SPOTLIGHT ON BASIC EDUCATION COMPLETION AND FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

Mozambique

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Sustainable Development Goals

Global Education Monitoring Report

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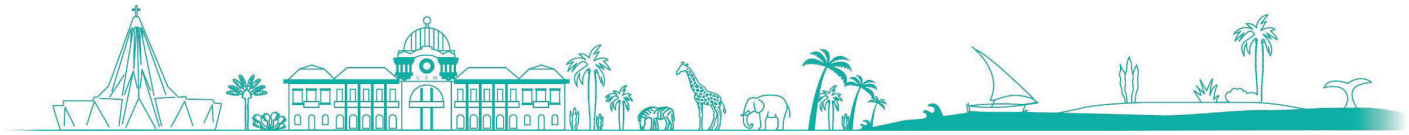
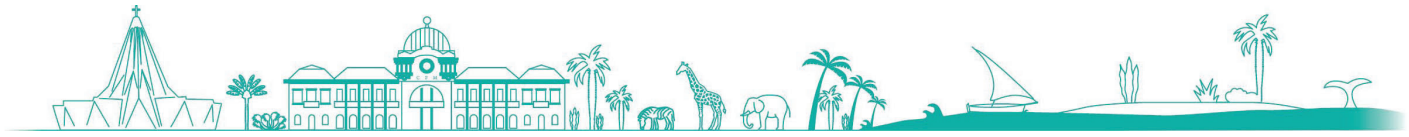


Foreword

The Ministry of Education and Human Development enthusiastically welcomed the preparation of this Spotlight Report, confident that it would provide a broad overview of the progress made in terms of basic literacy and numeracy, as well as the existing challenges. In fact, it is a document that is based on relevant research and analysis of the priorities identified by this ministry over the last few years and the steps that we have managed to take. At the same time, this analysis identifies a set of important needs that will be essential to address in the implementation of our Strategic Education Plan 2020-2029.

It is, therefore, a document that will support future decision-making, in the committed effort of this institution to continuously and consistently move towards the improvement of the literacy and numeracy levels of Mozambicans.

Certain that, overall, this analysis will form part of a broader continental vision, we are eagerly awaiting to share our own experience and, at the same time, benefit from the experience of countries that face a similar economic and social reality.



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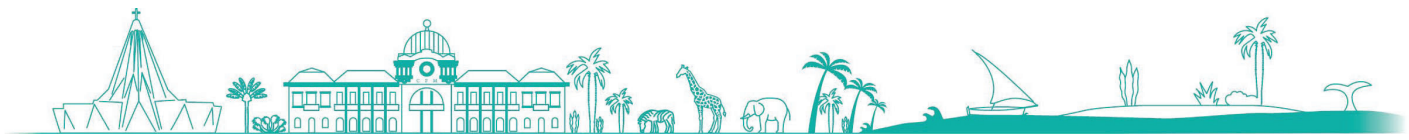


1. Executive Summary

The Mozambique Spotlight report is intended to provide sharp and evidence-based diagnostics to education leaders and development partners. It is part of a series putting the spotlight on education progress in terms of access, equity, quality, learning and finance in primary and lower secondary education in countries across Africa, as measured by two global indicators: the completion rate and the percentage of children achieving minimum proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics.

The percentage of children of official school age who are enrolled in primary education in Mozambique has improved, and enrolment rates show no major gender disparity. However, there is still a long way to go to include in the education system the estimated 3 million children who are out of school. In addition to social and economic issues families face, which make inclusion of their children difficult, there are challenges regarding education system capacity, with insufficient schools, classrooms and teachers to meet growing demand.

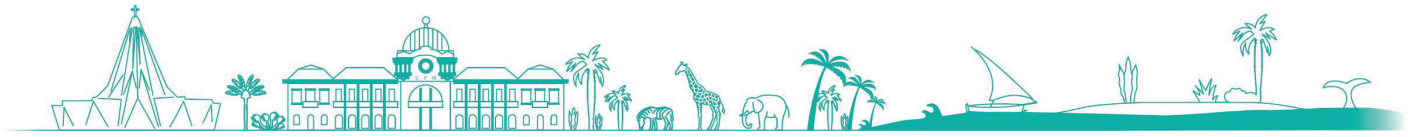
The country's population growth rate of nearly 3% translates into an average of almost 1.5 million children entering grade 1 each year. The consequent high pupil/teacher ratio is one of the sector's biggest challenges, according to an evaluation of the Education Strategic Plan 2012–2016/19.

In recent years, a series of reforms have been carried out with a view to improving education quality, access and retention. They include curricular reform in initial teacher training, extension of compulsory education up to grade 9, efforts to expand pre-primary education, and expansion of bilingual education. Challenges remain, however, on how to create effective conditions for implementation of these policies and address outstanding issues such as absenteeism among high school directors, teachers and students.

Fieldwork confirms an urgent need to improve school infrastructure and to conduct monitoring, supervision and inspections. It also describes the importance of collaborative work between teachers for improving teaching quality and of strong and active school management for compliance with education policy.

Based on the fieldwork carried out for this report, the following six recommendations are made:

- Construct more schools and hire more teachers.
- Improve teacher quality and school management.
- Continue to expand bilingual education.
- Improve pedagogical supervision, monitoring and inspection at the district level.
- Create an enabling environment for the reintegration and retention of out-of-school children, with a focus on girls.
- Involve parents and communities in functioning school councils.



2. Introduction

2.1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Spotlight series has two goals:

- Synthesize, analyse and clearly present comparative knowledge on challenges and solutions to achieving universal basic education (UBE) completion and foundational learning as a basis for support to regional peer learning mechanisms and national, regional and global accountability mechanisms.
- Support national and regional coalitions in the use of this comparative knowledge to move national education systems, plans, policies and budgets – but also international support mechanisms – in the direction of achieving UBE completion and foundational learning.

2.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

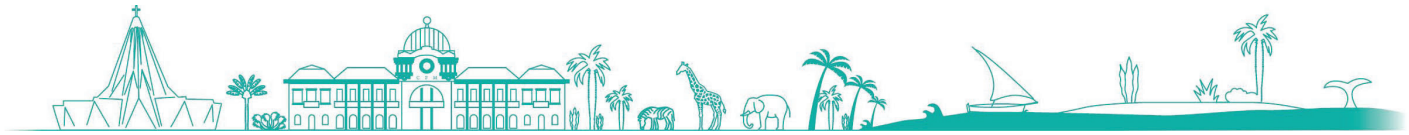
The study aimed to stimulate an informed and strategic country-led policy dialogue with stakeholders and development partners which would, in turn, lead to tangible actions to address identified issues. It also assessed progress towards reaching targets. This Spotlight report will be a key input into the annual continental Spotlight report that will serve as a basis for continental peer dialogue on issues related to UBE completion and foundational learning. Four research questions guided the study:

-
- What is the current state of Mozambique's education system, based on the seven factors identified for the report's analytical framework?
- What progress has the country made on achieving UBE completion and foundational learning skills?
- What challenges does the country face in achieving UBE completion? What solutions is the country pursuing to overcome them?
- What are the potential ways forward to foster foundational learning outcomes given the structural characteristics of the country's system and the country's current commitments to other goals?

2.3. MAIN ACTIVITIES

The Spotlight study in Mozambique comprised a set of activities, each generating evidence and findings related to the study's four research questions:

- Literature review and stakeholder mapping (August to September 2021).
- Initial stakeholder workshop (October 2021).
- Fieldwork (1 to 15 December 2021).
- Validation workshop (January 2022).



3. Situation analysis

3.1. GOVERNANCE OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The national education system is managed by the Ministério da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano (MINEDH, Ministry of Education and Human Development), guided by Law 18/2018 on the national education system, passed on 28 December 2018 (República de Moçambique, 2018). The education law codified several improvements to the sector, including establishment of pre-primary education as a formal education subsystem, extension of compulsory basic education up to grade 9 and official recognition of bilingual education (Portuguese plus one of 19 Mozambican languages) as a means of instruction. The law also codified changes to the organization of primary and secondary education into cycles (**Table 1**).

TABLE 1
Structure of primary and secondary education

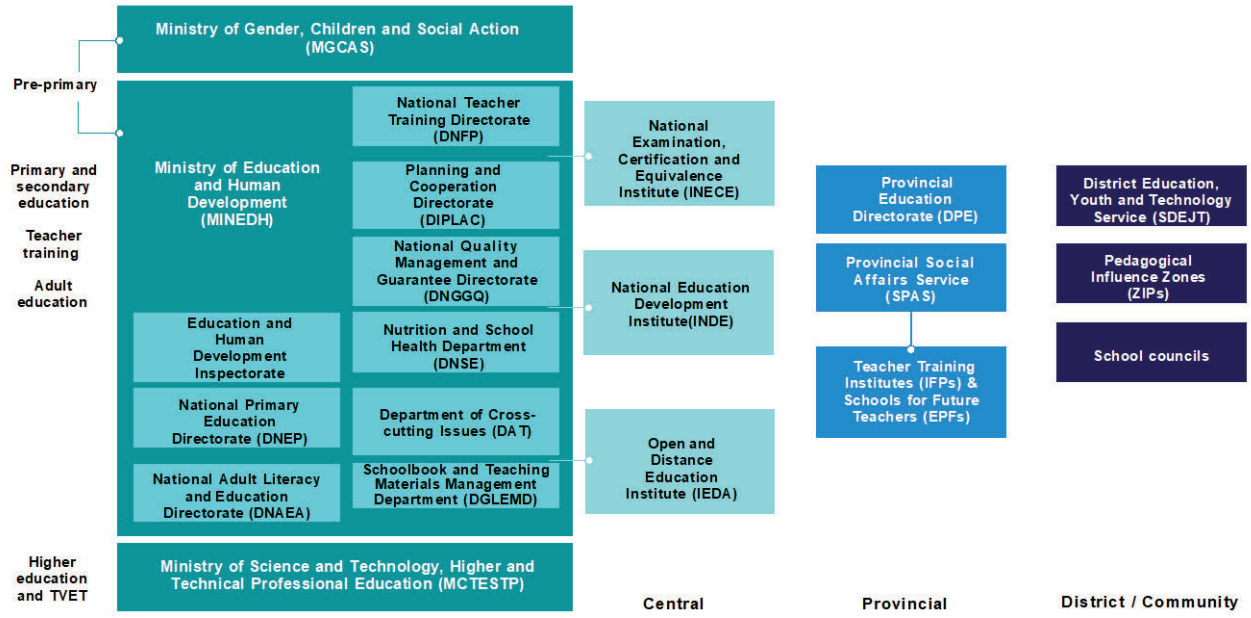
Age	Learning cycle	Grade	National examination and/or external evaluation
6	Primary cycle 1 (EP1)	1	
7		2	
8		3	• National examination to pass to next cycle • Avaliação nacional (national assessment) (sample-based external evaluation)
9	Primary cycle 2 (EP2)	4	
10		5	
11		6	• National examination to pass to next cycle • SACMEQ (sample-based external evaluation)
12	Secondary cycle 1 (ESG1)	7	
13		8	
14		9	• National examination to pass to next cycle
15	Secondary cycle 2 (ESG2)	10	
16		11	
17		12	• National examination to pass to next cycle

Note: Law 18/2018 is going into effect gradually, with the new structure in full effect from 2023. Until then, the first primary cycle covers grades 1 and 2, the second primary cycle covers grades 3 to 5 (with a grade 5 passing exam) and a third primary cycle covers grades 6 and 7 (with a grade 7 passing exam); the first secondary cycle covers grades 8 to 10 (with a grade 10 passing exam) and the second secondary cycle covers grades 11 and 12 (with a grade 12 passing exam).
Source: Authors.

Beyond primary and secondary education, MINEDH is responsible for teacher training and education and adult education. The Ministério do Género, Criança e Acção Social (MGCAS, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action) oversees pre-primary education, in coordination with MINEDH and the Ministério da Saúde (MISAU, Ministry of Health). Higher education and technical/professional education are overseen by the Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia, Ensino Superior e Técnico-Profissional (MCTESTP, Ministry of Science and Technology, Higher and Technical-Professional Education).

MINEDH has multiple departments, each with a specific focus (República de Moçambique, 2017). **Figure 1** includes its key departments.

FIGURE 1
Mozambique education actors: organizational chart



Note: TVET = technical and vocational education and training.
Source: Authors.

Among the main units making up MINEDH are:

The **Direcção Nacional de Ensino Primário** (National Primary Education Directorate). Responsibilities include planning, policy, guidance and supervision for all primary education programmes. This directorate contains a subgroup ensuring implementation of the 2020–29 Bilingual Education Expansion Strategy and a separate pre-primary education department grouping all MINEDH responsibilities for this subsector.

The **Direcção Nacional de Formação de Professores** (DNFP, National Directorate for Teacher Training). Responsibilities include planning, policy, guidance and supervision for initial teacher training and in-service professional development. This directorate coordinates the efforts of the country's 38 teacher training institutions.

The **Direcção de Planificação e Cooperação** (Department for Planning and Cooperation). Responsibilities include providing orientation for the annual collection, analysis, validation and publication of school statistical data, and coordinating planning processes and cooperation partner initiatives in the sector.

The **Direcção Nacional de Gestão e Garantia de Qualidade** (DNGGQ, National Directorate for the Management and Guarantee of Quality). Responsibilities include developing, implementing and supervising quality indicators for all education institutions, supporting external evaluations and ensuring regular school supervision through planning, policy, guidance and support for district supervision.

The **Departamento de Gestão do Livro Escolar e Materiais Didácticos** (DGLEMD, Schoolbook and Teaching Materials Management Department). Responsibilities include developing policy for the development and management of schoolbooks and teaching materials, and, in coordination with other departments, ensuring schoolbook acquisition and distribution.

Table 2 outlines key actors at the **central** level.

TABLE 2
Roles and responsibilities of key actors at the central level

Actor	Role and responsibilities
MINEDH	The ministry's general mission is to increase access to education with the objective of teaching citizens to actively engage in the fight against poverty and the promotion of social, economic, political and cultural development of the country. MINEDH works with specialized institutions with technical and administrative autonomy, under the minister's supervision.
Instituto Nacional do Desenvolvimento da Educação (INDE, National Education Development Institute)	Responsibilities include developing curriculum and materials and designing and conducting research on education sector initiatives. INDE is semi-autonomous, outside the main MINEDH structure, but reports to the minister.
Instituto Nacional de Exames, Certificação e Equivalências (National Examination, Certification and Equivalence Institute)	Responsibilities include the administration of the school examination process countrywide and managing the certification system for education qualifications, equivalences and recognition of academic levels obtained in the country or abroad. A semi-autonomous body, it is outside the main MINEDH structure but reports to the minister.
Instituto de Educação Aberta e à Distância (IEDA, Open and Distance Learning Institute)	Responsibilities include providing distance in-service training for teachers and distance education for children and adults not covered by the face-to-face education system. It is committed to gender equity, social justice, social inclusion, technological innovation, as well as to generating, systematizing and disseminating knowledge. IEDA is a semi-autonomous institution, outside the main MINEDH structure but reporting to the minister.

Source: Authors.

The Inspecção de Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano (Education and Human Development Inspectorate) is another key actor at the central level, with units also at the provincial level. Responsibilities include evaluating the degree to which MINEDH policy is implemented in all education institutions at all levels.

In recent years, the government has made efforts to decentralize service provision in all sectors, including education. While MINEDH sets the overall education policy, responsibility for implementation is delegated to the provincial, district, cluster and school levels.

Until 2020, the Direcções Provinciais de Educação (DPEs, Provincial Education Directorates), accountable to the provincial governor, managed and supervised education programmes at the provincial level. In 2020, as part of the decentralization efforts, a new governance structure was created in each province: the office of provincial secretary of state and the Serviços Provinciais de Assuntos Sociais (SPAS, Provincial Social Affairs Services).

The new Plano Estratégico da Educação 2020–2029 (PEE, Education Strategic Plan) (MINEDH, 2020a) and the amendment to the Constitution approved in Law 18/2018 advocate for provinces and districts to have greater autonomy and responsibility in planning and setting goals. As a result, actors at decentralized levels have taken on responsibility for more functions. The PEE includes actions for developing district inspection capacity, but at the time of this report's publication, they had yet to proceed.

Table 3 outlines key actors at the decentralized levels.

TABLE 3
Roles and responsibilities of key actors at the decentralized levels

Actor	Roles and responsibilities
SPAS	The Provincial Social Affairs Service is responsible for monitoring and implementing various services, including education. While covering many of the same areas as the DPE, primarily in a supervision capacity, SPAS is specifically responsible for guaranteeing training and education of teachers for primary education and adult education (República de Moçambique, 2021).
Serviço Distrital de Educação Juventude e Tecnologia (SDEJT, District Education, Youth and Technology Service)	The SDEJT is responsible for planning, implementation, support, pedagogical supervision and reporting at the district level. It manages distribution and oversight of Direct School Support (ADE) funds (discussed further below) to schools in the district, as well as teacher recruitment and placement. The SDEJT is accountable to the DPE and the district government. An important SDEJT role is to carry out regular school supervision. The DNGGQ has developed evidence-based guidelines for district supervision (MINEDH, 2015a). As there is currently no district-level inspectorate, the SDEJT has the primary responsibility for external supervision. The provincial inspectorates do conduct periodic visits to schools, but lack the human and financial resources to cover the entire province.*
Institutos de Formação de Professores (IFPs, Teacher Training Institutes) and Escolas de Professores do Futuro (EPFs, Schools for Future Teachers)	IFPs and EPFs are responsible for providing initial teacher training, supporting implementation of the in-service teacher training strategy and delivering in-service training in school management for school directors. The country has 38 IFPs and EPFs, with 3 to 5 in each province. To support in-service training needs, each IFP and EPF covers multiple districts.

* According to the General Inspectorate of Education and Human Development, there are 154 inspectors to cover 13,599 schools.
Source: Authors

Schools are organized into clusters of, on average, five schools located relatively close to each other, called Zonas de Influência Pedagógica (ZIPs, Pedagogical Influence Zones). The director of the lead school in each ZIP acts as the ZIP coordinator. The ZIP lead school typically has a resource centre and better conditions to allow organization of planning and in-service training activities with teachers from all the ZIP schools. In principle, ZIP coordinators are provided with transport (motorcycles and fuel) to allow them to carry out supervision activities in ZIP schools, though this is often not the case in practice (Nivagara et al., 2016).

All schools have a director, and all but the smallest schools also have an assistant director. The director is responsible for overall school management and ensuring compliance with MINEDH policies in relation to financial, administrative, operational and curricular matters. School schedules are based on the number of students, teachers and classrooms. Most schools operate on the one- or two-shift model with 28 periods of 45 minutes each per week. Schools with large student populations and limited numbers of teachers and/or classrooms may operate on a three- or four-shift model with 20 periods of 40 minutes each per week (MINEDH, 2015b).

As of 2021, there were 13,599 schools across the country, with 44% of them located in Nampula and Zambézia, the most populous provinces. As nearly a third of public primary schools only go up to grade 5, for many students reaching higher grade levels means transferring to another school, likely farther away from home, thereby creating challenges in completing primary school (**Table 4**). This structure reflects the situation prior to the 2018 education law. Once the law is fully in effect, which is scheduled for 2023, all primary schools will go up to at least grade 6. Some schools will be classified as ‘basic education’ schools and will cover grades 1 to 9, the full period of compulsory basic education in Mozambique. This will have implications for the provision of new infrastructure and hiring of additional teachers.

TABLE 4
Public schools in Mozambique, by grade level and province, 2021

	Grades 1–5 only	Grades 6–7 only	Grades 1–7	Grades 8–10 only	Grades 11–12 only	Grades 8–12	Mixed	Total
Niassa	593	-	573	17	-	21	1	**1,205**
Cabo Delgado	230	2	487	1	-	20	4	**744**
Nampula	1,146	-	1,102	39	-	58	-	**2,345**
Zambézia	702	-	2,870	29	1	43	10	**3,655**
Tete	688	-	595	10	1	23	19	**1,336**
Manica	279	-	573	31	-	23	-	**906**
Sofala	3	1	907	11	-	33	2	**957**
Inhambane	37	-	829	46	7	30	-	**949**
Gaza	299	-	475	22	-	42	1	**839**
Maputo	131	-	350	16	-	28	1	**526**
Cidade de Maputo	4	-	92	17	-	19	5	**137**
Total	**4,112**	**3**	**8,853**	**239**	**9**	**340**	**43**	**13,599**

Source: MINEDH (2021).

In addition to public primary and secondary schools, the 2021 MINEDH statistical report covers 542 private and community schools, of which 43% are located in Maputo and Maputo province.

Pre-primary education in Mozambique is still at an early stage of development and is not yet part of the education management information system. MGCAS is responsible for overall management of the pre-primary system, with MINEDH and MISAU playing coordinating roles that, as the PEE notes, are still not well understood. Pre-primary education is featured prominently in the PEE, however, so it can be expected to grow. The 2019 Education Sector Analysis noted that some 3.5% of 3- to 5-year-olds attended public, private and community pre-primary schools. As of 2019, there were 750 community pre-primary schools, 609 private pre-primary schools and 12 public infant centres with pre-primary education. In addition, 45 schools offered an accelerated school-readiness programme (MINEDH, 2019a).

School councils are made up of representatives of the entire school community (school directors, teachers, administrative staff, students, parents and guardians, and community members). The school council is meant to play important roles related to participatory management, student performance and teacher performance, and is responsible for monitoring school activities at the local level.

The district government plays an important role in the sector. District administrators, appointed by the provincial government, approve appointments of school directors, assistant directors, school administrative staff and teachers. The administrators also approve any accountability measures (e.g. regarding recurrent teacher absenteeism). This presents a potential for conflict: If an administrator appoints a school director on political grounds and the school's performance is poor, the school's community may have trouble holding the director accountable.

Teachers
As noted in Table 3, SDEJTs are responsible for teacher hiring and placement in coordination with the DPEs and IFPs/EPFs and with central-level planning to determine budget constraints. In principle, graduates of a teacher training institution will apply to one or more districts in the same province. Depending on the budget allocated to

each district and the projected needs, the district will proceed with selection and allocation of new teachers to schools. However, budget limitations prevent all graduates from being contracted. For example, 8,409 students graduated from teacher training institutions in 2017, but only 5,213 teachers were newly contracted in 2018 (Garrine, n.d.).

Mozambique's relatively high population growth – a 2.9% annual rate as of 2021 (World Bank, 2021) – results in a need for more teachers each year. The 2021 school census indicates continued high pupil/teacher ratios across the country, with large regional disparities – northern provinces have average ratios near or above 70 students per teacher, while southern provinces average fewer than 60 students per teacher. There is high variation within provinces as well; for example, in 2019, Moma district in Nampula province averaged over 94 students per teacher (Garrine, n.d.). Anecdotal evidence suggests, moreover, that within districts there are higher concentrations of teachers in urban and peri-urban areas than in more remote, rural areas. This suggests that part of the demand for more teachers could be addressed by improved allocation.

Teacher salaries currently are strongly determined by academic level rather than years of experience or performance. New teachers who have completed the 10+1 training model can expect to start with a base monthly salary of MZN 9,131 (US$143)[1] whereas a new teacher who has completed the 12+3 model can expect to start with a monthly salary of MZN 16,538 (US$259) (Ministério da Economia e Finanças. 2021).[2] In addition to the base salary, bonuses ranging from 10% to 50% are based on academic attainment level and school location. Within each salary category, every three years teachers may receive small increases (e.g. for category DN3, grade C, the increase from step 1 to step 2 is MZN 357). Rather than await these small increases, many teachers seek to improve their academic level through distance and other learning opportunities, which have a much greater impact on salary. The Holistic Study on Teachers in Mozambique (MINEDH, 2017a) noted that career progression relied on many actors in the system and was often delayed, leading to discontent among teachers. The DNFP is developing a Política Nacional do Professor (National Teacher Policy) that, it is hoped, will address many of these challenges.

In addition to teacher shortages, lack of classrooms can drive up the pupil/teacher ratio and create an unfavourable learning environment and increased absenteeism. As of 2018, there were 12,700 schools with a total of 52,000 classrooms for EP1 (grades 1 to 5) (MINEDH, 2020a). Of these, 20,000 classrooms, or 40%, were classified as precarious and in need of rehabilitation. Such classrooms are more likely to be affected by natural disasters, such as cyclones Idai and Kenneth in 2019, which destroyed thousands of classrooms. The PEE estimated that as of 2018, for the entire sector, 38,000 new classrooms needed to be built to accommodate all students. The number will continue to rise due to population growth and natural disasters, increasing financial pressure on the system.

3.2. ENROLMENT AND COMPLETION

The number of students in Mozambique schools has increased tremendously over the past decade, reflecting population growth and efforts to improve access. Between 2015 and 2020, the number of students enrolled in primary education increased by over 22%, from 5.9 million to 7.2 million. Enrolment and completion indicators have generally shown positive trends over the past several years, although the primary completion rate remains below 50% (**Table 5**).

The relatively low completion rate has been attributed to a variety of causes, including gendered family commitments and responsibilities, poverty pushing children to contribute to household livelihoods, language of instruction mismatch, factors related to quality of instruction and school management, school conditions (e.g. lack of infrastructure, water and sanitation) and lack of access to pre-primary education programmes, which have been shown to improve retention (UNICEF, 2020). Student enrolment data also show a general trend of attrition, with each subsequent grade level having fewer and fewer students.

As **Table 6** shows, in 2015 there were 1,366,896 students enrolled in grade 1. The highlighted boxes follow this cohort through to grade 5 in 2019, when 769,183 students remained. Leaving aside the fact that each grade will include some students repeating a grade, this shows the attrition as students try to progress through the education system. Even within a given school year, this is evident: simply comparing the number of students in

[1] The exchange rate was MZN 63.83 per US$1 on 15 June 2022.

[2] See Section 3.7, Reform 2 for details on teacher training models.

grades 5 and 1, it can be seen that the grade 5 student population is less than half the size of the grade 1 student population.

TABLE 5
Data on enrolment and completion, 2015–20

Indicator for primary education	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Students enrolled, primary	5,901,996	6,042,936	6,138,518	6,563,376	6,940,864	7,219,935
Gross enrolment rate, primary	108.63%	108.65%	107.81%	112.60%	116.38%	118.42%
Gross enrolment, gender parity index	0.91	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.94
Net enrolment rate, primary	91.51%	90.77%	89.87%	93.93%	97.60%	99.13%
Net enrolment, gender parity index	0.94	0.96	0.96	0.97	0.97	No data
Repetition rate, primary	9.79	9.51	9.25	7.02	7.16	No data
Completion rate, primary	37.60%	39.20%	40.90%	42.40%	43.90%	45.60%
Completion rate, primary, female	38.00%	39.90%	41.80%	43.60%	45.50%	47.30%
Completion rate, primary, male	36.70%	38.10%	39.40%	40.70%	42.00%	43.50%

Source: UIS database.

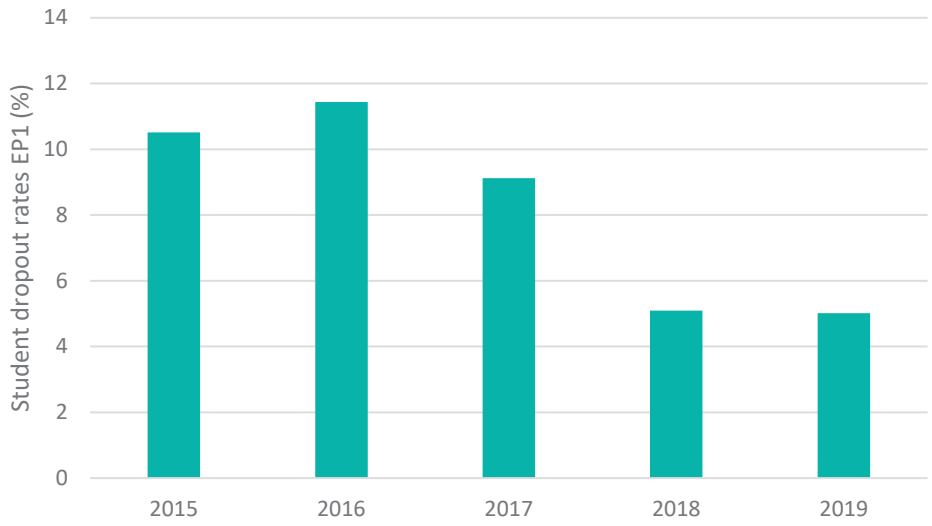
TABLE 6
Student enrolment data, grades 1 to 5, 2015–19

Grade/year	Student enrolment by grade and year, EP1, 2015–19				
	2015	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Grade 1	**1,366,896**	1,419,826	1,436,764	1,592,524	1,601,779
Grade 2	1,197,043	**1,223,302**	1,238,743	1,316,941	1,378,274
Grade 3	941,257	887,433	**933,798**	992.949	1.139.838
Grade 4	790,309	796,051	776,094	**828,171**	890,006
Grade 5	646,908	704,618	714,562	722,494	**769,183**
G5/G1	47.3%	49.6%	49,7%	45,4%	48,0%

Source: compiled from school census reports from MINEDH.

Dropout rates, published in the MINEDH school census, are computed by comparing the final student numbers at the end of each school year with those from the start of the school year. Prior to COVID-19, these figures showed a gradual decline, from a high of over 11% in 2016 down to 5% in 2019 (**Figure 2**). This trend is likely to reverse once the impact of COVID-19 is fully assessed.

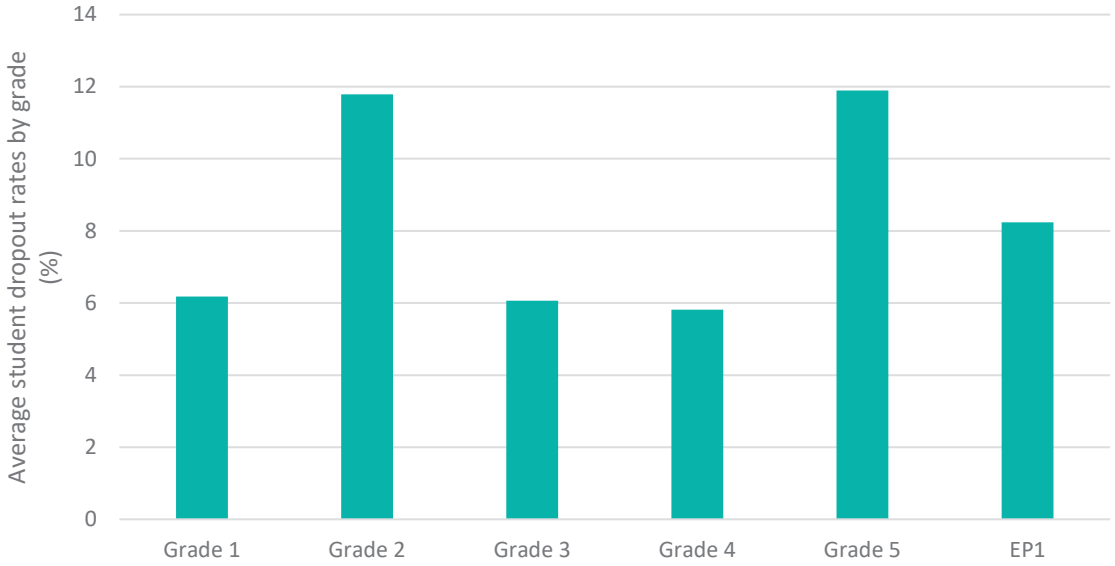
FIGURE 2
Student dropout rates in EP1, based on annual school census, 2015–19



Source: MINEDH annual school census reports.

Average dropout rates over 2015–19 for each grade level of EP1 highlight the fact that dropout is substantially higher in the grades marking the ends of learning cycles (grade 2 and 5 for the years under consideration) (**Figure 3**). This may be because students are automatically or semi-automatically promoted to the next grade independent of performance for years that do not mark an end of cycle. Students who have not mastered the foundational skills in the earlier grades fall further behind, potentially sparking higher dropout.

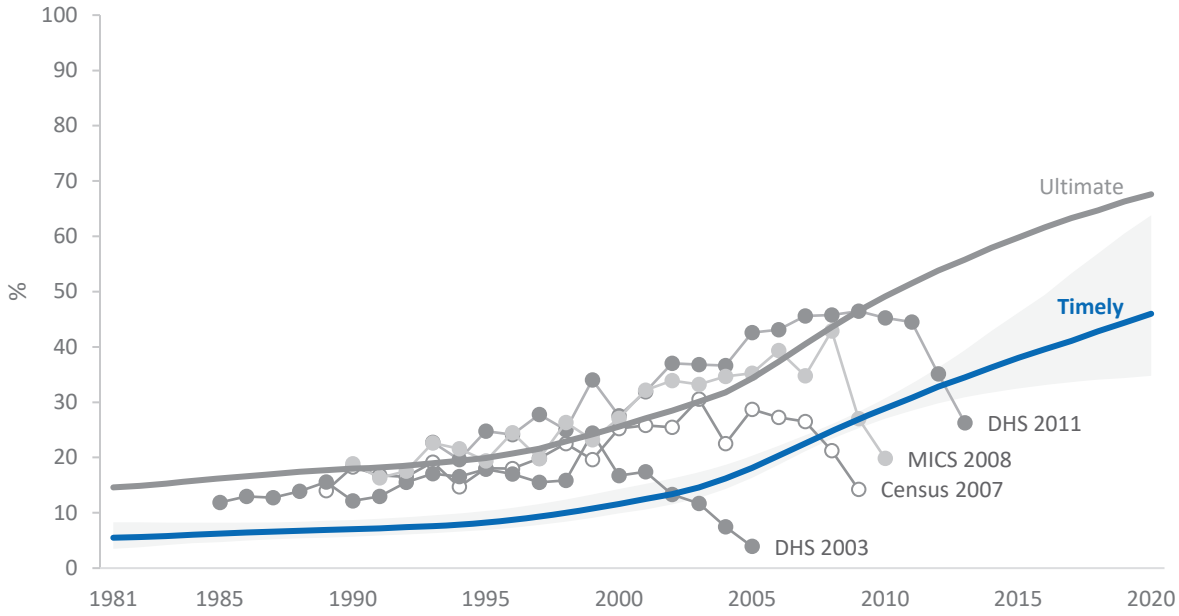
FIGURE 3
Average dropout rates per grade, 2015–19



Source: MINEDH annual school census reports.

GEM Report team estimates based on analysis of multiple survey sources indicate that the primary education completion rate increased from 12% in 2000 to 29% in 2010 and 46% in 2020. However, late enrolment and repetition mean that, ultimately, 68% of children manage to complete primary school (**Figure 4**).

FIGURE 4
Survey estimates of the primary completion rate



Note: DHS = Demographic and Health Survey; MICS = Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.
Source: UNESCO country completion rate estimates, https://education-estimates.org/completion/country.

As is the case globally, enrolment and completion rates in Mozambique are likely to reflect the negative impact of COVID-19 in the most recent periods. The pandemic resulted in the suspension of the 2020 school year after little more than a month of instruction. When the 2021 school year started, ceilings on the number of students allowed in a classroom, combined with already limited teacher numbers, led schools to operate multiple shifts for each grade level, reducing the total amount of in-person instruction time to two to three days per week for many children. Actual instruction time for students over the last two years has been extremely low as a result, reducing the possibility of improving enrolment and completion indicators.

3.3. LEARNING

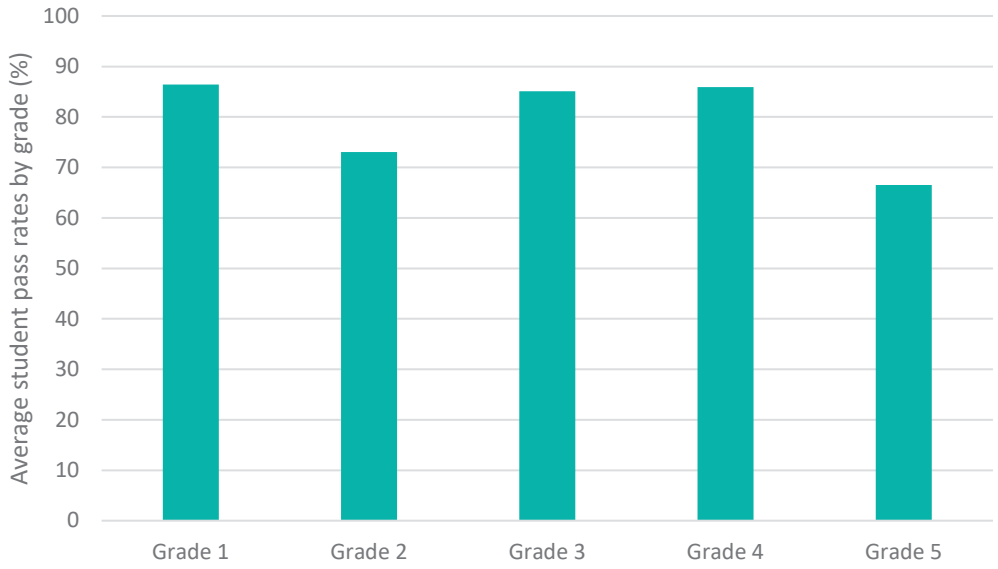
Learning assessments carried out in Mozambique are done in several ways:

National examinations are carried out at the end of each learning cycle (from 2022, grades 3, 6, 9 and 12; before 2022, the EP1 grades were 2 and 5.). They determine whether students pass to the next cycle. In addition, teachers administer **school-based performance assessments** at the end of each trimester in all grades.[3] The 'pedagogical performance' results are presented at important sector meetings to assess progress. These results are typically quite positive, with average pass rates of over 80% in grades 1, 3 and 4 but lower pass rates for grades 2 and 5 (**Figure 5**). The results are correlated with the dropout numbers presented in

[3] In grades 3, 6, 9 and 12, there is no separate third trimester evaluation since the national examinations takes place then.

Figure 3, the pass rate being based on the number of students enrolled at the start of the school year. The high number of dropouts in grades 2 and 5 causes the overall rate to drop.

FIGURE 5
Average pass rates by grade, EP1, 2015–19



Source: MINEDH annual school census reports.

There is also a **national evaluation,** a large-scale, sample-based assessment of Portuguese language and mathematics skills among grade 3 students. Initiated by INDE, it is carried out every three years by an external entity selected by public tender. The group-administered, multiple-choice instrument covers 24 items of varying difficulty. It is used to classify students into three levels, with level three corresponding to a demonstration of grade-level skills. The evaluation was conducted in 2013, 2016 and 2019, but the 2019 evaluation underwent several delays, and the final report had yet to be published as of the writing of this Spotlight report. The report on the 2016 evaluation (MINEDH, 2017b) showed declining performance in reading, with only 4.9% of students demonstrating grade-level reading and comprehension skills (**Table 7**). The report also showed a high degree of variability by province, with 10.1% of students in Inhambane province achieving grade-level skills, compared with 0.3% in the lowest-performing province, Niassa.

TABLE 7
Data from the 2013 and 2016 national evaluation

	Reading	Mathematics
2013	6.3%	*
2016	4.9%	7.7%

* The 2013 evaluation did not include mathematics.
Source: MINEDH (2017b).

In addition, Mozambique is a member of the **Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality** (SACMEQ), which supports grade 6 reading and mathematics assessments in several countries. The last two national evaluations were in 2007 and 2013. INDE coordinates the assessment, with support from SACMEQ and implementation by an external entity selected by public tender.

The 2013 assessment report showed improvement from 2007 but found only 62.7% of grade 6 students achieving grade-level performance. Mozambique's results are well below the average for SACMEQ as a whole (MINEDH, 2017c).[4]

INDE developed a **formative assessment** instrument, Provinha, to help teachers identify struggling students and provide remedial support. The instrument was modelled on the national evaluation instrument and received some initial donor support, but has not been used since 2016. No data were available on whether this intervention was effective.

Donor-supported evaluations have been conducted to provide deeper insight into learning performance and evaluate the impact of efforts to improve learning outcomes. The World Bank Service Delivery Indicator survey included reading and mathematics assessments for grade 4 students in 2014 and 2018. The results showed gains between the two assessment rounds, but overall low performance, with less than 50% of students able to identify a single word and less than 20% able to read a simple paragraph (Bassi et al., 2019) (**Table 8**). The report also highlighted wide variance by region (Portuguese language scores of 54.8 in the south and 19.9 in the north) and urban–rural character (Portuguese language scores of 44.8 in urban and 29.8 in rural schools). Results by sex varied by region: girls outperformed boys by 7 percentage points in the south while boys outperformed girls in the central and northern regions by more than 10 percentage points.

TABLE 8
Student results from World Bank Service Delivery Indicator surveys

	Reading	Mathematics
2014	19	25
2018	31.2	31.5

Source: Bassi et al. (2019).

The early grade reading programmes Aprender a Ler (Learn to Read) and Vamos Ler (Let's Read), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), conducted large-scale assessments using the Early Grade Reading Assessment in Portuguese and some Mozambican languages to assess learning gains following interventions with EP1 students. Aprender a Ler sought to improve students' reading performance through teacher training and coaching, development and use of complementary reading material, and improved school management and district supervision. The programme took the form of a randomized control trial, randomly allocating schools to full treatment (reading instruction support and school management interventions), medium treatment (reading instruction support only) or control (no support).

After a year, the midterm programme evaluation (Raupp et al., 2015) found that students in full treatment schools could read 22% more words than students in medium treatment and 81% more than those in control schools. As a result, the full treatment intervention was scaled up for the duration of the programme.

The Vamos Ler programme supported MINEDH in expansion of bilingual education. For the 2021 final evaluation, Vamos Ler adapted INDE's national evaluation instruments to three local languages. Amid the challenging conditions resulting from COVID-19, the programme sample only included schools identified as 'functional' – having in-person classes at least three days per week –in 21 districts in Nampula and Zambézia provinces. The results indicated over 40% of grade 3 students achieved grade-level skills (Magaia et al., 2022). While not directly comparable to the monolingual results, the findings agree with earlier studies in suggesting that bilingual education could lead to improvement.

Summarizing the learning assessments considered above, it may be noted that:

- Most recent assessments show improvement, while overall learning levels remain low.
- External assessments (e.g. the national evaluation) show lower performance than internal assessments (e.g. national exams), suggesting a need to improve internal assessment procedures.

[4] For Mozambique, 64.5% of boys and 62.7% of girls achieved minimum reading proficiency, compared with 73.5% of boys and 77.9% of girls in the overall SACMEQ IV sample.

- Learning outcomes show high variability by region, urban–rural character and gender.

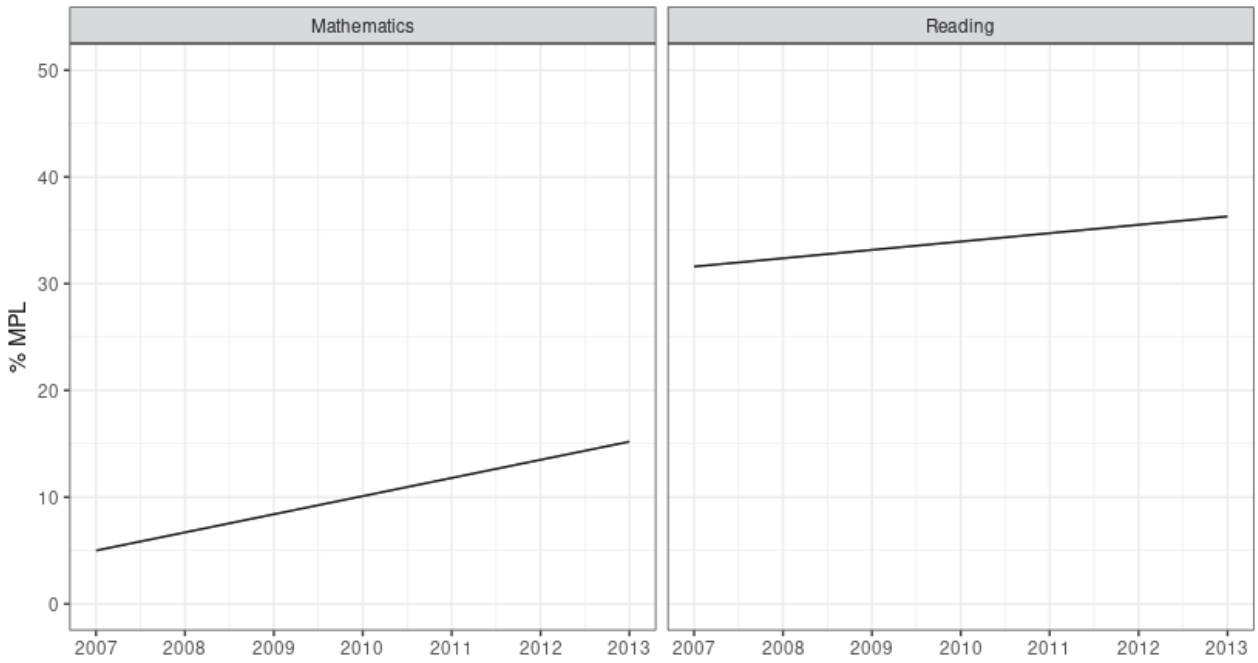
The various studies[5] noted above attempted to identify factors related to learning outcomes. These include high levels of teacher and student absenteeism, low teacher skill and motivation, large classroom size, poor school infrastructure, low accountability, the language of instruction, and community involvement.

3.4. ANALYSIS OF MOZAMBIQUE'S LEARNING ASSESSMENT DATA

This section addresses key policy questions on learning and equity in Mozambique with data from the 2007–13 SACMEQ assessments and the 2016 Nampula People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network Survey.[6] The PAL sample included children in school and out of school. Nampula province, located in northern Mozambique, has some 4 million inhabitants, 69% living in rural areas.

In the 2013 SACMEQ results, 36% of students in Mozambique reached the minimum proficiency level (MPL) in reading and 15% did so in mathematics (**Figure 6**), up from 32% in reading and 5% in mathematics in 2007. Performance improvement was statistically significant for mathematics, though not for reading (MINEDH, 2017c). Even so, more than half of students still did not meet the global MPL.

FIGURE 6
MPL in reading and mathematics over time on SACMEQ, % of students, Mozambique



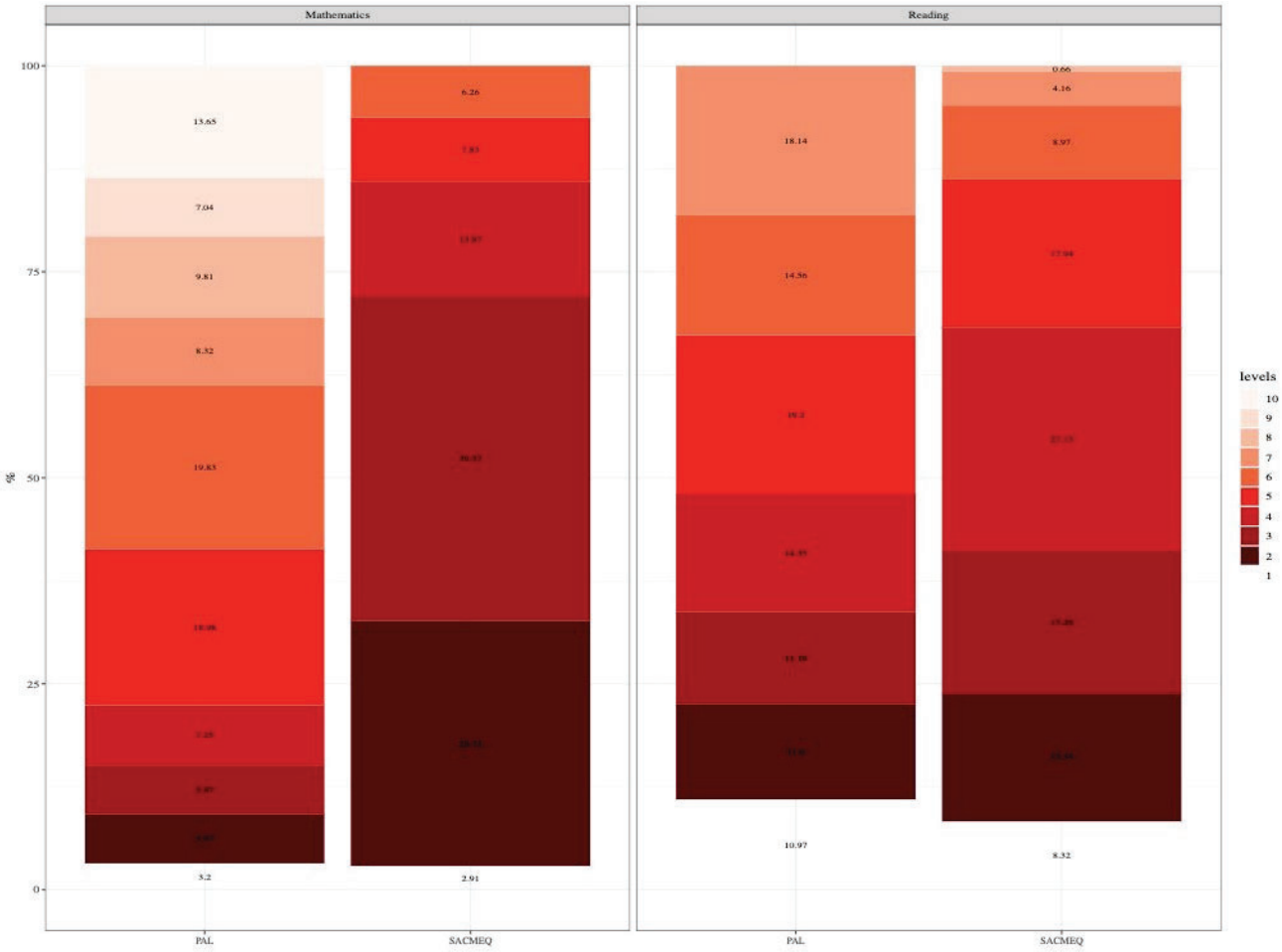
Source: UNESCO GEM Report team analysis based on PASEC 2019 data.

[5] See also USAID (2020).
[6] For a more detailed analysis, see the Spotlight technical report on learning outcomes in Mozambique: *Mozambique: Key Policy Questions on Learning and Equity*.

2013 results, while PAL 2016 data showed 59% of grade 6 students performing at or above level 6, i.e. could do addition or subtraction. The percentage of grade 6 students reaching the global MPL in mathematics (level 5 or above) was 14%, according to SACMEQ data. According to PAL data, 14% of grade 6 students performed at level 10 (problem resolution) in mathematics. In reading, PAL data showed 33% of grade 6 students at level 6 or above (could read a story), while SACMEQ data indicated 76% had basic reading skills (level 3 or above) and 32% performed at or above the global MPL.[7]

FIGURE 7

Proficiency in reading and mathematics among grade 6 students, PAL and SACMEC results, Nampula province, 2016



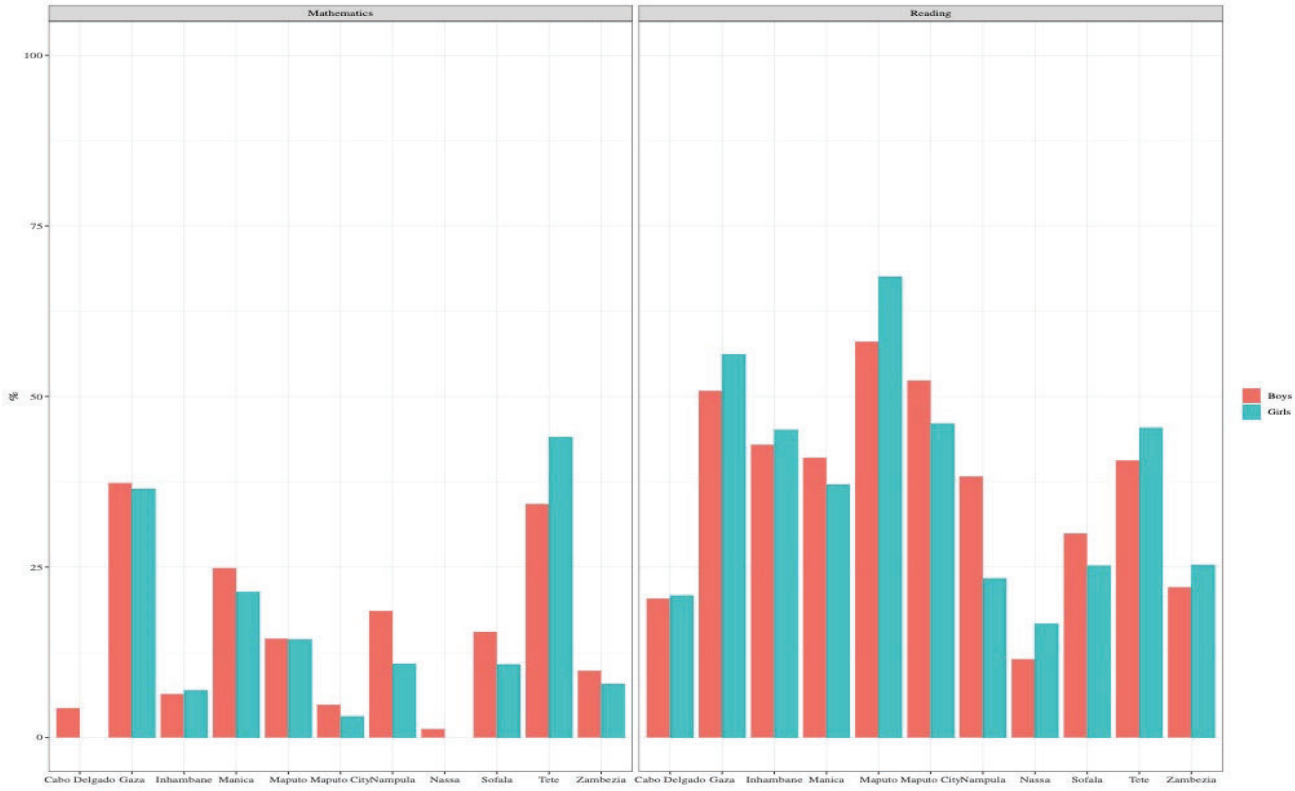
Source: UNESCO GEM Report team analysis based on PASEC 2019 data.

MPL results vary greatly by province. Overall, they are highest in Maputo, Gaza and Tete, and lowest in Niassa and Cabo Delgado. In reading, the highest percentages are observed in Maputo (63%), Gaza (53%) and Inhambane (44%) and the lowest in Niassa (13%) and Cabo Delgado (20%). In mathematics, the highest percentages are observed in Tete and Gaza (37%) and the lowest in Niassa (1%) and Cabo Delgado (3%). Provinces in the northern region (Niassa and Cabo Delgado) have seen little or no improvement since 2007 (MINEDH, 2017c).

[7] The MPL definition SACMEQ set in 2007 and 2013 differed from that for SDG indicator 4.1.1, decided in 2018. That is why the SACMEQ MPL results here are much lower than the 2013 results discussed in section 3.3.

While there are no significant gender gaps at the national level, national results mask significant differences across provinces. For instance, boys tend to perform better in Nampula and girls in Tete. The share of boys in Nampula reaching the MPL in reading is 38% and in mathematics 19%, while girls' respective shares are 23% and 11%. The share of girls in Tete reaching the MPL in reading is 45% and in mathematics 44%, compared with 41% and 34% for boys (**Figure 8**).

FIGURE 8
NMP por província, sexo e disciplina, % de alunos, Moçambique, 2013



Source: UNESCO GEM Report team analysis based on PASEC 2019 data.

Learning outcomes vary markedly between urban and rural areas. Children in rural areas of Nampula perform worse than their peers in urban areas (**Figure 9**): 16% of children in urban areas and 9% in rural areas are proficient in mathematics, and the respective shares for reading are 20% and 7%. A significant part of the urban–rural gap in Nampula, 38%, is explained by rural families' lower socioeconomic status.

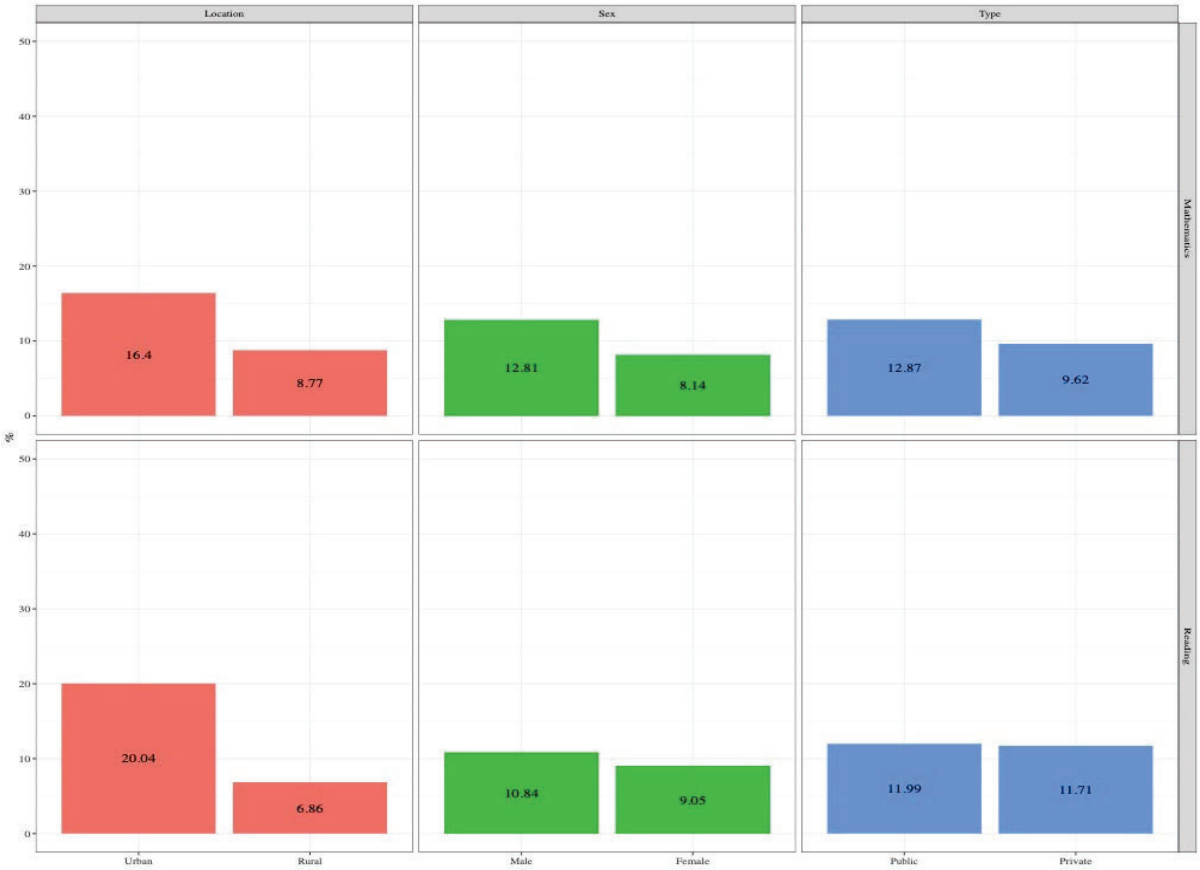
Boys in Nampula tend to perform better in mathematics: 13% of boys are proficient in mathematics, compared with 8% of girls. Children in public schools tend to perform better in mathematics as well, with 13% proficient compared with 10% in private schools.

Students from more affluent families perform better than students from poorer backgrounds. Socioeconomic status inequality in performance is stronger for reading; the gap in mathematics shrank between 2007 and 2013.

The group with the greatest disadvantage in Nampula is girls in private schools in rural areas: They performed the worst in reading and mathematics. Public schools in Nampula are more effective than private schools at serving children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, judging by student performance. Students from affluent families tend to perform better in private schools (**Figure 10**).

FIGURE 9

Shares of students in Nampula province reaching proficiency levels in reading and mathematics by location, sex and school type, 2016



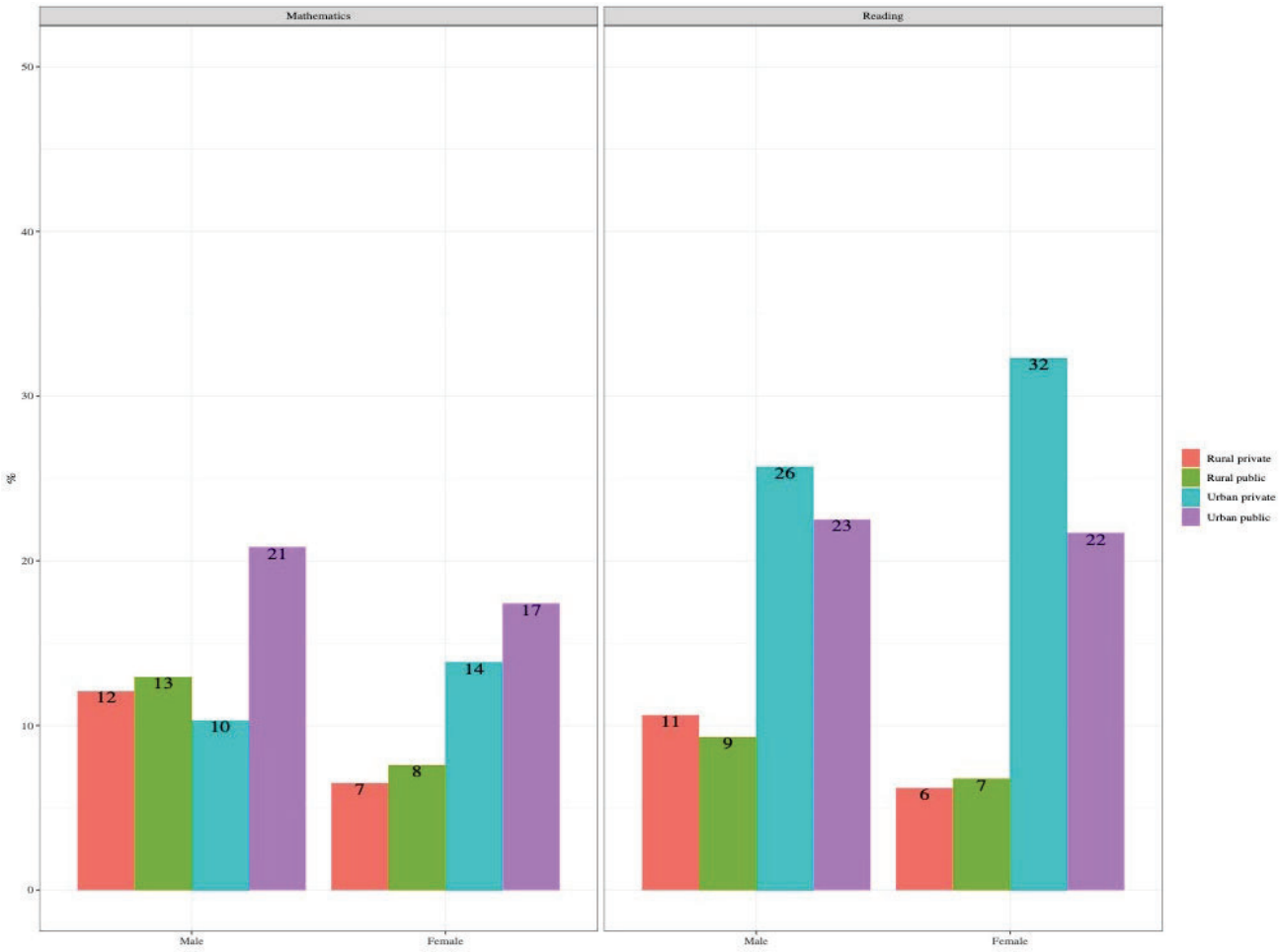
Source: UNESCO GEM Report team analysis based on PASEC 2019 data.

More than 50% of children aged 7 to 16 in Nampula performed at the lowest levels in reading and mathematics, being able, at best, to recognize characters in a short passage (reading) and numbers in a list of numbers (mathematics). Less than 10% of children achieved reading comprehension levels or could perform division or problem resolution tasks in mathematics.

Proficiency levels in reading and mathematics increased with age. In mathematics, boys consistently performed better than girls across age groups. Children in school performed better than their peers out of school. The gap in performance between the latter two groups widened with age, increasing the advantage of children attending school.

FIGURE 10

Share of students in Nampula province reaching proficiency levels in reading and mathematics by school type, school location and sex, 2016



Source: UNESCO GEM Report team analysis based on PASEC 2019 data.

3.5. EDUCATION FINANCING

In the past decade, Mozambique's government has made substantial investment in the education system, maintaining allocations to the sector well above the average for its sub-Saharan African neighbours in terms of percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). Annual government education expenditure as a share of GDP was 6.3%, on average, compared with 3.8% for low-income countries and 4.1% for sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2019). On the other hand, as a share of the state budget, the amount allocated to education dropped from 21.3% in 2016 to 17.4% in 2021 (UNICEF, 2021). Despite this relative decline, in nominal terms the amount allocated to education in the state budget increased from MZN 44.1 billion to MZN 64 billion. In around 2015, Mozambique began experiencing extremely high inflation rates, with the metical dropping in value against the US dollar from around MZN 30 per US$1 at the start of 2015 to nearly MZN 80 per US$1 before the end of 2016. This resulted in a much flatter budget growth in real terms. Over 60% of the education budget is dedicated to primary and pre-primary education (UNICEF, 2019).

The education budget includes both internal and external contributions, with the external component including donor commitments to the Fundo de Apoio de Sector de Educação (FASE, Education Sector Support Fund) and individual bilateral programmes. The proportion of the budget covered by internal resources, which was 70% in

2008, has been over 90% since 2018 (UNICEF, 2019). Internal resources cover both operational costs (e.g. salaries) and investment costs (e.g. school construction, provision of desks, programmes to improve system quality), while external resources only cover investment. Operational costs take up most of the budget: Salaries alone accounted for over 80% of the overall education budget in 2019 (UNICEF, 2019). Given the increasing need to hire more teachers, it is likely salaries will continue to consume the majority of expenditure and drive up the total budget.

Mozambique joined the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in 2003 and has received over US$400 million in GPE grant support. These funds have principally been administered by the World Bank and UNICEF to support MINEDH. Most recently, Mozambique received US$35 million from the GPE to support sector response to COVID-19 and post-cyclone recovery (GPE, 2022).

Apoio Directo às Escolas (ADE, Direct School Support), covered by FASE contributions, provides funds to schools to improve teaching and learning conditions by facilitating the purchase of needed materials (e.g. notebooks and pencils for students, material to assist teachers in developing complementary teaching materials), improve school management through greater involvement of the community and the school council in resource use, and to support retention, particularly for the students with the greatest needs. ADE funds are included in each district's budget and include amounts for each SDEJT, ZIP and school. The amount for each SDEJT and ZIP is determined by the total number of schools in the district or ZIP, and covers monitoring and administrative costs. The amount per school depends on student and classroom numbers (**Table 9**) (MINEDH, 2019b). This budget is thus tied to the annual student census, which reinforces the need to ensure the census data quality, given the direct budget implications.

TABLE 9
How ADE funding levels are calculated, 2019

Parameter	Amount (MZN)
Amount per student	120
Amount per classroom	200
Amount for ZIPs, per school in ZIP	300
Amount for SDEJTs, per school in district	200
Minimum amount per school	25.000

Source: MINEDH (2019b).

Due to recent reforms (e.g. Law 18/2018, making education compulsory up to grade 9), initiatives to improve instruction quality (e.g. the 12+3 teacher training model[8]), the need to replace classrooms destroyed by natural disasters and the goals outlined in the PEE, increased funding for education is clearly needed. The PEE projects an estimated funding gap of over US$352 million for its implementation, based on internal and external funding trends.

3.6. DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

External support to MINEDH is provided through FASE and bilateral programmes and represents nearly 10% of the overall education budget. As much of the internal budget goes to operational costs (particularly salaries), external support provides a substantial part of the budget's investment portion: in 2019, 83% of the investment budget came from external sources (UNICEF, 2019).

[8] See Section 3.7, Reform 2 for details on teacher training models.

FASE partners include Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, the GPE, UNICEF and the World Bank. A 2021 memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlines coordination parameters for the partnership between MINEDH, the Parceiros de Cooperação (PCs, Cooperation Partners) and civil society partners, represented by the Movimento Educação para Todos (MEPT, Education for All Movement). That partnership is also called the Grupo de Educação Local (GEL, Local Education Group) (MINEDH and Cooperation Partners, 2022). Key details of the MOU are outlined below.

- Technical dialogue between GEL members is to be carried out through education sector working groups (ESWGs) aligned with sector programmes (pre-primary, primary, secondary and adult literacy).
- Priority task forces (PTFs) for human resources, teacher training, curriculum, school infrastructure and equipment, and school management are temporary teams with specific tasks, defining and managing steps towards arriving at solutions for meeting the targets of high-priority reforms. Additional, non-priority task forces may be established to address specific needs as required.
- A new monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) PTF will be responsible for building an MEL system and provide technical assistance to the MEL team, as well as MINEDH structure and operations and decentralized levels of the education system.
- Each December, the Grupo Conjunto de Coordenação Alargado (Extended Joint Coordination Committee) will meet to decide on the following year's activities and procurement plans and on the annual disbursement schedule by the FASE partners.
- An annual review meeting is to be held every March to allow MINEDH, PCs and MEPT to review sector performance against the PEE's main goals and objectives and make recommendations for improvement. A performance report is expected to be presented at the meeting, prepared in advance by MINEDH in line with the PEE strategic matrix and its operational plans.
- The GEL's main coordination body is the Grupo Conjunto de Coordenação Restrito (Restricted Joint Coordination Committee), with members from MINEDH, PCs and civil society (represented by MEPT). It is to meet every two months to follow up on recommendations from various policy meetings; monitor the function of the various ESWGs, PTFs and other task forces; facilitate information sharing; make decisions on matters related to the dialogue and to the partnership in general; and conduct quarterly implementation performance reviews.

Many FASE donors also fund specific bilateral programmes. **Table 10** shows a non-exhaustive sample of the larger programmes from 2015 to 2021.

TABLE 10
Sample of major current and recent bilateral education programmes

Partner	Programme	Summary
Canada	Better Education through Teacher Training and Empowerment for Results (BETTER) (2015–22)	A programme intended to improve the quality of education for girls and boys in Mozambique by elevating the quality of pre-service teacher education at the teacher training institutions in Maputo, Tete, Cabo Delgado and Niassa provinces, attended by some 1,200 student teachers.
Finland	COACH/Aprender+ (2019–21)	Part of a global initiative to introduce evidence-based approaches for improved in-school pedagogical coaching
Germany	Various	System-strengthening support to MINEDH, including on school management
Japan	Construction support, Reforço à Implementação do Currículo do Ensino Primário (PRICEP, Project for Expansion of New Curriculum in Mozambique) (2021–27)	A project aiming to improve academic performance of pupils in mathematics and science at primary level. Includes support for revision of the primary education mathematics and science curriculum, textbooks and teacher training.

United Kingdom	Successful Transition and Advancement of Rights for Girls (STAR-G) (2017–22)	A programme aiming to improve the life chances of 15,430 marginalised girls in Gaza, Manica and Tete provinces by equipping them with functional literacy and numeracy skills and helping them transition to the next stage of education.
USAID	Eu Leio (I Read) (2014–21)	Distribution and use of learning and reading materials to target primary schools in Nampula and Zambézia provinces, aiming to improve reading competencies of first and second graders and improve school councils' capacity for monitoring education and holding education personnel accountable to local communities for learning outcomes.
USAID	Vamos Ler! (Let's Read!) (2016–21)	A programme aimed at improving early grade reading outcomes in 2,800 schools in Nampula and Zambézia provinces by teaching young children to read in local languages while acquiring initial skills in Portuguese as a second language. Helped the MINEDH implement its Bilingual Education Expansion Strategy and worked within local government structures to build capacity in early grade reading and school management by giving them responsibility for supervision, coaching and training of early grade teachers.
US Department of Agriculture	Food for Knowledge (2015–21)	A project focused on school feeding and education implemented by partners in the northern and southern regions
World Bank and GPE	Improving Learning and Empowering Girls in Mozambique	Support for increased learning readiness and girls' retention in the upper grades of basic education, prioritizing underserved areas (programme under procurement)
World Food Programme	Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar (PRONAE, National School Feeding Programme)	National school feeding programme

Source: Authors' compilation

Some bilateral programmes are implemented directly through MINEDH systems while others rely on technical services from local and international NGOs. In the latter case, organizations working on programmes that address foundational learning have included ADPP Mozambique, Associação Progresso, Centro de Aprendizagem e Capacitação da Sociedade Civil, Creative, Save the Children, World Education, World Vision and Unidade de Assistência Técnica de Alfabetização Funcional – Associação para o Fortalecimento Comunitário.

3.7. GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES IN EDUCATION

The PEE (MINEDH, 2020a) outlines education sector vision, mission and strategic objectives, emphasizing quality and learning (**Table 11**).

TABLE 11
Education sector vision and mission

Vision	Citizens with knowledge, skills, and cultural, moral, civic and patriotic values, capable of contributing to the development of a cohesive society and adapting to a constantly changing world
Mission	Providing a national education system that is inclusive, equitable, efficient, effective and innovative, and able to guarantee quality lifelong learning.

Source: MINEDH (2020a).

To realize this vision, the PEE focuses on three strategic objectives guiding priorities for the sector:

- Guarantee inclusion and equity in terms of access, participation and retention
- Ensure quality learning
- Ensure transparent, participatory, efficient and effective governance.

The plan is structured around six programmatic areas:

- Pre-primary education
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Adult education
- Teacher education and training
- Administrative and institutional development (focused on improving the management of the national education system at all levels.

Quality in primary education is to be achieved through a strong curricular focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills and teacher training. The plan also emphasizes the importance of increasing access to early childhood education and adult learning opportunities.

Mozambique has undertaken two major reforms related to basic education in recent decades: the revision of the primary education curriculum and the evolution of teacher training models.

Reform 1: Revision of the primary education curriculum, including monolingual and bilingual modalities

In 2011, MINEDH revised the primary education curriculum. The revision was rolled out gradually, starting in grade 1 in 2017. The revision restructured the cycles (e.g. previously the first cycle covered only the first two grades but now it covers the first three) and substantially reduced the number of disciplines. For example, in the first two grades in the monolingual instruction modality, the number of disciplines was reduced from six to three so as to increase the amount of time dedicated to foundational learning in literacy and numeracy.

The Plano Curricular do Ensino Primário (PCEP, Primary Education Curricular Plan) (MINEDH, 2020b) sets out the guiding principles of the national curriculum, including the overall structure, number and type of disciplines by class and modality (monolingual [Portuguese] or bilingual [one of 19 Mozambican languages and Portuguese]), skills children are meant to achieve by the end of primary school, evaluation of students and strategies for implementing the curriculum. For planning lessons, teachers follow the Programas do Ensino Primário (Primary Education Programmes) (MINEDH, 2015b and 2015c), which provide thematic plans for each grade level and discipline. Thematic plans are organized around thematic units and present objectives, content, expected student skills to be developed and number of lesson periods dedicated to the content. Teachers use these tools, together with the student book, to conduct lesson planning.

Mozambican society is multi-ethnic, multicultural, multilingual and multireligious. The Portuguese language, maintained after independence as a guarantee of national unity, is the mother tongue of only about 17% of the population (INE, 2019). Rural areas are home to over 65% of the population and the 2017 census report indicates that only 5.1% of rural people have Portuguese as their first language (INE, 2019). Studies by INDE in the 1990s suggested that the exclusive use of Portuguese in Mozambican schools was a major cause of poor performance. In response, the first pilot bilingual education programme was carried out from 1993 to 1997 in

Gaza and Tete provinces. Its results were positive, so the bilingual initiative was expanded to 14 schools in 2003 and by 2018 had reached 1,907 schools, covering all provinces and 19 Mozambican languages (MINEDH, 2019c). The 2020–29 Bilingual Education Expansion Strategy, published in 2019, lays out the framework for gradual expansion of bilingual education throughout the country. It calls for language mapping (to ensure expansion to linguistically homogeneous communities), identification and training of teachers who speak the Mozambican language a given school, community mobilization to ensure understanding and buy-in from parents and community leaders, and training of school directors and SDEJT officers for effective management of the bilingual approach (MINEDH, 2019c). As of 2021, 3,225 schools applied bilingual education, according to the Direcção Nacional de Ensino Primário (National Primary Education Directorate).

Mozambique has adopted a transitional bilingual education model that starts in the early grades with pupils' mother tongue (L1) as the medium of instruction along with lessons in Portuguese as a second language (L2). In the first two grades, pupils learn reading, writing and mathematics in L1 and learn Portuguese orally. By grade 3, students begin to read and write in L2. With each grade, the amount of L2 instruction time increases, with L1 maintained as a subject (**Table 12**).

TABLE 12
L1 to L2 transition in bilingual education, grades 1 to 6

Discipline	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Portuguese language	L2 oral	L2 oral	L2 oral + L2 reading, writing	L2 reading, writing	L2 reading, writing*	L2 reading, writing*
Mozambican language	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1	L1
Mathematics	L1	L1	L1	L2*	L2*	L2*
Social sciences	-	-	-	L1	L2*	L2*
Natural sciences	-	-	-	L1	L2*	L2*
Visual education and arts & crafts	-	-	-	-	L1	L2*
Physical education	L1	L1	L2	L2	L2	L2
% L1	80%	80%	67.7%	43.3%	16.7%	6.7%
% L2	20%	20%	30.3%	56.7%	83.3%	93.3%

Notes: Asterisks (*) indicate monolingual programmes and books are used. There is a slight discrepancy between the PCEP and the Bilingual Education Expansion Strategy regarding the language of instruction for grade 5 social sciences: The PCEP has it as L2 while the expansion strategy maintains an additional year in L1.
Source: MINEDH (2020b).

For both instruction modalities, the PCEP outlines the distribution of disciplines and the number of instruction periods allocated (**Tables 13** and **14**).

Officially, the content outlined in the curriculum covers only 80% of the instruction time. The remainder is dedicated to what is referred to as the local curriculum. The local curriculum is meant to be developed by teachers with support from school directors, school council members, community leaders and local organizations or institutions. The content should be of local relevance and integrated coherently into lesson plans and evaluations. After consultations in the community, schools should produce a local curriculum guide to support lesson planning with integrated local curriculum content. No rigorous evaluation of the local curriculum has been carried out yet, but anecdotal reports suggest limited implementation in schools. INDE planned a study on local curriculum implementation for the 2022 school year.

TABLE 13
Distribution of instruction periods per week, by discipline, for monolingual instruction

Discipline	Number of instruction periods per week by grade – monolingual instruction					
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Portuguese	16	16	16	12	9	9
Mathematics	10	10	10	8	8	8
Social sciences	-	-	-	4	4	4
Natural sciences	-	-	-	4	4	4
Visual education and arts & crafts	-	-	-	-	3	3
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total	**28**	**28**	**28**	**30**	**30**	**30**

Note: The first cycle has fewer contact hours. In principle, this is to accommodate the later introduction of Mozambican languages as a discipline, adding two hours per week in the first cycle and then taking one hour each from Portuguese and mathematics in the second cycle.
Source: MINEDH (2020b).

TABLE 14
Distribution of instruction periods per week, by discipline, for bilingual instruction

Discipline	Number of instruction periods per week by grade – bilingual instruction					
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Portuguese	**6**	**6**	**8**	**8**	**8**	**8**
Mozambican language	**12**	**12**	**10**	**5**	**2**	**2**
Mathematics	**10**	**10**	**10**	**7**	**7**	**7**
Social sciences	**-**	**-**	**-**	**4**	**4**	**4**
Natural sciences	**-**	**-**	**-**	**4**	**4**	**4**
Visual education and arts & crafts	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**3**	**3**
Physical education	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**
Total	**30**	**30**	**30**	**30**	**30**	**30**

Source: MINEDH (2020b).

Officially, the content outlined in the curriculum covers only 80% of the instruction time. The remainder is dedicated to what is referred to as the local curriculum. The local curriculum is meant to be developed by teachers with support from school directors, school council members, community leaders and local organizations or institutions. The content should be of local relevance and integrated coherently into lesson plans and evaluations. After consultations in the community, schools should produce a local curriculum guide to support lesson planning with integrated local curriculum content. No rigorous evaluation of the local curriculum has been carried out yet, but anecdotal reports suggest limited implementation in schools. INDE planned a study on local curriculum implementation for the 2022 school year.

The curriculum includes suggested instruction methods for teachers – the same methods typically acquired during initial teacher training. For reading instruction in grade 1, the curriculum recommends using the analytical-synthetic approach: introducing new letters starting from a simple phrase, highlighting a key word from the phrase, breaking the word into syllables, then highlighting the individual letter being studied, starting with the vowels. The approach is then used to form syllables by combining the target consonant with different vowels, and proceeding in this manner to join syllables into words. This approach differs somewhat from a phonemic approach, which starts with individual letter sounds, then building to syllables and words. While the analytical-synthetic approach is learned in teacher training institutes and highlighted in instruction programme guides, the guides point out that it is simply a recommendation and other methods may be used if they help children achieve the desired skills. Given the growing scientific consensus that the phonemic approach is the most effective, some programmes have negotiated with MINEDH to integrate it into new programmes. However, teachers who have not been exposed to an approach during their initial training need in-service training to ensure that they master new methods.

Reform 2: Evolution of teacher training models

Teacher training models are designated by the highest grade reached and the number of years of specific teacher training required. Since the 1980s, there have been over 10 models of pre-service teacher training, with minimum grade levels ranging from grade 6 to grade 12 and between one and three years of additional training. The most recent is the 12+3 model, meaning the candidate teacher must complete grade 12 plus three years in one of the 38 teacher training institutions.

As a result of so many pre-service models being used over the last 30 years, in-service teachers have a wide range of initial training levels. The most common, at 47% of the teaching force, according to the 2021 school census, is the 10+1 model. Distance education efforts, managed by IEDA, support teachers in improving their training level through self-study modules at the ZIP and district levels. As teacher salary is largely determined by training category, there is a strong incentive for teachers to participate in such courses. The 12+3 model was introduced in 2019 with the intention of improving the quality of initial teacher training and phasing out previous models. The 2021 school census reported that 3,819 students in teacher training were following the 10+1 model and 4,632 were following the 12+3 model. As from 2022, only the 12+3 model will be used. A policy under development to provide additional criteria for entry into teacher training could further improve the quality of new teachers.

These efforts to improve teacher preparation have in part been triggered by studies showing low levels of teacher knowledge and job satisfaction in Mozambique. The World Bank Service Delivery Indicators report (Bassi et al., 2019) indicated low teacher subject matter knowledge (e.g. 3.3% of teachers demonstrated minimum grade-level knowledge in mathematics). The Holistic Study on the Situation of Teachers in Mozambique (MINEDH, 2017a) noted several factors associated with teacher job dissatisfaction, including low salaries, bureaucratic delays, limited career development opportunities, lack of social prestige and difficult working conditions (e.g. poor school infrastructure and inadequate teaching materials). These findings led not only to improved teacher training but also the DNFP's development of the National Teacher Policy, which is expected to be finalized in 2022. The policy will provide a basis for efforts to increase teaching's professionalization and social status by improving the legal framework; enhancing norms, guidelines and standards for teacher training; offering guidance and policy for teacher career development; providing improved guidance to school directors for better management and support of teachers at the school level; and creating platforms for dialogue.

The DNFP has also developed a revised strategy for continuing professional development for teachers. The approach builds on experience and includes activities at the school, ZIP and district levels. It outlines a process in which each ZIP identifies two experienced teachers to receive IFP training in leading monthly ZIP-level pedagogical workshops. At schools, teachers are meant to observe each other's lessons and provide constructive feedback. Challenges observed at schools would inform the ZIP-level sessions, where teachers can get support from their peers and more experienced teachers. A major challenge for the strategy is to ensure its implementation with limited financial resources.

Clear criteria for selection of school directors do not yet exist. While directors may be selected from among higher-performing teachers (who may lack strong management skills), it is widely understood that school administrators are often chosen on political grounds. The PEE lists the development of selection criteria and open competition for school director positions as key steps in improving transparency. As new school directors may lack knowledge and skills needed to manage their schools effectively, MINEDH has adopted various approaches to in-service training for school directors. In 2013, a 30-day school director training course was held at three IFPs, one in each region. It proved costly, however, and took directors away from schools during the academic year. In addition, an evaluation showed no substantial improvement in school performance. The PEE highlights the need to revise the training approach and ensure that results are seen at the school level. This is

especially relevant given the high levels of teacher and student absenteeism. School directors have a large role to play in improving attendance, which the PEE highlights as a priority.

Over the past decade, more locally generated evidence has emerged, pointing to low learning levels and their underlying causes (e.g. high levels of absenteeism). This evidence has sparked a push for improved results and a desire not just to identify problems but to begin finding and implementing solutions. Thus there is an opportunity for leadership and reform to make positive gains in foundation learning. Below are recent key policy developments and outstanding challenges that must be addressed to achieve foundational learning goals.

Key policy development 1 – Establishment of pre-primary education
One of the sector's most notable achievements was the establishment of pre-primary education as a formal subsystem through the 2018 education law. However, costs and responsibilities are dispersed across three ministries, presenting an implementation challenge. A World Bank-funded pre-primary pilot programme in 10 districts over 2015–18 helped inform key PEE priorities for the subsector. The PEE sets an ambitious goal of increasing pre-primary access for children below age 5 from the initial level of 3.5% to 17% by 2029 (MINEDH, 2020a).

Key policy development 2 – Extension of basic compulsory education to nine years
Law 18/2018 extended basic compulsory education to nine years in an effort, to ensure that all children gain the basic skills and general knowledge they need to be active citizens and progress in learning and the world of work. It is not yet clear how the government will respond to the increase in student numbers, estimated at 68% from 2018 to 2019, resulting in a need to build an additional 7,300 classrooms and hire an extra 19,500 teachers (UNESCO, 2019). Even without this increase, the number of secondary schools was insufficient, with capacity for only 14% of the students leaving primary education. To illustrate the challenge, the 2021 school census indicated that while 13,006 schools went up to at least grade 5, 8,899 went up to grade 7 and only 622 to at least grade 9.

Key policy development 3 – National Teacher Policy
The PEE (MINEDH, 2020a) describes improving the quality of teacher education as a critical challenge. The 2020–22 Operational Plan (MINEDH, 2020c) accompanying the PEE places teachers at the centre of the education system and includes the development and implementation of a national policy for teachers as a priority action. The policy is intended to establish guidelines for teacher training along with transparent processes of selection, recruitment, motivation, retention, continuing professional development and improved remuneration. The objective is to value the teacher's central role and ensure that questions concerning the profession are addressed coherently and consistently. Such a policy must be accompanied by a legal framework for its implementation and a sufficient budget allocation.

Key policy development 4 – Bilingual education
In 2019, MINEDH released the 2022–29 Bilingual Education Expansion Strategy. After successful pilot programmes since the 1990s, MINEDH committed to a gradual expansion of bilingual education to all schools meeting certain criteria. With donor support, the number of schools with bilingual education rose from fewer than 1,000 in 2016 to over 3,500 by 2021. Teacher allocation and management must be addressed to ensure the sustainability of bilingual education. Since current teacher allocation policy does not take into account a teacher's L1, ensuring that bilingual education schools have enough teachers who speak the school's L1 can be a challenge. Current MINEDH policy dictates one teacher per grade level (i.e. one teacher covering all subjects) up to grade 6, effectively requiring all teachers to speak the school's L1. Districts also need to ensure that teacher transfers are well managed so that teachers trained in bilingual education methods are not replaced with teachers unfamiliar with the approach.

Key policy development 5 – District supervision
In 2015, the DNGGQ released a district supervision manual providing orientation to districts on how to conduct evidence-based supervision in schools. An online platform for registering supervision data is in the initial stages of implementation. Continued progress in this area can help ensure that schools improve performance. Given the major distances between SDEJT offices and most schools, combined with poor road conditions and insufficient resources (e.g. for transport and fuel), more local means of supervision may be needed to complement these efforts.

Outstanding challenge 1 – Teacher absenteeism
Schools in Mozambique demonstrate weakness in managing absenteeism, with serious consequences for education quality. Findings of one major study point to absenteeism as a practice where those involved and affected collude so that it becomes a kind of tacit agreement in school practices (Mulhanga et al., 2016). The study also talks about 'absent presentism' or teachers and school directors being at school but not fulfilling their duties.

Outstanding challenge 2 – Teacher shortages
At the primary level, enrolment growth has accelerated in recent years. In 2020, there were 90,277 teachers working in EP1 and 31,500 in EP2. It is estimated that the system needs an additional 19,500 teachers to respond to immediate needs – given the number of students and MINEDH's target pupil/teacher ratio of 60:1 – as well as those created by the extension of compulsory education (an estimated 68% increase in students in ESG1 between 2018 and 2019). At the same time, school infrastructure needs to be constructed to accommodate current students and teachers who are working in poor conditions (e.g. with high pupil/teacher ratios, classes held outdoors/under trees, shift teaching), along with new teachers hired for the corresponding increase in class numbers.

Outstanding challenge 3 – Nutrition
Since 2013, the government, under MINEDH coordination, with support from the United Nations World Food Programme and other governmental and non-governmental partners, has implemented the Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar (National School Feeding Programme). It provides meals to 125,000 students in 150 primary schools in all provinces and plans call for it to expand to an additional 190 schools so as to reach more children in public education, especially in rural areas. MINEDH aims to gradually expand school feeding to all primary schools. Other partners have agreements with MINEDH to provide school meals to more than 300,000 students in 560 schools. All together, current school feeding programme commitments cover just 1,000 of the country's 13,000+ schools. It is essential to expand school nutrition programmes to cover more schools so as to contribute to children's cognitive development, improvement of health status, improved learning ability and likelihood of staying in school throughout the school year.

3.8. POLITICAL ECONOMY

Since gaining independence from Portugal in 1975, Mozambique has prioritized education, emphasizing equitable participation and access. In contrast with the colonial period, marked by social and political exclusion of the majority of the population (Mondlane, 1975), the newly independent Mozambican government nationalized education and expanded the network of schools. Over 1975–79, enrolment doubled to 1.2 million students, and in 1983 the first Sistema Nacional de Educação (SNE, national education system) was approved. However, two years after independence, armed conflict began between the ruling Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front, better known as Frelimo) and the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance or Renamo). In the ensuing 16 years of instability, some 68% of the country's primary schools closed or were destroyed (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995). The end of this conflict ushered in a new multiparty political context and the Constitution of 1990, leading to adjustments to the SNE. The SNE Act (Law 6/92) introduced changes to the system's operation and structure and invited non-state actors to support the formal education system. In 2005, amendments abolished school fees and provided free textbooks in all seven primary school grades. Access was further expanded through the early 2000s as the sector emphasized supply-side improvements by increasing the number of schools, teachers and classrooms to ensure the majority of Mozambicans could start and complete primary school (Mouzinho, Monjane and Santos, 2020).

Over the past decade, the education sector has gradually shifted from a focus primarily on access towards efforts to improve quality. This has required facing the politically challenging truth that despite significant government investment, Mozambique is in what Hossain and Hickey (2019) call an 'education crisis' or 'schooling without learning', where access to education does not equate to meaningful quality improvement. MINEDH and other government stakeholders have acknowledged that learning levels are low; school director, teacher and student absentee rates are high; and school management and teacher classroom performance are subpar. This has sparked intense debate in the sector, supported by a civil society that continues to be more active in identifying ways to address these barriers and improve learning outcomes. The 2018 education law, the PEE and other policy reforms reflect these shifting priorities.

Another factor, one that impedes the quantity and efficacy of internal and external investment in education, is a lack of government transparency and accountability. Mozambique is ranked as one of the world's most corrupt countries, coming in at 147 out of 180 countries in 2021 (Transparency International, 2021). A hidden debt scandal in 2016 resulted in many international donors cutting off or substantially reducing aid flows. Since a large portion of the education investment budget comes from international donors, this put enormous strain on the country. As investment has returned, the donor community can play a major role in helping the sector improve learning outcomes by increasing accountability. The recent FASE MOU, with its focus on quality, increased transparency and giving voice to civil society, and with MEPT as a signatory, is part of those efforts.

Recent events have shed light on the need for improved quality controls within MINEDH. It was found that the grade 6 social science textbook introduced in 2022 had several significant errors (Mosse, 2022). This led to an internal investigation that resulted in the resignation of the directors of the National Primary Education Directorate, INDE and the DGLEMD. At the time of writing, investigations were still ongoing, but the situation has sparked debate in traditional and social media, drawing more attention to the need to improve education service delivery.

Since the 1992 peace accords, decentralization of power has been a major point of contention between the two main political parties and a flashpoint for conflict. While legal reforms have been approved, significant devolution of power has yet to take place (ConstitutionNet, n.d.). Implementation of the 2018 reforms to decentralize education governance has begun, but initial efforts have led to some confusion regarding roles. The DPEs and SPAS have overlapping and interrelated roles, with DPE oversight by the elected provincial governor and SPAS oversight by the centrally appointed state secretary since 2019. However, this process has not yet reached districts. Plans call for districts to elect their own assemblies by 2024, resulting in district administrators being popularly elected rather than appointed by the provincial governor. Local election of district administrators would be another step towards increasing accountability for education service delivery and outcomes.

Mozambique has Africa's third largest proven natural gas reserves at an estimated 100 trillion cubic feet (EIA, 2020). A liquified natural gas project in northern Mozambique is expected to produce nearly 13 million tonnes per year initially and could expand to 43 million tonnes per year. After being derailed by a terrorist insurgency in the region, production is expected to start in late 2022 with support from the Southern Africa Development Community and Rwandan security forces. This could substantially increase government revenue and spur economic growth. The proposed creation of a sovereign wealth fund could help ensure sustainable management of the increased financial resources. If well managed, such a fund could provide substantial internal financial support to address challenges in the education sector.

3.9. SUMMARY

The education policy priorities outlined in the PEE focus on inclusion and equity in terms of access, participation and retention; quality; and transparent, participatory, efficient and effective governance. While previous efforts focused on access and retention, the need to improve education quality to ensure that students achieve minimum proficiency in foundational skills is recognized.

Enrolment and completion numbers, while showing improvement over the past several years, are still quite low, with the primary completion rate below 50%. External learning assessments show some improvement but indicate high variability by region, urban–rural character and gender. External assessments (e.g. the national assessment) show lower performance than indicated by internal assessments (e.g. national examinations), suggesting a need to improve internal assessment procedures. The data on low student achievement have driven many positive policy reforms, including efforts to expand pre-primary education, the extension of compulsory basic education to nine years, development of the National Teacher Policy, and expansion of bilingual education and district supervision.

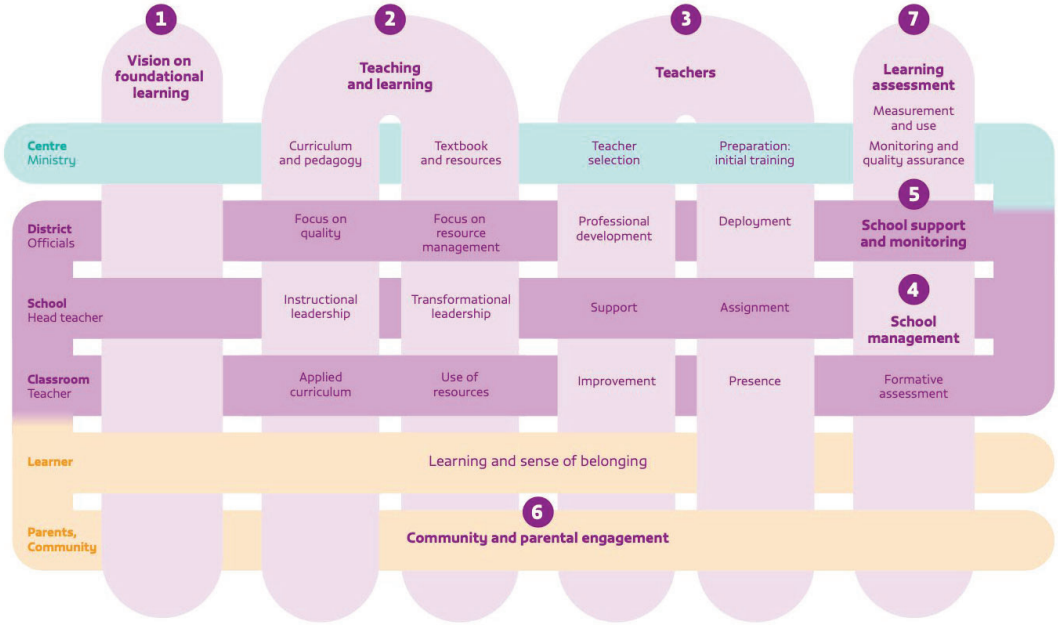
Several challenges remain if Mozambique is to achieve the SDG targets. They include ensuring that enough teachers are hired; improving school infrastructure; enhancing school management to increase director, teacher and student attendance; addressing poor nutrition; and increasing accountability at all levels of the education system.

4. Analytical framework and fieldwork findings[9]

4.1. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

This review follows the Spotlight series' conceptual framework, which outlines seven key factors that affect UBE and foundational learning (**Figure 11**).

FIGURE 11
Spotlight analytical framework



Source: Spotlight series analytical framework and research guide.

Table 15 summarizes the key findings of the literature review.

[9] Tables in this section are compiled by the authors from field notes.

TABLE 15
Synthesis of literature review with reference to the analytical framework

Factor in analytical framework	Current status in Mozambique
Vision and focus on performance	A **vision exists** in the PEE (MINEDH, 2020a). Reliable and comparable **data** are hard to find. The data collection system and evaluation methods seem inconsistent and unreliable. Data are sparse, incomplete and often inconsistent, making them hard to use to inform decision making on a political level.
Teaching and learning	Evidence suggests that **children's readiness to learn** when they enter primary school is low, especially in monolingual education. The **lack of pre-primary education** means children are not prepared for school attendance. **Bilingual education** is producing better learning outcomes. However, its scope is still limited, covering only 25% of schools. Since there are not enough schools, classrooms and teachers, teaching takes place in shifts, meaning **class length** is insufficient to cover the curriculum in full and ensure good quality teaching and learning. High levels of absenteeism further reduce the limited instruction time.
Teachers	The **new teacher training model (12+3)** is both promising and challenging to the system. The first graduates of the new model will enter the labour market in 2023. It is expected that their higher qualifications will improve instruction quality. However, the financial impact of their higher salaries will strain an education budget already dominated by salary costs.
School management and leadership	There are no clear criteria for selecting school directors. As a result, selection may be based on characteristics unrelated to effective leadership skills. While there is consensus that school management is essential for positive learning outcomes, an effective way of improving it has yet to be demonstrated. Absentee rates remain high and compliance with MINEDH policy is lower than desired. **A lack of accountability** makes enforcement of policy a real challenge.
Supervision and monitoring	**Pedagogical supervision** visits by districts have shown some impact on school performance. If these continue to be strengthened, they can help ensure schools continue to improve results. The objective of the visits is to provide support, but if schools are found regularly not to comply with MINEDH guidelines, greater accountability will be needed.
Community and parent engagement	There has been **a growing trend of civil society participation in education** issues, specifically with regard to accountability mechanisms related to teacher absenteeism. In general, in places where programmes are implemented to improve school management, involve community and combat absenteeism, there is an improvement in education results (MINEDH, 2020a).
Learning assessment	Results from various assessments indicate that **students do not develop the expected competencies**. However, the assessments do not factor in the relevance of language of instruction to the academic performance of students despite several local studies demonstrating that **bilingual education has resulted in better learning outcomes.**

4.2. RESULTS OF DISCUSSIONS WITH NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The research team organized a stakeholder workshop in Maputo on 5 November 2021 to introduce the analytical framework, present the literature review and assess priority issues. Stakeholders agreed that the seven components under analysis would have an impact on teaching and learning, and that each is influenced by policies, implementation measures and social context. Stakeholders commented on how the analytical framework highlighted the need for integrated strategies, as the interconnection between the various factors under analysis became evident and, in parallel, between the social and economic issues that condition all processes.

The main challenges and priorities the stakeholders identified were:

- Improvement of school conditions
- Improvement of teacher quality and school management
- Improvement of pedagogical supervision, monitoring and inspection at the district level
- Reintegration of out-of-school children, especially girls, in schools
- Involvement of parents and communities on the school council.

In general, the priorities identified by the stakeholders are in line with those defined by the PEE (MINEDH, 2020a). They are listed below in order of priority.

- Improvement of school conditions was the top priority for improving learning outcomes, as stakeholders believe physical infrastructure plays an important role in the education process.
- Improving teacher quality and school management was ranked as the second priority, raising questions about pre-service and in-service teacher training and the role of school directors in supporting teachers with improvement of teaching and learning.
- The need to improve pedagogical supervision, monitoring and inspection at the district level was the third priority. While the SDEJT conducts pedagogical supervision, its visits are more supportive. Inspection is meant to hold schools accountable for non-compliance with MINEDH policy. While MINEDH mandates regular school inspections, the allocation of staff and funds has been insufficient, so the number of visits has been limited.
- The fourth priority was the need to create conditions for reintegration and retention of out-of-school children, particularly girls. This is a challenge the minister also highlighted.
- The fifth priority was the need for greater involvement of parents and communities in education, and particularly their participation in school councils, to help improve learning.

4.3. FIELD APPROACH AND AREAS VISITED

Due to various challenges, fieldwork could not be carried out during the school year. Research teams travelled to districts and schools from 1 to 4 December 2021. While class observations were not possible, interviews were held with district directors of education, education technicians, school directors, teachers, parents and guardians and a focus group of school council members.

A sample of 12 schools, both rural and urban, with 3 levels of performance (good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory, based on their ratings from school-based assessments) were visited in 4 provinces – Maputo city (which is considered a province), Maputo province (excluding the city) and Zambézia and Nampula provinces – covering the southern, central and northern regions (**Table 16**). The sample was intended to represent the full range of realities in the country and reflect regional disparities.

Six categories of individuals were interviewed for each school (**Table 17**). In schools with an operational school council, a focus group of 8 to 10 people was assembled – generally 3 parents and guardians, 3 teachers, the school director, the district director and a district technician.

There were two initial goals: i) undertake classroom observations and validate through interviews the extent to which the challenges identified at the national stakeholder workshop were the same as those faced in schools, and then ii) identify possible ways to address obstacles to the learning process. As classes were not in session, classroom observation was replaced by interviews with school-based personnel. The research team also sought to document examples of good practice.

TABLE 16
Schools visited by district and province

Province	District	School	Modality	Performance
Maputo city	KaMpfumo	EPC 16 de Junho	Monolingual	Good
		EPC Alto Maé	Monolingual	Satisfactory
		EPC Filipe Samuel Magaia	Monolingual	Non-satisfactory
Maputo province	Matutuíne	EPC de Salamanga	Bilingual	Satisfactory
		EPC Bela Vista	Monolingual	Good
		EPC de Machanfane	Monolingual	Non-satisfactory
Nampula	Ilha de Moçambique	EPC de Lumbo	Bilingual	Satisfactory
		EPC 15 de Junho	Monolingual	Good
		EPC 16 de Junho	Monolingual	Non-satisfactory
Zambézia	Mocuba	EPC Derruba	Bilingual	Satisfactory
		EPC Marmanelo	Monolingual	Good
		EPC Aeroporto I	Monolingual	Non-satisfactory

Note: EPC = escola primária completa (primary school).

TABLE 17
Interviews and focus groups with schools by category of individual

School	School council	Parents and guardians	Teachers	School director	District director	District technician
EPC 16 de Junho	8	3	3	1	1	2
EPC Alto Maé	8	3	3	1	1	1
EPC Filipe Samuel Magaia	0	3	4	1	1	1
EPC de Salamanga	10	3	4	1	1	1
EPC Bela Vista	8	4	3	1	1	1
EPC de Machanfane	9	3	3	1	1	2
EPC de Lumbo	8	5	3	1	1	1
EPC 25 de Junho	8	3	3	1	1	1
EPC 16 de Junho	9	3	3	1	1	1
EPC Derruba	9	3	3	1	1	1
EPC Marmanelo	8	3	4	1	1	2
EPCE Aeroporto I	8	4	3	2	1	1
Total	**93**	**40**	**39**	**13**	**12**	**15**

There were two initial goals: i) undertake classroom observations and validate through interviews the extent to which the challenges identified at the national stakeholder workshop were the same as those faced in schools, and then ii) identify possible ways to address obstacles to the learning process. As classes were not in session, classroom observation was replaced by interviews with school-based personnel. The research team also sought to document examples of good practice.

4.4. FIELDWORK RESULTS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The interviews with district directors of education, education technicians, school directors, teachers, parents and guardians, and the school council focus groups identified similar issues at both the central and regional levels:

1. Improvement of school conditions

In general, all schools visited needed significant work. Problems included rain getting into classrooms through leaking roofs, lack of doors, and windows without frames and glass. From research team observations, it was evident that there were not enough desks; stakeholders said many children had to sit on the floor during classes. Stakeholder interviews also made clear that the number of classrooms was insufficient, so many children had to learn outdoors. Parents noted that limits on student numbers per classroom due to COVID-19 restrictions translated into very little time for teaching and learning.

Although teachers and school directors believe they are successfully covering the curriculum, the lack of student exposure to teaching and learning makes this arguable, since it is not possible to cover the curriculum satisfactorily in so little time. Also, for those studying outdoors, disruptions due to weather may lead to fewer school days. It is also widely known that political and social events in Mozambique can affect schools' normal functioning, with teachers and students participating in celebrations.

During interviews, parents noted that classrooms have basic equipment such as a blackboard, chalk and textbooks. Parents say they provide notebooks, pencils, pens and other supplementary materials, which means a heavy financial burden for families with many children in school. Sometimes the school provides pencils and notebooks to needy students through the ADE.

2. Improvement of teacher quality and school management

Existing teachers' initial training is quite diverse due to the multiplicity of models over the years. In all provinces, stakeholders mentioned differing approaches to continuing professional development. Some mentioned short training sessions of two to three days, carried out in schools. A few talked about longer courses delivered by universities, IFPs and EPFs. In the central region, USAID-sponsored weeklong training courses were mentioned in the context of the programme Vamos Ler. Schools in the southern region reported a greater range of training opportunities, including a seminar at the beginning of each trimester to support teachers' pedagogical improvement.

Schools rated as having 'good' performance were found to support greater collaborative work between teachers through training among colleagues, mutual assistance in classes, pedagogical workshops with class simulation and production of teaching material in schools. They also used participatory teaching strategies, such as games and reading competitions, and more practical teaching, exploring the use of local materials in mathematics. MINEDH recommends this type of methodology as well as themes related to the local curriculum, which value content and materials related to the region where the schools are located, but it is not a widespread practice.

The role that the school director assumes in the school has an impact on teachers' activity and, consequently, on students' results. This is because, in the absence of external monitoring and inspection, only the school director can ensure that teachers are present and that teaching and learning take place in school. As there is only pedagogical supervision rather than inspection from district authorities, school directors do not feel pressure from those authorities to show results. Therefore, they tend to limit themselves to doing what is necessary to keep the school functioning and have little incentive to change the status quo. For example, despite the clear need for more classrooms, school directors did not mention it during the interviews.

3. Improvement of pedagogical supervision, monitoring and inspection at the district level

Teachers and school directors consider supervision and inspection to be important for improving learning outcomes. But not all schools report receiving the expected number of visits. The distance between the district capital and some schools, along with poor communication channels and the difficulty of transport, make visits difficult. School directors feel the low frequency of visits has negatively influenced teaching performance. In Zambézia province, schools reported pedagogical supervision supported by USAID in the Vamos Ler programme. The frequency varied from the mandatory once a quarter to three to four times a quarter.

4. Reintegration of out-of-school children, especially girls, in schools

In the three regions visited, evidence came from school-level data and an annual MINEDH survey of out-of-school children. Their numbers were greater in the central and northern regions. Various social and economic causes were given, including negligence by parents and guardians, extreme poverty, orphanhood (forcing children to become head of the family), child labour and early marriage. There was mention of awareness-raising for parents and guardians about the importance of attending school, promoted by school council members, administrative authorities and community and religious leaders. Other measures taking place in the districts visited included NGOs providing school meals. However, stakeholders said a national policy to combat school dropout was needed.

In Matutuine district of Maputo province, on the border with South Africa, some children dropped out of school when their families emigrated to South Africa. School location was also a challenge in the case of schools situated far from communities. In the centre and north, there was evidence from school-level data of students dropping out, a particular issue for girls.

Among the measures provincial and district directors suggested to reduce the number of out-of-school children were building schools nearer to communities to reduce the distance children had to travel, providing snacks and school supplies to students, raising the awareness of parents and guardians and getting district authorities involved.

5. Involvement of parents and communities on the school council

Stakeholders believed a functioning school council and parental involvement were vital for improvement of learning outcomes. Interviews with head teachers and parents indicated that only one school visited lacked a functioning school council. In the rest, the council met at the end of each quarter and held extraordinary meetings whenever necessary, and its functioning was identified as important. School council representatives maintained strong links with teachers, attended classes to observe children's learning and helped find solutions to both pedagogical challenges and maintenance issues such as painting and repairing fences and windows. The school council, in coordination with the school director, discusses and approves plans for ADE funds' use.

The districts visited have strategies to sensitize parents and guardians to the importance of school attendance to combat dropout and retain children in school. At the beginning of each academic year, meetings are held involving parents and guardians and district officials, and all are urged to ensure students are enrolled. The effectiveness of this process was shown by district directors and head teachers confirming that all students from the districts had been enrolled. Parents are also invited to quarterly meetings with teachers to receive information on children's grades, behaviour and hygiene. Sometimes teachers call extraordinary meetings.

In general, there was consensus on the important role of parents and caregivers both in motivating students to study and in demanding greater quality and compliance with the rules by schools and teachers. The commitment to higher quality is shown, for example, by the fact that parents and guardians believe students should not be automatically promoted but should repeat a grade when they do not attain the expected skills in class.

4.5. FACTORS EXPLAINING DIFFERENCES IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Table 18 outlines the main factors explaining differences in school performance as identified in the fieldwork.

TABLE 18
Factors explaining differences in school performance

Factor	Differences in school performance
Bilingual education	• School directors reported that the percentage of students reaching expected standards was around 60% in monolingual schools, according to results from school-based assessment (aproveitamento pedagógico). However, results varied widely among schools, even within the same province. For example, in Maputo province, at the EPCs of Salamanga and Machanfane, 60% of students in the monolingual modality knew how to read and calculate while at EPC Bela Vista, around 80% could read and 95% could calculate. • In bilingual schools, performance is better among students in the bilingual modality than those in the monolingual modality. **Students studying the bilingual curriculum performed at a higher level** than those studying the monolingual curriculum, with about 15% difference in attainment of basic reading, writing and mathematics, according to performance data held by school directors.
Teacher collaboration	• Increased training and collaboration between teachers and the use of more practical teaching strategies seem to result in better student performance. • In schools where **collaborative work took place between teachers** through training among colleagues, mutual assistance in classes, pedagogical workshops with simulation of classes and production of teaching material, students generally performed better.
School conditions	• Classrooms in some schools were in such a poor state of repair that classes took place outdoors. COVID-19 restrictions led to reduced time spent learning. • **Schools with enough classrooms of a reasonable standard to accommodate students obtained better results.**
Location	• The percentage of students who can read and calculate varies widely by school, even within the same province. • There was wide disparity in results among urban schools. In Maputo city, in EPC 16 de Junho, before the COVID-19 pandemic between 90% and 95% of students could read, write and calculate. Since 2020, as students have spent more time at home, the shares have dropped to between 80% and 85%. At EPC Filipe Samuel Magaia and EPC Alto Maé, the percentage with literacy skills was around 60%, and with calculation skills slightly higher. • In the centre (Mocuba district) and north (Nampula), results varied. • Overall in the north, the percentages directors presented ranged from 60% to around 95%. In Zambézia, the results were 40% to 65%.

5. Two positive case studies

5.1. BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingual education is gradually being introduced into primary education, with nearly 25% of primary schools using the approach. The 2020–29 Bilingual Education Expansion Strategy (MINEDH, 2019c) calls for gradual expansion respecting several criteria, including:

- Language mapping to ensure that the approach is introduced in linguistically homogeneous regions
- Identification and allocation of human and financial resources to guarantee that enough teachers speak the school L1 and that teachers, school directors, ZIP coordinators and SDEJT technical officers are trained in the bilingual approach
- Development and allocation of the required teaching and learning materials
- Approval by district and provincial authorities prior to expansion in a particular school or area
- Community engagement to ensure that children, parents, local leaders and community members understand the benefits of bilingual education.

Support from donors, particularly USAID, has allowed the number of schools taking the bilingual approach to more than double since 2017. Anecdotal reports indicate that students in schools where bilingual education has been introduced generally perform better than students in monolingual schools, as the bilingual approach provides students with easier adaptation to school. In bilingual schools, children begin learning to read from the first days of instruction, while in monolingual schools, it often takes several weeks of adaptation as the children do not understand the language of instruction (Portuguese). The new teacher training curriculum (12+3) includes subjects dedicated to teaching and exploring bilingual teaching in the classroom and introduces another noteworthy feature: sign language teaching. This gives teachers the tools to include hearing-impaired students and thus move towards a more inclusive school. There are now sign language manuals for students and teachers in most local languages.

Early evaluations (INDE, 2011) suggested that bilingual education produced positive results from both the pedagogical and sociocultural points of view. Recent assessments (Magaia et al., 2022) provide further evidence, confirming the transformative potential of bilingual education. Observers of bilingual education classrooms report being struck by the high level of interaction in the classroom, improvement in student performance and increased participation of communities in school life.

There have not yet been any national assessments allowing rigorous comparison of monolingual and bilingual school performance. However, fieldwork for this report confirmed the positive results noted above, suggesting that bilingual education indeed produced better learning outcomes. In each school, teachers and school directors were asked to estimate the proportion of students who achieved minimum proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics. School directors mentioned two examples based on internal data (from school-based assessments):

- EPC Derruba – 40% of monolingual students but 65% of bilingual students had minimum proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics
- EPC Salamanga – 60% of monolingual students but 75% of bilingual students had minimum proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics.

EPC de Lumbo in Ilha de Moçambique district, with support from the USAID Vamos Ler programme, provides bilingual education and has made several initiatives to improve student learning. These include a student library, space and time for children to read outside the classroom, and in-service teacher training organized at the school level by experienced teachers. Such efforts have improved student performance. This result was verified during the fieldwork and in conversations with community members, who affirmed that they felt more involved in their children's learning with bilingual education and were more comfortable approaching the school to participate in the school community.

5.2. NATIONAL READING AND WRITING ACTION PLAN

In 2018, the Plano Nacional de Acção da Leitura e Escrita (National Reading and Writing Action Plan) was developed with the aim of creating a favourable environment for encouraging students to enjoy reading and writing. The plan assumes reading and writing are important for the teaching and learning process and aims to help promote them by encouraging reading habits at school and home and in communities, libraries and other places. Progress has been slow, but some encouraging measures are under way.

To achieve the plan's aims, MINEDH, with technical support from Save the Children, has produced a manual supporting the promotion of reading and writing. Its objective is to provide tools to put the plan into operation at various levels and to develop reading and writing activities.

Specifically, the manual aims to support reading and writing promoters or animators, presenting them with suggested strategies for developing reading and writing activities; promoting reading and writing fairs; organizing spaces that gather children, young people and adults to play reading and writing games; and other activities to complement the classroom. These activities call for the involvement of reading clubs, circles of interest, student associations and teacher training institutes. The manual also presents means and criteria for assessing reading and writing as an integral part of the learning process.

The movement to implement the plan is gaining strength with the training of coordinators and reading animators in all provinces. Schools, primary education teacher training institutions, district education directorates, ZIPs and various local associations play a crucial role in this process. The impact of this movement on the fieldwork within the scope of this research was evident in interviews when EP1 teachers referred to strategies and teaching methods of reading and writing learned in pedagogical training. They highlighted the importance of complementing this work with allocation of reading support materials, notably as regards school libraries.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on respondents' priorities on how to accelerate progress to reach SDG targets 4.1 and 4.5.

- **Construct more schools and hire more teachers**

The current school network is insufficient to meet the system's needs. There is an urgent need to build new schools that are accessible to communities. Findings from the fieldwork suggest that schools with better infrastructure achieve better learning outcomes. It is possible to obtain good results in more precarious schools, as the fieldwork also suggests, but it is evident that the difference lies in the dedication of the school director and teachers. School construction must be accompanied by the hiring of more teachers to reduce the existing shortage, avoid multiple shifts and accommodate an increasing number of students.

- **Improve teacher quality and school management**

Initial teacher training programmes need standardization and improvement to make them more flexible and better adapted to the school curriculum requirements. This effort needs to be jointly developed by INDE, the IFPs and universities. Continuing professional development coupled with monitoring of teachers' progress in the classroom, along with provision of teaching and learning resources and school libraries, would help enhance teacher performance.

A training programme for future school directors and an open and transparent recruitment process could help increase school directors' focus on being leaders of learning, spearheading improvement in teaching and learning at their schools and holding teachers accountable.

- **Continue to expand bilingual education**

Given the challenges identified regarding language of instruction, expansion of bilingual education is likely to improve learning outcomes. Efforts must be made to engage and mobilize parents to support bilingual education and involve themselves in their children's education in and out of school. A good communication strategy is also necessary to ensure Mozambican communities understand the bilingual education approach and its value.

- **Improve pedagogical supervision, monitoring and inspection at the district level**

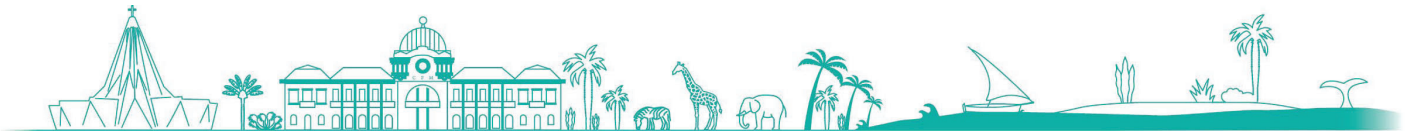
This will require the government to allocate the necessary funds to enable district inspection teams to function and ensure that inspection is undertaken through an increased number of regular visits to schools and prompt feedback of observations and actions to school directors. Greater value needs to be placed on the role of ZIPs as educational development communities. The fieldwork highlighted the importance of teacher communities of practice, peer learning and teacher collaboration for improving learning.

- **Create an enabling environment for reintegration and retention of out-of-school children, with a focus on girls**

Some 3 million young people of school age are outside the education system and there are not enough schools, classrooms and teachers to allow their inclusion. Thus a key priority is to increase education system capacity so as to accommodate out-of-school children and adolescents. However, it is not sufficient to focus on supply-side issues; demand-side interventions are needed to make education more relevant and attractive to children and their families. Such interventions could include provision of school snacks and other support for children from poorer households, along with extracurricular activities at school, such as workshops in cooking, sewing and crafts, dance, sports, literacy and adult education. This effort will also require development of catch-up programmes for those who have dropped out so as to accelerate their learning and integration. MINEDH (2020b) refers to 'Life Skills Courses', identified as relevant to ensure the retention of young people and adults in alternative education programmes: In addition to literacy and numeracy, the beneficiaries would be provided with tools for income generation. It is not clear, however, if such courses exist yet.

- **Involve parents and communities in a functioning school council**

To fulfil their purposes, school councils require both financial resources (a budget) and human resources (parent and community representatives) empowered to make decisions. A cultural shift in schools, towards valuing the council's role as a supervisory body and ensuring transparency regarding the funds used, is necessary.



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Annex

Supervision
‘The District Directorate of Education must improve with regard to supervision, so that teachers as well as the school board can perform well, with regard to the recommendations left by the technicians. Supervision should be carried out at least twice each quarter.’ – School director

‘Supervisions should take into account the size of the school. It should be done at least four times each quarter, because the school is large and works in three shifts and I would like all three shifts to benefit from this supervision.’ – School director

Teacher performance and on-the-job training
‘There are teachers who lack training to be able to develop their skills as a teacher, but among them there are also teachers who perform well, with good performance. If there were a mechanism to promote teacher training, it would be an asset.’ – School director

‘The percentage of students at the Airport EPC who at the end of third grade can read and write was 65%. In order to be able to eliminate this low percentage, there has to be a lot of work on the part of teachers, parents and guardians. Since the driving force comes from the teacher, it is necessary that more training of teachers acts to be able to respond better to this problem of reading and writing. Another influencing factor is the lack of appropriate teaching material for reading and writing, and the lack of monitoring by parents in charge of education.’ – School director

‘To improve the capacity of teachers, pedagogical workshops are held. I think that certificates of honour should be given to teachers who interact best with their students or through their performance. Incentives should also be created: salary improvement, appreciation of the teacher's work.’ – Teacher

Parents’ role
‘If my son in the third grade couldn't read, I would join efforts in coordination with the teacher to reach a conclusion together. If he doesn't improve, he should be retained in the same class to be able to read fluently. I think the automatic pass has contributed negatively to the performances of our students in terms of reading and writing.’ – Parent

School conditions
The school has 16 classrooms, 6 of which are conventional and 10 of mixed construction. It is a very small number. And we don't have school desks.’ – School director

Children out of school and motivation
‘We are not aware of out-of-school children in my area of jurisdiction. This is because we have a food motivation which is fresh soy milk sponsored by the company WINUA which is based in our district, and also because of the location of the school, which is an urban area of the city council. And sometimes the school administration has distributed notebooks, pencils and ballpoint pens to the most needy children.’ – School director

‘Because of poverty, families cannot afford to let their children go to school. I suggest creating incentives such as the implementation of school lunches so there is no hungry learning.’ – Teacher

School council
‘The school council works. We have held two quarterly meetings. Problems that the school council has solved is about the dropout of students and the issue of assiduity [close attention] on the part of the students and also on the part of the teachers.’ – School council member

Abbreviations

ADE	Apoio Directo às Escolas (Direct School Support)
DGLEMD	Departamento de Gestão do Livro Escolar e Materiais Didácticos (Schoolbook and Teaching Materials Management Department)
DNFP	Direcção Nacional de Formação de Professores (National Teacher Training Directorate)
DNGGQ	Direcção Nacional de Gestão e Garantia de Qualidade (National Quality Management and Guarantee Directorate)
DPE	Direcção Provincial de Educação (Provincial Education Directorate)
EP	Ensino primário (primary education)
EPC	Escola primária completa (primary school)
EPF	Escola de Professores do Futuro (School for Future Teachers)
ESG	Education sector working group
FASE	Fundo de Apoio de Sector de Educação (Education Sector Support Fund)
GEL	Grupo de Educação Local (Local Education Group)
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IEDA	Instituto de Educação Aberta e à Distância (Open and Distance Learning Institute)
IFP	Instituto de Formação de Professores (Teacher Training Institute)
INDE	Instituto Nacional do Desenvolvimento da Educação (National Education Development Institute)
MCTESTP	Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia, Ensino Superior e Técnico-Profissional (Ministry of Science and Technology, Higher and Technical-Professional Education)
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
MEPT	Movimento Educação para Todos (Education for All Movement)
MGCAS	Ministério do Género, Criança e Acção Social (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action)
MINEDH	Ministério da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano (Ministry of Education and Human Development)
MISAU	Ministério da Saúde (Ministry of Health)
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
MPL	Minimum proficiency level
MZN	Mozambican metical/meticais
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PAL	People's Action for Learning
PCs	Parceiros de Cooperação (Cooperation Partners)
PCEP	Plano Curricular do Ensino Primário (Primary Education Curricular Plan)
PEE	Plano Estratégico da Educação (Education Strategic Plan)
PRONAE	Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar (National School Feeding Programme)
PTF	Priority task force
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

SDEJT	Serviço Distrital de Educação Juventude e Tecnologia (District Education, Youth and Technology Service)
SNE	Sistema Nacional de Educação (National Education System)
SPAS	Serviço Provincial de Assuntos Sociais (Provincial Social Affairs Service)
UBE	Universal basic education
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ZIP	Zona de Influência Pedagógica (Pedagogical Influence Zone)