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Issues in understanding scholar exclusion: Interpreting the reason for dropout and repetition in Mozambique. The case of 1st Cycle of General Secondary School in Maputo-City (1999-2005)

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of education

Johannesburg, June 2005

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It is has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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Johannesburg, 2005

ABSTRACT

Key words: Dropout, repetition, scholar exclusion, school quality, General Secondary School, Mozambique.

This study is a school-based research into the reasons for dropout and repetition in Mozambique. The research methodology is of a qualitative nature, which enabled the exploration of relevant themes, processes and patterns that have characterized the educational process in Mozambique, especially reasons that led to repetition and dropout, during the period between 1999 and 2005. The main reasons could be found in the whole process of teaching and learning; outdated classroom pedagogy; insufficient student participation and shortage of textbooks or teachers materials; and low teachers salaries. In addition, poverty causes many students to drop out. The main conclusion is that higher levels of repetition and dropout have cost implications, inflating enrolments and adding to total costs without necessarily leading to an improvement in learners' outcomes. Recommendations include a redefinition of the model of secondary education in accordance with the new demands of the labour market.

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And last but not least, I would be remiss if I did not mention a woman not for the reason that she is my wife but because of her bright contributions. Thanks Stela!

CONTENTS

1 **INTRODUCTION…….....9**

1.1 Rationale……...9
1.2 Background and context…….11
1.2.1 Secondary Education in the world……...11
1.2.2 Secondary Education in Mozambique…….12
1.2.3 Historical review of the formal education in Mozambique……13
1.2.4 The situation since the 1990s……...15
1.3 Methodology……...18
1.4 Aim…….22
1.5 Research questions……..22

2. LITERATURE REVIEW……23
2.1 Scholar exclusion…….23
2.2 Repetition and dropout…….24
2.3 Students backgrounds and school quality……28

3. CHARACTERIZATION OF THE SCHOOLS……32
3.1 Malhazine secondary school……32
3.1.1 The learners……..……33
3.1.2 The educators……35
3.1.3 The school governing body…….……..36
3.2 Josina Machel secondary school……..……37
3.2.1 The students……..……38
3.2.2 The educators……39
3.2.3 The school management…….……...40

4 LOOKING FOR THE REASONS FOR DROPOUT AND REPETITION……41
4.1 Pupils backgrounds……..41
4.2 Organization of the teaching and learning process……..42
4.2.1 The classrooms…….....42
4.2.2 Teacher's background, work conditions and motivation…….....43
4.3 The teaching - learning process……...46
4.3.1 The quality of lessons……46
4.4 The assessment…….…49
4.4.1 Internal efficiency…….51

5 **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS……..53**
5.1 Conclusions……..53
5.2 Recommendations…….……...55

BIBLIOGRAPHY……57

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Learners progress in Malhazine secondary school 2002-2004……...63
Appendix B: Learners progress in Josina Machel secondary school 2002-2004……64
Appendix C: Classroom observation guide……65
Appendix D: Guide for Interviews……..67

LIST OF TABLES

1- Evolution of number of students, repeaters, dropouts and promotion in Mozambique 1999-2003……16
2-Evolution of number of learners, repeaters, dropout and promotion in Maputo-city 1999-2003…….17
3. -Teachers with and without pedagogic training-Secondary Education 1st Cycle-2004…….……18
4-Number of students and repeaters by grade-2005, Malhazine secondary school……34
5-Number of students and repeaters by grade-2005, Josina Machel secondary school……..39
6-Comparison between Malhazine secondary school and Josina Machel secondary school (2002-2004)…….……...51

ABBREVIATIONS

EFA-Education for All
EP1- First Level of Primary Education
EP2-Second Level of Primary Education
ESG1- First Cycle of General Secondary Education
ESG2 -Second Cycle of General Secondary Education
FRELIMO- Mozambique Liberation Front
MEC-Ministry of Education and Culture
MINED-Ministry of Education
OECD-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SNE-National Education System
UNDP-United Nations Development programme
UNESCO-United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE-Universal Primary Education

In memory of my grandfather Juliano de Bastos the first teacher in my clan and my parents Tomas and Julieta.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Rationale

First of all, my interest in studying this subject matter is based on the reality of my socialization process, which took place in a town with semi-rural characteristics, in a peripheral area in Tete, Mozambique, where I had personal experience of the process of exclusion. In the last few years of the colonial period (from the end of 1960s to the beginning of 1970s), I was part of a group of teenagers who shared almost all playing times. However, when it came to the time for going to school, our ways were different. Some of us were going to colleges (private schools) and others to rudimentary schools, while others could go to the official schools (public). However, there was also a group who could not even go to school because their background was the poorest in economical and social terms. Nevertheless, our wish was to go all together to the same school. Later on I realized that many factors were handicapping that wish.

I grew up within the above environment until the country's independence in 1975, when most of the described obstacles were overcome. The *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO) government made possible access to school for all. An uniformization process took place within the context of the nationalization of the private properties and services. Alongside this, private schools for elites were no longer allowed to exist.

In my current capacity as teacher and lecturer, after more than twenty years of practice in the education system, either at the secondary school level, teaching daily and evening classes, or as a lecturer in two public higher education institutions, I realized that the slogan "*Education for All*" is still far from being reached. Several reasons remain and continue to contribute to scholar exclusion, some of them very clear but others disguised. As a participant in the education process, I am motivated to offer my contribution to finding ways of gradually

overcoming *all* such factors of scholarly exclusion in Mozambique. To this end it is crucial first to identify them.

The study can contribute to understanding that, as one of the poorest countries in the world, Mozambique should try to use more effectively all funds available (most of them from donors) in the Education Sector. Dropout and repetition can be seen as a waste of money that could otherwise be used to expand the educational network or be in danger of being diverted to other sectors.

The focus of this research on the secondary school is related to the fact that, currently, when one looks at the research available in Mozambique, conducted by senior members of the ministry or by donors, even from UNESCO, it is more concerned with the primary level. Maybe because of the main goal of *Education for All,* to provide basic education, universal access to primary school is of fundamental importance for the government's development strategy. In addition providing basic education for all is a central element in its strategy for poverty reduction.

Nevertheless, my understanding is that, gradually, the government and its partners should concentrate their attention on the secondary level because:

> The rapid expansion of primary education and the improvements that are beginning to show in its internal effectiveness are imposing additional needs, which the current secondary school does not have the capacity to meet (UNDP, 2000*).*

Furthermore, the secondary[1] level (1st and 2nd) is designed to support other levels of the National Education System (SNE), as higher education, teacher training and human resources to the labour market. Reducing current rates of failure, repetition and dropout, will improve learning outcomes for many students, and make resources currently lost to wastage in schools, available for more productive uses. Reducing repetition rates also frees the school places occupied by repeaters for

[1] The secondary level of general education covers five grades (3+2) and is divided into two cycles: 1st cycle from 8th to 10th grades (ESG1); 2nd cycle, 11th and 12th grades.

new students, thus making way for a substantial increase in enrolments at virtually no additional cost.

1.2 Background and context

The background and context to secondary education in Mozambique will now be presented.

1.2.1 Secondary Education in the world

There is no agreement on the definition of secondary education, although it is commonly accepted that it falls between primary and tertiary education. However, the duration or the number of grades covered varies from country to county, many dividing the secondary education into a first, or lower, segment or cycle, and others into a second, or higher, segment. According to Holsinger and Cowel (2000), different countries have different grades, student age groupings, varied curricula and objectives, and may be related to the educational levels above and below in a variety of ways.

The general secondary education curriculum is inclined towards developing general skills in the language arts, sciences, mathematics and humanities. The curriculum usually provides for considerable student choice, especially in the upper grades. At the same time, a common core of courses is typically required of all students for certification. As part of the general secondary education curriculum, many countries offer an advanced programme of elective courses to prepare students for the university entrance examination or to assure comparability of preparation across countries or states.

Thus, looking at the secondary education curriculum in many countries, it is evident that there is an academic rather than pre-vocational focus. Consequently the general secondary curriculum contains little vocational coursework, but rather has the elasticity to make possible graduates not proceeding to tertiary education to embark on the job training or advanced study in a technical institution.

As part of secondary education there is also Vocational and Technical education, the curricula for which explicitly aims at preparation for specific jobs or occupations. The objective is to pass on limited knowledge and accurate and carefully prescribed skills, with minimal theory. All of these skills are planned to permit students to undertake advanced training, particular employment or to follow certain professions.

The Diversified Comprehensive Education, another component of secondary education, combines the objectives of an academic course of study with one or more vocational fields. Most of times the schools were initially academic secondary schools to which vocational contents were inserted into the curriculum, with the objective of making the school more responsive to labour market needs and to serve a more diverse student clientele.

1.2.2 Secondary Education in Mozambique

Mozambique lies on the southeast coast of Africa, territory covering 799.380 square kilometers in area (of which 786.380 square km is land and 13.000 square km is inland water), its borderland having an extension of 4.330 km. According to the1997 population census, Mozambique has a population of 15,278,334 people, whose density is 20,1 per square kilometer, varying between 5,8 in Niassa province and 3222 in Maputo city. Administratively, the country has 11 provinces (including the capital city-Maputo which has a status of a province) and 128 districts. Females comprise the majority of the Mozambican population, representing 52% of the total. 43% of the Mozambican population is of school age, a ratio of 6-24. Mozambique's youthful population consequently makes the demand for educational services greater.

The current curriculum of general education, 1st and 2nd Cycle of General secondary school, tends to be encyclopaedic. There are eleven subjects for the 1st cycle (from grade 8 to 10), and seven in each option of 2nd Cycle (grade 11 and 12). The curriculum for both levels of general secondary school is very academic

and emphasize aspects that function as a preparation for further formal studies in 2nd cycle and universities respectively. As a consequence, the learners who have graduated from secondary school are not prepared with specific skills for the labour market.

The internal efficiency at secondary school level is low, with repetition rates in the 1st Cycle and 2nd Cycle at 35% and 25% respectively. This contributes to increased costs and hinders the expansion of enrolments. Furthermore, there is a large gap between the official entry age (13-15) and actual entry age (16-19), in ESG1 and in ESG2 (16-17 vs. 20-21). In 2004 the enrolment was 200,000 in ESG1 of which 15% were in private schools. ESG2 enrolment was 28,000 with 31% of these in private schools. These numbers include day and evening classes

Entry age is three years higher than standard due to high repetition rates at primary level. Taking into consideration this scenario, many students enrolled in secondary schools have already repeated a grade in primary level, a figure very important in explaining repetition and dropout. As mentioned above, repetition is the most important variable contributing to dropout.

1.2.3 Historical review of the formal education in Mozambique

Currently, the law in Mozambique determines that the school has to be democratic, therefore opened to everybody. This was not always the case, as throughout the country's history there have been two very distinctive periods in which objectives of, access to and contents of the formal school education system may be measured. The first period corresponds to the colonial phase (*c.*1890-*c.*1974), where the official education system was acting as a means for domination. The colonial authorities simply ignored the existence of the traditional system of education, since being able to legitimatize the dominant ideology would only be possible if there were a rejection of local history and knowledge. The education system in that period carried the domination stigma, expressed not only in the rejection of the knowledge and values of the local

population, but also in the limitation of access to school. It also made progress difficult even for the few who were able to enter the school.

With the advent of the National Liberalization Struggle, in the period from 1964 to 1974, the National Liberalization Movement had considered education one of the major requirements for the building of the Mozambican nation. In addition to the political model of State-Nation, FRELIMO had adopted the ‘modern’ school. This led into the second period, after the gaining of independence, in 1975, mainly characterized by the challenge of education uniformity. According to a slogan from that period, the reform process was aimed at "turning the school into a platform for the people getting into power”.

By 1975, the independence year, about 93% of the 10 million inhabitants in the territory did not have access to the "modern school”. This constitutes one of the indicators that reflect the low level of "modernization" allowed by the colonial regime, and aggravated by the "undeveloped stage of the Portuguese colonial ruler, whose development was based in the exploitation of the cheap working force, which in consequence did not require the expansion of schools in the colonial territories" (UNDP, 2000:31).

With national independence came rapid socio-economic, political, and cultural change, one of the greatest effects of which was the expansion of the education system. However, the uniformization attempt had some handicaps. On one hand, in the teaching process, nationalization had generated conditions to eliminate the factors of social and racial discrimination and increased access to schools. However, on the other hand, it introduced a static process in the management of the educational system, gradually reducing popular participation, which had been very intense during the first years after the independence.

The adoption of the political and scientific ideal of modernity in practical terms had become a complex and difficult relationship between the modern running and the traditional organization of the education process. Over the full period after

independence and up to the introduction of the multi-party system in 1990, the examples of equal interaction and dialogue within the scholar environment were atypical. There was a tendency of homogenizing the school system, with the aim of building a society inspired by Scientific Socialism.

Taking into consideration the school system in 1990, it is evident how high the rates of scholarly exclusion were, partly having originated with the destruction of practically half of the primary school network during the civil war, and partly with the decrease of public funds to the education sector. This scenario, added to the neo-liberal pressures towards economic, political and social reforms, had made the government realize that the state could not be the exclusive education provider. Therefore, the government approved legal mechanisms authorizing the intervention of non-governmental agents in the education system.

1.2.4 The situation since the 1990s

Although the fact that in the last few years, in Mozambique, a relative increase in the school population has been registered, huge challenges still remain to overcome the associated problems. For example, in 1997, only 7% of the population (16.076 millions of inhabitants) had completed the secondary school level, 0,8% had completed the professional technical education and only 0,3% had acquired the higher level of education (UNDP, 2000). Of the total enrolment of the school population in 1999, 95,8% was concentrated at the level of primary school, from which 87,7% were the first level of the primary school (corresponding to the first five grades) and 7,9% in the second level of the primary school (corresponding to the last two grades of the primary school system). The secondary school system had in that period 3% of the school population, the technical and professional education 8% and the higher education sector 0,4% (ibid: 2000). As can be seen from these figures, the decrease in the school population between the primary level and the university level was dramatic.

> There are three fundamental problems in the Mozambique education system, which affect all levels of the system and virtually all institutions at each level. The first is limited access to educational opportunities, the second is poor quality, and the third is the cost of expanding access and improving quality (MINED, 1998).

The government strategy for education defines as a major goal the expansion of the opportunities to join education and training, through the balanced distribution of infrastructure, so reducing the gender disparities, especially in rural areas (BR nº 12, Iª Série, 2000). This task is complicated by rapid growth in the school-aged population, estimated at 3,7 percent per year (ibid, 1998).

To achieve this objective, the participation of the private, religious and other sectors of civil society in the education system is encouraged. However, if one considers the figures above, it can be deduced that the number of children without access to school is still very high. On the other hand, the number of children able to enter the school system is subjected to several processes of exclusion. The tables below illustrate the evolution of repetitive dropout and promotion between 1996 and 2003. According to Barro and Lee (1998:16), school repeaters are defined as "pupils who enrolled in the same grade as the previous year. Repetition rate is measured as the percentage of repeaters in the total number of students enrolled at a given level".

Table 1 - Evolution of number of students, repeaters, dropouts and promotion in Mozambique 1999-2003

Grade		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	Number of learners	27.547	31.735	39.652	49.153	55.661
8	**Repeaters**	7.482	7.992	10.344	11.961	13.071
	Dropouts	424	1.510	3.067	3.141	4.467
	Promotion	19.641	22.233	26.251	34.051	38.123
9	**Number of learners**	16.777	20.093	25.225	32.753	36.398
	Repeaters	3.777	4.130	5.712	7.626	7.538
	Dropouts	334	612	1.563	1.269	3.232
	Promotion	12.666	15.351	17.950	23.858	25.628
10	**Number of learners**	12.067	.13.943	17.655	25.361	.25.951
	Repeaters	5.248	5.343	6.617	8.963	8.694
	Dropouts	76	437	1.819	1.400	3.045
	Promotion	6.743	8.163	9.219	14.998	14.212

Source MINED, 2004

The table shows that the numbers of repeaters and dropouts are increasing and the level of retention is also higher. For example, in 2003 only 14.212 out of 25.951 left the 1st cycle of general secondary school in Mozambique. Only 54.7% were promoted in that particular year. Compared to the year 1999, the situation seems to be stable that is around 55%. The conclusion that can de drawn is that the system is not efficient

The situation in Maputo-city is not so different, as shown in Table 2 below.

In 2003 around 58% of learners were graduated. Compared to 1999 the difference is about 4%. The situation is getting better. The number of graduates is increasing. However the level of efficiency is still low.

Table 2 - Evolution of number of learners, repeaters, dropout and promotion in Maputo-city 1999-2003

Grade		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	Number of learners	6.349	7.099	7.877	9.288	12.076
8	Repeaters	2.087	2.145	2.488	2.588	2.989
	Dropouts	92	120	279	584	N/A
	Promotion	4.170	4.834	5.110	6.116	N/A
9	Number of learners	4.396	5.056	6.289	6.985	7.070
	Repeaters	1.152	1.492	1.919	1.743	1.865
	Dropouts	8	98	201	263	212
	Promotion	3.236	3.466	4.169	4.979	4.993
10	Number of learners	3.190	3.675	4.885	5.481	5.942
	Repeaters	1.384	1.434	1.671	1.743	2.134
	Dropouts	70	49	89	156	370
	Promotion	1.731	2.192	3.125	3.582	3.438

Source, MINED, 2004
N/A-Not available.

Looking at the composition of teaching staff, the scenario is that many teachers are not trained. This situation can imply, sometimes, the reduction of quality of the teaching and learning process, and consequently the student outcome.

The available data for 2004 shows the following:

Table 3 - Teachers with and without pedagogic training - secondary Education, 1st Cycle-2004

Public schools

	Total	With Training	%With Training	Without Training	% Without Training	Expatriates
Mozambique	4393	2.309	53	2.084	47	79
Maputo-City	849	730	86	119	14	2

Source-Ministry of Education-Directorate of Planning-Annual School Survey-2004

Comparing Maputo-City to rest of the country can see that the percentage of teachers without training is lower. This situation would be reflected on the results but as is explained in another part of this report the difference in terms of outcome is not higher.

1.3 Methodology

The research methodology in this report is mainly qualitative nature, which enabled me to explore relevant themes, process and patterns that have characterized the educational process in Mozambique, especially the reasons that lead to repetition and dropout. Special attention was given to bibliographical and documentary analysis. In the literature review, particular emphasis was given to phenomena of scholar exclusion, dropout, repetition and wastage in different countries and contexts, particularly in developing countries. Above all, a deeper analysis was conducted of scholar exclusion, particularly repetition and drop out literature in Mozambique. For this, I looked into studies conducted by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and individuals working under the rubric of these organizations.

The background to the problem of dropout and repetition was outlined on the basis of data collected and analyzed from Ministry of Education and Culture, more specifically from the National Directorate of Planning and National Directorate of Administration and Finance. Documents available from National Institute of Statistics were also consulted.

The main body of the dissertation is based on an empirical study that took place in the city of Maputo, Mozambique. To investigate the reasons for dropout and repetition, two schools were selected, one in the urban area and another on the outskirts. This provided a comparison of how the process of teaching and learning is developed, and the reasons for repetition and dropout.

The fieldwork took place in two different phases, firstly in November and December 2004, when schools were reaching the final term and preparing for the final exam. I visited the schools, looking at the infrastructure, read some reports and collected data relating to previous years, mainly on students' enrolment, dropout, repetition and promotion.

At the beginning of the first term in 2005 the environment was not good enough to permit effective involvement. Normally the enrolment of students does not stop when the normal period of lessons is supposed to begin. Schools continue to receive learners from different primary schools. Therefore, it was only when the schools were quieter that I started the second phase of the fieldwork. This involved making observations and conducting interviews with learners, educators and principals, with the aim of ascertaining their perceptions, feelings, ideals hopes and frustrations with regards to schooling issues. In order to achieve this aim I examined primary documents, such as annual reports from the schools and Department of Education (DoE).

The interviews with the learners focused on: (i) reasons for dropout and repetition; (ii) classroom environment; (iii) the relationships between teacher and learners; (iv) the role of the parents; and (v) students' backgrounds. The interviews with teachers were on the following areas: (i) conditions of working; (ii) teacher training background and in-service training; (iii) teachers' classroom practice (iv) teachers support; and (iv) assessment.

I interviewed the deputy principal of each school where the fieldwork took place. The content of the interview was similar but I tried to include issues specifically

related to school management. During the fieldwork at Malhazine Secondary School, I had an opportunity to attend meetings that I considered meaningful for my report. One such meeting was organized by the deputy principal to discuss pedagogic issues and called ‘pedagogic council weekly’. The participants were the heads of subjects and headed by the referred deputy. The main points of the agenda related to the ongoing teaching and learning process and disciplinary issues regarding teachers and learners.

Another meeting in which I participated was the ‘school council’, scheduled to meet 4 times a year, and considered to be at the highest level in terms of school decision-making. It integrates members of the school directorate, teachers, learners, parents and members of the community. In total it has 25 members, with the president coming from the ‘parents’ commission’. All members, excluding those from the ‘school directorate;’ are elected at the beginning of each year, thus securing an annual mandate.

The selection of the interviewees, namely learners and teachers, was not based on specific criteria, apart from a specific number. I spent one month in both schools, divided into a fortnight for each, during which I worked with the deputy’ principal on pedagogic issues and discussed with them my plan of observation. They just showed me the timetable and I decided for myself which teacher subject and grade were to be observed. Following my decision, the deputy principal introduced me to the teachers I wished to observe and we went together to the classroom where, in his or her turn, I was introduced to the learners as a teacher.

Despite my presence in the classroom, the environment seemed to be normal. After the lesson I discussed the lessons with the teachers, using the opportunity to invite him or her for an interview during a break. It is normal to find empty spaces in the teachers’ timetables, so I agreed with them to conduct the interviews in those spaces. All interviews occurred in the schools, face-to-face, without tape recording.

The interviews with the learners took place after a short conversation with them, in which I asked for volunteers. Many students in both schools were interested in collaborating, thus it was possible to interview 12 students in both schools, being 6 in each. The average age was 16 years.

I prepared a list of questions to guide me during the interviews (see appendix D), but despite this I moved to other questions when it was necessary. With the students it was essential to explain the meaning of some terms used in the interviews.

Beyond the interviews, I worked with maps of results from 2002 up to 2004. I followed 100 students from grade 8 to grade 10. At the start of grade 8, all students were between 13 and 15 years old, with no repeaters, and all being part of the same group. The intention was to find out how many students left the schools over three year period, which would show the level of retention in each school. As there was a difference in terms of class size in both schools, 52 students in Malhazine Secondary School, and 45 in Josina Machel Secondary School, I decided to add 10 students belonging to another group in the second school.

To find out student backgrounds I consulted the *class book*, where one can find much information relating to students, namely number, name, place of residence and name and profession of parent/s. The book contains the results of the students and a space where teachers have to write the main activities. If well documented, the book can be a good source of understanding of what is going on in each group. Unfortunately, this instrument of is not always treated in accordance with its real importance, as can be confirmed by my finding in both schools that they needed to be filled in by the teacher responsible. Some books from previous year were without any information. I develop this finding in another part of this report.

I observed 12 teachers in both schools; corresponding to 8,9% of all the teachers. As mentioned above, Malhazine secondary school has 61 teachers and Josina Machel secondary school 73 teachers in 2005.

1.4 Aim

The aim of the study is to find out the factors that contribute to dropout and repetition in the first cycle of the General Secondary School, and to suggest strategies for sustainable inclusive education in Mozambique.

1.5 Research questions

It is suggested that these stipulated research questions would assist in further delimiting the critical and theoretical issues, which will constitute the focus of analysis:

- What are the factors contributing to dropout and repetition?

- How can a sustainable inclusive education policy be developed in Mozambique?

Chapter 2: Literature review

This literature reviewes focus on studies examining school dropout and repetition, scholar exclusion as a component of social exclusion, students' background and school quality.

2.1 – Scholar exclusion

The issue of scholar exclusion gives rise to several questions and interpretations. It can be considered that scholar exclusion takes place in at least two distinct circumstances, which are: (i) scholar exclusion regarding the access (for those who never get into schools) and (ii) scholar exclusion over the teaching learning process, in the classroom, commonly termed 'failing'.

School failure comes in a number of guises, including multiple repetitions and dropping out without any qualifications or recognized skills. In most such cases the common factor is that it is highly disturbing to the moral, human and social plan. Very often, as the Delors Report (1996) shows, it generates situations of exclusion, which mark young people for the rest of their lives. The two forms of exclusion are both components of a wider concept of social exclusion. The concept of exclusion may mean several things, but is generally related to non-participation. Recently notions of social exclusion have been used in discussion of poverty, inequality and justice. This is apparent in both political philosophy and sociology (Gore, 1994). Therefore, the phenomenon of scholar exclusion is not dissociated from the process of social exclusion.

> Youngsters in a situation of school failure or looking for the first job, unemployed for long time or at the end of their jobs (…) all of them form the roots of a new kind of poverty that progressively follows three steps, exclusion loss of identity and social disqualification (GÉHANNE, undated).

The exclusion under the scope of this research is related to teenagers and youngsters who for many reasons are dropping-out or repeating school year by

year. These kinds of exclusion both under-utilize capacities. The assessment of the educational system starts out generally from the assumption that all learners entering grade 8, for example, should complete the 1st Cycle in three years.

A more restrictive functional definition of dropout and repetition is that learners in a particular cycle or level of education do not finish studies in the number of years laid down. That definition leads to the concept of wastage, which in its turn relates to inefficiency, a concept borrowed from the economists:

> As generally developed and refined by economists, the concept of *efficiency* refers to the relationship between the inputs into (agricultural, industrial or educational) and the outputs from that system (be they wheat, vehicles or educated individuals). The system is said to be efficient if maximum output is obtained from given input, or if a given output is obtained with minimum input. (UNESCO, undated)

2.2-Repetition and dropout

Together with dropping out, students' repetition represents perhaps the most significant obstacle to providing universalized primary education to the world's children. There is wide agreement that student repetition not only undermines the opportunity of many children to get a primary education but also represents a very large financial burden for many countries. In spite of student repetition being a complex issue, characterized by contradictory findings, there are a number of common threads which can help in making sense of it. These common threads include issues relating to each of the following:

i) Factors associated with repetition;
ii) Problems of interpretation;
iii) The effectiveness of repetition as a coping mechanism for educational systems;
iv) The relationship with dropout;

v) The relationship with early acquisition of literacy (UNESCO, 1998).

Reviewed studies included grade retention as a potential predictor of dropping out and research results demonstrated an association between these two variables. Moreover, a few studies reported that retention was found to be the strongest predictor of later dropout status.

A brief overview of the literature is presented below in chronological order.

Studies during the 1970s examined characteristics associated with dropout and identified grade retentions as an early predictor.

Stroup and Robins (1972) identified grade retention as the most powerful predictor of future dropout, followed by excessive absences, and frequent school changes.

Lloyd (1978) concluded that retention in grades was a strong indicator of later dropout.

Barro and Kolstad (1987) provided a report on who drops out of high school, and discusses many important contemporaneous and early predictors. The results indicate that the early grade retention increased the risk of dropping out by 30-50%.

Results on studies by Cairns et al. (1989) demonstrated a clear relationship between high school dropout and early grade failure.

Fernandez et al. (1989) compared male and female high school dropout among several groups, in addition to non-Hispanic White and Black youth. The Latino students included those who identified as Hispanic, Mexican American, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and other Latin American. The Latinos as a group were more likely

to be retained then non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks, and had the highest dropout rate. Overall, it was found that retention emerged as a powerful predictor across all groups. Furthermore, results of multivariate analyses demonstrated that subjects who were retained were more likely to dropout, independent of all other significant variables.

Grissom and Shepard (1989) re-evaluated three large sets of data that consistently showed that students retained regardless of socioeconomic level were at risk of dropping out.

Analyses of students' background and gender revealed that low academic achievement alone could not account for dropping out. Utilizing causal modelling techniques, it was found that retention was the most significant predictor for high school dropout for these students.

Tuck (1989) found that retained students were two times more likely to dropout than non-retained in elementary school, with dropouts experiencing feelings of alienation within the classroom climate and school environments.

The conclusion that can be drawn on the studies above mentioned is that early grade retention is one of the most powerful predictor of school withdrawal, regardless of the levels of education and socioeconomic conditions. Most studies on repetition and dropout are more concerned about primary level, related to the fact that, in general, the most serious repetition problem, as mentioned above, affects the early grades and particularly, the first grade, the entry point to the school system, where essential foundations for future learning, self-esteem and self –confidence are formed (Torres, 1995). Together with non-enrolment and dropout, school repetition constitutes a major obstacle to Education for All (EFA) and Universal Primary Education (UPE) (Torres, 1995).

Nevertheless, this does not signify that the other levels are not facing the same problem. With some differences, the problem affects all levels of education.

Grade repetition affects all regions and countries throughout the world, including the industrialized. Official statistics for 1990 registered 35.6 million repeaters worldwide at the primary school alone, based on available data from 84 countries (of which four countries represented half of the 35.6 million: China with 7.5 million, Brazil with 5 million, India with 3.4 million and Mexico with 1.3 million). According to official statistics, between 10 to 20 percent of children worldwide repeat an early grade in primary school. The regions of Sub-Saharan Africa (20 percent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (10 to 15 percent) have the highest repetition rates. In the Arab States and Asia, this figure stands at around 10 percent and in Europe and OECD countries at an estimated 3 to 4 percent. Great disparities exist, at the same time, within each region and within each country (UNESCO, 1993; Amadio, 1995).

Most studies undertaken in both developing and developed countries disprove the assumption, that repeating the same grade (for one two or more years) will ensure learning. Repetition is the first step, and together with poverty, the best predictor for dropout. Torres (1995) underlines that repetition is pedagogically, administratively and financially ineffective:

> Pedagogically, repetition is based on a number of wrong assumptions that the student who did not learn enough will learn if he or she takes same road again, the road that made him or her fail; that nothing was learned along the process and it thus necessary to start from the beginning once again; that knowledge and learning operate in linear dimension follow fixed routes and derive from cycle repeating and drilling;
> Socially, repetition reinforces the vicious circle of low expectations, low achievement, low self-esteem, and failure. Parents take their sons or daughters low grades as an indication of their child's incapacity to learn; repetition fuels parents own low expectations regarding their children, their education and future. Repetition attracts more repetition.
> Administratively and financially, repetition is a major bottleneck and enormous wastage of resources. It contributes both directly and indirectly to inefficiency, tying up resources that could otherwise be allocated to reaching non-enrolled children, and increases the likelihood of dropout (Torres, 1995:5).

Under optimum conditions, a secondary school learner in Mozambique should spend a year in each grade in order to conclude the 1st cycle in three years.

However, when a learner repeats a year or drops out, the average number of years considered necessary to complete the 1st cycle is more than what is predetermined. Under these conditions, the learner who needs more than one year to finish the grade is using space, teaching time and other resources that could be used by others learners. These circumstances contribute to consumption of resources, and in addition could be concluded that the system is wasteful.

A study conducted by the Ministry of Education in Bulgaria in the mid 1990s revealed that in general, the reasons or factors of dropping out and repetition were as listed below:

- Difficulties in the process of assimilating the instruction material;
- Problems in the relation with the school management, teachers or classmates;
- Social-economic reasons;
- Family problems;
- Problems of ethnic character (way of life, traditions, values, habits and so on);
- Drug abuse (mainly narcotics and alcohol);
- Criminal behavior (theft, violence, prostitution and so forth);
- Marriage and pregnancy;
- Continuous illness;
- Destructive behavior (aggressiveness, negative attitude, non-compliance with the school regulations, and others).

2.3 Students backgrounds and school quality

Lee and Barro (1998), argue in a different way on the matters of dropout and repetition as follows:

> We consider that higher school repetition and dropout are the results of poor academic achievement. On the contrary, repetition and dropout can also influence student achievement. For example, grade repetition may

> remedy inadequate achievement and improve the performance of slow learners (p.4).

Based on several studies, these authors believe that academic performance is affected by non-school factors and family background. For them, family background affects not only the probability that children enroll in, attend, and complete school, but also the learning of children in school. Another factor considered important is the school's resources, which can be measured by various indicators, such as pupil-teacher ratios, expenditure per learner, teacher salary, education level and availability of teaching materials. The relationship between school resources and pupil achievement is also a controversial issue.

Colclough et al. (2003) conducted a study, which presents some reasons relating to dropout out and repetition in sub-Saharan countries. Although this study had targeted the primary education level in some countries of the region above mentioned, and with a particular emphasis on economic and gender issues, their results are very elucidative.

> School quality, too, in much of SSA is low. Children are typically taught in much larger classes than is compatible with effective learning, and the average number of pupils per teacher in SSA is higher than in any other world region except South Asia. Teachers are often unqualified; teaching aids are few, and textbooks provision is desperately poor in many countries. In some countries it is not uncommon for pupils to be taught in schools without desks, chairs or windows, nor is it unusual for classes to be held outdoors. Where quality is low, learning is slow and children are unable to meet the demand of the curriculum. Consequently, repetition tends to be higher in systems of low quality, which in turn tends to raise the average of the student population (Colclough et al., 2003:27).

In the same study, Colclough et al. (2003:28) pointed out that "low quality leads to reduced effectiveness of schooling and thus to lower actual and expected benefits from the schooling process. By consequence, for any given level of first enrolment more pupils will tend to dropout where school quality remains low or declines". Those factors depend on the social and economic context that can be found in each country, with several being found in Mozambique.

Duarte (2001), in a study conducted during the period between 1996 and 2001 in Mozambique, established a relationship between a inadequate evaluation and low outcomes. Her study emphasized that instead of what is the common explanation for the school failure should be found inside rather than outside the school. The school is failing not the student.

Many students at secondary and even at tertiary education still have serious problems regarding interpretation and comprehension as a result of difficulties to understand Portuguese (Dias, 2001). Most of them have Portuguese as the second or third language, which seems to be a handicap to be taken into consideration.

It is not easy to find solutions for high levels of dropout and repetition. Some countries, for example Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Zimbabwe, have adopted a policy of automatic promotion, whilst others have regulations on promotion, albeit with a limitation on grade repetition, such as prohibitions of repetition in certain grade or restrictions of the number of repetition in a given cycle. In Mozambique, a learner at the 1st cycle of General Secondary School is not allowed to continue studying if he or she repeats more than twice.

Regarding the teacher in the process, several studies suggest that despite teachers playing a key role in retention decision-making process, they are frequently uninformed of the effects of retentions. Teachers' perspectives on the subject of efficacy of grade retention are commonly limited, as they are usually only attentive to student outcomes in the immediate years following retentions decisions (Tanner and Combs, 1993). Generally speaking, teachers have limited information of student progress ahead of elementary grades, and thus do not know of the long-term student trajectories after retention. Research suggests that many teachers view retention as successfully improving academic performance and that also results in homogenous grouping of students within grades (Haberman and Dill, 1993). However, it has also been reported that teachers do not believe that retention is a motivating incentive for student achievement (Tanner and Combs, 1993).

In the next chapter I present my findings and how they are related to some of the assumptions and theories developed in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Characterization of the schools

As I mentioned above, in order to understand the reason for repetition and dropout, I undertook fieldwork in two schools in Maputo. Thus, in this chapter, I present many aspects relating to the day-to-day running of the schools, and the ways in which they are organized.

3.1. Malhazine Secondary School

The Malhazine Secondary School was founded in 1996, as part of the expansion of the second level of primary school (EP2). At that time it was a mixed school, and in the 1st Cycle of General secondary schools. Since 1997, when the primary level was moved out, it accommodated only the 1st Cycle of General Secondary School. It was part of the strategy of the government to expand this level, serving the border districts. Thereafter, up to 2003, the school functioned with 18 classrooms, 2 laboratories, 1 room for administrative staff and 4 rooms for members of the school directorate. The directorate comprised a principal and two deputy principals for pedagogic issues - one for the day shift and another one for the evening shift – as well as the head of the administrative staff. There was a library from which students were allowed to withdraw books for a specific time, but there was not enough space for them to sit and read. The school had 2 playgrounds, where the students played basketball, football and other sports, and there was a teaching staff room.

In 2004, a refurbishment of the school was financed by the World Bank and as a consequence, while this research was being planned in that year, the school was functioning in tents. The constructor planned to hand over the school in October 2004 but at the time of writing it has not happened. Such a situation is becoming normal in Mozambique, with many similar cases are reported across the country. Despite this, in February 2005, the school moved again into its buildings, despite the building work continuing. Thus, the school now has 20 classrooms, a library, a computer room, and 2 laboratories - one for Chemistry and one for Physics. The

teaching staff room has been enlarged and the main entrance has a small room from which security staff can monitor people entering the school. The offices of the members of the directorate are well-equipped with new furniture, a computer and air conditioning.

The package of rehabilitation (approximately USD 800 000) included new furniture, including a new desk for each student. The deputy principal for pedagogic issues (day shift) said that the school was not happy with the furniture but added that nothing could be done because it was agreed between the Ministry of Education and the World Bank. In my opinion, the furniture will not last more than two years because of its fragility and over-utilization. Furthermore, the school has a triple shift and will need a permanently employed carpenter to fix parts of the wooden desks, as is the case at Josina Machel secondary school.

3.1.1. The learners

The process of enrolment is centralized at the Directorate of Education in Maputo –city, with the primary schools compiling a list of learners who completed the grade 7 and sending them to the Department of Planning, which is in charge of distributing the students to the secondary schools across the city. In theory, the learners have the same chance of being sent to any school in the city, but this does not happen. The main criterion followed by the referred department is school proximity, in accordance with policy aimed at intention reducing transport costs. Thus the learners are from different residential areas, mainly on the outskirts of Maputo-city, that is 25 de Junho, Malhazine, Zimpeto, Malhazine, Magoanine, George Dimitrov, Laulane, Bagamoio, and Laulane.

Kruger and Schalkwyk (1997) argue that there is a difference in school access between pupils from an average socio-economic background and those from a higher or lower socio-economic background. My examination of books with about 250 learners registered, revealed that almost all were from the above places. I did not find learners from the main city, where the wealthier classes live. According

to these sources, detailed further in another part of this report, the social and economic background of most students is modest. The majority of the parents are drivers, teachers, soldiers, security guards, miners (working in South Africa), informal vendors and domestics. In Mozambique it is frequent to consider two categories of domestics, those who normally work for a household and receive a wage, and simply the domestics, that is those who stay at home, doing tasks linked to their own homes.

The average age of the students is 17 years. Officially the age of entrance for that level is 13 years but many students enter at 15. Due to higher rates of repetition before entering and during the cycle, the school population is over aged. All learners have to wear a uniform approved by the school that is trousers or a skirt and blouse or shirt and tie. I consider these two-thirds of a uniform because students are wearing different colours of shoes. This observation could reveal a note of discrimination, in that students with better economic conditions can change shoes more often and wear sport shoes from well-known brands. If one takes into consideration that the youngsters are influenced by the fashion world, this may be a factor behind exclusion, with some learners wearing slippers because they do not have money to buy shoes.

In 2005, 2101 learners were enrolled distributed as follow:

Table. 4. Number of students and repeaters by grade-2005, Malhazine secondary school.

Grade	Number of students	Repeaters	% Of repeaters
8	1027	20	1,95
9	507	46	9,1
10	567	151	26,6
Total	2101	217	10,3

Source: School report (1st term), 2005

3.1.2 The educators

The quality of teaching is a further concern. Poor teacher training, insufficient materials, and lack of pedagogical support, has meant that most educators rely on teacher centered didactical methods, emphasizing repetition and memorization over learner-centered approaches that encourage creative thinking and skills-based learning. Teachers are poorly equipped to deal with some of the challenges that the school poses.

This situation is not different from the majority of schools in the country. The problem is that on one hand the demand for teachers has been expanding rapidly, as a result of the increase in students' enrolment, and on the other hand economic growth has created new opportunities with many teachers leaving education for better-paid jobs. As a result, education becomes a temporary job for many educators, especially at the secondary level.

In 2005, Malhazine secondary school had 61 teachers, 49 with training and 12 without. 34 teachers who have a permanent contract as civil servants hold at least a bachelor degree 27 educators have a contract, which could be renewed depending on their performance during each year. The school is responsible for filling a form with some indicators that can help the Department in charge of teachers' recruitment to take decisions on that matter.

A teacher from this school whom I interviewed claimed that the teachers with an annual contract had been under a hidden pressure, saying that most of them try at all cost to reach better results, for fear of losing their jobs. For him this makes some of the results artificial, that is, not in accordance with what the students really know.

University students comprise the second group of teachers. The teachers are distributed according to their academic level and experience, thus the experienced teachers are working on the final grade, which has a final examination. The

deputy principal told me "*we give the grade 10 to experienced teachers because we have an exam at that grade*". Unfortunately this practice is followed in many schools and levels, for example, the teachers working at primary school are the less skilled in academic terms. At secondary schools teachers holding a bachelor's or honors degree are often working at higher secondary school. As a result learners are not well prepared at the lower grades.

3.1.3 The school governing body

The school follows a combination of two models of structure, described below:

> Also called the hierarchical structure is the oldest and natural organization structure; a top-down structure with authority resting with one person at the top, who makes decision and allocates tasks to those underneath him or her. Everyone's position is clear, from the principal to the teachers. This structure of the school takes the form of a pyramidal shape (Bisschoff and Mestry, 2003:52).

In addition, the functional organization structure is described:

> In most organizations certain individuals have specific knowledge and skills that everyone in organization can benefit from. To allow these skills to filter trough to all staff, a functional (staff) organization structure can be implemented. (P.52-53)

Thus, in this school there is a directorate, which includes the principal, and three deputies, being two in charge of pedagogic issues and one the head of administrative staff. The pedagogic sector is directly responsible for all teaching and learning process, organized as follow, heads of subjects, grade directorates and class directorates. The school directorate has a weekly meeting, in which they analyze issues relating to the school.

Above all those structures, there is the council of school as the highest body at school level, described in another part of my report. When Malhazine secondary school was created, the intention was to alleviate the pressure on schools such as Francisco Manyanga and Josina Machel, which were serving children from

different parts of the city. But as schools located in the urban area the pressure has continued.

3.2 Josina Machel secondary school

Although called a secondary school, Josina Machel is in fact a higher school, integrating two levels of general education, the 1st cycle and the 2nd cycle. The school has students from grade 8 to grade 12 and is located in one of the most important residential areas, Urban Polana. Residences, a hotel, a kindergarten, a vocational school, a museum, a garden and an informal market surround the school. Close to it there is one of the most important bus stops in the City. It is a point of convergence. Josina Machel is the biggest school in Mozambique in terms of size and school population.

The roots of the school can be found in the colonial period when it emerged as a higher school whose objective was to serve the settlers and be *assimilated*[2], although mainly for the former. It was then named the Salazar Higher School, Salazar having been a symbol of the fascism that existed under his rule in Portugal and its colonies, in the period between 1930 and 1974. The school was formally established in 1952, after which secondary schools were located only in the cities. In the 1960s, in Mozambique there were only 5 secondary schools and two technical schools (commercial and industrial) in Lourenço Marques (today's Maputo), Beira and Inhambane.

In 1960, out of a school population of 1,000 pupils in the Salazar High School in Lourenço Marques, there were only 30 Africans, all of them children of a*ssimilated* blacks. The situation of exclusion based on race and socio-economic background continued up to 1975 when Mozambique became independent.

[2] *Assimilated* was a status given to the black people by the colonial authorities. It was supposed that *the assimilated* would have access to the same facilities as the whites. In order to become an 'assimilated' one had to apply after achieving the following conditions: to read, write and speak Portuguese fluently, among others.

Subsequently the school changed its name to Josina Machel, after the figure considered a heroine of the liberation struggle against colonialism.

Presently the school has 42 rooms, of which 4 rooms are not rooms for normal lessons but were planned for technical subjects. Due to a shortage of rooms, the school is using a hall, two amphitheatres, and a room prepared for Biology lessons as classrooms. In total, the school has 46 spaces functioning as classrooms, with three laboratories for Chemistry, Biology and Physics. They have some equipment but not enough. There is a former music lessons amphitheatre, now utilized for seminars and meetings. There are two gymnasia, which are well-equipped, a large room for school assembly and festivities and two playing fields. There is a block housing the offices of the principal, and two deputy principals for pedagogic issues. Not far from this block is situated the administrative block. Each subject group has an office. There is a swimming pool, which was lent to a club after an agreement between the Ministry of Education and Culture and the referred club. The school has not been rehabilitated since the mid 1990s

3.2.1 The students

Josina Machel secondary school receives learners from at least 20 primary schools through the Department of Planning of the Directorate of Education in Maputo city. The main criterion, as mentioned is school proximity, as well as the age of pupils. Unlike the Malhazine secondary school, this school has two extremes in terms of students' socio economic background. Thus there are some poor learners from the outskirts and others from middle class residential areas such as Urban Polana, Sommerchield, Central, Alto-Mae and Triunfo. The latter group constitutes the majority of learners in the school.

The professions of the parents include drivers, teachers, vendors, doctors, lawyers, managers, economists, police officers, domestics, accountants and politicians. Taking into consideration the situation mentioned above, it is possible to conclude that middle class people tend to send their children to that school. Even people

from the border, who can afford the costs, prefer to send their children to Josina Machel rather than schools nearer their residences.

According to the deputy principal, interviewed on 26 may 2005, *"there is a big pressure from the parents of children living nearby the school to put them here"* He stated, as an example, a situation that occurred in 2004 when the school was supposed to receive 511 new entries for the grade 8 and at the end, enrolled 850 new learners. That is why the school has had to use spaces not appropriate for teaching. In 2005, the school enrolled 2697 learners from grade 8 to 10. The total number of students is higher than this because of the existence of the 2nd Cycle.

Table 5: Number of students and repeaters by grade-2005, Josina Machel secondary school.

Grade	Number of students	Repeaters	% Of repeaters
8	1025	231	22,5%
9	884	179	20,6%
10	901	295	32,7%
Total	2810	705	25%

Source: School report (1st term), 2005

Students are not allowed to enter the school without a uniform. However, the situation that occurs at Malhazine secondary school also happens at Josina Machel, with students not wearing a complete uniform. The parents cover the cost of uniforms, whilst students whose parents are not able to buy uniforms or other material, including textbooks, have to apply for a 'certificate of poverty'. Thus, the school uses its funds to help them. However, the school is restricted in the financial help it can render by shortage of funds, and so the number of learners benefiting is low. In 2005, only 20 learners benefited from school funds.

3.2.2 The educators

In 2005, 73 teachers were working in this school, 9 of whom were without training. There were teachers with training in a specific field, but teaching different subjects. For example, two teachers trained in philosophy were teaching

Portuguese. One teacher who majored in Geography was teaching English. The majority of teachers hold a bachelor or an honors degree and most have more than ten years of experience working as teachers. The distribution of teachers among the grades follows the same criteria as explained above in the Malhazine secondary school. The experienced teachers and the teachers with higher levels in academic terms work with the higher grades, mainly 10.

3.2.3 The school management

As mentioned above, the school has two levels of general secondary education and thus the management is very complex. In total, including the evening shift, the school has 6 members of the school directorate. Furthermore, it is necessary to include the other members who in general terms are managing the schools, namely class directors, grade directors, as well as the members of school council. The pedagogic sector is responsible for the teaching and learning process. So the quality of lessons should be guaranteed by that sector.

The school council and the parent's commission are working as advisors of the school directorate.

Chapter 4: Looking for the reasons for dropout and repetition

Having described the schools' situations in the previous chapter, the main objective of this chapter is to analyze the whole process in the schools as a result of the fieldwork that I did. I believe that one cannot understand the students' results without looking at what is going on in schools, that is the internal factors as well as the external factors. The chapter is organized in sections regarding the issues that were included in my plan of observation in the classrooms, as well as the interviews with learners, teachers and members of the school directorate.

4.1. Pupils backgrounds

The students of both schools have different socio-economic backgrounds. It cannot be said that the situation in each school is homogeneous, rather that there are differences within them. However, looking at the file of each learner, there is a clear difference between both schools. In general, the learners from Malhazine are poorer than those from Josina Machel. The majority of students in each school live nearby the school, that is within the district where the school is located

An analysis of student background is important because it constitutes a variable that can explain why students have different outcomes. Based on a study carried out by Bernstein in 1996, relating to difference between school and everyday knowledge, Taylor (2004) presents the following assumptions:

> The problem raised by this research is obvious: middle class children, because of factors such as the kinds of conversation that occur in their homes and social circles, and access to books, computers, travel and other sources of information and experience, have ready entry into the principles that underlie school knowledge. Consequently education tends to reinforce codes, which these children bring to school, and it provides more opportunities to the middle class for success, and greater access to higher education, and to the professions and other higher-earning occupations. Working –class children have a greater distance to travel to acquire the

> elaborated language codes and specialized principles of classification which structure formal school knowledge. (Taylor, 2004:91)

Students and educators that I interviewed presented some of the problems related to background, particularly those students who were more concerned about the language used by the teachers in the tests and exams. They also complained about the shortage of books in their libraries, most of them not having books at home or being able to afford to buy them. Furthermore, students from modest families in both schools confirmed that they had to do other activities in order to bring some money to the household. Consequently, they did not have time for studying or doing homework. Catija[3] a grade 9 student from Josina Machel School said "*when I arrive at home after class I have to help my mom to care of my young brothers, that is why I do not have time to do homework"*

Kufa another student from Malhazine Secondary school told us "*I live only with my mother; my father is currently in South Africa working as a miner. My mother take care of us and she works at informal market because the money is not enough, we are 8 (brothers and sisters). Sometimes I have to help my mother"*.

Trying to show their social background Antunes, from the same school presented his situation "*I left home at half past five so that I can reach the school on time around a quarter to seven. Sometimes I have to walk because of the shortage of money. I spend about 10, meticais (almost 50 cents of USD) for transport per day; this is too much for my family"*

4.2 Organization of the teaching and learning process

4.2.1 The classrooms

Malhazine secondary has 20 classrooms, and Josina Machel school 46 classrooms. The two schools have furniture for all learners, though the quality of the furniture is questionable in Malhazine. Another school combines new and old furniture and has a carpenter to maintain it. Josina Machel secondary school has 45 learners per

[3] The identity of all respondents is preserved

class and Malhazine secondary school 55. In spite of the differences, the situation seems to be more comfortable at Malhazine secondary school because, as a new school, it was prepared to provide space for that. Josina Machel was founded in a period when class size varied between 25 and 30 learners. Thus 45 learners per class is a size relatively higher.

4.2.2 Teacher's background, work conditions and motivation

The quality of student learning is influenced by many factors, including home background, individual aptitudes, school culture, teaching quality and the availability of resources. Looking at the staff of each school, I found that Josina Machel has more qualified and experienced teachers than Malhazine. More than 70% of the teachers interviewed claimed that their conditions of working and living were not good enough and they were not motivated. Teachers' salaries are the most critical issue articulated, not just because they are low but because they are not paid on time. Teachers without permanent contracts are facing the same problem annually, and those who have the right to earn extra money because they have extra lessons also complained about the delaying of their payments. In my view, some of these problems are arising because of a lack of capacity of the administrative sector in the schools.

During my fieldwork at Malhazine, I realized that the relationship between the head of administrative staff and teachers is not good. Angelo a teacher from this school when I asked about the school management and conditions of work he responded "*our relationship with the directorate is not good. I feel very uncomfortable with the way they deal with us. There is a lack of conditions of work… we do not have support such as books, books and other teaching material, the library is almost empty. The titles are very old. How can we reach good results?"* Even the deputy principal for pedagogic issues is not happy with his colleagues, his behavior being a mix of arrogance and bad will.

At the beginning of the year, teachers received a syllabus from which they compiled a scheme of work, or annual division of lessons unit. In addition, twice a month teachers must have a meeting to discuss how to teach some subject contents, assessment and the teacher-learning process itself. These meetings are planned to take place on Saturday. What I saw in both schools is that less than 50% of teachers were participating in that meeting, the reason relating to a division between teachers and education authorities. In the past, teachers used to be paid for the lesson planning in the working group, but, the Ministry of Finance stopped this practice.

This is a critical issue, with many teachers, mainly those without training and experience, needing to be guided in their first contact with the subject. Many questions rose around this problem, one of which is what quality of lessons are being given to the children? I tried to answer this question by looking at what I found in the classrooms when I was observing some teachers. Furthermore, the contact with the schools showed that teachers do not have enough support, either from school directorates or from structures above. This factor is visible in Malhazine, which as a peripheral school needs more support. The teachers from that school found themselves excluded. Some of them are not there because they want to be but because they were sent by the Department of Human Resources.

There is not any plan for capacity development for the teachers. Generally speaking, schools do not have autonomy to choose their teachers and teachers are not being allowed to go to a school and ask for a job. On the contrary, even if a teacher is happy with a school where he or she is working, they could be transferred against his or her will.

Another issue that affects the quality of education in both schools is teacher absenteeism. The level varies from group to group and from teacher to teacher. At Malhazine secondary school we found a teacher who is the most absent in his subject group. As a result his learners have the worse results. For example in a class with 55 learners only 5 had positive results (10 or more marks). 50 students

had negative results being 15 students with 0. The deputy principal of that school said that beyond the bad results the teacher behaved badly but nothing can be done because of the shortage of teachers within the field of science.

At the same school, according to the deputy principal for the pedagogic issues, the overall numbers of lessons established which were 12000, 543 were not given because of absence. This corresponded to 4.5% only in the first term in 2005. In Mozambique the school year is divided into three terms. The group of Portuguese subject matter was most absentees, with 134 absences corresponding to 24.6%

An additional issue regarding teachers is that some of them do not have enough time. As the deputy principal in Josina Machel secondary school said that "*teachers do not have time to prepare their lessons, they jump from one to another school*". The main reason for that seems to be the low teachers' salary. I did not go further on the issue of salaries and so I cannot write to what extent they are lower. The evidence shows that within the civil servants' pay bill, teachers seem to be well paid. Nevertheless, one cannot analyze teachers' salaries as an isolated issue.

Colclough and Lewin (1993) underline that

> The more instructive comparisons, therefore, are between teachers' salaries and per capita agricultural product on the one hand, and the salaries earned by "similar" workers in the other sectors of the economy on the other.
> As regard the latter, wages in the teaching profession in most countries are determined in the context of established differentials with other professions. Although there may be some flexibility for raising or lowering salaries earned by one group, the extent to which this can be achieved without generating equal or compensatory pressures from or for other groups is usually fairly limited. Thus the issue of teachers' salaries cannot usually be addressed separately from that of the level of wages and salaries more generally. (p.143)

In my particular view the problem lay beyond the salary. It is a combination of various factors, salary, and conditions of working, which should be negotiated.

The question is who can negotiate? The answer is not easy. Evidently it should be the trade union but is it strong enough to deal with the situation? I add, in both schools what I saw is that teachers are students as well. So they have to prepare their lessons as well as to be concerned about their studies at Universities.

4.3 The teaching-learning process

The teaching and learning process is the core element of formal education, the subjects of that process being learners and educators. The process itself occurs in the classroom. According to Kruger and Schalkwyk (1997), teaching -learning can only exist if the following components are present simultaneously and in integrated manner: learning objectives, learning content, teacher, pupil and teaching and learning activities. Although the teaching-learning situation varies, the components always remain the same.

4.3.1 The Quality of lessons

In this section, the objective is to analyze the quality of lessons given to the learners. It was not my intention to make any judgments but to understand and explain what was going on in the classroom. I argue that the quality of lessons constitutes a large part of achieving good or bad results. The 1st cycle of general secondary education has 10 subjects from grade 8 to 10. In grade 10, the subjects are organized into two sections, Science and Arts. The number of subjects seems to be a problem, mainly at grade 10. According to the rules, the students have to pass both sections. It is not easy to find learners who pass the first time.

There is a timetable where each subject is included. The schools are being utilized three times a day in a triple shift. The first starts at 7 to 12.20; the second from 12.30 until 18.15 and the third from 18.20 to 22.30. The lesson of each subject lasts 45 minutes. Some subjects, such as Mathematics, Physics, Portuguese and others, with more than 3 lessons per week, have double lessons in the timetable.

How are teachers utilizing the time available to each lesson? I tried to respond to that question controlling the time from teachers' room to the classroom. When the bell rang, some teachers remained seated and chatting. On average, teachers in both schools take 5 minutes to reach the classrooms. Inside the classroom they spend between five and ten minutes for controlling pupils and asking for discipline. Afterward there remains only 30 minutes for the lessons. I observed that, time was not being used effectively. It is very incongruous when I heard from some teachers that they had not enough time to fulfill the whole subject program by the end of the year.

The utilization of time optimally brings only advantages. Kruger and Schalkwyk (1997) highlight some of them as follows:

> Objectives are more easily attained because time is not put to poor use.
> Productivity is increased through the optimal use of time.
> The effective completion of a task (in less time) makes more time available for other tasks.
> Optimal use of time makes the optimal use of resources possible. A worker (human resource) who works efficiently will complete a task in less time than one who is inefficient. He will be able to complete more tasks because he has more time available. This kind of worker is therefore more useful to the organization. (p.157)

An example that can illustrate that some teachers are not using the time available effectively is relating to a teacher of Geography at Malhazine secondary school who spent 45 minutes to handover a test to his students. He did it in two different classes. Even that activity was not well planned. He took 15 minutes correcting the test. Afterwards he stood in front attending the claims of each student while others were just making noise.

Almost 90% of the teachers who I observed were not using, or did not present, a classroom plan as an important tool to attain classroom management. Classroom planning is necessary as a primary and basic management function. What they took to the classroom was a notebook with the subject contents.

The most common teaching method is the demonstrative teaching strategies, which consists of narrating lecture and speech. These methods are similar in that they are very teacher-centred. The teacher speaks while the pupils sit and listen. This method, when correctly used, can bring some advantages.

The lessons given to students mainly in subjects such as Portuguese, History, Geography, were transferred in dictation. This situation was aggravated by the absence of textbooks. For different reasons on average more than 60%, of pupils did not have textbooks, the main reason being lack of money. Macuacua a student from Malhazine when interviewed he complained about the quality of lesson saying "*my teachers are always dictating, when we say we do not understand they say that they have to conclude the syllabus*…"

Another issue that undermines the quality of lessons was lack of students' participation. For example, more than 50% of students did not do their homework. When I interviewed some of them, they responded that they had not time. As teachers are not controlling this activity they are not marking. It seems not to be important for the learning process. The regular assessment of homework offers the pupil the occasion to determine his or her own progress, and permit the teacher to find out the effectiveness of his or her teaching Thus many teachers are not using homework as a useful tool of learning.

Kruger and Schalkwyk (ibid, 1997) highlight the value of homework,

> It gives pupils the necessary practice in subject matter. In subject such as Mathematics and Accounting, practice is essential.
> It creates opportunities for pupils to show their personal initiative and their ability to work through the subject matter on their own and to relate it their existing knowledge.
> By conscientiously carrying out homework assignments, pupils develop characteristics such as a sense of responsibility, thoroughness, perseverance, enthusiasm and self-discipline.
> Homework encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own progress.
> Regular homework leads to regular and sound study habits.
> Homework is also a method of bringing about cooperation between the school (the classroom) and the parents. You may, for example, request that

> parents sign homework assignments-this may result in parents becoming more involved in their children schoolwork (p.138)

4.4. The assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. The teacher can only be satisfied that his or her teaching has resulted in successful learning if learners demonstrate their understanding of the learning content by successfully completing assessment tasks set for them. This activity is regulated. As an obligation three assessments must be realized in each term. All of them must be written, taking at least 45 minutes. The assessment assumes a quantitative characteristic. The regulation is very prescriptive and teachers do not have a chance to explore a qualitative assessment.

Teachers give pupils a written test three times in each term, being two systematic assessments and a partial assessment. At the end of each term the students have a mark (0-20) as a result of an average (the average of systematic assessments, which are two plus one partial assessment divided by two). In fact, according to this formula, the partial assessment has more importance, Teachers and educators complain about the assessment regulation. The general sentiment is that it is very prescriptive and it is more related to classification than a learning process.

Another instrument of assessment is the final examination, which takes place in grade 10.It includes subject contents from grade 8 to 10. During the year the schools are concentrated on the final exam. They organize all activities looking forward to achieving better results. The exam seems to be the core issue of schooling. Step-by-step there has developed an exam culture amongst teachers, learners and school governing bodies. The exam determines the pace of teaching and learning process.

Analysis of tests from both schools and exams revealed that there is discrepancy between the quality of lessons, which are mainly theoretical and the assessments mentioned above. The way in which lessons are being driven leads students to

develop only their capacity for memorization, but the question that they have to respond to need understanding, explanation, and comprehension rather than simple repetition. Some students confirmed that this happened in subjects such as History, Biology, and Geography, whilst others noted that is possible to utilize the memory.

Afonso a learner from Josina Machel when asked about this issue said "*some teachers gave us very difficult tests because they want to put pressure on… when we have bad marks; some of them suggest … negotiation"*.

Sometimes teachers behave badly regarding assessment. Marieta a student from Malhazine secondary school presented what happened in her class "*the teacher of Math's, has been absent for three weeks. He did not leave anything for us to practice. He came last Friday and gave us a test without any preparation. You can imagine what happened to us…"*

The main difficulty of many students is how to express their thoughts using the written language. On the other hand, the language of instruction continues to undermine the learning process, even at that level of education. Effective teaching and learning depend on communication through appropriate accessible language, so that learners can make sense of the educator's explanations. Lourenco and Mariza both from Josina Machel confirmed that "*we do not understand what some teachers say during the lessons. They speak very quickly and they do not have time to respond to our questions"*

The same students add "The *tests that they give us do not take into consideration what happened during the lessons*"

The assessment in both schools seems to be not well driven and is the core problem relating to repetition. Ratiba, another student from the same school told us "The *language used by some teachers mainly for testing is very difficult*".

The response of Ricardo a learner from Malhazine regarding the issue of assessment is very significant "last *test I had a negative result in History not because I did not study but the language was difficult for me*".

According to regulation, the learners have to pass the two sections in order to be considered to have graduated. It is very hard to achieve that result, leading many students to suggest that the regulation be changed.

4.4.1 Internal efficiency

Having developed issues relating to assessment in the prior section, in this section are presented results of 200 learners from both schools. I tried to compare how learners from those schools performed between 2002 and 2004. The students were selected, taking into accounting the fact that they were not repeaters in 2002 and all of them had the same age at that specific point of time that is between 13 and 15 years old.

As described above, they were students from different social backgrounds. The school environment is different. The teachers' backgrounds are slightly different as well.

The tables below show what happened with those learners from 2002 to 2004

Table 6: Comparison between Malhazine secondary school and Josina Machel secondary school (2002-2004)

	Grade 8		Grade 9		Grade 10			
	2002		2003		2004			
School	learners	. pass	learners	pass	learners	Exam	Total pass	Compl rate
Malhazine	103	80	80	55	55	15	12	11,7%
J. Machel	100	79	79	79	72	49	62	62[4]%

Source: Schools maps of students' final results, 2002, 2003, 2004

[4] In terms of above 62 passed, 21 did not write the exam because they had at least an average of 14 marks; 49 students who wrote the exam 41 passed.

The results allowed for several conclusions. The first conclusion is that Josina Machel performed better than Malhazine secondary school. Thus, according to numbers above, Josina Machel had a completion rate equal to 62% and Malhazine secondary school only 12% that is 5 times less. The numbers of learners who considered approved at Josina Machel includes 21 learners who did not need to write an exam because they had at least 14 marks out of 20. According to regulation learners who reach that mark do not need to sit an exam. So in qualitative as well as qualitative terms the Josina Machel Secondary schools performed better.

At first glance the less poor school, better organized, and with a better-qualified staff experienced achieved better results. Another conclusion that can be drawn is that at the beginning that is at grade 8 students had almost the same results in quantitative terms. However the difference started at grade 9 up to 10. The results obtained at Josina Machel secondary school are above the results in Maputo and also in Mozambique

From the results it can be seen that although some theories link bad results to students with lower socio-economic background, Lee and Barro (1998); Taylor (2004), I believe that in the Mozambican case many factors should be taken into consideration.

The main factors that contribute to repetition and drop out are a combination of issues, such as the character of education reflected in the curriculum, the inadequate conditions of teaching–learning materials, low involvement of the teachers in their teaching and education and strict regulations.

Despite being schools with different socio-economic background I cannot draw a conclusion on this matter because I would need to analyze more deeply in order to understand how it influences the results.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Many studies related to dropout and repetition show that the reasons are very complex, some of them are presented in the literature review of this report
It would be important to highlight some of them socio-economic reasons; family problems; difficulties in the process of assimilating the instruction material; problems in the relation with the school management, teachers or classmates.

Others studies show that there is a significant link between repetition and dropout. Students who repeat tend to dropout more frequently.

In practice, repetition and dropout rates are not easy to pinpoint because they depend on a set of social and economic factors such as the background of the learners, availability of resources, cultural practices and beliefs, as well as the school and classroom environment.

This study was not extensive on the issue of why learners dropout. To do this would need more data on the reasons for student's dropout. In both schools there was a problem with student's records which are in some cases empty. However, I have a strong belief that the socio-economic issues are the main factor contributing to the dropout of these secondary learners.

Student's background

Malhazine secondary school with learners from poorer backgrounds, many of whom had to help with family income, systematically had much higher repetition and dropout rates than Josina Machel secondary school. This is despite the fact that both schools appeared to experience similar shortages of materials, textbooks

and facilities as well as similarly qualified educators and similar shortcomings in the teaching and learning process.

Quality of lessons and assessment

However, differences in background not with standing, I believe that the situation in both schools shows that in Mozambique the reasons of repetition are related to the quality of lessons: that is the gap between the quality of lessons and assessment, including the exam, shortage of textbooks, teacher's background, absenteeism, and lack of student's commitments.

The most common teaching method is the demonstrative teaching strategy, which consists of narrating lecture and speech. These methods are similar in that they are very teacher-centred. The teacher speaks while the pupils sit and listen

There is discrepancy between the quality of lessons, which are mainly theoretical and the assessments. The way in which lessons are being driven leads to students develop only their capacity o f memorization, but the question that they have to respond to during assessments need understanding, explanation, and comprehension rather than simple repetition.

Many learners have difficulty in expressing their thoughts using the written language.

Evaluation is basically relying on the quantitative characteristic and the regulation is very rigid just permitting and considering written assessments.

School management and administrative issues

School management and administration in both schools is weak and does not appear to play a role in supporting either teachers or students

The schools do not use the students' records as a whole. They do not know who the student is in their care. For example, they do not know how many times a student repeated in primary school. Even the information available in each year relates to the previous year. This is not enough to know the learners well.

Teacher support and development is not happening systematically. There is lack of professionalism amongst some teachers who have as preoccupation just to give the lessons to the learners.

The *class book* is not playing its role as it is supposed to do. I found books not filled by the class director and other books with empty spaces. This is a reflection that the supervision is not being done accurately by the pedagogic sector in either school.

5.2 Recommendations

Teaching and learning process and administrative matters

The process of teaching and learning, which can be considered partially responsible for the exclusion, should be improved in the schools. However, this is a very tough question because it involves many issues

A number of methods for improving the classroom atmosphere and the learning environment should be taken into consideration. These methods are diverse but have a common thread: learners have to develop internal discipline. They have to take responsibility for their actions and those of their peers. The educator must facilitate this by creating opportunities for involvement and debate with learners.

To use the time effectively and reduce absenteeism.

The disciplinary issues should be tackled no matter what type of contract that teachers are holding.

In order to reduce the discrepancy between the students' socio-economic backgrounds, it would be appropriate to provide free or subsidized textbooks.

Improve the number of students supported by the school funds.

To review the administration management. In this particular matter an open dialogue between teachers and the schools directorate should be taken into consideration and developed.

To reinforce the teacher support through a systematic programme designed by the school directorate and the Department of Pedagogic issues.

To allocate enough textbooks and devise a strategy in which textbooks can be made available to all students. Without textbooks, we are far from achieving equity and quality.

The Regulation of Assessment should be revised.

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Learners progress in Malhazine secondary school-2002-2004

	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	
Number	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**Observation**
1	P	F		
2	F			
3	**P**	P	F	
4	**p**	p	F	
5	**P**	P	F	
6	**P**	P	F	
7	**P**	F		
8	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
9	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
10	**P**	P		
11	**P**	F		
12	**P**	F		
13	**P**	F		
14	**F**			
15	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
16	**P**	P	F	
17	**P**	P	DO	
18	**P**	F		
19	**P**	F		
20	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
21	**P**	F		
22	**P**	F		
23	**P**	T	DO	
24	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
25	**P**	P		
26	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
27	**P**	P	DO	
28	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
29	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
30	**P**	DO		

P-Pass
F-Fail
DO-Drop out
Graduate-learner who complete grade 10

Source: Schools maps of students' final results, 2002, 2003, 2004

Learners progress in Josina Machel secondary school- 2002-2004

	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	
Number	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**Observation**
1	P	F		
2	F			
3	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
4	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
5	**P**	F		
6	**F**			
7	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
8	**P**	F		
9	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
10	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
11	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
12	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
13	**P**	P	DO	
14	**P**	F		
15	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
16	**P**	P	F	
17	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
18	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
19	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
20	**F**			
21	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
22	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
23	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
24	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
25	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
26	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
27	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
28	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
29	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE
30	**P**	P	P	GRADUATE

P-Pass
F-Fail
DO-Drop out
Graduate-learner who complete grade 10

Source: Schools maps of students' final results, 2002, 2003, 2004

Appendix C

Classroom observation guide

Nr._____ Date_____

I. General identification

1.1 School_____
_____
1.2.Teacher
(Name)_____
1.3.Subject _____ Grade_____ Class_____ Time____
1.4.Number of students_____ average age (estimated)_____
1.5.Time of starting lesson_____Time of ending lesson_____

II
Classroom_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

III. The lesson
3.1. Initial control _____
3.2. Theme_____
3.3.
Summary_____
_____
3.4. Aims_____
_____
3.5. Methodology_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
3.6. Introduction and linkage to day to day
_____
_____
_____
_____
3.7. Activities
_____
_____

_____
_____
3.8. Consolidation_____
_____
_____
_____
3.9. Controlling, evaluation, and homework _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
3.10. Comments on students' participation _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
3.11. Comments on disciplinay issues_____
_____
_____
_____
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_____
_____

IV. Final Evaluation

4.1. Teacher lesson self-evaluation _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
4.2. Global evaluation
_____
_____
_____
_____
The observer
_____

Appendix D

Guide for Interviews

I General aspects

- School localization
- Conditions and utilization of human and physical resources
- Number of learners and teachers
- Students and teachers background
- The role of the community

II. Aspects relating to teaching and learning process

- Textbooks and other learning materials.
- Disciplinary issues
- Teachers development
- Teachers support
- Regulations
- Curriculum
- Opinion on reasons relating to repetition and drop out

III Other aspects

- Supervision and Inspection
- Issue on decentralization