



FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT AGRIWOMEN – DGD 2017- 2021

SUBMITTED TO:



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partner in development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AgriWomen is a multi-year program (January 2017 - December 2021) aiming at increasing the agricultural income generated and managed by women farmers in Nampula province (Mozambique) through their insertion in local and sustainable agricultural value chains. The Belgian Directorate-General funds the program for Development Cooperation (DGD), and Oxfam leads it.

The expected outcomes of the program were:

- 1) the strengthening, securing, and protection of women's access to land;
- 2) the development of influencing strategies to promote women's rights and interests in the implementation of agricultural policies;
- 3) the creation of favourable conditions for the promotion of women in the horticultural value chain;
- 4) the strengthening of the capacities of civil society actors in Nampula province.

This final evaluation aimed at the follow-up and monitor the achievement of the Specific Objective, analyse to what extent the Specific Objective achievement is sustainable, vis-a-vis the current context and ongoing dynamics in Mozambique. Specifically, the final evaluation aims to address the evaluation question identified in the ToR and focus on four selected OECD DAC Evaluation criteria: Relevance, Impact & Effectiveness, and Sustainability.

The evaluation's main conclusions are:

- **A calculated response.** This project was able to identify a real and present problem that affected a vulnerable group. In turn, the whole community was being affected by the lack of equity and unfairness in the resource distribution
- **A bold approach.** In addressing that specific (gender) imbalance, the project combined a sensitisation and community mobilisation arm with material and technical support that would lend women the opportunity of increased income through their primary economic activity
- **An unmeasurable impact.** The change that has been operated in the beneficiaries' lives can't be quantified as it goes. The roots of their perceptions of self to all confidence and self-esteem to contribute to their communities. That change is likely to spread to areas not covered by the project in a systematic or informal manner
- **A frail situational analysis.** Processes that led to the project design and implementation flows failed to grasp a comprehensive vision of the target group and its (concrete) conditions. Issues with land ownership (by women)

and illiteracy rates (also among women) were not adequately addressed in the implementation design, and that created setbacks to the whole process

- **An uncoordinated M&E framework.** The monitoring activities of the project did not benefit from a bold and consolidated framework to allow one to grasp progress when combining the data of every implementing partner
- **A localised gain.** While it is certain that the project has brought a lot of gains and change to the beneficiaries' lives, the goal to influence policy pieces of national dimension seems unrealistic at this stage particularly considering the (low) educational level of those same beneficiaries.

Four main recommendations came out of the evaluation:

- **To improve situational analysis process** by going through a thorough and concise assessment of the situation at hand. To give some examples the fact that some women were illiterate and that most of them do not OWN land could have come to light earlier
- **To incorporate social change theories** to get familiarised with processes such as those and enrich the Theories of Change with a more comprehensive ground of options
- **Address the category 'women'** to go beyond the oversimplification and homogenisation of the category in ways that do not allow one to see differences (of class, race, religious background, sociological markers, etc.) within it
- **Disseminate the learnings** by using the wealth of knowledge gained by the women beneficiaries to spread that to neighbour areas not covered by the project, at a reasonable lower cost

I. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

AgriWomen is a multi-year program (January 2017 - December 2021) aiming at increasing the agricultural income generated and managed by women farmers in Nampula province (Mozambique) through their insertion in local and sustainable agricultural value chains. The Belgian Directorate-General funds the program for Development Cooperation (DGD), and Oxfam leads it.

The project strived “to increase the agricultural income generated and managed by women small-scale farmers in the Nampula province, through their insertion in local and sustainable agricultural productions” by strengthening the capacities of civil society organisations and associations in three districts – namely, Ribaué, Malema and Monapo. Overall, the project intended to ultimately contribute to a rebalance in the power relations between men and women by influencing the implementation modalities of agricultural policies to facilitate women's access to technical and management training, production resources, and markets.

The original theory of change for AgriWomen (complete diagram in Portuguese in Annex I) is based on the belief that greater women's participation in the economy favours economic development and the achievement of overall development goals. Such theory is also anchored in Oxfam's experience working towards a change of gendered power relations, which shows that transformation at community and organisations happens through awareness-raising and change at the individual level. The underlining understanding is that a well-organised and adequately empowered civil society can influence national decision-making towards respect for fundamental human rights.

The expected outcomes of the program were:

- 5) the strengthening, securing, and protection of women's access to land;
- 6) the development of influencing strategies to promote women's rights and interests in the implementation of agricultural policies;
- 7) the creation of favourable conditions for the promotion of women in the horticultural value chain;
- 8) the strengthening of the capacities of civil society actors in Nampula province.

The project's nature required a multifactorial partnership to which Oxfam mobilised financial resources and collectively developed the technical and methodological support necessary for the implementation and monitoring of activities. The project partners included organisations from the Mozambican civil society, namely: the Provincial Farmers Union of Nampula (UPCN), the National Rural Extension Association (AENA) and OLIPA – ODES (Organization for Sustainable Development), in the Districts of Malema, Ribaué and Monapo. Additionally, three other actors

operate at the national and international level - WLSA Mozambique,¹ Observatório do Meio Rural (OMR)² and Gender at Work (G@W).³

As the AgriWomen project reached its conclusion in 2021, this exercise, the project's Final Evaluation, is required to allow for a general overview of its implementation, achievements, and challenges. This document reports AgriWomen's project final evaluation. After this introductory chapter, the next one presents the evaluation's objectives and the approach used to accomplish them. The third chapter discusses the evaluation results focusing mainly on the initially identified criteria. Concluding remarks and recommendations constitute the two final chapters.

¹ <https://www.wlsa.org.mz/>

² <https://omrmz.org/omrweb/>

³ <https://genderatwork.org/>

II. THE EVALUATION

II.1. OBJECTIVES

AgriWomen has a considerable wealth of knowledge produced during its implementation, which includes a mid-term evaluation aimed at “exploring changes in thinking, behaviours, and actions of those who came into contact with GAL and how they understood, adapted, communicated, encouraged, and promoted related messages and practices both in their life and work”. It also included well documented Annual Evaluation Workshops with the participation of beneficiaries, partners and representatives of other relevant institutions. Hence this final evaluation aimed at:

- (i) the follow-up and monitor the achievement of the Specific Objective, analyse to what extent the Specific Objective achievement is sustainable, vis-a-vis the current context and ongoing dynamics in Mozambique.

Specifically, the final evaluation aims to address the evaluation question identified in the ToR and focus on four selected OECD DAC Evaluation criteria: Relevance, Impact & Effectiveness, and Sustainability.

Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore potential social sanctions experienced by GAL facilitators and program participants and what happens to those who go against social norms in their gender practices, attitudes, and behaviour?• Which is the fundamental element for behavioural change?• What is the project's contribution to the strategic goal of the Country Strategic Framework and the mainstreaming of gender and environment?
Impact & Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the expected and unexpected effects produced by the programme? And how do these relate to the changes envisaged in the Theory of Change described in the programme? What evidence do we have of those effects? <p>Related sub-questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What are the reasons behind the significant differences in income generation among groups of women and beneficiaries and the different districts?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To what extent and how did Oxfam and partners contribute to more gender-sensitive policies? ● Has the Country Theory of Change and underlying assumptions been confirmed or not? ● How did the GAL methodology (Gender Action and learning) impact the transformation of partners and people we work with (individual and household levels), partners transformation, women's associations, the community? ● How did organisational culture inside partner organisations change towards more gender-sensitive ways of working and engaging? ● In what ways (if at all) local associations are making gender-related progress in their internal structure and culture as it relates to agricultural work by women? ● How have relations of power changed inside partner organisations because of GAL effects?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To what extent have the program's actions contributed to the ownership and leadership of the program by the producers and partners and their individual, organisational development? ● Explore how local leaders and groups and government partners in the districts participate in the AgriWomen program. ● To what extent behaviour change due to GAL will perdure? ● Explore how women's associations, partners, as well as government partners in the districts, are taking part in the AgriWomen program; ● To what extent partners are capable enough to continue to use GAL as the elected methodology to bring gender transformation within an organisation, their programs, and beneficiaries; ● To what extent local Government will secure and continue to support (material and technically) the people we work with after the end of the program?

II.2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology proposed for this evaluation was aligned to principles of inclusiveness and participation to ensure that every stakeholder's (project officers, beneficiaries, partners, institutional counterparts) views are catered for and included in the analysis process.

In line with the ToR recommendation, the evaluation merged a quantitative and qualitative methodology to analyse data capable of producing a holistic and comprehensive intervention assessment. In the consultants' view, quantitative data allows one to grasp the figures and proportions of beneficiaries; resources spent or recovered infrastructure. Qualitative information gives access to explanations and causal connections between those figures, people's perceptions and representations on the intervention, and accurate (though sometimes single) stories of persons whose life has been impacted by the project.



Picture 1: Collective interview in Namipaua-Sede during evaluation (Malema District)

That combination, complemented by a desk analysis of the broader agricultural context and related gender issues in Mozambique, seems fit to respond to Oxfam request to assess the degree of achievement of the outcomes and specific objective; to develop recommendations and identify possible future steps to bring forward the process of change promoted by AgriWomen.

The evaluation started with a thorough review of the documentation made available by Oxfam (a complete list of references to be found at the end of this document) that included technical project documents, progress reports and evaluations, and other government and partners' documents. The revision of critical documents allowed for a greater familiarisation with the project.

The following steps were (a) the undertaking of exploratory virtual and in-person interviews with both G@W and WLSA representatives who were involved at the design stage. It was impossible to talk to OMR's representative due to unavailability related to a health condition.

Fieldwork took place during one week in Nampula province. The first day was devoted to interviews with representatives of the three implementing NGOs, and the four remaining days were split between work in Monapo and Malema. At the district level, contacts were made with Government representatives and beneficiaries. Four collective interviews were planned to occur in the Monapo district, and one did not happen as the community was gathered at a woman's funeral services at that day and time. In Malema, all six interviews took place as planned. The summary of interviewed contacts is listed below:

Key Informant Interviews					
Level	Organisation	Number of interviewees			
		Women	Men		
National	WLSA	1	0		
	G@W	1	0		
Provincial	AENA	0	1		
	Olipa-ODES	0	1		
	UPCN	3	3		
District	Government	0	2		
Collective Interviews					
District	Organisation	Total number of participants	Participants		Age interval
			Women	Men	
Monapo	Associação Verde Mulher de Nacololo	10	10	0	19-70
	Associação Opavela Nacuruvene (AON)	7	7	0	27-50
	Associação Luz Verde de Netia	17	11	6	19-75
Malema	Wirana wa Thiana de Namipaua Sede	7	5	2	25-62
	Associação Omalika Ohawa de Lotiua	6	6	0	25-56
	Associação Nrina Vukule de Murrarelo Sede	6	5	1	26-50

	Associação Phavela de Napai	3	2	1	28-45
	Associação Ovukula Ohawa de Naroa	2	2	0	28-48
	Associação Omana ni ha Makalelo de Malema Sede	9	9	0	23-49
Total number of interviewees		78			

Table 1: Distribution of contacted evaluation participants per organisation and disaggregated by sex

After the fieldwork and preliminary analysis, the latter was presented in a one-day workshop to partners and beneficiaries. A plenary presentation followed by group work provided inputs that have been incorporated into this document. The data analysis process used triangulation of the different methods used as the privileged approach. The review of the documentation, besides ensuring familiarisation as mentioned, made accessible information on the general progress of the implementation. One of the challenges is how the project data was very scattered through the different partners, making it impossible to have comprehensive quantitative data due to the risk of duplication. Although not consistently reflected in all reports, Oxfam yearly progress reports provided more consolidated data.

Annual evaluation workshops were very well documented, and they provided the overall idea of the achievements in the four years. Hence field observations and contacts with relevant stakeholders helped to complement the views portrayed in reports. The interaction with beneficiaries provided rich insights and critical perspectives to obtain a holistic perspective.

This evaluation has benefited from happening at a stage in which the project had not wholly been finalised. Because some activities were still taking place, respondents had vivid memories of the project's dynamics, pitfalls, and achievements. On the other hand, the short time to conduct the evaluation – particularly at the field level where it was only possible to visit two of the three covered districts – was a constraint.

III. RESULTS FROM PROJECT EVALUATION

III.1. OVERALL PROGRESS

AgriWomen's focus was to increase the agricultural income generated and managed by women farmers through their insertion in local and sustainable agricultural value chains to impact women's empowerment and balanced gender relations ultimately. As indicated by the respondents, the initial target was to work with 60 associations, comprising approximately between 1,000 and 1,200 women. After project's inception a more realistic assessment of the situation on the ground led the implementation partners to reduce targets to 800 women in 45 associations, three per district.

As mentioned before, given the lack of consolidated quantitative data, progress here is measured following the findings of the Annual Evaluation Workshops. Data from those workshops had some challenges. First of all it was presented in the narrative form rather than tables. It was sometimes contradictory be it from one year to the other or between partners numbers and the global ones. There was also lack of a precise and consistent number of indicators to be addressed every year.

The project was set to start in early 2017 and last until 2021. However, the project's activities only started in the last quarter of 2017. Available Oxfam reports indicate two main reasons for the delayed start. On the one hand, organisational changes – related to modifying the program design after budget reductions and challenges associated with implementing a new intervention model at Oxfam. On the other, the project went through an elaborated and extended partner screening exercise.

The program got up to speed in 2018. After the first year of implementation, the project had 174 associated women producing under it, covering an area of 30 hectares. There were 10 tonnes of horticultural production traded by the project beneficiaries. The average income per year was 670.00 MZM, far from the expected 2,500.00 MZM.

In the second year of project implementation (2019), the number of associated women grew to 484 but far from the 800 targeted. The horticultural production increased to 55 tonnes. Amongst the associated women, 20% (97 women) did not trade products hence did not have any income. Out of those with income (387), 20 women earned 17,000.00 MZM – more than three times the targeted amount (5,000.00 MZN), which may be associated with two production cycles. One hundred fifty-four (154) women got 2,124.00 MZM, and 213 women generated 725.00 MZM.

In 2020, the third year of implementation, the project reached 686 women farmers (42 associations), representing 86% of the objective of 800 by the end of the program. In total, cultivation covered 90 hectares with an overall production of 231 tonnes. There was an increase in the average income for the year 2020 as it reached 3,315.66 MZN. The factors contributing to the income rise were associated with

increased women farmers experience and commitment. However, there were discrepancies among individual beneficiaries. 5% (37 women) surpassed 2021's target of 15,000 MZN. 18% of farmers had reached the 5,000.00MZN mark, representing an increase from the previous year when only 5% had achieved the target. The higher incomes were associated with some producers' marketing and management capacities who invested more time and reinvested into other income-producing activities.

Apart from the Annual Evaluation Workshops, a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) explored the intermediate effectiveness of program strategies while generating learning and recommendations for future program success. The MTE also adopted a qualitative approach and concluded that a) despite limitations, significant contributions were made to the program's larger goal, particularly in sensitisation and training of target group, b) GAL processes sparked personal changes in behaviour, attitudes, and practices in gender matters, and c) partner organisations strengthened their gender-related capacities as will be presented and discussed in the impact section.

III.2. RELEVANCE

This project addressed a very present problem affecting a particularly marginalized group: female small-scale farmers. In the broader context of all the social gender imbalances, small scale farming presented a very particular challenge. Women were involved with their partners in the sowing, watering and harvesting processes but were never seen in the trading activities. That implied little or no participation in the family income management, firstly for not knowing how much it was.

Women were familiar with dry farming, which by principle only produces income once a year. Some of the beneficiaries had prior experiences with horticultural production, but the great majority lacked technical knowledge on how to grow it. There were no "women only" agriculture associations, and the existing ones were dominated by men, particularly in their leading structures.

*Mr Consultant, as you are now
seeing me, I grab a broom
these days*

Beneficiary's husband, Netia
(Monapo)

The GAL methodology started to bring to light day-to-day inequalities that people could not see before. Simple examples like the composition of the board of directors broken down by gender or the assigning of certain tasks (coffee making, tidying of the conference room, to mention just two) to female members of the staff were brought to light to reflect the inequality pattern present in the work place. The innovative method began by using the project staff as trainees and making them aware of what was at stake. The project initiated a (self) reflection process that would create

changes, to start with, among the persons implementing it. Respondents to this evaluation verbalised that the approach of training days separated by routine activities⁴ had a powerful effect first and foremost in their personalities.

Next, the focus was on inter-personal relationships at the institutional level. The result was a transformation at an informal level as colleagues started to address each other using the “fellow” . That form of treatment (“fellow” or “companheiro/a” in Portuguese) breaks with a very hierarchical and vertical way of addressing among work mates. People would usually address each other by their position in the organization (Mr. Director) or academic background (“Doctor” to refer to a university degree holder). By introducing a universal form of treatment that relates more with companionship and less to formal organizational positions, AgriWomen was able to even relationships and transmit some sense of equity.

Additionally, most partner organisations had their first females at leadership positions even after, sometimes, two decades of existence. That is not to say that there was no resistance, but the assessment indicates that the methodology appealed to equality, equity and fairness values that were easily understandable by every audience. GAL was able to overcome resistance because it placed organization’s staff members as subjects of change instead of placing them as the ones to bring change to the communities they work. The values of equality and fairness had long been praised by the same organizations but not from within, and that made it easier to tackle resistance.

The fundamental element for behaviour change – apart from the appeal to accept values mentioned before – was the engagement of local leadership. The approach combined a strong training component on gender equality, providing means for economic empowerment and involvement of the village leaders. Those leaders were the first to be sensitised, and after their understanding, the project would move to carry out its activities in the area. That move was important not only because leaders give permission to anyone wanting to work in a certain community, but also because their understanding and support lead to everyone else’s collaboration and compliance.

The GAL approach has implications on a strategic level because it provides an example of levelling in gender relations at various levels. Through an innovative approach, changes were operated at the individual, institutional, and community levels, turning relationships less hierarchical and more horizontal. The outcome was on women occupying leadership positions in their respective organisations and the day-to-day interactions between individuals in the same sett. By using a different designation (“fellow”, “companheiro/a” in Portuguese), they began to view themselves and others differently.

⁴ 4 days of intensive training, then 3 months of routine work, followed by another 4 days of intensive training, and 2 final months of work

III.2. EFFECTIVENESS

The project was highly successful in achieving its specific objective. Associated women farmers were introduced to a world and practices that were utterly unknown to them before AgriWomen's implementation. Skills like seeds management, separation of products to self-consumption or selling according to its quality, price bargaining, financial management (between income and profit) or water pumps' manoeuvring weren't initially on the radar of the beneficiary women.

Over the years of the project implementation, women and men benefited from various training and skill development activities on technical aspects (such as horticulture practices and business management/savings). They promoted a favourable social environment for gender equality (GAL training). Figure 1 presents the distribution of direct beneficiaries over the years.

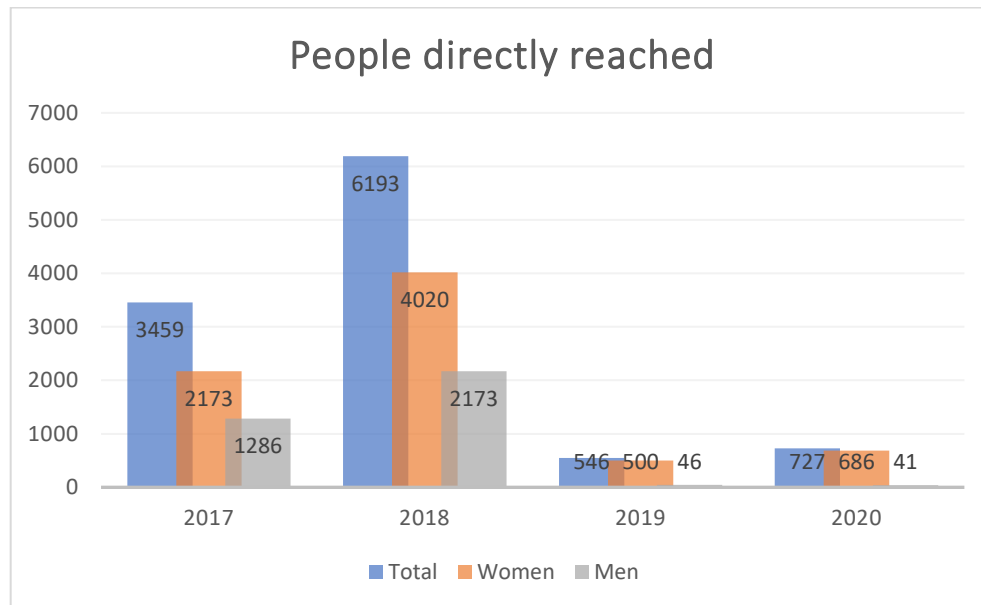


Figure 1: Distribution of people directly reached by the AgriWomen project from 2017 to 2020 disaggregated by sex

Through the project, women were introduced to a new agricultural practice (horticulture) that provided income all year round. They allowed them to have access and personally manage their income thus, allowing them self-sufficiency and independence. Respondents were very vocal on how the project put them in a new position at the family and community levels. They could now participate in the domestic economy decisions and decide what and where should be spent.

“Before, when our husbands and we were at the same farming association, they would be the ones taking our all production to the village to sell. They would stay

there for days. On their return, they would not inform us how much they had earned and how would the family spend the amount. They would just ask the children how many school notebooks they would need. A child could say six, and they would only give money for three, saying they should use one school notebook for two disciplines. Now that we directly sell our production, we can decide and influence how the family money is spent as we also contribute to it. (Association member, Nacuruvene, Monapo).

The average annual income of women farmers covered by the project reflects the change in their economic status as presented in figure 2:

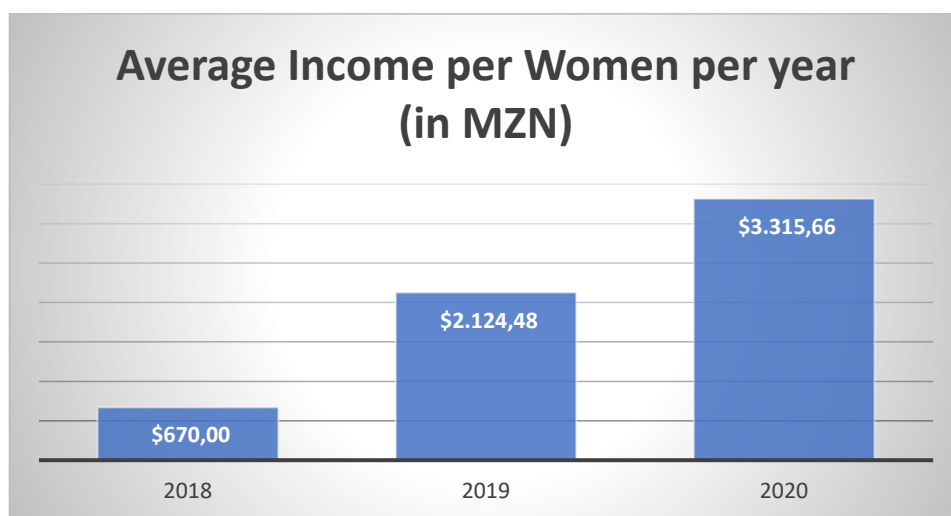


Figure 2: Distribution of average income per women farmers in associations under the AgriWomen project per year (2018 to 2020)

Before, women were simply 'safe boxes'
Partner NGO staff member

Nonetheless, some elements were not initially foreseen and contributed to jeopardising the full attainment of the objective. Women's situation was not thoroughly assessed. Their literacy levels were sometimes too low to start managerial positions requiring counting, reading or doing basic arithmetic. It was not foreseen that women, in general, do not own land, hence in many cases, they ended up borrowing or renting land that would be later called back by the owners (in most cases when the production was flourishing).

Those unforeseen pitfalls were corrected by including new activities not initially planned, such as the Literacy and Adult Education (AEA), which would need time to render results. The grabbing back of the land caused significant losses to investments made. In one narrated case, the landowner took his land back after a reservoir had already been built and production was rampant. Implementing these new activities led to delays in the project's progress. Some associations –particularly those that did

not entirely depend on income from agriculture as they were located closer to the district capitals and engaged in other commercial activities – have dropped out from the project, which compromised the targets envisioned.

All those elements had a toll on the time and resources allocated to the project, and that in short meant that although the rationale behind the Theory of Change (ToC) proved accurate, the dimension of the change was frail. The TOC envisaged changes at individuals and groups level that would affect the advocacy skills leading to influencing national policies like the National Plan of Investment in the Agriculture Sector (PNISA). While changes were observable in the interactions between individuals and within institutions (organisations and associations), they are a,) very limited to the environment of the GAL affected individuals and b) do not come with advocacy skills capable of influencing policies at the national level.

The project's baseline was not very realistic about the conditions on the ground, and that contributed to the mentioned change in the initial targets. The assessment also failed to grasp the real sociologic conditions of the potential beneficiaries, leading to the introduction of literacy activities as some of them could not read and write. That meant that project's activities created significant change in the day-to-day lives of beneficiaries but the skills leading to sway a national level policy are not yet there.

The ToC foresaw that all the investment done in material and technical support would ultimately lead to a greater level of public consciousness through consistent, evidence-based campaigning. The ToC assumed that the latter would influence central-level policies like PNISA and the Land Law. Our assessment indicates that while the Advocacy component was present in the documentation and in a few activities (for example, two meetings in 2019 to coordinate the civil society demands to make the new PNISA more gender-inclusive,) very few, if any respondent, mentioned activities on that area or its impact even if at a local level. Not obliterating the timing of changes occurring through advocacy campaigns, the evaluation shows minimal impact in that component within AgriWomen.





Picture 2: Water capturing system in Nacololo

The frail project's initial assessment also impacted the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework. Initial target numbers were overly ambitious and treated every covered district as equal. While Malema and Ribáuè have a humid micro-climate, Monapo has a semi-arid one. With the quality of the soils and annual rainfall patterns, horticulture is easier to do in the former two than in the latter. Malema and Ribáuè also enjoyed the previous experience of practising horticulture, whilst in Monapo, it was introduced as a new custom.

The M&E framework did not allow for effective consolidation of the results achieved. Every partner had a "Technical File" that would define each one's mandate, indicators and targets, and they would subsequently report on those. Annually compiled reports produced by Oxfam also lacked consistent quantitative data per indicator for each year of project implementation. There are numeric discrepancies between the Annual Evaluation Workshops and Oxfam project's annual reports. The main problem arose when there was a need to ascertain the project's overall progress. It was impossible to have consolidated quantitative data, as there were possibilities for double counting. Annual Evaluation Workshops reflect that lack of capacity and discussions with anecdotal evidence produced by one partner.

III.3. IMPACT

The impact of the AgriWomen project is felt at three dimensions: individual, institutional and community levels. The GAL methodology promoted individual self-reflection and consideration of gender imbalances and stereotypes rooted in social, cultural and organisational spheres that shape people values, attitudes and everyday

practice. The innovative approach – a continuous process that takes place over six months, being organised, overseen, and facilitated by a trained and skilled GAL facilitator – promoted the development of activities based on experimentation and peer learning in which every participant stood as an actor of the process in their own right.

Through such activities, participants were encouraged to deconstruct factors sustaining gender inequalities (i.e. social norms, values, stereotypes) while making use of arts-based participatory tools such as drawing, storytelling and meditation to express their feelings, share their experiences, reflect on their gender-related beliefs, and ultimately question and change their way of thinking and acting (Oxfam, 2020; Ou-Chim, 2020).

A widely acknowledged impact of GAL's methodology application was a change in perceptions with regards to gender imbalances, precisely a recognition of the social lieu of women both at the community level as well as amongst members of partner organisations:

“Before the GAL training, to talk about gender was to provoke people; you were creating trouble. But after the training, I have a different approach. I am now able to put myself in the shoes of a woman and understand what she goes through and that she did not choose to be born a woman”. (Partner NGO staff member, Nampula City)

“Before the gender training (GAL sessions), we were not happy in our households. After the training, our husbands listened to us and understood us. Even if I am not in the mood to sleep with him in the bedroom, he now understands it”. (Association member, Nacololo, Monapo)

At the institutional level, GAL brought visibility to gender and brought this marker of social divisions to the centre of the everyday dynamics of the organisations. Before GAL, to talk about gender was ridiculed, taken as a less pertinent topic and as a topic that would create trouble. After GAL activities – which encouraged people to reflect on gender inequalities, including at the workplace, deeply – such a topic is no longer ignored but considered.

An example is the introduction of a new lexicon in everyday forms of treatment – “fellow” [companheir@] – which impacts not only at the level of vocabulary but also establishes horizontal relations that emphasises cooperation and collaboration amongst colleagues. It is worth noting that such a form of treatment was also established at the farmer's associations level.

The participating organisations have experienced more significant gender equity, explicitly concerning women at leading positions and the decision-making level. At AENA, after the training on transformative leadership, the vice president is now a woman, and there are currently women at the top executive body of the organisation.

There has been an update of the gender policy to ensure that women are present in decision making positions, and a GAL transformation group was established there. The group is responsible for developing sessions with staff to promote internal reflection with collaborators and members.

At OLIPA-ODES, the president is now a woman, and it is the first time that a woman occupies such a position in 20 years of the organisation's existence. It was the first time that all organisations worked exclusively with women farmers' associations. Through AENA, OLIPA-ODES and UPC work with women farmers' associations, they were strengthened regarding farming techniques, management of their production, access to the market and management of profits. A technician from AENA stated:

"Women's associations under this project are now economically active. We have managed to transform vegetable horticulture into a profitable business for women. We believe that soon AENA will have extension workers demanded by women at the communities where we have developed the AgriWomen project" (Man technician from AENA).

Women farmers have benefited at two levels: in agriculture and at the social level. In their role as farmers, women, through the activities of the AgriWomen project, have gained autonomy in the management of their production through access to seeds, training about efficient horticulture farming and production planning and management and evaluation and negotiation in the market.

"We have been trained on business management with a practical dimension. As a result, we now know how the market works and no longer rush to sell our production out of desperation. We wait for the best moment to sell. We now know where to get fertiliser, and we have the Syngenta seed. We are now able to manage our profit to buy seeds and save to buy an electric motor pump" (Association member, Netia, Monapo)

"When we were at Apano (the farmer association they shared with men), the men would steal as they were the only ones going to the market to sell our collective production. In this women-only association, we coordinate and work together, including at the level of profit division. Thus, even with the hunger in Monapo in 2020, we were not affected as we produced year-round". (Association member, Netia, Monapo)

At the social level, the impact included changes in the structure of household spending with increased spending of a social nature such as the acquisition of school supplies; school uniforms; solar panels; house furnishing; increase in the number of meals per day and widen the variety of food for the household. All these were possible due to increased profit levels and training on evolving credit.

“With the training profits from this farming, I have managed to do something that I have been wanted to do for years now but was unable to do so because I did not have enough money: I was able to send my daughter to the initiation rites⁵. Also, I can now pay for school supplies for my children, which were not a priority for my husband who then controlled our family money”. (Woman farmer of an association in Monapo)

The evaluation did not gather many examples of women investing their income in their well-being, apart from the evidence provided in the project reports that highlight how women buy mobile phones for the first time in their lives. Phones strongly contribute to strengthening existing and expanding social networks and having better access to information.

Additionally, it is noticeable more equitable gendered relations at the household and community level. Husbands and other adult male members of the household who have participated in GAL activities show more understanding and cooperation with women:

“We started to understand that our wives need freedom. They did not leave us behind even though this was a project for women only. They have always helped us whenever we needed”. (Husband of a woman farmer in Monapo)

“In the gender training, I started to understand that the way we (men) treat women is not correct. We now help women in their machambas (fields) as the benefit is for both of us”. (Husband of a woman farmer in Monapo)

III.4. SUSTAINABILITY

The GAL innovative methodology and the type of adherence it provokes is the most significant sign of ownership AgriWomen enjoyed. Firstly, because it involves the people who will later implement the intervention at the community level, and only after their training do they interact with members at the local level. Not only is the training innovative, but so is the general approach.

The project sought to train women and men in gender-related matters to narrow imbalanced participation of women in the domestic and community economy and provide them with market navigation skills to increase their involvement in the products' trade. The collaboration between men and women is well regarded at the community level. When in possession of money, the latter tend to perform an even better re-distribution to the family.

⁵ Initiation rites a local Makwua rites of passage from childhood to adulthood that adolescent boys and girls go through in order to be socially accepted and respected as responsible adults in the community.

The fact that the methodology has been interiorised by both project implementers and beneficiaries implies that it is common knowledge at the community level. The environment that is supportive and transfers confidence to the women involved. Some respondents were interested in going to communities and villages not covered by AgriWomen to educate them on gender equity.

The option for a robust training and coaching component is a crucial sustainability factor. Women who had never been involved in the trading circuit and subsequently been exposed to that with the appropriate skills will never be the same again, irrespective of the project funding.

"A few years ago, I was just starting my business, but now I am planning to buy a car just like this one that brought you [the consultant] here". (Association member, Naroa, Malema)

Another innovation worth mentioning is horticulture production introduction in an area like Monapo. Although it comes with a cost, women increase their income chances by not depending exclusively on agriculture that relies solely on rainfall. Respondents mentioned that dry farming is hazardous because there is only one seeding and one harvesting period a year, and if that single one fails, food insecurity is almost inevitable.

Money, when in women's hands, it lasts [longer]
Male respondent, Lotiua, Malema

The Government in both visited districts has demonstrated knowledge and collaboration with AgriWomen. The project's focal points enjoy an optimal relationship with them. Extensionist workers have been used indiscriminately from Government and the project's side. Nonetheless, it has to be mentioned that fewer resources on the Government's side have made it challenging to monitor implementation. One of the main reasons is the lack of funds to allow remote visiting.

When discussing about sustainability a Monapo Government representative (Head of the Economic Activities Department) hailed organising a public ceremony to let people know more about AgriWomen and sensitize different stakeholders to come and support as the project was coming to an end. Nonetheless, an AgriWomen staff member clarified that it was a public presentation in which every program and activity in the district gave themselves to the newly appointed District Administrator. Nothing exclusively done to AgriWomen. That episode highlights that the Government does not have the resources to continue providing the same type of assistance (material and technical). Still, it enjoys the association with and the project's achievements.

Our assessment of AgriWomen indicates that the continuation of activities tends to be more a factor of the acquired skills and beneficiaries' motivation than local

structures' support. Considering that seeds have been planted and activities and ideas should continue, one should also consider the particularity and timing of social change processes. As receptive communities can be to the unveiling of gender differences, changes at the community level have precise timing, depending on a series of actions and combinations of actions by a wide array of stakeholders.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

- **A calculated response.** This project was able to identify a real and present problem that affected a vulnerable group. In turn, the whole community was being affected by the lack of equity and unfairness in the resource distribution
- **A bold approach.** In addressing that specific (gender) imbalance, the project combined a sensitisation and community mobilisation arm with material and technical support that would lend women the opportunity of increased income through their primary economic activity
- **An unmeasurable impact.** The change that has been operated in the beneficiaries' lives can't be quantified as it goes. The roots of their perceptions of self to all confidence and self-esteem to contribute to their communities. That change is likely to spread to areas not covered by the project in a systematic or informal manner
- **A frail situational analysis.** Processes that led to the project design and implementation flows failed to grasp a comprehensive vision of the target group and its (concrete) conditions. Issues with land ownership (by women) and illiteracy rates (also among women) were not adequately addressed in the implementation design, and that created setbacks to the whole process
- **An uncoordinated M&E framework.** The monitoring activities of the project did not benefit from a bold and consolidated framework to allow one to grasp progress when combining the data of every implementing partner
- **A localised gain.** While it is certain that the project has brought a lot of gains and change to the beneficiaries' lives, the goal to influence policy pieces of national dimension seems unrealistic at this stage particularly considering the (low) educational level of those same beneficiaries.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **To improve situational analysis process** by going through a thorough and concise assessment of the situation at hand. To give some examples the fact that some women were illiterate and that most of them do not OWN land could have come to light earlier
- **To incorporate social change theories** to get familiarised with processes such as those and enrich the Theories of Change with a more comprehensive ground of options
- **Address the category 'women'** to go beyond the oversimplification and homogenisation of the category in ways that do not allow one to see differences (of class, race, religious background, sociological markers, etc.) within it
- **Disseminate the learnings** by using the wealth of knowledge gained by the women beneficiaries to spread that to neighbour areas not covered by the project, at a reasonable lower cost

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ANNEXES

ANNEXE I – THEORY OF CHANGE

