



## Breaking the political resource curse in natural gas management in Mozambique

Substantial natural resources have been discovered in Mozambique's Rovuma Basin in recent years. Resource and revenue mismanagement remain a risk, due to weak institutions and limited media independence in the country. A 3ie-supported impact evaluation assessed the impact of providing information to local leaders and communities in the region. The intervention shared details about the discovery of natural gas, plans for exploration, and implications for provincial government revenues and job creation with local leaders and citizens. It also included deliberation meetings with citizens, where community members discussed public policy priorities in relation to the revenues expected from the sale of natural gas.

### Highlights

- Elites (local leaders) capturing information to facilitate their own financial gains increased when information was given only to local leaders.
- The community-targeted information campaign increased citizens' mobilisation, trust in provincial and national government, and voice and accountability, and decreased the likelihood of violence.
- Findings show clear positive effects of the community-level treatments on awareness and knowledge about natural gas discovery.



## Intervention

The study comprised three activities provided to three different groups of communities. The first was an information module about natural resources that was provided only to village leaders. The intervention targeted high-ranking government village chiefs in rural communities and neighbourhood chiefs in urban settlements. These leaders influence conflict resolution, land allocation, formal ceremonies, aid allocation, employment and public programmes in their communities. The second activity provided information about natural resources and

natural resources management to leaders and citizens. The third activity provided this information and added a deliberation module. The deliberation module began by forming small citizens' committees of approximately 10 people. Each group was invited to meet and deliberate on priorities for local spending of natural resources.

Due to low literacy in the communities, the intervention focused on verbal information dissemination. The approach assumed that if leaders and citizens were better informed about governance in the extractives sector, then they

could identify opportunities to deliberate publicly, identify and communicate grievances, and demand better development through better use of resources.

The deliberation component comprised behavioural activities – real-world scenarios allowing unobtrusive measurement of leaders' and community members' decision-making. To further test behavioural preferences, the intervention also implemented three experimental games. The surveyed community members participated in all three games, and community leaders participated in two games.





## Main findings

The study demonstrated clear effects of the intervention on awareness and knowledge of the natural gas discovery. This was particularly true for the second and third activities (the information-only module and the combined information and deliberation module).

The information-only activity also showed positive effects on awareness and knowledge of leaders and on the awareness and self-reported knowledge of citizens. The information-only approach increased elite capture, in terms of attitudes more accepting of corruption, use of funds for other than specific public purposes, and less meritocratic and male preference in appointing community members for public service. The findings also show clear and consistent increases in rent-seeking by citizens, when faced with information targeting only the local leaders.

The study also measured the effects on citizen mobilisation, trust and accountability. Social capital measures of membership in professional organisations and local committees increased with the combined treatment of information and deliberation. Citizens were more effectively mobilised in activities where they were targeted to receive information, with the strongest effects when information was bundled with deliberation. Treatments aimed at both local leaders and citizens showed clear effects on increasing trust in and demand for accountability from provincial and national governments. Similar effects were also seen on people's voice with provincial and national administrators and on decreased likelihood of violence.

## Implications

### Policy and programming

The study shows that large-scale information campaigns can be effective at raising community awareness about a resource discovery and related management debates. It is also significant because it demonstrates clear increases in trust in government at provincial and national levels and decreases in the likelihood of violence.

### Programme implementers

The findings reinforce the importance of tailoring information to the intended audience. It is important that such campaigns also target citizens, rather exclusively directing interventions towards local leaders.

### Research

This impact evaluation can inform future research on the potential long-term interactions between the availability of information and resulting community behaviour.







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## About this brief

This brief is based on an impact evaluation report by Alex Armand, Ana Isabel Costa, Alexander Coutts,

Pedro Vicente and Ines Vilela, *Using information to break the political resource curse in natural gas*

*management in Mozambique*, published in 2019.



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