



**BIOCHEMICAL
SOCIETY**

Initiative to Support the Participation of Young Female Scientific Beginners in Scientific Conferences in Mozambique

FINAL REPORT



Photos of 22 out of 30 women mentored through the project

Maputo, February 28, 2025

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

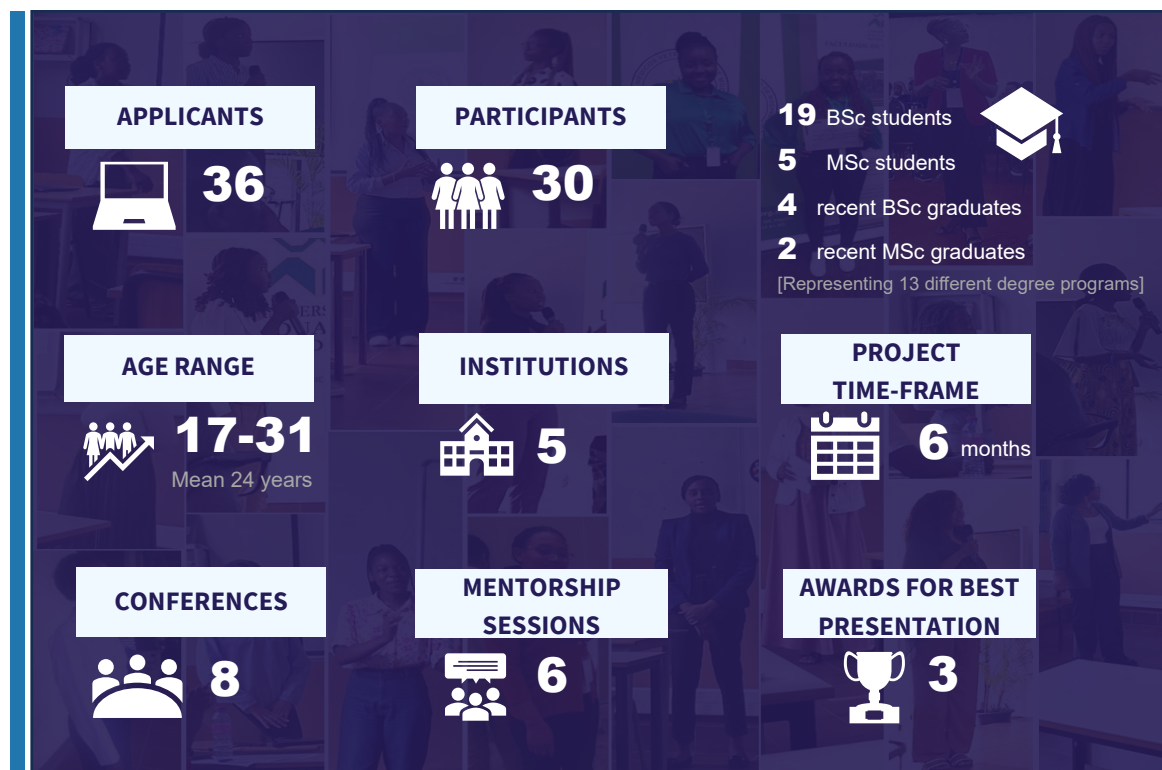
In Mozambique, as in many developing countries, women are still underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This lack of representation becomes even more apparent when it comes to their visibility and active participation in scientific events, which are crucial for disseminating research, networking, and shaping future opportunities.

The initiative aimed to address this gap by providing 30 young women with the support to participate in scientific events, fostering their professional growth and confidence. The program's main objectives were:

- To provide financial support of £30 (2,400 MZN) to cover participation costs.
- To offer mentoring sessions to improve presentations.
- To share additional opportunities for young women in science.

This initiative was coordinated by the Faculty of Sciences at Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM).

GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



I. FIRST DISSEMINATION OF THE INITIATIVE

In August 1, 2024, a call for applications was launched. The application was submitted via an online Google Form.

Eligibility criteria:

- Female, residing in Mozambique, and up to 35 years old.
- Enrolled in or graduated from a degree program (within the last 5 years).
- Must have submitted an abstract to a scientific event.

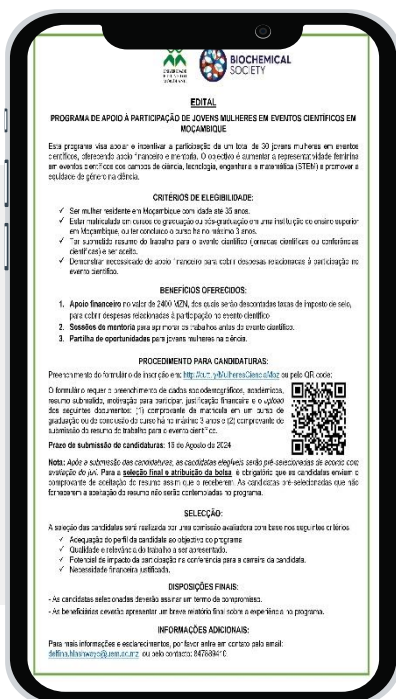




Figure 1. Call for applications.


Promotion efforts included:

 LinkedIn (2 posts):

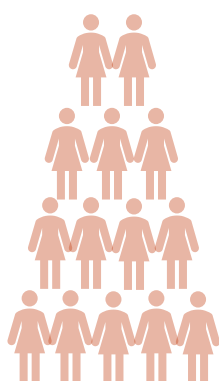
 12,734 impressions | 27 reposts

 Instagram

 WhatsApp

 UEM Faculty of Sciences' notice board, including the Biology, Chemistry, and Mathematics departments.

II. PARTICIPANT SELECTION



36 applicants

30 enrolled participants

24 years (mean age; ranging from 17-31)

19 BSc students (1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th years) | 5 MSc students

4 recent BSc graduates | 2 recent MSc graduates

13 degree programs

Academic background of participants

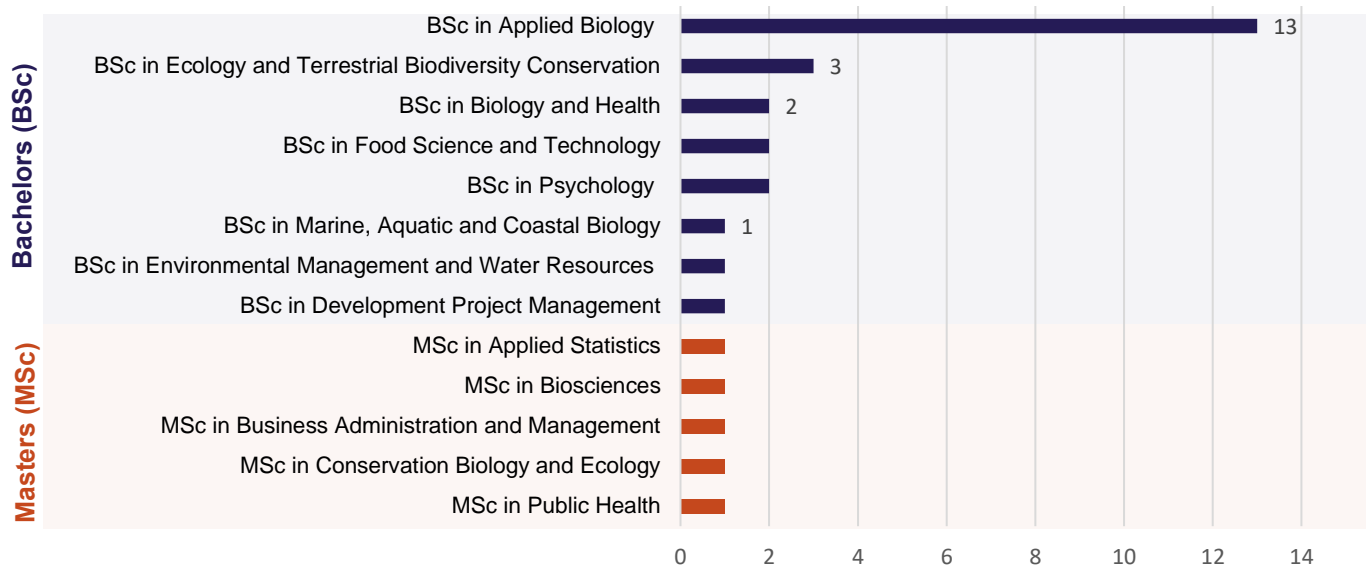


Figure 2. Academic background of the participants, including both those who have completed their degrees and those who are still enrolled.

Institutions of Higher Education where the participants completed or were completing their studies:

- Eduardo Mondlane University (**UEM**): 25
- Catholic University of Mozambique (**UCM**): 2
- Zambeze University (**Unizambeze**): 1
- Higher Institute of Science and Technology of Mozambique (**ISCTEM**): 1
- Púnguè University (**UniPúnguè**): 1

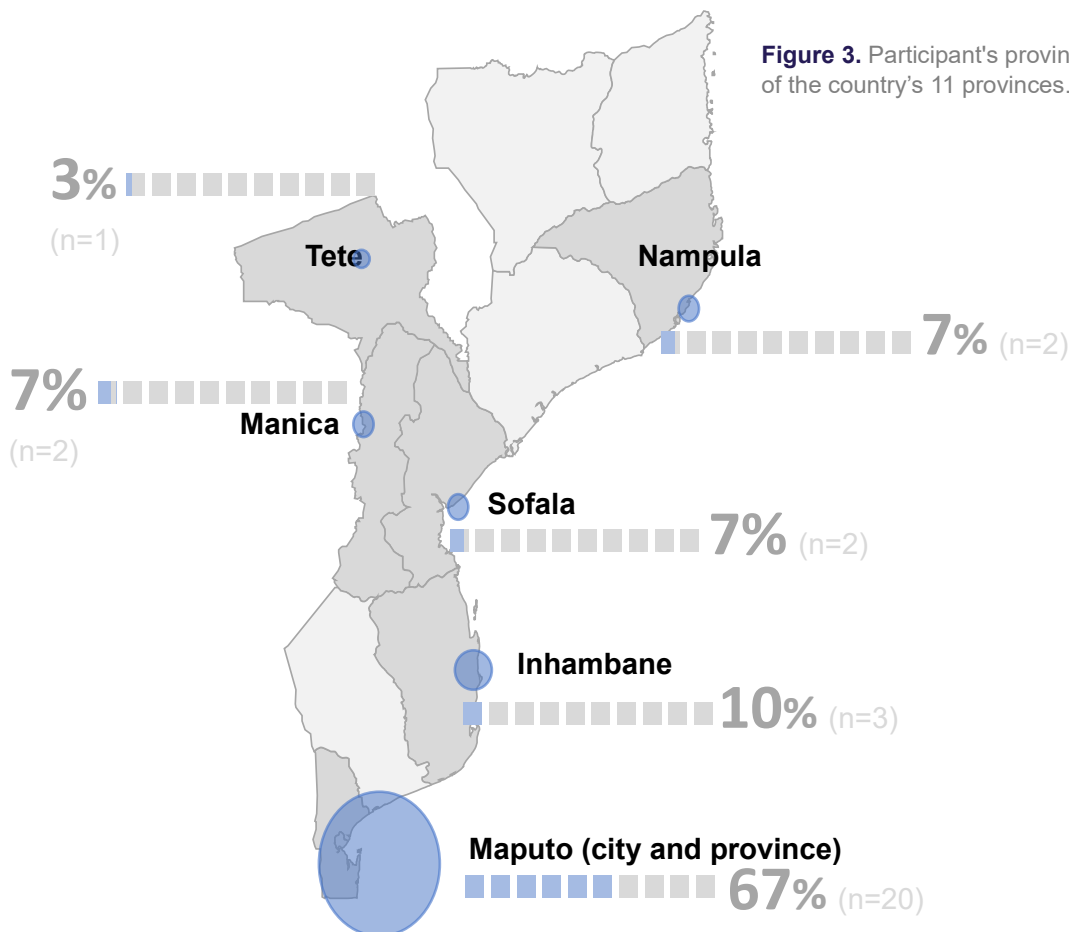



Figure 3. Participant's province of origin. They were from 7 out of the country's 11 provinces.

 **Project implementation period:** 6 months (August 2024 – February 2025)


 **Total Budget:** £1,000

Table 1. Scientific events for which participants were registered.

No	Scientific event	Registered mentees
1	XVIII National Health Conference of the National Health Institute †	5
2	V Student Conference of the Faculty of Sciences, UEM	18
3	XVIII Student Conference of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, UEM	2
4	International Conference: Mozambique and its challenges: accelerated urbanization, climate change, and forced displacement †	1
5	I Scientific Conference of Unizambeze †	1
6	XI Scientific Conference, Catholic University of Mozambique – Regional Health Sciences Center	1
7	VI Mozambican Pediatrics Congress	1
8	Scientific Conference of the University of Púnguè *	1

† Event postponed and did not take place during the program period.

* Participant registered but was unable to attend.

The participants engaged in a wide range of research topics, spanning various fields including ecology, environmental science, public health, ethnopharmacology, agriculture, marine biology, molecular biology, economics, food safety, rehabilitation sciences, toxicology, geospatial analysis, and sustainable development.



Figure 4. Word Cloud representing the diverse research topics explored by the participants.

III. MENTORSHIP

The mentorship program aimed to improve presentation skills, foster collaboration, and share career opportunities (fellowships, courses, workshops). The first session on August 30, 2024 introduced the program structure, with LinkedIn and WhatsApp groups created for ongoing communication, which remain active.



Mentoring sessions were held online via Google Meet twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays, 18:30-20:30), totaling six sessions. The participants shared their presentations (oral and poster) for group feedback, focusing on visual design, clarity, and delivery. Presentations and posters were also shared on WhatsApp for continuous feedback outside of sessions.

Resources such as websites with PowerPoint templates, infographics, and presentation tips, along with grants, fellowships, workshops, and courses, were shared to support participants' development. Both the mentor and participants actively exchanged these opportunities, creating a collaborative environment where they learned and supported each other.



Figure 5. PowerPoint slide from the first session and screenshots from two Google Meet sessions.

About the mentor



Delfina Hlashway is a faculty member and researcher at Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique, with 12 years of experience in public health. She holds a PhD in Biosciences and Public Health and a Postgraduate qualification in One Health. In addition to her research and teaching roles, she actively mentors students and leads initiatives to strengthen scientific capacity. Currently a TWAS Young Affiliate, Delfina is deeply committed to supporting the next generation of scientists, especially young women in STEM.

IV. PRESENTATIONS AT SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

The young women participated in the scientific conferences, where they successfully presented scientific work. Out of the 30 participants, **22 presented their work**, while **7 had their events postponed** due to the unstable situation in Mozambique in October, which led to delays and cancellations of several events. One participant was unable to attend a conference. The presentations included their own research as well as work from their research groups, where they acted as co-authors or representatives of their teams.

Three participants were awarded prizes 🏆 for best presentation:



Eliette Munezero "Medicinal plants and disabilities in Mozambique: a complex relationship"



Flávia Muthemba and Lislely Chirindja "Organic food production in Maputo city: challenges in the implementation of the organic production system (case of Mulauze valley)"

Figure 6. Participants of the program who won awards at the scientific events.

The grant (2,400 MZN) was used to cover essential expenses such as transportation, meals, internet, and presentation materials (e.g., posters, USB drives, notebooks, and pens).

The remaining 19 mentees and the respective topics they presented are listed below:



Adília Tembe "Soil macrofauna response to fire regime in the Maputo national park: A test of the pyrodiversity-biodiversity hypothesis"



Edelmira Fernando "Pregnancy outcomes and HIV status of adolescents attended at the Mavalane General Hospital maternity between 2020-2021"



Érica Latifa Zacarias "Evaluation of chlorophyll-a concentration based on Sentinel-2 data and in-situ data in the Massingir reserve"



Iolanda Eduardo "Promoting interdisciplinary scientific innovation and dissemination towards peace, sustainable development, and well-being"



Irene Incolo "Pharmacognostic study of the roots of *Securidaca longepedunculata*"



Isabel Cossa "Distribution and abundance of *Stolephorus commersonii* and *Acetes erythraeus* along the Mozambique coast"



Luzineide Monteiro "Species diversity analysis of the genus *Hypoxis* in Mozambique"



Marta Maculuve "Project for the implementation of a course on Integrative Medicine at the Faculty of Sciences, Eduardo Mondlane University"



Nércia Nhamuchue "Comparative evaluation of DNA extraction methods for the detection of mycotoxic fungi in maize and peanut grains"



Nicole Freitas "Ethnobotanical survey of medicinal plants used for primary healthcare in Sabié, Moamba district, Maputo Province"



Nurah Virahsammy "Initiative to support the participation of young women in science at scientific events in Mozambique"



Otilia Mauaie "Risk analysis of assets subscribed to the Mozambique stock exchange"



Pâmela Manhica "Modeling and potential distribution of endemic species in the Rovuma endemism center"



Rita Sithole "Review on ethnobotany, phytochemistry, and pharmacological activity of *Phyllanthus reticulatus* Poir"



Rucila Abubacar "Aflatoxigenic fungi contamination in peanut and maize in sub-Saharan Africa: focus on Mozambique (2018- 2024)"



Sara Massuanganhe "Clinical-surgical characterization of patients with intracranial purulent infections treated at MCH"



Tivânia Chissico "Molecular detection of *P. jirovecii* in patients with Kaposi's Sarcoma in Maputo, between 2016-2019"



Vitoria Catarina "Risk associated with toxic plants in schools in Maputo: identification, distribution, and preventive measures"



Zaira Macheve "Modeling of ecological corridors using updated open access geospatial tools"



The participants who have not yet presented due to rescheduling but who participated in the program are: Ana Cristina Biosse, Angelina Alberto, Belmira Banze, Deolinda Jorge, Esperança Rafael, Fátima Iahaia, Olga Maquessene & Teresa Machute.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD



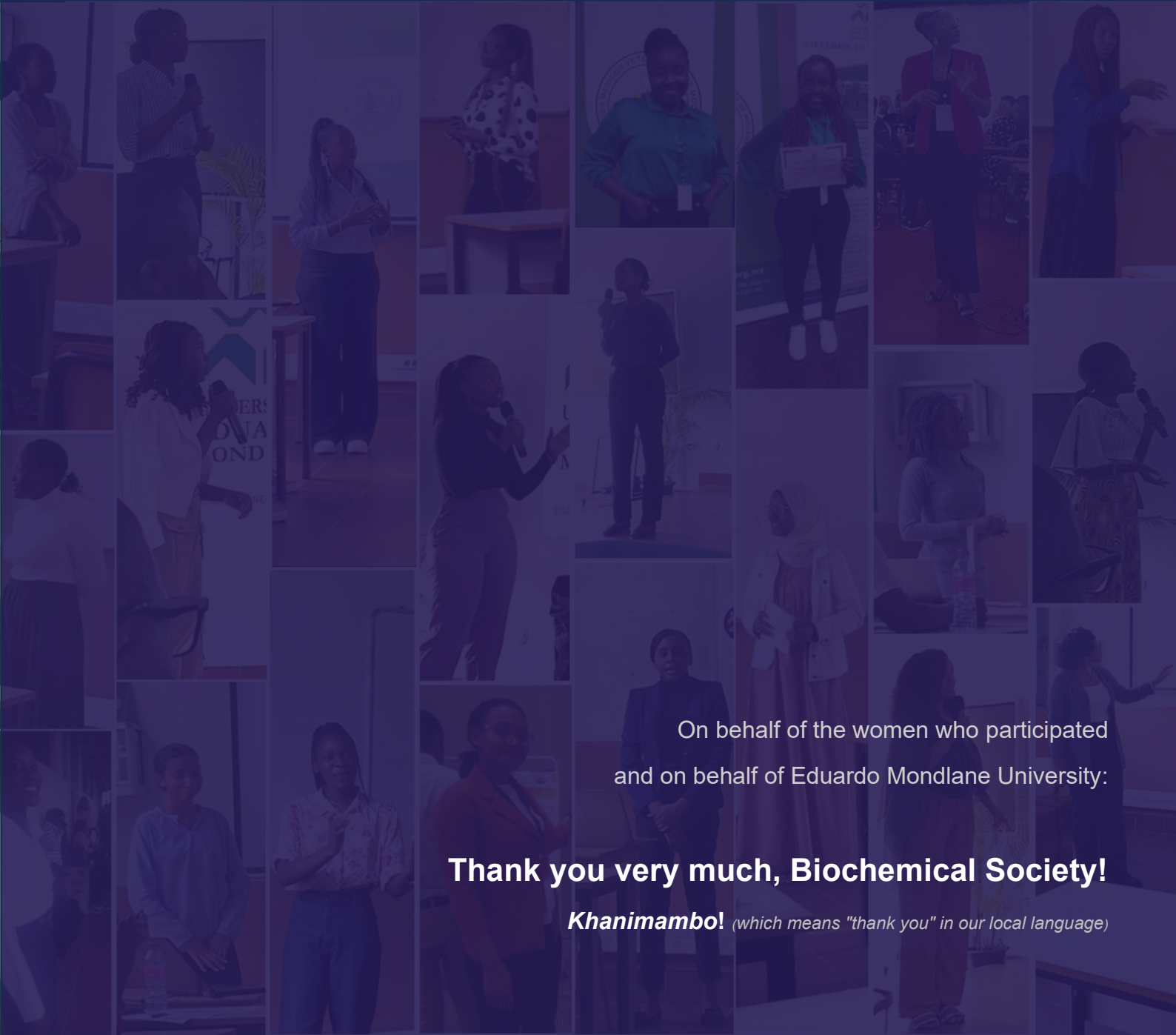
The participants express deep gratitude to the Biochemical Society for the financial support and the mentoring sessions provided by the program, highlighting the positive impact on the improvement of their presentations, their scientific development and fostered networking.



More initiatives to support young women in science in Mozambique are crucial because women continue to face significant barriers in accessing resources, mentorship, and opportunities for professional development in scientific fields.



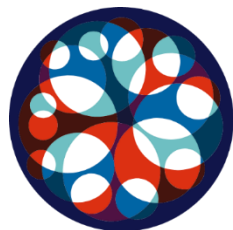
We look forward to continued engagement in a shared mission to advance science and address the most pressing challenges in Mozambique and beyond!



On behalf of the women who participated
and on behalf of Eduardo Mondlane University:

Thank you very much, Biochemical Society!

Khanimambo! (which means "thank you" in our local language)



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Report prepared by:

Delfina Fernandes Hlashwayo, MSc, PhD
Project coordinator

Faculty member and researcher - Eduardo Mondlane University - Mozambique
delfina.hlahswayo@uem.ac.mz