The Elderly and Development

– a field study on elderly people’s livelihoods
in Ribáuè district, Mozambique

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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings from research in Ribáuè district, Nampula province, in northeast Mozambique. Our aim was to understand the living conditions of the impoverished elderly and identify strategies that may improve their situation. We conducted semi-structured interviews with elderly people, including some of the most vulnerable and some who receive income from the social assistance programme. To gain a wider context we met representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations and referred to secondary sources.

We use the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods framework to present the capital assets (natural, social, financial, physical and human) of Ribáuè district and of its elderly inhabitants. We consider how access to assets is affected by political, economic and cultural factors in the community. We set the situation of the elderly against the development history of post-independence Mozambique, and international concern about poverty, the ageing population and their human rights.

We find that social assets in the form of human relationships, and natural assets in the form of land, are essential for elderly people’s livelihoods. Most of the elderly have very limited access to financial assets, apart from the few who receive social assistance. This programme makes a very small but appreciated contribution to family welfare. However the programme’s reach has been limited geographically and eligibility regulations tend to obstruct access for the very poorest. In general the human capital of the rural and uneducated elderly is declining, as society increasingly values modern skills and knowledge. However the Ribáuè residents we met experience some benefit from infrastructure modernisation. Elderly people are receiving more attention, especially as carers of children.

We have identified existing strategies for improving elderly people’s livelihoods. We suggest ways to build on these, as well as possible new strategies. If development policies are both equitable and successful, increased employment and taxation should enable formal pension and social security systems to provide for the elderly in the long-term future. In the short to medium term, expansion of the social assistance programme must be prioritised, as it is vital to the most vulnerable. It is also important that people’s customary engagement in mutually supportive social networks is strengthened rather than undermined by development changes.

Key words: Mozambique, Nampula, elderly, social assistance, the food subsidy program (PSA), Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (SRL)
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Acronyms

AU - African Union
DFID - Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
EDM - Electridade de Moçambique – national electricity supplier of Mozambique
ERN - Imposto de Reconstrução Nacional (National Reconstruction Tax)
GAPVU - Gabinete de Apoio a População Vulnerável (Office for Assistance to the Vulnerable Population)
ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross
IDS - Institute of Development Studies
INAS – Instituto Nacional de Acção Social (National Institute of Social Action)
INE - Instituto Nacional de Estatística (National Institute of Statistics)
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals
MIPAA - Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
MMAS - Ministério da Mulher e da Acção Social (Ministry of Women and Social Action)
MRC – Mozambique Red Cross
MTn – Metical, the Mozambican currency
OMM - Organização da Mulher Moçambicana (Women’s Organization of Mozambique)
PARPA - Plano de Acção para a Redução da Pobreza Absoluta (Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty)
PBST - Programa Benefício Social pelo Trabalho – (Social Benefit for Work Programme)
PRA - Participatory Rural Appraisal
PSA - Programa de Subsídio de Alimentos (Food Subsidy Programme)
RRA - Rapid Rural Appraisal
RTVC – Rádio Televisão Comunitária (Community Radio and Television)
SIDA - Swedish International Development Agency
SRL – Sustainable Rural Livelihoods
STAE - Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral (Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration)
UN – United Nations
UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UP - Universidade Pedagógica (Pedagogical University in Nampula)
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1 INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter explains the topic chosen for this master thesis. It also presents the aim and objectives of the study, followed by the structure of the study. A description of the country, the province and the district where the field study was carried out is also provided.

Demographic figures show that the world’s population is ageing rapidly. During the coming half-century the trend will progress fastest in the developing countries. The average life expectancy for both men and women in Africa is likely to rise to over 70 years of age during the next 50 years. Between 2000 and 2050 the number of people aged 60 or over living on that continent is forecast to more than double. By then there will be 102 million over 60s in Sub-Saharan Africa, of whom 22 million will be more than 80 years old. In developing countries this demographic change is partly due to declining fertility and improvements in general health care. However the most significant factor is mortality among the currently middle-aged generation due to malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. For these reasons in Mozambique, although aggregate life expectancy is less than 45 years and currently falling, more people are surviving beyond 60 years of age. The result is more families headed by the elderly who have to take care of sick children or orphaned grandchildren. A recent estimate indicates that nearly 14% of Mozambican households are headed by one or more elderly breadwinner.

In several African countries households where the elderly care for children or are the chief breadwinners are among the poorest of the poor. However in Mozambique children as a social group suffer deeper poverty than the elderly. This may be because the elderly are more likely to be integrated in supportive social networks. In Mozambique’s poverty reduction strategy paper (PARPA II) of 2006 it is noted that debate on the definition of “poverty” is ongoing. The country’s government now considers poverty to include lack of access to social, physical, political and other assets, as well as financial hardship:

“For purposes of policy decisions, poverty was initially considered as the lack of income—money or negotiable goods—necessary to satisfy basic needs. Because this monetarist definition did not cover all the manifestations of poverty, the definition was broadened over time to cover such aspects as a lack of access to education, health care, water, and sanitation, etc. At present, the definition of poverty has also come to include aspects such as isolation, exclusion from society, powerlessness, vulnerability, and others.”

In developing countries few elderly people have been formally employed, so very few pensioners are covered by private or state savings schemes. In Mozambique the great majority of people are subsistence farmers, dependent for their survival on family labour and favourable growing weather. Until recently Mozambicans in rural and semi-urban areas lived in mutually supporting family units that included elderly relatives. However modernisation is spreading rapidly from large cities out to small towns, bringing different values and pressures. The greater receptivity, mobility and ambition of the younger generation means they are faster to adapt to changed circumstances, while the elderly, most of whom are illiterate, are likely to miss out on benefits brought by development.

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2 HelpAge International (2003:20)
3 Kakwani & Subbarao (2005:12)
4 Kakwani & Subbarao (2005:18)
5 World Bank (2006:8)
International and regional bodies such as the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) began to take global ageing and its implications seriously about a decade ago. At that time the need for a safety net for the very vulnerable, including the elderly, started to be discussed across sub-Saharan Africa. By 2004 social assistance schemes involving cash and/or food distribution had been established in six countries, the most developed and widespread of these in South Africa. A similar scheme is Mozambique’s Food Subsidy Program, which evolved out of a previous emergency relief scheme. This provides the extremely poor elderly and other disadvantaged people with the sum of 70 MTn (18.9 SEK) per month. This flagship of the Mozambican Ministry of Women and Social Action (MMAS) operates in pilot areas focused on the major cities, provincial capitals including Nampula, and is currently extending into some rural towns and villages including Ribáuè district.

Back in 1996 during the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the UN declared that “The increase in the number of elderly people in the world will present one of the most profound challenges to the eradication of poverty in the next century.” Our intention with this field study is to understand how the poorest elderly live in a rural environment in northern Mozambique, how they have been affected by recent social and economic development, and what strategies exist for their survival, including the Food Subsidy Programme.

1.1 Aim and Objectives

Our aim is to understand the living conditions of the impoverished elderly in Ribáuè and identify strategies that may improve their situation.

We set out with the objectives:

- To chart the socio-economic circumstances of Ribáuè district and identify how these affect the livelihoods of the elderly.

- To identify existing and potential strategies for improving the livelihoods of the elderly and helping them out of deprivation.

1.2 Limitations

The elderly are a diverse group of people living under different social and economic circumstances. We have generalised our findings of necessity, but we have tried to distinguish between the most disadvantaged who receive social assistance and those in leadership positions or who have considerable resources such as an employment-related pension. A group of pensioners that we have not covered is demobilised combatants, who receive substantial financial support from the state. Our survey area was limited to Ribáuè town and surroundings, and to a small number of interviewees. (See Appendix I for overview of interviewees).

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6 Help Age International (2006:6)
7 women over 55 years old and men over 60 years old.
8 1 SEK=3.7 MTn (rounded down) on 7th June 2007
9 United Nations Department of Public Information (1996)
1.3 Structure of the study

We start with a brief description of Mozambique, Nampula province and the main field study location Ribáuè district. Then we explain our methodological approach in section two and how we apply the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (SRL) framework to present our findings. The body of the report in sections three to five summarises information from our field interviews. First we describe the institutional structures and processes operating at international, national and local levels that have a bearing on elderly people’s and their families’ livelihoods in Ribáuè. After that we explore the five capital assets of the poorer elderly, seen within the context of the resources available in their immediate community. The Vulnerability Context follows in section five, with an account of the broad social and economic trends we have identified as most affecting the elderly. The second aspect of this section is shocks - sudden events that can have negative impacts for elderly people. In section six we make a multi-level analysis of livelihood strategies aimed at improving the circumstances of the poorest elderly worldwide, nationally and locally. In section seven, we make recommendations on how to develop the existing strategies, before reaching our closing comments.

1.4 The historical and geographical context of the area

Mozambique is located along the eastern coast of southern Africa. It has an estimated population of 19.5 million, of which well over one million are 55 years old or more. It is one of the world’s least developed countries, placed 10th from bottom in the HDI ranking of 2004.

Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975, after almost five centuries of Portuguese rule. A war of independence had been underway for a decade before the fascist dictatorship in Portugal collapsed, effectively “releasing” Mozambique. The Portuguese had run everything themselves, investing only in agricultural production and infrastructure that would increase the flow of raw materials to Portugal. The traditional social order was infiltrated by the colonial administration, and the people exploited as forced labour. Benefits to black Mozambicans had been almost non-existent, leaving the country with few human or physical resources at independence.

Extended periods of armed conflict between the mid 1970s and the early 1990s devastated much of the country. The civil war was fuelled by a combination of the apartheid states’ determination to destroy black-ruled nations, and internal disillusionment with progress under the post-independence socialist experiment. The conflict and associated phenomena took an estimated 1 million lives, disrupted the social order and left survivors psychologically and physically injured. There was an almost total collapse of the infrastructure and economy in many areas. Therefore Mozambicans aged over about 25 years have known only brief periods of peace and stability. The elderly have endured colonialism, conflict and several different development policies that seem not to have improved their circumstances. The Frelimo party, still associated with the liberation struggle, is working hard to maintain the position of power it has held since independence. Relationships with former enemies in the Renamo opposition party can be bitter, but the Mozambican tradition of reconciliation has prevailed.

Investment in education has increased the number of young graduates, who now predominate in professional posts. Some former colonials, together with white South Africans are trying to re-establish businesses. The tightly knit community of businesspeople of Indian origin that has

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10 INE (2005:14)
11 Nilsson, A. tutorial, Växjö University, 2007-06-06.
12 Comissário, P. H.E. Ambassador to Mozambique in Sweden, Växjö 2006-03-14
been present in east Africa for centuries is recovering its economic strength. The three successive development paradigms, socialism, structural adjustment, and market liberalisation have all focused on increasing GDP through infrastructure and industrial mega-projects located in the major cities and coastal zone. Benefit has gone mainly to the elites, foreign corporations and lenders, with very little spreading out to the mass of the people. A wealthy elite is highly visible in Maputo and to a lesser extent in the regional capital Nampula.

Downtown Maputo and Nampula, dating from the colonial and socialist periods, are surrounded by vast and growing residential settlements of mud-brick huts with totally inadequate infrastructure. The newest and most lavish buildings in Mozambique are banks and foreign representations. In rural towns some young people are struggling for a foothold in the spreading free market economy. State services and infrastructure have recently improved. However in the vast and inaccessible countryside people rely mainly on subsistence agriculture and each other, as they have done for centuries.

Nampula province lies in northeast Mozambique. The provincial government, hospital, higher education institutions, airport and headquarters of state services are located in Nampula city, the provincial capital. An important transport corridor linking the port of Nacala to Malawi and Zambia runs through Nampula and across the southern part of Nampula province. The north of Mozambique is geographically and culturally remote from the capital, with air transport and shipping as the only practical transport options. The provinces in northern and central Mozambique have received much less investment than the provinces around Maputo. However the region has a high potential for agricultural production, and over two thirds of the province’s 3 million inhabitants live in rural areas. Most people belong to the Macua-speaking matrilineal culture that predominates north of the Zambezi River, and therefore have a different identity to people in the south of Mozambique.

Ribáuè town is about 140km west of Nampula, reached by rail via Namiconha, or about 2 hours drive on a dirt road. It was an administrative and commercial centre during the colonial period, as it still is today. The town is sited on a slightly raised plateau surrounded by a rolling landscape of red-earth that is hand-cultivated in the traditional way. To the north of town are a muddy river and a steep, high mountain outcrop (see photo Appendix IV). The district has an essentially rural character. In the town centre there are a few substantial buildings dating from the colonial and socialist periods, with much open space between. Other state institutions and public services are located in different parts of town, near the town centre. The residential suburbs consist mainly of single storey mud-brick and grass-roofed homes and storage buildings. The compounds are close together, with sandy paths between (See Physical Capital). The majority of the people live from subsistence agriculture, selling cash crops, and/or petty commerce (See Financial Capital).

The district stretches over an area of 4,894 km² including:

- Ribáuè town centre, surrounding suburbs and outlying villages;
- the railroad town of Iapala 80 km to the west, and dependent villages;
- the area surrounding Cunle.

The total population of the district was estimated to have reached 153,794 in 2005.

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13 INE (1999b:5)
14 Perfil do Distrito De Ribáuè (2005:11)
We have no figures for the current poverty rates in Ribáuè, but in 1996/97 the poverty head count index for Nampula province was estimated to 68.9 per cent. By 2002/03 the situation had improved somewhat to 52.6 per cent.  

\[\text{Figure 1: Map of Nampula Province and places visited}\]

Source: adapted from http://www.stop.co.mz/mocambique/provincia_nampula.php 2007-06-02

\[\text{World Bank (2006:12)}\]
2 METHODOLOGICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The method used for carrying out this study is explained in the following chapter and also problems that occurred during the collecting of the material in the field. The analytical framework used is the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods model and the application of that model is explained at the end of this chapter.

2.1 Method

The study was carried out as a supervised field study in Mozambique from April 8 – May 4 2007, taking a qualitative approach. It started with meetings and interviews in the provincial capital of Nampula in northern Mozambique. After the two-day introduction, two and a half weeks were spent in Ribáuè town and surrounding rural communities to interview local people and collect material. To finish up, two days were spent in Mozambique’s capital, Maputo, with the final interviews and meetings.

Our approach lay somewhere between Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). The International Institute of Sustainable Development (iisd) describes RRA as a process used by external researchers working to a short time frame. The aim is to understand the broad picture through qualitative rather than quantitative methods. It is an essentially extractive process, with interviews led by the researchers. It is participative in the sense that it places great weight on listening to local experience and knowledge.\(^\text{16}\)

By contrast during PRA, ideally, external agents who should be very familiar with the local context join teams of local people to share information, analyse issues and plan solutions together. Semi-structured interviews and triangulation, which we use, are common features of PRA, alongside other more participatory and longer-term methods.\(^\text{17}\) We are aware that there are drawbacks associated with RRA. As iisd warns, RRA can be abrupt and exploitative. It may raise false expectations and bring few tangible results for local people.\(^\text{18}\) Although pure PRA is much to be preferred, it was not a practical method to apply during our visit, since it was our first time in the country. However we tried to minimise negative effects by explaining that our purpose was to understand life from local people’s perspectives and that student research is unlikely to bring about concrete changes. We also shared a little of our own culture and experiences through photographs and discussing topics of common interest.\(^\text{19}\)

2.1.1 Interview guide

We prepared an interview guide (see Appendix II) before departure, grouped into questions to representatives of institutions and questions to elderly people and their families. We recognise that our insight into the culture we would encounter, obtained from secondary sources, was rather limited at that point. Neither could we visualize clearly the type of people or institutions we would meet. Since our intention and method was to use semi-structured interviews, and to some extent the snowball method, it was appropriate that our interview guide expanded organically as our understanding grew and deepened, and opportunities to explore new issues arose.

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\(^{16}\) iisd (2007a)

\(^{17}\) World Bank at http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sba104.htm

\(^{18}\) iisd (2007b)

\(^{19}\) Mikkelsen (2005:70)
2.1.2 Selection of respondents

Our role in selecting respondents was limited. For reasons of logistic efficiency, our group leader utilised an extensive contact network with Mozambican national, regional and local authorities to set up the interview framework. At district level, government officials in their turn set up meetings at “grass-roots” level. Within the local communities, we relied on the traditional community leadership to introduce us to families and individuals. We are aware that allegiances are inherent in all societies, so working in this way has implications for the objectivity of any study. Triangulation between primary sources in different locations and at different levels of society, our observations and consultation of secondary material has to some extent counteracted this bias.

2.1.3 Interviews

The interviews were of different character, according to circumstances. At meetings with officials representing government or state services the format tended to be presentations, followed by short question and answer sessions. In some cases we had the opportunity to meet several informants from the same institutions on different occasions. Meetings with ordinary citizens in the community ranged from small selected groups to large public meetings attended by up to 50 people. Nearly all meetings were gender segregated, according to local tradition. Meetings tended to involve males, unless we had requested meetings with women or the word spread that the interview team consisted of women. We tried to carry out as many interviews as possible in people’s own environment – that is we went out to homes and communities rather than expecting people to come to us. In most cases we succeeded in limiting the “spectators”, in order to encourage a more relaxed atmosphere. Interviews were conducted via translators, and generally lasted 1 to 2 hours.

2.1.4 Secondary material

Written secondary sources have been used to formulate our methodological approach, and to provide historical, cultural, legislative and statistical supporting material. These include international declarations, government documents, census results, conference papers, academic and field reports and NGO magazines. (See Bibliography).

We have mainly consulted material in English and Swedish, which means that there may be much relevant qualitative research in Portuguese that we have overlooked. Muzima & Matusse point out that “evidence on ageing and poverty, at statistical level in Mozambique, are very weak” 20. Our field-study tutor and our translator also contributed valuable insights to the local situation, as have our course lecturers and guest lecturers at Växjö University.

2.1.5 Criticism of sources

When writing an academic thesis and collecting the material there are certain criteria a researcher has to consider. According to the Swedish researcher Thurén these are validity, reliability, independence and freedom from bias. Validity means that the sources of information we have used when writing this report are relevant for the work we are performing. To achieve a high level of validity it is important for the researchers to explain their backgrounds and understanding for the topic, describe how the study was performed, how respondents were selected and show how the material was interpreted in the analysis. We describe and explain how we have applied these criteria concerning validity in this method chapter.

20 Muzima & Matusse (2003:14)
Considering **reliability** while carrying out research makes the work more trustworthy and of a higher scientific value. Sources of information are more reliable if not much time has passed between an event and writing about it, which is the case with this report. We came across a problem with many of the statistics because most of them date from the 1997 census and therefore are no longer accurate. To solve this problem we visited the National Institute of Statistics in Maputo to find more recent figures, but these were unfortunately not available: a new nationwide census is being conducted as we write. We therefore make reservation for statistics not being up to date.

Other researchers should be able to use our sources of material and methods and then reach a similar result\(^\text{21}\). However we recognise that our findings may decrease in validity over time due to changed circumstances. **Reliability** also includes explaining if any types of electronic devices were used during the interviews. We decided to write our field notes by hand both for technical reasons and because this is a method more familiar to the interviewees. Another characteristic of **reliability** is the researchers’ ability to perform a good interview and the experience of the tutor.\(^\text{22}\) In this respect we had tested interview technique and the application of the SRL framework during fieldwork in Sweden before departure.

We have sought to attain **independence** by referring to original sources as much as possible rather than summaries or reviews from a secondary source. The fourth criterion that we have paid attention to is **bias**. We have been alert to the possibility of sources of information being unreliable because a person has modified it out of economic, political, personal or other interests.\(^\text{23}\) Triangulation is a means of decreasing bias. We have applied triangulation in several respects. Firstly, we have rather different cultural, educational and work backgrounds, which means we analyse information from different perspectives. Secondly, in the field we consulted several different respondents to obtain information on the issues that are central to our study. Thirdly our report has been compiled using a combination of primary research and a variety of secondary sources.\(^\text{24}\)

Significant to note is that we are two white European women from different age groups with no previous experience of the Mozambican cultural context. Apart from historical factors, many personal characteristics such as gender, race, dress and mannerism could affect communication between the respondents and us. Language was another barrier to direct communication: we worked through translators, either through a Swedish female translator Portuguese/Swedish, or a Mozambican male translator Portuguese and Macua/English. Even the respective backgrounds of the translators affected the proceedings. In some cases respondents were aware of our associations with state authorities and state provision, and therefore saw us as a channel to forward their complaints and views to the respective “higher authorities”. Others reacted to our European backgrounds, which they associate with wealth and opportunity.

### 2.2 Analytical framework

To form a good picture of elderly people’s situation and as a basis for recommendations for what can be done to improve their livelihoods, we have utilised the Sustainable Rural Livelihoods approach (SRL). This analyses people’s strengths, needs and problems\(^\text{25}\). We

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\(^{21}\) Halvorsen (1992:41-43)  
\(^{22}\) Infovoice online  
\(^{23}\) Thurén (1997:11)  
\(^{24}\) Mikkelsen (2005:96)  
\(^{25}\) Carney (ed.) (1998)
choose this method as our analytical framework because it is holistic and puts assets and vulnerability contexts in relation to one another. SRL allows us to focus on people’s problems and lack of assets, as does Chambers “deprivation trap”, but also on people’s capabilities. We take “people” to refer to elderly in this report, since they are the main focus of this study. During the researching and writing of this report we followed a modified version of the SRL-framework to evaluate the situation of the elderly in Ribáuè:

**Figure 2: Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Framework**

Our starting point will be to explain the transforming structures and processes that we found relevant for Mozambique, which means that we will describe the international and Mozambican legislation on the elderly as well as institutional structures and operations. “Transforming” indicates that these structures and processes are dynamic. They have capacity to influence how society operates, and a tendency to stimulate socio-economic change. However transforming structures and processes interact in highly complex power relationships. Thus the various forces are constantly being transformed at the same time as they bring about transformation.

These structures influence the local community and the elderly’s situation in Ribáuè, which we will explain by dividing the capital assets into five groups – natural, social, financial, physical and human capital. The problem with describing the capital assets of a community or social group is that this generalises individual people’s circumstances. Not all people have the same amount of social capital, some of the elderly have none and some have plenty. In order to overcome this problem of generalising we tried to describe different people’s views, even if the focus has been on the vulnerable elderly.

The capital assets are affected by the vulnerability context that in the original SRL model includes the concepts trends, shocks and culture. We have decided not to treat culture in isolation, since culture permeates all aspects of society. Instead we have considered some of the cultural aspects that have direct relevance to the five capitals. We especially focus on gender-related and age-related cultural practices. Elderly people’s lives are influenced by different circumstances that affect the extent to which they can benefit from the five capital assets. An example of a trend in society is when young people show less respect for the elderly. A shock could be that they or someone in their family falls ill with malaria.

From these three aspects, capital assets, transforming structures and processes and the vulnerability context, livelihood strategies are formed. The strategies that people themselves
and other actors in society create to improve their living standards lead to livelihood outcomes, such as increased income or better health. It is almost impossible to predict what tomorrow’s outcomes will be, we can only identify what the strategies of today mean for people in Ribáuè district. We make *recommendations* for how livelihood strategies could be developed in order to improve livelihood outcomes for the poorest elderly.
3 TRANSFORMING STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

We start our path through the SRL model by describing structures and processes that affect people’s lives in Ribáuè, because these give us a holistic contextual understanding. First we describe the global, regional and national laws and policies aimed at protecting the vulnerable elderly. Then we move on the public, private and non-governmental institutions, focusing on Nampula province and Ribáuè district. We consider how the lives of elderly people are affected by and involved in these transforming processes and structures in Section 4: Capital Assets.

3.1 Legislation and policies on social protection

Social protection is a relatively new topic in the development debate. The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex explains its signification: “Social protection is distinguished from other development interventions in that it is not intended to promote economic growth, though it is intended to alleviate poverty. In general, economic growth is for poverty reduction; social protection is for vulnerability reduction.”

Social protection aims to reduce people’s vulnerability to shocks, for example when a drought hits a village. It is also meant to decrease variations around people’s income and to help those who are not able to work for an income.

There are different definitions or kinds of social protection strategies. Johnson & Selvester divide the strategies in three groups:

**Ex ante strategies**
- Social prevention (measures that aim to decrease risk)
- Social insurance (measures that aim to reduce the impact in case shocks occur)

**Ex post strategies**
- Social assistance (help to relieve the impacts of shocks)

In this study, the social protection programme we focus on is the food subsidy program, which we will also refer to as a social assistance program. DFID defines social assistance as “non-contributory transfers that are given to those deemed vulnerable by society on the basis of their vulnerability or poverty.”

3.1.1 Global level

A United Nations conference on ageing was held in Madrid in 2002 where a plan of action was created, called *Political declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* (MIPAA). It was recognised as a turning point for how the world deals with its elderly population and started a debate on building a society for all ages. The agreement is linked to previous declarations and plans and is also influenced by the MDGs.

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26 Devereux (2003: 1)
27 However recent research into the effects of social protection programmes in developing countries shows that they have a significant effect on economic growth. HelpAge International (2003c)
28 Johnson & Selvester (2006:8)
MIPAA focuses on three different areas concerning ageing:
- Old persons and development
- Advancing health and well-being into old age
- Ensuring enabling and supportive environments

The MIPAA encourages governments, non-governmental organizations and ordinary citizens to act towards a non-age discriminating society. "Persons as they age, should enjoy a life of fulfillment, health, security and active participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of their societies. We are determined to enhance the recognition of the dignity of older persons and to eliminate all forms of neglect abuse and violence".\(^{30}\)

The action plan was reviewed in 2006 to see how governments implemented the ideas from the MIPAA and gave further suggestions on how to address the issues. The MIPAA is not legally binding as other declarations and treaties, for example the Convention against Torture, are. Instead it is meant to be used as a tool or guideline for policy makers to attract attention to issues and obstacles facing the elderly. MIPAA stresses that social security is an important issue and that it is “the foundation for economic prosperity and social cohesion”.\(^{31}\) The declaration also suggests that governments create basic social security programs for workers, and social assistance programs for those not able to work due to age or disability.

Since the MIPAA is not legally binding, it is not an agreement on the human rights of the older people, though it is strongly influenced by the Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights states:

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”\(^{32}\)

3.1.2 Regional level

The members of the African Union together with the non-governmental organization HelpAge International agreed on the African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing in 2003. It is a regional strategy for implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The Common Position highlights the problems that Africa faces today when family structures change due to economic development and elderly people are left outside the ongoing changes. Other problems facing the older generations are alienation, chronic poverty and discrimination, which the Common Position aims to address.\(^{33}\)

The Common Position has three priority areas, which are the same as in the MIPAA. It develops the ideas of the MIPAA and puts them into an African perspective. For example the Common Position wants to develop traditional medicine to become a safe choice of treatment, since most of its users are elderly. The plan also highlights issues concerning land, old people as victims of crime, public education for the elderly and poverty reduction programmes for old people, problems that we will discuss in Section 4; Capital Assets.\(^{34}\)

\(^{30}\) HelpAge International webpage 2007-05-27
\(^{31}\) HelpAge International webpage 2007-05-27
\(^{32}\) United Nations (1948)
\(^{33}\) HelpAge International leaflet (2005)
\(^{34}\) HelpAge International leaflet (2005)
3.1.3 National level

There are two important policies at national level concerning elderly people; the PARPA (poverty reduction strategy paper for Mozambique) and the National Policy for Older People. There is also a social assistance program for vulnerable people, which has a special importance for the elderly and will be discussed later on in this section.

PARPA II and National Policy for Older People

In the latest PARPA, released in 2006, social protection receives more attention than it did in earlier editions of the PARPA. The human development pillar of the PARPA highlights the importance of including everybody:

“The principal challenges faced by Women and Social Action are concentrated in an effort to ensure that resources allocated to the reduction of absolute poverty are directed at the most vulnerable population groups, through implementation of plans to serve unprotected target groups and those excluded from society.”35

The most recent PARPA specifically includes the elderly for the first time. There are three areas where the government wants to support older people:
- Increase the number of beneficiaries of the food subsidy programme to 91,520 people by 2009.
- Construct 22 open community centres for the elderly per year.

The National Policy for Older People was released in 2002. It includes a range of policies concerning the elderly. Of particular note are the right to free medical treatment for the elderly caring for HIV-orphans, supporting day centres for the elderly, non-institutional care for the elderly homeless, encouraging local communities to provide free maintenance of elderly people’s houses, ensuring that old people get their pensions on time and that employers forward information about their employees to the social security institutions.36

There is no current debate on an expansion of social protection spending in Mozambique. The Social assistance programme makes up only 0.6 per cent of the state budget. Out of that amount, 54 per cent is spent on pensions to former state workers and only nine per cent on the Food Subsidy Programme (PSA), which we will focus on in the following paragraphs.37

Social Protection and The Food Subsidy Programme (PSA)

The Mozambican government provides several social protection programs for its citizens today. The largest is the food subsidy programme for vulnerable individuals, which especially aims to reach older people. The programme covered 82,631 individuals in 2005 and 91 per cent of them were elderly.38 A majority of the elderly beneficiaries, 65 per cent, were women. Other beneficiaries were disabled people (6 per cent) and the rest were minor groups of chronically ill, female-headed households and malnourished pregnant women.39

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35 PARPA (2006) paragraph 374
36 Johnson & Selvester (2006:19)
37 Johnson & Selvester (2006:4-5)
38 Johnson (2005:7)
39 INAS stats
During the war, in the 1980s, the government provided poor people in rural areas with an emergency help program of subsidies for basic commodities, which was the beginning of the food subsidy program. The program was introduced by GAPVU (Office for Assistance to the Vulnerable Population) within the Ministry of Planning and Finance, in 1990. In the mid-nineties GAPVU was accused of corruption and internal problems, so the food subsidy program was transferred to the newly established institution INAS (Instituto Nacional de Acção Social). Then INAS came under the responsibility of the new Ministry of Women and Social Action (MMAS) and became the implementing part of the ministry. MMAS designed the policy for the current program but it is INAS who receives the money, since it is still funded by the Ministry of Planning and Finance. The organizing and running of the program is very complicated, since there are three institutions involved with different interests and priorities, which has led to jealousy and several internal conflicts.

Figure 3 describes the structure of the organisations with the different administrative levels of the MMAS (national, in Nampula province and Ribáuè district) to the right and the INAS levels to the left. The figure shows how they interact between the levels and the institutions. There is no INAS delegation at district level in Ribáuè – the system currently operates via the Ribáuè MMAS office. A new INAS delegation is planned to open in Ribáuè in the near future to serve the expanding social assistance programmes.

The selected beneficiaries are chosen by INAS local representatives, “permanentes”. The permanentes work closely with the traditional community leadership in the bairros (neighbourhoods) to select beneficiaries. They visit the beneficiaries in their homes once a year and they also hand out the money at certain distribution points. The permanentes are the link between INAS and the local community. They have the lowest salary, 300 MTn (81SEK), which has made it hard to motivate them to work reliably. A consultant said “People blame them for delays in their payments. Elderly people threaten to put spell on the permanentes’ children. Permanentes see INAS staff in 4×4 cars and know they have a big subsistence allowance. There is a conflict between those who are permanentes and those with administrative jobs.”

Figure 3: The Organisational Structure of INAS and MMAS
One of the *permanentes* told us in an interview “*if you have an ID, that is enough to be able to receive the food subsidy. You don’t have to be the poorest of the poor*”.

The criteria for being selected for the food subsidy program are:

- Age or clinical state: Men over 60 years old and women over 55, (requires an identification card) or disabled or chronically ill people.
- Residence: Have to be permanent residents of the area.
- Poverty: Meaning that the person has no help from anyone else.

The food subsidy program is completely financed by the state budget, with no help from any additional donors. The amount that the beneficiaries receive monthly is 70-140 MTn (18.9 – 37.8 SEK) depending on the size of the household. There is a widespread perception that the food subsidy amount is too small and it is not enough to provide a reasonable monthly amount of calories. The food subsidy was actually supposed to be 30 per cent of the minimum wage. INAS has complained to the government about the small amount, but has not got much feedback.

So the critics say that it is just a drop in the ocean for the beneficiaries. Later on in this study we will investigate whether the program has had any positive impact.

3.2 Governmental structures and processes

During the three development phases of colonialism, central planning and structural adjustment Mozambique was ruled according to the functional approach. Political power has been of the controlling kind, emanating from the elite of the ruling party. Recent legislative changes are facilitating gradual decentralisation of political power to provinces and districts. This is coupled with consultation involving a range of stakeholders, including the opposition parties, the private sector and civil society.

3.2.1 Levels of government: provincial, district, and administrative post

The district administration of Ribáuè is housed in a former colonial building and smaller adjoining offices on Ribáuè’s central square. Posters in the reception area show positive aspects of social and economic development. Cartoons illustrate behaviour that the population should not tolerate from state employees such as arrogance and corruption, thus encouraging empowerment. On one wall hangs a locked suggestion box, ubiquitous to every Mozambican public institution.

Many of the public employees are young to middle aged males, which reflects the secondary and post-secondary educational history of Mozambique. The officials at all levels in the administrative structure are appointed by a higher authority. More senior positions are determined by the government in Maputo. Lower positions are appointed by the provincial governor in Nampula. None of the officials are elected directly by the people under their administrative charge. With 48 workers, the administration is a large employer in Ribáuè.40 Therefore its employees represent an important source of regular input to the local economy. Public sector operational activities such as maintenance and food preparation in schools and hospital also employ others.

\[\text{Perfil do Distrito De Ribáuè (2005)}\]
Ribáuè district administration is responsible for three administrative out-posts (posto administrativo) in the small towns of Cunle, Namiconha and Iapala, each of these being managed by a state employed administrator. The relationship between Ribáuè and the administrative posts was described as inter-dependent, “like a mother with many children”. The lower levels disseminate information and directives received from above. However the posto administrativo level is also involved in reviewing state provision such as health care and education, organising and requesting additional resources as needed.

Nampula was the first province in the country to pilot decentralisation, including regional planning. During recent years the district administration has gained a degree of independence from the provincial government. Co-operation with community groups and with the traditional community leadership regarding both needs analysis and carrying out practical improvements has increased. An example is how taxes collected locally, such as the ERN (Imposto de Reconstrução Nacional - national reconstruction tax), should be disbursed on local projects. However district initiatives must accord with the province’s 5-year development plan and the 10-year national development plan.

3.2.2 Traditional community leadership

Localidade is the equivalent of a rural village, and bairro is a section of a village or a residential suburb in a town like Ribáuè (see photo Appendix IV). At this level the traditional community leadership plays a key role in the social structure of the community, even though it has no statutory decision-making power. The system is rooted in ancient traditions: by custom the most senior position of chief (régulo) is a hereditary appointment from the community’s “royal family”, proposed by a group of elders, including a small number of women. However, the people of the bairro must concede that the candidate has suitable moral qualities and leadership capacity otherwise his legitimacy will be low. The people also propose and approve other community leaders such as the female hereditary chief, called pwiamwene. Other senior leaders are the cabo de terra, responsible for land use issues, and the secretário, who coordinates with the district administration.

Even though it has been banned and persecuted over the years, the traditional community leadership has always had high legitimacy among the people. The administration and other state bodies now recognise the leadership as an important channel both to and from ordinary people. A government employee commented: “traditional leaders have specific significance in society. They are persons who are specially dedicated, whose preoccupations coincide with those of the community”. Another said “it was a mistake to cut out the traditional leadership. They have a strong capacity to lead the people responsibly. They are also bearers of tradition and people need them to perform traditional ceremonies”. In January 2006 the government began to provide certain local community leaders with a modest financial allowance. In all meetings both parties expressed satisfaction regarding the co-operative relationships they have achieved.

3.2.3 Consultative councils

In 2000 community consultative councils were formally instituted. Even if the councils’ role is limited to consultation and implementation, the district administration is required to co-operate closely regarding development planning. The objective is to harmonize top-down strategies from the state with grass-roots views on issues that directly affect local communities, such as

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41 Citizen over 60 years of age do not pay ERN, which is currently 25MTn per head (6.7 SEK) per year in Ribáuè.
42 One régulo reported he is reasonably satisfied with the 750 MTn (214.3 SEK) he receives per quarter. The minimum agricultural wage is 1,024 MTn (292.6 SEK) per month. All Africa.com (2007-04-13).
schooling and water sources. Through dialogue, development initiatives will be better matched to people’s actual needs. The rationale is to create a greater sense of community ownership, so people will be more motivated to contribute labour and materials to building and maintenance. This is in stark contrast to earlier central planning where a remote authority made locally irrelevant decisions and people pointed to “the government’s school” rather than “our local school”.

Membership of the consultative councils is decided by community consensus or sometimes open voting. A bairro council should include 16 individuals, including traditional community leaders and other respected members of the community such as teachers. By law, at localidade level, at least 6 members (30 per cent) must be women, as a strategy to address gender-specific issues.

According to a district administration official, the entire population is invited to participate in development planning, and most people who can attend meetings, do so. People gather in discussion groups based on shared characteristics and interests, such as youth, men and women. They brainstorm ideas for infrastructure improvements: “a rain of ideas”. All the suggestions are gathered together. The community decides which actions they can carry out using their own labour and raw materials, and which they need external help with. Needs are prioritised using a voting system that involves individuals placing maize grains in a certain order. It is said that everyone must respect the outcomes as they “represent the wishes of the whole community”.

3.3 Private sector structures and institutions

Ribáuè’s largest employer is the Portuguese owned cotton-ginning plant. The cleaned raw cotton is mostly exported to Portugal where processing adds value. The small new mineral water bottling plant on the mountainside outside Ribáuè is owned by Mozambicans of Asian origin who come from outside the district. The main market for Ribáuè mineral water is in larger towns, such as Nampula, although there is some local demand from state institutions and out-of-town visitors who can afford it. Thanks mainly to an increasing flow of officials, consultants and conference participants from out-of-town the only restaurant in Ribáuè is flourishing and constantly expanding. Much of the food served is local agricultural produce.

The cotton factory has 104 workers but only 6 people are permanently employed. Those who are periodically employed earn the minimum industrial salary, which is 1,443 MTn (390 SEK) per month. The mineral water plant employs about 10 operatives. These jobs create a trickle down of cash to families and to the community. Salaried employees buy household items, clothes and food at market stalls. They patronise local micro-enterprises such as mills, repair shops, barbers shops, tailors, video clubs and bars. People with regular income are important because their constant purchasing power has a stabilising effect on the local economy. In contrast, agricultural production is seasonal, which has a knock-on effect on most other commercial sectors. A local entrepreneur explained that maize milling is highly sensitive to seasonal swings, whereas an electrical repair shop has constant business because it mainly serves salaried customers.

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43 In one of the Ribáuè bairro, leaders informed us that the consultative council consists of 6 members, serving around 5,000 inhabitants.
44 All Africa.com (2007-04-13).
Formal trade via shops seems to be contracting, while the informal sector (market stands and street traders) seems to be expanding. This may be because the informal sector can undercut prices, and the limited turnover to be made in Ribáuè does not cover the overheads and taxes on permanent trading. Formal trading also demands administrative procedures and legislative compliance. Many of the informal traders are young men prepared to travel to buy and sell goods. A state employee told us that boys tend to drop out of school to make quick money. Informal trading is more flexible, allowing for opportunistic rather than permanent engagement. Another barrier to entrepreneurship has been a lack of external support for small business start-up. Our impression from small entrepreneurs is that there are no sources of advice or credit for them, despite the fact that this sector offers potential to increase family incomes, with a possible spillover to elderly livelihoods.

3.4 Faith based institutions

The District Profile reports the 1997 census, when there were more Muslims than Christians in Ribáuè district. Figures were Muslim 43.6 per cent, Catholic 27 per cent, Evangelical 18.2 per cent, Animist 10.2 per cent and others 11.1 per cent.\textsuperscript{45} Statistics for the whole of Nampula province show an age-related trend. In the age groups over 50 there were twice as many Muslims as Catholics. This increased to four times by the age of 80+.\textsuperscript{46}

The Catholic Church in Ribáuè is a solid colonial structure dating from the 1920s. Both cement and small mud and straw built Catholic chapels may be seen in various districts and rural villages. The Muslims of central Ribáuè pray in two mosques of simple mud and straw construction, but there are 37 mosques in total in Ribáuè district that co-operate with one another. Modest mud and straw chapels in peri-urban and rural communities serve the many evangelical churches of different persuasions. There are also Jehovah’s Witness groups in the area. The main faiths are represented in the traditional leadership and consultative councils. Muslims leaders have noted a new respectful attitude towards Muslims from the state administration, public services and employers. There was no suggestion that the state discriminated against any religions group. On the contrary, the relationships were presented as mutually beneficial. As we explain in Section 4: Social Capital, faith based institutions are one source of assistance to the elderly.

3.5 Non-governmental organisations

NGOs that are or have recently been active in Ribáuè:

- SALAMA focuses on medical care and home help for the chronically sick. 20 volunteers provide home-based care for patients of HIV/AIDS, TB and other chronic diseases. Patients are transported to hospital and receive some medicines. Beneficiaries are identified through the local community leadership.

- CARE has trained basic level health volunteers in rural communities, to increase access to medical care locally and encourage health centre attendance. They also provide a car once a month so health workers can carry out vaccination in rural areas.

- OLIPA assists the establishment and capacity building of associations engaged in agricultural production and commercialisation. The target group is family farmers.

\textsuperscript{45} Perfil do Distrito de Ribaue (2005:12)
\textsuperscript{46} INE (1999a:39)
including the poorest. Assistance includes business planning, credit guarantee, commercial contacts.

- ADAP offers agricultural extension consultancy to encourage more efficient farming, diversification of agricultural products and more effective commercialisation. 4 agricultural specialists in Ribáuè district, 15 other employees and 14 volunteer activists raise awareness of modern farming methods. A specific programme aims to increase the agricultural capacity of families caring for AIDS patients. Orphans receive food baskets and some are granted scholarships to agricultural school.

- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has supplied 400 concrete latrine covers to Ribáuè. Nampula province, including Ribáuè is the target of an appeal to implement a comprehensive, safe, rural water supply programme by 2009.

- Organizacao da Mulher Mocambicana - Organisation of Mozambican Women (OMM). This is a membership organisation of the Frelimo political party with a branch that holds meetings in Ribáuè. The members in Ribáuè plan to establish a sewing workshop. The organisation occasionally distributes clothing to the poor.

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47 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies: Mozambique
4 THE CAPITAL ASSETS OF THE ELDERLY IN RIBÁUÈ

Here we address the capital assets section of the SRL-model. This is a descriptive approach to the livelihoods of the elderly people interviewed in Ribáuè district. It explains their assets and their access to the five capitals, natural, social, financial, physical and human.

4.1 Natural capital assets

The natural capital assets in Ribáuè district of relevance to the poorer elderly are the soil, the weather, water sources and natural vegetation. The main source of livelihood is family agriculture. The people are dependent on the crops they can grow by exploiting these natural resources and their own labour. The main food crops are maize, beans, potatoes, cassava and mapira. Labour intensive and sensitive cash crops such as cotton, tobacco, cashew nuts and vegetables are not produced by the very poorest.

Fishing from artificial dams, trapping wild birds and animals, and gathering wild plants does occur but is not significant for semi-urbanised people. Fowl, goats and pigs roam the peripheral areas of town and provide a supplementary source of food and income.

The district enjoys a sub-tropical climate that gives good growing conditions during most of the year. The average annual rainfall is 1200mm. Normally there is high precipitation between December and March with an extreme peak of over 800mm in January. This period is also hotter than other months (median daily max. 30-34 degrees). The very dry season falls between May and September, with the first few months of this period being slightly cooler than the rest of the year (median daily max. 25-28 degrees).

Rain is the only source of water for almost all crops, so variations in the weather pattern, such as a lack of rainfall during March this year, are damaging to agricultural production. There are however a lot of rivers that have water year round. A river crosses the plain on the outskirts of Ribáuè, between the town and the mountain, but the water is only accessible for irrigation by those few who can afford to run pumps with which they water vegetable plots. To others with nearby fields the river represents a threat due to periodic flooding.

Ribáuè lies several kilometres away from one of Mozambique’s best mineral water sources, where a commercial bottling plant is located. Only the very wealthy can afford to drink mineral water. A collection tank on the mountainside was linked to plumbing in town during colonial times. The tank was cleaned and renovated ineffectively several years ago, so that water flows seldom and the quality is sub-standard. Access to potable water is estimated at about 17 per cent in Ribáuè district. Ordinary people are dependent on well water and river water. There is a well in the Ribáuè bairro we visited but it does not provide sufficient flow for all residents. Therefore women must sometimes walk 60 minutes to fetch water from the river, but they suffer diarrhoea because the water is contaminated.

Raw materials from nature are the most commonly used building materials. Homes and storage buildings are constructed from a double skin of sticks, in-filled with stones and then plastered inside and out with mud, or home-made mud bricks. Roofs are of long grass tied to a stick framework. The main source of fuel for cooking is firewood, gathered from dead branches and trees that have been felled to make way for cultivation. There is no extensive woodland or

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48 INE online 2007-05-24
49 Nhate & Åkesson (2006:22)
forest in the area, although we saw village carpenters hand-sawing hardwood planks for construction and simple furniture.

### 4.1.1 Natural resource access issues

It is difficult to assess from visual observation how intensively cultivated the land is, because plots are small and crops planted in irregular formations, often interspersed with undergrowth or tall grass (under traditional crop rotation, land is fallow for up to 5 years). We were informed that there is no problem with land availability. However most of the people we interviewed, who live in the rather densely populated peri-urban belt, must walk between 1 and 4 hours to reach their fields. It seems that richer people have more fields in different locations, whereas poorer people have fewer fields that may be less accessible. We met one woman who either has to borrow a bicycle or stay overnight at the fields, and another who has to cross 3 rivers. We saw people carrying large bundles of firewood along the roads and down from the mountain, suggesting that sources of firewood may be far from the residential districts. As the community leaders pointed out, such journeys are very demanding or impossible for weaker older people. There may also be variations in land fertility and some people’s land is more vulnerable to natural shocks, thus compromising their food security.

According to matrilineal practice in Nampula province, when a woman marries her family gives land to the husband. If the couple divorce or the man dies the respective land should revert to the women’s family, not to the husband or his relatives. Traditionally women have had control of their own land, enabling them to support themselves and their dependent children. We heard that occasionally a widow loses access to land that should rightfully be hers. The deceased husband’s relatives find reasons to disown her and then take over all the land that the couple farmed together. This tradition also has implications for widowers, who could lose access to land previously farmed by the couple when they have to hand it back to the dead wife’s relatives.

### 4.1.2 Gender aspects of natural resource exploitation

In family agriculture women and men work side by side on most tasks. However, traditionally there is division of labour for some jobs and those divisions are strongly adhered to in the countryside, except among people who live alone and are forced to break the gender patterns. Some gender roles are beginning to soften: men have started to carry firewood and water. In Ribáuè, despite matrilineal land-inheritance traditions, men always lead the family unit. They decide what crops will be grown and where, and organise the work schedule. This limits women’s independence regarding whether to grow cash crops for sale, for example.

Members of an association of small farmers described the agricultural year to us (See Appendix III). Men do the heavier preparation of new or overgrown land, including burning and clearance, and preparation before planting. Women may take over during growing while their men try to bring in additional income by working in other districts, brewing beer or engaging in petty commerce. The main weeding period during December to February is a demanding task involving the whole family, even children during the January school holidays. Picking beans, peanuts and rice is a woman’s job, while men cut the maize.

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50 Attempts to rationalise agriculture and social provision by forcibly concentrating rural populations in village centres during the 1980s may have contributed to the land access problem. See Pitcher (1998:126-127)
51 Chilundo (2005:18)
52 Men carry many items on their heads, in the same way as women, but we heard that men do not carry water in this way, as it is considered humiliating.
Regarding construction work, men are responsible for making the framework of buildings, whereas women cut the grass for roofing and plaster the walls. We heard that men make the enclosures and cages for domestic animals such as goats and hens. A single woman told us she could not keep such animals for this reason. We also heard that slaughtering chickens is considered to be a female job and a traditional-minded woman might be insulted if her husband took her role. These gender-related conventions may have implications for nutritional variety among single women especially.

Single men or women, especially older ones, may feel they should not do, or do not know how to do tasks normally reserved for the opposite gender. They have to rely on others to carry out certain necessary tasks. This limits their productivity and their opportunities for diversification.

4.2 Social capital assets

Social capital assets are the social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of livelihoods. In the SRL model social assets include: 1. networks; 2. membership of groups; 3. relationships of trust; 4. access to wider institutions of society. In rural Mozambique the main social capital asset for the poorest and least mobile is the immediate community, or “the kinship reciprocity network”53. This consists of family and neighbour relationships, including the traditional community leadership.

4.2.1 Traditional and modern social attitudes

Before independence very few people went to formal schools. Instead they were taught social values and practical skills at home and in the rural community. Traditional upbringing included values like honesty, seriousness and respect for the elderly, values that are still important among older people. After independence there was heavy investment in education, so the traditional upbringing was overshadowed. The traditional education and upbringing that black Mozambicans went though during colonial times is rare among young people today and there has been a change in young people’s attitudes towards the elderly. One NGO worker explained the situation in Ribáuè like this: “If I have a problem with my motorbike and it stops on the road, an elderly person is the first who stops to help me. Young people just look at you and want you to pay them for helping you.” Since the younger generation values these things less, there is a clash between the generations.

Somewhere after 1975 the spirit of solidarity among Mozambicans seems to weaken. Before people helped each other to a greater extent. It used to be everybody’s business to educate children. “If somebody’s child behaved wrongly you told them what was right. Today it is just the parents who are allowed to educate and raise their children.” This change from traditional upbringing to modern upbringing seems to have had consequences in modern society. A few of our interviewees told us that this change has led to young people not liking hard, productive work, e.g. working in the fields. They prefer to have small businesses and earn fast cash instead. We can connect this to the mobility issue (see Vulnerability context section 5), with young people moving to the cities in the hope of a wealthier life and better standards.

Although it seems as if traditional values are disappearing, the elderly still seem to have an important role in Mozambican rural society. We heard from several very different sources that elderly people are more willing to do voluntary work than others. Even young informants say the elderly are more serious, more-hard working and more honest in general than the young.

The elderly are better at cooperating in a team. Different explanations we can offer are that the elderly have grown up with a strong sense of responsibility to the community (necessary for survival), and a work ethic instilled under colonialism. They may volunteer because they seek the company of others, or because of a dependent relationship with the community leadership, who mobilise volunteers, may exert invisible power over them.\(^{54}\)

4.2.2 Family mutual support networks

The most common type of mutual assistance is between close family members.\(^{55}\) Traditionally the elderly who can no longer manage alone have been incorporated into married children’s families, perhaps moving into a small hut built next to the family home. Another strategy is pairing up an elderly person with a younger carer. Sometimes boys live with elderly widowed relatives, which provides some security and help with practical tasks. We also met a young woman who said she cared for her elderly husband.

If younger relatives live nearby, they often assist the elderly by giving them food and clothing. On the other hand elderly women may help when their grandchildren are sick. Several beneficiaries of food subsidy gave money for the grandchildren to buy schoolbooks or bread. We got the impression that female relatives tend to provide care, while male relatives are more likely to give money and objects. Dava, Low and Matusse found that elderly people in rural Nampula were more likely to have ties with their daughters than with their sons.\(^{56}\) There is an expectation among elderly people that children or grandchildren who get educated will be able to work and thus be able to support them. Youths we met from traditional rural communities also expressed this responsibility towards caring for their elderly relatives. It was reported that grandchildren who are literate help with shopping and official business.\(^{57}\)

On the other hand some elderly people, often women, care for grandchildren and great-grandchildren, usually when their own children have died from malaria, TB or HIV/AIDS. We have no statistics for Ribauté yet on orphans living with relatives (a UNICEF survey is underway), but we have heard that there are “very many”, possibly thousands. Research in neighbouring countries has revealed that more orphans are cared for by grandparents than by any other category of relative.\(^{58}\)

4.2.3 Gender specific mutual support networks

People commonly work together in gender-specific groups involving several generations, such as women preparing food together. Such activity may be barter or commerce-related, such as a group of women we met who were brewing a large quantity of beer (see photo Appendix IV). In Ribauté we watched local people practicing traditional songs and dances in advance of the presidential visit. The members of the dance group were extremely fit men of late middle age, and their respected instructor was elderly. Thus older people are carrying forward traditional culture that takes a customary place in official visits.

We also met families headed by women. They consisted of widowed and/or unmarried or divorced women from several generations, together with young children. According to matrilineal tradition, children belong to the maternal line so the responsibility of care usually

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\(^{54}\) the notion of “willing compliance” discussed by Åkesson & Nilsson (2006:4,24)


\(^{56}\) Dava et al (1998:351)

\(^{57}\) 17.5 per cent of females, and 42.7 per cent of males over 66 years old were literate in 1997, according to Simler et al. (1998:Table 5.1)

\(^{58}\) HelpAge International International/International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2003:4)
falls on women. For the whole of Mozambique research shows that while poor households are most commonly headed by married men (around 67 per cent), poor households headed by widows are in second position. In rural Mozambique 5.2 per cent of ultra-poor households and 5.5 per cent of poor households were headed by widows, according to a 1997 report. This compares to 0.8 per cent of poor households headed by widowers.\(^{59}\) On average female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households.\(^{60}\) Therefore widows caring for children are likely to be amongst the poorest family units.

### 4.2.4 Mutual support networks between neighbours

Many people described a strong sense of neighbourliness. People who live near each other are considered to be members of the same family, even if they are not blood relatives. On the non-reciprocal level are charitable actions, where the better off donate basic necessities to the destitute, or the more able help the disabled with practical tasks such as house repair. This practice suggests a long-sighted attitude: I help people when I can, others will help me when I am in need.

Elderly people particularly value the neighbourly tradition. Widows described how the neighbours’ children visit when they are sick, bring water, and fetch relatives from another district when help is needed. Another told us that a wealthy neighbour has mounted an electric lamp in such a position that light shines on nearby properties, enabling other families to work or sit outside at night. People with radios let others listen – group listening and discussion of programme content may decrease isolation and spread knowledge of public benefit.

### 4.2.5 The elderly as community leaders

At our meetings with the traditional community leadership and consultative councils near town we noticed that approximately half were over 50 years old. In a smaller “administrative post” the male régulo and secretário seemed to be in their late 60s. It could be suggested that due to factors such as age, family background, cultural, educational and work experience the traditional community leadership have common links with and therefore insight into the circumstances of elderly people living within their community. One traditional leader explained that the community does not want older people to work in the fields because the work is too hard and too far away from home. The leaders are deeply rooted in the social fabric of the community. Their knowledge of all the families in the bairro enables them to play a very significant role in regulating social relations in the community. On the other hand the almost exclusively male structure of the traditional leadership may reinforce gender inequalities. There is usually only one woman in the traditional community leadership, who promotes traditional values to a greater or lesser extent. All the elderly residents we met spoke positively about their relationship with their leaders.

### 4.2.6 Community leadership support for the elderly

A traditional value that was mentioned by many people from different social backgrounds was a strong sense of responsibility towards helping other community members at all times, but especially in crisis situations. One community leader, who was also a representative of the Catholic Church in his bairro takes care of social matters. Regarding the elderly he mentioned advising and helping, encouraging them to use hospital services and mediating problems associated with death and inheritance. One aged and impoverished woman described how she was given a latrine cover from the MRC (although it broke in transit). The community leadership most probably recommended her as a beneficiary.

\(^{59}\) Simler et al. (1998:Table 2.8)

\(^{60}\) Muzima & Matusse (2003:6)
4.2.7 Community leadership and selection of elderly beneficiaries of INAS – food subsidy

INAS representatives in Nampula and Ribáuè explained that they depend upon the social networks and relationships of trust in the local communities in order to identify beneficiaries of state assistance programmes. The participation of the local leadership was seen as effective and a way to enhance the legitimacy of INAS through a sense of local ownership. The local leadership prepares a list of people they judge to be in need of financial support. Leaders say they know who has an inadequate diet, who are single parents and which children are sick. According to an INAS representative there may be up to 400 elderly people in a typical bairro who need financial assistance. Registration thus represents many hours of work for the community leaders. The elderly beneficiaries are also aware of the community leaders’ key role in them getting help from INAS.

Based on observations in one community, our impression is that the community leadership are well aware of the INAS criteria and how the distribution system functions. According to beneficiaries, they are also an active source of information regarding payment times, delays etc. The bairro leadership introduced us to elderly and disadvantaged people – both those receiving assistance from the state and those who had to cope alone. Our impression was that they tried to put us in contact with some of the most needy who lived in dire circumstances. On the other hand we also met elderly people with close connections to the leaders who seemed economically stable but still felt they should get an INAS pension. We cannot make any further comments on why the community leadership chose individual cases, or on the circumstances of elderly people we were not introduced to.

4.2.8 The elderly and access to decision making processes

Several of the elderly social assistance recipients explained that they do respond when local community leaders call everybody to attend public meetings, but their awareness of the content of such meetings varied. One elderly widow recalled “sometimes they give us good information, tell us to send our children to school and be nice to each other” and another said “I go there but I don’t know what they talk about”. There may be some kind of unspoken obligation to go to meetings, as one woman expressed it, “because we have to go with the government”. Many elderly have limited mobility due to their physical condition or their responsibility towards a sick or disabled partner. The participatory planning process (see 3.2.3) poses problems for people who cannot attend meetings, or are reluctant to forward their views due to cultural practices or social marginalization. According to the authorities, someone else such as a brother or wife may speak on their behalf, although a person who is unable to participate cannot appoint a proxy in the voting process. It was acknowledged that the elderly and handicapped may be less represented. Women would seem to be particularly disadvantaged. There is no minimum quota for female representation at bairro level, as far as we are aware, which is likely to have repercussions on the gender balance at localidade level. We have heard from various sources that traditional communities find it hard to accept and respect the leadership of a woman. Women, especially older women, may be less mobile than men due to caring for the chronically sick, disabled or small children. Social stigmatisation affects widows in particular. The very reasons why certain vulnerable people cannot participate are why their contributions are particularly necessary for the reduction of extreme poverty in all its aspects (material, political and social).
4.2.9 Non-profit organisations and the elderly

Organisations that run programmes specifically for the elderly such as HelpAge International and Age Concern are not active in Ribáuè district. Neither are there any clubs, membership organisations or associations for pensioners or the elderly that we heard about. However it seems that there is a feeling of shared identity among recipients of the food subsidy. We heard that the more active elderly had built a small shelter so that people could wait undercover at the distribution point. An elderly man whose wife was very frail told us that people sometimes visit each other to offer moral support. They sometimes even give each other medicines.

In general NGO programmes actively encourage female participation in projects. The health of pregnant women and young children, and women in community and income generating activities are emphasised. The NGOs also work with vulnerable groups such as the chronically sick and their carers. The elderly may gain some benefit from NGO initiatives aimed at improving the welfare of the whole community, such as training rural health care workers. Programmes that seek to generate income benefit the wider family. It is not unusual that elderly women or couples care for chronically sick children and orphans, so health care, food donations and educational support to these groups also helps their carers. SALAMA is planning a project to assist widows and vulnerable children. This may be linked to the INAS campaign currently underway, to register all orphans and their family circumstances.

However there is a sense that nurturing young people is the key to future development, and the inclusion of elderly people may primarily be a means to achieving that end. Recently founded agricultural associations do include elderly members. The poorest elderly were among those in Ribáuè who received latrine platforms from the MRC and clothing from OMM. In line with the water supply and sanitation (WSS) targets of the MDGs, the Red Cross’s WatSan programme is projected to bring safe water and basic sanitation to 116,000 people in Nampula province. Women and children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups are priority target groups.\(^{61}\)

NGOs also involve elderly people in project design and implementation. They train community leaders how to identify and resolve issues of community concern. One NGO is using the elderly to reach the young with information and advice. For example, this NGO informs the elderly about the benefits of vaccinations because then the elderly tell the younger generation in the village about this. According to the NGO, young people listen to and respect what the elderly say. They think that if a person has lived a long life, they must have listened to his or her parents’ advice. So the lesson is that young people should listen to the older generation in order to live a long life. The same informant also noted that the status of elderly people involved in projects increases and their role in the community is strengthened.

4.2.10 Faith based organisations and the elderly

In the past religions were seen as the major source of assistance for vulnerable groups, whereas now people look more to the state for support. However many elderly people named religious groups as a source of help, even if they could not say what kind of help is given. We heard from a church worker that food, clothing and medicines are sometimes given to the very poor. Many poor and vulnerable people including the elderly, are unable to access help from INAS because they do not have identity cards, so helping these people to obtain the relevant paperwork is another initiative of Catholic workers.

\(^{61}\) International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
The kinds of help the religious leaders of different faiths provide, and their descriptions of how people in mixed faith communities care for each other is very similar. Both Catholic and Muslim sources informed us that people from the two faiths co-operate successfully. It may be that in many situations community ties are deeper than religious ties, although we heard that “it can be easier to help people who are members of the same religious group”. It may be that only certain kinds of crisis help are belief related. For example Muslim community members support other Muslims in the event of death – they give cloth to wrap the corpse and make food for the ceremonies. Loss of a family member may strike an elderly person with limited financial resources particularly hard.

4.3 Financial Capital Assets
The financial capital assets consist of savings, incomes, credits and tradable goods. Since 78.5 per cent of the population of Mozambique work in agriculture, their main income comes from their fields. The government provides some of its vulnerable citizens with social assistance programs. These and other forms of income are issues that will be discussed in the following chapter.

Mozambique is traditionally a barter economy. Food, locally made goods and labour used to be the currency, but today there is a change towards a monetary culture. In the rural areas it is very common to trade agricultural goods produced on the field for a kapulana (piece of traditional Mozambican cloth) for example. An elderly woman explained to us how she “bought” things she needed: “I had some production from my field that I sold. I traded it for clothes, people came here and traded with me. My grandchildren helped me. They can read and write.” It is risky to be dependent on selling off produce from the fields. If there is a flood or drought the harvest will be bad and there will be less or nothing to sell, meaning no income or nothing to trade with. Another solution women in particular have come up with is to make beer, which they give to men who do labouring tasks that they cannot carry out themselves, such as house construction. One woman told us “Sometimes I make this local beer and sell it to make money. I produce myself the raw materials I need for the beer.” Others may pay with food such as fish, or other products, perhaps due to religious prohibitions against alcohol. People who need monetary income may work for others and receive cash, currently around 20MTn (5.4SEK) per hour of fieldwork. Another exchange system is to prepare a party with food and drink for the workers.

4.3.1 Business sector and the elderly
We met several entrepreneurial individuals over 50 years old engaged in multiple business activities including agricultural production, trading and mechanical repairs. We noticed that small entrepreneurs in Ribáuè tended to be people with certain social and economic advantages in their background. The uneducated elderly can be very skilled at making hand-crafted objects. We noticed elderly tailors working with their treadle sewing machines and saw locally made beds on sale in the market. The oldest and poorest are not likely to be involved in commerce due to lack of time, knowledge and capital. They do not have the capacity to grow cash crops. However growth of the commercial sector may bring indirect advantages to some of them. For example if younger

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62 Examples: they were members of the Asian or other foreign business community, they had been educated under colonial rule, they had salaried employment and/or an urban background, they belonged to the traditional or political elite.
relatives or neighbours gain more money and material goods there may be a spill-over benefit to family and community members. With more enterprises the choice of goods and services increases, prices may fall and quality may improve.

4.3.2 Salaries, pensions and goods
Most of the elderly are not capable of work, due to their physical condition. Those who have had a paid state job (nurse, teacher, administrators, post office and telecom workers, railway workers etc.) are entitled to a monthly pension. The amount depends on the salary the person had while working, but it seems that people who receive pensions are happy with the amount and they seem to have a better standard of living than the average person. Even though the elderly are too old to work themselves they can benefit from other family members’ salaries and incomes. We found out from our interviews that elderly people’s children tend to give their parents food and clothes rather than money. One elderly woman explained how her children helped her: “My girls help me by giving me kapulanas. They do not help me in the fields. That is my husband’s work.” Another woman received some money from her children for special occasions: “My children helped me to build my house. Sometimes they also give me food or clothes. It happens that they give me 5 MTn so I can travel to my son who is sick.”

Some of our elderly interviewees told us about OMM, which helps people who are members of their organization. One elderly told us: “I have heard that there are some people that have got clothes from them. I used to belong to this organisation but then I became sick and could not attend their meetings anymore. So they took my name off the members list and because of that I can not get any help from them today.” We did not meet any people who received help from them or meet any representatives from OMM, so we cannot say anything about the extent of their work.

4.3.3 The three social assistance programs implemented in the Ribáuè district by INAS
INAS has several programs for vulnerable people in the country. Three of them are implemented in Ribáuè and will be presented now.

Direct Social Support (Programa Apoio Social Directo)
This support is for those unable to work and the help can be in different forms, but is never money. It provides the disabled people in Ribáuè with help such as wheelchairs, crutches and tricycles. There were also two disabled persons who got help to build their houses. Mothers living in deprived conditions can receive food baskets with maize, flour and sugar for their children. These food baskets are also provided by some NGOs in the district.

Social Benefit for Work programme (Programa Benefício Social pelo Trabalho)
This is a work program that is especially directed towards younger widows. The program includes maintenance of public spaces and each is paid 450 MTn (121.6 SEK) per month. Today there are 45 people in Ribaue who are employed in the program. They have contracts for one year and after that 30 per cent of them must be offered permanent employment. The others are given training to prepare them for other income generating activities.

INAS food subsidy and other support (Programa de Subsidio de Alimentos)
The food subsidy is a monthly allowance from INAS to mainly vulnerable elderly and disabled people.63 In the Ribáuè district there were 1,160 people receiving the food subsidy monthly. Out of these there were 1,058 elderly beneficiaries (774 men and 584 women) and 81 disabled

63 See chapter 3 for more information about eligibility criteria.
people (58 men and 23 women). The rest of the beneficiaries were chronically ill (14 men and 7 women). 

The amount of the food subsidy is 70 MTn for a single household without family, but it could be up to 140 MTn per month depending on the size of the family. The food subsidy is usually the only monetary income for its beneficiaries. But we did meet elderly people in receipt of food subsidy who were helped materially and/or financially by their children who were employed in the state or private sectors in Ribáuè or Nampula. One social worker told us that “we are aware of the fact that the amount is very small, but we think it gives people a possibility to change their situation a little. But we know that it is not enough money to buy all the food that people need, they have to be capable of doing some work as well”.

To be able to understand how much 70 MTn is we have to compare it to the minimum wages in Mozambique. The minimum industrial wage is 1,443 MTn (390SEK) per month. According to Mozambique’s Consultative Labour Commission that amount “only covers 50 per cent of the basic needs of a worker and his/her family.” The agricultural minimum wage is even lower, 1,024 MTn (276.8SEK) per month. The food subsidy is only 6.8 per cent of the agricultural minimum wage, which shows us how small the amount really is.

But just because the amount is small it does not mean that it cannot improve people’s lives to some extent. Poor people seem to be very inventive with handling and spending money, they can make use of even this very small amount. To get an idea of how much money 70 MTn is we need to look at consumer prices in the following figure 4.

**Figure 4: Consumer prices for basic items in Ribáuè 2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price in 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>5 MTn/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7.5 MTn/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar of soap</td>
<td>11 MTn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box of matches</td>
<td>1 MTn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battery</td>
<td>3.5 MTn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise book</td>
<td>3 MTn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 litres of maize</td>
<td>50 MTn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal piece of cloth</td>
<td>45 MTn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket</td>
<td>120 MTn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>1400 MTn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nhate & Åkesson (2006:16)

As we can see in the list a 20 litre container of maize costs approximately 50 MTn, depending on the season (prices rise when the supply decreases before the next harvest). Grinding the maize costs 20 MTn at the mill, which makes a total of 70 MTn, equal to the food subsidy amount. These 20 litres of maize will give 12 kilograms (12,000 grams) of flour. 350 grams is the standard minimum daily allowance to ensure survival in emergency situations. 12,000 grams/ 350 grams = 34 (days)

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64 MMAS Ribáuè 2007-04-13
65 Allafrica.com 2007-05-23
This means that for 70 MTn you can buy enough maize to “keep your body alive” for a little more than one month (34 days). So there seems to be logic behind setting the amount. We actually met one older person who spent all the money on maize: “I am very old so I am not able to grow enough food for myself in the field. From the 70 MTn I use 50 to buy maize and the rest goes to the mill.” The problem though is that after spending all the money on maize they do not have any money left to buy oil, salt and sugar, which the body also needs.

We were told by a worker at MMAS that most of the elderly people receiving the food subsidy buy soap, salt, some potatoes, meat, tomatoes and/or kerosene for the money. Some give their money away to other family members. “I sometimes give the money to my grandchildren, they need it to be able to go to school. They need to buy pencils and books. Sometimes I buy myself some clothes or I buy salt and oil in the market.” A person from a religious group told us that there is a huge problem when you help older persons with money or food, because as soon as you have helped them all their relatives gather around and want to take advantage of that “gift”. “There was one elderly woman who we supported with some help. Before we came in the picture her neighbours helped her. But when we started to support her they suddenly stopped and then her son moved back to his mother’s house and started using her. The woman then wanted more support from us because she had the son to support as well. We told her that it should be her son who helped her instead of us doing it!”

4.3.4 Access to INAS food subsidy

The main source of financial capital assets for vulnerable elderly is the benefit from what they grow in their fields. Apart from that, the food subsidy is a major source of financial capital for vulnerable older people. But there are problems with access to the food subsidy. One of the criteria for being selected as a beneficiary is to have an identity card. It is not impossible to get one in Ribáuè, but the problem is that it is very costly. Members of a consultative council estimated the costs to be 200 MTn (54 SEK). The only situation where an identity card is needed is when people pay their taxes. But only people under the age of 60 need to pay tax. Many elderly have never had an identity card and do not need to have one anymore. If they are in need of the food subsidy they are most likely very poor and cannot afford to pay 200 MTn for a card. We discussed this situation with the MMAS in Ribáuè and they agreed that it is a weakness of the program. “But we cannot afford to pay for people’s ID-cards. We tell them to try to get help from other organisations and then gradually pay back to those organisations.” There have been some discussions on making exceptions for the most vulnerable, but this has not been implemented yet. “It would be great if this came to be reality, many more people would be able to get the food subsidy then.”

This identity card problem is a serious barrier because it means that the most vulnerable are not being reached. It is those who can afford to pay 200 MTn (or already have a card) who can receive the food subsidy. The program fails to reach the most vulnerable which was supposed to be the intention of the program.

Another obstacle with the food subsidy program is collecting the money. The PSA is distributed monthly at four different places in the district. If the beneficiary is sick and not able to collect their money he/she can send somebody else. That somebody else needs to bring the beneficiary’s identity card and also needs to be recognised and authorized by INAS as someone trustworthy and close to the beneficiary. Some elderly do not have anybody that close to them who they can trust. In that case the permanente can bring the money to the elderly instead, according to INAS. But we met people who had been ill and not able to collect their money. They said that if INAS does not trust the person they send they do not receive any
money that month. “I had some troubles with INAS. My legs were very bad so I could not move and walk to the distribution point for two months. I had nobody I could send to collect the money so I did not get any at all. When I got better I found out that they had taken my name off the list, so I had to reapply. I complained about it, but INAS didn’t say anything. Today I get the food subsidy again.” According to INAS their beneficiaries “need to keep in mind that if they get sick it is up to them to let INAS know so that they will not be taken off the list”.

4.4 Physical capital assets

Physical capital assets refer mainly to the quality of the private and state maintained built environment and infrastructure such as utilities like water, electricity and transport networks. Here we also include service provision of the main state institutions.

4.4.1 General description of assets

The representatives and sub-offices of state institutions such as MMSA, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Education are located in various buildings on different streets. Other public provision in the town is the police station, post office, hospital, the state funded radio/TV studio, public telephone centre and offices of the electricity provider EDM, all located near the town centre. The secondary school is in a rural suburb an hours’ walk from town, while the agricultural college is on a rural road around 10km out of town. In the whole district there are 92 schools, mostly primary school level and built from mud and thatch. There are 9 health units, including the district hospital in Ribáuè, one main health centre, 3 minor health centres and 4 health posts, with a total of 159 beds and 64 employees.

4.4.2 Access to health services

According to the director of the health care sector, the district has very low health provision in relation to the size of its population. Some people in the district must walk 70 kilometres to get to the nearest health post. To try to cover the need for health care they provide “mobile health centres” which go out into the district and vaccinate people for example. They also use a system with agentes polivalente de Saúde in the local communities. These are people who have been trained in first aid and malaria treatment. These people do not get paid, but the local communities build small community health posts for them and they get also some medicines and antiseptics from the state. It is up to the local community to decide whether they want the agentes polivalentes to charge people they treat or not.

The fees within the health institutions follow the national guidelines and vary depending on point of treatment:
- Consultation at the hospital is 1 Mtn.
- Consultation at a health centre is 0,5 Mtn.
- Consultation at a health post is free of charge.

Medicines in Mozambique are subsidised by the state and cost 1-3 Mtn. Some medicines are free, for example malaria treatment. A senior health administrator told us the most common diseases are malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and diarrhoea during the rainy season.

There are no known diseases that just affect the elderly. Most common among them are malaria and diarrhoea, which can be easily treated by the health service. The problem for the elderly is transportation and access to the nearest health post. “I have pains all over my body

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66 Perfil do Distrito de Ribaue (2005:21)
and sometimes also in my heart /.../ I have to walk to the hospital with a stick and it takes me 2.5 hours. My husband takes me there. We have to make stops along the way to rest. If my husband was working he could afford to buy a bike, it would make the journey to the hospital easier.” Often the distance is too far and it appears that many elderly try to treat themselves or find a traditional doctor who can treat them, but they can be expensive. “There are many healers in the bairro. But I need money to pay them. They cost 200 MTn. Some of them are able to heal you, if you are lucky.”

The elderly say they feel they are treated fairly by the medical services and are not aware of any age-related discrimination. All (new) public buildings must be equipped with access ramps - the ramp to the administration building has evidently been in place for some years - but we did not hear of any other adaptations to their special cultural or gender needs.

4.4.3 Infrastructure

There are several roads connecting Ribáuè district to other areas. The main road, road no. 8, runs from Nampula to Cuamba. Other roads connect Ribáuè to Lalaua district, Murrupula district and Alto Molocue in Zambézia province.67 The roads are in bad condition (see photos Appendix IV), which makes the surrounding areas inaccessible with a normal vehicle, especially in the rainy seasons. The bad condition of the road to Nampula means buses have stopped going there. Instead people from Ribáuè town have to take a chapa to Namiconha and then the train to the provincial capital, or ride on top of a loaded truck. There are plans to surface the road to Nampula in the near future, which would facilitate transportation to and from Ribáuè district.

Ribáuè district is located along the Nacala Development Corridor, a railway that stretches from the Nacala Port on the Indian Ocean via Malawi to Zambia. This was one of the first development corridors and has been recognised as a regional priority. The objective of the corridor is to increase economic activity in terms of trade, in order to promote development. The train linking Nampula and Cuamba passes through the district in one direction one day, with the return journey the next day. The train makes two stops in Ribáuè district, in Namiconha and in Iapala.68 It brings goods and passengers to the area and makes the commercialisation of cash crops easier, but with the railway there also come negative aspects. “There are disadvantages of the railway, such as HIV/AIDS. The people that pass by leave their mark on our population. There are also bad people coming here, for example thieves and other dodgy people”, a citizen of Namiconha told us. The railway is a contributory factor to the economic and social development of the district.

The elderly people’s ability to travel on the roads and the railway is minimal, because of lack of money, vehicles and their physical condition. A couple of years ago there were several transport companies in the area and there was a daily round trip by bus to Nampula from Ribáuè. But due to the bad roads the companies stopped providing services in the district.69 The young people may be able to afford a bicycle and the employed a motorcycle, and can then travel longer distances than an elderly person who is in a weaker physical condition. The transportation problem can isolate the elderly, separating them from their children who have moved to a bigger town, for example.

67 Nhate & Åkesson (2002:29)
68 Nacala Development Corridor online 2007-05-28
69 Nhate & Åkesson (2006:22)
The other factor, which has had a huge impact on society, is electricity. It is important for promoting economic and social development. The district has had electricity since 2000. The project was financed by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and was implemented by Electridade de Moçambique (EDM) and Swedpower. The reliable supply of electricity has impacted many aspects of society:

- The schools can now arrange night classes; more people are educated.
- Health care has improved. The hospital can now perform more advanced operations, can sterilise instruments, treat emergency cases at night, use the x-ray and keep vaccines in refrigerators powered by electricity.
- Street lights at night, people (especially women and the elderly) feel it is safer to walk in the streets after dark.
- A multimedia centre, financed by UNESCO, has opened with 5 computers, 2 printers and a copy machine, but the telephone service is not developed enough for internet.
- Restaurants and bars have opened and can serve cold drinks due to freezers.
- A mineral water factory has started and created more job opportunities.
- The cotton factory works better with electricity, has fewer stoppages now than it used to while diesel driven, which stimulates cotton farming in the district.
- Electricity driven mills for maize are more efficient.
- The range of entertainment has increased, with video clubs, bars and disco.
- The radio and TV station broadcasts local and national programmes.
- The mobile phone transmitters work, and people can charge their phones easily (see photo Appendix IV).

Those are factors that affect the whole society. But another important aspect of electrification is that people now can have electricity in their homes. With electricity there comes not only lighting, but also appliances such as TV, radio, refrigerators, freezers and irons for example.

Ribáuè town has 617 domestic consumers of electricity. During our interviews with the consumers many told us about problems they have experienced with their electricity meters. Many people were upset because the counter runs even when they do not use any electricity so they have to pay for more than they use. One consumer told us he had been charged twice one month for the same consumption and he also had got the wrong bill many times, which he considered as a huge problem. “EDM cares more about collecting money then taking care of their customers. It is bad service.” Another problem, we were told, is that electricity is too expensive for people in the countryside who only have income from their fields.

Electricity in people’s homes can have secondary impacts. For example one Ribáuè woman, with electricity and TV told us: “We learn many things from TV. We learn how to cook from the TV programmes in the mornings. We watch football from Maputo and other countries ././ My favourite programs are the ones that talk about AIDS and the programs about girls who don’t pass their grades in school if they don’t sleep with their teacher. We understand more from these programs why teachers are exploiting children.” In these cases TV is an educative tool and raises people’s awareness about problems in society.

There are also radio programmes that educate people. In Ribáuè town there is Community Radio and Television (RTVC) which has been broadcasting since 2002 (see photo Appendix IV). They produce local programs in the local language Macua, and also broadcast national
Their locally produced programs highlight local issues and talk about the women’s situation, HIV/AIDS and health care and aim to teach people and change their attitudes. The health programs on the radio are appreciated by the elderly. In these programs a doctor or nurse is invited to explain how to treat simple illnesses. This is an example of an educative program which leads to improved health among people and is especially important to the elderly because they and any younger family members in their care are a more vulnerable group. The radio and TV are important tools to open up the world for people and break their isolation. 28 per cent of people in the district had access to a radio at home in 1997.

The multimedia centre was able to open in Ribáuè in 2005 due to electricity in town. The users are mainly young people. Elderly people tell their children and grandchildren that they must go to the centre and learn. They seem to think it is very important that the younger generations keep up with technological development. The man in charge of the multi-media centre told us that they have not worked with the very oldest yet, they mostly work with children and youths. If the elderly need any photocopies they send their children to the centre. The elderly think the centre is exciting, but consider themselves as too old to go there.

Electricity has contributed to recent development of the district, but the number of elderly consumers is very low. An EDM worker identified only 11 customers who are over about 55 years of age. Electricity is expensive for an average person in the district and especially for the old people since many of them are too old to work for an income. But this does not mean that elderly people are not affected by electricity. One elderly woman told us “I listen to my neighbour’s radio. They have electricity and it helps me. Their lamp gives me light when it is dark, so that I can work.” The radio broadcasts have been a highly debated issue among the elderly and even adults. There is a program called “secret of hearts” which deals with young people’s love issues and talks very openly about relationships and problems. The fact that love affairs became public was liked neither by the elderly nor the district government. It appears that the younger generations are more open-minded about new things and the elderly are scared when there are changes that they do not know how to handle. The radio personnel had to go to the local administration and explain that these types of programs are global and not dangerous.

4.4.4 Houses

Looking at people’s houses gives a good indication of whether they are wealthy or not. There are three types of houses in Ribáuè:

- **Pau a pique** - the simplest house plastered in mud with a roof made of grass.
- **Casa mellorada** - with a stronger roof of metal sheet instead of grass.
- **Alvenaria** - the best house made of blocks/rocks (see photo Appendix IV).

The most common type of house in the district is single level with one room, of the type *pau a pique*. A very few more wealthy families have solid doors, glazed windows, curtains, TV aerials and electricity supply.

Most of the elderly live in *pau a pique* houses, due to their limited financial capital. During our 2.5 week stay in Ribáuè district we only met one elderly person who lived in an *alvenaria*. This person was a former worker for a state company and received a monthly pension from the state, so he could afford to build himself a better house. The houses are often built by men. If the husband dies his family usually takes over the house, which leaves the widow homeless, if she cannot stay with anyone in her own family or build a new house. One elderly woman we met solved the problem when her husband died in a very enterprising way: “*My husband died...*”

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70 Nhate & Åkesson (2006:22)
71 Perfil do Distrito de Ribaue (2005:14)
and his family always complicates my life so I had to move from our house. I built a new house myself and I had some men who built the roof for me. To be able to afford to pay them I made some beer and sold it to people.

The simplest houses, pau a pique, are very vulnerable and can easily be destroyed by heavy rain. In these situations the elderly are more vulnerable since they are less capable of repairing their houses themselves. They often need someone else to help them which can be costly if they do not have a family member near them who can help without payment.

4.5 Human Capital

The human capitals are assets such as skills or knowledge. It could be education for example. The literacy rate is a tool to measure people’s knowledge considering reading and writing. There are also other forms of knowledge such as knowing how to produce maize.

4.5.1 Formal education

It appears to be a tendency in Mozambican society that more people are seeking education. In Ribáuè night classes have started since electricity came to town. In 2005 there were 8,793 adults enrolled in such classes in the district72. “We have many more students in school today because of electricity. People’s knowledge is increasing which leads to an increase in production in the community. Many businesses can develop today” said an education official. The night classes offer classes for adults, students over 17 years and children who could not fit in the ordinary school. People seek education in the hope of increasing their chances of finding paid employment, which would enable them to help all family members, but the employment market is very weak at the moment and competition for jobs very hard.

The increase in students in the district has led to a shortage of properly qualified teachers. The director of education told us that sometimes there are 80 students on one teacher. According to her there is a high demand for education, especially among women. “It would be fantastic if we could offer education for all children. I don’t know how many children are not in school, but there are a lot. Maybe 60 per cent.” The director also told us that she could see a tendency that boys leave school at a younger age than girls do. Her suggestion is that the Nacala Corridor gives the boys an opportunity to make some money from petty trading instead of studying. The boys do not realise that their lack of education will be a loss for them in the near future. There are also boys who skip school because they are involved in the production and selling of cash crops. “There will be many people without intellectual capacity here in the future.”

There are also distance courses from UP (Pedagogical University) in Nampula for working teachers. The teachers from the district meet up in Ribáuè three times a year. This year they are 100 teachers taking this course in Ribáuè, because they feel the need to upgrade their competence due to demands in their occupation. One teacher explained why he was taking this course: “The world is not standing still, so we have to follow the development. Our country is also waiting for us, it expects us to do this education”.

4.5.2 Formal education and the elderly

In 1997, 20.40 per cent of males and 1.08 per cent of females aged 50-59 (now aged 60-69) in rural areas of Nampula province could read and write Portuguese. This affects their ability to

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72 Nhate & Åkesson (2006:22)
access written information and complete paperwork. However, many understand some spoken Portuguese, even if they have difficulty speaking it. They say they do not see language as a barrier to getting their message across outside the bairro, since all the government officials and hospital staff speak Macua.

**Figure 5: Literacy by gender for 50-59 year olds in rural areas of Nampula province 1997**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read and write</th>
<th>Read only</th>
<th>Not read / write</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Total population aged 50-59</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♂ 11,659</td>
<td>♀ 600</td>
<td>♂ 912</td>
<td>♀ 226</td>
<td>♂ 43,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>1.08%</td>
<td>1.59%</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>76.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♀ 600</td>
<td>♂ 912</td>
<td>♀ 226</td>
<td>♂ 43,988</td>
<td>♀ 53,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.08%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>1.59%</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>97.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♂ 595</td>
<td>♀ 714</td>
<td>♂ 57,154</td>
<td>♀ 55,468</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td>1.29%</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td>1.29%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♀ 714</td>
<td>♂ 57,154</td>
<td>♀ 100%</td>
<td>♂ 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


We are aware that these statistics at provincial level are dated, but an estimate from 2005 for Ribáuè district indicates that 98 per cent of women and 74 per cent of men above 45 can neither read nor write. Most of the elderly have never been in school, but many would like to go if they could afford it. School attendance is free but there are materials costs. Today there are a few elderly people in “adult-education”, but it is not common. Even though most can neither read nor write, they encourage their children and grandchildren to go to school. We met many elderly people who tried to save a little money so they could help their grandchildren to pay for school material, for example writing books and pencils. The general assumption seems to be that education is the key to development and prosperity.

The agricultural school and the secondary school take pupils who have been issued with a poverty certificate by the authorities in their home locality. Such pupils do not pay for tuition and get free food and accommodation if they are boarders. Demand is much higher than places available. The agricultural school makes considerable efforts to select the most capable from the many applicants with poverty certificates. Some of these children are orphans who may well be living with poor grandparents. Their placement at school could be a relief for their carers, and offers the longer-term prospect of a better livelihood for the family through work or more effective agricultural techniques.

### 4.5.3 Knowledge and skills

We could see a tendency that the older generation’s knowledge and experiences are not considered as valuable in modern society. One of our interviewees, an NGO worker, compared the differences between the generations as like a young plant and a tree. The elderly are the mature tree and the younger generations are the plant, meaning the young are the future. The interviewee continued by saying that is why this NGO did not focus on the elderly. They are not the future of the developing society of Mozambique and their knowledge and experiences are about to be forgotten.

We found in Ribáuè that the older generation’s long experience of agriculture is not seen as relevant today. Agricultural experts consider that harvests are meagre due to the persistence of

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73 Perfil do distrito de Ribáuè (2005:13)
inefficient farming methods. Examples are the use of primitive hand tools, lack of artificial fertiliser, random planting and recycling seed instead of purchasing commercial seed. Agricultural extensionists (now replaced by NGO advisors) and “model” farmers have helped to spread knowledge, but their reach is limited and old traditions persist. Their way of planting crops and organising their fields is regarded as old fashioned. Today people arrange their plants in rows to get higher returns of their harvest. However the traditional ways of fighting attacks from insects with *piri-piri*, soap or ashes are still regarded as useful to some extent.

According to an informant at HelpAge International, the elderly have other agricultural knowledge, such as the best techniques for growing cassava in the different types of soils in different regions. The elderly also have special insight into weather patterns and natural phenomena, which helps people to prepare for losses. This is why they hold rain ceremonies to try to counteract expected negative effects. A HelpAge International manager described how they discovered that the elderly have valuable knowledge about certain plants and roots to eat in emergency situations. After a devastating flood that destroyed homes and crops the elderly showed children what they could chew on until emergency help arrived.

According to hospital workers there is a tendency that the elderly prefer traditional medicine and the young are starting to prefer modern medicine. Even though the health workers and NGOs try to make the elderly understand why they should go to hospitals, there is still the serious problem in rural areas of long distances to the nearest health post. This makes them turn to their traditional healers in the *bairro* instead, because it is more convenient for an elderly person than to walk for hours when sick.

The younger generations learn from their parents and the elderly that traditional medicine is trustworthy and preferable. The hospitals and non-governmental organisations try to go out and inform people about modern medicine, but it is difficult to change peoples’ attitudes. There is also the difficulty that many people, especially in rural areas, are not able to read or write, which makes it hard to reach them with information. It seems that people in towns or semi rural areas or more aware of the benefits of modern medicine.

An NGO worker explained to us that they do see a smaller change in old people’s attitudes. If the elderly hear of or see somebody else who was treated in a hospital or a health post and got well, they start to understand that modern medicine is “true”. The church is also trying to convince the elderly that hospitals and modern medicine is good.

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74 Findlay et al (1998) report agricultural trials in Ribâuè in the late 1990s that utilised Monsanto Corporation products for maize growing. By using Roundup weedkiller before planting, farmers reduced working time to 22 days and 40 minutes per ha, from 140 days, 6 hours and 40 minutes per ha using traditional methods. Plots planted with certified seed, where fertilizer, top-dressing and herbicides were used, gave a 646 per cent increase in yield.

75 Khan (2004:54-55)
5 VULNERABILITY CONTEXT

The SRL framework indicates that the Vulnerability Context arises out of Structures and Processes, which are defined in the model as mainly institutional, and includes factors that affect people’s ability to take advantage of capital assets. It could be said that some Livelihood Strategies express themselves as social trends, especially in societies undergoing rapid change. Livelihood Strategies can be ways of resisting, coping with, or taking advantage of trends and shocks.

5.1 Trends

“Trends” refer to the main changes taking place in society over a period of time. Trends may be driven from outside the immediate community or may take the form of popular movements arising from people taking initiatives, or may be tendencies in nature. Trends may include a minority or a majority of the people and be beneficial to all, or help some while disadvantaging others.

5.1.1 Demographic changes

Population projection for Mozambique from INE, based on the 1997 census, shows that in 2000 Mozambique’s population of over 60s would number 0.8 million, or 4.4 per cent of the total population. 54 per cent of the age group over 60 would be women, thus indicating that Mozambique’s elderly population in the first decades of the millennium would comprise more women than men. 76

This national trend corresponds with the statistics projected to 2015 for Nampula province, as well as almost all places in Ribáuè district. Figure 6 show that overall in Nampula there will be an increase in men and women in all age groups. In 2015 there will be more boys than girls, but there will be more women than men in all age groups over 30 years. At present there are more elderly men than elderly women, but by 2015 the position will be reversed, with the number of elderly women being considerably higher than the number of elderly men. It could be that this projection assumes women will benefit more from improving health care and living standards. Although HIV/AIDS is known to be more prevalent amongst women, more deaths among females in the middle age group will not have a great impact on the balance between the numbers of males and females in the elderly age group in the immediate future.

Figure 7 shows population figures for certain parts of Ribáuè district during the 1997 census. There were more boys under 14 than girls. In most locations in the district there were more adult women than adult men overall. The prevalence of women is most notable in the age group 40-59 (not shown in the figure). After 70 years of age the balance was reversed, with a higher proportion of men to women. Namiconha is an anomaly. Therefore we can say that right now there are probably more elderly males over 80 years, but in the coming decades we can expect more elderly women in Ribáuè.

76 Muzima & Matusse (2003:4)
Figure 6: Projected population for Nampula province by gender and age (in thousands)

Source: Compiled from INE (2004) "Actualização das Projeções da População Por Província 1997-2015"

Figure 7: Population by gender and age for Ribaue district 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>0-14</th>
<th>15-59</th>
<th>60-79</th>
<th>80+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>30,261</td>
<td>29,290</td>
<td>2,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-whole</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>district</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Vila Ribaue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>15-59</th>
<th>60-79</th>
<th>80+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,579</td>
<td>1,385</td>
<td>1,543</td>
<td>1,562</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
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Loc.Chica

<table>
<thead>
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<th>60-79</th>
<th>80+</th>
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<td>5,858</td>
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<td>5,403</td>
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<tr>
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Loc.Namhiconha

<table>
<thead>
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<th>60-79</th>
<th>80+</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4,451</td>
<td>4,288</td>
<td>4,063</td>
<td>4,536</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loc.Namhiconha</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from INE (2004) "Actualização das Projeções da População Por Província 1997-2015"

The 1997 census also recorded the incidence of handicaps in different age groups. As seen in Figure 8, in rural areas of Nampula province handicapped men outnumbered handicapped women in all age groups, despite the fact that the middle aged female population is larger than the middle aged male population. Males of middle age could have been more affected by conflict, and/or their disabilities more recognised than those suffered by women. These figures
indicate that in coming years there will be more disabled elderly people in general, but more of the disabled will be male than female.

Figure 8: Disabled people by age and handicap in rural areas of Nampula province 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Nampula</th>
<th>0-14</th>
<th>15-59</th>
<th>60-79</th>
<th>80+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>♂</td>
<td>♀</td>
<td>♂</td>
<td>♀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,184</td>
<td>927</td>
<td>2,268</td>
<td>2,209</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>♂</td>
<td>♀</td>
<td>♂</td>
<td>♀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,716</td>
<td>2,791</td>
<td>12,410</td>
<td>10,803</td>
<td>2,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental + physical</td>
<td>♂</td>
<td>♀</td>
<td>♂</td>
<td>♀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>♂</td>
<td>♀</td>
<td>♂</td>
<td>♀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,559</td>
<td>4,206</td>
<td>17,085</td>
<td>14,082</td>
<td>3,109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These figures must be checked against the new census. If they are accurate, they have planning implications. There will be more elderly handicapped people (especially men) and more elderly women. Therefore the specific needs of these groups should be researched and provision made to safeguard their livelihoods.

5.1.2 Migration from rural to urban areas

Another trend is increasing mobility. Rehabilitation of the infrastructure started after the end of the war, making communication and travel somewhat easier. Some young people are attracted to the enterprise economy, which means travelling to buy and sell. Young people and young families are more likely to move from their home villages in search of educational and work opportunities. We met people who worked in Ribáuè but whose spouses and children preferred to live in Nampula. Other families were scattered across the province, with adults and children in different towns according to educational and work requirements. Those who can afford to, maintain family ties by travelling regularly, but we met school pupils who were too poor to visit their families in their home villages. When people move from a village to an urban centre they are drawn from a communal semi-subsistence environment to a monetarist and individualistic one.

Another option we heard about is for elderly people, especially widows, to move to town, where they help younger family members with domestic tasks. However if that elderly person falls sick, there are fewer family members in town to share the load. In general the elderly tend to be tied to their house and land, where they have probably lived for many years and have deep social roots. As Friedmann (1992) points out: “In principle, people may be mobile, as economists expect them to be. /.../ But they also have local and regional ties that bind, particularly among the older age groups who have an entire lifetime at stake. They do not move easily, and when they do, it is often under duress, and the process is painful.”

This trend can represent a shock for elderly people, left without emotional and practical support. One couple whose children lived in other towns expressed their deep concern about what would happen to them in the future “if you can’t go to live in your children’s home, then what?”

5.1.3 Social relations and attitudes

The Mozambique National Policy for Older People and its Implementation Strategy lists main problems affecting the elderly as “abuse and negligence characterised by the lack of respect, intimidation, physical and psychological violence, humiliation, abandon and exclusion”.

An NGO employee working with elderly issues explained to us how poverty is undermining the cohesion of the family. Firstly poverty means people do not have time or money to care for those who are relatively unproductive and/or sick. The younger family may feel guilty that they cannot take responsibility, and the dependents may feel guilty that they are an unbearable burden. So each side retreats from the other. An elderly man may try to survive alone instead, but women are less able to cope on their own.

Another trend is diminishing respect towards the elderly. Some elderly informants felt the young and the authorities are generally helpful and respectful, especially those in the immediate neighbourhood. However one elderly and poor man told us about male youths pointing at him or forcing him to step aside in the road. He said he had noticed a recent change in attitudes, but could not give reasons for it. There could be many contributory factors. One elderly community leader blamed television for encouraging violence and disrespect. Another possibility, described in recent research, explains how older people have lost certain attributes that traditionally commanded respect in society. For example, ownership of domestic animals used to be a status symbol and an insurance policy against poverty and hunger, but many animals were destroyed during the war, forced migration and natural disasters, leaving their owners impoverished.

Abuse of elderly people is a serious problem in Africa that is rightly receiving more attention. According to research in Mozambique, victims of abuse report that most abuse occurs at home and in public, and that the most common forms of abuse are emotional/verbal and psychological (see Figure 9). One professional informant told us she had heard that some families move their elderly relatives to cities and then keep them shut in the house like slaves, to cook and care for small children.

However a counter-trend is emerging. According to HelpAge International, the media have started to show much more positive and active images of the elderly, and journalists have defended the rights of the elderly in cases against the national authorities. Celebrities, public figures and religious leaders who are elderly themselves support HelpAge International in spreading their message. The HelpAge International leaflet “The Universal Human Rights of the Elderly” (Portuguese version) was prominently pinned to the notice board at the entrance to the administrative post in Iapala (see photo Appendix IV).

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78 Muzima & Matusse. (2003:12)
80 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was announced by the UN in 2006. It falls on 15th June every year to focus attention on Africa.
81 African Development Bank (2003:45)
Figure 9: Location of cases of elderly abuse in Mozambique 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public space</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other place</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: African Development Bank (2003:45) Mozambique: Multi-Sector Country Gender Profile

5.1.4 Increasing territoriality, or decreasing functionality

John Friedmann has identified two main development tendencies termed functionality and territoriality. Functionality was the predominant approach to governance in Europe during the Westphalian phase (pre-welfare state), and in developing countries until very recently. Functionality measures the overall productivity of the state as the aggregate outcome in financial terms. Thus a few extremely profitable macro-enterprises can produce a relatively high GDP even when the vast majority of the population is destitute, and still be classified as successful development. Functionality shows positive results even when there is a highly unequal control of resources and distribution of benefits within society.

In recent years Mozambique’s GDP has grown by about 8-9% annually, although the majority of the people, who live in rural areas, have not experienced the same rate of improvement to their livelihoods. In Mozambique macro-projects have mainly benefited those with influence and education in the larger cities. Stark economic and social differentiation between the capital and the more static countryside may be observed. The concept of functionality could even be broadened to apply to age, gender, racial, or other forms of institutionalised discrimination. Investing in those with the highest potential for productivity (ie talented youth) at the expense of the less able (such as the disabled and elderly) may be pragmatic but also involve violation of human rights. People in Mozambique are strongly aware of the various divides: north-south, rich-poor, young-old, male-female etc. In Ribáuè older people expressed tolerance and patience regarding the development process, saying things like “the country is poor and the government is helping us as much as they can”. But among ambitious youths and entrepreneurs the frustration gap is evident: their expectations are not being realised fast enough, despite all their investments and efforts. Unequal division of resources is a form of structural violence, breeding discontent that can lead to family friction, social unrest and finally violent confrontation.

Within the global community humanitarian values came to the fore towards the end of the 20th century. The emphasis was on the inter-relationship between Human Development, Peace and Security, and Human Rights (the so-called Kofi Annan triangle), with the firm intention of creating a more just world through the MDGs. Territorial development thinking accords with this trend. It aims to spread productivity and therefore economic growth as well, geographically and across the social strata. It also involves grass-roots decision-making, with ordinary citizens actively participating in the development of their communities.

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82 Friedmann (1992)
83 Comissário, P. H.E. Ambassador to Mozambique in Sweden, Växjö 2006-03-14
84 lecture Hettne, B & Abrahamsson, H. Växjö University, 2007-05-15
requires longer-term investment in human and social capital, rather than chasing immediate and highest profit through rapid industrialisation. In Mozambique territoriality is being introduced from the top-down, with central government in the lead. This new thinking is reminiscent of the redistributive strategy for development that was first discussed in the 1970s but was rarely implemented until after the failures of the Structural Adjustment Programmes had been acknowledged in the late 1990s.\(^{85}\)

In Nampula province we have observed the Mozambican government’s shift towards more territorial thinking. The district, in collaboration with the community consultative councils, can now spend locally collected tax money and a special budget of 7 million MTn (1 891 891SEK) per year on infrastructure and income generating projects. Health sector management has been decentralised to provincial level\(^{86}\) and ministries outsource consultancy work to NGOs. As we have described earlier, social support is progressively reaching out to provincial and rural areas, especially to the elderly, through the expansion of INAS’s social assistance programmes. With territorial decision making it is easier for local solutions to be found to local problems. Relevant local investments should improve the infrastructure and stimulate the local economy. This will enable some people to stay in their home communities instead of seeking “a better life” in a bigger city. With less migration, mutually supportive family and community traditions are more likely to survive.

The territorial approach is also significant for poverty reduction, since lack of power to decide over one’s own life and the future of one’s community is a feature of poverty. As we have already pointed out, we believe that the recent recognition of the traditional community leadership and the consultative councils brings increased and more relevant benefits to the community, including the disadvantaged, than the purely functional approach. Åkesson and Nilsson note that Mozambique is “trying to find a way to combine what is considered modern with its own traditional methods of governance”. They refer to Basil Davidson who has termed this “the third model”, having roots in indigenous democracy, rather than an imposed western model.\(^{87}\)

The move may also be a necessary instrument of political survival: a response to discontent within civil society as well as to external pressure from the international community for increased democratisation. It may be significant that Frelimo only has solid electoral support in the major cities and the three southern provinces, and that the state budget is heavily dependent on foreign donors. Election results presented in Figure 10 show that Frelimo has gained ground in Ribâuê district overall, even if Renamo is still more popular at a few voting stations, perhaps due to lack of evident development progress and/or to mobilising personalities.

\(^{85}\) Griffin (1989:30-31)  
\(^{86}\) See Saide. & Stewart (2001)  
\(^{87}\) Nilsson & Åkesson (2006:4-5,28)
Figure 10: Legislative Election results from Ribáuè district 1994 and 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1994</th>
<th></th>
<th>1999</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frelimo</td>
<td>Renamo</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Frelimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribáuè sede</td>
<td>3,365</td>
<td>1,848</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iapala total</td>
<td>6,259</td>
<td>4,421</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namiconha</td>
<td>1,099</td>
<td>1,084</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribáuè district total</td>
<td>17,121</td>
<td>12,535</td>
<td>7,925</td>
<td>13,549</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Namiconha was marginal. Some voting stations at Ribáuè, Iapala and Namiconha returned a large Renamo majority. Turnout fell, Renamo took proportionately fewer votes. Frelimo gained ground in most places.


A disadvantage of territorialism is that it places high demands in terms of time, competence and responsibility on those who administer and implement activities. The devolution of some responsibilities to communities in Mozambique has been possible because people’s traditional values mean they have been prepared to do much voluntary work. We have met people who invested their own time in attending training courses, in medical care for example, and contribute many hours of unpaid work every day within the health system. They volunteered partly out of a sense of wanting to help the community, and no doubt increase their social capital in the community by this means. But an important factor was that they were told they would have the chance to apply for permanent jobs later, as the health service expanded. Unfortunately, they say, job vacancies that they could apply for are not announced publicly. Furthermore the basic consumables they need in order to perform the vital tasks they are trained for and want to continue with have never been replaced.

In an increasingly monetarised environment, when some workers have salaries, facilities and prospects, motivation may fail among the others, who cannot carry on forever in hope. In recognition of this problem the state authorities have started to remunerate key people such as the regulo and the INAS permanentes. However most of the NGO projects in Ribáuè rely heavily on volunteers of all ages to spread knowledge and bring assistance to the most vulnerable, including the sick and elderly. If these people do not see any real long-term benefit to themselves, they may drop out, and many needy people will suddenly be left without the help they have become dependent upon.

5.1.5 The modernisation development paradigm

There have been attempts to implement several different development strategies within one generation in post-independence Mozambique. All have tried to force the pace of modernisation in one way or another. While some features have been fairly constant, such as large-scale agriculture projects, others have been disruptive, such as forced resettlement or restructuring of state industries. Low intensity armed conflict, with the associated social and physical destruction also obstructed progress during the two decades after independence. For various reasons, the general population has experienced little positive cumulative affect from these broad policy changes.

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88 Figures are only approximately comparable due to changes in election stations and style of reporting.
89 Simple items such as soap, disinfectant, bandages and surgical gloves.
These trends either did not reach the older generations in the countryside, or those people largely ignored them and carried on in more or less the same way as their parents and grandparents—long-term continuity based on self-sufficient agriculture. We often heard from governmental sources that “the green revolution” based on agriculture is going to be the new engine of economic development. Even so, education is seen as the key to a more wealthy society and success in the global economy. Children are strongly encouraged to attend school for as many years as possible and certain incentives exist to help the very poorest meet the necessary expenses of schooling. Our interviews with people from a wide range of social and economic groups indicate that children and parents believe that education is the path to prosperity—or rather they hope that education will one day set them on the path to prosperity, because at the moment few people are experiencing the progression from education to reasonably well-paid jobs.

Nonetheless education, contact with visitors from larger towns and the media, especially television and video clubs, expose people to new consumer goods and the attractions of the technological society. As one woman who had a TV at home told us with amusement “on TV we see people like you, having a nice life”. Values and attitudes, at least those relating to material expectations, seem to be changing fast especially among youths. To have any chance of fulfilling their dreams they must move away from their parents and grandparents in villages and small towns. Even if younger people do well in the city, transport problems and the lack of any banking system prevent them from sharing their success with the family back home. This leaves them in a dilemma—torn between their own future and the needs of more vulnerable family members.

People need to feel confident about the development process, otherwise they will be reluctant to get on board. Older people may be more cautious, or even more cynical, given their experiences. In any case most Mozambicans over 40 years old face the barrier of illiteracy that seriously limits their participation in the modernisation process. Faced with a culture shock older people, together with more conservative youths, may stick with ways they know and trust. Even educated older people may not be so much influenced or interested in changing their way of life dramatically. For example we heard that retired nurses tend to return to their home villages instead of staying in Ribáuè. This does not mean however that older people are against younger family members “experimenting” with the new, because that represents diversification, which is a sound survival strategy.
5.2 Shocks

“Shocks” refers to sudden and unexpected events in a society and/or the life of an individual that interfere with their ability to provide their own livelihoods. Shocks can be human or nature related. We will focus on trends and shocks we have identified in Ribáuê, and those that affect the elderly.

5.2.1 Illness, disability or the death of close family member

A shock that compromises social capital is illnesses or death of a close relative. After the husband has passed away, it can happen that his family takes possession of the house and fields, making the widow homeless and without livelihood means, in some cases.

Mozambique has a tradition of superstition and to explain people’s deaths by saying that someone has put a spell on them. Often the wife is accused for her husband’s death, by his family, possibly as a way to prevent her getting her husband’s property. Elderly women, and to a lesser extent men, are still accused of witchcraft. In Nampula we interviewed an elderly man who had been abandoned by his family after going blind. We connected this to his background – in his prime he had been engaged in magic practices in his village. There is a feeling that interest in fetishism is on the increase, especially in rural areas. Even educated urbanised professionals use the services of witches in attempts to eliminate their career rivals. Women who suffer from chronic diseases or those who do not behave in socially acceptable ways can also be called witches. Health workers in Nampula and Ribáuê told us that families often cannot cope with debilitating illnesses like leprosy.

When an elderly person is abandoned by family and community their situation becomes critical. INAS used to take abandoned and/or handicapped elderly into care in homes in Nampula, but now food subsidy is the only safety net. Care workers in Nampula report homeless old people begging and living off refuse.

According to various authorities the over 50s normally take care of grandchildren at home and do not work in the fields. This may be the ideal in nuclear families, but it is not true for the poorest elderly who live alone or are responsible for others. All those we met, both men and women, continue to work their fields nearly every day from necessity. The Poverty and Well-being in Mozambique 1996-97 survey revealed that between 82 and 87 per cent of people over 60 years from all social categories in rural areas continue to work, compared to about half of over 60s in urban areas.

Traditional subsistence agriculture is time and labour intensive – 84 per cent of small farms are managed by 3 or more family members working together. The crops need regular attention otherwise they become overgrown. Getting to the fields, working and carrying the crops home is physically demanding. If one or both in an elderly couple, or a single person or their main helper is sick or disabled, their ability to tend their fields is diminished. Several said my bones are getting lazy and they expressed great concern about their declining strength. The peak weeding season from December to March coincides with the hunger period when stocks of maize are likely to have expired. This is also the rainy season when colds, lung infections,

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90 Table 2.16: Work force participation, in Simler et al. (1998)
91 Perfil do Distrito de Ribaue (2005:29)
malaria, and diarrhoea type sicknesses are more common. Elderly people may be more vulnerable to such diseases and not have enough strength to keep on working.

### 5.2.2 Loss of crops and animals

With a lack of veterinary care animals are vulnerable to disease. We met two informants who reported their chickens had died. Theft of crops from the fields is not unheard of, and we were told of one case where domestic rabbits had been stolen. Single elderly are less able to defend their possessions.

Subsistence farmers are vulnerable to unexpected weather conditions. We heard from many sources that people anticipated a good maize harvest this year, but the maize has failed to swell properly due to lack of rain during March. We also heard that this will be a poor year for rice, and that there will not be a good harvest of peanuts, beans or cabbage. On the other hand sometimes low lying land floods and crops are damaged. Cassava is more tolerant than some other crops. It is filling, but its nutritional value is low.

People predict food shortages towards the end of this year. Few of the elderly we interviewed sell or exchange food crops. 25 per cent of farms are smaller than 0.5 hectares\(^\text{92}\). People who only have a few plots of land, grow a limited range of crops and cannot produce any surplus have no insurance against food supply shocks in the form of diversification. The families that farm these small plots, including probably a large proportion of elderly headed households, are more vulnerable to nutritional deficiencies.

Food storage is another concern that we understand has been much discussed in Iapala. If farmers store their maize in homemade storage barns (see photo Appendix IV) it may deteriorate until it is worthless. If they sell their maize to commercial buyers who have better stores, they have to buy it back at more than double the price near the end of the season. Then 70MTn, the normal monthly food subsidy, buys about 16kg of un-milled maize.

### 5.2.3 Disruption of social assistance programmes

Our interviews revealed some weaknesses in the delivery of food subsidy money to INAS beneficiaries. The reasons why some people received no benefit for several months became apparent – lack of awareness regarding correct procedures among the beneficiaries, absence of a workable contingency plan in the case of beneficiaries not being able to attend the distribution centre, compounded by a failure of the data processing system in Nampula. When beneficiaries who have come to rely on a more-or-less regular source of income fail to receive that income, they risk falling into a crisis situation. This is more severe when they are ill or incapacitated because they are physically and psychologically less able to cope than normal. Their only solution is to draw on their social capital, and seek help from family members and neighbours. Some people have less social capital to draw on than others, according to their social status.

People managing short-term emergency measures and limited duration social assistance projects identified a similar problem. When people receive food and clothing, or medical assistance in the home, or agricultural products, they experience these as inputs to various capital assets, and therefore may put less effort into strengthening other kinds of capital. When such measures come to an end, the beneficiaries experience a double shock.

\(^{92}\)Perfil do Distrito de Ribaue (2005:28)
6 LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES/ MULTI LEVEL ANALYSIS

In accordance with the SRL framework there are certain strategies in a society that people apply to improve their livelihoods. These strategies can originate from people in a local community, non-governmental organisations, governments or others. We have divided the strategies we have identified as being most relevant at three different levels – global, national and local.

6.1 Global strategies to improve elderly people’s situation

6.1.1 MIPAA
The main international declaration of elderly people’s rights is the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing released in 2002. The plan is not legally binding but it is the first complete plan which highlights older people’s issues and problems in the development debate. This is a strategy from the international assembly to include the elderly in the community in order to achieve a non-marginalising society.

6.1.2 Millennium Development Goals (MDG)
The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) include eight goals, for example to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty and fight HIV/AIDS, malaria and other epidemic diseases. These goals also include and affect the elderly, since they talk about people in general. But there are no specific goals among the MDGs which focus on the elderly in particular, so this is an indirect strategy for improving older people’s living situation.

6.2 National strategies to improve elderly people’s situation

6.2.1 National Policy for Older People
This policy includes different benefits for elderly, among others; the right to free medical treatment for the elderly caring for HIV-orphans, supporting day centres for the elderly, non-institutional care for the elderly homeless, encouraging local communities to provide free maintenance of elderly people’s houses and ensuring that old people get their pensions on time.

6.2.2 The food subsidy
The food subsidy program is the government of Mozambique’s strategy aiming to increase the standard of living for vulnerable elderly (and also disabled, chronically ill and malnourished pregnant women) and decrease the risk of shocks to their livelihoods. The food subsidy increases the elderly people’s financial capital in the form of cash and their food security improves. One of the weakest of the capitals among older people is their financial capital, and they are less able than other people to compensate for this by focusing more on their natural capital.

6.2.3 HelpAge International
HelpAge International is an international non-governmental organisation working with the elderly. They have community and income generation projects in Mozambique mainly in Tete and Gaza provinces, but not in Nampula province. One of their pilot programmes provides financial support to elderly people in these provinces, which INAS has agreed to continue after
the three-year trial is over. We will not discuss HelpAge International’s strategies further here since they are not present in the district of our study.³⁹³

6.2.4 Health care
The government is subsidising medicines, providing vaccines and charging rather low fees for medical consultations. This is to improve the well-being of the whole population, to achieve higher average life expectancy, lower infant mortality rates and fewer people dying of epidemic diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS or tuberculosis. The government is also trying to increase people’s knowledge about diseases and how to avoid and treat them. This national strategy is not especially directed towards the elderly, but people in general. When asking one health care worker if the hospital has run any campaigns targeted at the elderly he said “No because we don’t see any special diseases only among elderly people. Diseases happen to everybody, no matter if you are young or old”.

6.2.5 Education
Another national strategy of the government is to increase the number of people in school. A little under half of Mozambicans over 15 years old are able to read or write³⁹⁴. A higher number of educated people will probably lead to a greater number of people in income generating activities, which will give the country a higher GDP and economic growth. Even though it is mainly young people who have the physical strength and ability to educate themselves and look for work, when these youngsters have an income they often share the money with their parents or buy them things they need, so in this way education can improve the livelihoods of the elderly. What the outcome of a more educated population will be we do not know for sure today, we can only speculate that if social traditions persist it will affect the elderly too. It is important to emphasize that this can also be an individual strategy for people. One young secondary school pupil from a small village said “I would like to be a teacher when I have finished school. Then I could help my grandmother with food or clothes. I would like to do that”. It is also a strategy of the elderly to put their younger relatives into school, as one elderly widow living with a teenage relative explained: ”I think it is good that the boy is in school. When he is finished he can get a job and buy things for me, help me build a house and take care of me”.

6.2.6 Infrastructure development
The rural electrification program reached Ribáuè district in 2000. Electrification is a strategy aiming to increase economic activities, develop society and improve people’s living standards. It is a strategy of both the governmentally owned EDM and the Swedish SIDA that does not especially aim to improve the elderly people’s situation. We mentioned the way it has affected the elderly people in Ribáuè in the chapter about physical capital assets. For example, the hospital service has improved which the elderly can also benefit from. Even if most of the elderly cannot afford to have electricity in their homes they can benefit from electricity at public institutions or from friends or relatives with electricity.

³⁹³ refer to HelpAge International website http://www.helpage.org/Worldwide/Africa/Keyprojects
³⁹⁴ INE (2005:22) illiteracy rate for Mozambicans over 15 years in 2002/03 was 36.7per cent for men / 68per cent for women. Illiteracy in Nampula province – 48.7% for men / 81.4% for women
6.3 Local strategies to improve elderly people's situation

6.3.1 NGO initiatives in Ribáué
There are several NGOs working in the district with different programmes, but none of them have implemented any projects specifically aimed at helping the vulnerable elderly. Elderly people were included in the latrine programme offered by the MRC, but we have no numbers on how many since this NGO were unavailable at the time we were present in the district. There is a possibility that these people who received a latrine cover from the MRC were chosen by the local structures, meaning that they could be people related to the ones in power and due to this they were able to receive a latrine cover. Both Salama and Olipa work with health related issues so the elderly can also benefit from their work.

We were not able to find any clear strategies from the NGOs on how to improve elderly people’s situation. As we explained before they were not interested in helping the elderly specifically and one NGO worker also said that they aim instead to help the generation of the future, which are the young people. On the other hand encouraging different age groups to work together can be a good strategy for integrating elderly people in the community, but it is also important to bear in mind that females and males of different age groups have different priorities and needs.

6.3.2 Religious groups
There are two religious groups helping older people and trying to give them a better living situation. The Catholic nuns’ strategy for the elderly is to increase their financial capital by helping the elderly obtain identification cards so they can apply for the food subsidy. They also provide vulnerable people in general with food or clothes.

The Muslim community’s strategy for helping the vulnerable elderly is to support older people in need of hospital treatment. They try to be a link between the elderly and the hospital by helping the elderly to get in touch with the hospital. This is a strategy to compensate for some vulnerable elderly people’s lack of social capital by trying to be “a helping friend” for the older people.

6.3.3 Mutual support
Older people’s social capital is strengthened by the strategy of providing mutual support or “neighbourhood spirit” in the bairros. For example, if an elderly lady is not able to collect her food subsidy money at the distribution point, due to weak physical condition, a friend or neighbour can help by doing that for her. "We live very close together here, so my neighbours have also become my family." In the section on social capital we described this phenomenon closely. It is a strategy mostly for poor people to help each other, “because when you have so little you usually value other people’s help more”. Poor people are more vulnerable than others so they are in extra need of other people’s help. They have a lack of financial capital but try to balance it with a strong social capital instead. The philosophy is to help other people in the knowledge that others will help in return if needed, as we described earlier.

6.3.4 Migration
A strategy that indirectly impacts the elderly is the young people’s strategy to move to bigger towns or other countries in the hope of paid work and better circumstances. This influences the

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95 If that person is trusted or authorized by the INAS.
financial capital of elderly people if children or grandchildren succeed in getting a job and then give some of the money to the elderly or pay for things they need. This strategy, together with the education strategy of young people aims to increase their own and their family members’ financial capital. However there are negative consequences in that vulnerable elderly people are left alone in the rural towns and villages without any support from younger family members. Their situation can become critical if they are not included in the food subsidy programme.
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our last section provides a conclusion to the study. We also make some recommendations on how to improve the living conditions for vulnerable elderly people. From the five capital assets we will make suggestions for further improvements.

Our objectives for this study were:

- To chart the socio-economic circumstances of Ribáuè district and identify how these affect the livelihoods of the elderly.
- To identify existing and potential strategies for improving the livelihoods of the elderly and helping them out of deprivation.

Since the number of elderly is forecast to double between 2000 and 2050 in Africa, and many elderly belong to the poorest of the poor, it will be an increasing challenge to eradicate poverty in the world, as the UN declared. In order to achieve MDG 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) the global community has to act on assisting the elderly. From the findings of our field studies in Ribáuè district we have analyzed the capital assets of the elderly there in order to understand their situation and what can be done to improve it.

The natural capital is relatively strong in comparison with the other capitals; the elderly have natural resources but lack the physical ability and capital to be able to benefit from them. The older people’s human capital consisting of traditional skills and knowledge is rather strong due to their long experience in life, but these assets are not seen as valuable in modern Mozambican society. An estimate from 2005 for Ribáuè district indicates that 98 per cent of women and 74 per cent of men above 45 can neither read nor write. Even if the elderly educated themselves today it would most probably not help them to improve their living situation. Their lower physical capacity and lack of mobility prevent them using any education to get a paid job today, for example.

It is hard to generalise whether the elderly in general have a strong social capital or not. We found that many of the poorest were abandoned by their families, mostly widows, due to witchcraft or families’ lack of interest or inability to take care of their older relatives. But there is also the strong “neighbourhood spirit” in many bairros, where people look after and take care of one another. This makes it hard to put all these elderly together in one group and say that they do not have much social capital assets. In common for the elderly in Mozambique is that most of them are vulnerable and lack financial capital.

The most direct acting way to compensate for this is to hand out cash transfers or food to them. This not only assists the direct beneficiaries, but research has shown that cash transfers have a significant positive effect on the livelihoods of other family members and the community in general. Elderly people tend to prioritise their grandchildren’s health and education, as we have seen in Ribáuè. Furthermore, when they spend their regular monthly income it has a stabilising effect on the local economy and the businesses of small traders. If we assume that

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96 Perfil do distrito de Ribáuè (2005:13)
97 HelpAge International (2004)
all recipients of the food subsidy receive the minimum amount of 70MTn, and there are 1,160 of them, the income to Ribăuè is 81,200 MTn (21,946 SEK) per month or just under 1 million MTn per year. We can add to this the salaries of several INAS workers and the retainers to the *permanentes* in the residential areas. Cash transfers are a way of spreading out and recycling national finances within the economy, rather than a drain on public resources.

On the other hand we feel that the strong social capital in Mozambique is valuable for people’s support and sense of well-being. Some aspects of traditional upbringing and practices could be encouraged and usefully incorporated into modern life, at the same time as it should be recognised that other aspects of tradition work against contemporary values such as gender equality. Creating a blend of traditional and modern culture is a delicate problem, given that traditional social organisation followed an internal logic where all the parts operated in relation to each other.

There are a number of strategies that can be explored for advancing the living conditions for the elderly in Ribăuè district, apart from those already described. We have the following comments and suggestions:

**7.1 Financial capital related**
- The food subsidy should reach the poorest of the poor. The government must find a way to provide the vulnerable elderly, in need of the food subsidy, with free identification cards.
- The distribution of the food subsidy money has been problematic in the district. A formal system should be established to ensure that INAS representatives go home to beneficiaries who are incapacitated to hand them their money, and thus avoid relying on friends or neighbours.
- Aim to provide comprehensive coverage in those communities where food subsidy exists, to prevent hostile feelings between those who receive and those who do not receive it.
- Increase the amount of the food subsidy.
- A community credit scheme based on the HelpAge model in Tete province could help elderly people financially. Loans are made for the establishment of small businesses, and the community credit committee then decides how the interest will be used to benefit vulnerable people in the community.  

**7.2 Natural capital related**
- Research land use patterns to see if older people are disadvantaged by long distances or poor soils. Explore possibilities for growing higher value crops nearer the home, such as herbs or tomatoes on a small scale, by using pots and home-made compost.
- Consider how the elderly can improve their diet and perhaps produce a little surplus, for example by growing fruit trees or keeping small domestic animals.

**7.3 Social capital related**
- Consider how elderly males and elderly females could join together in self-help groups. They could co-operate, such as carrying out gender-specific tasks like building secure maize stores in order to increase their food security.

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98 HelpAge International/International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2003b:10)
• Extend the existing co-operation between the radio/TV studio and MMAS to include issues important for the elderly, such as health matters and stigmatisation due to superstition, in Macua radio broadcasts. Consider distributing clockwork radios to elderly people who are geographically or socially isolated, so that they can listen to these programmes. It is important that issues relating to the elderly are mainstreamed in the programming so that they influence the attitudes of people in other social groups.
• Take activities out to the bairro so older and less mobile people can enjoy or even participate: Students attending Koran classes could visit older Muslims who cannot go to church any more, the Catholic song and dance group could develop their repertoire in co-operation with older people.
• Continue to promote human rights for all categories of people, with realistic local examples so people understand how human rights concepts are applicable in daily life with regard to older people.

7.4 Physical capital related
• Assist the elderly to go to consultative council meetings, so their concerns and opinions can be heard. Seek ways that the community can solve practical problems such as house repair.
• Seek ways of consulting older people when planning public services (hospital visits, administrative issues, transport) and community projects (health, education, environment etc). Take into consideration the special needs of older people, including older men and women respectively.

7.5 Human capital related
• The schools could take inspiration from co-operation with the local community leadership on the inclusion of moral or ethical classes in school, and the involvement of elderly people in education about cultural history or nature for example. This would promote relationships between the generations and give the older people higher legitimacy within the modern development paradigm.
• In the long-term, future generations will be interested in traditional culture and everyday history as a way to understand and appreciate their own origins. Nampula is home to the national museum of ethnography, so in the future the province, and Macua culture, will attract more interest from tourists and international specialists. Considering the planned road improvements, Ribáuè to the west, could become what Ilha de Moçambique is to the east – a “culture and nature” tourist destination. In this respect the knowledge of older people is like a long-term investment fund.

7.6 Closing comments
Altogether these recommendations are very costly and would of course be very hard to finance at the same time. The most urgent issue is to safeguard those who have no livelihood alternatives through extending the food subsidy system, as the government plans to do. However the level of financial support should be increased as at present it makes only a very small difference to the beneficiaries and the local economy. The cost of providing a social pension equivalent to 35 per cent of the national average poverty threshold to poor elderly Mozambicans over 60 years is estimated to cost 0.87 per cent of GDP. If the age threshold were increased to include only the poor over 65 years this would cost 0.57 per cent of GDP. This must be considered against the fact that the entire range of social assistance programmes

99 calculations based on table in Kakwani & Subbarao (2005:30)
in Mozambique attracts only 0.6 per cent of the state budget\textsuperscript{100}. Even to diminish poverty among the most vulnerable oldest in Mozambique as outlined above, considerable policy adjustment would have to be made, including perhaps the targeting of funding from external sources.

In the light of this huge economic challenge, there must be alternative and complementary means for improving the livelihoods of the elderly. We consider it very important for the well-being of the elderly in Mozambique now and in the future that development initiatives are spreading into the rural districts, with improvements in health care, education and political participation. This encourages younger people to stay and work in small towns, which contributes to the stability of social networks and should, in turn, benefit the more vulnerable. The challenge is to complement this territorial development tendency with employment opportunities so that future generations of elderly people will have better chances of supporting themselves through work-related pensions and savings.

\textsuperscript{100} Johnson & Selvester (2006:4-5)
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APPENDIX I

People interviewed
(F) = female  
(M) = male

Nampula
Representatives of the provincial level of MMAS (F)  
Engineer consulted in rural development issues (F)  
Workers and people living at the elderly center  
Representative from the provincial level of the Ministry for Planning and Development (F)  
Representative from the provincial government (F)  
Representatives from EDM (M)

Ribáuè
EDM workers (M)  
Local government representatives (M)  
Cotton Factory workers (M)  
Representatives from the MMAS (F+M)  
Mill owner (F)  
Car engineer (M)  
RTVC workers (M)  
Consultative council members (F+M)  
Representatives from the local Ministry of Agriculture (M)  
Teachers from the Agricultural Secondary School (M)  
Students from the Agricultural Secondary School (F+M)  
Traditional community leaders (F+M)  
Representative from the local Ministry of Education (F)  
Teachers from the Secondary School (F+M)  
Students from the Secondary School (M)  
Group of women in a bairro  
Individual interviews with elderly receiving PSA (F+M)  
Interview with former TDM worker receiving state pension (M)  
Representative from the local Ministry of Health (M)  
Hospital workers (M)  
Group of elderly beneficiaries of the PSA (F)  
NGOs – Care, Olipa, Adap (F+M)  
Care target group at a health post (F+M)  
Representative of the Catholic Church (F)  
Representatives of the Muslim Community (M)  
Mineral water factory owners (M)

Namiconha
Local leaders  
Group of electricity consumers (M)  
Agricultural association (F+M)  
Health post workers
Iapala
Group of local leaders, economic agents, health workers and other influential persons (M)

Maputo
Representatives from the Swedish Embassy (F+M)
Consultant engaged in cash transfer issues (F)
Representative from the Mozambican Foreign Ministry (M)
Representative from HelpAge Maputo (F)
APPENDIX II

Interview guide

General questions for elderly people
1. Name
2. Age
3. Position in family
4. How many people (adults, children, age, gender) live in the household (family)?
5. Do you / family members own a house / other buildings?
6. Do you / family members own land / animals?
7. Are you / any family members employed (part-time, seasonal, hourly, permanent)?
8. What other sources of income do you / family members have (selling products, credit)?
9. What things do you normally buy?
10. What did you / household buy during the last 7 days?
11. What do you normally produce for yourself?
12. Is the income different at different times of the year?
13. How do you manage in times of lower income?

Pensions and social assistance
1. Do you or a family member get any form of financial help eg pension? social credit? other?
   ............................................................

Receivers of pensions or social credits
2. How does the system work?
   Information? selection? collecting payments?
3. Do you think the system is fair?
4. How much do you receive?
5. Who is responsible for spending the money?
6. What do you / they use the pension/credit money for? (eg electricity!)
7. Do you consider that the income you have is sufficient to meet your needs?
8. Have you heard of any other possible sources of income?
9. Who can you turn to for help if you have problems? (family, neighbours, friends, church, NGOs or other help)?
10. If you had money, what would you do?
    ............................................................

Not receivers of the food subsidy
11. What do you know about the food subsidy?
12. Do you think that you are in need of the food subsidy?
13. Why can’t you receive the food subsidy?
15. If you had pension / social credits what would you spend the money on?
   How would it improve your/family’s standard of living?
Topics discussed with elderly and other age groups

- Development and modernisation issues in the district of Ribaue
- The importance of electricity for the person, their family and the community
- Infrastructure

- Traditions and values
- Traditional and modern medicine
- Witchcraft and its consequences

- The status of the elderly in community
- Meeting-points for elderly
- Participation of the elderly in local meetings and decisions

- Education of young people and elderly

- Health issues, cost of medicines and consultations

- Organisations working with elderly
# APPENDIX III: Agricultural calendar for Ribáuè district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
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<td>High rainfall</td>
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<td>(M) Clear new land</td>
<td>Clearance of land</td>
<td>Weeding</td>
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<td>Cassava harvest</td>
<td>Sorghum harvest</td>
<td>Cassava planting</td>
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<td>Maize harvest</td>
<td>Maize sowing</td>
<td>(M) Maize harvest</td>
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<td>(F) Carry maize home</td>
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<td>Cotton harvest</td>
<td>Cotton sowing</td>
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<td>(F) Bean harvest</td>
<td>Beans planted with maize</td>
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<td>(M) Plant seedings</td>
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<td>Sow veg – first crop</td>
<td>Sow veg – second crop</td>
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<td>(F) Peanut harvest</td>
<td>Sow peanuts</td>
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<td>(M) Prepare rice storage</td>
<td>(F) Harvest rice</td>
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<td>Colds, Lung infections</td>
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<td>&quot;Mango season&quot;: diarrhoea illnesses</td>
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Source: informants in Ribáuè district, April 2007
APPENDIX IV
Photographs from Ribáuè

The landscape of the Ribáuè district.

Bairro Muhiliale.

Wealthy house with electricity.

Storage.

Elderly man working at RCTV.

Women making beer.

Interviewing elderly female food subsidy receivers.

The rights of the elderly.
Road in bad condition after rainfall. Transmitter.