

Project update (EN)

Project title (Acronym):	“Strengthening the Resilience of Rural Food Environments In The Context of Disaster Risk and Climate Change In Mozambique” (FEMOZ)
Geographical focus:	Mozambique
Call reference:	Food environments for improved nutrition
Cooperating partners:	Institute for Technology and Resources Management in the Tropics and Sub-tropics (ITT) TH Köln; Institute for Information Science (IWS), TH Köln; Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Faculty of Agronomy and Forest Engineering, University Eduardo Mondlane (UEM); Universidade Rovuma, Nampula, Mozambique, Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition (SETSAN), Maputo, Mozambique; National Institute for Disaster Management (INGD), Maputo, Mozambique; Network of Food Sovereignty Organizations (ROSA), Maputo, Mozambique, Rural Association for Mutual Aid (ORAM); Maputo, Mozambique; Solar Power Stores, Maputo, Mozambique
Duration:	01.03.2021 until 29.02.2024
Budget:	1,152,806.26 €

Current development of the project:

In the framework of the FEMOZ project, the Symposium under the theme "Rural Food Environments in the context of Climate Change" was held on 14 September 2022 in Maputo, Mozambique. The following objectives were formulated in the development of the event:

- Address aspects of food environments from an individual and external environment perspective;
- Share and discuss the preliminary results of the research conducted between October 2021 and July 2022 with a more specialised audience, including the scientific community, government institutions, and NGOs, among other key stakeholders.



FEMOZ preliminary research results were presented in one guest keynote speaker presentation, four panels and a simultaneous demonstration of the FEMOZ Dashboard. In addition, products derived from Neglected and Underutilized Plant Species (NUS) were exhibited. The findings presented include:

Expert panel: Ambientes alimentares como porta de entrada para intervir no sistema alimentar: desafios para o meio rural (Luis Goulao – University of Lisbon)

1. In the context of national food insecurity, the government and society as a whole should be more aggressive in implementing policies. Nevertheless, this task is hindered by internal and external shocks that include extreme climatic effects linked to climate change (i.e., the occurrence of natural disasters).
2. Traditional knowledge on the uses of different types of food should be integrated with scientific knowledge on their nutritional value (and potential) in order to incorporate them into national agendas.

Panel 1: Análise da insegurança alimentar aguda: discussão dos resultados e métodos integrados (Rui Pedroso – ITT/TH Köln, and Adérito Machava – UEM)

1. In the three FEMOZ research areas (i.e., districts of Ribáue, Búzi and Moamba), food insecurity is classified as acute (according to the IPC acute food insecurity scale and the FEWS-NET combined matrix for food insecurity). There are different levels of food insecurity in the three districts studied, with Búzi being the most critical, followed by Ribáue and Moamba, with higher outcomes.
2. Results were based on complex and detailed questionnaires on the constitution of the households, which allowed the collection of data following the objectives of the project to understand the role of the households in food insecurity, namely: access to markets, head of household (man or woman), household size, among others.
3. FEMOZ preliminary results contrast those of SETSAN (Secretariado Técnico de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional) in 2021, which considers that in districts such as Búzi, there is no food insecurity. Nevertheless, the FEMOZ evaluation does not invalidate the SETSAN evaluation,



which brings much more data on harvest forecasts, among other information. FEMOZ's evaluation is simple and pragmatic, utilising a table of indicators.

4. The project seeks the possibility to interact with further analysts and sectors linked to food security in Mozambique, experiment with a new methodology, and test a more pragmatic analysis of all indicators, from an academic perspective, not subjective, without taking a position on which is the most valid, but seeking complementarity between different approaches. The intention is not to replace the IPC methodology but to add a complementary tool for addressing food insecurity.

Panel 2: Food availability through value chain perspectives: diversity, prices and markets as key factors (Christine Bohn – FFG)

1. Given their limited economic capacity, more than half the population does not have access to a nutritious diet. Thus, FEMOZ discusses and elaborates on the first research results on food availability in its research areas through a value chain perspective, where the diversity of value chains, markets and prices are addressed as influential factors on food security and nutrition.
2. Regarding food availability, the diversity of intermediaries facilitates quick responses to respond flexibly to constraints caused by climatic events. The impact of disasters on food prices is short-lived and localised in disaster zones; a more far-reaching impact arises as an effect of drought. Moreover, food aid in crises is provided on too small a scale to affect market prices.
3. Specific foods do not enter local markets. This can be caused by limited local demand, high transport costs, aggravated access, lack of local production and sale of large quantities to reference markets by large-scale producers. Furthermore, insufficient infrastructure leads to losses, price increases and low competitiveness.

Panel 3: Neglected and Underutilised Plant Species (NUS) and their value chains: an unexploited resource (Luis Artur – UEM, and Ivo Cumbana – UEM)

1. Overall, there is insufficient knowledge of NUS in the country, particularly their nutritional values. However, NUS have several values, namely: sociocultural, commercial, environmental, ecosystem maintenance and medicinal.
2. In the district of Buzi, although *mazamera* is the best-known species, only 8% consume it. In Moamba, *massala* is a plant with considerable consumption. Moreover, in Ribáue, the most popular one is *ithema*. More NUS were mentioned in Buzi in comparison to the other districts. However, NUS are more consumed in the Moamba district.
3. The consumption of NUS occurs spontaneously, often for pleasure or to satisfy hunger, increasing significantly in periods of crisis. As a result, NUS are little marketed, and when marketed, the price charged is comparatively low compared to conventional food crops.

Panel 4: Mechanisms of inter-institutional coordination and cooperation to strengthen food and nutritional security (Luisa Mutisse Chicamisse – UEM and Samuel Quive – UEM)

1. The low level of coordination and inter-institutional cooperation of actors have a role in national food insecurity and can weaken the mechanisms for ensuring security in the context of disasters, impacting the resilience of rural communities.
2. Weak coordination, cooperation and clash/redundancy of tasks among several national actors and various scales towards the objectives of improving food security in the country, mainly at the district and community levels, which are characterised by weak representativeness and decentralisation powers.
3. The existence of different consultation mechanisms generates conflicts and mistrust between actors.



In addition to the efforts of communicating FEMOZ preliminary results to a diverse selection of Mozambican stakeholders through the Symposium, following the methodology proposed by the project, the Technical University of Cologne and its two partners (ITT and IWS), Frankenfoerder Forschungsgesellschaft (FFG) and the University of Eduardo Mondlane (UEM) meet in Germany in December of 2022. In these workshops, further results were presented in the fields of dietary diversity, production diversity, food accessibility and affordability, food safety, the role of local Neglected Underutilised Species (NUS), and price stabilisation shocks, among others. In addition, future events of 2023 and ideas were collected, including the next visit to Maputo, the final scientific conference, and the FEMOZ DAAD Summer School at the beginning of next September.

In the period of March 2023, the team met in Maputo, Mozambique, to undertake official conversations, network, present results, and obtain additional data with project partners, including SETSAN (Technical Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition), MISAU (Ministry of Health) and OMR (Observatory of the Rural Environment), among others, in the format of Living Labs and Expert Interviews. Furthermore, the FEMOZ DAAD Summer School was once again discussed, in addition to expanding the scope and impact of the FEMOZ Scientific Conference.

