

# Escola do Agricultor: transforming women through agriculture

Producers in the agricultural sector represent over 80% of the Mozambican labor force, even though the sector contributes only for 23% of the National Gross Domestic Product (TechnoServe and CTA, Promoting the Agroindustry in Mozambique, 2021). Of these producers, about 90% are women. However, only 10% of these women have access to the same inputs that male farmers receive, although there is evidence that if women have access to the same inputs as men, there is the potential to significantly reduce problems caused by food insecurity and malnutrition.

To circumvent this scenario, several interventions are being developed at the level of the food production sector, such as the *Escola do Agricultor* (Farmer's School).

Through its initiative, *Escola do Agricultor* is supporting farmers nationwide with the transmission of good practices in agricultural production. Through this concept, farmers are learning and applying everything about agricultural practices from home.



In the image, Ms. Alda Chauque working at her farm.

This initiative of **Escola do Agricultor** seeks, through broadcasting programs from the mass media (radio and television), to disseminate good agricultural practices, stimulate commercial level agricultural production, transmit post-harvest management techniques, and share gender-focused marketing and sales techniques for agricultural products. **Escola do Agricultor** works with several partners who are interested in investing and seeing its content disseminated through this initiative, and has nationwide coverage.

## ALDA ALEXANDRE BAUQUE, A SUCCESS STORY IN FAMILY FARMING

**Alda A. Bauque** is a farmer who has been in the business for about 8 years, at the invitation of her husband. The couple owns

2 hectares of land. Initially, they explored only half of their property, because they didn't know how to implement some techniques to have more quality production.

*“The practice of agriculture is important for us (women), because instead of depending on our husbands, we also fight to end hunger and earn some money for our livelihood, helping the family as well,”* says **Alda**, adding that *“the woman in agriculture is very important, because we work, earn money, and help our husbands with the expenses. So we feel proud that we are not dependent on our husbands.”*

## AGRICULTURE AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING GENDER RELATIONS

Through a partnership with **TechnoServe's**

**WIN - Women IN Business Program, *Escola do Agricultor*** is implementing its activities with a gender focus, impacting social rules and norms and showing women playing roles not traditionally assigned to them, as well as seeking to diversify the means of dissemination and identifying stable sources of funding to ensure sustainability in the future.

Many are the farmers who benefit from this program. **Alda** says she has learned various production techniques, such as the knowledge of the schedule for managing medicines and their control, something that many did not follow, which contributed to crop destruction. According to her, “*Escola do Agricultor has helped a lot, because it has trained young people in various techniques. Escola do Agricultor must continue, because we continue to improve the techniques. With these techniques, we were able to manage several pests and get the product to sell, and with quality, to get more customers. This program has helped improve the quality (of our product).*”

### FAMILIES TRANSFORMED THROUGH AGRICULTURE

The program has been helping to transform the lives of farmers. As a result of the partnership between the **WIN Program** and **Escola do Agricultor**, two seasons of radio programs and one season for television have been produced and broadcast, programs are being broadcast on community radio stations throughout the country, the program is being transmitted through the 84 321 mobile phone platform in a service using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems, and the first part of an impact study of the program has been carried out, and the mid-term evaluation of the program will be completed in October 2021.

Alda ends by saying that through the program “*we started as small farmers, then*



*we bought cars so we could make deliveries, we got more customers, and our lives got better too. We have educated our children. I advise other women who are sometimes afraid to do farming, to come and work as farmers, so that we can stop depending on our husbands and have a better life. And I hope that the program continues, so that we can improve. Because by learning, we do more. Escola do Agricultor must exist for us to learn more and improve more!”*

Today the couple manages to produce on the 2 hectares of land they own and with quality, thanks to the techniques learned through the program and they hope to expand their production to another four hectares they own in Matutuíne, Maputo province.

**The new season of *Escola do Agricultor* is being broadcasted in several community radios throughout the country, in Portuguese and in local languages.**

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