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Evaluating the implementation of free Primary Education (FPE) policy in Mozambique: equity and efficiency approaches

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Abstract

In 2003, the government of Mozambique abolished obligatory school fees for grades 1 to 7 with effect from 2004 school year as a means to eradicate the cost barriers of access to school. This intervention became known as Free Primary Education (FPE) Policy. The program was an accomplishment of the initiative launched by the international agencies such as UNICEF and the World Bank in the early 1990s when they emphasised that Universal Primary Education for All (UEA) should become a right and duty. The purpose of the policy implementation was based on the assumption that tuition fees had led to segregation and inequalities in access to school and consequently illiteracy and poverty proliferated in the country. This article evaluates the implementation process of the policy in terms of equity and efficiency addressing three main concerns. Firstly, is the genesis of the policy and associated policies and how previous efforts and agendas faltered to eradicate illiteracy and poverty in Mozambique. Secondly it raises questions concerning policy implementation and the nexus established between equity and efficiency. Therefore, the situation of Malawi and Ghana which followed two unlike implementation methodologies are herein brought in order to show how Mozambique learns from the two countries to generate its own model of policy implementation. Lastly, a logic model is devised which illustrates how the policy was designed, how it operates and which priority efforts to eradicate illiteracy and social disparities in access to school are being prioritised. The results and findings from this study are summed up in the vision that despite some weaknesses in the establishment of (FPE) procedures, the strengths of the policy are leading the country to far reaching outcomes in the sense that access to school is now reaching unreached zones, parents are no longer financially constrained, employment opportunities were created in the education sector and learning needs are slightly being met. The information for this study was collected mainly through the review of secondary sources such as reports, government documents, academic books and journals on the state of education in Mozambique and other countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa.

Key words: FPE policy. Mozambique. equity and efficiency.



Resumo

En la jaro de 2003 Mozambika registaro aboliciis lernejan kotizon por 1^o kaj 7^o klasoj kaj ja ekde 2004 kun elradikiga mekanismo de financa baroj en aliro lernejon. Tiu interveno estis konata kiel libera politika eduko (LPE). Tiu programo estis daŭrigo de la iniciato lanĉita por iuj internaciaj agentejoj kiel UNICEF kaj Monda Banko en la meza 90 jaroj kiam ĝi substrekiis ke universalan unuanivelan edukon devus iĝi ĉiujn rajton kaj devon. Celo de la enplantado de la politiko estis kontatanta al la supozo ke enskribaj kotizo kondukis al apartigo kaj malegalecoj en aliro al lernejo kaj sekve, analfabeteco kaj malriĉeco proliferis en la lando. Ĉi tiu artikolo analizas enradika procezo de ĉi politiko en terminoj de egaleco kaj efikeco alparolante tri interesa aerroj. Unue, estas genizo de politiko kaj asociataj politikoj kaj kiel tagordoj kaj koplodoj por elradikigi analfabetismon kaj malriĉecon hezitis en Mozambiko. Due, artikolo proponas demandojn pri efektivigo de tiu politiko kaj ligilo stabilitaj inter egaleco kaj efikeco. Sekve, Malavia kaj Ghana situacioj, sekvantis antagonisma metodikoj en la sama politiko estas alportitaj tiom pruvi kiel Mozambiko lerna el tiujn du landojn, generantas sia propa modelo por enradikigi saman politikon. Fine, logika modelo estas elpensita por ilustru ke politiko estas desegnita kio ĝi operacias, kaj kiu pledis penadoj por elradikigi la analfabetismo kaj sociaj malegalecoj en aliro al lernejo. Rezultoj kaj konkludoj de ĉi tiu studo povas esti resumita en la vido ke malgraŭ politikaj ĉeestas iujn malfortojn ĝia kategorio, ĝiaj gajnoj kondukas landon al altaj niveloj kaj neatenditaj rezultoj en la mezuro kiu aliro al lernejo komencas alveni neatingeblajn aerroj, gepatroj ne estas pli finance limigitaj dungada ŝancoj estis kreitaj em eduko kaj lernado necesoj estas ĉiufoje sukcesas. Informo por preparado de tiu studo estis kolektita ĉefe tra recenzo de malĉefaj fontoj kiel raportoj, registaraj dokumentoj, libroj kaj akademias urnaloj sur eduko statuson en Mozambike kaj aliaj landoj en Subsahara Afriko.ĵ

Ŝlosilvortoj: LPE; Mozambiko; egaleco; efikeco.

Resumo

Em 2003, o governo de Moçambique aboliu as taxas obrigatórias escolares para 1^a a 7^a classes e com efeito a partir de 2004 como mecanismo de erradicação das barreiras financeiras no acesso a escola. Esta intervenção ficou conhecida de política de educação livre (PEL). Este programa foi a continuidade da iniciativa lançada por algumas agências internacionais tais como a UNICEF e o Banco Mundial em meados dos anos 90 ao enfatizarem que a educação primária universal para todos deveria se tornar direito e dever. O propósito da implementação da política esteve concatenado à suposição de que as taxas de matrículas haviam conduzido à segregação e desigualdades no acesso à escola e conseqüentemente o analfabetismo e pobreza proliferaram no país. Este artigo avalia o processo de implementação da política em termos de equidade e eficiência abordando três áreas de interesse. Primeiro é a gênese da política e políticas associadas e como é que agendas e esforços para erradicação do analfabetismo e pobreza vacilaram em Moçambique. Segundo, o artigo levanta



questões concernentes à implementação desta política bem como do nexos que se estabelece entre equidade e eficiência. Portanto, as situações de Malawi e Ghana que seguiram metodologias antagônicas no processo de implementação da mesma política são aqui trazidas de modo a demonstrar como é que Moçambique aprende destes dois países para gerar seu modelo próprio na implementação da mesma política. Finalmente, um modelo lógico é inventado para ilustrar como é que a política foi desenhada, como é que ela opera, e quais os esforços preconizados para eradição do analfabetismo e disparidades sociais no acesso a escola. Os resultados e descobertas deste estudo podem ser resumidos na visão de que apesar da política apresentar algumas fraquezas no âmbito do seu estabelecimento, os seus ganhos conduzem o país a altos níveis e inesperados resultados na medida em que o acesso a escola começa a atingir zonas inatingíveis, os pais já não são mais constrangidos financeiramente, oportunidades de emprego foram criadas no sector da educação e as necessidades de aprendizagem estão cada vez mais sendo alcançadas. A informação para elaboração do presente estudo foi coletado primariamente através da revisão de fontes secundárias tais como relatórios, documentos do governo, livros e jornais académicos sobre o estado de educação em Moçambique e em outros países da África subsaariana.

Palavras chave: PEL. Moçambique. equidade e eficiência.

Introduction

The Sub-Saharan region of Africa has always presented the highest rate of illiteracy in the world and Mozambique is one among those countries where efforts to change the *status quo*¹² of poverty and promote sustainable development have faltered due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of the population is illiterate. As [Klees ET AL \(1997\)](#) indicate, since the dawn of independences in Africa, education agendas relied on the charge of school fees as the means through which the education system would be sustained. This

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² Derived from Latim and in the article is used in reference to the current situation in Mozambique with regards to education.



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approach led to a significant decline in enrolments, completion of grades and consequent proliferation of illiteracy and poverty mainly in the country areas were a considerable number of parents were unable to finance their children. A similar discussion though in a different context seems to have been debated in Brazil by Souza (2010) when he sought to understand the origin of inequalities. His findings which reveal his inheritance from Bourdieu (2007) concerning the argument that the status of individuals is determined by their positions on the economic grounds, different people are positioned differently on the economy which leads to inequalities and segregation. Therefore, either Souza or Bourdieu would blame schools as institutions in the reproduction of segregation and inequalities in a determined context. As to Mozambique, [Errante \(1998\)](#) who studied the genesis of illiteracy in former Portuguese colonies with special focus for Mozambique considered that associated to segregation in access to school are the strategic plans fostered by Portugal mainly concerned with educating the elite. It is worth noting then that being elite which was the condition for participation in schools associated to tuition fees which were an obstacle for many parents became the determinant factors for enrolment in the history of education in Mozambique. As a result, illiteracy proliferated through these strategies as they lacked the comprehension that education programs and policies which ignore the context are often unsuccessful. In addition, Portugal by aiming solely to educate the elite who later became *assimilados*³, adopted top down strategies and the charge of fees for school sustainability made school access limited to specific audience, a plan that became common in Mozambique in the subsequent years of independence. Various issues arise herein. If we consider that management and leadership for instance are key for success, in the case of Mozambique, the ideology of promoting access to school only to the elite and the charge of tuition

³ Is a term use by the Portuguese in their colonies to portray all those indigenas whose according to Portugal had reached the highest level of civilization and were able to be granted certain rights as Portuguese citizens.

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fees meant a crisis and failure of leadership in comprehending that the eradication of illiteracy and poverty relies on frameworks that are inclusive rather than exclusive. Therefore, Errante (1998) might be right to point out the relationship between illiteracy in the country and the failure of previous policies and associated agendas.

[Ryan \(2008, pp. 27-8\)](#) seems to take a step further in this perspective by arguing that, frequently change efforts that disregard participants in the process are molded by the error that top down decisions solely are sufficient for transformation. Before the implementation of (FPE) policy in Mozambique, the agendas that shaped education programs were centralised and lacked involvement of all the subjects that needed to be part of the process. Therefore, schools as organisations failed because various initiatives that were implemented seemed to ignore fundamental principles and consequently development would not be attained in a country with uneducated citizens. The discussion of contextualisation as a means for effectiveness and encouragement of development including in education was addressed by various scholars in Africa. [Moyo \(2008\)](#) simply argued that the failure of various programs and policies in developing countries especially in the Sub-Saharan region is due to the unsuccessful contextualisation of those. Moreover, the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) which ignored local needs of the population and imposed external agendas on nations did not have a positive impact on the eradication of poverty. The failure of this program in various fields including in education, seem to have given an insight for Mozambique that different approaches in the implementation of policies were to be considered if the country needs to eradicate illiteracy as well as poverty. Therefore, Mozambique in collaboration with international organisations, donors and civil society joined the global initiative to educate all children as one of the means to struggle for development. This intervention was a result of the acknowledgement that financial barriers which affect the majority

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of parents were perpetually leading to low school enrolments and completion of grades especially in rural areas where the levels of poverty are excessive. The country needed to learn that the eradication of illiteracy and sustainable development can be attained by creating educational regulations or policies that are inclusive and unlike former programs such as the Structural Adjustment Plan which led to the failure for development; these should take into account the context of the illiterate people and create mechanisms of inclusion. This may suggest that unless the costs that segregate non-affluent parents from affluent in school participation are removed and primary education becomes free and compulsory, disparities were to prevail in the country.

New Policy and Policies

According to Avenstrup (2009) the implementation of (FPE) policy has its genesis in the 1990s when concerns for partnership as a means of improving policies that foster the eradication of poverty through education of the citizens in developing countries were discussed by various stakeholders. What Mozambique did was to institutionalise the policy in its context in 2004. As defined by [Owen \(2006, p.25\)](#) policy is a social intervention aimed at guiding transformation efforts and ensure that desired goals are fairly attained. If we consider the definition of a policy or program in the perspective of Owen, there was a need for Mozambique to establish frameworks that target specific audience “the illiterate” and lessen the barriers of external forces that prevent them from being admitted in schools.

Implemented in 2004 Free Primary Education (FPE) policy appears as a School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI) launched by UNICEF and the World Bank according to [\(FREDRIKSEN, 2008, p.1\)](#). It is then a stimulus for unity, social justice and development as it attempts to empower the quality of school participation for all children through agendas that eradicate financial barriers in preventing parents from enrolling and maintaining children in education. Therefore, it argues that elite



and affluence will be replaced by the will of parents to enrol their children. Through this program and associated policies Mozambique outlines that decentralising school participation will lessen the gap between urban affluent and rural underprivileged because the initiative encourages more involvement. The more children are involved and maintained in schools, the more the country is likely to reduce illiteracy in the short-term which will have an impact in the development of the nation in the long-term. There seems to be in this thought an accomplishment of the view outlined by [McClelland \(2006\)](#) who sees policy as a framework of actions that turn intended innovative interventions into the wellbeing of the participants and stakeholders.

Associated with Free Primary Education Policy, is the achievement of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which advocate for Universal Primary Education (UPE) and eradication of poverty. The Millennium Development Goals as emphasised at the conference of Jamitien and Dakar, highlight the formulation, adoption and implementation of strategic plans that foster developing nations including Mozambique to solve determined problems in an established period of time. ([FREDRIKSEN, 2008, p. 2](#)). Thus, eradicating illiteracy and poverty through a Free Education policy became one of the key objectives that Mozambique pledged to achieve by 2015.

Purpose including Research

As previously mentioned, the efforts of donors in assisting Mozambique to guarantee school access to all children was more emphasized in the early 1990s when a World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jamtien, Thailand according to [Bruns, Mingat, Rakotomalala \(2003\)](#) defined that the goal of assuring education for all should be achieved by 2015. This view was reaffirmed and expanded by the World Education Forum of Dakar which evaluated the impact of the initiative after a decade and again outlined that Universal Primary Education completion has to be considered as an essential tool for development

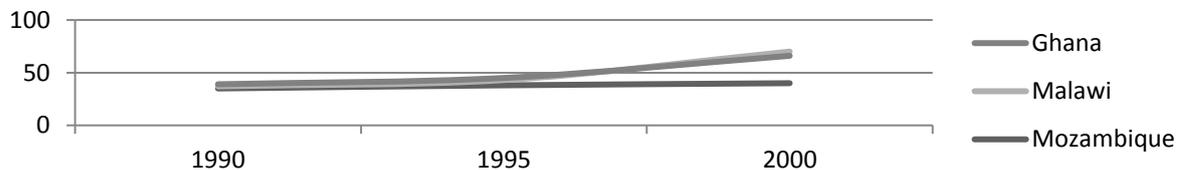


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especially in countries like Mozambique for instance, were 75% of the population lived below the line of poverty and nearly 55% of children were not enrolled according to Avenstrup (2009). Thus, the research on how Universal Primary Education would result in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 became an interesting field in the country. The graph which follows indicates the Mozambican *sitz im leben*⁴ in terms of enrolments as compared to Malawi and Ghana. From it, the inference that (UEA) has to be a *sine qua none* condition if development is determined by instruction, is unquestionable for Mozambique as the statistic line of enrolments for the country is significantly low.

Graph1.0. Students enrolment in Malawi, Ghana and Mozambique between 1990-2000



Source: ([BRUNS, MINGAT, RAKOTOMALALA, 2003, pp. 3-19](#))

The research findings outlined here by [Bruns, Mingat, Rakotomalala \(2003, pp. 3-19\)](#) with regards to enrolments are significantly lower at an average of 40% in the sample countries for 1990s. Moreover, for Mozambique, despite a slight increase in enrolment rates during the period that the (UEA) was discussed, the country appears at the bottom line among the three nations. Consequently, as Malawi implemented the policy in 1994 and Ghana in 1996 which led to the surge of enrolments in the two nations, it is then worth noticing that similar to Malawi and Ghana the purpose of implementing (FPE) policy in Mozambique was followed by a significant rise of participation in schools. Other objectives underlying the establishment of the policy are namely the expansion and

⁴ Situation of the time



improvement of early childhood education particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the rural areas, as well as to ensure that children belonging to ethnic minorities and gender disadvantaged have access and complete compulsory education as a means to promote equity and lessen disparities ([MAIA, 2008, p. 2](#)).

[Avenstrup \(2009\)](#) summed this up in his statistic findings of 2003 that direct and indirect costs fostered by Obligatory School Fees for the Social Action Fund (ASE-Ação Social Escolar) that prevailed for a long period in Mozambique resulted in exclusion for many children . He states that:

Poor households have larger families than non-poor (5.8 members compared to 4.5 members) and the cost of sending more than one child to school relative to household income increases considerably as the poverty level increases. According to the 2003 Public Expenditure Review (PER) on sectoral expenditures, the cost of one child in EP1 represented 12% of household consumption expenditure of the lowest decile and 10% in the second-lowest decile. Expenditure on EP2 was 34% and 29%, respectively. (AVENSTRUP, 2009, p. 215 APUD WORLD BANK, 2003).

This can be illustrated on the table bellow:

Table1.1. Costs for Primary Education when tuition fees are charged for parents.

	Direct fee to the Ministry of Education (per Year)	Baoding Fees (per Year)	Additional Costs- School Uniforms and Lunches (per year)	Costs of Text Books (per year)
Lower Primary Education (EP1)	Mt 150,00	N/A	Mt 21. 410,00	<i>Mt</i> 43000,00
Upper Primary Education (EP2)	Mt 250,00	Mt 500,00	Mt 60. 013,00	Mt 114.000,00

Source ([Avenstrup, 2009, pp. 214-5](#)).

Since rural unfortunate famers possess more children and are more financially constrained as noted previously the consequence was that the majority of children became uneducated and poverty proliferated in the country. The



excessive costs that the table shows give an insight that access to school was only for the children whose parents were affluent. Therefore, the implementation of compulsory and free education seems to be the main concern during this period.

[Fredriksen \(2008\)](#) puts it that the purpose of introducing (FPE) policy in Mozambique was mainly to ensure that abolishing fees will lead to inclusion in access and consequent achievement of MDGs. There is again a paralleled position with regards to participatory democracy in Brazil of Avritzer who indicated that the rise during Lula government of public audiences, national assemblies and national councils (including the councils of management and participatory budgeting) led to higher levels of involvement and empowerment and the consequent democratization of institutions. (AVRITZER, 2009, p. 30). Therefore, the UEA in Mozambique would to some extent imply the democratization of schools through involvement.

Questions of implementation

Implementing Free Primary Education policy in any country like Mozambique often raises questions as to how will the policy ensure that the targeted audience is reached and what needs to be done so that the initiative benefits the stakeholders equitably. The main focus here is to discuss the extent to which the planning and implementation of the policy considered and failed to address various aspects such as balancing access to school with the quality of education delivered, as the policy was initiated and finalised in a year period 2003-2004. We discuss whether the cultural constraints to respond to the program were contextualised especially with regards to resistance of rural farmers in sending their children to school. Other concerns include as to which extent the planning and establishment of this policy is related to previous studies, reviews and evaluation of the programs that failed. Are the means which were applied during the planning and implementation process justified by the outcomes and what can

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be learned from the implementation of (FPE) policy in the country? The identification of the major challenges that Mozambique encounters through the abolishment of school fees and how these can be overcome in a sustainable form is another fundamental question we consider in this policy evaluation.

[Avenstrup \(2009\)](#) argues that since one of the aims in implementing (FPE) policy was to reduce the cost barriers in order to encourage participation from vulnerable parents, the World Bank initiated an associated policy in 2003 named Direct Support to Schools (DSS). The purpose of this programme was to identify the needs of the families that are financially constrained and children infected by HIV/AIDS pandemic in order to alleviate their additional costs and at the same time attempt to improve the quality of education by allocating grants to schools in need of funds for the acquisition of school materials. The (DSS) is deemed as an intervention that guarantees the improvement of access in line with the quality of primary education in Mozambican schools.

With regards to the implications of this policy implementation for a low-income economic country, its establishment has been problematic in the sense that the growth of the economy has been slow from the period of civil war. ([HANDA, 2002, p. 106](#)). This might be the reason why the government had to rely on tuition fees charged to parents who wished to send their children to school and other sources in order to finance the education system. Though the policy is anti-illiteracy, it is a challenge to the national government and donors as they are forced to direct much budget to one sector, reallocate funds and distribute them equitably and efficiently.

However, various reports concerning the establishment of (FPE) policy in Mozambique indicate that despite the process of implementation being unquestionable the policy has revolutionised the Mozambican education system and has led the country to far-reaching achievements in various domains including Gross Enrolments, Net Enrolments, number of students and schools



which exist in the country and pupil teacher ratio improvements in both rural and urban areas. The table which follows outlines the situation before the implementation process in 1997, what happened in 2004 when the policy was implemented and what occurred after a year period for both rural and urban schools.

Table 1.1

	Total	1997	Total	2004	Total	2005
Gross Enrolment Rate (%)	74.8	U/R 867.6/61.9	112.7	U/R. 122.9/102.9	131	U/R 140.1/125
Net Enrolment Rate (%)	43.0	U/R *****	69.4	U/R 72.4/ 66.4	83.4	M/F 85.6/81.2
Number of learners/ students	****	1744869	*****	2884111	3471140	*****
Number of Schools available	****	*****	8077	*****	9002	*****
Pupil Teacher Ratio	60:1	U/R 65:1/ 55:1	67	U/R 70:1:/64:1	74:01	U/R 73:1:/75:1

U-urban schools: R-rural schools. M-male students enrolled: F-Female students enrolled. Sources: ([HANDA, 2002, pp. 107-13](#)), Education Statistics: Mozambique, May 2008 Retrieved from http://www.childinfo.org/files/ESAR_Mozambique.pdf and ([AVENSTRUP 2009, pp. 109-10](#)).

It is worth noticing that from the figures outlined on the table, the achievements of the policy are significant as more schools were built and the average number of pupil teacher ratio for country areas outnumbered that of metropolitan schools in 2005, a year after the establishment of the policy. This view suggests that the

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implementation of the program resulted in the improvement of school attendance in various settings. Furthermore, the table indicates that the policy has contributed to the increase in the number of students enrolled and consequent rise in the number of students per teacher. The strength of this achievement is that parents are slightly changing their attitudes with regards to education by sending their children to school and the efforts undertaken by the Mozambican ministry concerning the policy are leading to worthy outcomes. However, this has added more demands for teachers as they have to spend much time planning and often the needs of all students in classrooms are hardly identified and responded. The Mozambican strategy of implementation is a result of lessons learned from trial and error of two countries namely Malawi and Ghana. From the experience of these countries, Mozambique seems to take their strengths of policy implementation and adopts its own strategy.

FPE Policy implementation in Ghana and Malawi

The Implementation of (FPE) policy by various nations in the sub-Saharan Africa mainly followed two approaches despite the main objective outlining that (EFA) has to be targeted in order to eradicate illiteracy and poverty. Malawi and Ghana can illustrate the two approaches of policy implementation whereas Mozambique may serve to indicate the emergence of a new slight different approach of the same program.

Malawi was the first nation in the Sub-Saharan Africa to implement (FPE) policy in 1994 and from this period until 1997 Malawi developed various activities as the immediate establishment of the policy demanded. (INOUE & OKETCH, 2008). The response of this initiative was considerable since enrolments in most of rural schools in the country almost doubled compared to the previous years. However, the Malawian implementation perspective seems to be more concerned with



quantitative expansion of education rather than with quality. As a result, in implementing the policy, Malawi eliminated all financial burdens including school fees, uniforms and text books in all public schools in 1994, a fact that led to an abrupt surge in enrolment rates ([INOUE & OKETCH, 2008, pp. 42](#) APUD ROSE 2002).

However, Ghana implemented the policy two years later in 1996 and considered the expansion of access to school in line with quality. Thus, the implementation of the program was developed in two phases. At the commencement of (FPE) in 1996, Ghana abolished only tuition fees, that is, only part of schooling access barriers. The implementation was accomplished when in 2005, 9 years later Ghana abolished all other costs for uniforms and text books in public schools, ([INOUE & OKETCH, 2008, p. 44](#)). Ghana seems to be more cautious than Malawi in the sense that despite intending to guarantee (EFA), in order to achieve effective outcomes, monitors the quality of education as is concerned with preserving excellence.

Since the approaches taken by Malawi and Ghana were different, the results and implications of the changes and innovations in the two nations differed as well. According to [Inoue & Oketch \(2008\)](#) Malawi declared the implementation of the policy and abruptly abolished all tuition fees and used a pro-poor strategy in order to ensure equity in enrolments. This strategy led to an immediate reduction of disparities in the country and equitable distribution of resources. However, the demand of the surge of school enrolments forced the Malawian department of education to employ untrained and unqualified teachers and large of the budget increase was spent on their wages rather than on other pertinent fields or levels of education.

On contrast, Ghana seems to have adopted a strategy that enabled the Department of Education to continuously train teachers who were to take charge in 2005 when the policy was finally established. In addition the model of Ghana



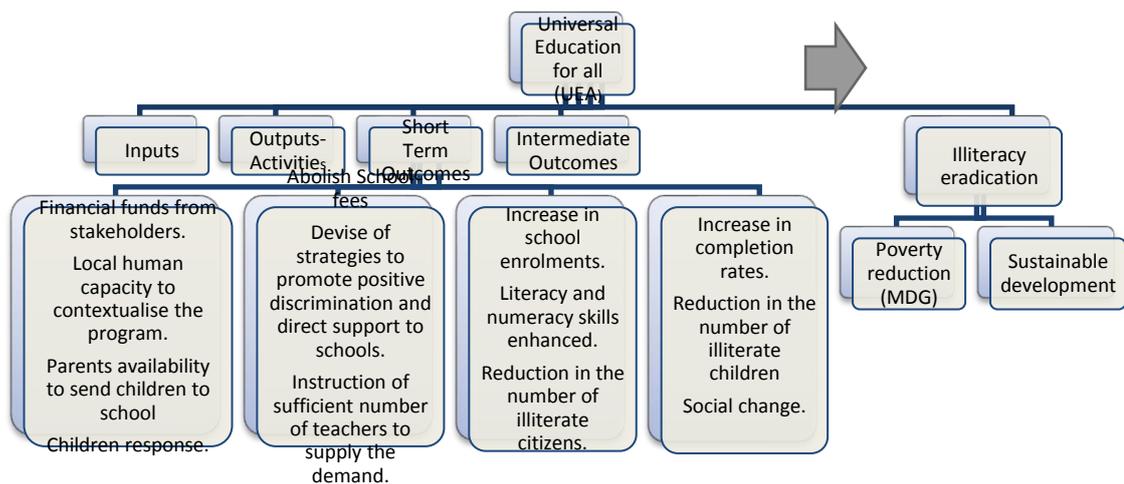
fostered efficiency in budgetary allocation to each level of education as compared to Malawi. However, this approach can question equity with regards to school access as indirect costs still burdened poor parents between 1996-2005. Furthermore, Ghana seems to lack equitable improvement in the distribution of resources in schools since there is no mention of how vulnerable families are treated, ([INOUE & OKETCH, 2008, p.67](#)).

Whether (FPE) policy can either be implemented by using the model of Malawi (1994) or Ghana (1996), Mozambique seems to apply combined efforts in the implementation process. In 2003 Mozambique declared the abolishment of tuition fees in schools and in the following year (2004) other costs such as uniform and texts book costs were as well eliminated, ([AVENSTRUP, 2009, p. 219](#)). This seems to be a combined implementation process adopted by Ghana and Malawi. Furthermore, Mozambique, adopted an equitable distribution of resources by applying a pro-poor strategy in order to ensure equity through (DSS) as previously discussed an approach that was followed by Malawi. How did Mozambique ensure equity and efficiency then?

The revision of secondary sources such as reports, government documents, academic books and journals on the state of education and implementation of (FPE) policy in Mozambique indicates that there are some elements similar to those stated by [Kellog \(2004\)](#) with regards to the link that should exist between investments and the activities developed in order to achieve desired outcomes in any program design. The logic Model that follows describes how Mozambique designs the link between investments and activities that FPE policy will develop in order to attain the intended outcomes which are mainly to reduce illiteracy by providing education for all as a means to fight against poverty and create sustainable development.



Logic Model Diagram for the implementation of FPE policy in Mozambique.



Evaluating the implementation process (equity and efficiency analysis)

[Owen \(2006\)](#) views evaluation as a judgement of how worthy is the object being reviewed. In the case of Mozambique it is worth noticing that evaluating the implementation of the policy it means outlining what happened, from what was done which aspects worked as well as those which failed.

Therefore it seems that the decision to abolish school fees and introduce (FPE) program and associated policies in the country was ultimately a political decision. [Avenstrup \(2009\)](#) states that the Minister of Education decided to abolish school fees for Primary Education in 2003, that was in the eve of the presidential elections. As a result, in 2004 the total costs of education were eliminated and after approximately a term Mozambicans went to ballots. This view suggests that the implementation of the policy can often be deemed as an ideology rather than as an attempt to respond to the social needs of the citizens. If this is true, the Mozambican Ministry of Education seems to fail to understand during the implementation process that any leadership which is intended to make a social change should often use participants as ends in themselves as opposed to use



them as means to achieve the ends. ([REINHARTZ, BEACH, 2004, p. 48](#)).

As stated earlier, the establishment of this program in schools was enhanced by the World Bank initiative “Direct Support to Schools” (DSS) an intervention that is more centralised rather than decentralised with insufficient consultation with the stakeholders. ([AVENTRUP, 2009, p. 207](#)). As a result, not all schools and students in need seem to benefit from the initiative especially in rural areas where learning materials such as textbooks until 2007 had not reached intended schools and students. As some may argue, the (DSS) program favours again the elite mainly located in metropolis and rural schools appear to be ignored.

As the logic model suggested, the implementation of the program was hierarchical, top designed and bottom implemented. However, change initiatives that follow these patterns are likely to falter because involvement, consultation and team work based on collective decision making are essential for effective transformation in any change effort. (FPE) policy in Mozambique would have reached far greater results if the devise of its implementation had followed either the model of “downplaying leadership⁵” [French, Simpson \(2006, p. 270\)](#) or “down to earth management⁶” [DuBrin \(2007, p.2\)](#) where decentralisation of decisions encourage the empowerment of participants and stakeholders.

The dilemmas concerning the establishment of (FPE) policy in Mozambique can well be addressed by discussing its equity and efficiency as the gap between policy implementation rhetoric and policy applicability is noticeable. The time of implementation seems to be insufficient as abolition fees occurred in 2003 ([Vimeo, 2010, Sept 16.](#)) and in the subsequent year other additional education

⁵ Referes to a type of leadership based on the view that change efforts are only successful in people are involved in the process of change or policies.

⁶ Is also a metaphor used to explain that the success of policies and changes are mainly effective in instances that are bottom up as opposed to top down as it seemed to be the case with FPE policy implementation Mozambique.

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costs were abolished. There is an indication here that the premise of balancing access and quality was simply rhetorical and cannot be unquestionable. In some schools as indicated in graph 1.1 the average pupil teacher ratio reached 74:1. This suggests that many untrained teachers were recruited in order to respond to the demands of enrolments increase that occurred in 2004 especially in rural areas where attendance had significantly improved. Therefore, an indication of the failure of policy makers to comprehend that overcrowded classrooms and excellence are incompatible.

The positive discrimination which the policy seems to advocate is praiseworthy because by promoting that unequal student situations are treated unequally makes the program equitable and efficient. If this rhetoric was true in all cases, then arguing about vertical equity in the distribution of resources as a stimulus for access would be one of the greatest achievements of the policy being evaluated. Results from multiple sources show that in certain instances, there was no clear associated policy which monitored such distribution so that the needs of the targeted population and schools were to be identified. As a result, there is no guarantee that the resources allocated to the schools and children especially in rural areas reach the intended destination.

From the findings of our research on the implementation of Free Primary Education policy, in Mozambique we infer that this policy was implemented with the main objective of removing the cost barriers that prevented many parents to send their children to school. The intervention is regarded as a means of increasing access and completion rates. As a consequence, the eradication of illiteracy was targeted as the long term outcome and sustainable development would be the impact of the policy. The World Bank, UNICEF and various other stakeholders played a significant role in the implementation process.

Despite these achievements, the implementation of the policy fails to address the consequences of the establishment of this program as the monitoring process

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seems to be weak. Thus, the dilemmas of promoting access to school, classrooms overcrowding and how to encourage quality in order to attain accountability and effective students outcomes need to be addressed. According to the results from SACMEC for instance, rural students score lower in literacy and numeracy as compared to their counterparts in the metropolis. The implementation process seems not to consider this aspect in order to identify strategies that will lead to equitable and efficient outcomes in both rural and urban schools of the country.

With the establishment of this policy the textbooks that are used in various settings are identical to different contexts. There are views to suggest that rural students score lower in mathematics and literacy due to the fact that only 29% of their parents can read and write in Portuguese. It is then evident that this gap impacts on student outcomes and leads again to disparities between rural and urban areas. Thus, if an associated policy is fostered in order to grant more attention to rural students it would make the program more equitable. The implementation of the policy by promoting positive discrimination seems to undermine the fact that still more especial attention is required for rural students so that sustainable development which is deemed as a long term goal of this policy implementation is attained in the country as a whole.

Some researchers recommend that since the implementation of this policy was top designed with insufficient involvement, farmers in the rural areas were not explained about the benefits of the change initiative and as a result many of them still resist in sending their children to school. It seems that an associated policy which raises awareness of farmers to give more value to education as opposed to agriculture would lead to the long -term goals of the policy we evaluated.

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Conclusion

This article was designed to evaluate the implementing (FPE) policy in Mozambique. The main objective of the evaluation was to assess equity and efficiency of the policy establishment process. It identified the underlying principles of evaluating a program or policy by addressing the factors which succeeded as well as those which faltered in the implementation process. Drawing from the experience of two countries namely Malawi and Ghana, the establishment of the policy in Mozambican schools was characterised by a model of its own. Analysing the logic model of the implementation process, it can be inferred that the sustainability of the policy is a challenge for Mozambique since its maintenance requires more funding. Due to the failure in the identification of fundamental needs of rural schools and students, equity and efficiency implantation process become questionable. As a result, the long-term-outcomes of the program are threatened as many children especially in rural areas are still not enrolled because some farmers resist in sending them to school. Therefore, the implementation of this policy is not a guarantee that the eradication of illiteracy and sustainable development will be attained. However, this program has led to social and educational innovation in the country as a whole. As outlined on the tables, Gross and Net Enrolments have increased in Mozambique and financial constraints which created social disparities of access to school were eliminated. The establishment of (FPE) policy in the country has significantly contributed to encourage cooperation of governments, donors, civil society and other partners in local education to coordinate efforts. The implementation of this policy enables the country as a whole to learn that the success of any program requires the involvement of multiple factors of which if not addressed may lead to failure of change. If the policy aims at achieving more successful outcomes we recommend that associated programs which address various aspects need to be formulated. These may include whether automatic promotion of children to progress without passing the existing grades will lead to the eradication of illiteracy, if overcrowded



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classrooms will really result in quality outcomes and how can strategies concerning disadvantaged and minority groups be improved and transparency in the distribution of resources between rural and urban schools be monitored and reduction of school distances enhances the policy in attaining far-reaching outcomes.

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