



## Monitoring and Evaluating Poverty Reduction Policies in Mozambique

### STUDY 2: SOCIAL RELATIONS OF URBAN POVERTY

Issues of urban poverty have received little attention in Mozambique, even though the urban poverty rate is high and urban inequality is on the rise. In the bairros of Maputo, unemployment, crime and the high costs of food, housing and land inhibit the poor from converting progress in education and health into increased income and consumption. In a context where money is an integral part of most social relationships, the most destitute become marginalised with no one to turn to. Rising poverty and inequality in Maputo also have an adverse impact on vital urban-rural relationships, and may jeopardise political stability.

## Introduction

This brief presents the second in a series of three qualitative studies on poverty in Mozambique, which also includes a rural district in northern Mozambique (2006) and a 'small-town' district in central Mozambique (2009). The studies will be used as baselines for monitoring and evaluating Mozambique's poverty alleviation efforts, by following the implications of government policies and interventions at the local level and ascertaining changes in the conditions, perceptions and relations of poverty after periods of three years (i.e. 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively).

Research-based information about poverty is recognised as important for the implementation of Mozambique's poverty reduction strategy (PARPA). Key quantitative data are found in national censuses, household surveys and demographic and health surveys published by the National Institute of Statistics (INE), and further analysed by the research department of the Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD) and other national and international institutions. While these yield important information on the mapping, profile and determinants of poverty in Mozambique, it is also recognised that they should be complemented by participatory and qualitative studies to better understand the dynamics of poverty and the coping strategies of the poor.



Urban areas in Africa have long been seen as potential engines for economic growth and development, but there has been an increasing awareness that urban growth also poses serious challenges in terms of poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. With their congested settlements and people constantly on the move, such areas represent particular methodological challenges for participatory and qualitative research. In this study we have relied on existing quantitative data on poverty in Maputo, and contextualised and informed them through a mixture of localised surveys in four settlements focussing on social relationships and qualitative methodologies – including histograms, community mapping, force-field analysis, wealth ranking and Venn diagrams.

### Structural Poverty in Maputo

The urban population of Mozambique is estimated at 30 percent and the projected rate of urbanisation implies that 50 percent of the population will live in cities and towns by 2025. While the rural poverty rate fell by 16 percent to 55 percent between 1997 and 2003, the urban poverty rate fell by 11 percent to 51 percent, with Maputo seeing an increase in its poverty rate from 47 percent to 53 percent in the same period. Urban areas in Mozambique are also characterised by growing inequalities between the poorest and the best off, with consumption in Maputo having increased by 28

percent in the richest quintile and decreased by 13 percent in the poorest quintile between 1997 and 2003.

Maputo has an estimated population of 1.3 million people, with the large majority living in congested semi-formal or informal settlement areas or *bairros* and a minority living in the formal 'cement city'. The city is governed by a municipal assembly, an elected mayor and a municipal council, and each *bairro* is divided into community 'quarters' (*quarteirões*). While the administrative structures and formal responsibilities of the various administrative levels are clearly defined, the municipality suffers from inadequate human and economic resources and consequent inadequate provision of services such as water, electricity, sanitation and secure tenure. There is also an ambiguous relationship between the structures of the state and the ruling Frelimo party, which may contribute to politically motivated processes of social exclusion.

At the level of the four *bairros* Mafalala, Inhagoia, Lulane and Khongolote as communities, crowded living and crime have a negative impact on people's coping strategies and sense of security. Recent disasters such as floods, mud-slides and explosions have added to the feeling of impoverishment and vulnerability. The large number of educated but unemployed and frustrated young men and women in the *bairros*, who do not manage to live up to ideals of urban modern life, may jeopardise the current political stability.





Key determinants of poverty at the level of family households have been defined in quantitative analyses as high levels of household dependency; low levels of education; low diversification of sources of employment and income; and the sex of household heads, with female-headed households generally being poorer than male-headed households. Our study in four bairros in Maputo reveals the primary importance of employment and income for coping in an urban environment where money is an integral part of most relationships. Formal employment opportunities are scarce and most people depend on a fragile informal economy with low returns. Upward social mobility is also inhibited by the high costs of land, housing, public services and transportation. Despite relatively low household dependency rates, high levels of education and good access to health services, the urban political economy makes it difficult for the poor to convert them into increased income and consumption.

### Coping through Social Relations

People in the bairros have clear perceptions of different levels and characteristics of poverty, separating structural constraints over which they have little or no control from social conditions related to people's own acts and relationships. The former focus on inadequate employment, high living costs, poor housing and crime; the latter on lack of respect for elders and the law and on 'loose'

relationships. People in the bairros define five different categories of poor people under the general heading of *xisiwana*, which means 'somebody who has nothing' or 'people who are afraid to talk to other people'. Some households are seen as 'poor by nature', implying chronic poverty or destitution, some are seen as victims of their own behaviour, and some are seen as making the best out of the little they have. They also define three categories of well-off households under the general heading *aganhile*, which means 'to win', underlining the general perception of wealth being related to luck or magic.

The coping strategies of people in the bairros are characterised by a high degree of mobility and flexibility at the levels of households and individuals. Our survey and case studies show that households are large and complex, with an average of 7.9 members; have a high proportion of female-headed households at 37 percent; and frequently go through processes of fission and fusion – all being expressions of social change and fluidity. Asked to identify the most important types of social relationship for their coping strategies, people emphasised relations with the extended family and other personal connections (such as friends, neighbours and workmates); relations of employment and provisioning (including rural relationships); and relations with the state, civil society and aid organisations as the least important.

Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of life in Maputo is the extent to which money is central

for acquiring basic needs as well as for establishing and maintaining vital social relationships. The poorest have problems maintaining relationships with extended family members, who often live in rural areas or other parts of the city; they have little to offer in other reciprocal personalised relationships; they have problems acquiring employment and establishing their own sources of income; and they often lack the necessary social capital and 'entrance ticket' to relations with institutions of the state and civil society. The better-off (and usually better educated) households tend to have superior access to all these relationships, and are also better positioned to maintain relations with rural areas that are vital for access to basic foodstuffs as well as for maintaining links with the extended family and tradition.

Our study finally shows that the coping strategies of women are framed in the context of a patrilineal kinship system, as indicated by the widespread practice of 'paying' for wives in the form of brideprice or *lobolo*. Moreover, female-headed households are less likely to be formally employed, and have lower incomes, lower consumption and fewer assets than most male-headed households. The high proportion of female-headed households in the four bairros is primarily an expression of poverty and the instability of poor households, but there are also emerging signs of conscious strategies being adopted by some women who prefer to live without unemployed, poor and sometimes volatile men.



Briefs of a series of participatory and qualitative studies done in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and Development in Mozambique.

The brief is based on Margarida Paulo, Carmeliza Rosário, Inge Tvedten:

*"Xiculungo". Social Relations of Urban Poverty in Maputo, Mozambique*, CMI Report R 2007: 13.

The report is available in English and Portuguese at [www.cmi.no](http://www.cmi.no)

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## Some Preliminary Policy Implications

The three initial studies in this series of six on social relations of poverty in Mozambique (2006-2008) primarily serve as baselines for the monitoring and evaluation of the Mozambican government's policies for poverty alleviation. We nevertheless present a set of broad policy implications in our study from Maputo that we believe are important for the alleviation of urban poverty in particular. Among these are the following:

- In order to ensure that data for the monitoring and evaluation of urban poverty reflect the situation and the ground, definition of key concepts used in national surveys such as the 'household', 'female headedness', 'dependency ratio' and the 'informal economy' should be reassessed.
- More attention should be given to the issue of urban poverty in Mozambique than is the case today, as urban poverty shows a less positive (and in the case of Maputo even a negative) trend and as urban poverty reduction will have repercussions also for rural poverty due to the extensive urban-rural interlinkages.
- The policy of decentralisation through the establishment of municipalities is positive as it brings political decision-making closer to the urban population, but municipalities must be supplied with sufficient human and economic resources to be able to implement their increasing responsibilities.
- In Maputo, it seems particularly important to strengthen the lower administrative structures at the levels of urban districts and bairros to secure the municipality's political legitimacy and enable effective interventions.
- Particular care should be taken to separate the responsibilities of the state and the leading party, to enhance efficiency and accountability and reduce favouritism or exclusion in service delivery on the basis of political affiliation.
- Formal employment is the key to poverty reduction in Maputo and efforts should be made to simplify red tape and attract national as well as international investment.
- Informal economic activities are currently the lifeline of the majority of poor households, and conditions for the informal economy should be improved by legalising it and improving its working environment.
- Quantitative data point towards a feminisation of poverty in Maputo, at the same time as women's responsibilities for social reproduction increase through female-headed households. Policies and interventions to support employment creation should give special attention to female providers.
- Land and housing are the most important assets for the poor in Maputo. The land tenure system should be reassessed with the objective of giving formal tenure rights to residents in the bairros. To reduce the drain on resources devoted to housing, systems of housing credit and lending should be developed.
- The overcrowding in bairro communities is a major source of poverty and instability, and community development interventions should ensure the proper demarcation of sites. The systems for supplying water, electricity, sanitation and other services should ensure access at affordable prices, which is also vital for the political legitimacy of the municipality.
- The very poorest and most destitute section of the population in Maputo is characterised by a lack of essential resources for urban survival, by marginalisation in relation to state institutions and by social exclusion. To reach this group, targeted interventions and social protection in fields such as income generation, health and housing will be necessary.

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