

Mothers of Literacy support daughters' education

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Adult learners assured the visitors that it was a bad day to visit because the instructor had just returned from being ill. In the village, where most people do not have a clock or other timepiece, people watch the sun and keep an eye on the tree where the class meets to know when it is time to gather for lessons. After the teacher's absence, it will take several days for all the students to return to class.

The participants do not like the village to have an illiterate population because they see a link between literacy and prosperity. A man explained how terrible it was when he received letters from distant family and had to ask for help to read them. This made his private family affairs known to anyone in the village and made him an object of gossip.

A woman explained that she found learning very difficult, but she has a dream to get a job, to



Ottawa-based CODE has worked in Mozambique in partnership with CIDA and non-profit organization Progresso which develops learning materials in Portuguese and in five local languages, trains teachers and reaches over 600,000 primary students.

Literacy

find work within her own village. She gave the example of being the controller of the water standpipe, where villagers are charged eight cents for 20 litres of water. This job can only go to someone who can read and write. It is an achievable dream.

When asked how they support their daughters' education, the women became animated.

They do not want their daughters to struggle as they do.

"I haven't learned enough to be able to help them yet," explained one mother, "but I make them go to school every day!"

The mothers hope their daughters will continue into secondary school, although they fear that when girls leave the village to go to the nearest secondary school in Mueda, they may soon return pregnant.

"But I won't give up!" another

- The most recent Demographic and Health survey of Mozambique shows that 56 per cent of young women between the ages of 20-24 were married before the age of 17 and 18 per cent were married before the age of 15.
- Girls usually stop going to school once they are married.
- In Mozambique, 37 per cent of married girls between the ages of 15-19 have no education. In Cabo Delgado, one of the provinces where CODE and Progresso work, the illiteracy rate among women is 83 per cent (and 68 per cent among adults).

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er mother promised, "After the baby doesn't need my daughter for feeding, I will send her back to finish her education."