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# The JOMA Project 2006 Final Report

November 25, 2006

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THE  
SHELBY BOND  
FOUNDATION



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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Summary of Activities .....	1
2.1 Conference .....	1
2.2 Microprojects .....	1
2.3 Microproject Monitoring .....	2
2.4 Yearbook.....	2
3. Successes.....	3
3.1 Utilizing Local Human Resources .....	3
3.2 Utilizing Local Material Resources .....	3
3.3 Developing Effective Prevention Messages .....	4
3.4 Including Young Women.....	4
3.5 Developing Relationships With Partners in Government.....	5
4. Challenges.....	6
4.1 Communicating Concepts of Gender.....	6
4.2 Developing Effective Prevention Messages .....	6
4.3 Maintaining Participation.....	7
4.4 Monitoring Project Progress .....	8
4.5 Developing Microproject Proposals .....	8
5. Conclusion .....	9
6. Supporters .....	10

## Executive Summary

The greatest development challenge facing Mozambique is the growing HIV/AIDS pandemic. One factor leading to the higher HIV prevalence rate is restrictive gender roles that create a fundamental inequality within relationships, perpetuating unhealthy sexual norms and behaviors. The JOMA Project (*JOvens para Mudança e Acção*, Youth for Change and Action) aims to reduce the transmission of HIV in Mozambique by effecting positive behavior change among young men by capacitating them to think critically about gender relations and equality.

The JOMA Project 2006 successfully trained and supported fifteen school-based youth groups comprised of young men exploring issues of gender in Mozambique and communicating information and prevention messages to their peers.

The most successful JOMA projects achieved the following:

1. Utilizing local human resources
2. Utilizing local material resources
3. Developing effective prevention messages
4. Including young women
5. Developing relationships with partners in government

JOMA participants also faced challenges in the following areas:

1. Communicating concepts of gender
2. Developing effective prevention messages
3. Maintaining participation
4. Monitoring project progress
5. Developing microproject proposals

Feedback from project participants, colleagues in government, and professional trainers has provided clear pathways to build on successes and address problem areas in the coming year. Participants in the 2007 project will actively seek out local resources to support JOMA microprojects and strengthen relationships with partners in government. An increased focus on the development and maintenance of effective communication strategies will improve the effectiveness of microprojects. And more extensive planning, with a focus on monitoring, will create a solid base of support for participants and allow for the further refinement of project strategies.

## **1. Introduction**

It is essential in the fight against HIV/AIDS to address the cultural factors that lead to high-risk behavior among both men and women, stressing the importance of mutual respect and collaboration. In this context, the JOMA (*Jovens para Mudança e Acção*, Young Men for Change and Action) project aims to reduce the transmission of HIV in Mozambique by effecting positive behavior change among young men by capacitating them to think critically about gender relations and equality.

To reach this goal, the JOMA Project takes advantage of the unique position held by volunteers in Peace Corps/Mozambique's education program. Education Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) teach either English or biology at Mozambican secondary schools in eight of Mozambique's ten provinces, working and living in rural communities for two to three years. Volunteers therefore have the opportunity to mentor youth outside of the classroom; likewise, Volunteers develop strong professional relationships with Mozambican teachers that facilitate skill sharing and capacity building.

The JOMA Project focuses on providing technical and material support for organized groups (JOMA groups) of young men led by Volunteer and Mozambican teachers. These groups explore issues of gender inequality in Mozambique, develop prevention messages based on these discussions, and communicate prevention messages to their peers in creative ways.

## **2. Summary of Activities**

### **2.1 Conference**

The JOMA Project 2006 opened with a conference in Inhambane City during the week of April 16th, 2006. Participants included thirty-four Mozambican students, fifteen Peace Corps Education Volunteers, and sixteen Mozambican counterpart teachers. Participating teachers and students were introduced to concepts of gender and explored gender roles in the context of HIV/AIDS in Mozambique. Participants also received training in one of four community microprojects: community gardens, murals, student theatre, or documentation. Participants were trained in project budgeting and proposal writing, and completed microproject proposals and budgets upon returning to their respective schools.

### **2.2 Microprojects**

JOMA groups in fifteen schools successfully planned, budgeted, and carried out microprojects designed to raise awareness of issues of gender inequality and their impact in Mozambique. Microproject funds of up to 8.000 Mtn (approx. US\$300) per group were provided by PEPFAR through the US Embassy Public Affairs Office and distributed by the JOMA Council.

## **2.3 Microproject Monitoring**

Teachers leading JOMA Groups submitted monthly reports, tracking the number of students participating in group activities, the number of persons reached with prevention messages, and financial expenditures. JOMA Council members collected these reports and used them as a source for this report and the JOMA Project 2007 plan.

In order to examine microprojects, clarify their successes and challenges, and further develop the capacity of the JOMA groups, the JOMA Council assembled monitoring teams were comprised of the following:

- A JOMA Council member
- A representative from the Provincial AIDS Council Nucleus (NPCS)
- A representative from the Provincial Education and Culture Directorate (DPEC)
- When possible, a professional in the area of the respective JOMA group's microproject (financial and logistical restrictions did not allow for trainers to visit all projects in the field)

Monitoring visit reports were reviewed by the JOMA Council and also serve as a source for this report and the JOMA Project 2007 plan.

## **2.4 Yearbook**

Monthly and final reports, monitoring visit reports, and narratives from JOMA group participants are to be synthesized in a JOMA Project 2006 Yearbook, and distributed to all participants. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the target date for the completion of the yearbook has been moved from November 2006 to February 2007.

### 3. Successes

JOMA group microprojects represent JOMA participants' dedication to the goals of the JOMA project. Groups were provided with material and technical support and developed creative strategies to communicate prevention messages to their peers. The most successful JOMA projects were effective in:

- 3.1 Utilizing local human resources
- 3.2 Utilizing local material resources
- 3.3 Developing effective prevention messages
- 3.4 Including young women
- 3.5 Developing relationships with partners in government

This report will cite examples of JOMA groups that exemplify these achievements and describe what will be done in the JOMA Project 2007 to facilitate further successes.

#### 3.1 Utilizing Local Human Resources

**Journalism Clubs:** JOMA groups with journalism microprojects interviewed nurses, doctors, community leaders, and testing center (GATV/ATS) counselors. Personnel from these facilities shared their valuable knowledge and experiences, which students passed on to their peers. JOMA group students developed an awareness of their communities' resources and how they are being mobilized in the fight against HIV/AIDS. They also became familiar with services that they and their peers have access to: voluntary counseling and testing, treatment, etc.

**Sussundenga:** A local journalist and part-time teacher active in management of the community radio contributed her technical expertise and arranged air time for JOMA programs.

**Chibuto:** A teacher not initially involved in the JOMA project took notice of the theatre group and offered his expertise, drawn from years of organizing community theatre projects.

**2007:** JOMA Council members and Education Peace Corps Volunteers will identify local professionals in the four microproject areas (journalism, photodocumentary, mural painting, theatre) and recruit these professionals to support JOMA groups' microprojects.

#### 3.2 Utilizing Local Material Resources

**Homoine:** The JOMA group used the community radio station to inform community members of new JOMA group murals and their key messages.

**Nacala:** The JOMA group rebuilt crumbling schoolyard walls and used these walls as surfaces for murals, both rebuilding and beautifying the school.

**Chimoio:** The Chimoio Agricultural Institute (IAC) contributed a hectare of land and use of the institute's tractor to the students' community gardening project.

**2007:** JOMA groups will be provided with these examples, and tasked with identifying existing resources (e.g. walls for murals, stages for theatre performances) in their communities prior to the training at the end of the first trimester.

### **3.3 Developing Effective Prevention Messages**

**Jecúa:** Students used an HIV/AIDS information pamphlet as a design on which they based a mural depicting HIV prevalence world-wide, comparing Mozambique to other countries. The mural was located in the new school library. Students also designed a message: "protecting the past, protecting the future," a prevention message linking the paintings at Chinhamapere (rock paintings near the school dating back to over 3.000 years ago) to the promise of the future. These murals both carried messages relevant to the community.

**IAC:** Group discussions placed a strong emphasis on future planning. This is a particularly relevant discussion for technical school students who will soon begin their careers.

**Hókwè:** The JOMA group's newspaper discussed preventing early or unwanted pregnancies through abstinence and condom use, widening the discussion on prevention from HIV/AIDS to general reproductive health.

Demonstrating a firm grasp of gender theory, the group also focused on discussing gender equality within domestic roles, highlighting gender stereotypes and their negative effects on women. They also discussed the importance of self-esteem for women in decision making and negotiating relationships between men and women.

**Chicucue:** The JOMA group discussed various STD's including gonorrhea and syphilis. They explained the forms of transmission and held radio debates involving the public on whether traditional healers can cure STD's.

**2007:** To further strengthen the quality of prevention messages, an April training session will focus on communication strategies published by the Ministry of Education and Culture<sup>1</sup>. Microproject trainings will focus on developing the student's ability to communicate with his peers. Teachers will be provided with reference material on developing effective prevention messages, and JOMA monitoring tools will include indicators for appropriate and effective prevention messages.

### **3.4 Including Young Women**

**Morrumbene, Chibuto, Mangunde, Nacala, Inhambane City, Buzi, Hókwè, Instituto Agrícola de Chimoio (IAC), Sussundenga:** The JOMA Project

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<sup>1</sup> Ministerio de Educação e Cultura, Ficha Technica, Setembro de 2003. *Estratégia de Comunicação sobre o HIV/SIDA.*

targets young men with activities designed to develop critical thinking skills and positive behavior, and the JOMA Council did not initially encourage the participation of young women where it was thought participants might be less open about their beliefs in the presence of members of the opposite sex. However, nine of sixteen participating JOMA groups included young women in certain activities (especially debates) and reported positive results. Feedback from the JOMA Project's gender trainer and colleagues in Sofala DPEC and NPCCS encouraged the inclusion of young women in all JOMA groups in order to "complete the dialogue" on gender inequality.

**2007:** JOMA groups will include young women in many club activities, and Education Peace Corps Volunteers will be encouraged to establish REDES groups in schools where JOMA groups are active<sup>2</sup>. Creating JOMA and REDES groups in the same school and integrating the two clubs for key activities will result in an improved dialogue on gender issues while allowing autonomous, independent discussions on sensitive issues such as sexual and reproductive health.

### **3.5 Developing Relationships With Partners in Government**

**Jecúa:** During the monitoring visit, the school director agreed to provide access to the television and VCR in the student dormitory. Manica NPCCS and DPEC offices both have video libraries, and representatives from the offices will loan videos to the students to view.

**IAC:** During the monitoring visit the Manica NPCCS program coordinator Sra. Josefa scheduled a meeting with David Charles, a student leader, to plan for support for the project in the coming year.

**Hókwè:** Students and teachers developed a relationship with Dr. Saúde, a Xai-Xai journalist who has agreed to edit their newspaper in the coming year.

**Chicunque:** During the monitoring visit, Sr. Valdemiro from Radio Mozambique in Inhambane City offered suggestions to the Chicunque radio group and will continue to offer his expertise to the group at regular meetings.

**Homoine:** Students and counterpart teacher met with community leaders to introduce their project. Community leaders were impressed with JOMA group's mural in the town's Youth Square and held a public ceremony inaugurating the mural on National Teacher's Day. Leaders then requested that the JOMA group expand their project with murals in other public venues. The JOMA group developed a second proposal and budget to request

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<sup>2</sup> The REDES Project is the JOMA Project's women-centered homologue, a national women's leadership conference, also organized by Peace Corps Volunteers. From the REDES Conference 2005 Report: *"The chief goals of the REDES conference... [is] to inform a group of female students ... about facts important to their sexual and reproductive health; to help them analyze their own relationships in regards to their health and futures; to empower them with tools and skills necessary to implement healthy life decisions; and to encourage them to share their learned facts, tools, and skills with their peers in their respective communities."*

additional funding, and the JOMA Council facilitated the delivery of these funds.

**2007:** JOMA Council members will continue to draw on the technical expertise of colleagues in the provincial NPCCS and DPEC. JOMA group participants will make contact early in the semester with community leaders and share their work with the community through public meetings and ceremonies.

## **4. Challenges**

Six areas presented significant challenges during the JOMA Project 2006:

- 4.1 Communicating concepts of gender
- 4.2 Developing effective prevention messages
- 4.3 Maintaining participation
- 4.4 Monitoring project progress
- 4.5 Developing microproject proposals

These difficulties all have clear solutions, many of which were elucidated by input from project partners during the monitoring visits.

### **4.1 Communicating Concepts of Gender**

When reviewing the prevention messages developed by JOMA clubs it became clear that group participants had difficulty communicating concepts of gender. “Gender” confused participants in part because it is consistently misused (in other projects) to mean “activities to benefit girls” or (as in the case of IAC or the Jecúa club meetings) “there are two girls in our group.”

The tenets of gender theory involving the socially constructed *ideas* of men and women are difficult to teach, and even more difficult to express in a relevant way. Young men clearly need more intensive guidance in this area.

**2007:** JOMA trainers and materials will only use specific terms: “gender stereotypes”, “gender inequality”, and “traditional gender roles.” Training sessions will also more closely define how gender dynamics can be best addressed through these communication projects. Groups will be provided with clear examples and monitoring mechanisms will focus on the proper development and communication of gender-related prevention messages.

### **4.2 Developing Effective Prevention Messages**

Monitoring teams found that JOMA groups have not found success in communicating with older students and adults. Colleagues from Manica NPCCS, and Sofala NPCCS and DPEC all encouraged JOMA groups to focus prevention messages on their peers, thus applying resources where they will have the greatest impact.

Monitoring teams also observed that certain journalism group articles were copied directly from newspapers and reference materials to the JOMA group

newspaper. This resulted in irrelevant information diluting other potentially useful information; for example, articles on an Inhambane police officer molesting his daughter and the risks of injection drug use were published in a remote Sofala village. This does not play to the strength of JOMA groups: the ability to make prevention messages relevant to students' schools and communities, and to communicate these messages peer-to-peer.

**2007:** In accordance with project partners' recommendations JOMA groups will be encouraged to target youth, i.e. their peers, with prevention messages. Additionally, as previously mentioned, a greater emphasis will be placed on creating and monitoring more effective prevention messages by employing the Ministry of Education and Culture's communication strategies.

### 4.3 Maintaining Participation

Of the seventeen schools originally selected for participation in the JOMA Project, only fifteen succeeded in implementing a microproject (and one of these with considerable delay). In several schools, group leaders – volunteer teachers, Mozambican teachers, and students – who participated in the JOMA Conference have since ceased participating in JOMA group activities.

Project participants have provided several explanation for attrition:

- A delay in microproject grants, and thus microproject activities. This delay was usually due to slow turnaround in project proposals (problems with communication, teachers with busy schedules) but in two instances was directly due to a lack of availability of funds.
- Participants "didn't take the conference seriously," looking at the conference as a paid vacation to Inhambane.
- A lack of teacher participation in the conference, was consistently associated with poor group performance upon returning to their respective schools. According to feedback from participating teachers and an independent conference evaluation, this was likely due to unclear expectations. That is, teachers and students were not informed beforehand of the level of participation that would be expected of them.

**2007:** JOMA Project activities will begin at the opening of the 2007 school year and continue through to the conclusion of the final trimester. At the conclusion of the first trimester of the 2007 school year, JOMA participants will meet for a national *training* (in place of a national *conference*). More than just a change in semantics, the 2007 training will involve better planning and clearly articulated expectations, creating a more professional environment conducive to developing strong skills.

At the school level, acting on a suggestion from Manica DPEC, the JOMA Council will request that school directors support JOMA groups by excusing

participating JOMA group students from school responsibilities such as working on the school farm or cleaning school property.

Following requests from volunteer and education teachers, JOMA Council members will heighten involvement in the monitoring of group activities, either by telephone or in person. This will necessitate an increase in administrative (i.e., telephone) costs, but will help motivate JOMA groups.

#### **4.4 Monitoring Project Progress**

Incisive questions from government partners during monitoring visits made it clear that the JOMA Council did not adequately define project objectives and indicators at the beginning of the 2006 JOMA Project.

Additionally, visits by monitoring teams to JOMA schools during the third trimester represented a logistical challenge, and not all government partners were able to participate. The JOMA Council attempted to establish contact with NPCS and DPEC offices only days before monitoring visits and several NPCS and DPEC representatives were not able to participate due to this short notice.

JOMA group participants reported that the feedback from monitoring teams was valuable, but the value was diminished by the late date of the monitoring visits.

**2007:** JOMA Council members will collaborate to develop clearly defined objectives and indicators for the JOMA Project 2007, and use these indicators to develop a more effective monitoring and evaluation system.

The JOMA Council will also prioritize the involvement of Ministry of Education and National AIDS Council staff. By the arrival of the third trimester these personnel will be familiar with the JOMA groups and their feedback will be more constructive when delivered early, during the first week of the final trimester.

#### **4.5 Developing Microproject Proposals**

Many teachers (both Volunteer and Mozambican) experienced difficulties completing sound project proposals. This delayed funding for many JOMA group microprojects and demonstrated that participating teachers were not adequately trained in project development and implementation.

**2007:** The 2007 JOMA Training will integrate the drafting of microproject proposals into microproject planning sessions. Teachers (PCV and Mozambican) will be guided through the project development process and the result will be a complete written proposal. Upon returning to site, participants will collect price quotes and complete the microproject budget. The JOMA Council will dispense funds immediately upon receiving a properly completed proposal.

## **5. Conclusion**

The success of the JOMA Project is demonstrated in the successes of the school-based microprojects. The most successful JOMA microprojects were distinguished by students and teachers making use of existing resources – human and material – and communicating relevant education and prevention messages to their peers. Microprojects were also distinguished by group members seeking support from female peers and colleagues in the Ministry of Education and Culture and the National AIDS Council.

Participants in the JOMA Project encountered difficulty in developing quality prevention messages. The project also suffered from attrition of participants, due primarily to delayed starts for the microprojects and a lack of clearly articulated requirements and expectations. Monitoring mechanisms for the JOMA Project also merit fortification.

The JOMA Project 2007 will build on the successes of 2006 by actively seeking out local resources to carry out microprojects, and strengthening relationships with partners in government. An increased focus on the development and maintenance of sound communication strategies will improve the efficacy of prevention messages. More extensive planning, with a focus on monitoring, will create a solid base of support for participants and allow for the further refinement of project strategies.

Throughout 2006, students and teachers demonstrated their flexibility and imagination in the implementation of these microprojects. The JOMA project will continue to support participants' creativity and energy in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

## **6. Supporters**

### **The JOMA Council Consists of the Following Volunteers from Peace Corps/Mozambique:**

Daniel Jack Lyons, Community Health Volunteer  
Joshua P. Wilcox, Community Health Volunteer  
Ana Alécia Lyman, Community Health Volunteer  
Michael D. Nelson, Education Volunteer  
R. Bernard Moorehead, Community Health Volunteer

### **The JOMA Project is supported by the following partners:**

The Shelby Bond Foundation  
Peace Corps/Mozambique  
Population Services International (PSI)  
The U.S. Embassy and U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Office (PAO)  
The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)  
Volunteer Services Organization (VSO)  
The Inhambane office of the Mozambique National AIDS Council  
(*Conselho Nacional de Combate ao SIDA, CNCS*)  
Population Services International (PSI)  
The Mozambique Ministry of Education and Culture  
The Foundation for Community Development  
(*Fundação Para o Desenvolvimento da Comunidade, FDC*)  
The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)