

FACILITATING GENDER-EQUITABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT GELD MOZAMBIQUE:

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Introduction

In 2009, [UN Women](#) and the [United Nations Capital Development Fund](#) (UNCDF) launched the Gender Equitable Local Development (GELD) Programme in five African countries: Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania. The three-year Programme's central aim is to improve women's access to resources and services at the local level through gender-responsive planning, programming and budgeting. GELD provides technical and financial support to local governments to plan, budget, and implement programmes to better respond to women's priorities and ultimately contributes to advancing gender equality. Three complimentary strategies are utilized: 1) capacity development for local governments in gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), 2) mobilization of women to voice their needs and priorities in local level planning and budgeting processes, and 3) investment in Local Development Funds (LDFs) to address women's priorities.

This case study profiles GELD implementation in Mozambique, describing results achieved to date with a view to share knowledge that may be useful for replication and scale up. Specifically, it describes the project context and key activities to revitalize local level governing structures, with increased space for women participants, and improve women's access to services and resources. It reflects on the promising progress made to date and the challenges it has faced.

GELD Mozambique falls within the *Delivering as One UN* programme of support to decentralization and integrated local development. It is organized by a Memorandum of Understanding between UN Women, UNCDF, and the Niassa Provincial Directorate of Planning and Finance (DPPF), which is the implementing agency for GELD in Mozambique. GELD supports the district government to comply with its responsibilities and better respond to citizen's needs. The project works closely with the Provincial Government, specifically DPPF, because it is responsible for harmonizing efforts at district level. Preparatory project activities started in 2009 and project implementation commenced in August 2010.

Methodology

The qualitative case study utilized desk review and stakeholder interviews. Research questions were developed based on the desk review and terms of reference from UN Women. Interviews were conducted with staff and officials involved with GELD at the DPPF in Lichinga;

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community members, officials, and planning staff in Mueembe district; and UN Women staff and officials from the national Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD) in Maputo. The interviews were semi-structured to ensure both triangulation of data and opportunities for open-ended discussion. A draft report was circulated for validation and comment by stakeholders. The final version of the study incorporates the comments received.

Country and project context

Local development and planning

Over the last two decades Mozambique has made changes in its administrative and political structures that can be classified under the general heading of "decentralization". Most of the country's decentralization can best be described as "deconcentration"- a delegation of certain administrative functions to sub-national levels that remain accountable to the centre (Buur, 2009).

Mozambique's 2003 Law on Local State Organs (LOLE) identifies the District as the basic territorial unit of the state, with responsibility for local planning, budgeting, and implementation. District governments are accountable to the provincial tier above, run by an appointed governor along with an elected assembly that has limited powers. Provincial governments are, in turn, accountable to the central government, in a highly centralized system. With the exception of the District Development Fund (FDD), which is fully decentralized into the hands of the District Administrator, district budgets are determined and managed at central and provincial levels.

In 2009, the government of Mozambique created the FDD to promote economic development at the district level as part of the overall program on poverty eradication. The FDD provides 7 million meticaís (\$300,000) annually to every district of Mozambique to promote district development by funding citizen's projects in the areas of food production, income generation and as well as employment generating activities. The FDD targets citizens who generally do not have access to regular bank loans.

Guidelines and regulations outline the role of popular consultative councils, collectively labelled *Instituições de Participação e Consulta Comunitária* or Community Participation and Consultation Institutions (IPCC). These are seen as channels of accountability and communication with district government and technical personnel, and mechanisms for including citizen's needs and priorities in district plans and budgets.

Within the context of non-elected local government, the IPCCs are not analogous to elected municipal councils and the community consultation system thus has few teeth when it comes to downward accountability.¹ Despite the lack of democratic decentralization in rural areas, the IPCCs do theoretically offer opportunities for citizen participation and downward accountability. However, rural participation and consultation generally remain weak. This reality is explained by numerous factors, including lack of resources, lack of information among community members and planners about national planning systems and norms, lack of professional capacity, especially at the district level, politicization of participatory processes and district fund allocations, and the weakness of civil society (Pereira, 2009).

¹ "Downward accountability" here refers to the accountability of government to citizens.

Mozambique's gender environment

Mozambique is a signatory to both CEDAW and the SADC Gender and Development Declaration, and its constitution recognizes the principle of equality between men and women in all spheres. The Government's Five Year Plan and poverty reduction strategy both identify gender equity and the empowerment of women as key factors in poverty reduction. Mozambique's national gender machinery includes a Ministry of Women and Social Action and the National Council for the Advancement of Women, created in 2006 as an intersectoral mechanism to monitor and promote implementation of government policies and plans on women and gender. Gender focal points within the various sectoral ministries also have counterparts at provincial and district levels.

Notwithstanding these policy and political frameworks, gender disparities persist in areas of educational attainment, health, access to resources and economic opportunity. Gender parity in enrolment at the primary level has been achieved, but only 65.1% of girls completed primary school as compared with 80% of boys. Nearly 58% of Mozambicans living with HIV & AIDS are women and this feminization is even starker among 15-29 year olds. Additionally, violence against women is widespread with an estimated 54% of Mozambican women affected (INE, 2007).

Gender disparities in the economic arena are significant, particularly access to and control over productive and economic opportunities. Women account for 87.3% of the labour force in agriculture - the sector with the lowest wages. The need to increase women's access to productive assets, with an emphasis on technologies and other quality inputs, has been highlighted as a main challenge. But this requires attention to other fundamental gender issues to ensure that opportunities for women to participate in the economy and benefit fairly are realized, notably by ensuring land ownership, access to formal employment, markets and financial services.

Even though patriarchal structures prevail throughout Mozambican society, including in party politics (ASDI citing Osorio *et al.*, 2007), the number of women in formal politics is relatively high. Over 39% of parliamentarians are women, largely because the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) internal quota system requires that one third of candidates be women (ASDI, 2007: 58). The proportion of women in high level government posts, such as minister and deputy minister, also increased between 1997 and 2006 (ASDI, 2007: 59). Government regulations also stipulate a 30% quota for women in the local Consultative Councils.

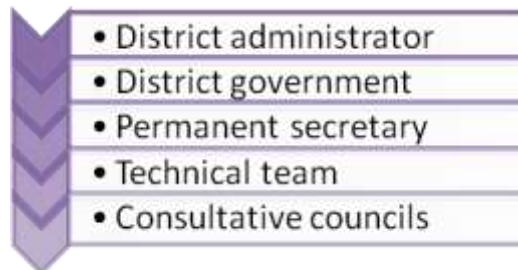
Despite the fact that gender equality is widely understood to be essential to successful development and a requirement of democracy; and despite the prevalence of decentralization reforms ostensibly aimed at improving both efficiency and empowerment outcomes, gender is rarely mainstreamed robustly into these reforms. Specific activities-training and capacity building for officials, politicians, and women in communities, efforts to offset the constraints on women's participation, appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks from local to national levels, and more-are all required to ensure that women's needs and voices are heard, that local patriarchal cultures do not dominate decentralized processes, that women have opportunities to participate in formal politics, and that resources are allocated in ways that benefit women as

well as men (IDRC, 2008). The GELD Mozambique project addresses many of these issues in a systematic effort to tighten the linkages among gender, decentralization, and local planning, budgeting, and implementation.

Project location

GELD Mozambique began implementation in the Muembe District of the Niassa Province in northwest Mozambique. Muembe is a rural district of approximately 29,000 inhabitants with 80% of the population engaged in agriculture. Selection of Muembe as the first district for GELD implementation was based primarily on the results of a 2008 baseline study and strong political support.

The visual on the right illustrates the administrative organization of the district.



Strategies, approaches, and results

Preparation - setting the stage

The 2008 baseline study examined Mozambique's main decision making bodies, processes and roles of various actors in each local authority,² capturing baseline information by which progress could be assessed over the course of the project, including capacity gaps in gender mainstreaming among local technical and political leaders.

From February to August 2010, preparatory work was conducted at DPPF headquarters. DPPF represents the Ministries of Planning and Development (MPD) and Finance at the provincial level, serving as the institutional link between provincial government and the centralized government.

Following her recruitment, the UN Women GELD National Coordinator, a Mozambican national, worked to strengthen her understanding of provincial planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes. Next, the GELD Steering Committee (COEGELD) was established, serving as a platform to provide independent monitoring of GELD to support policy work and scaling up. The committee is led by the DPPF and includes members from the provincial assembly, district government, Permanent Secretary and NGOs, civil society organizations such as the women's forum³ and academics. Additionally, time was devoted to forging relationships with key provincial staff and officials in the DPPF, raising GELD's visibility within the directorate

Once the GELD coordinator moved to Muembe, implementation commenced with three focal and complementary efforts: renewal of the consultative councils (CCs), facilitation of women's participation, and capacity building with government technical staff. This case study looks

² The 2008 baseline study was updated in 2010 at the start of project implementation.

³ [Fórum Mulher](#) is a Women's Network Forum that works for the rights of Mozambican women. Forum Mulher is a very significant civil society organization that addresses gender and development issues, advocacy and lobbying, as well as education and information work.

specifically at the first two strategies and also describes a local funding window supported by GELD to provide catalytic support to increase resource availability for women's priorities.

Renewing the Consultative Councils (CCs)

GELD addresses gender equitable community participation through the government-sanctioned IPPC structures, while at the same time engaging district government officials, technical team members, and key provincial level planning staff.

A central achievement has been the revitalization-or, perhaps more accurately, the initiation-of participatory planning in Muembe, through the renewal of community CCs from village to district level. Established in 2006 in Muembe, CCs are revitalized every four years to elect new members. In Muembe, this process commenced to comply with the LOLE regulation that at least 30% of CC members are women.

These councils are identified in government guidelines as channels for including citizens' needs and priorities in district plans, but they were only partially functional before GELD's launch. Through the renewal process, GELD has had the opportunity to promote women's representation and participation as an integral element, rather than simply "adding on" women's involvement to existing institutions and processes. In this way, GELD Mozambique's task has been to facilitate a genuinely participatory process for the first time, with gender equity concerns included from the outset. This has created the opportunity to define participation and accountability from the outset, building an understanding of people's needs and priorities as the differentiated needs of both men and women.

The 2008 baseline study described a high level of women's participation in Muembe's local consultative bodies, especially in villages, and noted that "women are not only represented but also participate in the discussions" (Oldenburg and Sitão, 2008). But the number of women CC members was actually well below the stipulated 30% and, in practice, many of the women did not speak up, or even attend, meetings-often because they were not invited, or were not given enough notice to make arrangements to attend.

One of GELD's first activities was a series of meetings from the village level up to identify and select CC candidates. To ensure women's inclusion, community members drew up separate men's and women's candidate lists. Prior to the launch of GELD, Muembe district had two CCs at the Locality level, two at the Administrative Post level, and one District CC. Following the renewal process, there are 21 Village CCs, four Locality CCs, two Administrative Post CCs, and one District CC. Meanwhile, women's membership in these bodies increased across the board, from about 20% to about 35% (GELD Relatorio, 2010).

GELD's success in increasing women's participation in the IPCC structure is partly due to the efforts made to understand and navigate the local cultural and political context and build alliances. Before starting the renewal process, the GELD national coordinator and the District Technical Team (EDT), accompanied by the head of the District Police, the District Administrator and the head of the District State Security and Information service, met with the Régulo Ntamila, an influential traditional leader. The coordinator introduced GELD,

emphasizing its link to government, and expressing hope that he could help promote women's involvement:

I told him we needed his help. I said that something was changing in the world, that the majority of poor people are women, and that women suffer a lot and must participate somehow in decision making. He said he understood and that he could help me listen to women and find out what they needed. He said that we could work together.



Community consultation

Régulo Ntamila is a CC member in his own village and through to the district level. His support helped shape favourable community opinion. The husband of one female CC member explained that when his wife was selected as a candidate for the District Consultative Council, Régulo Ntamila visited his house to ask if he was willing to have his wife participate. The Régulo also helped encourage husbands of female CC members to attend a workshop organized in December 2010 to address some of the obstacles to women's participation.

The GELD project organized a meeting with influential women from the district prior to CC renewal. The 26 women were female officials and civil society representatives, as well as wives of village *régulos* or district government officials. Gaining their support facilitated community sensitization about GELD. They advocated for and actively engaged in discussions about the project, and supported effective implementation in the Muembe context.

Community leaders engaged in GELD Mozambique have supported the CC members to organize community consultations. During the consultations, community members share their priorities and needs – information that is then translated into local plans. The Planning and Finance technical team, made up of planning officers from five different sectors, facilitates the process of needs' identification and then develops a report on the identified priorities. The district government evaluates and approves the district plan, which is then sent to the DPPF to be evaluated and harmonized with other district plans and shared with the central level.

Supporting spaces for women's participation

GELD stakeholders agree that women's participation in Muembe has improved in quality and quantity with the advent of the project. Women elected as CC members, based on criteria of community activism and engagement in civil society or a local committee, report a sense of satisfaction about contributing to their communities, and pride in knowing that others believe they can take on the role. But actually taking part in the meetings is not always easy. Lucia Rachide, a member of the IPPC structure from the village to the district level, said that at first she did not want to take part in meetings that included both men and women. She had never participated in any similar activities before, and felt shy about speaking up. But after watching other women with more experience, and with encouragement, she said she feels more comfortable.

Victoria Asudu expressed similar positive feelings. Previously, she said, women were not included when meetings were held: *"But now we are included, and when we say something, they listen. For instance, we can discuss the use of the seven million [the government's FDD]. We feel equal to men"*. Several men who were interviewed expressed surprise at women's ability to express their opinions. According to the GELD coordinator, men sometimes actively encourage women to speak up during meetings: *"They say, 'Later you'll say we didn't give you a chance, so you need to say something now!'"*

GELD activities have built confidence, encouraged women to speak up, and offered opportunities to learn about their rights and responsibilities. Male and female CC members received training on community participation and gender. But GELD also organized two sessions for women only, where facilitators presented and led discussion on government guidelines, community participation, and the role of women. The women also discussed constraints to their participation. They identified lack of economic independence, responsibilities of domestic work, low levels of literacy, and their husbands' "jealousy" as main constraints. As a strategy to overcome the last constraint, they suggested that GELD organize a workshop to talk with their husbands about their work on the CCs and try to generate support for wives' participation.

Transformation within the existing context - engaging men

The "husbands' workshop" was held in December 2010. While initially seen as a potential risk, it was one of the biggest successes of GELD's first year. *"Before"*, said one man, *"I felt bad when someone came to invite my wife to a meeting. But now I understand that it's important for the wives to participate"*. Men who participated in the workshop stressed the importance of giving women advance notice of meetings so that they are able to prepare for their departure and making sure that meetings were not too long. They also suggested avoiding meetings

during the rainy season, as this is the time of the "Unhago" festival -an important rite of passage festival for boys and girls, involving the entire community - as well as a time when families move to the fields to work on the land. During the workshop, men talked about some of the difficulties they face, such as negative comments from other men. One participant explained:

...[s]ometimes they ask, "Where is your wife? And often we don't know how to respond. So the neighbours take advantage of the situation to make insinuations that make us feel distrustful when our wives go out. But now we know, and we can respond to anyone. We'd like to have more meetings to raise awareness of men in our communities who might sometimes have wives in the consultative councils (GELD Relatorio, 2010).



The husbands' workshop

Maganga Jabilo, the husband of one CC member, said that attending the husbands' workshop helped him and other men understand that when women go to meetings, they are working to benefit their families and community. But not everyone, he says, accepts women's involvement. Some men say they would not allow their own wives to attend meetings. Jabilo says he tells these men that *"with ideas like that, the community will never develop, because it isn't possible for women just to stay at home. Women must participate to contribute to the development of the community"*.

An important ingredient for effective strategies to enhance women's participation appears to be the involvement of both male and female technical team members and facilitators. 'Women's projects' are often managed entirely by women. But while the presence of women facilitators helps put community women at ease and provides models of women speaking up and playing leadership roles, it is important for both men and women to see men expressing commitment to gender equality. Experiences elsewhere show that lack of support from men at the local level is often a major hindrance to improving women's participation.

Bringing men on board is important, but it can be difficult to sustain their support. When the advantages of women's participation are obvious—as in the villages where GELD's capital investment fund is drilling bore wells this year—men (and women) are likely to accept the idea. But Antonio Jangui lives in a village that has not yet benefited directly from the renewal of the consultative councils. He attended the husbands' meeting and professes support for his wife's participation, but says that he and others are still waiting for something positive to come out of the process.

Initial promising progress on priority setting

It is still too soon for tangible evidence that increasing women's presence and voice in Mueembe's IPCC processes leads to more gender equitable local development. In the CC meetings, lists of community needs are developed first by groups of men and women separately. Men and women then meet together to see what needs are shared by both groups.

According to most of the CC members interviewed, when men and women met to compare lists, they had similar priorities related to basic needs. But on needs related to women's specific experience, different issues emerged when women were present. For example, women cited the need for more beds in the women's ward of the local health centre, and requested maize-grinding machines to replace women and girls' hard manual labour.

We welcome this programme that the Government of the District brought to Nzize and to Lutuesse. This programme empowers us members of the Consultative Councils... Now we know that before the government starts planning it must listen to us. Female CC Council member

After the community CC list is finalized, incorporating female and male member priorities, three to four members attend and defend their priorities to the Councils at all administrative levels: 1) locality, 2) *posto administrativo*, and 3) district. As the village, locality, and administrative level CCs select the top priorities to carry forward to the District CC, the GELD project raises awareness that all members are accountable to their communities.

Improving women's access to services and resources

GELD supports a capital investment funding window to catalyze initial financing of women's priorities and complement government mainstream funding. The fund is administered by a Management Committee composed of two CC representatives (one man and one woman), a representative of the district government, and the GELD national coordinator. "Resources [are] earmarked for women's priorities identified by women's groups" based on the participatory planning and gender analysis processes envisioned under the project (GELD PRODOC: 6). In addition to direct project funding, the GELD funding window includes consulting support in areas such as small business management.



Women at the Consultative Councils Meeting

Because GELD Mozambique did not begin implementation until August 2010, the capital investment fund selection was carried out separately from the overall Muembe District planning process. This work was part of capacity strengthening sessions with the CCs at the beginning of September to permit disbursement of the investment fund's 2010 budget. Women's needs were highlighted in the CC meetings, and then community members prepared project proposals in line with these priorities. The selection of the GELD capital investment fund projects operated as a kind of trial run for the general planning process.

The 2010 funded projects, selected based on community priorities raised by CC consultations, were: an electrical generation plant in Muembe Sede (the district capital town), four bore wells, construction and start-up of a bakery business, and a fresh produce store. These investments responded to specific priorities raised by women. For example, the bore wells help reduce the time required to transport water - a major issue that women referenced as negatively affecting their work burden.

GELD funding has helped build enthusiasm for community planning and women's participation by generating some visible results quickly. This can have both advantages and disadvantages. Particularly for individuals and communities benefiting directly from the funds, the projects

demonstrate the utility of investing in the IPCC process, and show that priorities voiced by communities can gain a response. But GELD's primary purpose is to facilitate and support implementation of the government's planning guidelines. A potential disadvantage of the funding window is that it presents GELD as a project-funding mechanism, contributing to confusion among some stakeholders over the relationships among District Government, Provincial Directorate, and the GELD project.

This funding window is also intended to provide a model for the administration of the government's own FDD, which has been criticized for lack of effectiveness and transparency. FDD administration might improve by including community representatives on the fund management committee, selecting projects based on community priorities identified through a participatory process, and establishing criteria that emphasize benefits to women-all elements of the local capital investment fund. A start was made toward influencing the FDD in 2011, when the GELD national coordinator worked with district officials to ensure records of beneficiaries of approved projects were disaggregated by sex, facilitating efforts to monitor gender impacts of implementation.

Gender responsive planning, budgets, and monitoring

The most recent draft District Plan does not differ substantially from past ones in terms of including gender analysis or more sex-disaggregated data. The existing template for writing the plan is not conducive to reflect the participatory, gender equitable planning process that occurred in Muembe. But, work is underway with provincial planning staff to see whether it is possible to present the Muembe District Plan in a different format. The budget model at the national level was slightly modified for 2011 to capture sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries and allow gender dimensions to be reflected in templates on outputs and activities. The issue seems to be that the revised models have not yet been adopted at the district level.

At the national level, the MPD and Ministry of Finance are working together to better integrate planning and budget processes into one unified national system, but locally the links remain weak. Sectoral budget ceiling estimates, based on the three-year national medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF), are available each year before the planning cycle begins, and planners are expected to use them to link proposed activities to financing. But the annual district planning process conducted by local planners with support from the DPPF seems divorced from the annual budgeting exercise, which occurs at the provincial level on the basis of allocations handed down from the central government to each sector. The problem reflects district planners' lack of knowledge and capacity on budget systems and probably also a lack of cohesion between budget and planning sections within the DPPF.

The problem reflects the limitations of Mozambique's decentralization/deconcentration process. At the district level, there seems to be a sense of dissatisfaction with the fact that, while planning ostensibly takes place locally, allocation decisions are made at higher levels. Local planners feel constrained in their ability to respond to local needs and demonstrate accountability to local citizens. In this context, inserting gender responsive budget and monitoring mechanisms into the process is challenging. However, doing so is the necessary next step in GELD's programming. With the 2011 planning cycle due for completion when the

province approved district plans and allocated their budgets, the GELD team intended to begin monitoring implementation of last year's budget and strengthening the links between plans and budgets for next year.

To begin to address these challenges, an August 2011 Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting training was conducted that targeted technical staff from key sectors, including DPPF. Organized by UN Women, the training focused on the utilization of the new MPD methodology and targeted two planning officers from each district in Niassa Province. Also, the 2012 Economic and Social Plan and District Budget (PESOD) was reformulated to align with the new MPD guidelines. In addition, partners' (such as NGO, CSO and private sector) activities were included in the revised plan. To facilitate communication between provincial and district levels, GELD hopes to replicate the trainings delivered at provincial level at district level.

Lessons to date and way forward

Though it is too early for a comprehensive analysis of GELD Mozambique's strategies and results, there are already lessons to be learned from its experience.

The experience confirms the necessity of understanding gender as a concept that involves both men and women. In practice, gender initiatives are often simply projects for women. GELD Mozambique is concerned with empowering women, but its strategies reflect attention to how men's and women's roles, attitudes, and relationships with each other affect the prospects for gender equality. Bringing men into the project will probably make change more meaningful and sustainable over the long term.

The project began by renewing the consultative councils *in toto*, rather than simply adding women or working with existing women members, which further entrenches this gender orientation. GELD Mozambique had the opportunity to define participation in local planning from the outset in terms of equitable involvement of both women and men, with special attention to overcoming constraints facing women. By building gender responsiveness into the decentralized bureaucratic practices and community processes, the project creates some of the necessary conditions for women to benefit.

Catalytic funding through the capital investment fund has helped demonstrate linkages between women's participation in local planning and the achievement of concrete results. The translation of women's priorities into funded projects has resulted in tangible benefits for communities and in turn encouraged women's continued participation in planning and men's support of it. However, the funding window may contribute to the view of GELD as primarily a funding mechanism, which it is not. The reflection of main elements of the funding window in the government's FDD could help to address this issue and support improved functionality and transparency of the FDD.

With respect to specific constraints on women, illiteracy was identified as an important factor that kept women from participating more actively. Although adult literacy classes are available, women tend not to take advantage of them and say their husbands discourage them from doing

so. Finding ways to support women's literacy would be an important step in facilitating women's presence and voice in the IPCCs. Meanwhile, it may be useful for the project to seek out methodologies designed for use with non-literate people.

GELD Mozambique's institutional arrangements, especially the partnership with the DPPF, contribute to the project's success. Research in other countries has shown that promoting gender equality through decentralized planning depends heavily on conditions and policies established and enforced nationally, and the GELD experience bears this out. The project is designed and generally perceived as a support to provincial and district officials attempting to comply with existing policies and regulations emanating from the central government. This legitimizes its efforts in the eyes of those who might otherwise be less than enthusiastic.

Finally, a question will arise over the next couple of years on how to consolidate, replicate, and scale up gains achieved in this pilot initiative. One strategy already underway is the showcasing of GELD in GRB training for all district technical teams as well as other officials, as a means of sharing knowledge and influencing practices in other districts. Plans are also underway to expand GELD into Sanga, another Niassa district, leveraging the commitment, skills, and experience already developed by provincial and district technical staff and the coordinator and testing how strategies employed in Muembe work in a different-but similar-context. Long term success may be better guaranteed through concerted efforts to deepen and share knowledge, tools, and experience on participatory and gender responsive planning and budgeting within the provincial directorate, to promote the DPPF's future support for GELD-style work in districts across the province.

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