

# THE EDUCATION OF INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE: from the Colonial Period to the beginning of the Post-Independence Era

A educação de populações Indígenas em Moçambique:  
do Período Colonial ao início da Era Pós-Independência

La educación de las poblaciones indígenas en Mozambique:  
desde el Período Colonial hasta el inicio de la Era Posterior a la Independencia

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**Abstract:** The history of education of indigenous populations in Mozambique was marked by the colonizing action of Portugal, since the fifteenth century, until its national independence in 1975. This work intends to present and problematize the main landmarks of this process, in the time span of 150 years, from 1834, during the Colonial Period, to 1984, at the beginning of the Post-Independence Era. This contribution to the understanding of the history of education of Mozambican natives results from part of a doctoral study developed in the context of educational policies, carried out through a qualitative approach using the bibliographical method based on documentary sources. The interpretation of the data leads us to point out a set of colonising practices of discrimination, marginalisation and imposition of a language, as well as of cleavage and creation of a gap between the indigenous populations and the children of the colonisers. These social classes were assigned differentiated and penalizing educational regimes for the natives, since they aimed at reproducing and perpetuating the system of colonial domination, mainly through its orientation towards the production of labour. We also found that some of these marks of the past remained in the Post-Independence Era as an inheritance of a certain educational culture with which the Mozambican people struggle to achieve their designs.

**Keywords:** history of education; indigenous populations; Mozambique; colonial period; post-independence.

**Resumo:** A história da educação de populações indígenas em Moçambique foi marcada pela ação colonizadora de Portugal, desde o século XV até a sua independência nacional, em 1975. Com este trabalho, pretendemos apresentar e problematizar os principais marcos desse processo, no recorte temporal de 150 anos, compreendido entre 1834, em pleno Período Colonial, e 1984, no início da Era Pós-Independência. Este contributo para a compreensão da história da educação de nativos moçambicanos resulta de parte de um estudo doutoral desenvolvido no contexto das políticas educativas, realizado através de uma abordagem qualitativa com recurso ao método bibliográfico com base em fontes documentais. A interpretação dos dados assinala um conjunto de práticas colonizadoras de discriminação, marginalização e imposição de uma língua, bem como de clivagem e criação de um fosso entre as populações indígenas e os filhos dos colonizadores. A estas classes sociais estavam destinados regimes educativos diferenciados e penalizadores para os nativos, pois aqueles visavam a reproduzir e a perpetuar o sistema de dominação colonial, sobretudo por meio da sua orientação para a produção de mão de obra. Constatamos também que algumas destas marcas do passado se mantiveram na Era Pós-Independência como herança de uma certa cultura educacional com a qual o povo moçambicano se debate para alcançar os seus desígnios.

**Palavras-chave:** história da educação; populações indígenas; Moçambique; período colonial; pós-independência.

**Resumen:** La historia de la educación de las poblaciones indígenas en Mozambique estuvo marcada por la acción colonizadora de Portugal, desde el siglo XV, hasta su independencia nacional en 1975. Este trabajo pretende presentar y problematizar los principales hitos de este proceso, en el lapso de 150 años, desde 1834, durante el Período Colonial, hasta 1984, al inicio de la Era Post-Independencia. Esta contribución a la comprensión de la historia de la educación de los nativos de Mozambique resulta de una parte de un estudio de doctorado desarrollado en el contexto de las políticas educativas, realizado a través de un enfoque cualitativo utilizando el método bibliográfico basado en fuentes documentales. La interpretación de los datos nos lleva a señalar un conjunto de prácticas colonizadoras de discriminación, marginación e imposición de una lengua, así como de escisión y creación de una brecha entre las poblaciones indígenas y los hijos de los colonizadores. A estas clases sociales se les asignaron regímenes educativos diferenciados y penalizadores para los nativos, ya que pretendían reproducir y perpetuar el sistema de dominación colonial, principalmente a través de su orientación hacia la producción de mano de obra. También encontramos que algunas de estas marcas del pasado permanecieron en la época posterior a la independencia como herencia de una determinada cultura educativa con la que el pueblo mozambiqueño lucha por conseguir sus designios.

**Palabras clave:** historia de la educación; poblaciones indígenas; Mozambique; período colonial; post-independencia.

## INTRODUCTION

Our interest in the Mozambican educational past led us to study this subject from a historical perspective. This contribution to the understanding of the history of education of Mozambican natives stems from part of a doctoral study developed in the context of educational policies, conducted through a qualitative approach using the bibliographic method based on documentary sources (Amado, 2014).

To contextualize the theme of the present work, it is important to clarify that Mozambique was under the colonial administration of Portugal from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the year 75 of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, it was only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that colonial administration became effective as a result of the directives of the Berlin Conference (1884/85), which we will discuss later on.

As occurred in many other colonial African contexts, in the early stages of colonization, the education and literacy of the local populations in Mozambique were fully entrusted to missionaries, especially Catholic missionaries. This process took place arbitrarily and without the control of colonial power. The objective was to indoctrinate the indigenous populations, instilling in them the values of the dominant religion and culture, also establishing relations of power and domination. History teaches us that these complex processes of acculturation and imposition of a hegemonic culture also tend to annihilate local cultures and languages, precisely as a political form of exercising power.

Therefore, we will address this issue in more detail, from which we will focus on the unequal participation of indigenous populations regarding the right to education and the process of schooling and literacy.

## EDUCATION DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

In the Mozambican context, missionary education cannot be separated from colonial education. Mozambican colonization is a phenomenon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it is from this period onward that a systematic effort of education is made. The agreements between the colonial government and the Catholic Church, during the most intensive and fruitful phase of education in colonial times, prove that the separation between colonial education and missionary education is not pertinent. Indeed, the colonial government entrusts “[...] indigenous education to the church, while at the same time subordinating education to the interests of colonial nationalism” (Ngoenha, 2000, p. 43).

According to Ngoenha (2000), the process of creating educational institutions takes place with the fall of the last African kingdoms which date back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards that there is a

significant intensification of exploration voyages within the African continent. With economic interests in Africa, several European countries, including Portugal, intended to effectively occupy the coastal areas of Angola and Mozambique, in search of raw material and cheap labour. Portugal, after having extinguished the ecclesiastical religious orders, found itself unable to respond to the demands of the agreement of the Berlin Conference (1884/85), and had to see its colonies Christianized and, therefore, occupied by foreign competitors. With no alternatives, and fearful of losing all its colonies, Portugal granted subsidies to some missions. Thus, distrustful of Catholic missions, the Portuguese government established an instrumentalist policy whose missionary objectives were not subordinated to Portuguese colonial policy.

Despite the efforts undertaken by missionary educators, this fragile educational fabric began to deteriorate. This process was accentuated when the Marquis of Pombal, in the mid-18th century, expelled the Jesuits, and reached its apex with the decree of Joaquim António de Aguiar, of 1834, which extinguished the religious orders. From then on, the State replaced the Church in the educational mission. To carry out education, the liberal State created secular orders, the laity, to whom education was entrusted despite their poor preparation (Ngoenha, 2000).

With the political acceleration of the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and with the international demands of effective occupation and religious freedom, associated with the internal imperatives of the nationalization of the indigenous, the education system later proved to be weak and inadequate. Subsequently, from 1911 onward, with the proclamation of the Portuguese Republic, the Church was separated from the State, and Catholics began to benefit even less from official support. In their place, the State created, in 1913, the civilizing missions, making them responsible for the education of the natives. Even so, there was a group that believed in the instrumentalization of the Church, especially, in the denationalization of the Protestant missions. In 1919, with the enactment of legislative measures, the Portuguese government supervised foreign missions, forcing them to submit their statutes to the approval of overseas governments. In the final years of the parliamentary Republic, in 1922, the Catholic missions came to be considered civilizing.

With the decree of João de Belo of October 13, 1926, the Statute of the Portuguese Catholic Missions of Africa and Timor extinguished the lay missions and placed confidence in the Catholic missions for the entire task of education in the Portuguese Overseas. In reality, the Missionary Accord of 1940 (Concordat) and the Missionary Statute of 1941 were a simple resolution of details that depended on an understanding between the government and the ecclesiastical authorities. In obedience to the aforementioned diplomas, the education of indigenous people was completely entrusted to the missionary personnel and their auxiliaries.

In general, the political evolution of education in Africa, according to Belchior (1965), was characterized by its division into three distinct periods: the first period, from the discoveries to the extinction of religious orders (1834), in which the State entrusted the Church with all responsibility over the issues of teaching and education, with all or nearly all educators being priests, and with Catholic spirit chiefly guiding all educational work. In the second period, from 1834 to 1926, the year of the extinction of the lay missions, also known as civilizing missions, the State replaced the Church in the educational mission, with lay individuals and secular priests as educators, and the thought that gives political orientation of teaching is secular thinking. The third period is marked by the Organic Statute of the Portuguese Catholic Missions of Africa and Timor (Decree of October 13, 1926 apud Belchior, 1965). During this period, the State and Church collaborate closely to administer all levels and types of education, although dividing the sectors in which actions are carried out, because the Portuguese Catholic missions are entrusted with all education, especially for indigenous people. The characteristic of this teaching, according to Belchior (1965, p. 5-13), was its “[...] nationalist and practical aspect [...]”, with “[...] the use and teaching of the Portuguese Language” being mandatory in schools. Teachers are required to have Portuguese nationality, even if they are of African origin.

It is worth remembering that, from 1834 onwards, with the extinction of the Catholic religious orders and the process of expulsion of the friars from Mozambique, the Catholic missions went through a period of crisis in their relationship with the Portuguese State, the colonizer, which created an educational vacuum. During this period of crisis, which lasted until the years 1920-22, education was almost exclusively given over to Protestant missions, to Islamic schools and to lay missions, which were called civilizing missions (Belchior, 1965). Several Protestant missions were then established in Mozambique, operating outside the control of the government, teaching without officially approved programs and imparting knowledge in foreign languages. During the process of implantation of the Portuguese Republic (1911), in addition to the Portuguese Catholic missions, there were Protestant missions and Islamic schools (Belchior, 1965), each with their own type of education.

These missions of a secular nature resulted from article 5 of the General Act of the Berlin Conference (1884/85) which established and guaranteed the free and public exercise of all cults and the right to organize missions belonging to any religion, in territories dependent on the states that participated in that international meeting<sup>1</sup>. According to Basílio (2010), in this conference,

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<sup>1</sup> This principle was later established in the General Act of the Brussels Conference (1887) and in the Anglo-Portuguese Convention of 1891.

[...] the European powers granted themselves the right and legitimacy of colonization and delineated the territorial borders of each colony. With the division of Africa, colonial domination became official military occupation, that is, the total submission of existing states to colonial domination. As a result, from 1885 onwards, the Portuguese State legally declared itself a metropolis of Mozambique (Basílio, 2010, p. 40).

The decree of November 22, 1913 only made official the existing situation and created “[...] civilizing missions, imprinting secular thinking on teaching” (Mazula, 1995, p. 255).

In his proposal for the periodization of the history of colonial education, Mazula (1995) mentions that colonial education began in 1926 with the Decree of October 13 (Organic Statute of the Portuguese Catholic Missions of Africa and Timor), which, as we have already stated, it extinguished the lay missions or civilizing missions, reinvigorating the intervention of the Catholic missions.

A few years later, specifically in 1930, the colonial administration made a profound change to the educational system, towards obtaining more direct control over the education of the black population with the aim of “[...] creating a system capable of enabling the indigenous to their specific role as a cheap worker in the Mozambican colonial economy” (Mazula, 1995, p. 46). From this moment onwards, there is a separation between the teaching of white people and the teaching of black people, and the legislation prevents the teaching of Mozambican languages, except as a resource for teaching religion, a prerogative given in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, teaching becomes mandatory, and there is an increase in the number of Catholic missions and churches, as opposed to a decrease and even discrimination in the presence of other religions. At that time, education was divided between elementary education (for whites and assimilated people) and rudimentary (or ‘indigenous’) education. The first was composed of 4 classes that were divided into two degrees (the 1<sup>st</sup>, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and the 2<sup>nd</sup> corresponding to 4<sup>th</sup> grade), which then gave access to the general course (1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> year) and complementary course (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> year) of secondary education. The rudimentary education consisted of 3 classes, which corresponded to the 2<sup>nd</sup> class of elementary education and gave access to Indigenous Vocational Education, which, in turn, corresponded to the Vocational Schools (for females) and the Arts and Crafts Schools (for males), or to Normal Indigenous Education, offered in Indigenous Teacher Training Schools (where ‘indigenous’ teachers were trained for rudimentary education). In general, education was undergoing a process of reform, given the historical-economic circumstances of the time.

In 1940, the colonial administration, in close relationship with the Catholic Church, signed a Concordat with the Holy See, as mentioned above, and rudimentary education then became controlled by the Church (Mazula, 1995). In some situations, this institution maintained a close connection with the most repressive elements of the colonial system, such as forced labour, mandatory cultures, expropriation of land from peasants and poorly paid or forced labour (Gómez, 1999). According to this author, it was intended to civilize and assimilate the “[...] the brute African strata [...]” at the service of the economic and political interests of the system (Gómez, 1999, p. 347). Students in rudimentary education were forced to work as a payment for the instruction received. It was a matter of preparing rural farmers and craftsmen who would respond to the economic needs of the colony. ‘Assimilation’, in turn, functioned at this time as an instrument for the consolidation of colonial power and as a justification for the racist character of colonial politics and institutions.

Through Decree-Law nº 31.207, of April 5, 1941, the Missionary Statute was signed, which regulated the missions (Mazula, 1995). Article 2 of the Statute established that Portuguese Catholic missions were considered institutions of imperial utility and with an eminently civilizing purpose. In its article 66, it prevailed that teaching, especially for the “indigenous”, should be entirely entrusted to missionary personnel and aids. It also established the use of the ‘indigenous’ language only in the teaching of religion (article 69). The Concordat not only discriminated against schools for indigenous people and Europeans (article 15) but also tolerated the use of the ‘indigenous’ language in the teaching of the Catholic religion (article 16). The Indigenous Law established that teaching should be disseminated through the Portuguese language, but the use of native languages as a teaching instrument could be authorized (article 6).

The main objective of education, during this stage of colonization, was the “[...] civilization of the indigenous people” (Mazula, 1995, p. 47), mainly through the propagation of the Christian faith and European values and practices. The tolerance of the indigenous language emerged as a strategy and an instrument to exercise and reinforce the process of colonization and territorial imposition of the Portuguese language.

Right after the signing of the Concordat, the colonial administration established the teaching structure following the teaching organization model provided by religious entities. In 1941, the Portuguese administration divided education into ‘indigenous’ and ‘official’.

The official education was intended for the children of the settlers or the assimilated, the other education, the indigenous, was ingeniously articulated with the structure of the system of domination in all its aspects. The aim of indigenous education (also called rudimentary primary education) was to gradually elevate the

indigenous population of the overseas provinces from 'wild life' to the 'civilized life' of educated peoples, while official education (also called elementary primary education for non-indigenous people), aimed to provide children with the fundamental tools of all knowledge and the foundations of a general culture, preparing them for social life (Mazula, 1995, p. 80, author's emphasis).

In other words, the Portuguese State instituted a purely discriminatory educational system. The 'indigenous' education, aimed at Africans, intended to reproduce and perpetuate the system of colonial domination. On the other hand functioned 'official' education, with the purpose of instilling in students the concept of Portugal as a motherland and an intercontinental nation. All "[...] the education of the children of the Portuguese was guaranteed by priests, some teachers, private individuals, in regimental schools, etc." (Castiano, Nguenha, & Berthoud, 2005, p. 13). The main goal of 'official' education was to prepare an educated elite that could serve the interests of the Portuguese State, especially in terms of administrating overseas territories (Chimbutane, 2015). On the other hand, 'rudimentary' education intended to equip local populations with rudimentary knowledge and Portuguese values, values that consisted of civilization and the nationalization of indigenous peoples through the teaching of the Portuguese language (Dias, 2002). The Catholic Church, which had been given the responsibility of educating the indigenous people and making them Christian, was viewed with suspicion by the colonial power and by the hierarchy of the Portuguese church itself, since, according to them, the preaching of Christian faith did not identify with the Portuguese imperialist ideals. Protestant missionaries were accused of denationalizing natives, that is, deportuguese the Africans. In fact, this teaching, according to the Portuguese, was concerned with the submission of Africans and never with their cultural and scientific development. The assimilated African minority was reserved a series of rights and privileges, often uncertain, theoretically corresponding to Portuguese citizenship. However, the objective of this policy was to continue to keep the indigenous separate, marginalized, in order to better control and use them as cheap labour.

The colonial administration, as can be seen, advocated an increasingly sharp separation between the education of 'indigenous' children and that of 'civilized' children. In structural terms, this education for the 'indigenous' or "[...] uncivilized Africans" (Gómez, 1999, p. 60) was structured as follows: a) first level, rudimentary education, which comprised the initiation of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades; b) second level, primary education, which comprised the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades, and admission, which consisted of preparation for entering secondary education; the few students who managed to complete primary education could enter secondary education, which would be admitted to the c) third level, indigenous vocational education, normal

education or seminaries. These students could only enter school<sup>2</sup> at the age of seven, with their continuity to the advanced classes being compromised at first. Education for the 'civilized' or "[...] Europeans and assimilated" (Gómez, 1999, p. 62) was organized into three levels, specifically i) the first level, divided into primary education with five classes, the last being added in 1962; ii) second level, composed of secondary education, subdivided into three other levels: 1<sup>st</sup> cycle, of two years (preparatory education), the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle, of three years (secondary education) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, of two years (pre-university education), and iii) the third level, which was the higher education of Portuguese universities<sup>3</sup>.

In terms of pedagogy, the education system for indigenous people was called 'rudimentary' and, for civilized children, 'official'. The two curricula, according to Basílio (2010), aimed to instill in Mozambicans a foreign-Portuguese identity. In the 'rudimentary' subsystem, specifically in the first year of initiation/adaptation education (later called pre-primary), the student would learn the rudiments of speaking and reading the Portuguese language. In the second and third years (called 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades), they had to learn reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as the history of Portugal, the colonizing country. The content of school books focused only on Portuguese culture, ignoring African history and geography, as we can see in Zimbico (2016).

The curriculum (from 1930) of the School of Habilitation of Indigenous Teachers of Alvor included the following subjects: Portuguese language, arithmetic, metric system, geometry and general geography, cosmography of Portugal, history of civilization, history of Portugal and civic education, physics and chemistry, natural sciences, hygiene, agriculture, design, crafts, physical education, music, pedagogy, methodology and pedagogical practices (Zimbico, 2016, p. 134-135).

By analysing this curricular structure, we can conclude that Mozambique presented itself as part of Portugal, although the people of the colony had no self-determination, and their culture, customs and history were disregarded. Furthermore, these subjects valued practice and know-how, favouring immediately practical objectives from the point of view of the employability of graduates of this education system.

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<sup>2</sup> School networks had not yet been expanded to peripheral residential areas, especially where there were no Europeans or assimilated people. The existing schools were very equidistant from each other, which did not allow a seven-year-old child to travel many kilometres. In addition, the missionary schools did not offer, at that time, the last level of primary education, forcing African students to complete this degree in official schools (Gómez, 1999, p. 60-61).

<sup>3</sup> In Mozambique, the first university emerged almost at the end of colonialism, in 1963 (Gómez, 1999).



The 'official' subsystem was guided by the principles of metropolitan education. In the first two grades, students learned the "[...] first letters" (Gómez, 1999, p. 63) and, in the last two, they learned contents from the subjects of geography and history of Portugal. The curricula were completely different in terms of content, objectives and policies. The curriculum for the 'indigenous' also included topics focused on manual work. The skills defined for this curriculum were aimed at training for work, as opposed to the 'official' curriculum, with training for citizenship and the socialization of local cultural values taking a backseat (Basílio, 2010).

Ten years after the Missionary Accord (1940) was signed, in which the colonial administration granted full powers to the Catholic Church in education, there was a change in the curriculum. The subjects taught included behaviour, Christian religion, Portuguese, arithmetic and geometry, history, science, geography, drawing, literature and pedagogy. The introduction of the new subject – the Christian religion – reinforced the threefold task of the Catholic Church to 'civilize and nationalize, Christianize and instruct the indigenous'. Another aspect to be highlighted is that the curriculum of 1949/50 became relatively poor, in terms of content, because it no longer had subjects such as the metric system, physics and chemistry, methodology and pedagogical practices. Comparing the curriculum of 1949 with that of 1930, we found there were some changes, but its core structure remained, a fact that indicated a certain level of conformity of the education system with the objectives proposed for teacher training in this time horizon. On the other hand, the number of subjects was increasingly reduced, which, at first glance, could seem to be a facilitating element.

In light of Ordinance nº 8392, of 31 May 1950, similarly to the Colonial Act of 1930, colonial education segregated the native black population, instilling values that reinforced the objectives of domination. The Colonial Act of 1930 consecrated the privileged position of the Catholic Church in the overseas territories in relation to other religious denominations, receiving from the Portuguese government all the material support necessary to execute its functions, which consisted of evangelizing and civilizing within the parameters defined by the Portuguese Empire. The Catholic missionary program was regulated by the Portuguese Constitution, that is, by the Missionary Accord of 1940 and by the Missionary Statute of 1941. Both the Missionary Accord and the Missionary Statute detailed the principles and foundations of the action of the church defined by the Concordat of 1940. In turn, the Concordat sanctioned and recognized the Portuguese colonial empire, while establishing, in its article 27, that dioceses and missionary districts would be subsidized by the State. Article 15 of the Missionary Accord granted freedom to Catholic missions to conduct their activities, namely those related to founding and directing schools for indigenous peoples and Europeans (Gómez, 1999).

The rudimentary schools, created for the indigenous people, were precarious and guided towards the production of labour to ensure the colonial enterprise. In turn, unlike 'indigenous' education, 'elementary' education was organized and intended for the children of the colonial elites.

Elementary education is mandatory for all Portuguese, non-indigenous, physically and mentally healthy individuals, at school age, and aims to enable them to read, write and count, to understand the simplest facts of the environment and to exercise moral and civic virtues, within a lively love for Portugal (Overseas Ministry, 1950, article 28).

As can be seen from the ordinance above, the Portuguese colonial authorities guided education according to the needs and objectives of the colonization process. Gómez (1999) indicated that, in schools, all levels and branches of education were taught, ranging from notions, knowledge that contributed to the development of colonial mentality, to imperial collaboration. According to Chimbutane (2015, p. 45), this shows the extent to which rudimentary education, when compared to official education, "[...] was less ambitious as to the type of citizen it intended to create". The student leaving rudimentary education "[...] should know only the minimum so as to be able to become employed and behave in a dignified way in society, which included being a docile and submissive man before the colonial power" (Chimbutane, 2015, p. 45).

Thus, it was sufficient for the natives to begin with the Portuguese language and the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, as can be read in article 16 of the 1940 Missionary Accord: "[...] in indigenous missionary schools it is mandatory to teach the Portuguese language, with freedom to use the indigenous language to teach the Catholic religion, in harmony with the principles of the Church" (Hastings, 1974, p. 107).

In this civilizing philosophy, it is clear that the Portuguese language was defined as the language of instruction, whether in official or rudimentary schools, while local languages were used only for religious instruction. It is important to note that the use of Portuguese as the language of instruction had negative consequences in terms of the performance of Mozambican students in school. Although these students did not master Portuguese, they were obliged to learn and be evaluated in this language, with their mother tongues, the indigenous languages, being set aside or even completely excluded. Until 1940, education programs for Africans, Europeans and Asians, assimilated, children of Europeans, were conducted by the Department of Education and Teaching of the respective colony. The exams were produced by the Portuguese State and the diplomas were awarded solely by the director of education. From 1940 to 1960, the Catholic Church was responsible for designing programs, exams and diplomas, as well as training teachers specifically for indigenous education.

From 1960 onwards, the design of the programs was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education of Lisbon. According to Gómez (1999, p. 57), this change was due to the fact that Portugal declared “[...] overseas provinces [...]” all its overseas possessions. Since then, the missionary schools were supervised by inspectors from the territorial division of Public Instruction.

As a result of these measures, Mozambique had the lowest illiteracy rate compared to other African countries at the time. Access to official education was so selective that only an insignificant number of school-aged children were actually covered. Table 1 below presents the results of the colonial education system for the years 1955 to 1959:

Table 1.  
African students in Mozambique, 1955-1959

Year	Adaptation		Elementary	Secondary		
	Enrolment	3rd year finalists	Enrolment	Enrolment		
				a)	b)	c)
1955	240.813	5.027	3.729	10	116	105
1956	292.199	5.626	4.034	10	139	94
1957	344.027	5.860	4.468	20	185	102
1958	370.013	8.158	5.197	34	183	166
1959	391.134	9.486	5.397	41	301	169
Total	1.638.134	34.057	22.825	115	924	636

Source: Duffy (1962) apud Gómez (1999, p. 67).

Until 1959, the total Mozambican population was approximately 5 million and 500 thousand inhabitants. Students enrolled in adaptation education in each of the years represented only 6.55% of the population. However, if we compare the total number of students enrolled in adaptation education and the finalists over the five years, we can see that the latter represented only 2.07% of students enrolled. On the other hand, of the 34 thousand and 57 finalists in adaptation education, only 22 thousand and 825 (67.01%) managed to enrol in elementary education. Of the 22 thousand 825 students enrolled in elementary education, only 7.33% managed to enter secondary education, distributed as follows: 55.16% in technical education (column b)), 37.97% in seminary (column c)) and only 6.86% in official education (column a)).

According to Chimbutane (2015), this situation would slightly change from the mid-1960s onwards, due to a set of eminently socio-political events, such as:

- i) the abolition of the called Indigenous Statute, in 1961, which extended the status of Portuguese citizen to the entire native population;
- ii) international pressure on the oppressive and discriminatory nature of colonial policy, including in its

educational aspect; and iii) the intensification of liberation struggles, not only in Mozambique, but also in other Portuguese colonies (Chimbutane, 2015, p. 46).

The combination of these factors led to some positive changes in the colonial education system, particularly the expansion of the school network, the increase in enrolment rates, the authorization of the use of local languages as auxiliary instruments in the teaching of Portuguese at the primary level, the Africanization<sup>4</sup> of the curriculum and standardization of education and its alignment with metropolitan education (Mazula, 1995; Gómez, 1999; Chimbutane, 2015).

One aspect that should not be overlooked is the role of religious missions, particularly those of the Catholic Church, in education in Africa. In this regard, Mondlane (1975), who is the product of education from one of these missions, recognizes its role, justifying it in the following terms:

All the responsibility for educating the African people was handed over to the Catholic Church, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of Africans are not Christians. And to this is added the task of preparing the Africans who could become assimilated to Portuguese culture. The Portuguese believed that an African is more likely to become a full Portuguese if he is Catholic. (Mondlane, 1975, p. 70).

However, Mondlane (1975) recognized that, despite the effort undertaken by Protestant missions in teaching Africans, the colonial authorities distrusted Protestant missionaries, because they believed these missionaries conveyed messages of denationalization of natives among the population, and this distrust was extended to foreign missionaries of the Catholic Church. What was observed, in the entire Portuguese colonial education system in Africa, was its discriminatory nature, by admitting the separation of the so-called 'indigenous' from the rest of the social groups consisting of Europeans, Asians, 'non-indigenous' or 'assimilated'<sup>5</sup>. Another equally important aspect was the fact that colonial authorities were not able,

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<sup>4</sup> According to Gómez (1999, p. 64), the educational reform of 1964, by Decree n° 45908/64, determined that "[...] the contents and methods of primary education should be adapted to local realities".

<sup>5</sup> "The distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous people was established in 1899, with the colonial labour law created by António Ennes. It distinguished between citizens with full Portuguese citizenship living under metropolitan law (non-indigenous) and those under African law, who were subject to the labour contract and *xibalo* (forced labour). This distinction was refined many times, for example, with the introduction of the Organic Charter of 1933, the first Constitution of Mozambique. To obtain non-indigenous or assimilated status (full Portuguese citizenship), an African individual had to fulfil certain requirements, which included knowledge of Portuguese, a stable income, level of education (4<sup>th</sup> grade) and acceptance of monogamy" (Firmino, 2002, p. 225).

throughout the colonization period, to extend a comprehensive school network, restricting it only to the few urban centres that existed at the time and to the small population, mostly of European origin.

In other words, and as mentioned by Gómez (1999), education for Africans ensured and legitimized, in its structure, objectives and contents, the inequality and economic, political and social discrimination of the African population. The aim of education was the submission of Africans and never their cultural or scientific development. With regard to the less unequal education of black children and young people, it only began to be discussed because of the Colonial Administration during the 1950s/60s, a period in which there were great social, economic and historical controversies in many countries, including Mozambique. At the international level, there was a struggle for the social equality rights of people with and without disabilities, which culminated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (1948). Thus, and as a result of this and other social and political factors, in 1962, emerged the movement of armed struggle for national liberation, in Mozambique.

Overall, and as we stated above, colonial domination was characterized by discrimination and ethnocentrism regarding the treatment of native Mozambicans. These individuals were forced to adapt to the western model of colonial education, since they were considered barbaric, delinquent, and without an identity or culture. During this period, the interests of the colonizing country were the priority, and an unequal education system that excluded black individuals was promoted. The colonial school always separated students from their origin and reality, leading them to despise African values and to adopt the values of the colonizer. As stated by Gómez (1999), colonial education was conceived and practiced to alienate young Mozambicans, which largely helped to trigger feelings of revolt, as well as the awareness that it was possible to fight to overcome Portuguese colonialism. It is in the wake of this feeling that the Liberation Front of Mozambique was formed, which gave rise to the national struggle for liberation.

## **THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE LIBERATED ZONES**

After the formation of the Liberation Front of Mozambique [FRELIMO], in 1962, in neighbouring Tanzania, an intense phase of preparation for the national struggle for liberation occurred two years later. For Mazula (1995), FRELIMO symbolized, on the one hand, the culmination of a process of secular resistance by the Mozambican people against Portuguese colonialism and, on the other hand, it marked the beginning of new challenges and new contradictions that would lead to the construction and consolidation of national unity and the rise of a Nation-State. Mozambican education emerged within this process and tried to differentiate itself from the socio-political and cultural parameters of colonial education.

According to Mazula (1995, p. 104), the genesis of the liberated zones took place “[as] the war for national liberation progressed, enabling the emergence of territories outside the control of the Portuguese administration and occupied by FRELIMO”. These territories were later called liberated zones<sup>6</sup>. However, the first liberated zones appeared in the provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado, because they are located next to the border of the United Republic of Tanzania. As the war spread to the south, FRELIMO liberated areas and massified education among the combatants. The liberated zones were no longer restricted to a group, a social category, a lineage or village community, and became a more open national space, although not without contradictions, while moving towards trans-ethnic and intra-racial social relations.

This organizational process of the liberated zones was viewed by Machel (1974) from a national perspective, in which national unity should transcend any tribal manifestation, a thought summarized in: “The tribe shall die, so the Nation can be born” (Machel, 1974, p. 4).

During the National Liberation Struggle, education was an issue that worried FRELIMO militants, since most of them lacked basic education, and the war imposed minimal schooling. This concern is expressed by Mondlane when he states that

[...] the shortcomings of the Portuguese education system meant that our movement had a strong lack of cadres of all fields. We understood that a successful result of future armed action would create the need for people with technical qualifications and a certain level of basic education. [...] We had, and still have, the task of recovering years of diligent neglect under Portuguese rule [...] (Mondlane, 1975, p. 137).

Mondlane (1975) saw education as the only way to develop the struggle and to form citizens capable of becoming aware of the situation in Mozambique. Under the same perspective, Machel (1980a) defended the development of cadres for the construction of a Mozambican with new ideals, that is, with nationalist ideals, as can be seen in:

[...] considering the particularly obscurantist character of Portuguese colonialism, there is a need for a swift increase in the level of scientific knowledge: scientific and literary education emerges as a priority, a need for the further development of the armed struggle and national reconstruction (Machel, 1980a, p. 32).

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<sup>6</sup> “The liberated and semi-liberated zones [...]” were zones where “[...] the entire life of the masses depended on the guidance of FRELIMO” (Machel, 1980a, p. 34).

Mondlane's (1975) and Machel's (1980a) insistence on education not only served to develop the liberation struggle, but also to reduce the rate of illiteracy and to create an awareness of citizenship among Mozambicans.

Education should accompany and support the transformative process of the national struggle for liberation. The liberation struggle, according to Machel (1980b), consisted not only of the liberation of the land, but also to reconquer the Mozambican personality and its culture, as well as the creation of a new mentality. The role of education was to fight against illiteracy which, according to Machel, was a product of colonialism. Schools were supposed to counteract superstition, individualism, selfishness, elitism and ambition. In the pedagogical field, teachers and students were supposed to learn from each other, in a climate of trust that would allow them to value their talents for the reconstruction of a new country.

Overall, education was considered important to consolidate the feeling of national identity and as a space for the development of technical knowledge, as it allowed the acquisition of knowledge for the struggle and the development of production in the liberated zones. According to Gómez (1999, p. 223), “[...] education was conceived as a fundamental instrument to rescue the dignity of the Mozambican people, their culture and at the same time to support the socio-political project of FRELIMO”.

In this struggle for liberation, new schools were created, with the aim of instilling in the population a new way of thinking and acting which was different from colonial education. According to Gómez (1999, p. 92), the goal was to form a Mozambican person “[...] free from colonial oppression and alienation, capable of recovering their history and dignity, individually and collectively”. Thus, the liberation struggle becomes a sudden political and cultural break with the colonial system. Since the latter had disregarded the development of the native population and truncated their training to Mozambicanity, FRELIMO defined education as the main weapon for human development. To this end, the Liberation Front launched a project to build a large school to develop the New Man, with two main objectives: i) to contradict the objectives of colonial education, conceiving education as the only way for the people to take the power, and ii) regard school as a space to renew the culture and history of the Mozambican people, as well as to build the national State.

Holding the power of control in the ‘liberated zones’, FRELIMO created militias that were subordinate to the local party structure and military leaders. In addition, it organized literacy schools, where political objectives were articulated with pedagogical objectives. Due to these objectives, in the new schools, the population began to discuss issues related to the revolution and patriotism, while trying to eliminate the differences in opportunities for access to education. Therefore, the curriculum reflected issues inherent to revolution, struggle, production, discipline, patriotism and the spirit of fraternity and national unity (Gómez, 1999).

As a result of the deficient and distorted colonial education, the movement was faced with a lack of cadres in all sectors, and the future of armed action depended on the existence of people qualified at the technical level and with a basic education degree. The high rate of illiteracy also made it difficult to awaken the political consciousness of the population. Thus, FRELIMO launched a campaign for the massification of education in the liberated zones, articulating formal education, literacy, adult education and teacher training. As a reflection of this articulation, the educational system was structured around formal education, adult literacy and schooling, and teacher training (Mazula, 1995). Formal education, aimed at children and adolescents, covered four levels: Pre-Primary for children's centres, Primary with four grades, Secondary with four grades and University, which ended up not working. Adult literacy and schooling were destined for the guerrillas who, in turn, taught the populations.

FRELIMO conceived literacy as the act of teaching to read and write in Portuguese. As is well known, the acquisition of non-indigenous or assimilated status in the colonial period depended on mastering the Portuguese language (Zimbico, 2016). This language became a form of social capital directly linked to the symbolic, ideological and economic systems that dominated and controlled social mobility and related personal skills to social stratification within the colony. However, the limitations imposed by the colonial administration, which had neither the capacity nor the will to expand the class of 'civilized' Africans, prevented their acquisition, so that, when Mozambique's independence was proclaimed, Portuguese was part of the of the linguistic repertoire of a Mozambican minority group. Moreover, and for reasons of colonial heritage that had established a social hierarchy of languages, Portuguese became a language of prestige. Furthermore, in education, this language represented a fundamental political-ideological condition for the success of the armed struggle. This was the way FRELIMO conceived, in parallel, a military program and an educational program implemented in the liberated zones.

The association of the Portuguese language with prestige and social mobility does not disappear with national independence, and was indeed reinforced by the fact that Portuguese was part of a new ideological framework that promoted and adopted it as a symbol of national unity, an official and instructional language of Mozambique. However, adopting Portuguese as the official language meant, in practical terms, that, much like in the colonial period, it continued to be the only language used in social events. In fact, since the bureaucratic and business elites were educated in Portuguese and often communicated in local languages, but exclusively in home environments or in non-institutional domains, they were not prepared to conduct official activities through communication in these languages (Zimbico, 2016).

From this we conclude that teaching FRELIMO militants to read and write in Portuguese was likely the political and ideological strategy found to serve the anti-colonial purposes of reconstruction and modernization of Mozambican society. There was a need to form a New Man equipped with a common language, since local



languages were not prepared for the acquisition of knowledge in official institutions. The school should train the cadres for the tasks of political and armed action. It should guarantee political education, since it was necessary to continually raise the political and cultural level of FRELIMO militants and those involved in the tasks of reconstruction (Buendia, 1995). FRELIMO knew that it was only through education that power could be taken back. According to Gómez (1999), at that time, education had the fundamental purpose of supporting the construction of national unity, and not the character of the school class. The courses offered would be comprehensive, not separate, as in colonial times (Mondlane, 1975).

Teacher training and education was administered through national and provincial courses, whose duration varied between two months and two years. Teachers could be trained according to the classes they were going to teach:

- a) teachers of the 5<sup>th</sup> year of secondary school in addition to 2 years of primary education to teach up to 4<sup>th</sup> grade; b) 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers plus 4 years of professional training to teach up to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade; c) teachers whose qualification was 4<sup>th</sup> grade plus a 2-month course to teach up to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade (Basílio, 2010, p. 104).

These teachers ensured indigenous education in Mozambique, although they were poorly qualified to do so. As for the operating mechanisms of the schools created in the 'liberated zones', Mondlane (1975) explains that, due to the lack of properly prepared human resources, the level of instruction given in these schools was only rudimentary, oriented towards the needs of children, taking into account cultural context allied to the context of the national struggle. The lack of properly trained teachers made it difficult to develop an educational theory and forced the creation, in the liberated zones, of a type of school that inherited the colonialist model. As stated by Gómez:

[...]at this stage, the inadequacy between ends and means was not fundamentally due to resistance on the part of teachers to take on a new type of education, but to the lack of knowledge and practice among teachers, as their level of training was extremely deficient. It is worth noting the large effort these teachers made to implement educational programs during the struggle for liberation (Gómez, 1999, p. 165).

The low level of teacher training, associated with a lack of knowledge and inexperience with the new type of teaching, prevented education from making great advances in terms of knowledge, thus reproducing social inequality (Gómez, 1999). In our view, we believe that adopting the Portuguese language as a means of teaching literacy could be considered an obstacle to the progress of teaching in the liberated

zones. Due to the lack of trained teachers to teach in schools, FRELIMO called on all Mozambicans with a minimum of literary preparation to be ready to teach literacy.

One of the biggest challenges of FRELIMO's educational policy, in this phase of the liberation struggle, was the inadequacy of technical competence with political competence. There was a contradiction between what was intended to be done and the ability to materialize it. According to Buendia (1995, p. 351-352), it was the relationship between "[...] political commitment and technical competence". In this relationship, it is difficult to imagine the effectiveness of political commitment without the corresponding technical competence. Despite all the difficulties and shortages felt in this phase of the struggle for national liberation, for the first time in the history of education, it was possible to teach children and young people to read and write outside colonialism, despite the fact that, until the time of independence, the level of illiteracy was 93% (Chimbutane, 2015), out of a total of 10.6 million inhabitants (II RGPH, 1997 apud Zimbico, 2016). With national independence, an attempt was made to apply, in all national schools, the educational experience acquired during the national liberation struggle. A democratic school was envisioned, in which teachers and students would learn from each other, in an atmosphere of trust, of harmonious relationships, in which talents were valued with the aim of building the nation.

In parallel with teaching, among various subjects, such as reading, writing, arithmetic and civics, schools practiced agriculture and other related activities, and more specialized teaching was done at the Mozambican Institute, operating in Dar-es-Salam, in the United Republic of Tanzania.

In 1974, in the process of signing the Lusaka Accords<sup>7</sup>, there was a massive exodus of Portuguese citizens, due to the loss of their privileges and the suspicion of their involvement with the colonial apparatus, which resulted in the closure of many schools, due to the lack of teachers. It is important to mention that the massive exodus of Portuguese citizens, among them Catholic teachers and missionaries, derived from a transversal cut that FRELIMO had established with the colonial administration in all senses and from the implantation of a new administration with local cadres. To compensate for the deficit, the government mobilized people with 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades completed and placed them in the socio-political institutions of the State. This strategy allowed the State to eliminate all traces of colonialism, dismantle the colonial education system and build new values, standards and principles aimed at Mozambicanity. The knowledge taught in schools became a choice made from the Mozambican cultural universe. This way, FRELIMO managed not only to reaffirm the

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<sup>7</sup> This is the agreement signed on September 7, 1974 between the Portuguese government and FRELIMO, in Lusaka, whose main objective was a ceasefire, in addition to guaranteeing national independence to the Mozambican people (cf: Gómez, 1999).

idea of re-Africanization of school contents, but also to take control of cultural, social and economic institutions.

In an attempt to avoid chaos in the area of education, FRELIMO recruited Mozambicans with some academic preparation to teach in primary and secondary schools; in areas where there was no educational institution, 'people's schools' emerged, created and built by the population; the student community increased significantly, with an explosion of schools taking place in the early years.

However, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC] (1979, p. 8), "[...] the lack of national structures to control, stimulate and support these activities and, consequently, the lack of methods, programs, national books as well as other material, soon determined a considerable decrease in the participation of the population".

Thus, what we can understand from this whole process of teaching in the liberated zones is the need to, through the demands of war, shape a new society, free from colonial prejudices and capable of understanding the need for war, leading it to national independence. Education was a right for all Mozambican citizens, regardless of their race, colour, religion and language.

## THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD (1975)

Having proclaimed national independence, which was the central objective of the armed struggle for national liberation, FRELIMO began a program of building the Mozambican nation, with a socialist orientation. This idea was clearly expressed in the Report of the Central Committee of the Liberation Front of Mozambique [FRELIMO] to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress, held in 1977 (p. 58), when it expressed that "[...] the Constitution of the Republic aimed at building the core political, ideological, scientific and material aspects of socialist society". As for the education sector, Gómez states that,

[...] summarizing its educational experience and bearing in mind its political strategy for the education sector, developed during the national liberation struggle, FRELIMO guided the Transitional Government so that instruction, education and culture were placed primarily at the service of the masses that were oppressed and humiliated by the colonial and capitalist exploitation system. Education was conceived as a fundamental instrument to rescue the dignity of the Mozambican people, their culture and, at the same time, to support the socio-political project of FRELIMO (Gómez, 1999, p. 221).

In fact, the experience lived in the 'liberated zones', in the field of education, will be important in this new phase of Mozambique's history. With regard to the first actions of FRELIMO and the Government, Mazula summarizes them in the following terms:

FRELIMO's intervention was of a political nature, while the Ministry of Education and Culture focused more on its structuring and the organization of the Schools. The interventions sought to correspond to the nature of the revolution, in the sense of process. There was awareness of planning mid- and long-term actions with a deep knowledge of reality, which would be part of the global political project and extend beyond the immediate dimension. However, the priority was to respond to the immediate and most blatant challenges (Mazula, 1995, p. 151).

Education was nationalized with the aim of creating a single educational system. The nationalizations intended to eradicate the possibility of the emergence of the bourgeoisie as a class and to introduce new social relations of production through the creation of state companies and production cooperatives (Gómez, 1999). Thus, the State absorbed 'the people's schools', and there was an increase in the number of school staff.

Following the revolutionary guidelines, in the same year of independence (1975), the first National Seminar on Education was held in the city of Beira, organized by the Ministry of Tutelage. This Seminar brought together primary and secondary teachers and staff with experience in the field of education in the liberated zones, and discussed, among other matters, the mechanisms for implementation in schools, the principles of FRELIMO's ideology, as well as the organizational methods that were to be followed. The school curriculum should translate the new socio-political reality of the country. According to the MEC (1980), the curriculum should eliminate all objectives and contents that mentioned the settler. The subjects of history and geography were the ones that underwent the most transformations, because they ignored the existence of the history and geography of Mozambique. The Seminar proposed new teaching programs, new contents, but the teaching methods were practically the same as in the colonial system, as Gómez reports:

[...] the reform of contents did not necessarily lead to a change in teaching methods. [...] In the Mozambican case, taking into account the level of political and pedagogical training of teachers, the change in content did not cause a change in the teacher-student relationship nor were authoritarian methods inherited from the old school overcome (Gómez, 1999, p. 239).

The Seminar also proposed changes in school structure and functioning. Regarding how schools should be organized, Gómez (1999, p. 240) refers to the elaboration of a document called 'Political and Administrative Organization of Schools' [PAOS] (1975/76 apud Gómez, 1999), an instrument that "[...] intended to introduce a new environment, capable of favouring the implementation and development of popular democracy in schools".

This document, according to Mazula (1995, p. 152), "[...] defined collective work methods, management methods, pointed out ways of democratizing and learning the exercise of power, through collectives of students and teachers and provided guidelines for the School-Community Link [SCL]". The document aimed to put an end to the atmosphere of disorganization, liberalism and instability that existed in schools.

However, Machel (1979, p. 17) mentions that the PAOS, as a guideline document, "[...] never provided the schools with the expected results, as it did not correspond to the concrete reality of the schools". Schools still suffered ideological influences from the colonial and traditional past of society. As a result, there were schools and teachers' directorates who, in the name of PAOS's demands, developed authoritarian relationships with students – colonial ideology –, which Machel (1979) already feared in his speeches. The teacher-student relationship unfolded in two branches: one, the most frequent, tended towards authoritarianism, in which the teachers imposed themselves on the students insofar as they had the power to evaluate students with consequences for their passage of the class; and another tended towards the relationship of cronyism, of tacit commitment between student and teacher, in which there was no lack of ethical corruption in the teacher and, in the student, a lack of respect for the teacher (Gómez, 1999).

Overall, we can say that the education sector undoubtedly underwent significant changes, although, in practice, these changes have barely been felt. Transformations were limited to changing the colonial content of the programs and introducing alternative ways of functioning in schools, but the educational system remained the same one inherited from the colonial system (Gómez, 1999). Thus, and corroborating Gómez (1999), we consider that the changes made by the PAOS to the teaching programs and to the schools' structure and functioning were such a failure that, in the understanding of Machel (1978, p. 4-6), triggered an "[...] authority crisis in schools".

In 1979, the educational crisis persisted, and there was a clear dichotomy between the teaching philosophy defended by Samora Machel, which aimed at the collective<sup>8</sup> and solidarity progress of the Mozambican people, and the system in force,

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<sup>8</sup> "It was a model in which everyone ('school leadership, community, FRELIMO Party structures') could lead. The model of collective leadership in schools prevailed until 1978, when school boards were redefined and restructured, based on a concept of 'unity of power'" (Gómez, 1999, p. 333, author's emphasis).

which presupposed, even in its evaluation methods<sup>9</sup>, the ‘selection of the best’, thus promoting social inequalities and school failure. According to Gómez,

[...] how they attempted to solve the problem of school failure and improve the quality of education put aside popular participation, relying only on technical aspects: increase in teacher training time, elaboration of school materials and reduction of the student/teacher ratio (Gómez, 1999, p. 330).

The civil war, also called the war of destabilization (1977-1992), between the government and the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) exacerbated the crisis in the education and health systems. Schools and hospitals were destroyed and the population was forced to migrate to safer areas (Gómez, 1999).

In 1980, under the guidance of the *3<sup>rd</sup> Congress* (1977), FRELIMO approved the Prospective Indicative Plan [PPI] with the aim of adjusting to the educational, economic and social modernization crisis. This plan defined goals and idealized large economic projects for heavy industry that would accelerate the socialization of the countryside, create bases for the elimination of underdevelopment over ten years, thus placing the country at the level of developed countries. According to Gómez (1999), this implied an adaptation of the educational system to the training needs of qualified staff for the different sectors of the economy.

FRELIMO “[...] intended to make the great leap towards socialism. The illusion was created, as a rational possibility for underdevelopment to be overcome in a decade and the success of education to result from rapid economic development” (Mazula, 1995, p. 170). The PPI was launched with a view towards balancing economic development for the entire country. Within the PPI, industrial macro-projects were outlined, such as: textile in Mocimboa do Vale, Texlon in Matola, Text-Africa in Chimoio; cotton ginning factories in Ribáue, Cabo Delgado, Niassa; distribution of the electrical network to all provincial and district capitals. Among the mega-projects, the national education system stands out, which culminated in the curricular reform, with the extension of the school network and with the creation of a teacher training centres.

In the context of developmental policy, education would play a major role in training for citizenship and work, contributing to the elimination of poverty. This meant that education was still a priority in building this new independent society.

Despite the first efforts to reformulate the programs, giving them a class content, containing the explosion of schools, and the planning of education, the

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<sup>9</sup> “The assessment system remained the same, the one inherited from the colonial system, with national exams for all classes. A system created to classify and, above all, select the best, the most apt, the best students, criteria whose theoretical-philosophical basis is closely linked to the psychological-biological theories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century” (Gómez, 1999, p. 330).

structure of the educational system remained essentially unchanged, with the contradiction between the type of social development of the previously in force and its real contribution to the overall development of the country. In fact, the following problems persisted: poor articulation between education levels, training areas and program contents; the distorted school network, among others (Mazula, 1995).

As a response to these contradictions, FRELIMO led the Ministry of Education [MINED] to design an education system with modern characteristics, but which sought to respond to the new challenges of the Mozambican people. At the time, the then Minister of Education, Graça Machel, in a meeting promoted by the Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC], in 1979, proposed the elaboration of a new National Education System [NES], a proposal that materialized four years later. According to the minister, the new educational system would solve the problem of exclusion and lack of continuity between the different levels and courses, provide general and professional training and solidify national unity and identity.

In 1981, MINED prepared a document that was presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> session of the Popular Assembly, called General Lines of the National Education System, which was approved in 1983 by Law 4/83, of March 23. One of the main objectives of this law was the right to education for all, respecting political objectives, pedagogical principles and the structure of the education system. According to the general principles of the *Constitution of the Republic...* (1990, 2004), education is a right that is effective in the access of children to education for all, as attested by the Bulletin of the Republic: “[...] the national education system guarantees the access of workers, peasants and their children to all forms of education, and allows the appropriation of science, technology and culture by the working classes” (Mozambique, 1983, p. 13).

This law intended to offer a quality education that would combat the high rates of failure and dropouts. However, according to Gómez (1999, p. 351), “[...] the materialization of this objective was conditioned and limited by the lack of trained teachers and the insufficient implementation of the school network”. The State decreed education, but did not extend this right to everyone. The system maintained the exclusion insofar as education was not compulsory and free in the true sense of the term. Schools charged enrolment fees annually, a fact that over time made it impossible for children in precarious conditions to be educated. In addition to the objectives mentioned above, the NES established that

[...] the entire education process was developed on the basis of the theory-practice connection, a fundamental condition for understanding reality, assimilating scientific knowledge and transforming nature and society. This principle materialized in the contents and teaching methods of the various subjects, in the school-community connection (Mazula, 1995, p. 182).

According to Castiano et al. (2005, p. 73), the education system allowed users to enter the labour market at four levels, elementary, middle and higher. The horizontal and vertical articulation of the education system and the systemic unit were limited to pedagogical principles, whose basic guidelines were the connection to the school/community; the conception of the school as a dynamic factor for the socio-economic and cultural development of the community; the link between theory and practice, between work and study; the dialectical unity between scientific education and ideological education, from which FRELIMO's political and ideological orientation was reflected.

In terms of structure, the NES was organized into five subsystems that complement each other, namely the subsystem of General Education, Adult Education, Technical-Professional Education, Teacher Training and Higher Education. In addition to the subsystems, the education system was structured into four levels: primary, secondary, middle and higher. The General Education subsystem constitutes the central axis of the NES and provides comprehensive and polytechnic training to Mozambican citizens. It serves children and young people from six to nine years of age. In it, the student develops intellectual, physical, cultural and manual skills. One of its objectives is “[...] to detect and encourage special skills, capacities and abilities, namely intellectual, technical, artistic, sports, and also to provide special education for children and young people with disabilities and with difficulties in social integration” (Law nº 4, 1983, article 12).

However, and as stated by Gómez (1999), the realization of this objective was limited, because the State did not take into account the socio-economic difficulties, such as the capacity of the school network and the socialization of the countryside, which the country was going through at the time.

Therefore, overall, although the National Education System reflects the Mozambican reality, it had influences from the socialist system, since, both in its conception and in its introduction, German, Russian and Cuban technicians were involved in the elaboration of the didactic material. On the other hand, the system also continued to be linked to the colonial tradition, not only through the use of Portuguese teaching materials but also through the teaching method, since the teachers, for the most part, came from the colonial tradition and were conservative. Another aspect that we found was the impermeability of teaching and the focus on memorization. The curriculum methodology of this system prioritized communication and memorization over writing, reading and comprehension.



## FINAL REMARKS

The interpretation of the data leads us to point out a set of colonizing practices of discrimination, marginalization and imposition of a language, as well as the creation of a gap between indigenous populations and the children of the colonizers. These social classes were destined for differentiated educational regimes that penalized the natives, as they aimed at reproducing and perpetuating the system of colonial domination, especially through its orientation towards the production of labour. We also note that some of these marks of the past remained in the Post-Independence Era as a legacy of a certain educational culture with which the Mozambican people struggle to achieve their goals.

From the above, we conclude that education in Mozambique only began to be truly debated in the 1930s, with the presence of the Portuguese. This does not mean that, during the Berlin Conference (1884/85), the interest in educating Africans was not an object of concern. There were colonial interests of all kinds. However, despite the enormous effort to break with the past, some political choices undertaken after independence represented the continuity of colonial educational policies, albeit based on different ideological assumptions. In both periods, the aim was to achieve an alleged national uniformity, understood as the guarantee of social integration and harmony. In the colonial period, this standardization implied the nationalization of the native, that is, the effort to make them Portuguese at all costs and annihilate their indigenous languages and culture, as well as making them belong to another social class, in conformity with all the colonial prejudices that were exposed. In the Post-Independence period, uniformity was seen as a necessary condition for the constitution of the Nation-State.

We believe that the specificities of each historical period addressed may serve as references for future works in the history and historiography of the education of indigenous populations in Mozambique, highlighting the importance of this exercise of reflection for the training of education professionals.

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