

DISCUSSION PAPER No. 312

The EU's gender action plan and the realities of Mozambique

GENDER

By **Mariella Di Ciommo and Marta Cumbi**

November 2021

In the last years, Mozambique has made progress in advancing gender equality and improving the lives of women and girls, but challenges still remain in several areas – from health to early marriages. The scale of these challenges calls for concerted actions from the Mozambican government, communities and international partners to sustain progress on the gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) agenda.

This paper looks at how the European Union (EU) is implementing its Gender Action Plan (GAP III) in the country, which overlaps with Mozambique's own gender priorities. We argue that while the EU has made good progress, it needs to have more sustained dialogue and follow-up with Mozambican authorities and civil society and ensure that the capacities of all stakeholders are used to realise joint gender-related ambitions. This means engaging with civil society organisations – a critical force for progressing on the GEWE agenda. Their involvement in the GAP III implementation will be crucial. Similarly, the EU will need to work more systematically with the relevant Mozambican ministries and increase cooperation with EU member states going forward.

The implementation of GAP III runs parallel to the programming of EU external action under the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe) for the period 2021-2027, a process which should be finalised by the end of 2021. The next few months will therefore offer an important opportunity to make sure gender features more strongly in the cooperation between the EU and Mozambique.

Table of Contents

Acronyms	ii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. The legislative and policy context for gender action in Mozambique.....	2
3. An assessment of the progress towards gender equality in Mozambique	3
4. The EU’s GAP III and programming in Mozambique.....	5
5. GAP III implementation in Mozambique and the collaboration with EU member states	6
6. Level of ambition: policy dialogue and national ownership.....	7
7. The application of the GAP III principles.....	8
Conclusions and recommendations.....	9
Bibliography	11

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all the interviewees for sharing their insights with them. The authors are grateful to ECDPM colleagues Andrew Sherriff and Katja Sergejeff for their research support and valuable feedback, and Annette Powell for her work on layout. Marta Cumbi is an independent expert working on gender issues in Mozambique. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and any errors or omissions remain the responsibility of the authors. Comments and feedback can be sent to Mariella Di Ciommo <mdc@ecdpm.org>.

Acronyms

AGIR	Actions for an Inclusive and Responsible Governance Programme
AU	African Union
CLIP	Country level implementation plan
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CSOs	Civil society organisations
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union delegation
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCG	Gender coordination Group
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IESE	Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estatística
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and intersex
MGCAS	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action
MINEDH	Ministério da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano
MIP	Multiannual indicative programme
MISAU	Ministério da Saúde
NDICI	Neighbourhood, development and international cooperation instrument
PQG	Programa Quinquenal do Governo
SADC	Southern African development community
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
TEIs	Team Europe Initiatives
UEM	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane
UN	United Nations
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WLSA	Women and law in Southern Africa
WPS	Women, peace and security

1. Introduction

Mozambique is advancing gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) based on its commitments at international and regional levels, domesticated through national laws and policies and materialised by national plans and programmes. In 2007, the country developed a gender policy and an accompanying implementation strategy (República de Moçambique 2018a). Updated in 2018, it provides context-specific guiding principles with the view to enable decision-making and the identification of actions to elevate the status of women and improve gender equality.¹ Several ministries also developed their own gender strategies that seek to incorporate the gender dimension in their programmes and structures. The Government's Five-Year Programme (PQG) for 2020-2024 guides policies in all areas of the national public administration and includes a gender dimension under the Human Development and Social Justice Strategic objectives, although not in other policy domains (República de Moçambique 2020).²

Despite some progress on the GEWE agenda, there is still a lot of work to do in Mozambique to align the country legislative and policy plans to the reality of its populations. Some progress has been made in some social indicators over the last few years. For example, the average enrolment rate for girls in primary education improved from 47.9% in 2015 to 48.2% in 2019. The increase is small but considering that the enrolment rate for boys decreased from 52% to 51.8% in the same period, it is an achievement (INE 2019). The maternal mortality rate has also dropped, although quite modestly. In 2017, the maternal mortality rate was 451.6/100,000 compared to 500.2/100,000 in 2007 (INE 2017a). However, several challenges remain. Mozambique is ranked the 10th country in the world with high prevalence of early marriages: 48% of women were married before the age of 18 and 14% were married before 15, in 2011 (Plan International 2019). In 2017, on average, 39% of people of 15 years of age or above were illiterate, but women (49.4%) much more than men (27.2%) (INE 2017b). In 2018, women between 15 and 49 years old were more likely than men to have HIV, with a prevalence rate of 15.1% for the former and 10.2% for the latter (MISAU and INE 2019).

As an external plan to promote GEWE worldwide, the EU's Gender Action Plan III – An Ambition Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action (GAP III), released in December 2020, provides an opportunity for enhanced collaboration between the EU, the Mozambican state and its civil society (EC 2020). The parallel programming of EU external action, a complex exercise that defines the EU priorities and financial allocations in different contexts, offers the chance to better integrate gender objectives into the EU action for the period 2021-2027 (Di Ciommo 2021).

This paper, based on desk research on publicly available material and interviews, looks at how the EU's GAP III high ambitions are landing on the ground in the case of Mozambique and how its aspirations are being integrated into the programming process for the period 2021-2027. Namely, the paper looks at:

1. what has been done so far to implement the GAP III and integrate it into the programming process in the case of Mozambique;
2. what capacities the EU delegation (EUD) have to implement the EU gender agenda, including with the European member states present in Mozambique;

¹ Its principles include: a) Gender equality and gender equity; b) Transversality; c) Participation; d) Social justice; e) Transparency and accountability; and f) Cooperation (República de Moçambique 2018a).

² The PQG covers a broad range of topics such as: a) Gender equality and equity; b) Social inclusion and protection of vulnerable groups of the population; c) Inclusive and equitable education system; d) Maternal health; e) Adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); e) Nutrition; f) Girls' economic empowerment; g) GBV; and h) Early marriages.

-
3. to what extent the EU has been able to engage in policy dialogue and work with civil society, in the spirit of alignment to national ownership;
 4. the extent to which the EU has been able to implement the GAP III principles.

This case study is a follow-up to ECDPM's discussion paper *Taking the Gender Agenda Forward in EU Programming*, published in April 2021 (Teevan et al. 2021). That paper built on country evidence from Ethiopia, Mali and Mozambique to offer an early analysis on how the GAP III provisions have been followed through on the ground and have been integrated into the programming process. This case study builds and updates that research in the specific case of Mozambique.

2. The legislative and policy context for gender action in Mozambique

Mozambique has a robust legal and policy framework for the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, particularly compared to other Southern African Development Community (SADC) Countries. Over the last few decades, several international, continental and regional instruments were ratified, committing the government to approve national legislation and put in place administrative measures to promote and protect the rights of women, girls and other vulnerable groups (UN Women 1979; AU 1990; UNESCWA 1995; OHCHR 2003; SADC 2008; UN 2015). The domestication of international commitments are reflected, for example, in the Mozambican Constitution that states that women and men have the same social, political and economic rights (Portal do Governo de Moçambique n.d.).

In 2018, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action (MGCAS), the government institution responsible for coordinating the gender equality agenda in the country, approved three important national plans that set priorities and targets towards equitable social justice in the country: 1) National Plan for Prevention and Combat to Violence against Women (2018-2021) (República de Moçambique 2018b); 2) National Plan for the Advancement of Women and Girls (2018-2022) (República de Moçambique 2019); and 3) National Plan for Women, Peace and Security (2018-2022) (República de Moçambique 2018c).

The government also approved/reviewed a number of laws such as:

1. Family Law (2004, reviewed in 2019) aims to ensure family environments where violence, discrimination and exploitation do not occur and guarantees equal pay at work for men and women. The review revoked the clause that allowed children from 16 years to get married with family permission (Reformar 2019a).
2. Law on Domestic Violence against Women (2009) combats all forms of violence within the family and includes the Multisectoral Mechanism for Integrated Assistance to Women Victims of Violence (2012), which seeks to improve access and availability of medical, legal and psychosocial services in a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated manner (IESE 2009; WLSA Moçambique 2012).
3. Succession Law (2019) gives the right to inheritance to spouses and/or long-term partners (Reformar 2019b).
4. Law on Prevention and Combat to Premature Unions (2019) protects girls from early marriage and holds perpetrators to account (UNICEF 2019).
5. Review of the Penal Code (2019) penalises violence against women and girls, de-criminalises safe abortion and nulled an article that offered pardon to perpetrators of sexual violence if they married the victim (Reformar 2019c).³

³ Other legal and policy provisions include: The Law for the Prevention and Combat against Premature Unions; National Plan for Prevention and Combat of Domestic Violence; The National Plan for the Advancement of Women; and The National Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

The approval and review of the above legislation by the Mozambican Parliament occurred under female leadership. For example, Her Excellency Verónica Nataniel Macamo Dlovo, who served as the first female President of the Parliament (2010-2020) and is the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated in 2021 during the celebrations of the 2nd anniversary of the approval of the Law for the Prevention and Combat against Premature Unions that the approval of the law to combat premature marriages was a victory for women and society as a whole. Yet, she noted that there is still a need to strengthen the public and private institutions to ensure the implementation of these laws (Club of Mozambique 2021).

Other participants to the celebrations recommended dissemination of the law, capacity building of public servants and relevant stakeholders and mobilisation of community leaders, women and men, to put an end to premature unions. They also recommended the adoption of specific targets and monitoring mechanisms of law implementation by the government and key stakeholders.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are a critical force for progressing on the GEWE agenda in Mozambique. They have been crucial, for example, in advocating for and contributing to legislation review (for example Forum Mulher); raising awareness on the challenges faced by women, girls and children in communities and demanding response from the government, including in the fragile context of Cabo Delgado (for example Plataforma Mulheres ComVida); monitoring government actions to provide safe, equitable and inclusive education, including during the COVID-19 pandemic (for example Mozambican Education Network); and implementing specific projects under, for example, the Spotlight Initiative of the EU and Actions for an Inclusive and Responsible Governance Programme (AGIR), funded by Sweden Denmark and the Netherlands.⁴ In addition, from 2021, the Women Observatory gathers CSOs, women rights activists, academia and other interested people with the view to collecting data, make evidence-based advocacy and monitor the implementation of country commitments on gender equality and women empowerment. The expectation is that the Women Observatory will be of added value to increase accountability for the realisation of women rights and improve the implementation of the national legislations and policies, although some observers are sceptical of how successful it will be in bringing about change (Interview, 10 August 2021).

3. An assessment of the progress towards gender equality in Mozambique

Despite the legal and policy provisions enabling an environment for gender equality, Mozambique still has a long way to go for the realisation of women and girls' rights due to systemic and sociocultural challenges. The extent of the implementation of legal and policy provisions depends on political leadership and technical and financial capacity in the public administration at both national and local level. So far, implementation has been slow, due to limited knowledge of specific regulations on gender by public officers and limited access to justice for ordinary citizens. Additional challenges include the difficulty to track interventions and resources allocated to gender, including by international partners, and the absence of systematic assessments of policy and legislative implementation. Data on gender issues and accountability and monitoring mechanisms on implementation need to be strengthened along with financial allocations to the gender agenda (Interview, 19 March 2021).

Some interviewees raised the issue that the MGCAS has not been sufficiently equipped with technical and financial support. Therefore, it struggles to exercise the necessary authority to fully realise its mandate and comprehensively

⁴ [The Spotlight Initiative](https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/mozambique) (2019-2022) is a global EU initiative implemented by UN agencies and CSOs that seeks to combat sexual and GBV and early marriage as well as promote women and girls' sexual and reproductive health. The project was adapted to respond also to the COVID-19 pandemic. See also: <https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/mozambique>. AGIR (2010-2020) aimed to support and strengthen the capacity of CSOs and community-based organisations on gender equality, human rights and accountability.

oversee the wide gender agenda in the country. At the same time, gender is not a transversal issue for other ministries that deal with issues and sectors that matter for women and girls. For example, while the PQG 2020-2024 has a gender dimension under human development and social justice, it does not present specific gender equality objectives and targets for economic development, sustainable management of natural resources and the environment, and peace and security. The national action plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is still to be translated into concrete actions to ensure women's participation in conflict resolutions, decision-making processes at all levels, including in the design of interventions.

The impact of legislation and policy is lessened by the persistence of social and economic inequalities between men and women rooted in social and cultural norms and practices. These disproportionately affect women and girls, subjecting them to subordination, violence, discrimination and voicelessness, with consequent marginalisation in social, economic and political life. Many girls are denied their right to education and several do not complete secondary school: in 2019, 45.7% of girls completed primary school and only 17.3% completed secondary school (MINEDH 2020). Women have limited access to productive resources, training, opportunities and funding for their economic initiatives (República de Moçambique 2018a). For example, access to banking and credit is very low for both men and women. But women struggle comparatively more (only 6.6% of women and 12% of men have a bank account and 1% of women and 2.2% of men have access to credit) (INE 2017b). In addition, they seldom have decision-making power, including on issues related to their health and bodies and, if they do make choices, the local culture often requires male approval.

Violence against women and girls continues to be widespread and is mostly perpetrated by intimate partners as well as family members (UEM and UN Women 2021). Data from INE show a decrease in reported cases of domestic violence against women from 2019 to 2020 (INE 2017b; Ministerio do Interior 2021).⁵ However, anecdotal evidence suggests that cases of gender-based violence (GBV), including early marriages, are likely to increase under emergencies and conflicts and as levels of poverty deepen. This may be due to the adoption of unhealthy or dangerous coping mechanisms. The confinement during the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact may have increased the chances of gender-based family violence, barriers to report and limited and/or overstretched services that are the entry points for reporting such as health units and police stations.

Notwithstanding the persistent challenges, the country has progressed on many accounts. There are more women in decision-making institutions, especially at central level, parliament and executive and municipalities. The 2019 elections resulted in 42.2% female representation in parliament, with a female chairperson; 45.5% in the executive as compared to 34% and 20% respectively in 2004. The municipalities elected 34% women in 2018, compared to 30% in 2004 (Gender Links 2020). These gains are yet to be translated into more vigorous actions to address the challenges of women and girls in their respective sectors and constitute a united front to influence gender mainstreaming in all sectors of public administration and promote policy dialogue and resource allocation at all levels.

The scale of the challenges in Mozambique calls for concerted actions from community-level to central government to sustain progress on the GEWE agenda. This is especially the case for a solid post COVID-19 recovery and includes reinvigorating the institutions that have the mandate to promote gender equality and women rights, raise awareness and increase capacity in other institutions with a wider mandate to implement the national GEWE provisions, allocate more resources to the gender agenda while maintaining the political will at all levels. Despite CSOs' key role on the gender agenda, they face financial, capacity and technical constraints that need to be addressed.

⁵ Under-reporting can occur, for example, due to pressure or fear of reprisal, lack of trust in the judicial system, limited capacity to follow reporting requirements and the preference to resort to family and community structures to settle cases of violence.

4. The EU's GAP III and programming in Mozambique

The EU's Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III) published in December 2020 arises from a stronger political will to put gender higher up on the EU agenda, despite resistances from a minority of EU member states (EC 2020). Overall, it presents a progressive and wide-ranging vision on the matter, covering several thematic areas, namely:

1. GBV;
2. SRHR;
3. economic and social rights and empowering girls and women, including economic empowerment, education and health;
4. equal participation and leadership;
5. the women, peace and security agenda; and
6. women, green transition and the digital transformation.

The GAP III spans from development policy to trade and foreign relations and links gender to EU policy priorities on green and digital transformations. The GAP III is guided by three principles for implementation, endorsing a transformational, intersectional and human-rights based approach. It proposes a so-called 'three-pronged approach' that includes specific actions on gender, mainstreaming gender across EU external action and policy dialogue. In addition, the new external financing instrument of the EU, the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe) reiterates the GAP III objective of mainstreaming gender, setting a target of 85% of action that will need to have gender as a significant objective, of which 5% will need to have gender as a principal objective. The NDICI-Global Europe programming guidelines also require that at least one project per country has gender as a principal objective.

The context of Mozambique makes for a challenging as well as conducive environment for the enactment of the ambitious agenda set by the EU's GAP III. Mozambique's laws and policies and the GAP III are broadly in line on many accounts. For example, they both emphasise the end of all forms of GBV, promote SRHR, place importance on advancing equal participation and leadership and incorporate the WPS agenda. The GAP III principles and the mainstreaming of gender in EU external action are aligned with the national provisions for a multisectoral approach to gender and the identified need to advance the cultural and social understanding of gender relations in Mozambique, expressed, for example, by CSOs.

The EUD in Mozambique has been working on a number of important documents to define the EU priorities in Mozambique and how to go about the implementation of the GAP III. The EU priorities will be spelled out in the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP), the EU programming document. Based on the information gained from multiple interviews and details circulating amongst stakeholders at country level it would seem that the EU in Mozambique currently envisages three priority areas, around the green transition, youth, and governance peace and security. In addition, a standalone project focused on tackling sexual and GBV that builds on the experience of the Spotlight Initiative would also be considered as a possible initiative. The MIP document itself is still pending official publication and approval, so it is not possible to say definitively at this moment what it will include. Although it is scheduled to be finalised by the end of the year.

In addition, the EUD in Mozambique has prepared an updated country gender profile in consultation with civil society, European member states and other development partners. Drafted in collaboration with the United Nations (UN), the gender profile offers a current analysis of the gender equality situation in the country and recommendations on critical areas for improvement. Joint drafting with the UN could increase the legitimacy of the document towards national stakeholders and therefore offer a stronger base for further action. Crucially, this

document serves as a base for the Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP), the principal document that spells out how the EU is going to implement the GAP III in Mozambique. The new CSO Roadmap 2021-2027 for Mozambique also includes a GEWE objective. Reportedly, the drafting of the CLIP involved different parts of the EUD in both the development and political sections.

The EUD in Mozambique had shown a high level of commitment to steer the gender agenda forward since the GAP II, the earlier EU plan for gender, at the senior level in the delegation as well as among staff. The drafting of these documents has been an additional opportunity to reflect on gender issues and the role the EU can play to address those. The overlap between the GAP III implementation and the EU programming has been harnessed by the delegation to a good extent to give a stronger role to the EU on gender in Mozambique, for example, through the involvement of CSOs and EU member states in discussions around the above documents and efforts to make them an integrated package for the EU action in Mozambique that incorporates a gender perspective and related objectives.

Interviewees highlighted that, despite this leadership, the MIP for Mozambique could mainstream gender more decisively and explicitly. There is still time to ensure that this is the case, as MIPs will need to be signed by the end of this year. The CLIP could offer guidance as it elaborates in more detail how to better integrate gender in the MIP priorities. Finally, the formulation of Annual Action Plans (the documents that spell out how MIP priorities will be implemented) could offer additional chances to ensure that EU action in Mozambique has a strong gender perspective at the implementation point.

5. GAP III implementation in Mozambique and the collaboration with EU member states

In principle, both the GAP III implementation and the programming process should happen with the involvement of EU member states. Based on past experience, this is an area that requires continuous attention and additional efforts to make sure that collaboration is strong at the level of policy formulation as well as implementation and engagement with the local stakeholders.

So far, the formulation of the guiding documents for programming and the GAP III seems to have happened collaboratively. The draft MIP for Mozambique, the country gender profile for Mozambique and the CLIP have been shared for feedback with the EU member states and civil society, an important good practice. Development partners also had the chance to comment on the latter two documents. These are important steps to ensure that documents reflect the priorities and have enough buy-in among European actors and can form a good base for future collaboration.

There are additional factors that can “make or break” EU-wide collaboration on gender issues. On one level, EU member states' engagement depends on how much they prioritise gender and their capacity to do so at country level. Countries such as Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden are known for their investment in this agenda, for example. On another level, involvement depends on how much influence member states feel they can have on EU agendas. For example, EU member states in Mozambique were compliant with the previous GAP II reporting requirements, but some of them would have liked to receive feedback on this reporting and know how this exercise had been used at headquarter level. Going forward, it will be important to keep member states engaged and communicate effectively on how their feedback has been integrated and operationalised.

Another layer of engagement of EU member states with the GAP III is the extent to which they use the document as a reference for their own bilateral programming and country presence. Our research shows that, while EU member

states in Mozambique usually support the GAP III, their national priorities and documents (for example, gender guidelines, development strategies et cetera) take precedence. An additional complexity is that the timing of bilateral programming, the programming of NDICI-Global Europe and the GAP III implementation process do not necessarily coincide and therefore some degree of integration among them may be harder to achieve or may be delayed.

In Mozambique, part of collaboration at the EU-wide level happens in coordination platforms. While not specifically linked to the GAP III or programming process, these platforms can be extremely valuable for coordination and information exchange. For example, the EUD has recently taken over the co-chairing of the gender group of the Coalition of the Willing, jointly with Canada. The group includes different development partners, including the EUD and some EU member states such as France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Finland and the regional government of Catalonia. In addition, the EU and member states gender focal points meet in the gender and citizens group that has been involved, for example, in the GAP III implementation process so far.

Interviewees mentioned as an example of collaboration, a joint mission of all Heads of Cooperation to Nampula province that took place in 2019 to visit the Spotlight Initiative activities and meet local organisations. A follow-up visit with development partners, that included Sweden and Finland, happened in June 2021. This latter visit provided an opportunity to reflect on successes and challenges of a government programme in support of women and children and on ways to improve it. These visits are very valuable to gather fresh information on the reality of beneficiaries and projects and raise awareness on GEWE issues, but need to be part of a wider pool of information exchange, coordination and collaboration activities to be impactful.

6. Level of ambition: policy dialogue and national ownership

The GAP III three-pronged approach relies on strengthening policy dialogue on gender issues, along with mainstreaming gender in EU actions and standalone projects. Policy dialogue can be useful to share information and devise common strategies among international partners and the national authorities. It can also offer space to influence policies at different levels and strengthen relations with multiple stakeholders. Our research found that this aspect of the EU work on gender could be strengthened in Mozambique. While several fora that deal with gender exist, none of them seems to have a strong enough mandate and a strategic enough perspective on gender issues in the country. Gender issues were only occasionally dealt with in political dialogue envisioned by the Cotonou Agreement.

The Gender Coordination Group (GCG) is a long-standing coordinating platform for the gender agenda in Mozambique. Chaired by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action and co-chaired by the Government of Catalonia, it comprises national ministries, development partners, CSOs and the private sector.⁶ Despite its ambition to be a space for dialogue and strategic coordination on gender issues, several interviewees pointed out that the GCG needs to be revitalised to perform that role since it currently operates ad-hoc and at a more technical level. In theory, the group would be well-placed to play at a strategic level since it congregates the most relevant stakeholders with extensive expertise and the mandate to act on the national GEWE agenda. At the moment, the group is updating its terms of reference to adjust to the present context and challenges and hopefully gain a stronger profile.

⁶ Among the participating ministries there are: the Ministry of Health; Ministry of Public Service; Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Ministry of Economy and Finances.

Along with the dialogue with the government, the programming of EU resources and the GAP III require consultation with civil society and other actors. The EUD in Mozambique held 10 provincial consultations for the formulation of the CSOs roadmap and for the update of the country gender profile. The EUD also shared the MIP and CLIP with CSOs for comments (Interviews, March and August 2021).

CSOs, however, raised concerns about limited outreach of the consultations: whereas women's rights organisations, farmers associations and associations of people with disabilities were consulted in all or some subjects, organisations promoting positive masculinities were left out and the involvement of the LGBTQI+ community has been weak (Interview with HOPEM representative, 2021). Furthermore, the CSOs mentioned that the lack of an all-encompassing CSO platform on gender contributes to the absence of a proper consultation process of CSOs. Going forward, the CSO interviewees see the operationalisation of the GAP III as an opportunity to improve engagement, focusing on strengthening country ownership for both government and CSOs through adapting the GAP III principles to the national context, defining responsibilities and monitoring progress. Strengthening the capacity of CSOs and women rights organisations was also mentioned as a way of promoting meaningful engagement (Interview, March 2021). The interviewed CSOs highlight that the consultations were a good space to provide feedback on EU plans but that they would like a more meaningful and steady engagement. Typically, they find it difficult to assess the extent to which their feedback was taken into account by the EUD (Interviews, March 2021). CSOs that have worked closer with the EU, as part of EU-funded projects for example, underline that some of their recommendations stem from lessons learned from the implementation of these projects and offer a privileged outlook on how to follow-up on them, including along the GAP III principles, for instance, in the agricultural sector.⁷ CSOs hope to see their feedback from consultation exercises translated into concrete and funded activities and accompanied with strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms (Interview, March 2021).

7. The application of the GAP III principles

The GAP III advocates for a gender transformative, intersectional and human rights approach to development. Implementing this approach is one of the most challenging aspects of the GAP III. However, according to some interviewees from CSOs and the EU member states, it is also one of the most important aspects for change to take place.

In the context of Mozambique, interviewees mentioned that working with people with disabilities or with organisations that promote positive masculinities would represent a step in the right direction for the EUD as well as for EU member states. Another challenge is to work on LGBTQI+ issues. Development partners, including the EU, have advocated for the legal recognition of the association for sexual minority rights (LAMBDA) for a long time towards the Mozambican authorities without success. Beyond the symbolic importance of such a recognition, a formal registration would allow LAMBDA to receive direct funding from donors. More widely, the EUD seems to be aware of the deep discriminations that the LGBTQI+ community faces – from access to sexual and reproductive health services to family and community discrimination – and hopes to work more on these issues in the coming years, for example, in the second phase of the Spotlight Initiative (Interview, August 2021).

The Spotlight Initiative approach to ending GBV is based on challenging social norms and practices that sustain violence and involving men as part of the response (EC 2019). The extent to which this approach is successful depends on how social norms are entrenched in the communities, the expertise of project staff, community leadership engagement and women empowerment and agency. Going forward, it would be important to ensure

⁷ Priorities, such as nutrition, women economic empowerment, women engagement in production and value chain and women active participation as agents of development.

that all parties involved, including at the implementation point, have the capacity to follow through the GAP III principles in the Mozambican context.

Interviewees recognise the role of the EU in the protection of human rights globally. Mozambique's President Nyusi requested help to fight insurgencies that are disrupting lives and displaced more than 700,000 people since 2017, especially women and children in Cabo Delgado. In response, the EU deployed a military training mission to train and support the Mozambican armed forces in protecting the civilian population and restoring safety and security in the Cabo Delgado province for 2 years. There are expectations that with trained armed forces, women and girls' rights violations can decrease provided that an effort to mainstream gender in armed interventions and humanitarian actions is in place. This mission will complement other EU support to Mozambique for peacebuilding, conflict prevention and dialogue military support, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, and the promotion of the WPS agenda (Council of the EU 2021). The EU has also been active in the country humanitarian work through interventions on protection, shelter, water and sanitation, education and health care (EC 2021) as well as support to the reintegration of women ex-combatant from The Mozambican National Resistance Movement (RENAMO) in the central part of the country and restoration of rights violation (Interview, March 2021).

Conclusions and recommendations

Mozambique has made progress in improving the life of women and girls in the last few years and it has a set of policy and legislation in place that can enable progress in the coming years. Still, a number of impediments to the full realisation of gender equality and women empowerment remain in the country. Overcoming these challenges will ultimately depend on the local circumstances and the efforts of national stakeholders, but international partners like the EU can play an important role in supporting change.

The EU is a recognised international partner in the realisation of the GEWE agenda in Mozambique and its agenda overlaps in many ways with that of Mozambique. The EU is also taking some positive steps to put gender higher up in the cooperation arrangements for the 2021-2027 period, under the new financial instrument the NDICI and through the implementation of the GAP III. The EUD in Mozambique has done well, for example, in sequencing the gender country profile formulation with the CLIPs. It has then used those documents to better specify how gender will be featured in the EU plans for the coming years, as will hopefully be spelled out in the programming documents (MIP 2021-2027). The decision of the EUD to work with the UN and civil society and through gender-focused working groups lends hope that these documents will bear a stronger ownership and political standing than if these steps had not been taken.

EU programming of the NDICI-Global Europe instrument should be finalised by the end of the year. The next few months will therefore offer the last chance to ensure that gender features more strongly in the final MIP for Mozambique, a concern of some EU member states. The formulation of Annual Action Programmes, the documents that will operationalise the MIP detailing specific actions, should also use the CLIP as a guidance for implementation.

The EU's political and policy dialogue with national authorities and dialogue with national stakeholders seem areas that need to be strengthened going forward. Despite some ad-hoc engagement on gender issues, for example, a more sustained dialogue and adequate follow-up between the EU and the Mozambican authorities seems to be lacking, both at the level of gender-focused dialogue and when it comes to include gender under other topics. Closer engagement with the MGCAS and featuring gender with dialogue with other powerful ministries that the EU has contacts with should be explored. The revamping of the GCG could offer some opportunities in this regard.

A variety of civil society actors have been involved in the programming process for the period 2021-2027 and in the formulation of the GAP III documents, along with the update of the EU's Civil Society Roadmap. While this is appreciated, CSOs call for more intelligible bureaucratic processes and adequate follow-up on how their recommendations have been taken into account by the EU institutions. Furthering investments in strengthening CSOs capacities as well as a closer involvement at the point of projects/programmes formulation and implementation could be of an added value to the EU too in terms of accountability and follow through. In particular, it could benefit more from stronger gender advocacy, policy monitoring and local knowledge and advice on how to further the GEWE agenda in Mozambique in line with the transformative, intersectional and human-rights based approach envisioned by the GAP III.

Last but not least, EU institutions' collaboration with EU member states and vice-versa will need more attention going forward. While in Mozambique, EU member states had opportunities to offer their feedback on both programming and gender-related documents, how this is followed up is less discernible at this stage. Secondly, collaboration between the EU institutions and the member states at the level of policy dialogue, political messaging and project implementation seems to be more occasional than structural. Finally, the GAP III could be better used to guide the action of member states, which often prioritise their own gender or development strategies with limited thinking about how to leverage the GAP III for their own programming. A more targeted reporting mechanism on the GAP III that provides incentives for stronger alignment between the GAP III and the action of member states may help in that regard.

The seeds for furthering collaboration exist, for example, in the commitment of the EUD and some member states with the gender agenda. The participation of EU member states in multiple working groups with a gender focus in the country, for example, the gender group of the Coalition of the Willing, co-chaired by the EU and Canada and especially the EU gender focal points group could be leveraged more strategically to enhance collaboration. It is less obvious how Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) are integrating a gender perspective. Still, it seems difficult to achieve the target of having 85% gender mainstreaming in the EU external expenditures without instilling a gender perspective in TEIs, considering their potential financial scale. An additional argument is that, as high-visibility, high-impact, EU wide-initiatives, TEIs offer a real political opportunity to strengthen the European leadership on gender.

Overall, there seems to be several opportunities for the EU to further its engagement on the GEWE agenda in Mozambique, in line with the three-pronged approach and the principles of the GAP III. The recommendations above offer some reflection on how to strengthen the EU action on this agenda further in the coming months, when many decisions will be taken that will impact the EU action on the GEWE agenda for years to come. Going forward, it will be important to keep monitoring and analysing the evolution of the EU action on gender equality and women empowerment as a contribution to strengthening EU action on this important topic.

Bibliography

- AU. 1990. [African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child](#). July 1990. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: African Union.
- Club of Mozambique. 2021. [Mozambique: Premature marriage is attack on human rights of adolescent girls – minister](#). 28 July 2021.
- Council of the EU. 2021. [Mozambique: EU sets up a military training mission to help address the crisis in Cabo Delgado](#). Press release, 12 July 2021.
- Desmidt, S. 2021. [How the women, peace and security agenda is integrated into the EU's gender action plan](#). 25 October 2021. ECDPM Briefing Note 141. Maastricht: ECDPM.
- Di Ciommo, M. 2021. [Matching ambition with reality: how the EU's gender action plan fits into the programming of its external action](#). 18 October 2021. ECDPM Briefing Note 138. Maastricht: ECDPM.
- EC. 2019. [Questions and Answers: EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls](#). Memo, 26 September 2019. Brussels: European Commission.
- EC. 2020. [Together towards a gender equal world: EU Gender Action Plan III](#). 25 November 2020. Brussels: European Commission.
- EC. 2021. [European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations: Mozambique Factsheet](#). Last updated 24 June 2021. Brussels: European Commission.
- Gender Links. 2020. [Monitoria e Avaliação de Género em Moçambique](#). Março 2020.
- IESE. 2009. [Boletim da República, série número 38, Lei d Violência Doméstica Praticada contra a Mulher](#). 29 Setembro 2009. Maputo: Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos.
- INE. 2017a. [Apresentação dos Resultados Definitivos do Censo 2017](#).
- INE. 2017b. [IV Censo da População e Habitação](#).
- INE. 2019. [Anuário Estatístico 2019](#). Instituto Nacional de Estatística.
- MINEDH. 2020. [Plano Estratégico da Educação 2020-2029: Por uma Educação Inclusiva, Patriótica e de Qualidade](#). Maio de 2020. Maputo, Ministério da Educação e Desenvolvimento Humano.
- Ministério do Interior. 2021. [Departamento de A.F.M Vitimas de Violência](#). Accessed 4 November 2021.
- MISAU and INE with ICF. 2019. [Inquérito de Indicadores de Imunização, Malária e HIV/SIDA em Moçambique \(IMASIDA\) 2015: Relatório Suplementar Incorporado os Resultados de Biomarcadores de Antiretrovirais](#). Março de 2019.
- OHCHR. 2003. [Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa](#).
- Plan International. 2019. [Mozambique bans child marriage](#). 21 August 2019, Plan International Mozambique.
- Portal do Governo de Moçambique. n.d. [Constituição da República \(PDF\)](#).
- Reformar. 2019a. [Boletim da República, Série Número 239, Lei da Família](#). 11 de Dezembro de 2019.
- Reformar. 2019b. [Boletim da República, Série Número 247, Lei das Sucessões](#). 23 de Dezembro de 2019.
- Reformar. 2019c. [Boletim da República, Série Número 248, Lei Assembleia da República](#). 24 de Dezembro de 2019.
- República de Moçambique. 2018a. [Política de Género e Estratégia da sua Implementação](#). Agosto de 2018. Maputo: República de Moçambique.
- República de Moçambique. 2018b. [Plano Nacional de Prevenção e Combate à Violência Baseada No Género - 2018-2021](#). Agosto de 2018, Maputo.
- República de Moçambique. 2018c. [National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security \(2018-2022\)](#). May 2018, Maputo. Republic of Mozambique.
- República de Moçambique. 2019. [Boletim da Republica, série número 77](#). 22 de Abril de 2019.

-
- República de Moçambique. 2020. [Programa Quinquenal do Governo 2020-2024](#). Maputo: República de Moçambique.
- SADC. 2008. [SADC Protocol on Gender and Development](#). The Southern African Development Community.
- Teevan, C. 2021. [The EU's gender action plan: Principles and practice](#). 18 October 2021. ECDPM Briefing Note 139. Maastricht: ECDPM.
- Teevan, C., Tadesse Shiferaw, L. and Di Ciommo, M. 2021. [Taking the gender agenda forward in EU programming](#). 19 April 2021. ECDPM Discussion Paper 297. Maastricht: ECDPM.
- UEM and UN Women. 2021. Inquérito sobre a Violência contra Mulheres e Raparigas em Moçambique - Províncias: Nampula, Sofala e Gaza. Apresentação em PowerPoint. Março de 2021, Maputo.
- UN. 2015. [Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls](#). United Nations. *Accessed 8 November 2021*.
- UNESCWA. 1995. [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#). United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA).
- UN Women. 1979. [Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women](#). United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.
- UNICEF. 2019. [Boletim da República, Série Número 203, Lei de Prevenção e Combate às Uniões Prematuras em Moçambique](#). 22 de Outubro de 2019.
- WLSA Moçambique. 2012. [Mecanismo Multisectorial de Atendimento Integrado à Mulher Vítima de Violência](#). Junho de 2012. Maputo: WLSA Moçambique.

About ECDPM

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) is an independent think tank working on international cooperation and development policy in Europe and Africa.

Since 1986 our staff members provide research and analysis, advice and practical support to policymakers and practitioners across Europe and Africa – to make policies work for sustainable and inclusive global development.

Our main areas of work include:

- European external affairs
- African institutions
- Regional integration
- Security and resilience
- Migration
- Sustainable food systems
- Finance, trade and investment
- Private sector engagement

For more information please visit www.ecdpm.org

This publication benefits from the structural support by ECDPM's institutional partners: The Netherlands, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark and Austria.

ISSN1571-7577

ecdpm

Making policies work

HEAD OFFICE
SIÈGE

Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21
6211 HE Maastricht
The Netherlands *Pays Bas*
Tel +31 (0)43 350 29 00
Fax +31 (0)43 350 29 02

BRUSSELS OFFICE
BUREAU DE BRUXELLES

Rue Archimède 5
1000 Brussels *Bruxelles*
Belgium *Belgique*
Tel +32 (0)2 237 43 10
Fax +32 (0)2 237 43 19

info@ecdpm.org
www.ecdpm.org
KvK 41077447