5

Artigo

Expansion of higher Education Distance-learning in Mozambique: student profile, expectations and perceptions of an international cooperation program

OrestePreti [1]
Maria Angélica Barbieri [2]

ABSTRACT

In February 2011, nearly 700 public servants in Mozambique composed the first class of students of four distance-learning undergraduate courses. The program was a partnership between four Brazilian and two Mozanbican universities, and an international cooperation initiative coordinated by the Brazilian Ministry of Education (CAPES/MEC*). During face-to-face meetings conducted at the three regional centers associated to the program, a 44 question socio-economic and cultural questionnaire was given to the attending students (85% of the total), with the purpose of tracing their profiles. Data revealed common characteristics between students enrolled in three of the courses, all of which Teacher Training programs (Biology, Pedagogy and Mathematics) and between students enrolled in the Public Administration program. Variables considered for this grouping were age, education, working life, fertility, dwelling condition, and access to communication facilities. However, the same grouping was not maintained when gender, study habits, work, profession, expectations and distance-education model were considered. When regional centers were concerned, data revealed that students from Lichinga (northern Mozambique) are in a less privileged situation than the others (Maputo and Beira) regarding distance from the center (and consequently, displacement time) and access to the Internet. There is a general sense of "adaptation" regarding the profession and the program while, at the same time, there is a perception that the program may contribute to the inclusion of individuals who would

[1] Federal University of MatoGrosso (1976-1996); Resident Coordinator for the Support Program for the Expansion o Higher Distance-Learning Education in the Republic of Mozambique (2011-2012).

[2] Federal University of MatoGrosso – UFMT.

* TN: CAPES/MEC: *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior / Ministério da Educação* – Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel / Ministry of Education, agency created to improve Brazilian graduate programs and human resources through evaluation, information, resources, international scientific cooperation and scholarships.

otherwise have no access to higher education, to the improvement in life quality, and to the offer of services to the population.

Keywords: social inclusion; student profile; educational expectations.

RESUMEN

En febrero de 2011, casi 700 servidores públicos de Mozambique comenzaron el año lectivo en cuatro cursos de pregrado a distancia, a través de la sociedad entre cuatro universidades federales de Brasil y dos públicas de Mozambique, en un programa de cooperación internacional, bajo la coordinación de la CAPES/MEC*. En el encuentro presencial en los Polos se aplicó a los estudiantes presentes (85,0% del total) un cuestionario socio-económico-cultural, compuesto por 44 preguntas, para trazar su perfil. Los datos colectados señalaron características comunes entre los estudiantes de los cursos de formación de profesores (Biología, Pedagogía y Matemática) y los estudiantes del curso de Administración Pública con relación a la edad, escolaridad, tiempo de servicio, fertilidad, condiciones de vivienda, medios de comunicación. Sin embargo, presentaron diferencias con relación a género, hábitos de estudio, trabajo, profesión, expectativas y a la modalidad a distancia. Cuando se compararon los datos por Polos, también se percibió que los estudiantes del Polo de Lichinga, al norte del país, están en situación menos privilegiada que los demás estudiantes con respecto a la distancia del Polo, al tiempo que emplea para llegar al Polo y el acceso a locales con internet. Hay un sentimiento general de "adaptación" a la profesión y al curso y, al mismo tiempo, la percepción de que el Programa podrá contribuir en el proceso de inclusión de más personas que no tienen acceso a la universidad, en la mejoría de sus condiciones de vida y también en la mejoría de la oferta de servicios a la población.

Palabras-clave: inclusión social; perfil de estudiantes; expectativas educativas.

RESUMO

Em fevereiro de 2011, quase 700 servidores públicos de Moçambique começaram o ano letivo de quatro cursos de graduação a distância, uma parceria entre quatro universidades federais do Brasil e duas públicas de Moçambique, um programa de cooperação internacional, sob a coordenação da CAPES/MEC. No encontro presencial nos Polos foi aplicado aos estudantes que se fizeram presentes (85,0% do total) questionário sócio-econômico-cultural, composto por 44 questões, para traçar seu perfil. Os dados coletados apontaram características comuns entre os estudantes dos cursos de formação de professores (Biologia, Pedagogia e Matemática) e os estudantes do curso de Administração Pública em relação à idade, escolaridade, tempo de serviço, fertilidade, condições de moradia, meios de comunicação. Porém, apresentaram diferenças em relação a gênero, a hábitos

*NT: CAPES/MEC: *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior / Ministério da Educação* – Coordinación de Perfeccionamiento de Personal de Educación Superior / Ministerio de Educación, organismo creado para mejorar los programas brasileños de postgrado y recursos humanos a través de la evaluación, información, recursos, cooperación internacional científico y becas.

de estudo, ao trabalho, à profissão, às suas expectativas e à modalidade a distância. Quando os dados foram comparados por Polos, também se percebeu que os estudantes do Polo de Lichinga, ao norte do país, estão em situação menos privilegiada do que os demais estudantes em relação à distância do Polo, ao tempo que emprega para chegar ao Polo, ao acesso a locais com internet. Há um sentimento geral de "adaptação" à profissão e ao curso e, ao mesmo tempo, a percepção de que o Programa poderá contribuir no processo de inclusão de mais pessoas que não teriam acesso à universidade, na melhoria de suas condições de vida e também na melhoria da oferta de serviços à população.

Palavras-chave: inclusão social; perfil de estudantes; expectativas educacionais.

CONTEXT

Because of its costal area (1,562 miles) facing the Indian Ocean and its strategic position – the Western coast of Africa – Mozambique became a commercial terminal (trading posts) to the Swahili [3] Arabs by the end of the 6th century. Between the 15th and 18th centuries, the Portuguese have also started using it for commercial purposes, establishing trading posts by the shore. Soon after, the "terms" [4] were created, and with them, the occupation of some inland areas. It was not until the end of the 18th century– and to avoid losing the territory (Berlin Conference, 1884-85) – that the Portuguese Crown started the settlement process. However, without the financial or military resources, the Crown ceded land to private companies (known as "majestic", "privileged" or "letter holders"), that kept the practice of slavery even after it was abolished in colonies, in 1869.

It wasn't until the end of the 19th century that Portugal actually occupied Mozambique through a slow military effort due to the strong resistance by the local population it encountered, only able to thoroughly gain control of the land and establish management of the colony between 1900 and 1930.

During the military dictatorship years (1933-74), a period known as *Estado Novo*, or The New State, president Salazar's policies of intensifying occupation and control over the Portuguese colonies through tough repression, have sparked the desire for independence within the local leaderships and population. Pro-independence movements born outside Mozambique[5] have come together in 1964 for an anti-colonial fight under the flag of The Mozambique Liberation Front, FRELIMO. The movement fought for ten years against the colonizers backed by soviet and Chinese support. In 1975, the fight reached its peak when the Portuguese troops withdrew as the Carnation Revolution in Portugal thrown the country into a crisis and anti-colonialist ideas flooded Europe, also favoring the liberation movement.

[3] A community of various ethnic groups who have the Swahili language, Islam, and Indian culture in common; Swahili ("coast" in Arab) is a mixture of Bantu grammar with Arab vocabulary spoken by approximately 50 million people, some in northern Mozambique.

[4] The crown would cede land for exploration to Portuguese, Indian-Portuguese, merchants, soldiers and others, for a term ("prazo") – usually two or three generations – passed on to the eldest daughter; at the end of the Term, the land was returned to the Crown, who could cede it back to the *termers*.

[5] UDENAMO (Mozambique National Democratic Union), UNAMI (National African Union for Independent Mozambique), MANU (Mozambique African National Union).

However, in 1977 the policies adopted by the Frelimo Party for the development of the country and their option for Leninist Marxism have led to internal discontent and conflict. Then, between 1977 and 1922 the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) started a civil war, receiving support from neighboring South Africa. The attempt to overthrow the revolutionary party in power was unsuccessful. Estimates claim that roughly one million people have died during the civil war, most of them young adults. For this reason Mozambique is referred to as an adolescent country, with 45% of its population under the age of 15.

The population soon felt the consequences. The two wars – the first one against the colonizer and the second, a civil war – have taken down much of the country's infrastructure, especially the communication system (railways, roads, bridges, and telegraphs), health and education.

In 1994, the first general elections for president and parliament took place, and although multiple parties were allowed, the national political scenario was bipolarized. Nevertheless, the country lives in political stability with the Frelimo party in power and no other strong party in sight to contest it.

According to estimates from the Portuguese National Institute for Statistics (INE, 2011), Mozambique's population is of 23 million people, most of them (70%) in rural areas, living off subsistence agriculture in small farms (called "machamba", in *changanelanguage*)[6]. The infant mortality rate is of 118/1000 births, and the fertility rate is of 5,46 children per woman. It is important to highlight the persistently high HIV contamination rates in the adult population (11.5%) and life expectancy of roughly 50 years.

According to António Francisco (2011), "having many children is still the most important form of social protection available to the Mozambican population"*. Therefore, according to his analysis, one of the explanations for this is that "the majority of the population is very dependent on a precarious subsistence economy, in comparison to the capitalist market economy" (p. 233).

Data released by the Portuguese National Institute for Statistics (INE, 2006) and by the Southern African Research and Documentation Center (SARDC, 2007) present low social indicators, as over half households lack any kind of basic sanitation, such as drinking water (43%) and electricity (18%)[7] . Literacy rate is of 48.1% of population – 63.5% of men, 32.7% of women). Unemployment rate is 16.4%, and more present in the southern part of the country (24% of active population). The Human Development Index (HDI) is of 0.458.

[6] Farmers can use the land, but the State has the ownership. There is no official data on population flight from rural to urban areas originally and mostly caused by the armed conflicts of former RENAMO guerilla fighters against FRELIMO government military.

* Editor's Note: all quotations are originally in Portuguese and were translated by the RBAAD's translation team for this publication.

[7] Most inhabitants obtain their water from wells without manual pumps; 54% use petroleum and another 30.3% use firewood for lighting.

Currently, the country is in a stage of economic growth[8] and implementing megaprojects[9]: hydrocarbons, especially coal and gas, have been discovered and are being explored; agriculture production has been expanded and improved; railway and highway networks are being recovered and expanded; city and district hospitals are being built and/or recovered; the educational offer is being expanded, especially primary (9.5% growth)[10] and secondary (tripled between 2004 and 2010)[11]. The exception is vocational/professional training[12] :

> Current schooling rates in the elementary education are 81%. However, graduation rate is 33%. On the other hand, there is a great educational gap between men and women, with the latter in disadvantage. Thus, the government's priority is to improve access to elementary education and assure that more Mozambicans go to school, with the projections that by 2010 schooling rates would be of 97% and graduation rates 69% (MINED. PEEC, 2006, p. 17).

The population hopes that the investments will bring social development, improvements to their lives.

Implementing the Program in Mozambique

The Support Program for the Expansion of Higher Education in the Republic of Mozambique was instated on 26 October 2010, by the Ordinance number 22, from the Ministry of Education, implemented in a cooperation system between two public institutions from Mozambique and four from Brazil.

The Program's undergraduate degrees are dedicated to training teachers of the Elementary and Secondary levels of public schools (Pedagogy, Biology, Mathematics) and public managers (Public Administration). They follow the same format adopted by the Open University System of Brazil (UAB), with a few adaptations to match Mozambique's reality.

During the initial phase of the Program, three centers for On-site Support were established: city of Maputo – the capital (South of the country), city of Beira (750 miles from it – central), and city of Lichinga (750 miles to the North). A total of 630 students would be accepted: 90 for the Public Administration program and 180 for each of the other three Teacher Training degrees.

---

[8] Average GDP growth of 6.5 between 2001 a 2006; 8.1% in 2010; the Mozambican government expected 7.5% for 2012, but the International Monetary Fund projected 5.2%.

[9] Brazil and Mozambique develop several projects of social impact: Vale Mozambique (extraction of coal in the Tete region); ProAlimento (in partnership with Japan, for family-based agriculture); ProSavana (agriculture development – agribusiness – central region); the antiretroviral medication factory; creation of the Breast Milk Bank Network; School Meal program, etc.

[10] Elementary School is composed of two cycles: EP1, five years long, and EP2, two years long.

[11] Expansion at the cost of quality in education: overcrowded classrooms, students transferred to evening classes (where there is availability) or enrolled in the Secondary Distance Education. In 2012, roughly 2,000 students from the Maputo province have enrolled in ten Distance Education Centers, coordinated by the Institute for Distance and Open Education (IEDA).

[12] Policies for the expansion of education have not yet reached the vocational-professional level, necessary for the development of the country, despite government spending per student on this educational level being higher than on others. In 2005, enrollments in vocational education represented 15% of the total student population in the secondary level (BROUWER et al. 1010, p. 283).

Two Mozambican universities are part of the program: UP, Universidade Pedagógica (*Pedagogical University*) and UEM, EduardoMondlane University. They are joined by four public universities from Brazil: UFG, Federal University of Goiás (Biology program); UFF, Fluminense Federal University (Mathematics program); UNIRIO, Rio de Janeiro University (Elementary Education program); UFJF, Federal University of Juiz de Fora (Public Administration Program).

The pedagogical project of each program was the result of a productive partnership between institutions in both countries, which is also producing results in the production of didactic material and running of the program. With it, came innovation: Mozambican students will receive a double major, as they are enrolled in a local university (either UEM or UP) and one of the four federal Brazilian institutions previously mentioned at the same time. Along with access to the virtual environment, the student is received at the center by tutors, most of them UP teachers, in the case of the teacher training degrees.

In 2018, when the Program is at its closing stages, the partnership between the Brazilian and Mozambican governments predicts the building of ten centers – one for each province – having helped train 5,500 teachers of elementary and secondary education and 1,500 public administration servants.

The goal is to first take the experience to other Portuguese-speaking countries and then to other destinations. In Brazil, the partnership involves the Ministry of Education (MEC), federal universities in the Open University of Brazil (UAB) system, the Coordination for the Improvement Higher Education Personnel (CAPES, an agency responsible for the national program for teacher preparation) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Brazilian Agency for Cooperation (ABC). In Mozambique, the Ministry of Education, represented by the National Institute for Distance Education (INED) is involved.

The Program has embarked as many people as possible inside Mozambican institutions for solidity and sustainability:

Table 1: Number of participants per program, institution and role.

	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION		BIOLOGY		ELEMENTARY EDUCATION		MATHEMATICS		TOTAL
Students	90		209		219		176		694
Coordination Team	Moz	Br	Moz	Br	Moz	Br	Moz	Br	23
	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	
Technical and Administrative Team	3	3	1	-	1	-	1	-	9
Teachers	4	4	7	3	6	1	4	4	33
Tutors	7	4	14	3	10	1	10	4	53
TOTAL	17	14	25	8	20	5	18	11	-

Thus, on-site and most of distance tutoring and teaching were under the responsibility of the team in Mozambique.

Table 2: Subjects under the responsibility of Brazilian and Mozambican D.E. teachers and tutors (2011-12).

	2011_1		2011_2		2012_1		2012_2		TOTAL	
	BR	MOZ	BR	MOZ	BR	MOZ	BR	MOZ	BR	MOZ
Public Administration	2	4	1	4	2	3	3	2	8	13
Biology	2	3	2	5	0	5	2	4	6	17
Elementary Education	0	5	3	2	0	6	0	6	3	19
Mathematics	1	5	3	2	1	3	1	5	6	15
TOTAL	5	17	9	13	3	17	6	17	23	64

The Elementary Education program was the one more often relying on the Mozambican teachers because most of the subjects in early semesters approach contexts and themes specific to the country, considering its size and cultural and linguistic diversity. The contribution from Mozambican teachers was also more intensive then that from Brazilian teachers in the production of the didactic material.

Table 3: Didactic material produced by teachers from Brazil and Mozambique in the Program (2011-12).

Number of Modules / Programs	2011_1		2011_2		2012_1		2012_2		TOTAL	
	BR	MOZ	BR	MOZ	BR	MOZ	BR	MOZ	BR	MOZ
Public Administration	2	4	4	2	4	2	2	4	12	12
Biology	2	3	2	3	2	4	2	4	8	14
Elementary Education	-	5	-	5	0	6	-	6	-	22
Mathematics	2	4	2	3	1	3	1	5	6	15
TOTAL	6	16	8	13	7	15	5	19	26	63

Without CAPES approval of scholarship payment for the didactic material production team, the solution was using material already produced – either elaborated by authors from the UAB system or from the CEAD/UP programs – or request the teachers to create their own material, under short notice and without the proper timeframe for D.E. adaptation: scientific evaluation, adequacy to didactic language and cultural context, illustration.

1. STUDENTS OF THE PROGRAM

Throughout the following lines, considerations on the data collected from students of the four programs during the Students Meeting at the Centers, in February of 2011, will be made and presented. A socio-economic and cultural questionnaire was given to a total of 591 students present at the meeting, or 85% of all enrollments.

Table 4: Number of students answering the questionnaire, per program.

	Enrolled students	Answered to questionnaire	% of program	% answering students
Public Administration	90	63	70	11
Biology	209	179	86	30
Elementary Education	219	186	85	31
Mathematics	176	163	93	28
Total	694	591	85	100

Students reported some initial difficulties while answering certain questions, as the questionnaire was written in Brazilian Portuguese, somewhat different than Mozambique's and despite having been read by part of the teaching body, who suggested the substitution of unclear words to avoid misinterpretation.

With 44 questions, the survey had a nine-dimension approach: identification, family situation and composition, housing, education, activities and work conditions, study habits, culture and leisure, politics, and distance education. The data collected were inserted and processed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software.

1.1. Data identification

In percentage terms, the number of students answering the questionnaire was nearly the same for all centers, with a slight advantage to the one in Beira, where students aren't believed to live far away from it.

Table 5: Number of students answering the survey per program and center.

Center	Program								Total	
	Public Administration		Biology		Elementary Education		Mathematics			
Beira	20	3.4%	56	9.5%	66	11.2%	73	12.4%	215	36.4%
Lichinga	24	4.1%	60	10.2%	65	11.0%	44	7.4%	193	32.7%
Maputo	19	3.2%	63	10.7%	55	9.3%	46	7.8%	183	31.0%
Total	63	10.7%	179	30.3%	186	31.5%	163	27.6%	591	100.0

Most students in the survey are in the 21-40 years of age range (77%), but a relevant number (23%) of them is above the age of 40. The Elementary Education program is the one with the highest number of students above the age of 30 (22%), when the total amount of students answering the survey is considered. When individual courses are analyzed, the highest number is found the Public Administration program (38%).

In regards to gender, the Public Administration and the Biology programs showa virtually equal presence of men and women, reflecting the national tendency (0.98 man/woman, 2011 estimate). Male presence is higher in the Mathematics program (72%) while females are the majority (66%) in Elementary Education, perhaps because this program caters to professionals working in primary schools.

Female presence in education is a recent phenomenon in Mozambique. As women had no access to formal education or the labor market, teaching was primarily a male activity. The death of many teachers (BOUWER et al., 2010 p. 274)during by the civil war[13] and, above all, the pay cuts teachers in elementary education have endured – which prompted male teaches to look for more profitable activities to provide for their families – have opened the doors for female educators.

Most of the married students are between 21 to 40 years old (77%), while unmarried are found in all age groups, up until the 50 years bracket. Divorced or separated student represent only 1% of the surveyed population. It was noticeable that, while answering the questionnaire, some students have checked the option "single" as they were not officially married, although they live with a spouse. Some other, in the same situation, checked the option "marital union".

[13] TN: The Mozambican Civil War began in 1977, two years after the end of the war for independence. Often seen as a proxy war of the Cold War, it was similar to the Angolan Civil War as both were proxy wars that started soon after the countries gained independence from Portugal. About one million people died in fighting and from starvation, five million civilians were displaced, many were made amputees by landmines. Fighting ended in 1992 and the country's first multi-party elections were held in 1994(Source: The British Encyclopedia).

Nearly all students (91.2%) have a religion: catholic (49.9%), protestant (15%), evangelical (14.8%) and Muslim (11.6%). However, 8.2% have declared obedience to no religion. The data are in accordance to what the national census of 2007 investigated from the Mozambican population: predominantly catholic (28.4%), followed by Muslim (11.6%), Jewish (15.5%) and Evangelical (10.9%) and with an Anglican minority (1.3%).

1.2. Education

Most students in the Biology, Elementary Education and Mathematics programs (62.2%) have attended secondary education courses for training of teachers[14] and 17.5% have attended regular high school courses. Of the Administration students, 63% attended the Technical Vocational program. Within the national context, being able to finish high school and have a job is considered a privilege.

Overall, students from the Program have better qualification than the teachers working in the primary education system of Mozambique: roughly 42% of teachers of the EP1 cycle and 31% of the EP2 cycle have no pedagogical training (MINED. PEEC, 2006, p. 46), as the 27 institutions currently offering teacher training degrees (MINED. PEEC, 2006) are only able to supply less than half of the annual demand for teachers.

For most of the students (90.2%), this is their first contact with a higher education program, although there is a group that has entered university course previously, but dropped out (5.9%). There are students enrolled in other higher education programs (3.2%) and one who has already graduated from it.

1.3. Family situation

Most students live with their own families (78.5%). Very few live with their parents (10.8%) and even fewer live by themselves (3.9%).

Students generally own their homes (76.5%), but the Administration students are the ones with the lowest rate of home ownership (60%), compared to their counterparts from the remaining programs (80%) and the general population (92.2%).

Nearly all of the students' homes are made masonry built (97.6%) and have four rooms or less (62.8%). Homes with four or five rooms represent 26.8% of the total and those with more than five rooms are 10.4%. But how many people live in those homes?

In most cases (70.1%), five of more people share the home. Three or four people live together in 26% of students' homes. The national high fertility rates are not different among the surveyed students: 32.1% of them have two children, 18.8% have three, and 30.6% have four or more.

1.4. Students Location and means of communication

There is a center located in the capital of each of the three provinces where the Program is being offered at this initial stage.

[14] Teacher training on secondary level takes place in the Centers for the Formation of Primary Teachers (CFPP) and the Institutes for Primary Teaching (IMAP).

However, students are not concentrated in the capitals and sometimes live hundreds of miles away from the center headquarters.

Table 6: Distance from students to center.

Centers Distance (miles)[15]	Beira		Lichinga		Maputo		Total	
Up to2.5	33	7.3%	43	9.5%	17	3.8%	93	20.6%
3 – 6	48	10.6%	47	0.4%	22	4.9%	117	25.9%
7 – 18	33	7.3%	13	2.9%	30	6.7%	76	16.9%
19 – 30	9	2.0%	6	1.3%	14	3.1%	29	6.4%
31 – 62	10	2.2%	10	2.2%	15	3.3%	35	7.8%
63 – 93	4	0.9%	31	6.9%	8	1.8%	43	9.5%
93 – 124	0	0.0%	3	0.7%	4	0.9%	7	1.6%
125 – 155	8	1.8%	9	2.0%	0	0.0%	17	3.8%
156 – 186	2	0.4%	2	0.4%	1	0.2%	5	1.1%
187 – 217	4	0.9%	5	1.1%	0	0.0%	9	2.0%
218 – 248	1	0.2%	3	0.7%	1	0.2%	5	1.1%
249 – 279	1	0.2%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	2	0.4%
280 – 310	1	0.2%	5	1.1%	0	0.0%	6	1.3%
+ 310	2	0.4%	5	1.1%	0	0.0%	7	1.6%
Total	**156**	**34.6%**	**183**	**40.6%**	**112**	**24.8%**	**451**	**100%**

An analysis of Table 6 seems to indicate that most students live close to the center, as 77.6% of the them live within a 60-mile radius from the center and therefore would be able to attend the on-site meetings. On the other hand, it may also be concluded that students who live further from the center were not present when the survey was conducted. There were 103 absentees and from those who did answer the questionnaire, 140 offered no response to this particular question, possiblyunable to inform with some precision the distance from their home to the center. In conclusion, 35% of all enrolled students have not supplied this information.

For this reason, tutors were later asked to inform each of their students'places of residence. It was found that 66% of the students from the Beira center live in the city. In Maputo they are 69% and in Lichinga, 45%. The latter being the center with the greatest dispersion of students throughout the province, some of them (5%) living further than 370 miles from their centers.

Considering the precarious road conditions and lack of transportation in the districts, it is important to obtain data on travel time fromstudents' homes to the

[15] TN: Converted from original in kilometers.

center. Proximity to the center does not always result in short trips, which is the case for students in the district of Lago (74 miles from the Lichinga center, on a paved road), who commute five hours on average, both ways. Public transportation in the countryside is nearly nonexistent and students almost entirely rely on the *chapas*[16] private service, ride their bicycles, hitchhike or walk. Some very few, and only in the Lichinga center, use motorcycles.

Table 7: Student travel time to the center.

Centers Distance	Beira	Lichinga	Maputo	Total	%
Under 30 min.	58	24	25	107	21
1 hour	70	44	46	160	31
2 hours	27	46	51	124	24
3 hours	6	11	20	37	7
4 jours	3	19	3	25	5
5 to 7 hours	11	18	2	31	6
8-10 hours	8	6	-	14	3
11-15 hours	1	2	-	3	1
16-20 hours		8		8	2
Total	184	178	147	509	100

Travel time to the center for half the students (52%) is of 30 to 60 minutes, and for 24% of them it is close to two hours. Considering the conditions of transportation, it is non-deterrent amount of time for the student to be present at the center more frequently than observed. However, there is another group for which transportation requires more dedication and much more time, and for which a trip to the center means a day (18%) or more (6%) away from home or from work.

For many, the question is not only limited to time, but perhaps to the financial cost of travelling to the center on weekends, for instance. These students are public servants whose average monthly salary is between 4,000 and 7,000 meticais (US$ 150 to 250)[17]. In addition to monthly tuition fees of 1,050 meticais (US$ 28), which represents a third or even a fourth of their salary, students must pay for enrollment in subjects and didactic printed material (UP programs only, UEM's didactic material is made available in pdf format on the teaching platform).

[16] *Chapas* are semi-private transportation of a minibus type, capable of carrying 14 to 18 passengers. They were called "100 chapas" as the user had to pay 100 meticais regardless of distance travelled. The *chapas* are usually overcrowded and travel in less-than-ideal mechanical conditions.

[17] Minimum wage for each activity sector is reviewed annually, on April 1st. In 2012 it was between MT 2,300 and 5,320 (financial sector). The Public Administration (largest employer) received an increase of 6% over the numbers of 2011 (from MT 2,380), below the inflation level of the period around 10%. The highest increase went to the mining industry (22%).

Elements such as distance, time and expenses, should be considered in the organization of didactic work of distance-learning programs. For this reason, providers have invested in the teaching platform and other technologies to overcome potential obstacles to student participation. But what means of communication are available to students?

The survey has shown that 16.8% of students have radios, 38.9% have cell phones and only 4.3% have a computer. Although above the national average, which reveals that 24% of the population has a cell phone and 1.1% has a computer, these numbers reveal insufficient resources to keep up with the program's progression.

With regards to Internet access, only 39.6% of the students in the survey have access to the world-wide web, differing from the 78% Public Administration students and 32% of Elementary Education students who are online. Where do they access the Internet from to follow the program?

Table 8: Where students access the Internet.

Place of access	Program				Total
	Public Administration	Biology	Elementary Education	Mathematics	
At home	11 4.7%	8 3.4%	9 3.8%	11 4.7%	39 16.5%
Workplace	14 5.9%	9 3.8%	6 2.5%	3 1.3%	32 13.6%
Internet Cafe	24 10.2%	45 19.1%	44 18.6%	52 22.0%	165 69.9%
Total	49 20.8%	62 26.3%	59 25.0%	66 28.0%	236 100.0%

Most students log-on from places that offer Internet access for fees that average MT 30 per hour. However, the number of students with access from their own homes is expressive (16.5%), although the total number of students that do access the Internet represent only 38.9% of total number of surveyed individuals. In conclusion, most of students have no access to the world-wide web.

With that information in hand, how can Programs offertheir content (forums, chat rooms, distance activities) planned for students believed to have access to the internet? Although the centers do offer Internet access, is it realistic to expect students to travel weekly to log-on to the platform, interact with the tutor online and the teacher on-site, and post their activities once a week or twice a month?

On his reporton platform access and usage for UP's programs, Valdinácio Martins (2011) has concluded that 90% of the 219 Biology students had logged on to the platform at least once; the same was true for 84% of the 230 Elementary Education students and 64% of the 216 Mathematics students. However, only 39.6% were

accessing the platform regularly (at least once a week): 45% of them in Beira, 36% in Lichinga and 38% in Maputo.

Students very seldom access the platform, struggling with constant signal failures and power outages. Teachers of the Public Administration program have been using Skype to connect with tutors and students in the centers, with positive results.

Outside the program, the media outlets most frequently accessed by the students are TV news (69.5%), followed by radio (21.7%). Very few access printed news (4.8%), the Internet (1.7%) and magazines (0.6%), as these are paid services.

A small number (17%) has a personal library, made mostly of didactic material, in the case of teachers. Also, only 23.9% have claimed to have the financial ability to purchase books to complement their education throughout the program. All centers were intended to be equipped with a library of books and videos, containing basic references for each subject, but the Program has so far been unable to comply. Thus, students have been using the universities' library (UEM's for the Maputo center and UP's for the other three), where availability of books suggested by teachers and authors is less then certain.

1.5. Study habits

A distance-learning program requires discipline from students who have no fixed schedules, to organize their study hours. The survey asked students about their study habits.

Table 9: Planned study schedule according to students.

Schedule	Program				Total
	Public Administration	Biology	Elementary Education	Mathematics	
Every day	36 6.1%	62 10.5%	82 13.9%	66 11.2%	246 41.6%
Before exams	2 0.3%	10 1.7%	10 1.7%	6 1.0%	28 4.7%
On weekeds	23 3.9%	96 16.2%	92 15.6%	70 11.8%	281 47.5%
Occasionally	2 0.3%	11 1.9%	2 0.3%	21 3.6%	36 6.1%
Total	63 10.7%	179 30.3%	186 31.5%	163 27.6%	591 100.0%

It seems at first sight that students show dedication and plan to study everyday (41.6%), or at least on weekends (47.5%). However, when asked how many hours on average they would dedicate to studying, only 250 (42%) have provided an answer. It remains to be seen why less than half were unable to answer – whether they have not understood the question or found themselves too early in the process to indicate how much of their routine could be sacrificed and dedicated to a study schedule.

Table 10: Studying techniques used by students.

Habits	Program				Total
	Public Administration	Biology	Elementary Education	Mathematics	
Reading	44 7.5%	80 13.6%	72 12.2%	44 7.5%	240 40.8%
Making notes	12 2.0%	27 4.6%	36 6.1%	54 9.2%	129 21.9%
Reading and Making notes	7 1.2%	72 12.2%	76 12.9%	64 10.9%	219 37.2%
Total	63 10.7%	179 30.4%	184 31.3%	162 27.6%	588 100.0%

Interestingly, most Public Administration students seem to have the study habit of only reading through the material, while students from other programs are used to reading and making notes, perhaps exercising the habit of writing, required by their teaching profession, which involves planning classes, reading and correcting students' work and taking notes to offer feedback.

Conversely, the majority of students (96.4%) seem to indicate a preference for group work – they would much rather study with their classmates than individually.

It's been noticed that students were unsure how to organize their study habits in the early stages of a distance-education program, bringing their past experience in traditional education as a reference. On the other hand, the Program has not organized activities in the beginning or throughout the semester to discuss what it is like to be a distance-education student and the dynamics of the course, raising awareness for study habits and self-evaluation. Reading and writing workshops to help students fit in an academic environment with its own language were also not proposed.

2. EXPECTATIONS

2.1. Towards their profession

Few were the students that started working before the age of 18 (8.3%). Most of them exerted paid activities after the age of 21 (67.5%), while 24.2% started their professional lives between the ages of 18 and 21.

Currently, they are in the public service, although some (11.4%) maintain a second and parallel professional activity. The public service was a choice for 69.2% of them. A considerable number (28.1%) admitted it was out of necessity or simply by chance (2.7%). Still, 89.7% feel "adapted" to their responsibilities and do not wish to switch careers, which is especially true among most teachers (91.2%), but the Administration ones (80.1%).

The word "adapted", however, might be an indication of little enthusiasm towards the public job, low self-esteem and, perhaps a feeling of social depreciation of the profession and responsibilities. Conceivably, "lack of options" should be included in the list of reasons why they remain in the public service.

Due to an oversight in the wording of a particular question, students were requested to state how many years they have been acting as teachers, instead of public servants. Nevertheless, a few students in the Public Administration program were found working a secondary teaching position.

Table 11: Number of years working in the teaching profession.

# of Years	Program				Total
	Public Administration	Biology	Elementary Education	Mathematics	
0 to 5	2 0.0%	56 10.0%	41 8.0%	66 12.0%	165 31.0%
6 to 10	0 0.0%	57 11.0%	69 13.0%	50 9.0%	176 33.0%
11 to 20	2 0.0%	42 8.0%	49 9.0%	22 4.0%	115 21.0%
21 to 30	3 0.1%	21 4.0%	24 4.0%	19 4.0%	67 13.0%
31 to 40	0 0.0%	3 0.1%	3 0.1%	6 0.2%	12 2.0%
Total	7 1.0%	179 33.0%	186 35.0%	163 30.0%	535 100.0%

More than half work in the teaching profession for less than 10 years (64%) and only 15% have been teaching for longer than 20 years. Thus, these professionals have a lot of time ahead of them, and it is expected they will be able to contribute with improvements in education from the training they have been receiving, contradicting the common assumption that these students are professionals at the end of their careers.

One characteristic singles out the educator's profession from all others – the teacher's home is an extension of the school and classroom, where assignments are corrected and classes are prepared during unlogged and unpaid for hours.

Nearly half the group of teachers (47.2%) has claimed to dedicate 5 to 10 weekly hours to teaching-related work at home. Only 27.6% of them have claimed less than 5 hours, and for 25.2% that time increases to more than 10 hours a week.

Making matters worse, the majority (88.9%) teaches overcrowded classrooms with more than 35 students each. This entails more than just physical and psychological exhaustion, but extra workload to be taken home.

2.2. Towards their program

What reasons guide students in their choice of program? Are they professionally fulfilled? Is a program in their area of work relevantboth personally and professionally?

When asked if they would like to switch professions, 70% of the Administration

students and 93% of the Teacher training degree programs have said "no". They also do not want to switch courses, as 36.7% of them feel the programs are "adequate to the work" they perform, and provide social prestige (33.1%) and "wide income possibilities" (15.5%).

These reasons seem to be important elements for profession adherence and presence in the program. The main concern is the professional and not personal fulfillment, mentioned by only 6.5% of interviewees. This becomes more evident as some have attested being in the program as that was their only chance of obtaining a higher education degree (4.4%).

Table 12: Reasons for program choice.

Motivos	Program				Total
	Public Administration	Biology	Elementary Education	Mathematics	
Labor market	11 1.9%	4 7.0%	2 0.3%	5 0.9%	22 3.8%
Social prestige of profession	24 4.1%	46 7.8%	71 12.1%	53 9.0%	194 33.1%
Adequate for my personal aptitudes	21 3.6%	77 13.1%	64 10.9%	53 5.6%	215 36.7%
Better income possibilities	0 0.0%	29 4.9%	29 4.9%	33 5.6%	91 15.5%
Personal fulfillment possibilities	1 0.2%	11 1.9%	14 2.4%	12 2.0%	38 6.5%
First choice unavailable in area of residency	1 0.2%	12 2.0%	6 1.0%	7 1.2%	26 4.4%
Total	58 9.9%	179 30.5%	186 31.7%	163 27.8%	586 100.0%

In terms of expectations towards the program, 84.7% of the students, especially the ones in the Elementary Education program (91%) but not as many in the Public Administration program (77%), believe it will improve their professional performance.

Table 13: Expectations towards the program.

Expectations	Program				Total
	Public Administration	Biology	Elementary Education	Mathematics	
Aquisição de culturageral	1 0.2%	0 0%	2 0.3%	2 0.3%	5 0.9%
Capacitação profissional	13 2.2%	16 2.7%	9 1.5%	24 4.1%	62 10.5%
Formação acadêmica para melhorar atividade prática	47 8.0%	155 26.4%	169 28.7%	127 21.6%	498 84.7%
Embasamento para estudos mais avançados	0 0.0%	8 1.4%	6 1.0%	9 1.5%	23 3.9%
Total	61 10.4%	179 30.4%	186 31.6%	162 27.6%	588 100%

From the answers provided by the majority, the aspiration for better training, allowing for better professional performance, becomes evident. Search for theoretical knowledge upon witch further education can be built on, or theoretic training as basis for practice, were not mentioned as reasons for choosing the programs.

2.3. Towards the distance-learning program

The last question of the survey inquired students on their distance-learning programs. The original intent was to obtain their opinion on distance-learning programs in general. However, students provided inputs on the program in which they were enrolled, feeding comments from the perspective of a newcomer, as this was either their first experience this educational model or there were no other distance-education programs in their communities.

Nevertheless, some have expressed their opinion on distance-learning programs:

> The distance-learning program is very important as it allows for the integral formation of the student and creates opportunities for better performance within the performed activities (Biology, Maputo Center).

> Distance-learning programs are better because they help students and make it easier for them to get prepared in the best way to achieve knowledge (Elementary Education, Lichinga Center).

> Distance-education programs help improve life in communities, those who are closest and those who are farthest, because they train teachers and they are the most important sources of social communication, that is, they train trainers of different communities (Mathematics, Maputo Center).

> It is very beneficial as it gives the opportunity to study at planned hours, wherever you are (Mathematics, Lichinga Center).

Many of the interviewees provided compliments to the institutions for offering this possibility of higher education degree; others expressed their wishes of success to the initiative and hopes that it would be extended to the entire country, so that many others would be given the same opportunity.

In conclusion, most answers can be grouped around two common ideas.

Idea A (24% of answers): distance-learning programs offer the unique opportunity to study at home, without the need of regularly attending classes, allowing for professional and domestic activities to be carried out simultaneously. Therefore, the model provides the opportunity to obtain higher education for students that otherwise would not be able to go to university (already are inserted in the labor market, or have no access to a local provider), regardless of where they live. With that in mind, according to the students, the model "promotes inclusion" and "citizenship" as a value, because as it reaches the most remote areas of the country, it offers the opportunity of higher education to anyone, at affordable prices and with less time and energy than required by a traditional program.

> It assures total inclusion of the Mozambican citizens to higher education, especially the teachers, whose subject works in the field (Mathematics, Maputo Center).
>
> It energizes teaching, bringing it to those who have not had the opportunity for many reasons, as available time for those who work. It helps a great deal in the expansion of education (Biology, Maputo Center).

Idea B (19%): distance-education programs also allow a broadening of knowledge in the professional field and/or academic background with access to bibliographic material and exchange of experience with colleagues and teachers, providing better professional performance, which would contribute to the development of the country.

> It's an open door I will walk through in search of knowledge (Biology, Lichinga Center).
>
> Its extensiveness will bring added value for many (Mathematics, Lichinga Cinger).

The idea of personal commitment to development and eradication of poverty strongly represents the ideal built around the Independence revolution and the first Republic (Ngoenha; Castiano, 2011). It is likely that many of the students have actively taken part of this process. Perhaps not in the actual armed combat, but offering volunteer work in the reconstruction of the country, fostering the Mozambican nation-building ideal.

However, when asked about their political involvement, more than half of the students (50.9%) stated having no participation in the political life of the country. It is conceivable they have interpreted it as "active party member", which may infer a certain sense of repulse or disavowal towards the party in power or the way parties have been acting as "representatives of the people" in the current Second Republic (1994-nowadays).

On one hand, students accept the governmental speech on the importance of the public servant's job in the reconstruction of the country and improvement of public services, especially through education. On the other, they deny it faced with the conditions that very same government offers in order to implement this changing motion.

Another group (7%) mentioned that, in order to successfully attend a distance-learning program, one must "develop new skills", such as individual studying (to overcome the initial difficulties and obtain better performance), reading habits, teamwork, master new technologies, creativity, dedication, organization, personal effort, and responsibility. From this comes the idea that a preparation course for individual studying, prior to the commencement of their program, is a necessity for D.E. students to overcome initial difficulties.

These answers provided by the students are an indication of how necessary it is to offer orientation at the beginning of the program on how to study, develop individual- and group-studying skills, reading and writing techniques and provide a certain command of the teaching platform.

In that respect, the Nucleus for Open and Distance Education of the Federal University of Mato Grosso has been developing a very relevant experiment with its students since 1994. During the first semester of the program, no subjects are offered. Students are encouraged to get involved in the process through a number of activities, such as reading the "Adventure of being a student"[18] (PRETI, 1994)[19], workshops and get-togethers. They are encouraged to become acquainted to the distance-education model, the Pedagogical Project of the program, the Institution and to go through a process of self-awareness, evaluating their studying habits and their lives as students, and to take reading and writing workshops.

Towards the end of the semester, the students present their "Memoires of a Student" [20]seminar as their first personal assignment as authors, part of the Integrator Seminar, before they begin speaking with authors from the different subjects or areas. In their testimonies, students acknowledge that this initial step is fundamental for their personal development and for better performance throughout the program.

The suggestion for modular programs is an answer intensely and exclusively seen in the teacher training degrees. This proposition is particularly more intense among students in the Lichinga Center. The students explain that living far from the center and having no access to the Internet make frequent trips to the center expensive. But what is a modular

[18] TN: loosely translated from original.

[19] Presented in 4 volumes.Vol 1: To be a student. Vol 2: Producing academic text. Vol 3 and 4: The construction of research. From its third edition on (2007), the compilation received a new title: "Studying in distance learning: an academic adventure". The first two volumes are worked through the first semester. The other two are used throughout the program in preparation for the Themed Seminars, when students do research work, in small groups. (TN: all titles loosely translated from original).

[20] In addition to the written text (free style, no pre-set mandatory style, containing pictures, report cards, note-books – material collected from parents, former teachers, etc), the student can present his or her work to the classmates as a short theatrical staging, parody, poetry, video, PowerPoint, etc.

program and why make the choice for it?

The concept of a modular program is familiar to these students, as many of them may have graduated from their teaching-aimed secondary education programs designed in modules – a modular program is developed over established periods of time (monthly or over school holidays), when the student attends classes for a certain subject (module). The student then studies using the printed material and takes the test.

Students understand that, in order for the desired results to be obtained, the distance-education program needs to have the infra-structure (11%) to properly support them, especially as far as communication is concerned (computers, internet). Some claim they would be willing to purchase the necessary equipment if the Program somehow offers the financing options.

3. PERCEPTIONS

By the end of the Program's first year, during the students Meeting at the centers, the questionnaire was submitted in order to obtain the students' perceptions on their course and Program – reasons for adhering, why colleagues have dropped out, positive and negative points, and suggestions for improvement in the programs.

Table 14: Number of students that have answered the questionnaire for the research: "First Impressions on the Program" – October/November 2011.

Program Centers	Beira	Lichinga	Maputo	Total
Public Administration	20	19	10	49
Biology	52	42	31	125
Elementary Education	53	29	36	118
Mathematics	50	23	25	98
TOTAL	175	113	102	390

The term of choice is "perceptions" (instead of "impressions"), which implies an action from the subject on the object, the student in relation to their course and Program, the subject that organizes it, gives it meaning, interprets what it observes and lives. In opposition, "impression" offers the idea of a contrary motion, of the action from the object on the subject, as something external to the subject and that is imprinted ("pressed on"), engraved, reproduced in the student's mind who passively looks at the course.

The intention is to understand how students perceive their programs at the end of the first semester, find out what reasons have led them to stay, what were the biggest constraints they have faced, what were the most positive aspects.

3.1. Adherence – abandonment of the program

Certain unanimity is found in the Administration program: the quest for professionalization and the chance to improve performance in the public service (80%). Some of the interviewees have also mentioned the possibility of obtaining higher academic level (16%).

The number of students dropping out was not high – total of eight (9%) – and motived by the distance from the student's residence to the center or relocation to other provinces, according to classmates.

Within the Biology program, adherence in the program was motivated by the quest for professional qualification (34%), career advancement (33%), improvement of teaching performance (19%) and identification with the program (14%). But why have 33 students (16%) dropped out of the program?

According to the students, their colleagues have left for financial reasons (31% of answers), difficulties in accessing the platform (19%) and distance from the center and/or frequency of trips to the centers for meetings (19%).

Within the Elementary Education program, 21% of the 118 interviewees have adhered to the program searching for professional qualification, which will allow them to improve their teaching performance (15%). There are students seeking academic progression, obtaining a higher education degree (18%) and higher income prospects (11%). Another group has mentioned the model (11%), the way the program is being managed and the possibility of studying and working being offered to them as reasons for not dropping out. How can the abandonment of the program by some students be explained?

Three are the main factors according to the interviewed students: financial difficulties (monthly payments and heavy late fees and penalties), distance to the centers and duration of the program (four years, instead of three).

Within the Mathematics program, the four main factors for adherence to the program were: professional qualification (25% of answers), professional development (20%) – which would help improve the country's education (8%), – academic advancement (11%) and identification with the program (10%).

A high dropout number was also noticed in this program: 29 students (16%). The remaining classmates indicate various reasons to explain the students' abandonment, and two can be highlighted: financial issues (35% of answers), and difficulties in accessing the program's platform (17%). These are the same reasons flagged out by the students in the Biology and Elementary Education programs.

3.2. Positive aspects and challenges of the program

Students were asked to rate (positive, somewhat positive, somewhat lacking, lacking) different aspects related to their programs, such as teaching platform, tutoring, didactic material, evaluation system, center, service, etc., disposed on a list containing 16 items, which allowed add-ons if students felt it was pertinent.

Students from the Public Administration have found that the most positive aspects

of their program were: tutoring (88%), profession/program relation (86%), quality of program (80%), didactic material (70%), and distance tutoring (68%).

The most lacking aspects were related to the infrastructure of the center: library, computer lab, and facilities.

The most positive aspects for the Biology program students were: profession/program relation (68%), Biology laboratory (64%), quality of program (62%), and on-site tutoring (60%).

The most lacking aspects mentioned were also related to the infrastructure of the center: library, computer lab, and facilities.

One aspect that has raised concern was observed in the answers provided by the students from the Maputo center. Roughly 50% of them have not expressed their opinions on 12 of the 16 items, including 94% of students not rating the item regarding the quality of service provided by the program's coordination and teachers. This could lead to the conclusion that students may have not understood what it was asked of them.

Within the Elementary Education program, the aspect most positively rated by students was the profession/program relation (81%), followed by the quality of the program's curriculum (74%), on-site tutoring (72%), and service provided by the program's coordination, teachers and center's manager (59%).

The aspects found to be more lacking were the library (inexistent) and the computer labs.

In the opinion of the Mathematics student's program, the most positive aspects are the profession/program relation (69%), service provided by the program coordinator (67%), on-site tutoring (59%), and quality of program (57%).

Aspects found to be most lacking were, once again, related to the center's infrastructure: library and computer lab.

3.3. Reports

In addition to the questionnaires given to students, reports from the residing coordinator, and each of the programs' coordinators, containing descriptions of encounters with students and assessment of the first semester were also included. Conversations held with students – in attempts to listen much more than expose ideas or present justifications – have resulted in a report later shared with the whole Program team for consideration and possible reassessment of pedagogical intervention and administrative procedures.

During the conversation between coordinators and students, the lacking infrastructure of the centers was not posed as a major issue. Two other aspects are point out by students as main causers of abandonment from the Program:

- The financial aspect: the penalties and late fees on monthly tuition payments and price of didactic materials are considered above their financial ability.
- The evaluation system, which they consider to have a"classificatory" role,and not an educating one. In their understanding, the system is excluding

the students and working against the D.E. mission to be a model for inclusion.

The students point out that formal aspects established in the evaluation systems at UEM and UP (e.g. deadlines for appeals and take tests, etc.) are not respected, due to feedback delays.

UP's regulations, as an example, state that:

> Evaluation of learning as a curriculum component, present throughout the teaching-learning process, through which data and information is obtained and that allows for decisions that aim towards the assurance or learning, identification and development of potentials and integral formation of the individual, with the purpose of improving quality in teaching-learning and scholastic success.

In that respect, evaluation is proposed as a "formative, summative and continuous" proposition, to include moments of self-evaluation during theoretical lessons and practices.

According to students' perception, the way in which the evaluation process is been managed impairs this ideal of evaluation conception to be put into practice, leading to discouragement in the learning process. Thus, according to the students, two were the paths for exclusion: financial reasons (payment of monthly tuition fees, particularly high late fees) and an evaluation system that tends to standardize students, neglecting their differences in levels of learning which should be replaced by a system of processes and procedures that takes that into account.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The students are public servants that either work as teachers in elementary and secondary education schools, or as servants in various sectors of the public administration. They represent the country's population in some aspects, such as age, gender and fertility rate, but find themselves distant in others, such as education, social and economic conditions.

The students say they are "adapted" to their profession and the program, to the perspective that the degree will add professional and academic value, and that they will be able to provide better service to the population of Mozambique, playing an effective role in improving their lives.

In that respect, they hope the Program will promote sensible improvements in their support structure and provide an equipped library and quality Internet connection, adding to the services offered by the courses during the first year, such as the material developed by the teachers and the on-site tutoring system.

The role of the distance education model as an enabler of democratic access to higher education to the Mozambicans, regardless of place of residence, has been reaffirmed. The presence of young and older professionals in the programs can be explained by the dynamics and flexibility of the model. Therefore, in the current national scenario, D.E. is presented as a viable path towards social inclusion, and improved education and public services provided by the public administration to the people.

REFERENCES

FRANCISCO, António. Ter muitos filhos, principal forma de protecção social numa transição demográfica incipiente: o caso de Moçambique. In: BRITO, Luis de et al. (Org.). *Desafios para Moçambique* – 2011. Maputo: IESE, 2011. p. 231-282.

MARTINS, Valdinácio F. Paulo. *Moodle*: funcionalidade e potencialidade. Maputo: CEAD/UP, 19.9.2011.

MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO. Instituto Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação. *Plano Curricular de Formação de Professores para o Ensino Primário*. Maputo, dez. 2006.

_____. *Plano Estratégico de Educação e Cultura* – 2006-2010/11 – Fazer da escola um pólo de desenvolvimento consolidando a Moçambicanidade. Maputo, 2006.

NGOENHA, Severino E. Por um pensamento engajado. In: _____; CASTIANO, José P. *Pensamento Engajado*: Ensaios sobre Filosofia Africana, Educação e Cultura Política. Maputo: Educar / Universidade Pedagógica, 2011. p. 13-39.

SARDC.Southern African Research and Documentation Centre. *Moçambique* – Relatório Nacional de Desenvolvimento Humano, 2007. Disponível em www.sardc.net

REPÚBLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE. Instituto Nacional de Estatística. Disponível em http://www.ine.gov.mz