

Reality Checks Mozambique

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

Final Report

2011-2015



ORGUT

in cooperation with:

CMI CHR. MICHELSEN INSTITUTE **COWI**

The Reality Checks in Mozambique have been carried out by ORGUT Consulting (Sweden) in association with COWI Lda (Mozambique) and Chr. Michelsen Institute (Norway) on behalf of the Embassy of Sweden in Maputo. The Reality Checks were implemented between 2011-2015, with fieldwork being carried out each year in the Districts of Cuamba, Majune and Lago in the Niassa Province. This is the Final Report for the series of Reality Checks, synthesising the main findings from the preceding five Annual Reports and their accompanying sub-reports.

The report is written by the team leader for the Reality Checks in Mozambique and sub-team leader for Lago Dr Inge Tvedten, the Majune sub-team leader Minna Tuominen and the Cuamba sub-team leader Carmeliza Rosário.

This document has been financed by the Embassy of Sweden in Maputo. The Embassy does not necessarily share the views expressed in this material. Responsibility for its contents rests entirely with the author.

Cover Photo: Kajsa Johansson – Lago: Woman in Storm

TABLE OF CONTENT

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. INTRODUCTION..... | 6 |
| 1.1. The Reality Checks..... | 6 |
| 1.2. Approach and Methodologies..... | 9 |
| 1.3. Outline of Report..... | 11 |
| 2. THE SETTING | 12 |
| 2.1. Niassa Province | 12 |
| 2.2. The Project Sites..... | 13 |
| 2.3. Some Personal Observations..... | 14 |
| 3. GOVERNANCE, AGRICULTURE AND PRIVATE SECTOR | 19 |
| 3.1. Governance | 19 |
| 3.2. Private Sector/Entrepreneurship | 32 |
| 3.3. Conclusions | 37 |
| 4. LOCAL DYNAMICS OF POVERTY AND WELL-BEING..... | 38 |
| 4.1. Community Relations..... | 38 |
| 4.2. Household Organisation and Strategies..... | 43 |
| 4.3. Gender Relations..... | 50 |
| 4.4. Social Mobility..... | 53 |
| 5. SUMMING UP | 56 |
| LIST OF LITERATURE..... | 60 |
| ANNEX 1: REFLECTION REPORT..... | 66 |
| ANNEX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE..... | 83 |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|---|
| ANE | National Roads Administration |
| BAU | Balcão de Atendimento Único ('One Stop Shop') |
| CBO | Community Based Organisation |
| EDM | Electricity of Mozambique |
| FDD | District Development Fund |
| FIPAG | Water Supply Investments and Assets Fund |
| FM | Malonda Foundation |
| INAS | National Institute for Social Issues |
| IOF | Mozambique Household Budget Survey |
| MDM | Democratic Movement of Mozambique |
| MLT | Moçambique Leaf Tobacco |
| Mt | Meticais |
| NGO | Non-Government Organisation |
| OMM | Organisation of Mozambican Women |
| PESOD | District Social and Economic Plan |
| POS | Point-of-Sales Terminal |
| PROMER | Programme for the Promotion of Rural Markets |
| SDAE | District Directorate for Economic Activities |
| SME | Small and Medium Sized Enterprise |
| SSA | Sub-Saharan Africa |
| UCM | Catholic University of Mozambique |
| MLT | Mozambique Leaf Tobacco |
| San-JFS | Cotton Society of Niassa – João Ferreira dos Santos |

Map 1: Reality Checks Mozambique / Niassa



1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty monitoring and evaluation in Mozambique primarily take place within the framework of the implementation of Mozambique's Poverty Reduction Strategy PARP/A (GdM 2005; 2011) and the country's Five Year Plan 2015-2019 (RdM 2015), 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, 2013, 2015; MPD 2010; World Bank 2007, 2015; UNICEF 2014).

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 Cooperation Agency (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.

A series of five "Reality Checks in Mozambique" has taken place in the period 2011-2015, focussing on the dynamics of poverty and well-being with particular attention given to good governance, agriculture/climate and private sector/entrepreneurship that are key sectors in Swedish development cooperation with the country (MFA Sweden 2008, 2015). Each Reality Check has been published in the form of one Annual Report and three Sub-Reports from each of the three selected study-sites (see Orgut 2011 for more details).

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

- Inform the public discussion among key development actors on poverty reduction, especially in the province of Niassa;
- Contribute to a better understanding of qualitative poverty monitoring methods in Mozambique;
- 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:

- 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);
- 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;

- 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).

There has also been an expectation that the Reality Checks shall, to the extent that it is relevant for the local population under study, pay special attention to “priority issues identified in the annual reviews of projects and programmes within Swedish priority sectors” (see Terms of Reference).

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 should 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 District of Lago; ii) the Municipality of Cuamba; and iii) the District of Majune (see Map 2).

Fieldwork for the 1st Reality Check Mozambique was carried out in September 2011, with Sub-Reports from the Districts of Lago (Orgut 2011b), the District of Majune (Orgut 2011c) and the Municipality of Cuamba (Orgut 2011d) and the 1st Annual Report synthesising main findings (Orgut 2011e). The 1st Reality Check has served as a ‘Baseline’ for subsequent

Map 2: Reality Checks project sites



reports, and includes background information and data about Niassa and the three project sites as well as a Baseline Survey that are useful when reading the subsequent reports for the period 2012-2015.

The 2nd Reality Check was carried out in September 2012 (Orgut 2012a, b, c and d). In line with the Terms of Reference, the reports had a thematic focus on governance. The 3rd Reality Check was carried out in June 2013 (Orgut 2013a, b, c and d) with a thematic focus on agriculture, employment and climate; the 4th Reality Check in September 2014 with a thematic focus on the private sector/entrepreneurship (Orgut 2014a, b, c, d); and the 5th Reality Check in October 2015 with a focus on the quantitative expressions of poverty and well-being as these appear through the Reality Check Baseline (2011) and Reality Check Endline (2015) surveys.

Illustration 2: Collage of Presentations



This is the Final Report, summing up and analysing the entire Reality Check series of studies.¹ In line with the main objective/idea of the series, it will primarily be based on qualitative information and data or “poor people’s perspectives on development in order to capture the multidimensionality of poverty, offer insights into causal processes and allow for a triangulation of information from different sources” (Swedish Embassy 2010/ToR) – using the quantitative data collected in 2011 and 2015 to validate the processes/dynamics described/analysed. The Final Report will be accompanied by a separate Reflection Report (see Annex 1) assessing methodology and process, lessons learnt and recommendations for possible future Reality Checks” (Ibid).

¹ Or as per ToR: “A final report consisting of i) a summary of the yearly reports, including a compilation of qualitative data and overall conclusions regarding findings” (Swedish Embassy 2010).

The Reality Checks produced so far have been presented and discussed in a number of different settings (see Illustration 2) including i) the Swedish Embassy in Maputo for national stakeholders ; ii) seminars in Lichinga for representatives of government, civil society and the private sector in Niassa; iii) for Local Government in Cuamba, Lago and Majune, iv) in interviews on the national news broadcast “Noticias”; v) for the community radio in Majune, Lago and Cuamba; and vi) through expositions of photos, participatory exercises etc. in all three project sites (Orgut 2011f). Upon requests, we have also distributed reports to local institutions such as Secondary Schools for use in the social sciences and to museums.

1.2. Approach and Methodologies

We have carried out our analyses with reference to an analytical framework where poverty and well-being is seen as the outcome of complex historical and structural forces, as well as the population’s own practices of complex social relations and cultural constructions (Orgut 2011f). Political and economic structures have a powerful effect upon human action and the shape of events, but there is also room for human agency and ordinary lives in the form of strategies and action for social mobility. The distinction between structure and agency is relevant for the current development/poverty reduction debate in Mozambique: While one line of thought holds the view that people can break out of poverty through individual ‘entrepreneurship’ and by enhancing their human capital in terms of education and health, others emphasise that poverty reduction will only be accomplished through the removal of structural political, economic and cultural constraints.

Our point of departure has been that poverty can most usefully be seen as a multi-dimensional concept (Ibid). It involves the lack of employment and income needed to attain basic necessities (alleviated through a combination of increased *opportunities* and an increased *capacity* to capitalise on available opportunities); a sense of voicelessness and powerlessness in relation to institutions of society and the state (alleviated through increased *empowerment*); and vulnerability to adverse shocks, linked with the ability to cope with them through social relationships and legal institutions (alleviated through increased *security*). ‘The poor’ have been identified through a combination of quantitative data on income and consumption, and local categorisations of who the better-off, the poor and the destitute are (see below). With reference to the recommendations in the Mid-Term Review of Sweden’s Development Cooperation with Mozambique (Sida 2009), special attention has been given to processes of marginalisation and social exclusion of the very poorest children, women and men.

Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches gives the best option for monitoring and evaluating development and poverty reduction. More specifically, the studies are based on a combination of quantitative information derived from the National Institute of Statistics (INE) and District Authorities; a Baseline Survey carried out in 2011 in the three project sites for this project and an accompanying Endline Survey carried out in 2015; key informant interviews in the provincial capital Lichinga and the selected Districts/Municipality; participant observation in the local communities selected for fieldwork; and a set of qualitative/participatory methodologies including immersion with households in different socio-economic positions. The methodologies are described in detail in a separate report

entitled “Reality Checks in Mozambique. Analytical Approach and Methodologies” (Orgut 2011f, see also Hesse-Biber and Johnson 2015), but a brief summary is in place:

Quantitative data. For the mapping of poverty and well-being in Niassa, the team has related actively to existing quantitative data. These include the 2007 National Census (INE 2009b); the 2008/09 and 2014/15 National Household Expenditure Survey (INE 2010, 2015); 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 (GdN 2007, 2011, 2013, 2015a) and the District Social and Economic Development Plans (PESODs) for Cuamba, Lago and Majune (see List of Literature).

We have secured adequate quantitative data to map poverty and well-being and peoples’ relations to public services in the three study sites over time by carrying out a survey with a total of 360 households (120 in each site). The survey has been done twice with the same families, i.e. in the beginning (2011) and end (2015) of the project period, and represents rare panel-data. The Baseline and the Endline survey 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 (Orgut 2015d, Annex 1).

Qualitative data. For the political/institutional dimensions of the Reality Checks, we have mostly relied 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 private sector/entrepreneurship. We also complement the classical anthropological methodology of ‘participant observation’ with a set of concrete participatory methodologies that are applied in focus groups, and expanded case studies at household level (Orgut 2011f). The groups are composed of women or men, young or old or a mixture of such groups, depending on the topic at hand.

The qualitative methodologies used include, but are not limited to i) *Histograms* (to ascertain the history of each site under study, with an emphasis on events and processes that have been particularly important for current socio-economic conditions of well-being and poverty); ii) *Community Mapping* (to map changes in institutions and individuals considered most important for the life of the community); iii) *Most Important Change* (to identify the main political, economic and social changes in the community the past year) iv) *Force-Field Analysis* (to capture perceptions of what conditions may inhibit or accelerate the type of change and development favoured by the community); v) *Community problem matrix* (to identify and rank the most important problems that affect the community or larger groups of people in the community); vi) *Venn-diagram* (to identify the relevance of and accessibility to the most important resources [people and services] in the community) and vii) *Wealth Ranking* (to capture the community’s own perception about different levels and categories of poverty and well-being). (See Orgut 2011f for more details).

Focus Households. The initial wealth ranking exercise done in 2011 (see Orgut 2011f) formed the basis for our identification of Focus Households, with whom we have related closely through various forms of immersion during the course of the Reality Checks. As will be discussed in more detail below, the communities tend to distinguish between 2-4 levels of poverty or ‘poor people’ and 1-3 levels of well-being or ‘better-off’ people – each with their own dynamics and position in the communities. Altogether 22 Focus Households have been selected from these categories and have been 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 in their socio-economic position.

Research ethics were initially discussed in the Inception Report (Orgut 2011a). We have sought to deal with this by being transparent about the objectives of the Reality Check study series, by carefully selecting and securing the anonymity of people we interview and relate to, and by systematically disseminating research results back to stakeholders in relevant institutions and the communities under study. Nevertheless, there have been challenges in relation to explaining and getting local acceptance for the type of formative process research that the Reality Checks represent. This is further discussed in the RC Reflection Report (Annex 2).

Illustration 3: *Cuamba at dawn*



Photo: Kajsa Johansson

1.3. Outline of Report

This Final Report consists of “a summary of the yearly reports, including a compilation of the qualitative data and overall conclusions regarding the findings” for the period 2011-2015” (Swedish Embassy 2010/ToR). With reference to the analytical framework and based on the methodologies outlined above, [Chapter 2](#) gives an overview over the Districts/Municipality of Cuamba, Lago and Majune and the local communities in which the Reality Checks have taken place. [Chapter 3](#) sums up and analyses the structural context that affect the lives of the local populations with special reference to governance and public services; agriculture and fisheries; and the private sector/entrepreneurship. [Chapter 4](#) takes its point of departure in human agency by accounting for perceptions and social relations of poverty and well-being in the community and among the 22 Focus Households. [Chapter 5](#) concludes the report, and presents a set of basic recommendations for how to support processes of upward social mobility while at the same time cater for the very poorest and most marginalised.

2. THE SETTING

2.1. Niassa Province

Niassa is Mozambique's largest province, with an area of 129,056 km² and an estimated population for 2015 of 1.722.148 – which is an average of only 13 persons per square kilometre (www.ine.gov.mz). With Lichinga as its political capital, the province has 15 districts and four municipalities (Lichinga, Cuamba, Marrupa and Metangula). Cuamba, with a population of 250.919, is the economic hub of Niassa.

Politically the ruling party Frelimo has the Governorship, the political majority in Provincial Assembly, controls all four Municipalities and has appointed all 15 District Administrators – all in line with the current system of governance. The Provincial Strategic Development Plan (GdN 2007) for Niassa is ambitious with the goal of a further reduction in poverty of 15 percent by 2017, and also contains ambitious plans in the areas of good governance, agriculture and energy (GdN 2007, see GdM 2015a for a mid-term review).

Ethnically Niassa is a mixture of Macua, who comprise 47.5 percent of the population, primarily in the south and east around Cuamba; Yao, who comprise 36.9 percent mainly in the central and eastern part of the province and around Lichinga; and Nyanja, who comprise 8.4 percent in the area bordering Lake Niassa. Only 4.3 percent of the population has Portuguese as a mother tongue. Much of the population is Islamic (60.8 percent), followed by Catholics (26 percent), and Anglicans (4.0 percent) (INE 2010).

In the national Mozambican context, Niassa province is one of the most deprived provinces in terms of infrastructure, which is linked to the province being remote from the country's main centres of production and consumption and the poor connections to its main roads and transport system. Niassa is as a result poorly integrated in the national market. In fact, for many people from Niassa contacts with Malawi and Tanzania are more frequent and important than with the rest of the country.

Agriculture is the main economic activity in the province. It is also the main source of employment and income for the population. Other key sources of income and subsistence are informal trade and fisheries. Recent developments are large investments in forestry, commercial agriculture and mining, usually owned by international interests. This has provided some employment, but also created conflicts for example around land and working conditions (Solberg 2012; Bleyer et al. 2016).

In terms of poverty, Niassa has historically been one of the poorest provinces in Mozambique due to its isolation and marginalisation. However, since 1996/97 when Niassa had the country's highest poverty rate of 70.6 percent, this rate has been significantly reduced to 54.1 percent in 2002/03 and 31.9 percent in 2008/09 – albeit disguising an unusually high discrepancy between male- and female-headed households. No poverty rate has yet been established following the 2014/15 national household survey. Some key socio-economic indicators that are accessible from the 2008/09 and the 2014/15 National Household Survey are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Key Socio-Economic Indicators – Mozambique and Niassa (percent)

| INDICATOR | Mozambique | | Niassa | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------|--------|------|
| | 2010 | 2014 | 2010 | 2014 |
| Illiteracy of household head | 50 | 45 | 61 | 58 |
| Primary School Attendance Rate | 81 | N/A | 78 | N/A |
| Chronic malnutrition under five years | 44 | N/A | 45 | N/A |
| HIV-AIDS Prevalence | 12 | N/A | 4 | N/A |
| Quality housing (solid roof) | 25 | 35 | 11 | N/A |
| Electric lighting in dwelling | 13 | 25 | 12 | N/A |
| Bicycle ownership | 38 | N/A | 65 | N/A |

Sources: MISAU 2005, 2013; INE 2010, 2015.

2.2. The Project Sites

Three sites were to be chosen for the implementation of the Reality Checks in Mozambique project in order to “adequately reflect differences in structural constraints (such as access to services, infrastructure and economic opportunities) as well as political and social relationships (degree of importance of traditional vs. state institutions, degree of access to different types of social networks etc.)” (Swedish Embassy 2010/ToR). This was done as a collaborative effort between the provincial and district/municipal authorities and the research team in the project’s Inception Phase (see Orgut 2011a).

The District of Cuamba is situated in the southern part of Niassa Province, some 300 km from the provincial capital Lichinga. Cuamba is the economic hub of the province due to its location at the crossroads with Nampula and Zambézia provinces, and is less than 100 km from the border with Malawi. The district had a population of 209.621 in 2010 and 250.919 in 2015² of whom approximately 43 percent is concentrated in its urban centre. The Municipality of Cuamba is divided into five localities and eleven ‘bairros’, with each bairro being divided into different ‘povoados’. The Reality Check has taken place in two of the localities: Localidade 3 (Bairro do Aeroporto and Bairro Mutxora) was chosen because it is the most populated in the municipality, and Localidade 4 (Bairro Maganga) was chosen because it is the farthest away from the city centre and – according to the municipal authorities – the one with the least developed level of services.

The District of Lago consists of a population of 115.000 and four Administrative Posts. The Meluluca Administrative Post is located in the southern part of the district, and was established in 2008. Meluluka had an estimated population of 8.500 people in 2010, scattered over a stretch of approximately 70 km in 15 different villages. This had grown to 17.715 by the end of 2015. The large majority lives in the vicinity of Lake Niassa. Meluluca has historically been isolated, with very poor road access and the Lake as the main means of transportation. Agriculture and fisheries have been the main sources of employment and income. Partly due to its isolation traditional authorities have had a strong position in the

² All population figures are estimates based on the most recent Census by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), if not stated otherwise.

communities. A new and improved road made in 2008 ‘opened up’ parts of the area and has had a considerable impact on political and socio-economic developments in Meluluca – reflected in the large population growth.

Majune is located in the geographical centre of Niassa Province, with a population of 33.361 in 2010 and 39.223 in 2015. The District is divided up into three Administrative Posts: Malanga, Nairubi and Muequia. Of these Malanga, the district capital is the most populated one; according to the District Administrator, more than 80 percent of the district population lives in Malanga. Despite its central location, Majune was for many years isolated from both provincial urban centres, Lichinga and Cuamba, due to poor road conditions. It was only as late as 2003-2005 that the national road 14 (EN14) connecting Lichinga to Majune and Marrupa was rehabilitated and the physical isolation of the district was ended. The communities selected for closer study are the district capital Malanga and the village of Malila located 3 km south of the District capital.

In official quantitative terms (INE 2010, 2015), the three study sites possess a set of social and economic characteristics that reveal similarities as well as differences. As evident from Table 2, Cuamba generally comes out as the best-off and Majune as the poorest and most deprived district of the three both in the beginning and end of the project period.

Table 2: Social Indicators – Districts of Lago, Majune and Cuamba

| SOCIAL INDICATORS | Cuamba | | Lago | | Majune | |
|---------------------------|--------|------|------|------|--------|------|
| | 2010 | 2014 | 2010 | 2014 | 2010 | 2014 |
| Female Headed Households | 24 | N/A | 35 | N/A | 35 | N/A |
| Primary School Attendance | 67 | N/A | 65 | N/A | 54 | N/A |
| Solid Roof Housing | 1 | N/A | 1 | N/A | 0 | N/A |
| Electricity at Home | 6 | N/A | 4 | N/A | 0 | N/A |
| Radio ownership | 55 | N/A | 68 | N/A | 45 | N/A |
| Cell-phone | 3 | N/A | 1 | N/A | 1 | N/A |
| Bicycle Ownership | 68 | N/A | 30 | N/A | 63 | N/A |

Source: INE 2009, 2015

2.3. Some Personal Observations

To set the stage for the qualitative analysis of changes in poverty and well-being in Cuamba, Lago and Majune in the period 2011-2015, we will recapitulate some of the personal observations that have been used to introduce every Reality Check report – taking us from the provincial capital Lichinga, via the district/municipal centres and to the communities where the studies have been carried out.

Cuamba. As the backbone of Niassa province, the road from Lichinga to Cuamba is still not tarmacked in its entirety. However, the existing dirt road is better maintained than in 2011 and has been widened in anticipation of upcoming improvements. As we approach Cuamba city for the last time in 2015, the refurbishment of the railway line that connects Cuamba to

Lichinga becomes apparent, with rehabilitation advanced one third of its 300 kms. On the other side of Cuamba, the tarmac on the road between Nampula and Cuamba has reached Malema, 120 km from Cuamba and the still remaining dirt road has been well maintained. As a result, a major bus operator Nagi Investimentos has started daily connections between Nampula and Cuamba. The city itself is full of new constructions. New expansion areas are materialising, some created as a result of the resettlement of the population along the Nacala Corridor railway line, which connects Moatize to Nacala Port; and others planned by the municipality. At night the roads are well illuminated. This improves security, which has become a major concern for the local population who attribute rising criminality to easier access to the city. In addition, people agree that there has been a significant improvement in access to water since 2011. On the individual level, despite a variety of formal and informal employment options farming continues to be important for subsistence and income for the urban population.

Yet, despite the outward signs of increasing well-being, Cuamba was recently hit by two events that may slow down the vibrant dynamics of the city. Heavy rains have affected crops and everyone we have spoken to are bracing for famine. Also, the poor quality houses in the city's peripheral neighbourhoods were destroyed, isolating some communities. Impoverished owners cannot afford – nor do they have the strength – to rebuild their houses. The affected population had to be resettled, putting a strain on the limited resources of the municipality. Perhaps the most significant recent change has been the passing away of the newly re-elected Municipal president, Vicente Lourenço. He was quite popular during his first tenure,

Illustration 4: Cuamba

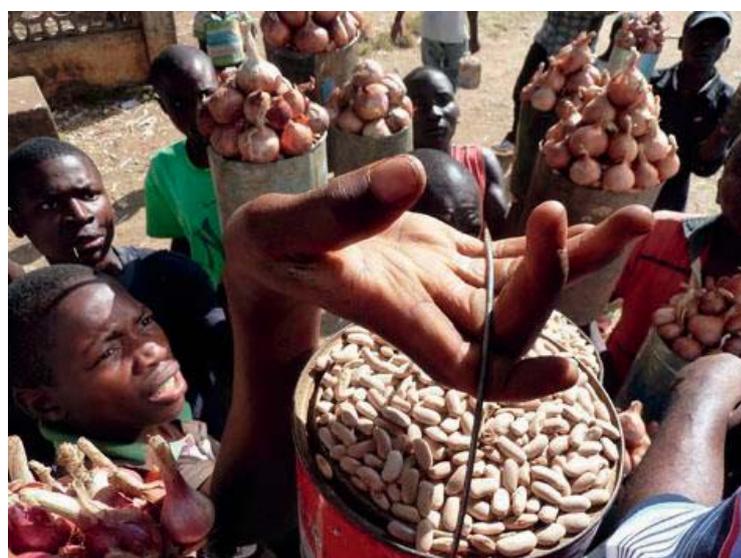


Photo: Kajsa Johansson

and public works saw a considerable boost. The new mayor is more cautious. He wants to pay the existing debts before committing to new investments. Already the improvement of municipal roads has been interrupted. He has also complained that municipal revenue is hardly enough to carry out what is needed. Despite the improvement in the water infrastructure, he argues, in the future it will not be enough to serve the increasing number of consumers. Hence, the central problem of water scarcity will remain an issue for Cuamba in the years to come.

Lago. Perhaps the most striking change from 2011 to 2015 along the 100 km road between Lichinga and the Lago district capital Metangula is the growing number of new and improved houses and informal markets. Housing is usually a household's largest investment, and the change attests to improved socio-economic conditions – at least among some. The markets have become larger and busier during the period in question, but seemingly not more

organised and formalised. Another notable change is the increasing number of flags from the main political parties Frelimo, Renamo and MDM, witness to increased politisation of the province and (apparently) also of political space. The continued prevalence of long poles with sarongs or *capulanas* tied to them, signalling that a child is going through rites of initiation, is a reminder that Niassa is a province where tradition and religion are strong. On our last trip in 2015, we are also passing vast forestry areas planted with eucalyptus that have grown both in scope and height since 2011. However, the failure of the Swedish company Chikwete in 2014 and subsequent sale to the Norwegian company Green Resources is a sign that investing in Niassa is complicated. Chikwete is seen to have underestimated both the importance and complexity of relations with communities, and the costs of doing business in a province with a poor business environment and infrastructure.

Approaching Metangula on the beautiful and steep escarpment down to Lake Niassa, the most noticeable change between 2011 and 2015 is the increasing crowdedness of the place, and the enhanced number of new and improved houses made of concrete (*blocos*) with zinc roofs. There are also a number of new shops (*lojas*) selling food and basic commodities in stark competition with each other – but also a few more ‘innovative’ enterprises including new tourist installations, a shop for electrical utensils and barber-shops with posters advertising new and ‘hip’ hairstyles. Moreover, the old passenger boat Ilala that took people to Malawi and Tanzania in 2011 has been substituted by the more modern and faster – but also more expensive – Tchambo. The most noticeable improvements, in terms of roads, housing and commercial outlets such as the town’s first commercial bank, are found along the main road from the town centre to government section or *Vila*.

The road from Metangula to Meluluca is still narrow and curved as in our first trip in 2011, but has seen clear improvements with new bridges and aqueducts that now makes it passable (almost) throughout the whole year. Passing the village of Ngolongue off the main road, a tourist establishment called Mbuna Bay Lodge has been developed with guesthouses and a restaurant representing the largest employer in the area. More people have also settled along the road, having moved from the interior with better agricultural conditions but considered too far away from roads, schools and hospitals. Entering Meluluca itself the main thoroughfare is more crowded; there are many more and improved houses with some having solar panels (electricity is still not there); the number of fishing boats on the beaches – that is the main source of income for the communities – has increased at least five-fold; and there are

Illustration 5: Lago/Meluluca



Photo: Kajsa Johansson

more commercial outlets (*bancas, barracas*) than the first time we arrived in 2011. However, there is also a tension in the air during our last visit that we have not experienced earlier. This turns out to be linked to a combination of natural/ environmental conditions in the form of excessive rains that has destroyed the crops and led to hunger among many families; endemic disease in the form of a cholera outbreak that killed 19 people in the villages; and a genuine fear that war will return to the area following news of fighting from southern/central Mozambique – all demonstrating the vulnerability of places like Meluluca.

Majune. As we start driving from Lichinga towards Majune, we can once more note how the provincial capital is extending its dimensions as new buildings are being constructed at the outskirts of the town. The construction works reach all the way to Chimbonila and even beyond, but then it all disappears. This year, while driving towards Majune we can see that the road rehabilitation that was started last year is still going on, but now it has been taken tens of kilometres further out. We are baffled to see the massive extension of it all. It is true, the road to Majune used to be a narrow one with potholes here and there, but it was nevertheless a well-drivable tar road. We cannot understand why the authorities decided to invest on improving this silent petty road westwards while the most critical road in the province, the one connecting Lichinga to Cuamba, is still covered by sand and gravels.

Illustration 6: *Majune/Malila*



Photo: Kajsa Johansson

Apart from these infrastructure improvements, the road from Lichinga to Majune has seen very few changes over these past five years. The description of the road from our first trip in 2011 could as well have been written in 2015: "We pass quite a few villages along the way but between the villages there are kilometres after kilometres of abundant land with no human settlement whatsoever. No wonder that the wild life tends to take over the control of these

lands. One of the striking features during our trip is the absence of trade along the roadside. There are no drinks, or fruits made available for the travellers; no tomatoes, small cookies, not even peanuts, that are typical food stuff sold along most main roads across Mozambique. If anything, one can sometimes see next to the road large plastic sheets with maize flour spread on it, but even that is said to be for drying, not for sale. Clearly, the local population has not yet tapped into the commercial opportunities that the rehabilitated road offers." Although a few more dwellings have been erected by the roadside between 2011 and 2015, the trade and the traffic along the road continue timid.

During our study period, the two most visible improvements in the district of Majune have been the construction of the bridge over Luchimua River that took place already in late 2011

and the extension of the Cahora Bassa power grid to Majune in 2014. During these years, the existence of the bridge has generated a modest increase in traffic and commerce between Majune and Mandimba. The availability of electricity has had a more brisk impact. Right away in 2014, we saw how electricity spurred nightlife in the district centre of Malanga. There were more people on the streets and more trade going on even late in the evening than we had ever seen before. Access to electricity also quickly brought new products to the district, such as frozen chickens and fish (*carapau*), although in 2015 those items are still available only in the few shops equipped with a freezer. This time we also find to our surprise a shiny new point-of-sales terminal (POS) sitting at the desk emitting meagre light in one of the dark and shabby local shops. The first POS in the district means that the local civil servants can now pay their expenses by card, without having to travel all the way to Lichinga to withdraw their salaries. The owner of the shop also explains that the POS has made his own life safer, as he does no longer need to carry large sums of cash between Majune and Lichinga. Electricity has really sparked some new dynamism in Majune, although, so far, it is only felt in the district centre of Malanga.

3. GOVERNANCE, AGRICULTURE AND PRIVATE SECTOR

Having given a broad overview of the three districts/communities where the series of Reality Checks has taken place, we will now analyse three structural circumstances that affect the lives of the population very directly and that have been singled out as core themes in the Reality Checks. *Governance* (Reality Check 2012) sets the parameters in terms of political space and participation, and access to and quality of public services. *Agriculture/fisheries* (Reality Check 2013) is the key source of subsistence and income for the population in all three areas. And in a context where agricultural production is weak and formal employment practically non-existent, the *private sector/entrepreneurship* (Reality Check 2014) represents the main alternative source of employment, income and social mobility.

In the subsequent chapter 4, this will be combined with an analysis of “poor people’s perspectives on development in order to capture the multidimensionality of poverty, offer insights into causal processes and allow for a triangulation of information from different sources” (Swedish Embassy 2010/ToR) through qualitative and participatory methodologies.

3.1. Governance³

Structural conditions

The district government is the highest executive body at the district level, consisting of the District Administrator, the Permanent Secretary, Directors of District Directorates as well as the heads of the District Administrative Posts. The district government is responsible for implementing the central and provincial government decisions both in administrative and practical terms.

This seemingly simple governance structure is in reality much more complex due to several different foundations of power that intersect and often overlap each other. In the first place, the District Directorates are formally linked to various line ministries at Provincial and Central levels of government, while at the same time being administratively accountable to the district administrator. There is an on-going public sector reform process of decentralisation, but the *de facto* dependence between the central-, provincial-, and district tiers of government vary considerably between the different directorates and their departments. In Lago, for example, some district government units like Health and Education have a large degree of planning and financial autonomy while others, such as Social Action and Public Works, are near totally dependent on decisions at the provincial level.

Secondly, Cuamba, which is both a district and a municipality, operates with a double set of governance structures. Formally the Cuamba district government is made up of the same organs as in Lago and Majune district governments. At the same time however, Cuamba municipality contains two sovereign organs: the Municipal Council and the Municipal Assembly. The Council largely mirrors the institutional division of the District. The Assembly has the role of assessing proposed development interventions from the Municipal Council and monitor their implementation. In practice, however, there is widespread uncertainty about the real role of the Municipal Council. Apart from collection of garbage (*lixo*), which is unanimously seen as a task of the Municipality, other sectors are still managed by District

³ See Orgut 2012a-d for more information.

directorates or semi-autonomous public companies/state authorities (such as FIPAG, EDM and ANE). This lack of clarity explains why the Municipality is generally considered weaker than the District both in terms of power and influence and its implications on the everyday life of people in Cuamba.

Thirdly, the district government is closely linked to the ruling party and its local leadership. In practical terms, Frelimo membership or party affiliation is a prerequisite for holding higher position in District and Municipal administrations, and therefore even the district's highest authorities (the Administrator, the heads of Administrative Posts and Localities) are politically subordinated to the district level Party Secretary. In some cases the Party Secretary takes an active role in local governance, as happened in Majune where the former Party Secretary used to participate in district government meetings.

Lastly, the decision-making power of the District government is limited by the allocated budget. Local governments have a weak local tax base and hence depend on financial transfers from provincial and central government. Only Cuamba saw a slight increase in its municipal revenues after the new Mayor took office in 2012, but the municipality still remained grossly underfunded. In Lago, the total budget in 2012 was 23 million MT, of which 8 million MT was for investments, 8 million MT for the Local Development Fund, and 5 million MT for goods and services. The bulk of the actual expenditures in the District - primarily for salaries in education and health – does still not go through the district coffers and are hence outside their control.

All the above-mentioned aspects install multiple layers of power that influence the local governance simultaneously. On the one hand, it must be recognized that the involvement of so many different actors ensures greater sharing of power and lessens the possibility of autocracy. It can be seen as an adaptation of modern democracy, which in theory provides many optional paths for the citizens to use to resolve their problems. The evidence shows, however, that the coexistence of several interlinked power structures affects negatively good governance. It makes decision-making processes ambiguous, slow and inefficient. The system lacks transparency which blurs the lines of accountability. In such a setting there is a certain degree of randomness in every process.

As a measure to enhance transparency and popular representation, Consultative Councils were introduced in 2006/7. They were to consist of a combination of local government representatives, traditional authorities, civil society organisations and 'community members of high esteem'. Their formal mandate is related to governance in a broad sense, and we have witnessed meetings with many people and lively debates e.g. in Lago on the initiative of a new Head of the Administrative Post. However, their actual role has primarily become limited to that of relating to the District Development Fund/7 million MT scheme (see Section 3.3) and the Consultative Councils have no real influence let alone decision-making power.

For a long time, political opposition used to be kept at bay through Frelimo's governance structure that reaches all the way to the community level where it includes the circle secretary (*secretário de círculo*), the bairro secretary (*secretário de bairro*) and the neighbourhood chief (*chefe de quarteirão*). These structures maintain vigilant social control over people's political opinions. Although there are no strong ideological differences between the largest political parties (Frelimo, Renamo and the Democratic Movement of Mozambique,

MDM), there has been little tolerance towards opposition in the past. There are many stories of discrimination, even open violence against members of opposition parties (incl. beatings, burning of party flags, barring access to public services, etc.). However, it seems that criticism against the ruling party has increased over the more recent years at least in Lago and Majune, where a slowly growing number of people have opted for the opposition. Hence, at the eve of 2014 general elections, there were more opposition flags seen than ever before in these study sites. This suggests that the political space may be slowly opening up even in the more rural settings.

The importance of civil society organizations for district and local level governance varies between the districts. Of the three study sites, it is in urbanized Cuamba where civil society has the most influence and involvement while in the isolated Majune, where there were only a few civil society organizations operating in 2015, these have had a marginal role in local governance. In Cuamba some NGOs have participated in the Consultative Council and many others sensitized and built the capacity of local associations to take part in decision-making.

Illustration 7: Governance



Photo: Kaisa Johansson

While the District authorities in general seemed favourable towards the presence of NGOs, many of them defended an old-fashioned idea of the civil society supporting and complementing the government in the delivery of basic services. The authorities seldom recognized the value of the work done by NGOs for building active citizenship. As stated by one representative of the district government of Cuamba, *“It would be better if civil society made five or ten water pumps [instead of awareness raising of the citizens]”*, a view that was shared by a Renamo representative who claimed that *“I would like if those organisations would fund construction, not just ideas”*.

Local agency

Most important people. One of the main objectives of the Reality Check series has been to ascertain “local power relations and relations with state institutions that enable or constrain people from carrying out their strategies” (Swedish Embassy 2010/ToR). The Baseline and Endline surveys confirm that traditional leaders (*régulos*, *rainhas*) are considered as most important people assisting communities in resolving their problems – particularly in Lago – although their role has slightly declined between 2011 and 2015 (Table 3). Also local community leaders, such as Neighbourhood Secretaries and Heads of Quarters (who are local but appointed by the Party), are held important. Furthermore, the police has increased

its importance considerably over the past five years in all the three districts. This may be a reflection of a greater concern for security.

Table 3: Leaders Considered Most Important for Solving Problems in the Community 2011 and 2015 (percent)*

| LEADER | 2011 | | | | 2015 | | | |
|---------------------|--------|------|--------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total |
| District Admin. | 3 | 6 | 29 | 13 | 11 | 1 | 9 | 7 |
| Head of Adm. Post | 2 | 25 | 3 | 10 | 13 | 23 | 8 | 14 |
| Trad. king/queen | 52 | 93 | 85 | 77 | 48 | 91 | 60 | 66 |
| Village leader | 15 | 8 | 17 | 13 | 28 | 5 | 1 | 11 |
| Community secretary | 69 | 73 | 64 | 69 | 71 | 59 | 42 | 57 |
| Head of quarter | 48 | 8 | 23 | 26 | 47 | 4 | 8 | 20 |
| Police | 13 | 0 | 16 | 9 | 27 | 60 | 52 | 46 |
| Muslim leader | 2 | 10 | 24 | 12 | 3 | 16 | 12 | 10 |
| Traditional healer | 1 | 0 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| Other | 22 | 2 | 13 | 12 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 6 |

Source: Reality Check Mozambique Surveys 2011-2015 * People were asked to list the three most important leaders in their community.

Community leaders (neighbourhood secretaries, heads of quarters, etc.) are part of local communities and therefore best placed to understand the needs of their fellow community members. However, even if the community leaders are in theory available to everybody, in practice this is not always the case. Many of the poorest community members felt that they were not heard by their leaders. Although they could participate in community meetings and raise issues of their concern, many felt the leaders did not pay due attention to the challenges presented by the poor, often related to deprived support services. At the same time, traditional leaders, *influentes* and known Frelimo sympathizers have usually a straightforward access to community leaders with whom they often have long and strong friendship ties. These people appear to also have a facilitated access to different services, such as the District Development Fund/7 million scheme, support from the National Institute for Social Issues INAS, etc.

The somewhat decreasing importance of the traditional leaders can be understood as a reflection of more modern lifestyle, especially in a place like Cuamba where public institutions are increasingly present. There were also indications that in some occasions traditional authorities have diverted their loyalties from their own communities in favour of the formal government. This is a result of the government policy that provides traditional leaders with monthly allowances, uniforms, bicycle and other 'incentives'. The government authorities are interested in the power that traditional leaders have over the communities, as it allows them to have better control of the territory and the district population. Realizing the changes in the loyalties, people have lost their confidence in some of the traditional leaders. Lago is again a partial exception, where two queens or *rainhas* still have considerable influence in the community.

In all three study sites men were more prone to seek assistance from the local leadership structures than women. Even in Majune, where the leading traditional authority (*rainha*) is a woman, women rarely approach her for other matters than for rain ceremonies. It is

recognized though that women's withdrawnness from decision-making bodies is more motivated by socio-cultural gender norms than inaccessibility of the leaders *per se*.

A striking feature in the relations between the community members and the leaders at all levels is deficient communication and scarce feedback from the duty-bearers to the communities. This is largely due to the socio-political inequality between the people and their leaders. Leaders see themselves accountable to their own hierarchical superiors, not to the ordinary citizens. The socio-political hierarchy is learned through socialization and is deeply rooted – and will only change if people start questioning the dominant authorities. For the time being such individuals are often stigmatized as being part of the opposition.

Despite the available resource persons, most people still seek advice and support, particularly for their personal problems, from their extended family, friends or neighbours. Yet again, the poorest have problems establishing social relations of support with their extended family. This is a consequence of the fact that poverty tends to be endemic within the families. The majority has very little resources to share, and they want to avoid the risk of lending to people who may not be in a position to pay back when they are themselves in need.

Access to services. The three study sites differ considerably in terms of availability of services (see Table 4). In Cuamba there are many public (and private) institutions and service providers available, while in Lago and Majune even the most basic services (such as secondary education) are scarce and difficult to access. In all three districts education and health services are the ones people use the most while the arguably most influential public institutions such as the District Administration and Administrative Post are much less used.

Table 4: Households Having Used Public Services the Past Six Months (percent)

| PUBLIC SERVICE | 2011 | | | | 2015 | | | |
|------------------|--------|------|--------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total |
| Primary school | 59 | 67 | 76 | 67 | 72 | 76 | 71 | 73 |
| Secondary school | 19 | 5 | 24 | 16 | 28 | 25 | 34 | 29 |
| Vocat. Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| University | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Madrassa | 1 | 29 | 11 | 14 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Health post | 44 | 47 | 38 | 43 | 42 | 82 | 21 | 48 |
| Health centre | 57 | 2 | 76 | 45 | 49 | 3 | 59 | 37 |
| Hospital | 40 | 1 | 4 | 15 | 61 | 2 | 2 | 21 |
| Maternity ward | 15 | 13 | 33 | 20 | 17 | 11 | 23 | 17 |
| Market - to buy | 89 | 95 | 81 | 88 | 91 | 95 | 98 | 94 |
| Market - to sell | 19 | 25 | 64 | 37 | 33 | 42 | 26 | 34 |
| Public transport | 27 | 58 | 41 | 42 | 33 | 86 | 26 | 48 |
| Water | 76 | 68 | 99 | 81 | 87 | 66 | 70 | 74 |
| Local government | 6 | 8 | 14 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| Registry/Notary | 30 | 0 | 18 | 16 | 11 | 3 | 9 | 8 |
| Police | 4 | 0 | 11 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 |
| Court | 5 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Source: Reality Check Mozambique Surveys 2011-2015

Every year since the beginning of the Reality Check project, interviews with community members in all study sites have proved that access to clean water is considered one of their

main problems. It affects particularly women and girls who are traditionally responsible for securing water for the household. Access to clean water has improved to some extent in Cuamba, but even there potable water continues to be a privilege of the minority. In Lago the lake is still the main source of water for domestic use as well as for drinking, while in Majune the situation has deteriorated over the past five years. There, the government has repaired some existing water sources but not drilled any new water holes in the past five years.

In all three sites authorities have focused on other investments, often prioritizing repair or construction of public buildings and housing for civil servants. In general, the service provision in the public offices is often slow and inefficient, not so much because of having too much to do, but rather because of the institutional culture, bureaucratic practices, poor motivation and lack of effective supervision. There is also a basic notion, especially in the more urbanized Cuamba, that civil servants are rude and uninterested in the people they are to serve partly as a conscious strategy to make people pay extra for a more decent treatment. There are numerous stories from the three study sites of slow or no responses to requests and applications, and even of entire public institutions (including public offices, schools and health facilities) that have simply been closed on normal working days due to a random absence of the civil servants.

Having said this it must be recognized that there are also many public offices where people work hard and do their very best against a lot of odds. In Lago, the new Head of the Administrative Post employed in 2013 introduced new dynamics in the relation with the community and has secured a number of public investments in the community. And in Cuamba, INAS considerably improved its services as it increased the number of beneficiaries between 2011 and 2015 from 3.187 to 4.457. There prevailed also a perception that through its community representatives, INAS has succeeded in identifying the beneficiaries who are most in need. However, also in Cuamba people complained about INAS for political opportunism: “Sometimes they stop paying for months, then they pay all at once when it is close to elections.”

In sum, the public sector does not appear too concerned with the quality of their services. Local population use only the most essential services – education, health, roads, water – but their needs are seldom adequately responded to. Clearly, the State apparatus would need well-qualified staff at the ‘outer end’ where it is in direct contact with the population it is to serve.

Political participation. For transparency, accountability and good governance democratic elections are key, but these do not yet play a significant role in the three areas under study. In districts, the District Administrator and the heads of Administrative Posts and Localities are still directly appointed by government. In municipalities, there are direct elections for Mayors and the Municipal Assembly, but the voter turnout has so far been very low (38.6 percent in the municipal election of 2013 in Cuamba and 24.9 percent in the by-elections in 2014).

This leaves national elections as the main avenue for popular political participation. National elections are still big events in the three areas under study, with a number of political visits and distribution of party gadgets albeit with complete dominance of Frelimo. However, also for general election, the voter turnout has been fairly low. In 2014 election, it was 32.1

percent in Cuamba, 54.3 percent in Lago and 53.1 percent in Majune.⁴ This is likely to be related to limited relevance of the State in peoples' lives. In contrast people get direct benefits when they register themselves as voters, since the registration card is accepted in many places as an identity card.⁵ This explains why the number of registered voters far exceeds the number of actual voters. The irrelevance of the election itself was illustrated by some women whom we met during our fieldwork in Majune. They had been registered as voters, but did not even know of the final results of the elections. In Lago, where the opposition is likely to have a larger following, people complained that they had not been informed about the results.

Based on the work carried out with the Focus Families, it would seem that wealthier households and men in general are politically more active than women or poorer people. Many of the wealthiest ones – although not all of them – are sympathizers of Frelimo and have been able to expand their social network precisely because of that. Hence, they are motivated to ensure that the political power remains where it has always been. Poorer households may have political sympathies for one party or another, but many of them are clearly less motivated to make the effort to go to vote. For the *mazikines*, i.e. the poorest of the poor who often are also disabled, participation in the election can sometimes be physically impossible.

Women, especially poor women, stay more aside from the political life, although they may take part in political rallies prior to the elections. As women cannot freely leave the domestic space, approach the authorities, seek public services or make independent decisions, they are much less involved as members of the public part of the community than men. Lack of information is another thing that limits women's political participation. We came across one striking example of this in 2012 in Majune:

Case: Dona Rosa¹¹, the single head of a wakulaga n'nope (poor) household says firmly that she has always voted – until she lost her electoral card last year when her house collapsed. We ask whom she voted for in the last elections. She looks surprised and responds promptly "Guebuza, of course. Are there other candidates?" It is our turn to get surprised and we ask if she has not seen the pictures of the other candidates. She does not pay attention to the others, she says. She only looks for Guebuza. -Why does she go to vote, we continue asking. "To comply with my obligation", she responds. Evidently, the electoral campaign of Frelimo party is by far the loudest and the most visible one. A common citizen, who does not have strong political awareness but is exposed to the election rallies, will easily misconstrue that his/her civilian duty is not only to vote, but to vote for Frelimo.

⁴ Source: Eleições Nacionais 2014 – Boletim sobre o processo político em Moçambique. Resultados distritais. 28 de Outubro de 2014. Downloaded at:

http://www.cip.org.mz/election2013/ndoc/258_Resultados%20distritais%20-%20District%20Results%20-%20presidencias%20-%2028%20de%20outubro%20de%202014.pdf

For the sake of comparison it may be useful to refer that in the 2014 presidential election the voter turn-out in Niassa province was 44.47% and in the whole country 45.84%.

⁵ The voter registration card is free and of relatively easy access. In contrast, identity card costs money and requires much more paperwork and longer period of waiting.

3.2. Agriculture/Fisheries⁶

The three districts display variations in terms of the profile and relative importance of agriculture and fisheries – with Cuamba being the most complex with a relatively strong commercial sector, Lago being characterised by fishing as a key sector rendering agriculture less important, and Majune being most dependent on agriculture both for subsistence and income.

Structural conditions

The majority of households in the three project sites consider themselves primarily to be farmers (Table 5), and essentially cultivate for own consumption. Nevertheless, 38 percent of the households sold parts of their produce in 2015 with the equivalent figure for 2011 being 47 percent (the reduction is probably related to the poor agricultural 2014/2015 season with excessive rains). Usually the revenue from agriculture is to accommodate immediate needs for cash for education, health and basic consumption items. Prices of produce vary considerably immediately after harvest and later during the 'hungry season', and those in situation to wait with selling crops are in a much better bargaining position.

Table 5: Occupation of Household Head 2011-2015 (percent)

| OCCUPATION | 2011 | | | | 2015 | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|------|--------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total |
| Employment public sector | 8 | 1 | 13 | 7 | 10 | 0 | 19 | 10 |
| Employment private sector | 9 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Farmer | 58 | 49 | 61 | 56 | 54 | 49 | 71 | 58 |
| Fisher | 0 | 26 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 31 | 2 | 11 |
| Self-employed/employees | 3 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Self-empl.no employees | 15 | 15 | 6 | 12 | 13 | 13 | 3 | 10 |
| Student | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Occasional/seasonal work | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Pensioner | 2 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Unemployed | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Domestic worker | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Reality Check Mozambique Surveys 2011-2015

Households in all three districts grow a large variety of crops, but there is a concentration around maize, cassava, rice and sorghum. The limited proportion of households who plant other varieties is based on traditional and localised agricultural practices, but is also related to natural conditions and the rudimentary methods used. While rain fed extensive farming is most common in all three districts, Lago and Majune also have low-lying inundated areas close to rivers, with a potential for up to three harvests per year with proper irrigation methods. Access to rain fed land is not a problem in the three sites, but access to good inundated land is.

⁶ See Orgut 2013a-d for more information.

A common denominator for all three districts is also the inadequacy of agricultural extension services. Lago received its first six extension officers in 2012, and in 2015 the number remained the same. In Majune the initial five have increased to nine, while in Cuamba the number of extension officers has gone from five to thirteen. The investment in extension officers is a good indication of the return of agriculture in a given district. Still, they work under considerable constraints such as limited access to transportation and inadequate technological inputs. There is broad agreement among agricultural authorities and the population alike that improved extension services is key to the development of the sector.

At the same time, farmer associations are relatively rare with the partial exception of Cuamba. Associations would be one way to introduce new technologies to a maximum number of farmers. Umbrella farmers associations such as the Farmer Union (UCA) are increasingly focused on political issues and larger agricultural units (such as ProSavana), and are seen by local farmer associations as having lost much of their roots of working directly with farmers in the fields.

Large agricultural producers, small farmer associations as well as agricultural promoters such as the Catholic University of Mozambique (UCM), tobacco promoter Mozambique Leaf Tobacco (MLT) and cotton promoter Sociedade Algodeira do Niassa João Ferreira dos Santos (SAN-JFS) all believe mechanised technology would considerably improve productivity and, consequently, the living conditions of small scale farmers. UCM technicians go further, insisting that other factors need to be present, i.e. receptivity to new production methods. However, this will not happen whilst the producers do not have good access to markets and greater income from their produce – which again requires infrastructure like improved roads. In other words, a vicious cycle exists which can only be broken if the different constraints are handled simultaneously.

Commercial agriculture is most common in Cuamba, of limited but increasing importance in Majune, and hardly existing in Lago. The main cash crops are cotton and tobacco supported by JFS and MLT respectively. Both companies have monopoly buying rights in Niassa, and they provide seeds, inputs and advice to farmers who pay for this at the time of harvest. MLT and SAN-JFS typically orient themselves towards wealthy and more 'advanced' farmers – even though small farmers may invest effort and time in tobacco and cotton production when prices are high. This has recently especially been the case for Virginia brand tobacco. Cotton, on the other hand, has seen deteriorating prices due to developments in the world market. Additionally, the entry of the Brazilian mining giant Vale and ensuing competition for access to the railway line has increased transportation costs considerably.

Sesame seeds and soya beans are mainly produced by cooperatives, which are supported by intermediary cooperatives that garner the product of several farmers and try to negotiate the best price. Soya production has been stimulated by poultry factories in Nampula. Some producers have also attempted production of cassava to supply a beer factory in Nampula, which launched a cassava based beer in 2013. Essentially, aside from cotton and tobacco, which have steady buyers, the choice of new cash crops is depending on market demands. In Majune there was a new jatropha farming operation established in 2012, but which turned to soya, maize and beans as the former turned out not to be commercially viable.

Forestry is most important in Lago among the three districts under study. Authorities claimed in 2013 that there was a change in attitude and approach among the forestry companies, which could make them more useful from the point of view of development. We reported then that the forestry company Chikweti was poor in communication (operating with concepts such as “10,000 hectares” that people could not understand) and primarily related to traditional leaders. In 2014 the company effectively failed and was sold to the Norwegian company Green Resources. Particularly Chikwete is seen to have underestimated both the importance and complexity of relations with communities, and the costs of doing business in a province with a poor business environment and infrastructure.

Other companies have managed to communicate better and have clearer ideas about how to compensate for land. They tried to avoid planting close to villages, and when people had to be moved they offered help to open up new fields of the same size by providing access to tractors, labour and seeds. At the same time however, all major decisions on the plantations are done at the level of the Province and the companies. The District’s role is really only to ‘communicate with the local communities affected’, as stated by the Lago District Administration.

Fisheries is also more central for the economy of Lago than the other two districts. Fishing in the Lago District is small-scale. In 2011 there was an estimated 2500 fishermen counting owners of boats/canoes and gear (*patrões*) as well as fishermen (*marinheiros*). For each fishing unit, there is an estimated 1-2 additional people involved in production and maintenance of equipment, processing and commercialisation. The main fishing methods used are boat seines (*cerco/chillimila*), gillnets (*emalhe de superfície*), beach seines (*arrasto para praia*), and longline (*palangre*).

The building of the road between Meluluca and Metangula in 2008 had particularly strong implications for the development of the fishing sector. The opening up to markets for fish (particular the pelagic sardine *uusipa*) in the District/Province gave a boost to the artisanal fisheries, which have grown from eight motorised boats in 2006, to 35 in 2011 and to 93 in 2015 in Meluluca alone. Each boat employs 8-10 fishermen.

Illustration 8: Agriculture



Photo: Kajsa Johansson

The Fisheries Research Institute argues that the Lake is in a quite healthy condition on the Mozambican side. The potential sustainable catch is 16.000 tonnes, while the low level of technology used currently allows for a production of between 6.000 and 8.000 tonnes. Introduction of semi-industrial fisheries, as in Malawi, would severely jeopardise the sustainability of the Lake as a source of employment, income and protein.

Nevertheless, there are concerns about the longer-term sustainability of

the fisheries among people in the District Administration, as well as the population depending on fisheries. The migratory pattern of the *ussipa* (accounting for 80 percent of the total production on the Mozambican side) and the most common bottom-feeding or demersal species (*chambo*, *nkhomo*, *kampango*, *utaka*) are not sufficiently well-known for effective management to take place.

Local agency

Most households in the three communities use very rudimentary agricultural technologies and have small fields (1 to 1.5 hectares) that yield very limited production. The plots are just about the size to produce enough to feed a family and small enough for two adults to manage – but not enough for producing a surplus. Practically everybody uses machetes and axes to clear fields, and hoes as their main agricultural tools. Only a small minority uses animal traction or can afford tractors. Most households practice rain fed agriculture, and some use shifting cultivation producing in the same field for a period of approximately 10 years before they consider it ‘exhausted’ with fallow periods of up to 10 years. Except for the gathering of dry leaves to be used in the *machamba* furrows to preserve moisture, hardly any other fertilisers – whether natural or artificial – are used.

As in the rest of Mozambique, customary law regarding land ownership is still practised in all three project sites – even though there are examples of people having to buy ‘informal land titles’ from traditional leaders, neighbours, etc. in areas with a pressure on land resources. Both the notion that land is abundant and customary land title mean communities assume there is no need to register their land because it belongs to them, and our data show that land is transferred to the wife or oldest child. In Cuamba, the Community Land Initiative (ITC) is implementing a project of improved security to land to support land ownership and community development. The initiative is particularly relevant in Cuamba due to the onset of the commercial agricultural project ProSavana. Farmers unions, such as UCA and the National Union of Farmers (UNAC), are vocal in their opposition to the project and are demanding that rather than accede to agro-industrial development programmes, the Mozambican government should favour and protect family sector production (both ITC and UNAC are supported by Sweden).

There is also a second type of agriculture in the low-lying areas (*baixas*) close to rivers, using natural inundation or manual irrigation from waterholes for watering. In Lago and Majune these are more common than in Cuamba, due to more perennial rivers. In Lago people separate between *mbwelas* that are fertile between May and August, and *nyatas* that are fertile between August and November/December. Good *baixas* are much less common than rainfed fields. While formally part of the communal areas this land is always transferred from one generation to the next, and according to informants ‘never for sale’. People in our focus groups also argued that dryland agriculture is becoming increasingly difficult with unpredictable rainfall and higher temperatures.

Vegetable gardens, or *hortas*, require much more work and investment than an ordinary *machamba*. It needs fertilisation, one needs to buy most of the seeds; and watering requires a lot of labour. Historically large areas in Lago and Majune were naturally inundated by overflowing rivers, but erosion and uneven rainfall have made it necessary to dig wells and pass ways, and water with buckets. Horticulture has rendered the local diet healthier and

also leads to increased incomes – currently particularly for tomatoes, cabbages and onions. The same is true for the few households that practice horticulture in Cuamba.

In essence, small-holder subsistence farmers in all three study sites cultivate land to feed their family. They choose the crops thinking about their own diet. Often they sell crops immediately after the harvest at the local market place, without concerted attempts of bargaining the price. Given that the seller seeks to satisfy an acute need, the farmers cannot wait until later in the year when the prices go up.

Commercial traders, who usually are middlemen between the producers and larger companies, take advantage of the agony of the poor and buy their products right after the harvest when the prices are the lowest. The products are then stored until the end of the year when the market prices start to rise. In a poor agriculture year, small-holders may deplete their food stocks within a couple of months and after that they start buying food (Table 6). When that happens, market prices start increasing; sometimes the farmer pays three times more for a tin of maize in December than what he earned when he sold one in June.

Table 6: *Number of Months Past Year with Only One Meal per Day 2011-2015 (percent)*

| MONTHS | 2011 | | | | 2015 | | | |
|--------------|--------|------|--------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total |
| 0 | 74 | 71 | 53 | 66 | 57 | 74 | 66 | 66 |
| 1-2 | 22 | 28 | 43 | 31 | 9 | 14 | 3 | 9 |
| 3-5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| 6 or more | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 6 |
| Don't know | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 1 | 26 | 17 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Reality Check Mozambique Surveys 2011-2015

Some 10-15 percent of the families in Majune and Cuamba cultivate cash crops with the sole purpose of selling the entire harvest. No such production takes place in Lago, with one attempt to introduce cotton in 2013 failing, as people did not earn enough to pay for their investments. The most common cash crops in Majune are tobacco promoted by MLT and more recently sesame promoted by a Spanish NGO, Mundukide. MLT also operates in Cuamba. Also in Cuamba is the cotton promoter SAN-JFS.

MLT and SAN-JFS offer, at the beginning of the season, all the required inputs to the farmers and discounts the value of the inputs from the final payment when they buy the tobacco at the harvest time. MLT defines the quality and hence the price of the tobacco that they buy, which is an issue of frequent upheaval and dissatisfaction amongst the farmers. SAN-JFS also determines the quality at the end of the harvest. Cotton prices are highly volatile, and hence, the price estimated and expected by the farmer at the beginning of production is often different from the one paid at the time of the harvest. This too is a cause for many conflicts between the promoter and the farmers, often requiring the local authorities to intervene and mediate.

The Spanish NGO Mundukide follows a different philosophy. The ultimate goal of the organisation is to prepare the local farmers for a market economy and to train them to sell

their produce with a profit. The organisation does not offer anything for free, except knowledge. In order to promote new crops, such as sesame, Mundukide sells the seeds at a low cost to the farmers. At the time of the harvest, Mundukide assists the farmers in identifying traders to whom to sell their produce. The price is negotiated between the trader and the farmers. Mundukide keeps the farmers informed of the market prices in order to support their negotiations.

The bargaining position of the farmers is often weak particularly when they negotiate one by one with traders. At the same time, the large majority of farmers in the three districts are not organised in farmer associations. There is a long history of trying to promote associations, but as soon as funding stops, the groups tend to fall apart. Cuamba seems to be the exception, mainly due to the fact that cash crop production is more important there. According to our informants, the advantages of being members include receiving agricultural inputs such as seeds and agrochemical products, access to warehouses for collective sale of products, and improved power of negotiation concerning prices vis a vis the cotton and tobacco companies.

Case: Despite having a diversified portfolio of businesses, a rich family in Cuamba (Okhalano, see below) still considers agriculture as their main activity and source of income. Agriculture, in fact subsidises the rest of the businesses. The crops the family produces are partially kept for consumption and the rest is reserved for selling during the hunger months. Depending on the year and the expected market demand, the family varies between planting tobacco, cotton, sesame, beans, soya and rice. Maize is the only crop that the family is sure will have a demand, as it is the staple food in the region. The heavy rains of 2014/15 heavily affected the Okhalano family production, and their yield was considerably lower than normal managing to produce only a small quantity of maize. They resorted to buying maize and beans from Lichinga, where the prices are lower than in Cuamba, and sell it at their marketing stall. in order to ensure that they do not lose clients who are used to buying agricultural products from them

When it comes to fishing, our research has revealed that while most important in Lago, it is also practiced in Majune and Cuamba. In Majune, fishing is practised by 26 percent of the households according to our Baseline Survey. This is a considerably larger proportion than shown in the 2007 National Census (13 percent), and probably reflects a general underestimate of the importance of inland fisheries. In Cuamba, rivers are drier and fish less accessible and only 8.3 percent of the households are involved in the sector – but still as many as 59 percent reported that they ate fish the week before the 2011 Baseline Survey – often bought from other districts.

In Lago, the three main types of fisheries are encircling nets used to capture the *uusipa*; standing or gill-nets used to catch larger bottom-feeding fish; and the less common beach seines used to catch a variety of fish. In addition many people will fish from – or close to – shore with lines and hooks, but solely for consumption. Only men are involved in fishing, but women are active in the processing and commercialisation of the catch.

Of the methods mentioned, the encircling net (*chillimila*) used to catch *uusipa* is the most common and economically most important. The method involves a crew of 8-10 people in

three boats: The main boat or *boti* with an outboard motor, a small wooden canoe (*bwato*), and an intermediate boat (*boti-bwato*). Production and income depends on the quality of the crew, the boat and the fishing equipment. During one and the same night one boat may catch up to 200 buckets of 20 litres of *uusipa*, while another may get practically nothing.

The prices of fish vary considerably. In parts of the year with little fish one bucket of *uusipa* may sell for 300 meticaís, while the same bucket may sell for 80 meticaís in times of abundance. The other types of fisheries are more individually based (with the owner of the canoe and the net usually fishing himself with one or two helpers), but with much lower potential production and income. All fisheries are seasonal depending on temperatures, currents, wind and (in the case of the *uusipa*) the position of the moon as they are attracted to the surface of the lake by light at night.

When landing their catch, processing is still done in the simplest way either drying and salting or drying only on large wooden racks covered with fine nets. The fishermen usually do not do this work themselves, but leave it to family members (often one of their wives) or other locals. While fish is either quickly consumed in the local community or bought by traders, access to ice would make it possible to sell larger amounts of fresh fish in Metangula or in Lichinga where there is a market.

There is an apparently insatiable market for fish. There are locally based traders (usually women) who sell fish in external markets in Metangula and Lichinga, but the larger bulks are sold to traders (often young men) who arrive in Meluluca in small trucks or minibuses and leave the same day. In periods of good fishing, up to 8 to 10 minibuses may arrive per day resulting in a frantic competition and a good bargaining position for the fishermen/processors in Meluluca. In periods of poor fishing, hardly any cars arrive at all. The easiest to sell is *uusipa* which is a staple for the majority of the population, while larger fish are more difficult to sell both because they are harder to conserve and because the market is much smaller.

3.3. Private Sector/Entrepreneurship⁷

In a context where most people depend on agriculture with limited options for surplus production/commercialisation and formal employment is practically non-accessible for the large majority of the local populations, the private sector/entrepreneurship presents itself as the most important alternative source of income. Our definition of an ‘entrepreneur’ (Orgut 2014d: 9) is “someone who manages, organizes and assumes the risk of a business or enterprise through investments in physical capital”. This covers a large number of different economic adaptations, including formally registered micro, small, medium and large companies as well as informal enterprises in trade, service and construction.

Structural Conditions

Niassa is currently undergoing changes related to recent investments in forestry, mining, cash-cropping, growth corridors and linkages to growing economies in Cabo Delgado and Nampula. However, economies of scale of this nature have a tendency not to ‘trickle down’ to the type of local communities and local entrepreneurs that are the focus of the Reality Checks. At the same time, the districts/municipality display variations in terms of the profile

⁷ See Orgut 2014a-d for more detailed information/analysis.

and relative importance of private sector/entrepreneurial activities. Cuamba is an urban hub having a relatively large commercial/manufacturing sector, Majune has very few establishments fulfilling the formal criteria for businesses/entrepreneurship, and Lago finds itself somewhere in between these two with artisanal fishing enterprises being most important.

A principal constraint facing economic agents in Niassa is the weak transportation infrastructure (roads in particular), which leads to extremely high transport costs. A second factor is the value of the Mozambican currency (Metical) relative to the value of the currencies of Malawi and Tanzania, which makes it advantageous to make purchases there rather than in Mozambique. In fact, trucks tend to leave Mozambique for these two countries completely empty and come back with full loads. In addition there are also regular (e.g., annual and/or monthly) fees for permits to undertake most business activities and payments to the tax authority that people perceive as unfair as they receive little in return.

The costs that an operator of a small shop (*barraca*) might face in the first year of operation, for example, include expenditures for a trading license (1.500Mt), approval of project for commerce (400 Mt), annual fee (550 Mt), monthly fee (100 Mtx12), and three percent sales tax on monthly sales of 1000 Mt. Assuming total monthly turnover of just 1,000 Mt, these costs – which are taken from the structure of fees in Metangula – amount to around 20 percent of total annual sales (in the first year). If the monthly turnover was 10,000, the corresponding share would be 5 percent of sales. This way, the various fixed fees/costs of doing business are regressive in the sense that they are more onerous for smaller businesses.

There is also limited awareness of activities that aim to support/promote local small and medium-sized businesses. Aside from regulatory simplifications through the One Stop Shop (BAU) and the District Development Funds, no interviewees from the government or private sector were able to point to other additional activities undertaken to support local businesses. Interviews with relevant officials from the District and Municipal administrations in Cuamba, Lago and Majune show that they do not see it as their role to support and develop the private sector and entrepreneurs except through infrastructure. Rather, they see their main role to be to issue licences, collect taxes and contribute to fiscal obedience.

The main source of funding for businesses/entrepreneurs in all three Reality Check study sites continues to be the District Development Fund, initiated in districts in 2006 and extended to also include municipalities in 2012. The Fund's annual allocations per district/municipality has increased to around eight million Mt (or 260.000 USD), which is a considerable sum in political/administrative areas that have very limited resources for self-initiated public investments. Allocations vary between 20.000 Mt and 200.000 Mt, with formal requirements for repayment over a period of three years.

The original objective of the District Development Fund was to contribute to income generation and employment creation, and the fund has reached a large number of people in Cuamba, Lago and Majune. At the same time, it is increasingly acknowledged by public sector stakeholders that the programme has a number of serious flaws. The proportion of projects that can be characterised as 'successful' is relatively limited, the selection process

has been based on favouritism and nepotism rather than business qualifications, and the repayment rate has been very low.

Some key characteristics of entrepreneurship in the districts of Lago and Majune and the municipality of Cuamba have emerged from the Reality Checks and include: i) The heavy concentration around trade at the expense of manufacturing; ii) the lack of cooperation among entrepreneurs, be that formal in the sense of business associations or informal in the form of clusters; iii) the slow or incremental way most entrepreneurs build up their businesses; iv) the preference for distributing assets and efforts in various business domains rather than focusing on one only; v) the dominance of external actors with experience from elsewhere among the larger entrepreneurs; and vi) the discrepancy between the formal system of licensing and taxation – that is largely in place – and the actual ‘informal’ way the system is functioning with businesses being subject to a taxation system few understand and that is open to abuse.

Illustration 9: Entrepreneurship



Photo: Kajsa Johansson

Local agency

The large majority of people in the focus communities in Cuamba, Lago and Majune who are involved in economic exchanges commercialise natural resources in the form of agricultural products, firewood, bamboo, grass, mud for building blocks etc., which do not require initial investments in physical capital and with risks being related to poor returns to own labour. In the local vernacular being an ‘economic agent’ or *azienu gueni* involves something more – even though the investment to be made may be small. To start a business or *gueni*, people argue, requires initiative and ambition. “*It is not everybody who has such initiative*”, they say.

In the outset, people have a positive attitude towards members of the community who are successful in establishing businesses and becoming entrepreneurs. In fact, in our wealth ranking exercise done in 2011 (Orgut 2011b) one of the main criteria defined for belonging to the best-off category (*opata* and *olemela*, see below) was to be in a position to give employment to others. People also emphasise that entrepreneurs are important because they ‘bring development’ and access to goods and services in the local community. However, it is equally clear that investing in enterprises and ‘bettering oneself’ in relation to others in the community come with a lot of challenges and dangers (see below).

Investing in a business requires access to money to make the first venture. Case studies of entrepreneurs in the three communities show that most people start very small with money

earned from the few local activities involving economic exchanges and options for surpluses, such as fisheries in Lago and production of tobacco in Majune and cotton in Cuamba. Many entrepreneurs also emphasise how they get support from their own family. Cuamba stands out as having entrepreneurs basing their activities on income from formal employment or pensions, which is very rare in Malila (Majune) and in Meluluca (Lago) where such persons hardly exist.

In the local communities the most common forms of investment are in small shops or *barracas*, flour mills (*moageiras*), carpentry, fisheries, brick production and pottery; and services, such as guesthouses, barbers, hairdressers and traditional medicine (*curandeiros*). Fisheries (Lago) and brick production (all communities) seem to be among the better options for growth and for creating employment. *Patrões* investing in a boat, nets and a motor need to employ 8-10 people per boat in order to have viable production unit. In brick-making the building of ovens, collection of firewood and burning and selling bricks require a relatively large number of workers – depending on the size of the enterprise.

However, among those who establish small-scale businesses in the local communities, very few manage to expand their businesses significantly. The larger entrepreneurs from the three communities have either grown slowly over a long period of time, or have grown with the help of support from the District Development Fund. The larger and ‘successful’ local entrepreneurs we have met seem to share a set of characteristics: One is that they tend to invest in different types of economic activities; a second is to move ones economic activities out of their local community, and a third is to concentrate on one’s own activities rather than cooperate with others – as exemplified by the case below.

Case: Mr. Saide is one of the three ‘large entrepreneurs’ (Gueni Zazikuluzikulo, or buana) in Meluluca. He was born in 1969, and his four wives, 12 children and grandchildren is a clear sign of his success. The interviewee started by working on the fishing boat of patrões. During a period of unusually good fishing at the time of war he managed to buy fish that he transported on foot over the mountains to Lichinga. Later, he started to sell chickens in Lichinga and Malawi and took back capulanas, used clothes, shoes and other things that were not available in Meluluca. He also started to trade in maize meal, which gave sufficient income to open a barraca in Metangula – partly to accommodate his second wife who lived there. In 2004 he opened a shop in Meluluca, and then another one in Metangula in 2009. His main problem both places is people (relatives, neighbours, friends and others in the community) who insist on getting things without paying. (“We don’t know what to do”). At the same time he acknowledges the importance of relations with the local community, and always supports and is present at important events. In addition to the three shops, his business now includes three minibuses and one truck bought in 2011, and one fishing boat bought in 2009. He has also started to get into construction by building houses in Metangula that he rents out. In all his businesses he primarily relies on his own family (wives, children and siblings), and the only non-family members he employs are fishers and drivers.¹ Mr. Saide insists that he has never borrowed money, and only invests in new activities when he has saved for that purpose.

In a context where the position and role of men and women generally is clearly defined in private as well as in public space (see below), private sector/business relations are not

equally clear-cut. In Majune, women are found in most types of entrepreneurial activities. Even though the large majority are pursuing small scale businesses selling agricultural products, firewood, cakes and bread, there are also examples of women who are involved in larger scale businesses such as *barracas*, mills and guesthouses. In Cuamba, being a city, the socio-cultural barriers to what types of economic activities men and women can pursue are even less pronounced – or more difficult to control for men. Still it is more common that women carry out their economic activities close to home rather than in commercial areas/markets, in order to be able to fulfil their domestic responsibilities.

In Lago/Meluluca, socio-cultural rules and expectations concerning what type of economic activities men and women can do are more stringent. This probably reflects a community which has been more isolated and where tradition and religion still have a strong hold on people. Discussing the types of economic activities and businesses men and women can do with a focus group of young boys and girls in Lago/Meluluca, there was broad agreement that most types of entrepreneurial activities are for men and that women cannot own and run larger enterprises.

In quantitative terms, the share of households with income from other sources than agriculture has increased from 2011 to 2015. In 2015, this was the situation of some 64 percent of the households in Cuamba (68 percent in 2011), 78 percent in Lago (72 percent in 2011) and 73 percent in Majune (70 percent in 2011). Most of these fulfil our broad definition of an ‘entrepreneur’ as someone who «manages, organizes and assumes the risk of a business or enterprise through investments in physical capital” (see above). These involve around 30 different income sources, including fisheries, artisanal activities, shops and marketing stalls, carpentry, bricklayer, tailoring, occasional labour and traditional medicine. In all the three study sites the proportion of households earning more than 2000 Mt per month from such activities has increased between 2011 and 2015, while the proportion earning 1000 Mt or less has decreased (Table 7). Female-headed households still earn less than male-headed households, but there is an upward trend also for the former.

Table 7: Monthly Income from Other Sources than Agriculture 2011-2015 (percent)

| INCOME | 2011 | | | | 2015 | | | |
|------------------------|--------|------|--------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total |
| Less than 50 | 27 | 23 | 21 | 24 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 50 – 500 | 14 | 20 | 24 | 19 | 22 | 8 | 20 | 16 |
| 501 – 1,000 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 12 | 6 | 12 |
| 1,001 – 1,500 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 6 |
| 1,501 – 2,000 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 11 | 6 | 9 | 9 |
| 2,001 – 5,000 | 24 | 11 | 23 | 19 | 31 | 27 | 25 | 28 |
| 5,001 – 10,000 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 17 | 14 | 13 |
| 10,001 – 15,000 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| 15,001 – 20,000 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| 20,001 or more | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 11 | 7 | 6 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Reality Check Mozambique Surveys 2011-2015

Summing up, the two key conditions for becoming a successful entrepreneur in Cuamba, Lago and Majune are *social relationships* and *diversification*. Both are largely absent in the economic literature on entrepreneurship, seeing the main social unit as ‘economic man’ with the objective of accumulating capital and grow as economic agent. This partly reflects deeper epistemological differences between economics and anthropology, but also differences in the understanding of socio-cultural contexts like Niassa.

A person in the communities is ‘nobody’ without social relations and networks. For this reason, surpluses are invested in relationships such as having more wives and more children rather than in material items of (conspicuous) consumption. For the same reason, it is nearly impossible for successful entrepreneurs not to share parts of the income with the extended family and other members of the community. What the most successful entrepreneurs do is to *combine* continued strong relations with the community *and* expanding their businesses in external contexts where they can be ‘economic men’.

The importance of diversification in geographical space and types of businesses is partly related to the precariousness of small scale businesses in places like Cuamba, Lago and Majune. The context for doing business is unpredictable and vulnerable with the existing financial context and taxation regime – and profitability is usually limited due to high competition in key sectors and low purchasing power. By putting ‘all eggs into the same basket’, sudden changes in framework conditions may lead to a downfall. By diversifying, the entrepreneur not only reduces such risks but also makes it easier to fulfil social responsibilities by expanding networks.

3.4. Conclusions

The analysis above has revealed the types of structural constraints and opportunities under which people in Cuamba, Lago and Majune live and work. While many themes are the same for all three social formations, there are also important local features that have an impact on poverty and well-being in each individual district/community. Cuamba is first and foremost characterised by being an urban setting. This implies a more complex society/community with better services, more people and more opportunities – but also a stronger reliance on employment and income for survival. In the case of Lago, the most important defining feature seems to be Lake Niassa having defined propinquity to Malawi economically as well as socially and with its opportunities for fishing as a viable alternative source of employment and income. And for Majune, the relative isolation from larger population centres has to a large extent defined the District as structurally poor and with more limited options to exploit infrastructure investments for economic activities/entrepreneurship.

4. LOCAL DYNAMICS OF POVERTY AND WELL-BEING

In line with the analytical and methodological approach chosen for the Reality Checks Mozambique, the dynamics of poverty and well-being among people in Cuamba, Lago and Majune have been analysed with a focus on the interphase between structural constraints as outlined above, community relations and the agency of households and individuals.

In the following we will first present people's own perceptions about the characteristics of and changes in their own community between 2011-2015, mainly with reference to a series of qualitative/participatory Focus Group discussions. The community represents the most immediate social world for the population under study, and the type of social relations they have/manage to establish has a considerable impact on their position and room for social mobility.

This will be followed by an analysis of the coping strategies of households and individuals in Cuamba, Lago and Majune. The household is the central social and economic unit for people in the communities, and peoples' agency is largely determined by their economic position, their composition and gender. Our point of departure will here be a number of Focus Households, initially selected through a Wealth Ranking exercise done in 2011, which we have followed closely throughout the Reality Check process (see Orgut 2011f).

4.1. Community Relations

Mapping Institutions

To get an overview over institutions people themselves perceive and experience as important in their lives, community maps were made by Focus Groups in all three sites through the Mapping Exercise in 2011. First, people had to decide what constituted their 'community' and hence what area should be included. In all cases the 'community' was perceived as the immediate village or neighbourhood (*bairro*), showing how peoples' worlds tend to be confined to settings where they have face-to-face relations with other people whose decisions and actions have immediate implications.⁸ Following this, traditional institutions, state

Illustration 10: *Mapeamento das Instituições*



Photo: Inge Tvedten

⁸ In other contexts, a similar exercise has resulted in people drawing both larger physical space including an entire District (with the argument that all important decisions are made in the District Centre), as well as smaller immediate neighbourhoods in urban shantytowns (with the argument that only immediate neighbours and friends can be trusted and related to).

institutions, individuals as well as other community markers such as roads, rivers and mountains were drawn – leaving out local and external institutions not considered important or not known (see Illustration 10). The Map was revisited the last year of the Reality Check (2015), as a basis for discussions about changes in the institutional landscape.

The Focus Groups largely agreed that the institutional landscape is made up of traditional and religious leaders (that have long historical roots and represent continuity for people in communities like Cuamba, Lago and Majune – where formal political representations have shifted and where the government is only partly present in people’s lives); state institutions (with an emphasis on community based representatives who for them is government such as the Head of the Administrative Post – often disregarding the higher level powerholders who may have a strong influence but are ‘out of sight and out of mind’); and institutions that people have problems defining in the interface between the community and the state (such as Bairro Secretaries, political party leaders and ‘non-government’ organisations).

Importance and Relevance

The importance attached to the community institutions identified has changed during the five-year period of the Reality Check studies. In Cuamba, the change towards a stronger government influence seems to be a result of the increasing relevance of Municipal government in peoples’ lives. In Lago, the presence (since 2012) of a proactive Head of the Administrative Post has made government’s impact stronger both in the form of political influence and infrastructure and other interventions. And in Majune public presence and services has increased but the impact has been weaker than in Cuamba and Lago primarily due to a higher incidence in poverty. In all three communities traditional authorities have seen a relative decline in impact, while the Party (i.e. Frelimo) is seen to have become more important for community life.

In one of the Venn-Diagramme exercises done in 2015 people were asked to i) list the most important institutions (organisations and individuals) in the community, ii) allocate to each of them three (most important), two (medium importance) or one (least important) points, and iii) place each of them (in the form of round pieces of paper with the name of the institutions in three sizes related to importance) on a flipchart based on the ease with which they can be reached. The same exercise was done in 2011, making it possible to record possible changes in the importance attached to each institution between 2011 and 2015. The results are visualised above in Illustration 11.

Illustration 11: Venn-Diagramme

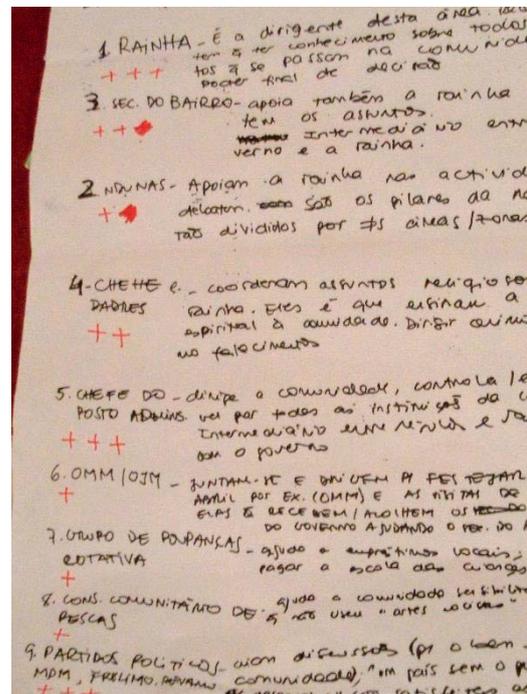
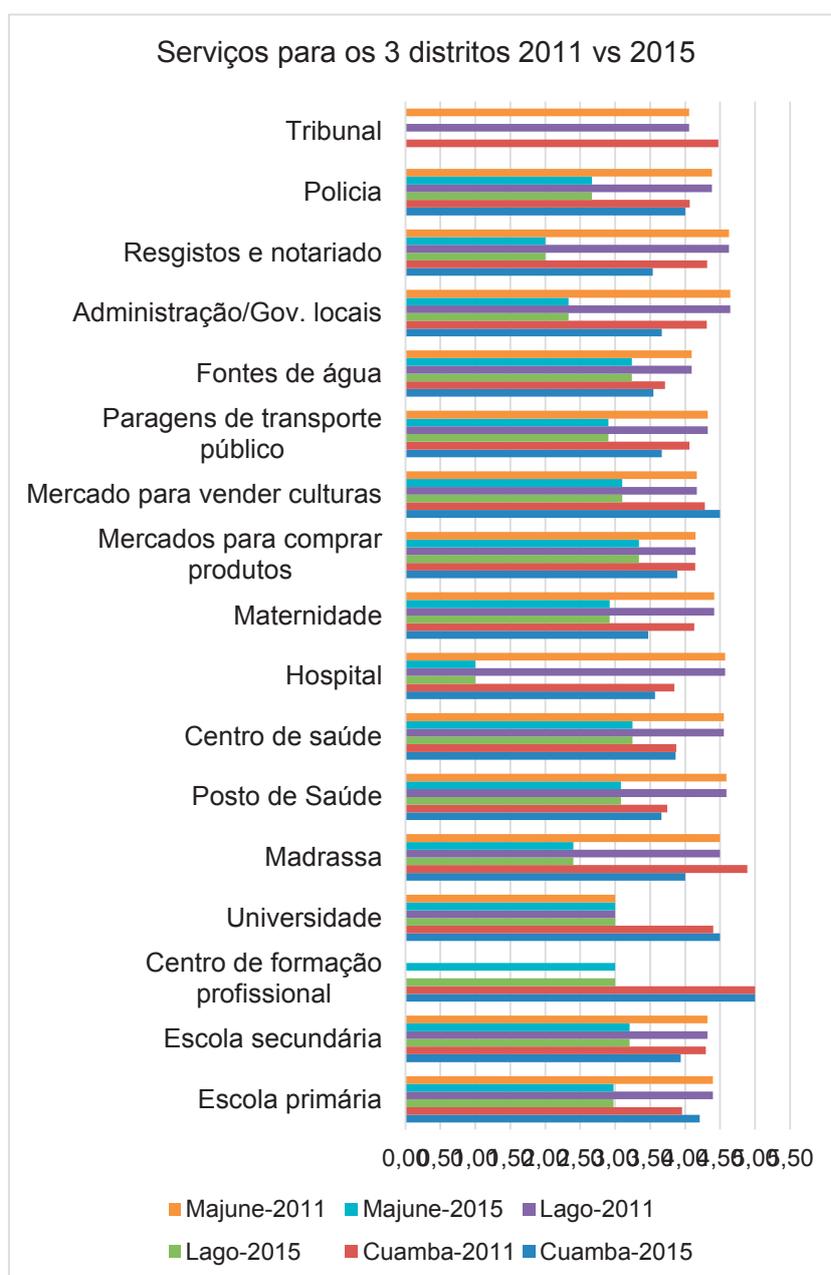


Photo: Nair Noronha

The most significant change since 2011 is that political parties are seen to have become more important, at par with the highest levels of community-based traditional leaders (*rainha*). The members of the focal group argued that ‘the country and the community need an opposition to be democratic’, but it also reflects the extent to which communities are becoming ‘politicised’. Concerning the head of the Administrative Post, who also received top score, people have come to realise that he is important for ‘bringing development’ to the community. The Organisation of Mozambican Women (OMM) on its part is seen to have been reduced to organising ‘social events’. The importance (albeit limited to one star) of ‘interest groups’ related to fisheries as the main source of income, savings groups for small scale investments, and football for children also say something about the intricacy of the institutional landscape even in small villages in Niassa.

Changes in Accessibility and Quality

In parallel with a stronger presence of government, people in the communities argue that the accessibility and quality of government institutions have become poorer. Asked in 2011 and 2015 to rate public services on a scale from 1 to 5 – where 1 is very bad and 5 is very good – very few express very negative opinions (Level 1 and 2) and few had very positive attitudes (Level 5) – but there is an overall decrease in perceptions of quality (Illustration 12). This could reflect that expectations become higher once an institution is in place – but in the case of key public institutions such as education and health our participatory exercises show that this does reflect a perceived deterioration of the quality of services. Cuamba stands out as having seen the most positive trend in perceived quality, reflecting higher public investments particularly in education and health in urban areas.



Future Plans and Expectation

People in Cuamba, Lago and Majune have expressed their own plans and ideas for how to improve conditions in their communities through sets of *Force Field Analyses*, with the objective to capture perceptions of what conditions may inhibit or accelerate the type of change and development favoured by the community. The favoured change for development are usually related to very concrete external interventions in physical infrastructure, private investments etc. rather than changes in e.g. agricultural conditions and terms of trade. This largely reflects perceptions that change has to come from the outside – even though the Focus Groups also emphasise that the local population can ‘contribute with their labour and local knowledge’.

Illustration 14: Force-field analysis

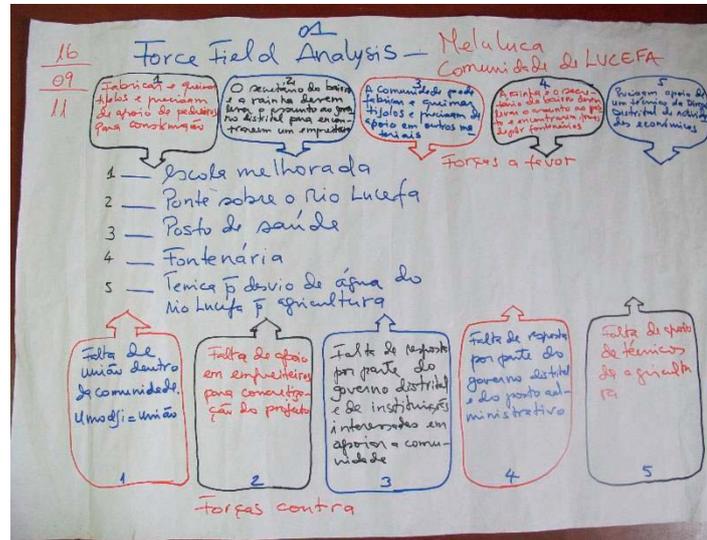


Photo: Inge Tvedten

In the enclosed example (Illustration 14), the five most important issues to be solved in the community were seen to be 1) improved educational facilities; 2) improved systems of transportation (including bridges); 3) improved health facilities; 4) improved access to clean water; and 5) improved agricultural technologies (including systems of irrigation). The community also listed forces in favour of and forces against achieving these goals.

The former included: i) The community can make and burn [building] blocks; ii) The Bairro Secretary and the Queen should contact the District Government to find a constructor who can make a bridge with quality; iii) The Queen and the Bairro Secretary should approach the Administrative Post to increase the number of wells; and iv) The community needs the support of a technician to teach how to construct [systems of] irrigation.

And the forces against include: i) There is a lack of unification (*umodji*) in the community; ii) There is a lack of support from building companies to implement the project; iii) There is a lack of responses from the District Government and other institutions that can support the community; iv) There is a lack of the necessary responses from the District Government to construct the wells; v) The government does not send agricultural technicians.

Revisiting the exercise in 2015, it was concluded that only the first two points had seen real improvements mainly due to support from the Head of the Administrative Post and the community's own efforts, while the last three are still pending – with the argument that government had not followed up on its promises.

Seen together, the qualitative/participatory exercises reveal communities that are well aware of the challenges/problems they face and are able to formulate expectations towards the

government/public institutions. Improved communication (roads, telecommunication) has extended the outreach/space for people's coping strategies, but also made it possible for them to compare the situation in their communities with that of others. However, the focus group discussions have also demonstrated that people are much more uncertain about *how* they can follow up in relation to a state/public institution that they often see as distant and unreceptive.

4.2. Household Organisation and Strategies

In pursuing the main research question in the series of Reality Checks of understanding the "coping/survival strategies adopted by women and men living in poverty" (Swedish Embassy 2010/ToR), our point of departure has been people's own (*emic*) perceptions of what it means to be poor. Anthropological/qualitative perspectives on poverty prioritise poverty not as an absolute measurable condition but as a qualitative social relation, examining how the group categorised as poor come to be so classified and by whom. People's own notions of poverty matter because that is the basis for their strategies and actions – rather than external or 'etic' definitions that primarily reveal the distribution of poverty and well-being over space and time.

In the *Wealth Ranking* exercise originally done in 2011, Focus Groups were asked to define what poverty and well-being means to them and how types and levels of poverty are differentiated by using their own conceptualisations/vernacular. This pointed to a twofold notion of what it means to be poor: On the one hand it is about material deficiency and lack of what is considered basic assets/necessities, but on the other – and equally important – it is about the number and nature of social relationships in which people are involved and can activate in times of hardship.

In all three study areas, there is a striking consistency in peoples' categorisations of poverty and well-being – albeit with smaller local variations reflecting local level idiosyncrasies often related to socio-cultural organisation. In broad terms distinctions are made between being i) the 'destitute' or extremely poor who are effectively 'captured' in material poverty and lack of social relations; ii) the 'poor', including 'chronically poor' who get by on a day-to-day basis mainly through their own labour and subsistence production and the 'transient poor' who have resources and social relations making social mobility possible with hard work; and iii) the better-off who have sufficient resources and social relations to invest to live well, improve their own situation and support/employ others. The Table below is a summary of the local vernacular for these three levels.

Table 8: *Local Definitions of Levels of Poverty*

| Level of poverty | Cuamba (Macua) | Lago (Nyanja) | Majune (Yao) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------|
| The destitute | <i>Vanchipali</i> | <i>Usuwedwa</i> | <i>Mazikine</i> |
| The poor | <i>Ovelavela, Vakanene</i> | <i>Chilecua, Maciquine Ukalama</i> | <i>Wakulaga</i> |
| The better-off | <i>Opunha Okhalano</i> | <i>Odjifunila, Opata Olemela</i> | <i>Wakupatha</i> |

In the second part of the Wealth-Ranking exercise, the Focus Groups were asked to identify households belonging to each category, for the purpose of immersion and in-depth interviews. By following the selected 22 households over a period of five years, we have been able to ascertain what factors that most directly influence their lives and the extent to which people experience/manage social mobility. Below, we will use these households as point of departure for our analysis – revealing the combined relevance of i) household organisation, ii) economic adaptations and iii) social relations with family, neighbours and social/state institutions. We have selected nine of these households as extended case studies in this Final Report, and refer to earlier Reality Check Reports for a complete overview over developments in the 22 Focus Households between 2011 and 2015. By way of introduction, Table 9 shows the marital status among households in Cuamba, Lago and Majune.

Table 9: Marital Status in Households in Cuamba, Lago and Majune 2011-2015 (Percent).

| MARITAL STATUS | 2011 | | | | 2015 | | | |
|----------------|--------|------|--------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total | Cuamba | Lago | Majune | Total |
| Single | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| Married | 34 | 83 | 29 | 49 | 28 | 66 | 35 | 43 |
| Cohabitant | 41 | 6 | 48 | 32 | 49 | 18 | 42 | 36 |
| Divorced | 11 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Widowed | 13 | 4 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 6 | 14 | 10 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Female HH | 23 | 11 | 30 | 21 | 24 | 15 | 27 | 22 |
| Polyg.HH | 3 | 34 | 18 | 18 | 8 | 33 | 18 | 19 |

Source: Reality Check Mozambique Surveys 2011-2015

The Destitute

Olupwana ohawa vanchipali (Cuamba). In Cuamba we have interviewed three destitute families. Of these, one man was the most destitute of all. He is originally from Nampula. In 2011, when we met him he was living in his ex-wife's yard thanks to their daughter taking pity on him. He is elderly, has problems with his eyesight, is weak and unable to produce his own food or engage in any other income generating activity. He has children from a previous marriage who live in Nampula, but they will not take him in. In 2013, tensions escalated between the man and his ex-wife, following the death of their daughter. She asked him to leave the yard. The man regained his eyesight, after an operation by an itinerant medical team, but continues to depend on external help. When he moved out of his ex-wife's yard he was supported by members of his mosque, many of whom are also originally from Nampula. He continues to depend on support from neighbours and friends from the community, as well as the National Institute for Social Issues (INAS) subsidy for the elderly.

Usuwedwa II (Lago). In 2011 the household consisted of a single mother, the youngest of her two children and the child of an older sister. The house had four rooms and a fenced back-yard. However, it belonged to a younger brother, and *Usuwedwa's* real dwelling was a small two-room shack in the yard. She had never gone to school, and her children stopped studying in 3rd Grade 'as there was no money'. She had a small *machamba*, but survived by

selling small *bolinho* (rolls), raising chickens and ducks, and renting out the small shed. Later *Usuwedwa* had to move out of her brother's house when he returned, and back into the small house in the garden. She also stopped selling *bolinhos* because the price of wheat went up, and the chickens she used to sell died. *Osowedwa II* has been very ill. Due to poor health, she is usually not able to work on her small *machamba*. In 2015, her burden increased when her oldest daughter divorced and moved back with her mother with two small children. *Osowedwa II* totally depended on support from her brother and neighbours.

Mazikine I (Majune). The household is composed of a divorced man who lives alone in a very small hut made of clay bricks and covered by straw. He was crippled by polio in his early childhood, and hence he has always sought alternatives to agriculture to sustain his life. He used to be married and has one adult son who lives in Malila. Some ten years ago, *Mazikine I* also lost his eyesight (possibly due to cataracts) and that was when his wife left him. Even if he later recovered his sight through an eye operation supported by the Catholic

church, he has never remarried. In 2011 *Mazikine I* sustained himself by working as a *lateiro*, a kind of blacksmith who repairs worn-out pots and pans. In bad days, when he had nothing to eat, he used to ask for help from his neighbours. By 2015 there have not been any substantial changes in the household or level of wellbeing of *Mazikine I*. The only contact he has had with public services is with INAS that recently started to pay him a monthly subsidy. According to *Mazikine I*, he had to pay two times under-the-table in order to get enrolled.

Illustration 15: (*The ultra-poor*)



Photo: Minna Tuominen

The very poorest/destitute among the households in Cuamba, Lago and Majune are often characterised by being single headed and/or having a handicap making it difficult to pursue even the most rudimentary economic activities. Particularly for women, being single violates central cultural expectations related to kinship relations and marriage and they are easily marginalised and seen

as 'prostitutes'. At the same time particularly female headed households headed by elders are often overburdened with grandchildren, nieces and nephews etc. – an irony in a context where elders traditionally have been honoured and taken well care of by their extended family. The elders themselves often refer to their children being 'too poor to take care of them', which shows the importance of material poverty for social organisation and indicates that extreme poverty tends to be transferred from one generation to the next.

Being single and/or handicapped also imply disadvantages in terms of production and income. The relevant Focus Households either do not have access to sufficient household

labour (including men who have few but important tasks in agriculture) or are hindered by handicaps to perform the necessary tasks or be away from their dwelling. Without or with little subsistence production, they depend on money to start small-scale income generating activities they often do not have. Moreover, investments made, such as buying small quantities of flour to start baking rolls (Osowedwa II), are often so small that the activities are exceedingly vulnerable to even small changes in fortune.

The implication of extreme poverty and vulnerability is that the very poorest depend on support from the outside – from family-members, neighbours, friends etc. Among the poorest Focus Households we have seen that such support often is not forthcoming. According to the same Focus Families support is particularly scarce at times of general crisis in the community – such as the increase in prices of agricultural products/famine following from poor harvests in the end of 2015. In most communities in Niassa the ultimate responsibility for the well-being of women and children rests with matrilineal kin (such as oldest brother or maternal uncle). Traditionally (during the system of uxorilocality when a married couple stayed with the wife's kin) these were close by, but this tradition is fast changing to a system where the husband and his family have more influence.

For the ultra-poor, social relations with institutions of the State and society are also often problematic. This is partly a question of affordability, for example for education where even the smallest costs for school material and fees for health consultations may be too much. But there are also more subtle barriers inhibiting such relations: We have seen throughout the series of Reality Checks how social relations and money determine the type of contact households are able to establish. This is perhaps most evident in access to funds from the District Development Fund and access to social security through the National Institute for Social Issues (INAS). In fact, for poor people in crisis in the three communities the most relevant institutions are still traditional leaders (who are known to have collected money for people in dire needs) and religious societies (with some Muslims following the prescription of the Coran to hand out food to the needy on Fridays).

The Poor

Ohawa ovelavela (Cuamba). When we visited this family in 2011, the head was an old woman living with her daughter and her daughter's five children. The eldest granddaughter lived in the same yard with her husband and a child. The following year the head of the household had died and her daughter had taken over as head. The youngest son and grandson of the new head also died in the same year, very likely due to cholera. The new head sustains the household by selling maize flour in the market. That is enough for them to get by, but not enough for upward social mobility. In the extended family, health problems are increasing reducing the options for external support. Their income is only sufficient to buy food, and they seem to have given up improving their lives. The children are too young to help with harder chores like restoring the house, as was necessary after the rains at the beginning of the year. The eldest daughter separated and remarried, but the new husband is only assisting in the restoration of the couple's house, which was also destroyed during the rains.

Usuwedwa I/Maciquine. In 2011 the household lived in a small precarious house with only one room. The couple had six children from 2 months to 16 years of age, and two *machambas* that barely produced enough for consumption. In addition, the husband made

and repaired agricultural tools and doors. He claimed his family has always been poor. The one person they relied on in times of crisis was the wife's uncle, who lived close by. The household has continued to work hard, even though the prices for the head's artisanal products has remained very low. They managed to put the oldest son into 8th grade in Meluluca, but had to give up after a few months as the costs became too high. The household has continued to work hard despite many odds against it. The head has seen his health deteriorate, but the family has still managed to produce maize and cassava and a range of artisanal products (agricultural tools, chicken-houses, reed doors and mats etc.) albeit still with prices making it nearly impossible to save. Their stigma as poor was highlighted in 2015 when another family in the village refused to accept the oldest son's request to marry their daughter with reference to their poverty.

Wakulaga panandi (Majune). The household comprised a husband (about 45 years old), his wife (in her thirties) and their four children (between six and one years). This household was engaged with Reality Checks only in 2013, in order to gain greater insight into the socio-economic category of the poor (*wakulagas*). At that time, the family was living in a 3-room dwelling and they were farming a *machamba* of 3 hectares. They were also raising 10 goats received from an NGO (Mundukide) for reproduction. On the *machamba* *Wakulaga panandi* was growing maize, sorghum, beans, cassava, groundnuts, rice and sesame, the only cash crop introduced also by the NGO. When the wife of *Wakulaga panandi* was younger, she lived with an aunt in

Malawi for five years, where she learned about farming. The head of household had never left the village. None of the two had ever gone to school, neither was their 6-year old son attending school; he was in the field with his father every time we visited the house. When their granary gets empty, *Wakulaga panandi* said they engage in *ganho* (*occasional labour*) in other people's fields. In 2014, the wife died

Illustration 16: (*The Poor*)



Photo: Kajsa Johansson

suddenly from an unidentified illness. The husband moved to another village nearby and their children were taken by a (maternal) aunt to live in Malawi. Their house and all its belongings were occupied by the parents of the deceased wife. The husband was only allowed to take two plates and a metal bucket from his home. Even this was said to be more than what the customary practice establishes.

The Focus Households characterised as poor tend to be 'complete' households consisting of parents, children and other extended family members such as grandchildren, nephews and nieces. While formal/traditional marriage is still the norm, an increasing proportion are living

together without any marriage arrangements (see Table 9). This tends to make the unions less stable and weakens the involvement of extended families – even though divorce is usually relatively easy in matrilineal society where there is no bride price/dowry and the wife and children are seen to belong to her family. Both the Focus Households and the Baseline/Endline survey show that households in Cuamba, Lago and Majune are permeable both in form and structure responding to both internal and external pressure.

With a male head, the household is better positioned to pursue agriculture as well as additional economic activities. This includes fishing, which is strictly for men and important particularly in Lago. As seen from Table 5, the proportion of households having farming and fishing as their primary occupation has been relatively stable between 2011 and 2015 but more households are involved in secondary activities (see also Table 7). However, households without experience/ideas from other places and with limited access to capital primarily work with small-scale production and services demanding small investments – such as marketing stalls for primary products or artisanal production – that yield very limited returns.

For the poor, fulfilling cultural expectations for conjugal relations and being in a position to participate in various social arenas, their relations with institutions of society and the state are more prevalent. The proportion of children going to school has increased in the communities with the exception of Majune – even though we have seen some families give up education because they depend on their children's labour and have lost faith in it as a way out of poverty. Many are also active in local level institutions such as the mosque, consultative councils and associations. However, as primarily primary producers with limited time and income they are often inhibited from establishing political and economic networks outside their immediate communities, which is vital for economic growth/expansion into new activities.

The Better-Off

Okhalano (Cuamba). The head of the household has two wives, each living in their own house, with the respective children. He has two stores, one selling basic food stuffs and the other is rented out to Nigerians who sell car parts. The family also sells surplus from their *machambas*. The first wife manages the agriculture production, but they contract '*ganho-ganho*' workers to cultivate, plant, weed and harvest. The family also owns a mill and a transport truck for rental that regularly travels to Lichinga. Presently they are constructing a guesthouse. In 2013, the household head received cattle from the municipality as part of a District Development Plan, which he stores in Mecanhelas. He applied several times to the District Development Funds without success. Hence, all his investments are from his own effort. Although, through the years some of the household members have become ill or become disabled – some even went to Malawi for treatment – the stability of the household economy has not been affected. Last year, the production was not as good as the previous years, due to the excessive rains. Yet, the household is doing well due to the variety of income sources it pursues, and is likely to continue to do well.

Opata (Lago). '*Opata*' left for Malawi at long and regular intervals during the war-time. 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 a *barraca*, fishing boats and cattle. 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. The household continued to do well throughout the Reality Check period. With money from the District Development Fund he has opened a new shop (*barraca*) in Metangula finding a 'niche' in the new market for electrical appliances. His wives oversee one economic activity each, and *Opata* plans to move to Metangula mainly to expand his business to a warehouse but also to avoid pressure for sharing and 'envy' (another word for 'witchcraft') from the village community where many people work for and depend on him. *Opata* sends all his children to school, and deals with illness by sending sick children away to good hospitals in Malawi or Nampula. In 2015, he finally fulfilled his dream of buying a truck from Japan through the internet to enter the transportation business – although he was not quite sure how to get it from the port in Dar es Salaam to Metangula.

Wakupatha (Majune): *Wakupatha* is a 55 year old man with two wives: the first one lives in Lichinga and the second one in Majune. He has a total of 16 children. During the civil war he fought in the Frelimo army, and when the war was over, he used the demobilization benefit to start up a small-scale trade of basic food items that he bought from Malawi. Already in 2011 *Wakupatha* was running several different businesses including a small shop, a guest house and a construction company. Both wives were taking active part in the management of the businesses. *Wakupatha* was not cultivating land; he bought everything the family consumed. All the children of the household were going to school, except the very youngest ones who had not yet reached school age; the eldest ones were in university. *Wakupatha* knew personally several members of the district administration, and a few years earlier he had been a member of the district level consultative council. He had left the position as the composition of the council had been renewed. In 2015 *Wakupatha* was still doing very well. He had stopped working in the area of constructions, but had expanded the transport business (through purchase of new vehicles) and built more rooms for the guest house. Two of his adult daughters were now employed by the public sector. His household had increased in number as his younger wife had just delivered one more son to him and he had taken one of his mothers-in-law to live in his house. Physically, *Wakupatha* looked stronger and healthier than ever.

As seen from the Focus Households presented – and verified by data from the Baseline/Endline survey showing that the proportion of households with more than 10 members has increased – the better-off/rich households tend to be large in size and composite. In fact, a very common strategy for social and economic expansion is polygamy. All the better-off households have used their position of economic well-being to marry more wives, which expands both their social network (through extended families) and their economic flexibility.

In terms of employment and income, most of these households also share other characteristics: One is that they have a past/personal history of experience from outside their local communities – in Malawi as refugees, from the military etc. A second is that they systematically seek to diversify their household economy, locally as well as outside the local community. In a context where trust is a scarce commodity and people are reluctant to hire non-family members over whom they have little control, a large family is seen as a

Illustration 17: (*The better-off*)



Photo: Margareta Paulo

prerequisite for economic growth/expansion. The *Opata* household from Lago is perhaps the best example of such as strategy and what it can accomplish. The better-off households have to make a careful balance between local involvement and external expansion. Locally the income options are limited and the socio-cultural pressure for sharing is considerable. At the same time, the best options for growth are found in expanding businesses or establish new in larger population centres away from their communities.

Finally, the better-off have superior relations with institutions of the state and society. They can afford to send their children away for education beyond primary school, and they can afford to take their sick household members to superior health facilities in district or provincial centres or abroad. With their proven capacity, own means and social relations they are also *de facto* favoured in allocation from the District Development Fund. Many are also active in key socio-cultural institutions (from fishing associations to burial societies) in order to demonstrate their community belonging.

4.3. Gender Relations

Gender has considerable implications for the position of women and men in domestic as well as in public space in Cuamba, Lago and Majune. People have traditionally been part of a system where the matrilineal family and religion played a decisive role in regulating their lives. In very general terms, matrilineality does not give a woman power and influence per se but it *does* define her own family as more important than that of their husband – which has implications for their options to make choices. Islam on its part gives men the responsibility to feed and care for their families, and also defines a set of obligations for women in their relation to men – including the responsibility to be obedient. These values are instilled in children throughout their upbringing, including their participation in the Islamic school (*madrassa*) and initiation rites. Tradition and Islam are less prevalent in Cuamba and Majune where Christianity dominates, as we have seen reflected in e.g. household organisation (Table 9).

With time, the 'cultural system' has come under pressure – with poverty, wealth and 'modernity' playing an increasingly important role for relations between men and women. In households, the position of men is based on a combination of religion/tradition and their economic role as providers. Focus Group discussions have shown that men as well as women see clear distributions of labour and employment that are also shared by the younger generation (see Illustration 18).

Women have the main responsibility for the day-to-day house chores (cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching water) and for caring for children. Men's duties imply less regular occupation but consist of physically heavier tasks (construction of house, erecting a fence). Gender-based division of responsibilities are less pronounced in the farm field. Both men and women are often involved in weeding, sawing and harvesting; only clearing of the land is traditionally seen more appropriate for men to do. Also, cash crop cultivation is more often done by men.

It seems though, that this pattern is in the process of change. Young men in all three districts revealed a keen interest in finding alternative non-agricultural areas of income. Young women, in contrast, seem more resigned to carry on the farm works as before. This pattern suggests agriculture may become even more feminized in the future. Except for agriculture, women tend to practice their businesses at home. Their husbands agree that their wives may leave the house without their explicit authorization, but only for short distances.

Households headed by women – which is foreign both to matrilineality and Islam as 'ideologies' – are in a particularly difficult situation. For women to head a household comes with a number of costs. One is the stigma of not having a husband, which tends to define women as 'lose' or 'unmarriageable'. A second is the implications of not having a man who can help out with key 'male' tasks particularly in agriculture. And a third is the constraints set on the freedom of movement by having the sole responsibility for taking care of children. In line with this, the majority of female household heads have been forced into such a position when the father of their children has either died or abandoned the family.

However, there have been signs of change during the Reality Check period – as for example reflected in the Baseline/Endline survey where more

Illustration 18: Perceived Gender Distribution of Employment

| 12 08 14 ActivIDADES ECONÓMICAS EM MELILUCA | | |
|--|---|---|
| | Homens | Mulheres |
| Gueni Zingozingono | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Venda de peixe em Meliluca * Venda de hortícolas no povoado * Venda de feijão no povoado | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Vendem peixe, mandioca, milho, batata-doce, tomate no povoado. * fabrico e venda de bolinhos de banana e de trigo * Venda de galinhas |
| Gueni yapakati | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Venda de peixe em Lichinga * Compra combustível em Meliluca e revende em Meliluca * Compra milho no planalto e revende em Meliluca | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Compra de capulanas, sabão, sal em Meliluca/Lichinga e revende em Meliluca * Vendem peixe no planalto * Compram pratos em Meliluca, Trocaça com galinhas em Meliluca e voltam a Meliluca e vendem as galinhas e compram produtos q necessitam |
| Gueni Zazikulozikulo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * moageiras * bancas * Venda de peixe em Malawi, Cuamba e Gurue * transporte Meliluca/Metanguila * pesca com barcos motorizados | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Compra de roupas usadas em Malawi, Tanzania, Nampana e revende em Meliluca * Aluguel de quantos e resfrescos * Pesca com barco não motorizado * Venda de peixe fresco em Malawi e Tanzania |

Photo: Nair Noronha

domestic and productive tasks were considered the joint responsibility of men and women in 2015 than in 2011. Also, our case-studies show that there is a more equal division of labour and responsibilities in the wealthier households where women often have separate economic activities. We have also experienced that women more freely let themselves be interviewed without their husbands present – and seem to be better informed about the household economy. Finally, there are individual examples of married women who are considered to be heads of households if they are the main providers and/or the husband is somehow relegated.

In public space, women are still marginal. Wives usually have to ask the husband first before seeking any public services. Often, they would go and contact such services together. All in all, it is culturally more appropriate that men deal with the authorities and the power-holders. From the authorities' side, there is nothing that would impede them from meeting a female citizen and responding to her needs, but the culture and the customary gender roles put limits on the woman's ability to seek assistance from an authority. The women are thus largely confined to the domestic and informal part of the society. There are also here small signs of change. Particularly in urban Cuamba but also in rural Lago and Majune women are more present/visible than before as economic actors/traders in the communities, and individual cases show that women *can* have positions and influence. These tend to be women with a certain economic independence, sometimes – ironically – as women that are part of better-off polygamous households. The following two cases demonstrate the variation in the situation of women in the communities:

Case: In 2011 a destitute Usewedwa household consisted of an old widow as the household head; her daughter with three children; and her granddaughter of approximately 15 years who had a child of 3 months and a husband who was 'out travelling'. The three women lived separately in small dwellings, but claimed they belonged to the same household as they 'ate from the same pot'. They had a machamba but did not produce anything ('we don't have husbands who can help us'), and barely made a living from ganho-ganho – working in fields or helping out with small chores for neighbours against pay in cash or kind. Even though the household is very poor, they still did not get support from the community that seems to regard them as 'outcasts' consisting only of women. Five years later, the household has grown with one more baby, implying six people to feed. Their only diet is cassava porridge and green leaves – sometimes with fish they manage to get as hand-outs on the beach. Their main worry is that they do not have money to construct a fence around their yard – meaning that people constantly pass through on the way to the beach and see the state they are in.

Case: A well-off Wakupatha household head has one wife in Lichinga and another one in Malanga (Majune). In line with the principles of polygamy, Wakupatha seeks to treat the two wives in an equal manner. Both women have a well-built house where they live with their many children. Altogether, Wakupatha is a father of 16 children. As a businessman, he has handed over the management of one type of commercial activity to each wife. In Lichinga, one wife runs Wakupatha's transport business; in Malanga, the other wife takes care of his shop/bar and the guest house. "I am the commander, and my wives are the

chiefs of the staff" says Wakupatha allegorically. In practice, this means that the wives can take freely care of the routine business matters but all the unusual expenses or investment issues are decided by the husband. He also holds them accountable for the financial results. In the end of every month, the wives present the accounts to him. The farsighted Wakupatha has deliberately created conditions for both wives to sustain themselves and their offspring, so that if he were to die, his two families would not be poverty-stricken.

4.4. Social Mobility

For the poorest and most destitute, it is nearly impossible to improve their conditions. The combination of small/single-headed households, material poverty and social marginalisation is very difficult to break out of. The principal factors that fuel extreme poverty are living alone, female household headship, old age and/or physical disability. Any of these factors reduces the household's capacity to produce food, and while going hungry people in such situations have no time or energy to create alternative sources of income. A combination of two or more factors within one family further multiplies their vulnerability.

In communities like Cuamba, Lago and Majune, where the public sector only offers limited support, the extended family is usually an important source of assistance. However, people who are critically poor have often exhausted the support mechanism that can traditionally be expected from the extended families. Their needs surpass excessively the available resources. Therefore, they have to turn to neighbours and other community members – who we have seen also often are not in a position – or willing – to help.

At the same time, some people are able to find a way out of poverty. All the heads of the wealthiest Focus Households were born to poor families, but they accumulated wealth little by little and gradually moved upwards in the socio-economic hierarchy. One feature that is common to all of our wealthiest families is the comparatively high level of formal education (5th-6th grades) attained by the household heads. Besides, they all have travelled considerably and experienced other neighbouring countries and/or other parts of Mozambique.

Both the formal education and the travel experiences tend to expand their social networks and help building up certain level of self-confidence and courage to break free from the locally dominant economic practices and try out alternative strategies to generate income. The more they diversify their sources of income, the further away they get from poverty. All of the wealthiest household heads started doing business, as opposed to agriculture, when still young adults. Thus, they have had many years to create prosperity. And, all of them have built their businesses through service provision in the areas where there was considerable local demand.

The main group of poor seems to be made up by a mixture of people who are 'chronically' and 'transitory' poor. The first category of households work hard to make ends meet but with low productivity/income they only tend to make enough to cover every day necessary expenses with little or nothing to invest for future growth. The part of the poor who makes it and manages to maintain a certain level of living or improve their conditions under the current structural constraints (politically, economically as well as socio-culturally) depend on a combination of education and experience with other ways of life and more personal factors

or coincidence. One of these is constructive relations with extended family members who support them. Another is longer periods without misfortune in agricultural production/fishing production or absence of unexpected expenses (such as health).

In Illustration 20 below, poor people in Cuamba have taken photos illustrating what for them are the differences between poverty and well-being. The two cases illustrate how little that is needed for the poor to improve their situation and have a better life – but also how vulnerable even the better-off households are in contexts and communities like Cuamba, Lago and Majune.

Illustration 19: 'Poverty' and 'Well-Being' as seen from the poor in Cuamba



Photo selection: Focus Families

Case: The Ohawa vanchipali household from Cuamba is headed by an elderly female traditional healer who lives with her daughter. The daughter is a poor farmer. The household head has taught her daughter to become a healer as well, helping out picking herbs and assisting in preparing them. The old lady was approached by the opposition party MDM in 2013 because of the outspokenness, but as a former Frelimo supporter she would not change party. In 2013 the woman continued to be confident, despite her poverty and the fact that her daughter's boyfriend had left her and gone back to his previous wife. In 2015, Ohawa vanchipali has seen her life improve, and has constructed a new house where she lives and works as a healer. She was also able to work in her machamba, even though production was small. The most negative experience was when the house was broken into, which she attributes to the increasing number of people from other areas coming to Cuamba and the fact that there are no more vigilante groups to keep people safe.

Case: The Wakupatha panandi household from Majune is headed by a widowed man who is in his 40s. He has six children from his first marriage. He now has two children (a son and a daughter) with the new wife with whom he lives in Malila. For many years Wakupatha panandi I made his living with his minibus with which he transported passengers between Majune and Lichinga. Between 2012 and 2013 the family also built

a barraca on their yard to bring additional income, and in 2013, the household head set up a construction company in the district. The barraca business was left in the hands of an acquaintance who managed it poorly and failed to produce any surplus. Simultaneously, the construction company went bankrupt due to inexperience of the Wakupatha panandi I in that field. Ultimately, the minibus of Wakupatha panandi I broke down, and then he used all his savings to purchase a new minibus that he imported from Japan through a web-based agency. However, the importation fees proved to be too high for Wakupatha panandi I to pay, and after a lengthy period of waiting, the customs sold the vehicle. All what Wakupatha panandi I received was 15,000 Meticaís (approximately 350 dollars). As a result, the living conditions of Wakupatha panandi I have drastically worsened. In 2014, the family decided to move to Lichinga, partly because they hoped to find new business opportunities there and partly because of the shame following from their social downgrade. In Lichinga, Wakupatha panandi I is living in a small dwelling built on a piece of land that belongs to the family of the first wife. He tried in vain to get a loan through a micro-credit institution. In 2015, Wakupatha panandi I was making occasional earnings by helping a friend to sell second-hand clothes at the marketplace in Lichinga, or by following another friend to buy wheat from the districts and to sell it in Nampula. Within two years, Wakupatha panandi I had become a poor man.

5. SUMMING UP⁹

Introduction

The 'Reality Checks Mozambique' studies have given composite picture of the changing conditions of poverty and well-being in Cuamba, Lago and Majune over the period 2011-2015. Portraying the dynamics of poverty through qualitative methodologies and their quantitative expressions, the overarching findings are that i) the state/public sector is omnipresent in the districts and communities under study but only partially delivers on its responsibilities; ii) local populations have generally experienced positive socio-economic developments with some having been able to improve their situation considerably; and iii) the poorest sections of the populations – including many women – are left behind and marginalised from these developments and effectively captured in extreme poverty.

The approach/analysis has been guided by an analytical framework where poverty and well-being is seen as the outcome of complex historical and structural forces, as well as human agency in the form of complex cultural constructions and social relations. The relative importance of structure and agency has important implications for development policies and interventions: The former calls for a primary emphasis on the alleviation/removal of structural political and economic constraints, whereas the latter calls for a primary emphasis on individual empowerment and incentives. Our analysis has revealed the prominence of structural constraints/oppression – making it very difficult if not impossible for the poor to break out of poverty on their own.

Governance

The State has a strong presence in the lives of people in local communities such as Cuamba, Lago and Majune, both through its own institutions and by cooperating with/co-opting community based institutions including traditional authorities. Frelimo as the ruling political party continues its influence on the State through the *de facto* requirement of party membership for civil service personnel. At the same time there are signs of enhanced space for the opposition in election processes (national/municipal).

Public institutions at the levels of the District/Municipality and Administrative Posts delivering basic services such as education, health, water, electricity and communication have become more present in the communities – but have generally not managed to improve the quality of services. There are also still problems with accessibility, particularly at the District level and for the poor/women. Services have generally improved more in urban Cuamba than in rural Lago and Majune.

Traditional authorities (*règulos, rainhas*) have seen a deterioration in their position and influence except for their customary roles in conflict mediation, ceremonies etc., particularly compared to bairro secretaries and other local representatives in the interface between the state and the community. Their role is strongest in rural/traditional Lago, and weakest in

⁹ The current Final Report is meant to be a summary of the preceding five Annual Reports (2011-2015) and 15 Sub-Reports (2011-2015) (Swedish Embassy 2010/ToR), and the concluding section is therefore held short. For summaries and conclusions of Reality Checks as an approach to study poverty and social change, we refer to the Reflection Report in Annex 2.

urban Cuamba. Religious institutions (mosques/chehes and churches/priests) maintain their presence and importance in people's everyday lives.

The Consultative Councils were established to be an arena for communication between local communities and the State. While it does function as such for example in Lago, their real decision-making power is limited including on issues such as allocations from the District Development Fund. Also NGOs/CBOs vary in their presence and influence, being most important in urban Cuamba and least important in Lago. Associations have a long history in all three communities, but seem to have lost much of their relevance as units of production except in commercial activities such as tobacco-production and fisheries.

Access to public services effectively depends on a combination of socio-economic position and socio-cultural competence. Education and health are in principle free, but for the very poorest even the smallest (legal as well as illicit) costs may be too much, children are often needed for work, and many have lost faith in education as a way out of poverty. Other services, such as potable water and electricity/solar power are costly – and still unavailable in many small communities. Access to the vital District Development Fund is perhaps the best example of a public service that effectively requires social networks, economic resources and educational level/skills to be accessible.

Economic adaptations

Economically, agriculture/fisheries and small-scale trade/commerce remain the backbone of all three communities. Cuamba has the best options for formal employment and commerce; in Lago artisanal fisheries has been particularly important for the positive socio-economic developments; and subsistence agriculture continues to dominate the economy of Majune. The most under-utilised local economic adaptation is that of flood-based agri- and horticulture, which has a considerable potential particularly in Lago and Majune.

While most households continue to be subsistence producers with over 50 percent of the households not selling any of their agricultural produce, there has been an increase in the commercial agriculture/fisheries as well as the proportion of households who pursue 'other economic activities' such as trade/commerce, services and artisanal production. These sectors are usually the basis for the increasing socio-economic inequalities between the poorest who do not have the resources and networks to pursue them and the better-off who do.

The basis/space for entrepreneurship or people who "manage, organize and assume the risk of a business or enterprise through investments in physical capital" is more limited, largely due to the non-conducive political/administrative and economic context. However, for those who are able to surpass such hindrances *and* strike a balance between acting as 'economic men' and maintain social relationships with their extended families/communities there are options for considerable incomes and upward social mobility.

The perhaps single most important factor contributing to economic developments in the period 2011-2015 is the road network. In Lago improved roads have been instrumental for the economic growth that has taken place, in Majune new roads and bridges have opened up the community to external markets and relations, while the long delay in finishing the road to Lichinga represent a lost opportunity for further economic development in Cuamba. The factor with the most negative impact on economic developments is the continued limited

public/private investments in improvements in the agricultural sector upon which most households depend.

Social mobility

Within the structural political and economic context, people in Cuamba, Lago and Majune have generally seen positive developments in their communities as measured by income and assets – including housing. More people are able to manage their poverty, albeit still with limited options for upward social mobility. People attribute this to a combination of improved communication with district centres/other communities; enhanced options for income in commercial sectors like tobacco and cotton production, fisheries and trade; and better access to goods and services in the communities. Agriculture (due to low productivity) and education (due to lack of formal employment opportunities) are generally *not* seen as viable strategies for social mobility.

One exception to this general picture is the very poorest, who have not been able to benefit from developments in the local political economy and remain poor and marginalised. For the poorest, their very poverty compels them to work ‘ad hoc’ on a day to day basis – often as occasional labourers – without being able to invest in social relations, land and other basic conditions for social mobility. With extreme poverty often being endemic within families, they have little or no support from family members. Access to public social security continues to be difficult and rare. And at times of particular hardships (such as droughts or excessive rains), neighbours and friends will usually be in similar difficult positions and unable to help.

A second exception is people who already were relatively well-off, and in a position to exploit the opportunities that the political and economic developments have opened up for. This is usually based on a strategy of economic diversification – combining primary production in the community (fishing, commercial agriculture) with investments mainly in commerce and services – and requires a set of social relationships (with political as well as commercial actors) that the poor usually do not have. While there are options for considerable accumulation of capital, however, also the richest are vulnerable to changes in the political and economic context.

Third and finally, female headed households/single women are generally poorer and more vulnerable than male-headed households. They tend to own less land, have access to less (male) labour and to effectively be excluded from income earning options outside of agriculture and commerce. There are examples of female headed households/individual women who have improved their situation/become economically independent, but often with active support from men (such as in polygamous households) and in urban areas where socio-cultural restrictions are less pronounced.

Recommendations¹⁰

As per ToR, the purpose of the Reality Checks Mozambique has been to inform the discussion on poverty reduction among key development actors including Sweden – rather than give recommendations on specific programmes and projects. Nevertheless, some more general lessons for development interventions for poverty reduction in Mozambique/Niassa can be drawn.

¹⁰ See individual Reality Check Annual Reports (Orgut 2012d, 2013d and 2014d) for more information.

Reality Checks. We believe that the Reality Check approach – in which development is seen ‘from below’ and through the eyes of poor people and other local stakeholders – has made it possible to understand the subtleties of the dynamics of poverty and well-being in a way that would not have been possible through more classical time limited/quantitative methodologies. The approach should be considered used also for more narrow/smaller project-based interventions.

Levels of Intervention. A development/aid policy taking poverty reduction seriously must focus on the sectors that most immediately affect the lives of poor people. Through the Reality Checks, there is hardly any evidence that higher level interventions in governance/economic development ‘trickle down’ to the levels of villages and the poorest. In contexts such as Niassa, this essentially means improving the conditions for agriculture, small-scale trade/entrepreneurship and artisanal fisheries.

Governance. The Reality Checks have emphasised the importance of public institutions in peoples’ lives, even though their increasing presence is generally not seen to be matched by improved qualities of their services. For poor people in local communities, the state *is* its local representatives in public administrations, in schools, in hospitals and in service delivery. It is vital that the government/donors contribute to a situation where it is attractive for well-qualified public sector employees to work at this level.

Primary production. Support to primary production – upon which the large majority of the rural poor depend – should be broad-based. There are challenges in the production process (access to land and labour, level of technology, variation of crops) as well as in processing and marketing/sales of produce. In agriculture the most immediate concern is to have more well-qualified extension workers, and to make available improved technologies for irrigation/horticulture. In artisanal fisheries, boats and gear should be made available locally and alternative methods of processing and marketing fish introduced.

Entrepreneurship. With the dearth of formal employment, small-scale trade/entrepreneurship remains the most relevant alternative source of employment and income particularly for young people. A main challenge is the gathering around a limited number of activities/technologies where competition is fierce and the limited scope for innovation. Information on alternatives available in neighbouring areas should be collected and the establishment of ‘Idea Banks’ where people with ideas and initiatives can come to get support and identify possible collaborators should be looked into.

Smart Aid. Recent developments in Mozambique have highlighted the challenge of poor governance and corruption and led to a crisis with/halt in payments from donors. There are strong arguments for continued donor presence in one of the poorest countries in Africa, but the aid must be smart: The poor must be more directly targeted, and alliances must be entered with a broader spectre of stakeholders at provincial and local levels where aid allocations can be more directly followed up. Focussing aid in one or a limited number of provinces where knowledge and confidence can be built rather than channelling it through central ministries is one way of doing this.

LIST OF LITERATURE

Government Documents

- GdM (2003): Lei nº. 8/2003 de 19 de Maio Estabelece o Quadro Legal dos Órgãos do Estado. Maputo Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique.
- GdM (2006). Decreto nº 6/2006 de 12 de Abril Estabelece O Estatuto Orgânico Do Governo Distrital. Maputo: Imprensa Nacional de Moçambique
- GdM (2011). Poverty Reduction Action Plan (PARP) 2011-2014. Maputo: Governo de Moçambique, Ministério do Planeamento e Cooperação.
- INE (2009a). Inquérito de Indicadores Múltiplos (MICS) 2008. Maputo, Mozambique: Instituto Nacional de Estatística.
- INE (2009b). Recenseamento Geral de População e Habitação 2007. Maputo: Instituto Nacional de Estatística
- INE (2009c). Trabalhos de Inquéritos Agrícolas (TIA) Maputo: Instituto Nacional de Estatística.
- INE (2010). Inquérito sobre Orçamento Familiar 2008/09. Quadros Básicos. Maputo: Instituto Nacional de Estatística.
- INE (2013). Mocambique. Inquerito Demográfico e de Saúde. Maputo: Instituto National de Estatística.
- INE (2011). Agenda Estatística 2011. Maputo: Instituto Nacional de Estatística.
- INE (2015). Inquerito aos Orcamentos Familiares 2014/15. Principais Resultados. Maputo: Instituto National de Estatística.
- MISAU (2012). Moçambique. Inquérito Demográfico e de Saúde 2011. Relatório Preliminar. Maputo: Ministério de Saúde.
- MPD (2010a). Report on the Millennium Development Goals. Maputo: Ministry of Planning and Development.
- MPD (2010b). Poverty and Wellbeing in Mozambique: Third National Poverty Assessment. Maputo: Ministry of Planning and Development (National Directorate of Studies and Policy Analysis).
- RdM (2010a). Programa Estratégico para a Redução da Pobreza Urbana. Maputo: Ministério da Planificação e Desenvolvimento e outros.
- RdM (2010b). Resolução n.º 02/AM/2009sobre o PESOM, Investimentos e Orçamentos do Conselho Municipal referente ao ano económico de 2009. Maputo: Ministério da Planificação e Desenvolvimento e outros.
- RdM (2013). Final Assessment of the Government of Mozambique of the Performance of Programme Aid Partners (PAPs) in 2012. Maputo: República de Moçambique.
- RdM (2015). Programa Quinquenal do Governo 2015-2019. Maputo: República de Moçambique.

Swedish Aid

- MFA, Sweden (2008). Strategy for Development Cooperation with Mozambique 2008-2012. Stockholm: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- MFA, Sweden (2015). Strategi för Sveriges utvecklingssamarbete med Moçambique 2015-2020. Stockholm: Utrikesdepartementet.
- SADEV (2009). Mainstreaming the Environment. Does Sida Conceptualize Poverty-Environment Linkages in Accordance with the Global Norm? Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority.
- Sida (n.d.). Sida's Support to Niassa Province. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority.
- Sida (2002). Perspectives on Poverty. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Agency.
- Sida (2004). Looking Back, Moving Forward. Sida Evaluation Manual. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority.
- Sida (2006). Current Thinking – The Two Perspectives of the PGD. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority.
- Sida (2009). Women's Economic Empowerment: Scope for Sida's Engagement. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority.
- Sida (2009). Mid-Term Review of Sweden's Development Cooperation with Mozambique. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority.
- Sida (2010). Ett utvecklingssamarbete i förändring. Sidas resultat och prioriteringar. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority.
- Sida (2009) Civil Society Support Programme-Annual Report-2009. Swedish Cooperation Centre, Niassa.
- Sida (2010) Civil Society Support Programme- Midterm Report-2010. Swedish Cooperation Centre, Niassa.
- Swedish Embassy (2010). Terms of Reference. Implementation of Reality Checks in the Niassa Province, Mozambique. Maputo: Swedish Embassy.

Niassa

- Åkesson, Gunilla and V. Nhate (2005). Rapid Poverty Assessment, Niassa, Mozambique. Is the Swedish Support to the Niassa Province on Track? Maputo: Swedish Embassy
- Åkesson, Gunilla and A. Nilsson (2006). National Governance and Local Chieftancy. A multi-level power assessment of Mozambique from a Niassa perspective. Maputo: Swedish Embassy and Sida.
- Åkesson, Gunilla, A. Calengo and C. Tanner (2008). Study on Community Land Rights in Niassa Province, Mozambique. Report 6/2009. Uppsala: SLU

- AustralCowi (2009). Socio-Economic Baseline Studies on Rural Electrification Projects in Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Zambezia Provinces, Mozambique. Maputo: EDM, Republic of Mozambique and Sida.
- CAFOD (2011). Plano de Orçamental dos Parceiros Apoiados pela CAFOD – 2011, Niassa, 2011.
- Chipeta, Sanne, J.F. Olsen, G.F. Junior, M. Rucki (2010). SCC-Vi Agroforestry Collaboration and Possible Expansion around Lake Nyasa-Niassa-Malawi. Feasibility Study. Final Report. Copenhagen: Danish Agricultural Advisory Service
- CIP (2011). Rastreado a despesa de 2010-Distrito de Cuamba, Niassa. Edição 01/2011. Estamos.
- CMdCdCuamba (2010). Balanço das Actividades Desenvolvidas Durante o Ano de 2009 pelo Conselho Municipal da Cidade de Cuamba. Cuamba: Conselho Municipal da Cidade de Cuamba
- CMdCdCuamba (N.A). Dados Principais do Município de Cuamba. Gabinete de Estudos, Cooperação, Assessoria e Planificação. Cuamba: Conselho Municipal da Cidade de Cuamba
- Concern (2011). Relatório Annual de Actividades 2010. Lichinga: Concern Universal Moçambique
- Fredrikson, Malin and A. Grimaldi (2010). The Sustainable Development for Chikweti in the Forest Industry in Mozambique. How can improved management structure facilitate Chikweti's business performance? MA-Thesis. Mälardalen: Mälardalen University.
- Gatu, Karin and S. Rodman (2007). A Green Revolution in Southern Niassa? A field study from a small [scale] farmer perspective about possibilities and obstacles for a Green Revolution. Wäxjö: Wäxjö University.
- GdN (2005). Estudo sobre o Desenvolvimento Sócio Económico da Província do Niassa (1997-2005). Lichinga: Governo da Província do Niassa.
- GdN (2007). Plano Estratégico Provincial 2007-2017. Niassa. Lichinga: Governo da Província do Niassa.
- GdN (2008). Documento Orientador do Gabinete de Estudos Estratégicos e Desenvolvimento (GED). Lichinga: Governo da Província do Niassa
- GdN (2011a). Plano Económico e Social de 2011. Niassa. Lichinga: Governo da Província do Niassa
- GdN (2011b). Plano Económico e Social de 2010. Relatório Balanço Annual 2010. Niassa. Lichinga: Governo da Província do Niassa.
- GdN (2011c). Relatório sobre a Situação Global das ONG's Estrangeiras na Província de Niassa e a sua Contribuição para o Desenvolvimento do País Referente ao Ano 2010. Lichinga: Governo do Niassa
- GdN (2015a). Avaliação do Meio – Termo do Plano Estratégico Provincial Niassa 2017. Lichinga: Governo da Província do Niassa.

- GdN (2015b). Plano Económico e Social e Orçamento do Estado 2015. Lichinga: Governo da Província da Niassa.
- GdN (2015c). Relatório Balanço Anual do Plano Económico e Social 2014. Lichinga: Governo da Província da Niassa.
- GdN/Lago (2015). Informe Por Ocasão da Visita de S. Exia Arlindo da Costa Chilundo, Governador da Província ao Distrito do Lago. Lago: Governo do Distrito do Lago
- GdN/Lago (2015). Plano Economico e Social 2015. Lago: Governo do Distrito do Lago.
- GdN/Lago (2015). Relatório Balanço Annual 2014. Lago: Governo do Distrito do Lago
- GdN/DdMajune (2010). Relatório-balanço do ano de 2010. Majune: Governo do Niassa (Distrito de Majune).
- GdN/DdMajune(2011). Plano Económico e Social para 2011. Majune: Governo do Niassa (Distrito de Majune).
- GdN/DdMajune (2011). Relatório Blanço referente ao Primeiro Trimestre de 2011. Majune: Governo do Niassa (Distrito de Majune).
- Irish Aid (2010). Relatório do Progresso Annual do PES 2009. Programme do Desenvolvimento Local de Niassa. Lichinga: Irish Aid
- MAE (2005). Perfil do distrito de Cuamba 2005. Maputo. Metier Consultoria & Desenvolvimento Lda.
- MAE (2005). Perfil do distrito do Lago 2005. Maputo. Metier Consultoria & Desenvolvimento Lda.
- MAE (2005). Perfil do distrito de Majune 2005. Maputo. Metier Consultoria & Desenvolvimento Lda.
- Medeiros, Eduardo da Conceição (1997). História de Cabo Delgado e do Niassa (c. 1836-1920). Maputo: Cooperação Suíça.
- P.A. Meluluca (2011). Breve Informe do Posto Administrativo de Meluluca. Meluluca: Posto Administrativo de Meluluca
- P.A.Meluluca (2011). Relatório das Actividades Desenvolvidas Durante o Primeiro Semestre de 2011. Meluluca: Posto Administrativo de Meluluca
- ROADS (2010). Plano Estratégico – 2010, Niassa, 2010.
- Tew, Mary (1950). Peoples of the Nyasa Region. London: International African Institute.
- Weigher, I.M.C. Padre Luis (1995). Um olhar sobre o Niassa. Trocos históricos-etnológicos. Maputo: Paulinas.

Publications Reality Checks in Mozambique

- ORGUT (2011a). Reality Checks in Mozambique. Inception Report. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.
- ORGUT (2011b). 1st Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report District of Lago. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.

- ORGUT (2011c). 1st Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report District of Majune. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden
- ORGUT (2011d). 1st Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report Municipality of Cuamba. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden
- ORGUT (2011e). 1st Reality Check Mozambique. Annual Report - Baseline. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.
- ORGUT (2011f). Reality Checks Mozambique. Approach and Methodologies. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.
- ORGUT (2012a).^t 2nd Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report District of Lago. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.
- ORGUT (2012b). 2nd Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report District of Majune. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden
- ORGUT (2012c). 2nd Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report Municipality of Cuamba. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden
- ORGUT (2012d). 2nd Reality Check Mozambique. Annual Report - Governance. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.
- ORGUT (2013a). 3rd Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report District of Lago. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.
- ORGUT (2013b). 3rd Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report District of Majune. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden
- ORGUT (2013c). 3rd Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report Municipality of Cuamba. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden
- ORGUT (2013d) 3rd Reality Check Mozambique. Annual Report – Agriculture and Rural Employment. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.
- ORGUT (2014a). 4th Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report District of Lago. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.
- ORGUT (2014b). 4th Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report District of Majune. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden
- ORGUT (2014c). 4th Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report Municipality of Cuamba. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden
- ORGUT (2014d) 4th Reality Check Mozambique. Annual Report - Entrepreneurship. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.
- ORGUT (2015a). 5th Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report District of Lago. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.
- ORGUT (2015b). 5th Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report District of Majune. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden
- ORGUT (2015c). 5th Reality Check Mozambique. Sub-report Municipality of Cuamba. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden

ORGUT (2015d) 5th Reality Check Mozambique. Annual Report - Endline. Maputo: Embassy of Sweden.

Other Documents

Addison, Tony, David Hulme and Ravi Kanbur (eds.) (2009). *Poverty Dynamics. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cunguara, Benedito and Joseph Hanlon (2010). *Poverty is Not being Reduced in Mozambique*. Crisis States Working Papers No. 2. London: London School of Economics.

Huhn, Arianna (2013). *Sustenance and Sociability: Foodways in a Mozambican Town*. PhD Dissertation. Boston University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Boston: Boston University

Newitt, Malyn (1995). *A History of Mozambique*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

PAP (2013). *Final PAPs Assessment of the Government of Mozambique Performance in 2012*. Maputo: Programme Aid Partners

UNAC (2011). *Os Senhores da Terra. Análise Preliminar do Fenómeno de Usurpação de Terras em Moçambique*. Maputo: União Nacional de Camponeses.

UNICEF (2011). *Child Poverty and Disparities in Mozambique 2010*. Maputo: UNICEF

UNICEF (2014). *Situation Analysis of Children in Mozambique 2014*. Maputo: UNICEF.

UNDP (2009). *2008 Mozambique Report on the Millennium Development Goals*. Maputo: UNDP.

Van den Boom (2011). *Poverty Analysis in Mozambique. Desk Review for the G19*. Amsterdam and Maputo: Centre for World Food Studies and Royal Dutch Embassy.

World Bank (2007). *Beating the Odds: Sustaining Inclusion in a Growing Economy. A Mozambique Poverty, Gender and Social Assessment* Washington D.C: The World Bank.

Methodologies

Addison, Tony, D. Hulme, R. Kanbur (2009). *Poverty Dynamics. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chambers, Robert (2008). *Revolutions in Development Inquiry*. London: Earthscan.

Hesse-Biber, Sharleen and R. Burke Johnson (2015). *The Oxford Handbook of Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Inquiry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jackson, Cecile (2002). "Disciplining Gender." In: *World Development* Vol. 30(3) pp.497-509.

Mikkelsen, Britha (2005). *Methods for Development Work and Research. a New Guide for Practitioners*. London: Sage Publications.

Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Third Edition). London: Sage Publications.

ANNEX 1: REFLECTION REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the “Reality Checks Mozambique” studies implemented between 2011-2015 are (Swedish Embassy 2010/ToR): i) To inform the public discussion among key development actors on poverty reduction, especially in the province of Niassa; ii) to contribute to a better understanding of qualitative poverty monitoring methods in Mozambique; and iii) to provide Sweden with relevant qualitative data on developments and results from its engagement in Mozambique and support further implementation of its programme in Niassa.

Still according to the Terms of Reference for the Reality Checks Mozambique, the objective of this Reflection Report is to make an «assessment of the methodology and process, lessons learned and recommendations for the future» (Ibid). The original plan for the process and methodology was outlined in the project’s Inception Report (ORGUT 2011a) and in the subsequent document «Reality Checks Mozambique. Approach and Methodologies” (ORGUT 2011f).

These two documents will be our points of reference in the following outline. We will first give an assessment of the process of planning and implementation from project initiation in 2011 to its end in 2015 (Section 2). This will be followed by an overview and assessment of the qualitative and quantitative methodologies used (Section 3). The project’s dissemination strategy will be outlined and evaluated in Section 4. Section 5 concludes and points out a possible way forward for other Reality Checks.

2. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Tender/ToR.

The basis for the Reality Check Mozambique was a notion that 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.

Against this background, the Swedish Embassy in Mozambique “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/ToR).

The call for bids to the project was made in December 2010. References were made in the ToR to earlier Reality Checks commissioned by Sida, with emphasis on qualitative methodologies in general and the idea of ‘immersion’ with households and individuals in particular (Ibid). It was also suggested that a Reference group should be organised by the Embassy in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Niassa.

During the elaboration of the bid, ORGUT and associated institutions COWI and CMI decided to suggest an extension of the scope of earlier Reality Checks by also proposing i) a broader set of qualitative methodologies, ii) a quantitative Baseline and Endline survey in order to relate the qualitative research to quantitative data, and iii) annual themes (governance, agriculture, private sector/entrepreneurship) that would facilitate/make it easier to focus the analyses.

In terms of staffing, the ORGUT bid sought a balance between international/ national researchers and junior researchers/assistants from the province of Niassa. The involvement of the local staff was important, both for local embeddedness, language and as points of contact.

2.2. Inception Phase

After awarding the project to ORGUT and associates (June 2011), the Swedish Embassy gave room for an inception phase – including fieldwork in Niassa – in order to i) ground the project with relevant authorities and institutions at the provincial and district/municipal level and ii) select sites for project implementation (see ORGUT 2011a for more details).

The inception phase was important for preparing project implementation and the team managed to meet most of the relevant stakeholders – even though the work was complicated by a decision by Sweden to reduce/cut aid transfers to the provincial budget following suspicions of corruption just prior to the inception phase fieldwork.

Interviews were initially held with a large number of stakeholders from government, civil society as well as the private sector (Ibid, Annex 2). The most challenging was to get government officials on board/interested. Formal acceptance of the project with necessary signatures etc. went well, but there was a certain scepticism as to the motives of the exercise that may be related to Sweden's position at the time.

The decision on sites for fieldwork was done in close cooperation with provincial government stakeholders, which turned out to be important for ownership. Emphasis was given to a combination of geographical distribution and socio-economic characteristics – leading to a choice of Cuamba, Lago and Majune (see Map 1 in Main Report).

The same selection process was repeated at the levels of the districts/municipality, with the Administrative Posts/bairros and communities being identified in collaboration with the District Administrator and the most relevant District Directorates. Also this turned out to be important for ownership.

During the inception phase key elements of the project implementation were defined and settled, including i) Empirical Background, ii) Methodological Framework, iii) Coordination with Stakeholders, iv) Time Schedule and Work plans, and v) Strategic Communication and Dissemination (Ibid).

2.3. Implementation Phase

The first fieldwork in Niassa was implemented in September 2011, and included i) qualitative research in order to get a broad overview over issues of poverty and well-being and ii)

training for and implementation of the Reality Check Baseline Survey 2011 (to be followed up by an Endline Survey in 2015).

In practical terms fieldwork in the selected communities in Cuamba, Lago and Majune has gone well – despite challenges particularly in Majune to find decent accommodation. All teams ended up staying in the District/Municipal centre (i.e. Cuamba City, Metangula and Malanga), travelling to the relevant communities on a daily basis.

Work was initiated by interviews and necessary permissions from local authorities (i.e. District/Municipal authorities and related public institutions), while introductions in the local communities were done with government and traditional authorities and NGOs/CBOs where relevant.

The initial Focus Group discussions (see below) turned out to be important venues for explaining the role and purpose of our work. We emphasised that we were doing (applied) research, trying to capture people's own experiences and opinions about their situation. The only output, we underlined, would be reports to stakeholders in government and among donors.

It is our experience that people were pleased to see us every year we came back to the District centres. The general interest became more limited as time went by, but in all three project sites some key persons (such as the District Administrator in Majune, the District Permanent Secretary in Lago, and President of the Municipality in Cuamba) maintained interest and read and related to the project outputs.

Also in the communities people continued to show positive interest. Some became key persons for effective implementation of the project (by contributing to organising interviews, Focus Groups, the Baseline and Endline Survey etc.), and some became important interviewees. The emphasis on surveys and different themes (see above) was important for peoples' interest/attentiveness. Among the population at large, the teams developed particularly close relations with some of the most active individuals and the selected Focus Households.

2.4. Overall Assessment

The Terms of Reference for the project reflects an original and (to the team) welcome approach to poverty monitoring and analysis, emphasising qualitative dynamics at a time when economics/quantitative data dominated the field of development and poverty monitoring and evaluation. The ToR was clear and detailed, but also gave room for alternative suggestions.

In our view, the decision to combine the qualitative focus with a Baseline/Endline survey (first and fifth year) and different 'themes' (second, third and fourth year) turned out to be important. Combining analyses of processes/dynamics of poverty and well-being with quantitative data has added to the analyses, and made the studies more credible/relevant to stakeholders and readers who are not used to qualitative approaches.

Further, a more narrow focus on a limited number of Focus Households through 'immersion' – as in earlier/model Reality Checks – would have made it difficult to report on variations in

rural settings where changes from year to year are often small and subtle. Choosing ‘themes’ (governance, agriculture, private sector/entrepreneurship) has made the reports from each year different and more focused than they would have been without such an approach.

Finally a minor point: The statement in the Terms of Reference that local team members should speak English in a context where Portuguese and national languages (Macua, Yao, Nyanja) dominate was arguably unnecessary – and complicated the process of identifying good local staff from local research institutions as also envisaged in the ToR.

The Inception Phase and its accompanying fieldwork was in our view very important for the further development of the project. It made it possible to identify relevant stakeholders, carefully select the most relevant/useful field sites, and make contacts with stakeholders/people that would greatly facilitate the initiation of the project. It also made it possible to write a grounded and relevant Inception Report, which became a useful point of reference throughout the report series with very few deviations being made from original plans during the five-year period.

The Implementation Phase has been interesting and rewarding but also challenging – first and foremost due to the limited time at the Team’s disposal. Per year each of the main researchers have had approximately i) three days for preparations; ii) 10 days for fieldwork including time for presentation of previous fieldwork, interviews in Lichinga and the relevant district capital, application of the qualitative methodologies in the communities, and implementation of the Baseline and Endline; and iii) 18 days for the production of one sub-report and contributions to the summary Annual Report – with the team-leader being allocated an extra seven days for the latter as main author.

Having said this, the work became easier and more efficient as we gradually came to know the context and key persons better. The same limitation of time has influenced the process of writing reports, making it necessary to settle for ‘good enough’ rather than ‘as perfect as we can get it’ – being a general characteristic of applied research work.

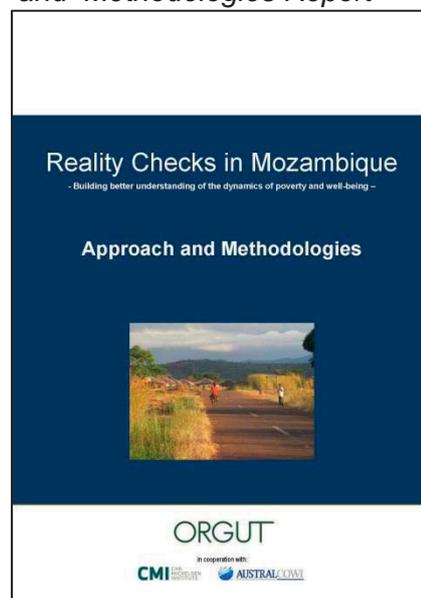
Support from the Swedish Embassy. In general terms, we have been very pleased with the support from the Swedish Embassy. There have been three responsible officers during the project period, which could have jeopardised institutional memory. However, each officer has shown keen interest in the studies, made diligent comments to draft reports, and shown the necessary flexibility in terms of deliveries and deadlines for a project with such a long time-span and involving so many people.

Nevertheless, two issues deserve mentioning: One is the original idea of a Reference Group from government and donors (see Embassy of Sweden 2010/ToR), which except for the first year never really came to function (Ireland as a central member has followed the study Reality Checks individually). The second is the original emphasis on continuous relations with Sida Stockholm, in order to ground/further disseminate the Reality Check approach. This has not really happened – even though the Reality Check series will be presented in a meeting in Stockholm at the completion of the project (April 2016). With a stronger involvement from the Reference Group and Sida/Stockholm, the Reality Check approach could have been more institutionalised and used in other contexts/for other programmes

3. METHODOLOGY

Essentially the Reality Check project has sought to assess “what poverty means as a condition of living and as experienced by people who identify themselves as poor” (Embassy of Sweden 2010/ToR). The study has primarily relied on qualitative methods, supported by a quantitative component developed specifically for the Reality Check. In this section we present the two components separately, starting with the qualitative approach and then presenting the quantitative one. We provide a brief presentation of the principal methods that were employed by each component and make an assessment of the main strengths and weaknesses of each – referring the reader to the report “Reality Checks Mozambique. Approach and Methodologies” (ORGUT 2011f) for further details.

Illustration: Cover of *Approach and Methodologies Report*



3.1. Qualitative component

The qualitative component consisted of three main information gathering methods: (i) semi-structured interviews with formal development actors; (ii) focus group discussions with community members, and (iii) engagement with focus households (immersion). We will discuss each of these separately here below.

Semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were annually carried out with selected key informants based in the respective district. These included members of the district government, representatives of district directorates, members of municipal assembly (Cuamba), civil servants at the district administration, representatives of administrative posts and other more local level administrators. In addition to the public employees, also representatives of private sector, civil society, local media, community level leaders, members of the political opposition and other local development actors were interviewed.

Semi-structured interviews implied a structured conversation with a thematic focus. The interviews were to some extent prepared in advance and followed a loosely structured interview guide. Permanent points of discussion included main changes in the district since the previous year as well as principal achievements and main challenges related to district development. In addition, the key informants were interrogated in relation to the focus themes (governance, agriculture and entrepreneurship) that were selected as specific topics for each year's Reality Check (see above).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the office of the key informants or in another closed setting that provided some privacy for the conversation. Most of the interviews were held in Portuguese and lasted for 1-2 hours. The study team took notes but did not record

the discussions (except for the first year after which this practice was dropped as an unnecessary measure). Afterwards, the interview material was systematized and used as part of the qualitative content analysis.

Strengths of the method. Semi-structured interviews were found as most suitable method to engage with professional people who have many responsibilities and tight time schedules. At its best, the semi-structured interview method offered the study team critical insights and sharp analysis of the situation in the districts. Some key informants with close ties to the local ethnic groups contributed with a more ethnographic analysis of the behaviour pattern of the local population.

Given their level of education and central role in the district, many of the key informants were able to produce an elaborate analysis of the main challenges and present ideas for potential solutions. Often, the information obtained through the interviews served for expanding the scope of observation of the study team and helped the team to understand some of the critical limitations of local development.

From a practical point of view, semi-structured interviews were easy to carry out as the method itself does not require much of logistics. The protocol for setting up meetings with local government representatives was light and usually did not require much time, especially in the rural settings of Lago and Majune. In Cuamba town, the etiquette was more rigorous and previously set appointments were a must.

At district level, contacts with civil society, media and representatives of local leaders were straightforward. It was not uncommon that the team was provided with direct access to the key informants at the first contact. In general, only private sector representatives were harder to reach, as they were moving around frequently and appeared to run a more stressful agenda than many others. With few exceptions, however, the private sector representatives also made themselves available for a scheduled appointment, and many of them proved to be analytical and outspoken interviewees.

Challenges. The main challenge related to semi-structured interviews was the fact that the interviewer inevitably obtained only a part of information, the part that the key informant wanted to deliver. Obviously, this is a general challenge that affects all social interview techniques. There is always a degree of social and/or political censorship involved. In the context of Reality Check, this was particularly evident among some civil servants who weighed cautiously their words assumingly to follow the official discourse. Such interviews were marked by absence of criticism and deeper analysis, and typically resulted with very limited new information.

Another challenge faced by the team in the context of semi-structured interviews was limited access to some of more controversial key informants, especially representatives of the political opposition. These people tend to live in social isolation, and they are mainly contacted by other like-minded people. Some of the Reality Check team members were explicitly advised to avoid contacting such controversial figures in order not to be stamped as sympathisers of the 'wrong side'. That would complicate further information gathering with the rest of the population. Hence, in order to be able to interview such people, the team had to do it as discreetly as possible, for example by stopping by while already on the way back to Lichinga.

Focus group discussions. The focus group method is a type of group interview technique where the purpose is to stimulate interaction within the group so as to obtain information and insights of a given theme. In the context of Reality Check, the focus groups sought to shed light into different aspects of community dynamics, and included such themes as people's relationship with local leaders, development needs of the community, identification of most significant changes in the community, roles and responsibilities of men and women, etc. Focus group discussions were also used to define the socioeconomic categories that exist in the target communities.

For the purpose of Reality Check, which mostly targeted illiterate people, the study team developed a number of participatory tools that promoted visual expression so as to stimulate interaction. Some of the tools invited the participants to draw different elements of their reality (e.g. map of their community), while others involved a visual systematization of the gathered information by the focus group facilitator (e.g. main problems of the community). Some of the methods were conducted only once, while others were repeated annually, or at the beginning and at the end of the five-year period, depending on the relevance.

All the group discussions were facilitated by a member of the Reality Check study team who worked side-by-side with a local assistant/translator. Practically all the group discussions (with an exception of a few male groups) required translation; the participants interacted in a local language while the facilitator spoke Portuguese.

Focus groups were always organized in advance with the help of the local leaders who mobilized the participants. All the group discussions took place outdoors in a place commonly used for community meetings or nearby. Most of the time group discussions lasted for 2-3 hours. Themes that were anticipated to divide views according to gender, were organized in separate groups of men and women. Some groups were also organised on the basis of age, mainly older people and adolescents. Else, the groups were mixed.

For research ethical reasons, the participants were not paid for their contribution in the discussion. However, for the consideration of the time they spent in the focus group, the participants were given refreshments (biscuits and soft drinks) at the end of each session.

Strengths of the method. Although the logistics required for a focus group discussion were somewhat more demanding than the ones involved in a semi-structured interview, the overall outcomes exceeded the required inputs. Community members in general appeared willing to participate in the group discussions; there were usually more people curious to take part than what was requested (max. 15). Most of the time, the small refreshment at the end of the sessions seemed to be an appreciated reward, and often attracted more people to join the event. Sometimes, however, particularly women complained for the house chores or farm works that remained undone due to the lengthy time spent in the group discussion. It is recognized that due to the amount of responsibilities attributed to women, their participation in activities beyond the household, bears greater consequences than that of men.

Overall, the participatory tools worked well in getting the participants engaged in the selected discussion themes. Men were generally more open and got easier involved in a discussion, while women, especially in the rural areas like in Majune, were often more timid especially at the beginning of the session. However, usually courage won timidity even among the women after the ice was broken by the first few participants. In mixed groups, however, male

participation clearly dominated the discussions. Often, the modality of participation generated spurts of laughter and animated comments within the group. It was felt that the visual presentation of the activities, even when done in writing on front of the participants, helped people to follow the rationale and conveyed a message of the importance of the discussion.

Apart from a few exceptions, the focus group discussions generated a wealth of information, and the use of (graphic or other types of) illustrations facilitated considerably the posterior systematization of the information. The method worked particularly well in relation to topics that gathered wide consensus in the community. What was noted though was the rarity with which strongly contradictory views were raised. This was understood as an expression of a social code that inhibits community members to challenge each other publically.

Challenges. The inevitable consequence of involving local leaders in mobilizing the focus group participants was the presence of the leaders in the group discussion itself. There was no way to go around this since it was the only way to engage the people. The presence of the leaders in the group established an effective social control over the participants, and probably partly explains why contradictory opinions were not brought up. There was also some indication that the leaders tended to favour the participation of their family members and friends. Several times it was noted that partly the same people were invited to the discussion sessions year after year.

Another challenge was the use of translation. Translating every intervention, even if in a more concise format, inevitably made the process slower and more time-consuming. Another, even more critical aspect was the loss of valuable details and side-lines of the discussions that were expressed in local languages. It was simply not possible to translate everything; the facilitators usually only obtained brief summaries of the interventions. Methodologically speaking, this aspect alone was a clear limitation of the focus group technique, where the facilitator is supposed to stimulate the discussion and observe the interaction between the participants. The need for translation greatly limited the facilitator's capacity of observation.

Perhaps the most demanding challenge was presented in a form of expectation that the repeated appearance of the study team evoked among the community members (occasionally also among public sector representatives). Although the team repeatedly explained what the purpose of the fieldwork was, it was difficult for many to understand the full meaning of a 'research' or a 'study', and hence they built up an explanation that made more sense for them. Many interpreted the interest showed by the study team on the hardship of the local population as a promise of making things better. This was particularly evident in contexts, like Malila (Majune), where living conditions did not significantly improve over the five-year period. Here, the unreal expectations led to the feeling of frustration or fatigue among some of the community members especially after the first three-four years of the study. The frustration lowered the motivation of participation, as people realized it would not necessarily make a difference. In other locations, e.g. in Meluluca (Lago), where at least the public space developed at a faster pace, the population seemed to attribute the improvements, at least in part, to the Reality Check study.

Immersion into focus households. The involvement of focus families as a study method was the brand mark of the Reality Check approach. The objective of the immersion was to

get a close look into (or even become part of) the modus vivendi of the local population through close contact with selected families whose lives were thus followed annually over the period of five years.

The identification of the focus families was done in three steps. First, at the beginning of the study, the Reality Check team conducted a wealth ranking exercise in a focus group so as to identify and characterize the different socioeconomic categories that existed in the respective communities. In all the three study sites, the exercise resulted with 4-6 different categories covering everybody from the most destitute to the wealthiest types of households. As the second step, the community members were asked to identify some households representing each category. Finally, in the third step, the study team contacted identified families, explained them about the Reality Check project and invited them to participate in it. In 2011, the team engaged in total 21 households in the three districts as focus families.

The focus families were visited several times every year during the fieldwork. The visits took place at different times of the day (morning, afternoon, evening) so as to get a fuller picture of an ordinary day structure of the families. The discussions with the families consisted of thematic interviews (covering their family history, intra-household division of labour, access to and use of public services, relation to agriculture, income generating activities, etc.) as well as informal conversation. The interviews were mostly conducted with the head of household and/or his spouse, while other family members were involved more in jovial talking. Nearly always, the encounter took place at the house yard of the focus family, where the team also had a good position to observe the dynamics between the different family members as well as their neighbour relations). Through different types of interaction, the team sought to gather information and deepen the relationship with the families.

Usually the family visits were carried out unannounced, without previous appointment. However, some of the wealthiest household heads who were running several businesses stayed long periods away from home and therefore it was necessary to schedule the visit in advance. Normally, the visits lasted between 1-2 hours. The study team members took notes of the observations and discussions. In addition, photographs were taken to visualize the different realities of the families.

Logistically, immersions were easy to carry out as the method did not require any preparation. The focus families did not receive any payment for their participation in the study. However, recognizing the long periods of time they spent with the study team away from their farm fields and other activities, the poorest households were provided with food items (salt, oil, soap, rice, beans, etc.) every year at the end of each fieldwork period. The food bags were always received with visible appreciation.

Strengths of the method. As a method, the immersion really allowed the study team to get a closer look into the lives of the focus families. Repeated visits and interviews provided a rich source of information and enabled the team to better understand the ways of living of each household. The approach also lowered the threshold of posing more sensitive questions about poverty and wellbeing, and clearly demonstrated the often minute brink between positive and negative developments for the households in question.

Members of the focus families appeared mostly positive about the recurrent visits and interviews. Although it was anticipated that the involvement of a few families could evoke envy among their neighbours and family members, in practice such expressions were rare.

The household heads and their spouses told openly about their lives and responded willingly to the multitude of questions. People who had some formal education background (the wealthier ones) tended to elaborate well their thoughts, and many even spoke fluent Portuguese. The expression of the poorer people varied more. Some poor people (men) were very out-spoken and talked openly and effortlessly about their lives. Others (most women) were more succinct and strictly responded what they had been asked about. The body-language and non-verbal expression served as an important source of information as well.

Notes taking did not seem to bother the families. Rather, it seemed to convey a sense of importance to the people in question. Overall, immersions and the continuous interest showed in the selected households were often perceived to have an empowering effect, particularly for the poorer households.

Challenges. Within the five-year timespan of the project, there were changes in some of the focus families that meant dissolution of the household altogether. Such resolute changes were caused by the death of the head of the household or his/her spouse. In some cases, we still continued accompanying the life of the rest of the household members (gaining additional insights of the coping mechanisms in such critical circumstances), but in cases where the deceased household head was living alone, information gathering was discontinued. Although other households were then identified to substitute the lost one, we missed the opportunity of getting a full coverage of five years of life of a given household.

Similarly to the focus group discussions, also the immersion evoked unfounded expectations of material benefits, at least among the poorer households. Some people openly asked for support, while others revealed their expectations more through gestures and facial expressions. After a few years of the study, also these families grew frustrated as they did not see improvements happening. Despite that the study team repeatedly explained the purpose of the fieldwork, the hope of receiving some assistance never died.

Related to the expectations, some focus families were discovered exaggerating their hardship. For example, one elderly couple presented themselves as being totally dependent on the help of their neighbours to get food to eat, while it was later revealed that the couple actually owned a farm field. While it is difficult to know how commonly this happened, our sense is that it was more of an exception than a rule.

There was also another, less contemplated dimension of 'not telling the truth' the team encountered: the recounts of people's life histories or passages of their lives tended to vary to some extent every time they told these stories. Often, it was small details (e.g. the amount of money that the person had available when he/she started the first business venture) that were different than what was told at the first time. Clearly, this did not happen to evoke empathy among the study team members, but rather it was understood as a characteristic of the local story telling culture where small, seemingly unimportant details could be told in many different ways.

3.2. Quantitative component

The quantitative component consisted of two main information gathering methods: (i) existing government data; (ii) and a Baseline and Endline survey.

Existing government data. For the mapping of poverty and well-being in Niassa, the team actively collected existing quantitative data. These included the 2007 National Census (INE 2009b); the 2008/09 and 2014/15 National Household Expenditure Survey (INE 2010, 2015); and other more sector-specific studies. In addition to national data-sets, we used data from locally based situation assessments 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 (GdN 2007, 2011, 2013, 2015a) and the District Social and Economic Development Plans (PESODs) and their accompanying Annual Reports (Balanços de PESODs) for Cuamba, Lago and Majune. These reports were requested from the local governments during each yearly visit.

Strengths. One important aspect of using official government data is the acknowledgement that these are the data that decision makers have access and relate to. Using such data is also a way of showing that one takes local data collection seriously. Another potential strength is that it allows comparing the outputs from the data collected by the research team and that available through official channels. Official documents provide important information about the relevant development indicators to investigate. These were used both in exploratory questions in qualitative interviews and focus group discussions, as well as in the quantitative questionnaire used in the household surveys. Using the relevant development indicators ensure comparability of data also between the three study sites

Challenges. Despite its strengths, government data is not without challenges. Two major challenges relate to availability and reliability. Documents and reports were not always available, or would only be shared by specific persons who were not always readily available. This was particularly true for sector reports such as Agriculture, Education and Health. The data on reports and documents, including the PESOD was not always reliable, and basic data was not reported consistently. Some of the indicators varied from one year to another, a fact that made systematic comparisons challenging. Some data was outdated, or alternatively the data collection method was not clear. At the same time, government officials have vested interest in over reporting realizations. This is particularly true for Millennium Development Goal indicators.

The most challenging year was 2013, when due to the time the teams were in the field – May and June – the Balance of the PESOD was not yet finalised. As a result, the data used in that report referred to planned outputs, which are usually higher than the final realisations. In addition, in the same year, the reporting format changed, and some of the variables that we had been monitoring were no longer reported.

The Baseline/Endline Survey. In addition to government data, we have conducted a panel study consisting of two surveys with a total of 360 households (120 in each site). The first one (Baseline survey) took place in 2011 and the second one that targeted the same families was carried out in 2015 (Endline survey). Panel longitudinal studies track the same people, and control for differences observed in those people to be less likely to be the result of

cultural differences across surveys. The expectation is that observing changes in this fashion would make the results more accurate and actual.

The two surveys combined 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 organisations, family, friends etc.) in which they are engaged.

The selection of the households followed partially a non-probabilistic approach; the communities were purposefully selected with the support of the local administration. At the community level however, the households were selected through a systematic random method, after listing all the households existing in selected smaller sub-communities (*aldeias, quarteirões*). In the context of the Endline survey, the same households were revisited and re-interviewed using practically the same questionnaire as in 2011. In cases where the same households could not be traced, a substitute household with similar characteristics, within the same sub-community, was selected. A drop-out rate between 15% and 20% was expected from the original sample.

Interviews in the households were conducted preferably with the head of the household. The spouse or a responsible adult (over 18 and knowledgeable about the dynamics of the household) was interviewed, in the cases where the household head was not available. Interviews were conducted in the relevant local languages: Nyanja in Lago; both Yao and Emakwa in Majune; and Emakwa in Cuamba. Interviewers were selected for training based on their fluency in both Portuguese and local languages, as well as experience conducting surveys. Those with the best command of conducting the questionnaire were selected to conduct interviews in the field. For the Endline, interviewers who had been part of the Baseline team were prioritised. On average an interview lasted between one and a half to two hours.

Strengths. The surveys represent rare panel-data, which allows for observation of change within the same households over time. While the qualitative data was gathered annually, thus perceiving change at a slower pace, the surveys having been conducted with a longer time span allowed for a greater perception of change. Moreover, despite the high mobility of households and the time span of five years, success in tracing the original households remained within acceptable rates (83 percent).

The panel study made it possible to triangulate information obtained from different sources and get a good perspective on the experiences/dynamics of the focus families. Through a larger sample, we were able to understand better the frequency in which their experiences may have occurred in their communities. Insights from the life experiences of the focus family also allowed a better understanding and analysis of the quantitative data.

Challenges. High mobility of households (permanent or temporary), and mortality of household heads was responsible for most of the attrition of the sample from 2011 to 2015. Part of the mobility is due to the agrarian nature of the surveyed areas. The timing of the survey of 2015, i.e. the beginning of a new agriculture season contributed to the fact that some households were not available to be interviewed, having moved to their farm fields.

Five years between surveys is a relatively long time span, where many changes could occur within and to households.

Due to the relatively small sample size, a rigorous statistical analysis is only meaningful when the whole sample of 360 households are considered together. When analysing the results district by district, the confidence interval grows broad and accuracy of the results suffer. However, in the context of the Reality Checks, where the main objective was to gather qualitative information on poverty and wellbeing, the survey results were used mostly to support the qualitative analysis.

Additionally, data relating to income and expenditure is usually unreliable and should be taken with more caution – even though the latter is usually more reliable than the former. Unreliability is due to data being based on people's recollection, and being sensitive data people are not always upfront about it to strangers.

Despite the challenges identified and the limitations of the quantitative methods used, they provide good support to the information gathered through qualitative methods. Alone the data gathered through quantitative methods does not provide sufficient information for an in-depth analysis of the poverty dynamics. Combined with the qualitative methods they are strong and mutually reinforcing.

Overall Assessment. Studying change is a challenge in itself. In remote agrarian communities with no investment projects, people's lives usually change slowly. Typically, the most significant changes relate to birth, death or marriage of a family member. Absence of major events in people's lives makes the time seem like a continuum with no clear reference points. In such context it is very challenging to distinguish between 'no change' and 'a small change'. It is therefore likely that despite all the different types of interviews (one-on-one and in group) and field observations, some changes went unnoticed to the study team.

Finally, putting everything together one cannot but acknowledge the power of simple qualitative methods in bringing up an enormous diversity of information. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, recurrent interaction and observations with focus families revealed multiple facets of poverty and wellbeing, dimensions that are beyond the reach of any statistics. People's aspirations, desires, fears, disappointments, feelings of exclusion, injustice, dreams, despairs, and many other feelings and the respective triggers could only be captured through qualitative methods. Quantitative methods are important to reveal contours and outlines of the reality but qualitative methods are needed to bring colours and shades into the picture. There is however no point of comparing the two approaches; for any phenomenon as complex as poverty, a combination of the two is the only way to capture a more complete picture of it.

4. RESULT DISSEMINATION

The Inception Phase of the project gave emphasis to result dissemination at three levels: i) To people in the districts and local communities under study. ii) To key stakeholders in the province (government institutions, civil society and private sector institutions). iii) To government and donors at national level (see ORGUT 2011a for more details).

Reports. The main output from the studies has been a series of reports (i.e. one annual and three sub-reports every year) in Portuguese and English. Attempts have been made to make them accessible to a broad public, by keeping them relatively short, adjusting language, emphasising illustrations etc.

The Reports have been distributed internally at the Swedish Embassy, to other donors in Mozambique and to Sida Head Office in Stockholm. They have also been available at the Embassy's Homepage (<http://www.swedenabroad.com/en-GB/Embassies/Maputo>), at the ORGUT Home Page (<http://www.ORGUT.se>), at the Home Page of the Chr. Michelsen Institute (www.cmi.no) and through a net based network of researchers on lusophone countries (H-Net Notifications drupaladmin@mail.h-net.msu.edu).

In addition, the reports have been sent via e-mail to a large number of people who signed up for them in the Inception Phase (see list in ORGUT 2011a), and they have been distributed in hard copies during annual presentations in Lichinga (see below). The institutions that most regularly have taken part in the seminars are Provincial Government (usually Directorate of Planning and Development but also sector-based directorates depending on the theme at hand), National Institute of Statistics, Swedish Cooperative Centre/We Effect, Concern Universal, FONAGNI (Fórum das Organizações Não Governamentais do Niassa) and UCAN (União dos Camponeses e Agricultores do Niassa). Copies have also been sent to the Ministry of Planning and Development in Maputo (Department of Economic and Social Studies, DNEAP).

Presentations. Following every Reality Check a debrief has been held at the Swedish Embassy in Maputo. These have been organised as 'lunch seminars' and been well attended by the Embassy staff. Outsiders have also been invited – including the Embassy of Ireland that has its own Niassa programme – but their number/attendance has varied.

Formal presentations in Lichinga have been given at the initiation of fieldwork every year (i.e. one year after publication) to invited representatives from government, civil society and the private sector. These were well attended for the 1st and the 2nd Reality Check (with around 50 persons), but the attendance dropped for the 3rd and 4th Reality Check (to 10 persons at the minimum). In one case the presentation collided with a conference held by provincial government, and in the second there had apparently been challenges with the invitation.

Formal presentations have also been given at the District Level for the District Administration, Government and other stakeholders. Regularity and attendance has been best in Majune where it has been done every year. In Lago this has been more intermittent, but meetings with the District Administrator/Permanent Secretary have been held every year. In Cuamba the presentations were done the first two years, with presence of the district directors, civil society representatives and traditional leaders. In the subsequent years meetings were held with the Administrator and Mayor separately. In the communities/Administrative Posts, every fieldwork has been introduced by meetings with community-based heads of Administrative Post and Traditional Authorities – also in order to get green light to continue.

Last, but not least important, feedback/presentations have been carried out in the communities under study. This has been done in the form of scheduled meetings where people have been invited to listen to presentation, usually based on photos and exercises in

the form of flip-charts done by Focus Groups. Also, feedback has been given informally through group and individual discussions. This was particularly the case during the last fieldwork, when exercises/flip-charts done in 2011 formed the basis for discussions about change.

Other forms of result dissemination. The Reality Check studies have also been disseminated through other channels: The two first Reality Checks were presented on the main national news broadcast (TVM) and their provincial news programme in the form of reports from the presentations in Lichinga (including interviews with team members). Presentations/summaries of the Reality Checks have also appeared in the provincial web-based newspaper FAISCA.

In Lago the Reality Checks have been presented through three programs/interviews in the Community Radio, which reaches an estimated 70 percent of the population. In addition, reports have been distributed to the district's only secondary school (to be used in the social sciences) and printed copies have been submitted to a small historical/ethnographic museum in Metangula that is mainly visited by school classes.

In Cuamba the Community Radio conducted interviews in the first and second year of the Reality Checks and the reports were submitted and used the subsequent years. The 4th Reality Check (on private sector/entrepreneurship) has been used by the Secondary School of Cuamba and its entrepreneurship classes.

Furthermore, the Reality Check reports have been used in teaching at the University level. We have heard (but not managed to verify) that they are used at universities in the province of Niassa. The reports have also been actively used by the Liné University in Kalmar as part of the teaching in the Peace and Development Studies programme that includes collaborative fieldwork between Swedish and Mozambican students.

Finally, the Reality Check Mozambique has served as an example/model for at least two other similar exercises: One is a Reality Check Angola project (2015-2018), funded by the Norwegian Embassy and carried out by the Catholic University (UCAN/CEIC) and the Chr. Michelsen Institute. Studies are being carried out in the capital city Luanda and the rural province of Malanje and represent a rare approach in Angola. There are also plans for a Baseline study modelled on the Reality Check Mozambique by a UN program on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for girls and young women in Mozambique, to be implemented by UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and UNESCO in the Zambezia and Nampula provinces in Mozambique.

Overall Assessment. We believe that the wide distribution of the reports and the number of events where the reports have been presented and discussed have led to a large degree of fulfilment of the first objective of the Reality Checks Mozambique: To inform the public discussion among key development actors on poverty reduction, especially in the province of Niassa.

The second objective – that of contributing to a better understanding of qualitative poverty monitoring methods in Mozambique – has partially been fulfilled. The reports have engaged

policy makers, aid practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders in discussions about qualitative aspects of poverty and well-being – but it is difficult to *verify* that this has had tangible implications for the way poverty reduction policies are planned, implemented and evaluated in government and among donors and civil society organisations.

With regards to the third objective – providing Sweden with relevant qualitative data on development and results from its engagement in Mozambique and support further implementation of its programme in Niassa – goal fulfilment seems to be mixed. The initiation of the project in 2011 coincided with Sweden reducing/pulling out of several activities in Niassa, which made the scope of Sweden’s overall involvement smaller. On the other hand, the Reality Check reports have been used as reference literature by the embassy and implementing partners in the development of a new programme for Agricultural Development and Poverty Reduction in Mozambique. Original intentions of involving the Reality Check team directly/as discussants in “priority issues identified in the annual reviews of projects and programmes within Swedish priority sectors” and the development of a new Country Strategy did not materialise – without thereby saying that the studies have not had an influence.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Most governments and donors continue to have public service provision and poverty reduction as a central objective of their development policies. Given this, we believe that a Reality Check approach/qualitative analysis should be an important complement to quantitative analysis measuring service provision and poverty reduction over space and time.

We also recommend that the original concept/idea of Reality Checks focussing on individual households and ‘immersion’ is extended to include additional qualitative/participatory approaches accounted for above. Change at household level will often be too slow and restricted to throw light on parallel changes at structural/community level. This, we have argued, should be important parts of the overall analysis.

In cases where access to quantitative/survey data from the communities under study is limited, we further recommend to include Baseline/Endline surveys. In addition to the analytical advantages, most stakeholders will take studies combining qualitative and quantitative data more seriously.

The Reality Check Mozambique is broad in scope, relating to dynamics of poverty and well-being as well as relationships with state institutions. It is also long-term (five years) and involves a relatively large number of people (nine researchers plus support/enumerators). The utility of using the approach in relation to smaller, sector based interventions (agriculture, energy, private sector etc.) with smaller teams should be assessed.

The Reality Check Mozambique studies have assessed the implications of development processes and interventions over a period of five years. To measure longer-term impact on social development and public institutions, more time is needed. We recommend that a revisit to Niassa and the communities of Cuamba, Lago and Majune is considered after a period of 3-5 years.

Applied research/consultancies like the Reality Check are by nature a race against time – in the field as well as during the writing process. There is rarely time for deeper analysis and learning. At the same time, the Reality Checks have produced a wealth of data. We recommend that the Swedish Embassy/Sida or other stakeholders set aside funds for the production of a limited set of more profound academic studies/publications related to the dynamics of poverty and well-being and the utility of qual-quant approaches.

ANNEX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE



Embassy of Sweden
Maputo

2010-12-16

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Implementation of Reality Checks in the Niassa Province, Mozambique

These terms of reference provide guidance for the elaboration of a tender regarding the application of the methodology for a Reality Check in the Niassa Province in Northern Mozambique, as well as possible further context specific modification of this tool.

1. Introduction

Poverty Monitoring in Mozambique is rather well established and the country's information systems are relatively well developed when comparing with other countries with similar levels of development.

Poverty monitoring chiefly takes place within the framework of the implementation of Mozambique's poverty reduction plan (PARPA). The annual Joint Reviews (carried out jointly by the government and the donors) and the Development Observatories (the main platform for civil society participation in the PARPA processes at provincial and national level) are the main institutionalized processes/platforms for reviewing poverty trends and the poverty impact of public policies. These processes are foremost informed by quantitative data derived from different types of national surveys provided for by the National Statistics Institute, INE (*Inquérito Demográfico e de Saúde* (IDS), *Inquérito de Indicadores Múltiplos* (MICS), *Inquérito ao Orçamento* (IOF) and *Questionário de Indicadores Básicos de Bem-Estar* (QUIBB))¹

This data forms a fundamental input to the development of government policies and programs for poverty reduction, as well as the donor interventions that support them. However, by their quantitative nature, these surveys do not capture all the dimensions of poverty that are relevant to the design of policies and programs. Additional data on qualitative dimensions regarding poverty would constitute valuable complements to the existing quantitative data.

¹ see INE (2008), *Plano Estratégico do Sistema Estatístico Nacional 2008-2012*.

Against this background, the Embassy of Sweden in Mozambique considers that there is a need to apply and possibly further adjust additional tools for monitoring poverty and the impact of public policies. The initiative will hence be carried through within the realm of close partnership between Sweden and the Province of Niassa.

2. Objectives

By improving the knowledge on crucial dimensions of poverty, the use of the Reality Check tool is expected to: (i) provide Sweden with qualitative follow-ups of developments and results to inform the implementation of its cooperation with Mozambique, (ii) inform the public discussion among key development actors on poverty and on poverty reduction programmes and policies in Mozambique, especially in the province of Niassa; and (iii) contribute to an increased understanding of qualitative poverty monitoring methods in Mozambique.

The Reality Check is expected to achieve these objectives by enhancing knowledge on:

Poverty:

- Non-tangible dimensions of poverty, such as vulnerability and powerlessness;
- Poor people's own perceptions of poverty;
- Causal processes underpinning poverty dynamics; and
- Coping/survival strategies adopted by women and men living in poverty;

Policies and Service:

- 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;

Local power relations and relationship 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.

3. The assignment: tasks, phases and deliverables

3.1. Tasks

The consultant shall carry out the following tasks:

- a) To apply and, possibly further develop the methodological framework of Reality Checks, including the tools and instruments to be used in its implementation (see section 4 of these Terms of Reference);

- b) Conduct the Reality Check annually over a time frame of five years;
- c) Compile and produce reports on the findings from the Reality Checks;
- d) Provide feedback to communities and local stakeholders that take part in the Reality Check;
- e) Coordinate with stakeholders and development actors in Niassa and at the national level; and
- f) Participate in discussions with the Embassy and other stakeholders, as well as in dissemination events.

3.2. Phases and deliverables

These tasks will be carried out in four different phases during the period April 2011 -March 2016. Each phase will result in specific deliverables to be approved by the Embassy of Sweden in consultation with the Provincial Government of Niassa. In addition to the deliverables specified under each phase, the Consultant is expected to participate extensively in meetings and conduct presentations to the Embassy, the Provincial Government of Niassa and possibly other stakeholders.

Phase 1 (Inception Phase April-August 2011)

During the inception phase, the Consultant shall apply and contextualize the methodological framework of RC as well as a plan for how the entire assignment will be carried out. This phase also involves developing, testing and modifying the tools and instruments that will be applied in the Reality Check, as well as consulting with stakeholders in Niassa. This work will be closely coordinated with the Embassy, the Provincial Government of Niassa and possibly other stakeholders.

During phase 1, the Consultant shall deliver the following products:

- A methodological framework, i.e. a document that explains and provides the scientific rational for the methodological approach and details the instrument and methods that the consultant will use.
- A proposal on how to coordinate with local public and private institutions in Niassa, including options for involving local research institutions/universities.
- A broad work plan that covers the entire Reality Check process.
- A detailed work plan for the first Reality Check.
- A tentative table of contents for the first Reality Check report.

Phase 2 (Consolidation of Methodology and first Reality Check September-December 2011)

During Phase 2 the Consultant shall conduct the first Reality Check, document the results in a report and fine-tunes the methodological framework and tools. The adjustment of methods and tools will be based on a separate report about the process and the methodology, as well as on a profound discussion with the Embassy, the Provincial Government of Niassa and possibly other key stakeholders.

During phase 2, the Consultant shall deliver the following products:

- A field report, consisting of separate reports from each selected location. These informal but detailed reports by each field team are the raw material from which the Annual Report is derived and will serve as a baseline for the coming years.
- A first Annual Report based on the on the results of the first Reality Check as presented in the field report. The Annual Report consolidates and synthesizes the field report, taking into account feedback from a Reference Group to be set up in Mozambique (see *below*), including the Embassy of Sweden and the Provincial Government of Niassa, following the post fieldwork presentation. The Annual Report is the public, finalized document, laid out and written for a wider dissemination. The Annual Report shall be written in Portuguese with an executive summary in English. It is expected to be around 30 pages including a summary and should have a professional layout. The report should be ready for dissemination in Mozambique and Sweden within one month after the presentation of the field reports;
- A report on the methodological issues and concerns identified during the first reality check, including suggestions on how to fine-tune and further adapt the methodology.

Phase 3 Reality Checks (December 2011-December 2015)

During Phase 3 the Consultant shall conduct yearly Reality Checks, document the results in reports and participate in the dissemination of the results. Each annual "Reality Check cycle" will be based on a yearly plan that will be discussed with relevant stakeholders and approved by the Embassy in consultation with the Provincial Government of Niassa.

During phase 3, the Consultant shall deliver the following products:

- Yearly plans that outlines the process and milestones for each year's Reality Check (4 in total);
- Yearly field reports 2011-2015 documenting the Reality Checks.
- Yearly reports for 2011-2014 that compile the results of the Reality Checks, focussing on changes over time. The Annual Report shall have the same graphic profile throughout the years. Feedback to the local communities taking part in the Reality Check.
- Coordination with stakeholders and development actors in Niassa and at the national level; and
- Presentations to the Embassy of Sweden in Maputo and the Provincial Government of Niassa, as well as participation in dissemination events in Mozambique (key meetings will be agreed on in the yearly work plans) and possibly at Sida HQ .

Phase 4 Conclusion (October 2015-March 2016)

The phase 4, which partly overlaps with the last year of phase 3, consists of compiling a final report based on the results from the annual Reality Checks, as well as conducting a profound review of the entire Reality Check process

and a critical self-assessment of the methodology. The review will involve the participation of key stakeholders and be documented in the final report.

During phase 4, the Consultant shall deliver the following products:

- A final report consisting of (i) a summary of the yearly reports, including a compilation of qualitative data and overall conclusions regarding the findings. This report shall be in Portuguese, with an executive summary in English; (ii) a Reflection report, including an assessment of the methodology and process, lessons learned and recommendations for the future (up to 50 pages in length). The report shall be in Portuguese, with an executive summary in English.
- Presentations to the Embassy of Sweden in Maputo, as well as participation in dissemination events (key meetings will be agreed on in the yearly work plans) and possibly at Sida HQ.

3.3. Utilization and dissemination of results and reports

The output of the Reality Check will be used by the Embassy and the Provincial Government of Niassa in their dialogue as well as in dialogue with other stakeholders, including the Government of Mozambique at national and district levels. It will also be used in dialogue with development partners in general. In the pursuit of information that can contribute to constructive policy changes that benefit the results for the people living in poverty, spinoff initiatives such as workshops and seminars are expected to emerge along the way. Special flexibility is called upon to meet these requirements, as far as funding and planning goes. After each field period, verbal presentations on findings and experiences is expected to take place as described above. The Consultant may also be requested to participate in dissemination events in Mozambique and/or at Sida HQ in Stockholm, Sweden annual review meetings or similar events. In order to preserve the integrity of the RC approach, and to protect the confidentiality of informants, the Embassy and Sida shall consult with the Consultant before any public dissemination of RC material.

4. Main Features/Methodology of the Reality Check

The two perspectives under Sweden's Policy for Global Development PGD² serve as key points of departure, with particular emphasis on Poor Peoples' Perspectives on Development. Sida's *Perspectives on Poverty* shall also serve as a point of reference³. Special attention should also be given to priority issues identified in the annual reviews of projects and programmes within the Swedish focus sectors, i.e. Democratic Governance, Agriculture and

²Current thinking – the two perspectives of the PGD (2006).
<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/3102/a/18434>

³ Sida's Perspectives on Poverty, October 2002;
<http://sidapublications.citat.se/interface/stream/mabstream.asp?filetype=1&orderlistmainid=2588&printfileid=2588&filex=3499262952264>

Energy. The Consultant is expected to be well informed about progress and difficulties within these sectors and programmes/projects receiving Swedish support, and should find methods to sustain contacts and extract information throughout the assignment.

The process and methodology for the Reality Checks will respond to the following broad characteristics:

a) The emphasis of the Reality Check approach is on qualitative, participatory and innovative methods for listening to poor people's perspectives on development in order to capture the multidimensionality of poverty, offer insight into causal processes and allow for the triangulation of information from different sources.

The Reality Check will:

- depart from the relevant available statistical data on poverty and service provision;
- collect quantitative micro-level household data on living conditions in the locations where the study takes place;
- collect information about service provision from local institutions and service providers through available statistics, visits and observation;
- apply qualitative methodologies such as semi-structured interviews and participant observations with selected households and key actors, including e.g. participatory rural appraisals (PRA) and/or equivalent methods such as life stories, the use of photography, drawings and/or drama if relevant and applicable;
- combine the information from the above sources with the aim to form a comprehensive picture of the reality, focussing on establishing causal links and uncovering underlying dynamics. The central objective is to understand and explain change.

The approach is to be well documented and care shall be taken to ensure consistency from year to year.

b) The reality check will look at how issues related to transparency, non-discrimination, participation and accountability affect people's daily life, more specifically: (i) transparency and access to information about public policies and resource allocation; (ii) participation in public life; (iii) accountability of public institutions to citizens at the local level (district and below); and (iv) the link between discrimination, vulnerability and poverty (including issues related to the rights of women and children).

c) The Reality Check methodology should allow, where possible and appropriate, for the exploring of issues related to the agriculture and energy, including land, environment and climate change.

e) The reality check will be carried out in the province of Niassa. In order to adequately reflect differences in structural constraints (such access to services, infrastructure and economic opportunities) as well as in political and social relationships (degree of importance of traditional vs state

institutions, degree of access different types of social networks etc), the Reality Check should cover a range of different types of locations in Niassa. The criteria for the choice of locations need to be further elaborated on by the Consultant and discussed with Sida and the Provincial Government of Niassa. As a benchmark, three locations should be chosen and the final choice is to be made in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Niassa.

The Reality Check should include a panel of households to allow for the study of poverty dynamics and for understanding the factors behind phenomenon such as chronic poverty, vulnerability and transitory poverty.

f) The Reality Check should be updated annually. Different options for updating the study, such as doing a “lighter” yearly follow up and a “deeper” study every two years, and their cost implications should be discussed during the methodological development process.

5. Coordination

The Consultant shall plan and carry out the Reality Checks in close coordination with the Embassy of Sweden in Maputo and in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Niassa . The Embassy will provide a focal point who will act as the consultant’s main counterpart; however, the consultant will need to interact with a broader group of Sida staff..

The Consultant shall also coordinate with Mozambican stakeholders, including:

- The Provincial Government of Niassa;
- The National Institute for Statistics (INE), in order to ensure coordination with other initiatives and processes linked to the National Statistics System (SEN);
- The Direcção Nacional de Estudos e Análise de Políticas (DNEAP), within the Ministério de Planificação e Desenvolvimento, in order to ensure coordination with other poverty monitoring initiatives;
- Local authorities in the locations where the Reality Checks are carried out as well as the provincial government, to make sure that the initiative is well planned and that its results feed into the local policy discussions;
- Local research institutions/universities in Niassa, in order to ensure that the initiative has an institutional anchor in the Province;
- Civil society stakeholders in the province, to make sure that the initiative contributes to an improved public discussion about poverty and policies and programmes to fight it.

In order to maximize the usefulness of Reality Check, and utilize its potential to contribute to the discussion around results for people living in poverty, both in Mozambique and globally, it is suggested that a Reference Groups is set up in Mozambique . The Reference Group will be organized by the Embassy in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Niassa and consist of persons

of strategic importance and insight in the respective sectors and thematic issues of relevance, including government, donor and civil society individuals. The Reference Group in Mozambique will provide input and feedback to the Consultant, review draft reports and assist the Consultant to draw conclusions from the voices heard in the field work. The Reference Group will also suggest appropriate platforms for the dissemination of the reports, and draw attention to key findings in relevant policy fora. The Reference Group will also assist the focal person in the Embassy to provide the Consultant with reference material concerning the focus sectors and thematic issues of concern. The Consultant is responsible for acquiring relevant documents and up-dated information on the developments in Mozambique and Niassa.

Feedback to the communities participating in the Reality Check is an integral part of the approach to be carried out by the Consultant.

6. Team

The Consultant is expected to hold in-depth knowledge and proven application of qualitative methodologies, including participatory methods and approaches (such as immersions, varieties of participatory rural appraisals, and the use of verbal and non-verbal techniques to ease the data collection).

The composition of the team should reflect the multi-disciplinary nature of the assignment, integrating members with in-depth knowledge in the fields of anthropology, sociology, statistics, political science, economics and agriculture.

The team leader/s should have more than 10 years experience of participatory approaches and qualitative work, techniques and data collection from countries in the South, preferably from the Southern and East Africa region. All team members should be comfortable with living in basic conditions in rural and semi-urban environments and demonstrate a sense of integrity towards people living in poverty. The team should integrate members that are fluent and/or conversant in the local languages (i.e. Macua, Nyanja, Yao) and members that are fluent in English and Portuguese. In Niassa, the knowledge of English is very limited and therefore it is of particular importance that field staff, including interviewer, can communicate well in Portuguese. At least one team member need to be fluent in one of the local languages. Additional team members being conversant in the local languages will be considered a strong advantage.

7. Budget

The budget in the tender should be proposed on a basis of approximately 60 man weeks per year and allocated adequately over the different phases. This amount of working weeks shall include preparatory work; field missions (including possible sub-teams working at the selected locations); reporting and documentation, translation and interpretation services; presentation,

dissemination and feed-back as well as extra time for the Team Leader and unexpected miscellaneous work. A complete budget shall be attached to the tender and figures proposed in SEK (excluding VAT).

8. Archive

The Consultant shall create an easily accessible electronic archive for photos, videos, audio tapes, drawings, and field reports which can be accessed by the public for purposes authorized by the Embassy in consultation with the Consultant. One copy of the archive shall remain with the Consultant and one shall be lodged with the Embassy. All original material should when possible be stored at the Embassy.

