



DEBATE IV – Transparency in public funds and in access to employment and education

This two-pager sets out the highlights of Debate IV, part of a series of five Dialogs on Inclusive Policies and Youth Employment in the Extractive Sector in Mozambique held in 2016 and presented on 25 May 2017.

The need for transparency in access to employment and education, as well as accountability for the policies being implemented, was the focus of Debate IV. The main barriers emphasized in this debate were with respect to corruption and sexual harassment.

Corruption was stressed as a structural factor that leads to social exclusion, which affects the whole population, including youth. Corruption has been identified as a *barrier to creating an environment conducive to inclusion and the promotion of equal employment opportunities*. The need to improve confidence and ensure the transparency of criteria for access to employment, as well as to ensure accountability for inclusive policies (overall and youth-focused), were associated with the demand for a more permanent and participatory dialogue mechanism between youth groups and the Government of Mozambique.

The debate highlighted the need for a *strong State*, with the capacity to respond to the demands of the population, through transparent criteria and mechanisms. Attention was drawn to the *costs of corruption*¹ in terms of the country's growth (see Debate I). It was pointed out that public funds diverted by corruption could be invested in policies to boost inclusive development or productive investment, which would promote jobs.

Several examples exposed concerns about corruption, which is commonplace in Mozambique, including the requesting of bribes to fill job vacancies. In response to comments about youths' weak interest in working (see Debate II), young people in the debate explained that *youth are discouraged from seeking employment* due to: lack of transparency in the selection of candidates; the injustice of having to pay bribes in order to access vacancies; companies that advertise vacancies when

they have already chosen a candidate; and the large sums requested by employment agents to fill vacancies.

Other forms of corruption cited² were: influence peddling; rapid and illicit enrichment without effort, to the detriment of the commitment to work; vacancies filled by directive, recommendation or favouritism (nepotism, tribalism or regionalism were cited). Other practices that discourage youths from accessing job opportunities included³:

- ◆ Vacancies announced with short notice, limiting the time for youths to prepare the necessary documents
- ◆ Companies with headquarters in the capital that send people to work in the provinces when there are people with sufficient qualifications in the provinces
- ◆ The lack of recognition of the work done by youth, with other team members taking advantage of the results and overshadowing youth
- ◆ Weak maritime surveillance over the exploitation of natural resources, which could open the door to corrupt practices

Government representatives said that they were aware of these challenges, pointing out that the need for transparency and the fight against corruption were prioritized in the National Strategy for Development (2015–2035). Managers present reaffirmed the importance of these practices being tackled. It was mentioned that a campaign 'Vacancies are not paid for' (*Vaga Não se Paga*) was being launched by the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security. However, a number of comments by the participants during the discussions stressed that the government should make greater efforts to eradicate corruption, because the majority of people in the provinces could not see the impact of anticorruption policies.

Concrete suggestions for ways of intensifying the fight against corruption included *severe penalties* for those who commit such acts, which would stop others from engaging in corrupt practices, as well as *legislation and more effective reporting mechanisms* (examples were given emphasizing that people are afraid to report corruption, especially in the provinces, where people tend to know each other and a complaint may create some risk for the complainant).

Two complementary strategies, used in other societies to combat corruption⁴, were discussed: 1) the government and the country's leaders should

assume a position of *clear and transparent suppression of corruption*; and 2) actions should aim to *boost the (inclusive) development* of the country.

The debate also stressed that the solutions depend not only on policies, but on the actions of each Mozambican. It was argued that *increased inclusion and social justice*, as well as *poverty reduction*, could help to discourage corrupt practices. It was noted that some people engage in corruption not by choice, but because of a lack of information or due to poverty. *Policy gaps* and *non-compliance with the law* were said to contribute to the worsening conditions of vulnerability of youth, resulting in them engaging in ‘pernicious’ practices. It was pointed out that lack of ethics in general has led people to engage in illegal activities, corruption and ‘questionable conduct’. Several participants stressed that corruption could not be justified and was based on outdated customs that did not contribute to the development of the country.

Another focus of the debate was the still frequent practice of **sexual harassment**, manifested through the exchange of *sexual favours for jobs* or educational attainment (grades). The subject of harassment was highlighted in the girls' discussion groups (as a type of violence against girls). In other groups, it was also referred to as a form of corruption (the exchange of favours)⁵. Examples of harassment⁶ provided by women, girls and school officials included:

- ◆ Girls forced to become involved with a boss to keep their job or gain a promotion
- ◆ Students who leave a course because they have suffered, or want to avoid suffering, sexual harassment by teachers
- ◆ Trainees who do not continue because they have suffered, or want to avoid suffering, sexual harassment by the boss
- ◆ Girls who compete for positions and are asked for sexual favours to pass the interview (as one of the examples cited, girls have a dilemma: either fail the interview or give in to the sexual harassment)

Regarding the causes of this serious problem, it was emphasized that girls feel ‘*fear*’ and do not know who to turn to when they suffer sexual harassment. As in cases of corruption, sexual harassment was cited as a *disincentive for girls* to compete for jobs, resulting in them preferring to stay at home. The debate about this fear brought out other opinions and discussions, encouraging girls to overcome their fear and believe in their skills and abilities. Empowerment was one of the solutions mentioned.

The *role of men* (and boys), families, teachers and communities in general was pointed to as being important for the transformation of girls' self-esteem and as a motivation for them to compete for job openings, participate in training and produce quality work.

Gender inequality (Debate II) was also discussed in relation to why women are the main target of sexual harassment. It was argued that men also suffer sexual harassment, although much less frequently and in a different way. The debate on the relationship between sexual harassment and gender inequality raised questions, highlighting the need to deepen discussions and training in this area. The promotion of activities to raise awareness about gender equality, along with clear information on penalty mechanisms, were also cited as ways for women and girls to gradually achieve fulfilment.

Plataforma Inclusão is an intersectoral initiative launched in 2016 as a contribution to the sharing of knowledge and identification of concrete actions to promote inclusive policies and decent employment for youths in Mozambique.

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¹ CIP and Christian Michelsen de Bergen Institute (2016) *The costs of corruption for the Mozambican economy: why it is important to fight corruption in a climate of fiscal fragility*. Center for Public Integrity and Christian Michelsen de Bergen Institute (Norway).

² The examples mentioned were part of the plenary debates and confirmed by participants. However, no evidence was presented, so that there is a need for further investigation.

³ Idem.

⁴ Oral presentation by the Center for Public Integrity.

⁵ Corruption and sexual harassment are treated in this summary as separate and related topics. In Mozambique, the legislation generally treats sexual harassment as a crime of sexual freedom and not corruption.

⁶ The examples mentioned were part of the plenary debates and confirmed by participants. However, no evidence was presented, so there is a need for further investigation.