

# WOMEN IN MOZAMBIQUE



A photographic exhibition looking at how women in Mozambique are helping to rebuild communities after years of civil war



Anglicans in  
World Mission

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**Mozambique is a country undergoing new beginnings after years of political turmoil.**

First, the country was involved in a long struggle for independence from Portugal, achieved in 1975; then followed 15 years of civil war, fuelled by groups supported by South African and Rhodesian governments that were opposed to Mozambique's independence.

But now there is hope. The country has been at peace since 1992 and there are signs of new life.

Otillia Soures, 46, has lived through a time of both national and personal change. She is a symbol of new beginnings in Mozambique.

Otillia lives with five children in a three-room adobe home, in Lichinga. Two years ago, her husband walked out on her. Finding money to buy food has been a constant challenge. But these hardships are something that Otillia is facing with patience and faith – and with the support of the local Anglican church.

Otillia was baptised as a baby and brought up in the Anglican Church. Many years later, she had a profound spiritual experience that changed her life. She said: 'It was like I was angry all the time. Then I changed and started to care about other people.'

Her revived faith has inspired Otillia to become active in her community, and volunteered for a project that supports AIDS orphans.

Otillia has also started a course in

theology, which is equipping her to relate more meaningfully with those around her.

Otillia was encouraged to take the course by USPG Mission Companion Helen van Koevering, who leads the church that Otillia attends.

Helen is the only ordained woman in Mozambique and as such she is something of an inspiration; she is an example of what women can become in the new Mozambique.

Historically, women in Mozambique have had few rights, but all that is gradually starting to change. Women now hold positions in government and new legislation has been designed to protect women from men who seek to divorce their wives without financial responsibility.

Helen introduced an innovative approach to bible study, which doubles as literacy training – something that is having a massive impact in a region where about 65 per cent of women are illiterate.

Helen is married to Mark, who is the Bishop of Mozambique's Niassa Diocese. They are providing women with a voice. For example, Mark is insisting that women are represented on all decision-making bodies in the diocese, whereas these bodies were previously male-only.

Women like Otillia are part of the new Mozambique. Though life can be difficult, they are participating in change and embracing 'new life' in Christ.

*For further information and resources, phone 0845 273 1701 or email [enquiries@uspg.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@uspg.org.uk)*



Lichinga. Daily life for rural folk often involves walking long distances to gather water or visit the market.



A baby is baptised during a service at St Simao e Judas Church, Lichinga, in the Diocese of Niassa. The diocese has recently seen massive church growth, with new churches opening and existing congregations growing in size.



Women in Mozambique have suffered profound discrimination. But there are signs that this is beginning to change, with the implementation of new laws. Although much of the country operates under traditional laws that still discriminate.



Pounding grain. Mozambique has not been spared by the global food crisis and rising fuel prices.



Luisa Wolaya is a catechist at St Simao e Judas Church, in Lichinga. Women in Mozambique are increasingly being given opportunities to study theology and take on leadership roles in church.



This is Otillia Soares, who is studying with the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) correspondence course from her home in Lichinga (see story).



Family outside house in Lichinga. Most social welfare in Mozambique comes primarily from within the family. The Anglican Church also plays a significant role.



Luisa Wolaya in her kitchen in Lichinga. Luisa works for the Frelimo Party, which was founded in 1962 to campaign for Mozambican independence. It has ruled Mozambique since independence was achieved, in 1975, until the present (2008), first as a single party, and later as the majority party in a multi-party parliament.



Luisa Wolaya tends her sister's grave at Lichinga Cemetery. Life expectancy in Mozambique is 42 years (UN), one of the lowest in the world. The low figure is largely a result of AIDS, poverty and a lack of health services.



A mother washes her baby in a river. Access to clean water is a problem in Mozambique, which is one of the poorest countries in the world, prone to both drought and flooding.



Members of the congregation at St Simao e Judas Church, in Lichinga, prepare a communal meal. The Anglican Church in Mozambique is a source of hope and practical help that is bringing communities together.



**‘ Life was different for our parents because woman were not supposed to say anything. But now we can talk in church, and in our own homes we can communicate better with our husbands.’**

*Rebecca Jaquissone, All Saints Church, Nacala*



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