

Mozambique case essay

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Mozambique is located on the coast of Africa to the south east. It is bordered by Tanzania on the North, South Africa and Swaziland lie to the South, Zimbabwe is the West and Zambia and Malawi have borders on the northwest. The Africa Guide's Mozambique page tells of wet and dry seasons, mountains, hills, plateaus and coastal plains. Rainfall in the higher regions is as high as 56 inches annually.

Temperatures vary from 18 to 29 degrees Centigrade. In pre-colonial Mozambique there lived first of all were the San, bushmanoid hunter gatherers from about 10, 000 years ago. According to the web page ' History of Mozambique' these were the ancestors of the Khoisani people. The Khoisani have their own group of languages, the click languages, and although it includes some 50 variations, it is the smallest group of languages in Africa according to Hutchinson's Encyclopaedia. Swahili and English are spoken but Portuguese is the country's official language according to the web page, Mozambique, Interview. Later, during the first 4 centuries C. E. , waves of Bantu people gradually filled the area, although the first of them may have arrived as long as 3, 000 years ago, having migrated north along the Zambezi river valley. They came from the Niger Delta area and brought with them a knowledge of iron weapons and tools. The Bantu formed settlements as farmers and iron workers. Kingdoms gradually developed. These included those of the Karanga or Shona, which extended from present-day Zimbabwe north into Mozambique, and to the southwest of present-day Tete there lay the legendary kingdom of Monomotapa, Arab peoples settled along the country's coast from about the 8th century C. E. Their ports

connected with inland gold mines. The first European group to reach Mozambique were Portuguese, led by Vasco de Gama, who arrived in 1498.

During the next few years the trading posts and forts, which were quickly established by the Portuguese, became regular ports of call for ships travelling east. Gradually the influence of the Portuguese increased as they ventured further into the land in search of gold, ivory and, later in the 18th century, slaves. The Portuguese government in Lisbon however was much more interested in easier trade with India and places even further east and also of course to its colonization of Brazil, so it was individuals who exerted authority rather than the Portuguese government. There were many extensive agricultural estates worked by armies of slaves. This of course meant that little real national development took place. By the early 20th century much of the country's administration was in the hands of large private companies, mainly controlled and financed by the British. Rail lines were constructed to the surrounding countries and these enabled cheap, sometimes forced, African labor to reach the mines and plantations of both British colonies and South Africa. Many laborers traveled south because of over strict labor laws laid down by Portugal.

Policies were designed for the benefit of white settlers and of Portugal, little attention being paid at that time to the needs or abilities of the native population. After World War II., although most countries were granting freedom and independence to all their colonies, Portugal failed to let go of Mozambique despite the fact that by this period it only had 250, 000 Portuguese colonists in the land.. By 1962 political groups had been formed

to oppose colonialism such as the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO).

An armed campaign against Portuguese rule was initiated in September 1964. This at first was led by American-educated Eduardo Mondlane, before his assassination in 1969. Finally Independence came in June 1975, following a coup and huge political changes in the Portuguese homeland and after 10 years of the negative effects of internal warfare. The Portuguese left rapidly, leaving the country bereft of professional people. The new government quickly established a one party state, eliminating rival parties and allying itself to the Soviet bloc. This meant a clamp down on religious establishments and a negation of the country's traditional sources of authority.

It almost meant an end to private ownership of land. The result was economic collapse due to a combination of forces such as the departure of the Portuguese, resistance and economic mismanagement. All these led to a civil war which forced more than one and a half million people to flee their homeland and in which probably a million died. The government did however give support to those from the countries of Southern Africa seeking also seeking liberation. The FRELIMO policies weren't working and at the party's third congress in 1983, President Samora Machel finally turned away from extreme socialist policies and called for both political and economic reforms. Three years later he, along with several of his advisers, were killed in a plane crash which some saw as suspicious. The next president, Joaquim Chissano, continued with the reforms that had begun and had peace talks with

RENAMO,(Mozambique National Resistance). By 1990 provision had been made for a multi-party political system, there was a true market-based economy, and elections were free.

It was however two more years before the civil war finally ended in 1992 with the General Peace Accords, which was set up by the Community of Sant’Egidio. Under the supervision of the United Nations, peace finally returned to Mozambique. RENAMO, a rebel group was transformed into a political party led by Afonso Dhlakama, and stood, although unsuccessfully in the 1994 elections against FRELIMO. Eventually the more than 1.

7 million Mozambican citizens who had sought refuge abroad had returned and some 4 million people who had been displaced within the country’s borders returned to their homes in each of the countries 10 provinces.

Professor Folami on the web page ‘ Mozambique Interview’ describes his life in modern day Maputo, the country’s capital. He states that 50 % of the people still follow native religions. Of the rest Christians slightly outnumber Muslims. He mentions 200 ethnic groups, but the main ones are the Makua who live mainly in the north, while the Sena and Shana people reside in the Zambezi Valley, and the Shangaan are to be found in the south. The professor describes his hobby of wood carving, typical of the Makonde people to which he belongs. He describes his home, complete with television, but also, despite relative peace, with a locked gate and guard dogs because of the level of crime in the city. The country and its 17 million population seems to be putting its turbulent past well behind it.

‘ The Lonely Planet’ web page warns travelers to get there quickly before tourism takes too strong a hold. However, despite the beautiful beaches and elegant colonial buildings, there are still landmines hidden in certain central areas and currently floods are swilling down the Zambezi valley and are likely to last until the end of the wet season, sometime in March. At other seasons the heat can be intense. Despite this at holiday seasons the tourists are beginning to take over the coastal areas to such an extent that advance booking is essential – one sign at least of economic recovery. Especially popular with visitors are beach holidays, safaris and the islands that make up the protected Bazaruto Archipelago National Park.

Besides the clear, diver friendly, waters the area has many colorful birds and a small population of Nile crocodiles and the somewhat more elusive dugongs. The larger islands were once connected to the mainland, but nowadays a boat trip is needed. The Lonely Planet web page also recommends the Mediterranean architecture of Maputo, found alongside Soviet style apartment blocks and streets where Indian traders, as well as indigenous women in colorful local costume, carry on trade.

Fishermen stand with their catches on the shore, selling to passing car drivers listening to the ever present Radio Moçambique. On the sands boys play what has become the national game of football. Mountain climbing trips and trips to seek out local fauna, as well as the falls on the Zambezi River are popular tourist attractions. Mozambique Island, a coral island to the north of the country, was one of the first places explored by Europeans and their buildings can still be seen. It has been declared a World Heritage Site.

Today it is described as part ghost town, part fishing village. Its buildings represent, at least to some extent, the history of this sometime troubled land. Despite signs of progress the average yearly income, according to Unicef, is still only \$2005, which places it 158th in the world. Unicef is unable to come up with a figure for adult literacy and in 2000 recorded the chances of a woman dying in childbirth as one in 14, a figure possibly linked to some extent to the rates of child marriage and evidence, although not measured accurately, of widespread female genital mutilation.. In the last 38 years life expectancy has only risen from 40 to 43 years - statistics linked to deaths from malaria and from AIDS. Because of early adult death rates many children are left to look after themselves.

Obviously there are problems, but some at least of the children of Mozambique are capable of solving for themselves. With support these children work the land when not at school The web page ' Paradise lost in Mozambique tells of children living by themselves in the home of their dead parents. There are thought to be 470, 000 children orphaned by AIDS, a number expected to more than double by 2010. On another of their Real Life web pages ' Mozambique , children lead the way' there is news of Child to Child clubs where children, some only 7 years old, are educating their peers about such things as hygiene, the importance of safe water and so on. This has proved to be more effective than the teacher lectures of earlier times. It is done through song, dance, theatre - anyway which works and is vital in a country where 40% have no access to professional medical care. Schools are scarce so the children attend in three shifts and so 54 schools in an area can

serve 34, 000 children. Unicef has enabled schools to build latrines and have clean water for washing.

40% of children are still stunted by lack of food and foreign aid is still a necessity. However it is children who have demanded central refuse collection so that their play areas are free of rubbish. High rates of infant mortality are finally falling according to Unicef, Mozambique Background. The children teach each other how Aids, currently affecting 12% of the adult population, can be combated – whether or not their efforts have a long lasting effect upon this scourge we will have to wait and see.

But with young people as determined as these Mozambique has not just a history, but also a positive future. Electronic Sources; History of Mozambique 1996, 6th February 2008 http://www.worldrover.com/history/mozambique_history.html;

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