Preparations for TPC – Mozambique: A Citizen Led Assessment Facilitated by FACILIDADE

Part V

3\textsuperscript{rd} pilot of testing tools (Day 4) in Bairro Muahivire, Nampula, Mozambique
Today is the last of the field pilots. We are going to an urban slum right next to the FACILIDADE office – Bairro Muahivire.

Yesterday, most members of FACILIDADE were busy with Chamo, the programme manager of NOVIB, Maputo office. Reviewing the NOVIB funded programmes. A smaller group led by Faridah revised the testing tools of the 2nd pre-test, and also administered TTR, to check consistency of reading tools across the samples. Towards the end of the day, Chamo sat with us to learn about our (Faridah and me) recent activities in Mozambique. “We are keeping a close watch on this interesting activity that you have undertaken with FACILIDADE” – is how he reacted.
We decide to walk to the neighbouring slum today. All of us are wearing the ‘FACILIDADE T-shirt’, some in whites and some in greens. We are going to meet the Secretário do Bairro of Muahivire, first.

(left to right: Isidine, Faridah, Armando and Lino)
The slum is situated on either side of the main road in Extensão (extension) Nampula, the road is not metalled and has many pot holes. By 9 in morning the road gets pretty busy. On either side of this road is an all day market selling various things – vegetables, cooking oil, spices, garments, trinkets and what not! Public transport from nearby rural areas terminate here, and clogs traffic. We cross this area every day to reach the FACILIDADE office.

The Secretário do Bairro is not in his office. We visit the police outpost adjacent to the bairro office. The constable on duty helps us and calls up the Chefe de mobilização do Bairro Muahivire. We wait outside for the Chefe de mobilização do Bairro.

(left – Extensão Nampula main road) (right – The wait outside the Muahivire police check post)
António Neria, Chefe de mobilização do Bairro Muahivire (chief mobiliser of ward of Muahivire) finally arrives. He first speaks to the Secretário do Bairro, who has left town for the weekend, over the phone, about us. Before giving us permission to conduct the household survey, he writes down what we have to say about our quest. He will have to show it to the Secretário do Bairro when he is back.

We have already lost almost 3 quarter of an hour.

(Matilde and Armando watch the Chefe de mobilização do Bairro Muahivire, write)
Atlast, we are on our way. While Armando, Isidine, Lino and I decide to walk to the centre of the slum, which is to the left of the main road. The rest get into the car that has been hurriedly summoned.

It is a huge slum! Just the section we are in probably has 1,000 households, if not more.

After negotiating many turns and bends through narrow lanes, much of which have puddles and slippery ground conditions due to overnight rain, we reach the centre of this section, which is a large open space. A few children are playing football and some fruit sellers can be seen.

Lindo and Isidine decide to quench their thirst
Today the group has changed. Group 1 has Amelia, Lino, Bene and me. Armando, Matilde, Isidine and Faridah in group 2.

We also decide to do a full survey of 20 households, 10 households by each group, following the ASER India, 5th household and left hand rule that Armando likes so much after his trip to Aurangabad.

The 2 groups go to 2 different areas of this section of the slum.

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Bene explaining the purpose of our visit to the head of the family of the 1st household, just before we enter.
The 1st household has 3 children, but only 2 within our target group 6 to 16.

After collecting the household information, from the lady of the household (the head of the family does not interfere), Lino starts testing the older child, Esperanza, aged 14 and in Std. 7. She is fairly confident to face the assessment. She can only read words and can recognizes 2 digit numbers!

Lino testing the Esperanza, while Amelia records her performance
It is time to test Esperanza’s brother, aged 8 year, now. He keeps sitting in the same posture, with both his hands folded behind his head. He cannot recognise alphabets and identifies only the single digit numbers.
There is no child in the next sampled household, but we take down the household details. Same is the case with the next one. The 4th household has 2 children, but below the age of 6. We are losing time. Together with going to 10 households, our group also has to cover 20 children. The assumption was every household would have at least 2 children. We are proved wrong. It is well past noon, it gets dark early, and we have only surveyed 2 children in 1 household and collected household information from 4 households. We change our plan and ask around for large families with many children! The 5th household that we go to has 2 children in the range of 6 to 16 years, but none of them are home, they are all out selling knick-knacks on the main road.
We reach Mr. Mauricio’s home. He has many children, some are home - the younger ones, the older ones, as is the custom here, are out selling different things on the main road. Mr. Mauricio is rather sceptical about what we are doing. He wants to know how would he, as a parent, benefit from our assessments.

Contrasting moods of Mr. Mauricio:
(Left: before assessment – pensive)

(right: after assessment – pensive and grim! Making notes of his children’s performance. He will visit the bairro school on Monday)
Two daughters of Mr. Mauricio, aged 7 and 8, are tested. Neither of them can recognize letters and single digit numbers.

We also test one of his sons, aged 9. He is no exception.

Bottom right: Amelia giving feedback to Mr Mauricio
There are two boys in the next household. Julio Francisco aged 16 goes to Std 9 and his brother aged 15 is also in Std 9. Both are in story level, and answers the comprehension questions. Similarly, both can divide, but Lino can only divide mentally, when we give him the division sums in writing, he repeatedly gets them wrong!!

(left: Bene testing Julio in red vests)  
(right: Suhura Mucina – proud mother of Julio)
We manage to finish 20 children almost in darkness after many households, particularly the more affluent ones, refuse to participate in our assessment.

Like in Nacurare and Murrupula, we encounter many children who can answer the comprehension questions, but in the local language – Macua! Not in Portuguese.

Tomorrow is Sunday, we will finally go sight seeing – to Ilha de Mozambique and leave on Monday.

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Some pictures of children in bairro Muahivire