



Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium
for Monitoring Educational Quality

Progress in Gender Equality in Education: Mozambique

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Introduction

The purpose of this policy brief is to investigate whether there has been progress in 'gender equality' in primary education for the eleven provinces in Mozambique by seeking answers to the following specific questions:

- What were the changes in the **proportion of girls' enrolment** at the Grade 6 level for the eleven provinces in Mozambique between 2000 and 2007?
- What were the changes in the **size and the direction of the gender differences** in Reading and Mathematics' scores for the eleven provinces in Mozambique between 2000 and 2007?
- What were the changes in **selected gender-related school environment information** between 2000 and 2007 that could be further investigated in order to improve gender equality in education for Mozambique?

Answers to the above questions are expected to guide policy decisions regarding the gender-related interventions in education.

Mozambique's Participation in SACMEQ

Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) is a network of 15 Ministries of Education (Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland,

Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe).

SACMEQ's mission is to: (a) expand opportunities for educational planners to gain the technical skills required to monitor and evaluate the quality of their education systems; and (b) generate information that can be used by decision-makers to plan and improve the quality of education.

SACMEQ has undertaken three large-scale, cross-national studies of the quality of education: SACMEQ I with seven Ministries (1995-1999, Reading); SACMEQ II with 14 Ministries (2000-2004, Reading and Mathematics); and SACMEQ III with 15 Ministries (2006-2010, Reading, Mathematics, and HIV and AIDS Knowledge). Mozambique participated in SACMEQ II (3 177 Grade 6 pupils in 176 primary schools) in 2000 and SACMEQ III (3 360 Grade 6 pupils in 179 primary schools) in 2007.

Importance of Gender Equality in Education

The importance of gender equality in education within the process of international goal setting has been emphasized in the Education for All (EFA) Goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

The gender equality issue in education has been a major concern in many countries because of its link

with health and nutrition, economic development, and civic responsibilities. For the purposes of this policy brief, the concept of ‘gender equality in education’ follows the UNESCO (2003) interpretation which refers to the notion of boys and girls experiencing the same advantages or disadvantages in attending school, receiving teaching methods, curricula, and academic orientation, and producing equal learning achievement and subsequent life opportunities.

Gender-Related Policy in Mozambique

Mozambique is a signatory of various international conventions on gender issues, namely Beijing Platform of Action, African Charters on Human and Peoples’ Rights, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Emphasis to gender issues has been given by the current Cabinet by setting up a Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare, which coordinates gender and family related issues.

Mozambique has enacted the necessary policies in order to address gender issues. The Cabinet approved the Gender Policy in 2007 which served as a basis for other sectorial gender policies. In the Education sector, the Government approved the Education Policy which contains specific guidelines for gender issues in education. The Education Sector Strategic Plan contains a Chapter dedicated to Gender.

The Basic Education General Regulation (Regulamento Geral do Ensino Básico – REGEB) sets the guidelines for positive discrimination of girls in order to achieve parity in enrolment and retention.

In the Ministry of Education and Provincial Directorates of Education, special units for addressing gender issues have been established. A special programme for the north of the country, where girls’ participation is very low, has been designed and implemented.

Gender Balance in Grade 6 Participation

In Figure 1, the proportions of girls enrolled at Grade 6 level for both 2000 and 2007 have been presented for each province and Mozambique as a whole. It should be noted that the ‘scientific’ sampling method with internationally-required level of sampling accuracy that has been used throughout the SACMEQ studies has allowed the girls’ proportion at the Grade 6 level in the sample to reflect that for the target population.

At the national level, the proportion of girls enrolled at Grade 6 level has increased from 40 percent in 2000 to 46 percent in 2007. This is a positive change towards parity.

At the provincial level, all the provinces increased quite remarkably the proportion of girls’ enrolment except Maputo Province, where it was maintained at above the 50 percent level. It can be noted that five provinces (Maputo Cidade, Gaza, Inhambane, Maputo Province, and Niassa) had percentages at or above 50 in 2007. Niassa Province had the largest gain from 30 to 50 percent. While other provinces did not quite reach the 50 percent level, it is important to stress that the range has been narrowed compared to 2000. That is, the girls’ enrolment in 2000 ranged from 27 (Cabo Delgado) to 54 percent (Maputo Province) while in 2007 it ranged from 39 (Nampula) to 54 percent (Maputo Cidade).

Gender Differences in Learning Achievement

While there was enormous improvement in Mozambique towards greater gender equality in enrolments between 2000 and 2007, policy makers should be also concerned about whether this enrolment trend was accompanied by greater gender equality in terms of learning achievement.

Gender and time differences in learning achievement in Reading and Mathematics have been presented by province in Figures 2 and 3, respectively. The standardized scores with a pupil mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100 were established, based on the calibrated test items during SACMEQ II. Use of the sub-set of test items along with the Rasch measurement approach during SACMEQ III permitted valid comparison of scores over time.

Reading

At the national level in Mozambique as a whole, the results decreased for both girls and boys by some 40 score points. Both for SACMEQ II and SACMEQ III the boys performed slightly better than girls. There was not much change in the direction and the magnitude of gender differences between 2000 and 2007.

At the provincial level, both boys and girls decreased in Reading scores, maintaining the general tendency of boys performing better than girls with the exception of Inhambane, where girls performed better both in 2000 and 2007 with a similar distance. The provinces with a large gap between boys and girls, more than 20 points, were Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Sofala. It is important to note that Sofala was the province that presented a balance in terms of gender achievement in 2000 but in 2007 it not only decreased in terms of performance but also increased the gap between boys and girls in terms of performance in reading.

Mathematics

At the national level, the results decreased for both girls and boys. The gap between boys and girls decreased from 17 points in 2000 to 11 points in 2007 in favour of boys. In both studies the gap between boys and girls was larger in Mathematics than Reading.

At the provincial level, there was a general tendency of boys performing better than girls with the exception of Manica, where girls performed slightly better in 2007. As it can be seen in Figure 3, Maputo Cidade, Gaza, Maputo Province, Manica, and Nampula have reduced the gap between boys and girls.

Other Information through 'Gender Lens'

The above two sets of results illustrated two contrasting pictures regarding gender equality in education. First of all, Mozambique had been making a great progress in the implementation of gender-related policy regarding access to and participation in primary school, especially for girls. Secondly, it appeared that the learning dimension of gender equality had been completely overlooked (Saito, 2010). In order to help understand the context of these results, a set of selected gender-related information has been provided in Table 1. All the indicators expressed in Table 1 should be interpreted in relation to the Grade 6 pupils.

Female Staff

Increasing the female staff has been seen as a strategy for girls' success since female teachers and school heads are considered to be good role models as leaders. Among SACMEQ countries, some had general teachers who taught all subjects, while others had specialized subject teachers. In Mozambique, Reading and Mathematics have been taught by specialized subject teachers. As seen in Table 1, in general the proportion of Grade 6 pupils taught by female teachers were very low, although there have been some increase over time. For example, those taught by female Reading teachers increased from 30 to 39 percent, and those taught by female Mathematics teacher slightly increased from 26 to 29 percent. Similar pattern was seen in School Head with an increase from 15 to 22 percent. These percentages illustrate that Mozambique is far away

from the gender balance level in terms of education staffing.

School Safety

Some school resources are very critical for keeping girls at schools. For example, these resources include school safety measures (such as school fences) and sanitation measures (such as separate toilets for boys and girls). Table 1 illustrates the relative deterioration in terms of the situation in the provision of school fences from SACMEQ II (49 percent) to SACMEQ III (34 percent). It should be noted that Grade 6 pupils of SACMEQ II went to middle schools, while Grade 6 pupils in SACMEQ III went to primary schools due to the re-structuring of school education. As can be seen from Saito (2011), the Grade 6 boys and girls tripled from 2000 to 2007. There is a possibility for the newly constructed primary schools to meet this need were not equipped with enough toilets.

Sanitation

In Table 1, the average numbers of pupils per toilet in 2000 and 2007 are shown separately for boys' toilets and girls' toilets. It should be noted that about 20 percent of Grade 6 pupils in Mozambique went to schools with no toilet at all in 2000, and all Grade 6 pupils went to schools with at least a toilet for him or her in 2007. These average numbers of girls and boys per toilet reflect only those schools with at least one gender-separated toilet. If the average number of pupils per toilet decreased in 2007 compared to 2000, this indicates that the situation regarding the provision of toilets improved over time. The number of pupils per toilet increased for both boys (132 to 243) and girls (161 to 237) in 2000 and 2007 respectively, indicating that for more boys and girls had to share toilets. These ratios were extremely high.

Summary of Results

In this policy brief, gender equality issues regarding the participation and learning achievements (Reading and Mathematics) for Grade 6 pupils in Mozambique

have been examined. Additional information concerning female staff, security, and sanitary issues has also been presented, in order to understand the context.

The results indicated that:

- There was an overall improvement in girls participation in all provinces except Maputo Province where there was a slight decline but even then it was above the balance line in favor of girls.
- There was a general decline in learning achievement and the gap between boys and girls has increased in favor of boys.
- The proportion of female staff has increased in general, but there is still a long way to go to achieve gender balance.
- There has been deterioration in safety and sanitary conditions. The percentage of grade 6 pupils who attended schools with fencing has reduced and the ratio of pupils per toilet has raised to alarming levels.

Policy Suggestions

To overcome some of the above-mentioned shortcomings, it is suggested that:

- The Ministry of Education should continue to develop special programmes for girls, but the focus should be shifted from participation and retention to achievement. For example, in Cabo Delgado and Niassa, the trade-off between more girls' participation and larger deterioration on girls' achievement needs to be seriously debated amongst policy makers, curriculum developers, and teachers.
- The Gender Units of the Ministry of Education and Provincial Directorates of Education should continue to develop special programmes to increase the percentage of female staff particularly in Mathematics as well as School Heads.

- The Ministry of Education is currently developing benchmark standards for various aspects of education. It may therefore wish to include benchmarks standards for fences and boys and girls per toilet separately.

Conclusion

In order to attain the gender-related objectives within EFA, it is necessary to go beyond gender parity. The SACMEQ III Project research results for Mozambique indicated that, although there has been an improvement in attaining gender balance in enrolment and teaching staff, gender equality in achievement had deteriorated and overall there is still a long way to the achievement of gender balance in all aspects. The Ministry of Education should continue to design, implement and closely monitor programmes aimed at improving girls participation, retention and achievement.

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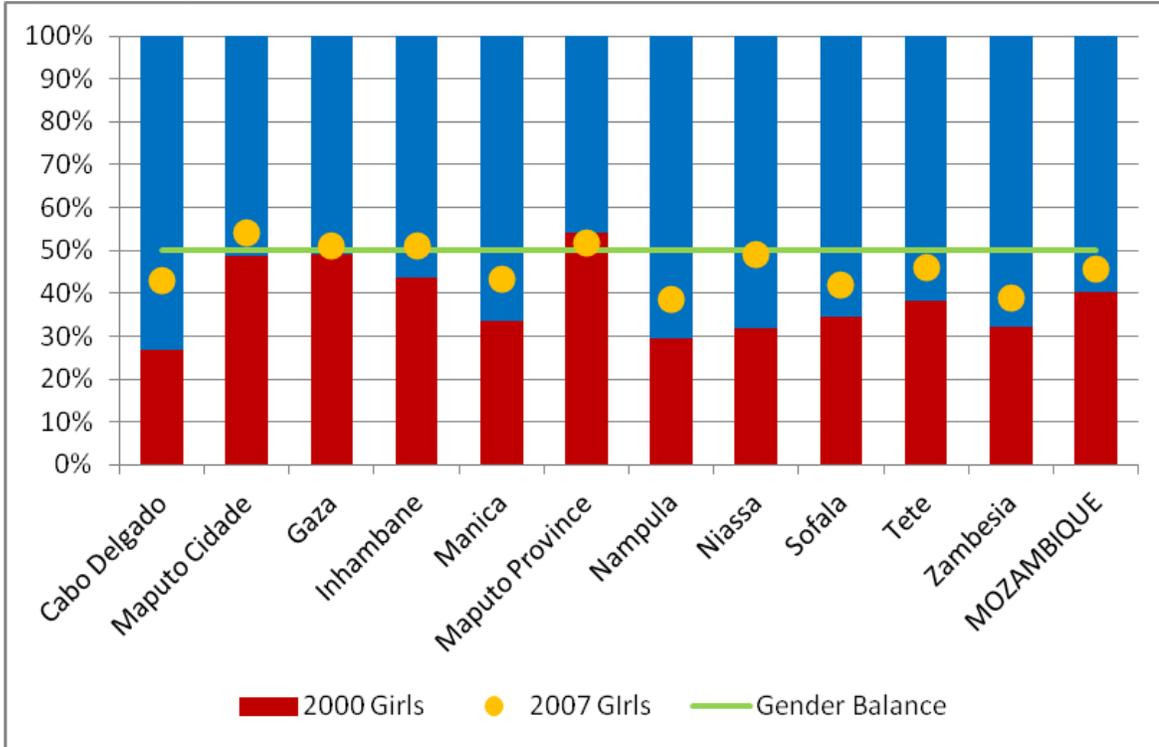
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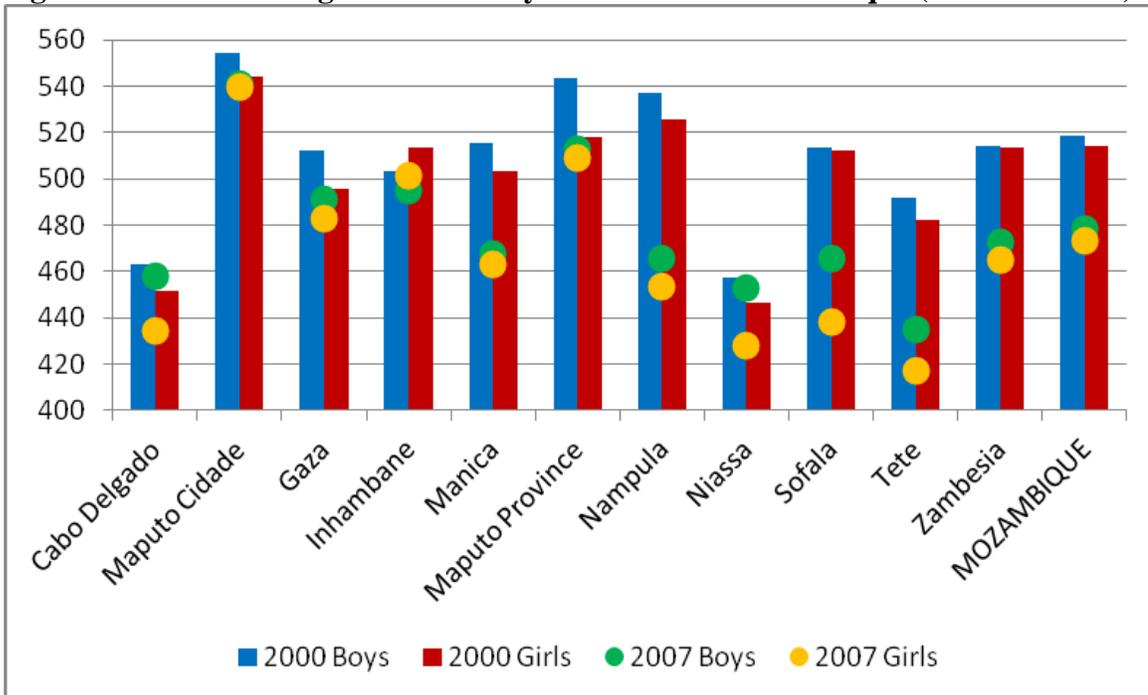
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Figure 1: Proportion of Grade 6 Girls out of Total Grade 6 Enrolments in Mozambique (2000 and 2007)



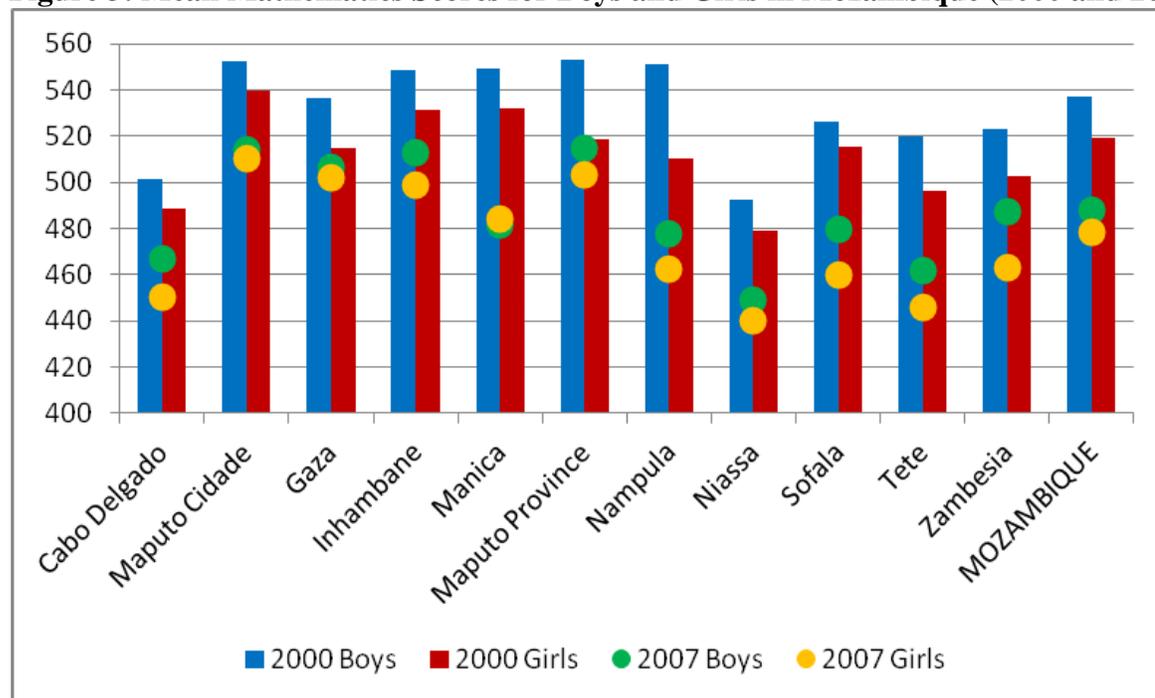
Source: SACMEQ Data Archive

Figure 2: Mean Reading Scores for Boys and Girls in Mozambique (2000 and 2007)



Source: SACMEQ Data Archive

Figure 3: Mean Mathematics Scores for Boys and Girls in Mozambique (2000 and 2007)



Source: SACMEQ Data Archive

Table 1: Selected Information through ‘Gender Lens’ in Mozambique (2000 and 2007)

Selected Indicators	2000	2007
Female Reading Teacher	30%	39%
Female Mathematics Teacher	26%	29%
Female School Head	15%	22%
Have School Fence	49%	34%
# Boys per Boys' Toilet	132	243
# Girls per Girls' Toilet	161	237

Source: SACMEQ Data Archive