



CEF Mozambique End of Project Evaluation

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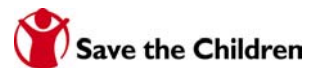


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ACRONYMS

AMOPED	Mozambican Association of Parents and Guardians in Education
CEF	Commonwealth Education Fund
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DfID	Department for International Development
DSS	Direct Support to Schools
EFA	Education for All
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FAWEMO	Forum of African Women in Education Mozambique
FDC	Foundation for Community Development
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
LDÇ	Liga dos Direitos da Criança
MAHLAHLE	Women Association for Women's Development
MC	Management Committee
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MEPT	Movement on EFA
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
ONP	National Teachers' Union
PARPA	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SCs	School Councils
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UK	United Kingdom

Executive summary

The Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) was launched in March 2002, and operated in 16¹ Commonwealth countries² in Africa and Asia, with a Secretariat in the UK. The CEF was managed jointly by three UK development agencies (ActionAid, Oxfam GB and Save the Children UK), working closely with the UK government. Its goals were linked to the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a special focus on civil society participation in the education system.

This work attempts to evaluate the impact of CEF in Mozambique, and explore how far CEF has achieved its objectives: stronger civil society participation in education advocacy, through a combination of national education coalition building, budget monitoring and tracking, and promotion of innovative education approaches to influence wider policies and practices in favour of the most marginalised children, especially girls. The period under evaluation is 2002-2007.

First of all, it is important to frame the CEF in its national context. Independent CSOs in Mozambique are a new phenomenon that began to emerge in the early 90's. Beyond the lack of technical skills and resources, CSOs do not understand yet the concept of "advocacy". Many of them are also entering this area for the first time. They might also lack of information essential for increasing their knowledge on relevant education topics. Within this framework, the work and the quality of CEF in Mozambique is strictly linked to, and influenced by the role and quality of its partners. Therefore, the expectations coming in with the initiative might have been too high in relation to the internationally global-defined objectives on one side, and the Mozambican reality on the other side. Overall, a more appropriate level of objectives would have helped the CEF Mozambique to set achievable objectives. Moreover, *to achieve behavioural, attitudinal, policy and practice changes at a national level* goes far beyond the time-frame limitation of CEF's initiative.

However, it can be said without any doubt that CEF strongly contributed to the strengthening of a national education coalition, the Movement on EFA (MEPT). In this context of weak, non-homogenous and uninformed civil society, MEPT increased its capability to represent civil society's voice at policy level. CEF's support to MEPT played a key role in congregating the individual voices of civil society, and moving them toward a more informed, influencing and structured voice. Even though it might be difficult to establish a line between what has been achieved just through the support of CEF, and what has been achieved through the support of other donors, it appears that CEF contributed in a more systematic way in terms of continuity, and in a more crucial way, in terms of budget allocated. A strengthened MEPT, institutionally and organisationally, in the last five years has been able to gain its place at government policy level. However, the quality and level of this engagement are still questionable. There is the challenge to support the current type of participation to promote better quality participation.

¹ In the beginning the countries selected were 17, then Zimbabwe was left out for its internal political situation

² Bangladesh, Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

About the work on enabling local communities to monitor spending on education, the stakeholders interviewed felt that *this objective in Mozambique has not really happened yet*. Based on the evaluation, findings have identified a combination of challenges preventing the accomplishment of this objective. Lack of political will to supply budgetary information, reality of the country where primary schools are not considered by the government budgetary units, and insufficient capacity and knowledge of the issue among CSOs. However, CEF made some important contributions that should be regarded as a qualitative starting point to pursue this objective. In Mozambique, the government's programme *Direct Support to School* is an extremely important step to decentralise the education system and promote community participation in school management. The programme provides a grant to be managed directly by schools. CEF's partners – Mahlahle, Magariro, and Liga dos Direitos da Criança - developed capacity among School Councils to monitor and track disbursements of the fund in order to better manage it. This approach showed that effective and operating Schools Councils could have a positive impact on schools management through involving and sensitizing communities. Once again, contextually more appropriate level of objectives would have helped, bearing also in mind that as far as CEF's partners are identified, their capacity to come up with good projects is lacking. It seems that the gap between what is expected from partners and their ability and capacity to do it, is still quite big.

CEF documented and supported innovative approaches for promoting girls' access and retention in school. FAWEMO – main CEF's partner in the area of gender and education – established Girls' Clubs in schools. The clubs had a positive impact in changing practises at local level. In those schools where Girls' Clubs were operating, it has been observed: a significant reduction in the number of girls dropping out, reduction in early pregnancies, increased performance at school, increased enrolments and progression. At the same time, the work done on Schools Councils showed the same positive attitudinal and behavioural changes among communities, parents and guardians. Unfortunately, CEF missed to influence wider policies on gender education due to FAWEMO's internal institutional problems that slowed down the dialogue between FAWEMO and the Ministry of Education.

CEF needs to look at the next step. There is the call for consolidating the results obtained up to now. Although MEPT have been able to attract funding from other sources, it is still dependent on CEF for core funding. In addition, although advocacy work conducted by CEF's partners at local level, though it is having an impact, is still happening in isolation. Therefore, the question for CEF is how to replicate and expand the activities implemented in order to have an impact for the whole country.

In Mozambique, CEF was supposed to come to an end by June 2008. However, CEF managed to attract funding from in-country donors and extent the work until June 2009. This effort to carry on the CEF's experience shows the renewed commitment of its actors, and the importance of giving continuity to the work on strengthening civil society participation in education.

The evaluation also looked at the CEF as an innovative partnership between three INGOs – ActionAid, Oxfam GB and Save the children UK. The challenges of the CEF’s structure – having a Lead Agency legally and financially responsible for the fund, but an inter-agency committee for decision-making – are also explored by this evaluation.

Finally, a list of recommendations drawn directly from the findings of the evaluation has been highlighted at the end of the report. These recommendations are made with the intention to feed into future plans aimed at achieving what CEF was intended to achieve

1. Introduction

1. 2 CEF: a global initiative

The Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) was established in 2002, and it worked in 16³ low-income Commonwealth countries⁴ in Africa and Asia, with a secretariat in the UK. The countries selected are the ones most at risk of missing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on education and gender. Therefore, the CEF's mission has been :

“to promote the right to education by ensuring that governments fulfil their commitments through good quality education policies, transparent and accountable financial procedures and provision of quality education that reaches the most marginalised girls and boys” (CEF, 2008, p.4).

Since 2002, the CEF supported civil society participation in education advocacy, through a combination of national education coalition building, budget monitoring and tracking, and promotion of innovative education approaches to influence policies and practices in favour of the most marginalised children, especially girls. Internationally, the CEF was jointly managed and administrated by a secretariat and a management committee (MC) composed by ActionAid, Oxfam GB, and Save the Children UK. The CEF's work was funded by DFID and came to an end in 2008.

At country-level the CEF was introduced in Mozambique in late 2002. The effective launch of the project was possible only in January 2003. The international strategic partnership between three international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) – ActionAid, Oxfam GB, and Save the Children UK – was replicated. To enrich the diversity of expertise and benefit from a local perspective, the MC was expanded to include two national organisations – Igreja Presbiteriana and Fundação Para O Desenvolvimento da Comunidade (FDC). An important element of the CEF's management structure is the role of the Leading Agency, financially and legally responsible for the initiative. In Mozambique, just like the CEF globally, ActionAid held this position.

The main purpose of CEF Mozambique was to “enable the participation of the civil society in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the education process in the country (CEF, Mid-term review, 2005)”. Therefore, CEF's work has been around the following objectives:

1. Strengthen civil society participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans, especially through the support for broad based national alliances and coalitions;
2. Enable local communities to monitor spending on education both at national and local levels;
3. Support the development of innovative approaches to educating the most marginalized children (especially girls and the most vulnerable) in a way that influences wider policy and practice;
4. Strengthen the inter-agency collaboration and internal functioning of the CEF.

³ In the beginning the countries selected were 17, then Zimbabwe was left out for its internal political situation

⁴ Bangladesh, Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

2. CEF Mozambique end of project evaluation

2.1 Aims and objectives of the evaluation

As agreed on the terms of reference of the researcher the evaluation process started on the premise that the 'CEF model' consists of three key strands:

1) a fund jointly managed by international NGOs, to support 2) national Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) engagement in education advocacy, campaigning, and strategic monitoring of plans and practice. A support which in part is channelled to and through 3) national education coalitions.

The essence of CEF's work was "to achieve behavioural, attitudinal, policy and practice change at a national level, in order to create a social and political environment in which education becomes the number one national priority" (CEF, Global Mid-Term Review, 2005, p.3).

Therefore, the overall aims of the CEF Mozambique, end of project evaluation are:

- to assess the performance and the impact of the CEF's work in relation to the three objectives stated above;
- to capture challenges, achievements, failures, changes in practice, and the learning against the objectives set out for the CEF's project.

Hence, the specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- to share the experience and learning from achievements and failures;
- to provide an opportunity for internal and external stakeholders to explore CEF's work and reflect on both positive and negative impacts and outcomes of the project;
- examine the efficiency of the CEF present management structure;
- investigate the successes and challenges of collaboration between international NGOs as fund managers.

2.3 Methodology of the evaluation

The researcher used a qualitative approach to conduct the evaluation. Two different methods of data collection were used: semi-structured interviews and review of policy and CEF documentation. Semi-structured interviews with a wide range of key stakeholders were the primary source of data collection. In total 22 interviews were conducted over three-week period. The open-ended questions of semi-structured interviews were organised under three different sections to reflect independently on each objective. This allowed the researcher to identify main achievements, cases of success, and impact of activities, challenges, and lesson learnt in relation to the objective under discussion. The interviews were partly recorded, partly transcribed, summarised and then coded to organise the process of data analysis. An inductive analysis procedure was followed to identify common themes, partners and trends emerging out of the data.

Review of documentation produced at National and International level under the umbrella of CEF was undertaken to acquire an in-depth knowledge of CEF's work. The documents reviewed include: CEF's quarterly reports, mid-term review, researches conducted, and published reports. Governmental policies and strategy documentation provided also a secondary data source.

Finally two presentations of evaluation's findings to CEF's MC and partners were conducted for triangulation of data. They were an important tool to generate discussion on CEF's main achievements and challenges, create consensus among them and enrich the evaluation with relevant information.

2.3 Key evaluation questions

The collection of data has been undertaken bearing in mind some key questions to focus on the evaluation aims and objectives.

The four main evaluation questions are as follows:

1. How far has CEF Mozambique achieved its objectives?
2. What are the perceptions of key stakeholders on CEF's impact, contributions, achievements, failures and challenges?
3. How effective was the CEF's structure in order to accomplish its mandate?
4. What are the lessons learned during this process that could be drawn to better plan a future intervention?

2.4 Structure of the evaluation

The evaluation is divided in six main chapters and several sub-chapters. The first chapter gave a brief introduction of the CEF's project at global level. The second chapter, this one, explores aims, objectives, key research questions, and limitations of the evaluation. The third chapter gives a brief introduction of the country socio-economic and educational background. The chapter four looks at the historical development of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Mozambique in order to understand the starting point and the relevance of the CEF's work in Mozambique. The chapter five explores the analysis of findings. The analysis was framed under the three key CEF's objectives. It concludes with an overview of the CEF's structure analyse the main challenges of the structure, and explore CEF's transparency and accountability. The chapter six overviews the CEF's future plans. Chapter seven summaries the recommendations suggested throughout the document. It has been followed by conclusions.

2.5 Limitations of the evaluation

Several limitations were encountered during the evaluation process. They are outlined below:

- The three-week evaluation did not allow the researcher to travel outside Maputo in order to conduct face-to-face interviews with CEF's partners in the provinces, and explore by first-hand the work done. However, the interviews were conducted over by telephone when possible, the projects' reports were reviewed, and partners were met during the presentation of findings;
- several stakeholders were on-leave or out-side the country during the weeks planned for interviews;
- the consultant was not able to reach any representative for Save the Children. The only person responsible for Save the Children was on-leave during the time of the evaluation process;
- the consultant could not get relevant information on activities implemented during the initial period 2002-2005, due to lack of relevant documents produced and available;
- there were challenges measuring the impact of CEF on policy changes in certain areas because it is not possible to establish a direct line between activities implemented and changes at policy level.

3. Country-context: Mozambique

3.1 Mozambique Political and Socio-Economic Context

Mozambique gained its independence in 1975, after almost five centuries of Portuguese colonialism. The Portuguese left the country in a status of chaos. The new FRELIMO Government considered necessary to implement social reforms and build infrastructure. However, soon after the independence the country faced a drawn-out civil war that forced millions of people to leave the country. A peace agreement between Renamo and the government was signed in Rome on the 4th October 1992. This was followed by UN monitored demobilisation and then elections on 27-29 October 1994.

Mozambique after emerging from more than a decade of conflict faced a challenging situation: reconstruction of the national identity, and promotion of economic recovery and stability. Between 2001 and 2005, Mozambique had remarkable achievements in promoting macro-economic stability, rebuilding infrastructure and recovering the education, health, agriculture and rural development sectors. Despite these achievements, the country is one of the poorest in the world with 54.1% of the estimated 19 million Mozambicans living below absolute poverty line. Moreover, these achievements were accompanied by strong regional diversities. Poverty is widespread in rural areas, in northern and central provinces.

To tackle the challenges posed by poverty, the government launched in the second quarter of 2006 the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – PARPA II. The main objective of PARPA II is to reduce the proportion of the people living below the poverty line from 54% to 45% by 2009 (Household survey figure, 2003).

3.2 The Education Sector in Mozambique

In 1995, the Mozambique Assembly of the Republic (Parliament) approved the National Education Policy and Strategies for Implementation (NEPS). The NEPS guided the development of the Education Sector Strategic Plan, 1997-2001 (ESSPI), prepared by the Government (World Bank, 1999). The objective of the ESSP I was "to provide increased and equitable access to higher quality education and to improve the management of education for economic and social development in Mozambique" (World Bank, 1999, p.2). The ESSP II, for the period 2005 – 2009, reaffirms the Government's commitment to increasing access and improving quality in basic education, and to providing a coherent integrated system of administrative structures and procedures to achieve these objectives. However, an increasing attention is paid to secondary education and to Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as instrumental for personal and economic development.

The Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty 2006-2009 (PARPA II) once again restates: "the relationship between education and poverty is significant [...] education acts directly and indirectly to reduce poverty – directly, because education is a basic human right and part of human development [...] Indirectly, because education is essential to accelerate economic growth. It expands the quality and quantity of human capital in the production process" (Government of Mozambique, 2006, pp. 84-85).

However, considering quality as the achievements of the education system, in the case of Mozambique, the rapid growth in enrolments has not been followed by comparable growth in completion rates or reductions in repetition and dropout rates. This could be seen as a consequence of not proportional investment in the quality of education, or lack of strategies for such massive increase in number of students. As a review of major indicators will shortly confirm, the total number of pupils enrolled in schools has increased since the peace agreement (1992), reaching almost universal access to grade 1. On the other hand, around one million children still remain out of school. The percentage of Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) at lower level of primary education (Grades 1-5) has now reached over 100%. Instead for grade 6 and 7 (upper level of primary education) the percentage is still extremely low, around 28%. From 1992 to 2007 net enrolment rates (NER) for lower primary education grew from 32% to 86%. In specific, the NER for girls from 2005 to 2007 grew from 77% to 84%.

However, despite the high level of access to grade 1, completion rates remain poor: for example less than 50% of pupils enrolled in 1999 completed the full course of lower primary education in 2004. Also, dropout and repetition rates remain extremely high, respectively 8% and 11% in 2005. There are also huge geographic and gender disparities across the country. For instance in 2003 grade 6 completion rate for boys was 49%, while for girls 33%.

The quality of the infrastructure is overall poorer in rural areas. In particular, schools lacking furniture and houses for teachers fail to attract teachers to rural locations, especially female teachers. In general, in 2007 only 29% of teachers were female in lower primary and 19% in upper primary (MEC Key statistics 1998 - 2008). The distance to get to school also affects pupil attendance.

In general, during the last 10 years the pupil-teacher-ratio has increased from 61 pupils-per-teacher in 1998 to 73 pupils-per-teacher in 2008. When considering the data, it is important to underline that there are still many local differences in teacher distribution and qualifications across provinces. For instance, in Maputo city, only 8% of teachers in lower primary are untrained, compared to 58% in Manica. The proportion of pupils-per-qualified-teacher-ratio is 59 in Maputo and 162 in Manica.

Cultural practices and socio-economic conditions - contextual factors - are also important reasons in rural communities for not sending children to school: initiation rites in rural communities usually prevent girls from completing primary education. After the rites, girls are considered women and they do not return to school.

4. Civil Society Organisations in Mozambique⁵

The chapter looks briefly at the role and history of CSOs in Mozambique. It is an essential background to frame the CEF's work into its context. Moreover, the work and the quality of CEF in Mozambique is strictly linked to and influenced by the role and quality of its partners. Even though 'civil society' is a concept that could mean different things according to the context, there is a world-wide general consensus that civil society "is a broader term that refers not only to NGOs with a development focus but encapsulates local community-based organisations (CBOs) such as parents associations, professionals associations, students associations, research institutions, charitable organisations and the media" (CEF, s.d., p. 14).

Independent CSOs in Mozambique do not have a long history. They are a new phenomenon that began to emerge in the early 90's. Both the colonial Portuguese administration and the centralist post-Independence government closely monitored 'civil society' activities. This lack of a long history of existence, makes local CBO's and NGO's comparatively weak, organisationally and institutionally. Their existence is further complicated by the legislation governing the registration of CSOs: non-profit organisations except for churches and trade unions have only one form of formal registration; to register as an 'association'. This weakens their creativity to improve internal governance structures as they are expected to be membership-based. There is no real legal framework to register an NGO network.⁶ There are also poor prospects for CSO's to raise funds from national sources due to not only poverty, but also lack of real fiscal incentives for the private

⁵ Chapter extracted by the CEF document, Civil Society Engagement in Education Project, 2008

⁶ Another form of registration is to register as a 'foundation' but this is more restrictive. Any proposal for a civil society fund will have to take legal aspects into account.

sector to give money to charitable courses. Hence, the unavoidable reliance on foreign sources of finance. Very few CSO's are engaged in meaningful advocacy activities, mainly due to wide spread inadequate capacity and skills. Most CSO's are more comfortable working in welfare and service delivery programmes, acting mainly as contracted implementation agencies for external donors or the government.

The skills needed for proper advocacy work are lacking, the majority of CSOs are unable to make linkages between local and national issues and turn them into policy advocacy agendas. They have limited access to information, skills in research and confidence to engage with the government. They do not fully understand what advocacy is about and therefore prefer service delivery roles. At times, there is even competition among them to access funding. There is a big capacity gap in engaging, managing and running networks. Mozambican CSOs in education need to be supported in their capacity to network, innovate, lobby and advocate through working in coalitions. The inability to articulate national agendas for policy change goes hand in hand with capacity shortage in crucial internal areas such as visioning and programme development, proposal writing and fundraising, the management of financial, human and physical resources. CSO's struggle with problem analysis, impact report writing and M&E in general. Hence strengthening the capacity of Mozambican CSO's while a laudable objective, comes with huge challenges.

4.1 Relevance of CEF⁷

The role of civil society in mobilising political commitment to education, engagement and participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of the chosen strategies in education is now generally acknowledged by the majority of stakeholders in public education. This acknowledgement however, has not been matched with a commitment in the level of resources allocated to CSO's to do advocacy work with efficiency and effectiveness. Hence the CEF has been unique in Mozambique in providing the much-needed resources to CSO's and their coalitions to be specifically engaged in advocacy work in education. Moreover the CEF's mandate is in line with the government's priority in achieving EFA goals and MDGs related to education and inclusion of the most marginalised children, especially girls.

5. Analysis of findings

This chapter is intended as a tool for:

- assessing the effectiveness of activities implemented to explore how far, and to what extent CEF achieved its objectives;
- investigating and reflecting on CEF's achievements, impacts, challenges and lessons learnt;
- sharing the experience of CEF's work in Mozambique;
- reflecting on the efficiency of CEF's management structure.

⁷ Chapter extracted by the CEF document, Civil Society Engagement in Education Project, 2008

5.1 Objective 1: strengthening Civil Society participation in education

Strengthen civil society participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans, especially through the support for broad based national alliances and coalitions

As pointed out in the previous chapter, considering the weaknesses and the poor level of engagement in education advocacy among CSOs, in Mozambique there was the urgent need to improve community engagement and participation in education. The CEF's work was framed around this need in a twofold way:

- strengthening the institutional capacity of the existing national coalition – the MEPT – to work as a stronger focal point for civil societies' voices at national level;
- empowering School Councils (SCs) to promote education advocacy at local level through the main partners Magariro, Mahlahle, Liga dos Direitos da Criança and FAWEMO.

5.1.1 Key achievements and impact of CEF's support to MEPT

Data collected shows that CEF, to a broad extent, achieved its first objective especially through the support for strengthening the institutional capacity of MEPT. The common feeling of stakeholders interviewed is that the impact of CEF's work highly contributed on supporting the MEPT to operate as a stronger national coalition. The CEF's support to MEPT can be regarded mainly as a financial support, but to some extent also mentoring. When CEF was launched in Mozambique, MEPT was already established, even though it was functioning as an informal and fragile structure. The CEF's mentoring support was instrumental in developing a new vision of the MEPT. As an outcome, MEPT started the process for formalising its existence, and obtaining its legal registration. The shift from an informal congregation of members toward a more structured coalition is one of the key achievements under objective 1.

Birth of MEPT

MEPT in Mozambique emerged as an outcome of the Mozambique's participation at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000. The MEPT brings together more than 70⁸ members across the country including local NGOs, international NGOs, religious institutions, teachers' association, and trade unions, with the common goals of strengthening civil society's actions in pursuit of Education for All (EFA)

Vision and mission of MEPT

The vision of MEPT is *to participate in the on-going construction of a country where all children, young people, and adults have access to quality basic education without any type of discrimination.*

In order to realise it, MEPT considers its mission *"to undertake advocacy within the government, civil society, and the public and private sectors so that basic education is available and enjoyed by all citizens"*

Moreover, the CEF's financial support contributed to strengthen the MEPT in two different ways:

⁸ MEPT is still working on the exact number of its partners. There is no need to fill a specific form to become a member of MEPT. Organisations express their interest and become members of MEPT by participating in activities promoted by MEPT.

1. Stronger institutional and administrative structure through establishment of permanent internal posts for its Secretariat, identification of the leadership at central level, and expansion of linkages with CSOs at national and provincial level;
2. Establishment of linkages with donors, Government, and other coalitions or movements working at regional and global level.

Even though it might be difficult to establish a line between what was achieved just through the support of CEF, and what was achieved through the support of other donors, it appears clearly that CEF contributed in a more systematic and crucial way in terms of continuity, and budget allocated (around 80% of the MEPT total budget). Furthermore, CEF contributed in a way that other donors are usually reluctant to contribute: payment of staff's salaries, equipment and others management costs. This was an essential contribution to establish the institutional capacity of MEPT, remove from MEPT problems of "surviving", and allow MEPT to enhance its capacity in advocacy, research and networking.

"The work of CEF seems to be arrived at the right moment, [...] CEF began its work when MEPT did not have an administration structure, there were not the right conditions to work, because there was a problem of finding the funds to survive [...] it was only after CEF that other donors start looking at MEPT, as a reliable counterpart"

MEPT, secretariat

At the same time, the rapid growth of new members joining the Movement to work together toward common goals was unexpected:

"The CEF's support helped to congregate the unheard voices of civil society, individual voices of each organisation are diminishing to leave space to a "movement", a "net". [...] We can say that now with the Government we are talking as a movement. [...] Organisations take issues that are bothering them, we discuss them, encounter consensus and present the issues to the Government as a movement"

MEPT, secretariat

As an effect of CEF's financial and mentoring support, undoubtedly MEPT gained greater recognition and visibility at national and local level. A key achievement is the progressive involvement of MEPT with government at policy level, during the last five years. MEPT in 2006 participated and contributed in the annual review meetings of the education strategic plan between the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and its international partners. During this policy discussions an agreement was reached to further institutionalise civil society participation in the process. On one hand, this participation enables to hear the civil society's voice - not usually heard - but it also enables civil society to have a wider access to key information and policy documents. On the other hand, the MEPT's representation of CSOs in policy forums, debates and reviews is becoming a norm.

However, there is still a long way for civil society to be fully involved in policy formulation and implementation. A common feeling emerged out: there is the "physical" space and the "recognition" of the important role that civil society could play, but MEPT should take more

advantages from the new dialogue with the Government. In other words, the quality and the level of this engagement should be enhanced.

“[...] The Ministry of Education has undeniably opened its door to civil society participation, [...] however the government at the end of the day is still taking decisions [...] It seems that at the moment it is more about going there and marking the presence of civil society”

CEF’s MC member

Hence, the data collected shows that the level, the quality and the impact of this engagement are still questionable. There is the need to improve the current type of participation to have a quality participation. Often MEPT receives too short-notice for meetings called by the Ministry of Education (MEC). This does not allow MEPT to consult its members, put the right capacity in place to analysis strategies, and actively respond on issued raised by the Government. Therefore, even though there is a place for civil societies to discuss and seat at the same table with MEC and its donors, MEPT is not influencing yet the final decision of the Government. It would be interesting to explore possible strategies for MEPT on how to push the agenda on issued raised by the civil society, when the Ministry of Education is not taking them into account. At the same time, it would be interesting to involve more government and donor representatives to meetings organised by civil society, in order to bring at higher forums issues pointed out at district and local level.

Officers of MEC, interviewed for the evaluation, recalled the workshop⁹ co-run by MEPT between the MEC and CSOs as a productive experience to share good practices on successful activities implemented by CSOs. It was the first ever workshop of this sort but unfortunately this experience did not become a routine due to

Tab.1 Impact of MEPT work at Policy level

Case study of ADEMO

ADEMO (Mozambican Association for the Disabled) is a Mozambican National NGO that conceived a programme of education for deaf and dumb children. With the help of Handicap International and UNESCO, the ADEMO Community School was opened in 2000. However, the school faced immense difficulties, including payment of teachers’ salaries.

Since 2004 ADEMO has been in negotiations with the MEC for the proper remuneration of ADEMO school’s teachers, and to fully include them in the education system.

Finally in 2008 the Government recognised the teachers of ADEMO school and started paying its salaries. These great success has been also reached through the support of MEPT during the Global week of Education in 2007.

The **problem of ADEMO** is a specific intervention but key stakeholders saw it as the first step to open the dialogue at Ministry level about Special Needs Education

the high cost to bring together CSOs and government participants across the country. At the same time, the officers recognised the significance of MEPT’s contribution during policy discussions. They pointed out an extremely important issue raised by MEPT that is now receiving consideration at

⁹ 11-12 December 2006. The theme for the meeting was ‘ **Quality Education for All – the role and contribution of civil society and partners**’. CEF was instrumental in getting the meeting held and contributed financially to enable the attendance of civil society organisations. Oxfam-GB was approached by CEF to provide financial contribution to enable government participants from the provinces and central level to attend. The Ministry was the listening partner while CSO’s did the talking.

policy level: the need to consider primary schools as budgetary units. However, there is a call for better coordinating and synchronising the new dialogue, in order to reciprocally benefit from it. For instance, presentation of strategic plan of MEPT, researches and studies carried out by MEPT should be scheduled in advance to give the MEC time to participate. The information should be also distributed in a more programmatic way.

Within this framework, another issue comes out. Has MEPT the knowledge and technical capacity to respond in a more strategic and planned way to the Government education agenda?

As mentioned before, MEPT is a forum congregating many different organisations, some of these are still fragile. MEPT was able to establish one Focal Point in each province, some of them stronger, some of them weaker. The Niassa province can be used as a good example where the organisation representing MEPT¹⁰, UESAM, was strong enough to be the focal point of the province. This allowed to gather together, and in the future coordinate, organisations working in the education area. On the other hand, the Focal Point in Cabo Delgado¹¹ seemed to have problems in accomplishing this role due to its internal weak capacity and structure.

“The first MEPT’s strategic plan did not really have a focus on building organisations’ capacity at provincial level. The focus was mainly on creating a dialogue with the Government [...] There is the need to build the capacity of MEPT’s members in the provinces to promote concrete advocacy actions”

MEPT, secretariat

To the need of addressing, building and strengthening the capacity of its Focal Points at provincial level, MEPT is responding with the new strategic plan 2009 -2013. The focus is now on strengthening provinces in order to move the Organisations Focal Points toward *Provincial Nucleus*. The shift would allow to reinforce the presence of MEPT in each province. The *Nucleus* will increasingly assume the lead to coordinate the education support in the area, improve communication among organisations, avoid projects’ duplication and identify common strategies. The recognition of these needs, and the change of vision from the willing to create a dialogue with the Government to the establishment of a qualitative and strategic approach to this dialogue, could be also regard as a big step forward in the consolidation and growth of MEPT. Furthermore, the planning of the strategy brought together a new surprising participation of MEPT’s members at all levels of inclusive discussions – local, provincial and national. That has never happened before.

5.1.2 Key achievements and impact of CEF’s support to CSOs at local level

School Councils in a country like Mozambique with a long history of top-down decision-making is a major step made by the government toward the decentralisation of school management, accountability and community participation. This allows a shifting of responsibility and decision-making from central to school level actors - head teachers, teachers, parents,

¹⁰ The focal point organisation of MEPT in Niassa province is receiving support from Oxfam Intermon to build the capacity of its member. According to MEPT this interest of external donors into funding MEPT came in only after CEF began its support

¹¹ Also supported by Oxfam Intermon

students and community members. The assumption is that the changes will lead to a better and more conducive learning environment for the pupils and, hence, improved learning outcomes. Increasingly SCs are becoming not only good entry points for the community into the school management, but also good forums to debate and promote important local education issues between the community, government and other stakeholders. Therefore, each section under its specific objective explores the work supported by CEF on promoting the establishment of SCs and developing their capacity to qualitatively intervene on schools' matters.

A major contribution of CEF's work was the support given to the organisation of the first National Symposium on School Councils (SCs). Overall, this initiative was an outstanding starting point because for the first time it was reached a common understanding on the important role of SCs. The symposium also created a common knowledge shared by government and CSOs on the work that should be done to strengthen the functioning of SCs. Moreover, it allowed to:

- map and collect data on local NGOs working with SCs;
- create linkages between local NGOs working with SCs;
- involve the government to listen to the challenges hindering the correct functioning of SCs;
- identify the gaps to be addressed in order to respond to those challenges.

The outcomes of the National Symposium could be used to strengthen the links between local organisations involved in the advocacy work on SCs, and develop a comprehensive strategy to address the issues raised, coordinate and harmonise the support.

Tab 2: Key achievement of CEF work at local level

The National Symposium on School councils

CEF supported the National Symposium on School councils, held in Chimoio, Manica province, 1 -3 November 2006, organised and hosted by MAGARIRO. Over 100 delegates from all the provinces except one attended the 3-day national meeting. The delegates included current school council chairpersons and school heads. The Ministry of Education was also represented.

As the result of working through school councils, some of the following outcomes are being observed:

- Increased community awareness of their rights and duties as citizens,
- Increased awareness of the importance of education especially of girls,
- The need to remove the barriers to education,
- Increased access to education,
- Increase knowledge of impact of HIV/AIDS

The meeting also came up with key issues and recommendations to better functioning and use of School Councils, among them:

- The need to improve the capacity of school council members. There should be greater effort to train school council members in particular those representing civil society;
- Development of training programmes/content,
- MEC should appoint in each provincial directorate an officer in charge of the functioning of school councils;
- The need to urgently set up school councils in all schools,
- Dissemination of good practice, sharing of experiences
- Expand the newly formed parents and guardians' association to all the provinces;
- Revision of the current regulations governing primary schools and the school council manual.

In general, the CEF's partners working on SCs – Women Association for Women's Development (Mahlahle) in Inhambane, MAGARIRO in Manica province and Liga dos Direitos da Criança (LDÇ) in Zambézia province – reported a positive impact of the capacity building activities implemented for SCs at local level. They all agree that where operational and trained SCs had a strong impact on schools and communities:

- SCs mobilised effectively communities to participate on school matters and plan local actions to support education quality. For instance, in Funhalouro district – Inhambane province - Mahlähle conducted training and workshops for SCs members and other important stakeholders. During the training, participants produced school plans and came up with strategies to deal with pupils dropping out. The school plans produced and adopted by all, facilitated the adoption of locally appropriate solutions to deal with issues affecting schools in both Funhalouro and Massinga districts in Inhambane province;
- SCs that received training, were able to create a "network" among them and establish an agenda of common concerns. This agenda brought schools issues to wider discussion forums with local authorities (Mahlähle experience in Inhambane)
- the support to SCs helped reduce the distance between communities and schools, and increasing the feeling of *ownership* of communities toward *their* schools;
- SCs' members were able to engage District Education Officers for the provision of the Direct Support to school's grant. It will be further explored under the second objective;
- SCs had a positive impact on retention and enrolment rates and in girls' education. It will be further explored under the third objective;

CEF was also instrumental in supporting the emergence of the first ever Mozambican Association of Parents and Guardians in Education, AMOPED. The emergence of this forum is an important milestone in the history of parental participation in education in Mozambique. CEF provided technical and financial support for the establishment of the new association and the development of its programmes. Advocacy materials (posters and calendar) were produced and used as part of an advocacy plan for increasing parental participation in education over 2007. Parents play a key role on access and retention of their children in schools, and they could make a difference. If mobilised and sensitised on issues as quality and inclusive education they would have a strong personal commitment to advocate for it. Therefore, CEF should increase its support to AMOPED in order for the association to establish strong linkages in all the provinces of the country, and continue the work of capacity building for parents in SCs initiated through CEF and UNESCO financial support.

Overall, the impact of the work done on SCs is positive, but it is still limited to districts where CEF's partners worked. There is a call for consolidating and sustaining the work initiated, as well as expanding it across the country. Specific challenges and lessons learned from advocacy

work on SCs will be explored in part in the following section, and fully in the sections 5.2.1 and 5.3.1.1, after having investigated the importance of SCs under each area of CEF's involvement education planning, budget tracking and gender education.

5.1.3 Challenges and Lessons Learned during the process

Before drawing conclusions from the previous section and analysing specific challenges and lessons learned, it is important to frame the CEF Mozambique into the bigger picture of the CEF's initiative worldwide.

Considering the CEF's initiative as an initiative planned at international level to be implemented at different and non homogenous national levels, the expectations coming in with the initiative might have been too high in relation to the internationally global-defined objectives on one side, and the countries' realities on the other side. Moreover, *to achieve behavioural, attitudinal, policy and practice change at a national level* goes far beyond the time-frame limitation of CEF's initiative. To plan achievable objectives it is essential to understand the country realities where CEF's initiatives are implemented. In Mozambique, CSOs began to emerge during the post-war period, early 1990s, and are still far from being homogeneous. Since then, the main role of CSOs has been on service delivery. In order to change CSOs' profile from merely service delivery to advocacy, the process is slow and difficult. Beyond the lack of technical skills and resources, civil societies do not yet fully understand the concept of advocacy. They might also lack of relevant information essential to increasing their knowledge on relevant issues.

5.1.3.1 About the support for a broad based national coalition

In this context of a weak, non homogenous and uninformed civil society, MEPT increased its capacity and visibility to represent civil society, strengthen voice, and move this voice toward a more informed, influencing, a structured voice. There is no doubt that CEF played a key role in supporting it. Through a stronger institutional and organisational structure, supported by CEF, MEPT:

- increased its visibility at National level;
- attracted donors' interest on its services;
- expanded its linkages at provincial level;
- established an open dialogue with the government;
- gained its place in the four more important meetings organised annually by the government to review its policies and strategies;
- MEPT is perceived by the government itself as an important counterpart.

However, to what extent could MEPT be truly considered representative of all Mozambican unheard voices? And what are the challenges that MEPT has to face in order to actually represent a pro-active civil society?

MEPT, through CEF's support, established linkages with organisations outside the country, and had access to information, elaborated at global level, that are influencing the education agenda of the government at national level. However, it is still missing an effective circulation of information among its members and partners. MEPT has the capacity to access this information, while local organisations do not have it. Therefore, better communication – on both ways central to local, local to central - appears essential for MEPT further growing as a National Coalitions in two ways:

- at Secretariat level MEPT should improve the sharing of relevant information within its members, and divulgate it at the *grass-root* level. On the other hand,
- MEPT should bring issues on what is happening at district and local level to wider forums at national level, in order to share good practices and failures. However, there is still a feeling that issues brought at government level are still mainly coming from the central (Maputo).

At district level organisations still need to understand that MEPT is not the secretariat, but they are the MEPT. Many members joined the movement in a moment of euphoria. MEPT secretariat and MEPT Provincial Focal Points need to continuously address the issue of keeping high the interest of members. Working as a National Coalition demands efforts to coordinate and share the work. Members and partners need to be informed and involved to feel the ownership of the concerns moved forward by MEPT as movement. At the same time, MEPT should have the knowledge on who the real partners are, what they do, and how they can support MEPT advocacy work. In order to accomplish this role, MEPT Secretariat and MEPT Provincial Focal Points still need to further strengthen its capacity and its technical knowledge.

Stakeholders argued that CEF should have had the capacity itself and the system to promote the capacity of MEPT, but it did not. Moreover, some disappointments on CEF's work relate to the fact that CEF should have functioned not only as grant-maker, but also as capacity-builder for its partners, especially for MEPT. The rationale is that CSOs' work is not hindered by their lack of money, but by their lack of skills on project writing and financial management. However, this is was not at the root of the CEF's system. The system was created as a tool to support advocacy activities. At the same time the financial support to partners could be used by them – and in part it was used by MEPT – as a tool to participate in capacity building and advocacy training specific to their needs.

Moreover, data shows that CEF in the beginning did not have a clear idea on how to build the capacity of MEPT and its partners.

“Because we did not have a clear path in mind when we started the project, [...] it is clear that MEPT has grown but it is difficult to say what exactly the CEF did”

CEF MC member

The lack of a strategic approach influenced CEF's path in the long run. In its early days CEF did not reflect on the real situation of CSOs in the country, on how to build capacity of MEPT and partners, and on what CEF wanted to achieve. Nowadays, it seems that advocacy work – with the exception of the Global Week of Education - is still happening in isolation through the support to a specific partner in a particular district. Therefore, among the new challenges for CEF there is a call for strategising more, consolidating the work done, but also expanding the impact of this work.

Box 1: Summary on CEF main achievements and challenges on coalition building

Achievements on coalition building

Even though it might be difficult to establish a line between what was achieved just through the support of CEF, and what was achieved through the support of other donors, it appears clearly that CEF contributed in a more systematic and crucial way in terms of continuity, and budget allocated (around 80% of the MEPT total budget)

- **Shift of MEPT from an informal congregation of members toward a more structured coalition** The CEF's mentoring support was instrumental in developing this new vision. As an outcome, MEPT started the process for formalising its existence, and obtaining its legal registration.
- **Stronger institutional and administrative structure established**
 - establishment of permanent internal posts for its Secretariat (funded by CEF)
 - identification of the leadership at central level (promoted by CEF)

As an outcome of this strategic and financial support

- linkages with CSOs at national and provincial level expanded
- linkages with coalitions or movements working at regional/ global level established
- **Greater recognition and visibility at national/local level gained**
 - Donors' interest on MEPT services increased
 - Number of members rapidly increased
 - progressive involvement of MEPT with government at policy level, during the last five years:
 - MEPT established an open dialogue with the government;
 - MEPT gained its place in the four more important meetings organised annually by the government to review its policies and strategies;
 - MEPT is perceived by the government itself as an important counterpart.

Challenges on coalition building

- **The quality and the level of MEPT engagement with Government / MEC should be enhanced:** often MEPT receives too short-notice for meetings called by the Ministry of Education (MEC). This does not allow MEPT to consult its members, put the right capacity in place to analysis strategies, and actively respond on issued raised by the Government. Therefore, even though there is a place for civil societies to discuss and seat at the same table with MEC and its donors, MEPT is not influencing yet the final decision of the Government.
- **MEPT Secretariat and MEPT Provincial Focal Points still need to further strengthen their capacity and their technical knowledge:**
 - MEPT should bring issues on what is happening at district /local level to wider forums at national level, in order to do this:
 - MEPT secretariat and MEPT Provincial Focal Points need to continuously address the issue of keeping high the interest of members;
 - Members and partners need to be informed and involved to feel the ownership of the concerns moved forward by MEPT as movement
 - Secretariat level MEPT should improve the sharing of relevant information within its members, and divulgate it at the *grass-root* level
 - MEPT should develop a better knowledge on who the real partners are, what they do, and how they can support MEPT advocacy work
- **MEPT should move from ad-hoc interventions to a more programmatic approach**
 - Resources made available by donors should be used to give priority to areas, members and partners identified by MEPT.

5.1.3.2 About the support for the work on School Councils

Among the issues preventing a stronger impact of capacity building activities and advocacy work on SCs, CEF's partners identified the following:

- the capacity of the organisations was financially too weak to monitoring the activities after the end of the projects;
- changes at community level are slow and take time. Firstly there is the need to promote awareness among communities, then acting for promoting changes;
- lack of continuity on activities implemented in order to consolidate those changes and allow them to become routine.

Most of CEF's partners have organisational and institutional weaknesses. This undoubtedly can jeopardise the quality and the influence of CEF's work in the field. Therefore, the main risk for

CEF's supported work remains the fragility of partners' capacity. The quality of the programme depends on the capabilities of the implementers. Delays on financial report submission by partners, or poor quality of reports caused delays in the disbursement of funds. The 3-month CEF funding cycle did not help this process as well. Gaps in between the funding cycles put on halt the activities and reduced their sustainability. However, partners highlighted an initial unclearness on CEF's mechanism and CEF's reports' format that did not help their work. In addition the change of coordinators in crucial moments of their projects worsened the situation.

One of the main challenge is to ensure that CEF's operations remain institutionally sustainable after the end of the projects. This means that the support to the majority of CEF's partners involves improving their internal capacity and their advocacy skills too. To some extent CEF did it in a mentoring way, essential for the quality of its own work. All partners said that CEF played a key role on strengthening their administration skills in terms of financial management and report writing. At the same time, they mentioned that CEF's support positively helped them to gain visibility, experience and attract other donors. This helped them to replicate successful activities in other districts. In particular Magariro recognised the essential contribution of CEF. They worked for the first time with SCs in rural areas. This experience facilitated them to replicate the work in forty schools.

In short, it means while the concern for supporting meaningful advocacy activities remain CEF's main focus, support to its partners' structures could also be explored in circumstances such as the ones existing in Mozambique. On the other hand, it is also true that broadening the CEF's mandate would mean re-thinking its system or strengthening the CEF Mozambique secretariat. The secretariat is composed by the CEF coordinator and the financial officer. There should be at least a third person in order to monitor and evaluate CEF's partners' structures and projects, and help them in monitoring, evaluating, and reporting. Regarding the structure of CEF's system, the three INGOs could play a wider role. They could facilitate advocacy training to partners identified. There is also the need to bear in mind that many CSOs are entering advocacy area for the first time. As said before, the long-term commitment goes far beyond the CEF's project.

5.2 Objective 2: Budget monitoring and tracking

To enable local communities to monitor spending on education both at national and local levels

In Mozambique the activities on budget tracking started in mid 2006. Overall, the impact of these activities is perceived to be low. The stakeholders interviewed felt that *this objective in Mozambique has not really happened yet*. However, CEF made some important contributions that should be regarded as a qualitative starting point to pursue this objective. Previously, it has been discussed how internationally defined objectives have to be adapted to the local reality, in order to propose achievable objectives. The activities on budget tracking undoubtedly started late. Activities should have started earlier, in order to explore the reality, identify the gaps, plan strategic interventions, learning from them and move forward. However, the un-accomplishment of this objective relates mainly to the real situation of the country. Budget tracking even if significant and

crucial, is not fully applicable in the case of Mozambique, especially at primary level. On this regard it is important to say that primary schools in Mozambique are not regarded by the central authorities as budgetary units. MEPT, during the 2007 Global Week of Education has strongly pointed out that schools should be considered as independent budgetary units and, therefore they should be involved in the preparations of the budget and in the negotiation process. Even though MEPT received the attention of the government on the matter, this is still a open issue.

Therefore, the assumption behind budget tracking seems to be wrong, and the level of objective set was unrealistic considering two main issues:

- at central governmental level Mozambique has still an highly centralised government not accustomed to supplying budgetary information;
- at local level CSOs responsible for this work have weaknesses in terms of knowledge of the matter, capacity, financial and human resources.

5.2.1 Key contributions and challenges of CEF's work

Having in mind this framework, CEF Mozambique needed to start from zero to implement any advocacy work on enabling local communities to monitor spending on education. CEF co-funded a research on education finances aimed at increasing knowledge on the functioning and financing of the Education system. The research was essential in order to:

1. understand the various levels of the budget process;
2. identify how and at what stage MEPT and CSOs could be directly involved in the process and make an impact;
3. help MEPT thinking on how to get involved into a key issue as the budget tracking.

However, how was MEPT supposed to follow up the research? How the research was going to be used?

The research has been described as "a beautiful car that you cannot drive anywhere". Results and recommendations highlighted important and relevant issues, but there was not a concrete way forward for MEPT and civil society to enter effectively into the budget process at different levels. In others words, there should have been a translation of results and recommendations into a long-term strategy in order to develop a comprehensive approach at provincial and district level. MEPT was not able to take it forward to the next level. At the same time the research was finalised in September 2006. Even if essential for the beginning and planning forward of CEF's work in this area, it came in a critical moment. Few months later CEF UK discovered they had insufficient funds to properly finance the CEF's final phase January 2007 – June 2008. CEF Mozambique found itself with only the 19% of the indicative budget and it needed to tighten its focus on ensuring the functioning of MEPT's secretariat.

The results of the research opened new questions whether MEPT has the capacity to take the lead of CSOs on matters related to budget tracking. Two main issues are coming out:

- at central and provincial level MEPT might not having yet the capacity to take the lead;
- at local level there is always the need to see realistically that CSOs are still weak, in terms of human and financial resources, knowledge and capacity.

Therefore, MEPT should firstly empower itself and its members, then its partners to gain technical knowledge. CEF need to help MEPT decide on how they want to move forward and address this issue. On this matter, it would be interesting to follow up the outcomes of the National Symposium of SCs, in order to identify at local level that the partners that could support MEPT in its work are, and how they need to be supported. During this process, MEPT should involve its Provincial Focal Points to track CSOs working in this area, and to produce working plan at provincial level. As a further step, CEF could support the follow-up of this "exercise" by helping MEPT to move from ad-hoc interventions funded by international donors and INGOs, to a more programmatic approach. In this way resources made available by donors could be used to give priority to areas, members and partners identified by MEPT.

The research about education finances co-funded by CEF and Oxfam GB, identified the District and Provincial Directorates as appropriate entry points where MEPT and other CSOs could make an impact on budget tracking. This because of two main reasons: the introduction of the MEC Direct Support to the Schools Programme (DSS), and the fact that District Education Directorates are responsible for preparing the operational budget of the district, including those of primary schools.

The DDS programme provides a direct grant to all primary schools for purchase of supplies, learning material, and supervisory activities. It is disbursed by the District Directorates of Education. The grant is jointly spent by the school authorities and the communities. The SCs are in charge of the management and budget preparation for this grant. This is an extremely important step to decentralise the education system and increase community participation on school management.

Therefore at local level, the strategy adopted by CEF and its partners was to develop capacity among SCs to better utilise this fund, monitor expenditure, and track disbursements. The CEF's partners were Mahlahle in Inhambane, MAGARIRO in Manica province and LDC in Zambézia province. Training sections were conducted for SCs' members on budget tracking, budget preparation and accountability. The activities implemented brought positive changes at local level. Where projects were implemented the partners agreed that the activities had a big impact:

- CEF visited schools in the locality of Bambatela in Massinga district, where Mahlahle worked. The majority of community members of school councils were aware of budget allocations for their schools and how the money was spent;
- DSS incurred criticisms in Manica province about lack of transparency and poor accountability in fund management MAGARIRO. The claims on the inappropriate use

of funds, and concerns about the selection of SCs' members, progressively diminished during the implementation of the project;

- In Zambia SCs were able to claim the grant to the District Directorate of Education that initially did not want to give the grant to the schools supported by LDÇ.

Even though an important work of advocacy was initiated to raise awareness among SCs, many challenges, need to be tackled:

- After the end of CEF's support MAGARIRO found itself without enough resources to give continuity to the project, and the project itself was too short. To get access into the community and change attitudes take time, considering also that there is not any technical knowledge in the communities;
- unwilling of local government authorities to cooperate. The district direction in the Zambia province initially did not give the grant to SCs because sceptical on the capacity of SCs to manage it (LDÇ experience). This seems to be a common issues among other CEF's partners as well;
- civil society felt that the DSS was not working properly as some headmasters did not inform the school community about the amount of money the school received (MAGARIRO experience);
- the way SCs were elected was not satisfactory as, in some cases, the headmasters "choose" the members without any criteria, making it possible for them to be manipulated.
- Mahlahle reported initial difficulties in having access to schools and obtaining permission from the provincial education authorities to start with the project. The problem was solved through the use of the provincial forum for education (a forum between non-government partners and the provincial directorate of education) where the issue was discussed and a course of action agreed. This is a good example how problems faced by an individual NGO can be solved by working through a coalition.
- Every two years SCs' members change. Capacity building activities are needed for new members. On this regard it would be interesting to sustain SCs to create a sustainable hand-over. Members retiring if well trained could pass their skills to the new members. Or, an interesting point made by LDÇ, it is to start training members of the community as well, so that when new members enter the SCs they have already a notion of the work.

Taken the work done in this area as a whole, it seems that slow changes happened at local level and the CEF's activities had a good impact on communities. However, advocacy work happened in isolation. For instance, Mahlahle initiated at provincial level debates on school fees and other levies being charged by schools. The campaign, to make sure that these levies and charges were abolished, reached a climax when Mahlahle took up the issue with the provincial

education authorities. The work initiated by Mahlahle should be extended to all the country's provinces.

One of the main lessons learned by CEF's partners is that when correctly informed communities can take the right decisions, move forward the right plans, or argue actively. For CEF there is the need to look at the next step. First of all, as previously said, there is the need to consolidate, but at the same time expand, and replicate the most successful activities. Sharing experiences helps – as shown by the National Symposium on SCs. Moreover, it is also worth to documenting good practices and common issues¹² on budget tracking in order to understand what kind of approach can better help SCs' members on budget tracking, why and how. Key issues have to be tackled in order to achieve maximum results from the use of these resources. MEPT could take the lead on moving these issues forward at national level.

To sum up contextually more appropriate level of objectives would have helped. Bearing also in mind that as far as new partners are identified, the capacity to come up with good projects (with smart objectives, good baselines and targets) is lacking. It seems that the gap between what it is expected from partners and their capacity to do it, is still quite big. Moreover, to address these problems, and expand the impact a more coordinate approach should be implemented. MEPT through its provincial focal points could track the implementation of the DSS programme to ensure maximum benefits, and the existence and operation of SCs in all schools. This would help to support the work of CSO's on SCs. For all this to happen MEPT should reinforce its capacity to intervene and coordinate the work of NGOs and other CSOs working in the education sector. This would also mean attracting more funds to sustain the work, and putting efforts to establish common educational agendas. There is also the need to understand whether MEPT wants to play this role and embraces the priorities set by CEF.

5.3 Objective 3: innovative approaches to equity and inclusion education

To support the development of innovative approaches to educating the most marginalised children (especially girls and the most vulnerable) in a way that influences wider policy and practice;

Encouraging girls' enrolment and retention in school, especially at higher levels, is still a serious challenges for Mozambique in order to achieve EFA's objectives. It is important to identify innovative approaches to promote inclusive and equity of education for the most marginalised children. In order to evaluate the CEF's work in this area a preamble is important. At government level the issue on how to improve enrolment, but especially retention and performances rates of girls in schools is receiving attention. Instead, there is still a lot of work to be done in the area of inclusive education for the most marginalised children and children with disabilities.

¹² Overall, transparency and accountability, enforcement of rules and regulations for financial management and education management

Box 2: Summary on CEF main issues and contributions on budget tracking

Issues on budget tracking

- **The Feeling that *this objective in Mozambique has not really happened yet***
 - activities on budget tracking started late
 - the impact perceived to be low
- **Un-accomplishment of this objective relates mainly to the real situation of the country**
 - level of objectives set was unrealistic considering:
 - at central governmental level Mozambique has still an highly centralised government not used to supplying budgetary information
 - budget tracking even if significant and crucial, is not fully applicable in the case of Mozambique especially at primary level, because schools are not considered budgetary units
 - at local level CSOs responsible for this work have weaknesses in terms of knowledge of the matter, capacity, financial and human resources

Contributions on budget tracking

- **Research on education finances_essential to:**
 - understand the various levels of the budget process
 - identify how and at what stage MEPT and CSOs can be involved to make an impact
 - help MEPT thinking on how to get involved into budget tracking
 - the research identified the District and Provincial Directorates as appropriate entry points where MEPT and other CSOs could make an impact on budget tracking
- **SCs' work brought positive changes at local level**
 - SCs' members aware of budget allocations for their schools and expenditure (Mahlahle, Inhambane)
 - Lack of transparency, poor accountability in fund management, inappropriate use of funds, and concerns about the selection of SCs' members progressively diminished (Magariro, Manica)
 - SCs able to claim the grant to the District Directorate of Education that initially did not want to give the grant to the schools (LDC, Zambesia)

The need to advocate on gender and inclusive education is within the MEPT's priorities. The approach with the Government was to share examples of good practices on girl's education and support advocacy work through the Global Week of Education 2008 framed around the topic of inclusion. Moreover, in 2006 has been launched the campaign against sexual abuse of girls in the education. It testified the first step in terms of denouncing, condemning, and penalising the criminals to reduce the number of girls leaving schools because of it. The principal voices and faces

of the campaign are ActionAid and its partners, among them MEPT and FAWEMO. However, even though there is a lot of work, campaign, advocacy going on, it is not possible to establish a line of cause-effect between the work done by MEPT, with the support of CEF, and its influence in policy changes.

5.3.1 Key achievements and impact of CEF's work

The experience of CEF in this area seems to be a history of *Good Opportunities missing the final score*. In other words, the work implemented in this area produced concrete examples of innovative and successful interventions that unfortunately missed their finalisation at institutional level in order to influence wider policies. In the case of FAWEMO – CEF's partners in the area of gender and education - an effective work could have gone much further with the major achievements of moving from local initiatives to an institutionalised procedures. Unfortunately major internal problems hindered FAWEMO's work. Instead with ACAMO – CEF's partners on the area of inclusive education – the problems with the shortage of funds from London did not allow the project to reach the end.

Tab.3 ACAMO experience on inclusive education

CEF's partnership with ACAMO had initiated innovative work on advocacy for the education of blind and sight-impaired children in Mozambique. ACAMO, in the Beira province, trained teachers to work with disabled children and promote inclusive teaching. Meanwhile, through the CEF's support ACAMO aimed at developing a curriculum for children with special needs and bringing it to the attention of the Ministry of Education. CEF supported ACAMO to share this work with a neighbouring country, Malawi. Unfortunately the work on Curriculum designing did not reach the end due to CEF's lack of funding. ACAMO received only half of the budget approved. At policy level ACAMO participated in the preparation of the annual plan of Special Need Education.

CEF supported two type of initiatives under the objective 3:

1. advocacy based activities at school level through SCs and Girls' Clubs - an innovative approach experimented by FAWEMO in its programme;
2. a study on 'Good Practices' to Promote Girls' Education in Mozambique, in order to contribute to research and documenting good practices that could be used as well as advocacy tool.

5.3.1.1 About advocacy based activities

The CEF's support to FAWEMO was instrumental for setting up and sustain Girls' Clubs in three primary schools (Grade 1-7) and one secondary school situated in two districts of Maputo province¹³. The purpose of FAWEMO's programme was to empower girls in order to improve their performance and retention at school. This was sought through the establishment of Girls' Clubs. Girls' Clubs aimed at:

¹³ Primary Schools Jonasse (Boane district) and Changalane and Goba (Namaacha district) and Namaacha secondary school in Namaacha district.

- providing a safe and secure environment for girls to feel comfortable
- providing a forum for girls to discuss their problems;
- raising awareness of parents and the community to prioritise girls enrolment and retention;
- mobilising the participation of a greater number of teachers in academic and extra-curricular activities in support of girls' education.

According to CEF's and FAWEMO's reports the Girls' Clubs in schools made a difference. They had an huge impact in changing practises at local level within the communities. In those schools where Girls Clubs were operating, it was observed:

- A significant reduction in the number of girls dropping out;
- reduction in early pregnancies;
- increased performance and progression at school;
- increased girls' enrolment due to the fact that schools with girls clubs attracts more girls.
- parents mobilised and sensitised on the importance of girls' education played a key role in supporting the project.

Tab.4 Example of good practice of FAWEMO'S work

It is a custom in most parts of the country especially in rural areas for people to seek the services of traditional healers when they are sick or have a perceived social problem. The acceptable form of payment for the services is through provision of domestic animals such as chicken and goats. However, when a family cannot afford to pay for the services, a common occurrence for the majority of destitute households in rural areas, young girls are used instead. Girls are forced to leave school and go and live with the healer until payment is made in full. In this way, girls are used as de facto collateral until the debt is settled.

FAWEMO in Inhambane province decided to tackle this old practice directly with traditional healers. First it identified 23 young girls who were forcibly removed from school and forced to live with traditional healers as payment guarantee. Meetings were held with traditional healers. At first there was resistance, but later the traditional healers agreed to allow the 23 girls to attend school but would not accept that they return to their parents. A success of sorts!

Moreover, the work supported by CEF on SCs indicated that SCs through training and constant support are becoming a forum where communities and parents 'meet' with the formal structures of education, and the formal structures meet with the communities. Hence, locally tested approaches are being employed by SCs' members aimed at increasing girls' enrolment, increasing girls' retention and reducing incidences of abuse.

For instance, Mahlahle continued to make a difference by working with communities to tackle factors hindering the participation of vulnerable children in education, and to improve coordination between the school and the community on these issues (see table 5).

Furthermore, training of SCs' members conducted by Mahlahle and LDÇ included specific activities aimed at improving girls' education. The following are examples of such activities and their specific outcomes:

Organisation	Problem	Action	Outcome
LDÇ	Girls leaving school because of pregnancy (Morla Primary School – Nante, Gogone, Namuinho, Sampene, in Zambézia)	Community members of the school council working with the girls and parents	All pregnant girls returned to school
	Girls dropping out due to early marriages (Mugoloma, Zambézia)	The setting up of girls' club at school	Reduction of number of girls dropping out
	Sexual abuse (Sampene, Zambézia)	Community member denounced the perpetrator	Perpetrator imprisoned
Mahlahle	Girls dropping out in Funhalouro district due to domestic chores	Workshop with members of school councils to look for ways to reduce the problem	Local solutions and specific actions suggested for each case at the workshop
	Parents complain that girls at school were unable to learn domestic and life skills (Funhalouro, Massinga)	School councils proposed the inclusion of needle work and other domestic subjects into the local curriculum	Girls able to acquire certain life skills at school

Tab.5 Case of Success of Malhalhe work at local level

Majority of Mozambican children cannot attend school or stay longer at school because of poverty. Most of the affected children are girls. However, if a child can obtain a 'poverty certificate' he or she be exempted from paying a wide range of school levies and charges including medical costs. To obtain a poverty certificate however, one needs to be registered. And here is where the catch lies; the majority of vulnerable children are not registered! These children are thus excluded from education. Malhalhe within the framework of the CEF financed project initiated a programme to register children especially girls in district of Massinga to allow them to have a poverty certificate so that they can attend school. They managed to register free of charge 600 children to obtain a poverty certificates which allowed them to attend school.

5.3.1.2 About research and documenting good practices on girls' education

CEF funded the FAWEMO's study on 'Good Practices' to Promote Girls' Education in Mozambique. The aims of the study were to:

- identify good practices that can promote girls' education by eliminating gender disparity in access and performance;
- analysing why and how those good practices work in Mozambique;
- sharing the experience;
- evaluating FAWEMO's work to feed in the study (FAWEMO undertook seminars and workshops on capacity building for advocating in favour of gender education in 9 provinces at community and Provincial Directorate of Education level).

The report identified countrywide good practices in the following main three strands: improvement of physical environment, socio-cultural and economic environment, and academic environment. Of the three strands, the study concludes that social-cultural and economic factors appear to be the main obstacles to girl's education in Mozambique. Therefore advocating for and

working around this area would increase the likelihood of more girls going to school and performing better:

- Reduction of domestic chores for girls;
- Reduction of early marriages and initiation rites;
- Mobilisation of parents on the importance of girls' education;
- Financial and materials support to girls;
- Income generating activities of the girls clubs;
- Participation of adult women in school affairs

FAWEMO produced the first draft of the report, but they were not able to promote a wider sharing of its findings and recommendations at governmental level. According to FAWEMO, CEF's support was as well important in building the organisational capacity, and organising a general assembly of the organisation to evaluate its work. Unfortunately, FAWEMO went through internal leadership problems, that sadly slowed down and, at times, paralysed the work.

5.3.2 Challenges of CEF's work

Overall emerged that SCs had a relevant impact and became good vehicles to promote children's enrolment in education, especially girls and marginalised children. As well, the approach of FAWEMO through Girls' Clubs was a significant experience to tackle issues at local level. There is no doubt that the activities supported by CEF increased the numbers of girls in schools in the districts of implementation. However, the main concern for CEF is how to scale up these activities in order to reach other districts and schools.

The question could be: what have been supported is replicable? and how? Within this framework appears once again the isolation of the activities supported. On one hand, CEF have to support its partners to conduct countrywide advocacy campaign to reduce domestic chores for girls, early marriages and initiation rites, and mobilise parents on the importance of girls' education. On the other hand, even though the vision and the aims are the same there is a need to promote an highly localised approach to respond to the issues identified at local level. This could be done through the work on SCs.

Because of the visible and positive impact of Girls' Clubs, FAWEMO approached - encouraged by CEF - the MEC to divulgate and share the experience. This started the process of institutionalisation of Girls' Clubs to introduce them in all schools in the country. A draft memorandum of understanding between FAWEMO and the Ministry of Education and Culture was developed, but the process slowed down due to FAWEMO internal institutional problems. However, the MEC recognises the Girls' Clubs where operating. Overall FAWEMO after the initial support of CEF was able to replicate the experience in 33 schools.

On the other hand, SCs once again seem to play a key role in involving the communities on education planning, budget tracking and gender education. Therefore, as suggested before, there is

the need to better document and coordinate this work and share experiences. To add on what said before, after setting up SCs and building their capacity, specific working group carrying out different activities – education planning, budget tracking and gender issues – might be created involving the local communities. It would be interesting to resume the study conducted by FAWEMO and finalise it, as well as speed up the process for the institutionalisation of Girls’ Clubs. It would be also interesting to understand whether FAWEMO, as a member or MEPT, could be a valid intermediary between MEPT and the activities carried out in the field, considering its internal problems.

Box 3: Summary on CEF main contributions on innovative approaches for gender education

Main contributions on gender education

About research

- **study on ‘Good Practices’ to Promote Girls’ Education in Mozambique**
 - to research and document good practices that could promote girls’ education
 - to analyse why and how those good practices work in Mozambique
 - to share the experience
- **the socio-cultural appears to be the main obstacles to girl’s education in Mozambique**
 - advocating for and working around this area would increase the likelihood of more girls going to school and performing better

About advocacy based activities at school level

- **FAWEMO’s Girls Clubs**
where set up it was observed
 - a significant reduction in the number of girls dropping out
 - reduction in early pregnancies
 - increased performance at school
 - increased girls’ enrolment due to the fact that schools with girls clubs attract more girls
- **School councils where supported and trained it was observed**
 - parents mobilised and sensitised on the importance of girls’ education
 - locally tested approaches employed by school council members aimed at increasing girls’ enrolment, increasing girls’ retention and reducing incidences of abuse.

Box 4: Summary on CEF main contributions and challenges about the work on School Councils on education planning, budget tracking and gender education

Contributions about the work on School Councils

- **Where operational and trained SCs had a strong impact on schools and communities:**
 - communities mobilised to participate effectively on school matters and plan local actions to support education quality
 - Communities' feeling of *ownership* toward *their* schools increased
 - SCs' members were able to engage District Education Officers for the provision of the Direct Support to school's grant
 - parents mobilised and sensitised on the importance of girls' education
 - locally tested approaches employed by SCs' members aimed at increasing girls' enrolment, increasing girls' retention and reducing incidences of abuse.

Major contribution of CEF's work on SCs

- **Support given to the organisation of the first National Symposium on School Councils**
 - common understanding on the importance of SCs
 - creating linkages between local NGOs working with SCs
 - involving the government to listen to the challenges hindering the correct functioning of SCs
 - identifying the gaps to be addressed in order to respond to those challenges

Issues preventing a stronger impact

- the capacity of CEF's partners financially too weak to monitor activities after the end of the projects
- changes at community level are slow and take time
 - need to promote awareness among communities
 - then acting for promoting changes
 - then sustain the changes to become routine
- lack of continuity on activities implemented
- delays on financial report submission by partners, or poor quality of reports caused delays in the disbursement of funds
 - the 3-month CEF funding cycle did not help this process
 - gaps in between the funding cycles put on halt the activities and reduced their sustainability

Main challenges

- CEF's partners organisational and institutional weaknesses
- Ensure that CEF's operations remain institutionally sustainable after the end of the projects Need to consolidate and expand the impact of activities implemented
- scale up successful activities in order to reach other schools and districts
- support CEF's partners to conduct country-wide advocacy campaign
- influence wider national policies

5.4 Objective 4: Inter-agency collaboration

Strengthen the inter-agency collaboration and internal functioning of the CEF

5.4.1 Efficiency of the Project Management Structure

The Commonwealth Education Fund was introduced in Mozambique in late 2002. ActionAid as leading agency took the legal and financial responsibility for the fund. A Management Committee (MC) of 5 members - three international INGOs ActionAid, Save the Children UK and Oxfam GB, and two national NGOs the Foundation for Community Development (FDC) and Igreja Presbiteriana - was formed¹⁴.

Previous researches and studies on CEF Mozambique perceived CEF as following into two distinct phases:

1. the first one runs from the beginning of the project (late 2002) to September 2005,
2. the second one covers the period from September 2005 up to the present.

The main reasons for this division seems to be related to the appointment of the second coordinator in September 2005 with a more pro-active, and a stronger educational and management background compared to the first coordinator. The second coordinator was able to reinforce the partnerships with CEF's partners and identified new ways to move CEF forward. However, many different issues should be regarded as a continuum in order to better understand the main challenges about the CEF model.

These issues are related mainly to:

- roles and responsibilities of the Leading Agency, CEF secretariat, and MC;
- coordination, participation and power decision-making among the agencies involved.

After a brief introduction of the initial experience of CEF in Mozambique, these issues will be analysed.

Key stakeholders recalled the beginning of the CEF experience in Mozambique as a period of "confusion":

- CEF was brought in Mozambique from outside;
- lack of a clear idea on how CEF was supposed to work in the country;
- lack of time to reflect on how CEF wanted to operate in order to reach its objectives;
- lack of strategy to direct the CEF's activities.

The appointment of the first coordinator undoubtedly did not help clarifying CEF's roles, responsibilities and ownership. Even though the first coordinator was not regarded as the right

¹⁴ UNICEF was included as well in the first year

person to hold that position in that particular moment, his contracts were renewed up to 2005. In the beginning of its experience, CEF should have rethought and readapted the internationally defined objectives into the national reality.

Moreover, it should have strategised more on:

- its internal objectives;
- how to build the capacity of its partners;
- how to promote advocacy awareness;
- how to create long-term and stable partnerships with the actors involved.

This failed and had somehow repercussion in the work of CEF in the long term. The data shows that the lack of success in the beginning cannot be attributed just to the coordinator's lack of experience in managing and setting up the CEF's fund. It happened for a combination of issues:

- Idea behind CEF was considered good but there was not a clear idea on how to let it work concretely in Mozambique;
- ActionAid (the leading agency) went through major institutional problems that also affected its financial systems. Being ActionAid financially responsible for CEF these problems had repercussions on CEF's administration of fund;
- ActionAid's leadership was replaced in 2003. The Programme education officer, representing ActionAid in the MC, was appointed Country Director. His post was not replaced immediately, and his new position did not allow him to constantly follow CEF's work;
- in the same period the staff of Save the Children withdraw their active participation due to staff shortages, and Oxfam GB education programme moved to Nampula and followed the work through e-mails and phone calls.

Therefore, the weaknesses and ineffectiveness of CEF in the beginning and the unclear vision of CEF's work can be explored under a combination of three essential factors:

- the internal institutional problems of the leading agency;
- the recruitment of an unsuitable coordinator;
- the weak participation of the members of the MC.

However, behind these factors there are some issues at the root of CEF's system. As a consequence they accompanied the CEF's work up to the present.

5.4.1.1 Issues with the Management Committee

CEF's strategies intended to enhance inter-agency collaboration by initiating a strategic partnership between three international NGOs – ActionAid, Oxfam GB, and Save the children UK. At country level the MC was responsible for:

- defining policy and operational guidelines for the CEF as required;

- approving strategic plans and providing other strategic guidance for the CEF country secretariat;
- ensuring that monitoring and evaluation systems are in place for CEF projects.

The MC was expanded to two local organisations FDC and Igreja Presbiteriana in order to enhance transparency, ensure active participation of local partners, and add value by including a local perspective. Stakeholders highlighted that the work done for CEF allowed a better understanding and knowledge among the MC members on programmes implemented by the agencies. This could open further collaboration to the attainment of common goals. However, the collaboration within the MC had its challenges:

- there was an assumption behind the partnership that the three organisations would have had common interests on CEF's objectives, and experience relevant to CEF's work. This would have as well enhanced an inter-agency collaboration at various levels apart from the CEF's work. In Mozambique, this assumption was wrong. Save the children did not have an education programme and that resulted in a withdraw in 2003, up to the present, of its active participation in the MC;
- this coordination to be effective needed clear roles and responsibilities among the organisations since the beginning
- there was the need to reflect on the essence of the CEF, in order to have a common understanding, vision and strategy. This has not really happened in Mozambique and it allowed singular individuals to come in with different ideas on CEF's purpose and support different visions in the long run;
- members participated in the MC on voluntary bases. The work load of each member at times prevented the commitment on CEF (delays on feedbacks, unavailability to meet, less active participation in the MC)
- Power dynamics

5.4.1.2 Issue with the Leading Agency and CEF Secretariat

A combination of limited understanding of roles and responsibilities of the Leading Agency, and the weakness of the first coordinator that was not able to pursue the CEF's autonomy resulted in CEF to be perceived as an internal project of ActionAid. The CEF was regarded as part of the ActionAid mandate, in terms of decision-making¹⁵ and accountability. The CEF's partners initially did not have a clear idea on the strategy and structure of CEF. They perceived the CEF as part of Action Aid mandate and did not understand the mechanism behind CEF.

The model had in-built tensions related to:

- roles and expectations;
- project ownership;
- accountability.

¹⁵ During the period of the recruitment of a new coordinator the decisions on CEF shifted to ActionAid

Even though ActionAid was legally and financially responsible for CEF, according with the CEF's Roles and Responsibility Document, it was always understood that key decision-making around CEF would be taken by an inter-agency MC. The success of CEF depends on the active support and engagement of the lead agency – and yet CEF needs to have independence from it.

The second coordinator tried to establish the autonomy and independency of CEF as an education grant-making fund. To some extent it happened through a more pro-active role of the CEF Secretariat in planning and distributing information to all MC members and reinvigorating partnership already established. However, all key decisions regarding financial management continued to be taken by ActionAid. The re-affirmed independence of CEF - that seems in line with the Roles and Responsibilities document "ensure CEF is independent of the lead agency work" - created tensions and low communication between CEF and Action Aid. It was exacerbated by not having regular meetings of the MC. It would have helped to have a Chairperson on the MC, and have scheduled meetings instead of ad-hoc meetings to resolve some issues. In terms of decision-making with the new coordinator the decisions were made by the CEF's coordinator with the approval sought directly through the CEF UK office. This resulted in a progressive less active role of the MC. Stakeholders agreed on the need for claiming the independence of CEF. However, their attitudes are discrepant on the issue of a less active MC's role. Whether it was a necessary strategy to be followed to speed up the process and gain in operational and delivery, or whether it resulted just in a gradual impoverishment and untold changes of roles and responsibilities of the MC.

As a concept the CEF was supposed to be *a collaborative managed fund supporting civil society engagement in education*. This concept has been translated into reality through an international partnership between 3 international organisations that created the system to manage the fund (Lead Agency, Secretariat, MC). In practice, however, this system should have moved a step further in harmonising the concept - *collaborative managed fund* - with a strategy to allow it to be managed effectively. Therefore there should have been a common vision on what CEF was about. Then an agreement on a common strategy - how is CEF going to manage collaboratively and effectively the fund to reach the objectives set?

It seems that at the present even if a common vision on what CEF is about could be there, the CEF's structure creates tensions between a unique mission and working in partnership. For instance, the way CEF has been managed financially, and the role played by the leading agency could explore this tension. Therefore, here comes the need to agree on a strategy to allow the smooth functioning of the system. Within this framework the independence of CEF, in terms of better delivery of the planned and agreed activities - during the MC's meetings - seems to be essential to speed-up the thick bureaucratic process. However, the area of 'use and management of funds' is still strictly linked to planning and monitoring. Instead of having a facilitator role, and ensuring that any constraints based on its legal or financial responsibilities were made clear to all, all key decisions regarding financial management were taken by ActionAid, from authorisation of

monitoring activities, payments and reporting. Some further examples on how these tensions affected the CEF's management efficiency are explored in the following section.

5.4.2 CEF transparency and accountability

The problem at the foundation of CEF's structure seems to be the introduction of the organisational structure called *Leading Agency*. The Leading Agency had the legal and financial responsibility for the project. At the same time the decisions on CEFs work were supposed to be taken by an inter-agency committee.

Box 5: Efficiency of the CEF Project Management structure

The model has in-built tensions related to

- unique mission and working in partnership
- roles and responsibilities (not clear definition of them among the organisations)
- project ownership (CEF Mozambique did not find the right balance between the Leading Agency and the CEF Secretariat)
- accountability (not clear procedures and strategy in place on how to manage the fund effectively)

These tensions accompanied the CEF's work up to the present. Main challenges of the system:

- Wrong assumption on the INGOs' partnership
- Not common understanding on CEF's vision and strategy
- the work load of each member at times prevented the commitment on CEF (delays on feedbacks, unavailability to meet, less active participation in the MC)
- CEF secretariat is highly dependent on the efficient management of funds by the Leading Agency
- the area of use and management of funds is strictly linked to planning and implementing the work

The CEF Mozambique did not find the right balance between the Leading Agency and the CEF Secretariat due to different visions of the CEF fund. The evaluation identified the following problems:

- different visions were exacerbated by the fact that there was not a strategy in place on how to manage the fund effectively;
- within the CEF's structure, the CEF secretariat is highly dependent on the efficient management of funds by the Leading Agency;
- the area of use and management of funds is strictly linked to planning and implementing the work;
- the internal problems of ActionAid regarding also its financial system had a negative impact on CEF.

It appears there was no proper process of review of the expenditure due to ActionAid financial problems. Therefore, the difficulties within ActionAid finances in the past, involved the CEF as well and they had repercussion up to the present. CEF Mozambique, ActionAid and CEF UK worked hard for the reconciliation of the project's fund with an actual expenditure in 2007.

This weak management of the CEF's fund also shows the kinds of tensions within the role of the Leading Agency. Tensions were due to different reasons:

- feeling the ownership of the project;
- not clear procedures in place;
- misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities;
- CEF over-dependency to the Leading Agency in matters of financial management;
- assumption that the Leading Agency will have an active and positive role on CEF;
- assumption that the Leading Agency will have a financial system able to incorporate but at the same time threat as autonomous the CEF fund.

ActionAid for an extended period was not able to produce financial reports on the balance and movement of the CEF's account. On the other side, CEF secretariat could not rely on ActionAid and had to monitor the financial management with two major impediments. CEF secretariat could see the actual balance of the CEF's account but not the movement of the money (transfers to where and when, and payments). Moreover, CEF staff was not signatory of the account. In other words, even though CEF had a separate bank account, the bank account was used by ActionAid as its own internal project. The CEF account was managed over the years – with advances made by the Lead Agency on behalf of CEF and CEF money being used to pay for lead agency expenses over the years. This resulted in the CEF secretariat not having full control of the payments made from the projects, while it should be aware of any transaction, and it should authorise all payments from the project. For a better accountability and transparency of the CEF's fund it would have helped for CEF secretariat to visualise the movement of the bank account and to have one of the obligatory signature in the bank in order to validate the checks. Hence, it comes back the need to ensure a right balance between the independence of the CEF and the role of the Leading agency, and to have a strategic direction in place to promote a pro-active management of CEF fund. This would help the consequent effective execution of CEF's work. The role and responsibilities document strikes the right balance on paper, but of course in practice it all depends on how people interpret and apply this.

5.4.3 Use of funds

An analysis of the below variances shows that from the total approved budget the CEF's received only 65% of the amount (hence less 35%), the actual expenditure compared to budget is 78%, thus therefore an under-spent of 22%. However, there is an overspent of 20% in relation to actual expenditure. A combination of reasons is behind the CEF Mozambique under-spent against the total budget:

- the difficult task of developing systems, organisations and coalitions. It takes time have institutions up and running;
- apparent mismatch in the beginning between CEF criteria and the type of project proposals received;
- staffing issues both within CEF and partners,
- poor partner's capacity to plan, implement and report properly and timely.

The following table shows the approved budget and remittances for CEF Mozambique as well as the actual expenditure during the project¹⁶

Currency: USD							
Description	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007-8	Grand Total
Approved Budget	19,503	27,767	186,309	61,563	472,800	154,500	922,442
UK Remittances	19,872	0	190,000	99,706	289,149	0.00	598,727
Actual Expenditure							
-Grants to Partners	0.00	40,000.00	47,424.00	81,793.07	185,981.20	42,618.98	397,817.25
- Central Costs	1,707.56	34,270.56	67,580.89	62,377.51	82,986.50	73,419.73	322,342.75
- Total	1,707.56	74,270.56	115,004.89	144,170.58	268,967.70	116,038.71	720,160
Variances							
- Remittance in relation to Budget							65%
- Actual Expenditure in relation to budget							78%
- Actual Expenditure in relation to total Remittance							120%
- Grants to partners in relation to total actual expenditure							55%
- Central Costs in relation to actual expenditure							45%

Even though there was not in place a selection criteria of partners, the partners identified had visions and missions in lines with CEF's objectives. The total grants to partners of USD 397,817.25 was distributed as follows:

¹⁶ Extracted from CEF 2008 Internal Audit report

		Remittances in relation to budget approved
MEPT	USD 218,363 ¹⁷	- 28%
Magariro	USD 49,352	- 28%
FAWEMO	USD 44,701	- 42%
ACAMO	USD 29,697	- 46%
LDC	USD 14,131	-37%
MAHLAHLE	USD 41,573	- 17%

Box 6: Challenges about CEF's work

In general, about CEF's work

- expectations coming in with the initiative too high in relation to
 - internationally global-defined objectives
 - CSOs' reality in Mozambique on the other side
- time-frame limitation of CEF's initiative
- lack of a strategic approach in the beginning influenced the CEF's path in the long-run
- capacity weaknesses of CEF's partners
- tensions between Leading Agency and CEF secretariat

There is the need to

- strategise more,
- consolidate the work done
- expand the impact of this work
 - advocacy work – with the exception of the Global Week of Education - is still happening in isolation through the support to a specific partner in a particular district

¹⁷ USD 1,909 made available for ONP through MEPT (Teachers' Union), because there was not an agreement in place with ONP

6. CEF's future plans

The formal end of the CEF project was June 2008. However, in December 2006 – UK CEF Management Committee announced an unexpected funding shortage to finance the remaining 18 months of the project in all the 16 countries. Of the budgeted £6,804,658, only £2,864,053 was available (only 42% of the total budget, £3,940,605 was the unfunded balance). Because of this global funding shortage, Mozambique got allocated £75,000 or 19% of the budget for the period, of which, £20,000 was already held as partner balances in country. The result was a funding crisis leading to a huge streamlining of activities including total stoppage in most areas. It was decided to use the remaining resources to finance the maintenance of the CEF secretariat with operations focused on raising funds to implement the final phase of the project and the development of a national civil society funding mechanism.

The need for civil society advocacy work is not diminishing, instead it is growing and increasingly. CEF was keen to ensure that the funding shortage did not turn back the CSO's advocacy work in Mozambique, and that the already weak capacity in terms of systems and institutions was not undermined further. In Mozambique the CEF was able to raise funds locally to support the work up to June 2009, and its members committed themselves to work together beyond June 2008. Funding, though having its origins in the CEF, is to be provided to the new Education Fund (Mozambique) to develop a collaboratively managed fund supporting civil society organisations in Mozambique, including the national education coalition (MEPT), to build their capacity to engage in education advocacy work.

The strategic purpose of the fund is to foster collaborative and coordinated approaches between CSO's, both national and international in supporting civil society work to achieve specific changes in policy or practices in education, as well as to improve their organisational and institutional capacity. It is also expected that the on-going work by CSO's to increase and improve the performance of school councils would be better coordinated to ensure greater harmonisation of work on school councils, by involving multiple civil society actors. The ultimate objective of the proposed project is to contribute towards more capable citizens and civil society organisations for their effective participation in education policy processes and practice at school, district, provincial and national levels. The Fund proposes to work with the majority of CEF's current partners albeit in a much more coordinated and focussed manner.

The new phase proposes a continued reliance on CEF structures and management systems that might perpetuate some of the previous challenges. Even though the name 'leading agency' has now been substitute by 'International Facilitating Agency', the role seems to be the same:

- legal representation of the fund, have an oversight on the management of funds in accordance with donor guidelines and project purpose,
- ensure that a separate Fund statement is made in any external audit and that internal audit carried out for the project.

For the purposes of this project the Fund Steering Committee has chosen Oxfam-GB to perform this position. The question is whether now with the CEF's past experience the 'International Facilitating Agency' will use its position to facilitate the ex CEF secretariat or will impose its position on it through the management and use of funds. How will the Lead Agency regard the fact that the CEF secretariat will not share the premises with the International Facilitating agency but with the MEPT secretariat in order for the Fund to exercise a mentoring role and benefit from being closer to the beneficiaries? The members of the National Management Committee with the role of providing direction on the project's strategic aspects are the same ActionAid, FDC, Presbyterian Church, Oxfam GB and Save the Children Alliance.

In the light of findings coming out from this evaluation some suggestions in order to not perpetuate the same mistakes of CEF are important:

- *explore the possibility to enlarge the number of its member or at least select a new member considering that:*
 - Save the Children redraw its active presence, and it does not have a pro-active role in the MC;
 - having four active participants in a MC that should reach an agreement by consensus or majority does not help the decision making process;
 - the members agreed that in case of incompatibility and contradictions between project strategic direction and execution, the terms and conditions agreed bilaterally between OGB and the donors (DfID and RNE) will prevail;
 - a stronger MC could reduce the power on decision-making of the Leading Agency
- *having a proactive chair from a non-lead agency*
 - Oxfam-GB will be the chair of the new NMC. However as mentioned earlier, power tensions can happen between the CEF Secretariat, Leading Agency and MC. Therefore a chair from a non-leading agency may reduce Leading Agency dominance and promote wide ownership
- *Clarifying role and responsibilities:*
 - There is a need to agree on who has the final decision in the day by day running and management of activities. As identified by the evaluation to allow a smooth delivery of the programme, avoid delays, and increase CEF performance, after an agreement at MC level on strategies and activities to be implemented, the CEF secretariat should be responsible of the day by day implementation of activities;
 - CEF secretariat should not be involved in the activities implemented by the leading agencies apart from CEF

7. Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusions

The CEF Mozambique made important contributions in supporting the emerging of stronger civil society participation in education and building its capacity for policy engagement in education.

CEF played a instrumental role in supporting the building of a national coalition, the MEPT, and in enhancing its institutional and organisational capacity of MEPT. However, there is still a lot of work to be done to consolidate CEF's achievements. The strategic partnership between three International NGOs – ActionAid, Oxfam GB, and Save the Children UK, and two National organisations FDC and Igreja Presbiteriana - was highly innovative. While in theory it allowed to share visions and work collaboratively toward the same objectives, in practice it brought also many challenges. It would have helped in the beginning a better orientation of roles and responsibilities among the actors involved and the structure created. This would have facilitated a better management of the fund and the operational delivery of the system. At the same time, there was a need to reflect and adapt CEF's international objectives into the national reality and develop a strategy to build the capacity of CEF's partners.

Through CEF's support, MEPT gained visibility at National level and it became the interface between the civil society and the government. MEPT is now representing the civil society in public discussions, in the reviewing of strategic documents, in creating effective linkages between NGOs, faith-based organisations, and parent associations and teachers unions. However, MEPT is still in its infancy. It must grow-up rapidly to take the most out of the current situation, and move forward to represent a more structured and informed civil society's voice.

CEF during its experience identified an area that could further increase the impact of CEF's activities if well coordinated and explored: the work on School Councils. The contribution made to set up, train and advocate for School Councils should be framed under the big picture of the three CEF's objectives. The work done showed that communities when well informed and mobilised can have an impact on education planning, monitoring spending, and promotion of girls' education. A hugely successful national seminar on School Councils supported by CEF came up with many challenges in relations to current work. Despite the formal existence of School Councils in most schools, they are in general not operating or powerless. CEF's partners (Magariro, Mahlahle, LDC) supported School Councils at local level to improve their functioning and promote parental involvement in school governance. The work brought positive changes at local level. Therefore, there is the need to push forward the work promoted by CEF, expand its impact at National level, coordinate or harmonise this work.

CEF Mozambique started as well an important work to promote innovative approaches for gender education. The established of 'girls' clubs' in school, to promote access and retention of girls, observed important changes in enrolment rates and performances at local level. This happened through an intensive advocacy work with communities, parents, and guardians on the importance of gender education. Once again there is the need to replicate this work to have an impact at national level and influence wider educational policies. Instead, more efforts need to be made to promote inclusive education for excluded children and children.

Of course during its path CEF encountered many challenges some of them related to the weaknesses of CSOs in terms of knowledge, role played and capacity. There is a need to allow CSOs to fully understand what advocacy is about in order to switch their role from service deliver to proper advocacy. At the same time, the weak organisational and institutional capacity of CEF's partners implicates the need for CEF to also develop the capacity of partners in area of planning, finance, monitoring and evaluation. CEF Mozambique, to give continuity and consolidate its work, was able to raise fund at local level to extend the support till June 2009. The new proposal though aims at strengthening the capacity of MEPT and calls for a more coordinated approach on School Councils, loses the CEF's specific focus on budget tracking and documenting gender innovation for policies changes at government level. The hope is that a further strengthened MEPT and a more coordinated approach on School Councils' work, will lead into this.

Recommendation

Drawing on findings, analysis of the evaluation data, and as well on the lessons learned during the CEF's project the following recommendations are made to feed into future plans aimed at achieving what CEF had intended to achieve.

Around CEF Structure and management

- The roles and responsibilities of different actors within CEF must be clarified
- There is the need to share a common visions of roles and responsibilities of CEF secretariat, Leading Agency and Management Committee
- CEF should find the right balance between the role of the leading agency and the independence of CEF secretariat (for instance, after an agreed plan between the Management Committee members, CEF should have the independence to implementing it, the leading agency should come in to facilitate and monitor the work)
- CEF should rethink and revise the most viable elements of CEF Management Committees, and select at least a new pro-active member (considering that Save the children do not participate actively);
- CEF could enlarge the Management Committee to encourage inputs from external and independent parties
- CEF Management Committee should elect a chairperson (chairperson should be 'neutral' and allow the equal participation of all members)
- Proactive chair from a non-lead agency may reduce Leading Agency dominance and promote wide ownership
- Communication between Management Committee members should be improved with regular scheduled meetings and election of a chairperson (the meetings could be organised once a month – for 2 hours – or at most once every quarterly for half day, to finalise the quarterly reports and move forward)

- All three INGOs must keep actively engaged in CEF and contribute with their expertise on the planning of CEF's interventions (perhaps a rotative chair could promote it)
- CEF should defining clear procedures for evaluation and selection of partners
- CEF should improve transparency of funds (CEF coordinator should authorise all payments together with the Leading Agency)
- A more rigorous system to improve the disbursement, monitoring and reporting of advances to partners should be introduced in future payments to increase efficiency reduce fiduciary risks and errors
- CEF could harmonise the financial report mechanism to speed-up a thick bureaucratic system (the CEF's accountant in coordination with the CEF coordinator could review and approve the partner's financial reports, and then ask for the disbursement of further funds' tranches. In case of problems between the compliance to CEF's criteria and the use of fund CEF secretariat should solve the issue with the leading agency)
- The CEF's secretariat should have at least a third person in order to monitor and evaluate CEF's partners structures and projects, and help them in terms of monitoring, evaluating, and reporting

Around coalition building

- CEF should also build the capacity of MEPT secretariat and MEPT's focal points, in areas of policy analysis, strategic planning, research and documentation in order to promote more structured advocacy interventions
- CEF should strengthen MEPT in order to improve communication between secretariat and members, secretariat and provincial focal points to build strong links with good two-way communication.
- CEF should encourage MEPT to continue fund-raising to other funding sources so that there is no longer-term dependency on CEF
- CEF should sustain MEPT to move away from un-planned ad-hoc links to more strategic, planned and predictable partnership
- CEF should support MEPT to strengthen its knowledge on partners and their work so that when resources are made available by donors can be used to give priority to areas, members and partners identified by MEPT.
- Support MEPT in the process of strengthening the provincial focal points to better function as a net, through seminars, better sharing of relevant information and documents and sharing of good practices
- It would be interesting to explore possible strategies for MEPT on how to push the agenda on issued raised by the civil society when the Ministry of Education is not taking the MEPT inputs into account.
- CEF should support MEPT to improve communication with government (for instance, presentation of strategic plan of MEPT, researches and studies carried out should be planned in advance to give the Ministry of Education the time to participate), at the same time MEPT

need to strategise to receive information in time to actively participate in the meeting with the government

- The outcomes of the National Symposium could be used to strengthening the links between local organisations involved in the advocacy work on School Councils, and develop a comprehensive strategy to address issues, coordinate and harmonise the support.
- CEF should mentor MEPT on the Global Week of Education organised. It is important that the momentum and linkages created by the activities of the Global Campaign Week are maintained alive throughout the year Improving planning and linkages to increase the impact of the campaigns as national events happening locally.

Around budget tracking

- Need to adequate the international defined CEF's objective into the reality of the country to ensure a more appropriate level of objectives
- CEF should continue and improve the support given to capacity development of partners
- CEF should ensure all partners are clear about the objectives of budget tracking
- CEF should continue the work on School Councils through a more holistic programme of work
- CEF should understand whether MEPT want to move forward with budget tracking (the priority of CEF could enter in conflict with the priorities of MEPT)
- If MEPT wanted to move forward with budget tracking, CEF should help MEPT deciding how they want to move forward and address this issue. MEPT should identify the local partners that could support MEPT in this work at local level, and the support they need to strengthen capacity.
- CEF should sustain MEPT on tracking the implementation of the Direct Support to Schools programme to ensure maximum benefits
- CEF should sustain MEPT on tracking the existence and operation of School Councils in all schools, the promotion of the formation of parents' associations and involvement in school administration
- CEF should document the work done on school councils and share experiences

Around learning from innovative

- Considering the institutional internal problems of FAWEMO CEF, should understand how to move forward the results of the study on good practices of Girls' education in Mozambique
- CEF should promote FAWEMO to reinvigorate a dialogue with the government on the institutionalisation of Girls' club
- CEF should identify how replicate and sustain the impact of the work done
- CEF should give more emphasis to documenting experiences on inclusive education for the most marginalised children and children with disabilities. Work in this area should be focused on building an evidence base for policy and advocacy work.

- CEF should ensure that the innovative work documented on inclusive education is converted into mainstream policy recommendations

Overall

- Plan better and realistically around the three key CEF's objectives, taking into consideration the reality of the country and the capacity of partners
- The strategic partnership between three international NGOs should include INGOs that have education programmes relevant to CEF's objectives
- Build strategic partnership with a range of stakeholders interested in supporting a future CSO fund
- The INGOs could use their experience and knowledge relevant to CEF's objective to build the internal capacity of CEF's partners
- Consolidate the work done, document successful activities in each area and share the experience
- Define a focus within a few areas of comparative advantage such as school councils, gender, inclusive education in order to harmonise the work and ensure several 'quick-wins' for CSOs
- Clarify objectives, strategy and structure of CEF with partners involved
- Reach a common understanding and knowledge on CEF work with partners

Annex I

List of interviewees

Tomé Eduardo	CEF Secretariat CEF Country Coordinator
Lucrecia Gemo	CEF Secretariat Accountant
Marta Cumbi	Member of the CEF Management Committee Director of Cooperation and Advocacy FDC
Paula Mendonça	Ex Member of the CEF Management Committee Ex Action Aid, Education Programme Officer
Zaida Cabral	Ex Action Aid, Programme Education Officer
Reinaldo Sive	Member of CEF Management Committee Civil Society Representative, Igreja Presbiteriana
Ruth Bechtel	Member of the CEF Management Committee Senior Programme Manager, Oxfam UK
Nacima Figia	Ex FAWEMO Programme Coordinator
Salomão Kaligwere	ACAMO Secretary General
Dinis Machaul	Movimento Educação para todos (MEPT) Coordinator
Amina Issa	Movimento Educação para todos (MEPT) Programme Officer
David Harrington	Movimento Educação para todos (MEPT) Programme Officer
Eusébia Mata	Oxfam Intermon Country Director
Sofiano Racune	Ex Action Aid Ex Financial Officer
Gregorio Ulisses	Liga dos Direitos da Criança (LDC) Programme Coordinator
Maria Paula Vera Cruz	ONP
Isidoro Manuel	EX CEF Country Coordinator
David Jorge	Action Aid , Consultant
Alberto Silva	Member of CEF Management Committee ActionAid Director
Cristina Tomo	MEC , Director of General Education
Manuel Rego	MEC, Director of Planning
Nhanez Antonio	Magariro , Programme Coordinator

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