Coming out from the Civil War, Mozambique had an enormous education deficit. In 1997, five years after the peace treaty, 80 percent of the labor force reported to have no education at all, and school enrollment outside the large cities was miserable. Since then, Mozambique has come a long way in improving access to lower and upper primary through sustained investments in education infrastructure and introduction of important reforms. The primary education reform programs implemented in 2004, combined with a continuing program of school construction and teacher training, resulted in a 70% increase in enrollment in EP1 over 4 years with the highest gains for the poorest and most vulnerable children. Yet there was only a slight increase in student/teacher ratios.

However, despite these efforts, there is still an education deficit. In 2008, over 1 million children who should be attending primary school were not. Over half of the children who began grade 1 in 2000 did not complete grade 7 by 2008. One reason is that school costs remain high, especially for grades 6 and above (EP2+). And quality is still not adequate in many schools. As a result, the transformation of the labor force is slow, as over half of the females who entered the labor force in the decade since 1997 did not even complete EP1.

Analysis of employment and livelihood opportunities indicates that the transition out of subsistence agriculture requires primary education. This means that to achieve inclusive growth, the key strategic objective of the education system needs to be ensuring that as many children as possible start and finish primary school with competency in the basic subjects, as well as the skills to allow them to find productive economic activities and make these activities pay.

Expanding access to education is a key policy goal for Mozambique not just as an end in itself, but because lack of a qualified labor force is a constraint to growth and poverty reduction.

Growth translates into higher welfare for households primarily through allowing mobility of the labor force from lower productivity into higher productivity activities. By 2008, only 7.8 percent of the labor force was engaged in private sector non-agricultural wage and salary employment. Even with major investments in new plants and larger enterprises, private wage and salary employment is therefore not going to be available to most of the new entrants to the labor force for the next 10 or maybe even 20 years. This means that most labor mobility and income growth will take place within the scope of household economic activities. Households will have to find ways to raise the productivity of their traditional activities, and add new and more productive non-farm ones, such as non-farm enterprises.
In 2008, more than two thirds of the labor force had either no education at all, or had not completed even lower primary school. Mozambique is still behind its neighbors (and competitors) in educational attainment at all levels, so more will need to be done to ensure the country has a qualified labor force that can promote economic growth. Studies in Mozambique and other African countries found that households and workers with primary education were able to transition into non-farm activities, achieving a higher income and transforming their livelihoods in both rural and urban areas, but those without at least lower primary education were not.

**AMAZING PROGRESS IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION**

Mozambique has made impressive gains in improving access to lower and upper primary school since the education reforms of 2004, which abolished all national primary school fees, provided free textbooks and introduced a new curriculum, while maintaining the high pace of school construction and teacher training. Enrollment in primary schools surged as the combination of lower costs and supply of schools increased access particularly for poorer families. The study shows that in lower primary (EP1), access improved the most the response to the reforms was highest for poorer families, whereas in upper primary (EP2), the gains for poor families were limited. Overall, the primary system has become more inclusive.

The 2004 reforms also had an indirect effect on secondary schooling. By having more students enroll and complete primary school, secondary school enrollment also increased for both male and female students in both urban and rural areas. By 2008, secondary school completion rates had more than tripled since 1997.

The general perception by the population of the change in the education services provided since 2004 is positive, largely due to the abolition of school fees, but also because of textbooks and school materials being provided for free.

**CHALLENGES REMAIN**

Despite these gains, the study shows that many challenges remain. The gains in enrollment surged from a low base, and still in 2008 more than a million children of school age, who should be in school, are not. Many children who enter lower primary school do not complete even 5 grades, and over half of them do not complete the 7th grade cycle. And while there is increasingly gender equality in terms of enrollment, completion rates for girls fall significantly short of those for boys. At the same time, many children do not start school on time, and most take longer than they should to finish, indicating that the education system is inefficient.

Compared to countries in the region, Mozambique is lagging behind in educational achievements. In comparison with Uganda, where 95 percent of children age 10 are in school, in Mozambique, only 83 percent at the same age are in school.

There is therefore a concern that barriers to entry and completion remain. One reason is that while national fees were abolished in 2004, local fees have remained or grown.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No education</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 1 incomplete*</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 1 complete</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 2 complete</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary 1 complete</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary 2 complete or above**</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>100</td>
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The study shows that a large proportion of households still continue to pay what they perceive as obligatory fees, as well as voluntary fees, both of which are imposed at the school level. These fees are a concern for poorer households, as for upper primary school, local fees are quite high. These fees are neither monitored nor controlled at any level of government; indeed this study was the first to document the extent of this practice. Many parents also cite school uniforms, school snack (lanche) and fees associated with exams and tests as significant costs as well.

For education to be successful, it is not enough to ensure that children attend school but importantly, they also need to learn while they are in school. The expansion in primary education, because of limited resources, put pressure on quality of the education. Children and parents frequently complain about the low quality of infrastructure, lack of availability of books, and increasing class sizes.

At the national level educational test scores have declined since the reform. This is often the case when access to education is expanded, yet ensuring the quality of learning is a challenge Mozambique must confront to improve the education of its labor force.

**PRIMARY LEAVERS NEED TO BE READY FOR THE JOB MARKET INCLUDING WORKING FOR THEMSELVES**

Owing to continuing supply constraints, for the next ten years, most Mozambican youth who enter the economy, will most likely only have primary school education. Youth seeking productive employment will need to make their own livelihood, either working on their family farm and/or creating a business which sells goods or services to their community, or to another small business. Mozambique should strive to make sure that they are ready for work.

Since secondary school remains an illusion for the vast majority of Mozambican youth, the key strategic objective of the education system needs therefore to ensure that as many children as possible finish primary school with competency in the basic subjects, and that they learn the behaviors and competencies which will allow them to exploit this livelihood strategy and find productive economic activities and make these activities pay. Evidence from other countries suggests that teaching simple rules-of-thumb on financial management significantly increases the likelihood of a profitable business. Introducing such simple financial management skills in primary school would increase the likelihood of increased earnings for primary graduates. It is efficient to do this while they are in school, before they have dispersed into their communities and beyond.

**GOING FORWARD, PRIORITIES NEED TO BE SET**

Mozambique’s Poverty Reduction Strategy has as a goal for the next five years is to raise the gross completion rate of primary education for 48 percent to 57 percent and to expand secondary education opportunities. While it already spends 5 percent of GDP on education and is unlikely to see...
from the point of delivery and therefore local governments in Mozambique need to increasingly take an active role in monitoring. Civil Society including parents and the wider local communities can also provide effective feedback. Information coming from the ground needs to be systematic, easy to collect and comparable over jurisdictions.

The current system of top-down monitoring is expensive and not effective enough. The study found that there is a large variation in fees paid and in the quality of education in Mozambique. Community school committees are not used for regular feedback to the local or central government. Administrative data is routinely collected, but not accurately reported and does not provide adequate information to improve education services.

A more efficient approach is to develop a simple national monitoring system to be implemented at the local government level, with inputs from parents, teachers, students, and school committees. Such a system would allow benchmarking at the facility, district, and province levels, and would set up an accountability mechanism that can build trust between the schools and the community as well as hold principals and district officials increasingly accountable for outcomes.

**MOVING FORWARD**

While Mozambique has much to be proud of, the country can not rest. A second generation of education policy and program reforms of policy and programs reforms are needed to preserve existing forward progress and build on the current momentum. This forward looking strategy will need a combination of efficiency gains and quality improvements, especially at the primary level. This could be achieved by:

» Focusing on quality at all levels.
» At the primary level, focusing on demand side strategies to pull in those children still excluded, and ensure that all children who start primary are able to complete.
» Making sure that children who leave primary school are ready for work.
» Making sure that expenditures and policies at all levels support inclusive growth.
» Monitoring of fees, expenditures, and teacher, student, and school performance for results.

Local monitoring systems would allow all stakeholders to support this strategy and ensure success.

| Do you know about School Council in the school where the member(s) of this household attend? |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                                    | Urban | Rural | National |
| Yes                                | 57.8  | 59.5  | 59.1      |
| No                                 | 42.2  | 40.5  | 40.9      |
| Total                              | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0     |

expenditures increasing by much, the question is not so much about increasing funding to the sector as much as how to get more value for money with the current level of expenditure.

In a situation of constrained resources, priorities need to be set and this implies a tradeoff for Mozambique between quantity and quality and investments in primary vs. secondary (not to mention further education). The fastest and cheapest way to achieve the goal of increased education for all, would be to prioritize primary completion for the next five years, by improving access, quality and retention in the lower and upper primary levels. This would increase educational attainment at lower levels while simultaneously increasing the number of secondary school graduates in the labor force by boosting the number of people qualified to enter secondary. This would also be the most inclusive strategy.

As the number of primary school graduates increase, demand for secondary school will be rising and so planning now for an expansion of the network of secondary schools in the later part of the decade is necessary as well. Encouraging private provision with scholarships for low income students is one option to increase access in a financially constrained environment.

**MEASURING AND MONITORING PERFORMANCE AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL CAN UNLOCK PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS**

Meeting these challenges by ensuring access and quality in public education requires continuous monitoring of education expenditures and results, including inputs such as quality of school infrastructure, teacher performance, availability of books and other learning tools and finally, monitoring of fees are important to ensure that they do not continue to pose a barrier to entry and completion.

In a large and predominantly rural country such as Mozambique, effective monitoring has to be done close to the point of service delivery, at the school level. Central Government is far away...