

# Hornby Educational Trust

## Improving English Teaching Through Collaborative Subject Groups

### Mozambique

2022-2023 Alumni Project Report

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# Hornby Alumni Projects

## Project Overview

<b>Title</b>	<b>Improving English Teaching Through Collaborative Subject Groups</b>
<b>Country</b>	Mozambique
<b>Dates of project</b>	2022-2023

### 1. Background and rationale

What are the main issues in your English teaching and learning context? How did these issues influence your choice of project? Were there also other important contextual factors to consider?

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In my Master's dissertation it was pointed out that professional development opportunities for English teachers in Mozambique are scarce, and constrained by low institutional capacity. In addition, data showed that teachers from different schools face different challenges, and they respond to them differently, and as part of the recommendations drawn, it was proposed that professional development activities that are self-directed and locally initiated could better respond to such unique challenges.

In every secondary school in Mozambique, there are subject groups which involve teachers teaching the same subject as members; these groups are meant to work together for the improvement of teaching and learning. However, from my experience as a secondary school teacher, and conversations had with teachers in secondary school, these groups often meet only to design the scheme of work at the beginning of the year and at the end of it to mark exams or tests and discuss grades: teamwork throughout the year is limited.

This project proposes that subject groups can be used as a source for teacher collaboration, where individual and school challenges can be addressed, and teaching can be improved through teachers reflecting on their teaching and finding solutions for themselves. If approved, the project is to be implemented in Nacala, a coastal district in northern Mozambique and two surrounding districts: Monapo and Nacala-a-Velha, involving 10 English subject group delegates from 8 schools in Nacala, 1 in Nacala-a-Velha and 1 in Monapo.



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## 2. Project objectives

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Subject groups will be a space for teacher collaboration, where they meet regularly to find and later implement solutions for local problems.

## Evaluation

### 1. Project objectives

To what extent do you feel your objectives were met? If they were not met, or only partially met, can you explain why?

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In general terms the objectives were met. We were able to see evidence of collaboration within 7 of the 10 subject groups we worked with. However, in one school our objectives were not met, and in some they were partially met, as explained below:

I. We were expecting to work with ten schools but ended up starting with nine. The subject group delegate in that specific school had been recently changed and the new one did not show interest/availability to join the project.

II. From the nine schools we started with, in two schools we could not verify that our objectives with the subject group were met. In one of the schools, after two attempts, we were not able to meet the group, even though we had authorization from the school. While the delegate participated in the workshops, it appeared to us that the group was not cohesive or that teachers were not working together at all. In fact, the delegate did share during our workshops the difficulties he had been having working as a group but because we couldn't meet the teachers unfortunately we did not have the chance to explore the issue. In the second school, the delegate, with whom we had been directly working, unfortunately fell very sick and new teachers came who did not fully understand and got involved in the project.

### 2. Project impact

What was the impact of your project on:

- a) you
- b) your Association(s) / Institution(s)?
- c) the people involved in your project?
- d) the wider community?

What evidence do you have to demonstrate this?

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a)  
The project has professionally impacted me in different ways:  
First is the networking and connection to a community I felt by meeting and working with teachers around me. At my institution I have been the only English teacher for many years and while I do have professional networks, none are local. Secondly, it has been a ‘training’ to me: this is the first time I am directly coordinating a project and have acquired many skills. In addition, I have learned much more about the realities of ELT in my context: talking to colleagues and visiting schools increased my sense of awareness to a level I did not have before, even though I have been working in this district for over a decade.

b)  
To my institution, the project created room for institutional collaboration. The project counts as an extension project, where we are expected to extend our activities to the wider community and institutions around us. With this project, the Institute has collaborated with nine schools in three districts and through this our presence in the community and contact with local institutions has been in a way strengthened. In addition, to the schools involved, their collaboration with us was welcome. In every school we visited, we sent letters and met the directors of studies, in one case, the director of studies even joined our meeting with teachers.

c)  
Teachers involved in this project gave positive feedback. In our last workshop we handed out feedback forms and the responses were good. (see some attached forms.)

d)  
To the wider community, although we did not have the opportunity to verify the actual impacts, we believe that students benefited from the work done by teachers as part of or result of the project, when identifying problems and implementing solutions.

### 3. Sharing with a wider audience

Who did you share information about the project with? Why, when, and how did you do this?

What reactions did you get?

Do you have any further plans for sharing more widely?

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1. Who I shared information about the project with

I. By working with teachers from various schools, the project was foremost shared with these schools. When issuing the credentials asking to visit the subject groups, we always attached a copy of the terms of reference of the project. Before this, we also asked the teachers to inform their superiors in advance.

II. Being included in the 2023 report of my institution’s scientific department as an extension project and as this report is to be shared to the university scientific directorate at the

headquarters level, it became known to the people from those higher departments.

III. As part of a training program by the Africa ELTA on leadership and presentation skills I presented about the value of teacher associations and while as was elaborating on the opportunities for collaboration that an association can create, I was able to mention the work we have been doing in the project.

## 2. Reactions

I. Appraisal: from my working institution and other partners. My institution was very supportive and congratulated the project and the schools involved were very welcoming the praised the initiative too; we had leaders meeting us when we arrived in schools and in one of them they joined our meeting with teachers.

II. Invitations: for future work came. For example, my mentor in the Africa ELTA training program expressed being open to working with me in the future partly because of what I shared about my work in the project.

III. Inspiration: I have been sharing updates of the activities we had in the project and as the concept of the project can be applied in other disciplines, some colleagues expressed interest in applying the idea within their subject areas.

## 3. Plans to share more widely

I plan to talk more about the project in events that I might attend, within my association or any other fora. Some in mind is a Hornby Alumni community event that might take place in November, and I am also hoping our project is selected for a presentation at IATEFL 2025.

## 4. Overall reflections

As a result of planning, implementing, and disseminating the project, what did you learn about:

a) organising / managing a project?

b) the strengths / weaknesses and future needs of your TA(s) /Institution(s) and / or working context?

Would you do anything differently next time?

Would you like to suggest anything to another alumni planning to undertake a similar project?

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a) What I learned about organising/managing a project a project:

I. I learned about identifying key people and putting together a team

II. Designing, submitting, and implementing a project

III. I learned about budgeting, working together with other people, coordinating activities, organizing and running a workshop,

Some lessons I learned:

IV. Inviting key people/stakeholders to be part of the managing team is very helpful as they will

enable or help creating communication channels to your target people. In this project, working with colleagues from the Mozambican English Language Teacher Association and the Provincial Directorate of Education was very beneficial.

V. While team members are extremely helpful, in some situations as the leader you will need to go the extra mile.

vi. Working with a team where the coordinators/facilitators are not in one location in a project that is designed to be mostly face-to-face requires adequate planning. While this did not significantly affect the objectives of the project it did require extra effort to run things.

VII. When budgeting, leave some room for 'miscellaneous' or unforeseen expenses.

**VIII. Managing a project requires specific skills that you might not already have a teacher. ?**

b) What I learned about the strengths / weaknesses and future needs of your TA(s) /Institution(s) and / or working context

I. Strengths:

Institutions are often welcoming to projects, especially if the objectives of the project aligns with or responds to the institutions' objectives or needs

II. Weaknesses/Needs

Institutions do not have the logistic/financial capacity. Working on teachers' morale and/or motivation is key for them to embrace and get engaged in a project. Another way around is working on something that is part of or at least resonates to what teachers are expected to do as part of their job. In this project, the meetings that teachers held in their subject groups are something that they are required to do. In fact, in our first workshop, we invited a Portuguese teacher who facilitated a discussion on the document that presents the guidelines on subject groups by the Mozambican Ministry of education.

What I would do differently next time

I. I would read/seek to learn about the administration part of managing a project

II. Specifically plan and budget follow up activities

III. One key aspect, I would plan to assess the impact of the project on student's learning. The purpose of the project is that at the end of the day the collaboration among teachers affects students learning in a positive way. While we heard from teachers about the outcomes of their action plans which were about aspects of teaching and learning, this was not something that, within the activities of the project, we had the chance to verify.

Would you like to suggest anything to another alumni planning to undertake a similar project?

I. Be meticulous in your planning

II. Expect things to not always go exactly as planned and be flexible to adapt to changes

## 5. Next steps

How do you plan to continue and / or build on what has been achieved through this project? Why? How might you begin?

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I. The first step is that six months from now, we will contact the teachers again to find out how they have been collaborating in their subject groups.

II. We agreed during our last workshop that we would keep the WhatsApp group, not only for the follow up communication but to keep the community alive. This, we believe we enable us to interact, and maybe when other initiatives appear in the future we already have the community and contacts in place.

## Permissions

This report is primarily for the Hornby Trustees and British Council internal review and records. However, we do want to promote your hard work and would like to share what you have done with other Hornby awardees and publicly via the Internet.

- Can you please tick here if you give your permission to share your report?
- Please tick here if you would like your project to be considered for presentation at the 2025 IATEFL conference (the Hornby Trust will select from reports submitted and will support one team member from each of these projects to attend the conference).

Please indicate who would give the presentation if selected:

Click or tap here to enter text. (Cândida José Arlindo)

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**Name**

Candida José Arlindo

**Date**

24 May 2024



# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Expenditure

Were there any **significant differences** from your planned budget? By significant we mean you spent far more than planned, or you were given a donation from a partner that was not expected, for example.

Note any costs below that exceeded the original budget by £200 (below this amount does not need including). Please also tell us what caused these changes in the *Reflection* section below the two tables.

a. local funding

Description	Breakdown	Total cost	Final cost
Room for workshops	1 room for the 4 planned workshops		
<b>Totals:</b>			

b. Hornby funding

Description	Breakdown	Total cost	Final cost
<p><b>Trips</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitators and participants who live outside Nacala to attend workshops</li> <li>Facilitators to carry out school visits and participate in subject group meetings</li> </ul> <p>Facilitator and participants who live in Nacala, from their residences to the workshop venue.</p>	<p><b>Workshop 1</b></p> <p>Nampula to Nacala (3 people x 9.09)</p> <p>Monapo to Nacala (1 person x 3.89)</p> <p>Nacala-a-velha to Nacala (1person x 1.29)</p> <p>In-town Nacala (12 people x 0.39)</p> <p><b>Term 1 (school visits)</b></p> <p>Nacala to Nacala-a-Velha (1 person x 1.29)</p> <p>In-town Nacala (1person x 0.39)</p> <p><b>Workshop 2</b></p> <p>Napula to Nacala (1 person x 9.09)</p>	185.3	

	<p>Nampula to Nacala (3 people x 9.09)          Monapo to Nacala (1person x 3.89)          Nacala-a-velha to Nacala (1person x 1.29)          In-town Nacala (12 people x 0.39)  <b>Term 2 (school visits)</b>          In-town Nacala (1 person x 0.39)          Nampula to Nacala (1 person x 9.09)  <b>Workshop 3</b>          Nampula to Nacala (3 people x 9.09)          Monapo to Nacala (1 person x 3.89)          Nacala-a-velha to Nacala (1 person x1.29)          In-town Nacala (12 people x 0.39)  <b>Term 3 (school visits)</b>          Nacala to Monapo (1 person x 3.89)          In-town Nacala (1person x 0.39)          Nampula to Nacala (1 person x 9.09)  <b>Workshop 4</b>          Nampula to Nacala (3 people x 9.09)          Monapo to Nacala (1 person x 3.89)          Nacala-a-velha to Nacala (1 person x 1.29)          In-town Nacala (20 peple x 0.39)</p>		
<p><b>Meals</b></p> <p>To be offered during workshops to all participants and to facilitators when away visiting schools to take part in subject group meetings</p>	<p><b>Workshop 1</b>          snack and lunch (8.44 x 17 people)  <b>Term 1 (facilitator school visits)</b>          snack (2.59x1 person),          snack and lunch (8.44 x 2 people)  <b>Workshop 2:</b>          snack (2.59 x 15 people)  <b>Term 2 (facilitator school visits)</b>          snack (2.59 x 1 person),          snack and lunch (8.44 x 1 person)</p>	<p>499.35</p>	

	<p><b>Workshop 3</b> snack (2.59 x 15 people)</p> <p><b>Term 3 (facilitator school visits)</b> snack (2.59 x 1 person), snack and lunch (8.44 x 2 people)</p> <p><b>Workshop 4</b> snack and lunch (8.44 x 27 people)</p>		
<b>Stationery</b>	<p>Paper (box of 4 reams) (1 x 19.48)</p> <p>Pens (box of 60 pens) (1 x 7.79)</p> <p>A2 Paper (ream) (1 x 2.013)</p> <p>Markers (pack of 10) (2 x 9.74)</p> <p>Sticky notes (30 x 0.90)</p> <p>Writing pads (15 x 1.94)</p> <p>Planners (15 x 5.19)</p>	183.18	
<p><b>Airtime and Data vouchers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To guarantee communication among all participants (facilitators and teachers)</li> <li>Online discussions and sharing of ideas and information through WhatsApp,</li> <li>Access to online resources to be used to prepare content for workshops,</li> </ul> <p>Research on ideas to address teaching problems by subject groups</p>	(25.97 credit x 14 people)	363.64	
<b>Totals:</b>			

## Reflections:

There were no significant changes in the sense there was no spending of more funds than planned. However, there were alterations, based on some aspects that we identified as the funds were made available and as the project ran.

I. Upon receiving funds, we noticed that there were some transaction fees, which meant there was a small deduction in the awarded amount. As we did not budget for miscellaneous or unforeseen items, while the at first glance the amount in question was not significant, it was an initial indication that some adjustments would need to be made.

II. By the time funds were available, we noticed some changes in the prices of some items, especially stationary. We decided to add a few more items we thought necessary and redirected some funds to the expenses we had failed to budget for. We noticed some aspects that we did not include some expenses, for example, dinner for the nights when facilitators (who live in Nampula) would have to stay overnight in Nacala. In addition, we forgot to budget for their transport in town, and only include the bus fare. In this specific case, we decided to reduce the airtime and data allowance per participant.

IV. As the project went on, in some instances some participants were not available to join some activities, and we also noticed that there were transfer and/or withdrawal fees and we accessed the funds to cover expenses. This also, caused some redirections to be made.

VII. One of the ten schools did not join the project, therefore the expenses for these participants did also affect the distribution of funds, the same as cases when some participants were not available

## Appendix 2: Planned activity

Review your planned activity below and then reflect on any changes that were needed and explain why these were necessary.

Dates	Description of activities	Duration
<b>Beginning of the school year</b>	<p><b>Workshop 1</b></p> <p>Workshop on self-directed professional development and teacher collaboration</p> <p>How can teachers collaborate through English subject groups to improve teaching?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facilitators will organize content and material and/or resources for the workshop;</li> <li>2. Explanation of the objectives of the project;</li> <li>3. Discussion on the importance of collaboration and the need for locally initiated ideas/innovations;</li> <li>4. Agreement on a plan of action for collaboration within subject groups;</li> </ol> <p>A WhatsApp group will be created for efficient communication and sharing among those directly involved in the implementation of the project (facilitators and teachers).</p>	<p>5 hours</p>
<b>Term 1</b>	<p><b>School subject group meetings a)</b></p> <p>Subject groups will hold reflection and discussion meetings (at least two) in their respective schools and design and implement a plan of action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Subject group members will identify problems, understand them, and look for ideas, knowledge and/or resources needed to address them. Actions to be taken should reflect the challenges teachers from a particular school face in their teaching and/or profession so that the benefits of collaboration in the subject groups are evident;</li> <li>● There should be meeting minutes;</li> <li>● Facilitators will visit schools and join subject group meetings;</li> </ul> <p>Through WhatsApp, participants will also be holding online discussions and sharing ideas and experiences about their subject groups' work.</p>	<p>1-2 hours</p> <p>Subject group meetings should happen throughout the year, in the three terms</p>
<b>End of Term 1</b>	<p><b>Workshop 2</b></p>	<p>3 hours</p>

	<p>Sharing and discussion <b>b)</b></p> <p>How did the collaboration work in the subject groups?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Every delegate will share the activities carried out in their groups;</li> </ol> <p>There will be a discussion on what went well, what went wrong and why, and what could be done differently in the future</p>	
<b>Term 2</b>	<b>School subject group meetings (a)</b>	1-2 hours
<b>End of Term 2</b>	<p><b>Workshop 3</b></p> <p>Sharing and discussion <b>(b)</b></p>	3 hours
<b>Term 3</b>	<b>School subject group meetings (a)</b>	1-2 hours
<b>End of Term 3</b>	<p><b>Workshop 4</b></p> <p>Feedback and way forward</p> <p>Delegates and a teacher from each participating school should be present and together evaluate the project</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Was there a change, and which, if any?</li> <li>2. How can subject groups continue active after the project?</li> <li>3. How can impact be guaranteed and measured?</li> </ol> <p>A commitment should be made for subject groups to continue being active as a space for sharing, collaboration and development.</p>	5 hours

### Reflections:

In general terms, all planned activities did largely take place. There was the fact, however, that in some activities we did not reach the planned number of participants namely:

I. We planned to work with teachers from 10 schools but ended up working with 9.

II. We were not able to visit two schools: one because the group did not make themselves available and the other because the leader fell sick and new teachers joined the school who seemed not well informed about the project.

III. For some school visits we found it not feasible for facilitators to travel from and back to Nampula on the same day, instead we had them join us online in one instance and in another



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we had only one facilitator travelling and used some of the funds available to increase the budget to cover the travel expenses.