



**Save the Children in Partnership with
Avaya Charitable Fund**

Establishing Community Book Banks/Preserving Local Histories for Children in Mozambique

**Final Report
September 2021**

Children display the beautiful storybooks created with the support of Avaya. These very special bilingual books not only encourage reading, but preserve community histories for these girls and boys and the generations that follow.

Our Deepest Thanks

Save the Children is deeply appreciative of the steadfast support Avaya and your employees have shown to us over the years. Whether enabling us to build classrooms for girls or provide children with safer, more resilient spaces in which to learn, you have helped children in our sponsorship communities have access to resources they would otherwise not have, resources that will help them enjoy happier and more fulfilling futures. This wonderful Reading Camp/ book bank project builds on our earlier joint efforts in Mozambique, not only encouraging reading and learning, but helping to preserve the histories and cultures of the communities we serve, engaging children in their families' pasts to help pave the way to an exciting future.

The Project

With Avaya's generous support, Save the Children undertook to establish four community book banks for children in grade 1- 3 (ages 6-8). The book banks were established in 50 Reading Camps in our Sponsorship programs in Nacala and Nacala-a-Velha – 10 camps in Nacala and 40 camps in Nacala-à-Velha. The project was conceived as a means to collect local stories and community histories and produce bilingual children's storybooks. The books are intended to be used at reading camps and local fairs to build children's interest in reading and in their heritage, encouraging them to enhance their learning skills both in school and when not in school.



Books produced through the project.

The project began on April 30, 2020 and ended on June 30, 2021.

Project Context and the Impact of COVID

In March of 2020, shortly before the project was scheduled to begin, the Mozambique Government announced a state of emergency due to COVID-19 and instituted measures to prevent infection and spread of the virus. The first positive COVID-19 case was confirmed in Mozambique in March, and the number of cases quickly grew and spread across the country.

Nampula, the area where this project was implemented, was the first province in the country to manifest community transmission, and Save the Children's main office in Maputo registered its first case of COVID at the end of September 2020. Thus, restrictive measures were decreed causing interruption of the program's activities on the ground. Most of the changes we conducted during the declared state of emergency were in response to COVID-19 prevention and mitigation needs.

In October 2020, the Ministry of Education re-opened government schools for grade 12 and then gradually for other older children. However, primary schools (grades 1-7) have not yet reopened.



Unfortunately, the pandemic had a significant impact on the implementation of this project, especially as the Ministry of Education and Human Development, which played a key part in the approval process, was not available to provide their input within the initial proposed timeline.

In addition, we could not collect the photos to be used with the printed stories, because we received approval of the final versions of the texts late so that the supplier selected to do the printing did not have enough time to finish the work and deliver the books for distribution to the communities according to the original timeline. They ultimately committed to having the books available in December 2020, and we committed to adding the photos at that time.

Nevertheless, despite the need to reschedule some activities, we are pleased to report that all planned activities were ultimately completed and the project was deemed a great success..

Project Accomplishments

1. Coordination meetings were conducted with key stakeholders at different levels (Provincial Education Department, Nampula Teacher Training Institute, school management team and community members) on production of local stories and printing of bilingual local history books. The meetings were also used to engage stakeholders and to underscore the importance of the availability of these books for children's learning.
2. Technical staff from the District Education Services worked with teachers at the Reading Camps to collect 33 stories told by adults (parents) to children during the camp sessions. Once the stories were collected, they were submitted to the Ministry of Education Evaluation Committee for approval. The Teacher Training Institute of Nampula and the Provincial Director of Education then selected the 14 best stories that also accorded with the national curriculum and Save the Children Literacy Boost methodologies. The selection criteria for the bilingual storybooks were: a) Stories with strong cultural aspects; b) Stories with a connection to early-grade topics; c) Stories with short sentences to make them easy for children to read and understand.
3. The first translations, revisions and illustrations of the 14 selected storybooks was done with the Teacher Training Institute of Nampula, Provincial Education Director and Save the Children staff. The books were written in the Portuguese language and translated into the local language, Emakwa, so the children can read them in both.

4. The first editions of the bilingual storybooks were printed. Only one copy of each book was initially printed to show to the Ministry of Education and seek their approval in terms of content, adaptations and other technical details.

5. A workshop for sharing the first drafts of the 14 history books was held with the Evaluation Committee of the Ministry of Education and Human Development to seek their approval and feedback. Because we had approval from the Ministry of Education to start the project before we had the books, we then returned to the Ministry to show them the books and get approval to start printing and distributing.

6. Second revisions and illustrations of the storybooks were done to incorporate the feedback of the Ministry of Education.

7. A second edition (printing) of the 14 bilingual, local history books was done.

8. Delivery of the 14 titles was made to the communities. In total, 4,429 copies were printed to benefit 8,478 children (boys 4,408 and girls 4,070). Each Reading Camp received 7 copies of each of the 14 titles, for a total of 98 books for each Reading Camp. These books were planned to be distributed in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the children are using them this year (2021).

9. We trained 43 volunteers (23 men and 20 women) in proper use and conservation of the storybooks in the communities (Reading Camps).

10. We collected testimonials from children, teachers and community members.

Lessons Learned

- Through this intervention, the Ministry of Education of Mozambique recognized they could mine the local environment to increase community participation in the teaching and learning process by providing important resources (storybooks) made locally but available for use in others communities in the country. In addition, through this process, parents came to value the importance of education more and the need to participate in the process.
- The production of local stories, based on community experiences, allowed the documentation and conservation of the popular stories of the community, which have heretofore only been transmitted orally from generation to generation.
- This project has taught the program that our participation in documenting local stories not only strengthens the acceptance of the program in the communities, but also gives value to the community itself as we preserve their stories and make the stories part of their children's learning rather than merely sharing stories from other places.

- Involvement of the Evaluation Committee of the Ministry of Education and Human Development was a good approach for appropriation of the materials produced. This is an idea that can be replicated at the national level in other projects.

Quotes from the Field

"The booklets are very good, and we like them very much. They have people with hoes like papa and mama going to the farm. They also have beautiful stories that I have heard my grandfather telling at home. We will now know all the stories from the booklets our aunties share with us and use to teach us to play, sing and read here at the camp. And we will know them from our uncle who tells us beautiful stories, too. Here at the Camp we will learn many good things." – Nando and Gerinha, children at the reading camp in Nacala district



"As the person who tells stories here in this community, I see that my stories will now always be valued. The children will always know how to respect the stories of our community and will be able to make good use of them in adult life, even in their professional life in the future. And they will know that the Reading Camps are a good thing for them and for other children and will make sure they don't drop out of school." – Aly Armando, Community member-Storyteller, Nacala district

"The booklets will help children to understand their language, as they do not speak much Portuguese, especially in the early grades. Also the pictures in the booklets reflect the reality of the communities. It is very good to produce content created by the communities." – Inácio, teacher, Nacala district

Thank you, Avaya, for partnering with us on this unique project and what it gave to both the children and to their community, helping the children learn while preserving community legacies. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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