

TACTIC REPORT

A school for growth.

Escola em Campo para Pequenos Agricultores (ECPA) demonstrate how to increase production in the poorest locations.



How do we increase agricultural production among the least productive farmers in one of the world's poorest locations? The key is to increase their knowledge on what's possible when you do things in smarter, better ways.

Context

Although Mozambique is rich in natural resources, including 36 million hectares of fertile land, only about 10% of that is presently used for productive purposes, and that which is under cultivation has some of the lowest productivity rates in the world. The majority of farmers continue to use manual methods to prepare the soil and rely on rain for watering. This strongly contributes to Mozambique's ranking as one of the poorest countries, at 185 out of 189, as of the 2012 Human Development Report from the UNDP. The average income from farm activities in some of the heavy agricultural provinces such as Zambezia and Nampula is three times lower than in the rest of the country.

Project Background

To address agricultural poverty in Mozambique, iDE has been implementing its Farm Business Advisor (FBA) model there since 2011. This model develops a network of independent micro-entrepreneurs that support smallholder farmers. The FBAs earn a commission on the sale of products and services to rural households - including agriculture inputs, equipment, loans, marketing, and transport to output markets - while also providing technical assistance on improved agricultural techniques, a service embedded in the margins of the products. While the model has had some success in Mozambique, a management review in 2017 identified that, in the poorest communities, low productivity meant that there wasn't enough "business" to attract and support an FBA. That is, because of their very low productivity with a focus on food security, these farmers couldn't afford to invest in the things they needed to be able to increase their productivity and incomes, such as better inputs (seeds, fertilizer, pesticides), mechanization, and low-cost greenhouse technologies. The challenge was what could iDE do to "jumpstart" their productivity in order to build the value chain that would connect them to increased prosperity.



"Recognizing when a crop has been attacked by pests isn't the first step to dealing with the problem, but it's often the first step in realizing you have a problem."

Adolfo, iDE Mozambique

Intervention

When farmers have new knowledge, they can break increase their production by farming smarter and better. To do so, they need to go to school. Since they neither have the time or transportation to attend a school, iDE decided to bring the school to them. In the poorest local communities, we are establishing *Escola em Campo para Pequenos Agricultores* (ECPA, translated as "Field School for Small Farmers"), with a special focus on the inclusion of women farmers to support our Farming as a Family Business initiative.

Because there is no market incentive for an FBA to give training or manage an ECPA, at the beginning iDE technicians are responsible for their creation and maintenance. Each technician had to choose five communities in their area of intervention in addition to their "normal" annual field activities. They establish small demonstration plots which they advertise in the community as a source for new information, holding individual and group training sessions that highlight the use of improved farming techniques and technologies, such as alternating crop planting, crop rotation, methods to improve crop quality, and smart water management. This way they can

learn how to increase their productivity and the local FBA can then see business opportunities in terms of inputs, services, and aggregation.

In addition to service to the community and FBAs, these ECPA are helping to expand our technicians' understanding of the constraints these poorest farmers experience as well as "get their hands dirty" by engaging in exactly the same type of activities they promote to FBAs and their clients. Every two months, iDE brings all the technicians together for a meeting to learn more details about Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and affordable technologies as well as discuss and share the value chain issues in their areas.

The topics covered during the sessions are not just related to GAPs but include also affordable irrigation technologies, nutrition, and market. As these poor farmers at the beginning are not keen to invest, we also teach how to prepare organic fertilizer and pesticides.

ECPA Training Modules	Agrarian Season											
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Module 0 - Introduction to project, selection of Leader Farmers, beneficiaries list, CDR site, and protocol												
Module 1 - Cash crops, land preparations, and seed												
Module 2 - Conservation agriculture, sowing, and bookkeeping												
ToT Module 3 - Conservation vs. traditional agriculture, pest and water management												
Special module - protected production technologies for vegetables and drip irrigation (ONLY FOR SOME)												
ToT Module 4 - Vegetables, irrigation systems, organic pesticides and fertilizers												
ToT Module 5 - Harvest, market, conservation, and bookkeeping												
ToT Module 6 - Horticulture, irrigation, organic fertilization												
ToT Module 7 - Evaluation of crop yield, planning, and nutrition												
Promote post-harvest techniques												

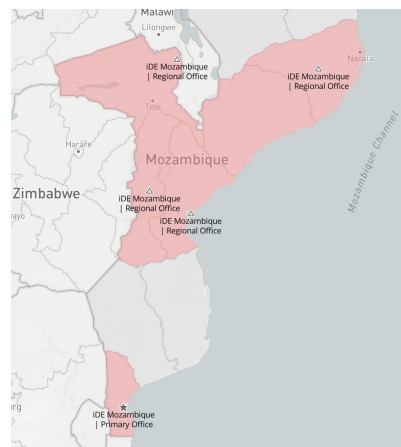
Impact 2018-2019

- 400 ECPAs set up
- 30 technicians involved
- 250 Leader Farmers (trainers) involved
- 12 districts
- 4 Provinces
- 16,000 farmers (majority of whom were women) trained

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iDE Global Agriculture Initiative

Read more: <https://www.ideglobal.org/areas-of-focus/agriculture>

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