

Mozambique: Empowering rural communities to improve livelihoods

In a remote area of northern Mozambique, rural populations face daunting challenges on path out of extreme poverty and vulnerability. With the support of the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the International Labour Organization (ILO) is implementing its “TREE” programme aimed at promoting decent work and inclusive growth

The challenge

The rural inhabitants of Cabo Delgado province are among the poorest and most vulnerable in Mozambique. Despite relatively strong economic growth during the first decade of this century, poverty and illiteracy in the region remain widespread and present significant challenges for training and skills development. While Portuguese is the national language and is widely spoken in the country's largest cities, the prevalence of several other local languages and dialects, also results in skills challenges.

The response

Given the broad consensus that training in skills is one of the most direct ways to promote decent work and encourage inclusive growth in high- and low-income economies alike, the ILO, with the support of KOICA, began implementing the “Skills for employment and productivity in low income countries” programme in selected districts of Cabo Delgado in 2015. The project adapts elements of the G20 Training Strategy developed by the ILO, in partnership with other international, regional and national organizations and employers' and workers' representatives, to support the transition between education, training and work.

A central part of the effort is the TREE, or Training for Rural and Economic Empowerment, programme being implemented by the ILO in collaboration with the Government of Mozambique, particularly with the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security. The programme is especially effective in environments with poor opportunities for education and formal technical training. Key steps in the process involve identifying local employment and income generating potential and delivering practical skills and training. Training in such skills as carpentry, fisheries, photovoltaic energy and crafts is being provided to some 1,100 young women and men.

A key feature of the approach is the use of local professionals/crafts persons as trainers. The programme relies heavily on these experienced trainers to deliver the modules. Moreover, “local masters” receive technical and pedagogical training before they begin teaching. They speak the local languages and tailor the curricula to match the cultural context in which the trainees live and learn which increases the effectiveness of the training.



The story

Assane Mussa Mpana is a local fisherman in the community of Bagala, in the Palma district of northeast Mozambique. He's married and has eight children, and knows how to read and write, having obtained a basic education diploma. He has been fishing for more than 45 years. It started as soon as he became a demobilized soldier in Mozambique's civil war. As part of his fishing activities, he uses a vessel called "Machua" measuring six meters in length and driven by sails and oars. He employs bottom nets for fishing species yielding greater commercial value in the local markets. Assane's average monthly fish catch is 1,700 kg and all the marketing is done locally.

He was chosen by the local authorities and the district and local steering communities to act as the trainer or "master" to some 25 young trainees in fishing, according to the plan designed by the Provincial Direction of Sea, Inland Waters and Fishery of Cabo Delgado (DPSIAF), and under their technical and pedagogical supervision.

The results

Training was delivered for a period of three months after which the trainees started their association and established agreements with local hotels to provide fish and seafood. Toolkits were also given to the association to lend guidance in increasing member participation and starting their own activities, which also conforms to the business plan drafted by the DPSIAF with the help of a consultant.

"I have more technical knowledge, learned a lot of things to improve my activity and I have also more respect and recognition by my own community and others. And I now have interactions with different people."

Under the business plan Mr. Assane continues to support the association, and provides coaching and technical assistance to his former trainees. As a result of the assistance furnished by the project, he has increased his income generating activities, in particular, since local trainers not only received training and equipment but also a toolkit to promote effective teaching that includes a 15cv boat motor (for the first time his boat had a motor which improved its fishing capacity), fishing nets, cable reels, floaters, masks, isothermal boxes and lifting buckets.

Mr. Assane says that he has improved his fishing capacity by at least 30 per cent and has increased the number of agreements with local hotels. He now has more money to support his family and other benefits that he likes to point out, like technical knowledge and more respect and recognition from his community and others.

