



## Evaluation of Norway's Support to Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation – *Mozambique case study*

This report evaluates Norway's support to women and girls' rights and gender equality through its development cooperation in Mozambique between 2007 and 2013. It is one of three country case studies (alongside Ethiopia and Nepal) that form part of a broader evaluation assessing the results of Norway's support. It considers whether those results are in line with the four priorities set out in Norway's Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (the Gender Action Plan) – political empowerment, economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive health rights, and violence against women. The evaluation addressed four broad questions:

**1. Effectiveness:** To what degree has Norwegian support to women's rights and gender equality produced the intended results?

**2. Alignment:** To what degree is Norwegian support to women's rights and gender equality aligned to the Gender Action Plan?

**3. Relevance:** To what extent is Norwegian support relevant in view of national priorities, needs and possibilities?

**4. Sustainability:** To what degree has Norwegian support influenced (positively or negatively) national processes to improve women's rights and gender equality, including influencing national ownership of the issues, or the capacity of national institutions and implementing partners?

### THE EVALUATION TEAM'S APPROACH

The Mozambique case study focuses on gender equality and economic empowerment of women in energy and agriculture, as well as women-focused projects through the Women and Gender Equality Grant. The projects selected in energy were the 'Cabo Delgado Rural Electrification Project' and the 'Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Development Cooperation'; in agriculture the 'Expanding Soy Bean Production and Marketing in Northern Mozambique'; for the Women and Gender Equality Grant 'Pathfinder/SRHR and Safe Abortions' and 'HOPEM/Men for Change'; and core support to the umbrella-organisation Forum Mulher.

**Commissioning agency:** Norad Evaluation Department

**Evaluation team:** Swedish Institute for Public Administration in collaboration with the Overseas Development Institute and the Chr. Michelsen Institute.

CMI was responsible for the Mozambican case study. Authors of the Mozambique report were Inge Tvedten (team leader), Carmeliza Rosário, Sheila Faquir and Fumo Chacuro

The evaluation team gleaned vital information from relevant written documentation, as well as key informant interviews with Norwegian Embassy staff and government officials and staff from implementing agencies at the national and community levels. Their insights were complemented by in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with programme beneficiaries and other members of the community in the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Zambézia.

The team's analysis sought to identify results at three levels:

**Systemic change:** Has Norway's support contributed to changes in laws/regulations, funding levels, national discourse (what the public and policy-makers talk about and any national processes under way), or lent more legitimacy to women's rights and gender equality?

**Organisational change:** Has Norway's support strengthened the capacity of its partner organisations (including government agencies, non-governmental organisations and civil society groups, UN agencies and private enterprises) to do work on women's rights and gender equality?

**Project results:** Has Norway's support contributed to the empowerment of women and girls, and to changes in people's attitudes and behaviours around gender equality (including the attitudes of influential people such as community or religious leaders)?

## COUNTRY CONTEXT

Despite impressive economic growth over the past decades, standard indicators reveal that Mozambicans remain poor overall, as well as in gender equality terms – with a ranking of 178 out of 187 countries in UNDP's human and gender equality indexes. Important progress for women has been made in areas such as political representation, education and health, but the socio-economic position of women remains weak in key areas such as employment, agricultural productivity and income, as well as sexual and other types of abuse. In general terms, the matrilineal and Muslim north remains more

'traditional' than the patrilineal and Christian southern and central parts of the country, with more limited economic participation, higher levels of early marriages and lower levels of literacy among women.

While gender policies and interventions may be important, evidence from Mozambique suggests that the most profound changes in gender relations are found in the wake of deep structural alterations affecting the socioeconomic context in which people find themselves, such as war, labour migration, impoverishment, urbanisation and economic upheavals related to mega-projects in oil, gas and the extractive industries. Currently, the most significant changes in the position of women seem to take place in larger cities such as Maputo, Beira and Nampula and in the provinces of Tete (coal) and Cabo Delgado (oil and gas). It is in this context that Norwegian aid to women's rights and gender equality is being implemented.

## Aid and gender

Official development assistance (ODA) has historically played an important part in the political and economic development of Mozambique. However, this situation is changing rapidly with the current gas, oil and extractive industry boom and with the appearance of alternative economic and aid partners. This has led to a reduction in the relative importance of ODA from 56 per cent of government expenditure in 2006 to 38 per cent in 2014.

International and national aid organisations in Mozambique have all established 'gender equality and women's empowerment' as a crosscutting issue, ostensibly affecting all their development and poverty reduction initiatives. Some agencies have given more emphasis to gendered aid than others. While Sweden, Denmark and the UK top the list, Norway has had among the lower proportions of gender marked aid.

A Gender Coordination Group involving donors, the government and civil society has made efforts to coordinate gender issues with varying degrees of success. Important Mozambican NGOs that continue



to work for gender equality are the umbrella organisation Forum de Mulher (Women's Forum), the Women and Law in Southern Africa Research and Education Trust (WLSA) and Women's Law and Development (MULEIDE).

### **Norwegian support**

Since the very beginning of Norwegian aid to Mozambique in 1977, gender has been part of the political dialogue and been defined as a cross-cutting issue – albeit with few specific programmes and projects, and with continued low allocations. To enhance the options for reaching the objectives of the Gender Action Plan of 2007, the Embassy in Maputo became one of Norway's gender pilot embassies in 2010. Despite increasing gender-related initiatives, however, the proportion of gender-marked projects in Mozambique between 2007 and 2013 is exceptionally low in comparison to other donors in Mozambique and in comparison to other countries receiving Norwegian aid, with the majority being funded through the Women and Gender Equality Grant.

This rests on a combination of factors: Norway has had a project portfolio focussing on economic sectors rather than social sectors where gender tends to be seen as more relevant; there has been a tendency to disregard gender when the issue competes with private sector initiatives; there are no compulsory loops to safeguard that gender is taken into consideration; and there is a perception that there are limits to how many policy markers one can insert for each project – making gender easily fall out of project proposals. In line with this, there are signs of underreporting on gender through the gender marker system in the Mozambique project portfolio.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

The starting point for this evaluation has been the ambitions expressed in the Gender Action Plan and that gender is more than just one among multiple competing priorities. It is critical – both in terms of a rights perspective and with regard to contributing to Norwegian development cooperation's ultimate goal

of poverty reduction. In this perspective, Norway's support to Mozambique has been only partially successful.

### **Relevance**

#### ***Relevance for national priorities, needs and possibilities***

- > At an overall level, Norwegian aid to gender equality in Mozambique is relevant to needs in the sense that it relates to expressed national policy priorities and existing gender inequalities on the ground.
- > Seen from the point of view of central Mozambican decision makers, the relevance of Norwegian aid to gender equality is less obvious. There are low budget allocations to relevant gender institutions, and an unwillingness to legalise sexual rights. Also, central partners in energy and fisheries tend not to see gender issues as particularly relevant to their sector and rarely, if ever, push the issue themselves. The exception is NGOs working explicitly on gender issues.
- > At the local level of districts and communities, the importance of women's rights and gender equality is often not seen as relevant by central actors – partly based on an internalisation of deep cultural gender perceptions. Local relations of power between men and women also imply that the concerns of women do not easily make their way into public discourses. The relevance of a focus on gender equality is most evident for people in agriculture, where women make up the majority of the labour force, and related to sexual abuse and violence.

#### ***Alignment with strategic priorities in the Action Plan***

- > Norway's overall strategic priority of giving stronger emphasis to issues of women's rights and gender equality has only partly been fulfilled, despite concerted efforts by key actors such as Embassy gender officers. The proportion of gender-marked projects has been low, and key recommendations in the midterm review such as stronger involvement by management and increased

gender mainstreaming have only partially been put into practice. Considering the projects that have had a strong gender component, however, these have been based on a clear strategy particularly in the case of sexual and reproductive health and violence against women.

### **The use of the Women and Gender Equality Grant**

- › The Women and Gender Equality Grant has had an important function in that it has made it possible to surpass some of the structural and institutional hindrances for a stronger focus on women's rights and gender equality in Norwegian aid to Mozambique. The projects have generally been small and reached a limited number of people, but the grant has been used to focus on issues that gender specialists have identified as particularly important – such as the involvement of men in gender action, safe abortions and interventions to hinder violence against women. The Women and Gender Equality Grant has also made Norway a more visible donor on gender issues.

### **Effectiveness**

- › **Systemic change.** Taking Norway's long-term relationship with Mozambique as a point of departure, it may be argued that Norway has contributed to systemic change (e.g. laws, regulations, funding, discourse) by helping put gender issues on the political map and thereby also affecting recent gender-related laws and regulations. It is more difficult to trace possible implications for gendered social norms, but, particularly in urban areas, concepts such as 'women's rights' and 'gender equality' would probably not have been as broadly understood had it not been for the long-term relationship between Mozambican champions of women empowerment and aid organisations – including Norway.
- › **Organisational change.** The results of Norway's support have varied in terms of reaching objectives of gender equality and women's empowerment in institutions of the state and society. The impact on sector-based institutions in energy, fisheries and partly agriculture has been limited, due to the low priority

given to gender issues by management and lower levels of government closer to the ultimate target group. The most effective contribution of Norway's support has been to strengthen NGOs working directly with gender issues.

- › **Project results at field level.** Taking 'field level' to mean both institutions and men and women at the local level of districts and communities, there is a general problem that too much funding and activities have remained at central level and only partially reached other parts of the country.

- In *energy*, the idea of mainstreaming gender in the sense of gender affecting all institutions and activities has not really taken root – particularly at the provincial and district levels. Partly for this reason, concrete gender projects on the ground have been slow to develop. Nevertheless, the power of electrification in districts like Cabo Delgado/Macomia is evident, with changes in terms of business and private electricity connections and women's empowerment. The results of the electrification efforts have been below targets and largely 'gender-blind', while the most immediate sign of women's empowerment is the small number of women who have become economic agents in a context where this has been very difficult.
- The support to *agriculture* for cash crop production was also initiated without an explicit gender focus, but project interventions increasingly came to focus on women as the locally based government and aid organisations confronted realities on the ground. While production of soybeans has put women in the difficult situation of having to balance the need for income with the need to spend time on food production, an explicit strategy of empowering women through adult education has put women in a better position both in agricultural production and in public and domestic space.
- The support to *civil society* organisations is of two types. Results from working with advocacy (Forum Mulher, HOPEM) are difficult to measure. Their impact has been strong in terms of contributing to a political focus on



gender, but less strong in terms of implications in villages and shantytowns. One reason is the concentration of activity in Maputo, and another is the continued distance between the feminist approach of the relevant institutions and the type of issues deemed relevant by local women (and men). Interventions for practical support related to sexual and reproductive rights reach an increasing number of people in most parts of the country, and cover an important need.

### **Unintended consequences**

- › The issue of women's rights and gender equality as advocated by Norway and other donors is still controversial among large parts of the political establishment and in Mozambican society. There are people who see it as a new form of 'cultural imperialism', and as violating deep-rooted cultural rules. Largely involving women (as for example Gender Focal Points) and supporting women in unequal relations with men, many men do feel that their status and role is threatened.

### **Sustainability**

- › Profound changes in gender relations in Mozambique have come about as a result of deep structural change affecting the socioeconomic and cultural context in which people find themselves. Aid to women's rights and gender equality is most likely to be sustainable when it works with, rather than against, the grain of such processes. Norwegian gendered aid has done well in terms of linking up to ongoing economic changes in Mozambican society (business/entrepreneurship, agricultural production, fisheries) and embryos of a stronger focus on women's sexual and reproductive rights. However, the emphasis on mainstreaming gender in institutions that are at the outset focused on sector concerns and with limited attention to issues of gender make it less likely the current focus will be sustainable beyond Norwegian support. Lessons from Mozambique indicate that the impact of gender interventions are stronger and more sustainable when they are done through specialised government and non-governmental institutions and implemented in the form of concrete tangible interventions that yield concrete outcomes as 'lessons learnt'.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- › There is a mismatch between expressed Norwegian political intentions of the importance of women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation and the actual emphasis in Mozambique. The status and implications of the Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality for programme implementation should be clarified with compulsory loops via the gender officers at the Embassy/in Oslo for all programmes and projects.
- › The fact that a focus on gender has been maintained throughout the period 2007-2013 is much thanks to the pilot embassy programme, the Women and Gender Equality Grant and the presence of designated gender officers. The closure of the pilot embassy programme and the planned discontinuation of the gender officer post is likely to reduce this focus. The latter should be re-established, if necessary in the form of a local gender specialist officer.
- › There are strong indications that mainstreaming gender through gender focal points, and a general encouragement to include gender in all aspects of a given programme or project, does not work. The focus in sector programmes should rather be on concrete and tangible interventions that demonstrate its relevance – planned and implemented by specialists in the area.
- › The Women and Gender Equality Grant has functioned well in that it has made a clear focus on women's rights and gender equality possible, it has been unbureaucratic and flexible, and reporting procedures on results have been well adapted. The grant should increase substantially, and be developed into the main vehicle for gendered aid in sector as well as in targeted programmes in Mozambique.
- › The embassy should be encouraged to 'think big' about development and gender. In the aftermath of budget support and a reduction in energy projects, a focus on women should be used as a platform to larger-scale projects for support to economic development/entrepreneurship with a focus on on-going processes in the urban informal economy and areas affected by oil, gas and extractive industries.

- > Rather than mainstream gender into Norwegian sector priorities, the embassy should be encouraged to develop innovative projects based on Norwegian experiences and expertise in gender with a focus on economic empowerment (from women-based enterprises to creative industries) and social protection (from kindergartens to conditional cash transfers).
- > Reporting on results on women's rights and gender equality should be based on more systematic use of baseline and endline studies combining quantitative and qualitative data. In sector programmes, monitoring and evaluation should include sector as well as social science/gender expertise. Possible quantitative gender indicators for energy interventions include the proportion of female-headed households with private connections (usually among the poorest), the proportion of women heading connected businesses, the level of electrification in public spaces frequented by women such as informal markets and changes in women's use of educational and health services. In agriculture, key quantitative gender indicators should include changes in the frequency of contacts with agricultural administrators and extension officers, the proportion of women owning/controlling land, the level of animal traction/mechanisation among female farmers and the relative importance of food crops and cash crops for female farmers, indicating the degree of economic independence.
- > Results on women's rights and gender equality should be made more accessible to stakeholders in Mozambique by more systematically disseminating results to the levels of provinces, districts and communities in languages people understand and further developing the embassy homepage by including links to reports and other written results.



Please visit the Norad website to see the full Mozambique case study report, the full evaluation report and the case study reports for Ethiopia and Nepal (in English): <http://www.norad.no/en/toolspublications/publications/2015/evaluation-of-Norways-support-to-womens-rights-and-gender-equality-in-evelopment-cooperation/>

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