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**The Reality of Mozambique**

Picture this. You have just won an all expenses paid vacation to Mozambique, Africa, and you are so excited to finally get to experience a country outside of the United States. After doing some research, you have decided to stay in the northern part of Mozambique, so that you can experience the beautiful coastline and see how the economic systems work. Once you arrive in Mozambique, you are in for the shock of your life. You realize the beautiful coastlines are an on going threat of tsunami or hurricane, and that the economic system is slowly deteriorating. Once you begin traveling into the central part of Mozambique, you start to see a higher number of shack type houses, very small fields, almost small enough to be a garden, and residents that are in need of medical attention. Once you make your way into the southern part of Mozambique, you cannot decide whether to cry or cry out for help. You see fewer and fewer houses, and more shacks or blankets in the safest places Mozambique has to offer. You start to see scarce amounts of fields, and the ones you do see look like they could support one to three people at most. Over half of the females walking the streets look like they are in need of medical attention. When you look a little closer you see that there are slightly more men than women in this country, and you begin to wonder how that's possible considering the amount of children you have encountered since being in Mozambique. You begin to venture back to where you are staying when a young child approaches you and asks what you are doing in his town. This is when you ask yourself, "What am I doing here?"

The Northern part of Mozambique appears normal, because of the way the civil war ended in 1992. During the war, a lot of landmines and bombs were used to attack the enemy in central Mozambique. This caused a lot of damage considering the Civil War lasted sixteen years. During those sixteen years the ground became less fertile as well as declared not safe to live on or around. Once the war ended, this caused a lot of people to move to the coasts, northern, and southern regions to start a new life. After moving to the coastal areas, residents began to experience flooding and excessive amounts of winds. The residents who moved to the Southern areas owned lots of farm land and usually got by month after month, considering they were self employed. After moving to the northern region most residents began to start a life in the business world or took part in running the economic system of Mozambique. This led to the 1995 and 1997 Land laws which forever changed Mozambique forever.

The Land law of 1997 stated that land belongs to the state and cannot be sold, alienated or mortgaged. Customary land systems and the rights allocated through them are recognized. Private investment in land is to be promoted with guaranteed secure rights. Women and men have equal rights over land. Land access and use must obey principles of sustainable use. Land access and use must promote principles of equality. Land can be transferred to third parties, but only when linked to the sale or transfer of standing assets (The evolution of the international law of alienability).

With the new land law in place, most farmland owners did not have the opportunity to own any more farm land than they already owned. Since most farmers' families were still growing, the food from their crops was being spread even more scarcely. Almost 80 percent of all Mozambique residents were farmers, and some had to find other jobs to be able to feed their families and animals. This meant they would not only have to run their farm, they would also have to work a different job to make a sufficient amount of money. This is when the residents of

southern Mozambique started using their wives as extra help on the farm, and northern residents did the complete opposite.

In the northern part of the country, women, although they have the same written rights, are not treated the same as the men. Women are considered stupid and unworthy to some men. They are not allowed into some schools to further their education, and some places of work will deny employment to women. In the southern part of Mozambique, even though women are more likely to get sick or die in child birth, they are held at the same respect as men. The southern part of Mozambique is where the majority of the farming takes place, and since farming is such a huge responsibility to juggle with kids, women are encouraged to help their spouses in any way possible.

Normal farms in Mozambique are completely different from what is considered to be a normal farm in the United States. Usually in the United States, farms are multiple acres being harvested annually to make money for living expenses. Being a farmer in the United States is a full-time job. Farms are a huge contribution to the community, district or even state. In Mozambique, farms are usually only a few acres, and are not the same crop throughout the entire field.

The majority of farms in Mozambique are not only doing poorly because of the flooding from the coasts and the civil war damage. They are having troubles getting sustainable yields because they plant the same crop in the place every year. This degrades the health of the soil because the nutrients in the soil cannot supply the same root style for numerous years at a time. Farmers are also having troubles with the recent population growth of animals. After the civil war, animals were not seen as much as before the war. This caused conservation groups to set aside areas of land where animals could try to re-populate. The animals have re-populated in the last nine-teen years, and hurting farmers rather than helping them.

Elephants are a huge part of the animal community in Mozambique. They help residents of Mozambique in numerous ways such as, transportation and security. But, recently they have begun to stomp on farmers' crops and ruin the chance of a good yield. Elephants are not the only animals that are causing harm to farmers, but due to their size, they are causing the *most* harm to farmers. Since farms in Mozambique are so small elephants can destroy a whole farm, whereas in the United States if elephants were a part of the animal community, they still would not destroy entire farms.

A farm in Mozambique is similar to a large garden in the United States. But, people who farm in Mozambique are constantly dealing with costal threats (hurricanes, tsunamis, and floods) so they usually do not end up with all of what they started with. Since Mozambique is such a poor

country, not many people can afford "groceries" from the market, so most families have a farm, and other occupations to help ends meet. Since eighty percent of Mozambique is made up of farms, almost everyone, including the northern residents, have some sort of farm, but that does not mean they are not suffering from poverty.

In the northern part of Mozambique, there are more people in poverty than not. Fifty-seven percent of Mozambique's population is made up with people who cannot make ends meet, whether it be from lack of food, money or even shelter (World Bank Group). These families are living in what Americans would consider "shacks" and "forts". In some cases, parents have gone days without eating just so their kids had enough food to get by. These families are not given the rights nor the respect they deserve. The people who are poor, are trying as hard as they can to make enough money to support themselves and their families, but usually the government

interferes and makes it difficult for them to have a sustainable life. This poverty problem has led to women population decreasing in Mozambique.

The population of women has dropped due to the increasing rate of women infected with HIV/AIDS. Most women who are infected with HIV/AIDS were infected by men from towns that have hatred for women. There is more hatred for women in the northern part of Mozambique, because in the southern part of Mozambique men consider women to be at the same level of

society as themselves. The average life expectancy in Mozambique is forty-six, when women are infected this could drop five or more years. Recently women have also been dieing more frequently in child birth, sue to unsanitary conditions, lack of doctors, or other medical problems. After the mother dies the father, or older children, are required to take care of the other children; when the children grow up they are more likely to become involved in dangerous situations, as well as be open to the HIV/AIDS virus, if they are not already infected. This leads to yet another generation of HIV/AIDS spreading, and Mozambique continuing in its downward spiral. In order for Mozambique to start making a “comeback”, it is going to take a lot of effort and commitment.

The biggest issues in Mozambique are poverty, discrimination, and lack of food. Since Mozambique is considered one of the poorest countries in the world, it will take baby steps to improve their economy. They will have to start off by working on new laws that help everyone, and not just a (particular crowd). Although there are many laws that are directed at different groups, the Mozambique government thinks having more laws directed at individuals is better than having a few laws that benefit everyone, but might not please everyone. For Mozambique to be able to improve the way women are treated they need to address some key issues.

First, the Mozambique government needs to upgrade their security, so that men can no longer sexually abuse women. This is the key factor in preventing women from getting HIV/AIDS, because men are taking advantage of poor or homeless women, who can not defend themselves. Since women have also been dying more in child birth, sending doctors from other countries or the United Nations would help to eliminate this problem. In the United States, the types of problems are not a prevalent. We have a sufficient amount of doctors and should help a country in need of more. In the end everyone is human, and no one should be treated different than the next person, whether they are fat, skinny, ugly, pretty, rich, or poor.

To eliminate the problem of there not being enough food to support Mozambique, the global community should help them learn how to handle the danger of living so close to a dangerous coast. Farms should increase in size, so families can support their kids with one farm, and not have to take on other jobs as well, because running a farm is a job in itself. Another thing that needs to change to help there be enough food to support Mozambique is, make it known that when you own a farm and take pride in your farm, you can make enough money to afford a house or school your children. If everyone took pride in their farms, they could still work other jobs to help better the economic side of Mozambique, but they would also have a sufficient amount of food and that would help left a lot of stress of their shoulders.

Owning a farm and running a good farm are two completely different things. Right now, Mozambique farmers are farm owners, they have to own something to try to produce crops, but they also have to work other jobs because their farms are unreliable. When the farmers have to go away to their other occupations, they are not able to watch over their farms and make sure their crops are growing as needed. If they ran a farm instead of just owning a farm, farmers would have enough yields to sell and make enough money to support their families. They wouldn't have to have other occupations and therefore could spend all their time tending to their crops. If

farmers start to make enough money to expand on their farms this would help the business spectrum realize farming is good for the land and economy. If the global community stepped up and helped the residents of Mozambique start running farms instead of just owning farms, Mozambique could be off to a fresh start.

Picture this. You are about to leave for the airport to make your trip back home, when you realize everything you have seen this past week is going to impact the rest of your life. As you are looking onto the beautiful coastline, you start to think about all the children and how happy they were, even though their families were going through tough times. You also start to think about ways to help out those in need when you get back to the United States. After boarding the plane, you start to read over a diary you have been keeping the past week, and remember all the new foods, clothes, and culture you experienced. You start thinking about how families who are struggling to stay alive day to day, are so happy and so grateful that their children are in good health. You realize you may be taking your life for granted. After seeing all the tragedies of floods, wars, and death, you realize Mozambique is a country in need. Mozambique needs people to care about the problems they are encountering, because for them it is not about having the next iPad, it is about finding a way to decrease the rate of poverty in their county and increase the rate of farming. It is about forgetting about people's gender, and worrying about the country as a whole. After getting off the plane you start to think back to the little boy that made you question why you were in his town, and having plenty of time to think about everything that went on the past week, you realize the question should not have been, "What am I doing here?" The question should have been, "What can I do here?"

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