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**IMPORTANCE OF THE EDUCATION FOR ALL PROGRAMME
OF THE UNESCO, IN THE EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT OF
SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE DURING THE YEARS 2000-2015**

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Abstract

This investigation highlights the importance of the Education for All programme of the UNESCO in the education development of São Tomé and Príncipe during the years 2000-2015.

For this matter, it has been selected a number of reports of the UNESCO, the World Bank, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences of São Tomé and Príncipe, as well as some investigation articles of the education of São Tomé and Príncipe written by different researchers, as the base for this research project.

In the course of this investigation, some education indicators are going to be given as a comparison tool to measure the assessments of the development of the education in São Tomé and Príncipe during the years selected.

Key words: Sustainable Development, Education Development, Millennium Development Goals, Education for All, Escola +, Alfabetização Solidaria

Abbreviations:

STP: São Tomé and Príncipe

UN: United Nations

MDG: Millennium Development Goals

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

EFA: Education for All

WB: World Bank

IMF: International Monetary Found

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

ECE: Early Childhood Education

ECD: Early Childhood Development

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund WASH

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

IMVF: Instituto Marquês de Valle Flor

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1. Introduction

Education has proven to be a key factor in the development process of human civilization. The Declaration of Human Rights, in the year 1948, reaffirms the importance of the education in our societies and declares as a human right the following aspects: *“(1) everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.”* (Declaration of Human Rights, UN, 1948, Art. 26)

The general objective of this research project is to prove the importance that the Education for All programme, of the UNESCO, has had on the education development of São Tomé and Príncipe during the years from 2000 until 2015. For this matter, these two specific objectives were outlined:

- General assessment of the implementation and success of the Education for All programme of the UNESCO during the years 2000-2015, as well as the position of the UN and its member states towards the development of the African Continent.
- Outline the education situation in São Tomé and Príncipe before and after the Dakar period of the Education for All programme (2000-2015).

In the course of this investigation we are going to answer questions like:

- Which has been the main education programmes in STP during the period considered?

- Did these programmes meet the objectives of the EFA framework?
- What are the main challenges that STP faces in public education in the new agenda (SDG)?

Document Analysis is the methodology used for this investigation, with a problem oriented approach. For its realization, many important official documents from the UNESCO, UN, the Ministry of Education of STP, World Bank, UNICEF, and the IMVF institute, were taken as the basis to find the answers of the previous proposed questions, as well as many research articles about the education situation in STP written by different researchers. These articles assisted me to understand how has been the development of the education in STP, from a critical point of view.

Two interviews were preformed to corroborate collected information. The first interview was done to Mrs. Joana Martins, during the month of September, of the year 2016, to understand the scale of the cooperation projects of the Instituto Marquês de Valle Flor with the education development of STP.

The second interview was preformed to Ambassador and Executive Board of Director Member of the UNESCO, Mrs. Laura Faxas, in the headquarters of the UNESCO, in Paris, France, during the month of September of the year 2016. She, and the person in her staff in charge of the EFA programme in her Mission, helped me understand the structure of the EFA, as well as the governing bodies in charge of the programme within the UNESCO.

This investigation is divided into six parts: 1. Introduction; 2. Brief history of the education in Africa; 3. Education for All, past, present and future; 4. Education challenges in São Tomé and Príncipe; 5. Achievements in the education development of São Tomé and Príncipe and 6. Conclusion.

It is important to say that until this moment, no investigation has been preformed to study the impact of this programme in the development of the education of any specific country.

2. Brief history of the education in Africa

Education in the African continent has suffered many transformations throughout the years. As a result of the different European colonization in the continent, along came the western (Christian) education with the excuse that they were doing the local residents a favor educating them into the western manners.

“Europeans of the colonial age, and even after that, saw Africans as uncivilized and barbarous”. (Gwnfogbea, 2011, P.48) When the Europeans powers arrived, they did not consider the African culture and traditions to be worthy enough to be included into their education curricula. As a result, Western education intended to alienate the learners from their own culture and people, and Africans were not involved in the formulation of their own educational policies.

➤ African Indigenous Education

Before the Arabs and European arrival, African Indigenous Education was the education that they practiced. It was created to attend the realities of the community and was built according to their needs. African Education does not divide into specific assignments such as arts, sciences, agriculture, economics, arithmetic, etc. although these are implicit in educational ideas and practices. Indigenous African education wedges the children’s daily routines and the livelihoods of their family and community together, integrating skills and knowledge about all aspects of life into a single curriculum. African educational ideas and practices are entrenched in family traditions to permit parents, especially mothers, to be the first teachers and educators. They start with language (mother tongue) training and follow with sanitary and aesthetic education.

➤ Islamic-Arabic Education

Islamic-Arabic education was introduced in Africa by Ibaadi clerics from the Arabian Peninsula before the end of the first millennium. It began in North Africa and spread

to the Horn of Africa. Islam spread into West African communities from the North through trans-Saharan Muslim merchants as well as from the Horn of Africa by the 10th century.

Islamic education has a religious emphasis. The principal factor determining and even dictating the content and the development of the Islamic education system is derived from the belief that God's final judgment to humankind was revealed in its entirety through the prophet, Mohammed, and is enshrined in the Koran. (Gwanfogbe, 2011, P. 46)

Islamic education differed from Indigenous African education because it had a well laid out policy concerning all aspects of life in a society. The main principles guiding the content were of divine origin aimed at directing the conduct of the individual and the community to respect Allah's command. Since these commands were written, it became incumbent on Muslims to have literary education so as to gain fully from the religion.

Islamic education evolved into two sub-systems, the ulaama and the Madrassa, perhaps to separate adult- child spaces. (Gwanfogbe, 2011, P.47)

There is no doubt that even though a lot of force was applied in propagating Islamic religion, Islamic education and culture were not widespread in Africa. This can be explained by the fact that learning the Islamic scripture was not necessarily a condition for conversion into Islam. All that the convert needed was to accept the faith and start learning by recitation to say the prayers.

➤ **Western Christian Education**

Western education was introduced in most African countries by Christian Missionary societies. The technical, industrial and military superiority of the West came to be taken as signs of corresponding moral and spiritual superiority. It is therefore no accident that the early Europeans whether Christian Missionaries

or colonial administrators did not consider African culture or environment in planning of the educational curricula.

Not much was done to adapt Western Education to the realities of the pupils. The people's music, dance, habits and the entire culture were considered evil.

As educated Africans evolved, they felt that the practicality of the education policies introduced by the Europeans was invariably aimed at maintaining Africans in European servitude. These elites felt that the limitation of the scope of curricula reduced the hope for scientific and technological education considered essential for acquiring Western knowledge for development.

➤ **Post-colonial education until EFA**

After the independence of Europe, the African countries had a big challenge ahead in the terms of developing their education system and adapting to their own roots and culture.

A colonial past that is difficult to overcome: In Africa, the concept of “modern school” is closely related to the colonial period. One of the reasons why Africans have for long rejected what they called “white man school” is certainly due to the fact that this institution that was imported from the West was considered as a kind of acculturation and moral and physical repression for African children.

After international education development programmes started to appear in the year 1990 (World Conference on Education), African education has been a subject of many renovations. *The design and implementation of educational reforms have been performed with the purpose of ‘Africanising’ the school curricula by including national languages as the means of teaching and enhancing African history and culture. To measure the extent of these reforms, we should recall that in the former colonies, the use of mother tongues was formally forbidden by school rules.* (Gwanfogbe, Mathew B., 2011, P. 554)

Public education has suffered from funding shortage after the implementation of Structural Adjustment Plans in the late eighties and nineties. The international community and their cooperation programs have helped African countries in the development of their own education curricula, oriented to cover their specific needs, particularly focusing in primary education.

2.1 Position of the UN towards the development and support of the African continent

In the United Nations General Assembly of the of the year 2000, the member States of the UN gather to agree and sign their commitment to Millennium Declaration. This declaration reaffirms the mission of the UN in defending the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level; establish a just and lasting peace; respect the sovereign equality of all States; respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; respect for the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion; reiterate the compromise of the international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character; as well as to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people. (United Nations Millenium Declaration, UN, 2000, P.1)

To translate these commitments and values into action, they defined seven objectives to be addressed by the compromise of the member states with concrete and measurable actions. One of these seven objectives is ***Meeting the special needs of Africa***, and therefore, the following targets were stated in the declaration:

- We will support the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assist Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy.

We resolve therefore:

- To give full support to the political and institutional structures of emerging democracies in Africa.
- To encourage and sustain regional and sub regional mechanisms for preventing conflict and promoting political stability, and to ensure a reliable flow of resources for peacekeeping operations on the continent.
- To take special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa, including debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced Official Development Assistance and increased flows of Foreign Direct Investment, as well as transfers of technology.
- To help Africa build up its capacity to tackle the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other infectious diseases.

(United Nations Millenium Declaration, UN, 2000, P.7)

2.2 Education for All, A Framework for Action in Sub-Saharan Africa (Dakar)

In December 6, 1999, the *Conference on Education for African Renaissance in the Twenty-first Century* was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, to agree on a strategic framework for action for the countries of the Sub-Saharan African region. This framework for action included targets and policies that suited the especial needs of these African countries, for them to be able to achieve the common six goals to be accepted in the World Education Forum that were to take place in Dakar, Senegal, in the year 2000.

“Built often on a weak physical and institutional base, education systems in many African countries are vulnerable to natural and human made disasters that have hindered progress and, in some cases, even rolled back the achievements already won. Many countries have experienced austere economic adjustment programmes, an increased debt burden, a skewed global economic system, poor governance, inadequate and sometimes poorly used resources, as well as drought and floods. These factors, combined with impact of HIV/AIDS and armed conflict, have continued to have

devastating effects on the education systems of Africa.” (Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO, 2000, P. 25)

Some of the strategies determined in this conference by the countries of the region to reach the goals set for the EFA – Dakar were the following:

- A review and harmonization of existing policies and legislations
- An increase in the financing and rationalization of investment in education
- Development of national, sub-regional and regional institutional capacities
- A review of curricula and validation of African indigenous knowledge systems, values and skills
- The improvement of capacities for educational change
- Improvement of the teaching and learning environment
- The adoption of appropriate and cost-effective technologies
- The promotion and support of African-based educational research
- The development of genuine and sustainable partnerships

(Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO, 2000, P. 29)

For better results in applying these new measures, the governments of the countries of the region had to commit themselves to make the following changes in their national policies so this framework for action could be effective:

- End armed conflicts, ensure security, nurture a culture of peace and redirect military budget, demobilized soldiers, arms, equipment and other assets to constructive use, such as occupational training, adult literacy programmes, school repair and construction, public transport, water management and irrigation, etc.
- Promote enlightened, participatory, transparent and accountable governance, and prosecute corruption in all its forms, at every level of government and civil society
- Concentrate resources on teaching-learning processes and delivery systems that enhance efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and resource and cost sharing

- Invest more resources on basic education by an amount necessary for making a significant impact on quantity and quality
- Ensure that savings from debt reduction are invested in education and the social sector for the betterment of heretofore marginalized and excluded children, youth and adults
- Take the leading role in mobilizing resources, setting standards and facilitating participation of stakeholders in education, including communities, civil society, and the private sector and development partners
- Ensure that policies and the legislation are inclusive and supportive of quality education for all
- Create an enabling environment, including affirmative action, for full participation of women in educational leadership
- Develop institutional capacity for strategic resource planning, monitoring and implementation of the Framework for Action
- Remove legal, administrative and tax constraints hindering the publishing industry and promote indigenous publishers by eliminating custom duties on paper and other required materials

(Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO, 2000, P. 32)

3. Education for All, Past, Present and Future

Definition:

According to the definition given by the UNESCO at their web page, *“The Education for All (EFA) programme is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults.”* (www.unesco.com/educationforall) At the World Education Forum of the year 2000 celebrated in Dakar, 164 governments pledged to achieve EFA and identified six goals to be met by 2015. Governments, development agencies, civil society and the private sector are working together to reach the EFA goals.

3.1 Past:

➤ Education for All (EFA), Jomtien, 1990

At the World Conference on Education for All of the year 1990, at Jomtien, Thailand, a global education development programme was created named Education for All. This initiative was coordinated and sponsored by UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank. This programme adapted an *“expanded vision of basic education”, focusing on the education for children, young adults and adults inside and outside school, from the moment they are born throughout their lifetime.*”

(World Declaration on Education for All Framework for Action, UNESCO, 1990, P.4)

This was the first time in the history of the world that an education development programme was signed and ratified by 155 countries that committed themselves to achieve six common goals by the year 2000. *“This created a new era of international cooperation in education.”* (Education for All 2000-2015, Achievements and Challenges, UNESCO, 2015, P. 26)

This expanded vision of basic education is a complete vision of supplying the basic needs to fulfill a basic education level in all the member countries.

The Education for All programme of 1990 established the following six goals to be reached by the year 2000:

1. Expansion of early childhood care and developmental activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children;
2. Universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher level of education is considered as “basic”) by the year 2000;

3. Improvement in learning achievement such that an agreed percentage of an appropriate age cohort (e.g. 80% of 14 years-old) attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievement;
4. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to, say, one-half its 1990 level by the year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on female literacy to significantly reduce the current disparity between male and female illiteracy rates;
5. Expansion of provisions of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults, with programme effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioral changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity;
6. Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sustainable development, made available through all education channels including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication, and social action, with effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioral change.

(World Declaration on Education for All - Framework for Action, UNESCO, 1990, P.20)

During this decade, the EFA did not reach its proposed goals; the overall goal of universal basic education by the year 2000 was not met. In the Final Report of the programme of the year 2000, the director of the time of the UNESCO mentioned struggles of how the world changed dramatically during the decade of the 90's and how "the collapse of the Communism in Europe and the resultant end of the Cold War led to a change of the global map and major shifts in national alliances." (Final Report World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 2000, P. 9)

Another reason why the EFA goals for the year 2000 were not reached was the unfolding of conflict events that took place during that decade in many countries of the world, resulting into a refugee crisis and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, affecting the national commitment with the EFA programme by the year 2000.

3.2 Present:

➤ Education for All, Dakar, 2000

The World Education Forum was celebrated in Dakar, Senegal, in the year 2000. In this forum, 164 countries from around the world analyzed and discussed the then current situation of the education development, systems and policies as well as the results from the EFA Jomtien 1990. The future of education for those 164 countries for the next fifteen years was decided in this forum.

Based on the facts that “in the year 2000, more than 113 million children had no access to primary education, 880 million adults were illiterate, gender discrimination continued to permeate education systems, and the quality of learning and the acquisition of human values and skills fell far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies; youth and adults were denied access to the skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and full participation in their societies” (The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting our Collective commitments, UNESCO, 2000, P. 3)

The member states committed to reach the following goals by the year 2015:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and

complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
4. Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all, so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

(The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting our Collective commitments, UNESCO, 2000, P. 3)

As the goals set in the World Declaration on Education for All, in Jomtien, Thailand 1990, the goals set in the World Education forum in Dakar, in the year 2000 were not entirely met either.

➤ **Financial Investments and Cost of Implementation of Education for All – Dakar 2000-2015**

Achieving the six common goals of the EFA Dakar 2000-2015 programme was no easy task. A lot had to be done in such a short period of time to address such transcendental issues as to globalize education. The UNESCO and the World Bank estimated that it was needed \$8 billions of dollars per year to be able to tackle all of the issues identified in the World Education Forum and to improve education

quality. (Education For All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges, UNESCO, 2015, P. 29)

The international community acknowledged that many countries lacked the resources to achieve Education for All within the established timeframe. New financial resources, preferably in the form of grants and concessional assistance, needed to be mobilized by bilateral and multilateral funding agencies, including the World Bank and regional development banks, and the private sector. Debt relieve was proposed by the international community as a way to alleviate the economical pressure. (The Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO, 2000, P. 10)

The compromise of the governments with the EFA programme and the priority given by them to their commitment with the six common goals was the turning point of the success of the programme. The involvement of the civil society, NGO's, private sector, international donors and debt relieve was also a key point in helping the EFA be a successful programme in the international community.

3.3 Future:

➤ Incheon Declaration, Education 2030

After the experience of the EFA programme of the Dakar 2000, and the United Nations Millennium Declaration and MDG's, it was very clear that there were overlapping and shadowing of interests and common goals. To avoid this difficult kind of situations, both agencies (UN and UNESCO) synchronized their projects and unified to work together in a common goal. (Education For All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges, UNESCO, 2015, P. XV)

In the UN Summit of January 2016, the new world agenda for 2030 was presented with the conception of 17 universal commitments called the Sustainable Development Goals. One of these goals, SDG4: *“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”*, is directed to attend

the ‘unfinished business’ of the EFA agenda and the education-related MDGs, and addresses global and national education challenges. (Education 2030, UNESCO, 2015, P.5)

With 25 years of experience in the EFA programme (1990-2000, 2000-2015), the World Education Forum of May 2015 was celebrated in Incheon, Republic of Korea, to create the 2030 education agenda and the Framework for Action, as well as future priorities and strategies. It is inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion; protection; cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity; and shared responsibility and accountability. (Education 2030, UNESCO, 2015, P.5)

The Incheon Declaration reaffirms that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights. It is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfillment and sustainable development. It recognizes education as the key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication. It focuses their efforts on access, equity and inclusion, quality and learning outcomes, within a lifelong learning approach. . (Education 2030, UNESCO, 2015, P.8)

SDG 4: *“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”,*

Targets:

- **4.1** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

- **4.2** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

- **4.3** By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- **4.4** By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- **4.5** By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- **4.6** By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- **4.7** By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- **4.a** Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- **4.b** By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and

communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries

- **4.c** By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

(Education 2030, UNESCO, 2015, P.12-23)

4. Education challenges in São Tomé and Príncipe

In this case study we are going to analyze the education situation in São Tomé and Príncipe before and after the Education for All movement of the years 2000 – 2015. We are going to give a brief introduction of the general information of the country and at the end we are going to match the current situation of the education in STP with the expected goals of EFA.

4.1 General Information of São Tomé and Príncipe

São Tomé and Príncipe is a small island nation located in the Gulf of Guinea. This country ranks 144 out of 187 in the Human Development Index 2013 report; it stands among the group of least developed countries. The estimated population was 187,356 in 2012 (according the Census 2012). More than 66% of the population lives in poverty, and 11.5% lives in extreme poverty (Source: World Bank Data). The poorest quintiles are located at the more distant districts: Caué, Lembá and the Autonomous Region of Príncipe.

Almost 50 per cent of people active in the labor market are employed in the informal sector, earning below decent wages. Latest data from World Bank showed an unemployment rate in the country of approximately 13.6 per cent (Source: Central Intelligence Agency). The official data indicates that women have an inferior economic status and that inequalities exist in family and social responsibilities,

domestic work at the family level, weak education level and access to professional training.

São Tomé and Príncipe is advancing in the child survival and maternal care agendas. In the past decade, significant progress has been made in reducing the infant and under-5 mortality rates from 96 to 38 and from 124 to 63 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively. Acute respiratory infections are the leading cause of morbidity and mortality among children under five years (Source:Central Intelligence Agency). The maternal mortality ratio is 150/100,000 live births. The major causes of mortality are the poor quality of services and equipment, inefficient service organization standards, early pregnancies and ignorance by future mothers of the signs of a high-risk delivery.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country is low, at 1.5 per cent among adults ages 15-40. The Autonomous Region of Príncipe is among the most affected, with a prevalence rate of 2.2 per cent.

Chronic malnutrition and anemia remain significant problems, with one in four children (25 per cent) under the age of five suffering from chronic malnutrition. The prevalence of anemia in women 15-49 years of age (42 per cent) is considered high, and is equally high in children 6-59 months of age (42 per cent to 82 per cent).

Access to drinking water and basic sanitation varies according to the wealth quintile. Access to improved drinking water is estimated at 95 per cent for the wealthiest quintile, against 79 per cent for the poorest. The inequity in basic sanitation is even greater: 33 per cent of the population in wealthiest quintile has access to improved sanitation facilities, compared to 8 per cent in the poorest.

São Tomé and Príncipe have made significant progress in attaining the primary education Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target. Gross enrolment rate in primary education (grade 1-6) is 93 per cent, with gender parity. Only 85 per cent of students are enrolled in primary education and 48.5 per cent in secondary

education. There is a high loss of students between primary and secondary education: nearly one in three students do not enroll in the seventh grade and one in four does not pass the eighth grade. The additional costs for education may be a contributing factor.

4.2. Constraints of the Education System of STP

Historically, secondary and tertiary education during the colonial period was reserved for the children of the national oligarchy that worked in the private or public sector, whom could afford sending them away to Portugal to complete their studies. (Seibert, 2013)

The first national high school was created in the year 1952, and the first public university was open in the year 2014. Before this university, the only tertiary education that existed in the country was the Instituto Superior Politécnico de S. Tomé e Príncipe and the Instituto Universitário de Contabilidade, Administração e Informática – IUCAI.

In the article *“Cooperation, State and Civil Society in Education/Formation in São Tomé and Príncipe”*, written by António José Oliveira Martelo, the author mentions some of the constraints that the education system of STP faces in current era. Some of them are: the education supply in all levels is very low, lack of built structures for schooling purposes, lack of qualified human resources and financial, lack of updated textbooks. (Martelo, 2013)

Other important struggles of the education system in STP according to Martelo are absence of equipment and furniture inside education centers, as well as school and educational material, deficient educational and financial resources that can minimally meet the daily activities. Weak equity between boys and girls, high number of retentions, strong school leaving (especially by girls), poor family expectation about school, poor structure of the school system that prevents most students of completing secondary education. These constraints have a negative

impact in the number of students that completes pre-university education. (Martelo, 2013)

The author Martelo also mentions a very important issue in the correlation between graduated students and their economic role in the society, having a minimum impact the relation between school graduates and actual jobs in the working market of STP. Therefore, communities behave as if the school were a foreign body inserted into her womb.

Early childhood education is one of the most affected areas of the education system in STP. Early childhood education programmes are almost inexistent, mostly for 0-3 years old children. There are some kindergartens centers that are overcrowded, the excessive number of students per class is disturbing, having around 60 students in a class with very limited space, and receiving little individual attention from the teachers.

In the article *“Local Communities and Socio-educational Assistance for Children”* written by Maria João Cardona published by the II International Cooperation and Education Congress of the year 2012 (COOPEDU), the author talks about the history of the early childhood education in STP and compares it with the current situation. She mentions the struggles the education system of STP have, especially in the case of preschool education programmes. (Cardona, 2013)

Before the independence, the government issued a law that forbid mothers to take their children with them to work, so the solution was the creation of institutions that took care of the children, offering them education and caring while their mothers were at work. These centers were very popular since 1947 until the 1990s. After the independence, and with the privatization of the companies, these kinds of institutions closed and the government was forced to create an autonomous division in the Ministry of Education dedicated to childhood education that framed five departments: coordination, methodological support, administrative, health and nutrition.

Since 1991, the early childhood education in STP has been decadent, lack of potable water and any water in general affects many institutions, making the hygiene process of the centers a difficult task and resulting into the children getting sick. (Cardona, 2013)

The lack of trained teachers in the matter of children education makes it a difficult task to demonstrate to them that the practices they have been doing for so long are obsolete for the current needs of today's society.

4.3. Identified Problems in the Education System of São Tomé and Príncipe before EFA Dakar 2000

The Education System of São Tomé and Príncipe has been thoroughly studied during this investigation and the following problems have been identified:

- Very low number of early childhood programmes
- Lack of an identified budget and development area within the Ministry of Education destined for pre-primary education and early childhood programmes. These two education budget are included together with basic education
- Lack of learning material in pre-primary education
- Low quality of basic sanitation in pre-primary schools, as well as primary, secondary and tertiary.
- Lack of trained teachers
- Lack of special education programmes
- Shortage of school's installations
- Overcrowding of classrooms
- No universal primary education
- Untrained teachers and lack of certification
- Low salaries (teachers)
- Lack of training programmes for teachers

- Obsolete education curricula in general, pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education
- Shortage of textbooks and other learning materials
- High repetition rates
- Low survival rates
- Lack of incentives for students
- Low or inexistent schools in rural areas
- No pre-university preparation course (12th grade)
- High drop-out rates
- Low high school completion rate
- Low offer of universities and higher education center
- Low careers options at higher education centers
- Low technical education offer
- Low involvement of parents in the education development of their children

4.4 Analysis of Early Childhood Programmes

In a report made by the Ministry of Education of STP of their education status of the years 2005 – 2006, it was stated that for 0-5 years old, there was a deficit of 26% in accordance to fulfill the education demand of the time. In the year 2002, there were a total of only 42 nursery houses in the whole country and only 16 kinder-garden centers nationwide, in which there were 4,677 students signed in. (Ministério da Educação e Cultura Sao Tome e Principe, 2002)

The budget for early childhood programmes was included together with the budget for basic education, creating restraints in the decision making for improving these programmes. The absence of a specialized structure for early childhood education, limits its development possibilities. Continuous education for the teachers is almost inexistent and the lack of qualified human resources affects the quality of the education, as well as the poor installations and absence of education materials.

Health issues are of great importance in schools, especially in pre-primary education. Close to 90% of the children of STP suffers from intestinal parasites and also malaria. The health system of the country doesn't have the tools to combat these conditions. Health care inside the schools is very poor as well as the lack of basic sanitation.

4.5 Analysis of Basic Education (1st grade to 6th grade)

Even though primary education in STP should be mandatory and free, according to the 2/2003 law, in practice, that law was only put into practice in the year 2005/2006 when the Ministry of Education increased the offer to cover the demand of 5th and 6th grade. Thanks to the application of this law, STP reached a universal education at least for the first 6 first years of education, in the year 2010/2011. After 2005/2006, primary school survival rate increased from 62% in 2002/2003 to 116% in the year 2010/2011. (Ministério da Educação, 2014)

In STP, basic education is divided into three cycles (1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th, and 5th and 6th). Classes from 1st to 4th grade are normally taught in the same school installations and are the most frequented classes of all. In the school year of 2005-2006, there were 77 schools teaching the 1st to 4th grade classes with a total of 22,376 registered students, being 51.6% boys and 48.4% girls. From the total of the 683 teachers of that year, only 40.1% of them are certified teachers.

Historically, the 5th to 6th grade cycle has been the least frequented one. It is only taught in schools that give the three cycles and/or independent schools only for those levels. In the school year of 2005-2006, there were only 13 schools that taught these levels, with a registration of 7,747 students, being 49.9% girls.

The number of teacher with specific trainings for different subjects is very reduced, only 40% of the total certified teachers are specialists in specifics areas. This problem, together with the shortage of textbooks and other learning materials, as well as the obsolete curricula of the education system that had more than 18 years

of creation and had never been updated, is the result of the poor quality of the education of STP.

At the end of 6th grade, students are given a final exam similar to a national exam in difficulty, and the result of the poor education throughout the years is a 25.5% of repetitions in 6th grade. The retention rate is 61.8%. (Ministério da Educação e Cultura Sao Tome e Principe, 2002)

4.6 Analysis of High School Education (7th grade to 11th grade)

The first high school was created in the year 1952; but because STP was a country in which the economical source of wealth was mainly the plantation, high school education remained undervalued by the Portuguese powers.

During the colonial period, the rich elite of STP used to send their children away to Portugal to finish their high school studies, and continue their university education.

The Liceu Nacional (National High School) was created in the year 1960 with a capacity for 600 students where they could attend from 7th to 11th grade. Since its creation, it was overcrowded with 5,700 students. It is situated in the capital of the country (Sao Tome). It was the only public school where students could attend from 7th to 11th grade in the same place.

Thanks to cooperation programmes with Portugal, 12th grade was introduced in the year 2010 in this high school. This was the only public school where students could attend 12th grade until 2011.

High School education in STP is still almost a luxury for many, there are only two National High Schools where students can attend from 7th to 12th grade all together and they are located only in the capital of the most important districts. In the other districts, high schools are only located in their capitals, and they just offered some of the courses, normally just from 5th grade until 9th grade. If students want to finish

their high school, they would have to enter the few private education centers that offer them, or move to one of the only two district capitals that have the National High Schools.

The quality of the education in high school is also very poor. Kids that does have the opportunity to join in, have a very bad background level, resulting in a high repetition rate (40%). (Ministério da Educação e Cultura Sao Tome e Principe, 2002)

The curriculum hadn't been revised in more than 22 years, it is obsolete for the current era and it prevents the students from being at the same level of other fellow colleagues from other countries. Only 18% of the students graduate from high school.

Close to 73% of the teachers don't have the preparation needed to teach. This together with the overcrowding of the classes and the lack of incentive for students to graduate are one of the biggest constrains of high school education in STP.

The survival rate in high school is very low. From 86% of the students that sign in 7th grade, only 15.2% of this group makes it until 12th grade. The high dropout rates and repetition rates, respectively 24% and 20%, and the insignificant completion rate of 13%, explain that only 55.2% of STP young people attending secondary education in 2011. (Ministério da Educação, 2014)

4.7 Analysis of Higher Education

After the democratization o STP, during the 90's started to appear the first centers of higher education in the country. Currently there are four institutions of higher education: the Instituto Universitário de Contabilidade, Administração e Informática (IUCAI, private institution opened in the year 1992), Instituto Superior Politécnico (ISP, public institution opened in the year 1996), Universidade Lusíada de São Tomé (private institution opened in 2006) and the Universidade Pública de São Tomé e

Príncipe (UPSTP, public institution opened in 2014).

As we can see, public higher education in STP is very limited; there is only one public university, which before it used to be the Instituto Superior Politécnico.

The population of the students that attend higher public education is mostly men, being them a 70% of the registered students of the year 2001 at the Instituto Superior Politécnico.

The careers options offered are also very narrowed, and they are in the form of Bachelor Degrees. In the latest 15 years, the tendency is that the students that graduate from high school opt to apply for different scholarships offered through cooperation programmes to continue their education.

4.8 Analysis of Adult and Technical Education Programmes

According to the National Institute of Statistics of STP, in the year 2005 the illiteracy rate was 27%, from which 75% of them were women (INE-STP 2005). There are more literate people in the urban areas than the rural ones.

In the year 2001, in cooperation with Brazil, the Alfabetização Solidaria (Solidary Literacy Programme) programme was created. This programme has been of great success in STP, having a 95% of completion.

Illiteracy index experienced a reduction especially of the female part; the rate of abandonment that until 2005 was in the order of 36.6% fell to 5.38% in 2010 the number of literates has increased with some relevance to the female gender.

➤ Technical Education

The Centro Politécnico de Formação Profissional (CPFP) is a technical institute where students that have until 6th grade can study general mechanic, auto-mechanic, civil construction and electricity. The student population is mostly men.

The capacity of the center is for 120 students, but in the year 2002 there were only 37 students registered, being 70% of these men. Due to the little diversity of the programmes, the popularity of the institute is very low.

The Liceu Nacional (National High School) manages to teach only 5 qualifying professional courses for students who complete 9th grade. They are less than 5% of students who undertake this route due to poor supply.

5. Achievements in the Education Development of São Tomé and Príncipe during the EDF Dakar period (2000-2015) – International Cooperation Programmes

In this segment, the most important international cooperation programmes that have helped develop education in STP during the EFA Dakar years will be mentioned, according to the EFA goals.

- **Goal 1: Expand early childhood care and education**

As we have seen in the course of this investigation, early childhood programmes in STP were almost inexistent. There were not enough kindergarten, nurseries and pre-school centers in general. The ones that were operating were doing it without the proper conditions.

After the year 2000, and the commitment of STP with the six common goals of the EFA, the international cooperation programmes have helped the country in the development of Early Childhood Education and Development programmes, increasing the access to ECE and improving the quality of the existing centers.

Among the most important international cooperation programmes for this end, we can mention the following:

- **UNICEF**

Purpose: *Preschool Education Act and the Statutes of Education Institutions* operating in the same level of education. Universalizing pre-school and basic education.

Partners: World Bank, UNESCO, Ministry of Education of STP, Ministry of Education of Brazil, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio (Brazil), Ministry of Education of Portugal, Universidade do Minho (Portugal) and local STP NGO's.

Goals:

- To provide high quality technical assistance in the implementation of the ECD programmes.
- To universalize pre-school and basic education.
- To open more education centers.
- To enhance the conditions of the existing education centers

Investment:

- Successful funding of US\$1.1 million from the Global Partnership for Education

Achievements:

- In the school year of 2010/2011 there were a total of 8, 591 students registered for pre-school education, in comparison with the school year of 2001/2002, where they were just 4,699. This confirms an increment of a 6.1% yearly of new pupils.
- Provision of key technical expertise in the development of an ECE curriculum, pedagogical materials, the definition of minimum standards for pre-schools, and the development of a teacher-training course (preparatory and distance/face-to-face).

- The Government has committed to the universalization of pre-school, and increased its budget allocation to the department of pre-school, particularly for the rehabilitation of pre-schools. (UNICEF,2014)

However, the pre-primary education has an even weaker performance because only one third (30.9%) of STP children enter this cycle. The quality of learning is not yet desirable. Poor qualifications of teachers and inadequate facilities are still a source of this weakness.

- **Goal 2: Provide free and compulsory primary education for all**

This is one of the two goals that STP achieved from the EFA commitment. Thanks to the enforcement of the 2/2003 law on education, and the help of the international community, today STP can offer universal free and compulsory primary education for all.

UNICEF has played an important part on the achievement of this goal in STP. Their cooperation with training programmes for teachers, as well as for the technics of the Ministry of Education of STP has helped them to understand the need for renovation of the basic education of the country.

Even though much has been done to grant free universal basic education in the country, basic education is a continuation of pre-primary school.

Nevertheless, much remains to be done in the field of quality of learning and teaching, as the repetition rate continues to double digits (12%). The ratio of 79 students per class is simply alarming, as is the number of teachers without specific training, which is located in 57.5%. In such conditions it is difficult to provide a quality education.

- **Goal 3: Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults**

One of the most important cooperation project that has helped improve secondary education in STP is the project Escola +, sponsored by the Instituto Camões, the

Portuguese Cooperation, and the Instituto Marques Valle de Flor during the year of 2009 until 2013.

This important project has helped improve the curricula of the secondary education of STP, as well as the quality of the education. It helped introduce to the country the pre-university preparation course (12th grade) in the public high schools.

➤ **Escola + Contributions:**

- The rehabilitation of the school network and the provision of equipment, although incomplete, give way to a better teaching practice of the theoretical and practical subjects.
- Updated curricula and programmes well designed. However, it is necessary to promote a closer articulation with primary education.
- Adaptation of textbooks for pupils.
- Creation of legislation, in the frame of the curricular reform, namely the one aiming to improve the pupils' assessment and support for teachers, thereby ensuring appropriation of the innovations introduced in the system.
- The activities organized by the Project contributed to the reinforcement of the capacities of the teachers that participated in the training courses. (IMVF, 2013)

The cooperation of Taiwan has also made a great contribution in the development of secondary education in STP. They donated the construction of the second National High School in the country, located in the district of Mé-Zóchi.

There are still many aspects that secondary education has to improve in STP. Shortage of schools, overcrowding, high repetition rates, high dropout rates, untrained teachers and other important issues that still attacks the development of the secondary education in the country.

- **Goal 4: Increase adult literacy by 50 percent**

In 1975, the year of independence of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, the illiteracy rate stood at 80%. Fifteen years later, it dropped to 30%. Today, it is estimated literacy rate of about 95.4% in the population aged 15-24 years and adult literacy at around 88%.

This positive result was possible mainly thanks to the support of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency dispensing teams of Brazilian university volunteers to form and frame national technicians, using a designated model Alfabetização Solidaria (Solidarity Literacy).

- **Alfabetização Solidaria**

Goals:

- 1) Promote youth and adult education, contributing to the reduction of illiteracy and the expansion of global education of youth and adults in São Tomé and Príncipe.
- 2) Promote the expansion of personal autonomy of young adult population to manage the knowledge of math skills, the reading and writing of the Portuguese language for the daily lives of people and communities.
- 3) Socialize, enhance, preserve and articulate the knowledge of native languages for young people and adults.

Achievements:

- From 2001 to 2008, the programme served more than 10,000 people, illiterate or poorly educated.
- On average 60% of the trainees in the initial literacy course continue their schooling process enrolled in public schools in the country, especially the younger ones. (ALFASOL, 2008)

- **Goal 5: Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015**

This is the second goal of the EFA that was reached by STP during the Dakar period of 2000 – 2015.

Gender parity index in the country has had a positive variation since the year 2000 until 2015. In the year 2002 the index was 0.95 and in the year 2014 it was 0.94, which shows that this issue hasn't been of great impact in STP.

- **Goal 6: Improve the quality of education**

A great number of reforms have been made to the education system of STP in the last 15 years. International cooperation has been of great importance in the advancements made education speaking in the country.

Even though all of the efforts and work done until the moment, there is still much to do to improve the quality of the education offered in STP.

Challenges for the education development in São Tome and Principe:

- Construction of new education centers to cover the demand
- Improve sanitation quality
- Offer medical service of quality in the education centers
- Provide clean drinking water
- Provide enough education material
- Update education material and text books
- Adapt education curricula to the local needs
- Provide continuous training for teachers
- Improve salaries and working conditions for teachers

These are some of the urgent essentials that the education system of STP needs to supply to be able to improve the quality of the education offered.

6. Conclusions

Throughout this investigation, the impact of the Education for All programmes of the year 2000 – 2015 is registered as a positive contribution for the development of the education of São Tomé and Príncipe

Important international cooperation programmes have played a significant role in the advancements made in the last fifteen years in the education development of the country.

It is important to understand that besides everything that has been done for the sake of improving the education system and the quality of the education of country, there are still many aspects to develop and strengthen in the near future.

With the previous experience of STP in the EFA programmes, the achievement of the new SDG goal on education and its targets are now a more plausible dare to conquer.

The Ministry of Education of STP have recognized that the political instability and regular government changes have had adverse impacts on policy formulation, implementation, follow-up, programme delivery, and facilitation of dialogue with development partners.

For this matter, it is not only needed a strong commitment of the international community for the cause of developing the education of STP, but it is vital to have a greater support of the local government, where they can grant and prioritize the continuation of the new policies, and reinforce the implementation of the before mentioned.

The involvement of the civil society is also very important; taking into consideration that there is not enough support from the Parents/Teachers Associations to request from the local authorities the accomplishment of the promised changes.

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