



Reality Checks in Mozambique

- Building better understanding of the dynamics of poverty and well-being –

Year Two, 2012

Sub-Report, District of Lago



ORGUT

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The Reality Checks in Mozambique are implemented by ORGUT Consulting (Sweden) in association with COWI Lda (Mozambique) and the Chr. Michelsen Institute (Norway) on behalf of the Embassy of Sweden in Maputo.

The Reality Checks are implemented 2011-2016 and each year field work is carried out in the District of Cuamba, the District of Lago and the District of Majune in the Niassa Province. This is the annual sub-report from the field in one of these locations. In addition, an Annual Report is produced each year to summarise the findings and conclusions.

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Cover Photo: The Meluluca Administrative Post by Inge Tvedten

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1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty monitoring in Mozambique primarily takes place within the framework of the implementation of Mozambique's Poverty Reduction Strategy PARP/A (GdM 2005; 2011), and is informed by quantitative data derived from different types of national surveys and similar studies done by bilateral and multilateral aid organisations (see e.g. INE 2010; MPD 2010; World Bank 2007; UNICEF 2011).

However, by their quantitative nature such surveys do not capture all the dimensions of poverty that are relevant to the design of policies and programmes. While quantitative data yield valuable information about the mapping and profile of poverty over space and time, qualitative data are necessary in order to better understand the dynamics of poverty and the coping strategies of the poor (ORGUT 2011a; Addison et al. 2009).

1.1 The Reality Checks

Against this background, the Swedish Embassy in Maputo and the Swedish International Development Authority (Sida) have decided that there is a need to assess the impact of development and poverty reduction policies 'from below', and to regularly consult local populations in order to understand local processes and relationships (Swedish Embassy 2010).

A series of five "Reality Checks" will take place in the period 2011-2016, focussing on the dynamics of poverty and well-being with a particular focus on good governance, agriculture/climate and energy that are key sectors in Swedish development cooperation with Mozambique. Each Reality Check will be published in the form of one Annual Report and three Sub-Reports from each of the three selected study-sites (see ORGUT 2011a for more details).

More concretely, the "Reality Checks in Mozambique" are expected to:

- i) Inform the public discussion among key development actors on poverty reduction, especially in the province of Niassa;
- ii) Contribute to a better understanding of qualitative poverty monitoring methods in Mozambique;
- iii) Provide Sweden with relevant qualitative data on developments and results from its engagement in Mozambique and support further implementation of its programme in Niassa.

The Reality Checks are expected to achieve these objectives by enhancing knowledge on:

- i) Poverty (non-tangible dimensions of poverty, such as vulnerability and powerlessness; poor people's own perceptions of poverty; causal processes underpinning poverty dynamics: coping/survival strategies adopted by women and men living in poverty);
- ii) Local power relations and relationships with state institutions (formal [i.e. political, administrative] institutions that enable or constrain people to carry out their strategies; informal [i.e. cultural, social, family or kin-based etc.] institutions that enable or constrain people to carry out their strategies), and;
- iii) Policies and services (access to, use of and demand for public services according to people living in poverty; quality of public services according to people living in poverty).

The series of studies was initiated by an Inception Report published in August 2011 (ORGUT 2011a). Through that exercise, it was decided that the Reality Checks shall be based on fieldwork in three different Districts/Municipalities in the Province of Niassa that display variations in terms of geographical locations, access to public services and levels of poverty and well-being. The three areas selected were i); the Municipality of Cuamba; ii) the District of Lago and iii) the District of Majune (see Map 1).

The 1st Reality Check was carried out in 2011 in the form of three sub-reports (ORGUT 2011 b,c,d) and the first Annual Report (ORGUT 2011e), and represent a baseline upon which the subsequent Reality Checks will build. Much of the background information given in the first set of reports will not be repeated, and being familiar with the base-line studies will therefore ease readings. This is the sub-report on Lago for the 2nd Reality Check, to be complemented by similar sub-reports from Cuamba and Majune. Key lessons from all three reports will be compared and analysed in the Annual Report of the 2nd Reality Check (ORGUT 2012 d, forthcoming). In addition to pursuing the overall issue of the dynamics of poverty and well-being in the Districts/Municipality and local communities in question, this year's reports will have a thematic focus on governance (see ORGUT 2011a).

1.2 Methodologies

Methodologically, the studies are based on a combination of quantitative data derived from the National Institute of Statistics (INE), District Authorities and a Questionnaire Survey in the three project sites, and qualitative data from key informant interviews in the provincial capital Lichinga and the selected Districts/Municipality; a set of qualitative/participatory methodologies including immersion with households in different socio-economic situations; and participant observation in the local communities selected for fieldwork. The methodologies are described in detail in a separate report entitled "Reality Checks in Mozambique. Approach and Methodologies" (ORGUT 2011f), but a brief summary is in place.

Quantitative data. For the mapping of poverty and well-being in Niassa, the team relates actively to existing quantitative data. These include the 2007 National Census (INE 2009b); the 2008/09 National Household Expenditure Survey (INE 2010)¹; and other more sector-specific studies (see List of Literature). In addition to national data-sets, we use quantitative data from locally based surveys with particular attention to data produced by provincial-, district and municipal governments that form the basis for their development plans – including the Provincial Social and Economic Development Plan, the District Social and Economic Development Plan (PESOD), and the Evaluation of the District Social and Economic Development Plan (Balanço do PESOD).

We secure adequate quantitative data to map poverty and well-being and peoples' relations to public services in the three study sites by carrying out a Baseline Survey with a total of 360 households (120 in each site). The survey will be done twice with the same families, i.e. in the beginning (2011) and end (2015) of the project period. The Baseline and the follow-up survey will seek to combine i) classical socio-economic data on the composition of households, income and expenditure, levels of education, health and access to public services; ii) questions relating to people's *perceptions* of conditions in the household and their community and iii) the *social relationships* (with public institutions, aid projects, family, friends etc.) in which they are engaged. In this report, we give particular attention to data from the Baseline Survey related to the issue of governance.

¹ New data are likely to be available from INE/Niassa from 2013 in the form of data from INCAF (Inquérito Contínuo aos Agregados Familiares 2012-2013).

Qualitative data. For the political/institutional dimensions of the Reality Checks, we mostly rely on i) semi-structured interviews with key development actors including provincial government, district/municipal government, Institutions for Community Participation and Consultation (IPCCs), traditional authorities and private sector representatives, and ii) case-studies of concrete programs and interventions particularly in the areas of governance, agriculture and energy. We also complement the classical anthropological methodology of 'participant observation' with a set of concrete participatory methodologies that we apply in focus groups, and expanded case studies at household level (see ORGUT 2011f). The groups are composed of men or women, young or old or a mixture of such groups, depending on the topic at hand.

The participatory methodologies used for the 2nd Reality Check include *Most Important Change* (with the objective of identifying the main political, economic and social changes in the community the past year) and a *Community Leadership Matrix* (where the purpose is to identify the most important institutions/people in the community and the relationships between them). In addition, we revisit focus group exercises done in 2011 to assess possible developments and/or changes. These include the *Community problem matrix* (identifying and ranking the most important problems that affect the community or larger groups of people in the community); the *Force-Field Analysis* (with the objective to capture perceptions of what conditions may inhibit or accelerate the type of change and development favoured by the community); the *Venn-diagram* (identifying the most important resources [people and services] that the community has access to); and the *Wealth Ranking* (with the objective to capture the community's own perception about different levels and categories of poverty and well-being).

Focus Households. The wealth ranking exercise forms the basis for our identification of *Focus Households* with whom we will relate closely through various forms of immersion during the course of the Reality Checks. The communities in Lago distinguish between 4 levels of poverty or 'poor people' and 3 levels of well-being or 'better-off' people – each with their own dynamics and position in the communities (ORGUT 2011d). Altogether seven Focus Households have been selected from these categories, and will be visited and interviewed in depth every year with a focus on changes in their social relationships with the extended family, neighbours and friends, community organisations and state institutions as well as changes in their socio-economic position. This year, particular emphasis has also been given to their relations to and experiences with public institutions.

1.3 Socio-Economic Indicators

To end these brief introductory notes, we will present a set of key economic and social data, an overview of the budget and expenditures and key development policy statements as these appear in official publications from the Lago District Administration and the National Institute of Statistics (GdN/DdLago 2011 a,b,c). Table 1 and Table 2 will be updated every year of the Reality Check, in order to give an impression of overall developments in the District.² Table 3 will be updated at the end of the project period, when data from the new National Household Survey will be available.

² The information given for 2010 and 2011 is not totally comparable; some of the data for 2010 have been changed in 2011 publications; and some indicators appearing for 2011 did not appear in 2012.

Table 1: Socio-Economic Indicators – District of Lago

Economic Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Area under cultivation (Ha)	23.828	28.363	-	-	-
Agricultural production (1000 kgs)	72.740	76.240	-	-	-
Agricultural extensionists	0	0	-	-	-
Heads domestic animals	9.760	10.500			
Production of meat (kgs)	1.010	10.250	-	-	-
Forestation (in Ha)	6.050	n.a	-	-	-
Number of tourists	8.000	n.a	-	-	-
Fish production (in 1000 kgs)	3.443	6.311	-	-	-
Energy (number of clients)	1.156	1.517	-	-	-
Energy (clients cut off)	497	n.a	-	-	-
INAS (Number of beneficiaries)	682	1388	-	-	-

Sources: *GdN/DdL 2010, 2011a and b*

Table 2: Budget and Expenditures – District of Lago

Economic Indicator	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Self-generated income (MTn)	20.530	47.370	-	-	-
Self-generated/assigned income (MTn)	213.311	550.316	-	-	-
Expenditures for goods and services (MTn)	3.129.060	5.781.380	-	-	-
Infrastructure investments (MTn)	n.a	6.112.000			
No of public employees on payroll	684	770	-	-	-
No of trad.authorities on payroll	227	231			
District Dev. Fund (No. of Projects)	117	66	-	-	-
District Dev. Fund (Total, Mt)	7.666.000	7.848.000	-	-	-
Distr. Dev. Fund (Reimbursed, Mt)	207.860	316.000	-	-	-
Distr. Dev. Fund (No. of beneficiaries)	585	330			

Sources: *GdN/DdL 2010, 2011a and b*

Table 3: Social Indicators – District of Lago (Percent)

Social Indicators	2007	2015
Population (est. 2012)	83.099	-
Proportion Female Headed Households	35.1	-
Primary School Attendance	65.01	-
Solid Roof Housing	1.18	-
Electricity at Home	4.38	-
Cell-phone	0.97	-
Bicycle Ownership	29.8	-

Source: *INE 2009*

Below, we also quote what the District of Lago itself sees as the main challenges for development and poverty reduction for 2011 and 2012 as this appears in the relevant Social and Economic Development Plan (Box 1, 2). As can be seen, the development objectives are largely the same for the two years, even though objectives of “increasing income” and “contributing to the District budget” has been added for 2012.

Box 1: *Development Objectives of the Government of the District of Lago 2011*

“The main focus of the Government of the District of Lago for 2011 is [to] give priority to economic growth that will be reflected in the well-being of the population, [and] this development will be key in order to minimize the inequality between the communities. The Government will [also] continue to implement the Public Sector Reform, with emphasis on the well-being of the population and change of attitude and behaviour of the public servants and consequently an improvement of the quality of the services offered to the inhabitants [all] in order to secure a public administration that is transparent, efficient and responsible”.

Box 2: *Development Objectives of the Government of the District of Lago 2012*

“The main focus of the Government of the District of Lago for 2011 is [to] give priority to economic growth that will be reflected in the well-being of the population, [and] this development will be key in order to minimize the inequality between the communities. The Government will [also] continue to implement the Public Sector Reform, with emphasis on the well-being of the population and change of attitude and behaviour of the public servants and consequently an improvement of the quality of the services offered to the inhabitants [all] in order to secure a public administration that is transparent, efficient and responsible through securing enhanced skills and more training; increases in revenue collection, and contribute to the state budget in the District”.

2. DISTRICT GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Entering the District of Lago on the way between Lichinga and Metangula, we pass through large forestry areas making up a total of 4.800 hectares owned by the Chipetwe forest company and representing a substantial part of the 18.000 hectares planted in the Niassa province. Both the area under cultivation and the pine trees in Lago have grown since last year. Upon arriving at the Manjamba Administrative Post, (i.e. at the highland part of the Lago District), we are reminded of recent anti-government riots in May 2012 related to a police murder of a child but reportedly also with ethnic overtones (Manjamba is a Yao area). Continuing our drive towards Metangula the rehabilitated road suddenly stops being rehabilitated – as we understand it upon a message that President Gebuza would not visit Lago after all last year...

Approaching the edge of the *planalto* Lake Niassa is also this year a stunning view, representing a life-line for people who use it for everything from fishing to washing dishes. Entering the district capital and only municipality Metangula itself, we first pass through unregulated and “anarchistic” bairros; then the town centre with a large informal market, a beach full of people and the new Mozambican passenger-boat “Chabo” in the harbour (Illustration 1); before finally reaching the Government part of the town where all government institutions and housing for government employees are situated. The most visible changes from last year are an extended informal market and several new lodging places and restaurants in the centre of town, all indicating increased economic activities and well-being – at least for some. Otherwise Metangula is still characterised by what people claim is a “slow and peaceful way of life”.

Illustration 1: Boat and Girl in Metangula



Photo: Inge Tvedten

Metangula has been a municipality since 1997, and has a total population of 13.250. It has an Assembly with 13 members of whom five are women and all are Frelimo-members. The Município has a President and four *vereadores* with responsibilities for economy, health and social action, agriculture and “urbanisation”. Few people seem to be aware of the difference between 'municipal' and 'district' responsibilities. Most perceive roads and other infrastructure to be the obligation of the former, and economic and social services as the duties of the latter. In actual fact the municipality has a very limited budget, a weak income base³, and few options for actually fulfilling its obligations (Concern 2012). What primarily seems to characterize Metangula as a municipality and “town” is rather what it does not have: there are no larger shops, warehouses, hotels, restaurants or other “urban” services emphasising the district capital’s continued dependence on the provincial capital Lichinga. And there is no bank, ATM or other financial services compelling people to carry money with them and public servants to go to Lichinga to draw their salary.

The Lago District has, according to the District Administrator, gone through a number of positive developments since our visit last year. He particularly highlights increased trade and fisheries as important for economic developments; and water, roads and energy as the main areas of change in the District. The District Administrator also claims that there have been positive economic developments for the population at large, emphasising new brick housing with tin roofs and more motorcycles and cars as visible signs of such a development. Having said this, he regrets that the larger development plans envisaged in 2011 related to coal production has so far not come through – apparently because the Vale Company did not find the coal to be of sufficient quantity and quality for exploitation. On the other hand the

³In the form of the “Fundo de Compensação Autárquia” and the “Fundo de Investimento e Iniciativa Local” respectively.

exploitation of gold by the “Gold One” company is moving forward and creating jobs, and there have been several new tourism establishments making the total number 18. The generally positive perception of development in Lago is supported by the Permanent Secretary and Directors of a number of public institutions (see below).

2.1 The Lago District Administration

The District of Lago has a clear formal setup as explained by the Permanent Secretary: The District Government, made up of the Administrator, the Permanent Secretary, Directors of all District Directorates as well as the Heads of the District's four Administrative Posts, is the highest executive body at the District level. These meet for monthly ordinary sessions as well as extraordinary ones when special issues arise, sometimes joined by affiliated institutions (*‘convidados’*) such as the Police, the Security Services, the Naval Base and the Office for Natural Disasters – albeit without the right to vote. The District Administrator is responsible for “everything political and for communication with the population”; the Permanent Secretary is responsible for administration and implementation of decisions; and there is a total staff of 770 in the District Administration (up from 684 in 2010). These are currently going through an elaborate training programme as part of the Public Sector Reform Programme SISTAFE, with a number of staff members having gone for further education the past year (see Illustration 2).

Illustration 2: The District of Lago



Photo: Inge Tvedten

The Directorates are formally linked to various line ministries, even though they are often merged in smaller districts like Lago. The main Directorates are Planning and Infrastructure; Economic Activities; Health, Women and Social Action; and Education, Youth and Technology. There is an on-going public sector reform process of decentralization of decision-making and responsibilities, but the *de facto* dependence between the central-provincial- and district- tiers of government vary considerably between the different Directorates and Directorate Departments. Some (like Health) have a large degree of independence at the District level, while others (such as Water and Social Action) continue to be dependent on the Province for most decisions.

Below the level of the District are four Administrative Posts (Meluluca in the south, Lunho in the centre, Cobwé in the north and Maniamba to the east) and 12 Localities. The recently established “village” as the fifth tier of government – a *povoação* which is a conjunction of *povoados* – has not yet been implemented as envisaged in the amended Local Government Law (LOLE). The idea is to appoint people from the community itself with a certain status and influence (*‘influentes’*), who are neither part of government nor traditional authorities already on the government payroll. However, the District is sceptical to formalizing the *povoação* level primarily due to limited resources and conditions in the form of qualified staff, housing, office equipment etc. which they claim must be there to give such a position the necessary authority. In fact, the Administration emphasises the need to first strengthen the Administrative Posts as the crucial intermediary level between the population and the Government.

The development plans for the district are outlined in the District Development Strategy Plan 2010-2017 (GdN/DdLago 2010), the Social and Economic Plan 2012 (GdN/DdLago 2011) and the Report on the Social and Economic Plan 2011 or Balanço do PESOD (GdN/DdLago 2012). The plans are rather descriptive and do not present any analysis and clear priorities in order to reach the overall goals of economic development and poverty reduction as these are expressed in the same documents (see above). Neither are there any discussion of crosscutting issues such as gender, the environment, and human rights as envisaged in the

PARPA II (GdM 2011). It is also unclear how some of the figures presented are arrived at (see Table 1). While figures on the number of water posts, length of rehabilitated roads, number of INAS beneficiaries etc. should reflect reality, it is more difficult to understand how figures on overall land-utilization, agricultural production, total fish-captures etc. are ascertained. For planning and monitoring purposes it is important that figures are accurate – or that their possible inaccuracy is accounted for.

The District Administration also emphasises developments in its relations with traditional authorities, including an increase in the number of such people on the government payroll (see Table 2). While emphasising the importance of *régulos*, *rainhas*, *n`dunas* and others for mobilising and communicating with the population, the District Administration also acknowledges the difficult position these authorities are in – balancing their role as representatives of their people with deep historical and cultural roots on the one hand and being “employees” of the State on the other. The importance attached to the traditional authorities in Lago is exemplified by the visit of the President’s wife (*Primeira Dama*) to Lago and Meluluca in 2011. Public funds were used to expand and rehabilitate the dwelling of the Queen (*Rainha*), where the *Primeira Dama* spent most of her time and stayed overnight while visiting Meluluca.

The District Administration is less explicit when it comes to the relation between the State and the Frelimo Party. The Party is formally represented by Party Secretaries and heads of Party Cells (*Células*) down to the smallest level of villages (*povoados*) and bairro neighbourhoods (*quarterões/dez casas*), with the Bairro Secretaries being *de facto* appointed by the Party and receiving remuneration from the state at the same scale as the traditional chiefs (*régulos/rainhas*). In fact, the Frelimo party seems to get an increasing influence on the ground, and it is in reality necessary for Bairro Secretaries as well as traditional authorities to be party-members or sympathisers. As one traditional authority in Meluluca put it: “You don’t cut the hand that feeds you”.

The Government's relations with the private sector and civil society are presented by the District Administration in positive terms. The Administration specifically highlights the importance of NGOs for road construction and popular mobilisation, and for promoting rotating saving funds to fishers in the District. They are less positive towards what they see as a confrontational attitude of some NGOs and farmers unions against the large forestry companies – arguing that they should rather facilitate a spirit of cooperation where communities can gain from cooperating with the companies. Moreover, the Administration argues that some NGOs work in sectors and with projects overlapping those of the government – such as in water and health provision - without informing and involving the District properly. This creates problems of unrealistic expectations in the communities and for maintenance of the installations that tend to fall outside the District plans and budgets.

The District Administration also welcomes private enterprises, but emphasises the importance of making investments in close cooperation with the District Administration. They particularly mention the increasing presence of the tourism industry (highlighting the success of the Nkwichi Lodge) and the employment creation and social responsibility of the ‘Gold One’ company extracting gold in the northern part of the District, but are sceptical towards some other private investments: While Chikweti Forest has created employment opportunities in the District, they have not been equally good in avoiding conflicts with the local community and in fulfilling their social responsibilities. Having requested the presence of the cotton production company João Ferreira dos Santos in the District in 2011 in order to contribute to economic developments, moreover, the Administration complains that farmers who started to produce cotton in 2011 were not sufficiently followed up and hence had small yields. Finally according to the District Administration, neither NGOs nor the private sector is sufficiently interested in following up the 7 million MT scheme with competence and capacity building as the District has requested.

Despite a policy of decentralisation which “does not make us dependent on the province any more” as several District employees put it, the real decision-making power of the District is limited not only by its own capacity but also by the budget. According to the Permanent Secretary the total budget at his disposal for 2012 is 23 million MT, of which 8 million MT is for investments, 8 million MT for the Local Development Fund, and 5 million MT for “goods and services” (see Table 2). The bulk of actual expenses in the District – primarily for salaries in education and health – does still not go through his coffers and are hence outside of his control. Even the money formally at the District’s disposal are still subject to external decision-making, including instructions for transfers between the 7 million MT scheme and public investment. What the District Administration would like to see is that they control the overall budget, and may seek technical support from the Province or Central Government when necessary.

2.2 Local Governance

Within the formal system of Government described above, there are a number of challenges for attaining economic development, poverty reduction and good governance – as also acknowledged by people in the District Administration. On an overall level there are problems of autocracy or ‘authoritarianism’ and low motivation in parts of the government structures. In practise this implies that it is still very difficult for lower-level administrators and technocrats to voice alternative opinions and critical views to people in leading positions. For an external observer, the overt signs of this vary from forms of address (using very exalted words when addressing superiors) to the physical set-up of formal meetings (with the *chefe* sitting a distance from – and high above – his subjects).

As regards motivation, we have been told about, and also ourselves come across – not only slow responses to requests and applications, but also entire public institutions (including schools, health facilities and public offices) that are simply closed on days where there is no leave of absence or other reasons to be away. The apparent strong subservience towards authorities may result from a combination of deep cultural roots and a bureaucratic system that does not sufficiently open up for critical exchanges. Lack of motivation may be related to limited real decision making power and to inadequate or poor working conditions. Having said this, there are of course also many public offices where people work hard and do their very best against a lot of odds.

A second factor inhibiting good governance is the inadequate transparency and efficiency in communication between the different levels of government, as well as between government and the population it is to serve. This not only makes planning difficult, but also creates expectations in the system and among the population at large that are difficult to fulfil and which creates unnecessary antagonisms. There are a number of examples of this. The District requested a boat from central government to ease transportation particularly to the coastal population without road access, but central government ended up sending a boat that is far too big and expensive for that purpose (see Illustration 1). The district simply does not have the funds to manage and run it, and is now faced with the alternative options of either using it for international transport between Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania or selling it to a private enterprise which is likely to reduce access for the most remote communities which it was intended to serve.

The Department of Works (*Obras Públicas*) in the Directorate of Planning and Infrastructure in Lago annually carries out a process of identifying the communities most in need of water-posts and wells in cooperation with PRONAZAPO, and thereby creates expectations both at the District, *Posto* and *Localidade* levels of Government and in the population at large. However, they do this without information about the funding they will eventually get from the Provincial Directorate and usually end up having to reduce the number of wells considerably

(see Illustration 3). Furthermore, one of the weakest and most controversial public institutions in Meluluca is the Health Post (see below). The physical structures are detrimental, it lacks necessary medicines, mosquito-nets, contraceptives etc., and it has staff that is often absent. Neither the population nor the Administrative Posts have information about what will happen.

Illustration 3: Water-Posts in Lago



Photo: Inge Tvedten

At the same time, we learn at the Directorate of Health, Women and Social Protection that a decision of rehabilitation has been taken and funding from the World Bank has been secured – information that would have reduced tension between the Government and the population.⁴

The perhaps most striking examples of the incoherence between the different levels of government and the population is the process around the Local Investment Fund or the ‘7 Million MT scheme’. The scheme has involved a large sum of money – in the case of Lago as much as 52 million MT since the initiation of the programme in 2006 (see Illustration 4). As acknowledged by the District Administration, the idea and intentions of the scheme were good, but government made a big mistake by not explaining the rights and obligations of the beneficiaries sufficiently in the very beginning. The key purpose was

to create employment and income, but the scheme has largely developed into a fight for funds for private consumption and become enmeshed in problems of limited transparency and corruption – even though we shall see there are important examples of projects that have been successful both for employment creation and income. The rate of reimbursement of the funds made available has been very low, and currently jeopardises the entire programme.

Illustration 4: The Local Investment Fund



Photo: Inge Tvedten

In terms of popular participation and accountability, the District Administrator and heads of *Postos* and *Localidades* are still appointed by central Government under the current political system. They are in practise always Frelimo members, with little or no room for people belonging to the opposition. As a measure to enhance popular representation and transparency, Consultative Councils (CCs) were introduced in 2006/7, and were to consist of a combination of Government representatives, traditional authorities, members of civil society organizations and people in the community of particularly high esteem. They are currently found at the level of the District, the Administrative Post and (in principle although not always in practise) at the level of villages or bairros. However, despite political statements about their role and mandate being related to governance in a broad sense their actual role has become limited to that of relating to the 7 million MT scheme. The District Administration acknowledges that while the District Consultative Council in principal should be equal to a “Parliament”, the main impact and final decisions still remain with the Administration. And in Meluluca the Consultative Councils at Administrative Post and village/bairro level have lost much of their credibility due to severe controversies related to the Local Development Funds (see below).

The central potential avenue for popular participation and accountability thus remains National Elections. Elections are big events at the District as well as at the Administrative Post and community level, with a number of political visits and distribution of party-gadgets. Lago in general and Meluluca in particular have historically been areas where the political opposition has had a strong influence (see 1st Reality Check), but the political campaign seems to be totally dominated by Frelimo. In Meluluca the large majority of eligible voters turn out for registration, partly in order to get necessary Identity Cards (BIs), and partly to get

⁴ Apparently as a direct consequence of the visit of the First Lady in Meleluca in May 2012.

hold of food, shirts, hats, pens, and other items distributed by the party. However the actual turnout for elections is much lower, with (still waiting for data from STAE...) percent voting in the District of Lago the last election (see Table 4).

Table 4: Election Results 2009 – The District of Lago

Party	Parliament	Presidency
Frelimo		
Renamo	Waiting for data STAE	
MDM		
Others		

Source: *INE 2009*

The high rate of abstention in elections, despite the large number of voters registered, seems to be related to a combination of disbelief in the importance and relevance of the State for peoples' lives and a silent protest against the dominance of the Frelimo Party. While the Party seems to have a stronger hold on political and local leaders than last year (indicated by the increasing care with which people we knew last year speak about political issues), there is also a more visible opposition. Three MDM flags were raised on high poles three months prior to our visit, and neither the heads of the Administration or the Posto nor the traditional authorities knew how to deal with this – even though they were all clearly opposed to such public statements of opposition. The people having raised the flags expressed clearly that they did so because of frustration with Frelimo and of never receiving anything from the State (see Box), while people in institutions opposed tried to explain the act by referring to individual fallacies.

“Kukuluweka mbendela ya Nhuani, ndi kuikakamiza Boma kupeleka”
 “The reason for putting up the flags are to pressure the government to deliver”
 Member of MDM, Meluluca

3. THE MELULUCA COMMUNITIES

Driving from Metangula towards Meluluca for the first time in a year (see Map 2), changes are immediately apparent. The vital road built in 2008 is being rehabilitated, several smaller communities / houses have been built along the road to take advantage of the increasing traffic, and we pass a signpost to a recently established tourist resort. Also in entering Meluluca itself, changes are apparent. A new water-post has been constructed in the first village we pass; a new school building has been built in the EP2 School in Meluluca Sede; and there are a number of new commercial outlets and brick houses with tin roofs. Continuing to the village of Lussefa the changes are even more far-reaching: a new school has been started, a water-post has been built, and – most importantly – a bridge has been initiated across the Lussefa River which eventually will connect the villages to the south of Lussefa to a road network (see Map 2). While being signs of increased prosperity and government initiatives, we will also learn that the interventions reflect controversial political processes and decision-making with some parts of Meluluca feeling left out.

Below we will trace changes the past year (2011-2012) in terms of poverty and well-being with a particular focus on changes in the relevance and quality of public institutions and governance by i) assessing changes in the institutional landscape as this is presented by the institutions themselves and revealed through official statistics; ii) evaluate what focus groups of women and men see as the most important and relevant institutions to solve community problems; iii) pursue the relevance of the various public and community institutions in their attempts to solve the four main community problems identified in 2011, and iv) trace what groups of women and men see as the most important changes in their communities in general terms the past year.

3.1 Changes in Institutional Landscape

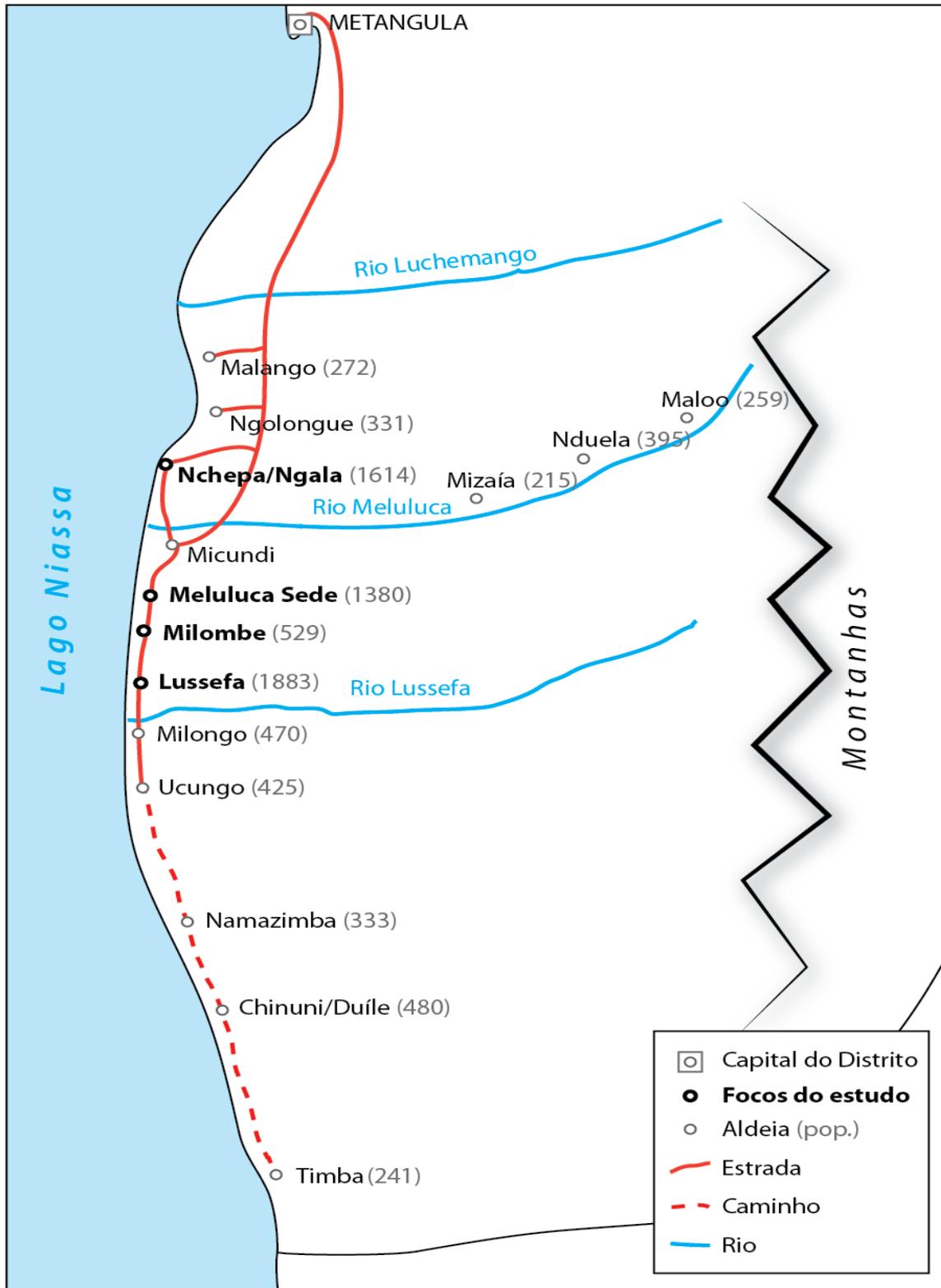
The institutional landscape in Meluluca was discussed at length in the 1st Reality Check/Lago, and will only be briefly recapitulated here – adding changes the past year as these are presented by the relevant heads of the institutions in question. According to the Baseline Survey done in 2011 (see ORGUT 2011f), the public and traditional leaders most frequently contacted (but thereby not necessarily considered most important) are (Table 5):

Table 5: *Households using public and traditional leaders six months prior to the Baseline Survey (Percent)*

Institution	Proportion of Households
District Administrator	5.0
Head of Administrative Post	12.5
Chief (<i>Régulo</i>)	36.7
Village Head (<i>N'Duna</i>)	19.2
Bairro Secretary	23.3
Head of Party Cell	0.8
Police (incl. community police)	1.7
Head of Mosque (<i>Chehe</i>)	10.8
Traditional doctors (<i>Curandeiros</i>)	5.8
Others	4.1

Source: *Baseline Survey 2011*

Map 2. *The Meluluca Administrative Post*



There are a total of 46 recognised **traditional leaders** in Meluluca, of whom 24 are of the highest category (1^o Escalão) and 22 of the second category (2^o Escalão). Among the former five are *régulos* (i.e. *régulos* Maniamba, Chingomanthe, Padja, Nhane and Gomane) two *rainhas* (i.e. Nyanja and Chitepethe). Traditional roots and influence vary between the different leaders, but they share opinions about what their role is: To 'look after' their community; to distribute land; to perform rituals e.g. to ensure good rains; and to relate to the government and visitors. The position is hereditary within specific clans, matrilineages and extended families. **Since 2011** the total number of recognised traditional authorities has not changed and the *régulos* and *rainhas* have remained the same, but two incidents underline the importance attached to these positions. In one case an *n'duna* moved to the most populous part of the *regulado* and claimed that this gave him the right to become *régulo*. The case was dismissed in the Community Court after long and heated negotiations. In a second case signs of attempted witch-craft or "*feiticeira*" were discovered in an agricultural field belonging to a *régulo/rainha*, but the attempt was reproached with the help of a powerful *curandeiro*. Stakeholders from government argue that their perception is that the power and influence of *rainhas* is becoming weaker than that of *régulos* because the former are women and the latter men, but there are no clear indications of this in the communities.

The *régulos* and *rainhas* are assisted by **advisors** or *conselheiros* (who are often close relatives of the *régulo*) and *n'dunas* in order to be able to follow up their duties at the individual village/community level. *N'dunas* are selected from specific families with deep roots in the community in question, and their position is hereditary. In Meluluca the *conselheiros* head the community courts and the *N'dunas* relate to smaller issues in the community – including the collection of the person tax – but will usually refer more serious cases/controversies to the *régulo*. **Since 2011**, there has apparently been increasing pressure from the part of the government to collect taxes (person tax, commercial tax, bicycle tax etc.) in the community with the help of the *n'dunas*, but there is no publically available information on the extent to which this has been successful or not. In their role as leaders of community courts, the *conselheiros* have heard an increasing number of cases. One apparent reason is that the community police (see 1st Reality Check Lago) has terminated their function due to lack of support from government in the form of remuneration. Most cases are related to issues of land/*machamba* demarcations and domestic disputes that do not involve violence, but the court has also heard two cases of sexual abuse against minors. One of these cases was taken to the police and ended with imprisonment, and the other with acquittal due to the mental state of the accused.

Practically everybody in Meluluca are Muslims. In most cases the **chehes** are influential people not only in religious matters, but also in the community at large. They have central roles during initiation rites for boys and girls, and they run the *madrassas* or Muslim schools. Their economic clout can be exemplified by the construction of a large new brick Mosque in Meluluca. In conversations with the *chehes*, they emphasise the importance of praying, that people respect each other and that there is peace in the community. **Since 2011**, the impact of the *chehes* has apparently been limited by internal disagreements. An interesting development is also open statements from women about the need for contraceptives, despite men's insistence that using contraceptives is "equal to killing children" ("*sinditumila kondomu, sindifuna kupha wana*"). The collective project of building a large new brick Mosque has also run into financial difficulties, with the lack of cement having stopped the construction activities the past five months.

The main representative of the Government in Meluluca is the Head of the **Administrative Post** (*Chefe do Posto*), and his office of four employees (see Illustration 5). According to the *Chefe do Posto* his main responsibility is to represent the government, inform the government about the needs of the community, and see to it that government policies and interventions are properly carried out. He does not have a budget of his own. **Since 2011** the current *Chefe de Posto* has entered his last year in public service and is in the process of

becoming a pensioner – with the new appointee being a younger man with roots in the Lago District. People in Meluluca have frequently complained that de Chefe do Posto is not “one of them”, and hence not really interested in their problems. Possible changes in approach by the new *chefe* having a different background will be followed up in the 3rd Reality Check.

Formally the Meluluca Administrative Post is divided into two **Localities** or *Localidades*, Meluluca Sede and Nchepa. However, in 2011 no person had been installed as *Chefe de Localidade* in Nchepa and the *de facto* representative was the Bairro Secretary (*Secretário do Bairro*). Nchepa has been known for being a strong-hold for Renamo, but according to the Bairro Secretary ‘the issue has been resolved’. **Since 2011**, nothing has happened in terms of appointing a new Chefe do Localidade, and Renamo flags are still waving on high posts – implying that the issue has not really been resolved after all.

Illustration 5: Meluluca Administrative Post



Photo: Inge Tvedten

There is also a lower level of **Villages** or *Povoações* with a *Chefe de Povoação*. These are appointed ‘informally’ through a combination of popular and government support. The larger villages (i.e. Meluluca Sede and Nchepa) are, finally, divided into **bairros** with a *Secretário do Bairro* who *de facto* is appointed by the Party. **Since 2011**, the Frelimo party has continued its strong control and surveillance of local leaders – albeit with few community leaders being interested in discussing their actual linkage with the Party.

While the **Frelimo Party** is not a ‘public institution’ per se, it is as noted closely intertwined with the Government authorities and directly represented in the form of a number of Party *Secretários* particularly in the larger communities. In areas where the opposition is believed to be strong they seem to be especially active. In other areas their role is primarily related to mobilisation in their *célula* around the time of elections or other major political events. **Since 2011**, we nevertheless find more explicit expressions of a political opposition than in 2011 such as open display of banners for the opposition. While neither the Administrative Post nor the traditional authorities know what to do about it, the representatives of the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) are – as stated above, see Box 4 – clearly intending to pressure the ruling Party to deliver by doing so.

The **Health Post** Meluluca opened in 2008, and one in Ngolongué opened in 2010 financed by the owner of the tourist resort there. The former (serving the main part of the population) has a clinic in very poor conditions; a solar panel only manages to maintain storage for medicines; and access to medicines is often inadequate. 57 cases of malaria, 14 cases of diarrhoea and 10 cases of dysentery were treated in August 2011. There were a total of 152 pre-birth consultations, 17 births and 296 infant-consultations. Many people preferred to consult traditional health personnel (*curandeiros* and *parteiros*) or (for those who could afford it) to go directly to the hospital in Metangula or Malawi (“where they discover more diseases”). **Since 2011** the Health Post has seen one maternity nurse who was frequently absent removed and a new hired to fill her post. A cleaner has also been hired. The main nurse argues that they have become more efficient and treat more people, emphasizing how they for the first time have detected cases of HIV/aids. There were a total of 223 adult consultations, 511 infant consultations and 17 births in August 2012. 51 cases of malaria, 67 cases of diarrhoea and 38 cases of dysentery were treated, indicating that more people are using the hospital than last year.

There are a total of 11 **primary schools** in Meluluca, with the closest secondary school being located in Metangula. There are no schools beyond 7th Grade. The schools vary considerably in the quality of physical structures, access to educational material and human

resources. In the largest school in Meluluca Sede, the teacher/student ratio is 1:65. There is also a large proportion of children who do not go to school at all (see 1st Reality Check). **Since 2011**, there have been three major developments according to the Director. One is that they have been able to attract more children to go to school (see Table 6). The second is that they have allowed young girls of 13-14 years who are married and have children, to continue their education and go to school on a daily basis. And the third is that the school has introduced the Bilingual Program, where children from 1st to 3rd grade are taught in both the local language (*Nyanja*) and Portuguese. The Headmaster expects this to have significant implications, and admits that hitherto a number of students have dropped out while others have continued up till 6th or 7th grade without really understanding what is going on in the classroom⁵.

Table 6. *Primary School Attendance Meluluca Sede 2011-2012*

Grade-level	2011			2012		
	Boys	Girls	Both	Boys	Girls	Both
1 st	95	85	184	133	157	290
2 nd	40	42	84	103	57	160
3 rd	43	61	104	51	38	89
4 th	29	39	68	52	50	102
5 th	37	28	65	30	33	63
6 th	94	55	149	75	39	114
7 th	52	30	82	73	33	106
Total	396	340	734	517	407	924

Source: *Meluluca Sede Primary School (EP2)*

There are also a number of public institutions that are potentially important for the population in Meluluca, but not physically present. **The police** is not there, and there are no places to retain people if there is a need to call the police from Metangula. **Agriculture** (being part of the District Directorate of Economic Activities) is hardly present and had, according to the Directorate itself, *no* extension officer for the entire Lago District in 2011. The most conspicuous absentee is that of the **National Institute for Social Support** or INAS. No older person or handicapped in Meluluca received social support, even though they have been there for registrations ('*levantamentos*'). **Fisheries** does not have any permanent representatives in Meluluca, but the Institute for Development of Small Scale Fisheries (IDPPE) located in Metangula has a presence in the form of frequent visits of extension officers. Also the **Notary** (*Registo Civil*) and the **Office of Natural Disasters** (*Calamidades*) are relevant public institutions for access to Identity Cards (BIs) and in times of calamities such as floods and droughts respectively – even though the latter has not had activities in Meluluca for a long time.

Since 2011 the challenge of calling the police all the way from Metangula remains, even though the community has built a provisional jail to keep people in until the police arrives. The community police has, as noted, dismantled itself. Agriculture still does not have any representatives in the form of agricultural extension offices, but access to seeds from the District Office has improved. INAS has more than doubled the number of beneficiaries in the District of Lago to 1350 (see Table 1), but there are still no beneficiaries in the Meluluca Administrative Post. With the proportion of the District population living in Meluluca they should have had around 135. And finally the IDPPE continues its strong presence in Meluluca with support to associations and investment funds. However, a project attempting to support more women in the fishery sector has not met with any success.

⁵ In investigations made by the Headmaster it turned out that many students relate to tests by memorizing parts of the book, without understanding what is actually said.

To end this section, Table 7 shows the proportion of households having actually used public services and Table 8 shows the level of satisfaction with these services for those who used them during the six month period preceding the Baseline Survey of 2011. The questions will be revisited in the final Reality Check (2015).

Table 7: Households Having Used Public Services Six Months Prior to Survey (Percent)

Public Institution	Yes	No	Institution not Available
Health Post	46.7	2.5	50.8
Maternity Ward	12.5	38.3	49.2
Primary School	66.7	33.3	0.0
Madrassa	29.2	65.8	5.0
Public transport	58.3	35.0	6.7
Water Post	67.5	24.2	8.3
Administrative Post	7.5	40.0	52.5
Notary	n.a	n.a	100.0
Police	n.a	n.a	100.0
Tribunal	5.0	44.2	50.8

Source: *Baseline Survey 2011*

Table 8: Level of Satisfaction with Public Services (1 = very poor, 5 = very good) (Percent)

Public Service	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
Health Post	3.4	6.8	13.6	74.6	1.7	0.0
Primary School	0.8	7.5	23.3	58.3	6.7	3.3
Madrassa	0.0	5.3	14.0	42.1	32.5	6.1
Public transport	16.1	11.6	13.4	45.5	11.6	1.8
Water Post	19.1	4.5	17.3	48.2	10.0	0.9
Administrative Post	3.5	5.3	19.3	38.6	5.3	28.1
Notary	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	100.0
Police	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	100.0
Tribunal	1.7	15.3	11.9	40.7	28.8	1.7

Source: *Baseline Survey 2011*

3.2 Local Relations of Power and Influence

In order to pursue the issue of what institutions people themselves perceive as most relevant to solve community problems and why, a male and a female focus group were formed and asked to respond to the questions “What are the most important institutions in your community?”, and “What are the types of issues they can solve?” (see Illustration 6).

The group of women argued that the **Queen (Rainha)** is most important, and that all issues are taken through her, in order for her to take the issue to relevant public- or other institutions. As mentioned above, there are two Rainhas and three Règulos in Meluluca. The strong emphasis on the importance of traditional authorities raises the issue of the “representativeness” and “accountability” of such institutions. The position of the Rainhas and Règulos has deep historical roots, and they have an elaborate system of keeping themselves informed about life in the communities. They always seem to have people visiting them, they have regular meetings with their N’Dunas, and their presence in the community court system makes them well-informed about larger controversial cases. The strength of the traditional authorities is that they know families and people well, and may therefore intervene

directly. At the same time, their decisions and rulings are generally considered to be final and there is little room for individuals or groups to appeal.

As the second most important institution the group of women listed the **Bairro Secretary (Secretário de Bairro)**. While the Secretary is formally elected by the local population, the group of women is also clear about the fact that he has strong links with the Frelimo Party. Even though the Queen and the Secretary are given allowances by the State at the same level (1st Scale), the former has a stronger position in the community than the latter. The third most important position is shared by the Advisors or “conselheiros” of the Queen and the Secretary, represented by **the N’duna** and the **Head of Ten Houses (Chefe de dez casas)** respectively. People who are not close to the people in the highest positions may contact the *N’duna* and the *Chefe de Dez Casas* first, knowing that they in their turn will take the matter to the higher level. Following these, the group of women emphasised the importance of **godparents (testimunhos / padrinhos)**. These are people outside the immediate family, who know the person in question well and also has a responsibility for helping out in times of hardships. The godparents will take the matter to the *régulo* or the *rainha* on behalf of their godchildren.

Illustration 6: Women Focus Group, Meluluca



Photo: Inge Tvedten

The group of women argued strongly that all matters should follow the hierarchy described above. At the same time they separate between issues that will be solved by the traditional structures and issues that have to be taken to political structures and public institutions. The former include adultery, divorces, payment of debt, borders between agricultural fields and thefts (*roubos*) that do not involve bodily harm. Examples of community problems that need to be taken through public structures are lack of water, problem with health institutions, and issues related to the seven million MT scheme (see Illustration 7).

For the women their “institutional world” is thus largely limited to locally based traditional structures, and they argue that they will never themselves take matters directly to public institutions, neither in Meluluca nor in the District capital. This seems to be partly related to their position as women (see below), but also to a realization that delivering community or personal problems directly to a public institution rarely gives any result.

Illustration 7: Community Leadership Matrix

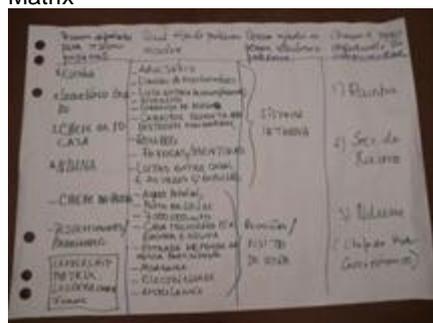


Photo: Inge Tvedten

Among the most outspoken women, there is a clear understanding that the best way of presenting and solving a problem is to do it in connection with larger public meetings involving people from the outside that they believe have the power and influence to make things happen. The main event highlighted in 2011/2012 was the visit of the District Administrator, the Governor and the *Primeira Dama* – in connection with which some women are said to have been particularly active by appealing to their sex and position as women.

Moving on to the male focus group, they agree that the *Rainha*, the *Bairro Secretary* and the *Conselheiro* and *N’duna* are the most important institutions for solving community problems. However, they add a list of formal institutions, clearly indicating that their range of relevant institutions is wider than what was the case for the women. They list the **Consultative Council** and the **Frelimo Party** as locally based institutions that are important for getting things done. The Consultative Council is, as we shall return to, particularly important for getting access to the 7 million MT scheme. The Frelimo Party is represented by the Party

Secretary, and he is perceived to have the most direct access to the real centres of power in the District.

The list of important institutions defined by the male group also includes ‘**external**’ institutions like the head of the Administrative Post, the District Administration, and District Directorates of line ministries. As confirmed by the head of the Post as well as the District Administrator, practically everybody who takes direct contact with them are men. Having said this, also the men are very clear about the strategic need to bypass the lowest levels of public institutions such as the Administrative Post, school, Health Post, School etc. in order to be heard (see Box) and have things done and that the best way to do this is to air views when visitors arrive from the outside.

“*Tapempha ambili, sitikutchiwa kwachokela mayongho*”
 “We are asking many, but we do not know from where we will get a response”
 Community Leader, Meluluca

The Consultative Councils are in principal to be both representative (women are by law to represent at least 30 percent of the members) and “accountable” (membership is to be reassessed and renewed every second year). In practise, the nomination of members is done by the traditional authorities and the Bairro Secretary, with a *de facto* requirement for Frelimo party membership or affiliation. As mentioned above, the original broad mandate of the Consultative Councils has been steadily reduced since their establishment in 2006/7. The main reason seems to be that they neither have a traditional “legitimacy” nor the power-base of public institutions, which effectively has reduced their impact. In Meluluca only one out of the three *Povoações* currently have a functioning Consultative Council, and the Council at the level of the Administrative Post has met only twice the past year.

An additional type of institution in Meluluca mentioned by the male-group is “**interest-based-committees**”. These are established on an ad-hoc basis by the population itself in order to solve particular problems, and there are currently committees for education/schools, health/health post, and water-posts/wells. The water committee consists of a mixture of men and women, while the education and health committees are made up of only men. The criteria for nominating members is personality and an interest to work for the issue at hand, and they are thus neither considered ‘traditional’ nor ‘public’ entities. During the past year, the education committee has been instrumental for planning and building three new classrooms at the main school in Meluluca, in cooperation with the school management. The health committee has less tangible results to show for the past year, but has contributed strongly to putting the health post situation in Meluluca high on the agenda. Finally the water committee was instrumental for moving an unfinished water-post built by a private company and rebuild it as an ‘advanced well’ in a location where more people can benefit from it.

An important development in Meluluca also highlighted by the male group is the recent economic development that has created a number of **economic entrepreneurs** (*comerciantes*). As we shall see below, there are several families who have invested in fisheries and trade, and have acquired considerable economic power. Particularly in fisheries

“*Kapolo okhuta aposa mfumu ya ndjala*”

“In the choice between a strong slave and a hungry *régulo*, the slave will come out on top”.
 Nyanja Proverb

their status is high due to the fact that they employ a number of people (each motorized fishing boat will employ between six and eight crew members). Their economic position gives them easier access both to traditional authorities, public institutions and other private enterprises. There are examples of such people having taken initiatives on behalf of the community at large or people in their neighbourhood, and their power-base is likely to increase in the years to come. The potential contradiction between traditional power and authority and the notion that ‘money speaks’ is not a new one, as indicated by the following Nyanja proverb (see Box).

Finally, people emphasise that they are influenced by and learn a lot from listening to **the radio**, particularly “Radio Malawi”. The importance of Radio Malawi, they maintain, is related to the stronger emphasis on transmissions in *Nyanja*, but also that Radio Malawi transmits programmes about important and controversial issues and “not only music” as one put it. The most frequently used Mozambican radio channel is the Lago Community Radio, but this seems to have lost much of its previous impact by having journalists who “think they are DJs” and by only airing government views. The radio seems to be a grossly underestimated means of communication also by Government, not least in their relations to rural communities like Meluluca.

3.3 Relating to Community Problems

Taking a closer look at the issue of the importance and relevance of traditional, public and community-based institutions for development and poverty reduction, we will now go through the main community problems identified in 2011 and ascertain the extent to which these have been solved or not the past year – i.e. water, health, electricity, roads, and education (see ORGUT 2011b). In discussing the development of these issues with groups of women and men respectively, they emphasise how they have used different institutions to try to get through to people who can make decisions and deliver.

Starting with the **health post**, the focus groups acknowledge that things have changed – but not necessarily to the better. In order to relate to what they saw as dismal conditions and poor service with frequent absenteeism, the community established a separate Health Committee in 2011 consisting of six men. After having discussed the issue with the *rainha*, she and the committee presented the problems directly to the Health Post. Claiming that did not help, they went to the unusual step of writing a letter to the District Directorate of Health and Women’s Affairs which they gave to the *Chefe do Posto*, but say they still did not hear anything. Finally they agreed to present it at the occasions of the visits of the *Primeira Dama* and the Provincial Governor. The focus groups argue that they still have not heard anything or seen any real changes. They are still not properly attended; the health post does still not have sufficient medicines, beds and equipment; there is still no electricity and light in the maternity ward; and the place is still dirty – but as shown above a decision seems to have been taken following the visit of the President’s wife that the Health Post will be rehabilitated and improved.

Illustration 8: Celebrating the New Water Post



Photo: Inge Tvedten

In terms of **water**, only one new water-post has been constructed the past year despite concerted efforts by the Meluluca communities to get more and what they say were ‘promises’ for a total of five water-posts following visits of *Obras Púlicas* (see Illustration 7). There is a clear notion that providing healthy water is the responsibility of the Government, and as noted a separate ‘water committee’ has been established with a mixture of men and women. Water is a constant issue of discussion among the population, particularly in times of frequent illnesses and diarrhoea. The issue of water has also directly engaged the *régulos* and *rainhas*, who claim they have delivered their concerns directly to the *Chefe do Posto* as well as during visits by the District Administrator, Frelimo party representatives and the Governor. The focus groups do not understand why the choice was made to construct the new well in a part of Meluluca that already has two wells, but imply that it is “political” and linked to the position of the Anglican Church in that area. There did appear one private

company or NGO (the groups are not sure which) that started to construct another well in a different part of Meluluca, but they disappeared before finishing.

As regards **electricity**, nothing has happened and the population is not sure why. They claim that “a car from the Electricity Company of Mozambique (EDM) has passed through the village”, but “did not stop” and did not give any information. No separate committee is established for this issue, and traditional as well as other community leaders do not seem to think that electricity in Meluluca is imminent. The focus groups locate the responsibility for getting electricity from Cahora-Basa to the Government, but argue that they would have higher hopes for getting electricity if the responsible institution was a private company or an NGO (apparently not knowing that electrification of Meluluca is in the District’s “Economic and Social Development Plan” for 2013 – see GdN/DdLago 2012:3). They also refer to the fact that the ‘rich’ (*olemela*) are bypassing the problem by buying solar-panels, which around 10 people have bought for their market-stalls and/or dwellings. While the group of men argue for the importance of electricity by referring to the possibility of producing ice and selling fresh fish, the women are more concerned about the costs of having electricity for their household economy claiming they are “not sure it is so important”.

Concerning **roads**, both groups acknowledge that important improvements have been made since 2008 and that this is largely thanks to the work of *Obras Públicas* and ANE. At the same time they highlight the role of the NGO ‘Accord’ and their own contributions through the community work when the original road was made between 2006-2008. Now they complain about the quality of the rehabilitation work being done, and question the way the Government selects its entrepreneurs. According to the group of men, they specifically asked for a company that built a new house for the head of the Administrative Post which was “quick and well done”, but “the Government sent somebody we do not know”. The road to Metangula (and from there to Lichinga) is the key reason for the economic developments taking place in Meluluca, but does not seem to involve the community institutions to the same extent as the other main community problems – possibly because it is not ‘locally based’ and hence more difficult to influence.

Finally in terms of **education** and the establishment of a school beyond 7th grade, the focus groups don’t see anything happening. They argue that having to send children to Metangula is too expensive, and hence that relatively few take higher education. They also emphasise that they themselves are willing to contribute, referring to the fact that the community has built three new classrooms for the existing school the past year. Again there seems to be a problem of communication: According to the District Director of Education, there is simply not enough students to establish a EP2 school in Meluluca, while both the head of the school, the head of the Administrative Post and the community argue strongly that the Government will establish a school within a short period of time.

The most notable lessons to draw from the way people have related to what they see as their main community problems is a strong sense of not being heard by government with respect to their needs for improving conditions in their community. There is also a basic lack of trust in the government’s will and ability to deliver basic public services. They claim that they always ask, and are always promised, but that “nothing happens”. People explain this as a combined outcome of their long-term isolation (i.e. prior to the road in 2008), politics (related to their history of support for the opposition), religion (related to them being a strong Muslim community), and what they call “their ignorance” referring to the generally low level of education in Meluluca and the fact that there are no schools beyond 7th Grade.

At the same time there is a strong sense of community and community spirit in Meluluca, even though there is also competition between the three main *povoações* of Nchepa, Meluluca Sede and Lussefa in their struggle for infrastructure and public services. The sense of community seems to stem from the strong and unifying position of the traditional leaders, a

“pride” in the fact that Meluluca is developing fast and has people economically active in other parts of the District (people from Meluluca are said to dominate the main market in Metangula), and finally the unifying sense of being “us against the others”.

A main conclusion that the community and community leaders has drawn is that the most efficient strategy for obtaining what they want from the government is to bypass its representatives at the Localidade and Administrative Post level, and relate directly to people visiting the community from higher levels of government – who they believe are in a better position to make decisions and things happen. We have seen numerous examples of this, including Primeira Dama, the Governor, the District Administrator and even visitors like the Reality Check team.⁶ There is also a strong belief that infrastructure and other services are more likely to appear if it is to be delivered by the private sector or NGOs. Looking at the development interventions that have actually taken place (see above) this seems at least partly to stem from an inadequate information about the policies and processes of public service delivery that do take place – and perhaps an unrealistic view of the way the private sector and NGOs work.

3.4 Most Important Changes

Having gone through the institutional landscape in Meluluca and how that has been used in attempts to solve the most important community problems, we will finally take a closer look at what people see as the most important political, economic and social changes in the community the past year in a more general sense – again with the help of focus groups of men and women respectively. As we shall see the perceived changes are primarily related to changes in economic opportunities and issues of poverty and well-being, where public institutions is only one of several vehicles for change.

For the group of women the most important change has been the improved road and the concomitant increase **commercial traffic** to and from Meluluca, which has made it easier for them to sell goods and to visit family and friends outside the community. The increased number of cars and small trucks is the direct result of increased production in fisheries and options for fish trade. Many of the owners of cars and trucks are people from Meluluca. However, among the group of 16 women only four had left Meluluca the past month using the road and transportation indicating that important developments such as in communication only directly affect a relatively limited number of people – and even less women.

The second most important change to the women focus group has been an increase in the number of **mills** (*moageiras*) in Meluluca from two to seven – primarily attributed to the 7 million MT scheme. They are all owned by men, as “we women do not have money” (see below). Nevertheless, this has greatly reduced women’s workload. They do not have to spend so much time on peeling the maize, and it has also made it possible for some to earn additional money from the sale of maize-flour. They claim that practically all women now use the *moageiras* because the costs are considered reasonable (2 MT to grind one bag of flour), but women grinding the old way is still a common sight particularly among the poorest in the community.

Illustration 9: Fish is Gold



Photo: Joelma Joaquim

⁶ In one of the three villages, promises had been made or work had been initiated for construction of a new school, a bridge, and water post within three months of our visit last year – making the Rainha give us a very “un-queen-like” hug when we arrived...

The third most important change listed by the women is a small ‘machine’ to **control the wind**, which is another good example of the problem of communication between the community and external private and public institutions. Late in 2011 a small metal item was put behind the Administrative Post building, which actually was put there by the João Ferreira dos Santos cotton company to measure precipitation and assess the potential for cotton production in the area. The device was in use the first few weeks, but as the company realised the problems of getting the Meluluca farmers to grow cotton the metre was no more read. However, the 16 women in the group had a completely different perception of the purpose of the new metal item: They were convinced that it had been put there by the Government in order to control the wind so that their husbands would not die on the Lake any more – and hence saw it as one of the most important developments in 2011/2012.

The fourth major change according to the groups of women was the construction of an additional **mobile phone antenna** by “Movitel”, which they argued greatly, enhanced the access to the mobile network. Mobile phones are actively displayed as a sign of “change” and “progress” particularly among young people, and are used actively by men for example in order to ascertain prices of fish in various markets. Asking how many of the 16 women in the focus group who actually owned or had access to a mobile phone, however, only one actually owned one and one had a husband who had owned one, but had to sell it as he could not afford to buy credit. This is yet another example of the inability of the very poorest – and poor women in particular – to actually take part in developments that they argue have implications for the community at large.

The fifth and final major change listed was in **health**, where the group of women argued developments had gone from bad to worse. As we have seen, health was listed as the main community problem in 2011. They claim that the nurse ended up being away for more than two months, and was finally moved to another province, with the result that no deliveries could take place in the hospital. They also argued that it is impossible to get hold of, or too expensive to get, key health supplies of everything from contraceptives to mosquito-nets. Much of this is, they further claim, sold to people who can afford to pay. In addition there is still no light in the maternity ward, and the premises are “in such a bad condition that you may be sicker when you leave than when you came” as one older lady put it.

The most important changes in the community identified by the male focus group largely coincide with those of women, with a few important exceptions. The men first mention the fact that the community has experienced hectic activities in the construction of **improved dwellings**, underlining that they are of burnt building blocks (*tijolos queimados*) and have zinc roofs. Improved housing is said to be important for safety in that it will not blow down in the windy season; for security in that it is more difficult to break into; as an investment in that a brick house secures *de facto* ownership to land and dwelling as it cannot easily be moved; and for health in that it is easier to keep ones house clean, tidy and healthy. It is also a central indication of increased wealth and hence entails a higher status for the household constructing the house.

A second change underlined by the group of men is related to **employment and income**, and the arrival of the João Ferreira dos Santos cotton company in Meluluca. A large number of households were convinced to start production of cotton, with support in the form of seeds from the company. Many either substituted food-production or allocated labour to additional cotton fields – with negative implications for food production. However, production largely failed due to inadequate information and possibly also conditions for growing cotton, and the farmers ended up being paid as little as 10 MT per kilo for the cotton they actually produced. While people in Meluluca blame the private company for exploiting and misleading them, local government representatives say that the farmers do not want to understand that the company is entitled to subtract the value of the seeds and fertilisers that were originally given to them.

The most important changes experienced by men and women in Meluluca the past year thus primarily relate to initiatives and developments instigated by the community and the private sector. These include increased commercial traffic between Meluluca and Metangula, the construction of mills and the improved mobile telephone network. Changes related to public sector initiatives are either negative (such as the development of the Health Post) or only indirectly credited to the Public Sector (such as the road rehabilitation leading to increased commercial transport).

At the same time we have seen that there are initiatives from the public sector that are not properly communicated to the community, such as the planned rehabilitation of the hospital and preparations for electrification that are to take place in 2013. The inadequate communication can be improved both through internal channels (for example by making the Administrative Post better informed and using more innovative ways to give messages) and by using alternative channels of information such as the community radio.

We have also seen that there are different emphases given by men and women as to what they consider to be important changes. While men tend to emphasise 'external' signs of success such as more small-scale businesses and improved housing, women tend to emphasise issues closer to the domestic sphere such as utensils to save their husbands from drowning on the Lake and the new mills that have made their everyday life easier.

The perhaps most important change for both men and women relates to the Health Post. Health is considered important both because illness effects practically all households in Meluluca (see 1st Reality Check), and because having ill household members effects productivity in a situation where all able hands are important in order to make ends meet. Experiences from other areas in Lago and Niassa show that there is capacity and competence to develop well-functioning health units. We will follow the developments related to the health sector closely in the Reality Checks to come.

4. SOCIAL RELATIONS OF POVERTY

4.1 Changes in Economic Adaptations

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Meluluca presents itself as a community undergoing dynamic economic change. The changes were sparked by the road built in 2008 with the support of the NGO Accord and with significant community participation. The main basis for the continued economic development has been fisheries, which has inherent possibilities for both employment creation and capital accumulation. People earning money from fisheries have invested in expanding their fishing businesses by buying new boats, canoes and/or fishing nets, but they have also opened up *bancas* and *barracas* that are often managed by close relatives.

There is also an increase in commercial contacts between Meluluca and Metangula, Lichinga and Malawi, as evidenced by a larger number of cars and trucks and new types of goods in the commercial outlets. Also this is primarily based on trade with dried fish, and several men are growing as *comerciantes* with some having bought small trucks to transport dried fish (fresh fish is not sold due to the lack of facilities for ice and preservation). In fact, people say that the majority of the most successful traders in Metangula are from Meluluca. There are also examples of women having developed small scale businesses, but these are primarily in locally-based trade and do not involve larger investments in means of production or transportation.

Beside fisheries and fish-trade, not much economic change appears to be taking place. Agriculture continues to be primarily for consumption, even though we have seen that new mills have made it easier to process and sell grain. Agricultural production also continues to be done with rudimentary methods and without the use of fertilizers. Very few people seem to sell grain and/or vegetables, with the exception of women selling small quantities from small stalls in the Meluluca itself. Also small scale handicraft production (reed mats, agricultural tools, tables and chairs, doors, kitchen utensils etc.) continues to be made largely the same way. In others words, there does not seem to be much technological innovation stemming from the on-going economic change – with for example the birdcage in Illustration 8 continuing to be the only lodging place in the village....

Illustration 8: The Only Lodging Place in the Village...



Photo: Inge Tvedten

Despite a relatively dynamic economic situation, the family budget remains small for most households and they depend on subsistence production in agriculture and fisheries – where the large majority of people involved are crew members (*marinheiros*) with few if any possibilities for capital accumulation. According to the Baseline Survey, 37 percent of the households spend less than 250 MT per week, which is a very small sum of money with the current price-level. A trip to Metangula for the price of 80 MT, for example, is a heavy toll on most family-budgets. An indication of the limited circulation of money for most households is the sale of basic consumption items in very small quantities, as exemplified by the mini-bag of sugar seen in Illustration 9. As we shall see below when presenting developments in the focus-households, even better-off families can ill afford sudden expenses and easily find themselves in a situation where their income is too small to maintain their standard of living.

Illustration 9: Sugar – sold small scale



Photo: Inge Tvedten

4.2 The District Development Fund

Even in a community like Meluluca with its “entrepreneurial spirit”, access to credit remains a basic problem for the large majority of people. In this context, the 7 million MT scheme is seen as perhaps the main option for obtaining money for investments and for economic developments. Seen from a local perspective, the scheme is a hot topic of debate and in many ways controversial. People have strong opinions about the selection process, and what type of projects that have the greatest potential for success. Those who receive the money are also scrutinised closely by the community, to ascertain the extent to which the beneficiaries use the funds constructively.

For 2012 a total of 31 proposals have been developed by people in Meluluca, with 16 making it through the process. At the community level the development of project ideas and selection of projects is taken very seriously. Proposals are in principle to be handed in to the local Conselho Consultivo, but in two of the three *povoações* such Councils are not established or not functioning and the applications are handed in to the Bairro Secretary. From him (they are all men) they are channelled through the traditional authorities who are to assess the “quality” and “seriousness” of the applicants. In Meluluca in 2012 a total of 10 applications were taken out at this level, with 21 eventually being submitted to the Conselho Consultivo at the level of the Administrative Post where community leaders as well as the government employees meet. There another 5 projects were disallowed, either by the Conselho itself or by the Chefe de Posto who sits with the final responsibility for the “technical merits” of the applications.

16 applications were sent from the Administrative Post in November 2011 for the year 2012, and are listed in Table 9 below. From this stage, the people having applied claim they lose control over what happens. As can be seen, 13 of the projects are individual projects and only three are developed by associations – which represents a development towards a ‘individualisation’ of the scheme. Moreover, 11 of the projects are developed by men and five by women – including all the joint projects in associations. Of the total number of 43 people involved, 23 are defined as ‘youth’ under 35 years of age. At the time of our field-work in September 2012, all 16 projects had apparently been approved by the District Administration – but no funds had been paid out. The delay represents a severe problem for the applicants, as they often will be too busy to follow up the projects at the height of the agricultural season.

Table 9: 7 million MT project applications for 2012.

Pro. No.	Type of Project	Value	Type of Activity	Men	Women	Youth
1	Individual	109,900 MT	Trade	1		
2	Individual	104,950 MT	Trade	1		1
3	Individual	123,400 MT	Trade	1		
4	Individual	154,050 MT	Trade	1		
5	Association	82,000 MT	Trade		10	6
6	Individual	88,900 MT	Trade		1	
7	Individual	100,000 MT	Trade	1		
8	Individual	102,900 MT	Trade agriculture	1		1
9	Association	82,000 MT	Food Production		10	5
10	Individual	177,000 MT	Fishing	1		
11	Individual	100,000 MT	Trade agriculture	1		1
12	Individual	100,000 MT	Trade agriculture	1		1
13	Individual	70,000 MT	Sale of diesel		1	
14	Association	82,000 MT	Trade		10	7
15	Individual	79,000 MT	Trade agriculture	1		1
16	Individual	104,500 MT	Fishing	1		
	Total	1,660,600 MT		11	32	23

Source: *The Meluluca Administrative Post*

Interviewing four persons in Meluluca about their relationship to the 7 million MT scheme, the controversies and the potential importance of the scheme are clearly evident. Mwnaiba Amido⁷ is the first wife of a successful fisherman, has seven children and has developed a flourishing trading business on the basis of funds received through the scheme in 2008. She received 150 000 MT as part of a group of five men and five women. They initially cooperated well, buying fish, drying it and reselling it in Metangula and Lichinga. All funds were repaid to the state during the first two years of the project, according to Mwnaiba because of “group pressure” and “mutual support”. However, as soon as the funds were repaid and the group pressure receded businesses started to deteriorate, and out of the ten people originally involved only three still have businesses. Mwnaiba buys dried fish and sells it in the market in Lichinga, where she claims prices are higher than in Metangula (not having a trading licence in Lichinga, she depends on an intermediary, but says this functions well). She uses the money she earns primarily by investing in her children’s education, but also makes sure to put aside money in case of difficulties. Her long term plan is to improve her house where she lives with five of her seven children.

Jaime Aissa received 100,000 MT as part of an association of five young men in 2010, but their projects have been less successful. The project idea was to buy cattle, but the men immediately split the 100,000 MT in individual parts of 20,000 MT and stopped cooperating. Most of the cattle bought soon died (Jaime admitted that none of them had any real experience on cattle farming). Following this, some in the group spent remaining funds on buying a mill, but also this turned out to be non-viable. The three people still using the funds currently buy diesel in Metangula and sell it to fishing boat owners, which is a much less lucrative business with few options for further business development. Jaime claims that the main problem with the project was the notion of “*associativismo*” which they thought was a condition for receiving funds, and that his project would have had better options for success had he received the money on an individual basis.

Illustration 10: A mill – Meluluca Style



Photo: Inge Tvedten

Mário Mbaia wrote a project proposal in 2009 together with three other persons for a project on commercialisation of fish for a total value of 50,000 MT. The idea was to work in two groups, with one buying and drying and the other selling in Metangula. The business should be developed by investing surplus in fishing nets and eventually in a boat, to make the men “real” fishermen. However, the project never made it through the Posto Administrativo, according to Mário because “it is all politics”. Mário was particularly frustrated because he had paid a “contribution” (*suborno*) of 3,000 MT just to be able to be part of the process. He never got a real explanation for why his project was not accepted, and has not tried his luck after this, but has managed to buy nets through his own efforts and still works towards his goal of becoming a “real” fisherman.

Maganisso Selemene has worked hard for a number of years as a “*marinheiro*”, and has managed to earn enough to invest in a small market stall (*barraca*). He has never applied for the 7 million, and gives two main reasons: One is what he perceives as a precondition of applying as an association, and he says he does not have any contacts of sufficient confidence to work with. The second is what he claims to be the “corruption” (*chipupu*) in the system, which makes it impossible for people without contacts and money to get accepted. He particularly mentions the need to pay money upfront and says that he cannot afford to pay 3,000 MT and still not be guaranteed that he eventually will get the loan. He maintains that many poorer people don’t feel that the 7 million MT scheme is for them, and that many would be able to develop projects but don’t even try.

⁷ All names used in this report are fictitious.

In conclusion there is little doubt that the 7 million MT scheme is potentially very important for economic developments in Meluluca in general, and for the social mobility and well-being of individual families in particular. It is also true that the scheme was poorly constructed and explained initially (as we have seen is also admitted by the District Administration), including allowing the majority of the beneficiaries not to pay back their loans which made it difficult to convince those who were prepared to pay to actually do so.

People in Meluluca still see the 7 million MT scheme as an important option for investments and employment creation, but primarily for the already better off, people in political positions, and men. The fact that the bulk of individual projects are developed by men and all group-based projects by women partly reflects the economic position of men in the community, but also socio-cultural constraints on women for being individual entrepreneurs and making money – as reflected in the Koran and the emphasis on men's responsibility for taking care of their wives and children.

However, there are a number of constraints in the way the process functions. One relates to the ability of people to design sound and viable projects. Proposals do not really contain a proper 'business plan' in terms of project idea, organization, resource requirements, and marketing options, but are rather very brief presentations following a formal format given by the District Authorities. There have been no attempts at increasing the capacity of people to develop good project ideas, neither from the Government nor from the private sector and NGOs.

The first real hurdle involves the Consultative Council and the Administrative Post, where people have experienced corruption (*chipupu*, referring to lack of transparency rather than deviation of funds *per se*). There are also complaints about the decisions made by the 'technical committee', in reality consisting of the *Chefe do Posto* himself, that are difficult to understand even for the members of the Consultative Council.

After the level of the Administrative Post the community and applicants largely lose control of the process as this is followed up at the District Level. We have no basis for assessing the quality and transparency of the process at this level, but members of the District Consultative Council from Meluluca argue that it is very difficult for them to follow and assess the negotiations there.

The total decision making process tends to take a very long time. For 2012 the applications were sent from the Administrative Post in November 2011, the Post and the community were told about the outcome in June 2012, and at the time of our visit in September 2012 the money had still not been paid out. Neither the head of the Administrative Post nor the applicants could explain to us why things were taking so long.

Experiences from earlier years show that when payment finally arrives it is often too late to use effectively as the end of the year collides with the busiest seasons in both agriculture (clearing and planting) and fisheries, and their project ideas have started to lose momentum. Moreover, it is very common that the original budget for the proposal is cut – often up to 50 percent – which people argue makes the project difficult to implement. The community leaders say they do not know what happens to the capital resources that are not paid out⁸, but there are stories of money finding their way to entrepreneurs in areas outside the relevant Administrative Post and District.

⁸ According to the District Administration, these funds are used to increase the number of projects that receive funding

4.3 Family and Household Dynamics

Moving on to changes in poverty and well-being at the level of households and individuals, we showed in the 1st Reality Check that people in Meluluca have clear perceptions about there being different levels of poverty (*umphawi*) and well-being (*olemela*). Their definitions tend to take two issues into account: The level of material poverty, and social relationships – or the extent to which a household or an individual is involved in social networks or socially isolated. More concretely, the Wealth Ranking exercise carried out for this study revealed that people in Meluluca distinguish between four levels of poverty and three levels of well-being in their own vernacular (Table 10, see also ORGUT 2011f).

Table 10: *Levels and Characteristics of Poverty and Well-Being*

The Poor	
Usuwedwa	People who do not have money, and no clothes. They are not in a position to marry because they do not have the necessary material means and no one wants to marry them.
Chilecua	Men and women who are lazy (<i>preguiçosos</i>), and who do not contribute anything to the community.
Maciquine	Men and women with physical or mental deficiencies.
Ukalama	Older men and women who do not have support from their family because no one is close to help.

The Better-Off	
Odjifunila	People who manage well (<i>desenrascar</i>) in their daily life, and who do not depend on others.
Opata	People who are in a position to give informal employment (<i>biscatos</i>) to other people in agriculture, fisheries and construction.
Olemela	People who have a car, who have companies in (Metangula), who pay fixed [monthly] salaries to their employees, who have a bank-account and who sell products coming from Malawi and Tanzania.

Source: 1st Reality Check Lago (ORGUT 2011c)

To systematically pursue the socio-economic and cultural implications of being part of each of these categories, we have identified seven individual households that belong to each one of them. These will represent a ‘panel of households’ (see ORGUT 2011f) that we will follow closely throughout the Reality Checks. Below, emphasis is on changes in poverty and well-being and experiences with public institutions in the period 2011-2012.

Family 1 (Usuwedwa I). The household lives in Milombe, in a small house with only one room. The couple has six children from 2 months to 19 years of age. They have two *machambas* in the rainfed area that barely produce enough for consumption. In addition, the husband makes and repairs agricultural tools and doors made out of bamboo-reeds – for which there are limited requests and which pay poorly. The children go to school “sometimes”, with the exception of the oldest boy who has always been interested and has received support to start 8th Grade in Metangula. The husband claims his family has always been poor, and underlines this by saying that they “never had the means to leave Meluluca” even in times of war when most people did so. He has no relatives left. The wife’s father died in the civil war (“guerra familiar”), her mother from malaria and all her three brothers are also dead. The one person they rely on in times of crisis is the wife’s uncle (the brother of her diseased mother), who lives close by.

Developments 2011-2012. The household has not seen any changes in its composition. The family still depends on the construction of sale of bamboo doors and repairs of agricultural tools. However, the husband has also started to learn to make fishing canoes, which he thinks will enhance his income. The wife has a *machamba* of *mandioca* and also produces

maize. The main changes in the family situation the past year is an increase in the value of the doors produced by the husband from 100 to 150 MT, and that the oldest child who studied in Metangula had to leave his studies because the family could no longer pay for his accommodation and his frequent absence compelled him to repeat 8th Grade. The family's relationship with the State is through the school and health services, and they claim that "up till now there has been no reasons for complaints [about our relations with the State] except that there are no medicines at the Health Post". The family does still not receive any support from local institutions, but they continue to receive support from the wife's uncle in times of real difficulties.

Family 2 (Usuwedwa II). The household consists of a single mother, one of her two children and the child of an older sister who lives permanently with her. Her oldest daughter is 15, has a child and just moved in with a man in the neighbourhood. The house where Usuwedwa lives is made of burnt blocks of clay (*tijolo queimado*), has four rooms and a fenced backyard. In this case, however, the dwelling is a poor indicator of poverty and well-being: Usuwedwa is taking care of the dwelling for a younger brother who has just married and moved to his wife's place in Metangula, and Usuwedwa's real dwelling is a small shack in the yard. She has no contact with the father of her children, and never received any type of support (one of them is what she describes as a 'drunkard'). She has never gone to school, and her children stopped studying in 3rd Grade 'as there was no money'. She has no *machamba* and makes a living by selling small *bolinhos* for 1 MTn a piece, has five chickens and two ducks, and gets fish when she rents out the small shack where she used to live to fishermen.

Developments 2011-2012. This household has seen a change in its composition in that a niece who lived in the dwelling went back to her mother's house and the brother of the household head came back from Metangula with his wife and three children. The *Usuwedwa* still depends on the support from her brother who works in fisheries, and the income she gets from renting out a part of her dwelling to a fisherman for 100 MT a month. Usuwedwa also still gets some support from her married oldest daughter, in the form of practical help in the house and food. The household head has a small *machamba*, but in the 2011/2012 agricultural year she did not produce anything because she has been frequently ill. The main changes for the family the past year has been that Usuwedwa had to move out of her brother's house when he returned, and back into a very small house in the garden – even though her brother helped her improve it. She also stopped selling small rolls (*bolinhos*) because the price of wheat increased and the chickens she used to sell to get capital died. The household's relation with the State is solely through the school and health services. She is pleased with the former, but very dissatisfied with the latter. The household does not receive any support neither from traditional nor from public institutions.

Family 3 (Chilecua). The household lives in Lussefa, and consists of an old widow as the household head; her daughter with three children for whom she does not get any support; and her granddaughter of approximately 15 years who has a child of 3 months and a husband who is usually out travelling 'dancing and playing drums' (as he was when we met the household). The three women live separately in individual dwellings close by each other, but claim they belong to the same household as they 'eat from the same pot'. Their dwellings are small and in poor conditions. They have their own *machamba* but did not produce anything the last agricultural season ('we don't have husbands who can help us'), and work in the fields of others. According to Chilecua's daughter the *rainha* does not want to give them any support, but according to Chilecua herself the real problem is that her daughter does not want to work and is considered lazy. Their main source of income seems to be from *ganho-ganho*, primarily by helping out with small chores in the houses of others for which they receive pay either in cash or kind.

Developments 2011-2012. The composition of the household did not change, but the daughter of the household head is in the beginning of her fourth pregnancy. Moreover, the grand-children from another daughter of Chilecua have started to give some financial support and basic food as they saw their grandmother's situation deteriorate. The household also survives with the help of *machambas* owned by Chilecua's daughter and grand-daughter, but they expect a very low production as they are 'only women'. Finally, the household sometimes sell fire-wood. The main changes in the life of the family the last year are: the construction of two small bathrooms made of grass, and a small house for the old household head as the old house fell down because it was in such a bad state. The family only has direct contact with the State through its health services. When they have needed help, they considered the support to be very poor. At one point the pregnant household member visited the health post and state: "I am pregnant, my stomach is getting bigger and I went to the Health Post to have a check-up of the pregnancy to get registered ('abrir ficha'), but they told me that my stomach didn't have anything inside and that I had to come back for another consultation later". Even though it is a very poor family, their members still don't get any type of support neither from a public institution nor from neighbours, and they say: "When we have nothing, we do not ask anybody" ("*Quando não temos nada ficamos, não pedimos a ninguém*").

Family 4 (Maciquine). 'Maciquine' lives alone with a heavily handicapped boy of around eight years of age. Their one-room dwelling is nearly falling apart, and the grass roof has large holes in it. She has a total of five children, with the other four being married and living elsewhere in Meluluca. Her fortunes changed in 2009, when her husband died and she lost her main source of support. The dwelling where she used to live was taken over by her oldest son and his family, and she moved closer to her oldest brother's oldest son – who she realised was the only one who could help her as her own children "are all poor". While 'Maciquine' has access to a *machamba*, she does not really produce as she cannot leave her son alone. Her main source of income is a few chickens, and she also makes mats (*esteiras*) when she can get hold of the material. When 'Maciquine' has real difficulties she turns to her nephew (*sobrinho*) for help. Her neighbours, she says, can only afford to give "moral support".

Developments 2011-2012. There have been no changes in the family-structure. The main source of income for the family is the production and sale of reed mats. In 2011 the lady also sold chickens, but they died and she has not been able to continue. The family get some support from the oldest children, and the nephew of a female household-head living close by. The support has been in the form of food. The household-head has a *machamba* with *mandioca*, but also this year she had no production because of illness. The main change in the past year has been the health of the handicapped son: last year he could not walk, and this year he is able to move around alone, which implies more independence for both the mother and the son. The lady says: "When you were here last year my son didn't know anything, he did not walk and he never left the house, but I worked hard and I found a good *curandeiro* who massaged his feet and arms with plants, roots and herbs. He also gave him something to drink and now he is better and much less aggressive.". Her relationship with the State has been through a couple of visits to the Health Post to get support for the child, but they did not have any medicines. Despite their poverty, the family does not get any support neither from the State nor from the community.

Family 5 (Ukalama). The household consists of two elders living in a poor one-room dwelling, and have a small *machamba* as their main source of subsistence and income. Their field is far away, and as they are old they do not have the strength to work much. They only produce *mandioca*, which requires the least work and care – even if they are aware that it is not a very nutritious crop. In addition to themselves, they also have the *de facto* responsibility for several grandchildren who come to stay with them for longer or shorter periods of time. Their four children are all poor and largely in the same situation as their parents. Two live

with their families in Metangula and two in Meluluca, and they tend to send their children to Meluluca when things (or their children...) become difficult. One granddaughter was present the day we visited the family, saying she wanted to stay 'to help out' and because it was nice to stay with the grandmother (*avo*). Their access to food improves sometimes with the help of the wife's oldest brother's oldest son who lives in Metangula: He has given them a fishing net that is used by others, and which gives the rights to a part of the catch.

Developments 2011-2012. Arriving at the dwelling of this household, we were told that they had not been present for a couple of weeks and would not return for another two-three weeks. The reason was, people say, that the household had managed to open another agricultural field with the help of a relative, and had planted maize. Being a more important and nutritious crop, they had decided to stay at the field and protect it from monkeys and other intruders. This way, the household has apparently seen an improvement in their situation. This will be followed up in the 2013 Reality Check.⁹

Family 6 (Odjifunila). The husband is 46 years old, lives in Nchepa/Ngala, and has two wives and a total of 15 children. With his first wife he lives in a compound with two dwellings and an additional one under construction. His second wife – with whom he lives every second week – has a similar living arrangement. Odjifunila reached 4th Grade, and claims he grew up under poor conditions moving between Meluluca and Malawi where he started out fishing with his uncle. Returning to Meluluca after the 'family war' he worked hard in his *machambas* where he produced *mandioca* as well as 'fine maize (*mahele*), and he ended up being able to start selling fish (and marrying a second wife). His business received a boost in 2008 when he joined an association and managed funding (from the 7 million scheme) of 8.000 Mtn, which he used to expand his fish trade. In 2010 his first wife also got involved in commercialisation of fish – again with a loan from the 7 million scheme. Odjifunila sends all his children to school in Meluluca or Metangula, with the oldest from the first wife attending the Pedagogic University in Lichinga. Odjifunila has a large extended family, with a mother and four married sisters living nearby. He also has married brothers, but they live further away in the compounds of their wives. Odjifunila claims he has close contact with his relatives, but also emphasises that he is independent and manages on his own.

Illustration 11: Successful Female Entrepreneur



Photo: Inge Tvedten

Developments 2011-2012. During the past year a child of the second wife died. Otherwise the family composition is the same, with both sub-households having a mixture of children having moved out and staying at home. The main source of income for the family is still commercialization of dried fish. None of the co-wives work outside their dwelling. The main changes for the household the past year has been an increase in the quantity of fish sales to between 50 and 60 cans per month, and that they have finished the construction of a brick house next to the first wife's main dwelling. The illness of the second wife compelled the household head to stay with her at the hospital in Malawi for close to four months. This created difficulties for the business in that period of time, but the household head has worked hard to re-establish his fish-sales. His main relationship with the Mozambican State is through education and the school, and he sees no reasons for complaints about the former. His one contact with the Health Post was, however, a very negative experience: "When my child became ill we took him to the Health Post, but the nurse was not able to treat him and he took a long time to write a paper of transfer to Metangula. When he finally did the child

⁹ While it would have been possible to ask neighbours and others about changes in the family situation, there are many good reasons not to do so in a setting like Meluluca.

was very sick. We rented a car to take him to Metangula, but he died on the way. This has also happened with other persons who have become ill [i.e. that he is slow in responding]”.

Family 7 (Opata). ‘Opata’ left, as so many in Meluluca, for Malawi at long and regular intervals during the two wars. He also got married in Malawi. Returning in 1995, he started out producing tobacco which gave sufficient income to start other small businesses. One was to sell dried fish and the other *capulanas* - in both cases using his contacts in Malawi. The business went well, and Opata eventually managed to invest in larger boats and cattle. He currently has a total of five motorised boats, each with crews of between 3 and 12 people depending on the type of fishing. He also has over 30 heads of cattle and 15 goats. Until he received a contribution from the 7 million scheme in 2011, he claims he was all ‘self-made’. His economic success has also had social implications: He has expanded his family and has a total of four wives and 20 children between 23 years and one month of age. Opata is still seeking to expand his business, and his plan is to buy a car and start with transportation.

Developments 2011-2012. When visiting this household the household head was absent on business in Malawi, but the first of his four wives had the authority to meet and speak to us on his behalf. During the past year the mother of the household head, who lived in Opata, died. Otherwise his large family remains the same. The main changes for the household have been a reduction in the number of the husband’s cattle to 28; the illness of the oldest child of the household head and his first wife, which led the latter to stay with her in a hospital in Malawi for five months; the construction of a wall around the dwellings of all four wives; the construction of a kitchen-section made of cement and with a zinc roof; acquisition of a larger variety of products in their store (spare parts for motorcycles and cars and paint among others); an increase in the quantity of fish; and overall improvements in the living conditions of the family. The family did not yet buy the vehicle for transportation they had planned to (“not because we could not afford it, but because we have not had the time”). The household’s relations with the Mozambican State has been positive, even though they usually go to Malawi for business and treatment. With the illness of the daughter they first tried to get treatment in Mozambique and were followed up well: “When our daughter became ill, I first took her to the nurse at the Health Post in Meluluca, but he did not manage to cure her. He gave us a letter of transfer to the Heath Centre in Metangula, but they didn’t know how to treat her either, and transferred her to the hospital in Lichinga. As they did not understand what was wrong with her either, the health personnel advised us to go to other Hospitals. We then went to the Hospital in Mandimba where they recommended that we go across the border to a hospital in Malawi. In Malawi they finally discovered what was wrong with our daughter and they operated on her abdomen”.

4.4 Social Mobility

As shown above, Meluluca currently has structural conditions that are conducive to economic initiatives and growth: On the one hand they have favourable infrastructure in the form of a road taking them to principal markets both in Lago, Lichinga and Malawi, and on the other they largely depend on fisheries which contains options for production increases and capital accumulation (there are conflicting opinions and messages about the danger of over-fishing with the current high level of exploitation of the resources).

Agriculture, on which the entire population of Meluluca depend for subsistence, does not have the same potential for production increases with the current level of technology. The only existing cash crop alternative came in 2011 with the investments by the João Ferreira dos Santos cotton company, but this has so far not instigated any larger income and options for social mobility. On the contrary, the 31 families who changed focus from traditional crops to cash crops have seen their economic situation deteriorate due to low or insignificant incomes from cotton and diminishing returns from consumption production.

The people in a position to exploit the favourable economic opportunities are primarily those who already had a certain economic base and funds for further investments (and who we have seen also make up the bulk of those benefitting from the 7 million MT scheme). Having said this, there are still important socio-cultural constraints on entrepreneurship and abrupt social mobility. Economic investments are particularly difficult for women, as they have very little control over economic resources in the household, except for what is being used for taking care of children's education and health. At the same time we have seen that female household heads are among the very poorest in the community, and tend to be the most socially isolated, often without support neither from their former husbands family nor from their own.

Rapidly improved economic fortunes is also still easily related to issues of witchcraft and sorcery, setting in motion often dramatic developments forcing people to move out of the villages all together. For some reason (to be further investigated in the Reality Check 2013), upwards social mobility based on fisheries does not seem to be related to the same social-cultural forces. One reason may be the respect people have for the craft of fisheries which is based on deep knowledge of the connections between nature, the fish-resources and the capability of the fisherman. Another may be that a successful fishing boat owner by definition also has positive repercussions for other people through the creation of employment opportunities for crew-members.

Looking specifically at the families in our focus household group, the general picture of non-mobility for the poorest (Usuwedwa, Chilecua, Maciquine, Ukalama) families and upwards social mobility for families who already are relatively well-off is largely confirmed. We saw that the Odjifunila and Opata families had managed to both improve their living conditions and expand their business the past year. There are also other examples of households in the former category, including a woman with 17 children who lost her husband in the end of 2011, finds herself without support from public institutions and the extended families, and depends totally on support from a small network of female friends. Among the better-off there are examples of a young household head who during one year has moved from being the owner of three fishing nets and a small marketing stall to running a flourishing business with a small truck selling dried fish as far away as to Cuamba – all primarily related to access to 7 million MT funds. Having said this, even households in the better-off categories are vulnerable to external shocks and unexpected expenses. The Odjifunila household found itself in a rapidly deteriorating situation when their incomes from fisheries stopped as the husband accompanied his wife to hospital in Malawi.

Illustration 12: Downtown Meluluca a Quiet Morning



Photo: Inge Tvedten

5. CONCLUSIONS/LESSONS LEARNT

5.1 Main Changes in Poverty and Well-Being 2011-2012

At the District Level, the expansion of formal industries (forestry, gold-exploration, tourism) has a considerable potential for economic development, but has not yet really given results in terms of development and employment creation. The main challenge is for the forestry industry to contribute with more stable employment creation and live up to expectations of social responsibility.

The District and its population is still primarily depending on agriculture, fisheries and trade, but only the two latter have a real basis for income generation and capital accumulation. Still agriculture remains the basis for the large majority of the population and it will be vital to make production more efficient with better access to new technologies, improved seeds, and markets. Agriculture and fisheries will be the main focus in the 3rd Reality Check.

Meluluca is still characterized by rapid economic developments, primarily resting upon fisheries. There are signs of over-fishing, particularly of the vital Uusipa, which will have to be taken seriously. With the expansion of fisheries and fish-trade, more people have experienced upward social mobility and become part of the “*upata*” and “*olemela*” categories of the better-off.

The 7 million MT scheme is still a central potential source for the creation of small scale enterprises and employment in Meluluca, but the scheme is experiencing serious challenges. On the one hand the process of selecting projects is hampered by non-transparency and corruption, and on the other the success-rate of the projects chosen is negatively affected by limited managerial and technical competence among beneficiaries.

The large majority of new enterprises and employments are in the hands of men, even though there are examples of successful female entrepreneurs. This shows that social-cultural constraints on women-entrepreneurships are not absolute. However, it is still more difficult for women than for men to get access to investment funds, to establish enterprises, and to control the income made. At the same time there are several examples of young men in particular having established small scale trade businesses. There are few if any examples of new innovative jobs created.

Primary education has seen small, but significant improvements particularly in the proportion of girls attending school and the introduction of the Bilingue-system where the students are taught both in Portuguese and their native language. At the same time the limited access to education above 7th Grade continues to be a severe limitation, and too many of those who do get higher education do not get relevant employment. The implication is that the faith in education as a way to improve one's life is being reduced.

Health remains the perhaps biggest obstacle to the improvement of people's life, in a context where access to food/nutrition is usually sufficient except for the very poorest. Poor health and premature deaths not only lead to unnecessary suffering, but also hamper production and income. In Meluluca the main challenges are an upgrade of the vital Health Post, and stronger efforts to spread knowledge about and accessibility of key prevention methods such as mosquito nets for malaria and contraceptives for HIV/AIDS.

Despite the overall positive economic developments in Meluluca the past year, the situation for the very poorest has not improved as evidenced by the poor (*umphawi*) focus families. They have limited capital and strength for working in agriculture, they remain largely socially isolated, and no one has access to public social support. They still depend on support either from extended family members or (for those who don't have family members in a position to support) from locally based institutions such as the traditional authorities, the Mosque, and/or

the best-off members of the community. Female-headed households and women represent an un-proportionally large part of this group.

5.2 Challenges in Government-Citizen Relations

The Lago District Administration has increasing confidence in its role and capacity following the on-going decentralization process and capacity development of its staff. However, there are still large variations between the different District Directorates as regards their actual decision-making possibilities, particularly in relation to Provincial Government. At the same time, the District acknowledges remaining challenges in their relations with the Administrative Post, Localidade, and Povoação levels of government, especially in terms of competence and capacity for the execution of decisions made.

Public services in terms of roads, water, education, health, etc. are delivered to places like Meluluca, but still way below expectations in the local communities and with decisions of actual locations for example of water-posts that are poorly understood. This is partly a question of the District's limited access to resources from central and provincial government, but also related to problems of communication of what is actually possible to accomplish.

The Consultative Counsels were intended to be representative institutions and “democratic” links between government and the local populations, with members appointed from government, traditional authorities, civil society, as well as people of particular esteem. However, their broad mandate has been diluted by lack of real decision making power both at District and Administrative Post levels, and they have ended up being primarily concerned with the 7 million MT scheme. Their recommendations are frequently changed by the District and Post administrations for ‘technical reasons’.

Traditional Authorities have retained their strong position and role in Meluluca both in relation to ‘traditional’ and ‘development’ concerns. However, there are signs that their position is undermined by their growing dependence on government for remuneration and for becoming government “mouth-pieces” – making some people question their real independence in matters important for the community.

The increasing presence and role of Frelimo in local communities like Meluluca has contributed to a reduction in the belief in democratic institutions and the utility of voting for the opposition in democratic elections – as evidenced by reductions in actual voting. In Meluluca, with a long history of opposition politics, Frelimo party membership is often seen as ‘opportunistic’ for people who want to obtain particular goals either privately or as community leaders.

The limited faith in the ability and will of the local Government to deliver central services to Meluluca – sometimes equally much related to problems of communication as to what is actually delivered – has resulted in an expressed strategy of the local communities of bypassing the formal government structures by relating to external visits from higher levels of government, visits by civil society organisations etc. in order to express their concerns to people they believe are in better positions to act and deliver.

5.3 Policy Implications and Development Interventions

Extractive industries will have large implications for developments in the District of Lago and directly affect the lives of many poor people. It will be vital that their work is combined with careful attention to their corporate social responsibilities and that civil society/NGOs change their strategy from one of confrontation to one of relating firmly, but constructively to the new development actors.

For most people in the District as well as in Meluluca, agriculture remains crucial, and the sector should be given more attention. Primary focus should be on recruiting extension officers and introducing improved technologies, as well as on securing market accessibility also for the more remote villages through improvements in the tertiary road network.

The potentially very important 7 million MT scheme should be reinvigorated by cutting all accumulated debt and redefining basic premises of the scheme related to the application process, as well as the priority types of projects. More attention should be given by government, civil society, as well as the private sector towards contributing to capacity development related to small-scale business development.

The crisis of confidence between the local population and the public administration and public institutions should be approached by developing new strategies for communication between government and local populations and vice versa. More explicit forums for communication should be established, improved transparency about decisions made should be achieved by innovative ways of communication, and the community radio (based on the Malawian model) should get a much more important role in delivering messages to local populations.

Enhanced popular representation and accountability should be secured by reinvigorating the Consultative Councils, particularly at the Administrative Post level, which in many ways is the weakest link in the five tier government structure. This should be done by reintroducing their broader mandate for community development at large, and by clarifying/strengthening their role in the process of selecting projects for the 7 million MT scheme. It will also be vital to accept open expressions of opposition politics, including acceptance of symbols like flags and non-harassment of representatives of opposition parties.

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