school.

The indirect effects of war are not less important. In war afflicted areas (and in areas controlled by the MNR) the tradition of sending children to school are often lost. In Naholoco, families who had recently come from such areas were interviewed. Their children had great difficulties in accepting the kind of control of movement and time that school necessarily represents and truancy and drop out was a rule rather than exception.

The strong mobility and instability in Mozambican society caused by war will effect schools for many years to come. Many analysed cases of drop out had their origin in mobility and instability of this kind. Children had been sent off to live with relatives and never returned or were ill treated and could not go to school. Sometimes families moved out in search of their relatives, taking their children with them. In other cases children who had lost one or several years in school had simply become too old. There were also instances of single mothers who were unable to sustain or control their children. These children were often expelled for truancy, because they had to earn their living as street vendors, and never returned to school.

War has also played the major part in the dramatic urbanization which creates new and demoralising situations in suburban schools.

4.11. Failure and repetition

Most cases of drop out were preceded by repetition of one or more grades. Being such a common phenomena, repetition was far from being considered a stigmata. But even so, repeating several times would be interpreted by most families as a sign that the future of the child was perhaps not to be looked for in the education system. Perhaps the most important aspect was that children grew older while repeating, which favoured the tendency to drop out (see above). Grown up children assumed wider responsibilities in family life and family economy than their younger sisters or brothers meanwhile keeping them in school in spite of continuous repetition also represented a considerable cost for the family.

The problem of school failure shall be returned to later in this report, but perhaps an evident aspect should be emphasised in the present context. It is true that peasant children were supposed not to argue with their parents about such things as attendance or non-attendance of school. But even so, repeated failure at school itself has a negative influence on pupils' school performance. Since curricula, teachers' manuals and text books do not contain any real strategy for dealing with repeaters, and as general teaching conditions certainly do not favour attempts to develop such a strategy, these pupils received the same pedagogical treatment as the one which produced their failure. For many of them, if not for all, the result was to create a profound disbelief in their own capacity as well as a distaste of school.

5. IN THE CLASSROOM - THE AFFLICTION OF FAILURE AND REPETITION

The faith in education obviously does not correspond to what school can do. The most problematic aspect probably is the continuous devaluation of the value of education degrees. Sending children to school and keeping them there, in spite of failures, repetition and daily difficulties in material survival, would perhaps be logical if school kept its promise to grant a better future to the ones who persisted. But this is less and less so. Peasant families in Matibane interpreted the return to the village of every new unemployed young man or woman who left the city schools after Grade 7 or 8 as still another sign that the whole education project was not worth while. In the suburbs of Maputo, families normally would try to stick to school because they have nothing else to believe in. But the real chances of success were steadily diminishing, creating discouragement and strengthening even more the necessity of finding other means of survival which, in their turn, came into conflict with school itself.

But what happens inside schools is not, of course, without significance. If, indeed, Mozambican pupils would fail less and repeat less, if what happened in the classroom was understandable and meaningful, then school would become a less contradictory project. The high rate of repetition in itself promotes drop out. Pupils not only get discouraged by repeating the same dull material once or twice. They get older when they do it and more inclined or forced to find other solutions in life.

The same goes for girls. Interviews with teachers and class room observations confirm that girls, outside the middle class urban areas and especially in strictly rural areas, are more timid and less outspoken than boys. The little communication between pupils and teachers there is in Mozambican primary schools exists, outside the few truly urban centres, between boys and the teachers.[39] The higher rate of failure for girls might to a considerable extent also be an effect of inequality of treatment within the classroom.

There is no evidence that women teachers behave differently. The average pass rates in female-taught classes from Grades 1 to 5 are 58.9 % for girls and 65.1 % for boys. Under male teachers, the corresponding figures are 56.5 % and 67.8 %. It should be borne in mind however, that most female teachers teach in suburban or urban schools (in fact, the percentage of female teachers in a school is one of the most secure indicators of an urban social environment) where girls generally get much higher marks and fail much less than in rural schools.

In the following section, some of the most important characteristics of teaching in Mozambican primary schools that contribute to failure, repetition and drop out will be briefly discussed.

[39] Class room observations made in a number of primary schools show in Grade 1 to Grade 3 show that communication within the class room where pupils have an active part hardly exists. In average, a pupil gets the opportunity to speak once a week or once every second week. The sentences are short and of repetitive character. (This material has been collected in the project of evaluation of text books in the primary school and will be made available later this year.)

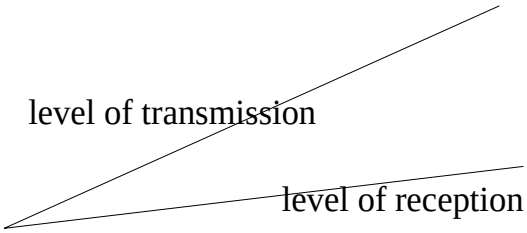
5.1. Growing discrepancy between the level of transmission and the level of reception

A general problem in observed teaching in all visited primary schools outside middle class, urban Maputo is the continuously growing difference, from the start of Grade 1 and onwards, between the demands of the curriculum (and of text books) and the pupils' level of knowledge.

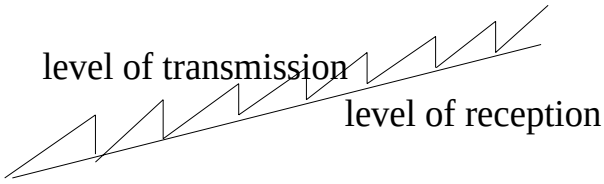
Let us hypothetically imagine that teaching and the ability of the pupils start off, so to speak, at the same level in the beginning of Grade 1. This means, then, that pupils are not required to have any special knowledge when they begin school. Ideally, the teaching level (the level demanded by curricula and text books), should rise gradually as pupils' knowledge also increases. If knowledge of pupils does not increase, then progress of teaching will not correspond to progress of learning. This, in turn, will create growing learning difficulties, since conditions for successful teaching will be lacking. Pupils do not know what teaching and teachers take for granted. New notions and structures cannot be learned because more basic ones, on which they must be founded, were not learned.

This is what is constantly happening in primary school classrooms. Pupils are expected to learn how to read in Portuguese at least in Grade 2. However, even in Grade 3 and Grade 4, a majority of children in rural primary schools do not know how to read. When teachers continue, as they are supposed to, with the curriculum, they cannot take these pupils' difficulties seriously. In Mathematics, pupils in Grade 3 should be able to make use of basic mathematical skills. However, most of them still have not been able to go beyond the most primitive principle of counting, that of enumeration using fingers, toes and strokes. As the curriculum proceeds, they have no chance to follow.

The process could be illustrated in the following way:



When there is a growing distance between learning and teaching, ideally, teachers should stop and make sure that pupils learn at least the basics of what they are supposed to learn, so that teaching and learning once again can start off from the same level. A teaching process of this kind is illustrated here:



In Mozambican primary schools, however, various factors make it unlikely or even impossible for such a continuous adjustment of teaching and learning to take place. In the first place, curricula, teachers' manuals and text books must give room and time for this adjustment to be made. This is not the case. Since manuals describe in details what teachers should do during lessons, no room is left for adjustments in teaching pace when pupils do not learn as they are supposed to do according to the manual. Text books are not made in a way that permits more thorough work with items when this is required, without simply repeating exactly the same exercises as before. Such repetition is not likely to result in better learning. In addition, text books generally have what is called a linear progression. This means that items are presented once or twice and usually not returned to in a way that would be characteristic for a cyclic progression.

In addition, the main concern for teachers is that of completing the curriculum at the end of the year, not that of making sure that at least a majority of pupils have really learned what they are supposed to have learned. This is not only an effect of bad teachers' training. If teachers do not manage to complete the syllabus, they will face serious problems. Their classes will not have been prepared properly for the exams[40]. The teacher's nightmare is to have his class tested on subject-matters that he has not been able to teach. Superiors, colleagues, parents and pupils would all blame him for bad results. If the teacher has completed the curriculum, at least he cannot be held responsible.

Obviously, this dilemma does not arise only from the attitude of teachers and the existence of exams. It is more fundamental and has to do with the basic construction of the school system. If curricula were not completed, confusion would arise within the education system. The fact that pupils pass from one grade to another would not mean that they have reached a certain level of knowledge and that they are prepared for new and higher levels. A unified, hierarchical school system where each new, higher grade depends on or presupposes the preceding lower grade, would be difficult to maintain.

If education planners and teachers were asked for the reason why priority always has to be given to completing the curriculum, their answer would probably be formulated in these terms. Ironically, however, the very fact of insisting on completing the existing curriculum[41] in Mozambican primary schools creates exactly the situation that was supposed to be avoided. In any grade and in any specific classroom outside the most privileged urban areas, pupils' knowledge far from correspond to what curricula presuppose. For the teacher, this situation will manifest itself as enormous learning difficulties on the part of the pupils and an embarrassing distance between the level of transmission and the level of reception.

What could be wished for, then, are curricula and text books that are constructed in a way that enables, or even obliges, the teachers to give priority to the learning process of the pupils.

[40] The disappearance of national exams of course will create new conditions for teaching. But it will obviously not automatically have as a consequence that more stress is put upon what pupils actually learn. Teachers might be satisfied with living up to the standards set by the local ZIP (Zona de influência pedagógica).

[41] Here it is necessary to talk about existing curricula, since it is possible to imagine curricula which more accurately correspond to the teaching/learning situation.

5.2. Failure of the evaluation system

Shortage of time, linear progression of text books, and the rush to complete a curriculum that doesn't give room for adjustment to pedagogical needs are not the only factors involved. If teachers would have time enough to bother about pupils' actual state of learning, then they also would need functional instruments of evaluation. Much time is now spent on an attempt to correct all exercises made by all, or almost all[42], pupils. This attempt is not realistic due to the number of pupils. Neither is it pedagogically fruitful, since teachers do not necessarily have to know if each pupil solved each exercise properly. What he needs to know is whether each pupil learnt the basics of the subject-matter in question. Here, probably text books and teacher's manuals could help by providing the teacher with a set of limited exercises especially constructed for evaluation which would take less time to correct and which would tell the teacher if the fundamentals of the material were understood or not.

Class room observations indicate that evaluation most often has turned into a symbolic ritual with none or very little pedagogical value. Teachers normally try to correct pupils' exercises, but the number of pupils to correct and the low level of understanding and knowledge of these pupils make it an impossibility to make any pedagogical use of these corrections. Teachers never have time to try to understand why pupils have not understood. Neither have they time to help pupils who have not understood. Even if they would, in spite of all, try to help pupils individually, the learning difficulties they encounter normally are so immense that solving them would mean going back to what was supposed to have been learnt in earlier grades or even in Grade 1. Such an attempt, then, would make it impossible to go on with the syllabus. The result is that the teacher is better off not knowing too much about the learning difficulties of the pupils and not taking them seriously into account when planning his teaching. The attitude of teachers, so often expressed, that the real problem in teaching is that pupils are too weak, is, thus, a reflection of their own pedagogical dilemma: that of having to go on teaching the syllabus, even when conditions for learning do not exist.

5.3. Two aspects: being taught in a foreign language and the ritualization of class room interaction

The complex question of the effects of the use of Portuguese as the only language of instruction shall only be briefly touched upon here. It has been subject of much discussion in Mozambique during the last years and policy has changed towards favouring the introduction of pupils' mother tongues as language of instruction in the first grades of primary school.

[42] Teachers normally claim that they use a system which permits them to evaluate a certain number of pupils in certain lessons and others in other lessons, thus making the turn of the class in one or two days time. Class room observations indicate, however, that this is not true. Most teachers use the end of lessons for correction and then try to correct as many pupils as possible. This means that the best pupils, who finish first, normally get corrected regularly, while weak pupils might pass long time in class without being corrected.

However, a few things ought to be said in the present context. First of all, it must be emphatically stated that Portuguese outside the urban centres has the status of a foreign language and that the term "second language" is less proper. Most rural children meet Portuguese only in school. There are few or no situations where they can or must use Portuguese (in the sense for example that immigrant children in industrialised countries are confronted with and can make use of a dominant, "second" language [43]).

In all the classes in the first grades of primary school visited in the course of this study, including suburban schools like Polana Caniço "B" or 21 de Outubro in Xipamanini, a great number of pupils have been found who obviously understood very little of what was going on in the classroom. They did not understand much of what the teacher said or of what they were supposed to do. Eventually some of them would try to imitate their class mates or develop other strategies which permitted them symbolically to take part in the teaching process. The psychological effects of this situation on children in the first grades have not been studied in the framework of the present research and will not be discussed here. However, another aspect should be emphasized.

Secondly, the absence of meaning encouraged the extremely strong ritualization of classroom behaviour that is such a striking characteristic of teaching in Mozambican schools.[44]. Pupils learn things other than what they are supposed to learn. They learn to listen to the intonation the teacher uses in questions so that they can know if the expected answer is "yes" ("sim") or "no" ("não"). They fill their exercise books with nonsensical figures or letters, since they do not know how to write, nor what they are supposed to write. They learn to pronounce words they do not understand the meaning of. They scrupulously copy sentences devoid of meaning to them. In order not to be punished, they learn to watch how other pupils react to the meaningless instructions of the teacher.

This kind of ritualization is functional in its context, since it permits teaching to go on in spite of its catastrophic results. Teaching will not stop because teachers realize that few pupils learn anything. But in the long run it is of course altogether contraproductive, since learning problems are not resolved. The result is not only repetition and drop out, but that higher grades always will receive pupils who have survived, in part, because of the same contraproductive classroom behaviour.

Of course, this kind of ritualization the teaching-learning process does not only depend on the language of instruction. But it would probably be much less necessary if pupils were able to grasp the meaning of what was said in the classroom and in text books. Obviously, many pupils gradually learn to understand a minimum of the language of instruction, especially after repeating the same grade. But it should not be forgotten that some 30 percent of all Mozambican pupils actually disappear from school before reaching grade 2, and another 20 percent before reaching grade 3. In

[43] At the same time it must of course also be remembered that most families send their children to school in order to learn Portuguese, i.e. to learn what has a clear and obvious market value in the modern part of society to which the whole education system is so intimately linked.

[44] The fact of using a second or a foreign language as the means of instruction is not, of course, the only factor creating what is here called the ritualization of class room interaction. Teaching styles would probably be authoritarian and class room life extremely ritualized even if the pupils' mother language were used for communication. The point made here is that the use of a foreign language as the means of communication encourages the mechanisms of ritualization, and in a sense makes this ritualization a necessary condition for keeping something that looks like normal teaching going in the class room.

this selection process, language probably plays a crucial role.[45] If pupils in future are taught in their mother language in the first grades of primary school, new conditions for teaching and learning will arise. This will not automatically resolve basic pedagogical problems, but better conditions to overcome them would exist.

In the meantime, the situation would probably be less catastrophic if teachers used the pupils' mother tongue for explanations or translations when this was judged necessary. It cannot possibly be of any value that the overwhelming majority of Mozambican children outside the urban centers pass at least one year in school without understanding virtually anything of what is happening in the teaching process. There is, of course, a danger that teachers would mix Portuguese and other languages in a non systematic and confusing way or that little Portuguese would be taught at all. But instructions to the teacher on the use of the local language as an auxiliary language could very well be put into the teacher's manuals.

5.4. Ignoring pupils' own culture and experiences

The problem of language is part of a wider cultural problem, which will only be touched upon here. It is not only the pupils' language, in a narrow sense of the word, which is put aside in teaching, but also most of their culturally framed experience of the world.

Text books and curricula inevitably are part of a "modern", quite westernized world which is more or less distant from the one of the pupils. Objects and phenomena as such might differ between the world of text books and the out-of-school universe of the pupils' lives. The text books in Portuguese for the first grades carry pictures of mainly urbanized families who sitting around tables. The science text book teaches the use of the thermometer, which is probably unknown throughout rural Mozambique. Examples could be manifold.

But what also differs is the way of understanding objects and phenomena. When a peasant family appears in a picture, the gestures, physical appearances and symbolically expressed relations between persons indicate that it is not really a peasant family at all, but an urban family in disguise. When the circulation of water (as vapor, rain etc) is explained in the science book, these explanations inevitably touch phenomena that are understood differently in the world outside school.

The subject matter of course must go beyond the pupils' realm of experience, otherwise very little of what is regarded as modern scientific knowledge would be transmitted to the pupils. What is at stake is rather the links between these subject matters and the pupils' ways of understanding the world. Class room observations confirm that little effort is made to establish this kind of link. Text books and teachers' manuals seldom or never mention them. Experienced teachers do try to create them, but are of course limited by their bad training and by the pupils' low proficiency in Portuguese.

[45] The cultural impact on Mozambican society of the use of Portuguese as the only language for alphabetization and teaching probably cannot be underestimated. The few selected ones - pupils who against all odds, as statistics so clearly show, manage to survive all the way through the education system - are profoundly transformed in and by the process of selection.

What could be wished for is that curricula, text books, teachers' manuals and teachers' training courses insist on the necessity of connecting the content of the teaching to the experiences and classifications of the pupils. The methods for establishing such a connection can only be tried out in pedagogical practice and on the basis of a knowledge of the ways of seeing and understanding the world in different parts of Mozambique. It should be remembered that primary school teachers themselves normally possess such knowledge and with proper instruction could be helped to make pedagogical use of it. The present situation, where teaching normally is supposed to be performed in a cultural vacuum, creates unnecessary difficulties for the pupils and has a shared responsibility for producing failure and repetition.

5.5. The love of abstractions

Mozambican primary school text books and even more so the actual teaching in Mozambican primary schools show an affection for abstractions which is sociologically understandable but pedagogically contraproductive. Text books use many abstract definitions. Teachers reproduce these definitions because they can be found in the text books and because they themselves have so little knowledge of the subject matter that they cannot replace them with more useful explanations. The effect is that the whole teaching of specific subject matters can be dedicated to copying and repeating nonsensical definitions or abstract notions that have little to do with real learning.

These habits are of course difficult to change. Text books and curricula could be revised, but teachers' lack of knowledge in their subjects will not disappear from one day to the other. Later on, it will be recommended that teachers are supplied with a reader in various subjects as a complement to the manual.

5.6. Learning by being totally passive

Another obvious characteristic of primary school teaching in Mozambique must be briefly touched upon. Class room observations confirm that pupils have an almost totally passive role in the teaching/learning process. In learning Portuguese they are invited only to reproduce ready made sentences and repeat what the teachers say. Manuals and text books rarely demand that pupils participate by asking or formulating questions. The result is not only bad learning, failure, repetition and drop out, but that the survivors adapt to a passive way of learning which will become a serious obstacle at the secondary or post secondary levels.

It is true that the general conditions in Mozambican primary schools - such as the number of pupils, the lack of material and the badly trained teachers - do not encourage pupils' participation in the teaching process. It must be said, however, that pedagogical methods encouraging pupil participation that are adapted to these conditions must be found and tried out if learning ever shall improve in Mozambican schools (see the proposal below on pilot projects and pilot schools).

5.7. Trained and untrained teachers

A profound and often expressed belief in Mozambique is that the overriding problem of the Mozambican school is its bad teachers. There are, roughly, two versions of this belief. The first one is salutary: if our teachers only were properly trained, so the argument goes, things would go much better. Curricula would turn out not to be so bad after all, the quality of text books would prove to be quite sufficient, and the problem of teaching pupils in a foreign language would be overcome.

The other version of the same belief is less salutary and more realistic. It is true, it is often argued, that teaching methods, curricula and text books have to change, but first of all we must get well trained teacher who are able to make use of such qualitative improvements. The ones we have simply are not able. Attempts to improve the quality of teaching are bound to fail if they are carried through with existing teachers.

Some commentaries should be made on these two positions. Firstly, it should be emphasized that the idea of an adequately and well trained primary teacher implies that there is sufficient experience and knowledge to fill such a training with content. This is not the case in Mozambique. Creating a teacher training programme of high quality and adapted to conditions of teaching in the country is probably a work for many years to come, if conditions ever permit that such a competence develops. To dream of an ideal primary school teacher who would be able to resolve most difficulties in the class room is then, is just to avoid the question. It can be quite convenient though, as in the first version of the belief quoted above, since it permits putting aside virtually all fundamental pedagogical problems existing in Mozambican primary school without discussing them as such: "the well trained teacher will resolve them all".

Secondly, Mozambique cannot afford dreaming of a future when thousands of well trained and well motivated new teachers stream out to the country's primary schools and improve the quality of teaching. In the foreseeable future, Mozambique will have to live with the teachers actually existing in its primary schools.[46] It is meaningless to imagine curricula or text books which are not functional in this, existing context, with these teachers and these pupils.

Thirdly, class room observations show that a strategy for improving the quality of primary education which give total priority to pre-service training will have to face another serious problem. Newly trained teachers who confront the reality of teaching have a strong tendency to take over teaching traditions and teachers' attitudes existing in the school where he or she is set to teach. This phenomena, the resocialization of trained teachers, is all the more strong in Mozambique, since existing teachers' training courses cannot be said to prepare the future teachers for the reality they are actually going to meet.

A fourth point should be made. The faith that the replacement of untrained teachers will resolve pedagogical problems in primary school rests on the hidden assumption that there are no other important factors determining teachers' behaviour. But this is not true. What is equally important for the overall effectiveness of primary schools are

[46] According to the head of primary education in the province of Nampula, the province received, in 1989, less than 50 new primary school teachers. This should be put in relation to the 4000 existing primary school teachers in the province. If we were to judge from this single case, the renewal of the corps of primary school teachers, then, advances with slightly more than 1% per year.

such things as the dedication of the teachers and the teachers capability to sustain a good relationship between school and the local community. As has been argued above, rural schools and rural teachers are often more effective in this sense in spite of many of them being inadequately trained. These teachers probably represent a considerable resource for the Mozambican primary school.

When these objections have been made, it should be emphasized that an improvement of the quality of primary education of course implies an improvement of the quality of teaching. The question is one of strategy. Getting new primary school teachers with a higher grade in school behind them and with a longer training is undoubtedly a good thing. But it would be dangerous to make this the only strategy for improving the quality of teaching.

6. WHAT STATISTICS SHOW

During the last years, the Planning and External Relations Department at the Ministry of Education has established well functioning routines for collecting statistical information on school effectives and school achievement. Data from all over the country are available on computers at the Ministry some six months after they have been sent from the individual schools to the district officers. It should be emphasized that this is an important achievement.

6.1. Some problems

However, a few things have to be said on the limitations of these data. Statistical data are collected from Mozambican primary schools mainly at two occasion, in the beginning of March ("levantamento do 3 de Março") and in December, when final exams have been finished and the final evaluation of the pupils has been made. This system has the important advantage of permitting a comparison between the situation in the beginning and at the end of the school year.[47] The data sent from the schools in March contain, among other things, information about enrollment by grade and sex and information about repeaters. These figures can be compared with information collected at the end of the year, that will tell about how many pupils, per grade and sex, who were still present and how many of them who passed successfully. If we, for example, want to know how many pupils have disappeared during the year (annual drop out), the number existing at the end of the year is subtracted from the number registered in March. Using these data for analyzing drop out and school wastage, however, is not without problems. Some major difficulties shall be emphasized here.

First of all, this information only covers children who have registered in school. It does not say anything about how their numbers relate to the total number of children in their age group in the country (or in a specific region). Enrollment rates for age cohorts therefore have to be estimated. Another type of difficulty is related to technical aspects of the information collected by the schools. This information is organized under different headings such as "repeaters, girls", "repeaters, boys", "existing girls in the beginning of the year", "existing girls at the end of year", etc. The use of categories of this kind is understandable, since more elaborate systems (for example keeping track of individual pupils) would be unrealistic and too costly. However, some problems arise.

It is impossible to follow cohorts of pupil generations during their school career and examine for example, how big the proportion that reaches Grade 5 is, or how many pupils belonging to this cohort thus drop out for example in Grade 3. Calculations on cohorts can only be made as estimates.

A related problem is that no connection exists between data from one year and data from the following one. If figures for passers and non-passers in 1988 are compared to enrollment figures for 1989, we get an idea about, for example, differences in the

[47] It should be empasized that this system, which is rare in other African countries, is extremely valuable for an evaluation of the returns of the education system.

rates of drop out between the two years. But what we get is only an idea. There is no way of telling to what extent the pupils who registered in 1989 were the same ones as the passers and non-passers in 1988. Other pupils may have turned up. In fact, drop out rate between school years in general is much higher than it appears to be.

Furthermore, calculations of annual drop out is far more tricky than has been stated hitherto. Pupils who drop out from school during the school year might be replaced by others. These newcomers may reduce or eliminate the difference in numbers between registered pupils in the beginning of the year and existing pupils at the end of year. Information about real drop out pupils may get lost. This problem has turned into a major one because of the strong mobility of the Mozambican population which has been a result of war. Many urban or suburban schools even report considerably more registered pupils at the end of year than they had in the beginning. This is particularly the case of suburban Maputo primary schools, which during several years have received great masses of new pupils during the school year and consequently do not report any drop out. Another aspect of the same phenomena is that pupils who disappear from one school might have registered in another one during the same year, which makes it doubtful whether they are to be considered as drop outs or not. If drop out is studied at sufficiently aggregated levels, for example at the national level, the effects of mobility will disappear. But it is seldom of much interest to discuss average figures of this kind, since they do not allow making vital distinctions between schools or regions with radically different social characteristics.

Finally, the problem of quality must be mentioned. School visits and interviews with teachers, pupils and parents do not suggest that the factual information about enrollment, repeaters, achievement, etc., would contain any systematic inaccuracy It probably happens quite often that schools adjust their figures a little when time has come to fill in the forms sent to the district offices. They do this in order to make numbers fit to each other and to avoid evident contradictions in the information they send away. But there is little to gain by fabricating this kind of data. Yet, in another sense there are strong reasons to doubt the value of these data for analyzing such things as the returns of teaching in terms of achievement and repetition. School visits strongly suggest that the rate of achievement or of passers (and, thus, also of repeaters) is too rough a measure to be used for serious analysis of the quality of teaching.

This is so for several reasons. In the first place, the evaluation system as it functions does not permit a truthful evaluation of individual pupils. The teacher instead will try to get a reasonable balance between passers and non passers within the classes he teaches. By far the most important reason, however, is that achievement is determined by social factors at least as much as by pure pedagogical evaluation. It is more or less agreed among teachers that the rate of non passers should not go beyond certain limits. The reputation of the school and the image of the individual teacher demand that a reasonable number of pupils pass. The idea of what is a reasonable rate of passers will vary between schools and individual teachers distribute their marks in relation to this idea. But this is not all. In recent years the decline in living conditions of teachers and the increasing number of children trying to get into the already overcrowded urban and suburban schools have created a new relationship between school and community in urban areas. Families not only have to pay teachers to get their children into school, but achievement is also sold for money. Sometimes it is linked to the condition that pupils must accept to take paid extra lessons from the teacher (i.e what is commonly referred to as "explicação").

The overall effect of these mechanisms is that the rate of passers in general is considerably higher than it would be if evaluation was scrupulously carried out. In other words, the real level of knowledge is considerably lower than figures indicate. This phenomenon will be returned to later in this report. It constitutes a serious pedagogical problem in teaching, since teachers constantly have to teach pupils who have not reached the level they are supposed to.

The rate of passers, then, is a very imperfect measure of the real pedagogical return of teaching. In fact, this is one of the arguments in favour of an idea that will be discussed later, namely the creation of a special unit for evaluation and assessment studies at the Ministry of Education. But when this has been said, it should also be admitted that the rate of passers does give an idea, even if it is rough, of the differences between schools. The social mechanism described above probably tend to reduce these differences. We shall see below that the rate of passers above all depend on the social recruitment of pupils (i.e. on the social characteristics of the school). It is most likely, then, that the real differences between, for example, middle class urban schools and rural schools are greater than they appear to be according to available data from the schools.

The reader, then, must bear in mind these difficulties when reading the following brief presentation of the statistical patterns regarding school failure, repetition and drop out.

6.2. How many drop out along the years?

A statistical analysis of how a generation of school beginners advances through primary school is not possible, for reasons discussed in the previous section. But we can get a rough idea of the effects of drop out and repetition for cohorts of pupils in other ways.

Table 1 is the result of one such attempt.[48] Here and in the following tables, figures will be presented for two extremes in Mozambican society: rural Nampula, as a representative for rural Mozambique, and District 1 in Maputo, probably the most homogeneous middle class area of the capital.[49] Figures from primary schools in these two areas will be compared to each other and to the country average, i.e. to figures obtained when all primary schools and primary school pupils are put together. It is little point in only discussing figures for the whole country. It might lead to the assumption that for example gender in different social settings will be more or less the

[48] The idea is borrowed from the analysis of Zeferino Martins in *Population Growth and Universal Primary Education in Mozambique*, Regional Institute for Population Studies, University of Ghana, 1980. The same type of calculation is also found in Bandouin Duvieusart, A financial feasibility study of the National education system in Mozambique, UNESCO consultancy report, mimeo, 1986.

[49] The data files at the Planning and External Relations Department contain a variable which distinguishes rural schools from schools in urban centers. This variable has been used here in order to separate rural schools in the province of Nampula. As regards District 1 in Maputo, schools at Inhaca and in Catembe, which also belong to this district, have not been counted. Distric1 1 in Maputo here stands for schools in an area including bairros such as Polana Cimento, Coop, Summershield and Alto Mae. Some of these schools have an elite character, such as "3 de Fevereiro", others are more normal urban schools.

same thing, which it obviously is not. Statistics will indicate this if is appropriately disaggregated.[50]

Let us suppose that the promotion rates from 1989 for all grades from grade 1 to grade 5 were valid for a number of years. (This is of course hypothetical since promotion rates vary between years). But let us disregard this fact. We can then calculate how many out of, for example, 1000 school beginners who reach grade 5, simply by applying the rates of promotion for each grade.

One thing complicates this calculation. In each grade pupils will fail to pass. Shall we then just put them among the group of repeaters in the same grade the subsequent year? No, since some of them will drop out from school before the next year begins. In Table 1 this rate of drop out among non passers has been calculated on the basis of the estimated real drop out rate between 1988 and 1989 (which is shown in Table 4). Hence not all, but between 50 and 100 percent of non-passers have been regarded as repeaters in the same grade the following year.

Tables 1A and 1B show the enormous differences between rural schools and properly urban ones. The difference is particularly striking when it comes to girls: in District 1 in Maputo, about 90 percent of all girls who begin grade 1 also graduate from grade 5. In rural schools in the Nampula province the corresponding figure is 5 percent. The difference between boys and girls in District 1 is interesting. Girls seem to have greater success in school, whereas the opposite is true in rural Nampula schools (and in most schools in the country, as the country average indicates). The same phenomena is visible in figures on the proportion of girls and on passers and will be returned to briefly below.

[50] Needless to say, other principles could have been used for the presentation. For example, it would have been equally justified to discuss regional differences, comparing for example areas with similar social characteristics in different provinces. A weakness of the general picture presented here is also that it does not give an account of the proper effects of war. This would have been possible if regional statistical data had been systematically scrutinized in relation to regional information about terror activities.

TABLE 1A. Survivors per grade out of a cohort of 1000 boys. Estimation based on rates from 1989.

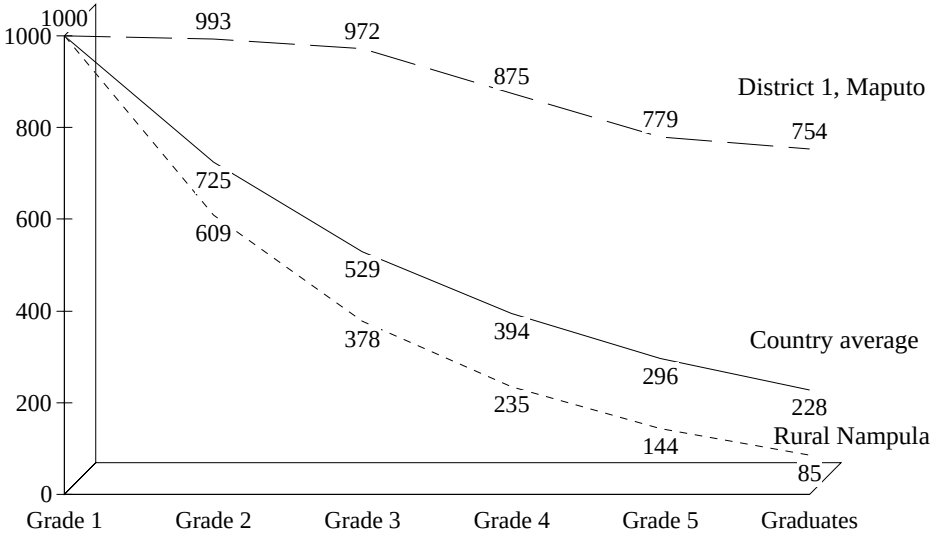
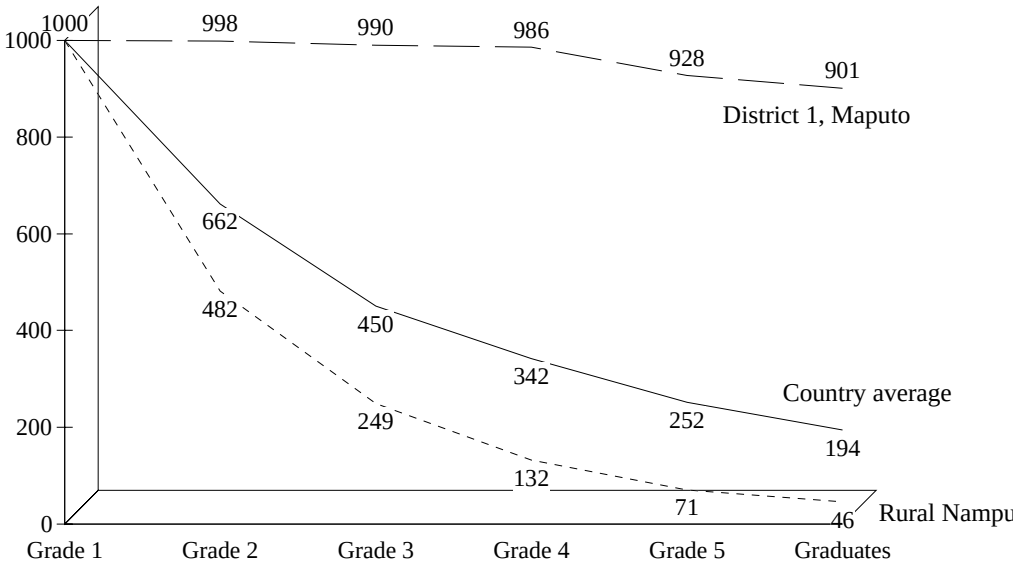


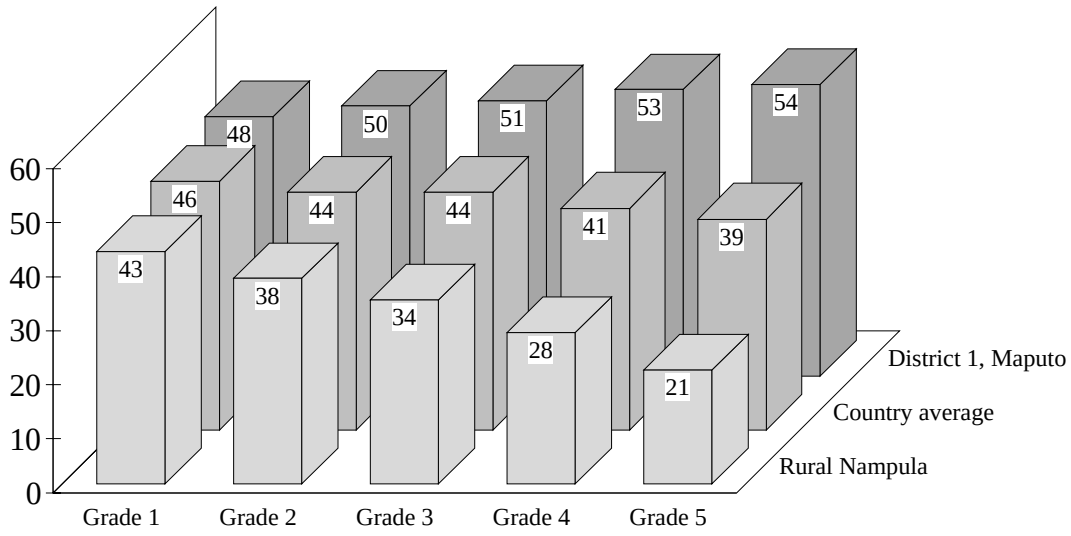
TABLE 1B. Survivors per grade out of a cohort of 1000 girls. Estimation based on rates from 1989



6.3. The gradual disappearance of girls

Table 2 shows the percentage of girls in grades 1 to 5. In Nampula rural schools, 43 percent of all pupils in Grade 1 were girls in 1989. In Grade 5, girls represented only 21 percent of the pupil population. In District 1 in Maputo, on the contrary, girls increased their part of the pupil population from 48 to 54 percent. (These differences represent a good example of the meaninglessness of average figures: they are an expression of the obvious fact that schooling - and, hence, drop out - have radically different meanings in different social settings.)

TABLE 2. Girls and drop out. The percentage of girls in Grade 1 to Grade 5. 1989



6.4. How many fail to pass?

Tables 3A and 3B show the rate of non-passers in 1989. The contrast between rural Nampula and middle class Maputo is particularly striking as concerns girls: in Nampula rural schools more than half of the girls fail in the first grades, while around one girl out of five fails in District 1 schools in Maputo. It is not surprising that boys do better than girls in the rural schools, but the contrary seems to be the case in the urban ones. In District 1 schools, boys fail considerably more often than girls in the first grades. This fact might explain why the proportion of girls increase in these urban schools from Grade 1 and onwards, but this, in itself requires further explanation.[51]

[51] No such explanation can be given from the fieldwork made for this study. One factor might be that it is far from uncommon in these urban bairros that families receive the sons, and less commonly the daughters, of (poorer) relatives outside town. These children probably are less well prepared for school and more inclined to fail and drop out.

The two tables make the effect of selection very visible. The rates of non-passers decrease from the first grades to Grade 5. The simple explanation probably is that survivors are so strongly selected that they resist the conditions of school life. As we have seen, in Grade 5 around 75% of their original classmates have been eliminated.

TABLE 3A. Rate of non passers among boys (in relation to existing boys at the end of year) in 1989. Percent

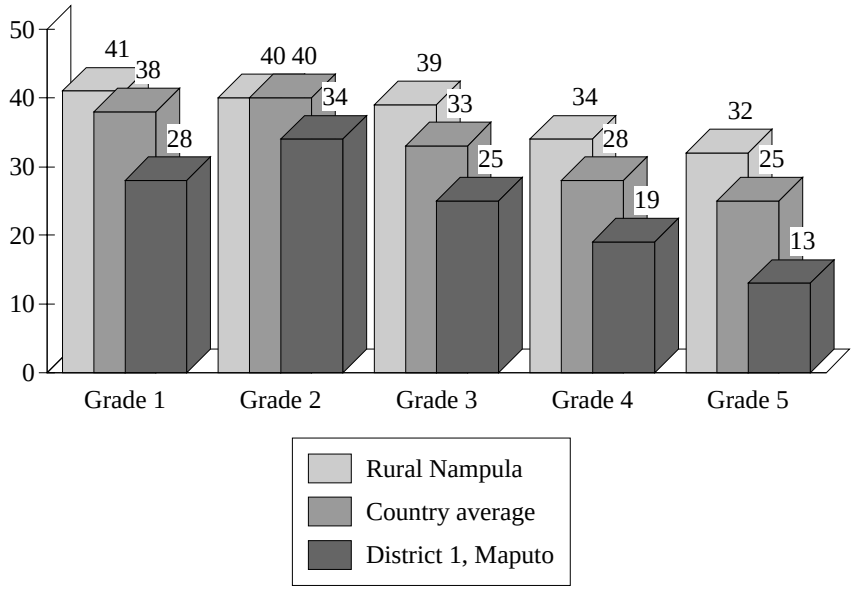
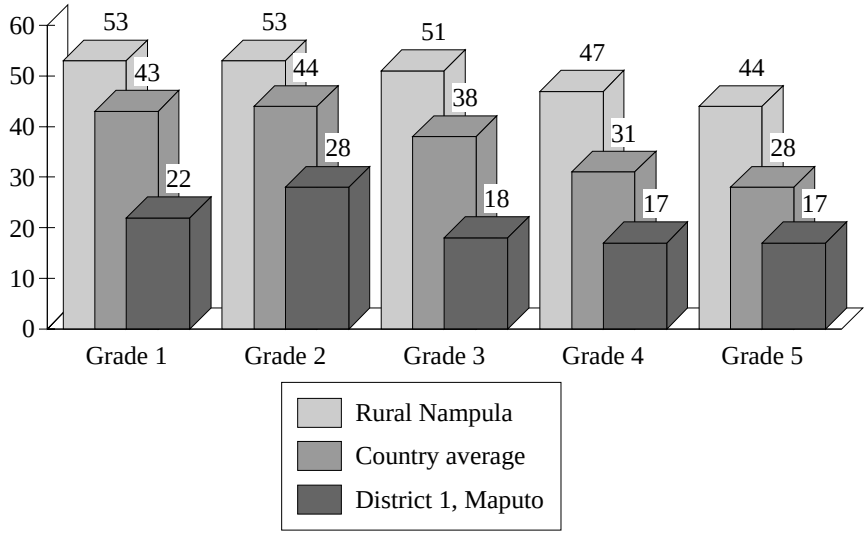


TABLE 3B. Rate of non passers among girls (in relation to existing girls at the end of year) in 1989. Percent



6.5. Of the ones who fail, how many drop out?

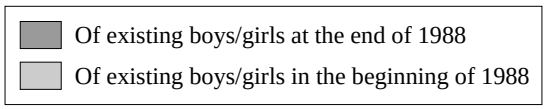
There is no easy way of answering this question but Table 4 attempts to give some ideas. It shows the relation between the number of repeaters in each grade in 1989 on one hand and on the other hand the number of pupils who failed in the same grade in 1988 (i.e the year before). These are indicated by the dark staples in the table. Ideally, all pupils who failed in 1988 should have appeared as repeaters in the same grade in 1989. The grey staples show the same thing but in relation to all registered pupils in the beginning of 1988 who did not pass to the next grade, i.e. including the ones who dropped out during the school year. In an ideal world, these pupils too would return to school next years and repeat the same grade.[52]

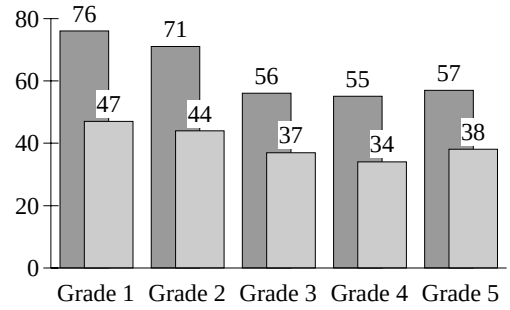
Three things should be pointed out at this stage. First, of all, "repeaters" in 1989 are not only pupils who failed the same grade the year before. An unknown number of repeaters might be pupils who dropped out from school in an earlier year and reappeared in 1989. Secondly, the fact that some pupils who failed in 1988 did not repeat in 1989 does not mean that they are drop outs for ever. Some of them are likely to return a later year. And thirdly, an unknown number of the pupils in rural Nampula schools who either dropped out during 1988 or failed to pass at the end of the same year registered in 1989 in non-rural schools. This was so because of the war that forced families to move for protection in urban centers. Similarly, the fact that District 1 schools in Maputo report more repeaters than pupils who failed the year before is due to an inflow of pupils that mainly, but not entirely, depended on war.

Several comments should be made on Table 4. First, in rural Nampula schools between 50 and 75 percent of the number of pupils who failed to pass in 1988 repeated in 1989. The rate is decreasing from Grade 1 to Grade 5. This is an expression of the fact that failure encourages drop out much more strongly when pupils become older and alternative activities impose themselves with more necessity. Repeating in Grade 1 does not amount to the same thing as repeating Grade 5.

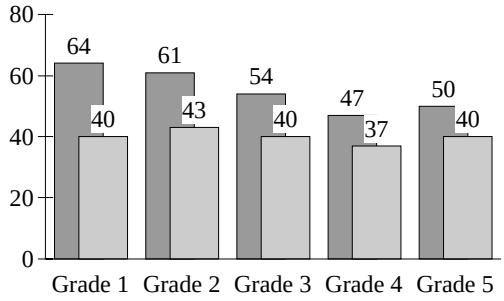
[52] It should be emphasized that these figures include schools that were burned down or closed in 1988. Of course many of the affected children did not have any chance to register again as repeaters in 1989.

TABLE 4. How many repeated of the one's who failed? Estimated rate of repeaters in 1989 out of non passers in 1988. Percent

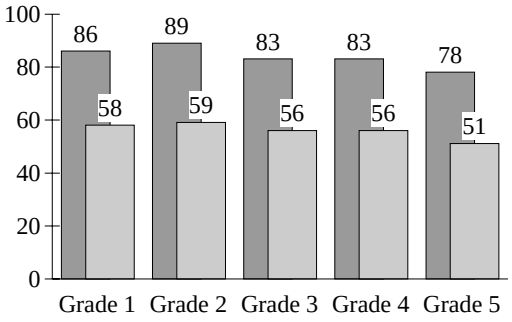




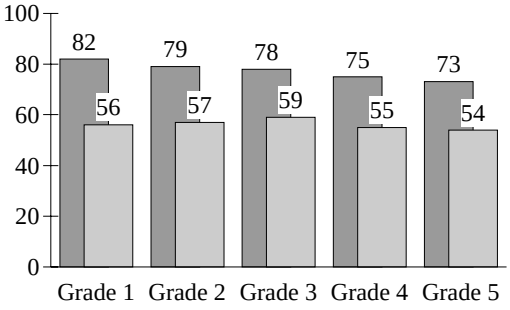
Rural Nampula: boys



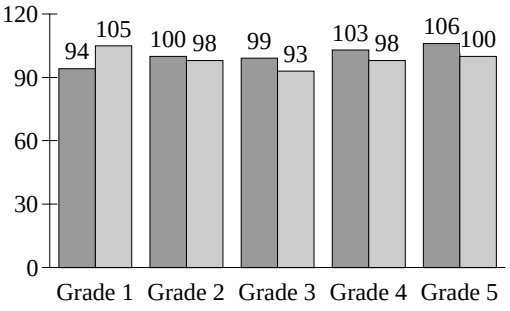
Rural Nampula: girls



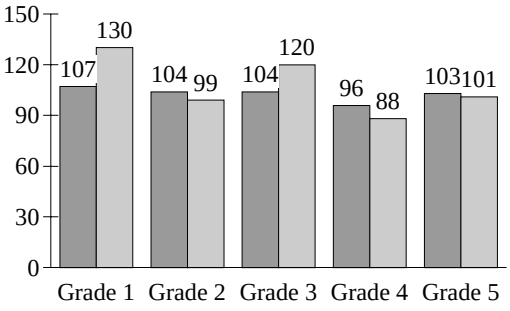
Country average: boys



Country average: girls



District 1, Maputo: boys



District 1, Maputo: girls

The differences also mirror the fact that pupils formally cannot repeat more than two times without being excluded from school (even though this rule is seldom applied systematically). Exclusion of this kind is more frequent in higher grades.

Secondly, the table indicates that drop out in rural areas among girls who fail is considerably more common than among boys. This is not surprising, since the reasons parents have for keeping girls in school in strictly rural areas are much weaker.

Thirdly, in strictly urban schools such as in District 1 in Maputo, there is almost no difference between the number of repeaters and the number of non-passers the year before. There are two reasons for this. One is that these schools are under constant pressure to accept pupils who cannot enter school because schools are overcrowded. Sometimes schools have to accept even more repeaters from preceding years than non-passers in the year before. This means that if one non-passer drops out, he or she will easily be replaced by another pupil. Another reason is that non passers in properly urban schools probably do their best to stay on in school. The whole logic of social reproduction in urban areas dominated by the petty bourgeoisie and by middle class families demands that families do all they can to profit from the education system. Non passers, then, are not very likely to drop out.

A fourth point is that no difference exists between boys and girls in District 1 Maputo schools. This is above all an expression of the fact that education here is assigned a totally different role in the social careers of girls than is the fact in rural areas.

Finally, something should be said about the grey staples. For rural Nampula, they just show that if non passers are taken to include all pupils who registered at the beginning of 1988 but who did not pass (i.e. include also annual drop outs in 1988), then the number of repeaters in 1989 amount only to less than half of all non passers in 1988. In District 1 schools, annual drop out rates for most schools come close to zero.

6.6. How many are repeaters?

The content of Tables 5A and 5B might seem surprising. The tables show that the rate of repeaters among girls is slightly but not much higher in rural Nampula schools than in District 1 schools, with the exception of Grade 1 where the rate for Nampula is lower. As for boys, the balance is even more pronounced. How does this relate to the fact that pupils in rural schools fail and drop out so much more than in properly urban schools?

The simple explanation is probably that non passers in District 1 schools do not give up the education project. On the contrary, they represent a pressure on school and compete with passers in the struggle for entry. An expression of this phenomena, that is proper for urban areas, is that pupils who are denied entry into their original school because they have repeated more than they are allowed to do, apply for entrance in another school where they are not known. Hence the rate of repeaters is high in such areas. In rural areas the situation is different. Failure is interpreted as a sign that education is not an investment worth its price in time and effort.

Table 5A and 5B also show that the proportion of repeaters tend to decrease when we move from Grade 1 to Grade 5. The reason is that pupils in the first grades are much more likely to repeat when they fail to pass than elder pupils in higher grades are.

The problem of interannual drop out should be seen in this context. Annual drop out should be quite evident to headmasters and teachers, since pupils disappear during the year. This drop out also is easy to see for other concerned parties at the district, provincial or national levels.

However, interannual drop out is less visible. An attempt was made in Matibane, one of the schools where extensive field work was done, to estimate the interannual drop out. Figures for 1988, 1989 and the beginning of 1990 were put in relation to each other and teachers asked to remember. In this small rural school (four classes), which was better organized than the average Mozambican primary school and which was situated in a stable and relatively wealthy rural area, 26 pupils out of 72, i.e. some 36 percent, had disappeared from school in each grade after having failed the year before. This had apparently happened without the teachers noticing. Interviewed teachers seriously believed they knew exactly which pupils had dropped out, but this turned out not to be the case.

The problem here seems to be that teachers (i.e. the ones who were well organized) satisfy themselves with making a census of school aged children who should begin Grade 1. Once this census is ready and attempts made to integrate all children, teachers concentrate on the children who actually come to school. Since there is no difficulty in filling up classes so that the number of pupils correspond to assigned quotas, drop out pupils are easily forgotten. This problem will be returned to in the recommendations which conclude this report.

TABLE 5A. Rate of repeaters among boys per grade in 1989.Percent

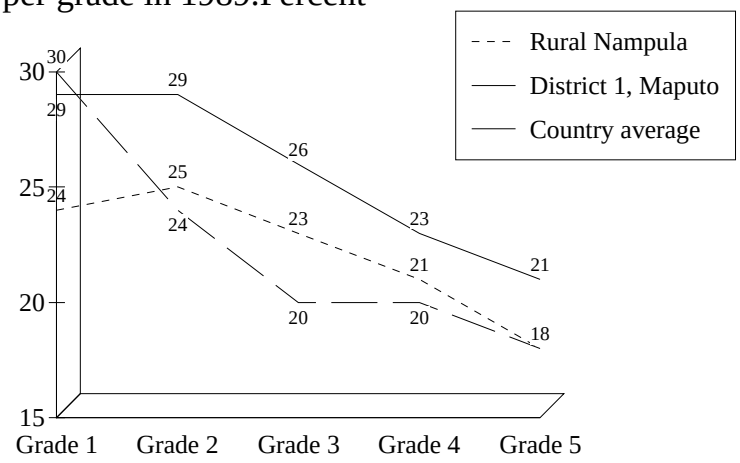
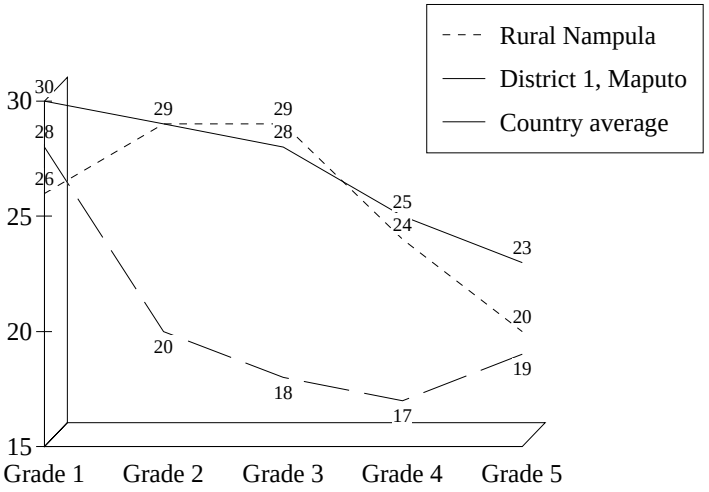


TABLE 5B. Rate of repeaters among girls per grade in 1989. Percent



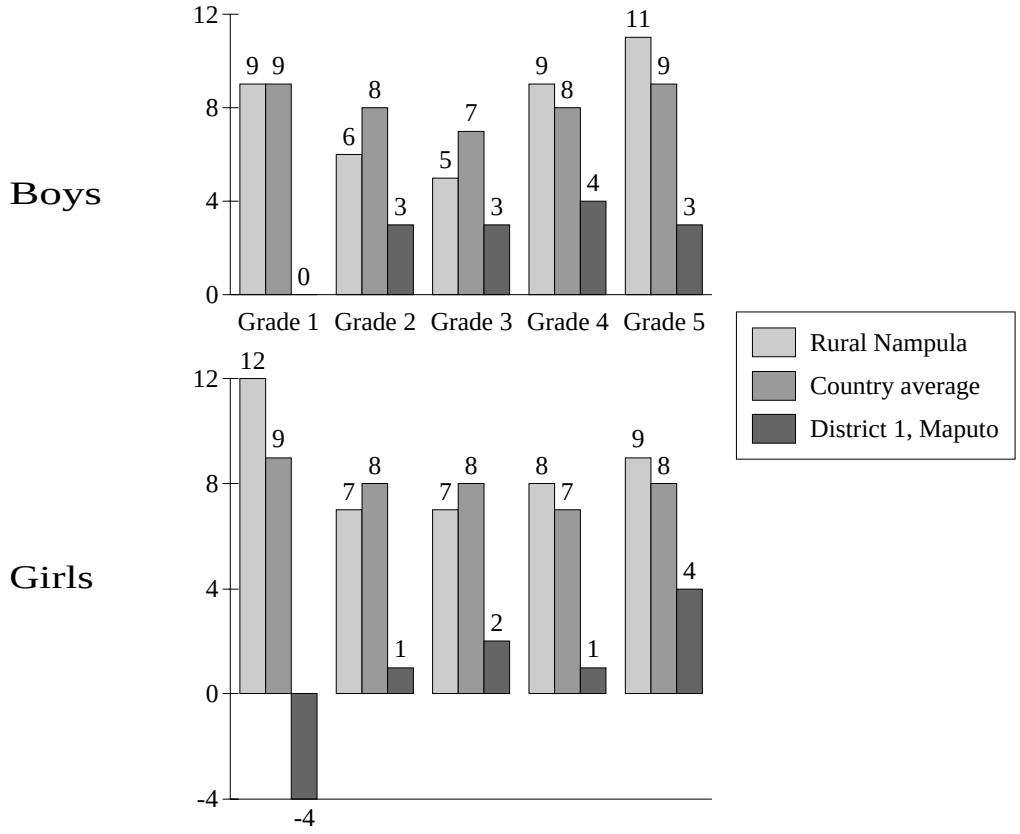
6.7. How many drop out during the year?

Tables 6A and 6B show drop out rates for the school year of 1989, i.e. drop out during the year. When annual drop out rates are calculated, the effects of war have to be remembered. In 1989, as in preceeding years, a number of schools have been closed down during the year, either because they have been attacked and burned down, or because teaching was no longer possible. When the number of existing pupils at the end of year is compared to the number of registered pupils in the beginning of the year, pupils from closed down schools will be counted as drop outs.

In District 1 schools, annual drop out rates are very low (even though they might be a bit higher than they look, since some pupils who drop out are likely to be replaced during the year). In Grade 1, schools had 4 percent more girls at the end of year than they had in the beginning.

In rural Nampula annual drop out rates are considerably higher. Perhaps one tendency should be emphasized, even if it is small. Especially for boys, drop out rates decrease when we move from Grade 1 to Grade 3 and they increase again from Grade 3 to Grade 5. This suggests that pupils in rural areas are most inclined to drop out either in the beginning of their school career (and in this case they are often likely to come back later) or when they get sufficiently old to experience school as an obstacle to more impelling activities.

TABLE 6A and TABLE 6B. Annual drop out rates per grade in 1989. Percent



6.8. Don't pupils get older when they fail and repeat?

Yes, they do: over-aged pupils and wide age distributions within classes constitute one of the many problems in the Mozambican primary school. Tables 7A and 7B give an idea of the age distribution in the two selected areas (and for the country i general). Not surprisingly, rural Nampula (and the country average) has a much wider age distribution than District 1 already in Grade 1. However, the age distribution is considerable also in District 1 in Maputo in Grade 5. There is no significant difference between girls and boys.

TABLE 7A. Age distribution among boys in Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 5 in 1989. Percent

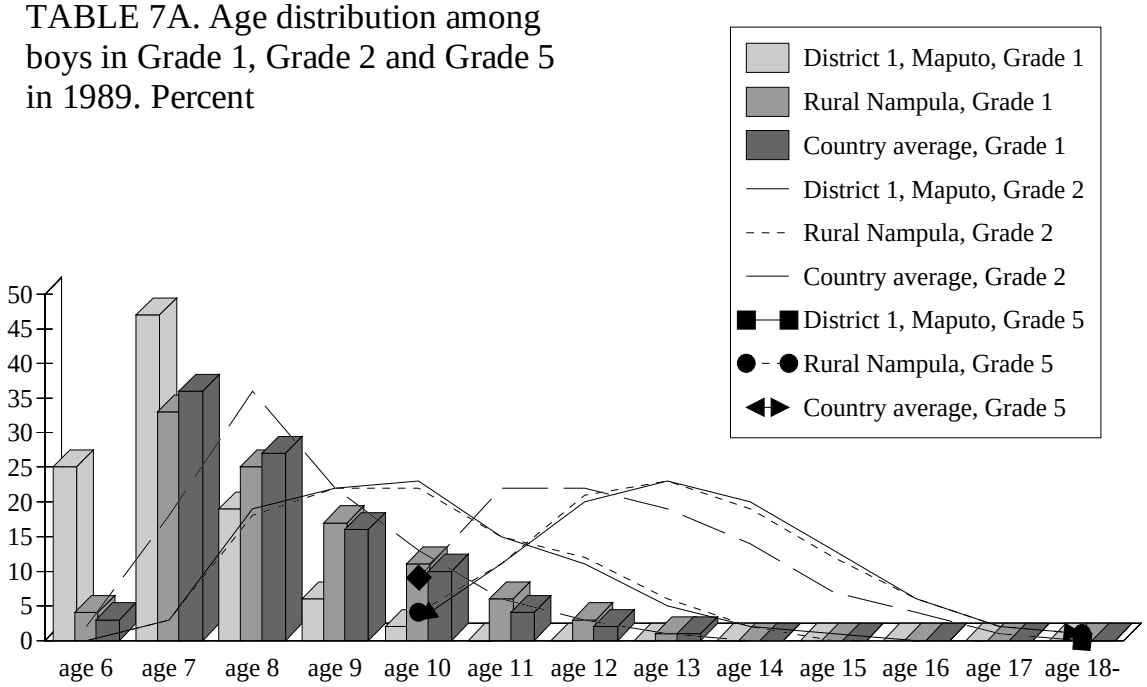
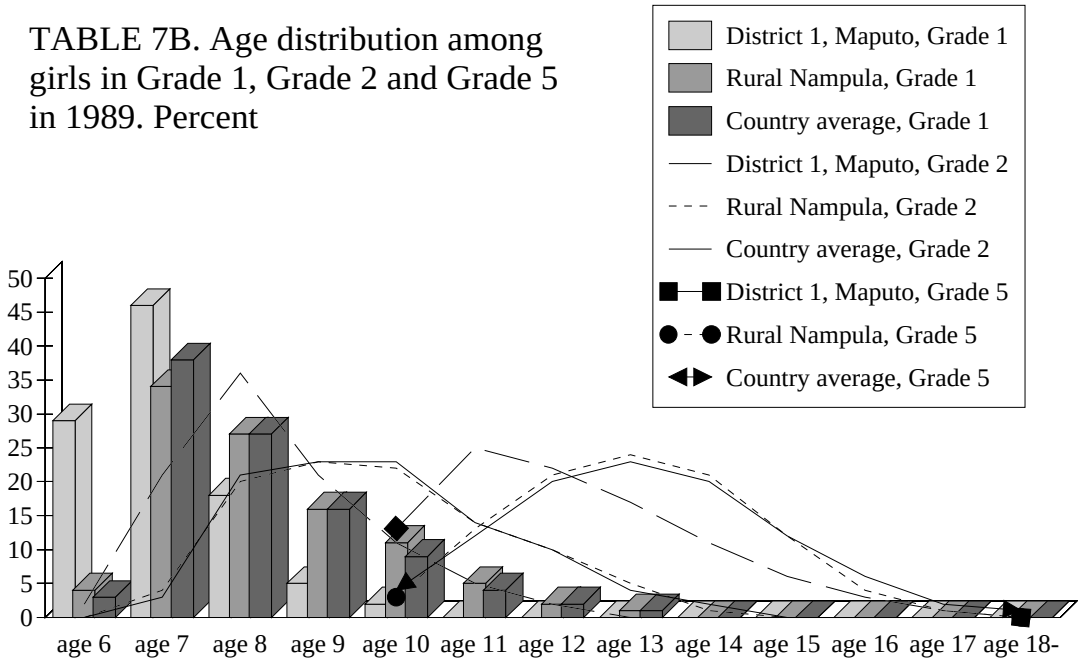


TABLE 7B. Age distribution among girls in Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 5 in 1989. Percent



6.9. Some conclusions

A few things should be said to conclude this chapter on statistical patterns. One of many things statistical figures so clearly show is the extremely selective mechanisms that govern the Mozambican primary school. As we have seen, more than 25 percent of the total pupil population disappear for each new grade. Only 50 out of 1000 Grade 1 beginners among girls in rural schools (in the province of Nampula, at least)

graduate from Grade 5. This means that pupils reaching Grade 6 (and even more so the ones reaching secondary school), the survivors, are strictly selected and that they cannot be equaled to their mates who were eliminated at earlier stages.

This fact has pedagogical consequences. It means for instance, that we cannot use the example of these survivors in order to defend pedagogical principles which will be applied to the totality of Mozambican primary school beginners. The strong elimination, if anything, shows that many things are going very wrong in primary school.

It is often said, for example, that the fact that some successfully pass through the education system from a modest peasant background and later on in life occupy important positions in society shows that, among other things, there is no reason to change policy as regards the language used for teaching to read and write. If these pupils succeeded, anyone can manage. This, of course, is sociological nonsense, since an extremely small number of survivors are compared to the great majority of Mozambican school children.[53] In fact, one of the major social obstacles to the development of a successful education policy probably is that many decision makers themselves belong to the few survivors and, hence, are inclined to believe in a system whose overall result is to produce everything else but survivors.

Statistics indicate that the basic principles governing achievement, repetition and drop out are gender and social group adherence. The pupils who are least likely to get anything out of primary school are girls in rural schools.

6.10 The social structure of the field of primary schools in Maputo

The only existing statistical data on Mozambican primary schools come from the information regularly collected by the planning department at the Ministry of Education. Since this information is produced for planning purposes, it is insufficient for a sociological analysis of such things as school achievement or drop out. There is, for example, little information for example on social characteristics of the individual schools, such as the socio-economic profile of the recruitment of pupils or the penetration of the Portuguese language in the area.[54]

However, as shall be seen, certain characteristics such as the proportion of female teachers, the proportion of girls or the age distribution in higher grades function as fairly reliable indicators of the general social character of the school. In the following sections, an attempt will be made to take into account, simultaneously, most of the information available about the individual schools. What is in focus is the structure of relations between primary schools in the city of Maputo with respect to some of their characteristics. The method used is correspondence analysis.

[53] The aim here is not to simplify the complicated question of what language to use in school; but of course there are other aspects to this question.

[54] Recently, a variable has been added to the existing files, distinguishing between schools in Maputo, in the three towns of Beira, Nampula and Pemba, in other cities, in small urban districts centers, and, finally, in rural areas. This variable has the merit of permitting to separate for example rural schools from non-rural schools. However, it is less accurate when it comes to urban centers. In the case of Maputo, for example, it groups together all schools, from the semirural ones at the limit of the city to the middle class schools in the most fashionable parts of town.

Correspondence analysis is a multivariate method for data analysis developed within French tradition and during recent years widely used by sociologists. Its specific merit is its capacity as an exploratory instrument in the analysis of a structure of relations, in this case of the pattern of relations between Maputo primary schools with respect to specific characteristics. The variables which express these characteristics are not treated as scale variables, but are most often (as is this case here) transformed into categorical ones. For example, the variable "rate of passers" will not be considered as a scale variable which value ranges from "0" to "100". It will be divided into a set of relevant categorical "modalities" (for example "rate of passers > 75%", each of which assumes the values 1 or 0.

In the following analysis, the individuals or rows are all primary schools in the five districts of the town of Maputo, with the exception of the ones belonging to district 1 which are situated outside the city limits at the island of Inhaca and in Catembe. These schools, totalling 68 in 1988, have been characterized by a set of variables transformed into modalities of the above mentioned kind. With one exception, all information come from the files available at the Planning and External Relations Department. To this information has been added a variable indicating the social environment of the school. This classification (which used four categories or modalities: "urban", "suburban", "semiurban" and "semirural") was made with the help of an officer at the Education office of the city of Maputo.[55] Since all variables (or modalities) used in the analysis are categorical, their relative weights are the same. Being a rural or non rural school counts as much as having up to or less than 20 % female teachers, or having 75% or less passers among girls. In the graphical representation of the first two dimensions (factors or axes) showed here, the individual points, which represent either the schools (rows) or their characteristics (variables or columns) and which are distributed in the two dimensional space, have been replaced by the name of the school and by a short description of the variable in question. Graph 1 then, is a less exact version of the original graph produced by the statistical programme itself.

Two things should be added. In some earlier analyses, more variables were included (such as the rate of girls in Grade 4 or the rate of teachers with the latest teacher's training courses ("6+3"). These variables were omitted since they either were very weak in their contribution (as was the case of the rate of teachers with a long teacher's training course) or because they seemed to measure the same thing as other variables did (as in the case of the rate of girls in Grade 4, which obviously measured the same thing as the overall rate of girls in the school). However, the basic structure shown in Graph 1 remains the same.

Graph 1 shows the relations between 68 primary schools in Maputo, when 17 types of characteristics are taken into account. Each school has been characterized by the following set of variables: its social environment (urban, suburban, semiurban or semirural), its total effectives in the beginning of the year, its rate of drop out for boys and its rate of drop out for girls, its overall percentage of girls, its medium age in Grade 1 and in Grade 4, its age distributions in grades 1 and 4, its rate of passers among boys and among girls, its proportion of pupils with 15 or more points in Portuguese ("Portuguese+"), its proportion of pupils with 15 or more points in Mathematics ("Math+"), its proportion of pupils with less than 9 points in Portuguese and Mathematics ("Portuguese-" and "Math-"), the number of pupils per teacher in the

[55] Mr. Chipanga, who has an enormous knowledge of the primary schools of Maputo and their teachers.

school (which should not be mixed up with the number of pupils per class, since a teacher might teach more than one class), its rate of female teachers, its rate of untrained teachers, and, finally, the rate of class rooms made of cement or concrete. Each one of these variables has been subdivided into a number of categorical variables or modalities (the rate of concrete built class rooms, for example, was transformed into four modalities: "less than 20%", "20-79%", "80-99%" and "100%"). In Graph 1 however, only a limited number of the modalities and a limited number of the schools are represented, since space could not permit a full representation. Apart from this, all important variables (or modalities) are represented. With regards to schools, all those schools close to the rural pole and most schools close to the urban pole are represented, while only a small selection of typical schools close to the suburban and semiurban pole have had their names included.

The correspondence analysis produces a two dimensional "map" of Maputo primary schools which basically has three poles. In the east of this map, we find a cluster of urban, middle class dominated schools, placed in real school buildings ("concrete built classrooms=100%") and characterized by several qualities: by their high proportion of girls (which indicates that education counts equally in the upbringing and in the social career of girls and boys), by their high proportion of female teachers (wives of officials who do not like to live in suburban or semiurban parts of town), by their equally high rates of passers and by a high number of pupils with the highest marks in Portuguese (indicating that this is their mother tongue) and in Mathematics, and by their relatively low rate of repeaters. These schools also have a small age distribution in Grade 1 as well as in Grade 4, and the medium age of the pupils in the two grades is, consequently, low. Both these characteristics indicate that their pupils come close to having a "normal" or "ideal" school career, starting school at 6 or 7, continuing from Grade 1 and onwards without repeating much and without disappearing from school a year or two in order to come back later, and not dropping out before completing primary school. These schools, and in particular schools like "3 de Fevereiro", "A luta continua" and "16 de Junho", are the elite schools among Maputo primary schools.

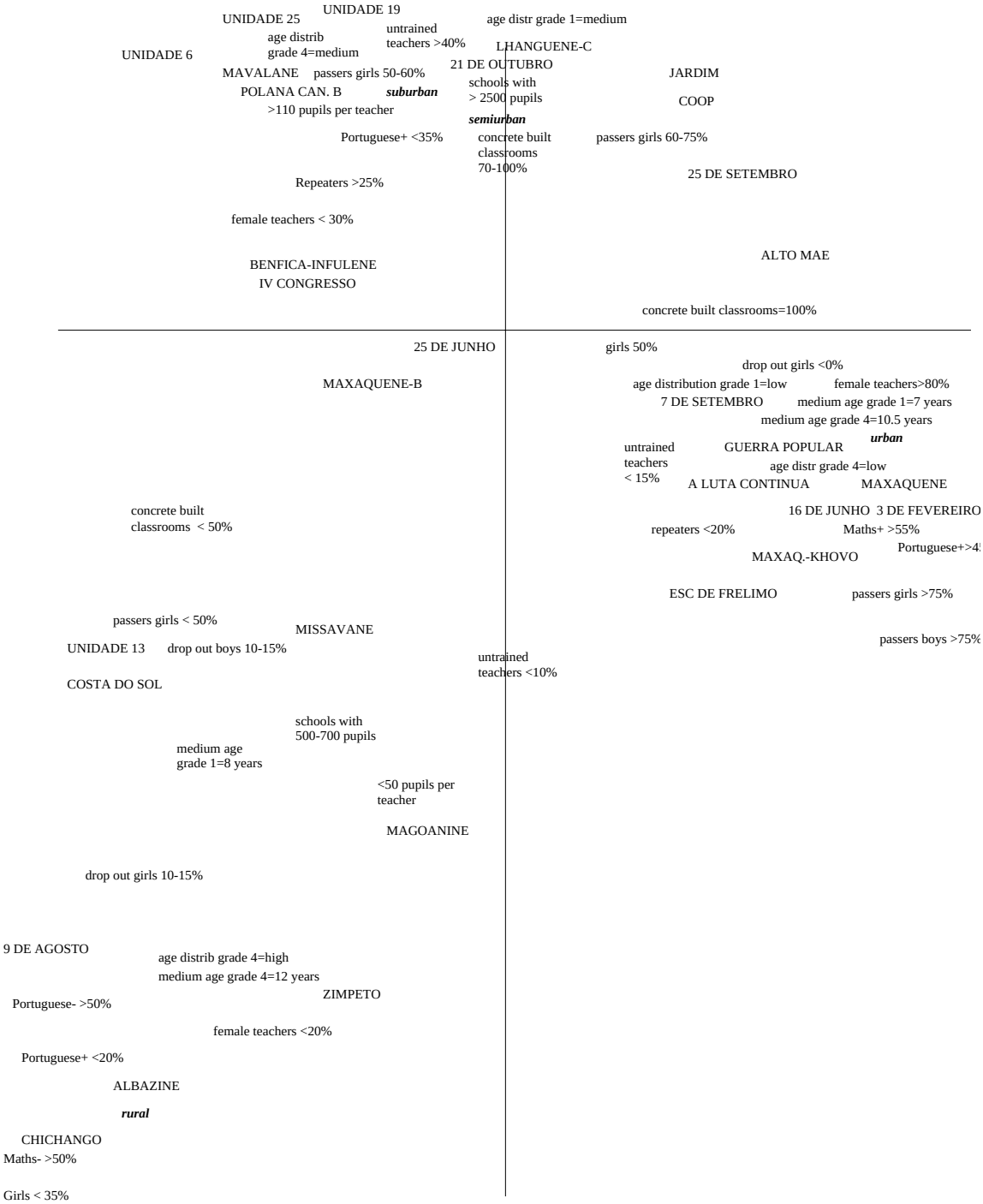
This urban pole is opposed to a semirural pole in the south-west corner of the graph. The schools assembled here have specific properties. They are smaller and have fewer pupils per teacher than urban or suburban schools. They have few untrained teachers and few female ones. They seldom have all classrooms built of concrete. Medium age in Grade 1 and Grade 4 is considerably higher than in urban areas and age distribution is considerably wider. The proportion of girls is small compared to other areas and gets even smaller in higher grades. Pupils often fail in Portuguese and in Mathematics and consequently do not pass at the end of the year.

The urban and semirural poles are clearly opposed to a third one, a suburban and semiurban pole. Here the pupils/teacher ratio is much higher than elsewhere, which means that teachers often teach more than one class. They have a high percentage of untrained teachers and, most probably, even though it doesn't show in the variables on which this graph is based, a high mobility among teachers (teachers often prefer to live elsewhere and demand to be transferred as soon as possible). The figures measuring school achievement indicate that they do better than semirural schools but

worse than the ones close to the urban pole.[56] Some of the relations indicated by the correspondence analysis are shown in the cross tabulations in Table 11.

The analysis clearly indicates the social nature of school achievement and drop out. The fact that such things as a wide age distribution in Grade 4, a low proportion of girls and few female teachers go together with a high rate of non-passers is not accidental. Neither should it be interpreted to mean that these factors in themselves cause drop out. A low proportion of girls or of female teachers indicate, above all, a social setting in which the families sending their children to school have little legitimate cultural resources which would make their children able to handle school successfully. It indicates, further, a social setting where families and their children have many other things to bother about than school in order to secure their daily survival. What we are dealing with, then, are mere indicators of complex social contexts in which schools and pupils find themselves situated, social contexts that must be understood in their totality. Pointing out, or at least indicating, this complexity, the analysis calls for a certain realism. If school wastage is to be substantially reduced, then clearly the best thing to do would be to transform semirural, semiurban and suburban areas into urban, middle class ones. Then girls would drop out less and pupils would not fail as often. Since such transformation is obviously not within reach, what perhaps could be wished for is a consciousness among teachers and education planners of the different complex realities in which school functions.

[56] It is an interesting circumstance that calls for explanation that the primary schools of Jardim and Coop, i.e. schools in urban areas, in this analysis are situated closer to the suburban/semiruban pole than to the urban one.



GRAPH 1. The social structure of the field of Maputo primary schools (correspondance analysis)

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

School wastage is a complex phenomena. The complexity includes the fundamental question of the uses made of the education system by social groups with different kinds of resources. Much of the moralistic rhetoric that so often dominates teachers' and policymakers' way of dealing with such problems as repetition and drop out tends to put all blame on parents and pupils or on the teachers or on all of them together. This unfortunate gap in comprehension calls for efforts to map out the complex mechanisms that determine what meaning education can possibly have for the ones engaged in it. The high rate of drop out of girls in rural Mozambique, for example, is not an effect of old-fashioned habits or ways of thinking. It is deeply rooted in the whole logic of social reproduction in the rural society and will not change just because representatives of the modern society think it is old-fashioned. A parallel example is the high rate of drop out and repetition in suburban areas which cannot be separated from the survival strategies imposed on families and children by extremely hard living conditions. There are no easy solutions to such problems as drop out, but the understanding and discussion of the mechanisms underlying them are the only way teachers and education planners can deal with these issues in a fruitful way. The problem of wastage also includes the question of teaching in different social and cultural settings. How, to put it simply, can teaching become more sensitive to the cultural conditions for learning?

Finally, the problem of wastage focuses the question of the "effectiveness" of school as an institution, on how it functions as a part of state administration on the one hand, and as part of the local community in which it is necessarily embedded on the other.

This report will conclude by mentioning briefly some points where educational policy could probably have a positive impact. I am well aware that these recommendations suffer from two common shortcomings. They are often vague and they are also general. And they sometimes have the characteristics of wishful thinking.

7.1. The development of Mozambican competence

Improvement of the quality of education through teacher training, in service training or elaboration of school books and new curricula will not come as gifts from heaven. It must be the result of action based on knowledge of the reality in Mozambican schools. Mozambique may borrow scientific traditions from the developed countries that provide the tools for producing this kind of knowledge, but cannot - or at least should not - import ready made results or solutions. The knowledge itself must be based on Mozambican reality.

7.1.1. Research

Studies are needed of how education functions in different social settings, of what meaning it has for different social groups and genders, of how the contents of

curricula, text books and teaching methods are related to how pupils learn and think and to their preexisting knowledge and needs for knowledge, of how teachers think and behave, of which factors that make schools function well or badly, and of what literacy is used for outside school.

A few such studies are being carried out at INDE and at other institutions. It is important that these institutions get adequate support in their work and that they get the possibility to develop fruitful contacts with various research institutions in other parts of the world. Research at INDE should probably be a mixture of short term evaluation studies with defined normative or policy goals and long term studies which are less directly defined by policy goals.

It is also vital that conditions for this research permit extensive field work, including interviews and direct observation, and that studies are not limited to statistical surveys. Educational research should also benefit from direct collaboration with other Mozambican institution with specific competence, such as NELIMO, ARPAC or the Department for archeology and anthropology at UEM. This kind of collaboration in specific projects is not only important for the quality of the research, but would contribute to competence-building.

Finally, in some areas educational research must be conceived and carried through in collaboration with teacher training colleges. It is a pity that such contacts are, up till now, so badly developed. If quality of primary education should improve, analyses of teaching processes must be made and results be used in pre-service and in-service training. This includes analyses of innovative attempts to find new teachings methods or to elaborate new teaching materials.

7.1.2. Evaluation unit

School achievement is normally measured through information on the numbers of passers and non passers. It has been argued above that this measure is far too crude for evaluation purposes, since it gives little useful information on the real returns of teaching in terms of learning.

A complementary and probably no too expensive way of guaranteeing a continuous evaluation of the outcome of teaching would be to create a small unit for evaluation studies, either at the Planning and External Relations Department at MINED or at INDE. Such a unit would elaborate simple tests in some of the most important subjects and perform these tests annually in a small sample of schools throughout the country. The experiences from the evaluation project of primary school text books show that, at least in Mathematics, it is sufficient to test a limited number of selected items in order to get quite an accurate picture of the pupils' knowledge and major learning difficulties. The accumulation of such information and such analyses over a small period of years would greatly contribute to the evaluation of curricula, text books or of the effect on school of such things as the teachers' strike for example.[57] This would be of help to education planners and education researchers in their work.

Such an evaluation unit could have a well trained staff of just a few members who work in collaboration with the curriculum groups at the Ministry, with the INDE

[57] In this sense, such a continuous national evaluation would be the opposite of the IEA programme in Mathematics, which tries to compare results from different countries by putting aside specific national traditions or conditions.

research group and, at least in the beginning, with a small number of foreign consultants.

7.1.4. Three suggestions for the improvement of collected data

On one point, specific recommendations will be given. The information collected by the Planning and External Relations Department on school effectives and achievement is very valuable. However, it should be even more useful if one or two things were added to the forms which the individual schools fill in. First of all, one column should be added in which the number of pupils who have been registered after the "Levantamento do 3 de Março" would be written. This information would make it possible to calculate the real number of drop outs during the year.

Further discussions should also look into whether the individual schools could not be obliged to give exact information on how many pupils of both sexes have disappeared from one year to the other and the reasons for this disappearance (the latter information would have to be collected through ready made, fixed categories). This information would be useful for the evaluation of the returns of the school system and it would also make teachers and headmasters more conscious of the necessity to take action against interannual drop out. Such new forms for collecting information would have to be tried out in a limited number of schools during one year, in order to see if they are realistic and functional.

It would also be valuable to add a variable for the individual schools which indicates the social character of the school. Such a classification (which would still have to be developed) would be of much help in analyzing achievement and drop out. The existing variable of this kind, which was mentioned above, is of doubtful quality, since it is based on an administrative principle.

7.1.3. Pilot schools and support to innovative projects

The development of pedagogical methods, new curricula or new text books adapted to conditions in Mozambican schools will demand small scale projects in schools where new pedagogical experiences can be made and analysed. Such pilot schools - which might vary according to the development project in which they are engaged - and their teachers would necessarily get specific conditions for their work, in terms of teacher support but should in other respects be typical Mozambican schools.

It goes without saying that such projects in their turn demand instructors or experts who are able to support the teachers. At present, this is a major obstacle for such innovative attempts. In the near future, however, the initiation of, support to and coordination of small scale innovation projects could be the responsibility of, for example, INDE.

7.1.4. Readers for primary school teachers

An obstacle to the improvement of quality in primary education undoubtedly is the low level of knowledge of teachers. Most teachers are unable to develop alternative and more productive teaching methods simply because they do not master the subject matters they are teaching.

Distance education by means of radio has been discussed as a means to improve the situation and to give even rural teachers the possibility to continue their studies. In the present context a complementary idea will be put forward. It would probably be of much value just to produce one or several readers for primary school teachers which would enable them to get deeper knowledge in the subjects or areas they are teaching. The lack of books makes it virtually impossible for teachers to improve their knowledge. The production of such readers also would be a symbolic expression of the recognition of the importance of the work of primary school teachers.

7.1.5. Teachers' training colleges

The pre-service training of teachers has not been within the scope of this study. However, interviews with many recently trained teachers indicate that many training colleges find themselves in a strange state of isolation, where for example contacts with schools are few and badly organized. Ideally, teachers' training colleges should be centers for pedagogical development and innovation.

7.1.6. Teachers' in-service training

Priority must be given to in-service training. As have been argued above, Mozambique will not be able to replace untrained teachers within a foreseeable future. Moreover, many untrained teachers, and especially in rural areas, constitute an important resource in the Mozambican primary school.

I am well aware that scarce resources on all levels (not the least the extreme shortage of trained instructors) make it extremely difficult to develop a realistic strategy for a large scale in-service training. However, the catastrophic situation in Mozambican primary schools calls for action. In some areas, like the city of Maputo, more ambitious programmes for in-service training would be possible to carry out even with scarce resources. At the provincial level, perhaps a renaissance for the old CAP (Comissão de apoio pedagógico) should be discussed. Discussion should also be held with foreign donor agencies, without falling into the trap of trying to import foreign solutions to Mozambican problems. Foreign donor agencies could for example finance a national meeting between the provincial heads for primary education and the provincial heads for pedagogical support where experiences could be discussed, problems mapped out and strategy questions focussed.

7.1.7. Strengthening administration at the provincial level

Finally, more emphasis must be put on the importance of the province level in the education system. This means, on one hand, creating better conditions for the work at the province levels, and on the other hand to make more use of the competence accumulated at the provincial level in educational planning at the national level. Officials at the provincial level come close to real problems in primary education through their contacts with districts and with individual schools.

Similarly, the work of officials at the province level could also be greatly enhanced if the competence and experiences of district officers were more systematically used in planning.

7.2. Teaching

7.2.1. Curricula, teachers' manuals and pupils text books

School curricula and school books should be reviewed. This cannot be a one time undertaking. In order to improve curricula, knowledge is needed about how they function in school contexts. This kind of knowledge might accumulate over time, if experience is not lost and also if the lower levels of the education administration (i.e. provinces and districts), are involved together with teachers in this process. One example already touched upon above, is the lack of knowledge of sex education among many urbanized young girls for whom traditional initiation rituals no longer exist nor function to regulate and inform them in this area. Opting for more sexual education at the lower levels of primary school might not be a general remedy for this knowledge gap. In rural areas, the existing curriculum, which starts taking up this matter at the end of lower primary school, has been found to be extremely offensive to parents, and has instead worked to strengthen their mistrust of school.

Teaching must also become much more adapted to the level of the pupils. Going ahead with ambitious programmes when pupils are hardly following is not only a waste of time but also leads to repetition and dropout. In curricula, text books and evaluation systems, principles must be worked out that create conditions for this continuous adapting of the level of teaching to the level of learning.

Text books, in general, must be made in such a way that more links between the subject matter and pupils' experiences are established. Similarly curricula must be made less demanding. At present in Mozambique, curricula demand more in certain subjects than what curricula in developed countries do at the same level. This is an unrealistic ambition devoid of pedagogical awareness.

The strategy opted for in teachers' manuals - binding the teachers to detailed instructions of how to act in the class room - is contraproductive and should be abandoned. Instead teachers' manuals should help the teachers, including the untrained ones, by discussing the central objectives with specific subject matters and by proposing pedagogical methods and model lessons for the teaching of these subject matters.

7.2.2. Teaching methods

Teaching methods and ways of organizing class room life that give pupils a more active role in the teaching/learning process simply must be developed, even though conditions in Mozambican class rooms do not favour such methods. What is needed here are experiments and accumulation of experiences.

7.2.3. The language of instruction

The Ministry of Education has initiated a pilot project in which the teaching of reading and writing in Mozambican mother tongues shall be tried out and evaluated. In the meanwhile, the pupils' first language must be used in the first grades for specific purposes, such as explaining difficult instructions or translating difficult words (where such translation is possible). Instructions to the teachers on how and when to use other languages than Portuguese can be developed and distributed. The present situation produces unnecessary school failure, repetition and drop out.

7.3. Girls

There are no shortcuts to improving the situation of girls in primary education. Teachers' pre-service and in-service training should of course include discussions on the present situation. Text books and teachers' manuals should be more conscious of the differences between girls and boys and contain suggestions for how teaching could be more adapted to the needs of girls. However, such action presupposes that sufficient qualitative knowledge exists that could be transmitted in these forms. The situation of girls (in different social settings) in relation to school, including analyses of class room interaction, could very well be a research priority for institutions like INDE.

Some more quantitative measures merit to be discussed. At boarding schools, a higher number of places than at present could be reserved for girls, thus encouraging families to let there daughters continue their studies. At higher levels in rural areas, where girls disappear in large numbers, the possibility of reducing or eliminating school fees for girls could also be discussed.

7.4. Boarding schools and EP2 schools

The devaluation of school exams makes it urgent for families who want to make use of the education system to be able to send their children to upper primary school (EP2). Such schools are rare outside urban centers, thus expelling rural families from upper primary education (and, of course, from the secondary level).

The Ministry of Education could well encourage foreign donor agencies to help constructing and supporting EP2 state schools in rural areas. Such schools should include boarding facilities. Boarding schools often represent the only existing possibility for peasant families to keep their children in school. As have been argued above, it is vital that such possibilities exist, since the logic of educational investment otherwise will be threatened. Such boarding schools should have generously put quotas for female pupils.

If such rural EP2 schools are supported by donor agencies, they could also be supplied with reasonably well built teachers' houses which belong to the school. The existence of such houses would be an encouragement to rural teachers and perhaps make EP2 teachers more inclined to accept leaving the urban centers.

7.5. School fees and prices of text books

The current trends to put more of the economic burdens for schooling on the individual families will have as a consequence that another price will have to be paid, namely drop out. If the Ministry of Education wants to keep school wastage down, schools fees and text books should not be made more expensive or even be distributed free. This is particularly true in rural areas, where spending for school represent a

considerable burden. Higher prices will in particular affect girls, since families first of all would choose to keep there daughters out of school.

7.6. Controlling interannual drop out

As have been argued above in the paragraph on interannual drop out, pupils who disappear from school between school years tend to be less visible for the school and hence not to represent a problem that must be handled. It would be possible to instruct headmasters and teachers to keep records on pupils who drop out between school years and to make attempts to bring them back to school. This would at least be possible in small schools situated in fairly stable areas.

The problem here is so to speak not only that pupils drop out, but that they are likely to come back a later year, at an older age. This effect would perhaps be slightly reduced if schools tried to keep track of interannual drop out pupils.

7.7. School as a moral institution: encouraging the teachers. The relationship between school and the local community

It is easy to say that contact between the school and the local society should improve. This has been on the agenda for many years. The study in Matibane, the rural bairro outside Nampula, indicates, though, that the forms of contact, in rural areas, also should include the traditional power structure and not only the political structure of the modern administration. Headmasters in small rural schools could well be permitted and recommended to ask advice of local chiefs in certain school matters, such as drop out of girls. The moral force leading persons in the traditional society have may often work in favor of the school, and even if it does not, it still is an extremely important factor in the shaping of the local school. This, of course, does not mean that instructions in the curriculum or regulations for schools should be abandoned when local forces want so.

During the last five or ten years the moral of urban and suburban school teachers have been declining, due to their bad conditions of living and to the pressure on school from the masses of newly urbanized families. Is is far from uncommon that teachers demand extra payment to accept pupils in school or to pass pupils at the end of year.[58] It is an open question how such tendencies can be weakened. The overall social development does not seem to favour the renaissance of school as a moral institution in the sense in which many rural schools are regarded and function as moral institutions. Living conditions among teachers are not likely to improve and once a certain amount of corruption is established as normal it will be difficult to get rid of it.

[58] Reports from Maputo suburban schools indicate that methods sometimes also include demands to sleep with girls.

One of the few directions open for action probably is to try to use the local community as a balancing force in relation to school, that is, once again put school/community committees and the like on the agenda. The function and effectiveness of schools should also be a priority object for educational research. Such research will to a certain extent employ quantitative methods and statistical use of existing data, but must above all include much qualitative field work, including interviews with teachers, parents, pupils and members of the local community.

It seems important, at the same time, to support the Mozambican primary teacher morally and materially. The present situation, when an unknown number of teachers are paid irregularly, not at all or in any case badly, and when many trained teachers have not been officially recognized as state employees, cannot but frustrate even the most dedicated teacher.

The ongoing privatization of schools in certain areas will probably create better conditions for the teachers who are fortunate enough to be selected to these schools (as it will for the fortunate children whose families have the means to send them there or the good luck to live in the right place). An effect will be that employment in ordinary state schools is threatened by a parallel devaluation. If the Ministry of Education, with financial help from foreign donors, could counterbalance this process, much would be gained for the Mozambican primary school.

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