



# DEVELOPME NT FOR WHOM?: FROM THE CASE OF THE PROSAVANA PROJECT IN

# MOZAMBIQ UE

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## **ProSAVANA project in Mozambique**

There are tremendous numbers of development projects all over the world. Mozambique is one of the least developed countries. A serious issue in Mozambique is food security. Even though 80 percent of the labor force in Mozambique engages in agriculture (USAID 2017), Mozambique's farmland is tropical savanna that features very poor soil quality, and Mozambique does not have technologies to overcome this issue. As related to a food security issue, more than two out of five children under five years old are malnourished in Mozambique (UNICEF Mozambique 2017). The government of Mozambique decided to transform the current agriculture system and ensure food security.

ProSAVANA is a triangular cooperation program among Mozambique, Brazil and Japan since 2009. The Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency have participated in this project. The main purpose is to "improve the livelihood of inhabitants of the Nacala Corridor through inclusive and sustainable agricultural and regional development" and to "create employment through agricultural investment and establishment of a supply chain," (ProSAVANA 2016). It seems that ProSAVANA has positive impacts on agriculture and on the total GDP of Mozambique and can improve childhood nutrition.

## **Disagreement from Civil Societies of Mozambique**

However, civil societies, especially local farmers in northern Mozambique and especially around Nacala Corridor, have disagreed with ProSAVANA for the following four reasons (Classen 2013).

First, they are concerned about a risk of land grabbing. Other Japanese agencies, (such as multinational companies), have entered the project area seeking business opportunities. This may result in land grabbing of local community land by these non-local agencies using contracts with the central government without agreement of a local community, for example of a large-scale plantation. Local farmers think that non-local agencies rob local farmers of their local lands. Land grabbing has happened in many places in response to the food crisis in 2007 in other countries.

Second, ProSAVANA neglects and ignores the production efforts of local community farmers around the Nacala Corridor. The local farmers subsist on their own produce, and sell their surplus products to others through local markets. They worry that if this system is destroyed, it will create tension within their communities.

Third, they are concerned about the potential environmental fallout of ProSAVANA. A number of Japanese and Brazilian food enterprises will enter the area and engage in agriculture on a larger scale. This will bring about both deforestation and the degradation of local soil. In addition, the local population is also worried that using chemical fertilizers and pesticides will damage the soil.

Fourth, ProSAVANA is interested in growing Mozambique's economy by exporting more food. However, the local population is concerned that such export-oriented agriculture will threaten food security, not only in Nacala Corridors, but also in other areas of Mozambique. For these four reasons,

the local population fears that the implementation of ProSAVANA will violate the sovereignty of the people of Mozambique.

In 2012, União Nacional de Camponeses, the biggest farmers' organization in Mozambique, criticized the ProSAVANA project in precisely this way (Classen 2013). Responding to these concerns, international NGOs such as Oxfam Japan and Japan Africa Forum have started to advocate for terminating or restructuring the framework of the ProSAVANA project.

### **Development for whom?**

ProSAVANA could be a success on a macro-sociological level, but it would likely bring hardship to small farmers and local communities. In this situation, we must ask ourselves: "development for whom?" Local communities? Or the elites of beneficiary countries? Or, perhaps, for donor countries? How can we prevent a local population from becoming the victims of a development project imposed from the top-down?

### **References**

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**Samiksha**

5 years ago

Hi Go,

We're master's students from the University of East Anglia, and we're trying to understand the different implications that ProSAVANA might have. What we're really wondering (and you might have an answer to this question) is



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