Understanding High Dropout Rates in Primary School Education in Mozambique

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Abstract

Mozambique remains one of the poorest countries in the world and has one of the least functional basic education systems. Despite a rapid expansion in access to basic education, the vast majority of pupils fail to complete a full seven year cycle of primary school. This research aims to better understand the characteristics, causes and consequences of children dropping out of primary school among low income families in rural areas. The research is based upon a qualitative fieldwork study in Ribáué, a rural district in the northern province of Nampula.

Theoretically orientated by the Capabilities Approach, giving a holistic conception of education and development, this research will analyse the findings using the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (SRL) framework. Such a model enables the analysis to incorporate a diverse range of household, societal and exogenous aspects to give a rich interpretation of the situation.

Given education’s prominence in many development discourses, particularly in relation to the Millennium Development Goals and the forthcoming post-2015 agenda, this research aims to contribute a deeper understanding of the role of education in such situations, what factors influence the dropout phenomenon, and the consequences of children failing to finish primary school.

The results indicate that dropouts are characterised by situations of extreme income poverty interacting with exogenous factors which create vulnerable livelihoods and where the quality of education is considered low. The causes of dropouts generally relate to families’ lack of resilience to cope with socio-economic shocks and the paucity of post-school opportunities. The consequences are severe for the individuals, their families and Mozambique, resulting in limited capacity to create sustainable livelihoods. There is also a likely transgenerational effect, with future generations afflicted by persistent vulnerability due to a lack of capabilities and opportunities from not completing school.

Keywords:
Mozambique, primary school, dropouts, sustainable livelihoods, resilience
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>AEA</td>
<td>Alfabetização e Educação de Adultos – Adult Education</td>
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<td>ADE</td>
<td>Apoio Directo as Escolas – Direct Funds for Schools</td>
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<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<td>BE</td>
<td>Educação Bilingüe – Bilingual Education</td>
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<td>CLUSA</td>
<td>Cooperative League of the United States of America</td>
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<td>CREATE</td>
<td>Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education For All</td>
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<td>EPC</td>
<td>Escola Primária Completa – Complete Primary School</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>FDD</td>
<td>Fundo de Desenvolvimento Distrital – District Development Fund</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GER</td>
<td>Gross Enrolment Rate</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<td>IDEA</td>
<td>The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance</td>
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<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>INE</td>
<td>Instituto Nacional de Estatística – National Institute of Statistics</td>
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<td>LIC</td>
<td>Low Income Country</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>MINED</td>
<td>Government of Mozambique Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>NER</td>
<td>Net Enrolment Rate</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NDV</td>
<td>Newcastle Disease</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROSC</td>
<td>Forum da Sociedade Civil Para os Direitos da Criança</td>
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<tr>
<td>SACMEQ</td>
<td>The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality</td>
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<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
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<td>SCIP</td>
<td>Strengthening Communities through Integrated Programming</td>
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<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
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<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Agency</td>
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Definitions

Agency
The freedom to make use of one’s functionings through freedom of choice

Bairro
A small village

Field
The situation within which one lives

Frelimo
Political party

Ganho-ganho
Ad-hoc day labour work

Habitus
The totality of the capitals which one possesses and can use

Machamba
Field used for agriculture

Makua
The local language and cultural identity of most people in Nampula Province

Meticais
Unit of currency in Mozambique

Renamo
Political party

$1 = 32 meticais
£1 = 51 meticais
€1 = 42 meticais
Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Framework (DfID 1999)  Page 8
1. Introduction

Primary education is hailed as both a fundamental human right and a dynamic driver of human and economic development. In the last four decades, much progress has been made in Mozambique to increase access to primary school education, especially in the post-conflict years. From 1992 to 2005, the number of pupils in the primary school system tripled, from approximately 1.3 million to over 3.8 million (UNICEF 2006, 18). Yet only a small fraction of children complete the full phase of basic education, with nearly 70% of pupils dropping out of school before completing 7th grade (UNESCO 2011). The instance of dropout is even higher in the poorest, rural communities at 80-90% (Hunt 2008, 2) (Paulo, Rosário and Tvedten 2006, 4, 41). This research will therefore focus on the factors contributing to the high dropout rate in primary school education (grades 1-7) from the perspective of low income, rural households.

1.1 Research Context

Mozambique is a very young country. After centuries of Portuguese colonial rule, the country became independent in 1975 following a decade-long armed struggle. However, soon after liberation, Mozambique became embroiled in a brutal civil war, primarily between Frelimo and Renamo. Each side was heavily influenced and supported as proxies of regional and global hegemonic power struggles, with the people and places of Mozambique paying the price. The education system in particular was badly affected by the war, with 45% of all school infrastructure destroyed (UNESCO 2004). Following the peace accord in 1992, the war officially ended, and multi-party democratic national elections have been held on four occasions since.

The experience of education before independence for most Mozambicans was one of brutality, segregation and degradation, permitted to attend only ‘indigenous’ schools, while the children of colonisers attended ‘official’ schools. The indigenous schools had just four grades and were sparsely spread across the country (Sheldon 2008). As a result, at independence in 1975, Mozambique had the highest illiteracy rate in the world at 93%1. A very limited historical experience of schooling remains among elder generations (UNESCO 2000b). The education system is still in the midst of a long process of recovery, expansion and improvement (Newman, Raupp and Revés 2013, 1).

Mozambique remains one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 185th of 187 countries on the Human Development Index (UNDP 2009). When using the UNESCO poverty measure of income below $2 per day, the poverty rate is a staggering 81.8% (UNESCO 2011). Mozambique is the lowest ranked country in the world concerning mean years of schooling at just 1.2 years, compared to the average of the Least Developed Countries of 3.7 years (UNDP 2009), with 39.6% of children out of school (UNICEF 2013, 37). Child labour remains a prevalent issue, with at least 22% of children believed to be undertaking full-time work (UNICEF 2012).

Despite a significant policy move in 2004, which included a rapid expansion of the number of primary schools, an update of all curricula, modernisation of teacher training courses and the abolition of official primary school tuition fees (Fox, Santibanez, et al. 2012, 5-6), completion rates in primary education have changed little. This is

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1 Which included many literate Portuguese who later left
especially true for the poorest quintile of households of rural populations (Bruneforth 2006) (Hunt 2008, 2) (UNESCO 2011b, 22-23). Additionally, school attendance in such families is just 45%, while children from the wealthiest quintile of urban families achieve double that rate (UIS 2013, 41).

With the deadlines for meeting the Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goal 2 (MDG2) targets for achieving universal access to education approaching in 2015, this research is timely with regard to better understanding the processes which lead to dropouts. Moreover, a literature review of primary school dropouts in Low Income Countries (LICs) identified a critical paucity of qualitative studies, and only one study that directly concerned Mozambique (Hunt 2008). Therefore, there exists a significant research gap, which this study aims to narrow.

The research is based upon a field study in Ribâué, a rural district in the northern province of Nampula, Mozambique. Ribâué is highly characteristic of districts experiencing persistently high dropout rates from primary education, populated largely by poor households dependent upon subsistence agriculture. Only 14% of the population of Ribâué aged over 5 have completed primary school, and the illiteracy rate stands at 55%, jumping to 71% for females (INE 2012). The schooling system in Nampula is statistically one of most dysfunctional in the whole country. Dropout rates in the province rose significantly between 2007 and 2011 (MINED 2012, 58). Pupil-teacher ratios in grades 1-5 increased between 2002-2010, from 70:1 to 79:1 (INE 2012). Pupil performance in mathematics and literacy deteriorated between 2000-2007, with Nampula recording the biggest drop in attainment of all the provinces (SACMEQ 2011).

1.2 Research Problem

Children failing to complete the full cycle of basic education becomes problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is a child’s basic human right to attend the full programme of primary school. Therefore if children cannot complete primary school, the government has failed in its duty to ensure their basic rights have been met.

Secondly, education is said to generate a range of direct and indirect individual and societal benefits. School is the main institution used to disseminate important information to children and increasingly to families, particularly regarding sexual health, sanitation, cultural activities and nutritional information (Hainsworth and Zilhão 2009). The FAO (1996) have argued that education is critical for enabling vulnerable families to achieve food security. Thus if children do not complete primary school, such benefits from education are not realised.

Thirdly, the high dropout rate of pupils in primary education is a significant source of inefficiency and resource-drain in the education system (World Bank/UNICEF 2009, 211). The investments made on children who fail to complete primary school do not then reap the expected returns on investment for the country’s development. Aid for basic education globally has rapidly declined in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis (Mahshi 2011), and in particular in Mozambique from $100.3m in 2009 to $52.6m in 2011 (World Bank 2012). Making efficient use of the remaining limited resources is thus increasingly imperative.

2 The study was, Annababette Wils (2004). I have also identified Mikael Palme’s (1998) work. As both use 1997 data, there exists a need for a more contemporary analysis.

3 Grade 2 = 7% (Δ1%); Grade 5 = 17% (Δ5%); Grade 7 = 15% (Δ6%)
Hence, focusing on retaining children within the education system is crucial to realising the potential benefits from primary schooling. The Ministry of Education place this at the forefront of the current sector plan (MINED 2012, 5). As Ananga has argued, the problem for many developing countries has now shifted from getting children into school, to keeping them in school:

“It is only when we address the problem of school dropout alongside enrolments, can the broader goals of education for all be reached.” (Ananga 2011, 380)

While several studies have highlighted the myriad reasons for children not enrolling in education at all in Mozambique (Handa 2002) (Lewin 2009) (Roby, Lambert and Lambert 2008) (World Bank/UNICEF 2009) (Klees, et al. 1997), there is comparatively little research as to the reasons why pupils drop out of school in Mozambique.

1.3 Research Purpose

This research aims to understand the process of the dropout phenomenon and how decisions to withdraw from education are made, by exploring the range of factors which impact upon such outcomes. This will include analysing the household-level livelihoods of the citizens of Ribáué, the structural arrangements within which they operate, including the school system, the broader contextual factors which impact upon their lives, directly and indirectly, and the strategies families adopt to lead fulfilling and sustainable lives.

1.4 Research Questions

From the literature review of dropouts in Chapter 6, it is apparent that household finances are widely regarded as a determining factor in the likelihood of children dropping out of primary school. This research will seek to understand why household income plays such a decisive role in dropouts, what factors create and maintain a situation of poverty for rural households, and what impact other non-family factors have on dropouts. Lofland (1971) suggests the study of a social phenomenon generates three major questions: what are the characteristics, the causes and the consequences of the phenomenon? Such an approach guides the formulation of the following research questions:

- How do people describe the characteristics of dropping out of primary school?
- What factors influence children dropping out of primary school?
- What are the implications of dropping out of primary school for the individuals, families and the wider society?

1.5 Analytical Framework

The data will be analysed using the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (SRL) framework. SRL establishes that livelihoods outcomes are determined by a number of linkages between policies, assets and context. This is elaborated through the following sections: a vulnerability context; one’s capital assets, understood as comprising of human, natural, physical, financial and social aspects; a range of transforming structures and processes; and the strategies people employ to create sustainable, resilient lives as best they can.
The SRL framework helps to understand the complexities of poverty, placing the various facets of rural life at the forefront of the research (IFAD 1999). SRL in particular is a useful analytical tool to explore the components of the dropout process in this context, as it allows one to consider the interdependent factors which affect the lives, considerations and decisions of poor rural people (Carney 2002, 21).

1.6 Methodology

The research will be a qualitative study, inspired by ethnographic methodological approaches. This approach will help to detail the characteristics, causes and consequences of dropouts, as told by the people of Ribáué. I will use a range of research methods which are commonly applied in qualitative studies, including semi-structured interviews, guided group conversations, and participatory observational techniques, which inform the contextual aspects fundamental to ethnographic approaches and the SRL model.

1.7 Limitations

A limitation of the study may be the ‘language barrier’ between myself as a researcher and the participants. I speak only English, while the majority of the interviewees spoke only Makua (the most widely spoken local language) and/or Portuguese (the official national language). While interpreters were used, the translation process may not have resulted in an exact representation of what participants wished to say, or may have led to misrepresentation of the questions. Time restrictions may stifle my ability to conduct thorough ethnographic research, which usually requires around 1 year to undertake; yet I conducted field research for 5 weeks, 22 days of which were spent in Ribáué. This also limited the range of people I will be able to interview.

1.8 Ethical Considerations

A core ethical consideration was obtaining consent for children to be interviewed. Questions must be posed in a way which is not offensive – for example asking someone to talk about their situation of poverty may be extremely upsetting or even insulting. Participants were asked if they wish to be anonymised or named. Furthermore, the issue of participants’ limited and valuable time was considered at all occasions.

1.9 Thesis Disposition

The subsequent work will be presented in the following way. Chapter 2 will provide a critical consideration of the three main ideological approaches to education; Chapter 3 will explain the use of the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods analytical framework; Chapter 4 will outline the methodological approach to the study, including research methods; Chapter 5 presents a review of the existing literature on the issue of primary school dropouts; Chapter 6 presents the main findings from the fieldwork, categorised into several emergent themes; Chapter 7 will analyse such findings using the SRL framework to answer the three research questions; Chapter 8 presents a discussion of the wider implications of the research results; and finally Chapter 9 presents the conclusions of the study, along with several key recommendations for action to prevent dropouts.
2. Theoretical Approach

There are three main ideological perspectives of the role of education (Robeyns 2006). These are the human capital/endogenous growth theory, the human rights-based approach, and the more recent capabilities approach. These will be critiqued in relation to the role of education in Mozambique.

2.1 Endogenous Growth Approach

Endogenous growth theory links education to economic growth (Schultz 1961) (Cohen and Soto 2007) (Todaro and Smith 2011, 377-386) (Zagler 2012). It is largely concerned with increasing productivity, seeing humans as innately a resource to be used for collective growth, paying little attention to their wellbeing (Robeyns 2006, 71-4). This is the central focus of giving priority to education sector development by influential international organisations such as the IMF (Mingat and Winter 2002) (IMF 2014) and the World Bank (World Bank 2006).

Mozambique has achieved sustained high economic growth, in which GDP has outperformed the Sub-Saharan African GDP average every year since 2001, averaging 7.2% (World Bank 2014). Yet given that over this period such a small percentage of pupils completed basic education, let alone secondary and tertiary education, it would appear that the causality direction at the heart of the human capital debate does not hold true; Mozambique has attained these levels of sustained growth in spite of the dearth of widespread human capital development.

However, this has not been achieved through equality in economic growth. The African Development Bank Group highlights the plight of the majority of the population regarding decent, formal employment:

“High economic growth rates have largely been driven by capital-intensive projects, particularly in extractive industries...As a result, many of the new entrants into the labour market are forced into marginal jobs in the informal economy, both in rural and urban areas, with little prospect of reliable employment.” (AfDB 2012, 2)

In this context, the short and medium term economic gains from basic education would appear to be severely stunted, questioning the cogency of the endogenous growth ideology in Mozambique.

2.2 Rights-Based Approach

Attending primary education is also considered a human right. Adopted as part of the UN Declaration on Human Rights (United Nations 1948) and reaffirmed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNOHCHR 1989), primary education is deemed to be something beyond simply a mechanism towards improved human capital, but an intrinsic part of human life (Visser and Berg 1999, 2). It is largely upon this basis, in conjunction with the endogenous growth theory, that the EFA and MDG2 targets were established, placing the right to basic education at the forefront of policymaking at the turn of the millennium (UNESCO 2000).

One of the central criticisms of a predominantly rights-based approach is that it is often blind to the type, quality and relevance of the education available; success in ‘meeting’ the right is judged largely on quantitative indicators of access (Lewin 2011). As a result of this narrow conception, Dyer (2013, 221-4) argues the poor
quality of schooling actually perpetuates poverty and does little to assure the true meaning of the right to education.

A rights-based approach therefore falls short of addressing the human and economic development needs of Mozambique in both achieving its primary goal of poverty eradication, and in achieving the core principles of the right to education as a means of enabling one’s ‘full development’. It may be seen as somewhat naïve to expect that meeting the right of access necessarily results in one’s full development, especially in Mozambique where an extremely limited, underfunded and badly damaged education system continues to exist.

2.3 Capabilities Approach

Alternatively, from the perspective of ‘development as freedom’, Sen espouses a notion strongly linking basic education to increased capabilities and as a catalyst for ‘freedoms’ (Sen 1999, 5). Rather than focusing on the more narrow targets of the human capital and rights based approaches, the Capabilities Approach takes a more holistic stance, seeking to address:

“The opportunities which enable us to choose and to live in ways we find meaningful, productive and rewarding individually and collectively for the good of society. Capabilities are the potential to achieve functionings – to be knowledgeable, to use one's knowledge in worthwhile ways.” (Walker 2012, 388)

At the heart of the Capabilities Approach is the idea of ‘social justice’. Such social justice, according to the two main proponents of the theory, Sen and Nussbaum, can be understood in terms of ‘freedoms’; that people have the freedoms to develop and use their capabilities in an open society in which they have ‘a meaningful world of choice’ (Nussbaum 2007, 15) (Sen 1995) (Sen 1999). Freedoms become the yardstick of development, beyond the rather shallow measurements of per-capita income levels and GDP, which tell us little about the actual livelihoods and wellbeing of populations (Allen 2012, 425) (Sen 1999). This creates a paradigm change in the gauge of conceptualising ‘development’.

A person is said to benefit from education in reading, communicating, arguing, acting autonomously in a more informed way, and by learning values in exercising capabilities (Saito 2003, 24-9) (Sen 1995b, 264). Education here is an enabling process, which helps develop functionings; which in turn allows one to exert greater freedom in the agency of utilising these capabilities (Fertig 2013, 5).

2.4 Justification of Chosen Approach

The Capabilities Approach provides an alternative and more comprehensive understanding of the value of primary education in situations where direct economic returns are limited by other structural contexts (Cameron 2012), conceiving a larger scope of possible benefits than the rights-based and human capital-based approaches (Walker 2012, 389).

Nevertheless, the Capabilities Approach is not entirely a departure from the human capital model; it simply sees human capital as one aspect, rather than the aspect, necessary to empower one to achieve a good life, and
collectively create a developed society (Walker 2012) (Sen 1999, 292-7). Similarly, the approach does not negate the value and role of human rights claims to education. Sen argues that,

“Basic civil rights and political freedoms are indispensable for the emergence of social justice...these rights can be seen as being constitutive of the process of development.” (Sen 1999, 287-8)

Given this broader, more holistic approach to understanding development, education can therefore be understood to be at the very core of Mozambique’s development in the coming years.
3. Analytical Framework

Here I will outline the features and process of using the SRL framework (Figure 1), before identifying how the Capabilities Approach interacts with this analytical method.

![Figure 1. Sustainable livelihoods framework](image)

(DfID 1999)

The SRL model takes a holistic approach to understanding poverty, with poor peoples’ perceptions at its core (Krantz 2001, 1). SRL establishes that livelihood outcomes are determined by a number of linkages between assets and context – the *habitus* and *field* (Mazibuko 2013, 174). For a progressive, resilient livelihood strategy, one is said to need security, capability, equity, and sustainability (*ibid*, 176-7). Livelihood strategies are thus dynamic operations which are adapted to current and long-term situations. Diana Carney (2002, 22) asserts that when people make decisions, they do so within social and cultural contexts and constraints. It is the analysis of such contexts and constraints in the SRL model which will help to answer the three research questions.

3.1 Vulnerability Context

The Vulnerability Context comprises the most intangible livelihood factors: ‘shocks’, ‘trends’, ‘seasonality’ and ‘market’ issues, over which individuals have very little, if any, direct means to influence. It is characterised by “change and uncertainty” (Chambers and Conway 1992, 1). This context constrains one’s *agency* to make effective use of one’s *functionings* and *capabilities* to create sustainable, resilient livelihoods (DfID 1999, 12). This means that even when the context trends move in a positive direction, vulnerable people are often unable to fully benefit from the change (*ibid*). This in itself can create a new ‘trend’ of vulnerability, generating a stronger delineation between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ in society. Additionally, Dackson and Binns (2010) contend that culture cannot be ignored in the formulation of one’s livelihood context. Given the importance of traditional cultural aspects in Ribáué, this will be included as a factor in the analysis.
3.2 Capital Assets

The SRL model recognises that ‘Capital Assets’, namely Physical, Human, Social, Natural, and Financial, are not merely factors in a vacuum, but are themselves dependent on other circumstances – the Vulnerability Context and Transforming Structures and Processes, plus one’s capabilities – in order to be successfully utilized (Mazibuko 2013, 173). Furthermore, these assets are deeply interdependent, mutually reinforcing each other in multifaceted ways, both positively and negatively (DfID 1999, 15). The SRL model advocates that greater accumulation of these assets is necessary (although not entirely sufficient) for households and communities to transcend the poverty-trap to lead sustainable, resilient and fulfilling lives. But the abilities to both accumulate these assets and make effective use of them through a livelihood strategy are inherently contingent upon the existing vulnerability context and nature of the structures and processes.

3.3 Transforming Structures and Processes

The Transforming Structures and Processes are the key instruments of social justice, development and change. They determine access to various types of capital, to livelihood strategies and to decision-making bodies and sources of influence; and returns (economic and otherwise) to any given livelihood strategy (ibid, 27). The SRL model demonstrates a two-way relationship of influence and access between one’s Capital Assets and the Transforming Processes and Structures. It is this juncture where the Capabilities Approach can be most readily observed to interact with the SRL framework. Allen asserts that,

"In the context of education, autonomy can be linked to the capacity of educational institutions to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to take advantage of an existing range of social opportunities. Agency, on the other hand, can be linked to education’s role in arming individuals with a critical perspective on social structures and norms." (Allen 2012, 426)

This intersection between the theoretical and analytical frameworks forms the crux of the analytical process. Stating the centrality of education to this argument, Apple contends that,

"Educational institutions provide one of the major mechanisms through which power is maintained and challenged...A truly critical study of education [must deal with] education’s relationship to economic, political, and cultural power." (Apple 2004, vii)

As this report largely concerns people with extremely limited assets, there may be little ability for them to have sufficient influence on these structures and processes to improve their livelihoods. Furthermore, the education system is seen as a primary structure of developing capabilities, but the education system in Nampula has been shown to be considerably dysfunctional. Allen reflects upon this juxtaposition, noting,

"We are forced to consider the extent to which an individual can play a role in shaping the development of institutional structures when individual action, if not individual consciousness itself, is contingent on these very structures for its realisation." (Allen 2012, 246)
3.4 SRL School System Analysis

Given the importance of the education system to this research, a more detailed analysis of the school system will be conducted. I find it necessary to understand the school system as also being greatly influenced by the wider vulnerability context and trends, the interaction between a school and other structures and processes, and indeed the capital assets of the schools. As UNICEF (2012) has noted, there has been little systematic analysis to identify bottlenecks and explain why well-intentioned policies are still not yielding robust results.

This section will draw upon the SRL framework process to achieve a thorough understanding of primary schools as transformative structures in ensuring children remain in school and receive a good quality of education.

3.5 Summary of SRL and Limitations

The SRL framework helps to understand the complexities of poverty and sees people as the main concern, placing their perceptions and the various facets of rural life at the forefront of the research (IFAD 1999). SRL in particular is a useful analytical tool to explore the contributing components of the dropout process in this context, as it allows one to consider the interdependent factors which affect the lives, considerations and decisions of poor rural people (Carney 2002, 21).

Nonetheless, SRL has limitations. It is based around a particular concept of rural livelihoods which may or may not reflect the situation in Ribáué. Each of the various aspects may be composed of several ‘layers’ or ‘areas’ which are not specifically stratified; possibly leading to issues being incorrectly analysed.

But, for the reasons outlined above, it is felt that the SRL framework provides the most comprehensive and relevant range of analytical components to understand the dropout phenomenon in this context. Its ability to capture both the micro-level household situation and future-orientated livelihood strategies in a structural relationship with meso- and macro-level organisations, social structures and processes, all held within the milieu of more intangible factors creating a certain context, can help to bring about a much deeper and wide-ranging understanding of the dropout issue. This should produce clear evidence related to the three research questions pertaining to the characteristics, causes and consequences of children dropping out from school.
4. Methodology

Crotty (1998, 3) suggests that well-designed qualitative research should consist of four overarching elements which act in congruence to guide and foster high quality studies: a theoretical or ontological stance, epistemology, methodology or broad research strategy, and the specific methods and techniques used to gather and analyse data. This chapter is therefore structured along these lines, with each element critically elaborated below.

4.1 Ontological and epistemological stance

Ontologically, this research takes into consideration the perspective espoused by Bourdieu, who presents an understanding of one’s experiences with regard to the dynamic structuralism of the interaction between one’s habitus and fields to comprehend the influence of context on one’s actions (Genfell and James 1998, 24) which closely reflects the concepts of the SRL framework; as well as a conceptualisation of ‘forms of capital’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013, 296-300), which will be elaborated using the SRL approach.

The research will be conducted from the epistemological viewpoint of critical realism. While the concept is not homogenous, a central aspect of most understandings is that it can help one to explain social phenomena by revealing the causal mechanisms which produce them, rather than studying the empirical existence of the phenomenon, as is done by positivists (Danermark 2001, 1-2). The purpose of critical realism research is therefore not to seek ‘absolute truths’, but explanations about issues in a particular field. Tikly suggests that the Capabilities Approach permits the formulation of knowledge in relation to the field of study, which can be used to support or challenge wider assumptions:

"A focus on capabilities can also assist in helping us think through what it might mean to be educated in the global era and how this relates to notions of ‘development’. It redefines a quality education as one that develops whatever capabilities society and individuals have reason to value." (Tikly 2011, 12)

4.2 Research type

The research took the form of a 5 week field study within the district of Ribáué. Mikkelsen defines field studies as systematic investigations of social situations and social change, used to generate an enhanced understanding of a situation from the interaction of one’s habitus and field (Mikkelsen 2005, 48-9).

This is a qualitative study with an abductive mode of inference. Abduction is a research tool which enables one to reconceptualise a phenomenon and understand the multifaceted attributes, relations and connections that are not otherwise evident, which result in its occurrence (Meyer and Lunnay 2013). A qualitative study is a means of exploring the meaning individuals ascribe to social problems (Creswell 2014, 4). UNICEF (2013, 74) highlights that further qualitative studies are needed to understand dropouts, to disaggregate the many differences obscured by national aggregates. Kanbur and Shaffer (2007, 183-4) outline the aspects of qualitative research which lend it to being particularly useful for household studies of social phenomena, including inter alia, to interpret counterintuitive or surprising findings, to explain reasons behind observed outcomes, probe...
motivations underlying observed behaviour, and facilitate analysis of locally meaningful categories of social
differentiation.

4.3 Ethnographic Methodology

The methods of data collection will be inspired by ethnographical methodology. Given the restricted time period
of research, a thorough ethnographical approach – which usually involves a sustained period of participation and
observation – cannot be upheld. Nonetheless, the study will aspire to the core perspectives of ethnography,
which understands social life as the outcome of the interaction of structure and agency through the practice of
everyday life (O’Reilly 2012, 6), echoing the ontology of Bourdieu.

Cohen et al (2007, 26, 183) advise that where pure ethnographic approaches are not taken, research should be
approached within a wider context than the microcosm of the study by ‘integrating’ data from a broad range of
sources and contexts to explore various aspects and understandings of a phenomenon. Hence the work aims to
make use of a range of secondary sources including statistical data, academic literature, government policies,
and reports from non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

4.4. Methods

Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from the target group (detailed below), focusing
particularly on their experiences and perceptions of primary education. ‘Guided group conversations’ were held,
which can often yield different considerations, subjects and responses from interviewees than in personal
discussions (O’Reilly 2012, 132). Additionally, semi-structured and group interviews with key stakeholders and
community members were used to contextualise, validate and help understand the specific issues of the target
group and more broadly. This included teachers; cultural leaders; local, district and provincial officials; NGOs;
and members of various local associations.

Furthermore, ethnography comprises a dual process of both participation and observation (ibid, 2). Thus
observational methods such as daily accounts of my experiences were used alongside the participatory interview
techniques to inform the contextual aspects fundamental to this style of research (Mikkelsen 2005, 155).

Initially, a theoretical sampling method was used to reach the target group of participants. Such an approach
selects certain people or groups due to their perceived relevance to the research topic and theory (ibid, 44). For
example, families in the most vulnerable situations, key stakeholders such as teachers, district officials, and
adolescents who have dropped out of school, were targeted. A ‘snowballing’ sampling method was further
applied to broaden the reach to the target group and key community members. This is a particularly useful
technique for researchers who are entering a new situation with limited prior knowledge (ibid, 43). However,
these methods can exclude certain people for a variety of reasons, so a number of specific interviews were pre-
arranged with the support of UCODIN and district officials.

I employ an ethnographic coding approach to identify, sort and differentiate data in the findings chapter,
organised into the key themes which stemmed from the research. The coding and categorisation of data was
constructed continuously throughout the fieldwork research to allow emerging issues to be explored in greater
depth in future interviews or when returning to a previous interviewee. This reflexive approach is described by Jodi Aronson (1994) as a “pragmatic” approach to qualitative research and a necessary step prior to analysis to fully appreciate the full picture of the data. This has been a useful approach to locate the variety of factors which influence the process of dropouts, to be analysed using the SRL framework.

4.5 Validity and Reliability

To bolster reliability, interviews with a broad range of primary stakeholders were held to obtain a breadth of opinions and experiences. Moreover, by conducting interviews with secondary and key stakeholders, one can understand issues from alternative perspectives and to corroborate findings. Furthermore, we held daily meetings to reflect upon our experiences and to discuss and compare notes, to increase validity. Primary data is also used to complement, corroborate and challenge academic literature and reports from international organisations where possible.

4.6 Concepts and Delimitations

Low-income households in Ribáué with at least one child who has attended some portion of primary school education is the target group of the research. Drawing upon CREATE’s ‘Six Zones of Exclusion’ conceptual framework of dropouts (Appendix 1), the study focuses on Zone 2, defined as, “Primary school dropout children who after initial entry have been excluded” (Lewin 2007, 21-4) i.e. those children that have been able to access school initially, but for some reason have had to leave before completing the full basic education cycle. This will be understood within the ‘Permanent Dropout’ and ‘Temporary Dropout’ categories of Ananga’s (2011, Ch.6) typologies of primary school dropouts (Appendix 2), which he defines as children who have no possibility or intention of returning to school, and children who may have the possibility and wish to return to school at some stage, respectively.

The fieldwork was delimited to the area of Ribáué in order to focus the limited time on developing as full a picture as possible of the area. Dropouts from secondary, tertiary and alternative forms of education were not explored in this study, due mainly to the emphasis placed on the value of primary education in most theories and in the EFA, MDG2 and Government of Mozambique targets. Nonetheless, considerations of the education system as a whole are important in analysing the dropout issue, so certain features of higher levels of education, such as access and cost, play an important role in this analysis.
5. Literature Review

Although there is a lack of research concerning school dropouts in Mozambique specifically, there is a wealth of academic and organisational research on the issue of dropouts in other developing countries. This chapter aims to present the contemporary debates and understandings of the phenomenon to outline the frontier of the present research discourse and to identify issues to be explored throughout the present research; while also identifying the limitations of the existing literature in understanding the characteristics, causes and consequences of dropouts in Mozambique. Hence, a research gap will be more readily defined.

An appropriate starting point for this chapter is a reflection on the comprehensive literature review on dropouts in LICs conducted by Frances Hunt (2008). Hunt notes that there is a lack of qualitative research on dropouts, and most research that does exist (both qualitative and quantitative) rarely has dropouts as the central theme. Beyond the literature reviewed by Hunt, I have identified several other studies concerning dropouts. While I will not thoroughly critique each source here, I aim to present the multiplicity of issues, conclusions and limitations collectively raised by such studies.

5.1 Poverty

Hunt’s main conclusion is that dropping out from school is a process, rather than being attributed to a single proximate event; and that while statistical data can highlight the existence of the issue, it does little to understand the underlying causes of the problem (ibid, iv, 1, 5). Hunt identifies that research broadly indicates issues including poverty, gender, household education levels, child labour, and seasonality often interact to influence a child’s possibility to remain in education (ibid, 11, 52). But little is known about why the interaction of such factors creates a greater risk of dropouts, nor why the situation in many countries is failing to improve despite efforts to alleviate poverty.

Such a conclusion is also drawn by several other studies (Abuya, Oketch and Musyoka 2013) (Ananga 2011) (Palme 1998) (Lewin 2009) (Justiniano, et al. 2005) (UNICEF 2012), which ultimately view ‘poverty’ as the key variable in dropouts, with all other issues influencing to a greater or lesser extent. It is necessary to note that the definition of poverty differs between each report, with some using simple measures of household income, while others use a more far-reaching ‘deprivations’ approach.

5.2 Opportunity Costs

Although only dealt with briefly in Hunt’s review (2008, 7-8), there is a large body of literature which suggests the ‘opportunity costs’ of attending school – as opposed to not attending and working – are a significant factor in decisions to keep a child in school or not (Aderuccio 2010) (Ananga 2011) (UNICEF 2012) (UNICEF 2013) (UNICEF 2013b) (Paulo, Rosário and Tvedten 2006) (Boyle, et al. 2002). In areas with lax regulations of child labour, particularly in areas with large informal and family-sector economies, children from poor families are often required to work to generate sufficient income and/or food for the family to survive, jeopardising their

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4 All findings not attributed to Hunt 2008 concern literature outside of that study
possibilities to attend school regularly. Abuya et al (2013) also suggest children who engage in work see less value in education, as they can generate incomes without going to school.

5.3 Household Literacy and Perceptions of Education

Hunt notes that a wide range of the literature points towards the household perceptions and values of education are instrumental in determining the likelihood of a child completing primary school. The literature suggests a range of determining factors, such as valuations and perceptions, including household education levels – particularly of the mother – and income-generating opportunities available to young people upon graduation (Hunt 2008, 18-24). The education level of the household head(s) is deemed by several other studies to be particularly indicative of the likelihood of children to initially access education, and also the likelihood of those who have initial access dropping out (Handa 2002) (Handa and Simler 2005) (Roby, Lambert and Lambert 2008) (Burchi 2004) (Justiniano, et al. 2005) (UNESCO/UNICEF 2005). The common indicator of household education is literacy skills, but other indicators such as years of schooling are also used in some studies.

In general, these studies suggest that parents (especially mothers) with higher levels of education have a greater understanding of the value and purpose of education, and are therefore more likely to adopt livelihood strategies which support their children to remain in school.

5.4 Late Enrolment

A number of quantitative studies in Hunt’s review indicated that children who enrolled later than the official enrolment age were far less likely to complete primary school than children enrolled at the correct age. (Hunt 2008, 45-6). But Hunt correctly states that such findings give no explanation as to why late enrolment appears to lead to early dropouts.

Wils (2004), Lewin (2009), CREATE (2008) and UNICEF (2013) discuss the potential impact of late enrolment on a child’s likelihood to remain in school through the whole primary education phase. They use a variety of statistical measures to draw correlations between children’s age and instances of dropout. Their general conclusion is that when children enrol after the official age, they face a range of issues which compound with other determining factors to create a potent situation which ultimately results in a permanent dropout. These issues include feeling uncomfortable learning with younger students, being ‘too old’ for the curriculum content, having additional responsibilities at home compared to younger children, and the greater opportunity cost associated with remaining in school; particularly for adolescent males (Paulo, Rosário and Tvedten 2006). Ananga and Dunne (2013) found a juxtaposition between the 'adult' lives of young people outside of school, and the 'childlike' environment within school.

5.5 Child Pregnancy and Early Marriage

The literature suggests a clear link between girls becoming pregnant and dropping out from school, with such problems occurring much more frequently in rural areas (Hunt 2008, 26-37). This is generally seen as a direct cause of dropouts, which tend to become permanent dropouts. Similarly, early marriage, which is intrinsically linked to early pregnancy, is seen to have a detrimental effect on a child’s ability to remain in school, due to a
variety of cultural values which invariably result in young girls being forced to leave education to devote themselves to their husband, to household work and to childcare (Palme 1998) (Justiniano, et al. 2005) (UNICEF 2013) (Colclough, Rose and Tembon 2000).

5.6 Gender and Geographical Disparities

This leads onto the final key findings from Hunt’s review: the disparities in dropout rates along gender and geographical lines. While Hunt does not suggest that dropouts are a wholly rural or female problem, her conclusion from the literature is that girls, particularly in rural areas, are the most ‘at risk’ of dropping out from school (ibid, 30-34). The ‘reasons’ behind such geographical disparities arising from the literature include the lack of physical infrastructure in rural areas, the higher instance of poverty in most (although certainly not all) rural areas, and the greater impact of seasonal issues in such areas. Regarding gender disparities, reasons from the literature include pregnancy, the tendency for girls to be married younger than boys, and what can broadly be termed ‘cultural’ issues. Colclough et al (2000) relate this to the male bias in gender roles in many developing countries.

5.7 Other Issues

Although other factors are briefly discussed in relation to dropouts in Hunt’s work, such as health and special educational needs (SEN), there was seen to be too little direct evidence from the literature to attribute such factors directly to the causes of dropouts (Hunt 2008, 23-6). Additionally, although quality of schooling is discussed in much of the literature, Hunt found few studies directly addressing issues of quality as a dropout factor, suggesting this may be in part due to the lack of agreed measurements of quality, given its subjective nature (ibid, 37). The wider literature reviewed for this work revealed several other issues not thoroughly covered by Hunt’s review. These are presented below:

5.8 Quality and Relevance of Education

I have identified numerous studies addressing the impact of poor quality schooling and irrelevant curriculums as important vectors in the process of dropping out of school (Aderuccio 2010) (Ananga and Dunne 2013) (Palme 1998) (Handa and Simler 2005) (UNICEF 2013) (Paulo, Rosário and Tvedten 2006) (Justiniano, et al. 2005) (Klees, et al. 1997). Quality aspects from these studies include the resources available to schools, the training levels of teachers, the attendance levels of staff, the physical infrastructure of the school, and grade attainment levels, among others; somewhat reflecting the problem of having no definitive measure of school quality. Ananga and Dunne found that where curriculums did not reflect or directly support the lives of the children, they became increasingly disinterested in school, ultimately leading to dropouts. It is important to note however that quality and relevance in these studies was seen to be only a contributory factor, rather than a direct cause of dropouts.

5.9 Health

These related to health problems affecting children such as malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, and malaria, which prevented them from attending school for certain periods, sometimes indefinitely. Other issues related to the health of other family members, with older children often asked to remain at home to care for them, or to perform the tasks the sick members would usually do, such as farming activities and household chores.

5.10 Confidence in the School System

Multiple studies claimed that household perceptions of the viability of the primary school as a transformative system had a significant impact on attendance and retention rates in primary schools (Ananga 2011) (Roby, Lambert and Lambert 2008) (ActionAid 2013) (Paulo, Rosário and Tvedten 2006) (Visser and Visser 2003). Where there was a perceived failure of school to generate the necessary conditions for graduating children to find work, or where other deficiencies in the system such as limited high school access (as noted by Lewin and Little 2011) created restricted opportunities to make use of the knowledge gained in primary school, parents apparently placed lesser value on the formal schooling institutions. Confidence was also said to be affected by teachers failing to attend, children attaining low grades, and the irrelevance of the curriculum.

This feeds directly into the issue raised by Palme (1998, 18) and Klees et al (1997, 45), that in Mozambique the school as an institution is not necessarily regarded as the most important institution for learning. They reflect that in fact many other traditional structures and household relationships are considered more important to the lives of rural people in situations where decent employment opportunities are highly restricted. This will be an important consideration when conducting the research in Ribaué, to understand the role that primary school plays for education.

5.11 Summary

The causes, characteristics and consequences of dropouts according to the literature review can be seen to derive from a situation of poverty, which is then exacerbated by a range of other issues such as health, culture, parental perceptions of education and late enrolment. It is clear that the vast majority of the literature concerning the dropout phenomenon relates to specific household issues and focuses on the indicators of dropouts, rather than the underlying structural, contextual or cultural factors which can explain the formation of such issues. I aim to use these issues to guide me in the initial stages of the research, although not limiting the research to these topics alone.
6. Findings

The findings originating from the fieldwork data can be seen to belong to seven general themes: quality, capacity, governance, motivations, culture, early pregnancy, and socio-economic conditions. These themes have emerged organically from the interviews conducted. Rather than trying to ‘fit’ the findings into pre-determined classifications, this process of ethnographic coding enables the presentation of the findings to be constructed in the closest way possible to the general diversity of issues and topics which materialised throughout the fieldwork (Charmaz 2006, 48). While not every particular finding will be presented here, the categories are intended to broadly represent the multiplicity of issues central to the understanding of the dropout phenomenon. A final section will detail relevant findings concerning Ribáué in general.

6.1 Quality

Most recent government policies have focused on ensuring universal access to primary education, in accordance with the EFA and MDG2 global targets. While quality of schooling has been part of these actions, the main thrust of government and donor policies has been quantity rather than quality (MINED 2012, 30-6). The expanded school system is now suffering in most cases from inadequate conditions for high quality schooling. Parents in all areas protested that children learned little in school and that teachers were not doing enough to ensure pupils left school fully skilled, motivated and prepared for either life outside of school or progressing to secondary school.

6.1.1 Teacher Training

Following the expansion of the school system, Mozambique created a ‘fast-track’ primary teacher training programme in 2009, where candidates are required to have completed Grade 10 plus one year of vocational training (Beutel 2011). Many teachers reported that a single year of training was insufficient to develop the necessary skills to teach effectively. School staff highlighted that the training is irrelevant for the situations they face. For example, the training focuses on Problem Based Learning techniques, and encourages teachers to attend to individual learning needs. But with schools often housing in excess of 100 pupils per classroom (in facilities built to accommodate 40 pupils), teachers claimed to have little scope to make use of these methods.

6.1.2 Curriculum Change

Problems were raised about the (post-2004) curriculum from school staff, suggesting it was too ‘Maputo-centric’ and had little to do with the lives of rural people. Both teachers and some parents, whose elder children had attended school under the previous (pre-2004) curriculum, also spoke of a shift in the values: that it no longer fostered good behaviour, and did not teach about working collectively, both of which they perceived as negative changes. Directors complained that teachers now have much less ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty’ in the classroom to adapt the curriculum to the local context.
6.1.3 School Resources

Although blackboards and chalk could be found in most classrooms, there was rarely any supplementary materials available to aid teaching and learning. Even the most basic resources such as chairs and desks were nowhere to be seen in the majority of schools. Teachers in all schools criticised the lack of materials as a central cause of the low levels of learning, stating the difficulties in trying to explain things without these resources and that they cannot not meet the learning needs or styles of the pupils.

6.1.4 Teacher Absenteeism

A common complaint from families was that teachers were frequently absent from school for extended periods. This meant children were not learning during these periods, and it did not set a good example for regular attendance of the pupils. One parent in Mechuasa argued,

“Why should my children walk two kilometres to the school each day if the teacher is not even there?”

Teachers themselves generally gave two main reasons for regular and extended absences. The first was the issue of accommodation. Many teachers complained that they did not have anywhere to live near the school, or if they did it was not of a sufficient quality, for example leaking roofs destroyed their teaching documents. The second issue was the problem of receiving their salaries. Teachers across Ribáué are still required to travel to Nampula each month to collect their salaries, as there are no banking facilities in the district.

6.1.5 Language

Although the Government has set out a vision of expanding bilingual education in grades 1-2, it gives no clear indication of how this should be achieved (MINED 2012). For now, Portuguese remains the official language to be used in all schools. The schools visited in the fieldwork however revealed that Makua is the language predominantly used for school instruction, with Portuguese mainly used in language classes only, or by teachers recruited from outside the province whom do not speak Makua. Many parents and school staff saw this as very positive, as it enabled children to learn other subjects such as mathematics, science and geography more rapidly. This meant that children in some respects attained greater value from their time in school, and it was seen as contributing positively to the quality and relevance of basic education. Nevertheless, other families, school staff and particularly other stakeholders – such as secondary schools, universities and employers – see this as a negative development as it greatly limits the literacy levels of pupils.

6.2 Capacity

6.2.1 Primary School Capacities

Over the last two decades Mozambique has substantially increased the number of primary schools. As a result, net enrolment (NER) is approaching 90% and gross enrolment (GER) has exceeded 100% (UNICEF 2013c).

5 Except for those selected to be part of the Bilingual Education (EB) pilot project
However, these successes of initial access are challenged by access at the third cycle (EP2) in grades 6-7. In Ribáué, there are just 31 EPC schools, compared to 90 EP1 schools.

Moreover, there is a great challenge of capacity within schools, most are overcrowded and oversubscribed. Many schools still lack adequate classrooms for even one room per grade, so teaching regularly has to take place outside under a tree, or often not at all during the rainy season. Most schools in Ribáué have some classrooms constructed with local materials, including thatched roofs; but these structures are not watertight and during periods of heavy rain are liable to leak heavily or even collapse. Even those that have corrugated metal roofs are hampered by the heavy rains, as the metal massively amplifies the sound of the rain making any teaching impossible. One teacher in EPI de Mohiliari explained:

“I stand at the front and we stare at each other, no learning can take place with the rain.”

6.2.2 Wider System Capacities – Secondary School and Tertiary Education

The expansion of tertiary education in Nampula, from just 1 University in 1996 to 9 higher education institutions currently, was cited frequently by parents and children as a positive move. It has raised the pupils’ aspirations, especially when someone from the community had managed to achieve this level of education and find employment. It also opens up new career possibilities, with children now dreaming of becoming journalists, engineers and professors. Nevertheless, access to tertiary education remains the realm of a privileged few; partly due to the costs usually associated with attendance – both fees, accommodation and ‘opportunity costs’ – but largely due to constraints of accessing and completing secondary school.

In a district with approximately 100,000 young people (INE 2010), there are just four secondary schools, only two of which operate to grade 12 (Escola Secundaria de Ribáué and Instituto Agrario de Ribáué). Furthermore, these schools are geographically proximate; hence progression beyond grade 7 is simply impossible for large areas of the population in Ribáué, such as Cunle.

The school system can therefore be characterised as a series of ever-narrowing bottlenecks, both within the primary school phase, and further to accessing secondary school, technical colleges, and higher education.

6.3 Governance

6.3.1 Grade Fixing

Teachers regularly doctor the results of examinations, so that the majority of pupils pass through to the subsequent grade and cycle. This has led to many pupils continuing throughout primary school regardless of their level of learning, compounding the issues of quality and attainment. School staff were open about this practice and gave largely consistent ‘reasons’ for such conduct – that they would rather see children remain in school and complete basic education on time, and that they were “under pressure” from officials at district and provincial level. Such pressure was claimed to include threats of being transferred to more remote or lower-achieving schools, reduction of school resources or limits on expected pay scale improvements.

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6 The cycles are grades 1-3, 4-5 (both EP1), and 6-7 (EP2). Progression within cycles is automatic, but between cycles is dependent upon passing national exams (MINED 2012, 13)
Parents had mixed feelings about this practice. Most were ambivalent, seemingly happy their child simply remained in school and progressed. Other parents were very vocal in their belief that this undermined the school system, as neither children nor teachers had cause to be concerned about achievement when grades could simply be fixed each year.

6.3.2 School Councils

School Councils are mandatory at every school and are the primary mode of governance. Members include school management, teachers, two pupils, and several community members. School Councils are widely seen to have an extremely positive impact on transparency, improving communication between the school and the wider community, and giving a voice – albeit small – to children. Particularly, the oversight of the ADE spending is seen as important to ensure that it is used within the guidelines.

Nonetheless, the effectiveness and implementation of School Councils varies greatly between schools. It was clear that in schools where the School Council was weaker or even non-existent, such as EPC de Iapala and EPC de Namiconha, ADE money was spent on items prohibited by the guidelines, including building materials, furniture for the Director, and painting the exterior of the school; with little to no money spent on initiatives to support vulnerable children to access and remain in school.

Communication issues between schools and communities prevail. This is particularly a problem for the most vulnerable families with children not in school; almost none were aware of the School Council or of any support available (for example provision of free notebooks and pencils), even where such support existed.

6.3.3 Corruption

Weak governance structures have created space for corruption to become endemic in the school system. Transparency International (2013) found that 79% of Mozambicans felt the education system was corrupt, with 43% having paid some form of bribe that year. I found numerous cases of schools charging fees of 20-60 meticais for students to pass exams. There were also cases of schools charging 30 to 50 meticais for a certificate to prove they had completed a grade, even when the child remained within the same school. In some cases parents believed the school used this money for construction projects, but others were unclear about where the money went. In almost all cases, families were unaware that such ‘fees’ were illegal if demanded as mandatory, rather than voluntary, contributions.

When asked of the consequences of non-payment, in some cases schools would exclude pupils until payment was made; while in other cases families spoke of facing harassment. In Napasso, parents were asked to pay 5 meticais per child, but when coming to the school were asked to pay 60 meticais, way beyond their possibilities.

7 The exact number of members is dependent upon the size of the school
8 *Apoyo Directo a las Escuelas* (ADE) is the ‘direct support to schools’, a stipend sent to each school to cover non-salary and non-construction costs, with a focus on supporting vulnerable pupils (Fox, Santibanez, et al. 2012)
6.4 Motivations and Relevance

6.4.1 Employment

Many parents described primary school as the first step towards a longer term goal of decent, formal employment for their children. None however talked of primary school alone as being sufficient to obtain a job; it appears that education to at least grade 10 is necessary for all local jobs. There are also many barriers beyond simply years of education and attainment – jobs in Ribáué are extremely scarce. This is compounded by the recurrent issue of corruption, with many young people repeatedly claiming they had been asked to pay 2,000-2,500 meticais or to give the company two goats to secure a job – far beyond the possibilities of most young people. Therefore the value of basic education was not considered to be in providing the necessary skills and experiences for a job per se, but an enabling process to allow for continued education “when development happens” at some point in the future.

6.4.2 Functional Skills

A key benefit of education described by all families was the ability for their children to properly use and read a weighing scale at the market, so as not to be cheated by traders. Furthermore, developing literacy skills was cited almost unanimously as a core reason for sending children to school. Interestingly, families where the parent(s) had received basic education themselves spoke of the ways in which education helped one to understand, evaluate and use information, such as health advice. Additionally, in communities where schools used some of the Local Curriculum time to teach basic agricultural techniques, families talked of the generative learning process within the family from the child’s knowledge, seeing good results from testing such techniques.

However, parents tended to create a contradiction by complaining that their children reached the higher grades of primary school still unable to read, write and speak Portuguese to even a minimal standard, and generally had learned very little in school. Although none related this directly to their younger children not being in school, it cannot be ignored that this diminished perception of the value of primary school played a part in their household resource allocation decisions.

6.4.3 Social Skills

Families also described other ways in which they valued education. Educated children were often considered to be more ‘responsible’, taking a greater role in the upbringing of their younger siblings, doing more to support the family unit, and particularly with regard to money management. However, such benefits did not constitute the central motivation of sending children to school or valuing education. Some parents also considered that some of these skills could be taught through other non-formal settings, rather than primary schools.

6.4.4 The Role of Primary Schools in Education

In light of this, it was not the value of education that was questioned by parents, but rather the value of primary school as the institution charged with delivering education. Both parents and staff working in adult education courses (AEA) spoke of children regularly attending AEA with their parents. It was claimed they did this for reasons including, wanting to ‘top up’ their knowledge from school, preferring to learn in a smaller and ‘better’
environment, enjoying the content, which was usually considered more ‘relevant’, and elder children felt more comfortable in this adult learning environment.

6.4.5 Curriculum Change and Relevance

One area where curriculum relevance appears to be improving is through the use of the Local Curriculum. This comprises 20% of the school timetable and in Ribáué often includes agricultural training, developing skills in local crafts such as basket weaving, and traditional songs. Parents described their pleasure when children returned home from school and could talk about things that related directly to the family’s life.

But this was dependent upon how this was implemented. Some schools claimed they integrated the Local Curriculum by simply mentioning a local river or mountain in lessons. In EP1 de Mohiliari, the school used this time entirely to teach Makua language (a very popular move among parents), even though Makua was used in most other lessons. Two employees of different organisations (DfID and ROSC) working in the coastal area of Nampula described how most primary schools in that region, which has a high population of Muslims, would use the Local Curriculum time to close the school entirely on Fridays and send children to the Madrassa and Friday Prayers.

These findings somewhat contradict those of a national study of curriculum change in Mozambique, which suggested only disparities between rural and urban schools in implementing the Local Curriculum due to availability of resources (Aderuccio 2010), without acknowledging the disparities within rural and urban areas and the additional training necessary to effectively implement the curriculum.

6.5 Culture

Cultural aspects are deeply embedded in life in Ribáué. Education is regarded highly in the local culture and broadly forms part of social status. Many young people described their motivation for attending school as partly due to not wanting to be seen as ‘stupid’ or ‘lowly’ by others in their communities. Traditional leaders were keen to stress the importance they placed on education for all children.

6.5.1 Gendered Cultural Influences on Education

Nonetheless, cultural aspects posed a variety of challenges for children to remain in school and gain sufficient value from their education. It was stated frequently by families and stakeholders at all levels that it is culturally “unacceptable” for a female to be better educated than her husband. It was said this was to ensure that the male did not face “embarrassment” in public if he were less educated than his wife.

6.5.2 Child Marriage

Mozambique has the sixth highest child marriage prevalence rate in the world at 56%, with the prevalence in Nampula reaching 59% (UNICEF 2013b). The majority of the families interviewed felt that it was “inappropriate” to keep a girl in school once she was married. In the families where this was not stated, parents claimed that girls could stay in school only so long as the husband ‘permitted’ it.
It appears that the prevalence of child marriage is profoundly related to the cultural conception of a ‘child’. The official definition of a child in Mozambican law is anyone under the age of 18, with marriage before a child turns 16 illegal (UNFPA 2008). But in Makua culture, girls are considered ‘adults’ once they have their first menstruation and subsequently attend the traditional initiation rites; regardless of their age. Families explained that this caused ‘difficulties’ for girls to remain in school, as they felt uncomfortable being in an environment designed for and treated the same as ‘children’. The issue did not seem as profound for boys however. Although two families did suggest that boys may also feel uncomfortable with being in school as ‘adults’, the issue was not raised by other interviewees.

6.6 Early Pregnancy

The issue of child marriage is also deeply intertwined with that of early pregnancy. Parents and school staff explained that according to cultural norms, when a girl becomes pregnant, it is decided between the families that the girl and boy are instructed to marry, largely so that the male does not “escape his duties of fatherhood”. However, it was found on many occasions that this method made little difference to the male remaining and helping with childcare duties, with numerous adolescent girls explaining that the father had abandoned them.

While cultural leaders were keen to stress that they advised boys and girls to ‘wait’ before marriage and to not see the passage into adulthood as an “open door” to have sex and get married, it was clear that either this message was being eschewed by young people (as they and others suggested), or that there was an issue of power over decision-making for girls.

There is a stigma regarding pregnancy, particularly in the expectant mother’s social interactions. Families, cultural leaders, religious leaders, education officials and school staff were all very resolute that pregnant girls could not remain in school. It was said that a pregnant girl in school would be a “distraction” for all other pupils and the teacher and that a pregnant girl “would not like being in school”. The girl has no ability to influence the decision.

All interviewees stressed that they believed “in principle” that girls should return to school after giving birth. But it was felt that they should instead attend ‘alternative classes’. Families also noted that a mother’s possibilities to return to school were largely dependent upon the will of the father/husband, should he have remained with the mother. Hence there were numerous occasions in which girls described that while they had very much enjoyed school, they had dropped out directly due to pregnancy and/or marriage.

6.7 Socio-Economic Conditions

Most families in Ribáué are small-scale farmers engaged in growing staple foods such as maize, cassava and beans for self-consumption and, when possible, a small surplus to sell. Such families had machambas between 1-2 hectares and made an average of 40 meticais per week from such work. Some families also engaged in growing ‘cash crops’ including cotton, tobacco and soya and could generate 100-150 meticais per week. But the machambas have relatively low productivity compared to large farms and are vulnerable to natural conditions. Crop failure and low productivity have created a situation of malnutrition nearing crisis, with 44% of under-
fives affected (Tisdall 2012). Malnutrition is the main cause of stunting, which seriously affects children’s learning abilities (ibid).

6.7.1 Direct School Costs

Household income remains the most important factor in causing dropouts from primary school. In each family interviewed whose child(ren) had dropped out of primary school, the finances of the family were given as the primary cause of the dropout. It was clear that although the removal of fees for primary school education had enabled many more children to initially attend school, the ongoing costs of keeping children in school were simply too high for many poor families. Such costs included basic resources such as pens, pencils, erasers, and notebooks; the school uniform; and non-voluntary fees levied by schools.

Costs associated with school uniforms varied depending on the policy of the local school. Some took a strict stance, that in order to comply with national regulations and to ensure that everyone at the school was considered equal, everyone must wear uniform at all times. Other schools, such as Escola de Mohiliari, had a more pragmatic approach, with a female teacher insisting,

“It is more important that the children are here, in the classroom and learning, than not in school just because of the clothes they wear.”

6.7.3 Dependency on Children’s Work

Although no families suggested they had withdrawn children from school to help with the family’s income-generating activities, in many cases parents admitted that they could no longer survive if the children were to return to school. This was particularly the case where the household heads were elderly and/or single. In some families, elder children who had been out of school for some time were generating income through selling firewood to help younger siblings remain in or return to school. It was also common for the eldest children, even those as young as 10, to be given the responsibility for the care and wellbeing of younger siblings in such situations.

6.7.4 Animal Breeding

It is very common for families to keep animals as a banco vivo, a “living bank”. Chickens were kept by the majority of families (although crucially not by the most poor/vulnerable families), with some others also keeping goats, fish in man-made ponds, and occasionally pigs. Families described that they used the income generated by selling these animals to invest in school resources and other basic household goods such as oil, soap, tools and so on. This gave greater spending flexibility, as these animals could be sold as needed throughout the year. Nevertheless, this was a very insecure savings method as the animals, especially chickens, were extremely vulnerable to disease.

6.7.5 Alternative Income Streams

For many families, ganho-ganho (day labouring) was an important way to supplement food and/or income for the family. This involves working on another family’s farm on an ad-hoc basis. Payment for a day’s work varied
between 30-60 meticais which depended upon an informal but widely used scale related to the area of land worked. Therefore, more physically able workers were able to generate greater income from such activities. However, given the majority of the population operate outside of the monetary economy due to the sporadic income they can generate, ‘payment’ was most commonly made through food. But monetary substitutes cannot be invested in ways a family may wish, for example in educational resources.

Families who had lost a parent or parents through death or divorce were due financial support. A parent who leaves the household is legally obliged to financially support the remaining family, but the knowledge of this right and the means of enforcement were totally lacking in Ribáué. None of the six families in this situation knew of the law, nor how they could claim such payments. Similarly with families caring for orphans, the deputy director of the provincial ministry for Women and Social Affairs stated that carers were entitled to payments of 500-700 meticais per month. Yet in all but one case, families caring for orphans were completely unaware of this entitlement. The one family that was aware, in Mohiliari, argued that,

“Every year, the government comes and make lists of who has orphans and tell us we will get money – but nothing happens! They should either pay us our money, or never come here in the first place and give us false hope."

6.8 District Characteristics

Ribáué has been connected to the national energy grid since 2000 (Åkesson and Nhate 2006, 8). In connected areas, such as Iapala and Ribáué Vila, there have been many advantages, such as the possibility to operate mills and other machinery, for hospitals to operate longer hours, and for new technologies to be adopted. But the electricity grid does not extend beyond the locality centres.

Mozambique has the lowest level of agricultural technology in southern Africa (Hanlon 2012), which limits farmers’ abilities to make productive use of their land. Most farmers rely on simple hoes and lack irrigation. Access to new types of seeds is often only available via contract farming agreements.

Like many other districts, Ribáué suffers from poorly maintained roads and irregular rail connections. Although the main road from Cuamba to Nacala is nearing completion, most tributary roads are simply dirt paths which become impassable during the rainy season. This limits the abilities of agricultural extensionists, health workers, and traders to access isolated areas.

With only one ‘rural hospital’ available throughout the whole district, located in the centre of Ribáué Vila, access to a range of decent health services is not possible for the majority of the population. There are eight other health units across the district – six ‘health centres’ and two ‘health posts’ – which provide basic services such as administering medication and midwifery support. But for most serious illnesses, these facilities do not have the capacity to support patients.
7. Analysis

The aim of this section is to first of all understand what creates ‘poverty’ for rural families in Ribáué beyond daily income levels, and how this is associated with dropouts. Secondly, a special section of this chapter will use the SRL model to analyse the factors constraining and supporting primary schools to operate as transformative structures, and how such factors consequently affect the dropout rate.

7.1 Vulnerability Context

The vulnerability context here can be understood as the interaction of exogenous forces which together comprise a field which families and communities live and act within. This will be analysed along the four major vulnerability context points of the SRL framework: seasonality, shocks, trends, markets. Moreover, it became increasingly apparent throughout the fieldwork that culture and geography also created a situation of vulnerability in Ribáué. Therefore, such aspects will also integrated into the existing analytical points.

7.1.1 Seasonality

The lives of most rural people are shaped by the varying seasons. For family farmers, who comprise the vast majority of Ribáué, the seasons largely dictate when they have access to food, money, opportunities for labour. The seasonality of rainfall also dictates when people can access places beyond their bairro, and when they must construct or repair their houses to mitigate the risks of flooding.

The seasons alone do not necessarily cause vulnerability, but when interacting with other factors can do so. The indigent physical capital aspect of poor quality roads in rural areas becomes a vulnerability during the rainy season, as the heavy rains prevent people from leaving the village, and crucially also prevents others such as traders and extensionists from accessing remote villages. This is compounded by the lack of access to decent storage facilities for most farmers, creating a vulnerability that their crops may be damaged during periods of heavy rain or intense heat. Some families alluded to the issue of climate change, claiming that the timing of the seasons and the intensity of the hot and rainy seasons had become increasingly unpredictable. When added to the lack of access to weather forecasts, this can cause great difficulties in the timing of crop-planting.

One consequence of the amalgam effect of seasonal vulnerability was malnutrition. The times when families had no food to harvest coincided with the scarcity of labour opportunities to get food or money, limited access to areas outside of the villages, a lack of produce available at local markets, and still having considerable work on their own farm. For the poorest families, seasonal malnutrition was a perennial issue, impacting negatively on their human capital. For children, this means suffering illness, being out of school for extended period of time and stunting where healthcare is unavailable. Furthermore, families were often unwilling to try new foods or eat meat products, preferring to rely upon their traditional crops. Malnutrition can also be equated with a failure of the government to neither ensure a sufficient agricultural market system for staple foods nor provide adequate welfare provisions to those in need.

Malnutrition therefore becomes a cross-cutting vulnerability, borne out of the interaction of seasonality with other deprivations, weak supporting structures and cultural traditions. This puts both children’s possibilities to
complete primary school, and their lives, at risk. So long as farmers lack the means to effectively mitigate or adapt to the issues of seasonality in sustainable ways, they will become increasingly vulnerable.

7.1.2 Shocks

One of the major shocks to families is the death of a parent, or parents separating. The balance of the livelihoods for the poorest families is very fragile, so to lose the household head can cripple the family unit. It created a ‘downward spiral’, with an immediate reduction in the human capital of the family, which when coupled with the specific gender roles of the local culture, meant that the remaining family lacked the skills or knowledge to perform some of the departed person’s tasks, in particular caring for animals.

For young girls, and the heads of household on whom they are dependent, unplanned pregnancies can cause severe disruption to the socio-economic stability of the family. It results in an immediate withdrawal from school for the girl (should she be at school), an inability for her to participate in many household activities, and ultimately an additional member of the household who needs food, clothing and care. The can be extremely burdensome, particularly when the fathers of the children are absent from their duties of care. The physical and financial resources used to care for the upbringing of the new-born child mean that others in the family have much less for themselves. The cultural attitudes to sex and pregnancy can thus amplify a family’s vulnerability and lack of resilience.

Price volatility of internationally-traded goods, such as cotton, soya and tobacco, can also cause an enormous shock. Although most commodities are traded in relation to fluctuating global prices, cotton has a minimum price set annually by a board consisting of businesses, NGOs, trade unions and government officials. This gives some degree of stability, as trade unions and NGOs can influence the decision to limit price drops. But they have a limited ability against the global market – between 2011 and 2012, the price per kilogram plummeted from 15 to 10 meticais. Such a drop can cause a huge income shock for a family if they are dependent upon cotton as a single cash crop as their primary income source. This makes investments in such cash crops very risky for poor family farmers. The interaction of price shocks with the stymied agricultural market system, and capital deprivations such as the lack of access to credit and savings services, intensifies the impact of the price shocks and the vulnerability of the families.

The increasing unpredictability and intensity of weather can reach a point of creating a ‘natural shock’, such as flooding or drought, which can destroy crops. When families are reliant upon small machambas, crop failure is like pulling the rug from beneath their feet. The failure of the welfare system to reach the majority of the people means there is no social safety net for these families; further demonstrating the multifaceted ways in which various aspects of the SRL model can interact to exacerbate poor, rural families’ vulnerabilities.

Ribáué has not experienced any major viral epidemics in recent years however. Given that all children of families interviewed had been vaccinated, either at the health posts or by mobile vaccinators, it seems as though this strategy has limited the likelihood of such health shocks. This is a demonstration of how the transforming processes and structures can positively influence the vulnerability context and foster more resilient livelihoods.
7.1.3 Trends

An increasing focus on transforming small-scale farming to larger-scale production, coupled with the growing fear of land acquisitions via Pro-Savana, creates a great deal of pressure on family farmers to undertake somewhat risky investments in growing singular cash crops. In Ribáué, not a great deal of change due to Pro-Savana can be observed currently, but given that it is recognised as one of the most fertile areas of the Province (ibid) (Governo do Distrito de Ribáué 2011, 4), there is a great likelihood that such issues will permeate the lives of rural families in the coming months and years.

There is an increasing manipulation of the political system and state organs at all levels by the ruling party, Frelimo (USAID, 2005). The top-down structure of the decentralised governance system, in which officials at both provincial and district level are appointed by the national government, coupled with the proportional electoral system in which MPs have no distinct constituency, has created a situation in which officials are increasingly answerable to the party leadership to maintain and improve their positions, than in being accountable to local populations.

There is a fundamental lack of accountability in most areas of governance and limited space for citizens to realistically demand their rights, needs and wishes be met. This creates a situation where the wishes of the national government are prioritised over local needs, inhibiting such structures from being transformational for the livelihoods of vulnerable rural people, essentially creating greater vulnerability. This raises concerns of how ‘deep’ the democratic system in Mozambique really is. Citizens have the right of suffrage, but remain disenfranchised, with the lines between the state and the Frelimo party increasingly blurred.

7.1.4 Market Systems

The market system in Ribáué is hindered from functioning effectively by physical, financial and international constraints. Despite a growing demand for agricultural products in urban areas, the separation of these areas by poor roads and irregular rail connections makes transporting goods costly, time-consuming, seasonally variable and irregular. This is heightened by the lack of sufficient storage, for example to keep fish bred in ponds in Ribáué fresh in a cool environment so they can be sold outside of the farmer’s locality. For those dealing in non-export crops, such as maize and cassava, their abilities to sell produce are also constrained by the lack of money and surplus cash available for most families within the district. With (currently) no bank and only a handful of small savings and credit groups, there are extremely limited opportunities to acquire sufficient credit for investments.

Additionally, despite its vast natural resource base, Mozambique is a net importer of staple foods (Hanlon 2012), and many people who have established small baracca (kiosk) businesses rely on imported goods from Tanzania and South Africa, as the national subsidies levied on these goods makes them cheaper than locally produced goods, leading to an outflow of money from Mozambique.

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9 A collaboration between the governments of Mozambique, Japan and Brazil, plus multiple private sector actors to promote industrial agriculture in Nampula and surrounding provinces
This raises a difficult question for rural families – when the local market is so dysfunctional that trading agricultural goods is near-impossible and barely profitable, markets within the province and nationally are largely inaccessible due to physical capital deficiencies, and goods are not competitive in global markets due to the paucity of subsidies, what can they then do to move beyond subsistence growing? And what value would increasing productivity of their machambas have beyond greater household food security? This conundrum characterises the vulnerability for families and the limited livelihood strategies available to improve their situation. The government has put great effort into supporting the development of an extractive industries market, but has largely ignored the development of basic local market structures, taking a laissez faire approach. But in the absence of sufficient credit services among other capital deficiencies, such an approach cannot be sustained.

7.2 Capital Assets

The capital assets of different socio-economic groups within Ribáué will be analysed to elaborate how greater or lesser capital accumulation can improve or hinder a family in pursuing a livelihood strategy.

7.2.1 Physical Capital

The physical capital levels between families from the same communities in Ribáué tends to have little variation, as they largely have access to the same infrastructure in each locality. However between different communities within the district, there are noticeable differences which can have significant impacts.

Electricity can act as a catalyst for development in the ways described in the findings. But, to take advantage of some of these possibilities from electrification, other capitals and capabilities must be present. For example, a trader can only make use of cold storage facilities if they have sufficient financial capital to purchase the equipment, sufficient financial and physical capital to buy the wholesale produce, to safely transport it, and to operate in an area with sufficient market demand. A married female can only take advantage of the evening school classes if she has the freedom to be ‘allowed’ to do so by her husband. And as it was apparent in Ribáué, one can only seek employment through new companies if they have sufficient social and financial capital to secure the in-demand job. This demonstrates that single actions, such as rural electrification, cannot be a panacea for development when other factors work to constrain its potential catalytic impacts as a common-pool resource.

Access to tools for work can greatly determine the productivity of one’s labour and the possibilities one has for different types of labour. In some cases, people were able to acquire tools from friends and family, such as carpentry equipment and soldering irons for electronic repairs, opening up opportunities for new income-generating activities, thus creating diverse income streams to build a more resilient livelihood and generate greater financial capital. However, the use of new tools is dependent upon both one’s ability to acquire them (financial and social capital) and one’s capabilities to operate them proficiently. Without the necessary human capital assets to operate new tools, the mere accumulation is rather meaningless – a demonstrable consequence of dropouts’ capability deprivations.
7.2.2 Natural Capital

The size, location and quality of one’s machambas is the crux of the livelihood situation of most families. The limited land available to most farmers meant they had little possibility of growing enough food to feed a large family; nor to generate sufficient surplus to sell, to generate money to invest in things such as school costs. Although some families had other areas of land, to ‘open up’ this land was very labour-intensive and time-consuming, given the rugged terrain. The option to open up such land was also constrained by their financial capital deficiencies, to pay for day labourers, and their own human capital – as once the field was open, it would require as much work and attention as existing machambas. This can be seen as an impact of the limited agricultural technology (physical capital) available to farmers and of the malfunctioning labour and credit markets.

Moreover, the distance to the machamba could be an extremely draining process. The time and energy spent on this meant that they had less to invest in working on their land. This also meant that elder children often had to assume more responsibilities within the home, with the family becoming increasingly dependent upon their help. This increased the ‘opportunity cost’ of the children being in school. The additional time spent walking and working left families with very little time to engage in social activities, mutual help schemes and associations. Thus the combination of physical and natural capital deficiencies limits other capital accumulation and creates difficulties for children to stay in school.

Animal breeding is a common livelihood strategy to try to accumulate financial capital; but such an approach is dependent upon other existing capitals, the vulnerability context and the transforming structures and processes working in one’s favour. If successful, this strategy could lead directly to greater school retention, as it can generate the additional time-flexible income needed to pay for school-related costs. However, within the context of other variables, this strategy becomes extremely risky given the high death rate of the animals. For families lacking the initial financial and human capital necessary to establish an animal breeding activity, they remain evermore dependent on the productivity of their machambas.

7.2.3 Financial Capital

The lives of most people in Ribáué are characterised by a severe lack of financial capital assets. The standard measurement of extreme poverty is income below $1.25 per day (14,600 meticais per year)\(^{10}\). Yet of all the household interviews conducted, only one family achieved an income above this level, with many surviving on around a tenth of this income. However within this section of the population considered to be in extreme poverty, there are many differences. The financial capital assets within the field of their lives are highly relative, so simple indicators such as the ‘dollar-a-day’ measure do not give a true representation of people’s lives. Outside of the peri-urban areas, families conducted transactions largely through bartering systems. This greatly limits the agency of families to have a choice in the investments they make, as the goods received in exchange have limited liquidity, meaning less possibilities to invest in keeping children in school.

\(^{10}\) Rate current as of 24/05/2014 via www.xe.com
Despite the high-liquidity of staple-food crops, the constraints of the market system restrict the ability to sell goods at a decent price. This has a direct impact on school dropouts, as when families cannot raise the necessary capital at the start of the school year to pay for basic school resources and uniforms, then children usually cannot return to school. Additionally, at times throughout the year when families are often unexpectedly asked to pay fees and bribes to teaching staff, the inability to raise sufficient cash can be problematic for the children’s retention and experience in school.

The ability to participate in most savings schemes is limited by both the volume and irregularity of income, particularly for families dependent upon subsistence farming alone, meaning they cannot contribute to groups which tend to demand regular weekly contributions. This limits poor families’ abilities to plan effectively for the future, constraining their freedom in adopting livelihood strategies. The impact of this on education is profound, as the annual and one-off costs associated with primary school cannot be met without sufficient savings mechanisms. In such situations, micro-credit rather than micro-savings schemes could have a much greater impact in enabling families to build sustainable livelihoods.

There is a moderate availability of other forms of financial and resource support, such as grants and loans tied to various projects, associations and NGOs. But access to these funds is also dependent upon other capital assets. In Ribáué, consultative councils required applicants to have sufficient collateral to be able to receive a loan from the FDD initiative for example. Moreover, for a family or individual to become a member of an association, they needed to be able to contribute in terms of membership fees (financial capital), goods such as chickens (financial/natural capital), their own labour and general group support (human capital), land for communal growing activities (natural capital), and to have any real power within the group they also needed substantial social power within the community. Hence the catalytic qualities of associations are thwarted by the capital deficiencies of poor families.

7.2.4 Social Capital

Extended family units are a great source of mutual support and form the main social structure in rural communities. Communities in rural areas of Ribáué are generally small but very cohesive units, which are relatively structured. With government support programmes at best limited, and transportation issues meaning most people spend the great majority of their lives in the same area, strong social connections are vital in creating robust livelihood strategies. Mutual support networks are vital for allowing many children to access and remain in education. As the provision of EP2 level schooling is sparse, it is necessary for many children to temporarily move out of their home to live closer to an EP2 school. Similarly, for children belonging to ‘nomadic’ families – those that are forced to move around to be closer to their distant machambas – it is necessary to stay with a relative or family friend to remain in school during times of movement.

But families from the poorest and most vulnerable conditions struggle to have such possibilities. Some families have been affected by earlier health crises, leaving little or no members to support children. Others suffer from chronic poverty and simply lack the conditions to support an additional person in their household. This depicts a characteristic, cause and consequence of dropouts: they are characterised by families with low social capital;
caused by the interaction of this low social capital with physical capital deficiencies; and a consequence is that children dropping out are less likely to be able to support younger family members to continue to attend school, creating a transgenerational effect.

The strength and types of social networks which people engage in are also key for securing employment opportunities and exerting influence on various structures and processes. Without such connections, people lack the autonomy to make use of their capabilities to influence (supposedly) transforming structures and processes. Even though School Councils have a large responsibility for supporting vulnerable children and families, it is highly unlikely such families have any representation on the councils due to their social capital deficiency, often coupled with their lack of free time due to their natural capital deficiencies.

Membership of groups and associations is one way to build social capital, as it draws people together in a more structured way to generate mutual support activities to work towards a common goal. Even when not an ‘active’ member, simply being part of the group was seen as an important way for people to live fulfilling lives and to create new support networks. For example, a very poor single mother in an isolated bairro outside of Iapala was a ‘passive’ member of a local association which focused on fish breeding and onion crops, but took part in neither activity. Instead she joined to meet new people and find new ways to generate income, and new support mechanisms for her children. This led to her being able to send her eldest son to live with another association member to attend EP2 level primary school.

Yet if the school curriculum is indeed now fostering less communal spirit as is alleged, this could undermine the reciprocal social support practices of the existing culture. Hence the curriculum could actually be creating a tinderbox issue for future generations of children, rather than acting to enhance the capabilities of families.

7.2.5 Human Capital

The literature review identified that a mother’s own level of education correlated with the likelihood of her children to remain in school, suggesting this link concerns a greater value of schooling by more educated parents. But the situation in Ribáué gainsays such a connection; there is a much more nuanced relationship between these two factors. Even where there was a somewhat ‘flawed logic’ in the value of schooling from both educated and uneducated parents, they nevertheless regarded primary school as extremely important for their children.

The link between household-head’s human capital and the likelihood of a child remaining in school instead concerns their wider capabilities in the formation of resilient livelihoods. Household heads with human capital deficiencies had, *inter alia*, more limited opportunities for decent income generation, limited capacities to understand political, healthcare and technical information, and were restricted in their abilities to participate in advanced positions within groups and associations. These limitations, when combined with the vulnerability context and their negative impacts on one’s ability to accumulate other forms of capital, creates an increasingly vulnerable state for a family, which puts children at greater risk of dropping out from school. It also leaves households with little ability to change the situation, as families with human capital deficiencies do not have the
necessary *agency* to influence such structures. This is also understood as a consequence of dropouts, as people that have not completed the full cycle of basic education will be faced with such problems in adulthood.

Beyond formal education, there are other ways for one to build human capital, including through associations supported by government, NGOs or donor projects. Such support often focuses on ‘capacity building’, a vague term that in practice relates to training in organisation, accounting and specific techniques linked to a project. Where this support is available, people are able to acquire new skills to diversify and bolster their income. Families explained that this enabled them to invest in children’s education and keep them in school. But such support is only available to those sections of society who have sufficient capabilities to participate in associations, excluding several families in the community and leaving them in the same vulnerable state. This can partly be seen as a consequence of the ‘hastiness’ of donor project implementations to meet targets rapidly, but failing to address the underlying structural causes of extreme poverty in such communities.

### 7.3 Transforming Structures and Processes

There is an expected two-way relationship of influence between households and these structures, with the notion of a cyclical effect of the structures to create change to allow greater capital formulation, and with greater capitals households can have greater influence on shaping the direction and intensity of the change to better support their livelihood strategies. However, the term ‘transforming’ is used reticently here, as it is highly questionable how transformational such structures and processes are in Ribáué.

#### 7.3.1 Groups and Associations

The positive role of associations in supporting families to create more resilient livelihoods has already been highlighted throughout this analysis; as have the barriers to accessing such transformative outcomes for the most vulnerable families. Yet even for those able to take advantage of association membership, there are limitations on one’s ability to move beyond a ‘resilience threshold’. The shortcomings of the market system restrict such groups to grow. This questions the cogency of the approach of such organisations, which promote ‘community empowerment and self-reliance’, when this is near-impossible to achieve in the presence of the conditions analysed above. People do not operate in isolation from the state and the wider conditions of Mozambique, they are an inherent part it and their lives are shaped and constrained by the national situation. Associations can be seen as a step up, but households require further transforming structures and processes to consolidate the change and lift families well and truly past a resilience threshold.

#### 7.3.2 Adult Education

Groups participating in adult education programmes face similar experiences. Receiving such education augmented human capital and capabilities in multifaceted ways. But the impact of adult education was limited by the wider constraints of the employment market, access to credit and a lack of further education opportunities for people to have the ability to make use of the education and use it as ‘means’ – a foundation for greater development – rather than it being merely an ‘end’ in itself.

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11 Able to move out of and remain out of poverty. Term coined by Scott *et al* (2014)
12 See Pathfinder International (2012)
7.3.3 Civil Society

Civil society groups (CSOs) have been active in advocacy, fighting for the rights of vulnerable people at various levels. In particular, their combined efforts were able to delay the wholesale introduction of Pro-Savana and forced the participating governments to reconsider the plans to better protect local farmers (AfricaFocus 2013). While such advocacy work is extremely important, it has also created an unintended reliance – the chief inspector at the Nampula Agriculture Department stated that CSOs “are the ones which fight for the peasants”, seeming to shed governmental responsibility for this role. This is a particularly unhealthy relationship, as not only does it create a further chasm between the role of the government and their accountability and representation of the people, but also because of the antagonism between many areas of government and the civil society; indeed the interviewee claimed forcefully that, “Civil society organisations come here to make war!” This may further demonstrate the way in which supposedly transforming structures and processes can act to actually generate vulnerability – seeing engagement with citizens’ views as inherently conflictual, and perceiving their role as implementing national policies, regardless of the actual local needs of the locality. So while there is a demonstrable need for CSOs as one of the few channels for citizens to challenge their government, there are also associated consequences which are working to further marginalise poor households. However, the type, character and aims of CSOs must be considered when analysing this statement, certainly not all CSOs are necessarily seen as uncooperative by officials.

7.3.4 Private Sector

The dearth of private sector opportunities for decent employment sustains the vulnerability of many poor families, limiting strategies to generate income and lead decent lives. The lack of opportunities is also influencing the dropout rate, with a decreasing value placed on education due to the restricted abilities to make use of the knowledge gained from school.

Yet the influence of the private sector is being increasingly felt across the district in different ways, primarily through contract farming arrangements for cash crops. Despite price volatility, engaging in contract farming is a lucrative and tempting livelihood strategy, due to the guarantee of a buyer and the provision of physical capital inputs on credit. Many cash crop-growing farmers spoke of their ability to use the funds raised from such contract farming to invest in their children’s education. Contract farming can therefore in this way be seen to be an extremely transformative livelihood strategy for poor rural farmers.

There are also great risks involved in contract farming, particularly when farmers expand to 3 or more hectares of land, as there is a dependency created on the viability and productivity of this single crop, coupled with the price volatility. The stunted private sector development in Mozambique has resulted in most contract farming schemes being dominated by monopsonies who have territorial command over certain areas. This means farmers have an incredibly weak bargaining position. Particularly in chicken breeding, an increasingly common contract farming method dominated by Frango King, the risks involved are augmented by the prevalence of persistent diseases such as ‘Newcastle Disease’ (NDV) and also by the greater technical knowledge required to breed animals compared to growing crops.
This demonstrates the vulnerability inherent in such activities and the disastrous effects a failure of such an approach could have on a family, which would almost certainly drain them of the resources needed to keep their children in school. Instead of providing greater support for commercialisation, as the Nampula Strategic Plan sets out (Government of Mozambique 2009), it would appear that efforts to improve the provision of micro-credit services for family farmers could do much more to eradicate poverty. Micro-credit would negate the need to rely upon contract farming agreements to acquire physical capital inputs and to pay labourers to help open up land. It could also enable others to be complementary in the market system by becoming traders, linking the farmers to a plurality of buyers, augmenting their bargaining powers.

7.3.5 Governmental Bodies

The culture of patronage which runs throughout the political system is further compounded by a lack of technical expertise and resources in the Central Office for Combatting Corruption.13 The Worldwide Governance Indicators, a matrix of 13 expert studies, denotes that Mozambique scores poorly on Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality and Control of Corruption, with the scores worsening since 2010 (World Bank 2012b). Despite the existence of robust governance laws, the increasing influence on state organs by Frelimo renders such laws ineffective. Yet in areas where donors often demand greater transparency such as state budgets (World Bank 2014b), Mozambique has made considerable progress. Mozambique generated one of the largest improvements globally in budget transparency between 2010 and 2012 (International Budget Partnership 2012). This somewhat demonstrates the relationships of accountability for the government, prioritising meeting donor demands over the pleas of its citizens. Such a situation creates significant vulnerability for the people of Ribáué, as they remain largely disenfranchised and disempowered to influence the structures and processes which have the potential to transform their livelihoods.

The persistent exclusion of citizens from creating change and commanding accountability is reflected in the growing apathy towards the electoral system as a means of real change. Since the first democratic election in 1994, turnout has decreased from 66% to 43% in 2009 (IDEA 2011).14 As the 2014 election draws closer, only 60.5% of citizens in Nampula had registered to vote just days before the deadline, down from over 90% in 2009 (Hanlon 2014). Given that none of the families interviewed had ever met a political candidate, very few could afford to buy a radio, and with the lack of any newspapers in circulation in Ribáué, families had little information about the candidates or elections in general. Most information came from the official local leadership structures, which were dominated by Frelimo officials. This fundamental lack of freedoms greatly restricted people’s capabilities and further marginalised the already isolated rural populations.

7.3.6 International Bodies

Interventions from NGOs, donors and the government habitually fail to assess the needs of the most vulnerable people in society to participate in projects. As was noted by a staff member working for DfID in Nampula, the pressure from donors emanating from the results-based programme directives force interventions to be hastily

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13 See also (Martini 2012, 1)
14 Although the 2009 figure is an increase on the 2004 turnout of 36%
implemented without sufficient understanding of the conditions of specific communities, providing short-term results but limited long-term gain. This can be seen more broadly as a consequence of the wholesale adoption of the ‘new public management’ approach to bilateral policymaking from donor governments, seeking more immediate indicators of ‘success’. This creates a vulnerability for the people of Ribáué as they are in some way treated as merely the subjects of intervention activities, rather than the agents of such projects. As ‘subjects’ of programmes initiated by institutions which wax-lyrical about the values of transparency and local ownership, there is a perverse irony that the very beneficiaries of such intentions are the ones least able to seize ownership and demand transparency from such organisations.

7.4 School System Analysis

7.4.1 Vulnerability Context

Given that Mozambique remains classed as a Highly Indebted Poor Country (IMF 2014), the government must seek to appease donors funding its budget. As such, transnational organisations such as the UN, World Bank, OECD and IMF have great influence on the policy formation. But the lack of coherence between such bodies creates a conflict of interest for the Government. In the education sector, recent policy advocacy reports from the IMF and World Bank gave contradictory advice on how expected revenues from extractive industries should be spent. The IMF argues against greater spending on teachers and education and instead on paying off high-interest debts (Ross 2014). On the other hand the World Bank argues that the anticipated income should be ‘frontloaded’ (i.e. spent before it is received) on expanding and improving education, among other public spending priorities (World Bank 2014b, 22). Such a balancing act in the wake of conflicting priorities creates vulnerability for Mozambique. Clearly the IMF position places the education system under increased pressure, but also the inability for citizens, schools and democratically elected governments to take control of their own destiny.

The dominance of the Makua language in Ribáué schools is both deeply rooted in the cultural identities of the people of the District and a consequence of the historic failures of the school system to teach Portuguese to most of the population. Portuguese is often seen as a second-language skill, rather than the primary means of communication. While it is widely recognised that Portuguese is needed to communicate with people of non-Makua heritage, the majority of the population exclusively use Makua in their social interactions. The prevailing dominance of Portuguese in the education system can be seen as part of the ‘national unity’ drive of the government as a common means of communication across the nation, and the notion of ‘global citizenship’ found throughout the curriculum. But when this restricts the learning of all other subjects in school, such an approach of lingual dominance is highly questionable; it exacerbates a situation of vulnerability for the citizens of Ribáué rather than empowering them. The system forces schools to ‘trade-off’ vis-à-vis literacy skills – a national priority, or all other subjects – of local importance.

15 Reinforced by a speech from President Guebuza in Ribáué, 11/04/2014
7.4.2 Capital Assets and Structures

Seasonality effects can be very damaging for schools which lack adequate physical capital to operate during the more extreme weather conditions. With classrooms not fit for purpose, children cannot learn and temporarily drop out of school, increasing the risk they may not return. Given that schools have a critical lack of capital assets, they are often unable to reconstruct classrooms for some time, further reducing their physical capital, enrolment capacity and the learning experience of children. Such vulnerabilities make it difficult for schools to operate as transformative structures, constrained by exogenous negative factors of which they have no control and little ability to mitigate.

Much like families, the lack of financial capital is the biggest constraint for rural schools. The ADE fund creates agency for the schools to invest in ways which are tailored to the specific needs of the school. But each school we visited was forthright in highlighting that the funds were inadequate to create any meaningful change. Delays in the delivery of ADE meant schools could not invest in resources to support vulnerable children to access school, such as notebooks, pencils and clothing in time, leaving many pupils excluded and at risk of not returning.

The prevalence of corruption can be understood to derive from this situation of inadequate finances, with schools and teachers using mandatory fees as a way to plug both funding and wage deficiencies. Therefore lack of financial capital for schools not only impacts on the quality of schooling, which itself is a factor in dropouts, but has the added impact of creating greater financial hardship for poor families, in many cases resulting directly in dropouts.

The weakness of some School Councils to hold the Director to account mean that funds are not always used in the most effective way. When ADE is used on superficial projects, this exacerbates the vulnerability of poor children, leading to a greater likelihood of them dropping out. This can be understood as a consequence of the cultural perception that Directors ‘own’ the schools and should take ultimate responsibility for all school-related matters.

The community engagement with schools is waning, despite efforts from School Councils. Despite the families interviewed for this study stating resolutely that they took a great interest in their children’s school work and life, there was a unanimous message from the schools themselves that parents were not doing enough to engage with the school and to support their children’s learning. But there is also a mutually diminishing connection, spawned from the failure of schools to take measures which relate to and support the community at large. Strong School Councils could help to reverse this trend, but require additional capabilities and better support from the District Government to do so. This is absolutely vital for families whose children have dropped out of school to discover information about support which may be available to help their children to return to education. Such channels of communication can also help facilitate families in having greater influence in school affairs.

School governance cannot be understood without relating to the increased suffocation of decentralised governments by Frelimo. Pressure to achieve results from the party at a national level is fed down to the local level, which in turn results in schools being pressurised into the practices of grade alterations and disregarding...
directions about the use of local languages as described in the findings. The ‘threats’ which school staff claimed to face from party officials for not meeting virtually unattainable targets ultimately manifests itself as creating conditions in which children learn very little and individual needs are overlooked. When this is coupled with a lack of checks, balances and accountability within the education system and the relative weakness of School Councils to take action on these issues, such practices are able to prevail.

However, the supposed pressure from central government to achieve such targets is not necessarily the result of political pretention. The pressure of external donor demands, linked heavily to the MDG2 and EFA goals, puts the national government under extreme pressure to satisfy the globally-set education targets, regardless of the reality in which the Mozambican education system exists; aberrantly the opposite of what the global goals set out to achieve.

The apparent lack of relevance in the curriculum is difficult to comprehensively understand without a more thorough study of the curriculum design process; but one can comprehend the disconnection between the curriculum content and rural communities as a lack of means to apply the knowledge in underdeveloped, rural contexts. The curriculum teaches skills which Mozambique aspirés that its citizens will need as the country reaches greater levels of development; but in the short to medium term, such knowledge is incongruous for the rural areas of Ribáué. It is apparent that the ‘Maputo-centric’ perception of the curriculum emerges from the understanding that such content is presently more relevant to more developed, urban areas.

Natural capital assets, such as a supply of drinking water and sufficient space for a school machamba, can also be important for the quality of learning and on the retention and health of pupils. Schools which have access to water can ensure children are hydrated, alert to learn, and do not need to travel great distances to get water during the school day, meaning they can spend more time in class. Moreover, ensuring children are drinking clean water greatly reduces the risk of disease, enabling them to attend school more frequently.

Schools which have space to grow their own produce are able to feed the pupils at certain points in the year. This is a great incentive to keep children in school for impoverished families. Furthermore, the ability to grow produce on the school land opens up possibilities for the teaching of agricultural techniques as part of the Local Curriculum. In some schools, such plots can also be used as a way to generate additional income to fund reconstruction projects, creating further possibilities for improving the quality of schooling and retention of pupils. This suggests that the construction of new schools should consider the natural capital assets available when selecting an appropriate location, to ensure that the school has the best possible resources at its disposal to operate effectively. Additionally, natural capital assets such as water wells can have spill-over effects for the community, and the joint management of such resources could also foster greater connections between the school management and the community.

With the demand for initial teacher training in Nampula massively outstripping enrolment capacity year after year, there may be problems in the coming years for schools to recruit enough staff. If the Government of Mozambique decides to follow the advice of the IMF in abolishing the ‘remote working’ subsidy16 to reduce its

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16 Used to encourage teachers to work in isolated areas

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public wage bill (Ross 2014), this could create serious teacher supply gaps in rural locations, furthering the vulnerability of such communities.

The push for continued professional development of teachers will see more pedagogic training for school staff. But the issue remains that teachers lack the necessary means to make any real use of such knowledge – the formation of greater skills and knowledge does not initiate a virtuous circle. This can be understood as a consequence of the increasing global considerations towards quality in primary education, which in functioning school systems has been shown to be achieved through improved human capital. The physical conditions of schools in Ribáué determine that other things must first be changed, in order to create a platform for training to generate improved quality in schools. Where teachers cannot teach effectively, further training is essentially futile.

7.5 Analysis Summary – what does this mean for dropouts?

7.5.1 The role of the vulnerability context on dropouts

The fragility and risk created means that even when greater capital formulation is possible, the inability to create sufficient resilience can rapidly throw families straight back into a situation of extreme poverty. It is when this happens that the long-term livelihood strategies, including educating children, have to be abandoned for more short-term strategies to deal with the immediate crisis, of hunger, shelter, income, health or all of these. This usually results in a child dropping out and staying out of school.

The argument developed here through the vulnerability context analysis challenges Hunt’s (2008, 1, 5) contention that dropouts are part of a process of events, not a single proximate issue. It is very apparent that a sudden shock to the fragile family economy can lead immediately to a child dropping out from school. It can be seen instead that this event is the start of a chain-reaction process which keeps children out of school, turning a ‘temporary’ dropout into an permanent dropout. Hence policies to tackle dropouts also need to address ways of reintegrating children back into education.

7.5.2 The role of capitals on dropouts

Access to sufficient financial capital undoubtedly remains the major cause of dropouts in Ribáué. Yet from this analysis it is increasingly apparent that the effects of access to other forms of capital, combined with the interaction with the vulnerability context and inadequately performing structures and processes, are restricting families from accumulating greater financial capital. Given that each of these interrelated factors can have their own negative impacts on school retention, this highlights the necessity to understand the issue of dropouts more holistically.

7.5.3 The role of transforming structures and processes on dropouts

The most crucial outcome of this analysis is that the structures and processes impacting upon the lives of vulnerable rural families are rarely transformative and in fact often cause greater vulnerabilities, starting a ‘viscous circle’ rather than a ‘virtuous circle’. People’s lack of information about their rights and entitlements, coupled with their limited capabilities in demanding such rights be met, leaves little pressure on the societal
structures and processes to change, maintaining the situation for the foreseeable future.

Even when education can increase one’s capabilities and functionings, one’s freedoms to lead sustainable and fulfilling lives are negated by the lack of agency in using such education. This means the opportunity cost of school is much increased; and in such a context, the actual purpose of primary education becomes dubious.

Therefore the conditions which result in children dropping out from school and keep them out of school long-term are unlikely to be transformed while the agency of marginalised rural communities is stunted by factors largely beyond their sphere of influence.

7.5.4 The role of the school system on dropouts

The systemic issues in the education sector circuitously conspire to push children out of primary schools. The endemic problems of quality, capacity and relevance throughout the school system devalues the role of basic education as a transformative process and make it less constructive as a means of generating positive livelihood outcomes. Weak governance stymies opportunities for well-intentioned policies to create better opportunities for vulnerable children to access and remain in primary school; while those who gain access face inadequate conditions for learning, all the while vulnerable to exogenous shocks.


8. Discussion and Theoretical Reflection – Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

This chapter aims to bring the results of the analysis into a wider discussion of contemporary development issues. As the Millennium Development Goals and Education or All targets approach in 2015, it is important to reflect upon the experiences of such frameworks for enabling development and supporting education. In particular, as the world gears up to finalise the agenda for the post-2015 ‘sustainable development goals’ (Moon 2013), it is imperative to understand how basic education will form part of this.

8.1 The Role of Education

Initially, the actual purpose and role of education for low-income rural households needs to be questioned. Chapter 2 introduced a critical assessment of the three main ideological bases of education, noting that while the human capital and rights based approaches have formed the basis of much international and national policymaking, the Capabilities Approach offers an alternative perspective of the role and value of education. Yet the results of the analysis in Chapter 8 challenge the inherent notion of education held by this approach.

Education has a privileged role in the development of the capabilities approach. Sen argues that education is both a constituent component of development – an unequivocal ‘freedom’ in itself – while also being an instrumental component of the capabilities approach in creating and enhancing such freedoms (Sen 1999, 5). But neither Sen nor Nussbaum has written much directly about education (Unterhalter 2003). More pertinently, the outcome of the analysis here directly challenges the cogency of these notions of education. Conceptualising basic education as an indisputable means of freedom and capability formation is problematic – naïve even – without giving full consideration to the wealth of complexities and differences in both the structures and qualities of education globally, nationally and regionally. In cases such as Ribáué, where the full cycle of primary school is rarely completed and the quality of education is severely diminished by factors somewhat beyond one’s immediate freedoms (although not entirely as has been argued), basic education seldom acts as an effective mechanism of developing one’s freedoms and capabilities.

What purpose then can basic education have in areas like Ribáué, if not as an instrumental nor constituent part of development? Unterhalter (2003, 19) suggests that in such cases, it is remiss to discount primary school as neither a constituent nor an instrumental factor of development per se. Instead policymakers should seek to address the other ‘unfreedoms’\textsuperscript{17} and capability deprivations \textit{inter alia} the political and social structures which prevent primary schooling from being the transformative, freedom-enhancing institution it is supposed to be.

8.2 Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Mozambique remains at the behest of the international development community in creating development policies to meet externally-set targets. Therefore the substance of the international development agenda for the

\textsuperscript{17} Sen’s terminology (Sen 1999, ff)
foreseeable future is of great importance to Mozambique, to ensure that it is crafted in a way which will best enhance its development possibilities.

Notwithstanding the systemic issues in primary schooling in developing countries, primary education remains at the forefront of the post-2015 development agenda (Moon 2013, 5) (Malik 2013, 13) (UNSDSN 2014, 12-13). The education system in Ribáue exemplifies the conundrum of well-intentioned action policies, and the actual results they achieve. It is evident that although the move in 2000 to create a coordinated approach among all development stakeholders globally to tackle some of the most pressing issues facing the world – the Millennium Development Goals – was highly laudable, basing the action framework on universal indicators of success was deeply flawed. As Keith Lewin has argued extensively (Lewin 2005) (Lewin 2007) (Lewin 2009) (Lewin 2011) (Lewin and Little 2011), there are several weaknesses in such indicators for development in education:

1. Universal indicators fail to recognise the great diversity of education systems, social structures and existing experiences of education in each country. This means that even when a country (such as Mozambique) which had an extremely limited school system, achieves a monumental leap in school access, they may still be considered a ‘failure’ or ‘laggard’ if they do not meet the global targets. Yet a country with an already extensive school system which has only achieved a marginal improvement over the same period can be considered a ‘success’ for making the small step over the target line.

2. The actual indicators of success for MDG2 and EFA are too focused on measures of access and enrolment rather than learning outcomes.18

3. NER and GER, the two most commonly used indicators, do not give any indication of the quality of schooling. Additionally, NER obscures the picture by excluding over-age learners from the data (of which there are many in Mozambique and elsewhere); while GER can misrepresent the actual level of access by including over-age learners. Even the MDG2 target 2.2 regarding the completion rate of pupils in primary school masks issues such as the time taken to finish school.


Yet despite the problems with such indicators highlighted by Lewin and others (Heyneman 2009) (Hulme 2010), proposals from prominent actors in the development community are advocating for universal targets in the post-2015 framework, albeit with a much greater focus on quality, learning outcomes and completion rates (Unterhalter 2013) (UNSDSN 2014) (Rose 2014) (Save The Children 2013) (Oxfam 2013) (Bates-Erner and Carin 2012). Only UNESCO (2014) bucks the trend by strongly advocating instead for a ‘global goal’ but national-level targets. Mozambique thus remains vulnerable to universal targets which, if the above reports are to go by, are to be set at a level which would be extremely difficult for the country to achieve. It thus faces a further 15 years of being classified as a ‘laggard’ country in human development almost regardless of the achievements it makes.

18 See also (Unterhalter 2013)
Nonetheless, the increased focus on quality measures in the above advocacy reports, plus a growing recognition of wider deprivations and freedoms, undoubtedly inspired by the capabilities approach, could help to spur Mozambique to create policies which address the underlying issues of primary school dropouts.
9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 The Characteristics, Causes and Consequences of Dropouts

The result of this analysis is that there is a multitude of factors at the household, school and societal level which interact to create a greater risk of children dropping out from school and remaining out of school long term. Dropouts in Ribáué are characterised by vulnerable and unresilient livelihoods exposed to shocks which can decimate livelihood strategies. With primary schools failing to deliver quality services which can create the freedoms and capabilities necessary for people to lead more resilient lives, coupled with the ongoing costs associated with such schooling, basic education is often the first sacrifice made in dealing with a livelihood shock. This could be seen as a negative coping strategy, sacrificing long term gain for immediate survival needs. But when education is of such poor quality, and there are little prospects to make use of any knowledge gained from education, there is little long term gain to be seen.

Dropouts are understood to be caused by a composite range of capital deprivations, interacting with the vulnerability situation, and compounded by the systemic issues within the school system. One teacher in Matharya claimed that some level of dropouts were ‘natural’; and given that the vast majority of families in Ribáué are characterised by vulnerability, capital deprivations and attending poorly performing schools, it is not unreasonable to conclude that in such conditions this claim is accurate. The vulnerable situation created by the lack of agency families have in creating a more equitable society, due to both their lack of capabilities and the dysfunctional structures and processes, gives little scope to alter this situation of high ‘natural’ dropout levels.

The consequences of dropouts are devastating for development in Mozambique. Even where educational quality is low, completing basic education has a range of other socialising aspects which are not experienced in other forms by children. Given that the school is also the main communicator of essential health and wellbeing information, failing to complete primary school can leave children and their families at an increased risk of health issues, intensifying their vulnerability. As the world moves into the next phase of global development goals, there is hope that greater access to secondary schools and employment opportunities will penetrate areas of Mozambique like Ribáué. But children who have dropped out of primary school will not then be able to take advantage of any future development in these areas, creating transgenerational long-term vulnerability both for themselves and their children.

9.2 Recommendations for Change

On the face of it, it seems as though there needs to be wholesale transformation of virtually every aspect of society and schools in Ribáué and Mozambique to really create possibilities for children to complete a full cycle of high quality education. But there are some readily achievable measures that can be taken immediately to start this process of transformation, while potentially achieving a great deal with relatively little financial input:

9.2.1 Improve Accountability and Transparency

Structures which ensure enhanced transparency and accountability should be prioritised, both in the school system and beyond. By creating opportunities for greater community participation in such structures, there could
be several direct and ‘spill-over’ benefits. Structures like the School Council can help to ensure equity and quality in the school system. Greater training should be given to members of School Councils to enable them to be more effective bodies. This not only improves the management and accountability of schools to tackle some (although certainly not all) of the system issues, but also provides members of councils with augmented human and social capital, which could work to improve their resilience.

Given the relative success to date of School Councils, opportunities for such a model to be introduced in other social structures should be prioritised and could increase oversight and effectiveness. This could have spill-over effects in terms of those members involved in the bodies communicating knowledge of rights and entitlements to the wider community. If the function of such structures were to be based on the concept of ‘fit for purpose governance’, which takes a pragmatic future-orientated view of governance seeking to mitigate against potential issues (Ashley, et al. 2012), then this could help to ensure the ongoing adaptability of such bodies to the ever-changing local situation.

9.2.2 Expand Adult Education

As demonstrated in the analysis, adult education can support the functioning of household heads to increase household resilience, keep children in school, and help those that have dropped out to return. Adult education provision can also support mature pupils along with married and pregnant pupils to continue to receive basic education. Adult education has a very positive reputation in Ribáué, and globally as it has been shown to be very cost effective (Laugo 2001). This could also work to counter the effects of cultural conceptions of adulthood which are understood to lead to dropouts from primary schools.

Given that many of the locations which do not currently receive adult education are the most isolated communities, the traditional approach to delivery – using a trained ‘animator’ to deliver lessons – may not be feasible. I would therefore advocate for an expansion of the Alpha-Radio programme operated in Ribáué and elsewhere. This service uses taped lessons to deliver the classes, with animators visiting just a few times per year to ensure the material is being used and understood correctly. Although certainly not an ideal solution, it is a pragmatic approach which could support isolated communities to access such services. The coordinator of Adult Education in Ribáué noted they had suffered problems with the cost and supply of batteries for the tape players to operate; I would therefore advocate the solar or dynamo powered machines are used for wider-scale rollout.

9.2.3 Local Leaders as Transformational Actors

One of the main causes of vulnerability for rural families is the low productivity of their crops and the risks of crop failure. But farmers who have accessed agricultural extension training through associations have been observed to have greatly improved the productivity and robustness of their crops. This has resulted in both higher incomes, which can be invested in children’s education, and also resilience against crop failure.

One of the major constrains facing rural farmers is the inability to access agricultural extension workers. One way this could be partially combatted is to build upon the great social capital and leadership which local leaders
possess. They were frequently cited by communities and stakeholders at all other levels as being the main route to communicate between communities and various levels of government. Hence, if such leaders were to be trained to deliver basic agricultural extension advice to their respective communities, this could yield massive improvements in the durability and productivity of the staple crops of vulnerable families across the district. Given that most local leaders are themselves farmers, they should possess the necessary experience and existing knowledge to both receive and deliver such training.

9.2.4 Reducing the Risks of Animal Breeding

As described in the results and analysis section, animal breeding is a common livelihood strategy to create diversified and time-flexible income generation, which is predominantly used to pay for school related costs, which usually occur outside of the main income generating harvest season. Hanlon and Smart (2013) (2014 Forthcoming) have advocated for an increase in the commercialisation of animal breeding through contract agreements to create more resilient livelihoods and increased income generation. But such an approach does little to counter the inherent risk, encouraging families to (quite literally) put all their eggs in one basket.

Instead I advocate for a focus on supporting fish breeding using man-made ponds. The instances of fish breeding in Ribáué are still few and far between, but where they do exist they have proven to be a more reliable and sustainable form of livestock breeding. The containment of the fish in ponds makes them less susceptible to disease than chickens or goats, and according to the farmers they are relatively easy to maintain. Their rapid rate of reproduction also means they can be a regular income stream throughout the year, not just in times of hardship as chickens and goats are usually used for. Given that it is common in Makua culture to eat fish, the significant nutritional properties of fish coupled with the better income and reliability of breeding them, makes strategies to support expanding a fish market-chain could create better conditions for families to keep children in school.

But breeding fish, is dependent upon access to sufficient land, a water supply, and adequate feed for the fish. Therefore interventions should focus on improved irrigation, establishing a feed market, and provision of storage facilities. This would integrate well into the FDD priorities for creating new complementary market opportunities.
Bibliography


Appendix 1: CREATE’s Six Zones of Exclusion Conceptual Framework of Dropouts

(CREATE 2008)
Appendix 3: Ananga’s Typologies of Primary School Dropouts

(Ananga 2011)
Appendix 3 – Territorial Value-Chain Map of Nampula

Governo da Provincia de Nampula, 2014
### Individual Interviews

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>3rd April</td>
<td>Nampula</td>
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<td>Lindolfo Castel Agosto António</td>
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<td>29th April</td>
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**Group Interviews**

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