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**CIVIC EDUCATION**

*A Report on Focus Group Research  
in Mozambique*

**Eduardo Saraiva (CLAIM)**

**August 1997**

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# ***CIVIC EDUCATION***

**A Report on Focus Group Research in Mozambique**



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**PREPARED FOR:**

**THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE [ NDI ]**

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**August 1997**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) contracted CLAIM Research of Brazil to conduct and analyze eight focus groups in diverse regions of Mozambique. The purpose of the research was to gain qualitative measurements of the impact of previous NDI-Mozambique civic education programs and to plan new programs in preparation for Mozambique's first round of municipal elections.

Seven of the eight target groups for this study demonstrated relatively stable and consistent opinions and knowledge of the current state of Democracy in Mozambique. The eighth target group, that of peasant women in Nanzinhenje, an isolated rural community in Niassa, provided dramatically different results.

Among the majority of groups in this study there was general knowledge of Mozambique's Constitution; the effectiveness of a petition as a powerful tool that can be used by citizens; the existence of Deputies; the occurrence of Citizens' Forums and their usefulness in communicating with Deputies and; the upcoming municipal elections. The Nanzinhenje group demonstrated little to no knowledge of any of these topics.

There is an overall desire for information that will permit people to "vote well" in the municipal elections. Participants requested information on the form, function and validity of the municipal assemblies. Additionally, participants requested an explanation of why certain areas were excluded from municipal elections, the structure of the municipal tax base and the process of indirect election of municipal deputies.

Participants stated a dissatisfaction with the local political leaders, touching as well on the national leaders. In fact, participants expressed no party preference, instead favoring candidates and deputies who could produce results, not be politicians.

While participants in a majority of target groups show general knowledge of democracy themes and events, they do not know basic concepts like the balance of powers in a democracy, the civic rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the responsibilities of the government. CLAIM considers it the duty of those involved in civic education to consider themes pertinent to these issues in future civic education programs.

The divergent results from the group held in Nanzinhenje demonstrate the need for NDI to expand its civic education programs in the rural areas. In fact, the positive reception by participants of the successful petition for a village well in Nanzinhenje seems to obligate the repetition and intensification of civic education sessions in the rural areas on the use of a petition as a successful tool.

CLAIM notes the intense desire of focus groups participants to be better informed and therefore better able to actively participate in the improvement of their lives and community. The NDI civic sessions were valued highly by those who had participated followed by requests to continue these sessions. This shows the necessity of returning and intensifying civic education within the Mozambican context.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

CLAIM was contracted by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) in August 1997 to conduct and analyze eight focus groups in diverse regions of Mozambique. The purpose of the research was to gain qualitative measurements of the impact of previous NDI-Mozambique civic education programs and to plan new programs in preparation for Mozambique's first round of municipal elections.

## Civic Education Program

In 1996 and 1997, NDI conducted a civic education program in all of Mozambique's ten provinces. This national program focused on democracy themes and issues tested and identified through Focus Group research conducted in February 1996. These themes and issues were:

- citizens' rights and responsibilities
- how citizens can participate at all levels in the political life of the country
- the multiparty system
- the composition of the National Assembly and duties of the Deputies
- the responsibilities of government to its citizens

NDI also sponsored Citizen's Forums in the provincial capitals promoting an open dialogue between citizens and their elected representatives.

NDI was responsible for the selection of the Focus Group sites, target groups, recruitment of participants and logistical arrangements while it was CLAIM's responsibility to conduct and moderate the groups and analyze the results. Results for seven of the eight groups are the primary focus of this report. One group, held in Nanzinhenje, Niassa, is analyzed separately due to unique circumstances and findings.

Funding for this project was provided by the United States Agency for International Development. CLAIM wishes to thank USAID and NDI for including us in this important project.

The views contained in this report are CLAIM's and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of NDI or USAID.

# Map 1.1 - Focus Group Sites



Table 1.2 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS Focus Groups August 1997

PROVINCE	LOCATION		PROFILE	N° PARTIC.			LANGUAGE	
	With Elections	Without Elections		Men	Women	Total		
Maputo	Manhiça		Women Market Vendors	0	11	11	Shangana	
Gaza	Chokwe		Students: Agricultural School	7	5	12	Portuguese	
Inhambane	Vilankulo		Teachers	6	5	11	Portuguese	
Tete		Zobwé	Health Workers	5	6	11	Nungwe	
Tete	Tete City		EDM Workers (Electricidade de Moçambique)	12	0	12	Portuguese	
Niassa	Lichinga		Educated Community Members	3	5	8	Portuguese	
Niassa	Nzinje, Lichinga		Peasants	5	6	11	Yawa	
Niassa		Nanzinhenje	Peasant Women	0	13	13	Yawa	
				<b>Total</b>		<b>38</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>89</b>
				<b>%</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>57</b>	



## 2. DEMOCRACY IN MOZAMBIQUE

### 2.1 Multiparty Democracy in Mozambique

All target groups in this study recognized the existence of democracy in Mozambique and were able to articulate the advantages of a multiparty system. When asked of their experiences with the multiparty system, people spoke with the presumption that democracy involves more than one political party. This position was unanimous in all sessions as demonstrated by the following dialogue between the EDM Workers in Tete:

Participant A *"Democracy in Mozambique began with the end of the war of independence, but it was a very small democracy."*

Participant B *"That was not democracy! That was only one party and everyone had to bend to its wishes."*

Participant A *"Because of this I called it very small. This thing of one-party rule has no future."*

The demonstration of support for the multiparty system is linked to the advantages perceived in the change they experienced regarding their individual liberties.

*"We are at peace and in our homes, even when there is nothing more than beans to eat."* -- Traditional Leader in Nzinje, Lichinga.

*"We can go to any place without humiliations."* -- Peasant woman in Nzinje, Lichinga.

*"The multiparty system is good. It permits us to live following our wishes and according to the Constitution."* - Health worker in Zobwé.

*"It makes us feel more free."* -- Student at the Agricultural School in Chokwe.

*"Diverse parties that discuss together the same issues in Parliament makes me understand that now there is really freedom of expression."* -- Teacher in Vilankulo.

*"I perceive a great improvement in the level of economic development which we are passing through now, not us, teachers, but the country as a whole."* -- Teacher in Vilankulo.

The acceptance of the multiparty model can also be measured by the desire of some participants to improve upon it, as demonstrated by a community leader in Lichinga:

*"Our model of Parliament is antagonistic to Democracy, in the end we did not choose its members. We need a more participatory democracy. Things are not better because of this contradiction."*



Lichinga, Niassa

## **2.2 Rights and Responsibilities**

In all the groups, participants claimed to know their rights and responsibilities. What differed among the groups were the concepts of rights and responsibilities. Except in rare cases, the majority of participants presented the concepts as: *"Rights are for the citizen, responsibilities for the State."*

The individual rights mentioned regularly are:

- Be free
- Ability to farm freely
- Freedom to express one's opinion
- Freedom to move about
- Ability to conduct business freely, in particular to sell one's produce
- Access to education
- Access to health care
- "Have children" (ability to raise a family in peace)

And as responsibilities mentioned:

- Pay taxes

When prompted, people also recognized citizen participation as a responsibility. Specifically:

- Participate in the population census (occurring at the time of the research)
- Participate in vaccination campaigns

The general attitudes of participants toward rights and responsibilities can be summed up in the following statements:

*"The government never forgets to collect when it comes to our responsibilities, but to have our rights recognized, we always have to prove our case." -- EDM Worker in Tete.*

*"Rights are a way we have to be able to receive for what we do." -- Health worker in Zobwé.*

The direct relationship between rights and responsibilities such as 'every right corresponds to a responsibility' or 'the rights of one ends where the rights of another begins' was never mentioned. CLAIM therefore concludes this direct relationship does not form part of the participants' concepts or logic concerning rights and responsibilities. However, there is one notable exception:

*"When there is no response to Julio's legitimate request for retirement, they are taking away his right to retire, this is because someone is not complying with his or her responsibility." -- Health worker in Zobwé.*

### 2.3 The Constitution

All of the target groups affirmed the existence of a Constitution in Mozambique, however, some participants lacked the specific knowledge of the content and implications. For example in Nzinje, Lichinga the peasants did not know the implication of having a Constitution; in Zobwé, the health workers responded that they had never read it and did not know what it contained. The Zobwé participants also had never seen a copy of the Constitution. Among the groups of community leaders in urban Lichinga, students of the agricultural school in Chokwe and EDM Workers in Tete, the content of the Constitution is described in a diverse way.

*"It defines how power is divided in Mozambique." --  
Community leader in Lichinga.*

*"It is a collection which shows how individuals are organized within the country." -- Student in Chokwe.*

*"The government made the Constitution so that all would know their rights and responsibilities." -- EDM Worker in Tete.*

Among the women market vendors in Manhiça, the answer was unanimous:

*"We know what is the Constitution because we attended civic education sessions of NDI."*

Even with this statement, these women were unable to recall the content commenting that: *"We are illiterate and unable to study the Constitution"*.

All of the groups were shown a copy of the Constitution. Participants demonstrated an unequivocal interest in deepening their knowledge or to have someone interpret the content. These requests represent the need the participants feel for better training in civic education.



Market Vendors in Manhiça, Maputo

### 3. DEMOCRATIC MECHANISMS

Participants of all groups declared if they felt their rights were violated, they would not hesitate to make a complaint to the government or to whomever was responsible. There were no comments expressing fear in exercising the right to make a complaint. However, doubt was expressed in whether their complaints would be heard and elicit an effective response.

*"A thief comes in my house, I catch him and take him to the police. Two days later I meet this same thief freely walking on the city streets, and this really happened." -- EDM Worker in Tete.*

*"Before, I didn't have the courage to complain. I knew that reprisals would come." -- EDM Worker in Tete.*

Fear or feelings of self-preservation were observed among the state employees in Lichinga and among the group of teachers in Vilankulo. The examples these participants provided revealed that the intensity of attitudes depended on the level to which the participants were integrated in the workplace. These participants feared retaliation by their superiors which would impede any future advancement.

In this situation superiors, such as school directors, are seen as members of government. The person placing the complaint, although a civil servant, is acting as an ordinary citizen whose rights have been violated. These participants demonstrated a great contradiction in that in any situation not involving their superiors, they showed courage in demanding their rights with the expectation of having these rights recognized.

#### 3.1 Petition

In the groups of EDM Workers in Tete, agricultural students in Chokwe and peasants in Nzinje, participants stated they did not know what is meant by a petition. After providing a definition and explanation of a petition process, each group expressed diverse reactions. In Tete, participants affirmed they would sign a petition to demand an individual right or in the defense of a collective right without any fear or hesitation. Participants would sign together with the authors, as authors themselves or as members of the community:

*"A petition is an instrument of right."*

In Chokwe participants considered the petition an instrument which could be used to recognize an individual's rights and therefore only the author or other people in the same situation could sign.

*"It is a request which must be made in an organized manner and if it were signed by several people it would be more effective."*

In Nzinje, despite having stated earlier, "Everyone can and must speak out", there is a contradiction when presented with the use of a petition. After being given an explanation of a petition, participants hesitated and showed signs of fear especially when told a petition must be signed with identification card numbers:

*"And this obligates us to what? Who is it that gives us permission to sign a petition?"*

The teachers in Vilankulo, community leaders in Lichinga and the women market vendors in Manhiça stated they knew what a petition was and that they were prepared to write one or sign one whenever necessary.

In fact, the vendors in Manhiça are preparing a petition to request the construction of public toilets with plumbing in the market.

When the meaning of a petition was explained in Zobwé, the health workers affirmed they would seek more information about petitions from the NDI trainers and immediately write a petition about their retirement requests being ignored. All wished to sign:

*"We need to fix these injustices happening to Julio now so that it doesn't happen to us tomorrow."*



Health workers in Zobwé, Tete

#### 4. CONTACT WITH DEPUTIES

In all groups, participants indicated they knew at least one deputy and, in general, could cite names of Deputies who were residents or had relatives in the area. Even the participants who were quiet up to this point, concurred when the names of Deputies were cited. Many participants used the phrase "knowing a deputy" to mean "I know that they exist".

Few had the opportunity to talk with a Deputy and none showed hesitation for such an opportunity.

*"One of my relatives is a Deputy."* -- Agriculture student in Chokwe.

*"I have spoken with a few Deputies."* -- EDM Worker and union member.

Among the group of civil servants, the issues they would like to discuss with a Deputy always involved individual problems such as transfers, salaries, promotions or requests either as individuals or as a group. All other group participants presented requests to resolve communal problems. Examples of these requests are: more hospitals, more schools, social security etc., whichever affected them more at that moment in that location.

The image presented by most of the focus group participants for what a Deputy should do includes being closer to the communities they represent in addition to seeing and experiencing community life first hand to better understand and resolve community issues. They believe the Deputies could accomplish this as long as the Deputies want to know a community's needs.

It is clear that the participants in these groups have no vision of wider national problems, only the ones they live with each day in their own community. This image by participants of a Deputy's omnipotence leads to negative feelings toward the Deputy as a competent politician, toward the Parliament as an institution and even to democracy as a system.

*"They need to help us, taking our problems to where they resolve these things."* -- Woman market vendor in Manhiça.

*"They listen to our problems, but they don't resolve anything and they don't even say what they are doing there (in the Assembly of the Republic)."* -- Agriculture student in Chokwe.

*"Since 1994 the deputies have not justified what they are doing."* -- Community leader in Lichinga.

## 5. CITIZENS' FORUM

Among group participants, there are those who have attended a Citizens' Forum, those who have heard one on the radio, others who have heard that one happened or was about to happen and a larger group who did not know what it was. When the objectives and format of a Citizens' Forum were described, the idea was greeted with enthusiasm. Some feelings of deception or exclusion were noted in groups at more isolated locations where the participants doubted they would ever have the chance to attend such an event.

*"This proves that now we have democratic freedom."* --  
Teacher in Vilankulo.

*"I will participate with enthusiasm so that I can have news of what was done in the past and what we are preparing for the future."* -- Peasant woman in Nzinje, Lichinga.

*"I will say everything that I feel. What we need is the strength to work."* -- Woman vendor in Manhiça.

*"This shows us well, what is democracy, it makes us happy! Can I hold a Citizens' Forum in my house?"* -- Health worker in Zobwé.



Peasants in Nzinje, Lichinga



## 6. ELECTORAL STRUCTURES

### 6.1 Population Census

The population census was ending during the time these focus groups were conducted. Questions on the difference between voter registration and population census were included due to the same word -- "recenseamento" -- being used to refer to both population census and voter registration. In urban areas, participants correctly defined the process of the population census including its necessity: "*So that the government can plan its future actions*".

*"The process seems to me satisfactory. I think the census is very important and because of this it should be done with more time, but I think that it is better this way than the way it was done in the past when we answered to the Administrator."* -- Health worker in Zobwé.

In rural areas or districts, the definition of the population census was limited to: "*To know how many we are*". In these locations some suspicions arise:

*"We answered everything because after all it was a government request so we couldn't refuse, but for what reason did they want to know so many things? How many goats do we have? How many chickens?"* -- Peasant woman in Nzinje, Lichinga.

*"I am only not satisfied because they didn't explain the objectives."* -- Woman market vendor in Manhiça.

### 6.2 CNE and STAE

All participants showed a full understanding of the differences between the population census and the voter registration in terms of the objectives of each. Participants were unsure if voting was mandatory or not, and therefore if participating in voter registration was a right or an obligation.

Participants correctly identified the CNE (National Electoral Commission) and STAE (Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration) and could distinguish their different responsibilities. In urban areas participants used terms such as "provides logistical assistance" when describing the duties of STAE, at times recalling information heard before or during the previous electoral process.

## 7. LOCAL ELECTIONS

In locations where local elections are planned, the participants not only know that elections are forthcoming, they also know the elections have been postponed. The postponement did not elicit any sign of disapproval, on the contrary:

*“We don’t have the conditions prepared to hold the elections in December, as the politicians say, we prefer that they be very well organized, if not we could have serious problems afterwards.”* Community leader in Lichinga.

People obtained information about the local elections, in general, through the media. This is restricted to information about the election of the mayor and municipal assembly. The participants considered it to be the responsibility of the government and NGOs to provide all the information necessary to make an informed decision. As stated by a community leader in Lichinga this information is needed, *“so that the people can choose well”*.

Below is a summary of the information and questions on this topic from the different groups:

- What will be the attributes and responsibilities of the Mayor?
- How will these be different from those of the current administrators?
- What will be the differences between the future Municipal Assembly and the current Municipal Councils?
- What is the criteria used in the selection of the cities and towns where there will be municipal elections? Why will some towns not have municipal elections?
- Who can be a candidate? Will only political parties be able to put forward candidates or will there be independent candidates?
- The political parties must publish before the elections the list with the names of the candidates for the Municipal Assemblies.
- Why don’t we vote directly for the candidates for Municipal Assemblies?
- How will revenues be generated and distributed? Most of the city’s revenues are generated from the surrounding countryside, and so why can’t those people vote?

In general, the desire to participate in the local elections is very strong. The reasons for participation always focused on changes the local elections are expected to bring in the quality of life for the citizens. The participants see the elections as being able to solve more rapidly all of their problems, making clear their high level of expectation and hope.

## 8. NANZINHENJE

Our objective in creating a separate chapter for this group in Niassa, is to try and prevent the analysis of the other seven groups from being too influenced by this very different situation. Nevertheless, we consider the results of this group to be of fundamental importance to the study since the situation of the women in Nanzinhenje probably reflects the reality of numerous rural communities throughout Mozambique.

To begin with we would like to describe the area and the participants. The women live simply in a small community without electricity or water system. Even so they show high standards of cleanliness and hygiene, using local resources for well built homes and the village showing signs of rational planning and layout. The streets are wide, clean and well cared for without any visible trash, with well spaced houses. The women were all barefoot, perhaps with their best clothes, clean and simple. Around the group were various children of the community, all showing elevated degrees of malnutrition, also barefoot and dressed in extremely worn clothing. Before the session the children asked to be photographed, all grouped around a bicycle, trying to show their one material good.



Children in Nanzinhenje, Niassa

The focus group participants were 13 peasant women, illiterate who spoke only Yawa. The average age was 40 years old, ranging from 22 to 60, each with an average of six living children and numerous ones that died. The women declared they dedicate themselves to "hoeing and weeding only".

The participants knew that "things had changed" and that there is now a democratic regime. This change, however, had no significance for them.

*"But for us nothing changed! They don't give us anything, neither clothes nor blankets. We still haven't received anything."*

This declaration reveals that for them, nothing has really changed, or that they still see themselves as part of a paternalistic regime. They are not begging, but anything they would be given would be highly valued.

It is impossible to make them think in terms of rights and responsibilities of citizens. Their living conditions leads them all to deny that they have rights, but unconsciously they recognize that they should have rights.

*"We don't have any rights, we have nothing."*

*"The hospital is very far, before we arrive the sick person dies."*

They never heard of the Constitution and react as if they are still living under an authoritarian regime:

*"I am illiterate, but I think I saw a book like that in the hands of a priest."*

*"I didn't know that the government had laws."*  
(Conformism or denunciation)

One doesn't note any sign of fear. The government is personified in the existence of the District Administrator, who is "well worn" in the eyes of the participants:

*"We always make requests or complaints through the District Administrator, but there is no response."*

In Nanzinhenje, the local NDI trainer had held civic education sessions, but the participants were unable to explain or describe a petition. They were, however, able to describe how the traditional leader (Régulo) had made a petition requesting a clean water source. The petition received a positive response -- by whom they don't know -- and the village got a borehole and pump. When this story was told, the participants applauded with shouts and whistles.

*"Now the fear is finished. We are already thinking about making another petition for a second water pump and another one for a hospital."*

The women did not know any deputies and did not know what they do, nor what their purpose was. They have never had any contact with a deputy and don't know if a deputy had ever been there.

*"We never saw anyone, or if we saw a deputy, he wasn't introduced."*

*"We only hear from the Régulo (traditional leader)."*

Despite two of the participants affirming that they have heard talk on the radio about the Citizens' Forum, they do not know the meaning of these words. When the idea of a citizens' forum is explained, the possibility of participating in one invokes enthusiasm in all. The women reacted as if it were a novelty which could be beneficial in much the same way the petition was beneficial in bringing a well to the village.

*"It would be good if they came, so that we could express our concerns and needs."*

When asked what concerns the women would tell the deputies, the answers came rapidly:

- The construction of a hospital here.
- The authorization for us to have a shop.
- A grinding mill and the conditions to transport what we produce.

They participated in the population census and stated that they answered all the questions they were asked correctly, however:

*"I don't know what they are going to do with it."*

They described the difference between the population census and voter registration in the following way:

*"One gives a card so that we can vote." (reference to the voter registration)*

*"The other they say it is to keep, to keep for what? To give as food for rats?" (reference to population census, result of the lack of information about its objectives)*

They are unable to explain CNE or STAE. They don't know what the letters stand for or what the organizations do.

They don't know what local elections are:

*"One day, someone will have to inform us."*

The material used by NDI in civic education sessions is recognized and they affirmed that:

*“It must be material used to educate people and it was made by people like you.”*



Peasant Women in Nanzinhenje, Niassa

## 9. CLAIM'S CONCLUSIONS

This is the third set of focus groups conducted by CLAIM in Mozambique on behalf of NDI. We are in the unique position to compare the results of this study with two previous studies of similar communities conducted in August 1994 and in November 1996. Even if the comparison is considered pernicious, it is important to verify the advances and setbacks that have occurred in this short space of time, to note people's anxieties and fears, and to gain a better understanding of these sentiments and the way in which they are expressed.

The 16 focus group sessions that made up the August 1994 and November 1996 studies presented two incredible similarities:

(1) In prior groups the word "peace" was always used in the sense of an armistice or cessation of the horrors and hostilities between Mozambicans. Today the word peace is used to describe tranquillity and the ability to live well in a state of calm. This difference may demonstrate that the earlier fears are no longer part of the daily life, and today's struggles are not just for survival but to improve the quality of life.

(2) Democracy was not questioned, however strong fears existed about its functionality as expressed in the denouncements of corruption and constant violation of rights. Participants believed in the democratic system, but they did not understand how corruption and rights violations could continue to exist in a democracy. Today these criticisms are softer and more isolated. The participants preferred to discuss how to make Mozambique's democracy more participatory, seeing the multiparty system synonymous with democracy. They search to stretch the limits of this current and young democracy, and want to learn to live democratically and be seen and heard in the same way.

Except in Nanzinhenje, group participants know Mozambique has a Constitution and that all should live according to its laws and principles. Despite some participants not being able to describe the Constitution's actual content, they have a reasonable understanding of its larger purpose and that it stipulates the rules for living in a democracy. The great difficulty comes from not having read the Constitution, not having access to it and having its content interpreted for those unable to read. Participants show that they don't know basic concepts like the balance of powers in a democracy, the civic rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the responsibilities of the government. CLAIM considers it the duty of those involved in civic education to consider themes pertinent to these issues in future civic education programs.

The use of the Petition emerges as a way of demonstrating the effectiveness of a multiparty democracy, independent of what party one belongs too. The positive reception by participants of the successful petition for a village well in Nanzinhenje seems to obligate the repetition and intensification of civic education sessions in the rural areas on the use of a petition as a successful tool. The correct interpretation of its meaning and its limits is essential in a civic education program. Civic education trainers should not exaggerate its usefulness or the petition could lose the positive image it currently possesses with the public. The statement: "*A petition is the instrument of right.*"

made by a middle level worker in Tete, needs to be taken seriously and demands a careful reflection on how to best transmit this knowledge to the public. It is necessary that the Petition be clearly understood as a powerful tool that can be used by citizens without the risk of indiscriminate or inappropriate use which will diminish its effectiveness.

Among those who already knew about Citizens' Forums or learned about them in the focus groups, the concept generated great enthusiasm and the desire to participate. The forums are perceived as a way to obtain information from the deputies and also as a means of transmitting their concerns as well as their criticisms and denunciations.

Knowing or having had contact with a Deputy is treated as circumstantial and is not a primary concern. For some, contact with deputies may be a demonstration of prestige. The will to increase their knowledge about one deputy or another presupposes a selective need, which does not occur. The possibility of directly and freely choosing those who claim to be their representatives is seen as a choice being denied them. This is stridently pointed out as a criticism of the system, particularly vocalized among the educated participants in the urban areas.

The Deputies are observed occasionally in the urban areas or district capitals visiting with the local authorities, participating in events or speaking with their fellow party members. Participants view these activities as "working visits", which to a certain point is true.

There are no other comments registered as topics to raise with deputies beyond requests, solicitations or appeals. This attitude seems to be driven by the belief that the deputies are capable of solving **ALL** their needs - both individual or collective. Participants believe that the citizens can only sensitize the deputy about their problems but that it is the deputy's responsibility to solve them.

This belief, was widely spread among all participants, regardless of the location, age group or profile. The resolution of all the communities' problems was presented as the **only** function expected or known of the Parliament members. It is important to contemplate that this is the image and expectation that the population has of the "faithful compliance of the deputy's public function". The Deputies were never seen as legislators. This expectation of the Deputy's role brings a great danger to the future policies of the current parliamentarians, the political parties, the parliament as a democratic institution, to the normality of the country's political life and even to democracy itself. The impossibility of attending the anxieties expressed and of resolving all problems, produces a deception, initially in relation to the deputy him or herself. This deception may be extended to questioning the validity of Parliament as an institution putting at risk the nature of the democratic regime itself. In CLAIM's opinion, the demagogic practice at this moment of history in Mozambique, can come to cause enormous and unimaginable damage to the normalcy of democracy.





EDM Workers in Tete City



Teachers in Vilankulo, Inhambane

In the places where local elections are to be held, their existence, dates, reasons for postponement and evaluation are general knowledge.

There is an overall desire for information that will permit people to “vote well”, which was expressed in the sense of using their vote for the general well-being and to improve the quality of life in their communities. The questions participants had about the local elections were:

- Form: Future functions of the Municipal President and of the Municipal Assembly.
- Validity: Comparison between the actual powers of the Administrator and of the Municipal Council to the future institutions.
- Justice: Existence of places without local elections and the exclusion of residents in rural areas from these elections even though most of the town’s revenues are generated in the countryside.
- Resources: What resources or what part of the current tax base will be attributed to the municipality? Will the future city budget include activities in the rural areas or only in the set city limits?
- Policies: Voters ask that the political parties publish the candidate lists for the Municipal Assembly prior to the elections. Participants question the system of not having direct elections for the municipal deputies.

A constant and recurring question throughout these focus groups is: “*Can independent candidates or those who are not affiliated to any political party run for office?*” This needs to be addressed in future civic education activities.

We mentioned earlier that the participants stated a dissatisfaction with the local political leaders, touching as well on the national leaders. This may lead to the preference of new leaders, both local and national, who are not politically aligned to any political party formally organized or recognized.

The ideal profile of the Municipal Presidential candidate presented by the participants focus on administrative qualities and/or management skills. Listed attributes include:

- Rich, therefore Honest (they believe that if they are rich they will have less need to use public money for personal use),
- Competent (capable of achieving or doing)
- Participative (listening to the people and working together with them) and
- Between the age of 35 to 40 years old regardless of gender.

At no time was it mentioned that the candidates should have public administration experience, belong to this or that party or have good relations with the central government. As said earlier, the candidate should be more a “producer” than a politician.

NDI’s training materials were recognized by the participants of previous civic education sessions, identifying the district trainer (when present at the group) as the person who showed them “the book” (Storyboard), and recognize NDI

as the author. Others recalled the period of the national elections often seeing the author as "some NGO". All clearly view the material as educational with statements like: "This is how one teaches others". The materials are seen to be extremely useful and interesting to see or read. The pages with photos of the Assembly of the Republic sparked great interest, satisfying their need to see that it physically exists. The photo inside the Assembly showing deputies voting in a session led one participant to comment: "Democracy in action".

In conclusion, CLAIM notes the intense desire of focus group participants to be better informed and therefore better able to actively participate in the improvement of their lives and community. The NDI civic education sessions were highly valued by those who had participated followed by requests to continue these sessions. This shows the necessity of returning and intensifying civic education within the Mozambican context. The task of participating in the development of democracy through civic education is difficult, imposing sacrifices on the trainers and coordinators in order to reach the many isolated communities. Perhaps the idea of AMODE, the Mozambican Association for the Development of Democracy<sup>1</sup>, can come to address these needs using successful examples such as the petition in Nanzinhenje as inspiration.



Agriculture Students in Chokwe, Gaza

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<sup>1</sup> The Mozambican Association for the Development of Democracy was recently formed by civic educators who earlier had worked for NDI. The founders intend to establish a long-term civic education program on democracy issues in Mozambique.

## 10. NDI'S CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the current Focus Group research was to evaluate the impact of NDI-Mozambique's civic education programs and to plan new programs in preparation for Mozambique's first round of municipal elections.

### Evaluation

The Focus Group research shows an increase in understanding of the basic democratic concepts included in NDI's civic education program compared to previous studies (February 1996 and November 1996). All the participants recognized the existence of democracy in Mozambique and showed a general knowledge of democracy themes and events.

Attitudes toward the multiparty system changed significantly. In the February 1996 report, Austral noted: "Be it in the rural or urban areas the existence of many parties is not well accepted." Participants feared competing political parties would increase the level of conflict and possibility of war. In August 1997 CLAIM found that all of the target groups of the study viewed democracy as synonymous with the multiparty system and "were able to articulate the advantages of a multiparty system." These studies indicate increase in participants' understanding of the multiparty system, one of the themes of NDI's civic education program.

CLAIM also found an increased awareness of other civic education themes including citizens' rights, the Constitution and the effectiveness of the petition as a democratic tool. CLAIM warns, however, that despite an increased awareness, many of the participants lack more specific knowledge such as the concept and content of the Constitution, the balance of powers between legislative and executive branches, the government's responsibilities and citizens' civic responsibilities.

The participants recognized NDI civic education materials as non-partisan educational tools and they were often able to identify the trainer of that particular district. "The NDI civic education sessions were highly valued by those who had participated followed by requests to continue these sessions."

The research indicates that while the civic education program has had a positive impact, there is a need for NDI to intensify and expand this program. This is especially important in the rural areas where access to information is much more limited.

### Future Program Planning

NDI's Provincial Coordinators have recently formed a national NGO, the Mozambican Association for the Development of Democracy (AMODE). AMODE is dedicated to implementing continuous civic education programs run by Mozambicans. NDI is supporting AMODE's initiative and helping to build AMODE's institutional capacity.

In 1997-1998, NDI will be working with STAE and AMODE to develop voter education materials for the first municipal elections scheduled for May 1998. The results of the Focus Group research will be taken into account in preparing the program and material content.

CLAIM cautions that the participants have high expectations of the ability of their Deputies and soon-to-be-elected local representatives to solve all problems. Unrealistic expectations of elected representatives could lead to a feeling of disillusionment and apathy. Increased civic education is necessary to improve citizens' understanding of the role and powers of their elected representatives and increased opportunities for dialogue between these elected officials and their constituencies. Participants were only aware of the Citizens' Forum program in the provincial capitals although once explained, all participants were interested in attending. NDI will consider extending the Citizens' Forums to the districts to promote dialogue with elected officials and promote increased citizen participation in the political process.

It will be vital in future civic education programs to address the specific questions raised by the participants regarding the structure of the municipal government, electoral laws, revenue generation and distribution. A more informed electorate will be better prepared to participate not only at the ballot box but also contribute to the municipal government by supporting local initiatives, contributing ideas and serving as citizen pressure groups. These citizens' groups and local NGOs could benefit greatly from advocacy skills training including more in-depth training on the petition process, use of the media, legislative process and budget issues.



Showing civic education material in Nanzinhenje, Niassa

## FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE August 1997

### Warm-up

- Introduce the moderator and others
- Explain the reasons for the meeting - Civic Education
- Explain the non-partisan character of NDI's work in Mozambique
- Participant Introductions

### Democracy in Mozambique

1. Have you seen any result of multiparty democracy in Mozambique?
2. Do you know any rights or responsibilities of citizens? Which ones?
3. Have you heard of the Constitution? (What is it? Have you read it?)

### Democratic Tools

(These questions are to discover people's real experience in recognizing and using democratic mechanisms and their motivation for participation.)

4. Would you participate in a complaint to the Government if there was a violation of your rights? (Why or why not?)
5. Have you heard of a petition?  
Have you ever written or signed a petition?
6. If necessary, do you think you would write a petition? (Why or why not?)

### Contact with Deputies

7. Do you know any Deputy?
8. Have you had contact with a Deputy?  
In this contact were you able to say what you wanted to say to the Deputy?
9. Do you know if any Deputy has visited (in his/her official capacity) your city or village?
10. What are the duties of a Deputy?
11. Have you heard of a Citizens' Forum?  
Did you participate or listen to one on the radio?
12. If someone organized a Citizens' Forum here, would you attend? (Why or why not?)
13. Do you think that meetings with Deputies are important? Why?
14. If you could speak to a Deputy, what would you say?

### **Electoral Structures**

15. Have you heard of the population census? What is it?
16. Is it different from electoral registration? What is the difference?
17. What is the CNE? STAE?

### **Local Elections - All Locations**

18. Have you heard about local elections?
19. What do you know about local elections?
20. Where did you hear the information? From whom?
21. Do you know if there will be elections here or not?

### **Local Elections - Locations with Elections**

22. Do you know when local elections will be held?
23. What information would you like to know about the local elections?
24. Who should give this information? How can they transmit this information to everyone?
25. What positions will be open for elections?
26. Do you think anything will change with local elections?  
What are the changes you foresee?
27. Would you like to participate in these elections?
28. What do you think are the best reasons to vote in local elections?
29. What type of person would you like to elect?

### **NDI Material**

(Show the Storyboard)

30. Have you seen this book before? When?
31. What does this book mean for you?
32. Who made this book? (Probe if the answer is the Government, an NGO, the CNE, a political Party...)

## Executive Summary

### Focus Group Report of November 1996

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) contracted CLAIM Research of Brazil to conduct a qualitative research study of Mozambican citizens' knowledge of specific democracy themes and issues.

The research, conducted in November 1996, specifically evaluated knowledge about existing democratic structures and upcoming municipal elections among rural and urban populations, both literate and illiterate. The results of these findings will be used to assist NDI in the planning of their civic education activities in 1997.

Several key findings emerged from this research. Specifically:

- In areas where both civic education had occurred and where it had not, there was widespread dissatisfaction stemming from the impossibility of reaching the high expectations generated by the elections, and by inference the democratic process.
- Participants in NDI programs generally have a better comprehension of an individual's rights, the use of peaceful solutions for problems, and recognize "democratic" participation as an important tool.
- Those who haven't been exposed to NDI efforts reveal themselves to be indignant, disbelieving, resistant and, in a certain way, passive about their destiny. It is evident when reviewing participants comments and attitudes that the fundamental difference between the groups was exposure to civic education.

This evidence leads us to validate the work being undertaken by NDI. The media used by NDI--personal presentations by trusted non-partisan individuals, radio dramas and simple, easy to understand story boards--are the proper channels to communicate these important topics.

The utilization of on-site district trainers who can reach into rural areas and meet directly with the population is vital. These trainers, as well as their provincial coordinators, are seen as good, honest, people of goodwill who are, above all, non-partisan. This lends credibility to the trainers, principally because they provide a service perceived as being extremely useful and necessary. Their work is also recognized as being very exhausting. There were numerous references to the long distances the trainers had to travel "to come talk to us." As they do not charge anything for their services, trainers are seen as a mixture of idealists, doctors, priests and teachers.

The greatest challenge presented is how to increase and support these programs to further democratic development. It remains obvious, to the researchers and to all those involved in the civic education project in Mozambique, that it is necessary to develop activities that utilize the most accessible and trusted means of communication.





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