



Final Project Report on CRC Mozambique batch 7, October 2008

Title of the Project: The Student at school- The case of Epc Anexa ao IFP

Participants in the project work;

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- Ms Virginia Gomane, Teacher at the project school, Escola Anexa and president of MELTA (Mozambican English Teacher's Association).

1. Local background of the project

Xai-xai is located in the southern province of Gaza in Mozambique. It's about 200 Km from Maputo, national capital of the country. It consists of approximately 160.000 inhabitants, essentially in a rural way of living. As coastal city it has very large potentialities for tourisms in a very beautiful beach. There are more than 47.000 students enrolled on the 36 public and private schools, where the girls represent more than 50%. As pointed by the Provincial Head Office of Education in Gaza, more than 22.000 students dropping out school each year.(MEC, 2006). It worries anyone, even the most absent-mind.

According to the City Head Office of Education & Culture, the illiteracy is under 15%. Gaza province is the most infected by HIV in Mozambique and the Xai-xai city is also occupying the first position across the province. As a result of HIV-AIDS so many orphan children are vulnerable and therefore, with a large tendency to drop out school.

In order to analyze these issues in a concrete environment it was designed a pilot project which is being implemented at Annex Primary School, which is closed to the teacher training Centre in Xai-xai. This school is one with the large number of vulnerable children.

2. Formulation of the problem. Aim and Objectives.

In general, quite numbers of children in the province are in giving up situation. Official data confirm that about 6% of the students in Mozambique between grade 1st and 7th. This issue if deeply analyzed may bring up some hypothesis, namely:

- Lack of motivation from students to go to school especially on marching of the real meaning of school;
- Probably they are not satisfied for the school because is not answering to their interest/expectations, due to weak relevance of the curricula;
- Poor contact on teaching and learning process among teacher x students, motivating on this way the students;
- Corporal punishment which is a current practice in most of the Mozambican schools;
- Some children start learning later and feel bad among others and have another view o school seeing this as back-ward;
- There's a dumb dialogue among parts. Parents are complaining because their children are not learning, they are not able even to right their names; Teachers are also complaining because students were not appropriately prepared from the previous standards. Therefore, students in silence react abandoning the system: It's just a dumb dialogue;
- According to some local operators organizations, children are not feeling a school as a safety place, cause of sexual harassment, even recognizing that there are not so many cases;

These hypothetic reasons may support the reality in Mozambique. But it is also important to consider that at the school level, as appointed by Mwamwenda (2005), teachers argues that corporal punishment helps to reduce or get off misbehaviors, and also useful to correct those who deal with similar behavior. This author, after deeply reflections, concludes that corporal punishment means inefficiency on controlling the misbehaviors and its goals doesn't justify its use.

According to the recent researches in USA, pointed by Mwamwenda, shows that parents who has been punishing their sons/daughters, in general, they were punished as well in their childhood. It means that corporal punishment becomes a wrong model for educating people.

Besides, Bowd et al (1982:296) quoted by Mwamwenda explain that the best way to deal with corporal punishment is just to avoid it. It seems to be clear for all that it promotes an aversion for a child to come to school, increasing a tendency for absenteeism and therefore, for drop out. Even so, it is still largely in use because teachers/educators assume it as a right way to force children for a learning activity.

Overall objective

- Decrease the Drop out of student.

Objectives:

- Spread the Child Rights issues at the school;
- Make aware the teachers, students and parents about the Childs Rights;
- Stimulate a student involvement in the school activities;
- Avoid Corporal punishment;

➤ **Long term objectives:**

- Promote a discussion at the teachers training centers about the Child Rights;
- Asking for resources to implement a tailor course for vulnerable students to support their studying at secondary school;

3. Defining the task, Target group (s) and Limitations.

The target area is Escola Anexa in Xai-xai in the province of Gaza. The target groups are students in standard 6 (12 years old up to 16 - 200 students) and teachers, principal, school council and parents.

As Verhllen pointed (2006), when a state ratifies the CRC, the implementation carries series consequences for the school system. Through ratification three important tasks are imposed on schools, namely, the right to education, in education and through education”. Mozambique has committed itself in Jomtien (1990), in Dakar (2000) and in other UN conferences, to keep providing a basic and quality education for all citizens (RNDH, 2006). In order to respond to this international rule, efforts have been undertaken, such as enlarging of the school net, fees abolition, and the so called direct school support. Equally, the MEC has reviewed the basic school rules, encouraging the student participation, through the school council, on the primary and secondary schools.

On this sense, it’s clear that there is a political will to implement the CRC in Mozambican schools, but more than a simple will, it’s also necessary to provide resources for it. Of course, it requires a continuous training of the teachers and the school boards, namely the principal and his team. The local community must be deeply involved at the school activities as it has been referred on the school rules.

It’s already known that “Once a country becomes a state party to the UN CRC it has an obligation to adapt or change legislation and policies, and practices that will bring about the realization of all children’s rights (...) and conform with the UN CRC”.(Save the Children, 2005).

To complement this statement, the Ministry of Education & Culture has addressed some sectarian changes namely, the revision of curricula, school rules, methods of learning process, adopting the student centered strategies. At the school level, the new rules consist on the introduction of school council in order to democratize the learning process in Mozambique. It includes a debate forum which involves a certain number of teacher, students and parents, where it uses to be discussed the school issues.

On this sense, as it was pointed out above, is not just a simple will which is going to allow successful of the activities, but it’s necessary to acquire some additional resources. In fact, in Mozambique responding to the EFA philosophy, the school net is growing in a rate which is not accompanied by the teacher training process.

Equally, even recognizing that the school net is also growing, there are still so many large classes, especially at the basic level. On this kind of classes, the learning process is facing constraints, such as the insufficiency of learning material and controlling students' behavior by the teacher, in 1-70 rate environments in the classroom.

Regarding to the cultural issues there is a risk of the so called adultcentrism (Verhellen, 2006) concerning to a child rights. It's a phenomena consisting of an exaggerate way of providing protection for a child by the adults, which is still notable in developing countries.

To thicken the limitations on implementing the project, as stated on the National Human Development Report, poor family has more prone for dropping out of their children from school. This is of course an economic dimension of this phenomenon, as it was also supported by Palme (1992).

Thus, the task is to sensitize the school board, teachers, parents and especially the students to participate in a school life in order to avoid drop out.

4. Choice of Methods- How we implemented the project;

In order to get the best results as it was planned, workshops were undertaken at the school pilot, which is located in Xai-xai city. A dialogue has been chosen as a method for sharing ideas with the school board, teachers, students and parents, first in a separated and later on, in common circumstances. The workshops included the video showing ideas related to the reality of the school and province in terms of child rights observation, and later on an organized debate among participants.

Recognized as a very useful pedagogical method for a large group, the theatre has been used somehow on this project. It was created a small theatre group with a certain topic related to their rights, prevention of diseases and shared with other colleagues.

All these methods were very useful for all groups, namely students, teachers and parents.

Of course to deal with these issues of dropping out from the school, it was also necessary to analyze the available literature, which also and somehow illuminated the reflections. For some teachers repetition is necessary to maintain the quality at school (Michaelowa, 2003). Is it really necessary? It could be useful to a broad-brush diagnosis of the classroom functioning. In the meantime, repetition seems to be another punishment for student which increases the prone for drop out. Anyway, a specific research should be done in order to clarify it.

The interviews (not structured) which were undertaken at the pilot school shows that teachers are frequently claiming for the large class for supporting the CRC implementation in the classroom. But there is an ongoing debate about these issues of class size. In fact, Hanushek (2007) and Michaelowa (2003) consider that below certain limit, increasing class size will not

necessarily reduce student achievement. This is another issue which should be analyzed in a specific research.

5. Collection of Data/Material

Cartages
Oral communication;

6. Participants in the project work;

- Mr Joao Assale, Head of strategic planning at the Ministry of Education.
- Mr Mathias Parruque, Principal at Joaquim Chissano Secondary School in Xai-xai and president at the Municipality of Xai-xai.
- Ms Virginia Gomane, Teacher at the project school, Escola Anexa and president of MELTA (Mozambican English Teacher’s Association).

7. Resources for the project

For implementing the project it was necessary some material such as papers, posters, video and overhead projector.

8. Drawing up a work plan and time table.

October	Nov	January	February
1. Ask for a permission 25.10.07 (MEC). 2. Questionnaire elaboration. 30.10.07 (Xai-xai). 3. Meeting with Henning Mankell (Maputo/30.10.07	1. Meeting with the Principal. (Xai-xai). 08.10.07 2. Diagnostic	1. Meeting with teachers. 24.01.08 2.	1. Meeting with the School Council. 12.01.08 2. Meeting with students (target group). 14.02.08 3. Creation of cultural groups (theatre, singing and dance, poem and story). 14.02.08 4. Classroom visits (18 th to 22 nd). 5. Workshop (Parents, cultural groups, students, teachers and principal). 29.02.08

April	May	June	July	August
Session with school council. 3.4.08	Exhibition of drawings, crafts materials and posters related to CRC and Prevention of diseases. 12.05.08	Theatre presentation and other cultural activities and exhibition of posters related to Children's Day. 1st June	Receive plants from Agriculture head office. 09.7.08	Assessment questionnaire. 05.8.08
Dialogue with teachers about methodology considering the best interest of the child. 10.04.08	Sensitization of children through theatre groups & dance. 31.05.08	Meeting at the Ministry of Education & Culture in Maputo. 19.06.08	Meeting with the Barclays Bank Manager. 14.07.08	Interviews at school (for students, teachers and school board). 29.08.08
Workshop with students, parents and community. 23.04.08		Meeting at the Swedish embassy. 20.06.08	Theatre/dance group and workshop. 29.07.08	
Asking for plants for the school. 30.04.08		Meeting at Joaquim Chissano Sec. School in Boane/Maputo. 20.06.08		
		Mentor's visit to pilot project school in Xai-xai. Visit to UDEBA; Meeting with the Provincial Head officer of Education & Culture; Meeting with MELTA; 23.06.08		
		Meeting at Save the Children; Joaquim Chissano Sec. School and Patrice Lumumba Sec. School. 24.06.08		

9. Outcomes of the project

a. Pilot Project;

Increase the CRC in classroom, democracy system of leadership, parents' participation in decision making and students' council participation at school life.

b. After the Pilot Project

On this phase several activities were developed involving students, teachers, school board and the parents. In fact, with all the groups were discussed issues concerning CRC. It was also discussed gender issues in order to minimize the girls' discrimination.

The central issues in discuss on the sessions was concentrated on the student participation in order to avoid school drop out. As pointed by Yukl (2006), "people are more likely to perceive that they are being treated with dignity and respect when they have an opportunity to express opinions and preferences about a decision that will affect them". In addition Yukl (2006) said "(...) substantial amount of consultation and delegation (...) empower the subordinates and give them a sense of ownership for activities and decisions. Verhellen (2006) emphasizing participation issues says for implementing of freedom of opinion and freedom of expression, "(...) the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child (...)".

It was also developed some activities which allows the children to recognize their rights, through theatre, local dances, poems and making posters. These groups were involved in sensitizing activities for those who had already dropped out to come back to school.

Nowadays, students involve themselves in volunteer activities such as taking care of the school environment, namely planting and watering the trees, cleaning their own classrooms and school as well.

Responding to the team appeal or not, some new classrooms are being built, sponsored by the Provincial Head Office of Education and Culture. According to the provincial head teacher, there is a perspective to build some additional infra-structure for offices and more classrooms.

10. Full implementation of the project.

First and for starting the activities it was asked permission at the Ministry of Education and Culture, at the provincial and local level. In order to find out the baseline for taking off the programme, it was undertaken a questionnaire for all the participants, namely, school board, teacher, students and parents.

Next, there was organized several discussion sessions related to CRC, with the participants, where it was presented the questionnaire results, and a project activities debate. Besides

theatre group, students created their own cultural group whose topics were also related to CRC, including HIV-AIDS issues.

Students organized an exposition where they were showing some drawings, crafts materials and posters, related of course to CRC, namely, corporal punishment, clean environment, participation, and so on.

In order to provide a safety environment students planted trees at school and according to the last visit to school they are taking of them.

For creating a local network, meetings with some local organization working in child advocacy were undertaken in Xai-xai city, such as Save the Children, UDEBA (Local organization for basic education), World Vision and Childhood local Parliament. On this sense, it was established a relationship with the Barclays Bank in order to provide furnisher for the school, equally to for a safety learning process environment at school.

Finally, for assessing the results of the project, it was realized a last questionnaire which must be compared with the first one, realized in February.

11. Conclusions

All in all, it can be concluded that respecting children is an imperative for a peaceful environment in the future, because as it was pointed when a child is punished he/she is learning that a punishment is a good way to solve problems. Developing a dialogue spirit is very strong solution for conflicts.

The weakness at the school board and at the teacher's level requires additional activities, considering that the mind changing is a very long process. It is useful those who think that a punishment is unique way to solve the misunderstanding at the classroom.

In spite many thing was already done, but there is still a lot to be done in order to minimize the conflict between the local traditions and the modern principles of teaching in developing countries.

Even recognizing that Mozambique has ratified the CRC in 1990, it's still difficulty to find out the really changes on the relationship between teacher and students in the classroom.

It should be more interesting if it could be assumed that children are not for tomorrow, as the politicians **have beenbut for today.**

12. References.

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13. Appendix

1. All used instruments. E.g. Questionnaires
2. Tables