LURDES MUTOLA FOUNDATION

Mais Escola para Mim "More School for Me" Girls Scholarship Program

(PILOT PROJECT)

September 2007

ACRONYMS

AFDB	African Development Bank
FDC	Community Development Foundation
FLM	Lurdes Mutola Foundation
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DPEC	Provincial Directorates of Education and Culture
LMF	Lurdes Mutola Foundation
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
INE	National Statistics Institute (Mozambique)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar (Currency)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Mais Escola para Mim* "More School for Me" scholarship program aims to address broad gender disparities in education to give girls greater opportunities to begin secondary school, perform well and complete their studies. This project will provide targeted assistance to female students in two secondary schools, by providing scholarships to girls who have completed the 7th grade and who are experiencing strong financial difficulties to continue on to the 8th, 9th, and 10th grades over the next three years.

A three year pilot program, *Mais Escola para Mim* is structured over the minimum timeframe required to bring lasting benefit to its grantee beneficiary targets. When the scholarship recipients reach the 10 grade, an opportunity will exist to extend their scholarships to the 12 grade, allowing them to graduate from secondary school, an accomplishment obtained today by less than one out every thousand girls in rural schools.

The program will be managed by the Lurdes Mutola Foundation (LMF) in cooperation with community based structures to support and protect these girls in the educational system against the many obstacles that lead them to leave school. These obstacles include extreme financial hardship, sexual abuse and harassment, and complex discriminatory social and cultural norms that reinforce gender inequalities. To address these obstacles, *Mais Escola para Mim* integrates scholarship assistance with measures to bring about accountability and social change through after-school programs and strategic partnerships with community organizations and school committees.

The Lurdes Mutola Foundation is committed in its education programs to work together with its partners to create positive practices, policies, and social attitudes that promote equity for girls in education. The Foundation aims to influence the transformation of education systems in Mozambique to increase access, retention, and the quality of education for all girls within the Mozambican school system.

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Country:	Mozambique
Target Provinces:	Maputo, Manica, Sofala, Zambezia and Cabo Delgado (focus on rural and peri-urban areas)
Project Concept Title:	***Mais Escola para Mim*** "More School for Me" Girls Scholarship Program
Funding partner:	Lee & Gund Fundation

INSTITUTION DETAILS – LURDES MUTOLA FOUNDATION

Institution name: Lurdes Mutola Foundation – Mozambique.		
Type of Organization: Non-Profit For Public Purpose Organization.		
Date of Constitution: Res. 85/2002, 05th December First Fiscal Year: 2004.		
Audited Reports Available: (Year 1) 2004; (Year 2) 2005; (Year 3) 2006.		
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1. THE LURDES MUTOLA FOUNDATION

The Maria de Lurdes Mutola Foundation was established in 2001 to be "an instrument of social solidarity, a philanthropic body with altruistic purposes, able to bring together efforts, and channel them towards identifying and promoting young and talents in the fields of education, sporting, social and economic arenas". The foundation's genesis stands on the role of effective support and assistance that Maria de Lurdes Mutola, Patron and President of the foundation, received from local and foreign organizations that changed her life from an impoverished young girl to become a world sports icon and first Olympic gold medal winner for Mozambique (800m). Maria de Lurdes Mutola believes that with support, opportunity and determination young people from Mozambique can overcome poverty, change their lives and be part of community development.

The Foundation empowers its intended beneficiaries of adolescent people, especially young women, through self-sustaining capacity building projects based on the idea that helping people help themselves is the most effective and pragmatic way to achieve results.

LMF is an institution which plays different roles depending on the type of challenges and scale of response required. With different partners LMF does direct implementation, co-implementation and grant making with technical support and assistance to other small and community based organizations and groups in Mozambique. It facilitates access to funds and technical assistance for communities and for other non-profit making organizations who also seek to help improve the living conditions of the poorest strata of the Mozambican population. Its objectives are attained through the communities themselves and/or national NGOs and in partnership with groups and institutions at various levels of Mozambican society who share its objectives and its values.

The foundation's programs are not limited to providing financial resources, but rather links the role of promoting development through transmitting values, knowledge, skills and resources that allow experimentation and change of attitudes; facilitating models of development based on the creativity of individuals in the community, and which can be replicated strengthening other local groups, building leadership and wisdom, managed in a sustainable manner with participation and transparency.

The LMF has defined its strategic objectives as follows:

1. Promote youth-lead entrepreneurship initiatives.

2. Provide incentives for adherence to and participation in education.

3. Promote sport and the utilisation of sport as a catalyst for behavioural change in youth.

4. Strengthen the institutional capacity of the LMF.

The *Mais Escola para Mim* "More School for Me" Scholarship Program falls within the 1st and 2nd strategic objectives of the LMF aiming to improve opportunities for women's education, leading to their social and economic empowerment as well as greater gender equity across Mozambican society.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project will increase the retention of female students in two secondary schools, by providing scholarships at these two schools to enable high-school aged girls who have completed the 7th grade and who are experiencing financial hardship to continue on to the 8th, 9th, and 10th grades over the next three years.

3. BACKGROUND

Mozambique's potential for development rests heavily on the improvement of education for its youth – 54 percent of Mozambicans are aged 19 or under (INE 2005). However, of the roughly 10.5 million school-aged children in Mozambique, less than 4.5 million are enrolled in school[1]. Even more startlingly, less than half of the students who enroll in primary school stay in school long enough to begin in secondary school and less than one percent graduate from 12th grade (INE 2005). These figures are significantly more extreme for girls: though girls and boys enroll in 1st grade in a roughly equal ratio, by only 43 percent of 8th grade students in 2006 were girls, and by 12th grade only 37 percent were girls. Girls are significantly more likely to drop out of school than boys (INE 2006).

The aggregate effect of this trend is that women in Mozambique have far lower levels of education than men. The national literacy rate for women is 39 percent, compared to 65 percent for men. In rural areas, only 3 to 23 percent of women are literate, depending on their age group (Handa et al 2004, 5). Despite the severity of this problem, targeted spending by the Mozambican government to address this problem has been inadequate: in 2006, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) allocated just 0.3 percent of its budget to address gender inequality issues (MEC, 2006). Furthermore, the government is currently focused on expanding the availability and quality of primary rather than secondary school education (2004 AFDB, 15). More investment and focus on girls' secondary school education is critically needed.

Programs alleviating families' monetary constraints have been shown to be an effective method to increasing school retention (Handa et al 2004, 2). However, reducing school fees alone does not have a significant impact on matriculation unless combined with policies to reduce the burden of other more significant expenses, such as school lunches, supplies, books, and uniforms (World Bank 2005, 2).

[1] The first figure represents the population below age 19 in Mozambique, and the second figure represents the country-wide enrollment rate in primary and secondary school in 2006 (INE, 2006).

The *Mais Escola para Mim* Scholarship Program thus aims to tackle the issue of girls' education in a comprehensive manner in two rural secondary schools by giving 20 girls who are unable to begin secondary school due to financial constraints the opportunity to do so. The project is structured to take into account and address the complex financial, social, security, and cultural reasons that lead girls to leave school.

4. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Girls stop attending school due to a number of factors, the largest of which are financially related. The costs of matriculation and school supplies are often too expensive for families with multiple kids, so parents must pick and choose which children to send. In this situation they most often favor boys, as they are expected to become the primary wage earners of their families. In addition, in times of financial difficulty the opportunity cost of attending school may seem too high: girls may be expected to stay at home to complete domestic work or help with income generation, most commonly contributing agricultural labor (Viana, 2007; Seguino 2005, 14). Furthermore distance most rural kids must travel to go to and from school is great—the average one-way distance for rural kids to a school is 4.5km (UNICEF 2007). This incurs large time and transportation costs to school attendance. When the distance to school is too far, boarding school is many times too costly to be an option. Thus the main reasons girls do not remain in school are monetary costs and time costs (Handa et al 2004, 10).

In addition to these financial factors, high school girls face several other strong barriers to school completion due to condition within schools. The education system itself is often poorly set up and riddled with corruption. In part because working conditions for teachers are poor and teachers often receive irregular salary payments, girls often face requests for bribes from teachers and are at a high risk for sexual abuse and frequent harassment from both teachers as well as fellow male classmates (DFID 2000, 172; MEC, 2007). Despite the fact that the Ministry of Education and Culture has issued a step-by-step decree with the punitive actions to be taken against perpetrators of sexual abuse and harassment in schools, in most cases, this document is not widely circulated or implemented and these incidences remain unpunished as well as undocumented (Muchine, 2007).[2] Finally, in some cases, schools are in a state of disrepair and lack basic privacy and security

[2] Efforts to gage the level and frequency of sexual abuse in schools indicate that the risk of abuse is high: Save the Children and Actionaid, for example, registered 30 cases of sexual abuse in Mozambican schools over a 10 week period in 2006 (US Department of State, 2006).

conditions for girls, such as separate bathrooms, and curtains in boarding school dormitories (Viana, 2007).

Furthermore, cultural norms and ideas about the importance of education often combine with other factors to lead girls to drop out. To many rural families, the benefits of formal education for females is not readily apparent, especially compared to a traditional education that emphasizes the importance of marriage, bride-price, and initiation rites (AFDB 2004, 28). As a result, child marriage is a significant problem in many rural areas among impoverished families seeking new sources of income (AFDB 2004, 28). Some 60 percent of girls with no education are married by the age of 18, while only 10 percent of girls in secondary school are married by this age (ICRW 2006, 1). Overall, 21 percent of girls are married by the age of 15 nationwide (Population Council, 2004, 1). Second, the discount placed on female education influences many families to enroll their girls late—only 35 percent of girls are enrolled at age 6 compared to 43 percent of boys--leaving them with fewer years of education when they are forced to leave school (World Bank 2005, xi). The phenomenon of late enrollment for girls is particularly pronounced in rural areas (*Ibid*). In addition, teenage pregnancy and child prostitution are other poverty-related factors that may prevent girls from continuing school. These problems are exacerbated by a culture of gender inequality as a norm that makes it difficult for girls to be assertive and defend themselves against the problems they face both inside and outside the classroom (Machel 2001, 88).

Many of these factors affect girls' performance in school, which may lead them to believe they are not capable of taking much away from their education and eventually drop out. Girls domestic and seasonal labor tasks detract from their ability to study at home, and make them more tired at school. Teachers, particularly male teachers, typically have less faith in female students, and females are culturally expected to be more reserved, which affects their levels of confidence, participation, and subsequently feedback from teachers in school (Aikman 2005, 47). Pedagogical practices, textbook curriculum, and examination structures and content typically reinforce these attitudes (*Ibid*, 7). Another factor contributing to underperformance is the fact that all curriculum is in Portuguese, a language that is rarely spoken at home, where girls spend all their time outside the classroom. Finally, harassment within schools has been shown to have a strong negative effect on girls' performance (AFDB 2004, 15).

5. MAIN OUTCOMES TO INCREASING GIRLS' EDUCATION

Though the obstacles girls face to receiving an education are steep, the benefits they gain from doing so are high. Studies show that there are extremely large returns to improving levels of secondary school education for girls in particular, both for the girls receiving education as well as for society, more broadly, in the short as well as the long term.

Education levels have long term implications for the future of Mozambique's growth and development for a number of reasons. First, education of adult household members is one of the most important determinants of poverty levels (Handa et al 2004, 1). Second, increased women's levels of schooling in rural areas have been shown to improve children's health, nutritional intake, and levels of schooling (Handa et al 2004, 72).[3] This is because education increases women's income earning capacity, increasing the opportunity cost of marriage and giving them greater bargaining power in relationships, allowing them to allocate more family resources to children and better protect female children (Seguino 2005, 11). Data consistent across countries has shown that a small increase to women's income is several times more effective in improving children's livelihoods than a comparatively large increase in men's income (Seguino 2005, 11).[4] In addition, prolonged education has been shown to have a strong positive effect on the health and development of adolescent girls (Population Council 2004, 1). Finally, it gives women a chance to combat child marriage, which is strongly linked with child pregnancy and HIV infection among Mozambican girls (*Ibid*, 1).

On the whole, changing the present culture of inequality through education to increase the number of female decision makers in households stands to bolster childhood education prospects for Mozambicans in the future (Pfeiffer et al 2001, 84). In the long run, increasing secondary school education for young girls stands to reduce the concentration of female labor trapped in labor-intensive agricultural work characterized by low levels of productivity as well as increase the productivity levels of those who continue to work in the agricultural sector (ADFB 2004, 23; Handa et al 2004, 8). Thus in the long run, because increasing health and human capital stimulates growth, increasing gender equality in education will also promote growth (Seguino 2005, 12). This program will thus contribute to that end for Mozambique.

[3] According to one study, literacy among household heads increases the probability of school enrollment by 18 percent (Handa 2004, x).

[4] For example, a case study in the Ivory Coast found that increasing women's income by $10 had a greater or equal positive effect on children's well-being as a $110 increase in men's income. (Hardinot and Haddad 1995, cited in Seguino 2005, 11).

6. RATIONALE AND PROGRAM DETAILS

Mais Escola para Mim, Portuguese for "More School for Me", fully addresses the reasons girls drop out at school as well as bring about the full benefits of continuing their education by integrating scholarships with measures for accountability and social change. The program will provide assistance to girls in two areas where a great need for the program is identified through input from partner organizations. The small scale of the program will allow for its implementation in a manner that takes into account the circumstances of each young girl scholarship recipient as well as those of the communities involved, so that the program is accepted by community groups and organizations that can serve as watch dog and accountability groups protecting the girls within the program. Thus the program will assess the barriers to school attendance that girls face according to the conditions at each school.

The *Mais Escola para Mim* Scholarship Program contains several key elements beyond financial assistance that make the program effective. First, a female social worker selected and hired by the Lurdes Mutola Foundation will serve as a liaison between the girls, the school, and the community and will work to strengthen the networks of communication and information flow between these groups.

Because the number of trained female teachers significantly increases the enrollment rates for girls in rural Mozambican schools, the social worker will take on a role model, leadership, and protective role similar to that of a female teacher (AFDB 2004, 35). The social worker will meet with scholarship students as a group and individually on a weekly basis, and increase girls' confidence levels at school despite inequitable pedagogical practices, as well as their awareness of the types and the nature of sexual harassment.

To efficiently connect with the school, the social worker will engage with the schools' Conselho de Escola, which are the school's main councils/committees, comprised of the director of the school, several prominent teachers, and parents. This council decides how to deal with cases of sexual abuse and harassment and has the authority to take disciplinary action. The social worker will thus circulate the MEC's decree among this committee as well as to all school faculty.

To engage with the broader community, the Lurdes Mutola Foundation will send literature on the program to community organizations and women's groups, who could help rally the community to pressure schools to take punitive action against teachers to engage in sexual abuse or harassment of students.[5]

[5] This strategy worked for Oxfam GB in the Zambézia province in which the organization successfully rallied students and parents to push for the dismissal of a teacher who had sexually abused a student.

Girls' completion and performance in the scholarship program will be enhanced through a number of measures that compliment the social worker's role. As mentioned above, the girls' weekly meetings with the female social worker will increase the girls' level of security in school. Furthermore, the weekly group meetings will serve as an opportunity for the girls at each school to tutor and teach one another to understand concepts they missed in class and were perhaps too afraid to ask about. These sessions can also be held in the girls' mother tongue as well as Portuguese, to help ease the language barrier student's face to school completion. To assuage the effects of the girls' domestic and seasonal labor obligations on their school performance, the scholarship program will give students the option to be *internatos*, or boarding school students, and require them to attend study hall sessions as one of the conditions of their scholarship. This will create a space and time for them to focus on their schoolwork, away from pressures that emerge from outside of the classroom.

Mais Escola para Mim will use aspects of the scholarship recipient selection process to change negative perceptions and challenge the prevailing cultural attitudes about female students' capabilities. Though all the scholarships will be need-based and given to girls from particularly poor families, the selection process will also favor girls who are the right age for their corresponding grade, to foster the notion that girls are as intellectually capable as boys at the same age. In addition, the process will favor girls with good performances and high levels of interest in math and science, which will serve as a positive example of girls' achievement capacities to other girls, as well as to boys and teachers in these schools. Finally, the process will favor students who are doing well, but whose parent's are not literate or have minimal education to help break the cycle of uneducated parents failing to educate their children.

7. PROGRAM GOALS

Mais Escola para Mim has the following broad goals:

- To increase opportunities for young girls who have completed primary school to begin secondary school in a safe environment, increasing incentives for girls in school to work hard and persevere despite the many barriers to their education
- To create the strong linkages between students, the school, and communities to increase levels of accountability and awareness across the schools and communities involved.
- To challenge cultural attitudes within the schools and communities involved as to the value and necessity of female education.

- To obtain further information about the reality that girls face with respect to school attendance to support future projects providing targeted assistance to girls in secondary school.

8. PROGRAM OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

Mais Escola para Mim will have the following outputs:

- Twenty girls' scholarships, 10 at each school, including school materials (books, textbooks, writing materials, paper, etc.), school equipment and school uniforms (when needed).
- Regular after-school support led by social workers with counseling sessions, leadership coaching, study hall and collaborative student sessions.
- Information dissemination to students, teachers, parents, and community organizations.
- Bimonthly visits by the Lurdes Mutola Foundation to schools to increase the accountability levels of the social workers and all participants.

9. PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

- Scholarship recipients
- Their families
- Classmates
- Teachers

10. THE PROCESS

I. *Project Development*

1. Continued Research
2. School selection based on a great need for the program
3. Visit the schools and research school conditions
4. Project Design
    a. Work with local communities to structure programs at each school according to the needs of each community
    b. Work with the MEC to develop programs the ministry and school directors will accept
    c. Creation of orientation programs/literature for social workers, students, and communities
5. Project Planning
    a. Set dates for implementation of milestones/phases
    b. Detail the costs of the implementation of these milestones

II. *Implementation*

1. Selection and hiring of local female social workers to serve as leaders for support groups
2. Program publicity among eligible girls in primary feeder schools
3. Collection of applications
4. Application processing and scholarship recipient selection
5. Social worker orientation/training with a member of the Lurdes Mutola Foundation
6. Scholarship recipient orientation and formation of support groups

III. *Program Evaluation*

1. Foundation will make bimonthly visits to the schools to collect periodic program evaluations. These reports will include:
    a. Student Evaluations:
        - Two-month evaluations they complete on the experience of going through 8th grade, with place to discuss any changes in their perspectives from the beginning of the year

- Reports of any instances abuse and harassment
- Reports of any pressure from parents or classmates that is affecting their school performance
- Evaluations of the weekly meetings as well as study hall conditions
- Evaluations of the social worker's effectiveness as well as that of their teachers
- Essay contests on related topics, in which the winner is rewarded with a prize.

b. Teacher Evaluations:
   - Will report the current grades of scholarship recipients
   - Their thoughts on the scholarship program

c. Social Worker Evaluations:
   - Their progress in establishing linkages between the schools, parents, and community
   - Reports on scholarship recipients behavior and any problems encountered
   - Reports on external pressures from teachers, classmates, or parents that the social worker has seen

2. Final evaluative measures of the program will include:
   a. The success rate of girls who finish the eight grade with the scholarships granted to them.
   b. The final set of student, teacher, and social worker evaluations on their experience in the program
   c. The capacity for the 8th graders who completed the program to move on to the 9th grade, whether through another program or similar means

11. RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk 1: The principals and other officials in charge of the school with will the program, saying there is no space for it in the school. MODERATE RISK

Strategy: Work with the MEC, and the Provincial Directorates of Education and Culture (DPEC) in particular, to establish a clear space for the program in these schools.

Risk 2: Competent social workers are unavailable in the community for hire. LOW RISK

Strategy: Search in the surrounding areas of the province. Use community organizations to find and contact women potentially suitable for the job.

Risk 3: Social worker is irresponsible or corrupt. MODERATE RISK

Strategy: Use bimonthly visits and evaluative reports to ascertain if this is the case, make the social worker's responsibilities clear once again, and use members of the Conselho de Escola to keep watch over the social worker. Replace the social worker if necessary.

Risk 4: The school conditions are such that *internato* students are at a very high risk for harassment and abuse. MODERATE RISK

Strategy: Circulate the MEC's decree on the disciplinary actions the school is obligated to take should any incident occur to both students and teachers. Request teachers to sign a document acknowledging receipt.

Risk 5: Parents of scholarship students do not lessen the domestic or agricultural work that the scholarship student must complete, which strongly affects student performance. MODERATE RISK

Strategy: Instruct the social worker to meet with the parents of the student and discuss with them the benefits of the student's education and the conditions of her scholarship.

Risk 6: Student decides to leave the school and the program before completing the 8th grade. LOW RISK

Strategy: Remain vigilant, using student, teacher, and social worker reports, of the progress and performance of each student in the program. Instruct the social worker to work with each students to resolve the problems she is facing before the become so serious as to force the student to leave school.

Risk 7: An incident of abuse or harassment occurs, and the Conselho de Escola refuses to take any actions in response. HIGH RISK

Strategy: Use the linkages and networks built by the social worker to put pressure on the Conselho de Escola to act according to the MEC's decree on the matter.

12. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

This program will leave an opportunity open to renew these girls' scholarships on a yearly basis after successful completion of the three-year program, allowing them to graduate from secondary school. An opportunity will also exist to expand similar programs to more schools, tailored according to the successes and lessons learned from the *Mais Escola para Mim* program.

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