

Helping Bright Girls Return to School

Winrock International

Improving Lives and Livelihoods Worldwide



Sinaida Geremias received a scholarship to pay for school supplies, fees, and a school uniform.

Sinaida Carlos Geremias stopped going to school last year when she was left orphaned as a result of her parents' deaths. Sinaida left her home in Maputo, Mozambique, and went to live and work with her grandparents in a village near Inhambane.

This April, community members and staff from Kulima, a local

nongovernmental organization (NGO) implementing USAID's Africa Education Initiative Ambassadors' Girls' Scholarship Program, found Sinaida. A selection committee was walking house to house to identify girls who needed help to attend the local school, Escola Primaria Completa Marumwano. They decided that 15-year-old Sinaida needed assistance, because without the program's support, her prospects for continuing her education were grim. Just a few weeks later Sinaida enrolled in the 5th grade and received a scholarship to pay for school fees, a uniform, and school supplies.

"This program is a huge motivator for the girls. The emotional support offered to them is a pivotal factor. Oftentimes, in these rural communities, people do not think that a girl can succeed at school," explained Francisco Batista, school director. "It is very difficult for a young Mozambican girl. In order to prevent things like early marriage or early pregnancy, the whole community needs sensitization," he said. "Even seeing the female workers (Kulima staff) can be inspiration for girls, 'see what can happen if you study?'"

Sinaida is one of 38 girls at her school that have received scholarships and mentoring services in 2005 that help them address problems, encourage them to stay in school, and counsel them on prevention of HIV/AIDS. She en-

joys going to school and walks 4 kilometers each way to get there. She hopes to become an engineer to help support her younger brothers and sisters.

In Mozambique 6,000 girls are receiving educational assistance this year through the program that targets girls with academic potential who are orphaned, disabled, impacted by AIDS, and economically disadvantaged. Kulima is one of nearly 30 NGOs that is a partner with Winrock International in implementing the program in 13 African countries and reaching some 20,000 girls.



Kulima, school staff, and scholarship recipients from Escola Primaria Completa Marrumwano.

Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources.