THE HUMAN FACE OF CHANGE

Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture Program

Most Significant Change Stories

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- AMODER (Mozambican Association for Rural Development)
- Fórum Mulher (Women’s Forum)
- Magariro (Community Development Association)
- OMES (Organization of Women HIV Educators)
- SAfAIDS (Southern African Information and Dissemination Service)
- UNAC (National Union of Smallholder Farmers)
- WLSA (Women and Law in Southern Africa)

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Introduction

Mozambique has faced great challenges in rehabilitation and development after decades of war and natural disasters. The largely rural population suffered significantly as the rural economy was destroyed during many years of conflict. Cyclical natural disasters, such as flood and drought, have inhibited the efforts of rural communities to reconstruct their livelihoods since conflict ceased in 1992.

Some Facts About Mozambique

- Population: 22.9 million (est. 2011)
- Population under 14 years old: 45%
- Urban population: 38%; urbanization rate, 4% per year
- Literacy rate: women 37%, men 63%
- Human Development Index: Rank 184th of 187 countries (2011)
- Income: GDP (Gross Domestic Product per capita): US$ 898
- Life expectancy: 50.2 years
- Infant mortality rate: 78.95 deaths/1000 live births
- HIV AIDS adults prevalence rate: 11.5% (est. 2009)
- People living with HIV AIDS: 1.5 million (est. 2009)
- HIV AIDS deaths: 74,000 (est. 2009)


High HIV prevalence rates have compounded challenges for individuals, families, and the country as a whole. Women in Mozambique suffer from cultural constraints marked by subordination and abuse, restricting their capacity to achieve full social, economic, and personal potential. Even after a successful peace process, intensive rehabilitation work, and important foreign investments, Mozambique is still one of the poorest countries in the world.

Oxfam Canada has worked to support Mozambican civil society organizations with their development efforts since the 1970’s. In 2005, the Canadian International Development Agency agreed to finance Oxfam Canada and partners to implement the Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture Program in Mozambique (SLAP). Thus began a determined effort to engage in a different model of development, away from the distribution of goods and assets to poor communities, and toward a system of supporting the capacities and strengths of organizations and communities with new skills, knowledge, and confidence.
The result has been the construction of solid, respectful relationships between Oxfam Canada and partner organizations, and between Mozambican organizations and the constituencies and communities with which they work. Trust and confidence are at the heart of these relationships, the foundation of change. This booklet contains the stories of individuals, demonstrating the impact of increased knowledge and newfound confidence on their lives.
Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture Program

Oxfam Canada and local non-government organizations in Mozambique embarked on a journey together in 2005, which was to last for over six years. The Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture Program was a multi-partner, multi-sectoral program in four districts in central Mozambique: Tambara, Guro, Mutarara and Moatize. These districts, along the Zambezi Valley, are extremely vulnerable to natural disasters such as flood and drought. Some communities are particularly isolated, especially during the rainy season, severely reducing agricultural marketing opportunities. These districts also have alarmingly high HIV prevalence rates, and are sites of deeply entrenched social and cultural subordination of women.

It is in this context that SLAP sought to improve the livelihoods of rural communities by building human and social capital and encouraging active citizenship. The four main areas of intervention included:

i. Strengthening smallholder farmers and community groups;
ii. Improving productive activities and techniques;
iii. Building HIV/AIDS awareness;
iv. Promoting public participation and gender equality.

Oxfam Canada’s philosophy of development is centered around helping local organizations and communities identify their vulnerabilities, and seek sustainable solutions which draw on community strengths. The program sought to improve human and social capital through skill and knowledge building, and through increasing the confidence of community groups to determine their own development agendas.

Oxfam Canada supported local partner organizations, which in turn supported local community groups, through capacity building and mentoring. The program helped build resilience by increasing skills to confront challenges in gender equality, institutional development, agricultural...
and livestock production, income generation, savings and credit, HIV transmission and natural disasters.

Mozambican civil society is growing and strengthening, and is increasingly representative of the priorities, capacities, and aspirations of Mozambican people. Oxfam Canada worked with seven civil society organizations during implementation of the program, including União Nacional de Camponeses (UNAC), Magariro (Community Development Association), Organização da Mulher Educadora do SIDA (OMES), Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), Fórum Mulher (FM), Associação Moçambicana para o Desenvolvimento Rural (AMODER), and Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service (SAfAIDS).

During the program, partner organizations worked with over a hundred local groups and associations in the 4 districts of Guro, Tambara, Moatize and Mutarara, reaching 2,198 members, rural men (45%) and women (55%). Women’s rights organizations involved in the program campaigned actively in Maputo province and across the country for the implementation of the Family Law and the Law Against Domestic Violence. They trained activists and police officers to work in prevention, support to victims and assist in prosecution of domestic violence cases.

It is due to the vision, commitment, and hard work of these organisations and the communities with which they worked, that sustainable change in people’s lives was achieved. The purpose of this booklet is to highlight and celebrate some of the most significant changes.
Mozambican Development Partners

UNAC
(National Smallholder Farmer’s Union)

UNAC, founded in 1994, is a national union of independent, Mozambican, small holder farmers, cooperatives and associations. UNAC is comprised of about 86,000 members and more than 2,200 small farmers associations organised in 83 district unions, seven provincial unions and four provincial nuclei.

UNAC’s mission is to strengthen the capacity of small holder farmers, both women and men, to work together and take action to build a society that is more just, prosperous and united.

UNAC works to: strengthen smallholder farmer organizations; improve agricultural productivity and marketing; influence policy dialogue on issues affecting the family farming sector; address impacts of HIV and environmental degradation on livelihoods and promotes the inclusion of women and youth in the farmer’s movement.

Through its national office UNAC has influenced legislative reforms and participated in many forums and events to increase knowledge about sustainable agriculture and small holder farmer issues as a member of La Via Campesina – the largest movement of peasant farmers and artisanal food producers in the world.

Magariro
(Community Development Association)

Magariro, founded in 2001, is a community development organization based in Manica Province. Magariro builds the capacity of disadvantaged people and groups to advocate for their own development.

Magariro seeks to improve access and quality of basic education, both at primary school level and in adult literacy; improve livelihoods options; increase participation in local governance processes for marginalized rural communities; mitigate the impacts of HIV/AIDS and natural disasters on families; and strengthen Mozambican civil society.
through capacity building in organisational development and governance. Magariro is also a reliable local response agency in times of natural disasters.

As part of the SLAP program Magariro focused its activities on local forums, livestock producer groups, grain banks, savings and credit groups, and local disaster committees from its field office based in Tambara district.

**AMODER (Mozambican Association for Rural Development)**

AMODER, created in September 1993, was licensed by the Bank of Mozambique to provide credit for rural development in 1999. AMODER has staff at eight offices in seven provinces. AMODER’s principal areas of intervention include the provision of credit for the commercialisation and processing of agricultural products, transport, agricultural inputs and equipment, and consumer goods; as well as credit for fishing activities, including commercialisation and processing of seafood. By directing financial assistance to entrepreneurs, who support the activities of small scale farmers and fishers, AMODER provides rural communities with operational markets and improved income to meet their basic needs.

**OMES (Organisation of Women HIV Educators)**

OMES, established in 1994 in Manica Province, is a community-based organisation whose 125 members and activists are predominantly women involved in commercial sex. OMES’ broad mandate is to educate sex workers, women, their clients, including truck drivers, and the community in general about HIV/AIDS. OMES also works to mitigate the impacts of HIV through counselling, home-based care programs, and alternative income-generating activities for sex workers.

OMES has played an important role in assisting other Oxfam Canada partners integrate HIV awareness into their work.
SAfAIDS (Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information and Dissemination Service)

Established in 1994, SAfAIDS is a regional non-profit organization with its head office in Pretoria, South Africa. SAfAIDS has offices in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Mozambique. In Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, and Tanzania, SAfAIDS operates through local partners.

SAfAIDS aims to promote ethical and effective development responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic through knowledge management, capacity development, advocacy, policy analysis and research in the Southern Africa Region. Core activities include capacity development, information production, collection and dissemination; networking and partnership development and promotion of dialogue.

In Mozambique, SAfAIDS has worked since 2008 with local non-government organisations, especially Oxfam Canada partners in the Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture Program, to deal with the challenges of HIV/AIDS.

WLSA (Women and Law in Southern Africa)

WLSA was founded in the Southern Africa Region in 1989, and in Mozambique in 1990. WLSA’s mission is to contribute to the sustained well-being of women within families and societies through research, training, and advocacy for legal and policy reform. Among WLSA’s many initiatives is the training of the Mozambican police force in human rights law as it relates to women and children, who are victims of violence. WLSA has a strong research and advocacy focus that has contributed to legal reform of the Family Law and the Law Against Domestic Violence Against Women in Mozambique.
Fórum Mulher (Coordination for Women in Development)

Founded in 1993, Fórum Mulher is a national network of 84 local, national and international organizations working for gender equality and defending the human rights of women. Its goal is the transformation of social and cultural principles and practices which subordinate women, by challenging the hierarchical relationship between women and men. Fórum Mulher advocates from a feminist perspective, serves as a mediator between civil society and the state in relation to government policy, and helps strengthen organisations working for women’s rights.

Fórum Mulher has been instrumental in achieving significant legislative and political reform in Mozambique, particularly the new Family Law in 2005, and the introduction of the Law Against Domestic Violence Against Women in 2009. Fórum Mulher is in demand in many varied reform processes, such as the national poverty reduction strategy (PRSP) consultation process, as it ensures a women’s rights and gender perspective forms part of these government policies and plans.
What is “Most Significant Change”?

The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded, and in analyzing the data. It is a form of monitoring because it occurs throughout the program cycle, and provides information to help people manage the program. It contributes to evaluation because it provides qualitative data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of a program as a whole.

The technique asks the beneficiaries and other stakeholders for their views on how the program has impacted their lives. The unique feature of the MSC technique is the ability to collect information about changes that are unexpected or difficult to extract, and at the same time allow beneficiaries to identify the changes that meant the most to them.

The process involves the collection of ‘significant change’ stories in the field, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. After identifying the domain of change to be monitored, significant stories are collected from those most directly involved, such as participants and field staff. The stories are then analyzed and the most significant are selected. The selected stories can then be verified by visiting the sites where the described events took place.

The MSC technique was introduced to SLAP in its last year of implementation. After five years of program implementation many experiences and lessons learned need to be documented through case studies, research reports, reviews and evaluations. However, the MSC approach helps document the actual impact of the program on people’s lives. To provide Oxfam Canada staff, a local consultant and selected partners with the technical skills to collect and document SLAP’s impact in a story format, a two-day MSC training workshop was held in July 2010.
After the training, the local consultant replicated the training with partners in the field. The consultant also accompanied partner staff in collecting stories of most significant change, who were then able to continue the process unaccompanied. Oxfam Canada staff also had a chance to use the skills by collecting some stories themselves afterwards. Some of those stories are shared in this booklet.

The collected stories were analyzed by all partners, who then agreed on the most significant stories to be part of this booklet. Each story was reconfirmed with its story teller who also accepted that we included their photo in this booklet. To respect the privacy of people mentioned in the three stories about HIV, their names have been omitted and substituted with fictitious ones. The selected stories were translated from Portuguese to English and summarized, taking care to preserve the key messages as they have been told by the program beneficiaries.

We thank every woman and man who generously shared with us a piece of their lives. This booklet is theirs.
The Human Face of Change

Introduction:

The Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture Programme was implemented in Manica and Tete Provinces, in the central region of Mozambique. Some activities, carried out by 2 partners, influenced national level policy.

In Manica Province, the program concentrated on the districts of Tambara and Guro.

Tambara was one of the districts of the province of Manica left very isolated by the war which raged from 1980 to 1992. Beyond this, the district, which is large geographically but poor in terms of infrastructure, is cyclically affected by floods and drought. This scenario caused the people of Tambara to become very dependent upon aid and passive in relation to their own destiny. It also left the district with limited services, particularly in terms of agricultural and livestock extension services. Cultural and traditional norms are also very strong in this isolated district, which embed a women’s subordination and increase her vulnerability to HIV infection. UNAC and Magario worked with rural communities in Tambara to improve their agricultural livelihoods, their participation in local governance processes, to recognise the impact of culture and tradition on women’s human rights and HIV vulnerability.

Guro is a district frequently affected by drought, hurting smallholder farmers who depend predominantly on rainfall for surplus harvest. The district is also located on an important transportation corridor linking the north and south of Mozambique. This corridor is used by many truck drivers from neighbouring countries, stimulating a ready market for sex work. As such, the district has a high incidence of HIV infection. OMES is present in the district, and undertakes extensive HIV awareness raising activities with these high risk groups, as well as with the community in general.
In Tete Province, the program concentrated on the districts of Mutarara and Moatize.

Mutarara district has a dry and arid climate, a negative for agriculture, and is also constantly affected by natural disasters such as droughts and floods. Being situated along the Zambezi River, many smallholder farmers take advantage of the riverbanks to practice agriculture. However any natural increases in the river flows, or artificial increases, such as unannounced dam level management, can seriously impact farmer’s livelihoods. UNAC worked with smallholder farmer’s groups in Mutarara to build their resilience to natural disasters, and in partnership with OMES, to raise awareness of the risks of HIV infection.

Moatize is the border district with Malawi, serving as a key transport corridor to and from a country with an alarming incidence of HIV infection. Moatize suffers from drought as does much of central Mozambique, and UNAC has worked to improve livelihoods of smallholder farmers through disseminating knowledge of sustainable agricultural techniques.

The stories which follow are from people living in Tambara, Guro, Mutarara and Moatize districts, and Maputo Province. In each case, partner organisations have been present in the districts building knowledge, skills and confidence, to allow for the change which these stories represent.
Mr Calisto lives in Buzua, a very isolated part of Tambara. He is a smallholder farmer, and has participated in various discussions about the development of the district via the Local Forum. Local Forums are part of the process of government decentralization that brings together civil society organisations in order to define local priorities and use community funds to deal with their own problems.

Mr Calisto explains the Forum and his role:

“In 2006 the government began to visit zone by zone to inform the communities that they should assemble Forums in the towns and villages. We didn’t know exactly what this was, we thought that they were simply forums to discuss the problem of hunger, since we had suffered significant drought and hunger that year.”

“I was elected member of this Forum, and a month after, I was chosen as president of the Forum. After that I was chosen to be a member of the Local Forum of the Administrative Post, and later of the District Consultative Council.

“Shortly after, members of the Forum were called by Magario (Community Development Association) for training, and we had various training meetings. We learned a lot of things, worked a lot in groups, discussed a vision for the district, learned to undertake a needs analysis in the communities, learned how to design projects, to make activity plans, and to monitor activities.

“We learned about the ‘7 million meticla community fund’ (approximately CAD$ 265,000) that the government was
giving to all of the districts. We learned the objective of this fund, how to access the fund, and how to select who should receive funds from it.

“All of this training that I received, and that the Local Forum received, made a big difference. I can see how it developed my consciousness. I learned many things that I never dreamed of in my life. I learned to design projects, and make plans. Before, I only went to the field and worked without making any plans. I learned to plan and monitor my own activities and due to this everything in my life is turning out positive: I managed to obtain cattle, a plough, improve my house, pay off my debts, things that I never thought I would achieve. But it was thanks to planning how to achieve my objectives.

“The existence of the Local Forums also made a difference in the communities. Before, the population had no voice, they only watched the government arrive and put up a school or a borehole. Not now. The population is consulted about the location of a school or borehole. The population is now free to speak, and are not afraid to participate.”

Gilberto Moisés Canheze

_Removing the coat of the Boss_

Tambara District, Manica Province, November 2010

Gilberto Canheze was appointed administrator of Tambara district in 2008. Gilberto said that although he has been in the leadership of the district for only 2 years, he can speak about changes stimulated by the interventions of Magario (Community Development Association).

“Magario promoted many good initiatives, such as the grain bank, the animal bank, the savings groups, and all contributed to reducing the affect of hunger in the district like in other years. But
to me, the most important thing is that Magariro is an organisation with a participatory approach, very open to dialogue and to discussion.

“An example which touched me was the meeting “Call for Ideas” which they promoted in September 2010 with members of the local government, members of the community, NGOs, and public and private companies, with the objective of finding pathways for the development of the district.

“The meeting “Call for Ideas” was important to me since I was able to see two new things. Firstly, it was a meeting in which the community didn’t just make requests, which was the norm, but on the contrary they identified ways to contribute to the district development. Secondly, I could step outside the role of the boss, which was also rare, and identify problems and discuss them like any other person there, not to give orders but to hear and discuss on equal terms with everyone else.

“I felt the commitment of everyone, and I felt lighter, since analysing problems, finding pathways, and taking decisions together reduced the risk of making wrong decisions which could prejudice the life of thousands of people. Of course, what is left to do now is to verify what will be implemented from all that was said, but holding a meeting of this kind here was a big step in the direction of development.”
Dinis Maqui

“Now I am a Person!”
Guro District, Manica Province, November 2010

Mr Dinis Maqui is the president and community agent of the association “Kumuda” (Awaken – in the Nyungue language) and he tells how his life has changed since he became a member of an association.

“I am Dinis Maqui, 37 years of age, with 8 children, and I studied until 4th class. I am a peasant farmer, my father was a peasant farmer, and I was always a peasant farmer.

“I got to know UNAC (National Union of Smallholder Farmers) when I was invited to participate in an Assembly. After seeing how other people discussed their problems I thought that it would be good to create an association here in this area to discuss the problems that affect smallholder farmers.

“I participated in many exchanges of experience, in Tete, Chimoio, Nampula, Tambara, Gondola and Sussundenga, where I learned to make organic fertilizer, avoid soil erosion, basic animal husbandry, and about organising district unions of smallholder farmers.

“The use of manure helped to increase my production of onions, now I produce greater quantity and bigger onions, and I get good prices in the market. In 2008 I managed to buy a pump and increased even more my production of onions. With the money that I obtained I have managed to improve my house, which now is made of bricks with a zinc roof. Before it was made of blocks with a straw roof.

“The difference that I see in me before and after these exchanges of experience is that now I am a person who has knowledge and I have the accompaniment of UNAC. Before I had no knowledge and I did things by myself, just out of my head.

“Before I worked the land alone. Now I have 2 people who work permanently with me, and at least 6 seasonal workers to help me with my field, which is now 4 ha. In 2000 I had only 0.5ha, and had little courage to increase my field. With the knowledge that UNAC has
given me, I gained the strength to increase my area of production. My life improved so much that people started to say that I had been to a traditional healer (witch doctor). They don’t know that the witch doctor is UNAC!

“Of everything that I saw and learned from the exchanges of experience, the most important for me was to discover that I was a person! I discovered this when I participated in the UNAC General Assembly in Maputo. I had never been to the capital, it was my first time. Not even my father had been to Maputo!

“When I went together with 110 people to discuss the problems of the country I saw that we smallholder farmers have a lot of weight in this country, and that our opinion counted a lot. Before I didn’t think of myself as a person, just as a peasant, half marginalized, living here on the banks of the Luenha River. Not today. I know what Presidents, Ministers, and Parliamentarians do, things that I learned in Chimoio, and I learned that we have the right to be heard. I also learned that I am a person not just on paper, but that I have a voice.”

Maria Deniasse is a young woman farmer, member of the Smallholder Farmer Association of Sanga, and she talks about what changed in her life from participating in the association:

“My name is Maria Deniasse. I am 26 years old, a smallholder farmer who finished 9th grade I am married, with two little children, and together with my husband we have four agricultural fields. We plant maize, sorghum, various types of beans, pumpkin, sunflowers, groundnuts, cassava, spinach, onions, tomatoes, and
carrots. Normally I sell the groundnuts, sunflower, cassava, and vegetables in the market in Guro.

“I got to know of the Smallholder Farmer Association of Sanga through my grandmother who had been a member since 1999. I grew up selling the good things that the association produced, I saw that the members managed to achieve good production, and so decided to join the association in 2005 because I also wanted to have good production.

“When I joined the association, the members chose me as the community agent. As the community agent, I participated in training courses, and exchanges of experience that took place in Zimbabwe, Chimoio and Maputo. During these visits I learned many things, such as how to make organic fertilizer and pawpaw jam, children’s food, and how to dry products, how to make dams to conserve water, and about forming farmer’s associations.

“I enjoyed very much participating in these training sessions since I learned many things. In these meetings all the associations were encouraged to form adult literacy groups. Since I had already completed ninth grade, the members chose me to participate in a training course for adult literacy teachers given by the Education Department. After participating in the course I managed to get a contract with the Education Department, and then received a monthly subsidy of 550 Metical (approximately CAD$21.00).
“My life improved a lot, since with the money I received every month I could buy clothes and basic things for the house, and when I manage to make some money through selling agricultural products, I can invest this in goods to improve our life. So far, we have managed to buy 2 cows and 3 goats.

“The second thing that I learned in the association which improved my life was the cultivation of beans. Before I didn’t plant beans, since I didn’t have any seeds. After joining the association I was able to access seeds and learned how to plant them. Beans bring good money. I also learned how to cultivate using techniques like planting in rows and organic fertilizer. My production increased; before my harvest was one cart load of maize, now it is 3 cart loads from the same field.

“What made the most difference in my life was becoming an adult literacy teacher with a contract from the Education Department. From then on I could count on regular income at home to purchase basic things and clothes for the children. This money made a big difference. I can make plans to invest the money which comes from selling agricultural products at harvest time. Before I didn’t count on any regular income at home; it depended solely and exclusively on the sale of the harvest. And when there was a poor harvest, we were very badly off.”
Improving Productive Activities and Techniques

Azélia Bengala

Grain Bank of Nhacafula mitigates hunger
Tambara District, Manica Province, August 2010

The creation of a grain bank in the town of Nhacaful put an end to the annual ‘hunger season’ in Azélia Bengala’s family and community.

Azélia Bengala, resident of the town of Nhacaful in Tambara, suffered every year with hunger in her family during the lean season. Azélia has never had any formal schooling, as she spent much of her time cultivating enough food, and had little time to look after herself and her family.

In 2006 Azélia participated in a meeting of the Local Fórum of Nhacafula which was organised by Magariro (Community Development Association) In this meeting they talked about an initiative to reduce hunger – a Grain Bank. The Bank would buy and store cereals and then sell them to the farmers during the hungry season at fair prices.

Azélia was chosen by the forum to join the other 13 people who would form part of this grain bank. Azélia’s main motivation was to see an end to the struggle of finding enough food for her family, which demanded so much time and physical effort.

Magariro guided the formation of the new grain bank and trained the members to run the bank. Azélia, who did not know how to read or write, became the bookkeeper, thanks to literacy training provided by Magariro. In 2006, the grain bank bought the first maize to store, and at this time it was necessary to maintain a register of stocks and sales. Azélia did not know how to read or write, so the facilitators of Magariro recommended a literacy class taking place mainly for illiterate women in the community. Azélia decided to participate so as to be able to undertake the book keeping.
At the end of 2006, during that lean period before the next crops are ready for harvest, the bank sold maize to its members and the community in general. Azélia, for the first time, stopped searching great distances for food and so had time to take care of her family and herself.

Now, Azélia says, she is sighing with relief. In 2009, through the income obtained from the grain bank, Azélia increased her cultivated land and in 2010 had surplus to sell to the grain bank and other people. Also she used part of the income received from the bank to start another business: buying and selling fish. She buys fish from the Zambeze River in Nhacolo and resells it in Nhacafula.

Alberto Bunai, the local extension officer of the Veterinary Services of Tambara, explains how the war had limited the veterinary services available in the district, and how the intervention of Magariro (Community Development Association) improved the bank of local knowledge of basic animal husbandry, and thus improved livelihoods for rural communities.

“Animals, principally goats which are more resistant, are very important to the food security of the smallholder farmer here in Tambara, since the dry and arid climate of the district is not good for agriculture.

“Most families kept some livestock but generally they would not receive any (veterinary) treatment. They were simply left to forage for food and water on their own, and if they became sick no treatment was provided and only some would survive.
“In 2000 the Agro-livestock Department returned to function in Tambara, and there were only 2 technicians (today we are 3) to cover the whole district. At the time of the animal vaccination campaigns we needed to request help from the Provincial technicians since we did not have sufficient personnel. Even so, we managed only limited coverage since the district is big and the technicians could not stay for a long time.

“In 2005 the strategy of the government was to identify community members and build their capacity in basic notions of animal husbandry. At the same time, to our good fortune, the NGO Magariro appeared with the same plan, which resulted in a perfect marriage.

“Together with Magariro we trained 36 veterinary promoters. Of these 36, we trained 6 women, which was extremely revolutionary for the culture of this area, where women had the role of raising chickens only. The promoters were trained in animal health management. They learned how to construct improved corrals, to identify, prevent and treat common diseases.

“Today, death of animals by disease has reduced greatly. This year the population of goats reduced but not because of mortality, but due to sales. Since the harvest was poor due to the drought, smallholder farmers are selling animals to buy food. For us, this is very positive since it demonstrates that we have managed to improve food security of the smallholder farmers by assisting them to treat their animals.

“The help provided by Magariro to build capacity in community members meant that we managed to provide good coverage to the whole district. We manage to maintain contact with the livestock producers, receive information about what is happening in each area, and they are capable of requesting help when needed.

“Today I see the sadness in a livestock producer when his animal is sick, he knows that the animal is money, and has value, therefore he can’t lose it. As such, he treats his animals in a way which prevents them from becoming sick. It is a big difference from what happened in the past.”
Chico Inácio

Achieving the dream of a better house.
Mutarara District, Tete Province, November 2010

“I am a smallholder farmer, 40 years old, married with 4 children, and like many other smallholder farmers of Mutarara, I have always practiced agriculture, planting maize and vegetables. I would sell the vegetables when someone came to the fields to buy them, and in this way managed to make a little money, but it wasn’t much, and in the months when there was no production I had no other source of income.

“In 2006 the UNAC (National Union of Smallholder Farmers facilitator came to talk to me, and convinced me to form an association with other smallholder farmers. I became convinced because he said that one of the advantages of participating in an association was the opportunity that everyone would have to learn new things.

“So in 2007 we formed the association “Mphabvu Ndi Muinji” which in the Sena language means “Union builds strength”. Being a member of the association, in 2008 I participated in a training session and exchange with other farmers from an association in Tete Province, promoted by UNAC. There I learned how to market my surplus crops and understood that to sell vegetables outside the normal season was an opportunity for good business. It was there also that I learned ways of conserving fresh vegetables at home to resell.

“When I returned home, I told my wife, who was always a good business woman, and we saw that during the season when there were no vegetables in Mutarara we could buy tomatoes, cabbage, and lettuce in other places and resell them. She went to Cinjare, a locality of Mutarara, where there is good production of tomato, and saw that if she travelled there once a week during the months when vegetables were scarce, she could buy tomato and resell them for a good price in Mutarara. After more research we saw that in the months when vegetables were scarce in Cinjare, we could buy tomatoes in the district of Gorongoza, in the Province of Sofala, and resell them here in Mutarara.
“I contacted the rural hospital and they said that they could buy the vegetables since they always needed them to feed the patients.

“We decided that my wife would make the journey since she was a better business person than me. Beyond that, women know better how to save more during journeys since they often make greater sacrifices than men, such as sleeping in the market, and not buying soft drinks. My role was to work in our fields and look after the produce at home.

“In this way we began our business of selling and reselling tomato, lettuce, and cabbage, which has given us a lot of money. With this money we managed to build a better house. Our house was made of unfired bricks with a thatch roof. We managed to improve it with fired bricks, a zinc roof, and since we had a better house we managed to connect the electricity and pay our bills every month.

“With what I learned from that exchange of experience I have guaranteed that every month money comes into our house. Before, the commercialisation of vegetables only from my field did not guarantee income every month, and what we earned was not enough to improve our house. But now we manage to have an income every month, a good income.”
“I have this here. What does it mean? That I improved my life, doesn’t it?” said a content and proud Mr Estevão, showing a cell phone in his hands. “I also had one, but it was stolen”, said Maria Helena, laughing.

The couple began to tell their story and, in contrast to the majority of couples in the rural area where only the husband speaks, both were animated. Like many other couples in Mutarara, Estevão and Maria Helena met in the refugee camp in Malawi in 1988.

“In 1992 Mozambique signed the Peace Accord and in 1995 we returned to Mutarara and began to work in Estevão’s field, planting maize, sorghum and ground nuts. We sold some but not much, since we saved most for our own consumption.

“In 2003 the District Agricultural Service suggested we form a group of 10 people in this area, who would receive some support. We gave the name “Zaonene” which means Come and See. The promised support never came but still we continued to work together. By 2005 we were cultivating 3 ha. Together with the field of the association, we also work our own field of 5 ha.

“In 2005 we received a visit from representatives of UNAC (National Union of Smallholder Farmers) in Tete who explained the advantages of being associated with their movement. They said that they would not come and give us things, but they would give us ideas, examples which could help us improve our production. Since we wanted to hear these ideas we decided to join UNAC.

“We participated in exchanges of experience, and learned many things: how to make organic fertilizer using animal droppings, we learned how to use worms as fertilizer, how to protect soil by covering it with straw, and how to plant in rows. We had never heard of this, to make manure from animal droppings, or to cover
the soil with straw. Before we just burnt the soil like the majority of smallholder farmers.

“UNAC was important to us as an association and as individual smallholder farmers since beyond giving us ideas, they gave us strength and courage. Visiting other associations, which had been successful, gave us courage to make more effort, in the knowledge that one day we too would be on top.

“Today we produce a lot in terms of the number of crops and in terms of production. We plant maize, sesame, different types of beans, potatoes, onions, garlic, lettuce, cabbage, and okra. We have managed to generate a lot of money with sesame, vegetables, and garlic, and don’t need to leave the house to sell them. People know us and come here to the house to buy our products.

“With money we managed to purchase animals: we have 32 sheep, 10 goats, 3 pigs, 10 chickens, and 4 ducks. We didn’t have any animals before we joined UNAC. We manage to pay for secondary school for our son who is studying in Beira city.

“Our lives have changed a lot since 2005: we used to eat badly, we had no clothes, we had no money. Today we have clothes, we have food, we purchased furniture, a radio, a bicycle... and a cell phone of course... Maria Helena’s eyes shine when she says ‘We are on top!’ Beyond this we have money to pay people to help us in the fields, and, God willing, we will be able to improve our house, with the money from the next harvest.

“The result is that our life improved. Our situation is very different from 25 years ago when we were in the refugee camp, we couldn’t even dream that one day we would have a life like this.”

MOZAMBIQUE 2005 - 2011
Mr Beriati is a traditional leader, an important and much respected position within the traditional structure in Tambara, and one which is inherited from one’s father.

He is one of the traditional leaders who encouraged a change to the practice Kupita Kula, (widow cleansing). Kupita Kula requires that a widow (or widows in the case of a polygamous marriage) has sexual relations with the oldest brother of the deceased husband, in the belief this will prevent her and the children from becoming sick. After the ritual, the brother in-law is responsible for the widow, the children, and his brother’s assets. This practice was identified as carrying significant risk of HIV transmission.

“I participated in two meetings organised by Magariro (Community Development Association) where we discussed this disease HIV. We saw that Kupita Kula was one of the practices which placed people at risk of catching the disease. In one of those meetings we arrived at the conclusion that times have changed and that we also need to change. In this way we came up with a solution to substitute the practice of sexual relations with a herbal bath.”

“I usually talk about this in all community meetings and can say that women mainly like this and now are refusing to undergo this practice using sexual relations. Women are now their own masters. I say this because as soon as a husband dies, the widow comes here to my home to ask for herbs, so she knows that this is now possible.

“And if the husband’s family doesn’t accept, the widow also comes to complain and I call the family and tell them that those times have finished, now we are in different times and they should accept the new ritual because the herbal bath can also purify.
“In truth this practice through sexual relations looked to give power to the brother of the deceased husband to obtain the assets of the widow. With the herbal bath this has ended and the brothers of the deceased husband are now very angry with me! (Mr Beriati smiles!)

“For me this is important because I want to avoid more people in the community becoming sick with this disease through *Kupita Kufa*. One day I was called to the hospital and they showed me a long list of peoples’ names and said: ‘Do you know what this is? It is the number of people who are undergoing Anti-Retro-Viral - ARV treatment in Nhacafula, your community.’

“This was some time ago now, and there were many people; I think by now it would have increased. I, as leader, don’t like to see people in my community die, suffer, or become sick, and whatever I can do to stop this, I will do. And I do it for myself too, I don’t want people from my own family to suffer with this disease.”
Love that saves or HIV which unites a family

Júlia da Graça, Guro District, Manica Province, November 2010

One of the activities that OMES undertakes in Guro is door-to-door visits in the neighbourhoods and communities to speak with each family about HIV. During one of these visits, in the neighbourhood of Seretse Kama, they went to the home of Mrs. Júlia da Graça, a 45 year old housewife who lives with her husband, a policeman and their daughter, Tania, a nine year old.

Júlia is a housewife like many others in Guro who takes care of domestic chores while her husband is away at work. She tells her story:

“In 2001 my daughter Tania was born prematurely at seven months, and weighed only one kilo. For this reason we were transferred to the provincial hospital in Chimoio where she stayed in hospital for two weeks. We came home but she continued to be sick, with fever and malaria. We tried many things to see if she would improve. We visited three traditional healers. We had a special medical consultation in Chimoio city, but nothing improved. She continued to be sick.

“When Tania was three years old, I began to think of the possibility that she had HIV. I started to remember what the OMES activists had explained when they passed through the suburb. They explained that when a person is always sick and does not improve it is advisable to have an HIV test.

“I went to speak with a nurse friend who suggested I may be right, so I did an HIV test firstly on myself. It came back positive. She called my husband to have an HIV test too and he agreed without any problem, and also proved positive. Lastly, they tested Tania, and she proved positive as well. Tania and I started ARV treatment.
straight away, but my husband had a high CD4 count and therefore did not begin treatment straight away. But it was not long before he was always sick, and began treatment too.

“Before, my husband drank a lot and became very aggressive, to the point where he would return home and hit me, insult me, but he stopped drinking and changed his behaviour. Now he treats me and our daughter well.

“Tania is now nine years old and she has not been sick again. She has normal sicknesses that any child gets and she leads a normal life like any child, playing and going to school.

“What lead me to go and have an HIV test alone and then to take my family was the love that I have for my daughter. It was through my desire to see my daughter healthy and leading a normal life like other children.

“Having had the HIV test totally changed my life for the better. When I knew the result I was happy. This may seems strange to others that someone would be happy to receive such news about a positive HIV result. But I felt relieved that finally we had discovered the cause of my daughter’s frequent illness, and I knew from then on the path to take: start and adhere to treatment.

“Now Tania’s health is good, and my husband has changed his behaviour, and treats his family well. We are a more united family and happier than ever.”

An activist who provided courage and seeded hope
Carla Machado, Guro District, Manica Province, November 2010

Carla Machado is a 46-year-old sex worker who is visibly sick and unable to work or do housework such as carrying water, cooking, and cleaning. She is very thin; her facial expressions and deeply sad eyes show a world of pain and suffering.

“I am from Gorongoza, an orphan, and I grew up as a domestic worker for other people. At 12 years of age I was married and I escaped. I took the first man who would take me away, and this way I began my life as a sex worker. Through catching lifts, I went...
to many places: Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, Nampula, Maputo, and ended up in Guro, where I have been living since 2001.

“Three years ago I became very sick, feeling very weak, with fever and spots all over my body. Julinha came to visit me and suggested, insisted that I have an HIV test. But I declined. Deep down I was scared, since I knew that with all my travelling and life, I must have HIV.

“I met Julinha when I watched a theatre piece that the OMES activists performed in the community. Many times I wanted to go to the traditional healer, but Julinha insisted that this was a waste of time and money, and that with HIV time was precious.

“Last year I decided to go and have an HIV test and since I had no money, Julinha gave me money for transport. The test result was positive and that day I cried a lot. I wanted to die. Live for what, if I had no-one in this life? I am an orphan, with grown up children; no-one needs me in this life, and I was tired of suffering.

“My best friend distanced herself from me, and never came to visit. At times I would hear the neighbours or people passing in front of my house say: "This one here is not a person any more, she is just a cadaver, she is just waiting to die". This hurt me a lot, and brought so much pain to my heart and gave me more reason to want to die.

“I started ARV treatment this year and it affected me very badly. My legs became swollen, and I had spots all over my body. I became very depressed and didn’t want to get out of bed. Julinha came to visit me, insisting that I get out of the house, and brought me to the OMES counselling centre, and stayed and talked with me until my nerves calmed down.

“At other times she took me to her house, stayed and talked with me, and when I was leaving her house I felt better. In our talks she explained that my reaction to the treatment was normal and that other people had been through the same thing and now were well.
Today I feel better; the spots are reducing. I feel light headed at times, but I can walk, go out of the house, go to the OMES counselling centre to talk with the activists.

“Thanks to Julinha I did not die. She gave me courage to go and take an HIV test and face treatment. She made me go out of the house, and she counselled me a lot. She gave me back the will to live that I had lost. I am an orphan but I know that today my family is Julinha and the other OMES activists. When my time arrives to die I know that they will bury me and pray for me.”

Look after your health above all else
Eduarda Costa, Guro District, Manica Province, August 2010.

Eduarda Costa, 36 years old, is a counsellor of OMES in the district of Guro.

When she was 11 years old she went to live with one of her sisters in the district of Catandica. At 18, she had a traditional marriage to her sister’s husband, making her a second wife. She lived with this husband for 12 years and had three children.

In 2000, she was diagnosed with tuberculosis. She was hospitalized for two months, and spent a year without working in the fields or doing any domestic work. After a year she began to have a normal life again, having sex with her husband, but did not get pregnant. So in 2003 her husband returned her to her family in Guro. She took her 5 year old daughter and went to live with her mother.

In 2005 she began to make traditional alcohol to earn some income, and entered the sex trade with men who came to drink.

One day in 2005, Julinha, an activist from OMES and a sex worker, began to talk with Eduarda about the risks of her activities, and invited her to join the organisation.

One day, after an HIV prevention training session in Guro, she realized that working in OMES with other women in the same situation would “reduce the feelings I hold in my heart.” She also began to realize that
if she continued to live the kind of life that she had been living she would die, and she still had a small child to raise.

It was with OMES that she took an HIV test for the first time and still does every year. It was with OMES that she learned to use condoms.

Income from sex work enabled Eduarda to own her own land and house. For that reason she is still a sex worker but now she only sees three or four clients a month, and refuses to have sex without a condom. For Eduarda the most important thing is to be healthy and raise her daughter.

Eduarda understands well what it means to be sick. She says that the most significant change in her life was to have an HIV test and to use condoms, to guarantee her health, since while she is healthy she can work in the fields, work as a counsellor for OMES, and raise her daughter, who is now 12 years old.
Promotion of Public Participation and Gender Equality

Marta António Alficha

A woman broadens her horizon.
Tambara District, Manica Province. August 2010

“I am Marta António Alficha, married with 3 children of which two are boys and one is a girl. The girl is the eldest, is 7 years old and is in 3rd class in the Nhaugenge primary school. My husband is a smallholder farmer who doesn’t know how to read or write, and he has two wives, and I am the eldest wife. I am a member of the Horticultural Association “3 de Fevereiro”. There are 30 members of which 7 are men and 23 are women.

“At the beginning of 2005, before I joined the association, they were only a group of 11 people who worked and received food (maize, oil, sugar, and beans) and sweet potato cuttings from the Department of Agriculture. During the first 2 months I saw my neighbours and friends receive food and seeds and thought that I should also join this group. So I gathered the courage to sit and talk to my husband and make him see the need to join the group. He resisted a lot, and didn’t want me to participate in that group. But, I insisted many times, and after 2 months had passed he agreed.

“After joining the group in 2006, the technicians from Magariro (Community Development Association) talked to us about the need to form an association to produce vegetables.

“We agreed with the idea, and constituted our own association. The technicians from Magariro came and taught us horticultural techniques, and provided seeds for lettuce, onions, spinach, tomato, and garlic. At this time we did not receive food from the Department of Agriculture, because we began to produce and sell vegetables ourselves.
“At the moment, within our association, I am participating in functional literacy classes which combines theory with practice. We learn about agricultural issues in the classroom and then put this into practice in our work in the field. I am in my 3rd year and know how to read and write with no problem.

“Beyond this, in our association we also have a rotating savings and credit scheme. I was elected to the role of vice president of the rotating savings and credit group in a secret vote during a general meeting of the group.

“What changed in my life between 2005 and 2010 is the following: when I joined the group I was very closed off, but now I am not afraid to speak where there are many people, including men and women, I know how to read and write very well, I helped my husband buy bricks to build our house with money that I managed to obtain through the sale of vegetables. Not only that, I also manage to buy food for the family, school material for the children, and now I practically don’t depend on my husband to buy anything I need.

“The most significant change in my life is that before I was very closed off, but now I have changed my way of thinking.”

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**Farida Maene**

*Regaining your dreams.*

Tambara District, Manica Province. August 2010

“I write well and everyone says so!”, she said with much pride, demonstrating great personal satisfaction. Farida Maene is a 40 year old smallholder farmer, member of the horticulture association of Nhacolo, and secretary of the rotating savings and credit group of the district of Tambara, province of Manica.
Like many women in Tambara, Farida is married with a polygamous man, who has 3 other wives, all illiterate smallholder farmers, as was her case only 3 years ago.

Farida is the first wife, and when she married she was in 1st class. Despite enjoying her studies and dreaming of being able to read and write, Farida, like a large number of women in this area, stopped studying before she was able to sign her own name, to dedicate herself to domestic and farm work only.

Apart from domestic and farm work, Farida has 5 children, now grown up, and therefore during many years she did not have much time to dedicate to herself.

Farida says that as her husband arranged other wives, she fell into a bottomless sadness, feeling less valued as a woman each time, since the other wives were always younger than her.

Life continued without much change, then Farida started to observe that her neighbour Marta managed to have her own money by producing and selling vegetables, and she also started to want to have her own money. Talking with Marta, Farida learned that she could join the horticultural association of Nhacolo where she could learn how to grow vegetables.

The association had technical help from a national NGO Magariro (Community Development Association) and with this assistance, the association implemented horticultural activities, teaching new techniques to the smallholder farmers.

So in 2008 Farida decided to join the association to have her own money. Farida discovered with much surprise that the association offered literacy classes to its members, and as such returned to her old dream of learning to read and write.

Today, Farida is in her 3rd year of literacy classes, and not only knows how to write her name perfectly, she was also elected as secretary of the rotating savings group to which she belongs. The group needed a member who knew how to write well and note down with precision personal details and financial records. To the group’s good fortune, and great personal satisfaction, Farida was chosen for the task of which she speaks with much pride.

Through the association, Farida reduced her sadness, regained her dream to study, and regained her self-esteem and pride in herself.
“My name is José Mário Machango and I have been a police officer since December 2005. I am a single man and live in the suburb of Malhazine.

“My attitude and willingness to help others have lead me to participating in many training sessions which are not the normal work of the police. Since I entered the police force I have participated in various training sessions. The first was in 2006, which had the objective of training activists in issues related to HIV/AIDS. In 2008 I went to peer educator training in the area of HIV/AIDS and in 2011 I became a trainer of peer educators in the same area. I also participated in another course in 2009 regarding voluntary testing and counselling, to provide me with the competence to undertake counselling and voluntary testing of other police officers. These training sessions were organised by the Ministry of Health.

“I also participated in a course about youth in conflict with the law, with the objective of up skilling the police to channel correctly children in conflict with the law. I only worked the initial three months on normal police work. There was not time to leave marks.

“I began work in the Help Centres for Women and Children victims of domestic violence in 2006. It was in 2008 that I participated for the first time in a course facilitated by WLSA for police officers attending to women and children victims of domestic violence. From then on I participated in training courses once a month. In the training sessions, which are called legal consultations, we received a lot of material, including brochures and posters, and the appropriate laws which defend women’s rights. The material is written in simple language without very technical terms. We learned how to channel the people who appeared at the Help Centre through the system to present their problems. The people were satisfied with our services.
“Since there was much satisfaction with the resolution of their problems, people told other women with the same problems and this lead to an increase in demand for the services of the Help Centres. The material which we distributed also increased the number of people presenting at the Help Centres. People now know what is domestic violence and know that it is a crime. They know that it is not only physical violence.

“Before the Help Centres existed, the traditional system was used, cultural norms were used to counsel people who presented with this type of worry. Yes, it was more counselling than channelling of cases through the legal system. Women’s rights were violated in a certain way. It was more about changing the behaviour of a person. The police accepted a woman’s request for help, but it was mainly to scare the husband into not becoming more violent. But it didn’t work. The husband was violent again because he knew that nothing would happen if he again committed the crime.

“But now everything has changed. When the Help Centres receive a case they channel it through the system seriously. The legal consultation program assisted the Help Centres in this mission. It helped to provide justification when needed. Through the program we learned to interpret the law. WLSA also provided legal assistance when we had difficult cases to resolve and channel through the system. We always call them when we have difficulty. Through an interpretation of the law we manage to bring justice to the victims.

“Personally I changed the saying “do as I say but not as I do” to “do as I say and as I do”. My attitude changed because I feel that I am an example to follow. My work here is serious. I do everything possible to not be on the side of the perpetrator. People respect me and listen to me since I am serious. I decided to apply to study social work because of the work that I do. Higher education will help me to better help others and change less favourable situations.

“Now I have more confidence in my work. I know that I can resolve a problem with justice because I know how to interpret what the law says about the cases that we receive here at the Help Centre. So a person who requires justification is really given justification. I know where to channel people to resolve their worries.”
My name is Piedade Faustino Mussá, and I am 25 years old, and a single mother of a boy and a girl. I am a waitress in a restaurant, and live in the suburb of Maxaquene B.

“I knew nothing of the courts. I came here to make a complaint against my partner for betrayal. When I became pregnant with my first child I lost it because of the confusion (spiritual). My husband always lived with his stepfather and never knew his real father. He had to meet his father to stop this confusion. My mother in law didn’t assist in this process when I was pregnant, even knowing that tradition dictates that my husband should know his real father so that my pregnancy would go well. So we searched until we found his father, and when I became pregnant the second time we had a baby girl.

“Since the confusion with my first pregnancy there had been distance between my husband and the family of his stepfather. So we arranged a house to rent. When the child was 4 years old I became pregnant with my son. It occurred at a time when my husband found work for the first time in nine years. It was with the National Institute of Social Security. I thought about aborting the baby due to the uncertainty of his behaviour. But I didn’t. He changed his attitude when he began working and had his own money. He had always lived off money lent by his family. We sat and talked. In this conversation he came up with the idea of us buying some land to build a house, which we did.

“When I was approximately seven months pregnant we spent Christmas at his stepfather’s house and it was agreed that I would go and stay at home with my mother for the birth. I began to question his behaviour. He was never at home during the holiday period and we had many arguments. After the holidays I
went to my mother’s house to have the baby and he forgot about me there. No affection, no attention and no financial support.

“One beautiful day I decided to go to our house. I was surprised to find a young woman there washing his clothes. She said she was his girlfriend and didn’t know he had a family, only that he had a daughter. The young woman knew all his family and friends. When he returned home he found me at home with the young woman. He didn’t deny anything. He went after the young woman to appease her and only returned home the following day at 5 o’clock in the morning, took a bath and went to work like normal. I went to speak with my mother in law and she said that her son was a man and I should have informed him before going to my own house.

“I stayed there for a few days but ended up going back to my mother’s house. I had a baby boy in February. My husband came once to the hospital and then didn’t appear again for about two months. When he turned up he brought 600 meticais to help with the costs and then disappeared again. I had no money to start with and had no money to take care of my son. Some people recommended that I make a complaint at the police station. I didn’t want to because I didn’t want the father of my children in gaol. My family helped me, but I couldn’t ask for much help from my father because he was sick.

“I went to make a complaint at the Help Centre for Women and Children at the police station when the child was four months old. It was to frighten my husband. After a couple of attempts to get him to respond, he and his father went to the Help Centre. He said that he no longer wanted me. So a child support payment was agreed upon and until now he has complied with this payment. He now knows that child support is not a favour.

“I was satisfied. I was helped and I didn’t give up. Without this help I would have sat and waited and relied on luck. It helped me to get up and begin to think correctly. It was through the Help Centre that my rights and the rights of my children were recognised. It was through the Help Centre that the behaviour of their father was recognised as being wrong. The money that I receive from him isn’t sufficient to cover the costs of my children, but my heart is peaceful since he has assumed his
responsibilities to me and his children. And it is not seen as a favour.

“The Help Centre assists everyone, men and women, but they assist more women because it is women who have most of these problems. It’s good that the Help Centres exist because the way in which problems are resolved is different. In the family everyone thinks from their own side. As a woman I feel protected. It is through the law that women are protected.”

Cecilia João

Women can realise great things.
Tambara District, Manica Province

"I started working with Magario (Community Development Association) in 2002 and have grown a lot since then, as a person, and as a member of the field team. Several opportunities for training and reflection that resulted from the partnership of Magario and Oxfam Canada have led to my understanding of the dynamics about inequalities between men and women. I have learned about concrete strategies to address the negative attitudes which prevail and deny the rights of women in families and communities. With Magario I learned a lot because we share our experiences and our ideas openly, there is no boss who dictates, everyone has an opportunity to discuss and contribute –whatever their position.

“At the beginning of the Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture program, Cecilia was chosen to be part of Magario’s Tambara district field team. She was the only woman at the time, another female colleague joined later.
“The program has changed many things in people’s lives as well. At first, I was the only woman working as a field extension worker in the district, and there were only two female employees at the administrative post in the district office. When riding a motorcycle, men and women in the communities shouted and pursued me, not believing that a woman can handle a motorcycle. When we organized community meetings, people arrived with bags in hand, hoping that they would receive food or other goods. It was a huge job to deconstruct this dependence, reassuring people, particularly women, to try and believe they can accomplish great things!

“Women are also playing very different roles in their communities. Women now work as the school director, have positions of authority at the town and village level, and one woman is the head administrator in Buzua district. These changes represent a big win for everyone. In the farmer’s associations, some women are leaders and others are participating in the advisory board of the district forums. This was unthinkable in 2005. In the savings and credit groups, women do everything themselves, they are leaders and managers. In the case of the savings and credit group in Nhacafula, a woman is the leader, while a traditional chief is just a member. Before, no one would accept that a woman could be in a higher position of leadership than a local chief.”

“In Tambara greater participation of women is seen all over the place. My organization has decided to hire women as extension workers in a very isolated district where many cultural practices discriminate and subordinate women. We demonstrate the importance of change by making changes ourselves. Actions and role models are stronger than words!”
Meaningful Change

The stories contained in this booklet demonstrate how increasing people’s access to knowledge and skills can change their lives. Many rural Mozambicans have limited access to formal education or training, and are thirsty for knowledge, be it in terms of improved agricultural and livestock breeding techniques, literacy, planning and participation, or information related to HIV transmission, prevention, testing and treatment.

By participating in exchanges of experience, practical training sessions, and functional literacy programs, the people introduced in this booklet have taken the knowledge they have gained and put it into practice with truly positive results! In urban Mozambique, many police stations have now Women & Child Help Centres where they can receive legal support. The partnership between civil society organizations and government in that field has been very fruitful in strengthening the role and functioning of these centres.
**Individual change**

Both women and men have gained much from increasing their knowledge as a result of participating in practical activities organized by local partners. Women and men have improved their agricultural and livestock raising skills, which has led to improved production and productivity, and increased income. The new knowledge gained has also provided opportunities for women and men farmers to diversify their animal and crop production, and their income generating and commercialization options. As a result, food and income security has been boosted in these rural families.

One of the most powerful changes to women’s lives came from learning to read and write. For many women, opportunities for schooling are short lived, keeping them dependent and lacking in confidence to achieve their full potential as agents for social change. To unlock this key, functional literacy has been prioritized during the program, with liberating results for many women. Literacy, along with access to local rotating savings and credit schemes has allowed many women to flourish in small business, thus increasing their independence, confidence, and income security. Another important step is for women to have access to information about their rights and to adequate services (health, justice, police) to exercise these.

Through demystifying HIV transmission routes, prevention options, testing and treatment, many women who engage in transactional sex in particular, have become aware of their vulnerability to infection, and now use condoms and seek testing regularly. Such HIV awareness raising has also lead to many in the community seeking testing and treatment, with lifesaving results.
Collective change

Through building confidence at an individual level, change can spread. Groups of small holder farmers are becoming organized, legalized, and a recognized voice within their communities, and beyond. There is an increasing recognition that they have a voice and a right to be heard, and can contribute constructively to the development agenda.

Improving knowledge can also lead to changes in the way a community thinks and behaves with regard to informal norms and values. This has been the experience in a number of communities in relation to the traditional practice Kupita Kufa, or widow cleansing. Once a risky practice involving unprotected sexual intercourse, it has been replaced in some communities by a herbal bath, due to an understanding by some traditional healers of the risks of HIV transmission.

In general, the traditional role of women is being challenged, with more and more engaging in marketing activities, livestock raising, and other non traditional activities. By promoting community dialogues, which challenge deep seeded cultural norms, the program has shaken some of the foundations upon which women’s subordination has been based. Women’s opinions are sought on development issues more often, their priorities recognized, and their voices are becoming respected. Men are beginning to recognize the strength and value of women in the family and the community.

Many of the above changes have been stimulated by the work of local development actors. Through a determined effort to improve professionalism, local non-government organizations are now more competent and confident actors, speaking up for sustainable and equitable legal and political frameworks, which respond to the needs of local communities.
Conclusion

After over 6 years of working together, Oxfam Canada, partner organizations, and local communities have many stories to tell. The stories told in this booklet are testament to all that can be achieved when people feel confident, capable, and supported.

With dedication, commitment, openness, and respect, people can achieve their potential, improve their livelihoods, their production, their living conditions, and their confidence in themselves. Social and cultural norms can change, and women can be valued and recognized for their energy, creativity, and contribution to their families and their communities.

The Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture Program has been a long and rewarding journey, with many lessons learned on all sides. It has been an honour for Oxfam Canada to work with Mozambican civil society organizations, to build social capital and skills with communities in central Mozambique.
Credits

Oxfam Canada wishes to recognize and thank the personal contribution of the story tellers and collectors, as well as all people who participated in the realization of this booklet.

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