

Gender and Climate change: Mozambique Case Study

Executive Summary
by Dr Natasha Ribeiro



1. Introduction

a) Country Situation

Mozambique is situated on the eastern coast of southern Africa. It is bordered to the north by the Republic of Tanzania, to the west by Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland, to the south by South Africa and to the east by the Indian Ocean. Along the coastline of about 2,700 km there are several islands such as the Quirimbas archipelago, Mozambique Island, Bazaruto archipelago and, Inhaca and Xefina Islands in the south.

Because of its geographic location, Mozambique is considered exposed to climate variability and climate change. It is located downstream of several major river basins in southern Africa – Zambezi, Rovuma and Limpopo – all of which are projected to have diminishing runoff by between 25 and 40% (Arnell, 1999), and especially the dry season (June-August) is projected to get drier across Mozambique in the future (IPCC, 2007). At the same time cyclone activity in the Indian Ocean is expected to increase as a result of increased sea surface temperatures (Lal, 2001; McDonald et al., 2005), which tend to result in widespread flooding in the region. As a result of changing temperature and precipitation patterns, Mozambique ranks high in the climate change index based on annual and seasonal indicators of temperature and precipitation (Baettig et al., 2007).

Mozambique's vulnerability to climate extremes is exacerbated by extreme poverty and in the current Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Mozambique has recognized the need to adapt to climate variability and change in order to reduce people's vulnerability (GoM, 2006ab). A 2005 review showed that Mozambique is unlikely to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within the given timeframe of 15 years, an obligation that was assumed by the Government of Mozambique (GoM) in September of 2000. Progress has been slow in the areas of hunger eradication, extension of primary education, gender equality, HIV/AIDS reversal, and environmental sustainability (GoM, 2005a).

Recognizing the need to improve the country's capacity to overcome the consequences of slow progress and at the same time create strategies to adapt to climate change, the GoM reformulated and created several national legal instruments which have mostly failed to

adopt a gender-sensitive strategy. This failure not only generates concern in terms of respect for gender equity at the international level, it also leads to shortcomings in the efficiency and effectiveness of climate related measures and instruments in Mozambique (genenet / LIFE e.V. / WECF, 2006). Lack of a gender-sensitive approach constrains the adaptation to climate change.

b) Description of Study Areas

The study was conducted in two communities in the Gaza Province of southern Mozambique – Mapai-Ngale in Chicualacuala District and Magondzwene in Chibuto District.

Mapai-Ngale: Is a small community of about 500 people (more than half are women) distributed in 130 families. Subsistence agriculture is the main activity in this community, followed by livestock production. From the woodlands people collect fruits, worms (in good rainfall years), construction material (stakes and thatch) and firewood. Additionally, the woodlands are used as forage for the livestock. Alternative livelihood strategies include charcoal production, bread-based alcoholic drinks production and informal jobs (construction and farms).

Magondzwene: Is composed of 1,297 inhabitants (more men than women) belonging to 237 families. Subsistence agriculture is the main activity in this community, followed by fishing and livestock production. From the savanna people collect fruits, construction material (stakes and thatch) and firewood. Additionally, the savanna is used as forage for livestock. The area is facing considerable levels of desertification. Bambene Lagoon which is the main water source for the community has become salty. These communities have faced several climatic/environmental changes over the last few years such as: (i) prolonged drought; (ii) high speed winds and (iii) floods (in Magondzwene). In both communities the division of labor is unbalanced, with women in charge of both reproductive and productive work while men are only responsible for productive work. The decision-making structure comprises the elder (both men and women), the traditional chief (the *Regulo*) and the government authority that includes the president and its secretary.

2. Methodology

A qualitative study was conducted that used a combination of various data collection and analysis methods. Data collection was performed through informal and semi-structured interviews to households and key informants (traditional and government's chiefs and heads of local associations), focus group discussions and life histories of the oldest men and women of each community. Data analysis was performed using a combination of tools such as Gender Matrix Analysis (GMA), Impact Assessment, Influencing factors, Institutional analysis, Access and control and social profiles, Capacities and vulnerabilities analysis and Needs assessment.

3. Key Findings

The main results of this study reveal that women and men are differentially impacted by climate changes due to the current power relations and their differentiated roles in these communities. Women have access to

but not control over natural resources and other property rights. Additionally, women do most of the reproductive and part of the productive work, while men are only responsible for productive work.

The drought these communities have faced for the last two years has increased men's migration to South Africa and other places in search for jobs. As a consequence, the role of women in productive work has increased considerably in the last two years. For example, women's participation in alcoholic drink brewing in Mapai-Ngale and fisheries-related work in Magondzwene has increased in the last two years. This imposes pressure on women who have to spend extra time for productive work to the detriment of the reproductive jobs and time spent with children. On the positive side, men's migration has enhanced women's participation in the decision-making structures of their communities. This is especially evident in the Mapai-Ngale community where migration is more intense and as a consequence, the National Women Organiza



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tion (OMM) has gained better position in the decision-making structure. However, this issue was not deeply explored in this study and thus a thorough investigation on this is recommended.

Coping and adaptation strategies and capacities exist in these communities and include alternative food sources (*tinhirre*, *ulharo*, *canhu-marula* and, *massala* – *Strychnos spinosa* in *Mapai-ngale* and *muambo* and *tinhirre* in *Mangondzwene*), informal (charcoal, farms, livestock and construction) and formal (migration) jobs and adoption of different lifestyles. In terms of formal and informal organizations to discuss environmental problems, the *Mangondzwene* community is better organized than *Mapai-Ngale*. However *Mapai-Ngale* has a better representation of women in the deci-

sion-making structure through the OMM and the elder advising group which is stronger.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

There are four ways to strengthen women and men's capacities for a better adaptation to climate change namely: effective implementation of existing policies and programmes, allocation of resources, capacity building and reinforcement of women's participation in local institutions. Due to the key role women play in



these communities, they should always be considered as the priority group in any activity.

Since agriculture is the main women's activity in these communities, we strongly recommend capacity building of women in agriculture and agro-processing techniques through for example the creation of a club of farmers, creation and reinforcement of local institutions and discussion forums and the formation of an environmental multi-institutional task force (including institutions as the Ministry for Environmental Coordination – MICOA, National Institute of calamities management – INGC, Ministry of Agriculture – MINAG, Non-governmental Organizations, etc).

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