

**Evaluation of the Advancing Primary
Education Programme in Lower Zambezia
Province, Mozambique**

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By Eric Slade



Executive Summary

The “Advancing Primary Education in Lower Zambezia Province”, 2006 – 2011 worked with the local communities, the district education authorities, the provincial education authorities other civil society organisations to improve quality and access to basic education in the most disadvantaged areas of Zambezia province, Mozambique.

Through the analysis of the programme documents and relevant reports and provincial statistics the consultant, in conjunction with the Concern Mozambique Zambezia education team evaluated the success of the project relative to the specific objective: to improve the capacity of and interaction between key stakeholders in the education sector to fulfil children’s entitlement to quality basic education for 21000 children including 10,000 girls (direct beneficiaries) in 52 schools in Inhassunge and Chinde districts. In addition the evaluation looked at the progress towards the 4 expected results of the programme using as much as possible the indicators highlighted in the revised logframe. Many of the indicators did not have a baseline value or situation description but we have pieced together as much to show where the progress has been made using the available sources.

The two districts of the intervention suffered a serious economic blow over the course of the programme as the coconut trees, which provided the principal source of income for the communities, suffered from the Lethal Yellowing Virus, a disease which has essentially killed all of the coconut trees in the area. This has resulted in an overall reduction in the number of students in the programme schools, and in the districts as a whole. This extra burden on an already impoverished population has undoubtedly hampered the development efforts in the area.

The percentage of children “surviving” in the education system to higher classes has improved overall and particularly girls are better represented in the upper grades of lower primary (EP1) and in upper primary (EP2) than in 2007. There has been significant improvement across the board but the schools in the programme have displayed slightly more improvement than the non-programme schools. In the pass rates in grades 5 and 7 we see a higher performance of the programme schools than in the non-programme schools in 2011. With respect to improving the percentage of girls in the schools, the programme schools showed marginally better retention of the girls to the higher grades than the non-programme schools.

The teaching practice of the teachers has improved according to the observational data from the ongoing monitoring- The teachers displaying child centred pedagogy in a list of 26 items increase from 53% to 81% over the course of the project. Teachers also displayed a greater integration of child rights, gender and HIV and AIDS issues in their teaching (from 21% in 2007 to 78% in 2011).

Relevance: The choice of the area of the programme and the strategy of supporting the communities and the children to understand and demand their rights, combined with the work with the duty bearers to be better equipped to deliver on their obligations was extremely relevant. The evaluation shows that the area has done a lot of catching up, in spite of the huge local economic setbacks, but still remains behind in the indicators when compared to the national level.

Effectiveness: The programme has been relatively effective at delivering the activities that were planned in the development of the programme. There has been partial progress on all of the results with result 1 being essentially completely realised. Some issues around the allocation of personnel hampered the effectiveness of the delivery of the programme in Micaune (Chinde). It highlights the issue that the places that are hardest to reach are also possibly the hardest to get staff to go to, and this was not successfully addressed – for much of the programme the Chinde team was understaffed.

Efficiency: In a rough analysis the cost per student over the life of the programme was 21 Euros per year per student. This includes all of the costs of the programme including the Concern administration costs. This seems relatively good value for the results, especially when considering the difficulty in access to the area. Utilisation of the M and E information to assist in identifying which schools/zips needed more attention and which ones could be left more independent was not obvious in the documentation of the programme and the team is in the process of identifying the schools that are able to be autonomous in 2012 and this should enable them to focus on the schools that need some extra support as the programme closes.

Sustainability: The attitudes and commitment of the parents and the teachers bodes well for the sustainability of some of the effects of the programme. The mobilisation of the communities for the construction of classes, furniture, teacher housing, etc has been impressive. The increase in the girls in the schools system should provide a virtuous cycle of having more girls reach higher levels of education to inspire more girls and their parents to keep girls in school longer. Issues around sustainability remain in the training of the School Councils. There does not appear to be a mechanism of handover or training for new school Councils and this could risk some aspects of the effectiveness of the school councils in the longer term.

Impact: There are the seeds that have been sown for the long term impact on the people of the target areas. More children realising their right to quality basic education means that they should be reaping the benefits associated with more education (health, income, etc). But this will be in the longer term. In the short term there more girls already reaching upper primary. The girls that were at risk of dropping out but were supported through bursaries from Concern to become teachers in Inhassunge and Chinde have already felt the impact of the intervention.

An intensive, detailed M and E plan was put into place in 2008 with a large investment in frontloading the capacity of the team to do detailed monitoring of the programme. The indicators used were not directly the indicators of the logframe of this programme. The indicators followed were of the national programme. Initially there was a great deal of data collected but there was not sufficient management to ensure that the information was consistently collected and analysed to inform the programme

In 2012 the programme team should take stock of the schools in the programme to see where some targeted support can be given to the school councils that need it to enable them to be autonomous. The information collected on each of the schools, ZIPs and SDEJT should be collated and analysed to ensure that there is a smooth exit or that the programme is well informed for the next phase as the area is clearly still an impoverished area of the country.