

Work by Day, Study by Night: PPF Graduate Finishes Secondary School while Working at the National Social Security Institute

Luis Vincente lost his father when he was seven years old. From that moment forward, his mother struggled to provide for him and his siblings by taking tenants into their family home and selling items from their farm. Luis began taking small jobs in carpentry and masonry as soon as he turned 16 to support the household expenses and pay school fees. The family was vulnerable, and the future did not look very bright for young Luis.

Fast forward a few years and Luis – bolstered by the skills and confidence he received through the Programa Para o Futuro (PPF) program, an integrated youth program implemented through FHI 360’s



Luis hard at work at the INSS entering data.

Capable Partner’s Program with funding from USAID/PEPFAR – has signed an employment contract with the National Social Security Institute (INSS). Although he did not yet have a secondary school diploma when he interviewed for the position, he was hired on the spot when he completed the data entry test in less than half the time required by his peers. Now, Luis is helping implement a new information management system that will be introduced nationwide, and teaching his colleagues at INSS how to manage the institute’s computer system.

Like most PPF youth, Luis had never even turned on a computer before he started the program. Through PPF, he learned skills such as Information Technology (IT), job search skills, and how to conduct research and give presentations. PPF helps orphaned and vulnerable youth (OVC) ages 15-17 develop the skills, knowledge and behaviors to transition into healthy, productive adults. More than that, it helps vulnerable youth begin to dream again, to see that there are tangible academic and employment opportunities within their reach. Says

Luis, “I changed the way I present myself and the way I talk. I learned to give presentations. I learned that I need to be flexible and adapt to things and different types of jobs.”

PPF also tackles topics with the youth that are typically left unaddressed due to cultural or gender norms. It is here that Luis himself sees the most changes in how he views the world. He is particularly bothered by traditional views on women in his neighborhood. “I have a girlfriend and many people ask why I don’t have her wash my clothes because they think it’s a women’s job to take care of men,” says Luis. “I don’t ask her to do these things because I don’t want to. Women can do so much (more).”

At PPF, Luis learned about gender norms, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS prevention. When PPF facilitated the opportunity for interested youth to get circumcised, Luis chose to have the surgery. Because of what he learned in the program, he has also committed to getting tested for HIV every three months, and uses condoms regularly.

Linkages created by PPF have expanded Luis' horizons. Through an internship placement following the academic portion of the PPF project, he joined the human resources department of the Office of Combatting Drugs, where he learned the valuable data entry skills that landed him his permanent job at INSS. Through professional connections at INSS, he secured an opportunity to interview for highly selective positions that are typically filled by internal candidates. Finally, the opportunity created for him to be circumcised has cleared the path for him to lead a full, healthy life.

At the INSS, Luis' supervisor continues to be impressed by his hard work and dedication. He stands out from his colleagues as being constantly hard at work at his desk and providing support to colleagues whenever they are in need. Very little effort is expended in supervising Luis, because he is so committed to his job. Luis received an excellent performance rating, which led to a permanent employment contract with the institute. Not only that, but his colleagues are impressed with him as well. Recently, three of his INSS colleagues visited PPF to understand more about the project-based methodology that was producing such qualified candidates. In the months following, another PPF graduate was hired at the INSS.

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Luis worries less about his future now, and spends more time dreaming of possibilities. Not only that, but he serves as a positive role model in his community for his hard work and dedication – and his positive attitudes toward gender roles and HIV prevention.

To date, 390 vulnerable youth in Sofala Province have graduated from PPF's 4-6 month learning program, with 366 youth participating in a three-month internship after completing the program. PPF motivates youth to stay in school and gives them the tools they need to succeed. As of September 2015, 95% of PPF graduates either remain in secondary school or have graduated. Graduation from secondary school is a critical indicator of success, as many private sector companies require a diploma. PPF builds youth's potential through ICT skills, reinforcing basic literacy and numeracy skills, job search skills, and understanding how to stay healthy and meet their goals. More than 60% of PPF graduates were working in the formal or informal sector within a year after completing the program.