building a
FREE MOZAMBIQUE

A Report from The Mozambique Institute to The Africa Fund

164 Madison Avenue • New York, N. Y., 10016 • (212) 532-3700
General Project Report

We take this opportunity to greet the Board of the Africa Fund and the donors to the Fund which have made possible some of the work mentioned in this brief report.

This year, 1974, is a special one in the history of the Mozambican people, for on the 25th of September we mark the Tenth Anniversary of the launching of the armed struggle against Portuguese colonial domination. For five centuries the Portuguese strode across our land, finally crushing the last armed revolt at the end of the nineteenth century. Although protestations took various forms among the African population during the first half of this century, Portuguese rule was so brutal and effective, concealed from the rest of the world behind fine phrases of their "civilizing mission", that while other former colonies of European powers gained their independence, the Portuguese colonies remained the dark shadow hiding man's inhumanity to man. Those shadows have now been brilliantly lit, and people all over the world have heard of our people's struggle for freedom. One-third of our country, about 250,000 square kilometres, are now under the administration of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), where approximately 1,200,000 people live. Most of the areas of the Provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Tete are liberated zones, and the armed struggle has stretched into the industrial and communications heartland of Mozambique, the Province of Manica e Sofala.

The armed struggle has a distinct purpose, for very few people fight a war taking pleasure in it. The Mozambican people wish to decide their own destiny, build schools,
hospitals and social centres which they never had before, and
cultivate the land for the good of all the people, and not
for just a few who came to invade the land and rob its
wealth, including the inhabitants themselves. The Mozambican
people are struggling for their independence.

So, for us, a liberated area is not where we sit down and rest,
satisfied that the colonial ruler has been pushed out.
Freedom means nation-building and national reconstruction,
and from the first moments of liberation in any area, schools
and medical centres spring up like fountains from the dust.
A new way of living has begun.

The Africa Fund, through some grants-in-aid, has helped to
support centres outside the liberated areas which back up the
work of reconstruction in the liberated areas themselves.
Some years ago, it was the existence of the liberated areas
that made supporting and training programmes outside Mozambique
so important and with the continual expansion of these areas,
the children's centre at Tunduru, the hospital at Mtwara, and
the secondary school at Bagamoyo - all in Tanzania - have not
lost their importance.

Tunduru Children's Centre

The camp at Tunduru has in residence almost two thousand people,
most of them children, living and working in its vast area.
The camp is a microcosm of Mozambique, for there one finds
Mozambicans from every part of our country. The children, who
number about 1500, are in the centre for various reasons: some
are orphans; the parents of others are in the colonialist
prisons; families of some are not living in conditions to keep
the children with them; and the remainder come from war zones
where we have not yet been able to set up schools and
infant centres.

The children of the primary school number more than 1100, filling
13 terms ranging from the first through the fourth (and final)
years of primary school. Generally, a child enters the
regular academic classes at age seven, last year the largest
age group being that of 12 to 14 years of age. The students
live in large dormitories and have a common kitchen. Until the
new classrooms are built, the dormitories still double as
classrooms, and many of the boy students have built a series of
houses for themselves, awaiting the time when their sleeping
quarters will be entirely freed for residential purposes.
Being a major pilot primary school, student teachers do their practice training there before taking up their posts in the liberated zones. Under these more centralized conditions, it is possible to compile the material necessary for the writing of textbooks for primary schools. The mixing of ethnic groups and the practice of communal living have made fertile conditions for the creation of new culture patterns in song, dance and poetry. It is a happy experience to see children performing what they have created out of their own backgrounds refined with ideas drawn from the new society in which they live. Every effort is made not only to give them an academic education but to inculcate in their minds the idea of unity - of the nation, of the continent, of the world. Our children learn this through visits to other countries, by foreign delegations visiting their school, by constant information from their leaders and teachers. They learn they are not alone in their struggle for a bright future, but have the help of many.

There are about 330 preschool children who form the "infant centre" of the camp. Even when living conditions are most trying in the camp, every effort is made to supply these younger children with dairy and protein foods. Although the children live and play together, there are women who are responsible for the welfare of small groups of them - bathing, laundry, making sure they do not spill their food or tip their drinking cups, and taking care of them when they are ill. These little children have a special play area and kitchen of their own, as well as a rudimentary first aid station.

The women in the camp are thus learning to perform valuable tasks to be used upon their return to Mozambique. That is why they are called to the camp: to be trained in child care, nutrition, homecraft, literacy, and agricultural production on a cooperative basis. It is not easy to change old patterns, but with practice and that ever-present idea of creating something better, the new ways are every day more interesting.

Last year a long-standing dream began to take shape - the building of a special centre to provide facilities for the rehabilitation and work training for persons disabled in the war. They may be men, women or children, but all need help. If they have families, their families come too. These victims have lost limbs, or sight, or hearing, or some combination of the three. Moral support is given, a new life started, and all, no matter what age, receive help and training. The first ten residences have been built, albeit temporarily, of clay
plastered over with cement, and there are already more than two hundred people living in the centre. Agricultural production and sewing are the main occupations at present, but when the material is available, there will be workshops, in carpentry, tailoring, metalworking and handicrafts. A pig corral is now being built which will be the first project in the training of animal production.

It is possible to see the important functions of the camp—a pilot primary school, an infant centre, a training centre for women, and a rehabilitation site for the disabled. However, the year 1973 has been difficult for the camp. A general shortage of food in the area, the lack of building materials, and the increase in the number of functions of the camp have all contributed to its problems. The help that came from organizations and governments in furnishing food, clothing, and agricultural supplies were essential to the programmes' total progress. Nevertheless, as is often the case, a period of hardship brings to fruition the seeds that were ripening. In May, the building of ten classrooms will begin for 1000 students. Linked with this will be the construction of, and thus the learning to make, a soil-cement block furnace. Throughout the whole of last year, workers were drilling for pure drinking water and we now have a well which produces more than 800 gallons of water per hour. Canalization of the pure water throughout the whole camp is another project for this year. The latrine system will also find a new design in the biopot system which will not only keep our water clean but provide us with fertilizers badly needed for the garden vegetables. Last year new staff residences were completed and this year student residences will be improved. The new projects are the result of long planning and waiting. We will continue to train our people to know how to create healthier living conditions, planning together, working together, so that the new teacher, the youth, the young woman and mother, and also those permanently physically damaged by the colonialist war will take up their tasks in the liberated zones, helping to spread the knowledge they were so fortunate to receive.

The Doctor Americo Boavida Hospital

Like all other centres of FRELIMO, inside and outside Mozambique, the central hospital at Mtwara, Tanzania, has grown. In the liberated zones of Mozambique, there are about 150 medical centres with a staff of approximately 750 persons, but so far it is only Boavida Hospital which has trained medical doctors.
(Our first trained Mozambican medical doctor will return from his studies in 1975.) The Boavida Hospital fits into the general structure of the Health Services in that it treats the most serious medical cases, is the major training centre for para-medical personnel and is the central medicines store.

The hospital is divided into two parts: in-patient and out-patient. The in-patient section has 70 beds and the out-patient centre has between 150 and 300 beds at any one time. The out-patient centre includes those people waiting to enter the hospital and those in convalescence. At present the staff consists of two doctors, 37 medical assistants who are the students (and who finished their studies in January this year), 2 laboratory technicians and about 50 general workers. The most recent statistics for a one-year period are 870 hospitalized persons and 8,400 out-patient consultations with 725 operations performed. The most frequent cases treated are hydrocele, hernia, wounds, tuberculosis and cases of acute malnutrition.

The arrival of a third doctor this year at the hospital will be of considerable help in the training programme. The training of paramedical personnel of medium level is of primary importance to our people. In the class of '73, there were 37 trainees in a one-year course. There were 25 graduates of a 10-month course in 1972. Theoretical study is combined with practical training, and the hospital relies on the students to serve as medical assistants in the Boavida Hospital. In addition to those who undertake the formal courses, at least 10 persons per year are trained as simple practical nurses, learning through doing.

Well qualified graduates of the above courses, after having gained sufficient experience in the field, conduct two 6-month courses which average 170 graduates per year.

Last year a number of constructions were built or modified, including the staff dining hall, duty-nurse rooms, out-patient centre and very important, a water tank. The hospital was often without water and that problem has now been resolved.

After having waited a long time in drawing up the design and carrying out formal procedures, the building of more staff residences and a children's centre will begin. Another plan has already been drawn up for a large new wing to the present hospital, but its construction depends on funds available. The medicines supply during 1973 greatly improved and although some medical posts in Mozambique still suffered a shortage of drugs, certainly 1974 will see an even greater improvement. The central
medical store responded rapidly to the outbreak of cholera in the Province of Tete where a massive innoculation campaign was carried out. The contributions of organizations abroad helped greatly to control its spread.

The role of the hospital in the area of preventive medicine can be shown in two concrete examples of the past year: 1) one doctor and one nurse of the hospital conducted a course for women in mid-wifery, child-care and nutrition in Tunduru; 2) two medical teams from Boavida Hospital led the innoculation campaign in Tete Province where they worked to control the cholera outbreak which had its beginnings in Portuguese-occupied Mozambique. That work continues.

This year, besides the launching of several long-awaited constructions, a drive will be made to provide better transport facilities. The roads between the hospital and the Mozambican borders are difficult to travel, especially during the rainy season. We need more ambulances and trucks to solve this urgent problem.

Although the work of the Boavida Hospital has for a long time been well-known in Tanzania, last year it became a centre of attention through the efforts of an expatriate support group in Tanzania who, many of them being medical doctors, were disturbed by the need for plasma and blood for emergency operations at our hospital and additionally, by the lack of blood available to Tanzanians -- a situation which had reached serious proportions. Consequently, a very successful campaign was launched which resulted in frozen plasma for Boavida Hospital and blood cells for Tanzanians. It is a good example of the cooperation among different groups which results in benefits for many.

Secondary School at Bagamoyo

It is almost impossible to say that one program in the whole process of building a new society is more interesting than another. At the same time, when one is at the secondary school, one feels the vibrations of the gigantic mental and physical growth. Perhaps it is because the school houses and educates a group of dynamic and eager young people who are ready to act, to carry out that which they have in their minds.

Passing by the school, one can see nothing extraordinary, just a spread-out mixture of small buildings. But like every FRELIMO camp, there are several activities in vigorous play in sometimes
nondescript constructions. Last year the school had 180 secondary school students, more than 20 primary school student teachers in training, and an entire staff of almost twenty. The school consisted of the first three academic levels of secondary school training. This year there will be 280 secondary school students studying in four academic levels. Among the other activities of the camp will be a UNESCO-sponsored course on literacy training which will have 40 trainees, and a seminar for women and young children which will discuss the role of women in a new society, the physical, mental and emotional growth of the child, and practical experience in using educational games and toys in play time. This latter seminar makes a part of the celebrations marking the first anniversary of the founding of the Organization of Mozambican Women.

Besides teachers and general staff who are Mozambican nationals, this year's teaching staff includes persons from the Netherlands, Italy, the German Democratic Republic, the United States, Brazil and England. The school continues with its student commissions to run the camp and besides the academic programmes, there are practical studies in construction, carpentry, sewing and agricultural production. During the long holidays the students return to Mozambique to live and work in the villages - otherwise it might be too easy to forget the hundreds of thousands of our nation who are so eagerly awaiting their permanent return.

Two notable factors in the secondary school underline the progress of primary schools in the liberated zones: 1) the age level of the students is falling and 2) more girls are now in school. Three years ago it would have been possible to count the youngest students, 15 years of age, on one hand. This year there are 30 children between the ages of 11 and 15. Last year we had ten girls in the school. This year the number has doubled. We feel proud of these changes, for it means that the arduous work in Free Mozambique - the short teacher-training seminars, the concentrated academic programmes, the mobilization of parents to send their young children to primary school (including girls), the increased school material, the ever-widening experience of the teachers - have made fundamental change in the educational structure which we have struggled for since the founding of FRELIMO. This year we hope for more and better school supplies for the village schools (one example, a fine canvas blackboard which is easily portable and weather-proof).

A three-year development plan is now being drawn up for the secondary school with the hope of solving water and sewage problems, and acute residence shortage and the extension of classroom facilities. It is a growing school, with students
and teachers working towards a single goal - a new society for Mozambique - and no doubt it is these elements that make the ground seem to race under one's feet.

At the beginning of this paper, we thanked the Africa Fund for the support it has given to the carrying out of various projects. We realize that material aid comes through the sacrifices of someone, and we appreciate what has been done, hoping that every effort will be made to continue that aid.

Janet Rae Mondlane
Director
Mozambique Institute