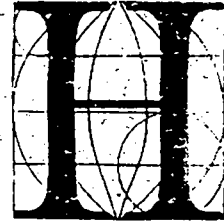




The National Democratic Institute  
for International Affairs



Louis Harris & Associates, Inc.

## **IMAGINING DEMOCRACY**

*A Report on a Series of Focus Groups  
in Mozambique on Democracy  
and Voter Education*

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and Voter Education*

Fieldwork: June 1993

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conducting nonpartisan international programs to help promote, maintain and strengthen democratic institutions



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### **Acknowledgements**

This report was commissioned by the National Democratic Institute in Washington, D.C. It was funded by a grant from the National Endowment for Democracy. It would not have been possible without the assistance and counsel of a number NDI staff members, including Patricia Keefer, Rodney Washington, Paula Santa-Rita and Samantha Bolton. While NDI played an important role in the development of the project and handled the advance work on the ground in Mozambique, all of the findings in this report are the work of Louis Harris and Associates, which takes full and sole responsibility for this analysis and its conclusions.

## Introduction

This document reports the findings of a series of 12 focus groups conducted in Mozambique in the last two weeks of June, 1993. More than 170 citizens aged 16 to 79 participated in the discussions that were conducted in 11 different locations in four provinces spread across northern, central and southern Mozambique. A range of occupations was represented from peasant farmers to truck drivers to teachers and one computer programmer. Members of at least 10 different linguistic groups participated and the discussions were conducted in Portuguese and a number of local languages.

The groups addressed a number of issues related to the development of democracy in Mozambique, including attitudes toward the upcoming national elections, democratic institutions and concepts, and a voter education campaign. This analysis will be of use for the national election commission, the government, political parties, non-governmental organizations, the media, the United Nations and the foreign donor community that is providing technical assistance and funding in Mozambique.

Public opinion research plays a critical role in a democracy. It provides a mechanism for transmitting public attitudes on a range of questions to policymakers in the legislature and executive, in opposition, and in other civic and governmental organizations interested in policy formation. Certainly, elected officials should not slavishly base their decisions on the results of public opinion polling, but independent research can help leadership listen to and respect the public's point of view and level of information.

In any transition to democracy it is critical that leadership elites that have traditionally talked to the public learn how to listen. There are many mechanisms for hearing voices from

the grass roots, such as interest groups (organized for religious, civic or economic purposes), letters to government officials or lobbying by ordinary citizens. These forms of public expression are all important, but governments must be careful to consider the nature of the organization that has collected the information and the way in which it has been collected. For example, a civic organization associated with a ruling party may report widespread public approval for a proposed program. And that finding might be quite accurate, but it needs to be understood for what it really is: an indication only that the party's rank-and-file is supportive.

The importance of public opinion research in this context is that it can provide impartial, independent and systematic studies that report the feelings of the public at large. All over the world, governments, political parties, the media and non-governmental organizations rely upon public opinion research to diagnose public policy problems, test possible solutions and further understand the attitudinal environment in which policy is being made and implemented. The development of a public opinion polling capacity, and its use in politics and governance, is an important step forward for any new democracy.

This project used time-tested techniques of qualitative public opinion research to take the first steps toward building an understanding of public opinion in Mozambique. Public opinion is not static and any research project is only a snapshot of attitudes at any particular time. Public opinion is constantly evolving, reacting to new information and changing circumstances, so the information in this report and the others that will surely follow will require constant re-examination and fresh scrutiny.



## **Executive Summary**

Louis Harris and Associates was commissioned by the National Democratic Institute to conduct a series of 12 focus groups involving 173 people across Mozambique in June, 1993, to study the development of democracy there, including attitudes about the upcoming national elections, democratic institutions and concepts, and a civic voter education campaign.

### **Themes**

The research generated three themes:

- Mozambicans are angry and bitter over the actions of key leadership groups and institutions since independence, but with the coming of peace they are willing to forgive and let the country make a new start.
- Mozambicans are enthusiastic at the prospect of democracy, are embracing new personal freedoms, and are eager to vote, but they have little understanding of what democracy means and how to participate, even how to vote.
- Democracy can work in Mozambique, but it faces formidable obstacles, including ignorance, illiteracy, multiple languages, the lack of a nationwide mass communications network, distrust of the government and main political parties, not knowing what the various political parties stand for, and suspicion and doubt of all new initiatives. The country will need a far-reaching voter education campaign to overcome these difficulties.

### **Level of Information**

By and large, Mozambicans are unfamiliar with what democracy means, although most have heard the word. City dwellers are better informed than those living in rural areas and men are better informed than women. Many Mozambicans have voted, but few have participated in elections with secret ballots and they are generally unfamiliar with that process. Because many Mozambicans have participated in state elections by show of hands to ratify the candidate of the ruling party, there is some confusion about the difference between those kinds of elections and multi-candidate elections. While some people have heard that national elections will be held, an even smaller number know that they are supposed to take place next year.

Clearly, the public has a lot to learn about democracy: terms like "constitution" are virtually unknown to Mozambicans and they have no knowledge of voter registration or how to mark a ballot. The good news is that in each discussion group, the participants were hungry for more information. When discussing a topic they did not know much about, the members of the group would invariably ask for more information from the moderator. The people are eager to learn about democracy and how they can participate.

### **Opinions**

Many people are reaping the benefits of peace. For most this means the right to travel long distances and therefore see friends and family members from whom they have been isolated; it means the right to own property and do with it what they please; it means the right to express themselves freely; and for people in more rural communities, it means

the ability to sleep in their own homes and to live free of intimidation from warring factions. Most believe that the peace will hold, but everyone is worried that it may not.

People are eager to vote, but they don't know how the process will work. Many are concerned that democracy will turn out to be like many other initiatives offered up by their leaders in the past that sound good, but bring no positive changes to people's lives. Others are afraid that even if the public embraces democracy, the leaders will not understand their obligations to respect the people's will. In general, people have quite negative feelings toward Mozambican leaders and institutions, whom they feel have often misled them. For this reason they are suspicious of all new plans and programs.

The public wants the United Nations involved in the administration of any elections to guarantee fairness and that the losing parties will respect the outcome. While people want to vote, there is a fear that those who vote for losing parties will be subject to reprisals. Both FRELIMO and RENAMO are viewed as having done both very good and very bad things to the country, and few people trust either one very much. People in rural areas report being harassed and intimidated by local party organizers, something the public resents a great deal.

Overwhelmingly, people report frustration at the failure of the parties to come forward with platforms and detailed programs so that they can begin to learn about their plans and decide whom to support. Specific issues that people want the government to address are health care, safety (from crime), the economy (especially high prices), education, and human rights (especially the right to move freely, to own private property and to speak freely). Other areas of concern are food supplies, employment, the return of displaced persons to their communities and the demobilization of the military. They have no confidence that more than one party could rule together in a coalition.

## **Voter Education Campaign**

By and large, the public is very interested in a civic voter education campaign that can help them learn how to participate in a genuine democracy. Most people say they want to vote, although a large number are afraid of the possibility of reprisals by the losing party. People want to vote to participate in the future and in making a change from the past. They need more information about how to vote and reassurance that polling stations will be convenient and their vote secret.

The two most important means for communicating information are visits to local communities and the radio. Community visits were the expressed preference of every group. Clearly the public's confidence in voting educators will be much higher if they have an opportunity to meet them, question them and verify their political neutrality. While group participants rated a number of different printed voter education materials highly, they wanted someone to come and explain the materials and to engender a feeling of confidence about voting. Religious organizations and some civic groups were suggested, along with the U.N. and other foreign organizations, as being good vehicles for voter education because they were known to be neutral in the nation's politics.

The radio is an attractive means of voter education because it reaches so many people. Listenership is much lower in rural areas, where only 20-30% of households have sets and rely on batteries for power, which are expensive and difficult to find. Local language broadcasts are the key to reaching the largest population. Men listen to the radio more in rural areas because women are busy farming and raising a family. Print materials should use colors and photographs, which are viewed as easier to understand than drawings.

## Detailed Findings

### Level of Information

#### Democracy

Familiarity with the word "democracy" ranges from people who have never heard the word at all to a quite full understanding of what democracy means in terms of freedom of expression and the right to select political representation. The majority of the people that we talked to had heard the word "democracy," but don't really know what it means. Definitions mentioned more than once included the absence of coercion by the authorities, freedom to travel, freedom of speech, and freedom from being arbitrarily imprisoned.

A significant issue in our discussions was the question of language. All of the groups were conducted in one or more local languages and, in some cases, Portuguese as well. The traditional African languages in Mozambique do not have a full vocabulary for democratic institutions and processes. This makes explaining democracy more difficult because Portuguese terms have to be imported and concepts explained and translated into African languages.

On the issue of democracy, as well as many other informational points, city dwellers have more information than people living in the country side. It is clear that information seeps out from the cities, where there are many more communication vehicles such as radio sets, newspapers, greater literacy and familiarity with Portuguese, to the rural areas. The peasants from the country were not only less well informed, they were very conscious of their ignorance and viewed the learning process with greater trepidation. It is perhaps not surprising that these people, who have little if any formal education, feel more intimidated

about the process of learning about democracy. On a number of occasions, group participants stressed that voter education instructors dealing with illiterates would have to take the lessons very slowly and repeat things again and again. Occasionally, it was suggested that the educators should reconstruct and enact the voting process in every detail. These comments and suggestions were as likely to come from participants with no education as those with some schooling.

Another important difference in levels of information among the population was between men and women. In general, men are much better informed. In part this is because they tend to be better educated and are more comfortable with Portuguese, which gives them better access to mass communication. Women in rural areas are also so busy farming and raising families that they have much less time for things that are not integral to attending to their families' immediate needs.

Apart from lacking information about what democracy is, some people also misunderstand what the word means. We were told that among democracy's virtues were personal economic freedom, economic prosperity and the creation of industry. Among the most popular definitions were "financial freedom," "freedom of enterprise," and "right to private property." A man in Meconta said, "democracy means employment." While political freedom guarantees no such thing, it is worth noting the importance of selling the opportunity to vote to strengthen the economy as part of the package of messages associated with voting and elections.

Universally, people feel that the forthcoming possibility of democracy means the country is on the verge of something new and exciting. This attitude is tempered by a significant fear of what negative things might be associated with democracy and that political

disagreements might mean more war. More than anything, there was a feeling of not really knowing what democracy will mean and what its implications are. One woman in Carrupeia said in the middle of a rapid-fire, open exchange with other members of the group, "I don't know what democracy is. But if it makes me feel like this, it's positive."

A metaphor that was developed on several occasions was that of Mozambique as a child learning about democracy as she was growing. "We are taking our first steps. We don't know how to speak yet," said one participant. Often there was the additional idea that the United Nations and foreigners could serve as parents helping the country to learn about democracy and aiding in the transition.

### **Voting Experiences**

Many Mozambicans have voted. A few who are members of more sophisticated churches or civic associations have voted with secret written ballots for group leaders. Some rural peasant women said they had voted in their villages by the traditional method of sticks and leaves. Most often, people reported having voted by show of hands in community matters or post-independence government elections that were organized to endorse the candidate chosen to run by the ruling party. Generally, written ballots are unfamiliar.

A key distinction that developed in the groups was the difference between an election between competing candidates and the old system of publicly ratifying a party selection. One man in Dondo called the secret ballot system, "choice without anyone looking." One of the challenges of the voter education campaign will be to help people understand how these elections will be different from the old ones, which were called "democratic" as well. In one sense, some of the terminology associated with democracy has

been degraded in Mozambique because of history. In certain places, some women reported that they still held to the traditional view that they ought to follow the lead of the men and elders in voting and respect their opinions.

### **National Elections**

Some people have heard that there will be national elections for president sometime in the future. A smaller number know that they will be held next year, although in most groups at least a few people were aware of this. There is less information about what methods are to be used in these elections. Some understand it is to be a secret ballot.

More well understood is the fact that it will be open to everyone 18 and over. Only a relatively small number thought that illiterates or very poor people would not be allowed to vote. There were a series of questions about how the blind and people with other disabilities would be accommodated and what guarantees there would be that their votes would be properly recorded.

The question of documentation for voting brings confusion. Some people think that some form of identification will be needed, for instance, government documents, a birth certificate or a police record. It was believed by some that the absence of such documentation would be a major obstacle for voter participation. Others expressed confidence that producing witnesses from the local community at the polling place would be sufficient. On several occasions, fear was expressed that without proper safeguards, the political parties would bring foreigners across the border to vote illegally on their behalf. No one mentioned the need to register to vote.



The most widely held opinion about the method of voting was that two ballot boxes will be used, one for each of the two major parties. People perceived the advantage of this scheme to be that fraud would be difficult and illiterates would not have to mark ballots but simply place them in the proper box. No one seemed concerned that secrecy might be compromised in the process or that a much larger number of parties would be competing.

In fact, people are aware of the existence of political parties besides FRELIMO and RENAMO, and a few were able to name some of the others. But throughout the groups, there was repeated reference to the "two parties" and no knowledge of what positions the other parties represented. One man in Pemba, who was aware of some other parties, referred to them as "silent and inactive."

One other democratic institution, the constitution, was raised for the participants to discuss. Virtually no one knew what the word meant, with reactions ranging from giggles and blank stares to some who said they had heard it before but couldn't say what it means.

While people know little if anything about topics like a constitution, the population has an overwhelming desire to learn more. One of the most common reactions to questions about democracy, democratic institutions and the national elections was "We don't know about that, please tell us." While there is some suspicion about democracy and what it will mean, more than anything else people want to learn more so they can judge democracy for themselves. Their eagerness to learn more about democracy is even more marked than their lack of information.

## Opinions

### Peace

By and large, people think the current peace will be permanent, but after years and years of war, many expressed lingering doubts. One man in Carrupeia said, "I'm not sure. They may just have spoken of peace without meaning it in their hearts." This peace has certainly brought significant positive changes for many people, which may explain why they think it is likely to be real and lasting.

Above all else, peace for Mozambicans means freedom of movement over long distances. After years and years of being isolated in their own regions or even communities, people can once again travel the length of the country, although there are continuing difficulties with some roads. "It [peace] enabled me to go and visit my mother and family because I had been confined to my area for more than 10 years" said one man. Others spoke of the right to own property, freedom of expression, freedom from government controls, and freedom from fear. People in Meconta spoke of being able to "sleep indoors" and "farm as we want." Some talked of religious freedom and the ability to sleep peacefully through the night without having to be prepared to flee to the bush if soldiers came through.

Some felt the benefits of peace were not yet fully realized. "It's the sprouting of a tree, although the fruits are still not ripe for the picking," said one Muslim. And some in Cabo Delgado said their farms are still occupied by the former combatants, which prevents them from returning to their old lives. But peace has meant the beginning of the return of the "lost and missing people," which is viewed as a big step forward.

## **Democracy**

As discussed in the previous section, there is a widespread eagerness to vote and participate in democracy. This feeling is tempered by a fear and mistrust of the major parties, the government, and leaders in general. For this reason, people are suspicious of any new initiatives such as free elections. One veteran of the war for independence against the Portuguese said, "I fought the war of liberation, which was tantamount to fighting for democracy. I would like to know the difference between the democracy we had after independence and the democracy we will have now." Others report adopting a wait-and-see attitude toward the development of democracy. "If it's what they say it is, it's a good thing," said a man from Mueze. "But only so long as it is what they say and they follow it strictly." Because of a sense of being misled in the past, people are very slow to believe what they hear in Mozambique.

Some participants raised the important question of whether their leaders will understand what democracy is. They pointed out that even if the public can learn what democracy is, that is only half the challenge. A man in Mahotas said, "We might well be able to vote for them, but in the end they are the ones who should understand us. That means they should understand what democracy imposes on them. Part of that means learning to lose because whoever wins reflects the will of the people." Clearly, the population is not confident that leaders will understand and act upon their will, even if the nation has free and fair elections.

## **Federal Government**

When the issue of national government was raised, participants in the groups outside the Province of Maputo expressed profound mistrust of the capital. They expressed particular anger at Maputo's monopolization of jobs and tight administrative control. "Even for an administrative position, which requires a fourth-class certificate [equivalent to a primary school education], the person comes from Maputo," said one man. Not all residents outside the capital expressed such negative feelings. One peasant woman outside Nampula said, "Maputo is the mother of this country and children need mothers and it's good to have mothers."

On top of their concerns for the distribution of jobs, some in the central and northern areas reported feeling what one called "a sense of inferiority." Others felt very keenly the fact that representatives of their own linguistic group played no significant role in the government and had few government jobs. As one person outside of Pemba noted of the capital, "there are very few Macuas there."

But the biggest complaints were reserved for the difficulty of getting certain papers and documents that were only available from Maputo. Because these things are not available in provincial capitals, people have to spend days on the road in order to get police records or other documents that they need. On the other hand, Maputo residents claim the country should set aside differences between linguistic groups for the sake of the country. One woman said, "The people don't need tribalism, there should be a feeling of harmony." Clearly, it's easier for the members of the groups taking the lion's share of government jobs and leadership posts to feel that way.

Despite all of these negative feelings toward Maputo, no groups raised the issue of local control of government without prompting. The population is a significant way from understanding that in such things, they may have a choice. The extant government structure has been imposed on them, as was the one before that and so on. This is not to say that a federalist program will not find a sympathetic reception. It may, but its proponents will have to educate the public as they are making their case. There is no sense that any of these structural issues are things that citizens have any control over or even input on. One of the significant challenges of a voter education campaign will be working to transform this mind set to an understanding that democracy brings the opportunity to reform government institutions and structures.

#### **Timing/Fairness/Working of Elections**

Mozambicans don't trust government to run national elections alone. They express two reasons. First, they don't feel elections run by the government will be free and fair. Second, even if the elections are free and fair, the people feel the results will be contested by other political parties if the government is the sole administrator of the balloting.

Over and over again, the groups said that the only way for the elections to be free, fair and above reproach is for the United Nations to be involved. The United Nations has no history with the people of Mozambique and they are willing to give the international organization the benefit of the doubt. Additionally, the U.N. in particular and the foreign donor community in general are perceived to be helping with the reconciliation of the country, which is positive, and to be above and apart from local partisan politics, which is also positive and distinguishes them from most every significant Mozambican institution.

City dwellers who have had more exposure to the U.N. are less quick to praise it than people in the countryside.

When the groups were told that there would be a single ballot to be marked by each voter, opinion was sharply divided over what method of marking should be used. Some favored "X's", others crosses, others just a slash, some a circle to signify inclusion, and others a thumbprint. The groups did all agree that the marking process should be made as easy as possible for illiterates, but there was no agreement about what method of marking would be easiest for them.

Across the country, people expressed fear that voters supporting losing parties would be subject to reprisals. All felt the involvement of the U.N. in administering the vote would diminish the problem, but not eliminate it. Although people expressed a strong interest in voting and participating in democracy, all felt that it would be a risk. This fear seems not to be strong enough to drive people from the polls, but reassuring potential voters that their votes will be secret and that there will be no reprisals will certainly be essential to boosting voter turnout. Significant steps will be needed to lift the atmosphere of fear and intimidation that has marked life in Mozambique for so long.

## **Parties**

One of the most intriguing findings of this study is the similarity of views of all citizens toward the two largest political parties. Regardless of which party they supported, people repeatedly used the same language to describe both the strengths and weaknesses of FRELIMO and RENAMO. The only difference between FRELIMO and RENAMO

supporters would come at the end of their statements, when after expressing identical reasoning they would conclude "therefore I support FRELIMO [or RENAMO]."

FRELIMO was characterized as the nation's liberators who went wrong once they got into power, but have improved their behavior somewhat in the last several years. This improvement is not significant enough to have generated widespread enthusiasm for FRELIMO but has certainly improved their standing. The overthrow of the Portuguese is still viewed as a great accomplishment by FRELIMO. One woman in Mueze described the party as the "father who taught us many things. FRELIMO opened our eyes, made us see things, made us see many of the evils that existed in our society, therefore it is a good thing." Other FRELIMO supporters see the party as on the road to improvement thanks to the introduction of democracy. "With the existence of other parties, FRELIMO will have to change," one woman said. "In the past, FRELIMO would not concern itself with issues such as water and food because there are areas in which they are really in short supply. So in order to win votes, FRELIMO must now consider these issues."

RENAMO is often described as brutal and violent, but is also viewed as doing the nation a great service by forcing FRELIMO to reform and introduce democracy. One person said, "they made us discover things, but their means were wrong. They fought through violence and killed many people." People in rural areas reported that they had seen kidnappings and violence by RENAMO in their villages. RENAMO's transformation from a guerilla movement, referred to by the government only as armed bandits, to a legitimate participant in the peace process is confusing to some. One man said, "RENAMO burnt many cars and now they are demanding more from the government."

Both of the major parties are blamed and praised for what they have done in the past. Another commonality is that people, regardless of their political affiliation, feel as though they have been lied to by both parties. One of the participants at Mahotas said, "I think people will find it hard to vote for Dhlakama or Chissano because of the scars left by the war."

All the years of fighting, bloodshed and economic disruption have had an enormous impact on the lives of Mozambicans and yet some remain confused about what the war was all about in the first place. "We still don't know why FRELIMO and RENAMO are fighting each other, so how will we know which one to choose," asked one woman. While the reasons for the war may be clear to those involved in the nation's political process, citizens farther removed from the mass communication network are in the dark about many of the simplest facts about a war that has caused them so much hardship.

Even people with some understanding of the conflict between FRELIMO and RENAMO felt that neither party had been forthcoming with a platform that citizens could judge for themselves. People expressed anger at being put in the position of having to make a choice between the parties without knowing what actions they could expect from them if they got into government. The parties may have clearly defined platforms available but it is not in the scope of this research brief to investigate that fact. The more significant finding is that if platforms do exist, many people are unaware of their contents. In general, people are eager for information about politics and the future of the country and feel as though the parties have not been forthcoming with their plans.



### **Politicking**

One disturbing finding of this report is that rural people claim that both of the major parties are trying to intimidate people in the areas they control into not going to meetings run by any of the other parties. People instinctively feel as though they should have an opportunity to hear what all the parties have to say without fear of reprisal. Similarly, rural residents speak of having to carry both a FRELIMO and a RENAMO card in disputed areas to protect themselves from intimidating gangs who demand that it be shown to allow them access into certain areas. Furthermore, people report being forced to buy the cards for between 200 and 1,000 Meticaís, an expense they bitterly resent.

The moderators raised the possibility of a coalition government with the groups. The concept took some explaining because generally the idea of more than one party governing at the same time struck people as counter-intuitive. One elderly man in Pemba said, "You can't have two parties at the same time. Two roosters can't crow at the same time." Even after discussing the idea, most people in the groups did not see how a coalition could lead to anything but trouble. One woman said, "A coalition is like two couples sharing the same house. There will be trouble sooner or later." Others said that they could not speculate because the possibilities of democracy were so alien. One man in Polana Caniço in Maputo said, "It's the first time that there will be several parties, so we don't know whether more than one party in power is possible. We will just have to wait and see."

In an atmosphere where ideological differences were presented as the reasons for years of civil war, the groups were asked whether public debates among candidates would threaten peace. This question found great division among the public on whether these disagreements between candidates are dangerous; almost all would prefer the candidates to try

to explain their ideas and programs to the people rather than arguing amongst themselves. "Public debates between candidates are not a good thing," said a man in Mahotas. "No one likes their dirty laundry aired in public. It is therefore important that everyone keeps it on a high level. They should convince the people and not accuse each other." Some people understood the role of debates in a democracy, one said, "these exchanges will be a good thing. They may lead to changes, so they're ultimately constructive." Others feared that public disagreements and arguments among the candidates might escalate into an exchange of more than just words and ideas and might threaten the peace and stability the country only so recently achieved.

### Issues

In addition to questions about politicking and the political process, the group participants were asked about substantive issues that concerned them. The issue that was raised most often and came up in almost every group was *health care*. Second was the issue of *safety*. This was mentioned more in rural areas where there were reports of armed men in the bush. One woman in Meconta said, "during the war, bandits hid as FRELIMO and RENAMO, now there are real bandits."

Third, the public mentioned the *economy*, especially high prices. One man said that peace was a good thing for the country, "but now there is another war, a price war -- a kilo of sugar costs 3,000 meticaïs (roughly 65¢)." Other issues that were raised by significant numbers of people were education, food supplies, troop demobilization, the return of displaced persons to their communities and *human rights*, especially the right to own property, to move about freely and to free expression.

## **Voter Education Campaign**

### **Introduction**

The final topic explored in the groups was a voter education campaign. There was widespread enthusiasm for a project that would teach people how to vote. The interest was highest in the rural areas, where people were more ignorant of democracy and how to vote. The clearest evidence was in the groups' curiosity about many of the topics we discussed and their desire to learn more about them. In the rural areas, people were very self-conscious not only of their inability to read, but on a more basic level with their unfamiliarity with formal learning processes. Because they have never been taught anything in a traditional setting, some expressed fear that a formal voter education program might be intimidating. They suggested that the program emphasize the basics and go slow so that people would feel more comfortable. The visualization of the electoral process, moreover, was often put forward as a very good way of educating the electorate, particularly the most illiterate, least educated and most rural people. In Meconte, some people explained, for instance, that they had successfully grasped the nature of the Rome Peace Treaty with the help of several people re-enacting the proceedings.

### **Message**

The key themes for the voter education campaign ought to be voting as something connected to the future, and democracy as a change from the past. A series of voter education slogans were tested and the most popular was "Voting is constructive," but many participants were clearly confused at being offered a choice. Their confusion underlines a

more general point: Mozambicans are not used to having choices of the kind that democracy offers. Many participants expressed fear of reprisals if they voted for a losing party, so another critical message of the voter education campaign will have to be that votes will be secret and there will be no retaliation.

As was discussed earlier, people were profoundly ignorant of democracy and intimidated by formal learning, so voter education will have to start with the most basic and visual explanations and go slowly. One critical message is that polling stations will be near every community and people will not have to travel long distances to vote. Things like voter registration and basic voting procedures are unknown and will have to be explained.

### **Communication Techniques**

The first hurdle for any voter education program will be dealing with the profusion of languages in the country. Participants in the focus groups expressed a clear preference for presentations in their own languages and their understanding of and comfort with Portuguese was limited. Men are clearly more comfortable using Portuguese, although it was less clear if this was because women didn't understand it or if it was not culturally acceptable for them to use it. Any voter education work conducted in Portuguese will only be reaching the most educated elements of the population, who need it the least. Compounding the language problem are two significant factors: first, the country's indigenous languages do not currently contain a vocabulary for democratic processes and institutions. Those words, including "democracy" itself, have to be imported from Portuguese or created. Second, the indigenous languages are not usually written, so printed materials created in these languages will reach only a limited audience.

The most important finding of this project regarding communications techniques was the need for teams to go out to communities and present voter education information in person and with visual techniques. Mozambicans, particularly in rural communities, placed a premium on personal contact and a visualization of the message and messenger. After reviewing samples of voter education material, time after time, groups said "We like these things, but please don't send them here without someone to explain them to us." People want to be able to see, understand and question the voter education messengers. One explanation is the general level of suspicion and distrust that exists in the populace at large. As a result, people want the chance to evaluate messengers themselves. When someone comes into the community, there is an opportunity to figure out what their motivations may be and what side, if any, they may be on.

In terms of what types of organization would be most credible to carry out a voter education campaign, religious groups were mentioned most often. This was equally true in Catholic, Protestant and Muslim communities. Civic associations were also mentioned by some participants, although others felt that some civic associations have been so thoroughly politicized that they could not be seen as an impartial source of information on democracy and voting. Another possibility suggested by some people were foreigners, who could be trusted not to be caught up with one of the political parties. The emphasis throughout was on impartial, neutral messengers who could be trusted to deliver voter education information on a nonpartisan basis.

The final possibility that was suggested for voter education work is the *regulos* or traditional tribal leaders. Unfortunately, there was a wide divergence of opinion among different groups and, in fact, among different members of some groups of what role these

leaders would play in a multi-party democracy. Some suggested that they would be truly neutral civic community representatives who could play the role of voter educators. "I not only think regulos should have an educational role, but I think that they should act as go-betweens between the government and the people," said one person in Pemba. Others suggested that these local leaders would become politicized in the manner of traditional ward bosses, bartering the votes of their community for favors from the parties. "Regulos shouldn't be involved in initial stages," said someone in Mahotas. "People would be wary of their presence. They might suspect they were sent on behalf of the parties." Clearly younger people felt less comfortable with these leaders than older people and there were some areas where the local traditional leadership structures had suffered a great deal as a result of efforts to dismantle them. Generally, there were widely divergent opinions about what roles they could play. One man in Polana Caniço said, "it may be that regulos have a place in democracy, however, the word by definition means 'little king', so they are people who give orders, rule and impose their wishes."

If visits by voter education trainers to local communities came out as the most effective technique for communicating with the public, the second most effective is clearly the radio. No other method discussed in the groups appeared to be nearly as important as these two. Radio listening is an important part of the lives of many, but far from all Mozambicans listen to the radio.

Radio listenership is much higher in urban areas than rural areas. More men listen to the radio than women. In the rural areas this is particularly true because farming and household tasks leave women with little time for the radio. Radio ownership is much greater in urban areas, where sets are powered by electricity. Radio ownership in rural areas runs

on the order of 20-30% and many are powered by batteries, which are often difficult and expensive to obtain.

The prime listening hours in the rural areas are in the early afternoons as women come home from working the small family farm plots. In the cities it's in the early evening after people return from work. Local language programs are widely listened to, as are some Portuguese language broadcasts that reach a more educated audience. Because television viewership is very limited even in Maputo, radio reaches a larger part of the population, even if they listen outside of their homes.

Other communication techniques such as theater, role plays, as discussed earlier, and print materials should not be discounted but used in conjunction with community visits or the radio. Print materials should be very basic, be in color and make use of photographs. In rural areas, less well educated participants expressed a concern about drawings saying that one needs to have gone to school to understand them. Photographs, on the other hand, appear to be more accessible and less intimidating because they are a direct reflection of reality.

One final means of voter education that was discussed with the participants was the endorsement of the voter education campaign by famous nonpolitical figures such as artists, athletes or musicians. This idea seemed to strike people at best as confusing. Furthermore, there were very few suggestions for people who might play that role. The only truly national figures seem to be very politicized. Mozambique society has not yet developed such people or at least the mass communications network to bring them into every household and make them familiar.

## Methodology

The findings of this report are based on 12 Focus Groups that were conducted in Mozambique between June 19 and June 25, 1993. A total of 173 people participated in the groups, which included between 10 and 19 people each. The groups were held in four provinces: Maputo, Sofala, Nampula and Cabo Delgado. Various locations within each of those provinces were used. A full listing of the groups and their locations is attached.

The participants ranged in age from 16 to 79, although eight of the older participants did not know how old they were. All would be at least 18 by the autumn of 1994 and therefore eligible to vote. The groups included members of at least 10 ethnic groups, including Ronga, Changana, Bitonga, Chope, Macua, Makonde, Lomwe, Xitswa, Kimwani and Chuabo. Both Portuguese and various local languages were used during the discussions, which were led by Mozambican moderators trained by the Harris firm with Giulia Landi. A list of the moderators is attached. The majority of the groups contained both men and women, but two were almost all female to give women a chance to express themselves without being intimidated. The moderators followed the discussion outline that is appended. The conversation was generally allowed to flow naturally, but the moderators pulled it back to the outline from time to time to insure that the appropriate topics were being covered by each group.

The participants were recruited by a variety of religious and civic organizations that were carefully selected to reflect the full range of such organizations in Mozambique. A list of the recruiting organizations is attached. Some of the groups were held in FRELIMO-controlled areas and others in RENAMO-controlled areas. The groups were held in



churches, mosques, community centers, and, in one case, under a tree. A full list of venues is attached. The groups were tape recorded.

Focus groups are a qualitative research tool that allows researchers to explore people's underlying attitudes and beliefs. They permit long discussions and the exchange of ideas between participants. They create the opportunity to get beneath "yes" and "no" answers to explain why people think the way that they do. But unlike large-scale quantitative public opinion polling, focus groups are *not* a means for assessing who is ahead in the horse race between the parties and candidates.

**List of Focus Groups**

<u>Date</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Size of Group</u>
<b>Maputo Province</b>			
June 19	Matola	ADOCA (Housewives Assoc.)	12
June 25	Mahotas (City of Maputo)	National Farmers' Union (União Geral Das Cooperativas)	15
June 25	Mahotas (City of Maputo)	National Farmers' Union (União Geral Das Cooperativas)	14
June 25	Polana Caniço-B (City of Maputo)	Free Methodist Church	15
<b>Sofala Province</b>			
June 20	Dondo	Parochial Community Center	19
<b>Nampula Province</b>			
June 21	Bairro de Carrupeia (City of Nampula)	Islamic Education Center	13
June 22	Meconta	Caritas Community Center	12
June 22	Meconta	RENAMO Controlled Village	15
June 22	Meconta	Santa Maria Mission	14
<b>Cabo Delgado Province</b>			
June 24	Chuiba	Adama Benababa's Shop	16
June 24	Mueze	Catholic Community Center	18
June 24	Pemba	José Garcia private school	10

### Moderators and Recruiting Organizations

Moderator: Mr. Naumoro Aruma  
Linguistic skills: Portuguese, Arabic, Macua, Makonda and Swahili  
Region: Meconte, Pemba  
Organization: Muslim Council of Nampula

Moderator: Mr. Pedro Bapiro  
Linguistic skills: Portuguese, Ndaou and Sena  
Region: Beira and Dondo  
Organization: CARITAS (Catholic Organization)

Moderator: Mr. Lucas Pamilimo Grulele  
Linguistic skills: Portuguese, Shangaan and Ronga  
Region: Maputo, Green Zones  
Organization: Institute of Social Communication

Moderator: Mr. Fernando Joaquim  
Linguistic skills: Portuguese and Macua  
Region: Nampula, Meconte, Pemba  
Organization: CARITAS (Catholic Organization)

Moderator: Mrs. Yvette M'Boa  
Linguistic skills: Portuguese, Shangaan and Ronga  
Region: Maputo, Matola  
Organization: National House Wives

### Focus Group Organizers:

Sis. Irma Carmen, The Commission of Peace and Justice, Beira  
Rassul Khan Mohammed, Muslim Association of Beira, Beira  
Mr. Manuel Sithole, CARITAS, Beira  
Rev. Mother Rica Gedeao, Free Methodist Church, Maputo (suburbs)  
Ms. Selina Cossa, National Farmers Union, Maputo  
Meconte Catholic Mission, Meconte  
Archdioceses of Nampula, Nampula  
Mr. Mateus da Apie and Mr. Madeira, RENAMO, Nampula  
Islamic Council, Nampula  
Mr. Catema, headmaster of Jose Garcia private school, Pemba  
Fr. Elias, Cabo Delgado's General Vilas, Pemba  
Mr. Firoz Hassam, Muslim Community Group, Pemba

**APPENDIX A:  
FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE**

**FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE**  
**Project Vote Mozambique**  
**June, 1993**

**1. Introduction**

*15 minutes*

- A. Introduce self, other observers
- B. Explain what focus group research is
- C. Explain purpose of group
- D. Why tape recording, observers
- E. There are no right/wrong answers
- F. Keep answers short to give everyone a chance to speak
- G. Have participants introduce themselves
  - 1. Name?
  - 2. Age?
  - 3. Sex
  - 4. Marital status? Children
  - 5. What tribe/linguistic group?
  - 6. Occupation?

**2. Peace**

*10 minutes*

- A. What did the end of the civil war mean to you and your family? How was your family affected by the war?
- B. What changes will the peace mean for Mozambique?
  - 1. What's the biggest problem facing the country?
  - 2. What opportunities does the peace create?
  - 3. What kind of changes in the way country is governed will come with the peace?

**3. Democracy**

*25 minutes*

- A. What words come to mind when you hear the word "democracy"?
- B. Do you think democracy will be a good thing for Mozambique? What do you view as the advantages and disadvantages of having national elections?

- C. Have you ever voted in any circumstances (school, sports team, religious group)?
- D. Does anybody know how you vote in a presidential election?
  - 1. Is who you vote for a secret?
  - 2. What qualifications do you need?
    - a. Do you have to be able to read and write?
    - b. Do you have to be knowledgeable about politics?
    - c. Do you have to have government identity papers?
- E. Do you think there will be voting in Mozambique? When? (After this discussion, set up the premise that there will be national elections next year for all adults to vote in.)
  - 1. Will the country be able to hold free and fair elections next year? Why or why not?
  - 2. Will there be violence associated with an election?
- F. Would you like to vote in these elections? Why or why not? Would anyone you know be afraid or unwilling to vote?

**4. Issues**

*20 minutes*

- A. I'm going to read you a list of words. For each one, tell me quickly how you react?
  - 1. Constitution
  - 2. Frelimo (Is it distinct from the government?)
  - 3. Renamo
  - 4. Maputo
    - a. Do you think your linguistic group is well represented in the government?
    - b. Do you think local government should have more political and economic power?
  - 5. Nation
  - 6. United Nations
  - 7. Religion (Catholicism-Islam)
  - 8. Traditional leaders/regulos

- B. Apart from Frelimo and Renamo, have you heard of any other political parties? Which ones?
- C. If the government is in charge of administering the election with the help of the United Nations, do you think the votes will be counted fairly?
- D. In elections, the parties and candidates argue about what the best way forward for the country is. Do you think that these public discussions and disagreements among leaders will be dangerous to the future of the country?

5. Voter Educations Techniques

*20 minutes*

Intro:

The organization that came here to conduct these groups is called the National Democratic Institute. We have worked in elections all over the world in many countries. In many of those places we have developed programs that teach people how democracy works and how they can vote and participate. We are planning to do the same thing here in Mozambique before the elections next year. We would like your help in learning how we can best communicate with the people here and tell them about democracy and voting.

A. Message

1. What would you say are the best reasons to vote?
2. What things will prevent people from voting?
  - a. Fear
  - b. Illiteracy
  - c. Ignorance of what to do
  - d. Ignorance of where to go
  - e. Poverty (lack of means, transportation, etc.)
3. What would be the best way to communicate with people in your family and community about voting?
4. Slogan test. Which of the following do you like best and think would be the most effective in persuading people to vote? (Read all slogans. Allow everyone to name one or two and ask for other suggestions.)
  - a. Voting is constructive.
  - b. Voting: a song for everyone to sing.

- c. Everyone has the right to vote.
- d. Vote for a say in the future.
- e. If you don't vote, your party might lose the election by one vote.
- f. Your country is counting on you, don't be scared to vote.
- g. Vote for your children.

B. Language

1. What languages(s) do you normally speak?
2. What do you associate with Portuguese, native languages?
3. What languages should we use in a voter education campaign?

C. One possibility for the voter education is to use well-known public figures to explain how voting works and encourage people to participate. Who do you think would be good in this role. Who would you recommend? (Put up list on flip chart. After all names up, add names from master list. Ask the group for nominees.)

1. Cultural figures (e.g. musicians, poets, writers, etc.)
2. Religious leaders
3. Statesmen, traditional leaders/regulos
4. Basketball, soccer stars

D. Best ways to educate the public on voting and democracy?

1. Religious groups
2. Civic groups
3. Advertising
4. Traditional leaders (tribal chiefs/regulos)
5. Public meetings
6. Political groups
7. Youth groups

6. Voter Education Materials

20 minutes

A. Print Materials

A number of voter education materials have been developed for use in elections in other countries. Let me show you some and tell me what you like and think would work well here in Mozambique. (For all ask whether the group likes it or not and if this format could be adapted effectively for Mozambique)

1. First, a giant sample ballot used in South Africa.



2. A poster showing a voter registration card from Cambodia. Do you like the colors? Which ones?
3. A poster from Angola showing the steps for voting without any words -- for illiterates. Would this help here?
4. A poster from Senegal that says "Vote to Win" in seven languages. Do you like these colors?
5. A poster from South Africa that asks "Why Vote" and shows the answers "Peace", "Employment", "Education", "Health", and "Housing."
6. This is a newspaper developed in South Africa. (Please pass copies around.) Do you think such newspapers are a good idea?
7. This one shows photos of voting in Angola, Namibia and Romania. Is it useful to use photos?
8. What about the colors in this poster from Cambodia?
9. Last, a step-by-step election guide from Angola. Do you think many people here could understand this? Inside it has simple drawings, is that a good idea?
10. Which ones do you like best?
11. Which ones do you think would be the most effective?
12. Should several types be used in combination? Which ones?

#### B. Radio

1. Do you/can you listen? (Try to ascertain, how many people have a radio?)
  - a. How much?
  - b. Do you have a set? Batteries or electric? Problems with getting batteries or power to operate it?
  - c. What types of programs do you listen to?
  - d. What types would you like to hear about the election?

#### C. Video

1. Television

a. Do you/can you watch?

1. How much?
2. Do you have a set? Access to one? Problems with getting power to operate it?
3. What types of programs do you watch?
4. What types would you like to see about the election?

2. Films

3. Slides

D. Theater/Music/Cultural Events

E. Sample Polling Station

1. Let me show you how this polling station works as a way of teaching people about voting. (Conduct demonstration). What do you think? Is this a good tool for teaching people how to vote? Who do you think should count the voters?

7. Summary

*10 minutes*

- A. What chances of success would you see for a voter education campaign?
- B. Would you like to participate?
- C. How could we make that attractive to you?
- D. What more would you need to know about voting to get involved?
- E. Thank you very much?