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USAID HIGHER EDUCATION FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



BACKGROUND

Mozambique is entering a demographic transition with a working-age population that is rapidly expanding. Youth unemployment represents a sizable economic loss due to unrealized human resources and foregone tax revenues which contribute to creating a tax burden in future years. Broadening education and training opportunities to youth will enhance their employability and the country's overall competitiveness and economic growth. While the portion of public education funding dedicated to the higher education system increased from 15.3 percent in 2009 to 18.4 percent in 2014, a 2019 UN University study found university graduates in Mozambique most often described their entry into the job market as difficult. The jobs graduates did find, often did not match their skill set, were of low quality, and had little job security and low pay. 18 months after graduation, 23% of graduates were still unemployed. There is a clear disconnect between the soft skills the private sector requires to compete in a global economy and the skills job seekers currently possess. Women and persons with disabilities face particular difficulties, including gender biases and accessibility issues.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The USAID Higher Education Career Development Initiative is a collaborative partnership between Michigan State University, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Instituto Superior Politecnico de Manica, and Universidade Pungue. This project will increase access to quality employability services through the development of sustainable Career Development Centers at these Mozambican higher education institutions. These centers will rely on the expertise of leaders from Michigan State University to establish training and activities that ensure students, including women and persons with disabilities, graduate with the technical, entrepreneurial, and soft skills to successfully enter and thrive in the current and future labor market. In addition to improving the skills of individual students, the program will also build sustainable ties between universities and the Mozambican business sector so that universities can continually adapt their course work and training to meet the demands of the job market. Career Development Center staff will also gain in-depth knowledge of youth development, gender biases and accessibility issues, human resource issues, and partnership building through training.

EXPECTED RESULTS AND IMPACTS

- Youth will increase soft skills, exploration of career paths, and job search skills, which complement academic knowledge and lead to employability in their chosen field of study.
- Private sector partners, through their partnerships with the project will have access to highly qualified interns and employees who have developed soft skills, achieved career readiness, and acquired requisite knowledge.

- Results and learnings shared with the Government of Mozambique, particularly the Ministry of Higher Education, to create and implement into the national plan for similar higher education career development center initiatives.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: Michigan State University	GOALS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase access to high quality employability services through the development of sustainable career centers ● Create sustainable links between private businesses and educational institutions. 	LIFE OF ACTIVITY: September 2021 - September 2025	USAID FUNDING: \$2 million
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