



## Monitoring and Evaluating Poverty Reduction Policies in Mozambique

### STUDY 1-3 SYNOPSIS

The first three in a series of six studies on poverty and well-being in Nampula, the city of Maputo and Sofala have revealed that there are positive developments in terms of the macro-economic context and in the social sectors of education and health. However, the continued dearth of employment and income in rural as well as urban areas makes it difficult to transform these advances into real poverty reduction. There are also worrying signs of local processes of social marginalisation and exclusion, following from the increasing commodification of social relationships. To achieve the goals of the PARPA, particular efforts will have to be made by the government and donors to reach the very poorest.

## Background

This synopsis sums up the main lessons learnt from three studies carried out in the district of Murrupula in Nampula (2006), four bairros in the city of Maputo (2007) and in the district of Buzi in Sofala (2008), as part of Mozambique's efforts to monitor and evaluate the country's poverty reduction strategy PARPA. The studies have taken quantitative data and analyses of poverty carried out by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), the Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD) as well as other national and international agencies as points of departure, and sought to contextualise these through participatory and quantitative research to better understand the dynamics of poverty and the coping strategies of the poor. The three study areas will be revisited in 2009, 2010 and 2010 respectively, to ascertain changes in poverty and well-being.

## Analytical Framework

The studies have been carried out with reference to a broad definition of poverty, encompassing lack of income and assets to attain basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter; a sense of voicelessness and powerlessness in relation to institutions of society and the state; and vulnerability to adverse shocks linked with the ability to cope with them through social relationships and legal institutions. Analytically, our point of departure has been that political, economic and cultural structural forces have a powerful effect upon human action and the shape of events, and hence that poverty reduction necessitates changes in these structural conditions. There is also room for human agency and upward social mobility, but the alternative livelihood options are more restricted for the poor than for the better off which tends to perpetuate situations of poverty and vulnerability.

## Methodologies

With existing quantitative data on the distribution of poverty as point of departure, the studies have been done on the basis of a combination of literature reviews, interviews with key stakeholders in government, municipalities, districts and communities; adapted household surveys with a particular focus on social relationships; and a set of participatory methods. These are histograms (to map processes and events considered particularly important for the current socio-economic conditions of well-being and poverty); community mapping (to map the institutions and people considered most important for relating to contemporary conditions of well-being and poverty); wealth-ranking (to capture the community's own perception of poverty and well-being and categories of the poor and the better-off); venn-diagrams (to identify social relations and networks used by the different categories of poor and better-off as part of their coping strategies); and force-field analysis (to capture perceptions of what conditions – political, economic, socio-cultural – that may inhibit or accelerate change and development in the community.

## Structural Conditions

The poor in Mozambique are susceptible to a number of historical and structural forces to which they have to relate the best they can with the political, economic and human capital they have at their disposal. We have taken these into consideration to explain the dynamics of poverty and the coping strategies of the poor – and hence the best types of interventions to reduce poverty. Some of these have a stronger impact in one area than others, such as the Portuguese colonial policies (Murrupula); the structural adjustment policies in the 1990s (Maputo); and floods, cyclones and other natural disasters (Buzi). We have also argued that the economic situation of rising prices on central goods and services; the increasing urbanisation and importance of rural-urban linkages; gender relations in Mozambique's heavily patriarchal socio-cultural structure and HIV-AIDS have significant implications for people's perceptions of their situation and coping strategies in all areas – yielding differences in the poverty headcount as well as in more specific socio-economic indicators.



## District Administration and Governance

An effective and just political system ('good governance') is essential to carry out poverty reduction policies. The three areas under study differ in terms of their administrative set-up and capacity, but face similar challenges in the form of limited options for own innovations as a result of their poor direct funding base. The transfer of the 'Seven Million Meticáís', to be used for development projects identified in cooperation between the district administration and local consultative councils, is a positive initiative. However, more care must be taken to ensure a just, effective and transparent distribution of the funds. In the urban districts of Maputo such direct funding is not available and the system of local taxation is weak. There, the combination of public and private funding for basic urban services remains a challenge, with inadequate availability and high costs. In all areas, the state and its representatives depend on traditional authorities (rural areas) and elected bairro secretaries (urban areas) for mobilisation of, and communication with, the local population and for tax collection. The blurred boundaries between the state, the party and traditional authorities currently represent an accountability problem.

## Quantitative Expressions of Poverty and Well-Being

Our surveys of household poverty and well-being have questioned the relevance of basic definitions of poverty, of the strict urban-rural dichotomy, and of the definition of the household and female household headedness, and have shown that the analytical units are more flexible and permeable than the strict de jure definitions used by INE imply. In particular households members 'eating from the same pot' often



live outside the principal household dwelling as part of a strategy of 'split households'; the proportion of female headed households (and hence the extent of feminisation of poverty) is underestimated due to the large number of unmarried mothers who form semi-independent units within their natal households; and the positive implications of established rural-urban relationships for household well-being have been clearly demonstrated. Our surveys confirm national data on improvements in education and health. However, we also show that people are in the process of losing faith in education as a vehicle for upward social mobility and that the economic and socio-cultural implications of frequent illness and high child mortality rates are underestimated in most analyses. Above all, the surveys have confirmed the importance attached to employment, income and fair prices for agricultural products for alleviating poverty and well being.

### Social Relations of Poverty and Well-Being

Society does not consist of bounded units of households and individuals, but the sum of relationships in which people find themselves. One of our main findings across the three studies is the extent to which people's ability to cope with and improve their situation depends on their abilities to establish and maintain relations outside the household – such as the extended family, traditional authorities, neighbours, friends, civil society, churches and mosques, and the state. The better off, we have shown, have larger sets of relationships with all these institutions and are hence more powerful and less vulnerable. For the poorest, the more limited set of relationships makes it more difficult to escape poverty and keeps the poor in a situation of chronic poverty and vulnerability. A main reason for this difference is the increasing importance of money to attain basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter as well as in relations with institutions of society and the state – and the consequent inability of the poorest to enter and maintain such relationships. In Maputo as an urban area, however, there are emerging signs of women exploiting new social space and forming female-centred networks.

Finally, we have revealed a remarkable congruence between the three areas of study in their perceptions of categories of the poor and the better-off. For the poor these capture the combined implications of structural forces, income and material assets and social relationships and identifies three main groups: Those who have so many odds against them that they have effectively given up making more of their lives and will remain poor ('the destitute'); poor people who work hard to improve their situation but remain poor under the current structural constraints (the 'chronically poor'); and those

who are poor 'by accident' and may accomplish upward social mobility 'by luck' (the 'transient poor'). The three categories call for different types of interventions to alleviate poverty.

Category	Murrupula	Maputo	Buzi
The destitute poor	<i>opitanha</i>	<i>xiculungo</i>	<i>umbwa</i>
The chronically poor	<i>ohawa</i>	<i>xantum-bulukulu</i>	<i>mulombo</i>
The transient poor	<i>ohikalano</i>	<i>xangamo</i>	<i>kombo</i>



Briefs of a series of participatory and qualitative studies done in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and Development in Mozambique.

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## Some Preliminary Policy Implications

Some of the key analytical concepts and units of analysis used by MPD and INE, such as 'poverty', 'the household', 'female headedness' and the dichotomisation of the 'urban' and the 'rural', should be further refined to better reflect realities on the ground.

There is an urgent need to strengthen the human and economic resources at the level of rural and urban districts if the state and its poverty alleviation efforts is to have an impact on local communities. The 'Seven Million' is an important step in the right direction, but the principles for the utilisation of the funds should be further clarified.

Stronger distinctions should be made between the state and the ruling party to improve local representativeness and accountability. The de facto dependence of the state on traditional authorities for mobilisation and tax collection should be formalised and made more transparent for the same reasons.

There are clear signs of an ongoing feminisation of poverty in the three areas under study, which will necessitate more targeted

interventions to address gender inequalities. In addition to widows and divorcees, particular attention should be given to young single mothers who seem to be a 'hidden' category in extended households.

More emphasis should be put on the issue of urban poverty, not only because of the seriousness and negative direction of poverty in Mozambique's cities and towns but also because of the close link between urban and rural development through urban-rural linkages.

People emphasise employment and income as the main vehicles for improving their lives. In rural districts, the low returns in agriculture due to inadequate access to markets and the exploitation by traders represent a particular challenge. In addition to improving the communication to larger markets, a reintroduction of some type of marketing boards should be considered.

In urban Maputo, the continued illegality of central parts of the informal economy impedes its development and possible transition

to formalisation. The importance and the merits of the informal economy as a central part of urban people's coping strategies should be better recognised.

While a continued emphasis on education is important, health has a more immediate impact on poverty and well-being and the prospects for poverty reduction. The quality of health services show clear improvements at central district level, but accessibility should be improved also at lower levels.

There is a fairly large section of the population in all three areas of study that effectively are chronically poor or destitute. These will not be reached by broad poverty reduction policies, but need targeted interventions for income generation or social protection in the form of cash transfers.

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