



LEAVING NO-ONE BEHIND **OPEN PRISONS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Mozambique not only as a health crisis but also as a devastating socio-economic crisis that may persist over the months and years to come.

COVID-19 in Tinonganine Open Prison

The Tinonganine Open Prison is situated in the community of Tinonganine in the Matutuine district, Maputo Province. This is one of the semi-open prisons established by the National Penitentiary Service, whose objectives are: (i) providing training, capacity building and agricultural expertise for prisoners who have already completed one third or half of the sentence and who are well behaved; (ii) promoting food production for supply of prisons (guards and prisoners) at Provincial level; and, (iii) helping with the process of integration and socialization of inmates once they are released. Open Prisons are intended to benefit prisoners with good behaviour by offering them the opportunity to learn and develop capacities, skills and knowledge on agricultural production, while moving from a locked-up to a semi-open regime.

In the Matutuine District there are two open prisons, the first has been a beneficiary of the project since 2015 and because of COVID-19 the project team also decided to support the second “open center in Massindla”. The open prison of Massindla was included in the project this year, in the scope of support to the production of food for the mitigation of hunger.



I'm Alton Filipe, 39 years old, married, father of 5 children, I have been working in the penitentiary establishment in the Matutuine district for over eight years. Before I have worked in the Bela -Vista district jail, Tinonganine open prison center and now I'm here in the Massindla Open Penitentiary center. I got to

know this project when I was working in the open prison in Tinonganine in 2017, where we received support for production of Irish potato and Orange-fleshed sweet potatoes. In Tinonganine we produced a lot of potatoes that we ended up sharing with other prison centers in the district and a little bit with the Maputo jail. This year is not easy due to the pandemic, we are all afraid of contracting the virus. We followed the government's guidelines to reduce the number of inmates (those who had only 6 months to end the sentence were released) and we restricted family visits. The partnership that we have through this project is helping a lot because in addition to information and awareness about the prevention of COVID-19, the Project support us with seeds and agricultural tools and guarantees the diversification of our diet. You can see here the gardens made with your support. As one of the managers of the open center in Massindla, I can only say that we are happy to be part of this project. Your support is very important because in addition to raising the self-esteem of inmates due to the skills they acquire; it improves their diet.

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As part of the implementation of this Project funded by DFAT through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), the open prison of Tinonganine has benefited from support such as potato seed, fertilizers, pesticides and skills building through trainings. In this agricultural season due to a lack of potato seed supply, members of the open prison association planted seed through positive selection of seed harvested last season. Potato will be harvested during July.

In April, during monitoring visits, the UP team carried out an assessment of the risks and COVID-19 prevention needs in the open prison and identified the following challenges: establishments without hand hygiene systems, interns without masks and lack of knowledge on the prevention measures.

Regarding food production, there was a low production of vegetables due to lack of seeds, which could contribute to the lack of food security for the inmates.



My name is Luís Paulo Mahamba, I'm 30 years old, divorced and father of one son. I was sentenced to 3 years and 6 months for theft. I already served 2 years and 4 months, of which 11 months here in the open prison. In this open prison we learned a lot about agriculture, we learned to produce a little bit of everything and got skills for the future. In my time here, we have received technical and material support from the project and it helped us a lot in improving our diet. In the center we receive basic food from the National Penitentiary Service, but as you know, potatoes and vegetables are not part of it. We receive only corn flour, oil and beans and it is never enough and often the beans are old. This year due to the COVID-19 pandemic we received vegetables, fertilizers and pesticides. We haven't received potato seeds but through the positive selection of the 2018/2019 season seeds we managed to produce in an area of about 200 m2. The project helps us a lot, even now with COVID-19. We did not receive masks or hand hygiene kits from the prison services, but the project didn't forget us. You explained us how the virus is transmitted, what we must do to protect ourselves and prevent the spread and brought us hygiene kits and protective masks for each inmate. Now we know we are doing everything to prevent the spread of COVID-19.



Measures to support Open prison:

- To mitigate food shortages and ensure daily food in the open prison facility, the project supported the centers in Tinonganine and Massindla with seed kits, fertilizers and pesticides for the production of vegetables;
- Project provided reusable cloth masks for all inmates and guards and hygiene kits consisting of a bucket with a tap, basin and soap;
- In collaboration with the governmental health sector, the UP team held awareness sessions (using posters from the Ministry of Health) on the correct use of

masks and measures to prevent and spread COVID-19 such as cough etiquette, social distance and the correct hand washing.

After raising awareness, the management of the open prison chain decided to adopt strategies for the prevention of contagion from COVID-19 such as:

- Field work rotation
- Prohibited contact with the community as a way to prevent the spread

Repatriation of Mozambicans from South Africa prisons

During May, South Africa repatriated 589 Mozambicans who had been pardoned after serving part of their prison terms to help curb the spread of the coronavirus in correctional facilities.

In response to a request from the Matutuine district government, UP provided 500 reusable cloth masks to Mozambicans returning from South Africa through the Ponta de Ouro and Machangulo border posts



Together towards better integration of interns in society

UP was the first partner at the Matutuine district level to include the Open prison as a beneficiary of the development project. This pilot initiative encouraged the government to look for other partnerships. As the result, from this year prisoners are involved in the multiplication of cashew tree nurseries in partnership with the governmental district services of economic activities.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Especially after you have been in a public place, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. Challenge the stigma, follow the official health sector advice

COVID-19

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