

Mozambique Fact Sheet

Author: Hans Goertz

Background:

Mozambique has a population of 25.8 million. The population is extremely young, with a median age of 17 years. Approximately 68% of Mozambicans reside in rural areas. Poverty is predominantly rural, affecting an estimated 80% of rural Mozambicans. The vast majority of the workforce is employed in subsistence agriculture. Portuguese is spoken by over 50% of the population, primarily as a lingua franca, but only 13% speak it as a first language. Between 2003 and 2013, Mozambique grew between 6 to 8% annually, led by transportation, communications, financial services and extractive industries. Poverty continues to be prevalent with 60% of the population living on less than \$1.25 a day.



Present State:

Formal education and training in Mozambique are comprised of general education, technical and vocational education, tertiary education and extension. Primary education is free and compulsory for ages 6 to 12, contributing to gross enrollment of over 100%. Students are required to pay tuition after the 7th grade. Enrollment and completion rates drop off after primary school due to prohibitive costs and limited spaces. Vocational programs offer agricultural theory and practice at the secondary level. Tertiary level education is available in two-year technical colleges and in four-year university bachelors programs. The higher education system is comprised of 26 higher education institutions: 13 private and 13 public - most located in the capital of Maputo. Agricultural programs account for 2.7% of students enrolled. The gender parity index in general education has improved to 0.92. However, the gender disparity remains wide at the tertiary level, where women make up only 38.6% of students.

Challenges and Issues:

The national curriculum at the primary level is focused on preparing students for secondary level education. However, nearly half of students do not go on to complete secondary school. Fewer still continue on to tertiary education, which has traditionally been reserved for the country's elite. Agricultural programs only account for 2.7% of students enrolled in tertiary education – however there are signs that incentives to study agriculture are changing with new demand for AET graduates in the private and non-profit sectors. While the Government of Mozambique has made progress, significant disparities still exist in access to education. Women are underrepresented at every level of education and training, being less likely to enroll, more likely to drop out and less likely to hold a teaching or extension position. Educational spending has a strong urban bias and tends to be concentrated in the southern provinces closer to the capital.

The current supply of qualified professionals in agriculture has not been able to keep pace with demand. This is both a result of the quality and quantity of available AET opportunities. According to the results of a labor market survey conducted by the Ministry of Planning, skills gaps are present at every level: public school system graduates often lack the financial or actual literacy necessary for low-skilled positions, vocational graduates are unable to reliably perform the skills required for technical positions, and university graduates do not have the practical, communication and business skillsets to succeed in managerial positions. The resulting labor market is highly segmented: a small portion of the workforce is educated, skilled and formally employed, while the vast majority of Mozambicans are locked into informal or self-employment and are generally under employed. The skill shortfalls have contributed to the recruitment of foreign workers by employers and subsequent creation of foreign worker quotas by the Government of Mozambique. Furthermore, agriculture is characterized by extensive rather than intensive production. The use of improved seed, inputs and infrastructure are all low, and expected to remain low unless appropriate technologies are introduced.

Next Steps and Recommendations

Agriculture's predominance amongst the rural poor singles out the sector as a promising avenue for more equitable growth and poverty reduction in Mozambique. Compared with infrastructure development or input distribution, agricultural education and training is a relatively affordable option for improving agricultural productivity and incomes. This research highlights the following steps to build on the capacity and impact of AET:

- Make primary education as valuable and productive as possible by supplementing the basic skills curriculum with financial literacy and other practical, competency-based subjects that can serve youth in the workplace – as primary education will be the extent of education for many students.
- Improve the quality and relevance of instruction by training teachers in more participatory and practical pedagogy, reforming curricula to include more practical courses, providing better learning materials, creating internship opportunities and developing AET provider-employer partnerships to connect students with post-graduation employment.
- Work with providers, participants and employers to reform AET so that it meets the evolving needs of the labor market to makes the workforce more competitive.
- Invest in scholarship programs, distance learning and satellite campuses in order to expand access to higher education for underrepresented members of the population.
- Support the role of farmer organizations as informal extension networks. Participation in these networks has been shown to be an important determinant of technology and practice adoption. Currently only 6.5% of farmers are members of such associations and cooperatives.