

## MOZAMBIQUE

### THEMATIC NOTE ON AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE

#### OVERVIEW OF LAND ACCESS AND ITS USES BY REFUGEES AND HOSTS LIVING IN THE MARATANE REFUGEE CAMP

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*A refugee family outside their home in the Maratane Refugee Camp. ©UNHCR/Tina Ghelli*

#### KEY MESSAGES

- Refugees in the Maratane Refugee Camp have less access to and are allotted smaller plots of land than the host community. This limited land access constrains their ability to increase agricultural outputs, improve productivity, and achieve sustainable livelihoods and food security. Interventions should aim at increasing access to land and land size for refugees as well as increasing land tenure security for landowners.
- The host community, on the other hand, while owning more land and are more diversified in their farming, are more likely to practice subsistence farming and less likely to use agricultural inputs such as fertilizers that can help increase their output.
- Interventions to improve refugees' and hosts' access to agricultural inputs, markets and technical assistance are needed to enhance productivity and crop output.
- Promoting crop diversification, especially among refugees who are less diversified, will also improve food security and income diversification.
- In addition, promoting joint agricultural programmes for both communities could lead to productive partnerships that utilize the comparative strengths of host members' ability to own larger plots of land and refugees' knowledge in using agricultural inputs. Such joint cooperatives could help contribute to progress towards self-reliance, inclusive economic development among refugees and hosts, and peaceful co-existence.

#### Background

The Maratane camp in Mozambique, established in 2001, hosts about 9,500 refugees and asylum seekers mainly from DR Congo (63 percent) and

Burundi (32 percent), and the remaining from other nationalities such as Rwanda (3 percent) and Somalia (1 percent). Also living in the settlement area are 16,390 people from the host community, who directly rely on the settlement for

essential services that are provided by the government and are supported by UNHCR (WASH, Health, Education and other Social Services).

Even though the refugees mainly depend on humanitarian assistance for their basic needs, the favourable socioeconomic climate of the local area, including a progressive legal and policy framework by the government, are conducive to efforts aimed at self-reliance and local integration. Studies show that one of the ways of promoting self-reliance is through the strengthening of agricultural livelihoods by addressing limitations related to access to land, credit, productivity, market linkages, etc. (Quan 2006; UNHCR 2016).

Mozambique offers a considerable agricultural potential with an estimated total of about 36 million hectares of arable land (IFAD 2019). However, this land is highly underutilized as only 10 percent is currently utilized. Smallholders represent about 99 percent of the Agricultural and fisheries sector, which is the main source of livelihood for the rural communities – 80 percent of their income come from agriculture which account for 94 percent of the country's agricultural production (IFAD 2019). The smallholder farms are mostly found in the north, with Nampula (where the Maratane settlement is situated) and Zambezia provinces accounting for 43 percent of the total (World Bank Group 2019). However, the sector suffers from very low productivity and limited access to markets, mainly due to low access to improved inputs and technology, extension and finances, poor market linkages and lack of land tenure security. The low level of productivity leads to endemic food insecurity (50 percent) which exacerbates a cycle of poverty and malnutrition.

While the government provides agricultural extension services to farmers, most of these supports target only nationals, especially small-scale farmers. An example is the National Agricultural Extension Program (PRONEA) which was developed in the mid-2000 with the aim of increasing income and improving food security for producers through increased production, greater efficiency and market orientation at provincial and district levels (World Bank Group 2019). The government, in collaboration with the international

Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has also recently launched the Inclusive Agri-Food Value Chain Development Programme (PROCAVA) to improve rural livelihoods, food security and resilience for about 902, 500 small-scale farmers in 75 districts in the country, where farmers will benefit from linkages to input suppliers, markets, appropriate climate-smart technologies and capacity building on value addition. On the hand, refugees are mainly supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP), through the provision of agriculture subsidies, inputs and other extension services.

This note provides an overview of land access and its uses by refugees and the hosts in the Maratane settlement in order to inform related strategies in programming and policy to improve land productivity and hence increase crop output, welfare and food security.

### Land Tenure System in Mozambique

There is no private ownership of land in Mozambique. The 2004 Mozambican Constitution establishes that all land is owned by the state and that land cannot be sold, mortgaged, or otherwise encumbered or alienated (art. 109.1 and 109.2). However, the constitution recognizes all Mozambicans shall have the right to the use of land as a means of production and social welfare (art. 109.3 and 110) (Jacobs and Almeida 2020). The 1997 Mozambican land law is the main legislation concerning the land rights in the country. The law centers its protection on land use rights locally known as *Direito do Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra* (DUAT). One of the key features of the law is the recognition of customary-based land rights of communities to their traditional territories, and rights obtained through traditional and good-faith land occupancy. While private entities can request these rights to the state, national individuals and communities are automatically recognized in case of customary-based occupations or more than 10 years of good-faith occupation.<sup>1</sup> Even though this automatic acquisition of the land automatically protects the poor, this protection has been weakened over time due to the enforcement of other legislations such

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<sup>1</sup> Grants of 50- year renewable use-rights are available at almost no cost for investors and others seeking land, subject to approved exploitation plans. Investors are required to consult with communities before obtaining concessions for agribusinesses and other development.

as the Decree 60/2006 on Spatial planning, land administration and poor governance (Cabral and Norfolk 2016).

While nationals have unrestricted rights to access to land, foreign individuals and entities must have local residence and an approved investment plan in order to have access land (USAID 2011). The National legal framework for refugees establishes a solid basis for the reception of asylum-seekers and refugees in Mozambique, including full access to education, health and other basic services, and a flexible policy on freedom of movement. However, the legislation is unclear on the administrative application of various legal provisions as to the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers. Moreover, the requirement of identity documents such as passport, which most refugees and asylum seekers do not have, during administrative processes affect their issuance of work and business permits, access to land, ownership of real state and acquisition of nationality (UNHCR 2010). Consequently, the individual rights that persons of concern enjoy, including those rights related to their local integration, is greatly dependent on their location and the individual effort made.

Refugees in Maratane settlement can have access to land through the National Refugee Support Institute (INAR). The Government of Mozambique has allocated some 2,000 hectares of land to INAR through the DUAT, for use by refugees, which includes the settlement area. The Spatial Development Framework, prepared by the UN-Habitat, suggests that about 1,235 hectares (60 percent) of this land is dedicated to agricultural purposes. Refugees, in order to access the land, must submit an application to INAR together with their ID and a letter, clearly stating the intended use of the land. Land accessed through this process cannot be sold but can only be used for the intended purposes. However, this allocation process has been halted since 2019, due to difficulty in accessing the land dedicated for agricultural purposes. The land is farther from the camp, causing transportation difficulties, and are not yet ready for cultivating as the land need to be cleared. Refugees who have access to land mainly do so through renting from members of the host community.

## Methodology

This note uses data from the baseline survey measuring the impact of the ongoing graduation programme targeting ultra-poor refugees and host community living in and around the Maratane Refugee settlement. The baseline survey took place from August 2019 to December 2019 and covers 152 refugee and 347 host community households.<sup>2</sup>

## Findings

*Access to land is a limiting factor for refugees in increasing agricultural outputs and improving productivity owing to the fact that they have less access, and own and farm smaller plots of land than surrounding Mozambican nationals.*

**1. Members of the host community are twice as likely as refugees to have access to land.** While 9 out of 10 host households report access to any type of land either through ownership or renting, only 4 out of 10 refugee households do. Among the refugees, those from Rwanda (50 percent) are slightly more likely to have access to lands than those from Burundi (47 percent) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (44 percent). Refugees who arrived before 2010 were observed to have slightly lower access to land than those who arrived in 2010 or after – 42 percent and 48 percent, respectively.

**2. Most refugees and Mozambican nationals use land for agricultural purposes; however, the size of the land owned imply they are usually small farms.** Almost all host community members and refugees who have access to land use it to cultivate agricultural products. This practice is slightly higher among the host community (97 percent) than refugee community (92 percent).

For agricultural land that is owned, the average land size is usually small, though the average size owned by host community is twice that of the refugees' (80m<sup>2</sup> vs. 40m<sup>2</sup>, respectively). The limited land access by refugees and smaller plot sizes owned suggest that even though most of the land is used for agricultural purposes, they tend to be small farms with more limited potential for crop productivity and for meeting food security.

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<sup>2</sup> Out of the 152 refugee households surveyed, 13 were repeated, and for the hosts, 47 were also repeated. For the purpose of this analysis, we drop the 60 repeated surveys, leaving a final sample size of 439 households, comprising of 139 refugee households and 300 host community households.

Improving access to agricultural land and increasing the size of land allocated could help overcome the productivity and output constraints and improve the livelihoods of the refugees.

While larger plots of land generally allow for a greater variety of ways to enhance productivity and output, some studies report evidence of an inverse relationship between farm size and productivity in low-income countries. These studies suggest that well-designed interventions, such as through risk-coping mechanisms like multicropping and land fragmentation, could help small-scale farmers achieve higher productivity (Ali and Deininger 2014; Ansoms, Verdoodt, and Van Ranst 2008; IAMO 2019).

*During the year's main agricultural season from April-May 2019, refugees cultivated land that was largely owned by the community or someone outside the household. The type of crop cultivated varies among hosts and refugees.*

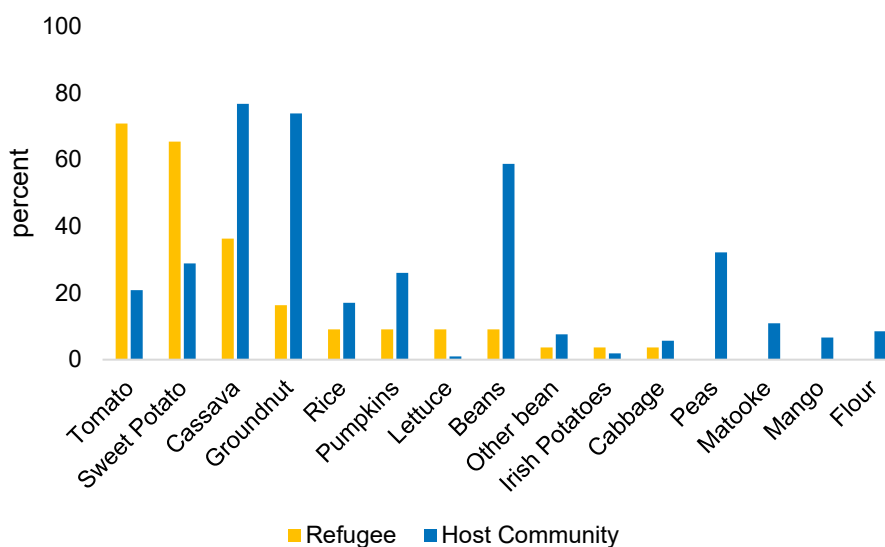
**3. While hosts are more likely to farm land that they own, refugees tend to farm land owned by someone outside their household.** A large majority of refugees (87 percent) and hosts (79 percent) cultivated their land during the April-May 2019 season. Due to the fact that refugees have access to smaller and often insufficient plots of land, they are more likely to require using lands owned by others. Some 71 percent of land farmed by the host community in the April-May season

was owned by a member of their household, while only 16 percent of refugees used land owned by a member of their household. The lower rate of land ownership among refugees results in more of them (15 percent) practicing sharecropping. This involves renting land from other landowners in return for a share of their crop. Sharecropping can lead to overexploitation of the land and uncertainties in harvests could lead to accumulation of debts. If suitable arrangements that balance the interests of landowners and the sharecropper are put in place, access to land by the refugees through such an arrangement could deliver benefits to both parties.

**4. Host community tend to be cassava and groundnut farmers while more refugees engage in potato and tomato farming.**

Considering the number of crops cultivated, refugees produce a smaller range of different crops than hosts. Crop diversification has been shown to have a positive impact on food consumption and security and improves soil fertility (Anuja et al. 2020; Adjimoti and Kwadzo 2018; Baba and Abdulai 2020; Makate et al. 2016). The majority among the host community cultivate cassava and groundnut (77 percent and 74 percent, respectively), which is unsurprising given that these are traditional subsistence crops for Mozambicans. From the data, only 9 percent of cassava and 10 percent of groundnut farmers sell their produce, showcasing the fact that they grow them for their own consumption rather than to sell.

Figure 1: Type of crop grown during March to May 2019 season



Refugees, on the other hand, are more likely to grow tomato and sweet potatoes – 71 percent and 65 percent, respectively. They are also more likely to cultivate and sell these crops for income as they are the main sellers of tomato

and groundnut in the Maratane market. About 53 percent of refugees report selling the tomato they harvested during this period while only 7 percent of the hosts did so.

**5. The use of agricultural inputs is very low among the hosts.** While just 14 percent of host farmers used agricultural inputs, nearly half of refugees did. Among users, the most common input used was fertilizer – about 8 percent of hosts and 44 percent of refugees used this. Some 7 percent of hosts also used pesticides and 3 percent used irrigation, compared to 35 percent and 16 percent among refugees, respectively. Some refugees benefited from a UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) programme and received agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, which could explain their higher utilization of agricultural inputs.



*A refugee harvesting tomatoes from his farm.*  
 Source: FAO, Mozambique

## Conclusion

Promoting self-reliance among refugees is an integral component of UNHCR's Framework for Durable Solutions, and one of the recommended pathways is through agriculture production.

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About 60 percent of the land allocated to refugees in the Maratane Camp is dedicated to agriculture (about 1,235 hectares). However, refugees have limited access to land. About 45 percent of refugees have access to land either by ownership or renting, less than the hosts' average of 91 percent. Even though most of the land accessed is used for agricultural purposes, the land sizes allocated are small, especially among refugees, and there is lack of productive means to increase crop yields. While hosts have greater access to land and are more crop-diversified, they are less likely to use agricultural inputs and mostly farm to feed themselves. Refugees, on the other hand, mostly farm to earn income.

Strengthening agricultural practices and potentially increasing size of plots provided to refugees – including increasing access to land, encouraging the use of agricultural inputs, and promoting crop diversification – would not only improve food security, it may also contribute to progress towards self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods for both hosts and refugees.

Furthermore, promoting joint agricultural programmes for both communities could lead to productive partnerships that utilizes the comparative strengths of host members' ability to own larger plots of land and refugees' knowledge in using agricultural inputs. This could include training on how to use agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, increased access to quality agricultural inputs and initiatives that promote land sharing and pooling their resources together. Such joint cooperatives could bolster inclusive economic development and peaceful co-existence.

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