



STORIES OF HOPE AND RESILIENCE

Impact Stories From Educating Children Together Phase III



FOREWORD

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Richard Ndou
Chief Of Party



This publication showcases the achievements of the Educating Children Together—Phase III (ECT-3) Project, which comes to a close after five years of dedicated implementation. Our strategic objectives were:

- To enhance literacy skills among school-age children
- To promote good health and hygiene practices
- To Improve nutrition and dietary habits
- To boost school attendance.

Throughout the project’s journey, we encountered challenges that tested our resilience and adaptability. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was among the most significant, forcing us to rethink our approach amid school closures and movement restrictions. In response, we swiftly adapted, integrating public health messaging and preventive measures into our programs. We collaborated with government authorities and community groups to supply schools with essential hygiene materials, ensuring children’s safety and continued learning.

The pandemic also prompted us to adjust our health and nutrition interventions, leading to the distribution of Take-Home Rations (THR)—including Corn Soy Blend Plus (CSB+) and vegetable oil—to pregnant and lactating women, as well as children under five. Despite the difficulties, our commitment to children, communities, the government, and partners remained unwavering.

Today, we celebrate the impact we have made together. This publication reflects what can be achieved when we join forces for the well-being of children. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) for its steadfast collaboration with World Vision at the central, provincial, and district levels. We also thank our implementing partners— the National School Feeding Program (PRONAE), the Civil Society Learning and Training Center (CESC), and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)—for being instrumental in this success story.

A special note of appreciation goes to the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for their continued trust in our ability to feed and nourish thousands of children. Over the past five years, ECT-3 has supported more than 90,000 children, a testament to the power of collaboration.

Finally, to the students, parents, teachers, volunteers, nurses, community leaders, civil society organizations, and government officials at all levels — thank you for being part of this journey. Your contributions have been invaluable in making this project a success.



Executive Summary

The Educating Children Together – Phase III (ECT-3) was a five-year project (October 2019 – September 2024) with the goal of improving literacy of school-aged children in 160 schools in the districts of Muecate and Nacarôa, in Nampula province, northern Mozambique. The project pursued two key objectives:

1) Improving literacy among school-aged children by enhancing the quality of instruction, increasing attentiveness, and promoting regular school attendance; 2) Enhancing health and dietary practices by increasing knowledge on hygiene, expanding access to preventive health services, and improving water and sanitation facilities.

With a budget of US\$26.76 million, the project was funded by the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). World Vision-Moçambique (WV-Moç) implemented ECT-3 in a consortium with the National Program of School Feeding, Civil Society Capacity Building and Learning Centre (CESC), and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

To achieve the strategic objectives, ECT-3 implemented a broad range of key-Interventions, making significant strides across several domains that include:



School Meals



Literacy



Health & Nutrition



WASH



Agriculture



Community Engagement



Sustainability

Children's Potential Unlocked Through Reading Competitions

On June 16—International Day of the African Child, two young girls stood proudly before a cheering crowd in Mozambique. Alima, an 8-year-old first-grader, and Belucha, a 10-year-old second-grader, had just been crowned winners of a regional reading competition. Behind their bright smiles was a deeper story, one of resilience, community, and the transformative power of literacy.

Both girls come from rural areas where poverty, early marriage, child labour, and limited access to education remain daily realities. But through the encouragement of their parents, guardians, teachers, and reading camp volunteers, they are rising above these challenges.

Their progress is a testament to the impact of community action, one of the core pillars of World Vision's Unlock Literacy approach.

Unlock Literacy model under the Educating Children Together - Phase III (ECT-3)

Helping children to read

Helping children to love reading and writing.

Helps to cultivate early literacy

Supporting children with tailored reading activities

Helping children both in schools and in community reading camps.

Belucha: A Star from the Start

Belucha's gift for reading became clear early in her schooling. Now in second grade, she has already won four reading competitions at school, inter-school, and district levels.

"I thank my parents, my teachers, and the reading camp promoter for helping me study. I want to continue learning so I can be a teacher one day," she said with a smile.



Belucha holds the bicycle she won in the reading competition

"I was happy to win school notebooks, bags, and a bicycle."

Her teacher, Franque Castro, trained in the Unlock Literacy approach, describes her as eager and focused.

"She's very active in class and loves reading both her learning materials and storybooks," he shared.

At the community reading camp, volunteer Enoque Alberto says she's a standout.

"She's always the first to raise her hand. She's confident, curious, and never shy."



Alima: Growing in Confidence, Dreaming Bigger

Alima, though younger, shares the same spark. Her guardian, Fatelma, is a teacher and took a hands-on role in preparing her for the competitions.



Alima displays the bicycle she won during reading competitions



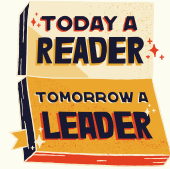
Alima receives further reading instruction from her aunt, Fatelma

“When she was selected to compete with students from other schools, I started training her in reading, spelling vowels and consonants. She was nervous at first, but she didn’t give up. In the next district-level competition, she surprised us all,” said the teacher

Unlocking Futures with Literacy

The Unlock Literacy approach builds five foundational reading skills:

- Letter knowledge
- Sounding out words
- Reading fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension



Belucha, alongside her parents, holds the notebooks she received in the reading competition

With support from the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the ECT-3 project has:



Trained 505 primary school teachers on the Unlock Literacy methodology



Opened and equipped 530 community reading camps



Reached over 14,000 children with early literacy support

Belucha and Alima's stories are not isolated successes—they are part of a growing movement that's lighting a path to brighter futures, one word at a time. With every page turned, every word read aloud, and every cheer at a reading competition, children across Mozambique are proving that with support, their potential is limitless.

How School Meals Help Maria Stay in School



of hope for families who find it difficult to provide regular meals for their children.

“Meals motivate children to stay in schools longer, since many of our students come from families who struggle to provide decent meals at home due to hardships. That is why parents are grateful to see their children with access to enriched food”

These are the dreams driven by the work of World Vision-Mozambique and partners, through the Educating Children Together - Phase III (ECT-3), currently benefiting up to 90,000 children in 160 schools of Nacarôa and Muecate districts.

Students benefiting from the school meals receive a daily ration comprising of 150g of CSB+, enriched with vitamins and minerals such as Vitamin C, Folic acid, Vitamin B12, Niacin, and others.

ECT-3 is a five-year project (2019 - 2024) with a budget of more than US\$26.76 million, funded by the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA).

“I enjoy my school meals because it keeps me going through the day, with energy, while I am in school, until the moment I return home. My colleagues also feel the same way. They like it. For some of them, for one reason or another, they may not have all meals at home but when the morning comes, they are motivated to go to school knowing for sure they will enjoy a nice hot plate of porridge,” Maria said.

For Maria (11), a grade 7 student at Santa Catarina Labouré Community School, in Nacarôa District, school feeding is not a dream or utopia luxury, but a daily celebration. She describes with excitement how school meals are a source of energy and joy for her and her classmates. The porridge made with Corn Soy Blend Plus (CSB+) encourages children who don't have regular meals at home, to persevere in their education.

Maria wants to become a doctor and she appreciates those who make her school experience pleasant, while on the journey to her dreams.

There are 2,294 students enrolled in this school. The Deputy Director of the school, Sister Estefania Jacinto, sees school meals not only as food in itself, but also as a



Clean Water Spares Children from Hard Journey in Tulua



In dark nights, Dércio (14) and his mother, from Tulua village, in Nampula Province, had only the dim light of the moon and stars to guide them on their way home, back from the river where they once used to get water to drink, cook, and wash.

Going to the river after the first glimpse of evening was frequently a dangerous endeavor for children and women. Dércio's father, Silvério (45), remembers vividly the times when robbers chased the boy and his mother away, in attempt to steal the 20-liter water gallons.

“At least three times, thieves hiding in the bushes tried to still water gallons by throwing stones at my son and his mother. Fortunately, they were not harmed, but the gallons were damaged on the run”

Yet, the day also came with its burdens. During daytime, the river was often crowded, because there were few safe accesses to the watercourse.

Walking to the river took more than two hours. The pilgrimage was a challenge for the barefooted boy, who had to make his way through a rocky trail, balancing his thin body to sustain the gallon on top of his head. A few minutes wasted on the road to find water meant he would be late for school.

Light began to shine on the life of Dércio's family, and for the community, when local authorities opened a water borehole with a manual pump. However, issues remained, because the community had to wait in long lines to use the one and single manual water pump.

In partnership with the Government, represented by the District Service of Planning and Infrastructures (SDPI, acronym in Portuguese), World Vision-Moçambique, under “Educating Children Together – Phase III” Project (ECT-3), upgraded this borehole into a piped water system.

More than 1,200 people in Tuluá community now have access to clean water, thanks to the new system that also makes water available in Tuluá Primary School, reinforcing hygiene to the students who are expected to return to school on 22 March, after a long period of restriction measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Since the conclusion of this water supply system in early 2021, finding water is no longer associated with dangers and heavy burden for women and children.

Like Dércio, more children and their families will benefit from clean water with the support of ECT-3 in the districts of Muecate and Nacarôa, a project funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Until 2024, a number of eight piped water systems for schools (1) and health clinics (7) will be served. Additionally, WV will construct 20 new boreholes on premises of an education facility, which is equipped with a hand pump and protected from contamination according to the Government standards

To ensure sustainability, water will be tested by the Ministry of Health Laboratory (MoH) and meet all water quality parameters for human consumption based on MoH standards. Water Users Association (WUA), composed of teachers and parents, will be trained to operate, manage and maintain the water system. Each system is expected to serve 1,200 people.

“Now life is simple because the water tap is near our home and I don’t worry of being attacked by robbers along the way”



A farmer committed to support school feeding

Saíde Namuana, 57, is a veteran of the Mozambican civil war fought from 1977 to 1992. After the conflict ended, he swapped the gun for a farming hoe, a “weapon” that does not kill but brings life when applied to the soil, and went back to his origin to dedicate himself to agriculture, his true passion.

He hails from Muecate district, in the Northern Province of Nampula, a place he knows well and where he cultivates a portion of 100 hectares in the fertile valley of Nakhoto. He is the president of the Farmers Association of Nakhoto (APRONA, Portuguese acronym) composed of 13 members.

This collective is turning Nakhoto into a vibrant rural community, and their effort not only benefits other farmers, but also school-aged children.

Since 2017, APRONA has provided 30% of its harvest to reinforce school meals in the primary school of Nakhoto under an agreement with the Educating Children Together –Phase III (ECT-3) project, implemented by World Vision-Mozambique and funded by the McGovern-Dole International Food For Education and Child Nutrition Program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Saíde, father of 12 children, is motivated to support school feeding because his youngest kids are enrolled in schools supported by the project, and he testifies to the gains.



Being a full legal association gives APRONA an advantage in accessing local and provincial markets. Last year they managed to secure a deal to sell cashew nuts to a processing factory in Nampula. Their products supply markets in Nampula and have reached Zambézia and Maputo provinces.

“Our association has a good reputation in such a way that other farmers who are not affiliated with us seek our support to commercialize their crops in bigger markets,” he assured. APRONA relies on organic farming, thus making their products more competitive.

To maximize the potential of the land, members of APRONA produce in blocks in which they divide the farm into sections, and, in the harvest, they reunite the sum of the crops to sell in the market. Saíde dreams of big things for the association and one of his many visions is to acquire more means of production.

“For me, school feeding is one of the pillars of good education. We see the difference since this program was introduced. Children are more motivated to go to school”



“We want to buy a truck so we can stack our production and reach markets in less time and we also want to increase our capacity to store seeds”

With this pace, Saïde firmly believes that the conditions to support school feeding even after the project closes are created.

Through the project, World Vision supports 90 farmers' groups with training on improved agriculture practices and technical support so they continue supplying 30% of their harvest to related schools. In partnership with the District Services of Economic Activities (SDAE), the farmer groups will be trained on the formation of associations, dynamics, functions, and responsibilities.



Felismina's Fight Against Malnutrition: A Story of Hope and Recovery



In Nahadge village, Nampula province, three-year-old Felismina carries a quiet strength. She lost both parents before she turned one. Without breast milk, proper food, or immunizations, her body weakened, and signs of malnutrition like weight loss and hair thinning soon appeared.

Her grandaunt, Elisa Luciano, stepped in to care for Felismina and her siblings.

"I never had children of my own, so I do everything for them," Elisa said. But with limited knowledge and resources, her cassava-based meals lacked the nutrients children like Felismina desperately need.

That changed when local Community Health Committee (CHC) volunteers visited her home. They helped Elisa to

register Felismina for Corn Soya Blend Plus (CSB+) distributions through World Vision's Educating Children Together - Phase III (ECT-3) project.

What Helped Turn Things Around

Nutritional support:

- 2kg of CSB+ provided every two months
- Training sessions on preparing balanced meals using four food groups

Community-based care:

- Health volunteers visit homes twice a week
- Awareness sessions at local health units on child nutrition and care





“Malnutrition affects orphans more severely”

- Ernesto Luciano *Head of CHC*

“That’s why we work closely with caregivers and promote better use of local foods.”

When Felismina joined the program in September, she weighed just 5kg. By January, she had reached 11kg, a promising sign. Yet, as Health and Nutrition Officer Josefa Amaral pointed out, “She missed early vaccines for measles and polio. We must catch up to protect her.”

Still, challenges persist. According to the WHO, over 55% of children in Nampula are stunted, and 17% are born underweight.

Myths and misinformation also hinder progress, as shown when a local father withdrew his child from hospital care before malnutrition treatment was complete.

“Parents sometimes don’t see the danger,” said Dr. David Fazenda, Chief Medical Officer in Nacarôa district.

But with continued outreach, nutrition support, and family engagement, children like Felismina are getting a second chance.

As she sits on her grandaunt’s lap, clutching her yellow hospital card, perhaps Felismina senses that more good days and fuller plates are finally within reach. World Vision made this possible.



Parents and Teacher Association Join Forces to Address School Safety

There is an African proverb that says, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”. This proverb once again manifested itself into existence, this time, in a primary school in the district of Nacarôa, Northern Province of Namibia.

Parents, teachers, and students came together to solve a common issue: improving the learning environment and making the school safer. The Mucuthy Primary School is the biggest in the district, with more than 3100 students from first to 7th grade, yet the school had no fence.

Due to its location in a residential area, many used the schoolyard as a shortcut home. Some crossed the schoolyard on foot, and others on bicycles. However, those riding motorcycles posed more danger to schoolchildren and teachers.

With this scenario, the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) and the school director gathered to draw ideas and possible solutions, and they decided to build a fence. The PTA president, Júlia Francisco, was one of the key people who helped make this idea a reality.



The manual of procedures indicates that each school must spend 70% of the ADE on goods and services and 30% are at the discretion of the school.

The school director, Diamantino Ali, said that to turn the project into reality both school management and parents had to come together.

“We applied 30% of this money to buy some materials such as bricks, cement and iron. However, the money was not enough and that is when the PTA proposed the community to make a contribution to buy more bricks, because without a fence, our school was naked,” said the school director.

“We called a meeting and we decided that each parent would buy a brick or give the equivalent amount in money, 30 meticais (0.47 USD). We all agreed and moved forward with the plan,” said Júlia.

The parent’s contribution was to reinforce the budget from the Direct Support to Schools Fund (ADE, Portuguese acronym). The ADE is an amount allocated to schools by the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH, Portuguese acronym) to improve teaching and learning conditions.

Even though the fence is not totally finished, the school director is optimistic in the conclusion of this endeavour with jointly effort of school and community. “We make sure that Parents and Teachers Association are involved in every decision concerning the school,” affirmed the director.

Mucuthy Primary School is a beneficiary of Educating Children Together – Phase III (ECT-3) project, implemented by World Vision-Mozambique, which includes daily school feeding provided with funding from the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program of the United States Department of Agriculture.

The Center for the Learning and Training of Civil Society (CESC), a non-profit Mozambican civil society organization that leads the community engagement approach within the project is leading the revitalization of PTA's.

CESC engages PTA and school councils to participate in Community Score Card exercises to contribute to social accountability efforts for provision of higher quantity and quality of government service provision in the education sector.



Literacy Instruction: The Benefits of Preserving Community Learning Spaces





A teacher is like a candle that dissipates darkness and stirs up knowledge in the minds and hearts of students. And because learning goes beyond the walls of the classroom, there is a place where the flame of knowledge continues to burn.

That place is the reading camp, where children, after school, can practice literacy core skills through the following activities: story time, activity time, make-and-take, and journaling.

Reading camp promoters also carry the light that facilitates children's journey in attaining more comprehension of what is taught in the classroom.

Tomé Gomes is a reading camp promoter from the community of Errua, Muecate district, in the northern province of Nampula, where he works with children from 1st to 3rd grade, enrolled in Errua Primary School.

Like every reading camp promoter, Tomé is a volunteer, which means that he doesn't receive a paycheck, like a primary school teacher, but he is motivated to lead reading camp sessions because, through his work, he sees the improvement of children's literacy abilities.

"I'm in my 5th year as a reading camp promoter, and I see changes brought by the Educating Children Together project. Children who were shy and couldn't read or write properly now are displaying their capabilities with more confidence," he said.

According to the promoter, reading camp sessions take place two days a week, after the school period. To stimulate learning, these spaces are equipped with a diversity of materials, such as storybooks, notebooks, pencils, posters of letters, and boards, to name a few.

"We also produce learning materials with resources that we obtain in the surrounding area," he pointed out.

Because of his commitment to the reading camp sessions, Tomé Gomes was selected by the Educating Children Together—Phase III (ECT-3) project to train and facilitate current and aspiring reading camp promoters.

"The project was looking for promoters who could apply their knowledge to instruct others and I was chosen here in Errua. It has been two years since I was appointed to be a facilitator and my goal is to motivate others to continue leading reading camp sessions even after the project ends," he hopes.

The project established:



530 Reading Camps



1,600 community volunteers trained as reading camp facilitators.

ECT-3 project is implemented by World Vision-Moçambique (WV-Moç) in the districts of Muecate and Nacarôa, in Nampula province, with funding from the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program under the Food Assistance Division of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

As the ECT-3 moves towards phasing-out, which will be finalized in 2024, World Vision is on a path to building capacity and transferring knowledge to the communities so that literacy activities will continue to take place. With more promoters like Tomé Gomes, communities have better chances to preserve literacy learning spaces for children.

Ermelinda's Journey Back to School

Ermelinda Valentim, a 12-year-old from Halaca village in northern Mozambique, once spent her days hauling buckets of sand from a riverbed in search of gold. Today, she sits in a classroom, chasing a different dream: to become a nurse. Her transformation is part of a broader shift taking place in Nacarôa district, where community-driven efforts are helping bring children out of artisanal mining activities back into school.

In 2020, Ermelinda joined the gold rush sweeping through Nacarôa following the discovery of alluvial gold along the Mecubúri River. Like many children and teenagers, she was drawn by the hope of escaping poverty and supporting her family.

Each morning, Ermelinda would walk to the river with other children, equipped with a plastic bucket. Her job: scoop sand from the pits dug into the riverbed and search for gold fragments. Sometimes, she earned as much as 600 Meticais (about \$9.40), which she used to buy food, clothes, and cooking utensils for her family. The work gave her a sense of independence, but it came with exhaustion, injuries, and danger.

“Mining is very tiresome and dangerous for children. I used to have sore legs every day. You can fall into holes, get covered in sand, and die. I don’t want to go back there,” she says.

Child mining is classified by the International Labour Organization as one of the worst forms of child labour. In Mozambique, UNICEF estimates that more than one in five children between the ages of 5 and 14 are involved in child labour.

Ermelinda’s turning point came when the Education Department responded to repeated community appeals by opening a 6th-grade class in Halaca. That change, combined with outreach by community activists, brought her back to school. Now in class again, she dreams of becoming a nurse: “I care about people, and I want to help them when they are sick,” she said.



“When I finished the 5th grade at Halaca Primary School, there was no nearby school where I could continue. I was tired of sitting at home doing nothing. That’s when I decided to dig for gold.”



Behind Ermelinda's return to school lies the tireless work of community networks mobilized by the Educating Children Together - Phase III (ECT-3) project, implemented by World Vision-Moçambique and CESC. These networks include:

Community counsellors and Father-Counsellors, trained to raise awareness about the dangers of child labour, early marriage, and other education barriers.

School councils and local leaders, who identify vulnerable children and advocate for school expansion and inclusive education.

Community Dialogues, where men and women gather to discuss local challenges and propose community-driven solutions.

Youth focal points, who monitor and support the reintegration of children into school.

Between April and September, 123 Community Dialogues were held across Muecate and Nacarôa, involving over 2,000 people. In the same period, 12 girls were rescued from child labour or early marriage in Nacarôa alone.



Defying the Odds: How One Family is Beating Chronic Malnutrition in Nampula



Nampula province, in northern Mozambique, has long carried the burden of the country's highest chronic malnutrition rate. Despite its fertile lands, nearly 47% of children under five still suffer from stunted growth due to undernutrition, according to the 2019/2020 National Household Budget Survey (IOF).

But in Minicane village, Muecate district, the six children of Filomena Manuel and Costa Rafael are not part of that statistic. Their story is one of awareness, action, and community-supported nutrition.

Filomena is one of the thousands of mothers receiving take-home rations through World Vision Mozambique's Educating Children Together – Phase III (ECT-3) project. For two years now, she has received Corn Soya Blend Plus (CSB+) and fortified vegetable oil, vital for her children's growth.

"Volunteers from the Community Health Committee visited our home and told me I qualified for food distribution because I was breastfeeding," she said. "Since then, I've made sure my children eat healthy."

Her husband, Costa, a trained health committee volunteer, supports her efforts, ensuring their meals are diverse and nutrient rich.

What Their Daily Nutrition Looks Like:

Home meals:

- CSB+ porridge
- Cereals mixed with vegetables, peanuts, eggs, and sugar
- Seasonal crops from their small garden

School meals

- CSB+ served during school lunch, supporting continued healthy weight gain

"We've seen real changes—our children are stronger and healthier."



“We train health volunteers to help women prepare enriched meals using at least four food groups.”

- Celestina José, Health & Nutrition Officer

Impact at Scale:

The ECT-3 project, funded by the USDA McGovern-Dole Program, aims to improve nutrition during the critical first 1,000 days of a child's life.

In FY2023 alone, it distributed:

- 2,100 metric tons of CSB+ and 60 metric tons of fortified oil
- To 8,428 children under 2, 2,080 children under 5, and 18,198 pregnant and lactating women

To ensure efficiency and transparency, the project uses Last Mile Mobile Solutions (LMMS) for distribution tracking, minimizing duplication and improving data accuracy.

Thanks to sustained effort and community collaboration, families like Filomena and Costa's are proving that with the right tools and knowledge, it is possible to rewrite the story of malnutrition in Nampula, one healthy child at a time.



Recipes of Hope that Restore Children's Lives

New Cooking Methods Restore Children's Health in Nacarôa

In the Nacarôa district of Nampula Province, innovative nutrition practices are transforming the lives of children struggling with malnutrition. Volunteers from Community Health Committees (CHCs), trained by World Vision-Moçambique through the Educating Children Together – Phase III (ECT-3) project, are leading this life-saving effort by empowering families with knowledge and skills to improve health and nutrition

Fighting Malnutrition—One Meal at a Time

Two-year-old Anatércia is an example of this progress. Sitting on a straw mat, she eagerly eats fortified maize porridge enriched with eggs, moringa leaves, and peanuts, prepared by her mother, Verónica. Just months ago, Anatércia was fragile and underweight, born prematurely after Verónica endured severe pregnancy complications.

Thanks to CHC home visits, the family accessed treatment and nutritional rehabilitation sessions, where Verónica learned to prepare nutrient-rich meals from locally available resources, that helped Anatércia gain healthy weight, from 5.2 kg in March 2021 to 9.3 kg a year later.

Another inspiring story is that of Amélia João, a mother of seven who was abandoned by her husband. Despite facing overwhelming challenges, she is committed to saving her youngest child, Ramadane, who suffers from malnutrition. Encouraged by CHC volunteers, Amélia joined nutrition rehabilitation sessions and now prepares fortified porridge at home. Though Ramadane's recovery is ongoing, his appetite and eagerness to eat offer hope for a healthier future.

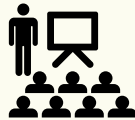


How Community Health Committees Support Families

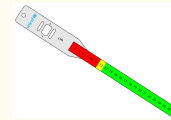
The CHCs play a vital role in combating malnutrition by:



Conducting regular door-to-door visits to identify at-risk children and pregnant or lactating women.



Providing training to parents on how to prepare fortified meals using locally available ingredients.



Monitoring child growth using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) measurements.



Supporting families through home-based nutritional rehabilitation sessions.



Delivering health and nutrition education during community gatherings and school programs.



Encouraging early treatment at health facilities to prevent severe malnutrition.



Acute malnutrition remains common among young children in the region. The district has seen a decline in severe malnutrition cases from 238 in 2021 to 194 this year, yet many parents still struggle to recognize early signs of malnutrition.

Cultural beliefs also impede progress. Francisco Pirai, the District Nutrition Program coordinator, explains that some harmful taboos persist, like the idea that pregnant women should avoid eggs to prevent bald babies.

Recognizing these barriers, the ECT-3 project focuses heavily on behaviour change.

Funded by the USDA, the program works with 61 Community Health Committees trained to identify malnutrition early, support pregnant and lactating women, and deliver nutrition education through schools and community events.



WASH Committees are Setting Examples to Sustain Water Infrastructures

Access to clean water is a milestone in rural Mozambique where communities must walk long distances to find this vital resource to secure daily needs.

World Vision-Moçambique, through Educating Children Together – Phase III (ECT-3) project, implemented in the districts of Muecate and Nacarôa, in Nampula province, has managed to provide safe water to 160 schools in both districts.

Communities themselves play a crucial role in maintaining functional and sustainable water infrastructures for improving health, hygiene and overall quality of life for children and their families.

In this context, ECT-3 is revitalizing school WASH committees, which are responsible for managing water and sanitation infrastructures.

The tasks of a WASH committee can be divided into social management, technical management and financial management. It's all about planning, organization, decision-making, co-ordination and control.

Recently, a WASH committee was established in Nathuo Primary School, in Muecate district, and was structured following the above description. The members were elected among community members.

The newly elected president of the Nathuo WASH Committee, Zacarias Manuel, said that he will encourage members to set good examples to motivate people to use water and sanitation facilities correctly.

In Namahia-Terrene village, also in Muecate village, the local WASH committee is responsible for managing a water supply system that can serve 1,200 people. During a storm, solar panels were displaced, but the committee managed to reposition them, and now the panels are working properly.

Sódio Tábuá, president of the WASH committee in Namahia-Terrene considers that the upgrade of a borehole into a water supply system has improved access to clean water allowing more families to use this resource.

“When we depended only in the manual borehole, women on the village had to wake up early because the process of collecting water was slow, but now he have faucets and people can get water at any time.”

ECT-3 project plans to revitalize and refresh the existing 13 school WASH committees during the Fiscal Year 2023. Also in this period, the project will train 13 local artisans for major repairs of water points, spare parts availability and link them with WASH committees.



“A member of a WASH Committee must be a role model in his community. He cannot tell others to adopt good practices of water treatment and hygiene if he cohabitates with filth where he lives. Hygiene starts with oneself. That is why a member must be an example to be followed.”



Cleaning with Pride: How WASH UP! Is Shaping a New Generation at Imala Primary School

At Imala Primary School in Muecate district, Nampula Province, cleaning is no longer a punishment. It is a source of pride. For Marília and her peers, hygiene isn't something to avoid; it's something to own. Thanks to the WASH UP! curriculum, what used to be an obligation is now a celebrated part of their daily school routine.

Home to more than 2,000 students from Grades 1 to 7, Imala Primary is one of the largest schools in the region. Every day, students spend their most productive hours here, learning in class, socializing during breaks, and now, actively keeping their environment clean and safe. With such a large student body, keeping the school clean used to feel like an impossible task. But that changed when WASH UP! arrived.

WASH UP! introduced a new way of teaching water, sanitation, and hygiene.

- Games
- Comic storybooks
- Interactive tools,
- Animated lessons



For 14-year-old Marília, a sixth-grade student, the change has been personal.

"Today I have learned that we must keep our bathrooms clean before and after we use them," she shared after a class. "We should always wash our hands and avoid going into the toilets barefoot to prevent diseases."

Her awareness and that of her classmates has grown through the WASH UP! Club established at the school. Here, students take initiative, overseeing the proper use of water and soap, monitoring toilet conditions, and keeping classrooms and playgrounds tidy. "We're divided into small groups," Marília explained. "Each group has different responsibilities, like making sure there's water in the toilets and that the schoolyard is clean."

Behind this transformation is António Camela, the teacher responsible for delivering the WASH UP! curriculum at Imala. Armed with a projector, story mats, slides, storybooks, and games, António transforms his classroom into an exciting space for learning. "I guide sessions like a maestro," he said with pride. "I ask questions, use examples the children can relate to, and keep them engaged from start to finish."

For António, the WASH UP! curriculum, combined with the structure of the WASH UP! Club has changed everything. "Before this, many students didn't know how to take care of themselves or their surroundings. But now, not only is our school clean every day, but the students are also even teaching their families what they've learned."

By empowering teachers and students alike, WASH UP! did more than improve sanitation. It is fostering leadership, pride, and responsibility in Mozambique's next generation.

The reach of WASH UP! goes far beyond Imala. Under the ECT-3 project, the curriculum is being implemented in 160 schools across Muecate and Nacarôa districts. To ensure sustainability:



50 teachers (16 women and 34 men) have been trained as Trainers of Trainers.



6 Master Trainers (2 women and 4 men) are supporting rollout in all schools.



Meetings with school leadership are ongoing to build ownership of good WASH practices.



When Learning Becomes an Exciting Experience

Carolina, 12 years old, is a 3rd-grade student at Nathuo Primary School, in Muecate district, Nampula province, north of Mozambique. Like her peers, after class, she attends the reading camp nearby the school.

This is her routine since she was enrolled in the first grade in Nathuo, which is one of the 160 schools supported by the Educating Children Together - Phase III (ECT-3), implemented by World Vision-Moçambique (WV-Moç), in Muecate and Nacarôa districts, aiming to improve literacy learning in school-aged children.

She is confident to show her literacy skills by writing, with big and elegant letters, her name and the alphabet on the small black board, during the reading camp session. Her commitment and dedication earned her First Place in the reading contest for the 3rd-grade category, held on June 16, during the celebrations of the International Day of the African Child.

Carolina's success results from learning inside and outside the classroom, the latter taking place in the reading camp created in the community. Here, children develop reading

and writing abilities through interactive activities such as music, games, story reading, and drawing.

“Reading camp lessons helped me prepare myself for the reading competition. With the teachings of the promoters, I now can read and write.”

As part of its education component, ECT-3 has promoted sessions in 324 reading camps in FY22, in the districts of Muecate and Nacarôa, through the training of community volunteers (reading camp promoters) who lead the sessions.

“I work with the children to teach them the basics of literacy. I guide them to make the transition from our mother tongue (Emakhuwa) to the official language (Portuguese). The parents are supportive of their children efforts in reading. Also, the community leaders are active in mobilizing children to go to the school and attend our sessions”, said Paulo Eduardo, reading camp promoter.

Being distinguished in the reading competition gave Carolina extra motivation to carry on her studies, as she



dreams of becoming a teacher. Luckily, the opportunity to teach may come sooner than expected.

To better entrench linkages between older students and those in grades 1 to 3, within the communities, ECT-3 project is reflecting on the possibility of training older students to serve as volunteer mentors. This would enable bright students, such as Carolina, to assist other children during the sessions.

The recommendation above was reflected in the Special Study on Community and Household Behaviours Associated with Improved Literacy Outcomes, commissioned by WV-Moç. The study occurred from 15 March to 28 June 2022. In complement to the literacy approach, ECT-3 also focuses on improvement of school attendance and reducing short-term hunger, by providing daily school meals to more than 90,000 students.



A deposit of opportunities

Fidelis lives in Nachere village, within Nacarôa district, and he applies his best energies to cultivate the land to provide for his family. They rejoice harvest time, when the green leaves of cassava and maize cover the landscape, that ends far from where the horizon can reach.

But nature doesn't always responds according to our needs. Plagues of all kind, heavy rains or the lack of it can tear down the laborious work of months. More recently, the lean season has been a major challenge for small farmers in Nachere village, from Nampula Province.

Poor harvest also means lack of seeds to grow food crops when the rain season begins. These hardships are familiar to Fidelis, but since he has joined a saving group called "Unidos Venceremos", (which means "united we win), he has managed to be more resilient. The same group of 36 members acts as a farmers' association

"With access to loans we can purchase better quality seeds and supply ourselves with pesticides to prevent the devastation of our food crops from plagues", he explained. Saving not only provides money in times of need. It also changed the way Fidelis managed his earnings.

"Before joining the saving group I couldn't track my spendings and always felt that money was not enough.



But now, my dividends from agriculture are better managed and safely kept", he said.

Five years have passed since Fidelis joined the saving group, and because of his dedication, he was appointed as secretary of the group. A part from paying school fees and buying stationary for his children, with the loans he recently started a small creation of domestic animals in his backyard.

"I'm aware that my neighbours don't have the money to buy large amounts of meat, so I will open a stall to sell pork snacks that are affordable", said Norberto, who often encourages his neighbours to join saving groups "for they are accessible and you don't need many papers to be a member", concluded.

World Vision-Mozambique is implementing the "Educating Children Together - Phase III" (ECT-3) project, aiming to increase literacy among children attending primary school in Muecate and Nacarôa districts.

The project, funded by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is working closely with saving groups who, by an agreement, provide schools with hygiene products food and. Nacarôa counts with 81 saving groups supporting 77 schools.

Not only do WV-Moç form these groups and equip them with tools such as calculators and safe boxes. Moreover, the members receive training in how to manage small business.

Trust and honesty are the values that keep the group working efficiently. Every Wednesday the saving group joins in the house of a different member to precede the collection of money. The minimum contribution for the savings is 100 meticaïs (MT) and additional 10 MT for the social fund. However, very often the members are allowed deposit small amounts.

Members believe that interest rate for the loans (fixed in 10 %) are much affordable than normal commercial banks, which, for instance, are distant from the communities.

School meals in Mozambique: Feeding Children's Potential for Success

In Nampula, Mozambique, many children face food insecurity, with unpredictable weather affecting rural families' access to nutritious meals. Malnutrition hampers physical and cognitive development, making proper nutrition crucial for children's health and education.

The Educating Children Together – Phase III (ECT-3) project provided meals to over **92,122 children in 160 schools** across Muecate and Nacarôa, ensuring they can focus on learning. Students like Flora Miropo appreciate the meals, which keep them motivated and nourished, easing the burden on families struggling to provide food.

Community members, including school director Felismino Goriate, highlight the positive impact of fortified Corn Soy Blend porridge and improved school infrastructure. The project strengthens nutrition education at the household level, offering hope for a better future for children in the province.



“At home, sometimes our children don't have enough to eat. That is why one of the things I like the most in this project is the meals, because we know our children do not starve while studying.”



Amid the Covid-19 pandemic: ECT-3 Ensures Food Security for Women and Children



"I never miss the days of food distribution, because, with this blend, I prepare porridges so that my children don't sleep hungry", said Marciana.

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the ECT-3 project in Mozambique has played a vital role in ensuring food security for women and children. Marciana Baptista, a young mother, relies on the food distribution at Ninhato Primary School to provide for her family, replacing the school meals her children would normally receive.

The project, led by World Vision-Mozambique, provides Corn Soy Blend (CSB+) and vegetable oil to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and young children, ensuring essential nutrition despite school closures. With food shortages and poor crop yields affecting the region, many families struggle to access basic necessities.



Community members, including Marciana and others like Amândio Domingos, express gratitude for the food distributions, which bring hope in difficult times. The initiative, supported by local authorities, has distributed thousands of tons of CSB+ to families, helping them survive and maintain their well-being amid ongoing challenges. The coordination between World Vision and local government continues to strengthen food security efforts for those in need.

Enhancing Student Health Through Deworming and Preventive Care in Schools



During the third phase of the Educating Children Together project (ECT-3), World Vision-Mozambique, in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MISAU), undertook significant efforts to improve the health of school-aged children through deworming and other preventive health interventions.

As part of its commitment, World Vision aimed to provide deworming medication to 80,514 children in target schools twice a year. Additionally, the organization offered logistical support for school-based vaccination campaigns.

To ensure the successful implementation of a comprehensive school health package, World Vision supported the Government of Mozambique by training Ministry of Health trainers. This package included:



Vaccination of first and second-grade children against measles and tetanus,



Deworming



Iron supplementation when necessary, and



Medical screenings for vision, hearing, skin conditions, and mental health.

First aid kits were distributed to newly participating schools based on student enrollment figures. Moreover, World Vision promoted health and hygiene activities facilitated by trained health educators and teachers within the targeted schools.

The project also extended its focus to the broader community by monitoring pregnant and lactating women and children under five for signs of malnutrition during monthly take-home ration (THR) distributions. Those identified as at-risk were referred to local health clinics for further care.

By the conclusion of ECT-3, a total of **94,956 children** had received deworming treatment—an **achievement rate of 118%**. This significant overachievement reflects strong coordination between the health and education sectors, as well as World Vision's effective outreach and implementation capabilities. Ultimately, these efforts contributed to improving the overall health and learning readiness of the children served by the project.



Innovating School Feeding in Mozambique: **How LMMS Transformed the ECT-3 Project**



In Mozambique, the Educating Together Children – Phase III (ECT-3) project broke new ground by pioneering the use of the Last Mile Mobile Solution (LMMS) to efficiently track and manage school meal commodities.

LMMS is a digital, computer-based system designed for beneficiary registration and food distribution. It enhances transparency and accountability while significantly improving the efficiency of food deliveries.

Before its application in schools, LMMS had already been successfully used for distributing food to pregnant and lactating women, as well as caretakers of children under two years old.



In the context of school feeding, LMMS simplifies the registration of students and collects real-time data to support planning and reporting. Schoolteachers responsible for food distribution use mobile phones equipped with the LMMS system to scan each student's feeding card before meals.

This process automatically records attendance and enables Food Monitors to calculate the exact amount of Corn Soya Blend Plus (CSB+) needed for the day.



By providing real-time distribution data and automating calculations, LMMS empowers the ECT-3 project to develop more accurate and timely food distribution plans, ensuring effective management of resources and better planning for future commodity imports.

Paving the Way for Sustainable School Feeding: The Journey Toward Legislation in Mozambique

World Vision-Mozambique is an active member of the School Meals Task Force—a multi-stakeholder working group dedicated to supporting the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) in strengthening and sustaining the Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar (PRONAE), or National School Feeding Program.

Established by a resolution of the Council of Ministers on May 14, 2013, PRONAE aims to sustainably mitigate the negative effects of food insecurity and malnutrition on education. These include low enrollment, high dropout rates, frequent absenteeism, and poor academic performance.



As a result, the Task Force was established with the autonomy to lead advocacy efforts aimed at securing dedicated legislation and a state budget line for school meals, while also harmonizing the efforts of implementing partners.

In addition to World Vision-Mozambique, the Task Force includes the World Food Programme (WFP), Joint Aid Management (JAM), Center for Learning and Capacity Building of Civil Society (CESC), Counterpart International, People to People Development Aid (ADPP), the Movement for Education for All (MEPT), the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Since its inception, the Task Force has successfully organized advocacy meetings, roundtables, and technical discussions, culminating in the drafting of the National School Feeding Strategy. The Advisory Council of the Ministry of Education and Culture officially approved this draft in July 2024.

The public consultation process is currently underway, led by the Task Force, to gather input and ensure consensus. The ultimate goal is for the School Feeding Strategy to be approved by the Council of Ministers, enabling full-scale implementation as part of a long-term, government-led solution to school feeding in Mozambique.

The program was built on three strategic pillars:

Improving the nutritional and health status of students

Promoting food and nutrition education in schools

Developing agricultural production skills



The formation of the School Meals Task Force was proposed during the 2022 Meeting to Discuss Ideas on the Sustainability of School Feeding Initiatives, held in Maputo. Participants recognized the need for a coordinated platform to advocate for stronger institutional support for school feeding.

Access to Clean Water for Improved Education and Health

Gilda, a 14-year-old student at Halaca Primary School in Nampula Province, Mozambique, remembers the days when she had to carry a five-litre container of water to school every morning. Each drop was precious, used not only for washing hands but also for preparing the school's porridge meals and cleaning dishes. Students who could not bring water often went home during breaks or skipped school altogether. Teachers also struggled, walking seven kilometres to the Mecubúri River to wash clothes and fetch water, carrying gallons back for bathing and daily needs. Without clean water, school attendance was irregular, hygiene practices were difficult to maintain, and diseases were common.

This changed with the arrival of a new solar-powered water system through the Educating Children Together – Phase II (ECT-2) project, implemented by World Vision Mozambique. The system, with a 20,000-litre storage tank, now supplies clean, safe water to Halaca Primary School, the local health centre, and the surrounding community. For Gilda and 662 of her classmates, school is now a healthier, more welcoming place. Students can wash their hands before and after meals, teachers no longer spend hours walking to distant rivers, and attendance has improved significantly. “Students now come to school on time and don’t skip classes as before,” explained Isac Têssiua, the school principal.



The health centre has also felt the impact. In the past, patients often had to bring their own water, and diarrhoeal diseases were widespread due to reliance on unsafe river water. According to Osvaldo Arcanjo, the health centre director, the situation was critical. With clean water now available on-site, hygiene has improved, and more patients are seeking care. The presence of reliable water has strengthened both education and health systems in Halaca, ensuring that essential services can function safely and effectively.

Beyond Halaca, the ECT-2 project has been scaling up its impact. Between April and September 2021, three boreholes were upgraded into Small Water Supply Systems, bringing the total to twelve. Together, these systems benefit nearly 16,000 households and more than 5,000 students across Nacarôa and Muecate districts. t nearly 16,000 households and more than 5,000 students across Nacarôa and Muecate districts. To ensure sustainability, teachers and parents are being trained in Water Committees to manage the systems, collect user fees, and maintain the infrastructure. According to Mangani Banda, ECT Interim Chief of Party, providing safe drinking water alongside sanitation and hygiene education is fundamental for improving living standards and educational outcomes for children and their families.

For Gilda, her classmates, and her community, access to clean water has been life-changing. What was once a daily struggle has turned into an opportunity to focus on learning, stay healthy, and thrive in an environment where education and health services can finally operate with dignity and reliability

Lessons Learnt

1. Integration of World Vision's project models including WASH UP, menstrual hygiene management etc. into the school curriculum would have been advantageous, creating ownership and sustain project interventions in schools. A successful school meals program should have several components including health and nutrition.

2. Project investment is focused on building the capacity of government institutions/structures and less on community. Thus, community participation in school management is weak. There are limited resources in terms of support to build the capacity of farmer groups for increased production to support household food needs and community contributions to school meals.

3. The absence of School Meals Legislation by government does not provide any framework which partners can work with towards schools' graduation and sustained locally led school feeding program. The local school feeding program, PRONAE has very limited resources to step up and take over school feeding programs on a mass scale. School Meals taskforce advocacy towards the legislation of school meals guarantees more resources for better education, and child nutrition outcomes. School meals not only contribute to improving levels of nutrition, health, student retention at school and student attention in the classroom, it is also a social opportunity for children. When they eat, they talk and interact with each other - it's party time daily!

4. An integrated and multi-sector project such as ECT is impacting children's wellbeing more positively compared with sector-specific projects because of its holistic design and delivery approach. An integrated program approach has proven to be the best way to address the literacy outcomes and foster community support for education. Multi-stakeholder, multi-level, integrated projects provide greater reach, involvement, and ownership, and thus sustainability.

5. The current project design is not responding to the children with special needs in schools. A more inclusive education design/approach is strongly recommended. There is the need to formally include interventions which support households and communities to proactively identify and deliberately provide specific support to children with special needs.



Lessons Learnt



6. Pedagogical supervision of schools is weak under the current project. Funding for this activity is inadequate and advocacy to the government for increased resources is strongly recommended.

7. Adaptive management skills were employed to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on project implementation and outcomes. The flexibility of the donor to provide approval of modifications to some of the interventions during the height of the pandemic helped keep the project on track.

8. MoU with PRONAE would provide stronger opportunity for the program to engage on graduation. Programs should therefore ensure that there is an implementation partnership established with PRONAE at the beginning especially the use of PRONAE criteria for the selection of target districts and schools. Alignment of the project with government program(s) is critical to engender ownership, technical oversight and commitment to schools' graduation and overall sustainability of the project.

9. Approaches related to the community mobilization was designed to be diffused through the community radios, unfortunately the two districts didn't have any community radios. Though the project adopted the theatre groups approach and the district platforms, to mobilize the community, the extent of the impact would have been greater if some mass communication tools like radios were available in the target districts. For the success of a good school meals program, communities must own and feel part of the program's approaches.

10. The project engages strongly with relevant government institutions at the provincial and district levels, however, information between the provincial and national offices of the government is weak. Therefore, there is a strong need for the project in coordination with National Office to intensify external engagement at the Maputo level to enhance project visibility. Involvement of stakeholders at all levels creates ownership for the sustainability of the school meals project. Early government buy in/participation at the national level must start from the outset of the program to guarantee long term project sustainability and graduation.

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