



Mobilizing the community's entrepreneurial spirit by improving tourist access to high potential cultural assets

I watched all the people visiting my Island, but I did not know how to attract the client to my business. I have learned all of this from this programme. Thank you.

Ms. Mariamo Momade Ali, a local gastronomy specialist and participant in the programme

Cultural tourism brought new job opportunities for women.

BACKGROUND

Unemployment in the tourist destinations of Mozambique Island and Inhambane City is high, and there have not been many efforts towards promoting cultural tourism. Organized tour routes existed and tour guides were accredited by the Government, but the guides did not have sufficient and accurate cultural and historic knowledge about their localities and communities. They had no formal training from qualified historians or cultural experts or on client service, and they ill-understood their roles or responsibilities towards tourists. Culture was not being effectively harnessed as an economic driver for community and economic development. Therefore, the cultural tourism initiative within the Programme was implemented. The pilot initiative engaged the government as part of the process aimed at strengthening community-based cultural entrepreneurs' capacity to develop and offer market-driven and high-potential cultural assets.

PROCESS

National, provincial and municipal government representatives participated in workshops which focused on the role of cultural tourism in development. A participatory approach was used to encourage ongoing dialogue between all stakeholders. Government focal points engaged directly with community based cultural entrepreneurs in order to understand their obstacles in implementing cultural tourism.

Cultural service providers were trained in business development, with a focus on education, practical business application, and sustainability. Women participated in these trainings as well, a privilege normally provided to males alone. Training at the community level culminated in four pilot tour routes in two different provinces. Service providers received collective and individual feedback on these pilot routes with the intention of applying lessons learned and good practices in order to improve their product and offer it to the public at large.



Muslim leader demonstrating to tourists, during the visit to the old Mosque in the tour 'City of Stone and Lime', how the community learned to read and write Arabic using an nimpau (small wooden plank), a wooden stick, and ink made from sea algae stored in a shell. © Lorraine Johnson, MDG-F JP Mozambique

Outcomes

As a result of the JP, participants developed new skills and knowledge that will enable them to strengthen their cultural services. Cultural tourism brought new job opportunities for women, for example as cultural tour guides, in dance groups, local gastronomy, drama, storytelling, and more. Cultural service providers will have priority access to a local financing fund of 7 billion Meticaís for each district, which was developed to stimulate entrepreneurship and economic development. Furthermore, as a result of this initiative, each tour route currently has its own bank account and is thus developing a credit history for participants.

Cultural entrepreneurs learned the importance of providing high quality products/services. They now understand profitability, costing and pricing, as well as the value of customer service – key concepts in developing a sustainable business. The beneficiaries of this story are no longer 'rivals' in a competitive market but work together as a team, supporting one another in order to create an effective tour route that will collectively benefit all service providers.

Citizens have begun to take greater pride in their own traditions and values, and younger people are participating in the provision of cultural services and the safeguarding of heritage.