



DEVELOPMENTWORKSHOP

Desenvolvimento Comunitário
Human Settlements and Development

Estudo “Participação das Mulheres na Gestão Comunitária de Água e Saneamento nos Municípios de Cacuaco e Viana”



Apresentado por:

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Nomes dos colaboradores:

Helga Silveira :	Oficial de Pesquisa Co-Coordenou a Pesquisa
Claúdia Gastrow :	Consultora da Pesquisa
Bernardo Alexandre :	Motorista e Relações Públicas Responsável Logístico
João Cassamano:	Estagiario e Tradutor
Massomba Dominique:	Oficial de GIS (Sistema de Informação Geográfica)
Nadir Prisco:	Estagiário e Inquiridor (recolha de dados no campo)
Salete Monteiro:	Estagiária e Inquiridora (recolha de Dados no Campo)
Yolanda Mutaxico:	Estagiária e Inquiridora (Recolha de Dados no Campo)
Gabriel Fernando:	Estagiário e Inquiridor (Recolha de Dados no campo)

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Indice

Contents

Introduction	4
Background	4
Neighbourhoods:	8
Methodology	15
Findings and analysis:	16
Conclusion.....	20

Participação das Mulheres na Gestão Comunitária de Água e Saneamento Municípios de Cacuaco e Viana

Introduction

This report outlines the findings of Development Workshop's research into the role of women in the community management of water and sanitation in the areas in which the Watsan Project operates.

During the research, carried out over one month, thirty-three people from the relevant committees and associations, including men and women of various ages, were questioned as to their views of the role of women within these institutions. In general, men and women expressed the view that not only were women adequately represented, but they were given enough scope to exercise their allotted positions and influence decision-making within the committees. However, underlying tensions in reference to gender roles surfaced at times, and given this, the question of gender is probably an area that warrants more intensive investigation. In general, however, water committees appear to be a successful mechanism not only for involving the community in the management of water, but also for enabling women, those most affected by access to water, to exercise a proactive role in the resolution of water problems in their respective neighbourhoods.

Background

After many years of civil war, the provision of water to Angola's population remains a major challenge, which both government and civil society have actively been involved in confronting. Although the government did not invest a substantial amount in the construction and maintenance of Angola's water infrastructure during the country's civil war (1975 – 2002), more recently it has been trying to use the opportunity offered by Angola's peacetime to resolve the problem of water with which so many of its citizens are confronted.

On the 19 July 2009, the government of Angola (GoA), in partnership with UNICEF and the World Labour Organization, launched a project named “Água Para Todos” (Water for All), which commits the Angolan government to distribute drinking water to 100% of the urban population and 80% to the rural inhabitants by 2020. Although the investments made by the GoA in extending the water network, and in the creation and maintenance of water infrastructure are key developments, Development Workshop’s long experience working with government and communities to address problems of service delivery in Luanda and other areas of Angola, have led it to believe that larger scale initiatives will not work without engaging the communities who are the recipients of government intervention. Development Workshop’s Watsan project aims precisely to engage government and community members in ongoing discussions and interventions to ensure access to water.

Development Workshop and Water:

Water has been a central area of policy research and community intervention throughout DW’s presence in Angola. The particular model of community water management which the water committees represent was developed approximately fourteen years ago in conjunction with EPAL (Empresa Pública de Aguas de Luanda), the state water distribution service in Luanda. This partnership was consolidated in 1992 with the aim of improving the functioning and the technical capacity of EPAL in constructing public pumps (*chafarizes*) for communities in Luanda. An additional key mechanism was the development of community management systems to ensure the upkeep and care of the public water sources in circumstances where EPAL’s capacity to address problems on the ground immediately is often limited.

This model was further strengthened from the mid-1990s until present under the auspices of LUPP (Luanda Urban Poverty Project), a collaborative project between various NGOs including DW to monitor and intervene in key areas regarding urban poverty in Luanda.

Community water committees and associations serve a vital function in mediating between the community and EPAL, ensuring that problems with the public taps are addressed as rapidly as possible, and making sure that water is paid for and infrastructure cared for on the part of the community. During LUPP, DW and other

NGOs provided training for members of water committees and eventually water associations to assist them in reflecting on water problems in their respective communities, and helping them to act on their findings. The communities involved have increasingly found that proactive involvement in the management of their own community resources had significant benefits as regards the provision of resources.

Luanda's First Water Association: Associação do Comité de Água para Progresso Comunitário (ACAPC)

The ACAPC was founded on the 7 June 2002 in the commune of Ngola Kiluanji, Sambizanga and over the years has proved the efficacy of the water committee and water association system as an effective and democratic means of managing water. Since its founding the group has expanded its activities significantly and today is made up of 78 members. In addition to increasing access to water in the commune by using the funds collected at public water pumps to build new water points, it also offers child care facilities and health advice to the community it serves. As a result, the commune of Ngola Kiluanji has one of the lowest rates of diarrhoea and cholera in Luanda.

Equally important to its other achievements is the fact that the democratic method in which members are appointed (by election every two years) and the official standing of the association means that the water associations are one of the few Angolan institutions where Angolans can fully experience participative democracy. It thus also functions as a space where Angolans can learn about the intricacies of rights and obligations within a democratic state. Antonio Madureira, a plumber in charge of the technical unit of the ACAPC explained that prior to being part of the association he never imagined it was possible to directly interact with local authorities. Now he takes pride in his active role within the ACAPC because of the opportunities that it offers for various forms of civic engagement.

The success of the Ngola Kiluanji ACAPC shows that water associations as a model of community-based management of water can be successful not only in expanding the supply of water to a community, but also in encouraging the development of democratic values and practices. This has been recognised by the Angolan government, which is planning to incorporate the water association model into its national strategy for water provision. This will hopefully lead to greater democracy and efficiency in the resolution of barriers to access to water in Angola.

Water committees are made up of “zeladores”, persons who maintain and guard the pumps, as well as collect payment for the use of the pumps that is then passed on to EPAL. Most interviews show that there tend to be two *zeladores* per pump, but this varies by neighbourhood. Water committees generally form more or less organically during the process of the building of public water pumps. Members of the community who accompany the entire process of constructing the water source make themselves eligible to be part of the committee. Once the pump has been constructed, the Comissão

dos Moradores (neighbourhood -based unofficial administrative organisations) choose who will be members of the Water Committee. As mentioned above, these individuals then become responsible for the management of the public water pumps. Although key in community-based management of water, water committees themselves do not have official recognition from the administration. In light of this, water committees were engaged during LUPP to drive the formation of *water associations* or **ACA** (Associações de Comités de Água).

Water associations are groups recognised by the administration that engage service providers, and communal and municipal authorities regarding issues related to access to water in their respective neighbourhoods. They also transmit information from these authorities to the water committees, thereby ensuring the possibility of conversations between state and community. Members of the water association are chosen via a local election organised by the Comissão dos Moredores and the communal administration, and, unlike the water committees, have official recognition under Angola's laws. At present, one water association in Ngola Kiluanji (Sambizanga) has been formally recognised by the Ministry of Justice, and four more are waiting on their official recognition. The water associations are vital in ensuring that both government and the community fulfil promises made.

Women and the water question:

The domestic division of labour in most Angolan households causes women to be disproportionately affected by problems in access to water. Women tend to be responsible for fetching water, and for household tasks such as cooking and washing of clothes that require significant amounts of water. As such, problems in accessing water have serious consequences for women's use of their time. This is compounded by the fact that recent surveys reveal that women are increasingly acting as heads of households in many of Luanda's neighbourhoods, meaning that their more traditional roles must be also be organised in conjunction with the demands of the household (DW and UNICEF 2010). Given the central role of women in the daily provision and organisation of water at a household level, it is vital that they are involved at a community institutional level in the management of water so to ensure that their concerns are adequately represented and addressed. Unfortunately, in Development

Workshop's experience, promoting the involvement of women in community organisations has often proved to be a challenge in Luanda

During its involvement in LUPP, Development Workshop assisted in providing opportunities for engagement between municipal authorities, service providers, CBOs and community representatives to discuss problems of service provision, through the activation of CACS (Conselhos de Auscultação e Concertação Social). These are newly legislated forums that are meant to take place at a municipal level and act as spaces where NGOs and community members can engage municipal representatives about the administrations work and the use of its budget.

During this process DW noted that women very rarely participated in local government or in NGOs and CBOs. As a result, their concerns were often not given the attention that they should have received. In addition, research into other DW programs such as KixiCredito, a microfinance initiative launched by DW in 2006, show that the inclusion of women very often enhances the performance of a programme, as due to the fact that they are the most affected by the lack of a resource, they are more likely to be proactive in its provision and management. The involvement of women in the management of water is thus presumably central to the success of the system of water committees and associations. It is with this in mind that research took place in the following three neighbourhoods where DW has been involved in the establishment of water committees.

Neighbourhoods:

Research took place in the neighbourhoods of Paraíso, Pedreira, and Moxico. In order to facilitate an understanding of the findings of the research, this section of the report provides a brief overview of information about the relevant neighbourhoods.

Paraíso:

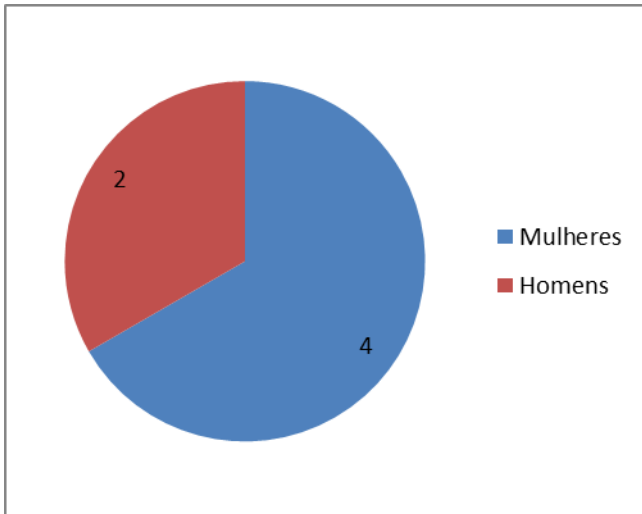
Paraíso, with approximately 86,172 inhabitants, is located in the commune of Kikolo, in the municipality of Cacucaco. At present, it faces significant problems as regards access to water. In 2009, a survey investigating access to water in the neighbourhood revealed that two-thirds of the private water tanks lacked water, and that the principle sources of

water in the neighbourhood were water tankers (DW and UNICEF 2010). In 2010, it was found that although several public water tanks were constructed in the area, at present only one is functioning. However, more recently a public water pump and new tank have been built and appear to still be in working condition (DW 2011 Field research in Paraíso).

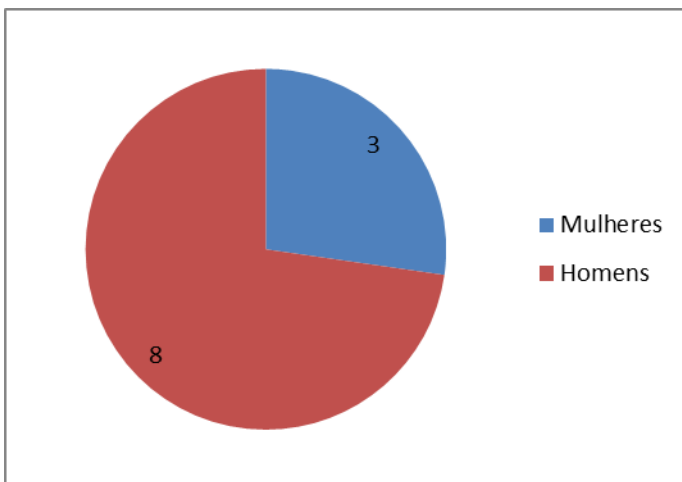
Mapa das chafarizes em Bairro Paraiso



Genero dos membros da Comité de Bairro Paraíso:



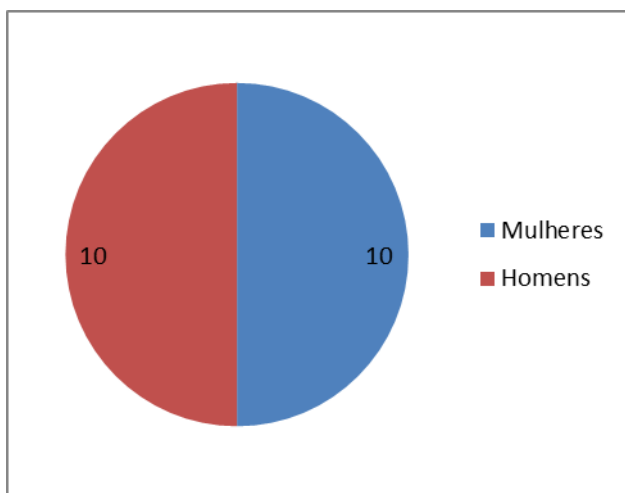
Genero dos membros da Associação do Paraíso



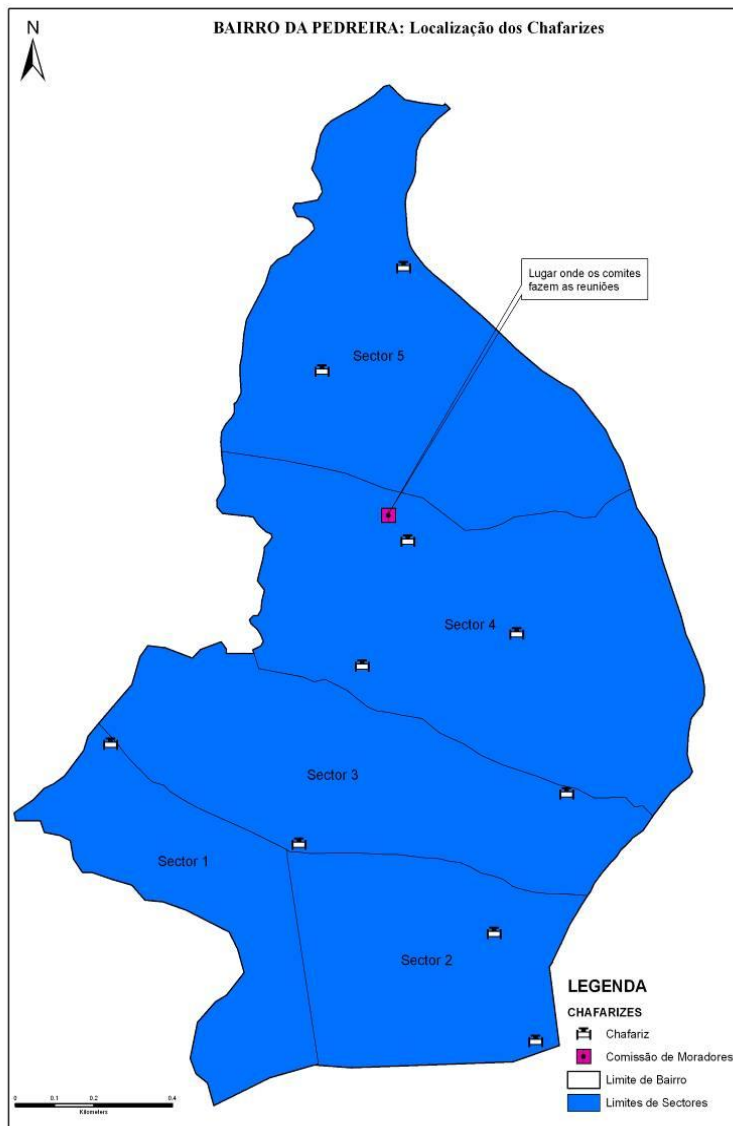
Pedreira:

The neighbourhood, with approximately 8,750 inhabitants, is also located in the commune of Kikolo, in the municipality of Cacuaco. Research in this neighbourhood revealed that 26% of families use their neighbour's water tank as their principle source of water, with only 34% accessing public water pumps for water (DW and UNICEF 2010). This possibly speaks to the need to provide more public water sources to the neighbourhood.

Genero dos membros da Comité do Bairro Pedreira



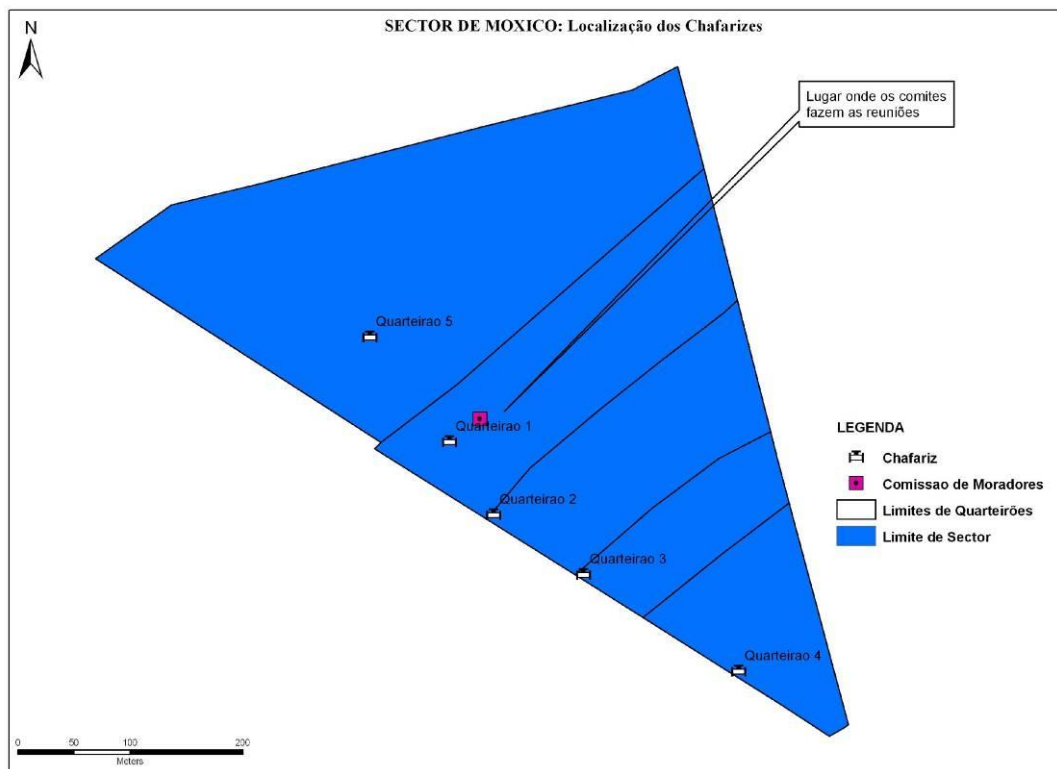
Mapa das chafarizes em Bairro Pedreira



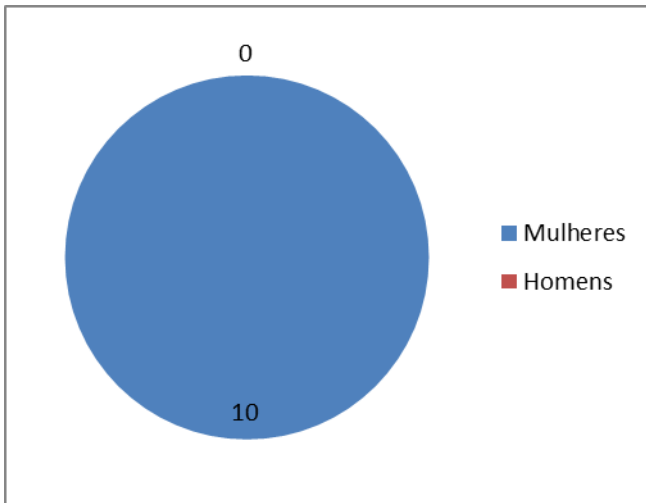
Moxico:

Moxico is a neighbourhood located in the commune of Viana II, in the municipality of Viana. It has about 3,842 inhabitants who mostly moved to the neighbourhood during the civil war from the province of Moxico. In this neighbourhood, public water pumps are the primary source water for the community, and recent visits to the area show that all of the five pumps are in good working order.

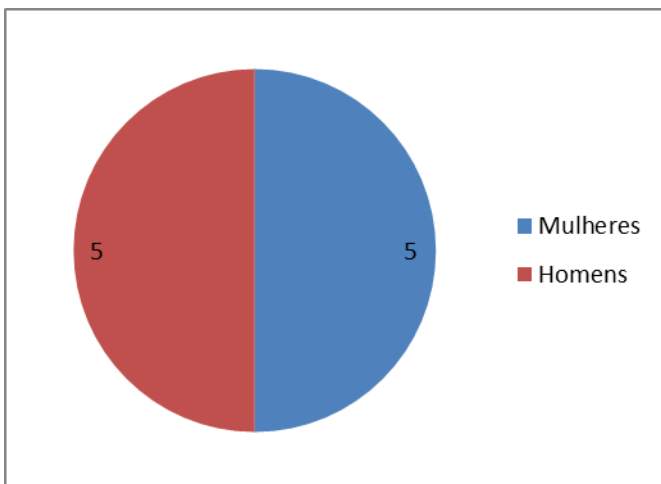
Mapa das chafarizes em Bairro Moxico



Genero dos membros da Comité do Moxico



Genero dos membros da Associação do Moxico



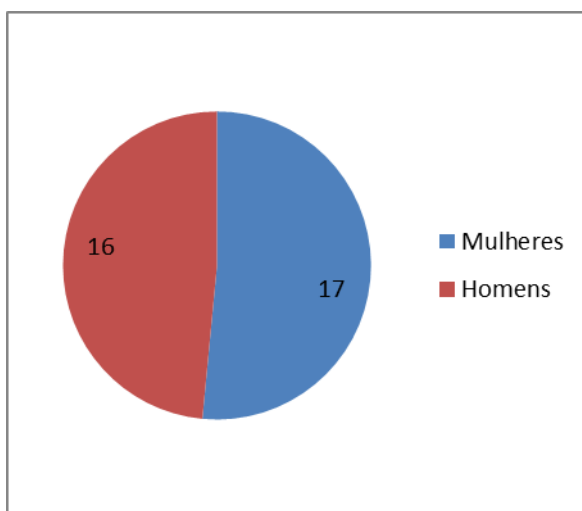
Methodology

The research aimed to assess the participation of women in the management of water within the areas in which the DW Watsan Project is active. The research team was instructed to research the issue according to four indicators: accessibility, utilization, quality, and performance. The aim was therefore not simply to track the existence of women within the committees and associations, but the actual extent and quality of their involvement.

Using these four indicators as guidelines, the research team designed a short questionnaire for use in focus groups in the respective bairros. The aim was to run semi-structured focus groups with members of the respective committees and associations that would allow for comprehensive discussion of the questions of gender and women's roles in the management of water.

Overall five focus groups took place, including men and women of various ages (altogether 33 participants). Amongst other things, participants were asked about their general background, why they decided to become involved in the management of water in their respective communities, their roles in the committees, and the position and work of women in the committees. Although it was not possible to interview all the members of each relevant committee, there was enough representation that the findings can be considered to provide an accurate account of the participation of women in the management of water.

Break down of participants by gender:



Findings and analysis:

As requested, the research findings have been organized according to the four basic indicators discussed in the terms of reference.

Accessibility:

As a very basic indicator it would appear that women's access to the water committees is strong. In most cases, at least half the members of the water committees and associations were women, and similarly, of the groups interviewed at least half of those interviewed were women. However lack of clarity regarding recruitment procedures into the water committees, and the fact that some of the women stated that a literacy requirement was necessary to be nominated to water association, could indicate possible gender-biased barriers to entry to these institutions.

The basic numbers indicate that women both have access to positions in these institutions and are choosing to be involved. Nevertheless, there are still some barriers to entry that should be taken account of. Although membership of the associations occurs via a vote, interviewees in some focus groups indicated that at times members of the committees were chosen by the *Comissão dos Moredores* (CdM) and that basic literacy was put forward as a condition for someone being nominated for a position in one of the water associations.

All people enter the water committees partially through self-selection, the process by which the CdMs chooses who enters is not entirely clear. In addition, the grounds for self-selection were not explained. As such it was not possible to ascertain whether or not there were gender biases in the actual recruitment processes to the water committees. It also needs to be known if gender dynamics within the CdMs have any effect on who becomes a *zeladora* or is chosen for a position in the water associations.

Basic literacy was also cited as a requirement for someone to be nominated for a position in a water association in some neighbourhoods. Given that women's levels of literacy tend to be lower than men's this could possibly be a gender-biased barrier to entry that should be addressed. It also raises the question of whether the most disadvantaged women, presumably those without formal education, are getting the opportunity to participate in community decision-making.



Watsan Project focus group

Utilisation:

The research shows that women are actively involved in the committees and associations, and would, in fact, like to take on more responsibilities. Most saw their involvement in committees and associations as opportunities to increase their involvement in the community, and as a stepping stone to organising either formal employment or assisting in additional community interventions (e.g. the creation of crèches, primary schools, starting up of small businesses etc).

Many of the women had previously been unemployed and said that they valued their work as *zeladoras* because it gave them a sense of purpose and something to do every day. In all the focus groups, women were very vocal about the problems that the committees faced. These ranged from EPAL not supplying prepaid water cards, to some of the associations not functioning as democratically as the women thought they should. The ability of women to voice their concerns and to proactively seek solutions to them (in the case of EPAL not providing prepaid cards, the women have created their own system of payment in Moxico and eventually pass that money on to EPAL) appears to indicate that women feel that they can express their concerns about the water committees and associations, and feel empowered enough to proactively attempt to find solutions.

Quality:

Focus groups revealed that although the professional relationships between men and women within the committees and associations were very good, there were underlying tensions regarding the “appropriate” position of women. In addition, the duties involved in being active members of committees and associations were sometimes more onerous for women than for men.

Participants in the focus groups unanimously agreed that professional relationships between men and women within the committees were good, and that women were not prevented from participating to their full capacity. However, at various moments, some of the male members indicated that although they were willing to accept equality in the workplace, they were not willing to accept it in the home. It seems strange that the existence of such attitudes would not have an effect on the workings of the committee, and so the question of to what extent gender equality really exists within the committees and associations should remain under scrutiny.

However, it is precisely the central role of women in the home that led participants to argue that it was important that they be included in the community level management of water. In all groups there was a very positive outlook on women’s involvement, with almost all participants, men and women, saying that they thought that women were better organisers than men, and that the water committees were more efficient at achieving their aims when women were involved. Although these perceptions cannot directly reveal the quality of women’s involvement, the high esteem with which their work appears to be held would seem to indicate that they had significant support from their male colleagues, which presumably would enhance the quality of their involvement in the relevant institutions.

The discrepancy between work and home responsibilities for men and women did have some negative effects on the quality of women’s participation. Although there are variations, in general, *zeladoras* work in pairs, one collecting money from customers at the pump, and the other keeping watch over the activities of customers. If there are enough of them, they usually work in two shifts, with two people staffing the pump from about 6am to the afternoon, and two of them working an afternoon shift. At the

end of the day, the money that has been collected is handed to the relevant body (usually the association or the CdM), and is eventually sent to EPAL as payment for water and maintenance.

While men in the groups indicated that this schedule did not interrupt their everyday activities, women indicated that if they could not arrange help from their family members, the work at the pumps often made it difficult for them to also do their household chores. However, none of them wanted to give up their work at the pumps and so they, perhaps expectedly, are forced to try and juggle home and work in ways that men in the association do not face. The problem appeared to be particularly acute as regarded the issue of childcare, especially when a woman was carrying out a long shift at the pump.

Performance:

In general participants did not think that there were significant obstacles to women performing their tasks, other than the ones raised in the previous section. Men and women were happy with the work that women performed in the various capacities in both the water committees and the water associations. There appeared to be slightly more men than women in managerial roles, but this does not necessarily show that women are not in a position to influence decision-making within the committees. Women were seen as performing equally valuable work in an equally if not, in fact, more efficient manner than men.

The only concern raised in relation to performance was that many of the *zeladoras* experienced conflicts with customers at the water pumps. Participants in the focus groups stated that conflicts with customers were one of the most significant challenges they faced in the day to day execution of their role as *zeladoras*. Participants were not particularly forthcoming about the form and content of these conflicts, but an area for future research could possibly be to see if these conflicts take on gendered dimensions that affect the quality of women's involvement, and their ability to adequately perform their tasks (for instance, are customers more likely to enter into a conflict with a woman or a man, are their physical risks to these conflicts etc).

Conclusion

This report describes the involvement of women in the community-based management of water in three neighbourhoods of Luanda. Overall it seems that women have been well integrated into the water committees and associations, and are able to perform their tasks and have their opinions heard and respected within these institutions. However, there are still some challenges facing women who are involved in these committees. In terms of accessibility and utilization the indicators were very positive despite there being some questions as regards possible gender-biased barriers to entry, such as a literacy requirement for the water associations. The quality of involvement was the weakest indicator with evidence suggesting that although women felt empowered within the committees, the work hours required of zeladoras disproportionately affected their capacity to carry out their other day to day tasks in comparison with the male colleagues. Finally performance indicators were strong, with the one caveat being the issue of conflicts with customers at the water pumps, which should be investigated if more research is going to be done into the question of gender relations and water. Overall however, the evidence shows that women are well integrated into the committees, are able to carry out the duties assigned to them, and influence decision-making within these institutions.