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# GENDER, YOUTH, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN ACCESS TO LAND AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

## SUMMARY OF THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMUNITIES IN THE NOVO MADAL AREA

Through the Integrated Land and Resource Governance (ILRG) program, USAID is working with Novo Madal, one of the largest agricultural companies in Mozambique, to promote inclusive land investment and agribusiness, provision of land to local communities, and engagement with smallholder farmers that benefit women, youth, and other marginalized groups. In November 2020, the organization NANA - Associação de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento, which is implementing the activity at the local level, carried out an initial assessment on gender, youth, and social inclusion in the areas bordering the Novo Madal properties in the district of Quelimane, Zambézia Province. The objective of the study was to analyze the current situation and perceptions of the target communities on gender, youth, and social inclusion in order to inform the implementation plan. The overall activity aims to document the land ceded by Novo Madal to the communities, support the company in the development of gender-sensitive policies and practices, increase women's participation in decision-making in the communities, and increase opportunities for women in productive land use and economic empowerment.

The study combined desk review, direct observation, and semi-structured interviews through focus groups with women (married, single, or widowed), men, young women (12 to 20 years old), young men (12 to 20 years old), and the Novo Madal team. Data collection was carried out in eight communities (Inhangulue, Marracua, Machimano, Magalá, Naiver, Gumira, Milato, and Mussuloga) on the properties of

Temane and Malacuari, making up 60 percent of the total target communities. Specific objectives included understanding the role that men, women, and young people play in agricultural production; identifying the perspectives and needs of men and women (and relevant subgroups) related to access, use, and control of land; identifying gender norms, roles, and responsibilities in the communities; and better understanding the attitude and capacity of Novo Madal on gender equality and women's empowerment.

## COMMUNITY PROFILES

Gender inequality is pervasive in Mozambique and women and girls are among the groups most affected by poverty due to unequal access to education and economic opportunities and low social status (Agy, 2020). About 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas and has agriculture as their main livelihoods (MINAG, 2005). Social inequalities and unequal access to resources between men and women are even higher in rural areas, where there are higher illiteracy rates, weak dissemination of legislation, limited access to information, and cultural norms and customary practices harmful to women and girls. According to the Constitution of Mozambique, the land belongs to the State, but women and men can use and benefit from the land through a *direito de uso e aproveitamento da terra* (DUAT). However, women have less access to and control of land due to socio-cultural barriers and lack of implementation of public policies. With the growing scarcity of land on a large scale and the resulting land pressure, Mozambican women's economic and social vulnerability is increasing.

In the Novo Madal areas in the province of Zambézia, social and gender inequalities influence the perpetuation of poverty, with a weak awareness of gender equality and women's empowerment in the communities. The Chuabo culture in Quelimane District is matrilineal; the family is centered around women, with the man leaving his family of origin to live with the wife's family. Assets normally pass between generations within the mother's bloodline. However, decision-making power is generally vested in the men of the family (such as maternal uncles), who have the right (based on social norms and in practice) to distribute assets and resources within the family. In households where there is more than one adult, men are always considered the heads of the household.

The traditional hierarchical structure includes community leaders and secretaries who handle traditional ceremonies and conflict resolution. They are also responsible for land distribution and management, assigning land to new families that arrive in the community and facilitating consultation and engagement with investors. Leaders are usually men; in the event of death or incapacitation, they are usually succeeded by male descendants. In the succession of traditional power there is a systematic exclusion of women and young people, who are considered weak or incapable according to prevailing social norms. Over the past 5-10 years, there has been a gradual increase in the acceptance of women in leadership, as a result of greater access to information via radio, observing women leaders in other neighboring districts, and the presence of the "*rainha*" ("queen," female "*Regulo*") as the main traditional leader in some of the communities. This trend is evidenced by the existence of women secretaries and secretary's assistants (although in very small numbers). However, cultural barriers to women's participation in community leadership persist.

The historical and cultural context of the communities is closely linked to the colonial history of Grupo Madal itself. Grupo Madal was founded in the colonial period as a plantation system that acquired land for coconut production. The demographic expansion in this area results from the gradual occupation of land by the company's employees coming from other districts over the twentieth century. Grupo Madal is the holder of the land use certificates (DUAT) and even though the communities occupied the land, they had no autonomy over it. The relationship of the company with communities followed broader social and gender norms, with most employees being men and the little autonomy that existed accorded to men. This contribute to perpetuating the historical exclusion of women in access to resources and decision making.

Recent events have increased the vulnerability of the communities. The outbreak of lethal yellowing disease of coconut trees in 2007 – 2008 created unemployment, especially among men, who were the majority of Novo Madal’s employees. Families had to seek alternative sources of livelihoods, with a disproportionate burden on women, who had their workload increased, and young people, who sought informal activities such as driving bicycle taxis in Quelimane. With the historical floods of the Licungo River Basin in early 2015, communities lost their homes, assets, documents, and income from crops. Some families were displaced, and women lost the stockpiled production of subsistence crops from previous years, increasing food insecurity. In 2017 the Chipaca bridge that connects the region to the city of Quelimane collapsed. The collapse made it difficult for people to move to sell and buy goods in the city, which further impacted the economic well-being of families. Though it is currently possible to reach Quelimane by canoe, canoe transport increases the isolation of women who do not normally use such boats due to restrictive social norms.



Canoes used to transport people and goods to Quelimane after the collapse of the Chipaca bridge  
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## MAIN FINDINGS OF THE GENDER, YOUTH, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ASSESSMENT

### PARTICIPATION IN INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES

Around 84 percent of families consulted reported agriculture as the activity that provides for the household, followed by small businesses (11 percent) and employment (5 percent). Families have one or more parcels of land (*machamba*) for agricultural production both for their own consumption and for sale of surplus, the latter generally controlled by men. Income from the sale of surplus is used for basic needs such as school enrollment and supplies for children, clothing, and other household items.

Paid employment is not a source of income for the majority of community members because over the second half of the twentieth century and the past two decades men who worked as employees of Novo Madal were dismissed due to structural changes in the company. In addition, the communities are quite remote and face difficulties in accessing the city of Quelimane, so they live in near-absolute isolation and are mostly self-sustaining.

Gender inequality influences income-generating activities. Low-income activities (for example, selling small amounts of wild fruits, or handmade brooms and other small handmade items) are carried out by women, while men control higher-income activities such as selling fish and surplus production of sunflower, corn, rice, and soy. In the focus group discussions, it was highlighted that the involvement of women in high-income activities is not well perceived by community members, including other women, as there is an understanding that these activities are reserved for men.

### GENDER ROLES AND DIVISION OF LABOR

The analysis of the gender division of labor was based on both domestic and productive roles. The groups consulted highlighted that the main domestic tasks performed are preparing meals, fetching water, gathering firewood, educating children, taking care of children, building houses, and taking care of animals. There was a general perception in all groups that certain tasks are assigned to men and certain

tasks to women. For example, 100 percent of interviewees understand that cooking and caring for animals are tasks for women and their children (young people). Between 70 to 90 percent think that taking care of children, fetching water, and gathering firewood are women’s activities. A minority believes that such tasks can be done by either/both men and women, provided that it takes place in specific circumstances understood as men “helping” women to fulfill their obligation. Activities perceived as demanding greater physical strength, outside the home, and not related to the day-to-day of the home are reserved for men. The education of children is a responsibility of the couple, but the daily care of children, such as feeding, dressing, cleaning, and sleeping, falls exclusively on women. Perceptions about the division of domestic tasks did not vary considerably between the different focus groups interviewed, revealing that this is an issue of deep-seated social norms in these communities, regardless of gender, age, level of leadership, educational level, and social condition.

**Comments by women during the discussions:**

“When a woman is married, she has no right to anything, because she becomes a slave to her husband.”

“The woman is the machine of the house. The woman lives like her own husband’s worker.”

“When a woman leaves her parents’ home, she loses the right to study and develop ideas.”

Women are also responsible for productive activities in the *machamba*, sometimes with the help of children and adolescents. The participation of men depends significantly on the purpose of production (family consumption or sale), as shown in the table below.

ACTIVITY	PRODUCTION FOR FAMILY CONSUMPTION			PRODUCTION FOR SALE		
	MEN	WOMEN	YOUTH	MEN	WOMEN	YOUTH
Deciding which crops to plant	X	X		X		
Buying inputs	X	X		X		
Planting		X	X	X	X	X
Tending to crop		X	X	X	X	X
Harvesting		X	X		X	X
Processing		X	X		X	X
Managing income		X		X		

The entire responsibility for subsistence crops lies on women, who also have to work on crops for sale. This impacts women’s time, which is very scarce, to participate in additional activities such as community governance, land associations, or agricultural extension training. Although women work in the crops for sale, men retain the tasks that provide control and have greater social and economic value, such as deciding which crop to plant, selling of crops, and using the income. These aspects are extremely important for the planned activity, as once families are engaged by Novo Madal as ingrowers and outgrowers, there is a substantial risk that men will take control over the parcels and the income from coconut production.

### ACCESS AND CONTROL OF LAND AND OTHER PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

Since the communities are largely dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods, access to land is crucial. As the land has historically belonged to Novo Madal, the communities do not have secure access to or ownership of the land. DUAT certificates from the government are not a form of access to land in these communities. Poverty, lack of knowledge of land legislation, limited access to information, illiteracy, and bureaucracy hinder use of DUAT certificates, especially by women. Despite the lack of certificates, the communities manage land under local customary practices that are recognized by the 1997 Land Law. According to the perception of the interviewees, there are different ways of accessing land in the

communities, most of them informal. The most prevalent is the right to occupation/good faith recognized by the Land Law (57 percent), followed by loans/borrowing (21 percent), inheritance (17 percent) and attribution by the local leader (5 percent), which is generally intended for opening fields for agricultural production (*machambas*). Land delimitation with DUAT certificates thus represents an opportunity to strengthen land security for the communities and women's land rights.



Mrs. Ana Maria after a day of work in the *machamba*  
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It was found that when land is used by a couple, men are perceived as land holders and often retain decision making power, since they are considered the head of the household. In case of land purchased by men, women have secondary land rights acquired through the union or marriage. Normally in the matrilineal regime when the union ends, the right to cultivate the land passes to the woman, with the man leaving the house. Nevertheless, it is important to note that social customs are changing, influenced by the close proximity to the provincial capital of Quelimane and the resultant movement of families as people seek work in the city. During the interviews, the focus groups recognized that although not common, in case of separation some men leave women without a home or land for cultivation, opting instead to provide the woman with some indemnity. Occasionally the family of a deceased husband could also force women to leave the land. Single, divorced, or widowed women are particularly vulnerable, as in the eyes of customary law in patrilineal areas and family members they have no right to land and marital property following separation or the man's death.

The assessment found that people have one area for their residential home and at least two to three parcels of land for agriculture (*machambas*). Most of the families live in a *de facto* union and some men have more than one partner (with two or more wives/partners). Many, if not most families, have multiple small parcels scattered around. This can make land management difficult, but on the other hand it can be an opportunity for greater inclusion of women and daughters as beneficiaries of DUAT declarations during the delimitation of multiple family parcels, increasing the representation of women as holders of some form of land registration. Young people (men and women) who cultivate land in general do so by helping their families and have no rights over land. They have access to the land by inheritance or gifts from relatives, with men usually favored.

## **ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING**

Participation in the social life and governance of communities was analyzed based on access to information and participation in community meetings. Most of the interviewees affirmed that, in general, information reaches everyone, although in different ways for men and women. Women usually receive information through their husbands, the radio, or through friends and neighbors during collective work such as fetching water and gathering firewood. Women's access to information, may be limited by excessive domestic and productive tasks assigned to them, lack of time, illiteracy, weak command of Portuguese compared to men, and socio-cultural restrictions related to their physical and social mobility.

In all focus groups interviewed (including women themselves) there were widespread beliefs and perceptions that men can freely meet in public spaces of the community/village, sit down with other men for leisure, and travel to nearby urban centers, something that is frowned upon and almost forbidden for

women. Local beliefs and habits are passed across generations, as both older and younger women believe that men have more right to freedom for physical and social mobility and that women should focus only on household activities. Men believe that restrictions on women’s mobility are a matter of honor and male power.

All focus groups interviewed recognized that women are the ones who most participate in community meetings led by secretaries to address cultural issues in the community. Women participate and have the power to influence the decisions that are made in these spaces. Due to their disproportionate share of domestic tasks and socio-cultural restrictions related to the broader mobility described above, these meetings provide women with an opportunity to socialize and have fun with neighbors and friends. The culture of machismo was also pointed out by the interviewees as one of the reasons that men participate so little in these meetings, as they perceive cultural and community issues to be insufficiently masculine and delegate participation to their partners. Young men and women also often participate in community meetings as a means of sharing information and socializing.

### **GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

Despite the stigma associated with discussing gender-based violence openly, during the study it was found that different types of violence (physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and social) are present in the communities, mostly perpetrated against women. The possible causes of this violence are strongly linked to gender inequality and harmful socio-cultural and religious norms. Men’s dominance in accessing and controlling resources such as agricultural land and cash crops is in itself a form of economic violence against women and used to reinforce women’s dependence and vulnerability to other forms of violence within the household.

The activity will promote the flow of new knowledge and more stable income for women as a result of engagement with Novo Madal, also promoting women’s leadership through participation in land associations. There is ample evidence that programs that promote social and economic empowerment of women can have unintended consequences, including gender-based violence in the family or the community as a whole. Mitigation measures are needed to prevent men from becoming violent because they feel neglected, perceive that they are losing power, or because they worry that women will spend more time away from home to participate in associations, attend trainings, and that they will have greater financial independence.

### **NOVO MADAL PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY**

Novo Madal staff recognized the importance of gender, youth, and social norms inclusion as a key aspect of the company’s social sustainability initiatives and the economic viability of its operations. Women are usually responsible for food production and men look for income opportunities, often off-farm. When a crop becomes a cash crop, men tend to get more actively involved in sales and in controlling the income, while women often continue to do much or most of the work. Novo Madal recognizes women’s roles in cultivating the *machambas* and wants to provide an opportunity for them to earn and control their own money by targeting women as main actors in the coconut value chain.



Women during group discussions with the NANA team  
NANA

In this context, in 2021 the company launched the Program for the Development of Women with Madal (PODEMM) promoting the engagement of women and men in subcontracted production of mixed planting of cash crops combined with coconut as part of the company's culture. The program aims to promote women's self-esteem through economic empowerment, increased production, and guaranteed off-taking.

However, there is a need to improve internal gender and social inclusion strategies and policies in the company's operations. There is still weak representation and gender balance in field teams and weak internal gender capacity, and materials for agricultural extension training are not gender sensitive. However, the company hopes that the partnership with USAID through the activity implemented by ILRG will lead to overcoming these challenges, advancing execution of PODEMM, and providing women with access to safe land and their active participation in productive engagement with the company.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **FOR WORKING WITH NOVO MADAL**

- Identify gender champions within the company that will lead the adoption of gender strategies.
- Work with Novo Madal to strengthen and develop gender and social inclusion policies and provide training for the company's technical team and employees on gender and social inclusion, as well as safeguarding policies to prevent GBV within the company and between company representatives and the community.
- Develop and implement gender equality in subcontracting systems (mixed model, sales, and consumption) with communities for ingrower and outgrower schemes, prioritizing women's empowerment.
- Review extension training materials and practices to be gender-responsive and inclusive.
- Plan extension training so that women also benefit, including training extension agents on gender responsive facilitation and outreach, engaging women extension agents, intentionally inviting women to participate, and organizing sessions in times and locations convenient to women.
- Develop strategies for payment of coconut production so that women can retain control over income, including paying women directly, signing contracts with both men and women in families, and promoting local fair/trade days so women do not have to rely on men to purchase goods for them and the family.

### **FOR WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITIES**

- Adapt training on land rights to meet the practical and social needs of different groups, especially those marginalized such as women and youth. This includes using participatory methods for illiterate groups and organizing sessions in times and locations that are convenient to women and other marginalized groups.
- In addition to facilitating DUAT certificates for women, address socio-cultural barriers by sensitizing communities' leaders and families so that women have access to and control of land on paper and in practice.
- Establish and train community land associations on land rights and gender equality, emphasizing equal participation between men, women, and young people (including in leadership).

- Promote the organization and strengthening of associations and social groups (e.g., school councils, health co-management committees, and water and natural resources management committees) in an inclusive manner.
- Use spaces in which women already participate, such as community meetings, to spread messages of gender equality and social inclusion.
- Engage men to promote dialogues on gender norms at the level of families and communities, especially on access, use, and control of land by women; redistribution of tasks between men and women; redistribution in the use and control of family income; and gender-based violence.
- Identify champion men and women to lead positive changes in communities.
- Provide training for women in the skills necessary to engage in community associations and with Novo Madal, such as self-confidence, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, public speaking, negotiation, and leadership. Use participatory methodologies and materials with accessible language and easy comprehension for different levels of literacy.

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