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# ***IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION (SABER)***

## **BACKGROUND**

Mozambique teaches ever greater numbers of children in its primary schools, but survey results indicate continuing obstacles to meeting literacy goals. In fact, the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH) 2016 National Assessment showed that only 4.9% of third graders reached the required level in reading and writing, a figure down from 6.3% three years earlier. Education Ministry data suggest that poor outcomes are a result, at least in part, of requiring rural children with no previous exposure in Portuguese to learn reading and writing skills in the official language, rather than in their home language. In fact, only 1 in 10 children speak Portuguese at home (INE, 2018). Poor outcomes make clear the need to expand education in learners' home languages, to help children acquire foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and other subjects. The USAID-supported SABER activity contributes to MINEDH's effort to gradually expand bilingual (Portuguese and mother tongue) education services, targeting children in rural locations who have limited exposure to Portuguese before entering primary school.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The USAID-funded Improving Learning Outcomes in Primary Education (SABER) Activity will harness local expertise and local systems to rapidly improve student learning outcomes through a bilingual education program in Nampula and Zambezia provinces, the two most populous of Mozambique's ten provinces. World Education, Inc (WEI) and its consortium partners will (1) support MINEDH to deliver quality remedial instruction to students in grades 1 to 3 (the 1st cycle of primary education) through a sustainable basic education program; (2) extend basic education interventions to grades 4 to 6 (the 2nd cycle of primary education) and train teachers to support students to consolidate foundational reading and math skills, transferring these skills to Portuguese and progressing to higher level skills; and (3) increase instruction time and reduce teacher absenteeism through engagement with education services, government, civil societies, school leaders and communities. In summary, SABER will help MINEDH roll out bilingual education as inscribed in its 2020-2029 Education Strategy.

## **EXPECTED RESULTS AND IMPACTS**

By 2027, the final year of the program, SABER seeks to achieve the following results:

- Over 50% of Grade 3 students achieve minimum competencies in first language (L1) reading and math scores, as measured by National Assessment instruments;
- Over 50% of Grade 6 students achieve minimum competencies in Portuguese (L2) Reading and Math scores, as measured by SACMEQ2, with bilingual schools outperforming Portuguese-only schools;
- 2,407,362 learners, 3,879 schools, and 27,205 teachers supported;

- All 1,974 schools from *Vamos Ler* (previous USAID-funded bilingual education program) graduate from SABER, having demonstrated outstanding student achievement in Portuguese reading;
- Sustainable bilingual education (BE) expansion in 1,905 schools demonstrating a cost-effective approach that MINEDH can expand with additional donor support;
- MINEDH officially adopts all program materials; as of 2024, MINEDH is fully responsible for printing all student books and tracking book distribution with the SABER Track and Trace platform;
- Evidence-based interactive instructional approaches proven to build student L1 and L2 reading skills are integrated into MINEDH pre- and in-service teacher training strategies;
- District Attendance Action Plans implemented to engage education services, local government, and civil society to improve student and teacher attendance;
- Teacher and student attendance improved: 90% of SABER schools with over 80% attendance rates as tracked on SABER-developed District Data Management Platform;
- Learning, attendance, and retention equity indicators show statistically significant improvement;
- Adopted policies that support increased time dedicated to reading and math instruction; and
- Action research findings support policy decisions on teacher training and coaching, formative assessments, remedial instruction, and gender-sensitive instruction approaches.

<b>IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:</b> World Education Inc. (WEI)	<b>GOALS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The main purpose of this Cooperative Agreement is to provide support to improve learning outcomes in primary education (SABER).</li> <li>● Beneficiaries: 3,879 schools; 2,407,362 learners and 27,205 teachers in 39 target districts.</li> </ul>	<b>LIFE OF ACTIVITY:</b> July 11, 2022 - July 11, 2027	<b>USAID FUNDING:</b> \$60,400,000.00 over 5 years
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