

The International Growth Centre (IGC) released new research results on financial inclusion in Mozambique at an event co-hosted with the Central Bank of Mozambique on 20 September 2017 in Maputo.

Only 36% of adult Mozambicans have a bank account - the figure barely reaches 40% when mobile money accounts are included¹. Bank accounts, mobile money - and financing technology ('fintech') instruments in general - have great potential to foster financial inclusion, giving people the long-term ability to deal with shocks and have a steady income. Ensuring that individuals and businesses have access to financial products/services in turn is vital to ensure that economic growth in Mozambique is inclusive.

Recent IGC [research](#) by Professor Sandra Sequeira (London School of Economics) shows that mobile money has the potential to reduce gender differences in economic performance among micro-entrepreneurs. In her study, providing vendors in urban markets of Maputo with a combination of access to a mobile money account and business training substantially improved their level of financial literacy and performance, and helped the female vendors reach almost the same levels of economic performance as their male colleagues. Another benefit of giving access to mobile money is that it fostered savings for both male and female vendors.

However, despite these positive aspects, the mobile money take-up in Mozambique is still quite low, especially when compared with other countries like Kenya and Tanzania. Another recent IGC [study](#) by Professor Steffen Hoernig (Universidade Nova de Lisboa) studied a specific aspect of mobile money in Mozambique that could contribute to increasing take-up, the so-called *Interoperability* issue. If mobile money operators were connected to each other and to the banking system, the size of the network would increase and costumers could transfer money more easily. However, the study points out that mandating interoperability at the current level of maturity of the Mozambican market would be risky, as it may undermine competition for growth and investments. The main policy recommendation of the study is that the Central Bank should instead play an active role in encouraging agreements between mobile money operators while defining clear 'rules of the game'.

At the [workshop](#), titled [Financial Inclusion in Mozambique: Interoperability and Literacy](#), Profs Hoernig and Sequeira discussed these issues with Mozambican policymakers and representatives of the private sector and civil society. The event also featured the presentation of Mrs Esselina Macome, executive director of the Financial Sector Deepening Program in Mozambique (FSDMoç).

Notes to Editors

The International Growth Centre:

The International Growth Centre (IGC – www.theigc.org) aims to promote sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research. Based at the London School of Economics and Political Science and partnership with the University of Oxford, the IGC is funded by the UK Department of International Development (DFID).

For more information contact:

Novella Maugeri, IGC Mozambique country economist,
+258 8228 97965, novella.maugeri@theigc.org

¹ Central Bank of Mozambique, Monthly statistical bulletin, June 2017