

DONDO POULTRY PROJECT

Investing in People: One Community at a Time

Located in the Sofala Province 20 km outside of Beira City, Mutua is a small town whose economic activities are limited to subsistence farming and small retail shops. Food security is a major challenge, highlighted by the lack of animal protein cheaply available to the majority of Mutua's 6000 residents. To create a sustainable way of reversing the protein deficiency afflicting Mutua, as well as create a source of income for several poorer Mutua residents, the Ambassador's Self-Help Fund awarded a grant of US\$12,800 to the AMAC (*Associação Moçambicana para Apoio às Comunidades*, or the Mozambican Community Support Association). The grant money was used to construct a three-room poultry house, buy 2,000 baby chicks, and purchase other poultry farm inputs. The three-fold objective of the poultry project was to fight malnutrition, offer a better alternative to the long trek to Beira or Dondo previously required to find good sources of protein, and provide school supplies for 200 orphans using the revenues from the poultry farm.

The impacts and successes of this project are evident. AMAC has tripled its stocking capacity from 2,000 chickens in 2011 to 6,000 chickens in 2014, and AMAC's annual sales reached a staggering 630,000 MT (US\$21,000) last year. With these revenues, in 2012 and 2013, AMAC distributed uniforms and books to 200 orphans and vulnerable children, and is now preparing the distribution of school uniforms for 2014 for 250 orphans. In addition to reducing food insecurity and taking key steps to help many of Mutua's orphans continue in their schooling, AMAC has employed 6 community residents to oversee operations of the poultry farm, making the project a sustainable community investment. Besides providing orphaned children with school needs, proceeds are used for financing the rehabilitation of AMAC's office, paying utility bills and workers' salaries, purchasing farm inputs (feed, vitamins, vaccines, and disinfectants), and arranging for transportation to markets.

As with most community projects, these accomplishments are not without obstacles. A major challenge is the irregular supply of day-old chicks by a nearby Manica supplier. Additionally, the demand for eggs and chickens has significantly dropped following the political conflict in Muxungue, which was one of the primary markets for the project. Other setbacks to the project include the increasing cost of inputs and low egg production due to avian diseases.

In the future, AMAC plans to acquire a maize mill to supply production of chicken feed. The maize mill will benefit local residents, creating jobs and giving them a much closer source of maize than their current 7 km walk to the nearest mill. Lastly, AMAC plans to increase the size of the poultry stocking from the current capacity of 600 birds per batch to 2,000 birds per batch.