

Implementing the ILO G20 Training Strategy

From the field: How rural communities are being empowered and deciding on quality jobs and skills needed in their areas



Photo: A. Paulo. In Cabo Delgado, TREE helps to empower local communities.

Maputo, Mozambique - Unemployment and underemployment are major concerns throughout the developing world, but are particularly acute in Mozambique. Tackling these challenges requires effective measures to increase employment opportunities for the growing supply of labour, in particular women and men living in rural areas, with the relevant and quality skills they need to enter the labour market. The “*Skills for Employment and Productivity in Low Income Countries*” project being

implemented by the ILO, with support from KOICA of South Korea, addresses the need to create more quality jobs and increase the employability of vulnerable groups, in particular young women and men in Mozambique. The ILO’s Chief Technical Advisor in the country, Ana Cristina Paulo, talks about the project, now approaching the midpoint of its three-year period.

Question 1. Tell us about the origin of this project. Where did the impetus come from?

Mozambique has been one of the fastest growing economies in sub-Saharan Africa in recent decades. This growth has been strongly supported by agriculture and fishing, two of most important sectors in the economy that represent 25 per cent of GDP in the decade leading up to 2014. However, as found in other countries, even this impressive growth doesn’t automatically translate into less poverty and more benefits for the poor. Recent studies show that the poverty rate in Mozambique has barely changed and that growth is insufficiently inclusive relative to other successful countries. The country also needs to improve its social indicators. The 2015 Human Development Index put Mozambique at the bottom of the ranking (180 out of 188 countries and territories). It is also clear that poverty in the country is still predominantly a rural phenomenon. More than 70 per cent of poor households are in rural areas. Farming is their main source of food and income, but agricultural productivity is low. Farmers and fishers generally make enough to meet their household’s basic food requirements, with an occasional small surplus for sale. Incomes from both farming and fishing are meagre, and most of the rural population survives at subsistence levels. The ILO intends to help change this situation in the Province of Cabo Delgado, located in the country’s north, by improving the skills and employment prospects for vulnerable groups, in particular, young women and men, in rural areas through promoting sustainable livelihoods and contributing to decent work opportunities.

Question 2. In tackling some of the many socio-economic challenges (poverty, inequality, low quality jobs, low skills) faced by the project, what are the priorities and why?

Broadly speaking, under the project, country-level support targets current gaps or constraints in skills development systems and aims to turn new potential for job growth into reality by overcoming skill gaps. More concretely, all project interventions and activities are explicitly linked to a number of high-priority “building blocks” that lead to strong training and skills development strategies and policies identified under the [ILO G20 Training Strategy on A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth](#). For Mozambique, implementation of the G20 Training Strategy called for support in tackling a number of challenges related to anticipation of skill needs, labour market information systems, sector-based approaches to skills development, and access to good-quality training for vulnerable groups.

A main aim of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the National Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (INEFP), our principle partner, to adapt and apply tools, and plan and implement strategies from the ILO’s Training for Rural and Economic Empowerment (TREE) programme. TREE is a community-based initiative designed to promote local economic and employment opportunities and related skills training for rural women and men in targeted communities in the Cabo Delgado Province. Capacity building is fundamental to ensuring the sustainability of the project. I am happy to report that this objective has already been met. The INEFP is applying the TREE methodology in other projects and regions of Mozambique. Moreover, they fully understand the advantages of this new approach to skills development.

Empowerment of the rural communities is also a crucial objective of the project. Positive inroads have been made in this area. For example, District and local Steering Committees were established, each having as their chair a representative of a district government or community leader. Committee members are fully committed and undertake crucial decisions concerning project delivery at both district or community levels. What is more, representatives of employers’ and workers’ organizations, the private sector, youth groups, women’s organizations, non-governmental organizations, among other key actors in the district or community, serve on these Committees.

Across several rural communities in the Cabo Delgado Province, some 750 young women and men will be participating in training that began in October and will continue through January 2017. Of those registered for training, some 37 per cent are women. Improved delivery of demand-driven skills training that is based on assessments of economic opportunities in each rural community – *a key component of the TREE approach* – has been critical in contributing to this success. The training, which is being carried out by certified trainers specializing in rural informal economies, has been “tailor made” to meet the specific needs of the target groups identified and includes complementary modules on

subjects like better nutrition, prevention of HIV, and how to manage a small business. In addition, the project has provided training to upgrade the skills of master craftspersons, some 30 individuals of whom four are women, in rural communities. Master craftspersons participating in the upskilling training are expected to deliver post-training support and guidance to the young apprentices, also known as beneficiaries.

Question 3. What are some of the biggest obstacles confronted in increasing employability skills workers need to enter the labour market? And, what particular barriers do women face?

The biggest obstacle we currently face is the low level of literacy and numeracy among young persons in rural communities - *about 60 per cent cannot read or write*. In addition, they lack proficiency or command of the Portuguese language. Since technical training must be delivered in local languages, this makes it especially difficult to find the right trainers. In meeting this challenge, the strategy relies on local, experienced professionals from the communities to act as mentors to deliver practical training and, teach basic numeracy skills in all the training courses. All mentors receive both technical and basic pedagogical training from selected training agencies affiliated with the project.



@A. Paulo. Women trainees take a break.

Ensuring the participation of women in training and post-training activities has also been an issue. Making the most of the training received by these women so that they will be employed and engaged in a productive economic activity after the project concludes has been identified as another challenge. The situation for women in the north of Mozambique can be characterized by strong stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination in terms of opportunities for education, employment and conducting a business. And, while there are very high drop-out rates for boys and girls, the levels are higher for girls (more than 75 per cent do not have basic education), and cases of early marriages are very common. The project has formulated a strategy to ensure the participation of women in skills training that has at its core gender equality sensitization sessions in all communities in which it operates. This strategy also includes networking among women; strengthening of women's associations in terms of association management as well as business; awareness raising among community leaders about women's rights and empowerment; and strengthening adult literacy programmes and technical vocational training to build the capacities of young women. It is very important to mobilize women for technical training. Towards this aim, we have launched an information campaign, using testimonials of women from the Province of Cabo Delgado who have technical skills and are entrepreneurs.

Question 4. Can you give us an example of some of the innovative approaches used by the project in carrying out its objectives?

As I mentioned earlier, the project uses the ILO's TREE approach to identify potential income generating activities at the community level and related skills needs before designing the contents of specific training programmes. Subsequently, it facilitates the necessary post-training support, including guidance in the use of production technologies, access to credit, and assistance in forming group associations to ensure that individuals or groups can initiate and sustain income-generating activities.

The existence of the TREE Steering Committees (SC) at the provincial and the community level is crucial to our work, particularly as it ensures community buy-in and support. These SCs monitor the progress of the project but also take important decisions in terms of implementation. For example, in one community the SC decided on relevant economic areas for income generation after an assessment of local economic opportunities, proposed training in the areas selected and validated the list of trainees. They also appointed the masters that would be involved in delivering practical training, guided by general criteria defined by the ILO.

The concept of providing *training of master craftsmen* before they are paired with the apprentice's association can also be considered as innovative. We expect this to produce fruitful results. Generally speaking, masters command great respect from their community; their role as motivators or catalysts in ensuring that young people avail themselves of training and/or post-training support is fundamental.

Another innovative approach focuses on collaboration with the private sector to help promote small rural businesses and to link small rural economies to the larger markets. By facilitating this connection, the project enables larger segments of the local populations to benefit from the growth in the extractive industries. In the process, it facilitates productive economic activities and the formalization of informal economic activities. However, a main problem faced by small businesses is access to large markets. In this regard, the project uses the ILO's value chain development methodologies. In addition, the project relies on local structures established by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce "Centros de Serviços de Negócios" to facilitate access to the market of goods produced by the rural communities, define business plans and marketing strategies.

Question 5. What importance does the project place on developing interventions to support green jobs for rural communities?

Rural communities depend mostly on natural resources such as earth, forests, fish stocks and ecosystem services for their livelihoods. They are also poor and lack adequate social protection, and thus bear the highest costs of environmental degradation and climate change. This is particularly true in the case of women. It is therefore important to develop interventions aimed at preserving, restoring and enhancing the quality of the environment across rural areas.

Under the TREE programme, we are initiating a specific intervention to create green jobs for



young women and men, in renewable energy, sustainable green construction, agro-business, fish farming and bee-keeping. Towards this end, an assessment of the green jobs potential in the seven rural communities in Cabo Delgado was conducted in July 2016. Following an analysis of local economic opportunities, two reports were produced - *Identification of Economic Opportunities and Training Needs, and Toolkits Necessary to Implement the Economic Opportunities*¹ - and subsequently presented and discussed in the Steering Committees. The proposed plan for the rural communities called for training in the area of solar and renewable energy. Under the plan, young persons would be trained and receive post-training support to start their own business linked to renewable energy sources. The project, through TREE, will help support training for young women and men in solar technologies, offer business skills development, and facilitate networking between established solar companies and the trained youth. Networking sessions will also provide a platform for companies to select trained youth who would subsequently be engaged as marketing agents for the companies in rural areas after they receive supplemental training from the companies.

END

¹ Access to the reports are available through the project's knowledge sharing platform :
http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=FM11G_021626