

***via*** PATHWAYS  
*to* WORK

# Success Story: Tunelga and Celeste

Meet Two Young Women Striving to Break  
Professional Stereotypes in Mozambique

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## **Introduction**

What follows is a series of success stories about young people who received Passport to Success® life skills training as part of their courses in the Mozambican Professional Institute and Labor Studies Alberto Cassimo (IFPELAC). They received this training thanks to the Via: Pathways to Work (aka Via: Rotas para o Trabalho) program, a partnership between International Youth Foundation (IYF) and Mastercard Foundation. The stories share the transformations experienced by the young people in their work as well as their engagement with their families and communities in their daily lives. The interviews and success stories were conducted and produced by Alfredo Jochoma, a Mandela Washington Fellow under the Young African Leadership Initiative (YALI) during his professional development experience at IYF.

## **Via: Rotas para o Trabalho**

Via: Pathways to Work (or Via: Rotas para o Trabalho) applies a systems approach to improve economic opportunities for underserved youth in Mozambique. By focusing on program outcomes, Via's goal is to influence the collective behaviors of TVET system actors (government, employers, civil society, and youth), so that they are more responsive to the needs of young people and industry. As such, Via facilitates sustainable changes and refinements in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and entrepreneurship systems. IYF works closely with IFPELAC and the Mozambican National Institute of Professional Employment (INEP) in Mozambique to strengthen training and services young people receive, so they are more prepared to succeed in the world of work. Specifically, Via is integrating life skills programming and career support services, clearly identified workforce and industry gaps, into technical offerings. The Via legacy will be in the systemic changes made at institutional levels and across an array of youth training and support services stakeholders, leading to significant numbers of youth benefiting from these advances over time. Via is also implemented in Tanzania.

## **Passport to Success®**

A significant component under Via is working with IFPELAC and associated stakeholders to sustainably integrate PTS into IFPELAC's offerings. Educators, employers, and policymakers increasingly emphasize the development of life and employability skills as a way to prepare young people for success in today's rapidly changing world. IYF's experience has been that offering combined life and employability skills programming results in young people who are self-motivated, reliable, productive, resilient, and confident decision-makers. Superior quality content and service delivery distinguish PTS, strengthening teachers' pedagogy to be more activity-based and student-centered. Developed and defined over the course of a decade, the curriculum adheres to best practice standards experts agree are critical to effective life skills programming. Among these standards is a focus on a core group of widely endorsed life skills—including self-confidence, responsibility, and respect—that responds to the needs of youth, employers, youth-serving organizations, and others.

## **Conclusion**

These stories are just a sample of young people who have benefited from PTS. The Via program's goal is to ensure that many more young Mozambicans can receive this training over the years through Mozambique's training institutions. For more information on the Via program and PTS curriculum, please contact:

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## Meet Two Young Women Striving to Break Professional Stereotypes in Mozambique

In many communities in Mozambique, men are still encouraged to pursue courses that lead to male-dominated professions, including, driving, construction, carpentry and electronics. Women, on the other hand, are expected to pursue courses that lead to women-oriented careers, including cooking, sewing and hairdressing. However, in Maputo, the capital city, two young women are challenging the status quo by pursuing unconventional courses.

Tunelga, 25, pursued a carpentry course and graduated from the Vocational Training Center in Machava (CFP Machava). Celeste, 20, pursued an electrical course and graduated from the Vocational Training Center in Maputo City (CFP Electrotecnia). These courses are offered through the Alberto Cassimo Institute of Vocational Training and Labor Studies (IFPELAC), in collaboration with the Via: Pathways to Work initiative. The International Youth Foundation (IYF) implements Via in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation.

Both Tunelga and Celeste faced difficulties during the first days of their courses because of the stigma that is associated with girls pursuing male-dominated courses. But rather than give up, Tunelga and Celeste persevered through the obstacles and completed their courses successfully.



Celeste Tomas Chingore



Tunelga Maria Juca Gobens

Celeste and Tunelga agree that their favorite PTS lessons were communication, conflict resolution, stress management, and team work. “I learned that no matter how stressed you are, never mix your stress with your work,” Tunelga notes.

However, although they have graduated, it has been difficult for them to secure employment. “Clients and companies think that women are incapable of performing well in these fields. None of my female colleagues are employed, while all of my male colleagues are either formally or informally employed,” Celeste laments. “We are not being a good

example to other girls who are interested in pursuing these courses; they will continue to avoid these courses. No one wants to pursue a course they will not be able to use in the real world,” Celeste says. She suggests that the Ministry of Labor intervene on their behalves to ensure that there is a clear career path for women pursuing male-dominated technical courses.

“Companies should not try to avoid us, because we are capable as men or even better,” Celeste says. Thanks to the skills they gained from the PTS classes, Tunelga and Celeste are confident that they will make good employees and positively contribute to the growth of their communities.

Celeste and Tunelga have not given up hope and believe that soon, someone is going to trust and employ them. In the meantime, Tunelga has started a small business of buying and reselling cosmetics and clothing accessories while Celeste is saving money to start a clothing retail business.