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## **The Key is Education**

### Introduction:

It's true, you know... If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. People all over the world need to recognize world hunger and the effect it has on everyone. If you are not helping in some way, whether it be volunteering with a global food distribution program, researching underprivileged countries, as I am doing now, listening to missionaries through churches, or simply watching the world news with a concerned heart, then you are not working toward a solution. People are touched in multiple ways that causes them to become involved. I was touched by this fact: "With the population projected to exceed nine billion by 2050, more food will have to be produced in the next 40 years than has been over the past 10,000 years combined." This is an enormous issue that many do not see as a reality. Currently, 800 million people suffer from deficient diets worldwide. Finding solutions to this problem is complicated and mind-boggling, but I am sure of one thing: education is the key. Advancing in agricultural sciences, training in agriculture practices, and increasing public awareness is the starting point for a solution.

Africa has more third world countries than any other continent and has the greatest number of health issues. Not only do the majority of Africans work and live in rural areas, but 70% of the population is smallholder farmers which means that they farm a very small area and produce barely enough to feed one family.

Mozambique, a country on the southeastern tip of Africa, is one of the many third world countries that face the issue of starvation. I believe that the answer to global starvation is to make impoverished nations agriculturally sustainable. If nations can feed their own people with food they grow themselves, global starvation would become a thing of the past and the people will not be as affected by market prices. Mozambique has great agriculture potential to become a more sustainable country.

### Mozambican Lifestyle:

From what I have read, the families in Mozambique are fascinating. The average family size is five people, and many of the families are smallholder farmers. These families only produce enough food for themselves with barely anything left over to sell on the market. In 2008, the average annual income for a farm family was \$290. If the farm was run by a woman, which was 22% of the farms at the time, the annual income was reduced to \$140. This statistic suggests that men in this country get paid much more than women. Men are also more respected in Mozambique and are given more opportunities to get a better education than women are. The majority of children that go to school are boys.

Another thing I found that was interesting was how many ethnic groups are in this country. The Zambezia and Nampula groups consist of 45% of the population and are located in the north central region of Mozambique. Four million people make up the Makuwa group, which is dominant throughout the northern half of the country. The southern half of the country consists of the Tsonga and Shangaan tribes. The last two groups are the Sena and Ndau and are mostly located in the Zambezi Valley. Not everyone that lives in Mozambique is a specific member of any one group. These people live rather independently. Due to the influence of missionaries who traveled a large part of this country, 40% of the population is Christians, according to a national census, and more than 20% of the people are Muslims.

### Country of Mozambique:

Mozambique is located on the southeastern side of Africa on the coast line. The Indian Ocean border is actually called the Mozambican Channel since Madagascar is located on the other side. The bordering countries of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa all live with the same general economic conditions as Mozambique. Because the northern tip lies just 10 degrees latitude south of the equator, and the southern tip of the country lies at 25 degree latitude, the entire country is in a tropical climate.

The total area of Mozambique is 799,380 square kilometers, which compares to twice the size of California. The whole country is divided into 10 provinces and then into 128 districts. I believe Americans can compare this separation to what we know as states and counties; however, each would not have its own form of government. Mupato is the capital of Mozambique and is located in the southern tip, but the majority of the population lives in the northern half of the country. There are more than 21 million people currently living in Mozambique, 41% of which are male and 52% female. Most of this population consists of people under the age of 15. In Mozambique, 81% of the adult population works in an agricultural related field.

Currently, Mozambique exports aluminum, prawns, cashews, cotton, sugar, citrus, and timber. They import machinery and equipment, vehicles, fuel, chemicals, metal products, foodstuff, and textiles. I feel that if the Mozambique government could negotiate more open trade agreements with other countries, their economic conditions would improve.

Anything a country can do to raise revenue which in turn boosts the economy shows progress. Surprisingly, tourism is a rising industry. Warm weather, lots of sun, and many beaches have made Mozambique one of the leading tourist destinations in Southern Africa. Visitors are required to have specific health vaccinations before coming.

### Mozambican government:

Mozambique officially became a country on June 25, 1975, when its citizens claimed independence from Portugal. At this time, Mozambique was one of the world's poorest countries. A civil war between the north and the south broke out in 1977 and lasted for almost 16 years. After it ended, Mozambique was at an all-time low, not unlike any nation that endures a civil war. This was complicated by a devastating flood in 2000 and 2001, followed by a severe drought. Since that time, Mozambique has made huge progress in its efforts to produce any food at all. They remain a high food insecurity concern, which is when people are undernourished as a result of low supply of food and sufficient nutrition.

Multi-party democracy is the type of government that leads this country. A democracy includes three branches of government. The executive branch, which consists of the chief of state, otherwise known as the president; the legislative branch; and the judicial branch, which includes the supreme court. Currently the president of Mozambique is Armando Guebuza, and the prime minister is Aires Bonifácio Baptista Ali.

### Current farming conditions:

Mozambique has huge agriculture potential. One reason is that only 5.4% of the land is cultivated which leaves about 600,000 square kilometers of the land not being used. Much of that land could be turned into farm land which would boost overall economic conditions and potentially be part of the starvation solution. One downside to farming in Mozambique is the tropical weather. The dry season is from April to September and has an average temperature of 64-68 degrees Fahrenheit. The rainy season is from October to March with an average temperature of 81-84 degrees Fahrenheit. The rainy season in

Mozambique can become very extreme. Annual rainfall from 12-62 inches is predictable but creates its own set of problems. It is not uncommon during the rainy season to have fields flooded because of an abundance of rain. However, there is no storage system developed to hold water necessary for the dry season months. Much of the country struggles not only with droughts and floods, but with cyclones, famine, and locusts. The major cash crops grown are sugar cane, copra, sesame seeds, sugar beans, sunflowers, rice, millet, and maize. Farmers also raise potatoes, cucumbers, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, cabbage, and tomatoes.

Across the country, the soil types vary. The northwest has predominately clay while the southern region and coastline are very sandy. The best soil for crop production lies next to the rivers. My research found that the Mozambique government fully realizes that 80% of the population directly depends on agriculture. They are always trying to improve agricultural practices and work with organizations that will benefit their country. One organization is opportunity international, this provides insurance, small business loans, training to working people, and more. With this help people have the financial support to expand or start a business in order to provide for their families and open jobs to others. With all of this happening, they are able to build a solid foundation for their future.

#### Health Issues:

Everywhere on the planet infectious diseases are lurking. Some countries have a low risk and others have a high risk. Mozambique happens to hold a very high degree of risk for infectious diseases which contributes to the life expectancy being 41. Hepatitis A and typhoid fever are two food and waterborne diseases that can be found in Mozambique. Some vector borne diseases include malaria (18,108 cases per 100,000 people) and plagues, and one water contact disease found is schistosomiasis. Rabies is transferred from animals to humans and can also be found in Mozambique.

There are three main hospitals which are owned by the government. They are located strategically throughout the country: Maputo covers the southern region, Beira covers the central region, and Nampula covers the northern region. In addition there are few clinics scattered throughout the rural areas. The hospitals lack professional staff but provide treatment and care to those who can afford it. Naturally, many people do not have access to modern medicine. Most people go to a 'curandeiro,' a self-appointed medicine man who practices a traditional style of healing using herbs and spices. This service is done for no charge.

As expected, HIV/AIDS is common in Mozambique. There are 1.6 million of the 21 million people in Mozambique that are currently living with this dreadful disease. Most of these people are women and one third of them children. In 2007, this figure translated into 16.2% of Mozambicans. Practically everyone in this country is malnourished and suffers from acute shortage of vitamins, proteins, and minerals.

#### Mozambican Education:

Education in Mozambique has slowly increased since their civil war ended in 1992, but it still is extremely low. The literacy rate of people over the age of fifteen is 51%. Most of these people happen to be men because they are handed better educational opportunities. Of all the children in Mozambique that are eligible to attend primary school, only 83% attend, leaving more than 650,000 children who can be enrolled that are not. This may sound bad, but in 1992 only 32% of the kids were enrolled in primary school. Not only has the percentage of enrollment gone up, so has the number of teachers and the number of primary schools.

I am not trying to convince you that their schools are topnotch either. According to UNICEFF (an organization that is active in Mozambique) most of the students have to walk 4.6 kilometers, or 2 miles,

in order to get to school. The majority of the children who attend schools are boys. I believe that one reason could be that since only 23% of the teachers are women, there is a lack of guidance for the girls. Another reason is that many schools in Mozambique are not extremely girl-friendly. UNICEFF also says that girls are at risk of being sexually abused, both on the way to school and once they are at school.

Even though the number of schools has tripled and the number of teachers has increased, the quality of the education and facilities remains the same. For every 74 students, there is one teacher, which can put a lot of stress not only on the teacher, but also on the students. The majority of the schools do not have available fresh water or proper restrooms for girls and boys.

### Conclusion:

Smallholder farms continue to face a number of challenges. Able-bodied men are being pulled to join the labor force on huge commercial farms and to take clerk positions in government offices. In addition some schools use agricultural tasks such as digging, planting, and weeding as punishment for poor behavior. This could well result in a negative impression of farming overall for the entire school. Many nations continue to view smallholder agriculture as just a way of life for a peasant population and not ever as a potential marketing resource.

Again, I stress that education is the key not only in Mozambique, but around the globe. Locally I feel women need to be educated because I believe it creates a greater chance for children to become educated. Mothers have a way of ensuring their children learn as much as possible. A system could also be put in place to document the farming practices which have been used for generations. Interviewing the elders who know firsthand how to get the maximum production out the land would benefit future generations.

One of the things Mozambique needs, in my opinion, to improve their education is money. They need financial support to maintain adequate physical schools, but most importantly, monies to provide professional teachers and everything that goes with teaching an effective curriculum. If those things are provided in abundance to Mozambicans, their general education will improve. With a good solid foundation and general education learning more advanced farming practices will be easier. In order to accomplish all of this, the country needs to be stable and able to support itself.

To meet the growing demand of food necessary to feed the world by 2030, production will need to increase by 50%. It will be vital that third world countries, particularly those with unused land suitable for agriculture, participate in the production of food. Countries and continents need to work together, without boundaries, to share ideas, equipment, and even workers.

Mozambique has a very troubled past. The people of this country have suffered and will continue to suffer because of war, a lack of food, poor education, unstable governments and a lack of financing. Diogenes once said that "The foundation of every state is the education of its youth." I believe that the future of Mozambique lies in building a strong foundation and that begins with education.

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