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“Development on the margin”

## A Strategy for Rural Development: Promoting Entrepreneurial Behaviour among the Youth of Mozambique

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### Abstract

Empirical evidence has repeatedly highlighted that business ventures are mainly initiated within the community by its original members. Entrepreneurs tend to set up their businesses in close proximity to where they live or to the organisations where they have acquired their skills and knowledge. They tend to maintain linkages with their original communities even in case of relocation/expansion of their business to other sites, at a later stage. Why are some communities more entrepreneurial than others? Besides institutional factors, empirical studies have shown that the community members' attitude towards business activities plays a significant role in promoting venture creation locally. Can this attitude be fostered?

Entrepreneurship education in schools is a strategy in this direction. All over the world, governments are increasingly mainstreaming entrepreneurship education in their education systems to foster an entrepreneurial mindset in their population at an early stage. By stimulating enterprising attitudes in students and equipping them with basic business knowledge, governments in developing countries attempt to provide their youth with a forward outlook on life, which will, in turn, inject dynamism in their communities.

What evidence exists about the effectiveness of entrepreneurship curricula to stimulate enterprising attitudes and entrepreneurial behaviour among the youth? The present study is the first one of a larger plan to investigate the effectiveness of a number of entrepreneurship education programmes in Southern Africa. Using a sample of some 600 secondary school students that have been undertaking an entrepreneurship education course in Mozambique, the study explores the role that a range of socio-demographic parameters (age, gender, social background, etc.) play in determining students' actual engagement in business activities. The study reveals that students, irrespective of gender and social background, exhibit a remarkable entrepreneurial behaviour, and that school context can constrain such behaviour. Furthermore, it is observed that these students tend to transfer their entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to members of their community. Finally, the results suggest that entrepreneurship development reinforces students' interest in further education unlocking the potential of engaging in a wide range of career initiatives.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, rural development, Mozambique