

# ANALYSIS OF THE **WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS** IN MOZAMBIQUE



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Electoral Project  
SEAM  
UNDP Mozambique

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## Abbreviations

<b>CEURBE</b>	Centro de Estudos Urbanos de Mocambique
<b>CNE</b>	National Elections Commission (Comissão Nacional de Eleições)
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>EISA</b>	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
<b>FRELIMO</b>	Mozambique Liberation Front (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique)
<b>INE</b>	National Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estatística)
<b>LGBT</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
<b>MDM</b>	Mozambique Democratic Movement (Movimento Democrático de Moçambique)
<b>RENAMO</b>	Mozambique National Resistance (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana)
<b>STAE</b>	Technical Secretariat for the Administration of Elections





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## 1. Executive Summary

The United Nations recognizes the need to protect and promote the rights of women to participate in the electoral process, particularly in post-conflict countries. Electoral rights are much more than simply the right to vote, but encompass freedom of expression, assembly and association, and the freedom to take part in the conduct of public affairs, hold public office at all levels of Government, and participate in the formulation of government policy. United Nations international human rights instruments affirm that women are entitled to enjoy all these rights and freedoms on the same basis as men. Women's equal participation is essential to the conduct of democratic elections. For elections to be truly free and fair, women must have the same opportunities as men to participate in all aspects of the electoral process.

Mozambique held its sixth general elections in October 2019 since 1994. The 2019 voter registration data available from the Technical Secretariat for the Administration of Elections (STAE) shows that a higher percentage of the registered voters were women (53.38%) compared to men (46.62%). At the same time, recent observations, and other data on previous elections also available at STAE, shows that voter abstention has been on the increase since the first general elections. Past electoral results and voter registration data are not sex-disaggregated making it difficult to tell or distinguish the abstention rates between men and women and as well as the factors influencing their voting patterns.

The main objective of this study was to assess the level of women's participation in electoral processes in Mozambique. Specifically it sought to identify and examine the factors that influence women's participation as voters and candidates, as well as identifying strategies to overcome any barriers/ constraints and increase their participation.

To examine the extent of women's engagement with the electoral process, the study employed a mix of three data collection methods. Literature review involved analysing statistical data available at STAE on voter registration and voting patterns by women in Mozambique in past national elections. Studies,



analyses and reports on women's participation in political processes in Mozambique conducted by civil society organizations in Mozambique were also reviewed. As part of data collection methods three provincial consultative workshops were conducted with civil society stakeholders who are informed about and experienced on the issue under study for the purpose of problematizing the issue of concern and addressing the specific problems. In addition, one key informant interview was conducted with the STAE Civic Education Advisor, with a view to gain understanding of the extent to which STAE targets the female electorate and the strategies employed to achieve this goal. Other potential key informants from civil society groups participated in the focus group discussions during consultative workshops where they made vital contributions hence no further individual interviews were conducted with them.

The study concluded that women's engagement with the electoral process as voters has been on the decline regardless of the high voter registration among them. It also confirmed that women still face some constraints both as voters and candidates which negatively affect their engagement with the electoral process.

The assessment revealed some key findings:

#### As voters:

- There are more women than men who register as voters with women constituting 53.38% and men 46.62% of the registered voters for the 2019 elections.
- Women are under pressure from local / community leaders and family (especially husbands in the case of married women) to register as voters even though some of them do not necessarily vote on the election day.
- The misconception that the voter registration card is some kind of "access key" to many social and development benefits has resulted in voter registration becoming the objective and polling being ignored by many women. This misconception is attributed to misinformation by community / local leaders.
- Whilst there is an increased awareness among urban-based women of their rights to participate in elections, their rural-based counterparts still

lag far behind, most women in rural areas do not understand the reasons why they vote.

- In both rural and urban areas women's multiple gender roles tend to interfere with their participation in election civic education programs and electoral processes (polling) as a result of which many women, especially in rural areas continue to be left out.
- Some religious beliefs constitute a barrier to women's participation by limiting their role in the political life of the country.
- Massive participation at election campaign rallies by women is motivated by the prospect of receiving the election campaign visibility materials (capulanas, t-shirts, caps, etc) which are considered to be a benefit by many.
- Loss of hope or confidence that their vote will bring positive changes in the society such as employment and good roads creates apathy among both young women and older women.
- Women lack the capacity to hold their elected leaders accountable for promises made during election campaigns.

#### As candidates:

- The political space in Mozambique is in general still considered as male domain thereby standing as a barrier to women ascending as candidates in political parties.
- Lack of capacity among women results their low participation.
- Women as both voters and candidates suffer election related gender-based violence, including psychological violence.
- Loyalty to political party limits women's effective engagement with the electoral process both at candidate level as well as an elected official, because the agenda of their party always takes precedence in situations where there is conflict between the gender agenda and the agenda of the party.

The recommendations are divided into four major points:

1. Strengthening election civic education programs:

- STAE should collaborate more with CSO in its civic education programs in order to increase confidence of the communities.
- Civic education on elections should be an ongoing permanent activity not just an election year activity.
- Civic education should be done in local languages to make it accessible to many women.
- Civic Education should take into account the needs of the visually impaired, and citizens with physical disabilities.
- Specific messages targeting young people should be included in the electoral civic education packaging.
- There should be special civic education programs for elderly people to ensure that they are not left out.
- Other marginalized groups' rights such as the LGBT women, are not included in the civic education campaigns.
- Election Civic Education programs should take into account women's multiple gender roles to ensure that more women are reached.
- Intensify and expand use of more attractive methods such as songs, dance, theatre, social media and debates on community radios<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Lessons learnt from the successful HIV and AIDS campaigns in the communities should be applied in order to strengthen civic education programs

- Existing advocacy instruments on women's participation in political processes developed by CSOs such as Women's Manifesto developed by Forum Mulher should be widely disseminated.

2. Legislated mandatory quota system as opposed to the current voluntary quota system, should be introduced in order to increase the number of women as candidates.
3. Sex disaggregation of voter turn out data - Voter turnout data should be disaggregated by sex and age to allow a better understanding of the women's voting tendencies and patterns.
4. Investing in women's capacities – political parties should invest in building and/ enhancing the capacities of women with a view to increase the number of women candidates.

#### Others:

- The CSOs should monitor the political parties commitment to gender equality and lobby them to implement a quota system as a starting point.
- Create a women's platform to demand accountability during mid-term, on promises made during elections campaigns.
- Create separate queues for women on voting day in order to increase women's participation.



Ticiana Egg/ UNDP Mozambique



## 2. Background

Following the end of a 16-year civil war that left the country severely impoverished, Mozambique held its first multi-party elections in 1994 with FRELIMO and RENAMO as the major political party players. Since 1994, democratic elections have become a central element of peacebuilding in Mozambique as is in other post-conflict countries. The emphasis on elections acknowledges that popularly supported, legitimate institutions can be a key to lasting solutions to conflicts. Only when institutions are democratic and representative of all groups in society - women as well as men, minorities as well as majorities, the dispossessed as well as the affluent - are stable peace and national prosperity likely to be achieved. Since 1994 the country has held four other general elections – 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 and with the 15th October 2019 election being the sixth one.

The legal and political context of the electoral process in Mozambique is based on the provisions of several national laws, and regional and international human rights instruments which the Government of Mozambique has adopted and ratified for the promotion and achievement of gender equality such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which has a specific goal to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

## 3. Rationale of the Study

Despite the fact that the participation of women in the electoral process has significantly increased over the years since 1994, women's engagement as candidates still lags far behind that of men. Participation of women as voters has been on the decline. Recent observations indicate that many registered female voters do not exercise their right to vote. These observations are supported by the fact that overall abstention in general elections has been on the increase in the last electoral years following the 1994 general elections despite higher voter registration.



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An assessment of the evolution of voter registration levels since the first general elections reveals a steady increase in voter registration from 1994 through to 2009 (81.02% in 1994, 85.86% in 1999 and 90.36% in 2009), a slight decrease in 2014 (89.11%) and an increase to 91.39% in 2019 (Graph 1 below). On the contrary, evidence shows that voter turnout has been on the decline following the 1994 general elections which had a participation of 79.59% of the registered voters. In the 1999 elections 69.54% of the electorate voted, and in the 2004 only 36.42% did vote, that is more than 60% of the electorate abstaining. It is important to note that in the last two general elections (2009 and 2014) there has been slight increase in voter turnout with 44.63% voter turnout in 2009 and in 2014 elections, 49.03% of the registered voters participated, with almost 51% abstaining<sup>2</sup>. Despite the slight increases in the last two general elections, overall, between 2004 and 2014, more than 50% of the registered voters have been abstaining.

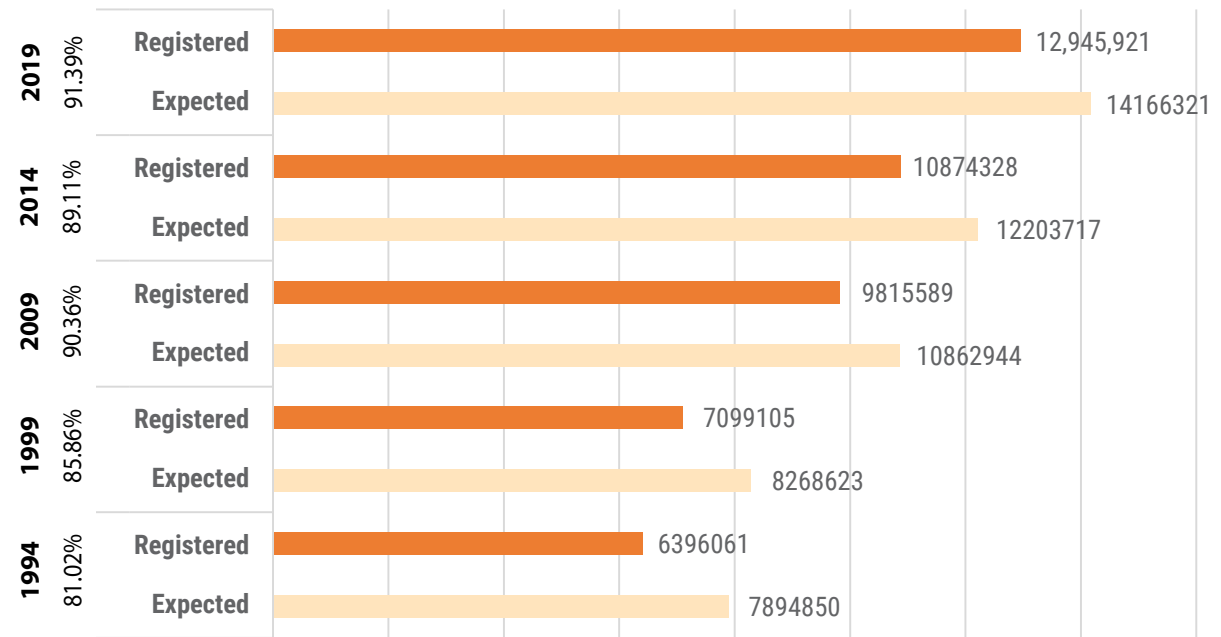
For the first time in the country's electoral history, the 2019 voter registration data (see Table 1) is sex-

<sup>2</sup> Source: Technical Secretariat for the Administration of Elections (STAE), 2019

disaggregated revealing a higher percentage of female (53.38%) registered voters in relation to men (46.62%). This closely corresponds with the 2017 national population census data by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) that postulates women as constituting 52% of the population and men 48%<sup>3</sup>. An analysis of the numbers of men and women on the voter register can provide valuable insights into women's participation in elections. However, this is not the case at this point in time as previous data on voter registration and voter turnout is not disaggregated by sex. This makes it difficult to draw conclusions not only of the extent of voting abstention by women, but also of the factors leading to voting abstention. This study was intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing women's voter registration and voting trends in Mozambique and identify strategies to increase women's engagement as voters and candidates.

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.ine.gov.mz/estatisticas/publicacoes/mulheres-e-homens/mulheres-e-homens-2018.pdf>

 Graph 1: Evolution of Voters Registration: 1994 - 2019



Source: Technical Secretariat for the Administration of Elections (STAE)

## 4. Objectives

The study sought to understand the underlying reasons for women's level of engagement with the electoral processes especially as voters and candidates. The specific objectives were:

- Assess the level of women's participation in elections in Mozambique
- Identify the barriers and or constraints to women's participation (registration, voting and candidacy)
- Identify strategies to overcome barriers and constraints and increase participation by women

## 5. Limitation of study

This was an assessment covering three of the eleven provinces of Mozambique- Maputo City, Gaza and Sofala provinces, by zones. The three provinces were selected based on 2019 voter registration turn out levels, particularly data relating to registration conducted in the year 2019, which was the data available at the time the study took off.

An analysis of the then available data showed Maputo City with the lowest voter registration turnout not only in general but more so among women. Gaza had the highest and Sofala was somewhere in the middle. The intention was to give a balanced representation of the situation at national level.

## 6. Data collection methods

### Literature review

This involved reviewing available statistical data from STAE on voter registration and voting patterns by women in Mozambique both and in the previous national elections. Studies, analyses and reports on women's participation in political processes in Mozambique conducted by civil society organizations such as WLSA, CeUrbe, Genderlinks, CEDES and others were also reviewed with a view to develop a better understanding and or awareness of the current state of knowledge on the subject.

### Consultative workshops

Three consultative workshops, one in each of the three selected provinces were conducted as part of the data collection process study. Workshops are a group-based research method where the emphasis is on activity-based interactive working. The consultative workshops brought together civil society stakeholders who are informed about and experienced on the issue under study for the purpose of problematizing the issue of concern and addressing the specific problems. Each workshop was attended by minimum thirty (30) participants drawn women's groups and CSOs working on promoting women's participation in elections at both national and provincial levels; youth organizations such as Parlamento Juvenil involved in election observation, research-based organizations such as CeUrbe, media organizations and community-based women's groups such as Associação Activa.

Each consultative workshop was conducted with the help of a facilitator using a mixture of interactive participatory methods including group discussions with five to six people in each group, presentations and plenary discussions. The group discussions were guided by a set of questions based on the objectives of the study. All presentations by the groups were noted down and opinions expressed were captured. To ensure that as much information as possible was collected, participants from different groups were also able to provide input into the presentations of other groups.

### Key informants

In addition to the consultative workshop one key informant interview was conducted with the STAE Civic Education Advisor, Yolanda Mussá. Her selection for the interview was based on the fact that as someone whose role is to support the STAE directorate in relation to civic education strategies and activities, she would provide an insight into the electoral civic education activities and strategies used by STAE to target the female electorate. All of the other key informants initially identified also participated in the focus group discussions and made vital contributions during the consultative workshops.



7. Findings

The findings presented in this section are based on data collected from literature reviewed and consultative workshops and interviews.

Voter registration and the influencing factors

As already stated above, the voter registration data for the 2019 general elections shows a higher percentage of women as registered voters in relation to men.

Table 1 shows that in all the eleven provinces, there are more female registered voters, confirming the findings in the field that there are more women participating at this stage of the electoral process.

The study found that there are various factors that influence women's participation as voters as well as candidates. Some of the factors vary between urban and rural women, whilst others overlap. The following factors were identified:

A. Pressure from local/ community leaders

In some provinces the high voter registration among women was attributed to intensive community mobilization by the local leadership. It was pointed out that women are under pressure from local leaders who make voter registration mandatory. Having the voter registration card is presented as beneficial in many ways including employment opportunities as well as benefiting from development projects.

In Sofala the influence of community leaders was seen as something negative, because sometimes the “Chefe de quarteirão” intimidate women to get them to register to vote or even to go and vote. On the other hand in Gaza community/ local leaders’ intervention was viewed as something both positive and negative. It was considered positive in the sense that their intervention results in the increase in number of women who participate. At the same time it was seen as negative because local

leaders mislead people by telling them of unrealistic benefits of the voter registration card. As a result of the benefits that are perceived to be associated with the voter registration card, a lot of rural women go to register even though they do not necessarily turn up on the election day. The voter registration card is therefore is seen as more important than casting the vote and there is fear that without the card, one is likely to miss out on some benefits. “In relation to voter registration there is massive turn out particularly by women, just to have the card because nowadays we know that if you want a document to apply for a position or to benefit from a project somewhere, without the voter’s card I will not be accepted, so I am obliged to register just to have the card”, said Leonor Ananias Chiluvane of Kuvumbana Association, a Xai-Xai based women’s group. It was mentioned that the male leaders at both the informal and formal markets control women when it comes to registering to vote.

B. Lack of awareness/ knowledge of women's human rights

In rural areas, lack of knowledge of rights due to high levels of illiteracy and weak and or less effective voter education programs are blamed for high voter abstention among rural women. The majority of rural women are illiterate and this causes them not to value elections.

As per the study, high voter registration among urban-based women was attributed to their increased awareness of their rights, specifically the fact that voting is one’s right and duty. Because they have better access to information compared to their rural-based counterparts, more urban based women tend to vote because they recognize it as their civil right. Women in cities are more aware of their rights, of their freedom to participate and are aware of the fact that there are laws in place that protect them.

Young women tend to vote when it is their first time to do so because on the one hand they see it as an exciting experience and on the other hand they vote because of having hopes for change in their lives based on promises (for jobs, scholarships to study, among others) made by political parties.

Whilst it may be true that increased awareness of rights leads to increased participation among urban women, they still face some constraints in their quest to engage with the electoral process. According to Yolanda

Mussa, her work for TV program shows that Maputo based women mostly engaged in informal trading at the markets. Given the fact that the rule is that one has to register to vote at the post nearest to one’s house, some women do not go because the markets where they operate from are not necessarily close to their homes.

Voting

As indicated earlier on, voter abstention has been on the increase and the following were identified as factors influencing voting patterns by women:

A. Multiple -gender roles

Women’s gender roles, particularly their duties within their families was pointed out as a factor that limit their engagement with the electoral process. They spend a lot of time working in their fields (agricultural activities), and selling at the markets in order to support their families. This leaves them with very little time to engage in electoral politics. For instance it was noted that during the last general elections, water was not flowing in Maxequene residential area (Maputo City), so some women chose to go looking for water instead. Over-burdening gender roles also leave them without much time to participate in the electoral civic education, so many women, especially in rural areas continue to be left out.

B. Gender inequality and unequal power relations

Unequal power relations in marriages or marital unions result in the violation of the woman's right to a secret ballot and her right to vote for a candidate of her choice. This is more so in the rural context where decisions are made by the husband. He decides which political party his wife should support and vote for and when it comes to participating in election campaign rallies, she can only participate in those held by the party that he has decided she should support. Going against husband’s decision could cost the wife dearly or may be her marriage. Therefore, to protect her marriage, she must force herself to follow while voting. It was also noted that upon returning from the polling station, some men ask their wives who they have voted for with a view to ascertain whether she obeyed his instructions on who to vote for.

Some men interfere with their spouse's rights to vote by preventing them from voting. In Gaza it was noted

Table 1: Results of the voter registration for the 2019 elections

Province	Forecast	Men	Women	Total	%
Niassa	845,219	330,500	347,264	677,764	80.19
Cabo Delgado	1,176,754	579,426	605,598	1,185,024	100.70
Nampula	2,793,912	1,138,019	1,223,954	2,361,973	84.54
Zambézia	2,098,545	989,926	1,150,199	2,140,125	101.98
Tete	1,311,682	534,392	584,986	1,119,378	85.34
Manica	949,279	413,582	479,844	893,426	94.12
Sofala	1,149,184	495,341	533,033	1,028,374	89.49
Inhambane	799,453	252,124	405,018	657,142	82.20
Gaza	1,144,337	472,238	693,773	1,166,011	101.89
Maputo	1,161,225	483,164	532,634	1,015,798	87.48
Maputo City	736,731	346,821	354,085	700,906	95.14
Total	14,166,321	6,035,533	6,910,388	12,945,921	91.39

Source: Technical Secretariat for the Administration of Elections



**Vengai Rufu Chikono**, a 56 year old HeForShe Campaign activist from Beira had this to say *“We see many women registering, but when it comes to voting time, the number begins to decrease. The factors causing this are often cultural as the husbands preventing them from voting. As a social activist, my role is to talk to other men to change their attitudes and stop preventing their wives from getting involved in elections”*.

that in polygamous settings the husband decides which wife goes to vote while others must stay home to do domestic chores.

The unequal power relations do not only manifest in the home, but also in other external spaces where the woman finds herself. Female vendors are monitored at the markets by the male authorities to see whether or not they have voted. *“In Xai-Xai, the leadership at the market places does not let anyone sit at their “stand” (“banca”) to sell without voting. You have to show your finger”* said Avelina António Cumbane, an elderly woman whose business is selling basic food commodities at one of the local markets.

#### C. Sexual orientation

LGBT women shy away from participating in electoral politics because of discrimination. As a result, not only are the LGBT women invisible in the electoral process, but there is also no representation of their issues at political level.

#### D. Religious beliefs

In Gaza it was stated that there are churches whose members do not vote because they do not believe in voting. They participate in voter registration, but on the election day they do not participate. The majority of the congregants in these churches are women. It was noted that there was need to target churches for voter education. Other religious leaders promote certain candidates and/or political party.

#### E. Provision of election campaign visibility materials

Participants at all the three provincial consultative workshops (Maputo, Gaza and Sofala) pointed out that women are the majority at election campaign rallies because of ‘the benefits’ they get (the t-shirts, the capulanas and the caps) at these rallies, but not all of them go to vote. In Gaza it was said that failure to benefit a capulana or something during a campaign rally is enough to demotivate someone from voting.

#### F. Lack of motivation

Young people in urban areas do not adhere to electoral processes either out of contempt or despair. They do not see the advantages of voting and do not know the value of one’s vote. They have the attitude that “this is not going to change my life”, therefore they choose neither to register nor to vote but rather engage in activities that they feel are productive and useful for them.

Yolanda Mussa pointed out that women in urban areas seem to have lost confidence in the ability of the political process to bring change in their lives. She said they ask questions like *“What will the vote change in my life, we have voted so many times before? Will things improve if we vote? Even where the distance to the polling station is short like in some residential areas (bairros) in Pemba, questions about good roads, decent housing, the poor state of infrastructure do not motivate women to go and vote”*, she said.

In Gaza the participants said that older women who have no hope of finding jobs do not go to vote. Some of them say that “our sons and daughters are here, they have no jobs, what am I going to vote for?”

#### Candidacy

Women’s participation in the electoral process as candidates is still far way behind. The following factors were identified as contributing to this state:

##### A. Lack of political will within political parties

Lack of political will and male chauvinism in political parties was said to hinder or limit women’s participation especially as candidates. Sometimes women candidates are put forward as a political strategy to lure the woman vote, but there is always a man behind her who calls the shots, so even though she is there, her participation is not effective. Politics is still very much considered as men’s space. The political parties determine who is nominated and even though there is voluntary quota system in Mozambique, it is not implemented by the majority of the political of the parties. In some cases, a female candidate is supported because of her family links with powerful members of the party.

##### B. Lack of capacity

Lack of capacity among women candidates was cited as one of the reasons for women’s low participation as candidates. Some political parties use this as an excuse for not having women on their lists. Rui Semente, President of the Forum of NGOS in Sofala (FOPROSA), citing the experiences of his organization as election

observers during the 2018 Municipal elections, said that lack of capacity was used as an excuse by the political parties. We were very concerned, many women participated in the campaigns and voter registration, but on the lists there were no indications of the women. Only FRELIMO had women representation. We invited all the parties - FRELIMO, RENAMO and MDM included - to understand why there was a poor representation of women. The answer was *“There is no capacity in women”* he said. It is interesting to note that in 2014 general elections, women comprised 40% of Frelimo candidates, 27.6% for Renamo and 20.4% for MDM, respectively <sup>4</sup>.

##### C. Election related gender-based violence

Women suffer threats of election related violence both within the home and outside the home. Election-related violence involving women, much of which is difficult to quantify and analyze because it occurs in the private sphere or in the form of psychological threats or social restrictions, is often overlooked. It is important to note that electoral violence against women, whether by political party leaders, poll workers or family members, represents a significant obstacle to increasing women’s representation in the political sphere<sup>5</sup>. In Gaza it was reported that some women have experienced domestic violence at the hands of their spouses because they participated in election campaign rallies “instead of being at home doing their household chores”. A study conducted by the Centro de Estudos Urbanos de

<sup>4</sup> EISA Relatório da Missão de Observação Eleitoral Presidenciais, Legislativas e das Assembleias Provinciais 15 de Outubro de 2014 Mozambique  
<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/2017\\_ifes\\_effect\\_of\\_violence\\_on\\_women\\_participation\\_in\\_bangladesh.pdf](https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/2017_ifes_effect_of_violence_on_women_participation_in_bangladesh.pdf)



*“It’s very difficult to be LGBT in Mozambique. LGBT women are discriminated twice, because they are women and also because they are lesbians. It is a double process. Usually there is no talk of the role of LGBT women in the political space. Truly speaking, currently there is not a large number of LGBT women interested in political issues”*, said 31 year old **Matilde Tomás Calima**, an LGBT activist from Beira.



Mocambique (CeUrbE) in the wake of the 2018 municipal elections in the districts of Chókwè (Gaza Province) and Mocuba (Zambézia Province) found election related or politically motivated violence as one of the factors that that hinder or limit women’s engagement with the electoral process, both as voters and candidates. The study found that even though election related violence is experienced by both men and women, in addition to physical violence, women significantly suffer economic and psychological violence. Women are prevented from voting due to family pressures and fear of “the political game”<sup>6</sup>.

Women candidates or potential candidates suffer psychological violence. “When they (the men) see that she is a strong woman and has a potential to win, they say it openly, that this is not your space. Political space is still very much considered men’s domain”, said Saquina Mucavel of the Mozambique Rural Women’s Movement (MMR) from Maputo City. When a woman engages in a political activity, there are always conflicts with her husband, it can be psychological violence or physical violence. “There is always the perception that for a woman to succeed in politics, there is always a man behind her who is pushing her and this is what causes conflicts with her husband, it can be psychological or physical violence”, said one participant from Beira.

In Sofala it was reported that fear of loss of jobs is also a contributing factor. Professional women like teachers and nurses go to vote in order to keep their jobs, they fear losing their jobs if they do not participate. It was also said that some women are forced to participate in electoral politics because of family ties. Those whose relatives are Government Ministers or occupy top positions in government, fear that if they do not vote their family might lose some benefits.

It was also reported that during the campaign period as well as on election day, it is not only women who experience violence. In some places, men, particularly young men, do also experience violence.

**D. Loyalty to Political Party**

Loyalty to political party among women was also said to a barrier to women’s effective engagement with the electoral process both at candidate level as well as an elected official. The political parties determine who is nominated and elected and what issues take prominence

at national level. Sometimes there is conflict between the gender agenda and the agenda of the political party and in such cases, the agenda of the political party takes precedence. “It is also not entirely correct to assume that the advancement of issues important to women takes precedence over party affiliation or party loyalty in women politicians. Women politicians also have multiple identities, and their identity as a woman may not always prevail in identifying priorities”<sup>7</sup>.

Political affiliation or loyalty was also credited for creating a barrier between the elected women and other women in general especially those from different political parties. It was said that some of them refuse to work with women and rather choose to work with men.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

There is high participation of women at voter registration level and their participation as voters on the election has been on the decline. Women, particularly rural women are under pressure from local/ community leaders to register as voters. This pressure is generated by way of intimidation whereby the leaders make it mandatory for them to register. The local leaders also attach the voter identification card to access to social benefits such as employment and access to credit, thereby leading many women to register solely for the purpose of obtaining the card. When they have obtained the voters’ card, many do not necessarily go to vote. Even when they do cast their vote, due to high illiteracy levels most rural women do so not only without appreciation of the value their vote, but also of the issues at stake. Their right to secret vote and choice of preferred candidate is sometimes interfered with not only by the local leaders, but also by their spouses who decide who they vote for. This is an indication that civic and voter education programs are not having the desired effect otherwise women would be more informed.

Women’s declining participation as voters is a result of a combination of factors that include multiple gender roles, lack of motivation, religious beliefs, election related gender-based violence and their inability to hold elected officials accountable for promises made during election campaigns.

Women’s participation as candidates still lags far behind that of men and this is mainly due to male chauvinism within political parties, lack of capacity, intimidation and gender-based violence. As elected officials women

do not effectively participate or contribute mainly because political party agendas take precedence over gender issues.

The proposed recommendations for increasing women’s engagement with the electoral processes were as follow:

**A. Strengthening existing voter education programs**

- STAE should collaborate with civil society organizations, especially women’s organizations and others involved in voter education for women and other programs aimed at increasing women’s participation in political processes. In Gaza some participants said that communities trust civil society organizations more than STAE, so collaboration between the two would help reach out to more women.
- Promote meetings with women with a view to sensitize them on the importance of the electoral process.
- Electoral civic education should cover aspects of violence against women in elections.
- Build the capacity of women civic educators to do electoral civic education for the elderly.
- Use of electoral civic education materials appropriate for the visually impaired.
- Electoral civic education should be done in local languages to ensure that it reaches the majority of the rural women who have very little or no formal education at all.
- Electoral civic education should be an ongoing activity, not something that is done only during the election year. It should also be included in the schools curricula. Dissemination of and sensitization about electoral rights/ political rights should be done.
- The elderly and people with physical disabilities should have priority. In Gaza it was reported that one political party provides transport to people on election day to take them to polling stations and it was pointed out that this should not be so because someone who does not wish to vote for that party feels intimidated to get on the bus. It should be the role of CNE/ STAE and not political parties said one participant.

- Specific messages targeting young people should be included in the electoral civic education package.
- Door to door voter education campaign targeting women with deficiencies and the elderly.
- Face to face/ direct contact conversations with women at the markets where they do their businesses. Most women are working for the greater part of the day and many do not have time to sit and watch TV or listen to the radio when they get home in the evening, so they miss out on a lot of tv and radio programs. Therefore targeting markets (mercados) where there are a lot of women is one way of broadening the outreach to women.
- Use of songs, dance, theatre, social media should be employed in electoral civic education.
- Debates on TV and community radios to promote women’s participation.
- Existing advocacy instruments developed by CSOs such as Women’s Manifesto developed by Forum Mulher should be widely disseminated.
- Electoral civic education should also target LGBTI women and their role in the electoral process.
- The number of women as polling officers should increase. This will encourage more women to vote because female polling officers are seen as less intimidating compared to their male counterparts.

**B. Legislated mandatory quota system**

In order to increase the number of women as candidates, introduction of quotas at political level could be beneficial. Political parties play a very important role in increasing women’s participation and a mandatory quota system would ensure that this is done by all political parties, not just a few as is the situation currently.

**C. Sex disaggregation of voter turnout data**

Voter turnout data should be disaggregated by sex to allow a better understanding of the women’s voting tendencies and patterns. “We want to see data that shows the number of women registered to vote and after elections we should have data on how many women actually voted. As election observers we do not have the

<sup>6</sup> Centro de Estudos Urbanos de Mocambique (CeUrbE): As “INADIVEIS” Estudo Sobre A Violência Contra a Mulher nas Eleições: O Caso dos Municípios de Mocuba e Chokwe. Jan 2019

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635548/EPRS\\_BRI\(2019\)635548\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635548/EPRS_BRI(2019)635548_EN.pdf)



capacity to collect this data, the CNE should", said Isabel Matos of Conchas Fernandes Foundation.

This recommendation is in line with the United Nations Secretary-General's report on women, peace and security S/2010/498 in 2010<sup>8</sup> which presented a set of indicators for use at the global level to track implementation of the Women Peace and Security Resolution (resolution 1325 2000). Among the indicators for voluntary reporting by Member States is a new indicator on women's political participation as voters and candidates. This indicator tracks the extent to which women register and actually vote and also the extent to which women contest in national elections as candidates.

#### D. Others

- Priority to vote first should be given to women so that they are free to go and continue with other responsibilities. Alternatively, there should have queue arrangements in the polling stations for women taking into consideration their gender roles.
- Women should also be empowered to vote or elect someone on the basis of issues rather than political affiliation.
- Elimination of social and cultural harmful practices that limit women's participation in electoral processes.
- Investing in empowering women to effectively participate in electoral processes. This should include not only building the capacity of women in elected positions or in politics, but also empowering rural women to demand accountability from their elected leaders and political parties.
- The CSOs should monitor the political parties' commitment to gender equality and they should lobby them to implement a quota system as a starting point.
- Promotion of peaceful elections free from violence.
- Building gender capacity in political party leadership.
- Create a women's advocacy platform to demand accountability during mid-term, on what was promised during elections. It was noted, however, there may not be need to create another platform, but rather strengthen the existing ones.

<sup>8</sup> <https://undocs.org/en/S/2010/498/20/07/2019>

## 5. Post-study Interventions

The main reason behind conducting the study was to assist the project to understand the underlying issues behind women's low engagement with the electoral process and to offer innovative solutions, especially those aimed at increasing women's engagement with the electoral process as voters. The report and the relevant recommendations would form the basis for the development of actions to this end.

Although the study provides a comprehensive assessment of the issues regarding women's engagement with the electoral process, the post-study follow up actions focused on responding to the findings and recommendations that needed to be addressed immediately with a view to increasing women's participation in the 15 October 2019 general and provincial elections. To this end, the project responded by addressing through following critical areas:

#### Gender sensitive Voter Education Campaign

The project supported the STAE led voter education campaign by making it more gender-sensitive. Gender sensitive and more inclusive voter education materials for and used by STAE and the Mozambique Command General (Police) were produced. These materials profiled women as role models, leaders and active participants in the electoral process. The aim was to allow women to see themselves as active voters and leaders in elections thereby encouraging them to go out and vote in large numbers.

As part of the campaign to encourage women to go and vote, a TV SPOT<sup>9</sup> targeting women, both youths and adults, was sponsored and featured on STV. The TV Spot was aimed at addressing three key issues that emerged from the study: that voting is a right and should be exercised; that her vote is important and makes a difference; that her vote is her secret, and the SPOT concluded by an appeal to women to go and vote. The SPOT was converted into an audio message and transmitted through community radios around the country.

<sup>9</sup> Youtube link for TVSPOT women and elections: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfgRscBMlew>



#### International Conference on Democracy and Political Participation of Women in Africa

One of the key follow-up actions was the "International Conference on Democracy and political Participation of women in Africa" held on 1-2 August 2019 at the Joaquim Chissano International Conference Center in Maputo City. The conference was organized by UNDP in collaboration with the International Federation of Women Lawyers, ADER and the Association of Mozambican Women Lawyers (AMMCJ). The conference intended to contribute to increasing women's awareness of their electoral rights in the context of the country's sixth general elections held on 15 October 2019. It's main objective was to promote a broad debate on women's participation in electoral processes and to prepare girls to participate in future electoral processes on the African continent, as well as build on women's achievements in terms of the enjoyment of the right to vote and participation in active politics. The conference which was widely covered on both mainstream and social media drew an audience of 300 participants, mostly women from all the provinces of Mozambique, foreign guests from Angola, Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo, France and other neighboring countries. Participants included members of civil society organizations, Government representatives, political leaders, diplomatic corps,

academics, legal professionals, religious leaders, national and international human rights activists.

The conference deliberation resulted in an outcome document containing findings, conclusions and recommendations around the following five thematic topics:

- Women's participation in politics
- Women's participation in electoral bodies
- Role of public authorities and NGOs in the promotion and participation of women in politics
- Political participation of rural women
- Beijing + 25: Preparation for CSW64 with a focus on women's political participation

#### Violence against Women in Elections Campaign

The study revealed that women experience election related violence both in and outside of their homes, including within their own political parties, and this violence takes different forms – physical, psychological, economic including threats. Unlike violence against women in other contexts, violence against women in elections is rarely reported or given high profile. In order to raise awareness on VAWIE, the project embarked on



a campaign against election violence against women. One thousand “No to Violence Against Women in Elections” posters were produced and distributed to all provinces through partnerships with key civil society organizations that have a presence in all the provinces. The fact that at the time the campaign took off, most CSOs were conducting voter education and election observers’ trainings in the different provinces made poster distribution faster and wider. For instance, 221 posters were distributed through Parlamento Juvenil which distributed to all the 11 provinces. Other key CSOs were the Mozambique Rural Women’s Movement (MMR), Muleide, Liga dos Direitos Humanos, AMMCJ, Horizonte Azul, CEDES, Forum Mulher, Sikelekani and 150 posters were distributed through Associacao Ativa and its network organizations. Posters were also distributed to project donors, embassies and UN Agencies.

Technical support to STAE for generation of sex-disaggregated data

Discussions were held with STAE staff and directorate with a view to sensitize them of the importance of collecting and presenting data disaggregated by sex, as well as encourage the institution to collect and report on sex-disaggregated data on the proportion of women and men who were going to participate on voting day

Table 2: Sex-disaggregated data of Polling staff

Nº	Province	Total no. polling staff	Men	Women	Men (%)	Women (%)
1	Maputo City	6860	3154	3706	46	54
2	Maputo	11655	4662	6993	40	60
3	Gaza	12915	5630	7285	44	56
4	Inhambane	8239	3666	4573	44.5	55.5
5	Sofala	10395	6782	3613	65	35
6	Manica	9299	5529	3770	59	41
7	Tete	13071	7990	5081	61	39
8	Zambézia	22262	13603	8659	61	39
9	Nampula	24402	15647	8755	64	36
10	Cabo Delgado	13035	8090	4945	62	38
11	Niassa	8386	4946	3440	59	41
TOTAL		140519	79699	60820	57	43

Source: Technical Secretariat for the Administration of Elections, 2019

N.B Sex disaggregated data relating to women and men as presidents/ heads of polling stations was not generated, as a result of which it was not possible to assess the level of women's participation as heads of polling stations.

(voter turnout). Drawing from experiences from other countries where this has been done (and done manually), particularly East Timor and Nepal where some of the key staff on the project have had firsthand experience, a template for collecting sex-disaggregated data on voter turnout was designed and shared with STAE for their approval, adoption and use. Whilst the idea of sex-disaggregated voter turnout data was appreciated (in principle), the efforts did not produce the desired results with STAE citing the existence of legal impediments as reason for not conducting the exercise.

However, efforts were made to produce and provide sex-disaggregated data on the accredited national election observers which showed that of the 42,902 national observers accredited by STAE for the 15th October General elections, 12,850 were women. This puts women’s participation as national observers in the 15<sup>th</sup> October elections at 30%.

Sex-disaggregated data on polling staff countrywide was also collected and produced showing that overall women constituted 43% of the polling staff, with Maputo and Gaza provinces scoring the highest women’s participation at 60% and 56% respectively, and Nampula and Sofala provinces scoring lowest with 36% and 35% respectively as shown in the table below:

Women’s participation as candidates for the Provincial Assemblies

In order to understand and have a clearer picture of the extent women’s engagement with the electoral process as candidates at the provincial level (as candidates for provincial assemblies), the project conducted a desk review on the participation of women in the three main political parties: FRELIMO, RENAMO and MDM. The rational for choosing these three main parties was that out of the 26 political parties contesting in provincial assemblies’ election, they were the only ones that were able to field candidates in all constituencies and for all

contested seats. An analysis of these three, therefore gives a reasonably reliable overall picture of the level of women’s participation at this level. The following infographics shows the level of women’s participation per party and at the nationwide (in legislature and provincial assemblies) overview.

A look at the data for each province shows variations between provinces even within the same party. There seem to be no uniformity on how the quota system is applied across the provinces and even within the same province.

Infographics 1– Women’s candidacy in Provincial Assemblies nationwide

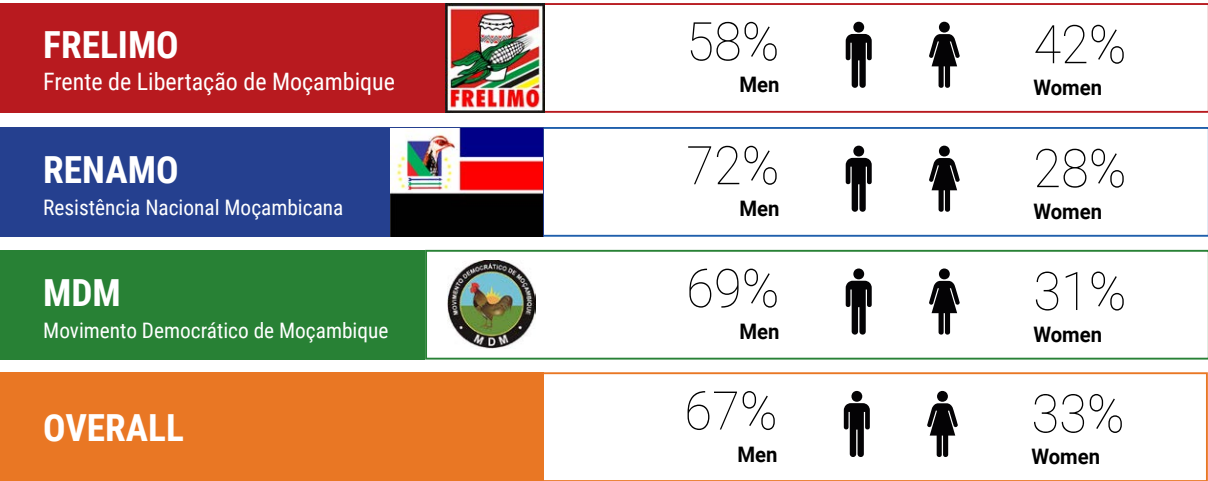


Table 3 – Women’s candidacy in Provincial Assemblies per province

Party	FRELIMO		RENAMO		MDM		Total per province all parties	
Province	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)
Niassa	36 (60)	24 (40)	44 (73)	16 (27)	48 (80)	12 (20)	128 (71)	52 (29)
Cabo Delgado	57 (57)	35 (43)	58 (71)	24 (29)	57 (69.5)	25 (30.5)	162 (66)	84 (34)
Nampula	58 (62)	36 (38)	70 (74.5)	24 (25.5)	68 (72)	26 (28)	196 (69.5)	86 (30.5)
Zambézia	53 (58)	39 (42)	65 (71)	27 (29)	65 (71)	27 (29)	183 (66)	93 (34)
Tete	48 (58.5)	34 (41.5)	60 (73)	22 (27)	55 (67)	27 (33)	163 (66)	83 (34)
Manica	54 (67.5)	26 (32.5)	63 (79)	17 (21)	56 (70)	24 (30)	173 (72)	67 (28)
Sofala	36 (44)	45 (56)	61 (75)	20(25)	64 (79)	17(21)	161 (66)	82 (34)
Inhambane	41 (68)	19 (32)	43 (72)	17 (28)	40 (67)	20 (33)	124 (69)	56 (31)
Gaza	49 (60)	33 (40)	54 (66)	28 (34)	47 (57)	35 (43)	150 (61)	96 (39)
Maputo	40 (49)	41 (51)	57 (70)	24 (30)	51 (63)	30 (37)	148 (69)	95 (31)

Source: Data generated from Boletim da Republica , I Serie =No. 174, 6 September 2019

Women’s representation in the 2020-2024 Provincial Assemblies

Following the general elections of 15 October 2019, the Table 4 below presents an overview of how women and men fared.

Overall, women’s representation stands at 35%. There are variations amongst provinces with Sofala Province having the highest at 47%, followed by Maputo at 44% and lowest being Niassa, Tete and Inhambane all at 30%. There is need not only to push for increased women’s representation at this level, but to all build the capacity of the women to ensure quality and effective participation.

Women’s participation as candidates for the National Assembly elections

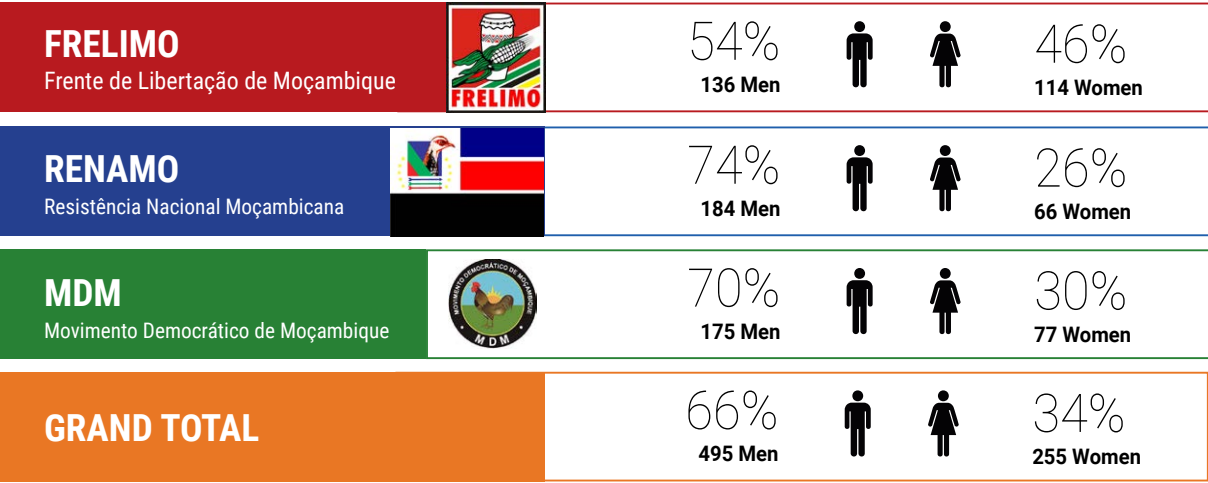
Again in this section, as is with women’s participation as candidates for the Provincial Assemblies, the desk review for assessment for women as candidates for the National Assembly was limited to the three main political parties for the same reasons, and the statistical data does not include substitute candidates. The infographics below shows that overall, women’s participation as candidates for the National Assembly in the 15 October 2019 elections for the three political parties stood at 34% with variations amongst them with FRELIMO having a 46% representation and RENAMO and MDM at 26% and 30% respectively.

Table 4– Women’s representation in Provincial Assemblies per province

Party	FRELIMO		RENAMO		MDM		Total per province all parties	
Province	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)
Niassa	32 (70)	14 (30)	10(71)	4 (29)	0	0	42 (70)	18(30)
Cabo Delgado	40(61)	26(39)	15(94)	1 (6)	0	0	55(67)	27(33)
Nampula	39(62)	24(38)	25(81)	6(19)	0	0	64(68)	30(32)
Zambézia	41(59)	28(41)	18(78)	5(22)	0	0	59(64)	33(36)
Tete	42(65)	23(35)	15(88)	2(12)	0	0	57(70)	25(30)
Manica	43(68)	20(32)	14(82)	3(18)	0	0	57(71)	23(29)
Sofala	28(47)	32(53)	10(77)	3(23)	5(62.5)	3(37.5)	43(53)	38(47)
Inhambane	36(67)	18(33)	6(100)	0	0	0	42(70)	18(30)
Gaza	49(60)	32(40)	1(100)	0	0	0	50(61)	32(39)
Maputo	31(51)	30(49)	12(67)	6(33)	2(100)	0	45(56)	36 (44)
Grand Total	381 (61)	247 (39)	126 (65)	30(35)	7(70)	3(30)	514 (65)	280(35)

Source: Data generated from Acordão no. 25/CC/2019: Processo no.30/CC/2019

Infographics 2– Women’s candidacy in National Assembly



Data generated from Boletim da Republica , I Serie =No. 174, 6 September 2019

6. Conclusions

Voter and electoral civic education are key to enhancing women’s participation both as voters as well as candidates. As such in order to be more effective, it should not be a one-off activity conducted for a few months during the election year but should be continued in between inter- election periods. Apart from STAE and UNDP, there were also other civil society organizations doing voter campaign directed at women. Whilst the observations were that more women turned out on the voting day, it is difficult to conclude that there was increase in voter turnout among women in the absence of data pointing to that effect. STAE statistics show an overall voter turnout of 50.74%. A 49% voter abstinence is still high and calls for more extensive voter and civic and voter education between the election periods.

With the introduction of Provincial Assemblies, there is need to build the capacity of women to ensure effective participation. This group is closer to the population than those in the National Assembly and it is vital that they be able not only to articulate the issues that affect

women, but also to take decisions that are important and can impact positively on the lives of women and girls.

Regarding the analysis of women’s participation the exercise was not only important for assessing the level of women’s participation in general but also to assess the extent to which the three main political parties are implementing the voluntary quota system (in view of the recommendation for legislated quota system) and how that affects the level of women’s participation in general. It is not about showing who is doing good or bad, but it is rather a contribution to the “Voluntary quotas vs Legislated quotas” debate.

The current variations in the application of the voluntary quota systems across the political parties makes the representation of women as elected officials heavily dependent on the winning party. This is true for both Provincial Assemblies and the National Assembly where women’s representation stands at 42%.

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# FACTSHEET

Women Participation | Mozambique Elections 2019



**53%** Women as  
**Registered Voters**

6,173,303 **Men**   6,98,7760 **Women**

Total Registered Voters: 1,316,1063

Source: CNE



**43%** Women as  
**Polling Staff (MMV)**

79,699 **Men**   60,820 **Women**

Total Polling Staff (MMV): 140,519

Source: STAE

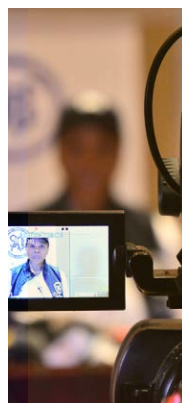


**37%** Women as  
**STAE Staff**

309 **Men**   182 **Women**

Total STAE Staff: 491

Source: STAE



**30%** Women as  
**Election Observers**

30,052 **Men**   12,850 **Women**

Total Accredited Election Observers: 42,902

Source: CNE



**51%** Women  
**Provisional Turnout**

48.82% **Men**   51.18% **Women**

Source: PVT- IDEA International



**42%** **Elected Women  
Representation in AR**

144 **Men**   106 **Women**

Total Members: 250

Source: CNE

## SEAM TEAM

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<b>Gloria Nyamuzuwe</b>	Gender Specialist
<b>Hemant Pathak</b>	M&E Specialist
<b>Rochan Kadariya</b>	ICT Analyst
<b>Almeida Mabutana</b>	National Legal Officer
<b>Mim Lama</b>	Project Management Specialist
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<b>Abilio Matingane</b>	Admin and Finance Assistant
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Note: Above information are collected by UNDP through different indicated sources. The indicated percentages are rounded-off to the nearest number.



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