

COMBATING CHILD LABOUR AND SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM THROUGH THE POWER OF FOOD



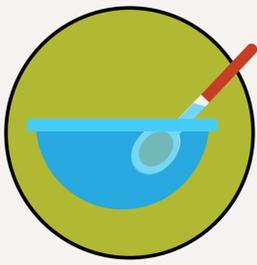
AVOIDING CHILD LABOUR

IN THE FIELDS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR ALL UNIVERSAL SUBSIDIARIES, AND MAKING SCHOOL MORE ATTRACTIVE IS CENTRAL TO ENSURING THAT CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL.



When school is not attractive, children tend to drop out and inevitably end up helping in the field. Through a school feeding programme,

MLT has seen school attendance rise to unexpected levels and children's health and attention improve as a result.



SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

=



RISE IN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

+



IMPROVEMENT OF HEALTH & RESULTS

Combating child labour and school absenteeism through the power of food

In July 2015, Mozambique Leaf Tobacco Limitada (MLT) founded the Kukula Programme in collaboration with the Associação Portuguesa de Apoio a África (APOIAR). This initiative aims to fight child labour, absenteeism and underachievement in elementary schools through the distribution of daily meals to all children enrolled at the Nacalongo, Joho and Mepapa Schools in the Mandimba district in northern Mozambique.



Each school has one full-time paid cook to manage the food stocks and hygiene. A select group of mothers from the community volunteer to assist with the cooking, supervision of the meal distribution and washing up each day.

All Kukula kitchens are built to a standard design, a practical block with two economical rocket stoves, which only need a few branches per day as fuel, backed by an ablution facility where children can wash their hands before meals. A shed is built next door by the community and furnished with tables and chairs to act as a canteen for the children.

No one learns well on an empty stomach, so a breakfast of tea and biscuits is served to all the morning shift children. Lunch is served to all children attending in the morning and in the afternoon shift. Each day, the number of meals served is recorded and compared against school attendance records to ensure that only children who attended school that day are given a meal. Children are weighed at the beginning and end of the school year to monitor their progress.

As a result of this programme, overall school attendance has more than doubled. Each school saw a massive increase

from just fifteen pupils to approximately 180 pupils per day in the two smaller schools, and to 260 pupils per day in the larger school.

The children no longer abandon the school after the celebration for International Children's Day on 1 June, but continue to attend until year-end in November. The children's health has also improved through school vaccinations, deworming and hygiene lessons starting from the basics of washing hands before each meal. Soap is now a commodity in great demand in these communities.

After the success of the first year of the Kukula Programme, with **750 children** being fed every school day, MLT was able to include a fourth school. Muita School's **495 pupils** will now also have access to daily meals when they attend school.

From August 2015 to May 2017, the programme has served over

380 000 MEALS.

Children now not only attend school every day, but also stay on the premises longer to do homework or play with friends, as their perception of school has changed. There has been a greater sense of community responsibility, with mothers volunteering to help the hired cooks prepare and distribute the food. Kukula has also had a positive impact on the local economy as a result of the sourcing construction and food from local businesses and markets, and the Ministry of Education has committed to ensuring the presence of motivated headmasters and teachers.

Compared with other similar programmes, this programme is innovative, as it is based on paid service and a continuous flow of supplies. Experience has shown that volunteer work in very poor communities is not sustainable, as people have too many other burdens. In the Kukula Programme, the cooks receive a monthly salary in communities where the opportunities for regular paid jobs are non-existent. These cooks are seriously committed to being there every day and prepared to cook more than just a basic porridge. In addition, the pool of volunteer mothers is wide enough to ensure that the burden on each woman is very light and manageable.

Another innovation is the emphasis on a variety of food to ensure balanced nutrition. Other programmes in Africa only provide maize porridge reinforced with bean flour, which does not appeal to the children. The programme supervisor is in charge of buying the food every week to ensure that all children have a meal every day that they attend school, whereas other volunteer programmes feed the children, and not always all of them, on an irregular basis based simply on whether there is a volunteer to cook and if there is food available.

★ GOALS ★

The main goal of the programme is to secure its future sustainability. MLT is studying ways to minimize the running costs without compromising the quality, and to maximise community participation in a sustainable way. As the demand is very high, MLT is also exploring options on how to expand the Kukula Programme to more schools.