**Out of poverty**

# United Purpose Ü

**Dynamics of participation and representation of Youth and Women in Governance Processes in Mozambique**

**September, 2018**

Young girls from the Association Olakana Wamiravo in Ilha of Mozambique

## Introduction, Objectives and Methodology

**Strengthened participation of women and young girls and boys** is key towards democratic, equitable, and inclusive development where all groups of a given society can have the opportunity to participate, debate and contribute in proper decision-making spaces. In Mozambique, although some progress has been made, in terms of the recognition that women and young girls and boys are still less represented at all levels of governance and public administration, and some efforts have been made to improve the quota of representation thereof, there is still a long way to go to get the desired results in terms of equitable participation, especially at the more decentralized levels of governance. Ensuring quotas for women and young girls and boys in political offices alone is not enough. It is crucial that these groups have the capacity and space within an enabling environment, thus taking active participation in decision-making; and above all, they must guard the interests of their peers, encouraging, through example, more women and young girls and boys to participate and demand improved services, as well as the institutionalization of public policies which aim at ensuring equity and defense of their fundamental rights.

The Mozambican Government acknowledges women's empowerment as a decisive factor to eradicate poverty and has set fundamental and attainable areas of intervention designed to foster equal opportunities for women and men[1]. However-er, assessments show gender policies and programs created so far have limited impact, thereby suggesting that greater efforts still need to be made. Overall, women are still poorer than men and there are more women living below the poverty threshold[2]. Women have heavy household responsibilities, informal jobs (with greater dependence on agriculture), low income and less access to credit and land. Women are still the least literate group and have the most vulnerable health status. On top of that, through the implementation of social accountability programs, civic participation and engagement we found that, while Mozambican young girls and boys make up the majority of the population, this group still remains excluded and is not given precedence in political agendas. Their participation in the local development processes or the inclusion of the movements exclusively led by young people in the decision making processes is still very low; however, their participation in the process of maintenance of Peace and promotion of citizenship is crucial for the development of a nation.

The overall objective of this study was to analyze and document the (current) Participation dynamics and Representativeness of Women and Young girls and boys in Governance Processes in Mozambique with some focus on the local level. Data collection for the preparation of this study was performed via field visits in the Municipalities of the Ilha of Mozambique and Quelimane (both

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[1] Gender Profile in Mozambique, 2016, Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Action

[2] "Studies conducted in the last few years in the country highlight the notion of "feminization of poverty". In other words, within poverty counting, 63% of households headed by women versus 52% of households headed by men are poor (CMI 2010)."

In: http://www.pscm-ps.org.mz/index.php/noticias/destaques/147-situacao-do-genero-e-pobreza-em-mocambique (Accessed on 21.08.2018)

target Municipalities of MuniSAM[3] program) during the months of June and July 2018. We opt to use mostly a qualitative methodology more linked to the interpretation of behavior, motivation, expectations and opinions of the group of individuals interviewed, supporting, where necessary, some arguments in quantitative data. The gathering of testimonies was carried out based on structured and semi-structured, and individual and collective interviews through focus groups. The individuals of the study sample were chosen deliberately by using criteria such as: their connection to the programs implemented by the United Purpose on social accountability, civic governance and engagement; membership or the affiliation of the individuals to an association, organization or political party; their (formal or informal) influence on their social environment; among others. The individuals interviewed from civil society organizations and associations (at local and central levels), municipal bodies, public institutions and political parties represented the universe of 40 persons, 22 women and 18 men, among which 29 young girls and boys.

For the purposes of this study, we will take into account the **definition of participation by Arnstei, S**.[4] who defines it as follows: (...) the redistribution of power that enables the citizens presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future and the strategy by which they join in determining how information is shared, goals and public policies will be approved, how public resources are allocated, which programs are operated, and what benefits are parceled out. In short, participation is the means by which citizens can induce significant social reforms which enables them to share the benefits of the affluent society. Based on this, we presuppose that the equality in the exercise of participation means that **both men and women from different age groups should have the same rights, duties and opportunities and that their knowledge and experiences should be potentiated in an equal fashion towards promotion of the development** of all pillars of a society.

This literature review, interconnected with the documentation of testimonies with the target group of this study aimed at capturing the current major barriers to the participation of women and young girls and boys in governance processes in Mozambique, and the dynamics of the Participation of Women and Young girls and boys in governance processes in Mozambique.



Young members of Associations in Quelimane during a Focal Group discussion

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[3] Social Accountability Monitoring Program at the level of Municipalities implemented by United Purpose (formerly called Concern Universal) since 2012 in partnership with Civil Society Organizations and locally based organizations currently in 14 Municipalities of the Centre and North of Mozambique: Metangula, Marrupa, Cuamba and Lichinga (Niassa Province); Mocímboa da Praia, Montepuez, Chiúre and Pemba (Cabo Delgado Province); Angoche, Malema and Ilha of Mozambique (Nampula Province); and Gurué, Mocuba and Quelimane (Zambézia Province).

[4] ARNSTEIN, Sherry R. A Ladder of Citizen Participation. Magazine of the Brasilian Association for Strengthed Participation – PARTICIPE, Porto Alegre/Santa Cruz do Sul, v. 2, n. 2, p. 4-13, jan. 2002 (In: http://aeessp.org.br/escada.pdf)

In conclusion, the study found that **in Mozambique and mainly at the local level, distrust and resistance to an effective participation are felt and many rulers do not know yet how advantageous it is for their governance to provide proper space and mechanisms to engage and allow the participation of citizens**. Civic participation and engagement in general in Mozambique is still a process which offers some resistance and distrust within public institutions, and as a result, many citizens end up fearing to get involved and question how processes are conducted and feeling demotivated to participate. However, within the universe of this participation, we have identified through the implementation of social accountability initiatives over the past 10 years, that the more vulnerable groups, namely women and young girls and boys continue to be the most excluded from decision-making processes and public participation spaces, thus conditioning improvements in governance and public services which in turn restrain equitable social development and better distribution of wealth.

We also concluded that, overall, **the factors that condition the low participation of these groups are: (i)** socio-cultural barriers and economic dependence faced by women and young girls and boys which condition their role and participation in governance; **(ii)** high levels of illiteracy, poor access to improved health services, poor access to information and ignorance by citizens about their rights and freedoms; **(iii)** the social and political marginalization of these groups in decision-making processes due to their alleged immaturity and lack of knowledge and preparation, which discourages them and cause them to distance themselves from the public sphere; **(iv)** the patriarchal and male chauvinistic system which is not only predominant in the private space of families, but also transported to the political system in Mozambique by politicians resulting in a regime of supremacy of adult men in the processes of governance and public domain; and **(v)** the attitude of the rulers in the face of a free, informed and effective civic participation which results in the lack of processes of effective hearing and participatory planning on the part of the Government and consequently the preparation by the political elite of plans "behind closed doors";

plans of which do not correspond to the reality of citizens and do not respond to the needs and which perpetuate a cycle of poverty that leads to serious consequences for the social development and economic growth of the country.

Women and Young girls and boys interviewed assume that they do not have equal rights as yet and have less voice in Mozambique. This **lack of equality results in lack of opportunities** for them to improve their living conditions. However, women continue to be the most marginalized group in any social sphere in the country. They actually have less access to spaces for participation and decision-making; for this reason, women are the most marginalized as to the access to services and opportunities and are the victims of social and economic exclusion who suffer the most, even though they are the ones who are responsible for the civic education and training of future generations. In part, and as stated in the Gender Profile in Mozambique prepared by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Action (2016) this phenomenon is due to the fact that in Mozambique *"the judicial system is not prepared to deal with the fact that women do not have access to justice in a gender sensitive way. This is partly explained by the idea that "gender" is about women and not about equality of rights and opportunities or equal sharing of*



*"There are many women in the parliament, but we did not stop believing as yet that men command and women hear, and that is true for these women in the parliament. While in the parliament, they may even want to defend their interests, but if at their homes they are still submissive, it conflicts with their own minds and they end up giving in to this cultural thought. So I say that it is not enough to place women there; we should educate our politicians, both women and men. This is a huge challenge, we must think strategies: jointly civil society with government and political parties. We must understand the underlying causes of this submission and the lack of voice of our female politicians and reach all stakeholders relevant to the cause."*

(Achima Mussa, Chairman of NAFEZA – Núcleo das Associações Femininas da Zambézia [Nucleus of Women's Associations of Zambézia])

*power between men and women."*

Faced by the barriers to their effective participation, women use culture to send messages about their discontent and the problems they face, which is why women's associations are mostly linked to cultural activities and not to the forms of participation, social pressure, conflict to demand their rights – but to what extent has this been successful in improving their living conditions, protection of their rights and respect for their equality? Since they are the ones who educate the children of today who will be young girls and boys and adults of tomorrow, they have greater responsibility and there is enormous potential for us to reach a socially and politically active society, responsible and committed to the protection of rights and equality of all citizens of a nation.

*"We are not fully representing Mozambican women and girls. We are there in leadership positions, but we are not representing them. (...) We are called when decision is made at our level of governance, but when decision is made at other levels we do not always continue to fight to get involved in all and any decision-making. We exceeded the goal of women's quota in leadership positions and in politics when compared to other Southern African countries, but*

*the truth is that our voices are not always heard. We need to gain more autonomy in the position we hold."*

(Member of Municipal Assembly of the Ilha de Moçambique)

*"If in the public space one is among equals with respect to the democratic State, (all are subject to the same rules), in the private sphere rights are hierarchized according to sex and age. Therefore, while all human beings are born free and equal before the law, actually the difference existing in humankind (men and women) is built on inequality. This dichotomy between private space and public space interferes with the construction of democracy as a representative system (...)."*

(Osório and Macuácua, 2014, p. 26)

*"In this public spaces, they are confronted with the requirement of respect for gender equality; so very beautiful policies are made: the Constitution of the Republic is an example, and all those policies women achieved through social movements, such as the Family Law, Bill on domestic violence and now still under discussion the Law for the prevention of early marriage, all seems to be very forced for the development of public policies. But who should implement public policies? The same policy makers from public institutions who come from those families with patriarchal bases."*

(Candida Quintano, Executive Director of NAFEZA)



Tuquia Bacar Juma (Chairperson of ACUMI, Cultural Association of Women from Ilha of Mozambique)

Nonetheless, based on the analysis of the current context, we did not find that parliamentary quotas (women form about 40%) have proved to be, up to now, a measure of change in the legal, social and economic situation of women and it could be argued as follows:

(i) The case of the approval in parliament of the article that provided for the annulment of the crime of rape within the marriage between the victim and the rapist, recognizing the rights of the rapist and ignoring those of the raped person (which was subsequently repealed thanks to the enormous pressure of society civil);

(ii) The delay in revising the law on early marriages (one of the most serious barriers to the development and empowerment of women in Mozambique that conditions their education, causing their economic dependence, their lack of power inside and outside home, and having serious health consequences caused mostly by early pregnancies);

(iii) The lack of improvements in policies to protect girls at school (the exclusion of pregnant girls from daytime schooling resulting in high dropout rates, the famous case of the imposition of the use of long skirts to discourage harassment as if it was the victims' fault, among several other examples);

(iv) The delay in approving the extension of maternity leave to 03 months (which in many cases leads to the exclusion of women from formal jobs); among others.

All this reality gets worse due to the lack of accountability mechanisms for parliamentarians to the voters. According to the interviewees, at the end of the day, parliamentarians are accountable to the executive who, in turn, guides the composition of the parliament based on party loyalties - thus, the control exercised by the executive and the rigidity of the political parties limits the power of decision of the parliamentarians. As a consequence, the political influence of women in Mozambique continues to be low and it is a whole system that we are not being able to penetrate through and understand what we can do to deal with it. At the grassroots level, poverty, early marriages, early pregnancies, lack of access to education, domination of patriarchal and male chauvinistic cultures, the worrying lack of access to information and the economic situation of the country place women in an even more vulnerable situation in society. Society is in fact still quite patriarchal both at community and family levels, and people go to public spaces of power carrying with them these experiences. Therefore, it is crucial that the government and civil society actions work towards the construction and promotion of fairer, more equitable, more balanced gender relations by involving men and women in favor of changes in thinking and behavior which should begin from inside their homes, thus reflecting in public spaces, at school, in the workplace, in spaces of participation and decision-making.

On the other hand, Mozambican young girls and boys lack adequate space and negotiating power before the Government for the improvement of their conditions! They are willing to engage, to be more active, but at the same feel dissatisfied and hold a certain grudge for not being recognized by society as a force of work, development, change, and this is an enormous obstacle to their participation. A shared feeling by the universe of young girls and boys interviewed is that Rulers see themselves as bosses and not public servants, and the fact that young girls and boys are seen as lazy for not adhering to the activities the Government fosters proves the general feeling of juvenile associations contacted from whom the State expects subservience and condescension, things they claim not to be willing to give.

We also felt that it was necessary to thoroughly understand the apathy of the young girls and boys towards the supposed opportunities created by the Government, and we understand that deep inside it results from the current ambition of the young people, in a society highly capitalist and increasingly entrepreneurial and instrumentalized, that no longer wants to be conditioned to sports, cleaning and party support projects, because according to the young girls and boys the activities planned for them by the Government (mainly at the local level) do not meet their expectations; they also claim that they have their own participation objectives *"we do not want to provide services to the Government"* instead, *"we want to have the voice, space and recognition to complain about the lack of provision of services by our Government"*.

*"We young people do not want to have anything to do with parties, we are tired, we would like to think on our own, not think in a way because the party tells you it is so; we do not want to be dependent on this doctrine in order to succeed in life."*

*"There is lack of job, but the most affected ones are us women because, between a man and a woman, all still prefer to hire men instead of women, they claim greater capacity of men and greater availability, because they do not get pregnant and do not have to take care of children and home."*

*"One of the major problems of early marriages is that after being married, many husbands will not let us go to school, because they think we are going to cheat on them, they are suspicious of our behavior at school and so they prefer that we stay home with children and deal with the affairs of home only."*

*"Both at the levels of State institutions and of neighborhoods and Consultative Councils, rulers are mostly adults and men. This creates a yawning chasm between them and us. How are they going to understand our challenges and respect our wishes if they do not live our reality?"*

(Members of the Associação Jovens [Association Young girls and boys] Olakana Wamiravo of the Ilha of Mozambique)

*"If the Parties require greater participation and inclusion they have to listen to what these groups think, stop manipulating them, stop instrumentalizing them and give a true voice and not commanded by a group of men behind that young or female figure."*

(Regina da Cruz Caminho – Zambézia Youth Parliament)

*"The political discourse which claims that we are the force of change does not correspond to the practice and the information is not disseminated by the Government. We are set apart for not having reached the much-desired maturity and for not being able to discuss adults' affairs."*

(Member of Student Association of the University of Mozambique of Quelimane)

*"There is a great demotivation of the young people and this is evident in their adherence to political parties, they have the perception that engaging in politics in Mozambique is complicated. We need a psychological depoliticization of civil servants. I have to work = for the benefit of Mozambicans and not our party; for us who are not part of the ruling party, our ideas have no value, even if they are good (...)."*

(Member of Youth League of MDM – Democratic Movement of Mozambique in Quelimane)



Matilde de Oliveira (member of students Association at Universidade Pedagógica and of SAMCom and Parlamente Juvenil in Quelimane)



Mussa Razão Ali (Chairperson of the Association Olakana Wamiravo in Ilha of Mozambique)



Regina da Cruz Caminho (Representant of the Women League of Parlamento Juvenil in Zambezia)



Members of the youth leagues of MDM and MAMO political parties in Quelimane

All the findings discussed are real and require us to reflect on strategies for dealing with the context in which, as civil society, we must continue to strive for improvements. But then, what should we do more? What can we do better?

Despite all the efforts made by the Development Programs implemented in Mozambique, there is still a lot of work to do, especially at the grassroots levels, on the most vulnerable groups, since it is necessary to identify the root causes of the problems that these groups face and to include it in the strategic programs and strategies targeted at and focused on them, working vertically between the base and rulers and vice versa to guarantee institutional and structural changes and consequently greater protection of the rights of citizens and greater and better provision of quality services. At the same time, it is also necessary to continue to "move the masses of the grassroots base" by working horizontally to empower and strengthen these groups on their rights and duties and on existing mechanisms and spaces so that in an organized, constructive and evidence-based manner they can put pressure on their rulers. In order to achieve profound structural changes and the balance of power poles, civil society and development programs must increasingly encompass grassroots

communities and elites, as the empowerment of vulnerable groups through access to information, opportunities and knowledge also depends on the transformation of the way of thinking and acting of the elites. As development agents, we also need to continue to work in partnership with the Government to strengthen democracy in the country based on principles of equality, equity and guarantee of the rights and freedoms of all Mozambicans, and develop a consensual notion of concepts of equality so that more sustainable results can be achieved.

Thorough and stratified work is required at all levels of our society to achieve lasting changes, a work that should encompass all social groups moving towards a vision, an objective, a common strategy even though it inevitably clashes with the status quo of our society. To this end, a common effort is required to design and implement concrete actions to balance poles of power, strengthen our citizens' civic education (about rights, duties, legislation, policies, public institutions themselves, how they operate, their authority, their principles) but also the perception of our rulers of the importance of civic participation for us to achieve long-term sustainable development built on foundations of equality and social justice.



Young girl from the Association Olakana Wamiravo in Ilha of Mozambique

## Recommendations of the Study

**Therefore, we consider crucial:**

❖ That pressure should be exerted by civic groups and development organizations in Mozambique towards the integration of a gender strategy transversally across all government policies and programs and at all levels of governance (effectively reflected in the budgets allocated) with special emphasis on the local level in the face of the new opportunities for rulers to approach communities with the recent approval of the new decentralization package - it is not enough

to raise awareness, it is necessary to encourage change by showing tangible benefits;

❖ To analyze and promote changes in gender relations making them fairer and more balanced and that include both women and men, because we believe that we cannot bring about changes in women's thinking and attitudes without working simultaneously with men; (iii) the dissemination and social and political sensitization on the potential of the role of women and young girls and boys in promoting a culture of peace;

❖ The continuity of the actions of advocacy, support and technical assistance to the Government (with special emphasis on local governments and Municipal, District and Provincial Assemblies as oversight bodies and representatives of the people) in order to promote mechanisms and approaches for hearing and participation of all social groups in increasingly inclusive participation processes; (v) the creation of spaces for participation and decision-making through appropriate criteria to encourage participation and appropriation by citizens from all social groups – spaces for participation promoted by citizens and the creation of conditions for the effective participation of vulnerable groups in the existing spaces;

❖ Continued exhaustive capacity building for rulers and education for citizens on social accountability, good governance, civic participation and citizen engagement in decision-making processes; and,

❖ The promotion of greater involvement and accountability of the media, taking into account their power of coverage and influence which can be crucial in achieving the desired changes, thus exerting social pressure towards a culture of tolerance and mutual understanding, equity and inclusion between women and men and opportunities for young people, transparency and effectiveness in the use of public resources.

**On top of that, the Government needs:**

❖ To continue to improve its mechanisms for dissemination of information that is relevant to the citizen on the one hand, but also of accountability, on the other hand, encouraging the exercise of citizenship;

❖ To develop equality and empowerment strategies that include all social groups in order to strengthen their participation in public spaces by combating cultural stereotypes and socio-economic barriers and being able to implement them at all sectors and levels of governance in the country;

❖ To develop common agendas of interests of all social groups within the parties in inclusive and participatory processes at the grassroots levels on the needs they intend to respond to; (iv) to promote changes in bureaucratic and legal provisions in the regulation of Associations by the State, fostering an independent, active and disruptive associative movement towards equitable development of the country;

❖ To create greater (and better) economic opportunities for women and young people in order to fight the high levels of poverty, unemployment and financial dependency;

❖ To stimulate, through the establishment of academies for new leaders, the participation of young thinkers and academics; and finally,

❖ To potentiate the role of women and young people in negotiations for peace and reconciliation given their willingness to overcome conflicts without the use of weapons (women and young people have no guerrilla thinking and are more interested in overcoming tensions through dialogue and peace) and taking into account their neutrality in the face of old 'political quarrels' that still cloud the minds of many adult politicians of today.



Residents in Ilha of Mozambique