

ASSOCIAÇÃO LIVRO ABERTO...

and the **LIVRO ABERTO BIBLIOTECA DE CRIANÇAS, LANGUAGE & LITERACY CENTER**

Jardim dos Professores, Maputo, Mozambique

Livro Aberto is a literacy organization opening books and doors for children in Mozambique. Livro Aberto provides not only books, but expert literacy workshops modeling and supporting the skills requisite for success in reading and writing. It has been demonstrated that most Mozambican children have limited access to reading materials and literacy role models within their homes. Most Mozambican children are challenged by speaking a home language that is different to the language of school. This creates a situation in which children are expected to learn academic concepts and to read and to write, through a language that they are not proficient in. Livro Aberto serves to overcome these barriers and to ultimately foster a culture of reading. Livro Aberto is providing access to quality books and educational materials, literacy models and skill enhancing experiences in both Portuguese and home languages.



Our Mission:

Livro Aberto aims to bring empowerment and enjoyment through literacy to children throughout the country through a community library, mobile libraries, and language/literacy support.

We believe that books, and the empowerment and enjoyment that comes through literacy, should be a part of everyone's world. Our vision is of a reading culture in Mozambique, where all children have access to the skills and resources to successfully gain enjoyment and personal strength through literacy. Therefore, our goal is to bring literacy workshops and library experiences to children from all cultures, environments, and language/literacy levels living in Mozambique. Furthermore, we believe that by enabling adults to read, the culture for reading within homes will grow. Adults that are empowered through literacy encourage their children to learn to read and to learn; as role models of literacy they can break the cycle of poverty that illiteracy perpetuates. For these reasons, the provision of adult language and literacy courses accessible to Mozambican adults, especially women, is a key part of Livro Aberto's mission. We, at Livro Aberto, have the vision, expertise, tools and community support to enable the children and adults in Mozambique to access books and empowerment through literacy.



Teaming with Communities and Schools:

Livro Aberto is a Mozambican registered non-profit children's library and literacy organization. Livro Aberto was founded in Mozambique in 2007 by an association of people local to or living long-term in Mozambique. The founders bring well over 25 years of experience in literacy education and library sciences. Livro Aberto team has worked with locally employed teachers and librarians, to develop and deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate educational experiences for children. Commencing with a course of pilot programs in collaboration with local community leaders, parents, orphanages and childcare centers; Livro Aberto has established that the need, demand and the support for literacy outreach programs exist in Mozambique. Our initial pilot project and projects thereafter have demonstrated the feasibility in adapting internationally recognized teaching methodologies, to rural and urban settings in Mozambique. The completely mobile classroom and library, developed by Livro Aberto was successfully piloted in low income communities (urban and rural), schools, orphanages and early

childhood centers. Through these experiences literacy programming, and writing and theatre workshops were prepared; tested; and proven effective in bringing stories alive for children, while naturally developing their skills for reading and writing. Most importantly both children and adults learned a value for reading, growing the culture of reading in Mozambique. It was also clearly established that by including water and a small nutritious snack of peanuts within the sessions, children's concentration and engagement levels were enhanced.

Since 2007, Livro Aberto has been working hard to improve literacy skills and to foster a joy of books through mobile library programs, creative workshops, and educational activities within communities surrounding Maputo and in Jardim dos Professores. We believe that children learn best through hands-on experiences with print materials. We use recycled materials to make sustainable, educational resources and books with children; resources that the children can take home to practice with family members. Our Community Library Program model, our recycled materials resource strategies and our trained team of expert Mozambican community literacy coaches and librarians (and volunteers from around the globe) have made it possible to document a portfolio of literacy outreach achievements across Maputo, the surrounding bairros and across Mozambique. Livro Aberto's use of recycled materials to develop educational resources and the emphasis on teacher and community adult training, addresses barriers to literacy in a sustainable way; empowering both adults and children, and providing programs that deliver lasting change.



Livro Aberto's Portfolio of Outreach, Projects and Experiences:

Livro Aberto's Biblioteca de Crianças, Language and Literacy Center

Since 2007, Livro Aberto's Community Library Programs were based originally out of a founding member's apartment. In 2014, Livro Aberto opened the Livro Aberto Biblioteca de Crianças, Language and Literacy Center in a public garden in Maputo (Jardim dos Professores) next to the Natural History Museum and the Cardoso Hotel. This location is ideal for families and children of Maputo across all socio-economic levels; due to its convenient location, excellent park facilities, and a popular café. There is a large government secondary school located across the street, and 5 government and private primary schools located within a five block radius of the Livro Aberto Library. There are 3 universities/technical schools within a short walking distance to the Livro Aberto Library. Finally, there is a large transportation hub for Maputo located a half a block away. Most importantly, this location provides Livro Aberto with the opportunity to attract more new families, reach more students and children with free access to books, literacy models, print media and free educational activities in the garden. In addition, the Library offers a means to raise support for our community projects; further securing the sustainability of Livro Aberto's literacy outreach.



Livro Aberto's city based public library is the epicenter for all Livro Aberto activities: literacy outreach, Community Library Programming, donated book/resource distribution to other program and libraries fundraising initiatives and the headquarters of Associação Livro Aberto. Staffed with trained community literacy coaches and librarians, this bilingual library is designed to create an empowering environment for children to not only access books but to be supported in reading and understanding them. Adults can enjoy an enticing selection of novels and non-fiction books; including an array of topics for families and guide books for traveling in Africa and beyond. The Livro Aberto book collection includes a plethora of both Portuguese and English language books, from toddler to academic reading levels. Adults, children and families can read in the Library or garden for free; or based on a sliding fee scale/book deposit they can become members and check books out to enjoy within the comforts of their home.



Since the Livro Aberto Biblioteca de Crianças, Language and Literacy Center has been opened our literacy outreach within the garden has documented achievements in the following:

- Free access to books read in the Library and garden by well over 50 children, students, adults and families on a weekly basis.
- Free books and magazines available to all to take home.
- Over 56 local, expat and small organization members to the Library; borrowing up to 20 books to read at home at a time.
- Both government and private schools and teachers are valuing the Library opportunities and making it possible for their students to experience reading for pleasure at Livro Aberto. Unsolicited, government school groups visit the Livro Aberto Biblioteca de Crianças, Language and Literacy Center, including well over 200 children each year. These children now know how and where to access a public library, books and literacy models in Maputo.
- Both public and private schools participate in literacy programming with Livro Aberto including drama, art & literacy activities, Read Alouds and "My Choice" Reading activities in the Library and garden. Totalling well over 150 children and teachers participating each year.
- Over 250 children and adults join in our annual Children's Day Fair participating in engaging literacy activities, recycled materials art activities, community cultural exhibitions and games. Well over 150 community children participate for free (with Livro Aberto securing donated transport, books to distribute and snacks). Those families that have the means to pay for the event buy activity tickets that help to raise funds for Livro Aberto's Community Library Programs.
- Livro Aberto provides free "Literacy Fair" activities in the park every second Saturday of each month. The fair promotes the public's access to local artists, authors and poets.



- Through fee paying memberships and courses at the Library, Livro Aberto raises funds in support of our community projects moving Livro Aberto closer to achieving sustainability in our community literacy outreach and programming.

The library also serves children and adults through our current Moms, Nannies & Tots developmental programming. Once Livro Aberto has achieved sustainability, we aim to begin to offer these programs for free to low income Mozambican families. The Livro Aberto Biblioteca de Crianças, Language and Literacy Center is working hard to offer new community outreach and fee-based programs in 2019 including: afterschool programming, Holiday Club programming, English lessons and a youth homework assistance center to be open daily.

Community Library Programs with Results

During the past 12 years, Livro Aberto has worked directly with Mozambican schools, communities and orphanages. Our community programs form the heart of Livro Aberto. Our model for fun and interactive learning forms the basis for all Livro Aberto's activities in communities. Livro Aberto and volunteers are currently providing two Community Library Programs in Bairro Triunfo with over 75 children ages 2 to 16 years old; and literacy modelling with the children that visit the Library in Jardim dos Professores on a daily basis. The Livro Aberto team of staff and volunteers start at 7:30 and end the last program at 3:00, providing a comprehensive literacy outreach program and lending library for the Bairro Triunfo children. For each session, four Livro Aberto community literacy teachers transport water, peanuts, books, shade, tarps and materials to each Community Library Program.

Our Community Library Programs are thematically based upon a book or books, with direct and interactive teaching of vocabulary and concepts based on the theme; while modelling literacy skills crucial for budding readers. After a "circle time" of songs, calendar, and a Read Aloud, children are broken into 3 smaller age level groups for developmentally appropriate literacy activities based on the theme. From toddler to teenager groups, each group extends the ideas and learning gleaned from the story at supportive, yet challenging levels. Livro Aberto focuses on teaching children to think about, write about, read about and talk about what they are learning.

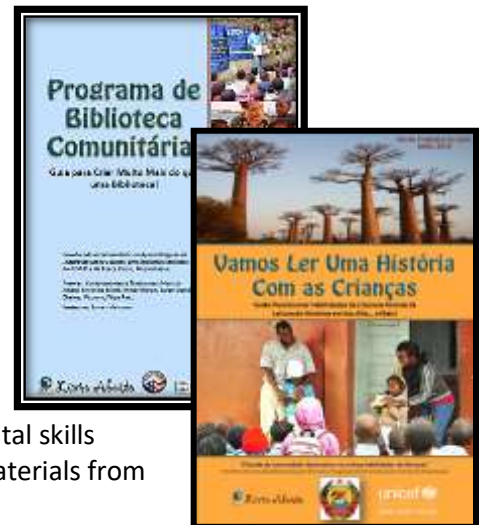


The Livro Aberto model for a Community Library Program is based on evidenced based practices from around the world. Our model has proven that with a significant, educational, fun, interactive, and consistent Community Library Program with books and literacy models that are easily accessible to children and at their language abilities; children achieve a foundation for learning to read and write. Through simple literacy screening methods, Livro Aberto has documented that children who consistently attend the Livro Aberto Community Library Program show gains in pre-literacy and literacy skills. However, the greatest evidence for our successes includes the fact that, independently, the children choose to come regularly to our programs (even during the holidays), to sit and read with friends, and to read and write within our interactive activities; while peers in the same neighborhood are playing soccer or playing on the beach. Children in our Triunfo program have been attending the Livro Aberto Community Library Programs regularly for up to 12 years; a majority of the older children have been in attendance weekly since our pilot project in 2007. Evidence is also apparent in showing that children who regularly attend our programs start grade one with knowing the letter names, the letter sounds for most letters, how to read and write their names, counting, an basic numeracy skills, not to mention the abundance of Portuguese vocabulary and conceptual skills that each child has gained from our thematic programming. In contrast, during Livro Aberto's observations while working in government schools in Maputo area with Grade 1 students, the majority of first graders (ages 6-8) are leaving first grade without knowing: letter names, they have no concept of the alphabet nor do they understand that letters have individual phonetic sounds. In addition, many do not know how to read and write their names and have limited numeracy skills.



Community Library Program and Literacy Skills Instruction Trainings

The Livro Aberto team has prepared and shared our model for literacy skills promotion and Community Library Programs to community libraries and to key community adults within over 50 communities across Mozambique from 2013-2015, as a partner with Peace Corps Mozambique. In 2016-2018, Livro Aberto partnered with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, and trained: over 500 teachers and community members from five districts in Tete province, over 24 IFP trainers, and 15 Ministry of Education technicians at the district and provincial levels. For all of these projects, Livro Aberto provided a series of dynamic, hands-on trainings in the planning and implementation of Community Library Programs, the strategies for positive modelling of the developmental skills crucial for learning to read, and for creating low to no cost educational materials from recycled materials.



In 2013, Livro Aberto created the first Facebook literacy outreach page and then renovated the page in 2017. The aim of the original and the current page is to provide a platform in which teachers and community members across Mozambique can both share and learn strategies for promoting literacy skills development for children within their communities and/or schools. Initially Livro Aberto was instrumental in posting photos of quality instructional strategies, however, the group is now posting and sharing their own strategies for low cost solutions for educational materials and for promoting literacy skills.



Child Authored Books and Book Publishing

Through book publishing activities with children, Livro Aberto has created 2 series of Mozambican children’s books that are culturally and linguistically relevant for children living in and learning to read in Mozambique. Livro Aberto’s first series included 13 different titles authored by children detailing the occupations that they dream to be when they grow up.

After a job experience for a day, each child used pictures from the experience and created text to account for the responsibilities of their dream profession and what kind of schooling is requisite to become that professional. From empregada (housekeeper) and pilot to policewoman and doctor, each child documented highlights of each professional’s job and from their perspective the importance of reading and writing as a means for employment in that profession. These books were shared with families, friends and for peers across Mozambique to read. Livro Aberto’s second book series included 13

important cultural, historical and fun places to visit in Maputo also authored by children. The community children shared an outing with a peer from another school to visit the location of their choice and then co-authored a story detailing their adventures. From chocolate factory and the Livro Aberto Library to the Fortaleza (an historical fort) and the historical train station, each of the 13 books celebrated important places for Mozambicans in the capitol city of Maputo. These books are in free-to-access libraries in 6 Mozambican provinces. As new book series continue to be developed, they will further expand their reach across Mozambique bringing the joy of reading to children whose access to high interest/low level language books with cultural relevance has been limited to date. Livro Aberto is currently raising funds for its third book series.



Aiming for Sustainability

Our mission is to ensure that books, literacy models and specialist literacy workshops are accessible to children across all walks of life through the delivery of workshops not only to children in the outreach programs but also to children enrolled on fee paying courses at Livro Aberto's city center Biblioteca de Crianças, Language & Literacy Center. In this way, helping one child enables us to support the literacy skills development of another. This mission and two strand model of outreach has sustainability at its core, with one program supporting the delivery of the other. Our inclusive approach recognizes the value of opening books for all children.

We truly appreciate your interest and support of Livro Aberto's literacy initiatives. Please see our web page www.livroaberto.org ... and Facebook page Livro Aberto Mozambique for our upcoming events, additional information regarding Livro Aberto and more pictures of our library and community projects...

Kindest regards,

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Livro Aberto has the vision, expertise, tools, and community/school support to enable access to books and empowerment through literacy for children and adults in Mozambique.