

FAO's promotion of decent employment opportunities for rural youth producers' associations in Mozambique

More than 80% of the population in Mozambique is active in the agriculture sector. Of these, about 90% work in family farming. The family farming system in the country is characterized by family labor forces and a low degree of mechanization, with the large majority of agricultural production being rain-fed. Small-scale agriculture still suffers from inadequate infrastructure, commercial networks, and investment. However, 88% of Mozambique's arable land is still uncultivated hence the potential for agricultural growth is significant. Mozambique's population is very young with 43.6% younger than 14 years and 34.4% between 15 and 35 years old¹ according to the National Statistics Institute (INE) 2007 figures.

Young people in Mozambique are facing different challenges, which frequently result in difficulties in finding formal and decent employment. Consequently, most young people resort to the informal labour market, which dominates the Mozambican economy, and fails to provide decent working conditions and social protection. One of the most important causes of this situation is the weak educational system which is characterised by high drop-out rates in schools; few secondary schools in rural areas and a near absence of technical vocational training opportunities. Furthermore, youth generally lack entrepreneurial skills and exposure to an enterprise culture due to the traditional and rigid curricula in secondary schools. Such circumstances make Mozambican youth poorly prepared for the labour market into which they tend to enter at an early age. Another underlying cause of the high unemployment and dominance of informal employment is the still incipient dimension of the formal sector in Mozambique. According to a 2005/2006 survey conducted by the National Statistics Office (INE) in Mozambique, 75.2% of the economically active population is employed in the informal sector, of which 6.6% are under the age of 14, 24.4% are between 15 and 24 years old, and 26.1% are between 25 and 34 years old, indicating that 57.1% of people active in the informal sector are under the age of 34. There is also a trend of rural-urban exodus of young people that is likely to have an important influence on unemployment in urban areas in the future. Such circumstances make Mozambican youth poorly prepared for the labour market into

Associação de Jovens Criadores de Canda



Paulino Seviano is 25 years old, married and with 3 children (2 boys, 6 and 4 years old, and a girl of 2 months). Paulino is the president of the Associação de Jovens Criadores de Canda. He started his activities with 1 hectare and after reinvesting part of the income he increased it to 2.75 hectares. Part of the land is used for family food security purposes and a part is used for agribusiness and economic return. He now employs seasonal workers from his own community and has also reinvested part of the income in a second activity. He and his young wife now own a shop selling mainly oil and second hand clothes, which is managed by his wife. Paulino is happy about how his life is going now and that he fully manages to provide for his young family, in the near future he hopes to become a bigger agro entrepreneur.

¹ Official definition of youth in Mozambique

which they tend to enter at a young age. In addition, the number of youth entering the labour market is increasing rapidly. It is estimated that each year 300,000 new young people enter the labour market. This indicates that Mozambique is facing a major youth employment challenge.

The Mozambique Constitution, in its article 103, states that agriculture is the basis for development. At present the sector accounts for 29% of the country's GDP and therefore holds a significant potential for job creation.

Since 2008 FAO in Mozambique has been actively supporting youth producers' associations in the Sofala province along the Beira Corridor, which constitutes the main transport access link between the port of Beira and the interior of the country as well as to the neighboring landlocked Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. A thorough evaluation on the activities carried out at the end of 2011, has shown that most youth managed to enlarge their businesses and invest in further activities while increasing the size of their land and have managed to access local and district markets and in some cases reached the provincial level. A significant number of them also became pivotal in generating opportunities for seasonal employment in those districts. Overall, the revenues generated went both to re-invest in their businesses and to further enhance the livelihood opportunities of their families. In most cases this allowed younger siblings to remain in school, thanks to the improved household revenue.

Support to youth producers' associations in Mozambique is foreseen to continue to further facilitate young people's access to markets while improving their food security, ability to cope with food price volatility and presence in local food systems and economic corridors development approaches.

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Associação Juvenil Kutcheça de Tucuta Ajukutu



Salazjane Ussene is 20 years old and an associate of the Associação Juvenil Kutcheça de Tucuta Ajukutu. He started his activities in the agro sector, producing millet and sesame and investing his first income both in further crops production and pig farming. Salazjane has successfully managed to access not only the local and district markets but has also reached the provincial level, selling his products in Beira where there is a higher economic return on agro-products and less costs involved in middlemen mediations. Recently, he also opened a shop in his village in Canda, selling his products and other agro-products he buys from local young producers. In the near future Salazjane intends to invest in clean renewable energy and have solar panels installed in the shop to sell clean energy for different purposes to his community members.