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An examination of the suitability of PADev as a method for effective participatory assessment of the development of higher education institutions: the case of Eduardo Mondlane University (1976-2016)
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Citation

César, N. A. T. (2025, December 11). *An examination of the suitability of PADev as a method for effective participatory assessment of the development of higher education institutions: the case of Eduardo Mondlane University (1976-2016)*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4285334>

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Appendix XXI: English Abstract

Abstract

This study examines the suitability of the participatory assessment of development method - PAdDev - employed at Eduardo Mondlane University (EMU), in Mozambique. The assessment of the development of EMU is both socially and academically relevant. As the first established national university that trained manpower and produced scientific knowledge, its impact was meaningful for the consolidation of the newly acquired independence and the construction of the Mozambican nation and society. Academically, EMU represents a historic milestone in the establishment of the higher education system in Mozambique. Therefore, EMU's development influenced the development of the higher education system itself and the legal and regulatory framework that enabled the emergence of other higher education institution in Mozambique.

Using the participatory approach to assess the institution's development path implies applying a long-term evaluation perspective that allows tracking changes, factors, and actors that influence the wider context of institutional transformation and its impact. In so doing, a broader picture of the development and change has been constructed. The assessment outcomes are useful at the very least in a twofold way: (i) gathering information on the improvements in the institutional decision-making process, and (ii) improving the implementation of programmes and projects.

The study has examined the suitability of the PAdDev method for effective participatory assessment of the development of EMU, addressing the following research question: *In what ways can the PAdDev method of assessing development and change at EMU in a participatory way be effective in measuring the impact of development interventions at EMU?* Specifically, the study investigated: *i. Which development interventions were implemented at Eduardo Mondlane University between 1976 and 2016? ii. How did the development interventions change Eduardo Mondlane University between 1976 and 2016? iii. What is the stakeholders' assessment of the impact of development interventions at EMU?*

A non-probabilistic sample design employing a purposive sampling strategy was applied for the selection of the study units, using the following criteria: (i) period of existence, (ii) the relevance of the study field, and (iii) the volume of support received. Six units were selected amongst academic, research and administrative units, specifically the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Sciences, and the Faculty of Engineering, the African Studies Centre, the Centre for Academic Development, and the Central Services.

A non-proportional quota sampling strategy was employed for the selection of study participants. A prior stratification of the study population was performed. The criteria for the selection of participants included: (i) gender, (ii) occupational category, (iii) function, and (iv)

contractual regime. Four categories of participants have been involved in the study, namely the directorate's board, staff (academic and non-academic), alumni, and external stakeholders.

A combination of methods was employed for data collection so as to triangulate and elicit meaningful information. It included the review of relevant documentation, semi-structured interviews, focus groups through PAdDev workshops, open-ended questionnaires, and 'crowdwriting'. Content analysis of the data was performed. Data processing entailed the transcription and systematisation of the data in an Excel database format. The transcripts were imported, coded, systematised, and analysed using NVivo 12. The data analysis enabled the generation of analytical categories, and identification of the emerging patterns and themes to sustain the interpretation.

The findings of the study were aggregated in compliance with the objectives set. With regard to the primary question: *In what ways can the PAdDev method of assessing development and change at EMU in a participatory way be effective in measuring the impact of development interventions at EMU?* The results showed that the PAdDev method alone for data gathering did not fully suit the assessment of a higher education institution like EMU when it comes to measuring the impact of development interventions, regardless of its set of tools to do so. Human factors did influence and determined the level of the methods' effectiveness. Additional methods were required to complement its efficacy. Despite this limitation, the scope of PAdDev tool enabled the contextualised reconstruction of the institution's history from the perspective of the university community. In addition, PAdDev created a platform for social interaction among the study participants, promoted collective learning, and produced knowledge about the context, factors and actors promoting change. The feasibility as well as the usefulness of the PAdDev approach as an alternative approach for assessing change and development of a given area, specifically an organisational context was proven undeniable, since it provides a holistic, long-term, and shared view on development. Despite its virtues, an effective use of the PAdDev method demands, from the participants, a strong commitment, engagement and historical knowledge towards the PAdDev objectives and results. At EMU, this proved to be a problem due to the limited availability of key informants, their lack of commitment, and their limited experiential and factual knowledge.

With regard to the first part (i) of the question – *Which development interventions were implemented at Eduardo Mondlane University between 1976 and 2016?* – six categories of interventions were identified, namely consortium and networks, funds, projects, programmes, partnerships, and events. Whereas the category of consortium and networks involves foreign foundations and local universities, the category of partnerships includes businesses, foreign governments and agencies, foreign universities, multinational companies, and local governmental institutions. There were referred three types of funds: donor, governmental, and institutional. Projects include capacity building, infrastructure, staff development, research infrastructure, international mobility, curriculum design, teaching innovation, scholarships, training, and equipment. Programmes goals include institutional capacity building, library

support, research funding, teacher training, human resources development, technical assistance, human resources supply, research culture and infrastructure, and general funding. Events, specifically scientific events, give external visibility and show the scientific production of the institution.

Concerning the second part (ii) of the research question – *How did the development interventions change Eduardo Mondlane University between 1976 and 2016?* – the results show that the occurrence of the changes relates to international, regional, and national events, of political, social, economic, and environmental nature and circumstances. Amongst those, are the Independence of Mozambique (1975) and the Civil War (1977-1992), the enactment of the Higher Education Law 1/93 (1993), the new higher education institutions (after 1993), the First General Election (1994), EMU's Strategic Development Plan (1998), and the World Economic Crisis (2008). The Independence of Mozambique triggered a reactive sequence of events, and these highly influenced EMU's transformation and development path. The Independence of Mozambique and the nationalisation policy adopted afterwards resulted in the decline of the number of university teaching staff and students, mainly Portuguese teachers and students and discontinuation of some courses. These circumstances led the university to open up to the outside world to ensure technical, material and financial support to perform its mission. The Civil War prevented the expansion of the university across provinces, as part of the physical infrastructure was destroyed. Since the provision of public higher education was initially limited to EMU located in Maputo city, the university candidates from all over the country moved to Maputo, generating pressure on the housing stock, and leading EMU to expand its housing infrastructure.

The changes that transformed EMU resulted from various local initiatives and external interventions, mainly programmes (MHO, NPT, Italian Cooperation, SIDA, and *Desafio*), projects (CBP, BUSCEP, and NICHE-032), and donor funds (FDI and FNI). Staff development, infrastructure building, curriculum development and others resulted from the implementations of some of the referred initiatives and interventions. The impact of the interventions might be perceived differently according to the intervention's scope, but from a holistic perspective, the interventions' outcomes has produced a measurable impact on the institutional effectiveness.

Regarding the third part (iii) of the research question – *What is the stakeholders' assessment on the impact of development interventions at EMU?* – the study revealed that the stakeholder's assessment of the impact of the external interventions, mainly based on the usefulness, relevance, and long-term effect, was positive. Stakeholders' valuation of the interventions was influenced by personal and institutional gains. They were more likely to rate as 'positive' the interventions implemented in their own units with long-term effects. That is the case of MHO and SIDA, which they perceived as contributing to the internationalisation of the university, along with promoting local changes and fostering institutional development. Notwithstanding the previous, stakeholders valued negatively those interventions, such as the Bologna

Curriculum Reform, that, from their perspective, had led to institutional crises, discontinuous change, and paradigmatic shifts.

One overall conclusion stands out: despite the many foreign funded interventions and the limited financial support from the Government of Mozambique, decision-making towards the institutional growth was very much a 'local' affair. In the first decade after the country's Independence, the university sought to establish itself as a Mozambican institution, train its teaching staff and establish its teaching programs with the technical and financial support of foreign partnerships. After 1990, with a more consolidated academic and administrative structure, EMU's leadership and decision-making processes became more democratic and participatory.