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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

As part of the long term cooperation project “PathH-ER-ways: Creating pathways for the political participation of young women” I had the opportunity to be in Mozambique for a “jobshadowing” activity that allowed me to contact local organizations, to discuss with experts and to do a brief research on the realities of youth participation and young women participation in the decision making process. The text bellow is the results of some of my findings and of recent research conducted in the country.

In Mozambique, apart from the elections, youth participation in governance is guided by the National Constitution and specific policies. To ensure better framing and implementation of youth related issues, the Government approved in 1996 the Youth Policy Framework, in 2006 the Integrated Development Youth Strategy and in 2013 was approved the National Youth Policy.

However, studies on participation in Mozambique point out the following factors that weaken youth participation, among others:

- i) Weak representativeness, in particular of women in decision-making structures;
- ii) Poor level of openness for dialogue from the part of national public institutions;
- iii) Political intimidation, prosecution and intolerance from the side of the owners of political and economic power;
- iv) Political socialization that many times conditions the youngster into having a negative perception of democracy, which ends up promoting political intolerance;
- v) A lack of common agenda between the youngsters;
- vi) Low levels of schooling and access to information (Youth Parliament of Mozambique, 2014).

With the purpose of evaluating the specific situation lived by youngsters in the districts of Namaacha and Marracuene, the Open Society in collaboration with the District Platforms for Civil Society undertook a meeting to dwell on youth participation in governance monitoring, that I had the opportunity to analyze the results and to discuss them with organizers.

The used methodology in the meeting consisted in the presentation of the main problems faced by youngsters, identification of strategies to be adopted to strengthen the participation of young people in governance monitoring and among plenary discussions.

## **2. FINDING REGARDING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE DISTRICT GOVERNANCE**

- Complementing the already existing studies, the results of an evaluation show that youth participation in monitoring local governance is weak, due to the fact of being affected by the following aspects:
- Tendency to manipulate ambitious and visionary youngsters to align their opinions with the governments' actions;
- Lack of opportunity to move forward with studies until high school, as books are sold in high prices;
- Difficulties in accessing university, which creates a general feeling of marginalization as regards access to employment;
- Youth associations being influenced by political parties;
- Lack of incentives and direct gains from participation, which in a way contributes that only elderly people participate in Consultative Councils;
- Low level of knowledge on participation's rights and duties, including about the spaces created for this purpose.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN MONITORING DISTRICT GOVERNANCE**

The recommendations below take into account the assessed situation:

### **Government**

- Increase the inclusion of young people and young women in the Consultative Councils at all levels, in conformity with the percentage established by the guidelines on the organization and functioning of these structures;
- Disseminate the existing associative groups within the provinces and districts;
- Provide bigger attention to social issues, such as education, housing, transportation and employment that are key to the development of young people;
- Direct bigger financing opportunities to young people that are beginning their professional careers;
- Increase transparency on the awarding of university scholarships;
- Involve youth and young women in solving of local issues;
- Improve the system of dissemination of information pertaining to the interest of citizens/youngsters so that they actively exercise their citizenship.

### **Young People**

- Participate in monitoring local governance integrating in the District Platforms for Civil Society as they are institutions acknowledged by the local government;
- Participate in the reunions undertaken by neighborhoods, schools, Consultative Councils, and Governmental audits;

- Create a youth movement parallel to the already existing movements/youth structures at the district level, to influence youth matters and ensure that the same issues are discussed at the central and provincial levels;
- Improve the mechanism for representing the interests of the Mozambican Youth Organization and the Youth District Council.

#### **Civil Society Organizations**

- Disseminate laws at the community level, so that the citizens are aware of them and foster their implementation;
- Strengthen associative forums and create debates within the communities about related youth concerns, such as lack of housing, high rates of unemployment, and lack of dialogue between young people, women and the Government, which will contribute to increasing the number of young people to participate and express their stances on local governance;
- Provide women and young people with tools for participation;
- Improve the connection with media in order to build a space for youth participation and intervention in decision-making processes.