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USAID COMMUNITY LIBRARIES PROGRAM (CLP)



BACKGROUND

The overall primary school completion rate in Mozambique is an alarmingly low 15% through grade 7 (30% in urban areas; 7% in rural areas). The overall literacy for Mozambicans over 15 years old is 58% and only 45% for females specifically. Completion rates have stagnated within the last 3 years due to inadequate infrastructure, poor teaching methodologies, limited instruction and time in school and high absenteeism among students, teachers and school administrators. As a result, less than 5% of students demonstrate the desired grade-level reading proficiency by grade 3. Poor education in early grades not only impacts an individual student's life, but also impedes Mozambique's economic growth and the overall well-being of its citizens.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

To address these low literacy rates, the USAID Community Libraries program (CLP), establishes community libraries and develops literacy activities throughout Mozambique. It serves local children of all ages but targets primary school students in grades 1-3, youth, parents, and other community members. The activities undertaken by the program include creating and training CLP teams, library stock distribution, after-school reading tutoring and mentoring programs with read-aloud, self-directed reading, interactive reading activities and games. Active since 2013, CLP has typically relied on Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) who live in local communities, often speak the local language, and have extensive community networks which extend to education personnel and community leaders, help to mobilize communities around improving early grade reading. PCVs also help provide supplemental education services in the communities where they serve.

COVID pivot: In 2020, Mozambique was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools and community libraries were closed leaving children with no formal education or regular access to literacy activities. Additionally, PCVs serving in Mozambique were evacuated back to the US. In order to accommodate the challenges posed by changing circumstances, the project's local Mozambican community library volunteers quickly adapted by developing radio programs to help children in the early stages of literacy skills.



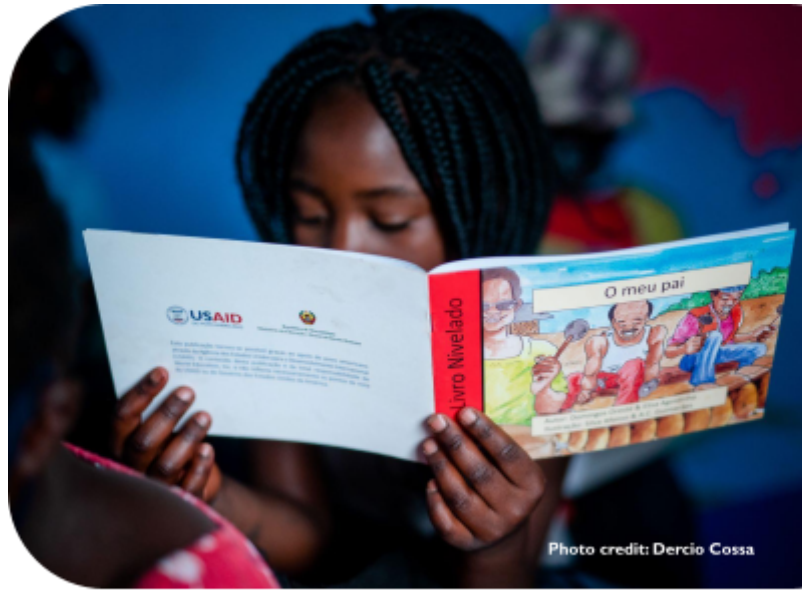
From February to October 2021, 11 community radio stations aired two 30 minute sessions a week, for a total of 82 sessions broadcasted by each community radio. They reserved time at the end of each session to allow parents, children and community members to call in with feedback and questions. In response to demand from individual communities, more in-person activities with COVID measures in place are opening.

CLP trains community members and mentors to develop literacy exercises using local materials like these bottle caps.

EXPECTED RESULTS AND IMPACTS

CLP's desired impact includes strengthened community capacity to conduct supplementary early grade reading activities, increased number of textbooks, and other teaching and learning materials provided with USG assistance. Results in 2021 include:

- 11 community radios providing CLP radio programming;
- 12 local Mozambican counterparts (previously trained in early grade reading teaching methodologies) trained to facilitate radio sessions;
- 45 districts reached by the radio programs, in 8 out of 10 provinces of Mozambique;
- 82 childhood literacy radio sessions aired by each of the 11 community radios engaged;
- In-person early grade reading instruction provided to more than 1,500 students, including 1,110 grades 1-3 students;
- Over 9,100 reading materials and picture books distributed to 6 primary schools, 9 community libraries and an orphanage in Nampula, Zambézia and Manica.



Many children participating in CLP activities had never had access to picture books with relatable content like this USAID-supported book now available in many CLPs.

<p>IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:</p> <p>U.S. Peace Corps</p>	<p>GOAL:</p> <p>To improve students' early grade reading outcomes in grades 1-3</p>	<p>LIFE OF ACTIVITY:</p> <p>Dec 2019 - Dec 2022</p>
<p>USAID FUNDING:</p> <p>\$899,111</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS:</p> <p>Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane, Manica, Zambezia, Nampula, Niassa, Tete</p>	<p>USAID CONTACT:</p> <p>Rosa Vique, rvique@usaid.gov</p>