DEVELOPING BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION THROUGH PUBLIC WORKS

RSR played a key role in identifying and preparing the first IDA-supported social protection project in Mozambique. The US$ 50 million IDA grant will strengthen institutions, consolidate a national basic social security strategy and support the nationwide expansion of a public works program.

CHALLENGE

In recent years, Mozambique has been hit frequently by natural disasters, leading to the loss of crops, livestock, homes and other assets. Intertwined with increasing food prices, more than half of today’s adult population in Mozambique is food-insecure, and 44 percent of children are chronically malnourished.¹

Three-quarters of the population and most of the poor reside in rural areas vulnerable to seasonal and frequent climatic-related shocks. The agricultural lean season poses an especially high risk of food insecurity for rural workers and their families —on average consuming 40 percent fewer calories in this four-month period.² Conversely, a reliance on food and fuel subsidies and protracted underemployment beset the urban poor who, as a result of the prolonged rise of food and fuel prices, have continued to delve deeper into poverty.

Population, total: 23.93 million (2011)
Poverty headcount ratio at $2 per day (PPP) as percent of population: 82 (2009)

**RSR Funding:**
US$ 2,155,000

**Associated IDA Project:**
Social Protection Project (US$ 50 million)

**Partners:**
DfID, SIDA

¹ The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Executive Directors of the World Bank or the governments they represent. The World Bank does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply any judgement on the part of the World Bank concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.
Families in rural and urban areas are often forced to resort to self-destructive coping strategies, such as, selling off already limited productive assets, reducing the quality and quantity of food and taking children out of school. The effects of these actions are often debilitating and lifelong, especially for children.

**APPROACH**

Through a pilot, RSR supported the development of labor-intensive public works in 10 arid and semi-arid rural areas and two urban areas to address the country-specific dynamics of poverty and food insecurity. RSR helped to set the direction of the new national public works program by developing and testing criteria for selecting beneficiaries, determining the level of transfers and ascertaining the types of eligible public works. Under the scheme, workers in rural areas are given a cash transfer for labor-intensive public works during the agricultural lean season, a time when families typically have no alternative source of income. The works are mostly focused on soil and water conservation and management, rehabilitation of degraded areas, rural roads maintenance and support to agricultural practices. The project will also support extremely poor workers in urban areas to help address longer periods of unemployment. Here, the workers participate in cleaning drainage systems, parks and cemeteries.

RSR also supported the National Institute for Social Action (Instituto Nacional de Acção Social—INAS), as the agency implementing the four major social protection programs comprised in the new social protection strategy, in defining its institutional responsibilities and relationships with other central and local agencies that are implementing labor-intensive public works.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS**

- Developed and implemented a public works pilot in 10 rural and two urban districts
  - 9,592 poor households or, around 50,000 people benefitted from the pilot
  - Community assets created in 10 rural and two urban districts
- Developed methods to adequately identify poor and vulnerable populations
- Defined the main processes to be implemented during IDA operation, including the flow of funds, payments to beneficiaries and monitoring and evaluation process
- Facilitated South-South learning, through core courses, in-country expert visits and an international conference on social protection in Maputo
  - Expands public works program nationwide
  - Employs 100,000 temporary workers, benefiting 500,000 people
  - At least 50 percent of workers are women
  - Places public works program as a key building block of a safety net system

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