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Community involvement in Mozambican school management

Sacatucua, Somao Carlos Capece

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN MOZAMBICAN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

BY

Simão Carlos Capece Sacatúcua

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management).

February, 1999

ABSTRACT

In the new democratic context of the country, with particular reference to education, the issue of community involvement in school management, is one that has received scant attention in education policy. In the view of the researcher, the issue is of critical importance at a time when education is facing developmental crises, which are not isolated from the whole spectrum of the levels of the country's development.

The purpose of this exploratory study was to generate better understanding of the issue and create greater awareness among policy-makers, education authorities and the community in general about factors that may hinder or enhance the involvement of the community in school management in Mozambique.

A qualitative research methodology was adopted, which used semi-structured interviews based on three major questions, to elicit an understanding of the research topic. The research was confined to the city of Maputo and the Province of Maputo. The population sample was made of officials in the Education Ministry, Directors of Education in the city of Maputo and the Province of Maputo, education authorities in the visited Districts and schools, teachers, students, resident community members and institutions.

In a nutshell, the results of the study indicate that, although there is a growing perception of the value of community involvement, clearer understanding of the concept is in the hands of the education practitioners.

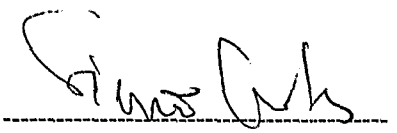
Parents commissions were generally seem as the present form of school-community interaction. Constraints of different nature were identified, but

they were generally assumed as the conjuncture of evolutionary or transitional process that the country is undergoing.

The creation of school councils in schools was the central finding as to how to improve community involvement in schools in Mozambique.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development management) in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in other university.



Simão Carlos Capece Sacatucua

February 26, 1999

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my daughter, Chelsea Olena (Mummy) born while I was away from home, in South Africa for studies, and my wife Natércia (Nina) who patiently carried out alone all the "burden" of our baby child, in the past two years.

I also dedicate this research to my mother, sisters and brothers and the rest of family for their support and encouragement.

I finally dedicate this research to my late brother, Mathias Kaphesse, who, as a teacher or education practitioner, tried to contribute with what he could throughout the liberation struggle and after the independence, for education development in the interest of the country, whom I owe my inspiration and interest in education issues.

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS AND EXPRESSIONS

EP1---------- 1st Grade Primary School (Standard 1 to 5)

EP2---------- 2nd Grade Primary School (Standard 6 to 7)

Comissão de Pais---------- Parents Commission

Conselho da Escola-------- School Council

Ligação Escola-Communidade ---------- School-Community Liaison

OPAE ---------- Political and Administrative Organisation of Schools

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

"In the short space of some quarter of a century, education in Mozambique has been dominated by diverse ideologies: traditional, religious, colonialist, collective and egalitarianist. Each was demanding, often extreme and oppressive in its own way and each has left an imprint on the planning and management of today's education system, its structures, curricula and methods. The SNE of 1983 was developed as an expression of patrimony of the State. The underlying ideology was scientific socialism and State control was entrenched in a bureaucratic centralist management system" (The Ministry of Education, February 1994, p.14).

Historically, the development of education in Mozambique can be contextualised within three different political periods. As indicated by the Ministry of Education (1997, p.2) "education development can be divided up in three periods, taking Independence (1975) as the reference year. The first period goes from 1975 to 1983; the second from 1983 to 1992 and the third from 1992 to date".

Regarding the first political period the Ministry of Education (1997,p.2) points out that this first period, "which followed National Independence, was characterised by political will to democratise access so that education became a right of every citizen. Both the political and popular will of the new government led to an enrolment explosion ".

The enrolment explosion in this period can also be assumed to be due to a popular or community recognition of the value of education, in particular the school, and the willingness or readiness of the community to participate in the education of their children and in the life of the school.

In fact, at the time of independence the illiteracy level was very high, at about 90%. The exodus of Portuguese bureaucrats and experts from the country raised the conscience of the masses, so that they saw education as essential for the development and future prosperity of Mozambique.

The perception at the time of independence, of both the government and people, was that the government was for the people, and so the unique provider of social goods to the masses. Politically, this was a period of popular participation aimed at expanding democracy. This approach is captured by the late President of Mozambique, Samora Moises Machel saying "Fazer da escola uma base para o povo tomar o poder" (July 1979) - ("Make the school a basis for the people to exercise power").

Given this context, education was seen to address the need to eradicate illiteracy and educate Mozambicans to build capacity for the challenges of the transformation and development of the country. It can be assumed that the value and the meaning of the school were in the heart of every citizen, rural and urban.

As the Ministry of Education confirms, "The ideology was new and exciting for a population with recent memories of a repressive colonialism, and the response was enthusiastic: education expanded explosively in the name of equality and equity. Educators dedicated themselves to the cause of universal education; many were assigned to teaching in the schools and teachers' colleges to contribute to nation-building" (1994, p.14).

In fact, in the early years of the Independence of Mozambique, there was not only parents and guardians involved in education, but also the community as a whole. This involvement would take different forms in urban and rural areas. It was usually done through monetary contributions (in urban areas), construction of schools and houses for teachers (mainly

in rural areas), participation in school assemblies or meetings, social and cultural events at schools, and the consolidation of the concept of "Ligacao Escola - Comunidade" (school - community liaison).

At the beginning of each academic year there were instructions and/or exhortations from the Ministry of Education emphasising the need for community involvement in school management. The concept of school-community liaison was politically instituted by the education authorities in order to promote and encourage the involvement of the communities in school affairs.

The concept of community at this time mostly referred to parents, guardians and the neighbouring population, who participated in several school programs. Socio-economic institutions did have a role, but not a very significant one, in addressing school problems. The economic power of these institutions was still picking up and, on the other hand, the issue of involvement was of a highly political nature.

"Broader" community (the population) engagement in school life can also be understood as a product of interesting experiences from the liberation struggle led by FRELIMO in Mozambique, especially experiences from the so called "liberated zones", that were becoming free of Portuguese colonial administration.

The meaning of the concept of community during the liberation struggle referred to people who were involved and liberated from the control of colonial administration, local authorities and popular socio-economic structures or organisations that were established as the struggle developed.

The conception of school organisation in those liberated zones, defended by FRELIMO politicians, was participative and involving. Communities built schools, produced food for the teachers, guaranteed secure environment for schools, etc. In turn, a school constituted a locus for community development through activities such as illiteracy and sanitary campaigns, and others.

The second period of education development in Mozambique takes place between 1983 and 1992. According to the Ministry of Education (1997, p.3), this was a period "in which the education sector confronted the most severe obstacles to its development and expansion", mainly because of the civil war in the country

Further, the Ministry of Education argues that "as the socialist dream faded in the face of internal conflict, economic depression and natural disasters, teachers and educationists, often the best of them, defected from the system in large numbers and the pool of professional expertise and dedication dwindled. As professionalism diminished, bureaucracy and administration became more dominant and finally overwhelmed the remaining populist, revolutionary zeal of the early Independence days" (1994, p.14).

This situation reduced the power and capacity of the Ministry of Education as a professional guide, resource and inspiration provider in the provision and management of education in Mozambique. Instead, "it became more and more a regulatory body, enforcing the outdated statutes, administering through a rigorous administrative code. Power became increasingly concentrated in the hands of a small elite" (The Ministry of Education, February 1994, p.14).

Indeed, the consequences of the civil war were enormous economically, and socially, for the consolidation of Independence and for the process of political and democratic transformation. Many schools were destroyed, closed or abandoned. Many teachers, students and families were kidnapped, displaced or killed.

This situation brought about the reduction of school network expansion and the scarcity of education opportunities in the country; and brought about corruption and degradation of moral values in schools. The fragmentation of the country went deeper, with distrust and "divorce" between parents, communities, schools, teachers and the whole process of education. Most interaction or contacts between school and community were reduced to those between the parents of children in a specific school. Furthermore, in most cases, interaction was initiated by schools, either for disciplinary or pedagogic reasons or to seek support to solve a specific problem in the school.

With the signature of the General Peace Accord in 1992, a new historical era for education development was launched in Mozambique. This is the third period which begun with the end of the armed conflict, "giving the way to a process of building and establishment of a new political and organisational context" (The Ministry of Education, 1997, p.3).

It was within this shift in the political scenario of Mozambique that the multi-party system was introduced, culminating in the first democratic elections in 1994. These elections determined a new political orientation and established new visions and conceptions for policies, governing structures and strategies.

One of the central debates today in the country is around the process of democratisation, and around advocating the vital role of the community or

civil society in the decision-making process, decentralisation and participatory governance. It is within this political framework that the reform of the educational system in Mozambique is taking place.

1.2 Research Problem

This research report is of an exploratory nature. It examines the issue of community involvement in Mozambican school management. The study is carried out in the light of the reform of the educational system in Mozambique in the post civil war period, from 1992.

The end of civil war in Mozambique urged the country towards new political and management directions and principles, from a centralist approach to decentralised and more democratic forms of management. This shift demanded sensitive reforms in major social development sectors such as education, health and employment.

In the education sector, new major policy guidelines are stated in the 'Educational Policy And Strategies For Implementation' document, as extracted from the 'Programme of the Government of Mozambique for 1995 – 1999'. In this document the need for community involvement in the operational responsibility and the management of education and its resources, down to the school level, are stressed as a way of democratising schools.

The Policy document states that "education is a fundamental right of each citizen and a key instrument in improving the living conditions and upgrading the technical and scientific level of workers. It is a basic means for understanding and participating in the tasks of social development, and in the struggle for peace and national development" (1995, p.6).

To pursue these intents the government set out a number of educational objectives, including the need for improving the quality of education by:

- developing relevant and feasible schemes for pre- and in-service training of teachers, with the adoption of a model which provides a good level of general and technical-professional training as well as a strong insertion of the school in the community;
- developing other forms of incentives for the teaching profession, which aim at increasing the motivation and morale of teachers, particularly by creating improved working conditions, salaries and through the construction of housing in rural areas;
- combating school failure through curricular changes which aim at making the curriculum more relevant and flexible;
- increasing efforts to ensure that school books are provided to all students through effective measures aimed at improving their publication, production and distribution;
- stimulating the involvement of private companies in the production and sale of school materials, particularly in the rural areas;
- establishing an efficient staff of inspectors and pedagogical supervisors who are institutionally linked both at central and local level. The school will be the main target of these inspectors and supervisors; and
- Strengthening the system and institutional capacity by creating local technical and administrative capacity in order to gradually introduce a process of administrative decentralisation to the local power structures and to increase the intervention of the community in the decision-making process in the school (Ministry of Education, 1995, p.6).

In this context, this research report will seek to contribute to further policy development by exploring community involvement in Mozambican school management. The following key questions will be investigated:

- **Why community involvement in school management?**
- **What is the current level of community involvement in school management?**
- **How can community involvement in school management be enhanced?**

1.3 Research Focus

As mentioned above, the focus of this research work is to explore the viability and context of community involvement in school management. The researcher will examine community perceptions of the new education policy and the need for community involvement.

Next, the research report will examine the present level of adherence and implementation of existing education policy in schools, strategies and instruments developed for the policy to be effective. This will lead to an exploration of the possible problems, conflicts and limitations of this policy implementation process.

Based on existing experience, the researcher hopes to explore how to enhance the involvement of the community by identifying possible strategies and experiences that will enhance the practical and effective implementation of community involvement in education management.

The research questions to be addressed are:

- What the perception of the community is regarding the education policy towards the need for involvement of the community in school management?
- Why community involvement in school management?
- What does community involvement mean in practical terms?
- What is the present level of the community involvement in school management?
- What are the strategies or/and instruments employed for its implementation?
- What are the problems, conflicts and limitations experienced in the process of implementation?
- To what extent will the community need to be involved in school management?
- What instruments and strategies need to be developed in order to improve the involvement of the community in school management?

1.4 Rationale for Conducting the Research

Educational researchers throughout the world have directed their attention, through publications, debates and conferences, to the issue of parents and community involvement in school r anagement. The issue is not new in the field of education, and recorded experiences exist or can be found in a range of literature, although they may differ according to specific factors different countries or environments.

With the new wave of political environment in Mozambique, which includes socio-economic changes, increased community involvement in education can be challenging.

Nevertheless, given the value of community involvement in school management and its potential impact on the efficiency and quality of education, it is the researcher's interest or wish to explore the Mozambican experience as a way for creating greater awareness of community involvement in education. From this point, strategies can be built, which will look to responding to the new context in terms of school management.

1.5 Significance of the Research

Community involvement in school management is widely understood as vital for efficient and quality education. However, in certain contexts the issue of community involvement seems to be unclear and, therefore, difficult to put into place effectively. Basically, this failure to understand the meaning of community involvement arises from questions such as: *Does community means parents who have got children in a specific school? If not who else do we refer to as community? What is a school and what does it offer to the community? To what extent the community needs to be involved, and what is the real responsibility of the community?* These are just few questions or aspects for reflection, which may affect the understanding of the value of community involvement in school management.

It is generally assumed that a school is a social product and the heart of education. Of course, schooling promotes and assists in developing favourable socio-economic conditions of a given society or country.

In Mozambique, partnership or involvement of the community is more and more in demand and significant, as the effects of economic reforms and structural adjustment, years of war and destruction are felt.

To re-establish and expand education infrastructures and school networks will require collective work. The government on no longer has the full capacity to deliver or administer education on its own.

In addition, in 1990, in Jomtien, Mozambique ratified the 'World Declaration on Education For All in the year 2000', a compromise which guarantees the universal right to a basic education for both children and adults. A better understanding of the need for community involvement is crucial in this context.

1.6 Research Structure

Chapter One constitutes the introduction to the report. It offers the background of this research, attempting to review the historical context of education development in Mozambique. It also defines the problem and the focus of this research, as well as its rationale the significance.

Chapter Two deals with a review of the literature on community involvement in school management. It tries to discuss the importance of involvement, forms and constraints of the process of community involvement.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology used for this research. It contains an explanation of how the research was conducted in terms of techniques, and covers difficulties and limitations encountered

Chapter Four presents the major findings around the key questions of the research; and Chapter Five provides a discussion of the findings. Lastly, Chapter. Six presents conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

There is no doubt that parental involvement has been greatly emphasised in the current educational debate, due to the unquestionably valuable contribution of parents to the education of their children and to the life of the school.

Examples of parental involvement or relationships between parents and schools can be found in many sources. For example, access to information, participation of parents in activities of school maintenance, and representation on governing bodies or school councils. In some cases this interaction does not only reflect on the involvement of parents in schools, but most importantly indicates the accountability of schools to parents. This is fundamental in education management because it is a way of ensuring that the efforts and contribution of parents have an impact on the quality of education of their children.

To encourage continuing changes in, and strategies for, education/school management, and recognising the merit of parental involvement, it is the intention of this research report to concentrate on community intervention or involvement in education management, particularly at school level. As the topic of this research suggests, this will take into account the fact that parents are part of the community as a whole.

The researcher uses the concept of community in a global context, referring to school parents, communities of residence, interest and need.

Communities of interest and need refer to institutions, companies, NGOs, associations, socio-cultural organisations, interested parties, as it is extensively defined by the researcher in the following section of concepts definition.

This is to support the basic foundation that a school does not only serve parents who might have children at a specific school, but a school also serves and has direct or indirect influence from the surrounding communities.

2.2 Definition of Concepts

2.2.1 Community

Many authors define the term 'community' in different ways depending on the purpose of their work. However, most of these authors assert that the concept needs clear definition.

According to Bray, (1987, p.11) "a community may be defined as a group of people who share social, economic and cultural interests". He further points out that as an overall definition it compasses different types of communities, for example, a geographic community. This type of community "refers to all the individuals living in a village, rural district or urban suburb".

For Bude, (1985, p.23) the concept of community "... designates a group of individuals who, by living together in a surveyable area, have established a specific social system of their own which is characterised as such by a particular feeling of togetherness and is considered as a political and administrative unit".

Both these definitions of community do accurately reflect the concept. However, to some extent, these definitions are of limited use within the scope of education or schools, particularly in the Mozambican school context. The definitions do not make explicit the involvement of all other groups around and separate from the school.

Although education policy in Mozambique uses the word "community", it does not define precisely what the concept means in relation to schools. For the researcher, in Mozambican context, community would not just mean individuals living in a specific area and sharing social, economic and cultural alues, or that have established a specific social system of their own and considered as a political or administrative unit.

Community as defined, broadly, would include parents with or without children in school, guardians and all other interested entities around or away from the geographical school area. These could include business institutions, production sectors, socio-cultural organisations, civic associations, national and international non-governmental organisations, religious organisations and interested individuals, etc.

As a matter of fact, if one follows the history of Mozambique, one will realise that most of the schools at different levels were named on historical, revolutionary, heroic national and international events, personalities and the merits of certain regional/localities names. For instance, throughout the country in most cases the names of schools have been intended to replace the colonial ones. To mention a few: Monornotapa (a resistance leader against the Portuguese colonialism); "25 de Setembro", "A Luta Continua", "7 de Setembro", "25 de Junho" (names related to national struggle and independence of the country); Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel (great Mozambican heroes and leaders); Julius Nyerere, Agostinho Neto (African leaders); "Murraça" (a

locality in Sofala Province), "Namaacha" (a village in Maputo Province), "Mariri" (a locality in Nampula Province).

In this context, what might happen is that, people, institutions and organisations must have been or are directly or indirectly related or associated with these names, may want to make a kind contribution towards the development of those schools. Therefore these people, institutions and organisations are in the ambit of the 'community' for that specific school, whether they are or not in the geographical area of the school.

On the other hand, school enrolment in Mozambique is not strictly based on locality of residents. It is very common to find parents enrolling their children in different areas for various reasons, including friendly links or because the school is close to their workplace and it is easy to collect their children.

2.2.2 Involvement

The term 'involvement' in much of the literature, as understood by the researcher is closely associated with the term 'participation'. The concept of involvement means making people actively participate as fully-integrated parts of a process. It promotes a sense of belonging.

The concept of involvement or participation is suggested as emerging out to the need to enhance democracy and the ability of government to respond to public needs with sensitivity and appropriateness.

According to McLagan and Nel, (1995, forward) "participation is a system of governance that requires all elements of an organisation be recognised in a common direction". Further they stress that "participation is emerging

as a powerful alternative form of governance. Of course the idea is not new. Throughout history, humanity has been moving toward increased participation" (1995, p.2).

Involvement of the community in the context of school management means a natural relationship and communication between school and the community. Of course, the school will only reflect the image of the society if a sense of ownership is developed within communities, and if democratic and participative forms are put in place.

As illustrated by MacLagan and Nel, (1995) a life in a participative organisation is sustained at two levels:

- involvement across a board spectrum of activities ranging from tactical to strategic, and
- involvement of the full array of stakeholders.

2.1.3 School

It is certain that everybody knows and recognises a school. What the researcher is not sure of is whether everybody can provide a clear definition of a school. From the researcher's experience as a teacher, 'schools' have always been defined in many ways.

For instance, a school can be defined as a centre where the teaching and learning process take place or a centre for the transmission of knowledge. These definitions are generally related to formal education taking place in schools.

Discussing the meaning of school within the framework of this research one will realise that the meaning of school is complex, because it stands as a scene of potential controversy between conflicting interests in

society. In fact, people in schools possess a variety of views, habits and behaviour, which may reflect a sample of the full range of interests and conduct characterising the wider community (Paisey, 1992).

In this context, the researcher defines a school as a pole or resource for community development, and where the formal and informal teaching and learning processes complement each other in producing the entire knowledge of the community and community education needs.

2.3 Community Involvement in School Management

2.3.1 Schools as Organisations

Changes in education management and reform are currently at the centre of attention in several countries. This trend follows general political moves towards decentralisation, democracy and participatory governance.

The concept of decentralisation within a general context represents the will of central government to share authority or power with other tiers of government structures, such as provincial, regional and local, in the whole process of governance. Decentralisation is at the top of policy agendas in many countries today, to bring the decision-making process closer to citizens, as political considerations call for efficiency and equity in the process of governance.

It is within this context that educational decentralisation constitutes one of the major focus of state policy in many countries, aiming at restructuring the education system in order to revert the provision of education to the hands of the users, that is, the community. This consolidates democracy and addresses inequalities in education.

Yusuf (1992, p.4) points out that "... the rationale for educational decentralisation can be demarcated into two broad categories, namely administrative and political. Firstly, administrative rationales are concerned with the most efficient way of delivering educational resources. It is argued that decentralisation allows for greater community participation in the provision of educational resources and as a consequence frees education from the grips of 'experts'. Secondly, educational decentralisation is argued for on political grounds. It is suggested that the decentralisation of educational administration deepens democracy by transferring power from central to the local level. As such it frees education from ideological manipulation and machinations".

A contribution to the debate on educational decentralisation in education governance by Weiler (1990) suggests three arguments: the "redistribution", referring to power sharing; the "efficiency", referring to the provision of the educational system cost-effectively, and the "cultures of learning", which refers to the decentralisation of educational content.

Those who advocate educational decentralisation suggest that, expectations of decentralisation involve mobilisation and generation of resources that are not available under more centralised systems and that decentralisation facilitates the more effective use of available resources.

Weiler (1990, p.437) points out that these expectations are "... directed particularly at the local community which, in return for a greater role in the making of educational decisions, is expected to express a stronger sense of commitment to the overall educational enterprise by generating added resources for school construction and maintenance, teacher salaries, and the like".

Democracy, as discussed currently, is a process through which an individual or a citizen exercises her/his freedom of opinion on important matters of common interest around policy and governance. Democracy suggests that every member in a community or society is equal and should be treated alike in political decision-making. "this means, firstly, that all will be included and enfranchised, and that, secondly, every individual vote will have the same value". (Hadenius, 1992, p.9)

Participatory democracy in education, particularly within the school context, can be argued to be synonymous with participation and involvement in education. This means bringing the community into school affairs in a more active process.

Many authors define governance in so many ways. However, they all tend to agree that democratic governance is a complex formal system to exercise power or authority in more interactive ways, rather than through unilateral ways of decision-making.

As Buckland and Hofmeyr, (1993, p.1) point out, "by governance we understand not simply the system of administration and control of education in a country, but the whole process by which education policies are formulated, adopted, implemented and monitored. Governance is an issue not only at the national level but also at every level of the system down to the individual school".

Indeed, in the school context, governance represents a paradigm shift from unilateral decision-making, which was institutionalised in the school principal, to a more democratic, participative and interactive process of decision-making with the community and other stakeholders.

In the process of these changes in education management special attention is focussed on school management. This is because people may view schools as small entities of education structure and easy to run. However if schools are understood as organisations, then, it is clear that they are not easy places to run.

Schools are potential centres of controversy between conflicting interests in society. This situation exposes the schools to constant criticisms, particularly of teachers. Of course, a large number of young people in schools share varied of views, habits and behaviour, which may reflect a sample of the full range of interests and conduct found in the wider community. This makes schools complex organisations to run. (Paisey 1992).

Paisey (1992, p.7) referring to Emmet (1967, p.184) indicates that "the management of a particular organisation must take into account all the behaviour which characterises the group of people concerned. This includes behaviour, which is wanted, and that which is incidental or unexpected. Organisation consists of networks of relationships between people acting and reacting on each other, sometimes in accordance with intended ways of furthering the purpose of the organisation".

It is on the basis of this perception of schools that current policies in education management advocate participatory management and the increasing need for intervention or involvement of the community in the decision-making process in the school, so that they ensure effective schooling for the community.

Davies, *et al* (1990, Introd.) suggest that "the central task of schools in the decade is to provide effective education through curriculum provision to all our children. Management, however, does not just concern itself with

organising an effective curriculum and its delivery. There are a large number of management activities which must take place to ensure that this learning process is successful".

Clark (1996, p.9) argues that "at the heart of all education systems is the school". Thus, education can be defined as science, technology, development and healthy transformation of a society. The school as the principal agency of education, is a learning organisation, and of course deals with the dynamic transformation and development of human beings. It studies and responds to environmental changes.

The South African Department of Education (December 1996) indicates that learning organisations see changes as a dynamic. They understand them as their organisational ethos, which are used for individual and collective learning as part of their mission.

As pointed out by Clark (1996, p.9) "the educational environment is now more mobile and less insular, with pupils frequently moving beyond the school to learn about neighbourhood, the region and wider world". This clearly leads one to conclude that for genuine education, there is a strong need for community engagement in the learning process.

Learning organisations constitute centres for reflection, development of capacities and innovation, which provide competencies for generating and using resources effectively, to improve the quality of teaching and learning (South African Department of Education, December 1996).

Clark (1996, p.9) defends the argument that "schools cannot exist at all without embracing at least some features of a 'learning community'". He asserts that by making schools effective learning communities there will be a solid transformation of education, guaranteeing the survival of the

species. Clark goes on to say "if, however the survival of our species does depend on a synthesis of community and education, the schools, above all, are the places where such a task must be addressed".

2.3.2 WHY COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The experience of recent years in education management has increasingly led to a concern over the issue of community involvement in school management. Although the issue is not new, some literature suggest that the topic has become more important than it has been before, because of economic depression and increased demand for education world-wide. This interpretation sounds objective and applies to the Mozambican context of education development.

Several education theorists strongly believe that education is solely a social product, of which the school is the heart. Therefore, the involvement of the community down to school level is imperative for development to take place in the right direction, and in order to boost the economy towards equitable provision of education.

According to Clark (1996, p.56) "Education needs community because without it learning becomes a lifeless, impersonal and functional affair. Without community, education loses nourishment, energy and impetus. Further, he goes on to explain that "If we are to bring community as a quality of life to bear on the education system, it is imperative that we transform all educational institutions, not least schools, into learning communities".

In the researcher's understanding, education debates currently support increasing involvement of the community in school affairs. This growing call for school and community relations can be assumed to be a product of

cultural changes, and new and critical problems that schools are facing today, in the context of democracy, which require new and clearer principles of school management and directions on the development of school and community relation programmes.

Referring to Watkins (1986), Rizvi (1987, p.3) believes that "a certain tension exists between the traditional concept of administrative leadership and the notions of community and educational administration currently being developed". Rizvi goes on to state that "the traditional concept of administrative leadership represents an acceptance of a range of values which include bureaucratic control and hierarchical accountability, and that these values are incompatible with values of collaborative decision making and community-based educational improvement".

This constitutes the object of the educational changes towards making the educational bureaucracy more responsive to the democratically expressed wishes of the community. The genuine devolution of authority and responsibility to the school and community, and collaborative decision-making will create the basis for the ideological trust of the Ministerial papers or instructions.

Rizvi, (1987) supports the views of those who advocate democratic participation in education, believing that communities are served best when decision-making is decentralised. Of course, as emphasised by Kindred *et al* (1976, p.4) "...the educational enterprise....is one of shared ownership. Each citizen in the community holds the status of part of owner in the schools". They further indicate that "shared ownership carries with it responsibilities on the part of citizens as well as those who administer the schools".

Through community involvement in school management, citizens come to know the school first-hand, and they benefit from legitimate opportunities to raise questions, obtain information, express ideas, consider proposals, and take positions on critical issues. Involvement will also allow them to become part of the decision-making process that keeps up with social change and brings about educational change (Kindred, et al, 1976).

These insights clearly suggest that there is compatibility between school and community systems. This means, "...since reality is socially constructed, knowledge which represents an interpretation of that reality or is based on direct experience must be specific to the society in which it develops. Consequently, the basis of school knowledge should be community knowledge". (Taylor, and Mulhall, 1997:21)

In fact, if the community is brought into the school life and actively participates, this can offer a great opportunity for the teachers to discuss, together with students and interested adult community members, problems that can surface in the classroom and in the school.

For instance, Bude, (1995, p.177) in support of this, argues that "particularly in pratical subjects (handicraft and agriculture) and in those subjects in which the locality is the point of departure for activities, the work of teachers should be supplemented by suitable members of the community and the local significance of the selected topic should be clarified to the pupils and parents".

This implies that community recognition of the school will be granted through efforts towards a compromise between national interests and a centralistic school administration on the one hand, of the local interests, and those of the users on the other (Bude, 1985).

2.3.3 Forms, Degree and Range of Community Involvement

Community involvement in school management is a solid principle or strategy to bring about partnership in the delivery of education at school level. This being a difficult task, Shaeffer (1996, p.70) suggests five pre-requisites for facilitating involvement or partnership at all levels, as follows:

- openness and adaptability: of schools in relation to other programs and processes, to non-formal approaches to education, and to accountability to parents, community organisations, the private sector and NGOs; and of bureaucracy to input from lower levels of the system, and from other development sectors;
- collaboration and participation: across and among various stakeholders, based on the belief that they have something useful to say about education;
- devolution of control down the system to promote greater local autonomy and empower local administrators and heads;
- transfer of responsibility out to other sectors, parents, community associations and NGOs; and
- development of a new hybrid balance of power among various partners in education: assuming more the position of facilitator and enabler of participation of other levels and stakeholders.

On this base, Shaeffer, (1996, p.71) also suggests that this could be developed in throughout the degree of participation and range of collaboration. He indicates that the degree of participation ranges from:

- complete non-participation and exclusion from school affairs, except in the provision of resources; through
- assistance at home with motivating children and helping them with homework; to participation

- as 'audience' and passive supporters at school-run meetings or assemblies;
- as 'consultants' on school issues;
- as 'partners' in teaching and learning;
- as implementers of delegated powers, and ultimately
- as citizens or a community in control of the school.

The range of collaboration involves:

- assessment of educational conditions, needs, priorities and resources
- policy-making and governance – the setting of school goals and the planning of school programmes.

This view is supported by Seddon (1994,) who suggest that the community appear in schools "in five distinct guises":

- *The community as an object of educational provision*;
  Seddon's argument here is that schools should reflect different community needs. He stresses that, in this context the notion of 'community' becomes complex, if one takes into account that some students require special programs and schools are not homogeneous in terms resources and staff.
- *The community as a source of resource, which the school can tap* – Due to the fact that the community is the object of educational provision, this should ensure that schools are resourced accordingly through active involvement.

- *The community as a source of aspirations, which are to be taken up and addressed by the school*;

Schools' vision and mission should interpret aspirations and needs of the community.

- *"Schools account to the community at the local level and at the State level. School councils monitor performance and report to the school community and the Minister;*
- *"The community as the school council* - "the council becomes the agency for community decision-making".

  The point made here by Seddon is that, for effective interpretation of community interests and needs, decisions that go into schools should come from the community.

In practical terms, literature and experiences in education reveal that community involvement in school management can take different forms. The most common practices take the form of:

- school boards;
- governing boards;
- school councils;
- school management committees; and
- PT(S)As (Parent – Teacher (Student) Associations).

In theoretical terms, it is not always easy to draw a distinction between these organs through which community involvement takes place. The literature tends to show that, in many cases, these terms are used interchangeably, and their responsibilities also tend to overlap.

For instance, Godden, (1996, p.21) indicates that school boards "represent the legally constituted executive powers of the school community; they are the implementing authority with enhanced powers, especially in education systems where school-based management has been introduced".

Nkata, (1996, p.192), asserts that governing bodies do have several responsibilities. He quotes a commonwealth publication (1993), indicating a list of functions of governing bodies, as follows:

- to ensure that the school is conducted so as to provide educational services in accordance with the provision of relevant educational laws;
- to develop and control the general policy of the school;
- to hold meetings regularly ... to discuss despatch of the school' business;
- to prepare the school's annual budget, for approval and submission to the relevant education authorities for the provision of government grants;
- to ensure that all funds of the school are properly managed;
- to hold annual survey of the school to verify its physical operation in relation to financial expenditure; and
- to hold the head of the school responsible for effective operation of the school, and to ensure that information is provided to the board to enable it to make informed decisions.

A careful reading can illustrate that what is stated in Godden's definition of a school board and what is suggested by Nkata as governing board responsibilities, generally express the same functions or responsibilities.

2.3.4 Constraints and Challenges of Community Involvement

The increasing debate on the concept of community involvement in the school management constitutes a clear indication of a desire to establish democratic bases to empower communities and to decrease central government responsibilities for school matters.

Nevertheless, the process of educational decentralisation poses considerable challenges, which can negatively influence the process of involvement in school management. Of course, the context of community involvement can be assumed to be closely affected by its political, ideological, economic and current historical context.

Community involvement programmes in the process of educational decentralisation face substantial difficulties, theoretically and in terms of implementation. Many authors characterise these difficulties in a number of ways. For instance, Weiler (1990, p.439) identifies three key features, summarised as follows:

1. "the notion of decentralisation, as redistribution of power, seems largely incompatible with the manifest interests of modern state in maintaining effective control and in discharging some of its key functions with regard to economic production and capital accumulation".

2. "decentralisation, as a means to enhance the efficiency of educational governance by both generating additional resources and using available resources more effectively, seems to have some potential (especially where the utilisation of resources is concerned), But also

appears to depend on premises which, when studied more closely, are rather precarious".

3. "lastly, the notion of the context and contents of learning as a means to recognise the diversity and importance of different cultural environments in one society is generally considered meaningful and valid. At the same time, however, it encounters the conflicting claims for a kind of learning that is less geared to the specifics of cultural contexts and more to the national and international universalities of dealing with modern systems of technology and communication".

The latter view is clearly seconded by Sayed (April 1992), who agrees that decentralisation allows for greater recognition of cultural differences. However, on the other hand, it may hinder "the acquisition of universal competencies that are transferable across region and units", due to the fact that the "advent of the technological era requires the standardisation of skills and competencies".

Shaeffer also indicates the existence of constraints in the process towards stronger community partnership in education. He argues that "first, in any bottom-up system, there is often a lack of clarity in terms of who is actually the "bottom". Also, the so-called "community" is often not unified but, rather, is riven by social, political, cultural and economic heterogeneity and driven by self-interest of local elite" (1997, p,227).

Further, Shaeffer elaborates that partnership is never cheap. It requires resources from the community and family, which in most of the cases does not happen because of the poverty which relegates them to passivity. More interestingly is that, given the gross disparities in the distribution of resources and wealthy in many developing countries,

decentralisation of education may further disadvantage the already disadvantaged and exacerbate class difference (Sayed, 1992).

The assumption for this situation is that decentralisation reduces or frees the state from the responsibility, and can generate a number of constraints within the potential partners such as lack of skills in collaboration, organisational and administrative obstacles to the required changes and resistance to change from individuals and institutions, for an effective provision of education (Sayed, 1992).

Shaeffer (1997) also considers school-community partnership as problematic because of the conflicts that may occur between different traditional, political and cultural norms, and suspicions that may exist between government and 'civil society'.

'Studies of Education Reform: Parent and Community Involvement in Education' (1995) also reveals a number of trends and factors that can negatively influence parent and community involvement in school management. The key factors refer to diversity within the systems, which involve families, communities and culture and economy; and perceptions, attitudes, and common goal.

As indicated by the above research, as families, communities and cultural and economic systems change this also implies changes in the roles and responses of parents, schools and communities; and "that perceptions, attitudes and beliefs differ dramatically among the constituents of schooling".

Further, factors related to the school setting itself that may inhibit involvement and skew perceptions of parents and community are also indicated in the above research. These factors can be schools that are

departmentalised or very large; schools located in areas that are not easily accessible or are perceived to be unsafe, or that are confusing in their physical layout; and curriculum that surpass the skills level of students.

Research on primary schools, local community and development in Africa by Bude (1985) (reporting responses from primary school teachers in Cameroon) points out that the following factors result in a lack of participation: low incomes and the financial burden of payment of tuition fees and other contributions for school; no willingness to make additional financial contributions; the perception that funds raised in the community should be used for other self-help projects, and the maintenance of the school should be the responsibility of the state or church authorities; the rejection of the school, because school leavers leave the community.

A very important factor in terms of negative impact of community involvement in schooling has to do with the involvement process itself. Studies in education governance have shown that the concept of community involvement or participatory governance in education have considerably affected the process of decision-making due to the complex nature of bureaucratic and consultative processes.

For instance, Nkata and Thody (1995, p.12) quoting Skelcher (1930) in reference to community involvement, argue that "involvement and empowerment ...[are] ... threatening to the hierarchies, routines and negotiated order of the organisation. They involve inviting, supporting and encouraging people from outside the agency to have a say in determining which services are provided in what ways ... the process is about people who are not employees or even specialists ... having a real effect on the review, design, and monitoring - and perhaps delivery and management".

If innovation and change have to take place for the benefit of the community that schools serve, and to promote democracy, participation, and involvement of the community in the decision-making process in schools, there is a need to empower educationalists and the community with knowledge and skills for an effective participation and power to take action.

2.4 Conclusions and Insights from the Literature Review

Lessons learnt from the literature on the subject have provided a profound and clear understanding of the relevance of community involvement in school management. The primary relevance of community involvement in education is based on the notion that there is no education without community.

The general perception from the literature review also revealed that the increasing call for stronger community involvement in school management, particularly in developing countries, is due to two main factors. The first one is economic, due to a shortage of resources available for education provision. This context requires education authorities to develop collaboration or closer partnership in addressing education development problems. The second is political as part of the decentralisation process. Decentralisation, in principle, results in democratisation through the introduction of participative forms of school governance, following processes of political transition taking place in many countries, including Mozambique.

Since effective involvement of the community in its different forms and levels is not cheap, the literature review reveals that decentralisation may

affect the equity in the provision of education. Existing disparities in terms of resources and wealth distribution, skills, organisational and administrative capacity are often reinforced unless the state intervenes on behalf of the most disadvantaged communities.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. 1 METHOD

To ensure that data gathered for research work is relevant, specific and meaningful is not a simple task. However, depending on the research area and objective, the researcher is required to decide on flexible techniques and procedures, which can elicit high quality data for the research work.

Seliger and Shohamy (1989, p. 23) suggest that "research methodologies may be determined by such factors as the philosophy of the researcher, the theory motivating the research, and objective factors such as the conditions under which the research is being conducted and the question being investigated".

The objective of this research was to explore the issue of community involvement in Mozambican school management, which is recommended in the Education Policy document. Policy in its nature is a long cyclical process and the realisation of its impact often requires time. This exploratory research report constitutes part of the contributions to the process of policy formulation and implementation in education, by exploring the possible constraints related to community involvement. In this stage it constitutes a form of problem definition with a view to enhance strategies to secure involvement.

The major purpose of this research report was to contribute to the development of awareness regarding the issue of community involvement in school management and to reflect on an effective realisation of the concept of community involvement in Mozambican school management.

Given the nature of this exploratory and qualitative research, and given time constraints as part of the limitations of this research, the method used here was based on interviews. The interv. ws were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews were used as the methodology for this research to ensure more freedom for both interviewer and interviewees and enough opportunity to the interviewees to express their feelings and ideas. Of course, the intention was to explore and capture general perceptions of the people in general.

As advanced by Seliger, and Shohamy, (1989, p.167) the semi-structured interview "consists of specific and defined questions determined beforehand, but at the same time it allows some elaboration in the questions and answers".

Cohen and Manion (1989, p.307) suggest that the research interview is "a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation". Further they indicate that the interview can be conceptualised in three ways:

- the interview as a potential means of pure information transfer, as long as the interviewer is confident and the interviewee is sincere and motivated;
- the interview as a transaction, which inevitably has bias, which is to be recognised and controlled, meaning that those who are involved in an interview perceive the situation in a particular way; and
- the interview as an encounter necessarily sharing many of the features of everyday life.

However, a number of weaknesses can be attributed to the interview research method. Subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer are an example of this. To add, Cohen and Manion (1994) identify the following as weaknesses with the interview methodology:

- there are many factors that inevitably differ from one interview to another, such as mutual trust, social distance and the interview's control.
- the respondent may well feel uneasy and adopt avoidance tactics if the questioning is too deep.
- both interviewer and respondent are bound to hold back part of what it is in their power to state.
- much of the meaning which are clear to one will be relatively opaque to the others even when the intention is genuine communication.
- it is impossible, just as in everyday life, to bring every aspect of the encounter within rational control.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was based on semi-structured interviews administrated to the several education stakeholders in the city of Maputo and Maputo province. The initial targeted population sample of 58 was distributed as follows:

- Ministry of Education: two (key) officials;
- Maputo City Education Authority: one (key) official;
- Maputo Province Education Authority: one (key) official;
- Six schools, two from city of Maputo and four from Maputo Province. The population sample was equally distributed between the six schools as follows: Students - two from each selected school ; teachers - two from each selected school; School management team - one from each selected school;

- Community of residents around the selected schools - six from the city of Maputo and twelve from Maputo province;
- Community of interest and need (institutions and organisations) around the selected schools - two from the city of Maputo and four from Maputo province

In the field, either on recommendation or due to bureaucratic procedures, other elements were incorporated to this population sample. On the other hand, due to a number of limitations, as outlined in the research limitations section, the initial intended population sample of 58 was reduced to 44, distributed as follows:

- Ministry of Education:
  The National Planning Director
  The Director of the National Institute for Education Development
  The former Director of the National Institute for Education Development

- The City of Maputo:
  Education Authority: The Director of Education

Schools:

1. "25 de Setembro" Primary School

Participants: The director of the school
Two teachers
Malhangalene Health Centre
Shoprite supermarket
Three resident community members

Students were not interviewed due to their young age.

2. "Josina Machel" Secondary school

Participants: Pedagogic Deputy Director

One teacher

Three students

The Museum of Natural History

Two resident community members

- Maputo Province:

  Education Authority: The Provincial Chief of Pedagogic Department - Provincial Directorate

  Schools:

  1. "Magode" Primary school

  Participant: The Director of the school

  The Deputy Director of the school

  Two teachers

  Two students

  Three resident community members

  2. "Namaacha" Secondary school

  Participant: The Director of the school

  One teacher

  Two students

  One resident community member

  - These two schools are from the Namaacha district. Because the district village is small and schools are not very far from one to another, the researcher decided to interview two institutions only: the Libombo Hotel and a shop of general commerce.

  3. Primary School of "EP1"

Participants: The Director of the school
Two resident community members

4. Primary School of "EP2"
Participants: A representative of the school directorate
One resident community member

- These last two schools are from the Boane district. Students were not interviewed due to their young age. Teachers did not participate because they simply avoided the interview.

In order to meet the research objectives the interview selection criteria were based on different techniques. This took into consideration the fact that the population sample presented different types of people and institutions.

This research report used selection criteria of education authority officials, school management and institutions or organisations based on purposive sampling. Purposive sampling refers to procedures directed toward obtaining a certain type of element. In other words, purposive sampling involves selecting specific units of interest (Dane, 1990).

Financial and transport considerations formed part of the limitations of this research. The selection of schools was based on accidental sampling (researcher's convenience) within the researcher geographical area of residence (Maputo City) and accommodation while on a study visit (Maputo province).

Initially, students, teachers and resident communities were to be selected on simple random sampling. Simple random sampling is unsystematic

technique that offers equal opportunity in the selection process. Dane (1990, p.297) argues that "basically, simple random sampling involves identifying every element in the sampling frame and choosing them on the basis of any planned process that also ensures that every element has an equal opportunity of being selected".

The reality in the field dictated a different procedure from the researcher, in terms of techniques. Of course, during the research process, some schools were functioning and others were on break. To avoid organisational problems and to save time, the school managers took over the selection criteria. They brought the interviewees to the researcher, selected on base of a purposive or accidental sampling.

The researcher was required to abandon the initial random sampling criteria, to select resident communities, to accidental sampling. It was not as easy to gain collaboration from the people in terms of their availability for the interviews, as the researcher had initially thought.

Some targeted interviewees seemingly did not understand the nature and the objective of this research. The general perception was that the research was a political issue, which many had no interest in. This will be discussed in the interpretation as it impacts on the feasibility of community involvement.

3.3 Method of Data Analysis

Due to the qualitative nature of the research, the researcher adopted descriptive techniques to analyse the data. The researcher analysed and summarised the tapes and notes from the semi-structured interviews, according to the themes of this research, which basically involved three

central questions. Responses to the interview questions were summarised according to relevance and objectivity and tendency.

3.4 Limitations

The researcher was aware that in conducting this research various constraints would be encountered. Time, transport and financial constraints, were the crucial constraints. These issues limited the scope of this research to the city of Maputo and Maputo province, which, probably, do not reflect a national spectrum of the problem. The initial and ideal intention of the researcher was to visit other parts of the country (urban and rural) which might have provided better results.

Also taken as a limitation is the feeling that within certain communities, teachers and students had little knowledge or information about the issue and efforts regarding the involvement of the community in school management. This resulted in poor quality and limited interviews, which might have affected the richness of the research.

Several interviewees did not want to be recorded. The researcher believes that note-taking while interviewing might have resulted in the loss of rich and important information.

The translation of the semi-structured interview questions into Portuguese might have affected the original meaning of the questions. However, it is the researcher's belief that it did not affect the overall intended objectives of this research.

No less important, is the fact that the gap between the initial population sample and the final one was caused by unwillingness of some of targeted interviewees. They simply did not want to be interviewed. Answers such

as the following were very common: "*não tenho nada a dizer*" *(I don't have anything to say), "não tenho filho nesta escola, por isso, não tenho nada a ver com esta escola" (I don't have a child in this school, therefore, I have nothing to do with this school); and "O governo é que sabe" (the government knows)*

The researcher associated this behaviour with a high rate of abstention during the first local election in Mozambique on June 30, 1998. General comments indicated that people are unhappy with political processes and debates in the country. A lack of participation would indicate to politicians the disappointment of the people.

This research might have been taken as one of those political processes, and so, some people did not want to participate. Politically, this constitutes a point not to be undermined.

CHAPTER FOUR: KEY FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research results captured through semi-structured interviews will be reviewed and analysed. The results will be presented in a framework based on the three key questions suggested for this research work:

- why community involvement in school management?
- what is the current level of community involvement in school management?
- how can community involvement in school management be enhanced?

The subjects of this research were education practitioners (from the Ministry of Education down to school level), students, resident communities and institutions around the selected schools, as described in Chapter 3.

The researcher's strategy for presentation of the results will be to examine respondents' common views. Where these views were found to be different, the views and opinions expressed by different respondents are indicated.

4.2 Why Community Involvement in School Management?

This research attempts to describe different phases of Mozambican education development and management, and the modes of community involvement during these phases. The new political context, after the

introduction of the multi-party system in 1992, opened up a new phase in education development and management in the country. This phase demanded policy reformulation and greater democratic and participatory governance of education down to school level.

It is within this historical context that democracy and participatory governance, as a result of political changes, were generally found to be one of crucial factors for educational policy reform, towards community involvement in school management.

Indeed, there is general consensus that the policy move towards community involvement in school management is enjoying an increasing acceptance in communities. They understood the value of education and schooling for their own children and for the country's development.

However, it was found that certain community members were quite reluctant to understand this policy shift. They perceived education and school management as the exclusive responsibility of the government, represented by the Ministry of Education.

The respondents shared generally positive views on the need for community involvement in school management. There was a general understanding that the community has to be involved because the school is part of the community itself.

The respondents asserted that education, good moral values and attitudes are initially developed at home, in the family, and that the function of the school is to formally continue with education provided at home, and to prepare the children scientifically and technically for life and for the development of the general community.

The respondents expressed the opinion that the deterioration of the general situation in schools can be better addressed not just with parents involvement, but with the involvement of the community at large.

According to one respondent "there are many problems in our schools. There is robbery, problems with teachers; teachers ask for money from parents; there is no longer trust in teachers; many children fail at the end of the year; there are no longer moral and cultural values; many drop out. This happens because most of us as parents or members of the community are not interested to know what is going on in our schools. We always say, "the government knows, it is their responsibility" (translated from Portuguese).

Another community member indicated that "there is a necessity for us as community to participate and give our great contribution to schools because they serve us as well as our children" (translated from Portuguese).

All institutions visited shared the view that there is a need for their involvement in school affairs, though these institutions are generally much more business oriented. They supported their involvement because they have realised the value of a school, as a centre for the transmission and development of skills for employment and life.

They further stressed that their institutions and others benefited from school education. They pointed out that they have children in schools, and that the school itself is a source for future employees. Therefore, there is a great need for community or institutional involvement to minimise the difficulties that parents and schools face, and for better quality of education. In addition, institutions manage different kind of resources that can be useful for the improvement of school conditions.

Visited institutions stressed that the present status of involvement, which is characterised as non-existant or spontaneous and unstructured, was explained as deriving from the absence of clear mechanisms and initiatives for involvement from the interested parties.

Education officials or practitioners of education who were much more familiar and close to educational reforms and policy development, proved well informed about the need for community involvement in school management.

They argued that community involvement in school management is not an isolated experience in Mozambique, but a universal strategy in education. Community involvement in school management constitutes a philosophy of education, given its nature as a social process, which is not just limited to the transmission of knowledge through the interaction between teacher and student in the classroom.

According to education officials, the concept of education goes beyond the boundaries of a school as an organised institution for transmitting knowledge in a formal way. It becomes a social phenomenon where the knowledge and system of values transmitted to students do not simply mean those activities done by teachers in the classroom.

This meant, as pointed out by a respondent, that "in a society, such as Mozambican society, with its level of poverty and illiteracy, the social function of a school is not just to instruct children; it also has the function of transmitting the system of values that will contribute to community development" (translated from Portuguese).

The National Director of Planning in the Ministry of Education, inc ed by an expression of the late President of Mozambique, Samora Machel – *"A educação é tarefa de todos nós." (Education is the task for all of us)* supported the need for community involvement in the school management because *"the school is in the community; it is part of the community; and the problems of the school are of the community and vice-versa"* (translated from Portuguese).

The Director of Education in the City of Maputo, in support argued that "we need the community to be involved because the school belongs to the community and is for the community" (translated from Portuguese).

On the other hand, another respondent, the former Director of the National Institute for Education Development in Mozambique, indicated that at present the presupposition of community involvement is *"not necessarily just involvement as such"*, but *"is due to the fact that the state on its own cannot fulfil what is stated in the constitution that education is the right of the citizen"* (translated from Portuguese).

Generally, the view of education officials was that, in the process of decentralisation, the school should no longer simply be a representative agent of the Ministry of Education. The school should be a place for community learning, where the school functions as a project of community development; to teach what is the national reality, but also what the communities themselves want their children to develop.

In fact, it was recognised that, from the pedagogic point of view, the teaching and learning process involves teachers, students, parents, guardians and others interested in education. Therefore, the dialogue resulting from the community-school-community interaction constitutes a

healthy environment in which to address problems that may occur in the school.

Thus, in real terms, community involvement in school management means active and direct participation of the community in the process of school management affairs. However, it was admitted that there would be some specific activities that will still rely on the education experts.

In short, the general view of the respondents is that there is a need for community involvement in school management because this constitutes an indicator of community existence, and community development. Respondents also acknowledged that community involvement brings about the consolidation of democracy and participative forms of school governance within the whole process of decentralisation.

No less important, it was generally assumed that the economic power of the government on its own at present could not guarantee the right of every citizen to the provision of education. Taking into account the dimensions of poverty in Mozambique, it was also assumed that government could not on its own accelerate the provision of better quality education.

4.3 What is the Current Level of Community Involvement in School Management?

Considering the concept of community as defined for this research, the findings show that community involvement at present was an expression of a wish or good intents in Mozambican school management. Basically, what was found, as a general practice in Mozambican schools was the intervention at school level of parents and guardians, not the community at large.

As acknowledged by the Chief of Pedagogic Department in the Provincial Directorate of Education in Maputo Province "the level of community involvement is very low. We are working at district and school levels, where we stress the need for stronger involvement of the communities in school management. What we would like to see is that the school falls under the communities responsibility" (translated from Portuguese).

According to a teacher's point of view, "the issue of community involvement in our schools, generally, is an expectation. There is still a vague perception in the community as well as in the Ministry of Education. None of these have managed to make this interaction effective yet" (translated from Portuguese).

The National Director of Planning in the Ministry of Education argued that the issue of community involvement today should be discussed at two levels:

- urban and the peripheries, and
- rural.

The urban area is characterised as the centre of 'middle class' concentration. Members of this class are concerned with giving better education to their children. Therefore, they would not mind doing or giving whatever necessary in terms of resources or monetary contributions to the school. For example, they create a system of accountability as a means of control, where a group of parents become school fund managers. "3 de Fevereiro" Primary School in the city of Maputo was cited as a good example of this experience. Unfortunately, as indicated above, it does not yet involve the broader community around the school.

In the periphery of the city there are certain groups of society, that are unresourced and that have low-income to make a contribution to

education. The tendency is to stay away from school, and to be reluctant to make any contribution.

In rural zones, the situation is different. There is no money to contribute with but, instead, there is enormous potential in terms of labour as a form of contribution. This labour potential is well known and visible in government and NGO projects for school network extension. Various examples illustrate that rural communities are involved in activities such as fabricating bricks, fetching water, organising wood, and so on. In some areas, this experience of involvement is extended to management of the school, for instance, by participating in planning activities, protection and in the resolution of social problems.

These experiences are carried out in different ways and at different levels, depending on the particular school, the approach of the school director, the school location, and local administrative and traditional authorities.

For instance, an article in the daily newspaper printed in Maputo, "*Notícias*" (1999, January 21) reported: "the government of Machaze district in Manica Province was happy with the positive collaboration provided by the traditional authorities of that region in accomplishing its governing program, with special reference to the process of school network extension, maintenance of road access and in others that fall within the five years of the government of the day plan" (translated from Portuguese).

Specific examples in education were reported in the article. In reference to the Director of Education in Machaze district the article reads: "through the chieftancy, the local population participate actively in the construction of new classrooms, houses for teachers using local available material and

logistic support, in the first four months, to the new contracted staff." (translated from Portuguese)

The article continues "the chieftancy supports education authorities by identifying zones in need for new classrooms ... in this process the population and traditional authority participate voluntarily, without demanding any remuneration". (translated from Portuguese)

Another example cited in the newspaper, referring to the Director of Education in Machaze, reads: "in Mavue, along the border with the region of Mangura in Gaza Province, the community built some 'barracks' which are functioning as classrooms, but paradoxically, 'we don't have teachers to correspond to the initiative' (quoting the director)" (translated from Portuguese).

An interesting aspect pointed out by respondents regarding community involvement in rural areas has to do with the gender issue. It was indicated that women's participation has been very active in these areas. The explanation behind this was that in rural areas the man is the provider of family sustainability. Men are often out at work or on informal business.

Generally, the concept of community involvement in Mozambican schools is not new. Respondents, especially the education officials, indicated that the present status of community involvement reflects, to some extent, the whole process of transformations the country is undergoing. According to the respondents, the notion of community involvement in Mozambican schools was an experience from the liberation struggle.

In liberated zones the community was encouraged and actively participated in the operational and management issues of schools. They built school and houses for teachers and provided food for them, and

assisted the school authorities in issues of management such as planning and counselling.

As emphasised by the Director of the National Institute for Education Development in Mozambique, "the breaking out of the national liberation struggle and the consequent appearance of liberated zones, gave birth to new ways of life, where problems and life needs were looked at globally, and the school became an instrument of the community" (translated from Portuguese).

He further indicated that "communities had space and freedom to make the school an instrument of the liberation struggle, which helped them to understand why the struggle, for what and how; an instrument of struggle for the harmonisation of social interaction, educating men and women for equal treatment in terms of gender, ethnic and tribe. The school also became an instrument of the struggle for much more self-sufficiency in terms of food production, as well as to guarantee better health for communities through the diffusion of basic agricultural techniques and sanitary education principles" (translated from Portuguese).

Supporting these views, the Director of Education in the City of Maputo emphasised that "communities in liberated zones always had a space to voice what they wanted schools to be and participated in their construction, resourcing, protection and management" (translated from Portuguese).

After political independence in 1975, as indicated by the respondents, there were attempts to consolidate these experiences as the concept of education management developed, based on theories and experiences from other countries.

As far as it was indicated by education officials, strategies or instruments employed for the implementation of these experiences were *"O Regulamento Geral da Direcção, Organização e Funcionamento das Escolas"* (The general Regulation for School Leadership, Organisation and Functioning), *Organização Politica e Administrativa da Escola (OPAE)* (Political and Adminstrative Organisation of the School) and *Tarefas Gerais e Obrigatòrias da Escola* (General and Compulsory Tasks of the school). The latter was issued annually.

These instruments were centrally issued by the Ministry of Education and implemented in all schools throughout the country. They contained a section on community involvement called '*Secção de Ligação Escola-Communidade'* (School-Community Liaison Section).

The statement on the democratisation of the school in primary education, presented by the former National Director of Primary Education at the XIV Co-ordinating Council of the Maputo City Education Directorate meeting on September 3, 1998 (at which the researcher had a privilege to be invited), indicated, quoting the 'Political and Administrative Organisation of the School', that the composition of school-community liaison commission was:

a) parents or guardians representatives, in the proportion of one representative for each class;
b) a representative from a local administrative authority (without a specified responsibility)
c) representatives of social organisations;
d) a representative from school health;
e) other representatives from enterprises and state institutions; and
f) activists. (Translated from Portuguese)

The tasks of this commission were defined as to:

- plan with school authorities, according to the annual school plan, activities that must be undertaken within the community and what, in turn, the community should do for the school;
- guide and lead literacy activities, which are not the school's responsibility;
- organise, with the pedagogic section, meetings with parents, guardians and the community;
- implement decisions formulated by the school health section;
- look after students' health and hygiene and the cleanliness of the school, in collaboration with the community, involving local political and administrative authorities;
- integrate parents and guardians in activities of maintenance, conservation and decoration of the school;
- meet every three months with the political party authority in the quarter in which the school is located; and
- meet every three months with all members of the school-community liaison commission. (translated from Portuguese)

In an implicit criticism, the Director of Education in the city of Maputo indicated that in some instances these instruments did not work effectively. "They gave so many general orientations; the capacity for realisation depended mostly on the school itself and the responses or sensibility of parents and guardians" (translated from Portuguese).

According to the respondents, with the deterioration of the socio-economic and political situation in the country, some of these experiences faded away. Although it can still be argued that there is some kind of community representation in schools today, this has simply resumed to what is called *'Comissão de Pais'* (Parents Commission). In other words, according to

respondents' views, 'Parents Commission' is the present instrument of school-community liaison. In effect the concept of community involvement today is confined to parental involvement only.

The findings showed that the "Parents Commission" differed from school to school in terms of constitution, composition and responsibilities. Differences depended essentially on factors such as the dimension, location and management approaches of the school.

In some schools, for example, the process of constitution begins with an election of *'pai turma'* (classroom father). From the total number of elected "classroom fathers", an executive body, generally, of 5 to 7 people is elected.

This body constitutes the *'Comissão de Pais'* (Parents Commission), which elects a president, who becomes *'Pai da Escola'* (the school father). As pointed out by a teacher, the 'school father' is just a symbol. He/she does not have any power" (translated from Portuguese).

In other schools, members of the 'Parents Commission' are appointed voluntarily or on merit, according to their level of participation in the school life.

Regarding the responsibilities of the 'Parents Commission', it was found that where they operate, they serve as an advisory committee to the school directorate, without any decision-making power. In some cases, 'Parents Commissions' are an instrument of intervention to solve punctual school problems, such as resources, maintenance, safety, relationship between teachers and students and others.

Many teachers reported that there is no teacher representation in the interaction between 'Parents Commission' and the school directorate. All matters concerning teachers and parents are forward to the classroom director, who reports to parents in a classroom assembly. The assembly occurs at least twice a year, at the beginning and at the end of the academic year. Occasionally informal interactions between teachers and parents do happen, usually due to the interest of both parties, to discuss matters related to the student.

It was also found that the 'Parents Commission' hardly worked effectively because people remained members of this commission only while his/her child is enrolled in a specific school. Once the child moves out, parents no longer have an interest in the school.

Respondents highlighted a number of other factors that are affecting progress towards effective community involvement. The National Director of Planning in the Ministry of Education pointed out that "our society is in a crisis of values because of the destruction of the social fabric that took place; the violent transition since Independence to the society we are building up today, often affecting what constituted the basic or pillar social structure before – it will difficult to reconstruct" (translated from Portuguese).

He went on to say that the "economic basis of our society has weakened; the internal war between brothers threatened the system of values communally accepted; what was naturally accepted yesterday by everybody is contested today; it is very normal today to hear some people saying – 'me to build a school! That is the business of the government in place' (translated from Portuguese).

Associated with this perception are a number of other aspects that hinder the process of community involvement in school management. Several respondents identified factors including:

- Lack of clarification of the concept or meaning of community involvement in school management, even in the Ministry of Education, and the absence of clear mechanisms or instruments for effective implementation.

- Low motivation in the community due to several factors such as, low performance of schools, resulting in bad results at the end of academic year, corruption in marking, involving students, parents and teachers, a situation which accentuated the distrust of schools and teachers; negative perceptions of the real value of Mozambican schools because, as pointed out by a respondent, "our schools in Mozambique are just for us who are poor; the sons of rich people or well-positioned people are not there so that their parents can help us; they are in private or international schools, or even abroad" (translated from Portuguese), and lack of transparency and accountability, especially where there are efforts for contributions from parents and community.

- Shortage or absence of economic power or resources.

- Lack of solid local authorities: with the introduction of a multi-party system in 1992 the so-called 'Grupos Dinamizadores' (dynamising groups created by FRELIMO for local administration, while a single party) lost power and, consequently, complicated the situation of local administration.

- Political mis-information from some sectors of political parties in trying to convince people that education is the exclusive task and responsibility of the government. According to a respondent, "political parties want to take advantage, instead of understanding that even countries that did not have the problems Mozambique has, the participation of the society in education is a constant activity" (translated from Portuguese);

- Lack of capacity and means for school directorates to develop initiatives towards effective community involvement.

- Interest: it was found that people are likely to relate to a particular school if they have a child or children there;

- Time constraints: people claim that they have no time for school activities because they are busy with survival activities. Those committed to Parents Commission have no financial compensation for the time they spend in school affairs.

4.4 How Can Community Involvement in School Management be Enhanced?

In spite of the factors that hinder the process of community involvement in Mozambican schools, there was a shared view that there is a need to make realistic moves towards involving the community.

To make this happen, several respondents came up with the suggestions outlined below:

- the need to devise clear mechanisms or instruments to realise this intent;

- the need to sensitise and promote in communities the value and need for their involvement in school management;
- the need for schools to take initiatives to approach and look for partnership with communities;
- the need to restructure local authorities into the new democratic ways. The first local elections that took place in the country were seen as the starting point towards reestablishment of democratic local authorities.

From education practitioners, in particular, it was found that two instruments that will assist the implementation of the community involvement policy are in the concluding phase. These are the:

- Strategic Plan for Education, and
- Primary Education Regulation, which creates *'O Conselho da Escola'* (School Council).

According to education practitioners, the school council, already being piloted in some schools, is intended to be applied to other school levels, particularly in secondary schools.

The Primary School Regulation (in chapter 16, paragraph One), states that "the school council is the highest organ of the institution and has objectives such as to adjust the school reality policy recommendations and goals centrally and locally established, as well as to guarantee its democratic, solid and co-responsible management" (translated from Portuguese).

In terms of competencies, the school council in Mozambique does not show significant differences with what is prescribed by the commonwealth as responsibilities of the governing body as indicated in the literature review.

Some of the competencies of the school council are:

- approve the strategic plan, annual plan, internal regulation and to guarantee their implementation;
- comment on the school budget proposal;
- propose at high level government, the school academic calendar in the case of specific problems such as ritual initiations, seed sowing and harvesting time;
- formulate and guarantee the execution of special programmes for family-school-community integration;
- approve annual school reports; and
- make recommendations on school staff appointments and also advise on staff expulsions.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the key research findings. This chapter provides a discussion and interpretation of the research results in the light of the insights from the literature review in Chapter Two. The interpretation will follow a framework based on the original key questions of this research:

The aim of this research was to undertake an exploratory study on the issue of community involvement in Mozambican school management, in the new democratic era, from 1992 with the implementation of a multi-party system.

It is important to note that major inputs in these research findings were provided by education authorities and practitioners. Certain members of the community did not have a clear understanding of the concept community involvement, and how to go about it. Others simply avoided the interviews, showing a kind of disappointment or frustration.

Community members reacted with answers such as *"não tenho nada a dizer"* (I don't have anything to say", *"não tenho filho nesta escola, por isso, não tenho nada a ver com a escola"* (I don't have a child in this school, therefore, I have nothing to do with this school; *"o governo é que sabe"* (the government knows). These answers implied lack of knowledge and weak education activities with communities.

The situation encountered during the interviews, although it negatively affected the normal research procedure, did not surprise the researcher. Prior to this research a small portion of a very large number of potential voters actually went to the polls in the first local elections that took place in 1998. This lack of participation followed a long campaign led by political parties in their opposition to the electoral process, with the allegations of fraud.

This limited support for participative processes may explain how some people feel insecure with certain forms of processes in the country. As a consequence, they tend to exclude themselves from certain issues of community and national interest.

5.2 Why Community Involvement in School Management?

The peace accord reached in 1992 followed by the first democratic elections in 1994 after a long civil war, opened up new forms of relationships and new responsibilities between the state and society.

In the context of education development, the past (the period post-independence) had been marked with experiences from the liberation struggle, where the concept of community involvement was initiated, and with new attempts to consolidate and improve those experiences in the light of specific and universal education development reality and theories.

Towards the second period, the growing impact of the political and economic destabilisation in early 80s and the commitment of the government to the economic structural adjustment took the country into serious crises, which obviously affected the system and structures of education. The war destroyed schools and economic infrastructures. Students and teachers were kidnapped or killed. The economic power of

the state and society weakened, and the spirit of co-operation and solidarity faded away. The concept of national unity or togetherness appeared to be questioned.

This situation led to the deterioration of the social fabric. People became selfish, and dishonesty and lack of solidarity and trust, also affected school systems. Schools were no longer seen as community assets for promoting macro-social development, but as an instrument of advancement. The notion of training of *"quadros"* (qualified professionals) through education/schools became an elite agenda, due to the shortage of school opportunities as a consequence of the war's destruction.

In the period of peace, reconciliation and reconstruction, in a new democratic context, the massification of education, national unity, participation and collaboration on issues of national interests should, once again, become the agenda of individual citizens, irrespective of plurality of thinking and different political agendas.

As McLagun, P and Nel, C (1995, p.229) point out, participation "is a socially acceptable form of governance. It is moral, it fits the prevailing democratic mood of the time". It is based on this concern that the community is being encouraged to play its role in school management.

Indeed, the research findings have clearly demonstrated that generally all interviewees held common positive views regarding the key questions of this research. Interviewees' responses indicated an increasing perception and positive attitudes toward the need for community involvement in Mozambican school management. There is an understanding that community involvement in school management can contribute to a large extent to ameliorating several problems that schools are facing at present, such as lack of resources, degradation of moral values and the culture of

learning, corruption, distrust, and others. It also constitutes an indicator that the enabling environment for effective involvement can be developed and improved.

As suggested in the findings of education practitioners, the perception of the concept of community involvement in school management really needs to be improved. There is a need to go beyond the perception that the involvement of the community in the school will just contribute to minimising or overcoming school problems. In reality, schools problems are community ones and they should be addressed together with the community.

As seen in the literature review and pointed out by many respondents, the school as an instrument of education is a social product, based in the community and existing for the community. It is an enterprise of a shared ownership, and all members of the community are part owners in the school. Therefore, it is in the interest of the community itself that becomes involved, so that the content and context of school effectively reflect community desire and interests.

MacLagan, P. and Nel, C. (1995, p.243) emphasise that "we want to think that, given an opportunity to be involved and have influence, people will be open, trusting, and trustworthy and they will act in the best interest of larger cause".

In summary, the core interpretation of what was suggested as the general view on why community involvement is important can be characterised as pedagogic, economic or administrative, and political.

The pedagogic notion of community involvement is associated with the social nature of education. This means that whatever goes into the school

curriculum and other events taking place in school and extra-murally, should reflect and enforce the community and its development. This way, schools really become learning communities, and learning will not become lifeless or impersonal and a functional affair, as pointed out in the literature review. Indeed the effectiveness of community involvement in Mozambican schools will bring about greater impetus for schooling and a better understanding of educational values.

For instance, the decentralisation of the curriculum will allow the accommodation of specific needs affecting a specific school environment, such as the alteration of school academic calendar during the agricultural season (for seed sowing and harvesting). This period normally affects the day to day running of school activities, and constitutes a cause for the high rate of drop-outs, an issue that affects many other African countries (Bude, 1985).

Decentralisation of the curriculum will also break the myth or habit of teaching only important historical facts and phenomenon that are nationally available. A lot can be taught locally in terms of history and practices, part of it oral, in parallel with national and international content. This will require open, direct and constant involvement and interaction with communities, to achieve a common objective.

Economic or administrative notion of community involvement in Mozambican schools reflects the incapacity of the government to deliver education on its own, as the right of the citizen according to the Constitution. This incapacity is partly as a consequence of instability in economic growth since national independence. This instability is, of course, a result of the Rhodesian attacks against Mozambique during the liberation struggle, led by ZANU and other liberation movements, the apartheid regime's attacks during the ANC uprising, and lastly the

domestic civil war, which considerably reduced the already scarce resources.

Another factor not to be underestimated has to do with the school population explosion. This occurred shortly after independence due to the massive spread of education. The civil war caused a great breakdown in school networks while at the same time the school population was increasing; and, without a choice, in a situation of war, the government gave more attention and financial resources to the defence sector than to social ones, including education.

Many people fled the country due to the war consequences, and many more were displaced. After the Rome Agreement in 1992, some people decided to come back into the country and, obviously, demand for schooling increased. There was a great need to rehabilitate the former schools and build up new classrooms where needed.

The shift to a market economy due to political changes implies that those who benefit from services should pay for them. It is this context of economic model that a tension is raised in relation to education provision as the right of every citizen. The recently introduced market economy in Mozambique has tended to shrink the role of the state, leading to the emerging of private schools, where the cost of education is higher. At the same time communities are demanding from the state the provision of cheap or free education.

The provision of an accessible and affordable education system that will enable the development of the country is of great concern. In addition the Constitution ensures that the government has responsibility for the provision of basic education. At the same time, the government is calling for community assistance in the fulfilment of this task nation-wide.

While the policy of community involvement tends to reflect a need to share economic costs of education, Mozambique has developed "Caixa Escolar" (school social fund) which offers free school materials to those who cannot afford to pay, in order to guarantee basic education.

The political aspect relates to the whole process of decentralisation of power down to school level, as an essential catalyst to participative decision-making. As indicated in the literature, decentralisation can deepen democracy by redistributing power, as well as enhancing efficiency through the cost-effective provision of education and rational use and management of resources.

These notions can explain that the economic incapacity of the state does not forcefully demonstrate the failure of government's performance, like some sensitive and emotional socio-political players may tend to interpret. Reflections provided here tend to show that the answer to the question 'why community involvement in Mozambican school management' is not an isolated one. It incorporates the three-fold, 'pedagogic', 'economic' and 'political', critically considered within the specific context of Mozambique.

This leads to a conclusion that government policy on community involvement today comes as social, economic and political efforts for better provision of quality education and towards the development of the country, regardless the incapacity of the state.

5.3 What is the Current Level of Community Involvement in School Management?

Research findings confirmed that, in these first five years of democratic power in Mozambique, the issue of community involvement in school management, as a system of governance, is still more a project than a reality.

The process of political transition did not allow for the immediate establishment of a conducive environment for effective involvement of the community. Ensuring a process of decentralisation, consolidating the social fabric, and rebuilding the trust of people are key priorities after the war. However, an important aspect that may have influenced the process of involvement is the unclear definition and understanding of the concept of community.

The present structure of community representation in schools is limited to 'Parents Commissions', which are basically composed of parents of children enrolled in a specific school.

The findings revealed that 'Parents Commissions' do not have any power in schools. They operate merely as an advisory instrument to the school directorate. This contributes to weak interactions with parents. The research data indicate that parents visit schools only when invited, or when they have a particular problem or a direct interest in relation to their children.

The limited nature of community involvement indicates that schools in Mozambique have yet to embrace the broader definition of community involvement at the desired level. The researcher understands from the

literature review that the product of schools does not necessarily benefit parents only. Schools constitute a centre for the development of the community as a whole, through activities such as literacy training, local meeting space, etc. For example, most of schools spaces were used for the first general democratic election in October 1994 and for the first local elections in June 1998.

There are some local forms of involvement emerging in urban and rural areas. In urban areas, parents contribute to schools with ideas and money, which is used to reinforce certain schools' budgets. Examples are present at *"3 de Fevereiro"* Primary School in the city of Maputo, as illustrated in the findings.

In rural areas, despite poverty, communities have proved that collaboration and solidarity are important for survival. Their involvement in projects such as building schools where they provide labour and part of the construction material do not constitute a burden for them. They regard the schools as theirs because the schools benefit their children, and in some rural schools the community do take responsibility or assist the management of school.

No matter how these initiatives of involvement may differ, they have a common denominator, which is participation. They constitute a solid starting point for developing broader community involvement.

Nevertheless, a number of factors were identified in the findings as obstacles that may hinder the effectiveness of community involvement in Mozambican schools. These include lack of clarity of the concept of community involvement, low performance in schools, low motivation in communities, economic disadvantages, lack of consolidated local

authorities, lack of managerial capacity in schools, political mis-information, interests and time constraints.

These factors are directly or indirectly influenced by:

- poor communication between schools and people in their localities;
- unattractive physical surroundings of schools and the low status of teachers and school directors;
- a perception of lack of power among school staff, and among parents and others in the community;
- confusion over the varying roles of 'school-community liaison commissions';
- illiteracy of a large proportion of the rural population and unrealistic educational requirements for membership of 'school-community liaison commissions'; and
- the perception of a heavy burden of responsibility for educational matters among a populace already overworked and underpaid, and lack of promotional campaigns (although even where there has been community readiness, involvement may continue to be poor). (Adapted from Coombe, C 1996:24).

Many of these factors may seem obvious in a process of change, and they are not just typical of Mozambique. For instance, the issue of negative perceptions of the value of schools was also reported in Bude's 1985 research findings about school and culture in Cameroon. Bude points out that, in developing countries, the elite group that play an important part in formulating educational policy have their children enrolled in private schools or are sent abroad.

Bude's argument is not an exception for Mozambique. It has become evident that well-positioned and advantaged people have their children

studying abroad in basic primary and secondary schools. This is a sensitive issue and can, indeed, be discouraging to communities, because those who could be playing an important role for the improvement of schooling conditions in the country may not get involved, given that they do not have children in the National Education System.

This trend provides an implicit understanding that education in Mozambique is more projected as personal advancement and that the National System of Education cannot provide satisfactory contents that can perpetuate development of communities and the country as a whole.

There is a general feeling that these factors should be treated as part of an evolutionary process, because community involvement in Mozambique should be seen as such. One senses from the interaction with the community that "many people are not fully developed emotionally, nor are they fully responsible. Some long for the protective cocoon of dependent and coercive management, while others will abuse any power that comes their way, even in a participatory system" (MacLagan and Nel 1995, p.229).

Further, some organisations tend to discourage the involvement of communities in school affairs, by advocating that the entire responsibility for education is the 'business' of the government of the day. This attitude tends to show incoherence and lack of understanding of certain organisations or community groups. It reflects the tension with respect to the need for democratisation in a context of scarce resources.

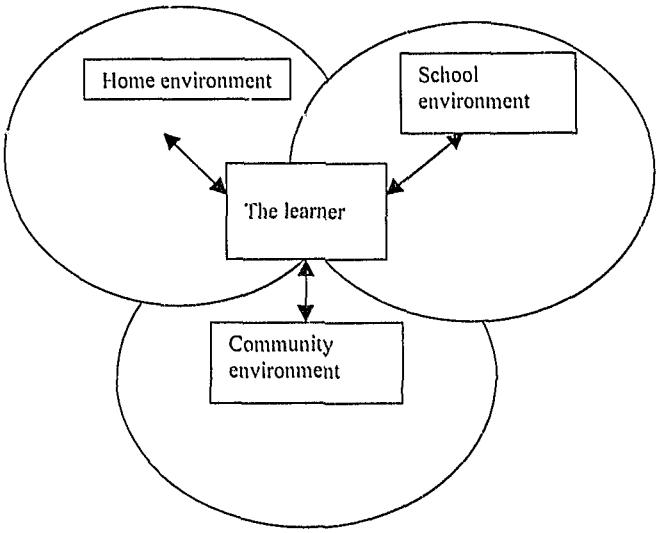
These organisations advocate democracy, which translates into participation and involvement in governance as well as decision-making process through legitimated forms, but on the other hand instigate communities to decline their involvement, while at the same time

communities continue to demand comprehensive social services. This can be dangerous political game, because, as implication, it can slow down development projects.

5.4 How Can Community Involvement in School Management be Enhanced?

The general consensus was that there is a great need for developing mechanisms that will enhance the involvement of the broader community in Mozambican schools, in order to guarantee a suitable quality education for the learners. This needs to be achieved through a curriculum, which is both universal and specific to particular situations.

This poses challenges to a school because, as indicated by Taylor and Mulhall (1997, p.23) "it has to strengthen and develop links between the school, home and community". Further they suggest that in an ideal environment, where the school reflects the image of the community, the links between school and community should take the following form:



(Adapted from Taylor and Mulhall, 1997)

This example suggests the need for a "broadly inclusive collaborative approach with regard to a shared vision, clear guidelines, agreed objectives and suitable techniques and coherent procedures, schemes, rights and responsibilities, limits and resources, processes and accountability" (Coombe, 1996:25).

The practicality of community involvement in school management would require restructuring and organisation of local authorities, and the promotion of civic education within the communities, so that they can better understand school values and school development.

Strategies proposed by education authorities, particularly the creation of school councils, should be seen as encouraging The school council, as suggested, represents a wide range of stakeholders' representation, and procedures for its members and president elections look democratic. However, the school council model does not make any reference to the representation of students, where applicable. This might not have been deliberate, because the school council sample referenced here relates to primary schools, and young school children may not be recommended to join the council.

The competencies of the school council system show that they will reinforce the responsibility and accountability of all stakeholders. However, it should be noted that the concept of community, as it is formulated in the school council, requires clarification. The legal competency of the school council, and the duration of its mandate and to whom it accounts, is not very clear.

These are some thoughts and strategies, which will encourage community involvement in school management. Objectively, the process will still

require continuous intervention of the state, and certain responsibilities will still have to remain centralised until ideal conditions are created for local school management. Of course, forms of involvement may differ from zone to zone due to regional or local development imbalances, and weak socio-economic power of the communities.

The recent Mozambican parliament consensus on the gradual local elections (the first local elections took place on June 30, 1998) explains the poor and uneven levels of the country's development. To improve these levels, there is a need for tolerance, and for hard and participative work from the entire society.

CHAPTER SIX: Conclusions and Further Research Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This was an exploratory study on the issue of community involvement in Mozambican school management. The study intended to inform and create awareness amongst policy makers and society in general, on certain aspects useful to encouraging community involvement. It is also intended to point to factors that may hinder the process, so that these factors can be taken into consideration.

The major findings of the study, indicated that there is an understanding of the value of community involvement in schools. However, there tends to be a tension between the three purposes of community involvement, pedagogic, economic and political. The community, in particular, tends to assume that the government is largely responsible. This may affect the implementation of the policy.

The community also understands that education is a means for advancement and improvement of life circumstances. It is therefore worth investment, as the country faces a number of economic and other transitional challenges. However, political transitional challenges, distortion of community values, shortage of resources and weak economic power have hampered efforts towards developing a healthier interaction of schools in communities.

The limited understanding of community involvement in the findings indicates a need to educate Mozambicans about the advantages of participation in school development. This task is complicated by a lack of

understanding about the realities of democratisation in a Mozambican context. A key to successful development will be achieving a careful balance between government intervention and community participation in social practices and services. Of course "Success requires major transformations in the way an agency performs its tasks, in the way the community relates to the agency, and in the way the society views the poor and their rights." (Shaeffer, 1991, p.23 quoting F. Korten, 1981).

The lack of a conducive environment and implementable mechanisms for involvement further affects the feasibility of the policy. There is a need to rebuild trust and the notion that schools are part of the communities and, the latter should understand schools as their resources.

This will demand the establishment of necessary and appropriate mechanisms, a clearer definition of the concept of community, development of the mission and vision of schools that reflect community needs and interests, and capacitating school managers and community members regarding participative governance. Also important will be a continuous education of masses (civic education), and the establishment of local authorities, which are not politicised.

The desirable level of community involvement should result in empowerment of communities so that they become agencies of decision-making. This will allow them to be in control of the school, assess the educational conditions, needs and resources, and set priorities according to school goals.

There is also a need to promote greater and more systematic communication, interaction and consultation among all school stakeholders and to establish formal policies or institutional norms regarding the roles and responsibilities of different players, and the

mechanisms and indicators of success in the process of school governance.

Schools should be encouraged to take initiatives towards involving communities through activities such as;

- workshops organised together with communities, in which both can perform different skills;
- cultural activities;
- different kind of voluntary campaigns (civic and sanitary education, free labour force in several activities of community interest), and others.

In giving space to emerging school councils, a mechanism proposed for the democratisation of school, it is suggested that the present structure of community involvement through 'Parents Commissions' be transformed into parent-teacher associations (PTAs). This will make flexible the interaction between parents and schools in the interest of both, and make this association one of the channels for activities of school councils.

6.2 Further Research Recommendations

Further research that could shed light on the concept of community involvement and the dynamic nature of its process is recommended. This research should examine other parts of Mozambique. This will allow for objective comparison of the levels and forms of involvement in education in urban and rural areas, in school projects funded by the government and NGOs, in aspects of gender, and other related issues. It was the intention of the researcher to have reflected a wider range of community involvement and "in loco" observation of schools operations and pilot experiences.

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Author Sacatucua S C
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