



FOCUS ON

Mozambique

A decade experimenting disaster risk reduction strategies

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

Acknowledgements

Focus on Mozambique

A decade experimenting disaster risk reduction strategies

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The design of the Kindergarten in Vilankulo was inspired from the works of **Julian Salas**, Industrial Engineer

The design of the Dome House in Vilankulo was inspired from the works of Hassan Fathy, Architect

Author of the Painting in the Back Cover ("Africa, we'll breathe always together to win" - Oil painted on canvas, cm 140 x 140, 1988): **Bertina Lopes**

Map of the lower Limpopo River basin: Courtesy of INGC, UEM-Department of Geography and FEWS NET MIND, 2003

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Foreword



The UN-Habitat programme in Mozambique represents one of the best examples within the Agency's portfolio on how diversified and in-depth interventions can provide concrete solutions to the challenges of a country which is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. This was possible thanks to the hard work produced by a dedicated and multi-disciplinary team of national and international professionals, which has been growing steadily since 2002.

The continuity of UN-Habitat's operations could be ensured by establishing synergies between the different projects and programmes, which helped overcoming the difficulties determined by irregular funding. In this manner great impacts were achieved with relatively limited financial resources.

Two crucial aspects deserve to be highlighted regarding this country programme: **participation** and **innovation**.

The team in Mozambique has managed, through practical experience, to establish a participatory planning approach which today is almost institutionalised. It consists of involving the targeted communities directly in the decision-making process, while ensuring the presence of local and central authorities, the academia, the civil society and the private sector. This empowers the local population and provides a sense of ownership, which makes any local intervention more sustainable. Importantly, all identified solutions are fundamentally suggested by the community itself.

During the past decade, UN-Habitat in Mozambique was able to propose alternative and innovative solutions.

One example is the "living with floods" approach which, if appropriately applied, can improve the government's policy of resettling people living in vulnerable areas. Other interventions consisted of building better in cyclone-affected areas or mainstreaming the use of rainwater harvesting in arid zones.

To achieve that, firstly, high-quality didactic tools were produced, able to transmit complex concepts through simple messages and to raise awareness at all levels.

Secondly, identified solutions were physically implemented through on-the job training of local communities and the establishment of live workshops, in a way that can be easily replicated.

As a result, some of the materials produced have become respected at the international level and are being widely disseminated, while the role of architecture in reducing disaster risk was highlighted in a unique manner thanks to the construction of pilot buildings. Importantly, these activities constitute important factors of decision-making in Mozambique today for redefining key policy, strategic and legislative tools in the field of disaster risk reduction, with a special focus on slum upgrading and urban development.

It is UN-Habitat's hope to see its programme growing in the near future and its experiences being systematically transmitted to the national and local counterparts within the government and the local authorities.

The final objective is to contribute to the creation of resilient communities and to reinforce the institutional capacity at the different levels to cope with the harsh environmental conditions and socio-political challenges.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Joan Clos".

Dr Joan Clos
United Nations Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Director of UN-Habitat

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Ten years working in Mozambique



The main aim of this publication is to focus on UN-Habitat's activities for reducing the vulnerability of local population living in disaster-prone areas in the long-term which have been implemented in different locations of Mozambique since 2002. Particular attention is given to innovative architectural solutions adopted as preventive measures for floods, cyclones and droughts. The work shows how the aforementioned solutions are the result of a process that starts from the roots of local practices, in terms of materials and building techniques, to improve and make them resistant to environmental conditions where communities live. The concept of living with these different kinds of natural hazards in areas prone to small and moderate events is based on the identification of sustainable architectural alternatives to massive resettlement operations of the population. This work, through an in-depth analysis of the most relevant demonstrative architectural interventions implemented in Mozambique, explains through text, graphs and photos, how UN-HABITAT strategies have developed.

Furthermore, the work takes into consideration the role of the United Nations as a partner of government and local authorities, local communities and civil society, academia and other stakeholders, in the development of awareness materials, training and capacity building activities, strategic studies and analytical maps, local participatory action plans and vulnerability reduction strategies. These have been adequately considered in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Mozambique for which the Delivering as One approach is consolidating.



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