



FIRST THREE LAND TITLES IN FAVOR OF VULNERABLE WOMEN HAVE BEEN ISSUED IN MOZAMBIQUE

By Marianna Bicchieri

Thanks to the joint efforts deployed by a group of paralegals of the local NGO AMUDEIA, trained by the Juridical and Judicial Training Centre of the Ministry of Justice (CFJJ) with support of FAO, the first three land titles in favour of vulnerable women have been issued recently. This is a very positive example how the CFJJ/FAO paralegal programme is having a positive impact and contributing to real social changes

Paralegals from AMUDEIA during community meeting about land and women's rights in Mozambique.

Photo: Rubén Villanueva



in relation to the promotion of land rights for rural communities.

Since 1992 FAO has been working with the government of Mozambique to formulate and implement the land policy, land law, the forestry law, and all related regulations and technical annexes. Capacity building has been the core of the more recent years of FAO support, particularly through CFJJ.

The courses were de-

signed to ensure citizens becoming aware of their property rights, how to successfully pursue them, and how to access the justice system. More recently a Gender and Land Program was set up by CFJJ and FAO, with the financial support of the Kingdom of Norway to address the complex gender issue in the wider land agenda.

Rural women face a great deal of vulnerability – they are both the major producers of food and responsible for the management of their homes, but they are not given real decision-making power in their families, or given rights over land. Meanwhile, land is getting scarcer, and so families are taking new measures to either hold onto or gain as much land as they can. In this context, young widows are being dispossessed of their lands, and the children are being disinherited.

For this purpose the CFJJ/FAO Land and Gender Project is working at many levels:

Paralegal training courses, in which civil society – CSO, NGO, public sector staff, and community leader are being trained on the most important laws regarding access to land, gender equality, and women's rights to land. District seminars targeting judges and prosecutors, as well as police chiefs, who

are going to be the ones who receive and address claims concerning gender discrimination and violence, as well as land dispossession.

Capacity training activities are clearly important, but it is much more important to see their impact at local level. The issuing of these three titles in *Sofala Province*, in the central region of Mozambique, is a proof that things are moving in this important and delicate issue.

'This is a moment of positive change in our lives, from now on our land and our livelihoods are safe, our past and our future are protected' says Teresa Mboa, from AMUDEIA. She states that the achievement of these land titles made all communities members very proud and confident in the future. *'Now we know that we can defend our land and our rights and we do not need anyone's help to do that – our lives are finally in our hands'* concluded Teresa.

The CFJJ and FAO, and the donors supporting this still evolving and important programme, can feel real pride in this achievement, and the evident impact which the programme is beginning to have on the lives of ordinary people, and in particular, rural women.

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