

NOTE:

This case study has been used to inform Chapter 5 of the book,  
*Strategies for Sustainable Open and Distance Learning*  
([www.col.org/worldreview/volume6.htm](http://www.col.org/worldreview/volume6.htm))  
The case study has not been subjected to an editorial process.  
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**Case Study: Distribution of materials in the IAP in service teacher training distance education course (7 + 3) in Mozambique**  
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**INTRODUCTION**

This paper aims to contribute to chapter 5, which is about sustainable systems through sharing Mozambican experience and IAP in particular. It will try to answer a set of questions that would help new ODL managers to have sustainable systems.

How could IAP with scant resources set up a reliable system that met students' individual needs throughout the country? To what extent this system was sustainable from the initial plan to up to date implementation process?

What went wrong?

What solutions were adopted?

Does the material distribution system reach students on time?

Did we choose the best process to distribute materials to students?

What needs our distribution system should meet?

**Context of distance education in Mozambique**

In Mozambique, the government has defined education as the starting point for poverty reduction, which is its major issue nowadays in the country. Although there are more people attending school and fortunately, illiteracy has dropped to nearly 47% (2000) against 93% at independence in 1995 (Fitzpatrick, 2000), the quality of education has decreased due to a lack of skilled educational staff and primary classroom teachers in particular.

For instance, the overall quality of teaching is very poor and one of the factors contributing to this weakness is the ratio of pupils to teacher, which is 61: 1 almost all over the country although it is even higher in some provinces (81:1). The table below shows the percentage of students' repetition dropout rates and passes and failure rates in primary schools in 1994, which reflect the extent of the failure of the schooling system in Mozambique:

**Rates on Mozambique Schooling Process (%)**

Repetition		Dropout		Pass		Failure	
EP1	EP2	EP1	EP2	EP1	EP2	EP1	EP2
25.2	30.5	11.5	9.1	55.8	42.8	32.6	47.9

Source: Adapted from (IAP, 1996)

EP1- *Ensino primário do primeiro grau* - lower primary school

EP2- *Ensino primário do segundo grau* - upper primary school

As mentioned previously, at all schooling levels, teachers are not adequately qualified for the jobs they hold (MINED, 1997). Approximately a quarter of all EP1 teachers (lower primary

school) have no qualification at all, to be a teacher, and the majority has had only six years of schooling and one year of professional training (6 + 1).

**Number of EP1 In-service Teachers and Teacher Training Type in Mozambique (1994)**

Total	No/Training	6 + 1	6 + 3	EHPP (4 + 4)	MP
22 544	5 484	11 588	1142	4 268	62
<b>Percentage</b>	24.3	52.4	5.1	18.9	0.3

Source: (IAP, 1996)

EHPP- *Escola de Habilitação de Professores do Posto* – College for local teachers’ training  
 MP- *Magistério Primário* - Primary teachers’ college

In this context, rather than recruiting new teachers it became more important and urgent, to provide a system that is sustainable for training existing teachers. Thus, distance education appears to be the most currently used methodology with this purpose.

The government policy options with view to solve the burden of teacher shortage are reflected in the main strategies to achieve universal access to primary education, which is in agreement with governmental provision of opportunities for in-service training of teachers. In this regard, in 1992, the government introduced a variety of new modalities including that of distance education staff development programs (Low nr. 6/92 act 28).

**The distance education provision**

Mozambique’s commitment for creating a sustainable system to allow teachers’ professional development is reflected in the creation of the Institute for Teacher Training (*Instituto de Aperfeiçoamento de Professores - IAP*). It is a single mode distance education provider and is one of the Ministry’s national directorates responsible for organization and administration of teachers’ professional development using mainly distance education methodologies.

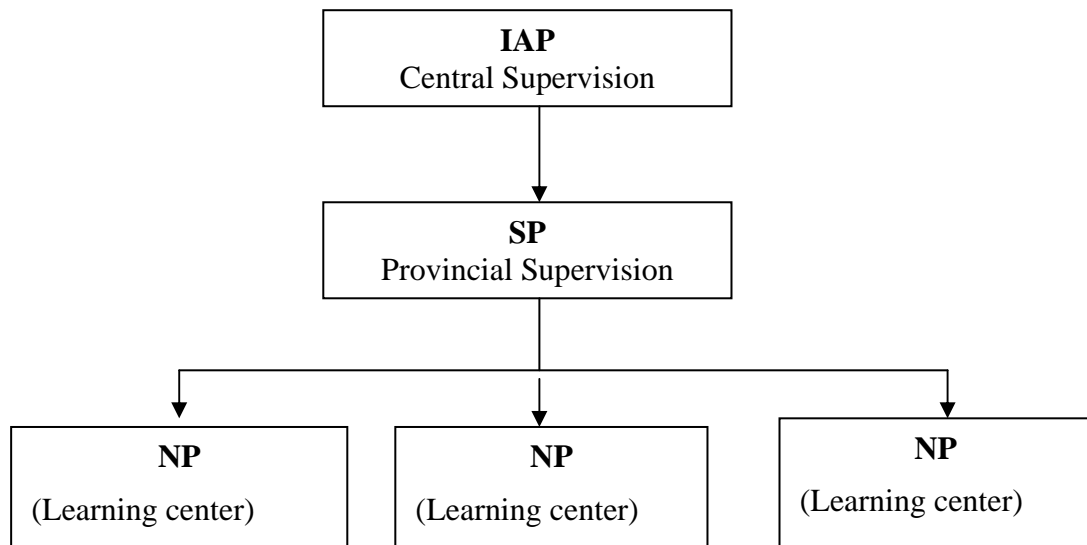
IAP activities through 7+3 course ought to target all group “E”, now called “N4” teachers, in the first place. These are in-service EP1 teachers (lower primary school) who were recruited immediately in the post-independence period to fill places caused by the drain of skilled people in education and classroom teachers in particular.

The 7+3 distance education course for in-service EP1 teachers comprises 62% of professional subjects (pedagogy) while 38% is reserved for upgrading teachers’ academic content, since the primary aim is professional development. The course has fifty auto-instructional modules, which provide both professional and academic qualifications.

The course length is a minimum of two years and maximum of four years and once teachers complete successfully, they are conferred with an equivalent degree to that of a basic technical-professional level. This intends, in the years to come (2008), to be the minimum academic qualification for teachers in primary schools.

Since the course was launched in 1996 it has attended nearly 61% of initial target of 15.000 identified teachers with academic qualifications equivalent to grade 7. Therefore, by targeting this group the intention is that the majority of lower qualified teachers would improve professionally and classroom work and learning outcomes would also improve and ultimately reduce the shortage of qualified teachers in the country.

## Materials distribution scheme



IAP, Central Supervision (*Supervisão Central*) regulates and coordinates the course at national level. It is the unit responsible for production, storage and distribution of materials countrywide.

Routine based procedures have been established in order to assure that IAP will supply to all provinces with course modules and other complementary materials. Reproduction and assembling of materials, is being allocated to graphic sector. It is in charge of print out of modules and their respective assessments and marking schemes (*pós-avaliação* and *chave de correção*). Then the materials are sent to the store, where a form called *Nota de Material* is filled in to report the quantity of materials received.

IAP Pedagogical department issues the provincial request for course materials filling in a form, which is submitted to the store. Then the store proceeds according to the order by filling in again a new form, which reports the withdrawal of materials. The logistic sector then, responsible for the storage of all materials, provides transport mean, which can be a plane, ship or truck depending on the Ministry availability.

Once more the pedagogical department of IAP is informed of such availability by submitting a special form containing material specifications such as quantity, date of departure, destination and transporting agent. Finally, the department communicates the provinces via fax mail about materials sent.

Provincial Supervision (*Supervisão Provincial*) is the distance education course unit at the provincial level of coordination. It is also responsible for expanding the course within its action area. It makes link between IAP and NPs, were distance education takes place. Within the material distribution system, the task of provincial supervisions is to provide NPs with all course materials. The provincial supervisors would arrange transport to deliver materials to each learning center.

NP (*Núcleo Pedagógico*) the learning center is the smallest unit where the course is run. It is a classroom working as a learning center under a responsibility of a tutor. A tutor provides teachers with the learning materials; that is to say, teachers have to go to the NP to collect a maximum of 3 modules and other course complementary materials.

A part from the above mentioned procedures used in the IAP to distribute materials to teachers undertaking the distance education course, there is a courier express service. In this regard IAP has celebrated an agreement with EMS (Express Mail Service) with endorsement of the Ministry of Education. This package is mainly used to exchange course information at the various levels of coordination. For instance, the express mail services may be used to exchange expedient and other course related documentation such as, data from students' registration, progression and amendments as well as data of tutors.

### **Problems faced during implementation process**

The system designed for material distribution has shown excessive centralization, which led, in many cases, to teachers' studies disruption. In fact, sometimes a request from a province had to wait for other provinces' request in order to make up a reasonable quantity of materials to be shipped or delivery via air or surface and this caused huge delays on the process.

Furthermore, whenever we sent wrong materials it became even worse to have the right ones in place and on time. If expected materials fail to arrive on time, the entire process will start again after the provinces or the NPs report back the detected problem.

I personally remember the time when almost all provinces complained for having received learning materials of methodological subjects, instead of academic subject first, which definitely contradicts with the course regulations and procedures. Due to this mistake the teachers had to wait 3 to 4 months to see their needs satisfied i.e., to collect the right modules.

Another episode happened when a province received a box of assessments, requested by one province, instead of a box of modules of Geography subject. This is more likely to happen when different provinces request different materials at the same time, so that materials are wrongly assembled and sent.

As a result, IAP had to reproduce enormous quantities of materials, which were not necessary, since it would be long to wait for the provinces to return back wrong materials sent and delivery them to a right place. Sometimes the institution run out of ream attempting to replace what was requested by the provinces and by doing so, other relevant learning materials were simply left aside.

Therefore, the centralized material distribution system was indeed not workable according to the course demands throughout the country. The deficient scheme for distributing learning materials had negatively affected other subsystems of the course. Apart from delayed reception of learning materials from teachers we experienced a number of problems such as: difficulties on reproduction of modules and assessments to feed the system, high costs from sending small quantities of materials, weakness on keeping on truck teachers need, deferred teachers' progression, poor tutor support, delays in issuing diplomas and deficient course monitoring.

### **Lessons learnt**

With a centralized system we found it too difficult to reach our students' needs on time. Because of this, IAP has decentralized the reproduction of learning materials to provincial supervisions. They were technically empowered through provision of equipment to allow efficient and massive reproduction.

One implication of decentralizing the system to provincial level of course implementation allowed a new working culture, a shift from dependency from central solutions to more local suitable decisions. People involved could experience a more sense of program ownership, thus increased motivation and allowed to more creative environment for local solutions. For

instance, tutors permitted teachers to borrow materials from colleagues, i.e. those who have studied a module could pass on to another teacher recently enrolled.

Although having resolved the problem with this alternative, endorsing reproduction to a lower level of implementation, the dependency of provinces to IAP continued partially. Very often the provinces could produce a large number of modules with no covers. Because such covers were only to be produced by IAP to ensure quality, and once IAP did not have enough working conditions to produce equal number of covers, the provinces could not be able to supply learning materials to NPs.

### **Conclusion**

With the expansion of the NPs network, increase of the number of enrolments, which required an increase in a number of tutors and supervisors, there was a need on the adjustment of the whole system designed for the pilot phase in regard to: reproduction, assembling, storage and distribution of modules. In addition, logistical organization had new structure and procedures for distribution and control of all course materials. Even this system appears to be subject for new change given that the dynamics involved on delivering materials to students in the NPs are too complex.

From the above findings it became clear indeed that any response to constraints or limitations, in ODL at any time requires a continuous process implementation monitoring to secure sustainability of systems.