



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION COUNTRY PROFILE

# Mozambique

PREPARED FOR

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AIR	American Institutes for Research
BETTER	Better Education through Teacher Training and Empowerment for Results
CESC	Centre for Learning and Capacity Building Civil Society
CODE	Canadian Organization for Development through Education
EGIDS	Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale
EGR	Early Grade Reading
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IFP	Instituto de Formação de Professores
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
L1	First Language
L2	Second (or additional) Language
LOI	Language of Instruction
MINEDH	Ministério da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano
REEP-A	Research for Effective Education Programming-Africa
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
ZIP	Zona de Influência Pedagógica

## INTRODUCTION

Enhancing reading skills in the early grades is a key education priority for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Despite some improvements in access and learning in sub-Saharan Africa, literacy levels in the early grades remain low, and progress has been slow. Efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the early grades have led to an increased focus on the role of the language of instruction (LOI). Recent research has demonstrated that mismatches between the LOI and the language that students and teachers speak and understand best, can hamper effective teaching and learning (University Research Co., 2019). Thus, it is critical to understand the LOI policy and linguistic context of a country when trying to design programs to improve literacy and learning outcomes.

Currently, USAID supports **Early Grade Reading (EGR) initiatives in 19 countries across sub-Saharan Africa**. Many policies in these countries have recently shifted toward adopting the mother tongue as the language for initial literacy acquisition, and then transitioning to a second or additional language, such as a regional, national, or international language, as the subsequent LOI.

Government policies and strategies related to teachers and LOI reflect country priorities, approaches, and objectives for early grade literacy. During the design-phase of donor-funded reading programs, decisions are made regarding the manner and extent to which national policies are incorporated into project design, and when alternative approaches or additional elements need to be considered. However, government policies on LOI, and other information relevant for informing design, are often difficult to find and are not easily accessible.

The LOI country profiles aim to address this need. The profiles will allow the USAID Africa Bureau, USAID Missions, and partner organizations to quickly understand the country's linguistic and policy context in order to design an approach that most effectively helps improve EGR outcomes. These profiles, designed for 18 of the countries with current or upcoming USAID EGR initiatives, aim to clearly and succinctly describe and illustrate the country's linguistic landscape and official LOI policy. This country profile in particular provides information on language policy and practice in Mozambique.



## LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

According to SIL International's *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, there are 43 established languages in Mozambique, 41 of which are indigenous languages and two of which are nonindigenous languages. Of these, three are considered institutional languages, 23 are developing, and 11 are vigorous, while six languages are in trouble (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2020). For more information on how languages are categorized on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), please see Table 1.

Article 10 of the 2004 Constitution designates Portuguese as the national language of Mozambique. Of a total population of 30 million, approximately 2.9 million Mozambicans speak Portuguese as their first language (L1) and an additional 7.34 million speak it as their second or additional language (L2) (Eberhard et al., 2020).

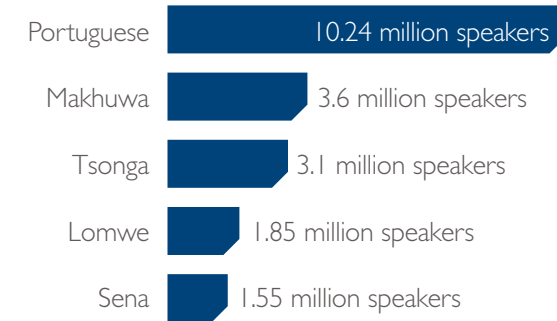
Mozambique is a multilingual country, with many citizens speaking different indigenous languages as their L1. Widely spoken indigenous languages include Makhuwa, with 3.6 million speakers; Tsonga with 3.1 million speakers; Lomwe with 1.85 million speakers; Sena with 1.55 million speakers; Makhuwa-Meetto with 1.14 million speakers; and Chopi with approximately 1.09 million speakers. Furthermore, there are approximately 120,000 speakers of Mozambican Sign Language, a developing language, which equates to approximately 0.4% of the total population (Eberhard et al., 2020). For more information on the geographic dispersion of indigenous languages across Mozambique, see Figure 2.

**Table 1. Assessing Language Vitality: EGIDS Scale**

<b>Institutional</b>	The language is used by institutions beyond the home and community
<b>Developing</b>	The language is in vigorous use and with literature in a standardized form
<b>Vigorous</b>	The language is not standardized but it is used among all generations
<b>In Trouble</b>	Intergenerational transmission is breaking down
<b>Dying</b>	Only fluent users, if any, are middle-aged or older
<b>Extinct</b>	The language is not used

Source: SIL International, n.d. For more information, please see: [www.ethnologue.com/about/language-info](http://www.ethnologue.com/about/language-info)

## Most widely-spoken languages in Mozambique

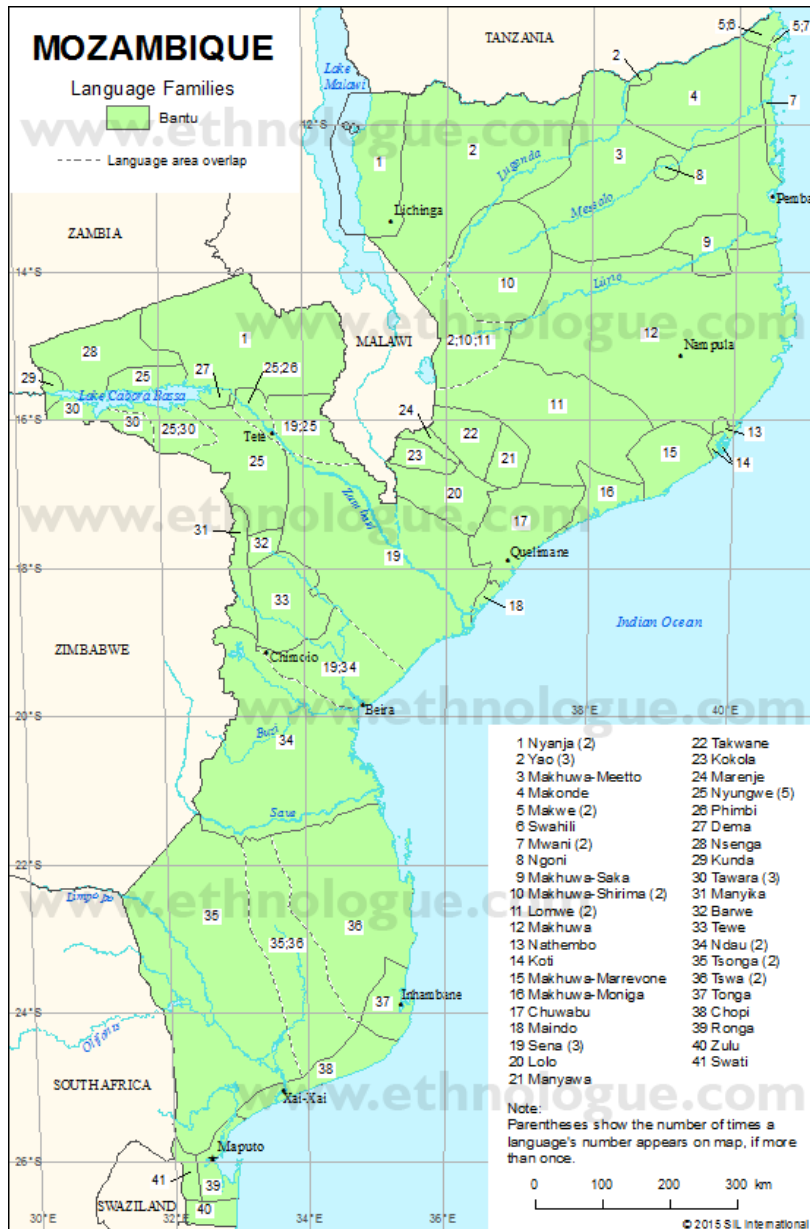


Source: Eberhard et al., 2020

**Figure 1. Map of Mozambique**



Figure 2. Mapping of Indigenous Languages in Mozambique



Source: Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). (2020). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Twenty-third edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION POLICY

The 2004 Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique declared Portuguese to be the official language, but emphasizes the important role that national languages play in maintaining cultural and education heritage as well in fostering national identity (Republic of Mozambique, 2004). The importance of national languages was reinforced with the adoption of a bilingual education model in 2003, allowing students to learn in their LI during Grades 1 through 3, while developing their knowledge of Portuguese by teaching it as an additional subject. Portuguese is introduced as the LOI in Grades 3 and 4 for two additional subjects, physical education and mathematics respectively, and is slowly transitioned to become the primary LOI by Grade 6 (MINEDH, 2020a). As of 2017, the bilingual education program was offered in 16 local languages, which were chosen due to political considerations and whether their orthographies had been standardized (Creative Associates International & the American Institutes for Research [AIR], 2017).

The Ministério da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano's (Ministry of Education and Human Development, or MINEDH) Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for 2020-2029 noted that the bilingual education program is now implemented in 1,907 schools, covering every province in Mozambique (MINEDH, 2020b). However, the program has faced considerable challenges in implementation, namely a lack of teachers trained in local languages, a lack of teaching and learning materials in local languages, and community attitudes toward teaching in local languages (Creative Associates International & AIR, 2017; MINEDH, 2020b). Additionally, in a language mapping exercise of Nampula and Zambézia provinces conducted in 2017, primary teachers reported significant mismatches between their LI and their students' LI, complicating implementation of bilingual education (Creative Associates International & AIR, 2017). In these cases, teachers often used Portuguese in the classroom, despite the language policy, because it is often the common language between the students and teachers. The 2019-2029 ESSP recognized these challenges and noted MINEDH's intention to address these issues in its continued roll-out of the bilingual education program.

According to MINEDH's *Plano Curricular do Ensino Primário*, Mozambican Sign Language and Braille are to be used to enable students with special needs to access schooling (MINEDH, 2020a). Furthermore, the 2019-2029 ESSP reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to inclusive education and specifically the use of Sign Language in order to ensure education is accessible to all children in Mozambique (MINEDH, 2020b).

## CLASS TIME

In 2018, the education sector in Mozambique was restructured, with primary school shifting from covering seven grades to six grades and secondary school now covering six grades, as opposed to five (Universalia, 2019). Under the new system, primary school lasts six years and is divided into Cycle 1 (Grades 1-3) and Cycle 2 (Grades 4-6). This reform was set to be introduced gradually throughout the country, and the extent of its implementation is unclear (Universalia, 2019).

The primary school curriculum is organized around three areas of study, namely communication and social sciences; natural sciences and mathematics; and practical and technological activities (MINEDH, 2020a). Seven subjects are included within these three areas of study. For more information on the subjects included in the primary curriculum and the LOI used for each subject, please see Table 2.

Primary school students receive 30 hours of instruction per week. The MINEDH employs a late-exit bilingual education model, whereby students are gradually transitioned from receiving instruction in their L1 to their L2. Within this model, the first cycle of primary school focuses on developing students' local language proficiency, with 12 hours per week of dedicated local language instruction in Grades 1 and 2, and 10 hours per week in Grade 3 (MINEDH, 2020a). Local language instruction decreases to five hours per week in Grade 4, and then two hours per week in Grades 5 and 6 when Portuguese becomes the primary LOI.

**Table 2. Mozambique's Bilingual Education Program, by Subject and LOI**

Subject	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Portuguese Language	Oral	Oral	Oral, Reading, and Writing	Reading and Writing	Reading and Writing	Reading and Writing
Mozambican Language	Mozambican Language	Mozambican Language	Mozambican Language	Mozambican Language	Mozambican Language	Mozambican Language
Mathematics	Mozambican Language	Mozambican Language	Mozambican Language	Portuguese	Portuguese	Portuguese
Natural Sciences				Mozambican Language	Portuguese	Portuguese
Social Sciences				Mozambican Language	Portuguese	Portuguese
Visual and Business Education					Mozambican Language	Portuguese
Physical Education	Mozambican Language	Mozambican Language	Portuguese	Portuguese	Portuguese	Portuguese

Source: This table was adapted from MINEDH, 2020a and translated by Dexis Consulting Group.

## PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR LITERACY

Minimum teacher qualifications have changed numerous times in the past few years, leading to a range of qualifications and training experiences among practicing teachers. MINEDH introduced new teacher training institutes (Instituto de Formação de Professores, or IFP) in 2007 to address teacher shortages and shorten the time required for teacher training. The IFPs provide a single training program for all basic education teachers. The basic education training requires teachers to have completed Grade 10 and to undergo one year of teacher training, known as the 10+1 model. The 10+1 qualification is the most commonly held teacher qualification, with 45% of lower primary teachers holding a 10+1 qualification (Universalia, 2019).

Civil society and other stakeholders raised concerns around the quality of training provided under the 10+1 model, leading MINEDH to implement a 10+3 teacher training program alongside the 10+1 program. The Ministry planned to replace the 10+3 program with a 12+3 program in 2019, but its implementation has been delayed (Universalia, 2019). The teacher training curriculum for the 10+3 program centers around five pedagogical areas: communication and social science; mathematics and natural science; practical and technological activities; science of education; and teaching practice (Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA], 2015). Teacher trainees take two years of courses within these areas, and then complete a one-year teaching practicum.

## TEACHER LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY/LANGUAGE SPECIFIC TRAINING

Teachers who complete the 10+3 training program complete modules on Portuguese pedagogy and bilingual pedagogy (JICA, 2015). However, it is unclear if teachers have the opportunity to develop their own language skills within this program, and if teachers in

other training programs, like the 10+1 program, have similar opportunities to sharpen their language proficiencies.

A small-scale study assessing the competencies of teacher educators in four teacher training colleges in Mozambique found that teacher educators received an average score of 43.2% on the Portuguese reading assessment, and an average score of 42.2% on an assessment of their ability to teach Portuguese as a second language (CODE, 2020).<sup>1</sup> Further, only three of six teacher educators who participated in an assessment of their knowledge of Mozambican languages scored the minimum competency level to teach Mozambican languages (CODE, 2020). Though difficult to generalize from such a small sample, such results may suggest that teacher educators could benefit from additional language training to ensure they are adequately prepared to deliver bilingual education and language training to teacher trainees.

According to a study of teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices around bilingual education in Mozambique, the majority of teachers expressed relative confidence in their ability to teach bilingual classes (Creative Associates International & World Education, 2017). However, assessments of teachers' language abilities often reveal different results. For instance, the World Bank's 2015 Service Delivery Indicators revealed that only 1% of Grade 4 teachers surveyed had the requisite minimum knowledge of primary-level Portuguese (as cited in Universalia, 2019).<sup>2</sup> Such studies raise concerns about teachers' abilities to teach the primary curriculum and follow the bilingual education program.

1 CODE developed this reading test in alignment with the Program for International Student Assessment for Development methodology. This methodology adopts 15 year-old students who have received 10 years of education as its starting point.

2 The requisite minimum knowledge of Portuguese was defined as a teacher scoring 80% on a Portuguese test developed for the survey. The tests were developed in alignment with the primary curriculum for Portuguese.



## TEACHER IN-SERVICE

The IFPs are responsible for providing in-service teacher training in Mozambique. In-service training can take three forms: distanced professional training, continuous capacity training, and school management training (JICA, 2015). Distanced professional training allows teachers to remain in schools while earning or upgrading their teaching qualifications. Continuous capacity training offers targeted trainings for teachers based on the grade level they teach, and covers topics such as lesson planning, teaching methods, and evaluation tools (JICA, 2015). Last, school management training aims to equip principals with the latest techniques for managing and administering effective schools (JICA, 2015).

School clusters (zonas de influência pedagógica, or ZIPs) offer additional opportunities for professional development. Starting in the 1970s, ZIPs were organized to offer primary teachers across a cluster of schools the opportunity to meet on a regular basis and discuss lesson planning and pedagogy (UNICEF Mozambique, 2017). However, some sources report that teachers are often overburdened with administrative tasks, preventing ZIPs from functioning as effective forums for peer exchange and learning (UNICEF Mozambique, 2017).

MINEDH also provides targeted in-service training on the bilingual education program. For this training, provincial education officials select teachers, based on their linguistic abilities, in their region who should be trained in delivering bilingual education (Creative Associates International & World Education, Inc., 2017). Selected teachers then attend province-wide trainings on pedagogical practices for bilingual education, which are organized by district and provincial education officials, MINEDH, and teacher trainers from the IFPs.

MINEDH developed and approved a new strategy for in-service teacher training in 2016 in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The new strategy aims to reach all Grade 1 – 5 teachers in Mozambique, as under the previous teacher training program only about 100 to 200 primary teachers of the 84,000

primary teachers nationwide were trained per year (Lennox, 2017). This objective will be achieved by training a master teacher from each ZIP, who then will cascade the content at ZIP meetings to all teachers.

## USAID READING PROGRAM APPROACH AND ONGOING PROGRAMS

In alignment with the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education, USAID's programming in Mozambique aims to support the needs and priorities of the partner country to ensure that gains from the programming are sustained.

As such, USAID launched the five-year (2016-2021) **Vamos Ler!** (Let's Read!) project, which aims to improve EGR outcomes for students in Grades 1-3 from 2,800 primary schools in two provinces, Nampula and Zambézia. Within these two regions, the project supports mother tongue instruction in three local languages, Emakhuwa, Elomwe, and Echuwabo, and provides second language acquisition support as the LOI slowly transitions to Portuguese starting in Grade 3 (USAID/Mozambique, 2019). Implemented by Creative Associates alongside several partners, the project also works to strengthen the capacity of the MINEDH to implement its existing bilingual education program (USAID/Mozambique, 2019b). Its interventions are focused around three principle results, which include: 1) improved classroom instruction in EGR by developing new teaching and learning materials in local languages, providing training and coaching to teachers and school directors, and monitoring to encourage new methods to be put into practice; 2) improved national EGR policy and systems through supporting the MINEDH to develop EGR standards, teacher core competency standards, an integrated research agenda, and improved assessments among other policies, systems, and coordination mechanisms; and 3) increased parental and community engagement in EGR, which is discussed in more detail in the subsequent section, *Community Engagement within USAID projects* (Creative Associates, 2020; Hua, Noyes, Van de Waal & Turney, 2017).

In addition to Vamos Ler!, USAID launched the three-year (2019 – 2022) **Engaging Communities to Improve Early Grade Reading activity** in December 2019, which is implemented by Peace Corps volunteers across Mozambique. The activity focuses on increasing community engagement through the establishment of local libraries (USAID/Mozambique, 2019a). Additional information on this activity can be found in the section that follows.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITHIN USAID PROJECTS

The 2016 Final Evaluation of the USAID/Aprender A Ler project, the predecessor to the Vamos Ler! project, found that increasing community engagement was a critical factor for the sustainability of the project (as cited by Shulman, 2017). As such, parental and community engagement is one of the core objectives of the Vamos Ler! project. The project aims to increase engagement through the establishment of reading clubs at schools, radio broadcasts to support distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and capacity building with school councils to increase accountability and reduce teacher absenteeism among other activities (Hua et al., 2017).

According to the project's midline evaluation, learners who participated in enrichment reading activities outside of school and who had support from parents at home performed better on the early grade reading assessment (EGRA), reading on average 6.2 more letters and 2.7 more words than students without such support (Turney et al., 2020). As such, the Vamos Ler! program has continued to support its community engagement activities. In USAID's 2020 fiscal year (October 2019 – September 2020), the project implemented the following key activities to bolster out-of-school support for reading:

- 1. Vamos a Escola/Go to School** awareness campaign, which organized community meetings with parents, directors, teachers, and other key community stakeholders to lead discussions on how to support children's learning. A total of 554 community meetings, with over 30,000 participants took place, with additional support from local nongovernmental organizations, radio stations, and theater troupes. Messages to support girl's education, the importance of bilingual education and additional strategies for parents were incorporated into the events.
- 2. Talk shows**, produced and broadcasted by local nongovernmental organizations on radio stations shared strategies to support children's learning at home as well as how to reduce COVID-19 transmission.
- 3. Let's Talk**, an activity implemented in the community by trained facilitators to support the development of children's oral language skills in local languages. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this activity was subsequently adapted for the radio in order to continue implementation safely.
- 4. Reading Clubs**, which provide children with opportunities outside of school to practice their reading skills and to participate in other fun education activities. Reading clubs are led by community volunteers, and currently, Vamos Ler! supports clubs at 54 schools.

Community engagement is also the primary objective of the USAID-funded Engaging Communities to Improve Early Grade Reading project. Specifically, Peace Corps volunteers help to establish local libraries, organize reading activities such as tutoring programs and reading competitions, and also conduct outreach to parents to encourage their involvement. Through this program, 32 community-based libraries are expected to be established and maintained by volunteers, which will support EGR skills development among approximately 2,500 children and their families (USAID/Mozambique, 2019a).

## OTHER DONOR FUNDED READING PROGRAMS

Alongside USAID, several other organizations are involved in implementing projects to address literacy and language issues across Mozambique, which are described below.

### **Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE)'s Better Education through Teacher Training and Empowerment for Results (BETTER) Mozambique<sup>3</sup>**

With funding from both the Government of Canada and Mozambique's Liquefied Natural Gas Project,<sup>4</sup> the seven-year (2015 – 2022) BETTER Mozambique program aims to improve the quality of teacher education at four teacher training institutes. Specifically, the project works with its local partner, Associação Progresso, to support improvements to the training curriculum and textbooks to increase the use of participatory approaches, gender-inclusive pedagogies, and literacy skills in local languages (CODE, n.d.). Furthermore, pre-service teachers are provided with one-on-one mentorship support, opportunities to develop their writing skills to produce stories to use in the classroom, and ongoing monitoring to help them put new methods into practice (CODE, 2020). The project aims to directly reach 1,200 student teachers, as well as the 150 primary schools where they complete their practicums. To support the project's sustainability, BETTER Mozambique is also working in close collaboration with the MINEDH to scale up the program's approach nationwide to additional teacher training institutes (CODE, n.d.)

### **Counterpart International's Our Bright Future!<sup>5</sup>**

With funding from the United States Department of Agriculture under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program, Our Bright Future!

<sup>3</sup> For more information, see: <https://code.ngo/approach/literacy-programs/better-mozambique/>

<sup>4</sup> Mozambique's Liquefied Natural Gas Project is operated by the international energy company, Total.

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.counterpart.org/projects/mcgovern-dole-international-food-for-education-and-child-nutrition-program-in-mozambique/>

aims to strengthen health and primary education outcomes among approximately 200 schools in Maputo province. The five-year (2020 – 2025) program is implemented by Counterpart International alongside its partners, Associação Progresso, the Centre for Learning and Capacity Building Civil Society (CESC), and Creative Associates International. Specifically, the program aims to: 1) provide healthy school meals, improve school infrastructure, and support community engagement in order to improve attendance and learning outcomes; 2) improve literacy outcomes by providing teachers with training and additional instructional materials; 3) support health and nutrition outcomes through increasing communities' awareness of water, sanitation, and hygiene practices as well as increasing access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and deworming treatment; and lastly; 4) strengthen local procurement systems and expand the type of foods used within the national feeding program, Projecto de Alimentação Escolar (Counterpart International, n.d.).

### **Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and UNICEF's COVID-19 Response<sup>6</sup>**

To support the Mozambican education system to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 crisis, GPE awarded UNICEF and the MINEDH a two-year (2020 – 2021), \$15 million grant. Under this program, the MINEDH's interventions will include: 1) setting up a crisis management team to support ongoing decision making; 2) developing and implementing distance learning through radio and television broadcasts of educational content as well as online learning programs; 3) establishing psychosocial support structures for children experiencing trauma during school closures and for once schools reopen; 4) distributing textbooks to schools with critical need; and 5) developing remedial interventions to support students who may be behind due to school closures and with an emphasis on supporting children with disabilities (GPE, n.d.).

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2020-05-18-COVID-19%20AFF%20Request%20Mozambique.pdf>

### **The World Bank and GPE's Girl's Education Project**

In 2020, the World Bank and GPE awarded the Government of Mozambique complementary grants of \$160 million and a \$139 million grants respectively to improve equity in education for girls (The World Bank, 2021). Specifically, the project aims to improve learning outcomes among children in lower primary school, increase the retention of girls in upper primary and support their transition to lower secondary school, and improve the efficiency in teacher allocation nationwide (GPE, n.d). To achieve these objectives, the program is organized around the following key components: 1) improve reading skills in Portuguese in Grades 1 – 3 by building additional pre-schools in high need areas, training teachers, and increasing access to instructional materials; 2) improving school infrastructure and access to sanitation facilities, expanding distance learning programs for lower secondary students, introducing a health education program that focuses on reproductive health and gender-based violence and also mentorship opportunities for girls at risk of dropping out; and 3) the introduction of a district-level results-based financing program to improve monitoring systems and the use of data to reduce teacher absenteeism and improve girl's retention (The World Bank, 2021; GPE, n.d).

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