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The European Union in Resource-Rich Post-Conflict Contexts:
Mozambique as a Case Study between Critical Peacebuilding
and Interest Politics

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Abstract (English)

This thesis examines the European Union's peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique within a (post-)conflict-affected and resource-rich context. Against the backdrop of armed violence in Cabo Delgado, significant natural gas reserves and intensified security cooperation, it investigates how normative commitments, strategic interests, and resource-related dynamics intersect in EU external action. Drawing on qualitative interviews, a content analysis, and a theoretical framework informed by debates on "Normative Power Europe" (NPE) and critical peacebuilding, the study reconstructs both the EU's institutional self-representation and local perceptions of its engagement.

The findings show that EU peacebuilding cannot be reduced to a dichotomy between values and interests. While normative commitments to human rights, governance reform, and participation are clearly institutionalized, their implementation operates within a stabilization-oriented framework and are partly shaped by security cooperation and geopolitical considerations linked to resource governance. Resource interests thus influence EU engagement less through explicit economic directives than through the structural conditions in which peacebuilding unfolds. Local perceptions reflect this ambivalence: the EU is widely regarded as a reliable and comparatively progressive partner, yet its credibility is conditional. Selective norm enforcement and bureaucratic intervention logics contribute to a perceived legitimacy gap and limit transformative potential. The thesis concludes that EU peacebuilding in Mozambique represents a hybrid form of stabilizing normative engagement, characterized by a continuous negotiation between values and strategic interests in a resource-sensitive context.

Abstract (Deutsch)

Diese Arbeit untersucht das friedenspolitische Engagement der Europäischen Union in Mosambik in einem ressourcenreichen und (post-)konflikt Kontext. Vor dem Hintergrund bewaffneter Gewalt in Cabo Delgado, bedeutender Erdgasvorkommen und intensiver Sicherheitskooperation analysiert sie, wie normative Verpflichtungen, strategische Interessen und ressourcenbezogene Dynamiken im außenpolitischen Handeln der EU ineinandergreifen. Auf Grundlage qualitativer Interviews, einer Dokumentenanalyse sowie eines theoretischen Rahmens, der von Debatten zu „Normative Power Europe“ (NPE) und kritischer Friedensförderung geprägt ist, rekonstruiert die Arbeit sowohl die institutionelle Selbstrepräsentation der EU als auch lokale Wahrnehmungen ihres Engagements.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass sich das EU-Friedensengagement nicht auf eine Dichotomie zwischen Werten und Interessen reduzieren lässt. Während normative Verpflichtungen zu Menschenrechten, Governance-Reformen und Partizipation klar institutionalisiert sind, erfolgt ihre Umsetzung innerhalb eines stabilisierungsorientierten Rahmens, der teilweise von Sicherheitskooperation und geopolitischen Erwägungen im Zusammenhang mit Ressourcen-Governance geprägt ist. Ressourceninteressen beeinflussen das EU-Engagement somit weniger durch explizite ökonomische Zielsetzungen innerhalb von Friedensprogrammen als vielmehr durch die strukturellen Bedingungen, unter denen Friedensförderung stattfindet. Die lokalen Wahrnehmungen spiegeln diese Ambivalenz wider: Die EU wird weitestgehend als verlässlicher und vergleichsweise progressiver Partner angesehen, ihre Glaubwürdigkeit bleibt jedoch kontextabhängig. Selektive Normdurchsetzung und bürokratische Interventionslogiken tragen zu einer wahrgenommenen Legitimationslücke bei und begrenzen das transformative Potenzial. Die Arbeit kommt zu dem Schluss, dass das EU-Friedensengagement in Mosambik eine hybride Form stabilisierender normativer Politik darstellt, die durch eine kontinuierliche Aushandlung zwischen Werten und strategischen Interessen in einem ressourcensensiblen Kontext gekennzeichnet ist.

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List of Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EC	European Community
ECA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFSD	European Fund for Sustainable Development
EnP	Environmental Peacebuilding
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EPF	European Peace Facility
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
EUMAM MOZ	EU Military Assistance Mission Mozambique
EUTM MOZ	EU Training Mission Mozambique
FADM	Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
HVNRs	High-Value Natural Resources
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IDP	Internal Displaced Person
IfS	Instrument for Stability
ISIS(-M)	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (-Mozambique)
MIP	Multi-annual Indicative Programme
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe
OACPS	Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
QRF	Quick Reaction Forces
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
VDO	Village Development Organization

1 Introduction

The European Union (EU) portrays itself as a global actor grounded in normative commitments and value-based external action. In its foundational treaties and policy instruments, the Union emphasizes democracy, human rights, the rule of law, equality, sustainable development, and the promotion of peace as guiding principles of its foreign policy. According to Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union, the Union's external action shall be guided by the principles that have inspired its own creation and development, including democracy and respect for human rights (European Union, 2016, Art. 21 TEU). These commitments are reiterated in contemporary funding instruments such as the "European Instrument for Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation – Global Europe" (Regulation (EU) 2021/947), which explicitly states that the EU shall:

"[...] uphold and promote the Union's values, principles and fundamental interests worldwide in order to pursue the objectives and principles of the Union's external action [...] Union action should promote respect for and be rooted in international human rights law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in international humanitarian law and should be guided by the universality and indivisibility of human rights" (European Union, 2021b).

This value-based orientation is further reflected in the EU's self-definition as a community founded on human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights (European Union, n.d.-a). Human dignity is described as "inviolable"; equality is a foundational principle underpinning European integration; and the rule of law is the basis of all Union action, especially in the realm of external relations. The EU declares that its aims in the wider world are to "contribute to peace and security", promote sustainable development, eradicate poverty, ensure the "strict observance of international law", and foster solidarity and mutual respect among peoples (ibid.).

This self-understanding has been conceptualized most prominently by Ian Manners (2002), who famously described the EU as a "normative power". According to Manners, the Union's identity is constituted through the diffusion of norms rather than through traditional military or economic coercion. Ethical values are presented as fundamental both to the EU's legal basis and to its day-to-day policies (Manners, 2002, p. 253). While rhetoric alone does not suffice to establish the EU as a normative actor, official discourse consistently reinforces the centrality of values in external action (ibid.). In 2012, Catherine Ashton, then High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, characterized human rights as "a silver thread that runs through everything we do in external relations" thereby underscoring the EU's claim to normative coherence (European Commission, 2010).

Particularly, the EU emphasises its commitment to its values within the framework of peacebuilding, which “generally refers to a form of conflict management aimed at creating conditions for durable peace and preventing a post-conflict society from sliding into violence” (Kmec, 2022, p. 3). Through different EU instruments, peacebuilding is institutionalised as part of a broader security–development approach (European Commission, 2021a).

Yet, contemporary global dynamics complicate the seemingly straightforward alignment between normative commitments and external engagement in peacebuilding engagements. Therefore, resource-rich, conflict-affected regions have gained renewed geopolitical importance, particularly considering global competition over critical raw materials, energy security, and strategic supply chains (Roithner, 2015, pp. 65–66).

The intersection of fragile statehood, armed violence, and valuable natural resources presents a particularly complex field for international actors engaged in peacebuilding as within these contexts, questions arise regarding how critical peacebuilding, normative commitments, security objectives, and broader political and economic dynamics interact in practice (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018).

In this context, Mozambique constitutes a particularly relevant empirical setting. Since the discovery of significant natural gas reserves in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, the country has experienced both renewed armed violence and increased international engagement (Macuane et al., 2025, p. 1; Sidumo et al., 2024, p. 2). Regarding to this, the European Union has become an important actor in the field of security and peacebuilding, while Mozambique simultaneously occupies a growing role within global energy and resource debates (Delegation of the European Union to Mozambique, 2021a; European Commission, n.d.-e).

Engagement in resource-rich and conflict-affected environments, however, is often characterised by particular political and normative complexities. Peacebuilding interventions unfold alongside economic investments, energy security concerns, and geopolitical interests, which may reinforce, reshape, or complicate normative commitments rather than simply contradict them (Bruch et al., 2016, p. 10). Such contexts make external engagement particularly fragile and contested, as stabilisation efforts intersect with broader dynamics of resource governance and strategic positioning. This constellation does not presuppose a contradiction between normative aims and strategic considerations. Rather, it provides a context in which their potential entanglements, alignments, or tensions can be examined empirically. The Mozambican case thus offers an opportunity to analyse how the EU articulates and implements its peacebuilding engagement, and how this engagement is perceived on the ground in a resource-rich, conflict-affected environment.

1.1 Problem Statement and Relevance

As mentioned, Mozambique presents a complex setting for analysing contemporary international peacebuilding and development interventions. The country has been shaped by long-lasting political instabilities and armed conflict, most prominently the civil war between Frelimo (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique / Liberation Front of Mozambique) and Renamo (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana / Mozambican National Resistance) from 1977 to 1992, the effects of which continue to shape political structures and social relations today (Funada-Classen, 2013, pp. 3–4). Although the 1992 General Peace Agreement formally ended the civil war and was followed by successive processes of demobilisation, reintegration, and institutional reform, episodes of renewed political violence and militarised tensions have persisted (European Commission, 2024). Since 2017, an armed insurgency in the northern province of Cabo Delgado has introduced a new dimension of violent conflict, characterised by attacks on civilians, displacement, and increasing regional and international security involvement (ibid.). Despite these dynamics, Mozambique is frequently framed in policy and development discourse as a “post-conflict” state, which is a categorisation that reflects the formal end of large-scale civil war but highlights the persistence of structural fragilities and uneven state authority (Bertram, 2017, p. 80). At the same time, Mozambique possesses significant natural resource deposits, most notably large offshore natural gas reserves in Cabo Delgado. These discoveries have positioned the country as an emerging actor in global energy markets, attracting substantial foreign investment and geopolitical attention (African Business Guide, n.d.). The coexistence of renewed armed violence and expanding resource extraction renders Mozambique an analytically significant case for examining the entanglement of security, development, and resource governance.

Within this context, the European Union (EU) has become an active and multifaceted actor. Its engagement in Mozambique encompasses peacebuilding programmes, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and security initiatives (Delegation of the European Union to Mozambique, 2021a). The EU presents these engagements as part of its broader commitment to promoting peace, stability, sustainable development, and respect for human rights in its external action (ibid.).

Yet, critical scholarship in peace and conflict studies has increasingly questioned the assumptions underlying different peacebuilding approaches. Scholars argue that externally driven stabilisation efforts may reproduce power asymmetries, prioritise state-centric security over local needs, or become entangled with geopolitical and economic considerations (MacGinty & Richmond, 2013, pp. 763–764). In resource-rich, conflict-affected contexts in particular, the relationship between normative peacebuilding objectives and broader strategic dynamics, including energy security, economic partnerships, or

geopolitical positioning, becomes analytically significant (Richmond, 2020, p. 21; Hamilton, 2022, p. 32). This highlights the potential complexity of their interaction.

1.2 State of Research and Research Gap

Academic engagement with international peacebuilding and external intervention in post-conflict and conflict-affected states has expanded considerably over the past two decades. Early debates were largely shaped by the paradigm of liberal peacebuilding, emphasising institutional state-building, market liberalisation, rule of law¹ reforms, and electoral democracy as pathways to sustainable peace (Exo, 2017, p. 92). This model conceptualises peace as the outcome of functioning state institutions embedded in liberal economic and political orders. Critical peace and conflict studies have increasingly problematised this approach. Scholars argue that externally driven peacebuilding can reproduce Western governance templates, marginalise local agency, and entrench asymmetrical power relations (MacGinty & Richmond, 2013; Paffenholz, 2015). Rather than assuming neutrality, critical scholarship highlights that international actors are embedded in global political-economic structures. As Peterson (2014) notes, international actors are often perceived as “neutral external observers or benevolent interveners”, yet they are frequently “deeply involved in the political-economic structures central to conflicts” (p. 131). This entanglement may shape both the models transferred to local institutions and the incentives within fragile political economies (ibid.).

At the same time, research on the European Union as a global actor has been strongly influenced by the concept of “Normative Power Europe” (NPE) (Manners, 2002; Forsberg, 2011). According to this perspective, the EU’s identity and external action are rooted in the diffusion of norms such as democracy, human rights, and multilateralism (Manners, 2002, p. 253; Forsberg, 2011, p. 1191). Empirical research has examined how these norms are articulated in EU foreign and security policy instruments and operationalised in external interventions. Yet critical analyses question the coherence of this normative self-understanding, pointing to tensions between values and practices, the securitisation of development cooperation, and the growing strategic dimension of EU external action (Niemann & Junne, 2011; p. 103). Nevertheless, studies show that EU peacebuilding discourse increasingly incorporates notions of local ownership, participation, resilience, and civil society engagement (Bargués-Pedreny, 2018, p.138). However, it remains debated to what extent such concepts transform underlying power relations or instead operate within broader geopolitical and economic rationalities.

¹ The rule of law is understood as the principle that all actions of the state must be based on law and subject to legal review. Core elements include legality and transparency in law-making, legal certainty, prohibition of arbitrary use of power, effective judicial protection by independent and impartial courts and separation of powers and equality before the law (European Commission, n.d.-h).

Parallel to these discussions, research on the relationship between natural resources and conflict has been conducted. Resource governance is recognised as a central factor in shaping conflict dynamics, state formation, and post-war political economies (Lujala & Rustad, 2012, p. 3; Hamilton, 2024, p. 97). Regarding to this, growing attention is being paid to the expanding role of the private sector in peacebuilding and development cooperation. Hybrid governance arrangements, public–private partnerships, and corporate involvement in stabilisation contexts reveal new constellations of influence, responsibility, and interest entanglement (Lie, 2024, p. 1313). Yet empirical analyses that systematically link EU peacebuilding engagement, resource politics, and private sector involvement in specific conflict settings remain limited. Furthermore, Hamilton (2024) observes that “little attention has been drawn” to the role of resources in post-conflict situations (p. 97).

With regard to Mozambique, existing scholarship provides detailed analyses of the historical civil war, the political settlement between Frelimo and Renamo, and the more recent insurgency in Cabo Delgado (UCDP, 2025; Morier-Genoud, 2020). Studies also examine the political economy of gas extraction and its implications for regional inequality and governance (*ibid.*, pp. 396–397). However, there is comparatively little research that systematically analyses the EU’s role within this constellation, particularly at the intersection of peacebuilding engagement, security cooperation, and resource politics.

Moreover, local perspectives on EU-funded interventions, especially in a resource-rich and conflict-affected environment, remain underrepresented. While policy documents foreground normative commitments and participatory principles, there is limited empirical research examining how these engagements are perceived, negotiated, or contested by actors operating within Mozambican civil society and peacebuilding networks.

Against this background, there is a need for an empirically grounded and theoretically informed analysis that connects debates on normative power, critical peacebuilding, and resource governance within a concrete case. Such an approach allows for a differentiated examination of how normative commitments, institutional practices, and structural political–economic dynamics interact in a resource-rich, conflict-affected setting.

Hence, the following section outlines the objectives and research questions guiding this study.

1.3 Objectives and Research Questions

Building on the preceding discussion, this study examines the European Union's peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique in a resource-rich, conflict-affected context. It aims to analyse how the dimensions of critical peacebuilding, normative claims, and strategic interests potentially interact, overlap, or diverge in practice.

The overarching objective of this research is to critically investigate the relationship between the EU's official self-representation as a normative peace actor and its concrete engagement in a setting marked by armed violence, fragile statehood, and significant natural resource deposits. Therefore, the study seeks to reconstruct both the institutional discourse of the EU and the perceptions and experiences of actors operating within EU-funded projects in Mozambique.

More specifically, the thesis pursues three interconnected objectives:

- To reconstruct the EU's normative self-representation in its peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique.
- To analyse how resource-related dynamics and broader geopolitical considerations are addressed, integrated, or absent within this engagement, especially in the context of Cabo Delgado.
- To explore how local civil society actors and practitioners perceive and interpret EU peacebuilding engagement, including its legitimacy, priorities, and possible tensions between normative claims and practical implementation.

In line with these objectives, the central research question guiding this thesis is:

How can the EU's peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique be understood at the intersection of critical peacebuilding, normative commitments, and resource-related dynamics?

This overarching question is operationalised through the following sub-questions:

- (1) Is the EU's peacebuilding in Mozambique driven by normative values or by economic interest politics?
- (2) How do resource interests influence the EU's peacebuilding in post-conflict states?
- (3) How do local actors in Mozambique perceive the EU's peace policy?
- (4) To what extent can the EU's peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique be considered effective in addressing the drivers of conflict in Mozambique?

By formulating the research questions in this way, the study avoids assuming a predetermined outcome. Instead, it allows for an empirically grounded and theoretically informed examination of potential tensions, complementarities, or contradictions between normative rhetoric and practical engagement.

Besides, the topic holds significant relevance for the field of International Development Studies. Peacebuilding has become a central pillar of international development cooperation, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected states. At the same time, global competition over strategic resources, energy transitions, and geopolitical influence shapes external engagement in such contexts (Zumach, 2005, p. 15).

Resource-rich, post-conflict environments represent particularly complex areas, where efforts to promote stability, institutional reform, and socio-economic development intersect with investment interests, security cooperation, and global supply chains (Hamilton, 2022, p. 32). Understanding how these dimensions interact is crucial for assessing the transformative potential of external interventions.

2 Theoretical Framework

Having established the research objectives and questions, this main section turns to the theoretical and analytical focus of the thesis. It hence presents the conceptual foundations, the different peacebuilding approaches, and situates the European Union's peacebuilding interventions by examining how EU policies and practices evolved through history and how they interact with different approaches and theoretical frameworks.

2.1 Definition of Terms and Concepts

It is essential to establish conceptual clarity of terms and concepts that appear repeatedly throughout the analysis. In particular, the transitional stage referred to as post-conflict, the concepts and structures associated with peacebuilding, as well as the notion of resources require a precise definition, as they constitute the analytical foundation of this work. The following section outlines how these terms are understood and applied.

2.1.1 (Post-)Conflict

The terms surrounding concepts of "conflict" and "post-conflict" are key categories in the social sciences yet shaped by divergent theoretical and philosophical perspectives that lack a single, coherent theory (Bonacker & Imbusch, 1999, p. 73).

At its core, "conflict" can be understood as the clash of opposing interests and values (Pelinka, 2016, p. 17; Brzoska, 2014, p. 32). Conflicts manifest in multiple forms, such as interpersonal, societal, and international, each involving different actors and modes of contestation (Bonacker & Imbusch, 1999, p. 75). The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research defines political conflict as "a positional difference [...] between at least two decisive and directly involved actors, which is being carried out using observable and interrelated conflict measures that lie outside established regulatory procedures and threaten core state functions, the international order, or hold out the prospect to do so" (HIIK, n.d.). In peace and conflict studies, such conflicts are not necessarily regarded as purely destructive; they can generate social change and foster democratic processes (Brzoska, 2014, p. 32). Yet, conflicts often produce severe negative consequences, particularly when they are carried out violently (Bonacker & Imbusch, 1999, p. 81). Such conflicts, referred to as armed conflict, are further defined as "to exist when there is an armed confrontation between the armed forces of states (international armed conflict), or between governmental authorities and organised armed groups or between such groups within a state (non-international armed conflict)" (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)). The Geneva Conventions, through Additional Protocol I and Additional Protocol II, presents additional frameworks on how armed conflicts are classified and characterized (European Parliament, 2023).

Generally, conflict duration and recurrence appear to be related: longer, more destructive conflicts tend to reveal more about the relative military strength of the parties, thereby making negotiated settlements more feasible (Webersik and Levy, 2016, p. 57). However, extended conflicts also deplete military capabilities, exhaust resources, lower combatant morale, fatigue troops, and reduce popular support, while high-casualty civil wars can increase the likelihood of recurrence (ibid.). Armed conflicts typically end through (1) outright military victory by one party, (2) negotiated peace settlements, or (3) attrition, though low-intensity conflicts often conclude without a decisive victory or formal settlement – a pattern particularly common in Africa and Asia (ibid.).

The debate on the notion of “post-conflict”, which is especially relevant for this study, reflects both epistemological and ontological ambiguity. Epistemically, scholars question whether the term adequately captures empirical realities. Similarly, Lederach (2005) referred to post-conflict as a “misnomer” (p. 7) and later as “the greatest oxymoron of them all” (p. 43), highlighting that underlying structural causes of violence persist beyond ceasefires and agreements. Ontologically, post-conflict does not denote a stable state of peace but rather a transitional process marked by fragility, reform efforts, and international involvement (Bertram, 2017, p. 78, 80). Therefore, “Peace agreements provide a framework for ending hostilities and a guide to the initial stages of post-conflict reform. They do not create conditions under which the deep cleavages that produced the war are automatically surmounted” (Ramsbotham et. al., 2011, p. 231). Scholars have described the post-conflict condition as a “limbo” or “no war, no peace situation” (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 146). As such, “post-conflict” should be understood less as a definitive endpoint but as a fluid and uncertain transitional stage whose duration remains highly contested, ranging from “between five and ten or occasionally more years” (Paffenholz, 2009, p. 187).

Overall, Reisinger (2009) argues that all post-conflict situations are characterized by an “usually strong involvement of external actors in domestic governance, and they often show a high degree of societal divide reflecting fractionalization into different conflict parties” (Reisinger, 2009, p. 484). Furthermore, post-conflict states are often branded by recurrent violence and instability (Bruch et al., 2016, p. 3). It is therefore challenging to determine when a post-conflict phase has truly ended. A transition can be assumed once political, security, and economic debates and practices are no longer primarily shaped by the legacy of armed violence, but instead centre on broader and more conventional development goals (ibid.).

For the case of Mozambique, these conceptual clarifications are crucial. The country is frequently described as post-conflict due to the 1992 peace agreement between Frelimo and Renamo, yet it has continued to experience recurring violence, most recently in the

Cabo Delgado insurgency. In the 2024 Fragile² States Index, the country ranks 25th, indicating that the pressures it faces exceed the state's capacity to effectively manage them (Fragile States Index, 2024; n.d.). An epistemologically and ontologically nuanced understanding of "post-conflict" highlights that Mozambique's situation cannot be seen as a linear transition to peace. Instead, it underscores the importance of analysing the fragile, liminal, and contested nature of the post-conflict condition, providing the necessary analytical foundation to assess both the country's dynamics and the role of external actors, such as the European Union, in shaping processes of peacebuilding and resource governance.

2.1.2 Peace and Peacebuilding

The focus of this study also makes a clear conceptual understanding of "peace" and "peacebuilding" essential. "Peace" is not a singular or universally agreed-upon term, as Richmond (2020) emphasizes: "It is clear that peace is essentially contested as a concept. Inevitably, and following on from this, it is a subjective concept, depending on individual actors for definition, different methods and ontologies, and indeed different epistemological approaches. Its construction is a result of the interplay of different actors' attempts to define peace [...] according to their relative interests, identities, power and resources" (Richmond, 2020, p. 21). This underscores that peace can be understood in multiple ways. Yet Galtung's classical distinction between negative and positive peace remains central to the field: negative peace refers to the absence of direct, personal violence, while positive peace denotes the absence of structural violence embedded in political, economic, social, or cultural relations (Galtung, 1996, p. 14). Meyers (2019) further distinguishes between metaphysical understandings of peace, conceived as an overhistorical or divine order, and political understandings, where peace is culturally and legally constituted and requires institutional support and enforcement (pp. 25–26). Building on this, structuralist and Marxist approaches further radicalise the concept of peace by linking it explicitly to social justice and equity. Rather than equating peace with stability or institutional order, these perspectives conceptualise peace as incompatible with economic exploitation and class domination. As Richmond (2020, p. 86) argues, peace is only sustainable if it addresses structural inequalities and is underpinned by resistance to local and transnational structures of domination.

² Fragile states are commonly understood as polities in which state authority and capacity are significantly weakened. This fragility may manifest in the loss of effective territorial control and the monopoly over the legitimate use of force, the erosion of legitimacy in collective decision-making, limited capacity to provide basic public services and constraints in engaging with other states as a fully functioning member of the international community (Fragile States Index, n.d.).

Based on these theoretical foundations, this thesis understands peace as dynamic and multi-dimensional. It encompasses (1) the reduction or absence of direct, personal violence, (2) the mitigation of structural violence, and (3) the institutionalization of durable, non-violent forms of conflict management (Meyers, 2019, pp. 27–28; Senghaas, 1994, 2007). This theoretical variety directly shaped the emergence of peacebuilding as a distinct field, since the way we define peace inevitably has implications for the approaches on how to deal with conflict. Accordingly, “peacebuilding interventions have taken different shapes and forms in the past” (Belschner, 2019, p. 4).

Originally coined by Galtung, the concept of peacebuilding was understood as going beyond “peacemaking”³ and “peacekeeping”⁴, aiming instead at the establishment of non-exploitative structures that address the structural causes of war (Galtung, 1976; Kmec, 2022, pp. 18–19). Therefore, “peacebuilding” refers to the processes and interventions aimed at achieving and sustaining peace through institutionalized, non-violent conflict management. This processual understanding is echoed by Paffenholz (2021), who conceptualises peacebuilding as a continuous renegotiation of the social and political contract rather than a linear transition from war to peace (Paffenholz, 2021, p. 368).

Scholars and practitioners subsequently developed peacebuilding into a broad framework encompassing both immediate post-war reconstruction and longer-term violence prevention. Importantly, peacebuilding is no longer understood as a strictly sequential process following peacekeeping but as an overlapping and interlinked set of practices in which peace, security, development, and governance must be pursued simultaneously (de Coning, 2008). Newman et al. (2009) summarize this contextualization as “preventing the resumption or escalation of violent conflict in conflict-prone societies and establishing a durable and self-sustaining peace; addressing the underlying sources of conflict; building or rebuilding peaceful social institutions and values, including respect for human rights; building or rebuilding institutions of governance and the rule of law” (p. 8). Therefore, peacebuilding is a long-term commitment, encompassing both practical and policy-oriented measures (Duke & Courtier, 2009, p. 5; Webersik & Levy, 2016, p. 44).

³ Peacemaking refers to a consensus-oriented process aimed at ending violent conflict through negotiation. It involves a broad range of societal actors, including political leaders, elites and, in some cases, wider segments of the population, with the objective of reaching a mutually agreed political settlement that addresses the underlying causes of the conflict (Handelman, 2017).

⁴ “Peacekeeping focuses on the maintenance of order and stability in conflict or post-conflict settings. It typically entails the deployment of political, civilian, and military instruments to monitor ceasefires, reduce violence and create the conditions necessary for longer-term peace processes, rather than negotiating the terms of peace itself (Handelman, 2017).

2.1.3 Resources

Recognising conflict, peace, and peacebuilding as multidimensional and context-dependent processes is particularly important in resource-rich, post-conflict settings such as Mozambique, where fragile institutions, ongoing violence, and international engagement intersect. In such contexts, natural resources often constitute a central ground through which power relations, development trajectories, and security priorities are negotiated. Analysing the role of resources is therefore important for understanding how political-economic structures shape conflict dynamics and condition the possibilities and limits of peacebuilding.

Against this backdrop, resource-related questions have gained increasing prominence in international politics. Zumach (2005) emphasises that struggles over the distribution of increasingly scarce resources have become a defining feature of global political relations (Zumach, 2005, p. 15). This growing salience underscores the need to clarify what is meant by “resources” in conflict and peacebuilding research.

Resources can be broadly understood as material or immaterial goods used to achieve specific objectives (Brzoska, 2014, p. 31). This broad definition captures the relevance of resources for individuals, groups, organisations, and states alike. Their strategic importance is particularly evident in sectors such as energy production, agriculture, and industry, rendering societies and international actors increasingly dependent on their extraction and governance (Jakobeit & Meißner, 2019, p. 610). A fundamental distinction is commonly drawn between renewable, organic resources and non-renewable, mineral resources (Jakobeit & Meißner, 2019, p. 613). Building on this, Denninghoff (2015) differentiates between three main categories of resources: non-renewable and exhaustible resources, recyclable non-renewable resources, and renewable resources (see Table 1).

Non-renewable
and
exhaustible resources

Raw materials that renew only over geological time periods, such as fossil fuels (lignite, hard coal, natural gas, or crude oil), rocks, sediments, or salts. The period of their renewal spans several generations.

Recyclable, non-renewable,
and exhaustible resources

Raw materials that can be reused through chemical and physical processes. Unlike the above-mentioned resources, they are not destroyed by their use.

Renewable resources	Reproducible resources, whose growth is determined by their own regeneration and reproductive capacity as well as by environmental conditions. A distinction is made between resources whose availability is limited (biofuels, soils, forests) and those whose availability is not reduced (solar energy, wind, geothermal).
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Table 1: Classification of Resource Types and Their Characteristics (Denninghoff, 2015, p. 22)

Beyond such typologies, resources can also be differentiated according to their location, accessibility, concentration, or economic profitability (Jakobeit & Meißner, 2019, pp. 613–614). For the purposes of this study, a narrower analytical focus is adopted. It concentrates on natural, non-renewable, and exhaustible resources in conflict-affected and post-conflict settings. High-value natural resources (HVNRs), such as oil, natural gas, minerals, gemstones, and timber are of particular relevance, as they have commonly been linked to the dynamics of civil wars and violent conflict (Lujala & Rustad, 2012, p. 3). This is because HVNRs are frequently used by armed actors, as “at least one of the armed parties uses them to finance their activities” (Hamilton, 2024, p. 97). Similarly, scholars emphasize that “dependence on natural resource production weakens state structures [...]. Weak states, in turn, are at higher risk of civil war” (Webersik & Levy, 2016, p. 44). These perspectives situate resources at the intersection of political economy, state capacity, and conflict dynamics.

At the same time, resources should not be understood as inherently conflict-inducing. Rather, natural resources can both fuel armed conflict and shape the institutional conditions under which conflicts are managed or resolved. As Le Billon (2001) argues, natural resources finance and motivate armed conflict while simultaneously weakening the capacity of political institutions to resolve disputes peacefully (Le Billon, 2001, p. 562).

This duality becomes particularly visible in the distinction between lootable and non-lootable resources. Easily extractable, lootable resources such as gold, diamonds, or tropical timber have historically prolonged conflicts by enabling decentralized war economies and providing armed actors with independent sources of finance. By contrast, non-lootable resources such as fossil fuels require significant technical capacity, infrastructure, and centralized control, thereby shaping different political incentives in post-conflict settings (Webersik & Levy, 2016, p. 44).

Yet, in some cases, resources may also encourage state-building efforts, regulatory frameworks, and negotiated settlements, as control over extraction and revenues becomes linked to institutional consolidation (Le Billon, 2001; Hamilton, 2022, p. 32). Against this

background, managing natural resources can help mitigate ongoing conflicts and prevent them from breaking out in the first place (Hellendorff, 2015, p. 121). Moreover, natural resources can serve as important sources of revenue, contribute to economic growth, and sustain local livelihoods, while enabling governments to finance public goods such as education, infrastructure, and other essential services (Bruch et al., 2016, p. 5). Resources thus occupy a structurally ambivalent position within conflict and post-conflict contexts. While they can intensify violence and undermine political institutions, they may also create material incentives for conflict management and post-conflict stabilization. Hence, “[...] short-term conflict resolution often requires a preliminary agreement on resource sharing, including for local commanders and foot-soldiers who may otherwise resist it to preserve their entitlements” (Le Billon, 2001, p. 580). Longer-term solutions depend on institutional reforms that ensure broader societal access to resource benefits, reduce reliance on state rents for political survival, and promote economic diversification and accountable governance structures (ibid.).

These dynamics are embedded in broader global political-economic structures. The extraction and governance of natural resources are closely linked to the “imperial lifestyle” of the Global North, characterized by Europe’s increasing dependence on resource flows from the Global South (Brand & Dietz, 2022, p. 245). As a result, investments in mining, land use, and oil and gas extraction in the Global South continue to expand (Dorn, 2025). This unequal global distribution of resources fuels dispossession, social conflict, and new forms of dependency (Jakobeit & Meißner, 2019, p. 610). These processes are commonly discussed under the notion of the “(local) resource curse”, which captures how resource abundance can undermine governance, accountability, and social cohesion, while fuelling displacement, repression, and social fragmentation on a local level rather than inclusive development (Hamilton, 2022, p. 48).

From this perspective, resources are not only linked to conflict dynamics but also carry strategic significance for external actors, whose political, economic, and security interests shape both extraction practices and peacebuilding interventions. Therefore, critical perspectives draw attention to the underlying assumptions embedded in dominant resource discourses. Hamilton (2022) criticises the anthropocentric framing of resources, which presupposes a nature–culture dichotomy and reduces nature to its instrumental value for human use (p. 22). This critique highlights the ethical and epistemological dimensions that inform debates on resources, conflict, and international governance, and it underscores the contested nature of resource-based development models.

In sum, resources in fragile and post-conflict states are inherently ambivalent. They can exacerbate tensions, finance armed conflict, support peacebuilding initiatives, and function as strategic assets for both domestic and international actors. A nuanced understanding of

these dynamics is essential for analysing the relationship between natural resources, conflict, and peace, particularly in contexts such as Mozambique, and for assessing the strategic interests of external actors, including the European Union, in resource-related interventions.

2.2 Peacebuilding Approaches

Within existing peacebuilding debates and practices, a range of approaches has emerged, each characterized by distinct priorities, underlying assumptions, and key factors. To grasp their historical origins, structural logic, and implications, it is important to outline and examine these different models and paradigms. Accordingly, this chapter begins by introducing the liberal peacebuilding model, then turns to critical and alternative perspectives. Mapping these approaches provides a foundation for understanding the evolution and specific characteristics of the European Union's peacebuilding strategies.

Overall and across many of these approaches, external intervention is commonly justified by the assumption that post-conflict states lack the capacity to consolidate peace independently and require international assistance to prevent political and economic decline (Webersik & Levy, 2016, p. 59).

2.2.1 Liberal Approach

The liberal model of peacebuilding has long represented the dominant paradigm within peacebuilding debates. Emerging most prominently after the Cold War, peacebuilding was understood as “external interventions that are designed to prevent the eruption or return of armed conflict” (Barnett et al., 2007, p. 36). Liberal peacebuilding became the guiding model for international strategies, combining security, economic development, humanitarian assistance, governance reform, and also ideological interests (Newman et al., 2009, pp. 8–9), underlined by the idea that “liberal interventionism in terms of underdevelopment and violent conflict has been tied to a political interest and global power configuration: anti-communism and soon thereafter the shift from colonial to post-colonial control” (Pospisil, 2017, p.2).

At its core, the liberal model rests on the assumption that democratization, rule of law, and marketization form the necessary preconditions for sustainable peace. In this view, peacebuilding is primarily pursued through processes of state-building, understood as the “externally assisted reform, construction or reconstruction of legitimate state institutions and the institutional infrastructure inevitable for the functioning of a state” (Kmec, 2022, p. 21). Accordingly, the central aim is to restore a country's institutional capacity for self-sustaining peace (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006, p. 46). Following this reasoning, durable peace is understood to depend on robust democratic political institutions that ensure political representation, support a market-based economy, and enable sustainable economic

development (Natorski, 2011, p. 3). Hence, as Chandler (2016) summarizes, “the solution to the problem of peace is liberal forms of governance” (p. 34). In practice, this means that post-conflict stabilization was often pursued through the export and implementation of Western-style liberal democracy, the rule of law, and market-economy models (Paffenholz, 2021, p. 367). However, liberal peacebuilding is not a monolithic project but rather an internally diverse paradigm, that distinguishes between several overlapping strands, each emphasizing different priorities and methods (Natorski, 2011, pp. 5–6):

<i>Conservative model</i>	This top-down approach prioritizes security and sovereignty as the foundation for statebuilding. Peace is often “imposed by military forces and sustained by coercive conditionality and dependency measures”. Security provision is considered the key precondition for peace.
<i>Orthodox model</i>	Like the conservative model, it remains state-centric but introduces a degree of local ownership and sensitivity to cultural context. Elite-level negotiations predominate, yet there is a growing “emphasis on local ownership and engagement with civil society”.
<i>Emancipatory model</i>	This approach seeks to transcend rigid state-centric logics by prioritizing “social justice, human security and welfare”. It is critical of universalistic liberal ambitions and strongly values bottom-up processes shaped by local communities, private actors, and social movements, with external donors playing a supportive rather than directive role.

Table 2: Liberal Peacebuilding Models (Natorski, 2011, pp. 5–6, based on Richmond et al., 2011)

These variations illustrate how liberal peacebuilding spans a spectrum, from coercive, security-oriented approaches to participatory, emancipatory forms that seek greater local inclusion. Nevertheless, international peacebuilding often prioritized top-down stability and state reconstruction at the expense of addressing underlying causes of conflict (Newman et al., 2009, p. 4).

Because of this and despite its normative appeal, the liberal model has been increasingly contested and renegotiated. Critics highlight its tendency to operate on a linear, technocratic logic, where “perceived problems could be fixed with the right institutional solution” (Belschner, 2019, p. 4). The model’s heavy reliance on external schemes often led to what Peterson (2014) calls the “construction of liberal peaces of what they define as vestiges of weak, failed and collapsed states” (p. 3). Accordingly, this approach, rather than transforming conflict structures, reproduces dependency and exclusion. Especially the failures of peace operations in Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia in the 1990s revealed

significant gaps between liberal ideals and their practical implementation (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015, p. 826). As a result, growing attention, especially in the 2000s and 2010s, was directed towards critical approaches to peacebuilding, as discussed in the following chapter.

2.2.2 Critical Perspectives on Peacebuilding

Critical approaches to peacebuilding emerged in response to the shortcomings of the liberal peace model. Although liberal theory and practice continue to shape recent peacebuilding missions, the assumption that democratization, the rule of law, and marketization constitute the essential foundations for achieving sustainable peace is contested. Richmond (2020) and Exo (2017) point out that there is a “double finding” in such liberal ideas, since democracies have repeatedly engaged in wars with non-democracies (Exo, 2017, p. 92; Richmond, 2020, p. 110). This is further emphasised by the assumption that democratization processes in fragile or divided societies can increase, rather than reduce, the risk of conflict. In such contexts, premature liberalization politics may worsen social divisions, ultimately undermining peacebuilding efforts (Newman et al., 2009, pp. 39–40). Beyond these structural criticisms, Paris (2010) identifies three central limitations of liberal peacebuilding practice: first, its insufficient consideration of local conditions and lack of engagement with domestic stakeholders; second, the contradictions between peacebuilding objectives, instruments, and the diverse practices of international actors; and third, the tendency toward premature mission withdrawal due to limited resources or ambiguous evaluation criteria (p. 347). Similarly, the liberal economic dimension of peacebuilding has been criticized for deepening inequality and weakening state capacity in fragile settings, as they “do not respond to societal needs, but instead promote a top-down culture of neoliberal wealth” (Richmond, 2011, pp. 53–54). Drawing on Lenin, Richmond (2020) further argues that imperialist structures embedded in global capitalism make peace impossible, as they hinder progress toward social democracy and equitable societal arrangements (p. 76). This critique highlights a fundamental tension between neoliberal economic prescriptions and the goals of sustainable, inclusive peacebuilding. Early critics also highlighted that the liberal peace framework often proved “short-sighted, overly optimistic, insufficiently nuanced, and unrepresentative of global perspectives” (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, p. 11). Subsequent discourse has reinforced this critique by emphasizing that the top-down, linear progression envisioned by liberal peacebuilding fails to reflect the complex, dynamic, and non-linear realities of post-conflict societies (Paffenholz, 2021, pp. 367–368).

Building on this, critical and postcolonial scholars argue that liberal peacebuilding interventions often reproduce hierarchies and structural inequalities between donor and recipient societies by their top-down approach (Meyers, 2019, p. 31). The creation of

institutions modelled on Western liberal democracies and market economies leads international actors to frequently transfer particular ideologies and governance norms, reinforcing Western hegemony (Richmond, 2011, p. 53-54). In some cases, states are stigmatized as “failed” or “corrupt” if they do not conform to Western templates, highlighting a central tension between the universalistic aspirations of liberal peace and local realities (Kmec, 2022, pp. 21–22). This process risks marginalizing local actors and perpetuating socio-economic inequalities, as peacebuilding becomes a “political accomplishment settled by bureaucratic and political power” rather than an inclusive undertaking (Barnett et al., 2007, p. 54).

For these reasons, scholars such as Lederach (2005) were among the first to frame peacebuilding as a dynamic, nonlinear process. Therefore, peace cannot be engineered through a standardized, externally imposed sequence of reforms, which implies the need to develop alternative forms of peacebuilding, that are more of a post-colonial nature and include every-day and hybrid aspects (Richmond, 2011, p.45).

From a postcolonial perspective, the universal logic of the liberal approach not only clashes with local cultures and values but can also reduce the legitimacy of interventions and, paradoxically, increase the risk of renewed conflict (Natorski, 2011, p. 4). The failures of large-scale interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan have fostered an emerging adaptive understanding of peacebuilding, which recognizes peace as a process of continuous negotiation shaped by local realities, which implies a recognition that “tools such as conflict analysis or needs assessments, while necessary and important, can never generate a fully accurate understanding of a conflict-affected social system” (de Coning, 2018, p. 309).

This gave rise to what MacGinty and Richmond (2013) describe as the “local turn” in peacebuilding – a paradigmatic shift away from externally driven state-building toward holistic approaches that prioritize local agency, knowledge, and legitimacy (pp. 763–764). The local turn emphasizes that “the greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long term is always rooted in the local people and their culture” (Lederach, 1997, p. 94). It encompasses two interrelated yet distinct dimensions. On the one hand, it views the inclusion of local actors primarily as enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of peacebuilding interventions through local ownership, capacity-building, and governance models adapted to specific contexts (MacGinty & Richmond, 2013, p. 775). On the other hand, it carries an emancipatory dimension that aims to amplify “voices from below” and challenge the dominance of externally imposed frameworks by promoting the active participation and agency of local communities in shaping peacebuilding processes (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, p. 11). Local engagement should be understood as a guiding principle of peacebuilding rather than a mere procedural requirement. The inclusion of local

actors, knowledge, and cultural contexts can enhance the legitimacy and sustainability of peace efforts (Richmond, 2011, p. 112). However, this engagement must be approached critically. Local agency and knowledge should not be romanticised, as they may also reproduce existing power asymmetries, exclusionary dynamics, or non-transparent governance structures (MacGinty & Richmond, 2013, p. 770). Thus, critical engagement with the local entails both recognition of its emancipatory potential and awareness of its possible complicity in perpetuating inequalities (ibid.). Moreover, adaptive peacebuilding approaches position external actors as facilitators rather than directors, supporting resilience, social justice, and long-term stability through context-dependent and participatory processes (ibid.). The “Localism” therefore challenges a global order: “At the heart of the local turn are notions of particularism and local variation that confront universalist ideas and practices, as well as the ‘natural’ historical progressiveness that places the North/West at the top of the current international epistemic hierarchy, simultaneously absolved from blame for colonialism and inequality” (MacGinty & Richmond, 2013, p. 772). Accordingly, the “local turn” not only promotes participation; it questions the epistemic hierarchy embedded in liberal peacebuilding and calls for greater sensitivity to context, history, and power. Building on this critique, more recent studies conceptualize peacebuilding not as the linear implementation of abstract norms but as an adaptive and relational process. This idea of the “local turn” is reflected in the notion of “perpetual peacebuilding”, which conceptualizes peace not as an end-state but as an ongoing process of (re-) negotiations, resistance, and adaptation (Bargués-Pedreny, 2020; Paffenholz, 2021, p. 367).

As Bargués-Pedreny (2020) notes, “in abandoning abstract and universal principles and instead engaging with concrete and context-specific situations, emancipatory forms of peacebuilding shift focus from addressing the causes of war (liberal peace) to concerns with the consequences of peacebuilding processes (hybrid peace)” (Bargués-Pedreny, 2020, p. 245). In other words, the emphasis moves from exporting predefined institutional models toward managing the complex effects that interventions themselves generate. Over time, several international actors have sought to institutionalize lessons from the “local turn” by incorporating elements of traditional knowledge and field-based experience into their peacebuilding frameworks: “External actors no longer claim to have the only legitimate knowledge and experience to manage situations. On the contrary, they value local wisdom, show a commitment of ‘doing no harm’ and are careful not to undermine existing local recuperative capacities” (Bargués-Pedreny, 2018, p.138). These emerging “best practices” include multi-dimensional commitments to rebuilding military, legal, political, economic, social, and cultural structures that can foster a lasting culture of peace. In doing so, they aim to transform externally driven interventions into more hybrid models by sustainable

partnerships grounded in mutual learning and local legitimacy (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, p. 12). Yet, several scholars contend that, although these policy discourses present themselves as emancipatory alternatives to dominant, top-down liberal intervention models, the overall sentiment within the field remains marked by frustration and disillusionment, stemming from a persistent gap between rhetoric and implementation (Bargués-Pedreny, 2020, pp. 237–240). Hence, critical, postcolonial, and adaptive perspectives converge on a shared insight, where sustainable peace cannot be externally engineered through liberal templates (Meyers, 2019, p. 31). Instead, peace must be understood as a co-created, evolving process rooted in local agency, legitimacy, and social cohesion (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, pp. 11–12; Paffenholz, 2021, pp. 367–368). This next phase of peacebuilding is characterized by the idea that the end-state of peacebuilding processes is open to context-specific interpretations of peace (Call & de Coning, 2017, p. 262). In response to this, the concept of “Adaptive Peacebuilding”, most prominently associated with Cedric de Coning, has gained increasing traction in recent years. Adaptive peacebuilding, a normative and functional approach, seeks to translate the lessons of critical and hybrid peace scholarship into actionable policy frameworks (de Coning, 2023, p. 28). It emphasizes iterative learning, local feedback loops, and flexible programming that can adjust to evolving political and social dynamics. The approach attempts to reconcile normative aspirations with empirical uncertainty: instead of exporting universal models, external actors are encouraged to support locally driven processes while remaining responsive to unintended consequences and shifting power constellations: “In contrast with top-down or deterministic approaches to peacebuilding, Adaptive Peacebuilding is a process where local, national and international peacebuilders, together with the societies, communities, and people affected by the conflict, actively engage in a structured collaborative process to sustain peace and resolve conflicts by employing an inductive and iterative process of learning and adaptation” (de Coning, 2023, p. 28). Adaptive Peacebuilding is built on six interrelated principles. First, peace initiatives must be context- and time-specific, emerging from collaboration with those directly affected by conflict rather than being externally imposed. Second, the approach is goal-oriented and problem-driven, requiring joint identification of key challenges and clear agreement on what change efforts should achieve. Third, it promotes the simultaneous implementation of multiple initiatives that are continuously assessed and adjusted through an ongoing learning process. Fourth, because outcomes are uncertain, it emphasizes experimentation and diversity, testing different approaches based on clearly articulated theories of change. Fifth, it relies on active monitoring, feedback, and participatory decision-making to determine which initiatives should be discontinued, adapted, expanded, or scaled up, while also refining broader strategies and assumptions. Finally, Adaptive Peacebuilding is inherently iterative. Since social and political systems are dynamic and constantly

evolving, any progress is provisional and must be revisited and revised over time through continuous learning and adaptation (de Coning, 2023, pp. 28–29). Overall, this approach is characterized by participative structures. As de Coning notes, throughout all processes, “the societies, communities and people that are intended to benefit from a peacebuilding initiative are fully involved in all aspects of that initiative” and can drive their own processes (ibid., p. 29).

At the same time, de Coning’s approach embraces uncertainty and focuses on processes rather than end-states (de Coning, 2018), leaving open questions about whether institutional donors are structurally capable of embracing genuine adaptability, given funding cycles, accountability mechanisms, and geopolitical constraints.

2.3 European Union Peacebuilding

As the different approaches to peacebuilding have been explained, this chapter now aims to explore the EU's peacebuilding approaches over the decades to further develop a differentiated understanding of the EU's peacebuilding, which largely shape the EU's peacebuilding actions in Mozambique today.

2.3.1 History and Key Programs

Generally, the evolution of the European Union's peacebuilding approach cannot be understood without tracing its historical and institutional roots, which go back to the aftermath of the Second World War (European Union, n.d.-b). Over the decades, this foundational narrative of peace has progressively expanded, from ensuring stability within Europe's borders to promoting peace and security across the globe. Yet the trajectory of EU peacebuilding doesn't reflect a linear evolution but a complex interplay between idealism, strategic necessity, and institutional adaptation, which is further outlined across the main periods of the EU's peacebuilding.

(a) Post–World War II Foundations:

The origins of European peacebuilding lie in the post-war reconstruction of Western Europe. The creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 and the Treaty of Rome in 1957 institutionalized the principle that economic interdependence could prevent renewed conflict (European Union, n.d.-b). By pooling coal and steel, the essential war materials, the ECSC sought to make war between France and Germany “not merely unthinkable but materially impossible” (European Union, n.d.-c). These early efforts framed peace as a structural condition resulting from shared prosperity, cooperation, and multinational governance.

Yet, in this early phase, peacebuilding was not a policy field, but a political philosophy. This approach reflected what Duchêne (1972) later labelled “Civilian Power Europe”, a Europe that wields influence through non-military means such as diplomacy, trade, and aid (Duchêne, 1972, p. 34). Peacebuilding was inward-looking, oriented toward reconciliation within Western Europe, and later toward assisting reconstruction in Southern Europe after the end of dictatorship (e.g., Greece, Spain, Portugal).

During the Cold War, the European Community (EC) remained largely a regional actor. NATO and the U.S. dominated security policy, while the EC focused on economic integration and external development cooperation (Natorski, 2011, p. 1). Therefore, “the European Union has [...] presented itself as a successful peace project that ensured the reconciliation and peaceful development of Western Europe during the Cold War and subsequent reintegration of divided Europe, bringing about stability and prosperity”

(Natorski, 2011, p. 1). Eventually, the seeds of external peace engagement were sown through the Lomé Conventions (1975–2000), which institutionalized development partnerships between the European Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states: “The Lome Convention is an imaginative approach to improving the ACP states economies through trade and aid stimuli that the ACP states themselves are involved in determining” (European Community, 1977, p. 1). Although primarily designed as trade and development instruments, the Lomé Conventions included economic mechanisms such as STABEX that sought to stabilise export earnings and thus contributed indirectly to structural stability in ACP economies (Hasenpflug, 2019). In retrospect, they reflected early elements of what would later evolve into the liberal peacebuilding model, linking economic development, governance, and political conditionality as pathways to peace.

(b) Post–Cold War Transformation

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s marked a turning point. The wars in Bosnia and Kosovo revealed the inadequacy of purely economic or diplomatic approaches to crisis management and the EU’s lack of coherent foreign policy capacity (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015, p. 826): “In the wake of the end of the Cold War and conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s, it became clear that Europe needed capability to prevent conflicts and manage crises autonomously” (European Union, 2025). This catalysed the development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) under the 1993 Treaty of Maastricht (*ibid.*).

At the same time, global debates around peace and security were undergoing profound change. The UN’s Agenda for Peace (1992) introduced the concept of “post-conflict peacebuilding” as a key component of the international response to conflict, focusing on institutional reform, governance reconstruction, and socioeconomic recovery (Belschner, 2019, p. 4). The EU quickly aligned itself with this emerging liberal peacebuilding paradigm, embracing the view that democracy, human rights, market liberalization, and the rule of law were the universal building blocks of sustainable peace (Kmec, 2022, p. 21).

The Amsterdam Treaty (1997) and the Cologne European Council (1999) established the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), introducing the first civilian and military crisis management capacities (European Union, 2025). This marked the EU’s transition from a purely civilian power to a hybrid actor combining development, diplomacy, and defence. As the EU then began deploying missions in the Balkans and Africa, peacebuilding moved from rhetoric to practice (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, p. 19).

(c) The 2000s:

The early 2000s witnessed the formal consolidation of peacebuilding as a distinct pillar of EU external action. The “Communication on Conflict Prevention” (European Commission, 2001) and the “Gothenburg Programme” (European Council, 2001) established a framework linking development, diplomacy, and security through what became known as the “security-development nexus”. These initiatives sought to integrate conflict sensitivity across EU policies, positioning prevention and post-conflict reconstruction as part of a single continuum of engagement (Natorski, 2011, p. 1).

In parallel, the EU expanded its operational reach through the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), later renamed the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The CSDP became the operational arm of EU peacebuilding, encompassing both civilian and military crisis management. Civilian CSDP missions focused on the rule of law, police reform, electoral support, and governance assistance. At the same time, military operations addressed stabilization, security sector reform (SSR), as well as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) (Moser, 2020, p. 1). Between 2003 and 2020, the EU deployed more than 40 missions on three continents under this framework (Kmec, 2022, p. 2).

Financially, this evolution was supported by the Instrument for Stability (IfS), introduced in 2007 with a EUR 2 billion budget for 2007–2013 (INCAS Consulting Report for the European Commission, 2011, p. 6). The IfS enabled the EU to respond flexibly to emerging crises and address the structural causes of conflict worldwide. Its measures ranged from small arms control to mediation, counterterrorism, and resource governance. While ambitious, the IfS reflected the dominant orthodox liberal peace model prioritizing law and order, state institutions, and market-based reforms over transformative or emancipatory peace (Natorski, 2011, p. 7-8).

The Treaty of Lisbon (2009) further institutionalized these efforts by creating the European External Action Service (EEAS) and formally embedding peace and security within the EU’s legal architecture (European Union, 2025). Article 10A(c) of the Treaty calls to “preserve peace, prevent conflicts, and strengthen international security” (Treaty of Lisbon, (2007/C 306/01)). The Lisbon Treaty also established the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, consolidating external action under a single framework (European Council, 2026).

However, despite its expanding institutional framework, the EU’s peacebuilding remained conceptually fragmented. As scholars note, not even EU officials have a clear picture of “what peacebuilding actually entails” (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, p. 13). The various EU institutions often differ in their understanding of the term (ibid.).

(d) The 2010s:

By the mid-2010s, fatigue with liberal peacebuilding and the challenges of intervention in Afghanistan, Libya, and the Sahel prompted a rethinking of EU engagement (de Coning, 2018, p. 309). Also, with the IfS coming to an end in 2013, the new program “Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace” (IcSP) was introduced (European Commission, 2014). The EU’s financing instrument for the period 2014–2020 aimed at supporting conflict prevention, crisis response and peacebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. It was designed to enable rapid responses to political crises and violent conflicts while also addressing structural drivers of instability and global or transregional security threats, including violent extremism, organised crime, and security sector governance (European Commission, 2014). Its operational logic was designed to combine flexibility with strategic targeting, enabling the EU to finance innovative, small-scale, or short-term interventions in rapidly evolving contexts. In doing so, the instrument reflected the EU’s broader effort to integrate security, development, and peace within its external action framework.

Nevertheless, this integrated approach has not remained uncontested. Critics argue that the growing securitisation of external action risks instrumentalising peacebuilding objectives, as interventions may prioritise stabilisation and state-centric governance reforms over more transformative or locally driven processes of change (Bergmann, 2018, pp. 1254–1255). This tendency became more pronounced with the publication of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) in 2016, which marked a shift towards a resilience-oriented framework. Replacing earlier emphases on “deep democracy” and comprehensive state-building, the strategy advanced a more pragmatic focus on stabilisation and the prevention of regional spillovers (Belschner, 2019, p. 6). In this sense, “resilience” signified a paradigmatic reorientation: rather than seeking to transform fragile states into liberal democracies, the EU increasingly aimed to stabilise them sufficiently to contain insecurity and regional instability. Bargués-Pedreny argues that “Resilience was a policy framework to bring together all EU policy communities, actors and institutions and represented a step towards a ‘joined up’ external Action” (Bargués-Pedreny, 2021, p. 5). Yet, according to Belschner (2019), peacebuilding also became increasingly tied to the EU’s own “vital interests”, including internal security, border control, and geopolitical credibility, using the language of “state and societal resilience” (Belschner, 2019, p. 6). This reorientation has often been described as “principled pragmatism”, a dual principle seeking to balance normative aspirations with strategic realism (ibid.).

Overall, this shift can be situated within broader critiques of liberal peacebuilding as a global paradigm: This “new generation of peacebuilding efforts, carried out by international actors such as the UN, EU, and international nongovernmental organisations, still adheres to the notion of a liberal peace, promoting democratisation, marketisation and human rights, yet

supposedly through a coherent and participatory approach” (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015, p. 827). However, these efforts remain problematic as the EU, although being criticised for shortcomings in implementing their liberal goals, kept ignoring “the societal and human consequences on the ground and for being a top-down, Western, external intervention” (ibid.).

Retrospectively, the EU’s evolving emphasis on resilience and principled pragmatism can be read as a partial response to these critiques and as an attempt to reconcile liberal ideals with the recognition that external interventions often fail to produce sustainable or locally legitimate peace (Belschner, 2019). Yet, this conceptual reframing did not resolve the internal ambiguities. Rather, the EU’s peacebuilding “toolbox” became increasingly multidimensional but also fragmented, combining structural measures and operational missions without a unified conceptual foundation or shared institutional understanding (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, pp. 13–14).

(e) The Present Phase:

In the 2020s, the EU’s peacebuilding identity was increasingly framed within the broader vision of a geopolitical Europe (European Union, 2025). In 2016, Federica Mogherini, then EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, introduced the EU Global Strategy (EGS), which outlined five key external priorities: (i) ensuring the Union’s security, (ii) strengthening state and societal resilience in the EU Neighbourhood and Africa, (iii) adopting an integrated approach to conflicts, (iv) fostering cooperative regional orders and (v) promoting global governance in the 21st century (EEAS, 2016). Importantly, Mogherini emphasized that development policy would need to become more flexible and closely aligned with the EU’s strategic objectives (ibid.). Besides, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and renewed instability in Africa have reinforced the perception that peacebuilding and security are inseparable (ibid.). In this context, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), active from 2014 to 2020, has been largely replaced by the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI), effective since 2021 and funded under the European Peace Facility (EPF) (European Commission, 2021a, p. 1). While IcSP no longer exists as a standalone instrument, its core objectives, conflict prevention, crisis response, and peacebuilding, have been integrated into NDICI, particularly under the thematic priority of peace, stability, and conflict prevention (European Commission, 2021a). The NDICI consolidates several previous EU external financing instruments into a single, more comprehensive framework for the period 2021–2027, enabling the EU to address fragile and conflict-affected contexts through coordinated development, governance, and security interventions.

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) remains a core operational pillar. Since its introduction in the early 2000s, CSDP missions have evolved from limited crisis management to a broad set of civilian and military operations focusing on security sector reform, training, advisory support, and monitoring (EEAS, 2025b). Civilian missions include monitoring, advisory missions, and security sector reform, while military operations deploy forces for executive tasks, training, or humanitarian support (e.g., EUMAM) (Kmec, 2022, pp. 54–55). CSDP missions and operations with peacebuilding mandates largely reflect what Richmond (2011) conceptualises as third-generation peacebuilding, prioritising the stabilisation, reform, and strengthening of state institutions and security structures. In this sense, CSDP missions largely follow a liberal peacebuilding approach, as they are grounded in state-centric assumptions and emphasise institutional stabilisation, security sector reform, and capacity building as key pathways to peace (Kmec, 2022, p. 62).

The EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) complements these instruments by providing emergency assistance, protection, and disaster response under a neutral and impartial humanitarian mandate (European Parliament, 2025, p. 4). While not directly engaged in peacebuilding, ECHO increasingly interacts with broader EU strategies for conflict prevention and stabilisation, raising questions about the interface between humanitarian action and peace-oriented development, particularly concerning potential politicisation of aid (Brown et al., 2024, pp. 575–576). In addition to these operational instruments, the EU's external action is further guided by broader partnerships, such as the OACPS (Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States)–EU Partnership Agreement, which entered into force in 2021. This strategic framework builds on previous ACP agreements (such as Lomé) and provides the overarching political, economic, and development context within which operational instruments such as NDICI, IcSP, and CSDP missions are implemented (European Commission, n.d.-f). The agreement sets out shared objectives in areas such as sustainable development, human rights, democratic governance, and economic cooperation, and facilitates structured political dialogue. It also defines guiding principles for aid allocation, trade preferences, and joint actions, thereby shaping the environment in which EU instruments operate and helping to align operational programmes with long-term development and peacebuilding priorities (ibid.).

Instrument/Program	Type	Main Focus	Typical Activities
NDICI – Global Europe	Financial Instrument for EU external action	EU external financing (2021–2027) integrating peace, development and crisis response	Governance reform, conflict prevention, state capacity building, development projects
CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy)	Operational security and crisis management framework	Operational security and crisis management	Civilian missions (monitoring, advisory), Military operations (training, executive tasks, humanitarian support)
IcSP (Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace)	Financial instrument for crisis response and conflict prevention	Conflict prevention, crisis response, peacebuilding (2014–2020; now part of NDICI)	Rapid interventions, support to state & non-state actors
ECHO (Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection)	Humanitarian assistance instrument	Neutral humanitarian assistance	Emergency aid, protection, disaster response
EPF (European Peace Facility)	Off-budget security and military assistance instrument	Military assistance & capacity building	Training, equipment, support to partner militaries
IPA III (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance)	Pre-accession financial instrument	Governance and stability in EU candidate countries	Policy alignment, institutional support, sector reforms

Table 3: Key EU Programs

Together, these instruments illustrate the EU's multi-layered and integrated architecture in contemporary peacebuilding of the present (for a more detailed explanation of each program, see Appendix). Thus, EU external action today increasingly links peacebuilding with defence, crisis management, and strategic autonomy, reflecting a broader policy orientation known as the “Triple Nexus” approach. This framework seeks to address fragile and conflict-affected contexts by simultaneously integrating humanitarian, development, and peace dimensions through coordinated strategies, shared financing instruments, and partnerships with local and international stakeholders (European Parliament, 2025; see Figure 1).

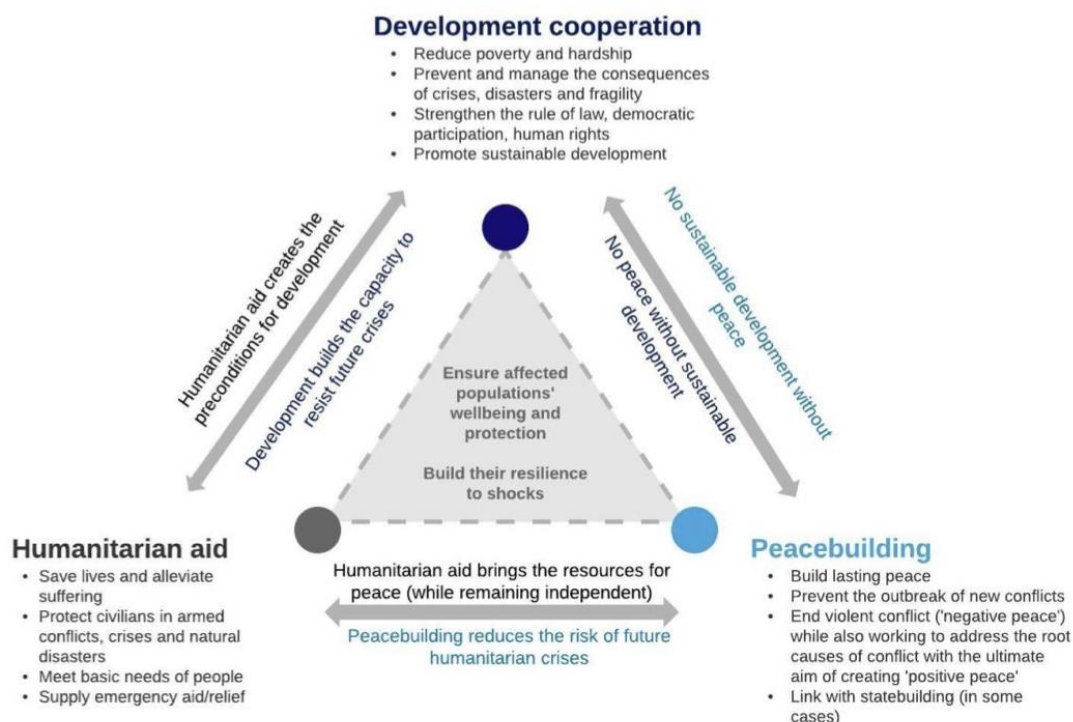


Figure 1: The Triple Nexus Approach (Veron & Hauck, 2021, p. 3)

In principle, the Triple Nexus aims to enhance coherence and long-term impact by overcoming sectoral silos and aligning short-term humanitarian and security responses with longer-term development and peacebuilding objectives.

However, this integrated approach has been subject to substantial criticism. Scholars argue that the blurring of boundaries between security, humanitarian, development, and peace actors risks undermining core humanitarian principles, particularly neutrality, independence, and impartiality (Brown et al., 2024, pp. 573–574). The inclusion of the peace dimension is especially contentious, as peacebuilding interventions are often inherently political and security-oriented, thereby increasing the risk of politicising humanitarian action. Moreover, the concept of “peace” itself is frequently ambiguously defined within Nexus frameworks, leading to divergent interpretations and difficulties in translating the approach into concrete, coherent operational practices (ibid., p. 574). These conceptual challenges are compounded by practical constraints, including institutional silos, short and earmarked funding cycles, and persistent power asymmetries between actors, all of which may limit meaningful coordination in practice (ibid., p. 577).

Despite these tensions, the EU continues to advance an increasingly integrated security–development agenda. The Strategic Compass for Security and Defence (2022) explicitly reinforces this path by calling for faster decision-making, strengthened defence capacities, and deeper cooperation among EU member states, thereby embedding peacebuilding more

firmly within a broader framework of security, stabilization, and strategic autonomy (EEAS, 2022). In this context, security considerations increasingly take precedence, while development cooperation and humanitarian aid are more frequently framed as instruments that contribute to security objectives. This shift reflects a reorientation in which development and aid policies are increasingly subordinated to geopolitical and security priorities. In a 2023 speech on the State of the European Union, President von der Leyen proclaimed that “we have seen the birth of a geopolitical Union” (European Commission, 2023; Adriaensen et al., 2025, p. 1). So, although not an official policy, scholars increasingly point to a “Europe First” logic in today's EU external action, whereby development cooperation and peacebuilding are progressively instrumentalised to serve security, migration, and geopolitical priorities centred on European interests: “aid has become increasingly instrumentalised, shifting away from the principles of the post-millennium international aid effectiveness agenda and more towards a situation where aid has become a tool for pursuing the political interests of donors” (Furness et al., 2020, p. 96). Particularly, longstanding objectives such as poverty reduction and aid effectiveness are increasingly overshadowed by political, economic, and especially security-related considerations (ibid., p. 95). Critics argue that this “securitization” of development and peacebuilding risks hollowing out their transformative potential and reproducing neo-colonial governance logics. As Bergmann warns, “[...] if the EU adopts an overly militarized approach [...] to bolster the EU's own positioning as a geopolitical actor, it may not serve the Union's long-term objective to support sustainable peace and security in Africa” (2023).

Importantly, this trajectory is not unique to the EU but part of a broader global shift in development policy. Similar dynamics can be observed in debates surrounding institutions such as USAID, where right-wing political agendas increasingly frame foreign aid as legitimate only insofar as it serves domestic interests, strategic competition, or narrowly defined national security objectives. Within this logic, development funding is portrayed as a tool to advance “useful” outcomes for donor states, rather than as a commitment to global solidarity or long-term structural transformation (Ziai, 2026, pp. 293–295). Such trends further reinforce the instrumentalization of aid and normalize the alignment of development cooperation with security- and interest-driven agendas (ibid.).

In sum, over seven decades, EU peacebuilding has evolved from a regional integration project into a complex, globalized mode of governance. What began as peace through economic interdependence has transformed into a multifaceted system of peace through management, combining development, diplomacy, and defence. Each historical phase has redefined the meaning of peacebuilding in response to broader geopolitical shifts: post-war Europe emphasized peace through integration and prosperity; the Cold War period foregrounded diplomacy and development; the post-Cold War era promoted liberal

transformation; and the post-2016 period increasingly frames peace through resilience, stabilization, and security.

2.2.2 Key Actors

EU peacebuilding is characterised by a multi-level constellation of actors operating across supranational, intergovernmental, national, and increasingly private spheres. Rather than being implemented by a single institution, it emerges from an institutional ecosystem in which mandates, funding instruments, diplomatic engagement, and operational activities are distributed across various bodies. Understanding this architecture is crucial for assessing both the coherence and the constraints of the EU's external action.

At the multinational level, the European Commission plays a central role, particularly through the Directorates-General responsible for international partnerships, neighbourhood policy, and enlargement. These bodies manage development cooperation, governance reform, and long-term stabilization programmes (European Commission, n.d.-d). Through financial instruments such as NDICI–Global Europe, the Commission supports initiatives in institutional capacity-building, the rule of law, and socio-economic resilience (European Commission, 2021a). The European External Action Service (EEAS) complements this development dimension by coordinating foreign and security policy, overseeing diplomatic engagement, conflict analysis, and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions (EEAS, 2025a). The European Peace Facility (EPF) fund has further expanded the EU's capacity to provide security assistance, including training and equipment (European Commission, n.d.-c). Additionally, the European Investment Bank (EIB) also plays a central role, providing loans, guarantees and equity investments for projects that strengthen socio-economic resilience in fragile contexts (European Investment Bank, n.d.). At the country level, EU Delegations act as key intermediaries, linking Brussels-based planning with local implementation and engaging partner governments and civil society (European Commission, n.d.-b).

Despite the EU's presentation as a unified actor, Member States hold significant influence through the Council, where mandates for CSDP missions and broader strategic priorities are defined: "EU countries must make civilian and military capabilities available to the EU to implement the CSDP. Decisions relating to the CSDP are taken by the Council of the European Union by unanimity" (European Council, 2026; 2025). As a result, EU peacebuilding often reflects negotiated compromises between supranational ambitions and national interests. While this multilevel structure can enhance legitimacy and resource mobilisation, it may also generate coordination challenges and affect overall policy coherence.

In parallel, private actors have gained increasing prominence within the peacebuilding landscape (Abramov, 2010, p. 481). These include private security companies, consulting firms, development contractors, extractive corporations, and financial institutions active in fragile or conflict-affected contexts. Their involvement is framed not only through Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) but also via Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) frameworks, which often channel private resources into community development, infrastructure projects, and social programmes (Kantowitz et al., 2021, pp. 5–6; Yucel & Yucel, 2024, p. 3). For example, CSR is founded on the notion that “businesses have an obligation to contribute to social and environmental progress as well as a strategic interest in ‘doing good’” (Kantowitz et al., 2021, p. 7). When applied to natural-resource companies operating in resource-rich regions, this idea is extended to suggest that “businesses can [and should] contribute intentionally towards the well-being of the communities affected by their activities” (Bond, 2019, p. 33). Similarly, PPPs involve collaboration between public and private actors to jointly implement development infrastructure projects (World Bank Group, n.d.). By integrating such initiatives into peacebuilding and stabilization projects, private actors can contribute expertise, technical capacity, and funding (ibid.), but their participation also aligns peacebuilding more closely with economic and strategic interests (Lie, 2024, p. 1313).

However, “the roles of the private sector as an actor and as a funder are often not clearly delineated in practice. For example, private companies may fund peacebuilding through their core business, or as part of their operational engagement, rather than as a stand-alone set of philanthropic programmes or initiatives” (Kantowitz et al., 2021, p. 7). Scholars have noted that publicly funded development initiatives may become “a proxy for private interests”, not necessarily due to “bad intentions or conflicting interests”, but because of “interface situations created by the public–private partnership agenda and its intentional merger of actors with distinct institutional logics, accountabilities, and rationales” (Lie, 2024, p. 1313). Scholars such as Shankleman (2012) note that extractive companies hold an ambivalent position within the post-conflict peacebuilding dimension. On one hand, they can contribute to the stabilization of post-conflict settings by increasing state revenues, providing job opportunities, and signalling to external investors that the region is sufficiently secure and conducive for business activities (p. 52). On the other hand, when not carefully and transparently managed, they can also negatively contribute to corruption and conflict (ibid). In terms of this, Abramov notes that “businesses are perceived as being selfish and indifferent to the impact their operations may have on the social and political development of local communities. Additionally, the corruption of local governments has been cited as interfering with the creation of stability in conflict areas” (Abramov, 2010, p. 481). This dynamic reflects a broader political economy of peacebuilding, in which economic priorities,

whether through corporate investment, PPPs, or CSR programmes, interact with normative goals such as human rights, democratic participation, and support for civil society. Normative commitments are not absent, but they function within a context in which financial and strategic considerations strongly influence institutional choices (Lie, 2024, p. 1326).

This exemplifies a transformation from a state-centric model toward a hybrid architecture in which international institutions, market actors, and public actors co-produce peacebuilding interventions. As a result, peacebuilding increasingly displays characteristics of a market-driven activity, structured around investment logics, measurable outputs, and contractual arrangements rather than solely political processes of conflict transformation. Critics have described this phenomenon as the “monetarization” or “financialization” of peacebuilding or development. This “financialization” refers to “the growing dominance of financial motives, markets and institutions” (Taggart & Power, 2024, p. 2). Accordingly, practices, theories, and instruments from the private sector now play a central role in framing development, informing policy design, and guiding implementation (Chiapello et al., 2023, p. 3). This raises broader questions about the redefinition of development as a normative concept and objective. As Engels et al. (2023) note: “Instead of a systemic, structural problem, development is conceived through the lens of investors and development initiatives, programs, and policies are designed to fit the norms and practices of financial actors” (p. 248). Critics argue that the state should reclaim a more prominent role as a driver of development (ibid., p. 250).

In sum, mapping the actors involved in EU peacebuilding helps to clarify how the Union’s normative ambitions are translated into practice. It highlights the role of private actors, from corporations to financial institutions, in shaping instruments and priorities and invites reflection on how their involvement affects accountability, coherence, and the alignment between stated values and operational choices.

2.4 Conceptual Debates within “normative” EU External Action

Throughout the presented external action, the European Union presents itself as a normative actor committed to peace, multilateralism, democracy, and human rights. Concretely, this self-representation is grounded in the Union’s foundational values and aims, as codified in the Treaty of Lisbon, including the promotion of peace, human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. Beyond its internal objectives, such as ensuring security, justice, social cohesion, and sustainable development, the EU also seeks to uphold and promote these values in its external relations by contributing to international peace and security, fostering sustainable development, supporting free and fair trade, combating poverty, and ensuring the strict observance of international law (European Union, n.d.-a). Hence, the EU emphasises that “the aims of the

EU within the wider world are uphold and promote these values and interests and “contribute to peace and security and the sustainable development of the Earth” (European Union, n.d.-a). Against this backdrop, the EU has been conceptualised in the literature first as a “civilian power” and later as a “normative power”, reflecting both its own self-understanding and external academic interpretations of its role in global politics. The idea of the EU as a “civilian power” (Civilian Power Europe - CPE), mainly associated with François Duchêne (1972), highlights its reliance on economic and diplomatic tools rather than military force (p. 34). However, this understanding became increasingly limited as the EU’s role in global politics expanded and its external actions took on a stronger normative dimension. As a result, attention shifted from how the EU acts to what it promotes, paving the way for later approaches that conceptualise the EU as a “normative power” (Manners, 2002, p. 238).

The notion of the EU as a “normative power”⁵ suggests that its influence in international relations does not primarily derive from military coercion or economic dominance, but from its values and its normative approach. Ian Manners (2002), who introduced the concept of “Normative Power Europe” (NPE), argued that the EU’s distinctiveness lies in its capacity to diffuse foundational norms, such as peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, beyond its borders. For Manners, normative power is not simply about promoting certain policies; it is about shaping the normative framework within which international actors define what is “normal” (Manners, 2002, p. 253). In this sense, the EU exercises power by influencing standards of legitimacy rather than by relying primarily on coercion.

The very idea of “normative power” also raises deeper questions about authority, hierarchy, and the politics of norm diffusion. Some scholars contend that the claim to normative power may itself carry hegemonic implications. Labelling an actor as a “normative power” implies that it assumes the authority to define what is a “norm”, what is “good” for others, and to universalize this definition (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, pp. 24–25). In this sense, the EU’s representation as a “force for good” may obscure the asymmetries embedded in norm diffusion processes. The discourse around normative power is therefore inseparable from questions of power and hierarchy, of whose norms are being promoted and who has the authority to promote them.

⁵ Norms are commonly understood as principles that prescribe appropriate or “right” behaviour and can be grounded in different ethical traditions. At the same time, the term also carries the meaning of what is considered “normal.” Similarly, power can be conceptualised either as the capacity to produce effects or as the possession of influence as a powerful actor. This distinction is crucial for debates on “Normative Power Europe,” since the label appears to imply actor-based power, whereas the ability to define what is regarded as normal reflects a more structural understanding of power (Forsberg, 2011, pp. 1190–1191).

Kavalski (2013) reinforces this relational dimension by arguing that “normative powers are those actors that are recognized as such by others” (p. 247). Accordingly, “normative power” is not a self-ascribed quality but depends on external recognition. This shifts the focus from identity claims to perception and reception. Forsberg (2011) further refines these characteristics by conceptualizing normative power as an ideal type. According to his five-part definition, a normative power must:

- (1) possess a normative identity,
- (2) behave according to norms,
- (3) use normative means of power,
- (4) pursue normative interests and
- (5) achieve normative ends (Forsberg, 2011, p. 1191)

Moreover, the distinction between normative and non-normative powers depends on whether their agency is “others-empowering” or “self-empowering” (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, p. 25). Importantly, an actor can only approximate this ideal; it can never fully embody it (ibid.). This conceptualization makes it possible to analyse the EU not as inherently normative, but as an actor whose practices can be assessed against normative criteria.

These theoretical debates are particularly relevant in the field of peacebuilding. Newman et al. (2009) emphasize that peacebuilding is never normatively neutral (p. 12). Interventions are embedded in specific political and economic models and may promote particular visions of governance and development (ibid.). In terms of this, Autesserre (2014) argues that most interveners arrive “with good intentions”, yet they often interpret foreign contexts through their own categories of meaning. In practice, they tend to “value thematic expertise over local knowledge” and “they use their own categories of meaning to interpret the foreign situations in which they work” (Autesserre, 2014, pp. 248–249). This critique highlights a tension between normative ambitions and technocratic implementation. Against this backdrop, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, and peacebuilding itself could also be interpreted as policy tools through which broader strategic objectives may be pursued, rather than normative-driven engagements.

Within the EU context, this tension becomes particularly visible in its security and crisis-management instruments. The CSDP is often presented as a concrete expression of the EU’s normative commitment to international peacebuilding. At the same time CSDP missions reflect the EU’s autonomous foreign policy interests (Kmec, 2022, p. 147), illustrating the structural interplay between norms and strategy. This dual character has not remained uncontested. Criticism of missions such as EULEX Kosovo has highlighted accountability deficits and institutional weaknesses, thereby raising questions about the EU’s ability to consistently uphold the normative standards it promotes abroad. As Moser (2020) demonstrates, internal investigations and complaints to the European Ombudsman

illustrate that civilian crisis management missions operate within a fragile accountability environment (pp. 12–13). If the EU fails to uphold its own normative standards abroad, this poses serious operational and reputational risks and may undermine its credibility as a normative actor (ibid.). Furthermore, the 2016 EU Global Strategy marked a significant discursive shift. The statement that “development policy will become more flexible and aligned with our strategic priorities” (EEAS, 2016) signals a stronger integration of development, security, and geopolitical interests. While this does not negate normative ambitions, it complicates the image of the EU as a purely value-driven actor (Mah, 2023, p. 55). Nevertheless, supporters of the EU’s normative role emphasize its democratic credentials. Accordingly, the EU possesses legitimacy, expertise, and political backing to promote democracy abroad, for example, through election monitoring, and that democracy can contribute to resilient peace (Hellendorff, 2015, pp. 119–120). Yet even here, questions remain as to whether such instruments are sufficiently adapted to local contexts (ibid.). Kmec (2022) further points out that effective peacebuilding requires inclusive and preventive approaches, particularly in ethnically diverse and post-conflict societies (p. 156). This suggests that normative commitment alone is insufficient; its operationalization determines its impact.

Taken together, the literature suggests that EU peacebuilding embodies a structural duality. On the one hand, it projects and institutionalizes norms related to democracy, human rights, and multilateralism. On the other hand, it operates in a geopolitical environment where security, migration management, counter-terrorism, and strategic influence carry significant weight (Furness et al., 2020, p. 96). The concept of “Normative Power Europe” therefore serves less as a descriptive label and more as an analytical benchmark. It allows us to examine whether the EU’s external actions approximate the ideal of normative power or whether tensions between normative identity, strategic interests, accountability practices, and local reception reveal deeper contradictions (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, p. 28).

This analytical lens is particularly relevant for assessing EU engagement in Mozambique. Rather than assuming the EU to be either a purely normative or a purely strategic actor, the following empirical analysis explores how these tensions manifest in practice and are perceived on the ground. Throughout the analysis, the questions around whether the EU’s peacebuilding activities and interests in peacebuilding are normative in character and whether the EU is using “others-empowering means” and providing a meaning of them consistent with the EU’s worldviews and values, will remain key.

3 Methodology and Research Design

After outlining the theoretical framework, this chapter introduces the methodological framework that underpins the empirical research. To systematically examine the relationship between the EU's normative self-representation and its strategic engagement in Mozambique, it is necessary to clarify how the research was designed, conducted, and analytically structured. Therefore, this chapter outlines the overall research design and the methodological choices guiding the study.

The study follows a qualitative mixed-methods approach, combining different qualitative techniques in order to capture both discursive structures and subjective perceptions. Qualitative research is particularly well-suited to examining complex social phenomena shaped by power relations, institutional practices, and context-specific interpretations. As Flick (2018) emphasizes, qualitative research starts from the notion of the social construction of reality and is interested in participants' perspectives, everyday practices, and everyday knowledge. It seeks to understand processes and relationships in a way that remains open and adaptable. In this sense, qualitative inquiry is often described as hermeneutic, reconstructive, or interpretive (Flick, 2018, p. 3). Furthermore, „Qualitative research is a methodology for scientific inquiry that emphasizes the depth and richness of context and voice in understanding social phenomena. [...] rather than merely quantifying occurrences” (Lim, 2024, p. 200). Thus, qualitative methodology aims to generate a deeper understanding of structures and lived realities (ibid.).

Given the thesis's focus on normative claims, strategic interests, and the interplay between policy frameworks and on-the-ground experiences, this interpretive approach enables a nuanced, context-sensitive analysis. This is particularly relevant in the context of EU peacebuilding and resource politics in Mozambique, where institutional narratives intersect with local experiences and conflict dynamics.

The research design is sequential and combines deductive and inductive elements. On the one hand, the study builds on existing theoretical frameworks, such as the critical peacebuilding literature, NPE theory, and debates on resources and conflict, which informed the initial development of analytical categories and concepts. On the other hand, it remains open to inductive insights emerging from the empirical material. In this respect, the study draws inspiration from grounded theory's logic of iterative engagement with data. Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) emphasizes the concurrent processes of collecting, coding, and comparing data (the “3Cs”), allowing concepts and themes to evolve organically from empirical material (Hunger & Müller, 2016, p. 259; Lim, 2024, p. 204). While this thesis does not aim to generate a theory in the strict grounded theory sense, it adopts its inductive sensibility by allowing categories to be refined and reinterpreted throughout the analytical process. This combination of deductive structuring and inductive refinement

enables both theoretical grounding and analytical openness. It reflects the understanding that social reality is co-constructed between researcher and participants and that knowledge production is shaped by interpretive processes (Lim, 2024, p. 200). By acknowledging this, the research adheres to key quality criteria of qualitative inquiry, particularly credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (ibid.).

3.1 Data Collection Methods

Building on the qualitative and sequential research design outlined above, data collection followed a multi-step process that combined qualitative document analysis and expert interviews. The deliberate integration of these methods reflects a strategy of methodological triangulation aimed at enhancing analytical robustness and reducing the risk of one-sided interpretations. As Flick (2018) notes, “Triangulation and mixed methods are two concepts for combining methods (or approaches) in qualitative, or qualitative and quantitative, research” (Flick, 2018, p. 141). More specifically, the study follows what Kuckartz (2014) describes as “methodological triangulation”, in which the same phenomenon is explored under different methodologies (pp. 46–47). By analysing official EU documents and conducting expert interviews, the research captures different dimensions of the same empirical field, thereby allowing for comparison, validation, and contextual enrichment of findings.

In line with Lim’s (2025) argument that triangulation enhances dependability by “corroborat[ing] findings” (p. 223) through multiple data sources and perspectives, the combination of document analysis and interviews strengthens the credibility and robustness of the empirical findings. It allows for a systematic examination of convergences, tensions, and discrepancies between institutional claims and practical realities.

The following sub-sections detail the qualitative document analysis, the conduct of expert interviews, considerations of field access, and the sampling strategy. Together, these elements provide transparency into how the empirical base was assembled and how it supports the research's analytical objectives.

3.1.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

The first pillar of the analysis includes a qualitative content analysis, which is a well-established qualitative research method. The objective of this methodological approach is to reconstruct how the EU performs and articulates its peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique and to identify underlying normative claims, strategic priorities, and discursive constructions. The “QCA (qualitative content analysis) is a suitable method [as it is especially relevant when] describing material that requires some degree of interpretation” (Schreier, 2012, p. 2). As Morgan (2022) emphasises, “Any document containing text is a potential source for qualitative analysis” (Morgan, 2022, p. 64). It is a method for

“systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material” (Schreier, 2012, p. 7). Therefore, policy documents, strategic frameworks, mission mandates, and official communications are treated not merely as administrative outputs but as meaningful documents through which institutional actors construct and communicate political realities (ibid., p. 4). A qualitative content analysis is particularly suitable for examining the EU’s self-representation as a “normative” actor, as power is articulated discursively through strategy papers, mandates, official statements, and policy frameworks. Analysing them provides insight into how the EU presents its role, justifies its engagement, and embeds normative commitments within, or intertwines them with, strategic considerations. The empirical material consists of official EU documents directly related to peacebuilding and security engagement in Mozambique. Further details regarding the selection of documents are provided in Chapter 3.3.

Methodologically, the analysis is inspired by Altheide’s (1987) Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA). As Altheide (1987) explains, “Ethnographic content analysis is used to document and understand the communication of meaning, as well as to verify theoretical relationships” (Altheide, 1987, p. 68). Its distinctive characteristic lies in “the reflexive and highly interactive nature of the investigator, concepts, data collection and analysis” (ibid.). In contrast to more rigid forms of qualitative content analysis, ECA does not treat a predefined coding protocol as the primary instrument. Instead, categories evolve in interaction with the material, as further described in chapter 3.4 (Altheide, 1987, p. 68). This approach is particularly appropriate for analysing institutional narratives and policy discourses, where meaning is often constructed implicitly through framing, repetition, style, and strategic emphasis. As Altheide notes, meaning is reflected not only in explicit statements but also in “format, rhythm, and style” and in the broader context of communication (1987, p. 68). Accordingly, the analysis in this thesis considers both explicit claims and implicit patterns of argumentation, recurring storylines, and underlying assumptions embedded in the documents.

The concrete coding procedure and analytical steps are outlined in detail in Chapter 3.4.

3.1.2 Qualitative Interviews

In addition to the content analysis, qualitative expert interviews constitute the second pillar of the empirical research. While the content analysis examines the EU’s official representation and claims around its engagement in Mozambique, the interviews aim to capture how EU peacebuilding engagement is perceived, interpreted, and experienced by actors operating in the field. This becomes particularly relevant in light of the assumption that normativity is constituted through its recognition by others (Kavalski, 2013, p. 247).

Expert interviews are suitable when the research interest lies in institutional practices, policy implementation, and professional assessments (Döringer, 2021, p. 265). As Döringer (2021) notes, the expert interview “aims at exploring or collecting data about a specific field of interest” and focuses on the knowledge of actors who possess “specific knowledge in a certain field of action” (ibid., p. 265). In this study, interviewees were approached not solely as representatives of abstract institutions but also as actors embedded in concrete professional contexts whose expertise derives from their involvement in EU-funded peacebuilding and security-related initiatives. Beyond formal knowledge, expert interviews provide access to what Döringer (2021) conceptualises as “process knowledge”, which is knowledge grounded in practical experience and shaped by institutional contexts. Process knowledge “comprises knowledge about interactions, routines, or social practices” and emerges from a person’s position within ongoing processes (p. 265). This dimension was relevant for this research, as it enabled insights into how EU peacebuilding policies are translated into everyday practices and how normative claims are operationalised, negotiated, or challenged in concrete settings. Expert interviews offer access to such insider perspectives and critical reflections that remain invisible in official documents. They enable the reconstruction not only of explicit policy interpretations but also of implicit assumptions, tensions, and practical constraints.

Methodologically, the interviews were primarily conducted as problem-centred expert interviews. This is particularly suitable for examining a clearly defined research problem/topic while reconstructing the interpretative dimension of expert knowledge. Such interviews aim at the “communicative opening up and analytic reconstruction of the subjective dimension of expert knowledge” (Döringer, 2021, p. 269).

In line with this, deductive and inductive elements were intertwined. Deductive aspects were reflected in the theoretically informed interview guide (see Appendix: Interview Guide), which was structured around the central research questions and key analytical dimensions to maintain a certain degree of structural consistency and ensure thematic comparability across the interviews (ibid., p. 266). This conceptualises the interviewer as a “well-informed traveller” who remains open to reformulating prior assumptions and to considering the interviewees’ perspectives (Döringer, 2021, p. 269). At the same time, inductive openness was maintained through a flexible, responsive interview situation, allowing interviewees to introduce additional perspectives, reinterpret framings, and highlight aspects not fully anticipated by the theoretical framework. Such semi-structured interviews are characterised by “pre-set, open-ended questions, with further questions emerging from the discussion” (Denny & Weckesser, 2022, p. 1166). These formats enable the researcher to organise prior knowledge through the interview guide while remaining adaptable to the dynamics of the conversation (Kaiser, 2021, p. 64; Strübing, 2024, p. 101). The guide was developed

using Helfferich's (2011) SPSS principle (Sammeln, Prüfen, Sortieren, Subsumieren/collecting, reviewing, structuring, and subsuming questions), which ensures conceptual clarity while preserving openness. This procedure required collecting all potentially relevant questions, critically reviewing and reducing them, structuring them thematically, and subsuming them under broader guiding questions. The content was shaped by both the overarching research interest and the preceding document analysis (Gläser & Laudel, 2006, p. 111). Following Helfferich's quality criteria, particular attention was paid to openness, specificity, and contextual relevance (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014, pp. 128–129). Questions were formulated to avoid prescriptive or normative assumptions and instead invited reflection on experiences and interpretations. During the interviews, questions were adapted ad hoc to match the interviewees' terminology and professional background to foster a dialogical atmosphere (Strübing, 2024, p. 102). Accordingly, the interviews were guided by prior theoretical considerations but remained open to empirical nuance and complexity, allowing space for individual emphases, contextual depth, and critical reflection. The aim was not to develop a new theory from the data, but to deepen the understanding of the empirical case and to critically engage with the EU's self-representation identified in the document analysis.

All interviews were transcribed and anonymised (I1–I8; see Appendix). The transcription followed a simplified content-focused approach based on Kuckartz and Rädiker (2022). The aim was not to conduct a fine-grained linguistic or interactional analysis, but to systematically examine thematic content and meaning structures. Hence, pauses and interruptions were marked where analytically relevant, while phonetic details, dialectal variations, and minor speech irregularities were omitted to enhance readability and analytical clarity (Kackartz & Rädiker, 2022, pp. 1–2). This level of transcription was considered appropriate for expert interviews, as it preserves the substantive meaning of the statements while ensuring manageable and comparable material.

In sum, integrating interview data with the content analysis enables a structured comparison between discourse and practice. It allows for identifying potential convergences, tensions, or contradictions between the EU's normative self-presentation and the lived experiences and interpretations of actors operating within the Mozambican context.

3.2 Field Access

Field access is not a neutral or purely logistical step in research, but a complex and dynamic process shaped by social interactions, trust, and local power relations (Flick et al., 1995; Rieker et al., 2020). As Flick (2018) emphasises, “When planning your study, it is important to find access to the field in which you want to work empirically. In some cases, the most important step here is to identify a field in which the experiences are made that you want to study or in which the people you want to access can be met” (p. 57). Access therefore begins not only with contacting participants but with identifying relevant social arenas in which the phenomenon under study becomes observable. Gaining access reflects the nature of the research field itself and requires not only organisational planning, but also openness, empathy, and respectful engagement with local norms and hierarchies (Rieker et al., 2020, p. 2; Lamnek, 2005, p. 601). Researchers’ entry into a field is often mediated by individuals or institutions who act as gatekeepers, capable of granting, facilitating, or restricting access (Lamnek, 2005, p. 601). Such gatekeepers can provide legitimacy, mediate trust between researcher and participants, and help navigate local structures. At the same time, they inevitably shape the conditions under which knowledge becomes accessible, since they influence who participates and under which circumstances.

In this study, access to interview partners at the community and (I)NGO level was largely mediated through gatekeepers who facilitated introductions and vouched for the researcher. While initial contact was personally initiated in all cases, gatekeeper endorsement was essential for establishing credibility and willingness to participate.

Linguistic barriers further shaped the access process, especially in smaller civil society organisations where participants were not fully confident in English. Rather than excluding these actors, methodological adjustments were made. In some cases, interviews were conducted as small group interviews, allowing for peer support and in-situ translation. This adaptation illustrates that field access is not merely about reaching participants, but about enabling meaningful participation under locally appropriate conditions.

Access to EU institutions and actors proved considerably more constrained. Requests for interviews were met with limited responses, often standardised and redirecting to publicly available documents or briefings. The EU Delegation in Maputo was contacted multiple times, without receiving a personal reply. This asymmetry highlights how institutional structures, formalised communication channels, and bureaucratic hierarchies can significantly restrict access when researching international actors. It also reflects the structural distance between supranational institutions and field-based research initiatives. Overall, the process of gaining access revealed important insights into the relational configuration of the research field itself. While community and civil society actors were accessible through trust-based networks, institutional actors remained largely shielded

behind formal communication structures. Field access became not only a methodological step, but also an empirical indicator of power asymmetries within the broader context of EU peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique.

3.3 Sampling

This research employs a twofold sampling strategy, distinguishing between selecting documents for the qualitative analysis and recruiting interview participants. As Flick (2018) notes, “Triangulating or mixing methods in many cases asks for differing forms of sampling” (p. 142). Since this study combines qualitative content analysis with expert interviews, distinct yet complementary sampling logics were required. The primary aim was not statistical representativeness, but the purposive identification of cases and sources capable of providing rich and relevant insights into the research questions (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014, p. 127). As Denny and Weckesser (2022) explain, “Sampling for qualitative research tends to be purposive (that is recruitment on the basis of a shared experience that is relevant to the research question), convenience (based for example on accessibility or cost) or snowballing (where a few individuals from the target population will connect the researcher with their network)” (p. 1166).

For the qualitative content analysis, a purposive sampling approach was employed (Döring, 2022, p. 303). Documents were selected based on their direct relevance to the EU’s peacebuilding engagement and its normative claims, strategic priorities, and discursive framing in Mozambique. The corpus includes official EU publications, strategic frameworks, policy statements, mission mandates, programmatic descriptions, and publicly available reports. The objective was to capture both explicit policy objectives and the broader narrative through which EU peacebuilding and security engagement is articulated, including its entanglement with governance, development, and private-sector engagement. The selection followed analytical rather than quantitative criteria. Only documents directly related to EU peacebuilding and security engagement in Mozambique were included, ensuring coherence with the research focus while maintaining a manageable scope. The aim was not exhaustiveness, but conceptual relevance and discursive depth.

Interview sampling followed a similarly purposive logic. Even though “Social scientists debate intensively about the criteria for being reckoned as an expert” (Döringer, 2021, p. 265), this study targeted individuals who are currently or have previously been involved in EU-funded or sub-granted peacebuilding projects in Mozambique. These participants were able to share their experiences and perspectives on the implementation of EU-funded initiatives, ensuring that they possessed context-specific, practice-based knowledge relevant to the research questions (Campbell et al., 2020, p. 653).

At the same time, elements of snowball sampling inevitably shaped the process. Gatekeepers and initial contacts facilitated further connections within professional networks, while accessibility constraints influenced the final composition of participants (Akremi, 2014: 272; Döring, 2022: 310).

In total, ten participants, equally male and female participants (E1–E10), were interviewed through eight interviews (I1–I8), representing a range of organisational contexts and professional roles, from leadership positions in larger (international) NGOs to members of smaller local civil society organisations (see Table 4). Despite the potential limitations of snowball sampling regarding diversification and in line with Flick's observation that "demographic features (such as gender, age and profession) are helpful for accessing the variety in what we study and that we should orient on these features to include this variety in our sample" (Flick, 2018, p. 4; Akremi, 2014, p. 273), the study aimed to capture organisational and professional diversity. While it does not claim statistical representativeness, the sample was designed to reflect a broad spectrum of roles and hierarchical levels within EU-funded peacebuilding initiatives. Concrete roles and positions have been anonymised to ensure confidentiality.

Access to EU-level interviews proved considerably more limited. Beyond the official EU documents analysed, the only additional institutional input obtained was a written statement from EUMAM (O1; see Appendix). No personal interviews with EU representatives could be arranged despite multiple attempts to contact them. This structural asymmetry influenced the empirical material and reflected the formalised communication structures of EU institutions.

Overall, data collection followed the qualitative principle that "data are collected until emerging concepts have been explored and additional data are not producing fresh insights" (Denny & Weckesser, 2022, p. 1166). Therefore, recurring themes across organisational contexts indicate sufficient conceptual saturation regarding the core research questions. By combining purposively selected policy documents with expert interviews from various organisational contexts, the study enables a detailed exploration of normative discourses, practical engagement, and local perceptions of EU peacebuilding in Mozambique, while acknowledging the structural limitations inherent in accessing supranational actors.

ID	Expert	Organisation/ Sector	Mode	Date	Duration
I1	E1	Aga Khan Foundation ⁶	Online	17.10.25	01:00:03
I2	E2/E3	Aga Khan Foundation	Online	30.10.25	01:07:03
I3	E4	Oxfam ⁷	Online	13.11.25	01:02:11
I4	E5/E6	MASC Foundation ⁸	Online	17.11.25	00:31:03
I5	E7	(former) Oxfam	Online	20.11.25	01:07:22
I6	E8	CEFA ⁹	Online	21.11.25	01:31:43
I7	E9	Associação PROGRESSO ¹⁰	Online	09.12.25	00:40:22
I8	E10	Forum Terra ¹¹	Online	12.12.25	01:01:19
O1		EUMAM	Written		

Table 4: Sampling

3.4 Coding and Analytical Procedure

To analyse the collected data, a mixed deductive–inductive coding approach was applied, allowing for both theory-driven and data-driven insights (Mayring, 2016). Following Kuckartz and Rädiker (2014), categories (codes) can be developed deductively, inductively, or in a combined manner (p. 395). Kuckartz (2018) describes this as a process in which “the process begins with a priori categories, followed by the development of categories and subcategories based on the material” (p. 95; translated by author). In line with this, initial main categories were derived deductively from the theoretical framework and the prior content analysis, ensuring alignment with the research questions and empirical grounding. Coding the interview material involved applying these deductive categories while adding inductive codes to capture emergent, interview-specific themes and patterns. This iterative

⁶ The Aga Khan Foundation Mozambique is an international development organisation and part of the Aga Khan Development Network, working primarily on community development, education, economic inclusion, and resilience-building in vulnerable communities (Aga Khan Foundation, 2026).

⁷ Oxfam Mozambique is the national programme of the international NGO Oxfam, focusing on poverty reduction, humanitarian response, gender equality, and advocacy on issues related to inequality and social justice (Oxfam, 2026).

⁸ The MASC Foundation (Mozambique Action for Civil Society) is a Mozambican civil society organisation that supports and strengthens local civil society actors, particularly in the areas of governance, accountability, and civic participation (Devex, n.d.).

⁹ CEFA (European Committee for Training and Agriculture) Mozambique is the country programme of the Italian international NGO CEFA, which works on rural development, food security, sustainable agriculture, and local economic development (CEFA, n.d.).

¹⁰ Associação PROGRESSO is a Mozambican non-governmental organisation focusing on community development, sustainable livelihoods, natural resource management, and support for rural communities (PROGRESSO, n.d.).

¹¹ Forum Terra is a Mozambican civil society organisation working on land rights, community land delimitation, and legal support for rural communities, particularly in relation to land governance and natural resource management (Forum Terra Facebook Page, 2026).

process combined elements of open, axial, and selective coding, consistent with grounded theory traditions (Rädicker & Kuckartz, 2018, p. 8). “Open coding” refers to the initial stage of breaking down the data into discrete units and identifying key concepts, “axial coding” links these concepts and explores relationships between them, and “selective coding” focuses on integrating and refining the codes to develop overarching themes that capture the essence of the data. The stages of reduction, reflection, and refinement were then applied cyclically: relevant segments were selected (reduction), interpreted in context to identify patterns (reflection), and categories refined or reorganised as new insights emerged (refinement) (Lim, 2024, pp. 208–210). As Flick (2018) notes, coding involves “searching for relevant parts of the data and analysing them by comparing with other data and by naming and classifying them”, thereby gradually developing structure in the material (p. 126). Concretely, the data were analysed through two parallel but methodologically distinct processes:

One, the official EU documents were examined, as already mentioned, using Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA), which allows the flexible reconstruction of institutional narratives, discursive patterns, and implicit frames (Altheide, 1996; Mayring, 2019). “The procedure is similar to that of qualitative content analysis; however, its design is not as rule-based” (Mayring, 2019, p. 4). Deductive categories were initially applied, while inductive additions captured unexpected patterns in the documents. Relevant content was identified and examined with regard to recurring narratives, argumentation patterns, and framing processes (Schreier, 2012, p. 7). The cyclic application of reduction, reflection, and refinement facilitated a nuanced understanding of how the EU constructs its normative and strategic claims in Mozambique.

The insights generated through this analysis informed not only the chapter presenting the empirical findings but also the descriptive sections outlining the EU’s activities in Mozambique. Given that policy papers, strategic communications, and official statements simultaneously contain both programmatic descriptions and justificatory narratives, a strict separation between contextual description and analytical interpretation was neither fully possible nor analytically desirable. Rather, the reconstruction of EU activities and the examination of their underlying framings are essentially interconnected.

Two, interview transcripts were coded with the same mixed deductive–inductive logic (Coding frame; see Appendix), combining theory-informed categories with emergent codes. After coding, the material was synthesised thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Lim, 2024, p. 220). Codes were aggregated into overarching themes directly relevant to the research questions, while less pertinent codes were omitted. This approach ensured that the presentation of results remained focused, analytically coherent, and aligned with the study’s

objectives, while preserving context-sensitive insights from both EU institutional and practitioner perspectives.

3.5 Research Ethics and Reflexivity

The research was conducted in an ethically sensitive field, encompassing both the analysis of publicly available EU documents and the perspectives of local NGOs and community actors involved in peacebuilding projects in Mozambique. Continuous reflection on ethical issues and the researcher's positionality was therefore essential and guided all stages of the study (Unger, 2014, pp. 22–24).

On one hand, publicly accessible EU communication materials could be analysed without formal consent, yet care was taken to avoid hasty judgments or normative attributions. Using such pre-existing documents raises fewer ethical concerns than interviews, as public records are widely accessible and often anonymous; however, they may reflect the biases of their authors and require critical interpretation (Morgan, 2022, p. 69).

On the other hand, the interview phase required particular ethical attention. Participants frequently represented small civil society organizations or community-level actors working in resource-constrained and conflict contexts. The study adhered to fundamental ethical principles as outlined by Flick (2018, pp. 84–85):

- Informed consent: Participation was voluntary, and participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study and the potential use of their data (Consent Form; see Appendix).
- No deception: Participants were provided with accurate information regarding the research aims.
- Confidentiality and privacy: Sensitive information was anonymized and identities were protected.
- Accuracy and integrity: Data were collected and interpreted with rigor, avoiding omission or manipulation.
- Respect, beneficence, and justice: Participants' well-being was considered, and the distribution of burdens and benefits was carefully reflected upon.

Field access itself was closely intertwined with these ethical considerations. Access was mediated through local gatekeepers, whose support was essential to establishing trust. Linguistic barriers sometimes required group interviews to facilitate understanding and meaningful participation. Practical and organizational challenges, such as unstable internet connections or coordinating across institutional schedules, demanded flexibility and patience.

Furthermore, the researcher also reflected critically on broader systemic dynamics. Topics such as European companies' extractive activities in Cabo Delgado or critiques of EU

policies could create tension. As a European researcher, the positionality implied the potential for perception as part of the system, which required conscious reflexivity to avoid projecting external frameworks onto local perspectives. Maintaining awareness of power asymmetries and structural inequalities was crucial for respectful dialogue, trustworthy interpretation, and ethical engagement (Kadianaki, 2014, pp. 360–361).

Finally, reflexivity informed the interpretation and presentation of data. By continually reflecting on positionality, power relations, and ethical responsibilities, the study aimed to safeguard the credibility, trustworthiness, and legitimacy of findings while remaining sensitive to social, linguistic, institutional, and organizational contexts.

4 Case Study: Mozambique

Now that the theoretical framework has been outlined, this chapter turns to an in-depth examination of Mozambique as a case study.

It provides an overview of Mozambique's historical, social, political, economic, and (post-)conflict landscape. It then examines the EU's peacebuilding strategies and projects, drawing on official documents and policy reports to explore how the European Union's peacebuilding initiatives have operated in a post-conflict, resource-rich context and to assess their implications for local governance, security, and socio-economic development in Mozambique.

4.1 Geographic Context

Mozambique, located in southeastern Africa and concluding 799,380 km², is bordered by Tanzania to the north, Malawi and Zambia to the northwest, Zimbabwe to the west, South Africa and Eswatini to the southwest and the Indian Ocean to the east (GIZ, 2017, p. 1) and stretches over 2,500 kilometres along the coastline (ÖFSE, 2000, p. 4). Mozambique's geography is diverse, including coastal plains, rolling plateaus, extensive river systems, and mountainous regions, which together shape both human settlement patterns and economic activities (Newitt, 2017, pp. 1–2).

Inland, the landscape transitions into plateaus and highlands, including the Gorongosa Massif and the Niassa Highlands, which are important for biodiversity, agriculture, and ecotourism (Club of Mozambique, 2025b). Mozambique is traversed by several major rivers, including the Zambezi, Limpopo, and Rovuma, which provide water resources, transport routes, and fertile floodplains, but also expose the country to recurrent flooding and related disasters (IAEA, 2020, p.1). The country's climate is predominantly tropical (GIZ, 2017, p. 1). Coastal regions experience high humidity and cyclones, particularly along the central and northern coasts, while inland areas are prone to droughts, influencing agricultural productivity and food security (The World Bank, 2025, p. 3). These factors are highly influenced by climate change. Particularly, the African Development Bank Group (2025) highlights the risks posed by climate change on Mozambique as follows: "The impacts of climate change present an escalating threat to Mozambique's economic growth, human development, and environmental sustainability. The country is consistently ranked among the ten most climate-vulnerable nations in the world, facing recurring extreme weather events, including cyclones, floods, and droughts. According to the Global Climate Risk Index 2021 (Eckstein et al., 2021), Mozambique was the most affected country by climate-related disasters in 2019, highlighting its acute exposure to climate shocks" (p. 40). This vulnerability was further illustrated by the cyclones in 2019, that impacted Mozambique immensely, with approximately 600 people dead and over 160.000 displaced (Penvenne &

Sheldon, 2025). Additionally, it was only at the beginning of 2026 that Mozambique was hit by one of the largest floods in centuries, affecting more than 150.000 homes and displacing almost 400.000 people (European Newsroom, 01/27/2026; UNHCR, 2026). The event pushed the urge to strengthen disaster preparedness, resilient infrastructure, and integrated climate risk management (African Development Bank Group, 2025, p. 40). This shows that Mozambique's diverse ecosystems support rich biodiversity on the one hand, but are increasingly threatened by climate change, deforestation, and the expansion of human settlements on the other (Penvenne & Sheldon, 2025). Overall, Mozambique remains majorly rural, benefitting from crops like cassava, sugarcane, corn, peanuts, rice, sorghum, millet, or wheat as well as from cash crops like tobacco, cotton, sesame, sugar, and tea (ibid.). Its geographic features shape the development, settlement patterns, and socio-economic dynamics.

4.2 Historical Context

Mozambique's history is shaped by a long trajectory of social, political, and economic transformations, influenced both by indigenous developments and external forces. Prior to European contact, the territory that constitutes present-day Mozambique was home to a variety of ethnic groups and polities, as evidenced primarily through oral traditions (Cambaza, 2023, p. 144). The region that is now Mozambique was shaped by successive waves of Bantu-speaking populations who settled there around 2,000 years ago and developed influential political formations such as the "Mwenemutapa Empire", with contemporary groups such as the Makua, Sena, Tsonga, and Yao maintaining diverse social hierarchies, trade networks, and agricultural systems (High Commission of the Republic of Mozambique, n.d.). Coastal regions were particularly integrated into the Indian Ocean trade network, linking local societies to Arab, Persian, and later Swahili merchants, facilitating the exchange of ivory, gold, and slaves and creating a culturally diverse and economically interconnected region (ibid.).

Portuguese contact began with Vasco da Gama's voyage in 1498, and over the following centuries, Mozambique became a strategic outpost in the Portuguese maritime empire: "Then, the visits became more frequent until the Portuguese finally settled to strengthen the commercial relationship with the locals" (Cambaza, 2023, p. 144). Ultimately, after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, the Portuguese officially colonized Mozambique and established forts and trading posts along the coast, gradually extending control inland (ibid.). Colonial rule in Mozambique relied heavily on coercive labour regimes known as "chibalo", as well as labour recruitment systems such as the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) and exploitative taxation policies, which disrupted pre-existing economic systems, undermined local livelihoods, and fragmented social structures (Isaacman et al., 2025, p.

131). Due to the harsh conditions under Portuguese administration, large numbers of Mozambicans, particularly men, migrated as contract labourers to neighbouring territories such as South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, where mining and agricultural sectors offered comparatively higher wages and fewer direct controls imposed by the colonial state (O’Laughlin, 2002, pp. 516–517). This mass labour migration had severe socio-economic consequences for Mozambique. The extraction of male labour led to the proletarianization of rural households, the feminization of subsistence agriculture, and a gendered reorganization of social roles (ibid., p. 516). Women assumed increased responsibility for agricultural production and household management, while also experiencing greater structural vulnerability due to the absence of adult men and the increasing monetization of local economies (ibid., p. 524). These dynamics contributed to long-term transformations in gender relations and social cohesion that extended beyond the colonial period.

While Portugal exploited the region for agricultural products and mineral resources and used it as a node in the transoceanic slave trade, infrastructure development and education for the local population remained minimal. Like other colonial powers, the Portuguese consolidated their authority at every level by appointing “regulos”, local leaders who acted as intermediaries between the colonial administration and the population, while remaining subordinate to Portuguese oversight (Cambaza, 2023, p. 144). Resistance to this colonial authority persisted in various forms, ranging from local uprisings to organized opposition by certain communities, though these were largely suppressed by the Portuguese military, especially under the dictatorial regime of António de Oliveira Salazar. Nevertheless, in the mid-20th century, anti-colonial sentiment, influenced by broader decolonization movements across Africa, intensified the “resistance against colonial rule [...] culminating in an armed liberation struggle” (Cabecinhas & Feijó, 2010, p. 29).

The Mozambique Liberation Front “Frente de Libertação de Moçambique” (Frelimo), founded in 1962, emerged as the primary political and military force against Portuguese rule (Cambaza, 2023, p. 145). Frelimo’s strategy combined armed struggle and mobilization of local support, ultimately leading to Mozambique’s independence in 1975, following the Carnation Revolution in Portugal in 1974, which brought the dictatorship to an end (Penvenne & Sheldon, 2025; Cabecinhas & Feijó, 2010, p. 29). The new state, under Frelimo’s Marxist-Leninist leadership and single-party, centralized rule, faced immense challenges, including consolidating governance structures and integrating diverse regions and communities into a unified national project (Cambaza, 2023, p. 145). Especially the “brain drain” to Portugal or Rhodesia led to economic underdevelopment “because there was very little qualified labour” (ibid.). Overall, Frelimo registered mixed success with its social and economic policies during its first decade of rule: On one hand, coercive systems such as forced cultivation, forced labour, and racial discrimination were abolished, while

Frelimo's emphasis on collective and state-led agriculture alienated many farmers who had expected the compensation of family-held land. By the mid-1980s, the shortcomings of these policies had become evident. So, in response to international creditors' pressure, the government gradually shifted away from state control toward supporting smallholder, family-based agriculture (Penvenne & Sheldon, 2025). On the other hand, Frelimo achieved impressive outcomes by investing heavily in expanding education, healthcare, and other social services for the wider population. Yet these early social achievements were quickly undermined by the outbreak of a protracted civil war (ibid.). Beginning in 1977, "Resistência Nacional Moçambicana" (Renamo), an anti-communist insurgency supported by Rhodesia, South Africa, former Portuguese settlers, and domestic opponents of Frelimo, launched widespread attacks that severely destabilized the country and reversed much of the progress made during the first post-independence decade (High Commission of the Republic of Mozambique, n.d.). The war caused widespread destruction of infrastructure, mass displacements, and severe loss of life, with approximately one million deaths, entrenching regional inequalities and social fragmentation (De Moura & Hofmann, 2014; Faleg, 2019). The signing of the Rome General Peace Accords in 1992 marked the formal end of hostilities, paving the way for multiparty elections, political stabilization, and engagement with international development institutions, after which Mozambique transitioned from state socialism to a neoliberalist regime (Cambaza, 2023, p. 145). However, friction between the Frelimo-led government and Renamo continued, with a flare-up in fighting occurring in late 2015 in northwestern Mozambique, which led to thousands of Mozambicans fleeing to neighbouring Malawi (Penvenne & Sheldon, 2025). "Peace talks between the two sides began in mid-2016 and in December Renamo announced a unilateral two-month truce, which the group extended several times thereafter as both sides continued with ongoing peace discussions" (Penvenne & Sheldon, 2025). Ultimately, the two leaders of Frelimo and Renamo signed agreements in August 2019 that intended to end hostilities and promote peace (ibid.).

Since then, Frelimo has remained the dominant political force and continues to govern the country, shaping both political and economic trajectories. Despite this official end of large-scale violence in 1992, Mozambique has continued to experience underlying tensions and new conflict dynamics. In particular, the emergence of violent extremism in the northern province of Cabo Delgado has deepened regional instability and reintroduced armed violence into the country's post-war landscape. These evolving conflict lines will be further analysed in the subsequent chapter 4.7.

4.3 Political and Governance Structures

To understand current conflict dynamics, it is crucial to examine the political and governance structures that shape Mozambique's landscape of peace and conflict.

Mozambique is a presidential republic, where the President serves as both Head of State and Head of Government and is elected directly by the people for a five-year term. Legislative power resides in the unicameral Assembly of the Republic (*Assembleia da República*), currently composed of 250 seats and elected through proportional representation in multi-member constituencies (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 2020, p. 1). Local government structures exist but often lack full autonomy or resources (Forquilha, 2023, p. 163).

Since its independence from Portugal in 1975, Mozambique has been governed by Frelimo, originally a socialist one-party movement that transitioned into electoral politics after the 1992 peace agreement (Cambaza, 2023, p. 145). This remains the dominant form of political authority, not only because of its popular legitimacy stemming from its role in liberation, but also because of its structural advantages, such as control of the state apparatus, long-standing patronage networks, and access to economic resources (Lourenço, 2025). Under Frelimo's rule, Mozambique has emphasized economic liberalization and foreign investment, particularly in extractive sectors such as mining, natural gas, and agriculture, as key drivers of economic development (Cambaza, 2023, p. 145). However, issues of governance, transparency, regional inequality, and state capacity persist, especially in remote and conflict-affected provinces. In the latest election on 9 October 2024 for the presidency, the Assembly of the Republic, and provincial legislatures, Frelimo's candidate, Daniel Chapo, was officially declared the winner with roughly 71% of the vote for the presidency, with Frelimo gaining 78% of the 250 Assembly seats. His main challenger, Venâncio Mondlane (former Renamo member; supported by the party PODEMOS) contested the results, alleging wide-scale fraud and manipulation of the vote count (IDEA, n.d.). International observer missions, including the European Union Election Observation Mission Mozambique (2024), reported irregularities in counting, voter-roll discrepancies, and restricted access to vote tabulation in certain districts: "the counting and tabulation of results was marked by anomalies and serious flaws and an acute lack of transparency, which negatively affected public confidence in the outcome of the process" (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2024, p. 5). Besides, reporting of "ballot stuffing, vote buying, voter intimidation" further intensified the concerns about the legitimacy of the election (Penvenne & Sheldon, 2025). Because of that, nationwide protests erupted with security forces responding with force and mass arrests: "Mozambican security forces used force against peaceful protesters that was reckless and unnecessary [...] the police unlawfully used firearms and less lethal weapons, killing and injuring protesters and

bystanders. [...] around 315 people were killed and over 3,000 injured between 21 October 2024 and 16 January 2025 in relation to the protests” (Amnesty International, 2025, p. 5). Although the constitution of Mozambique formally guarantees broad civil and political rights, including the rule of law, political pluralism, and fundamental freedoms, with every citizen entitled to “the right to freedom of expression, freedom of press as well as the right to information” (Republic of Mozambique, 2004, Art. 3, Art. 48; Constitution of Mozambique), these guarantees appear undermined in practice. Amnesty International reports “human rights violations by units of the Mozambican security forces in relation to the protests [...], as well as possible actions of internet service providers which resulted in impeded access to information during that time” (Amnesty International, 2025, p. 5). Nevertheless, the Constitutional Council confirmed Chapo’s victory with the new legislature being sworn in on January 13th of 2025 (Penvenne & Sheldon, 2025). This shows that Mozambique’s political structures are currently characterized by massive imbalances between the government and the opposition (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2023).

At the local level, governance in Mozambique is characterized by a complex interaction between formal state institutions and informal or semi-formal community structures, as the country’s governance structure is organized across multiple tiers, reflecting a combination of centralization and decentralized¹² administrative responsibilities (Maschietto, 2016, pp. 110–111). At the head of the system, the central state, headed by the President and based in Maputo, exercises primary authority over national policymaking, legislation, and the appointment of key administrative positions across lower levels of government (see Figure 2) (ibid.). Below the central state, Mozambique is administratively divided into eleven provinces, each governed by a Provincial Governor appointed by the President. Provincial administrations are responsible for implementing national policies at the provincial level and overseeing district-level governance. Provinces are further subdivided into more than 150 districts, which constitute the core units of state administration at the local level. District Administrators (Administradores Distritais), also appointed by the central government, play a central role in local planning, service delivery, and the coordination of development interventions (Aminaka, 2021, p. 119).

At the sub-district level, Administrative Posts (postos administrativos) function as intermediary structures between district authorities and local communities, facilitating the implementation of state programmes and the transmission of directives. Below this level,

¹² Decentralization generally refers to the transfer of responsibilities, resources and accountability from central state authorities to lower levels of government, based on the assumption that local administrations are better positioned to respond to local needs due to their proximity to communities and contextual knowledge (Maschietto, 2005, p. 105).

Localities represent the most decentralised tier of formal state administration, often encompassing villages or clusters of villages. Here, state authority intersects with traditional and community leadership structures, which play an important role in everyday governance, land allocation, and conflict mediation (ibid.: 120).

Parallel to the state administrative hierarchy, municipalities operate primarily in urban areas as autonomous local government entities. Municipal councils and mayors are elected and are responsible for urban planning, local economic development, and the provision of public services. Despite their elected status, municipalities coexist with state-appointed structures and remain embedded within a broader system of centralised political authority (ibid.). Together, these layers create a multi-level governance system intended to balance centralized authority with local decision-making, though in practice, coordination and capacity at subnational levels often vary significantly (Maschietto, 2016, p. 111).

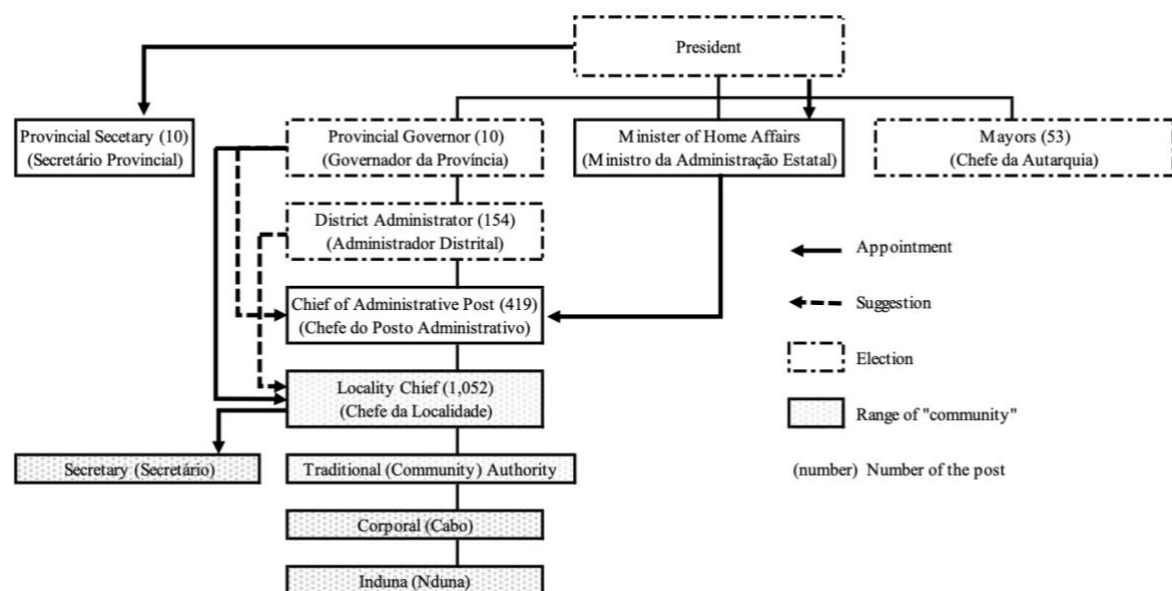


Figure 2: Governance Structures (Aminaka, 2021, p. 119)

So, although the governance structures show a mixture of centralized and decentralized characteristics, Mozambique has formally pursued a decentralization process aimed “to empower communities and strengthen the country’s economic independence” (Gacuruzwa, 2025). This process has, according to the international mainstream policy discourse, “the potential to foster good governance by bringing the state closer to the local constituencies. By doing so, decentralisation is expected to lead to greater political participation at the local level, ‘with citizens more able to make claims on local government and to subject it to greater scrutiny’, thus enhancing downward accountability, reducing levels of corruption and leading to greater responsiveness to the poor” (Maschietto, 2016, p. 106). Besides, decentralisation has increasingly been framed as a tool for poverty reduction and local

empowerment, particularly within broader development agendas and governance reforms aimed at promoting local development and inclusive growth (Chambote & Nipassa, 2023; Commonwealth Secretariat, 2011). By shifting decision-making authority and resource allocation closer to the local level, decentralisation is expected to strengthen local ownership and give communities greater influence over development processes that directly affect their livelihoods (Maschietto, 2016, p. 106). Leonardsson and Rudd (2015) emphasize, that carefully designed and “well-governed decentralization can help achieve stability and peace by increasing legitimacy, accountability, inclusion and participation [...] but only where the sub-national level has sufficient means and autonomy to control resources” (p. 328). However, in Mozambique this has not translated into genuine decision-making autonomy at the district or community level yet, as key political, financial, and security-related decisions continue to be centralized in practice (Baloi, 2022, p. 94): “Decentralization, at least for the Mozambican case, does not necessarily imply the definitive transfer of decision-making and implementation powers of any public policy at the local level without the knowledge of Central State’s administration, or at the most that these local bodies have to justify themselves to the central government” (Baloi, 2022, p. 95). So, although Mozambique’s governance arrangements have undergone change in the formal domain of the policy agenda, these reforms have not fundamentally altered the dynamics of local representation (Maschietto, 2016, p. 117). As a result, the structures are characterized by power asymmetries and top-down decision-making. This gap between formal governance structures and local governance realities contributes to the perceived legitimacy of both state institutions and external actors.

Overall, Mozambique is a case where authoritarian-leaning democratic structures and regional conflict intersect, making the political structure critically relevant for understanding instability and peace-building dynamics

4.4 Social Structures

Mozambique’s social structures are shaped by its demographic composition, cultural diversity, religious pluralism, and the historical evolution of communal identities. The country has an estimated population of around 34.5 million (2024), characterized by a very young age profile: almost half of the population is under 15 years old, while only a small proportion is above the age of 65 (WKÖ, 2025, p. 3). The gender ratio is generally balanced with a slight predominance of women, a result influenced by historical labour migration patterns and differing life expectancies, as mentioned in chapter 4.2 (Federal Statistical Office of Germany, 2025). This youthful and rapidly growing population not only shapes social dynamics within communities and households but also intensifies the need for future opportunities in education, political participation, and collective belonging. Furthermore,

ethnic and linguistic diversity is a defining feature of Mozambique. Most of the population is of African origin, divided into numerous Bantu-speaking groups such as the Macua in the north, Tsonga (Shangaan) in the south, and Sena and Shona (Ndau) in the north-central, each with distinct cultural traditions and regional identities (Minority Rights Group, 2020). Portuguese remains the official language, yet a large share of Mozambicans primarily communicate in local languages, including Emakhuwa, Xichangana/Xitsonga, and Cisen, reflecting the persisting importance of ethnic affiliation and regional heritage in everyday life (ibid.). These identities do not necessarily undermine national unity but can reinforce regional differentiation, which becomes politically relevant when combined with perceptions of unequal treatment or exclusion: “Minority issues are not sharply drawn in the usual sense in Mozambique. However, the effects of uneven colonial development and post-colonial policies led many northerners to resent a southern-dominated political class” (Minority Rights Group, 2020).

Religious plurality further contributes to the complexity of social structures. Christianity represents the largest religious affiliation, with more than half of the population identifying as Christian. Islam constitutes a significant minority, particularly concentrated in the northern coastal provinces, while traditional beliefs remain influential and are often blended with other faith practices (ibid.).

Surveys and normative measures suggest that many Mozambicans embrace cultural and ethnic diversity: “Most Mozambicans express tolerant attitudes toward people of different ethnicities (83%), religions (81%), political affiliations (75%) and nationalities (72%)” (Afrobarometer, 2022, p. 2), which is reflected in the UNESCO Intercultural Dialogue Index, where Mozambique achieves a relatively high social-cohesion¹³ score of 0.90 compared to a world average of 0.64, indicating favourable institutional and structural conditions for social cohesion (UNESCO, n.d.). Nevertheless, a significant segment of the population reports experiencing unfair treatment by state institutions toward their ethnic group. These experiences of marginalization, whether real or perceived, highlight how ethnic and regional distinctions can become politically salient, particularly in areas where state presence is limited or governance is weak. According to a 2022 Afrobarometer survey, 26% of Mozambicans report that their ethnic group is “often” or “always” treated unfairly by the government, and an additional 29% say this occurs “sometimes” (Afrobarometer, 2025a, p. 2).

In sum, Mozambique’s social structure is marked by strong communal identities, a dominant youth demographic, and layered cultural and religious affiliations. These configurations can foster cohesion, solidarity, and resilience across communities. Yet, under conditions of

¹³ Social Cohesion is a shared sense of belonging and trust across cultural boundaries, enabling cooperation and collective action among diverse groups (UNESO, n.d.).

unequal access to political power, security, or economic opportunities, the same structures may also amplify tensions that shape patterns of contestation and conflict. For this reason, social identities and belonging are essential components in understanding broader political and conflict dynamics in Mozambique.

4.5 Socio- Economic Dimension

Mozambique's socio-economic landscape is shaped by a combination of strategic geographic positioning, rich natural resource endowments, and persistent structural development challenges. Its long coastline supports fisheries, agriculture, and major seaports, which function as key regional trade hubs linking landlocked Southern African economies to global markets. This connectivity has reinforced Mozambique's role in regional economic integration within the Southern African Development Community (SADC, n.d.).

Despite this strategic potential, economic growth has translated only unevenly into improved living standards. In 2024, Mozambique's gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated at approximately USD 22 billion, reflecting sustained growth over the past two decades (Federal Statistical Office of Germany, 2025). Yet, GDP per capita remains among the lowest globally, at around USD 630, indicating persistently low average living standards for large segments of the population (ibid.). Accordingly, poverty remains widespread and deeply entrenched, while socio-economic inequality is pronounced.

Mozambique's horizontal inequality score is 0.32 (world average: 0.45), indicating substantial disparities across regions and social groups (UNESCO, n.d.). These inequalities are further reinforced by fiscal constraints: government debt levels have reached approximately 96.6% of GDP, limiting state capacity to address poverty and social vulnerabilities and increasing exposure to external economic shocks (Federal Statistical Office of Germany, 2025).

Mozambique's development path has been strongly shaped by neoliberal economic policies aimed at attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and integrating the country into global markets. This orientation is reflected in both the scale and structure of investment inflows: by 2023, cumulative FDI stocks amounted to approximately USD 57.28 billion (Cambaza, 2023, p. 149). Annual inflows remain substantial, reaching around USD 3.5 billion in 2024 (approximately 16% of GDP). Notably, these investments are highly sectorally concentrated, with extractive industries, particularly natural gas and mining, accounting for roughly 70% or more of total FDI inflows. Among the main countries of origin, the Netherlands, Italy, South Africa, and Mauritius stand out, highlighting a development trajectory closely tied to resource-based sectors rather than broader economic diversification (The World Bank, 2026; Club of Mozambique, 2025c). While these

investments have contributed to macro-economic growth, their poverty-reducing effects remain limited, as benefits are unevenly distributed and employment generation remains weak. Trade relations are similarly asymmetric: South Africa remains Mozambique's most important trading partner, particularly in the import and export of mineral fuels and related products, reinforcing structural external dependencies (Federal Statistical Office of Germany, 2025).

These structural dynamics are reflected most clearly in livelihood patterns. Agriculture remains the backbone of the economy and the primary source of income for most of the population. Approximately 52.8% of Mozambique's land area is used for agricultural purposes, yet productivity remains low due to infrastructural deficits, limited access to inputs, and exposure to climatic shocks such as cyclones (Federal Statistical Office of Germany, 2025). Rural poverty is therefore both widespread and persistent, particularly among smallholder farmers and fishing communities. In urban centres such as Maputo and Beira, formal employment opportunities exist mainly in trade, services, and transport, but also remain limited in scope. Nationwide, an estimated 70-90% of the active population is employed in the informal sector, often within family-based enterprises (Cambaza, 2023, p. 149). These livelihood structures leave large parts of the population highly vulnerable to environmental, economic, and political shocks, reinforcing inequalities in income, asset ownership, and resilience.

Human development indicators further illustrate how poverty and inequality are socially reproduced. Mozambique's Human Development Index (HDI) stood at 0.493 in 2025, ranking 182nd out of 193 countries, reflecting low educational attainment, weak health outcomes, and limited economic security (UNDP, 2025). Education systems remain under-resourced and deeply unequal. While primary enrolment has increased, completion rates remain low, and access to secondary and tertiary education stays below regional averages (GIZ, 2020). Educational inequality is particularly pronounced: a small, privileged segment of the population has access to high-quality education, while the majority study under high-quantity, low-quality conditions. This dual system risks creating a "vicious cycle" that widens intellectual and socio-economic gaps between social classes over time (Cambaza, 2023, p. 152).

Health outcomes mirror these structural inequalities. Mozambique faces high infant and under-five mortality rates, a significant HIV burden, and persistent barriers to healthcare access, especially in rural areas and conflict-affected northern provinces (WHO, 2025). Although healthcare access is formally almost free, the system remains severely under-resourced. National health policies have increasingly adopted neoliberal orientations, yet the public health system suffers from shortages of infrastructure, medical equipment, and

personnel, and remains heavily dependent on foreign donors (Cambaza, 2023, p. 151). As a result, access to effective healthcare remains uneven and highly stratified.

Public perceptions strongly reflect these material conditions. Afrobarometer surveys reveal widespread dissatisfaction with economic performance and governance. Fewer than half of Mozambicans describe the national economy positively, and only around one-third rate their own living conditions as good or very good (Afrobarometer, 2024a; 2024b, p. 2). Approximately 71% of respondents judge the government's overall economic management as poor, with particularly negative assessments regarding job creation, income inequality, and price stability (ibid.). These perceptions are even more pronounced among youth aged 18-35, for whom unemployment, access to water, and basic services are the most pressing concerns, despite higher educational attainment than older generations (Afrobarometer, 2024a, p. 2).

In total, Mozambique presents a socio-economic paradox: considerable strategic and resource-based potential coexists with widespread poverty, deep inequalities, and growing public dissatisfaction with economic governance. Situating governance and conflict dynamics within this broader socio-economic context is essential for understanding how structural deprivation and constrained state capacity shape social cohesion and vulnerability to conflict across the country.

4.6 Resource Politics and Its Implications

After outlining the key characteristics of Mozambique's post-colonial trajectory, it is necessary to examine the country's resource politics in more detail as the structures of the resource politics are not merely economic sub-sectors but represent the central showground of political contestation, shaping both the geopolitical significance of the nation and the local conflict dynamics, which will be analysed in the next chapter.

Natural resources have become the primary pillar of Mozambique's post-war development strategy, playing a decisive role in shaping political power and patterns of accumulation. As previously indicated, following the civil war between Frelimo and Renamo, the Mozambican state increasingly pursued a development strategy, centred on the extraction of natural resources as the primary engine for economic transformation. Nevertheless, for a long time, Mozambique's contribution to the global extractive sector remained comparatively low, which changed dramatically with the turn of the millennium and the discovery of world-class mineral and hydrocarbon deposits (Macuane et al., 2025, p. 1): "Mozambique is endowed with significant natural resources, including natural gas, coal, graphite, and arable land, offering a unique opportunity to foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth" (African Development Bank Group, 2025) (see Figure 3 & 4).

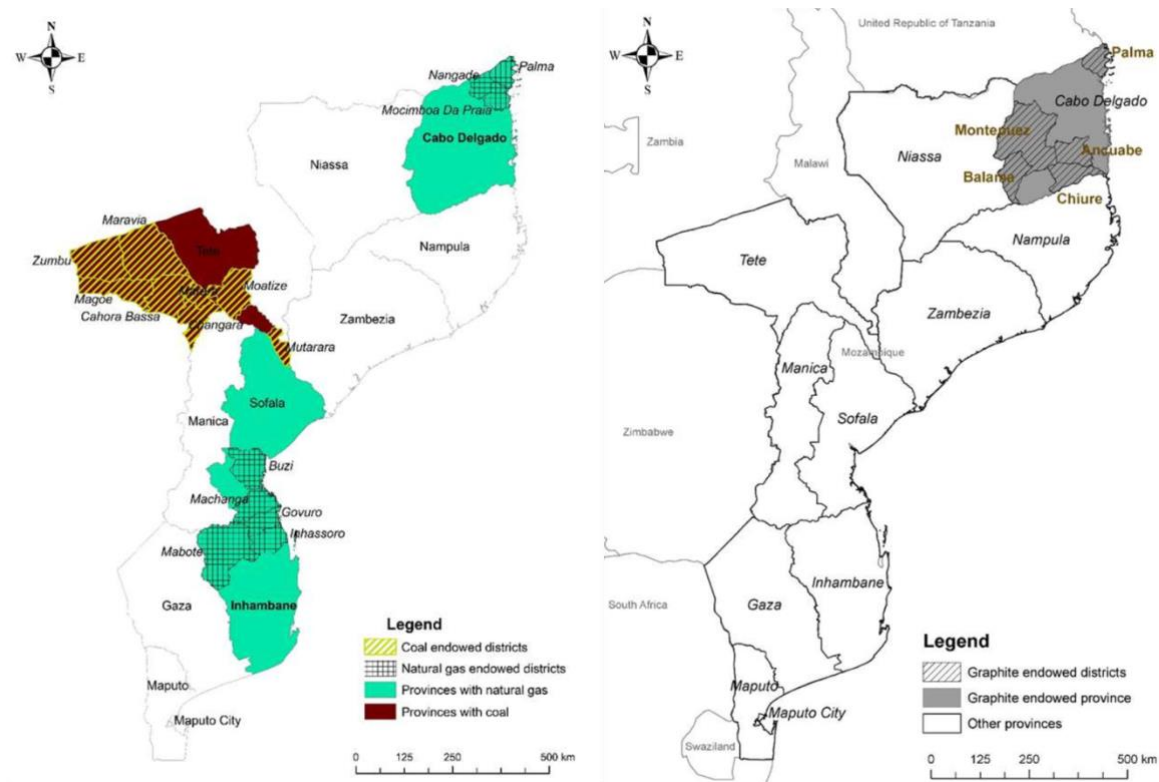


Figure 3 & 4: Natural Resource Distribution in Mozambique (African Development Bank, 2025, p. 45, 48)

The government's handling of these resources has been marked by a transition through three distinct cycles of extractivism:

The first cycle, emerging in the mid-1990s, was dominated by timber extraction and involved a complex system of political elites and transnational networks, particularly Chinese actors, which set the stage for the "party-state-business" nexus that defines the country today (Macuane et al., 2025, p. 1). From the early 2000s, a second, more localized cycle developed around pipeline gas exports from the Pande and Temane fields in Inhambane province, primarily operated by South Africa's Sasol, alongside the extraction of heavy sands by companies such as Ireland's Kenmare. It was the third cycle, beginning after 2010, that fundamentally redefined Mozambique's global standing. This period saw the discovery of massive offshore natural gas reserves in the Rovuma Basin in Cabo Delgado, intended for liquefied natural gas (LNG) export, alongside the exploitation of export-oriented minerals, such as graphite and precious gemstones (ibid.).

This "extractive turn" (Wiegink & García, 2022, p. 2) has been inextricably linked to a profound reliance on foreign direct investment (FDI), which was already mentioned in the previous chapter. In the second quarter of 2024 alone, FDIs exceeded USD 1 billion, driven mainly by LNG expansion and renewed investor confidence (African Development Bank Group, 2025, p. 13). Hence, Mozambique is frequently characterized as an FDI-driven economy, in which large-scale development projects, often termed "mega-projects", are initiated, financed, and operated almost exclusively by transnational corporations (Aminaka,

2021, p. 113). Scholars' argument that the handling of the resources by the Frelimo government has been characterized by systemic processes of "accumulation by dispossession", where the state functions as a facilitator for transnational capital while securing rents for a narrow political elite (Macuane et al., 2025, p. 21). Building on Harvey's conceptualisation, "accumulation by dispossession" is understood here not as a singular historical phase but as an ongoing set of processes through which land, resources, and livelihoods are restructured in favour of capital accumulation, often resulting in the dispossession and marginalisation of local populations through state-mediated legal, economic and coercive mechanisms (Harvey, 2007, p. 34).

Exemplary, during the 2000s, coal extraction in Tete province became the flagship of this resource-led development, as the province hosts some of the world's largest untapped coal reserves, estimated at over 23 billion tonnes (Pambazuka News, 08/31/2017). Yet, the actual developmental outcomes for the local population fell far short of the ambitious projections of the early 2010s (Macuane et al., 2025, p. 9). Instead, the coal sector generated highly enclave-like economies¹⁴ with minimal employment creation. "Mozambique is no exception – the development and economic progress resulting from such projects is unevenly distributed, as displaced people are largely excluded from the labour markets and business opportunities that are created by extraction projects" (Wiegink & García, 2022, p. 2). These dynamics produced what Wiegink and Garcia (2022) describe as "surplus populations": communities displaced from their ancestral lands and traditional livelihoods (agriculture and grazing) without being incorporated into the new economy as workers or consumers (Wiegink & García, 2022, p. 2). In Tete, these grievances have manifested in persistent land invasions and protests, to which the state has responded with a mixture of indifference and localized repression (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

A similar logic is visible in the ruby mining sector of Montepuez, Cabo Delgado, which became a global epicentre of gemstone production after 2009. Mozambique now supplies an estimated 80% of the global output of high-quality rubies, a boom accelerated by international embargoes on Burmese rubies (Macuane et al., 2025, p. 10). Prior to formal corporate exploitation, the area supported extensive artisanal mining involving thousands of local youths and regional migrants. However, the Mozambican state prioritized formal, large-scale concessions granted to politically connected actors. The most prominent case is the Montepuez Ruby Mining (MRM), a joint venture between the UK-based Gemfields and Mwiriti, a firm owned by senior Frelimo elites, including General Raimundo Pachinuapa, a veteran of the liberation struggle (ibid., p. 11). MRM was granted an exclusive 25-year

¹⁴ The term "enclave economy" refers to extractive or large-scale development projects that are weakly integrated into the national economy, characterised by limited linkages to local labour markets, domestic value chains and fiscal redistribution. Such projects often generate high export revenues while producing minimal spill-over effects for surrounding communities (Ferguson, 2006).

license covering 336 km² and enjoyed generous tax exemptions. To protect these elite interests, the consolidation of control was accompanied by extensive militarization. State security forces, including the Rapid Intervention Unit and private security firms, were deployed to forcibly expel artisanal miners. Reports have documented widespread human rights abuses, carried out to secure corporate concession boundaries (Earth Journalism Network, 2016).

Furthermore, the government's management of the hydrocarbon sector illustrates resource dynamics. While natural gas production began in the south in 2004, the massive discoveries in the Rovuma Basin (Cabo Delgado) after 2010 promised a transformative impact on the national economy. The anticipation of these revenues led to the infamous "Hidden Debt Scandal" (2013–2016), where senior officials illegally contracted USD 2.2 billion in loans for maritime security projects. The discovery of this secret debt by the IMF and international donors led to a collapse of external aid, a sharp devaluation of the Metical (local currency), and a nationwide economic crisis that disproportionately affected the rural poor (Macuane et al., 2025, p. 9). This scandal highlighted the "party-state-business" nexus as a major obstacle to transparent and accountable governance: "The close connections between the party, the state, and the private sector are impeding efficient and transparent government action and responsive administrative services" (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2023). Besides, the emergence of Mozambique as a key supplier of graphite, critical to the global "green energy transition", has added a new layer of geopolitical significance to Cabo Delgado, yet the local impacts mirror those of the coal and ruby sectors (Hartlief et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the resource sectors collectively illustrate how Mozambique's resource politics are characterized by alliances between transnational capital and national political elites. These alliances are facilitated by state institutions and reinforced through legal, financial, and often coercive mechanisms. Often promoted as a motor for inclusive, economic development, the state's handling of these resources has entrenched deep-seated socio-economic inequalities, created vast "surplus populations," and fostered a profound sense of relative deprivation. It fosters systemic exclusion and state-sanctioned violence that provided the fertile ground for the violent extremism and conflict dynamics that have engulfed Cabo Delgado since 2017.

4.7 Conflict Dynamics in Cabo Delgado: A Multi-Dimensional Perspective

Mozambique is considered a post-conflict state following the 1992 Rome Peace Accords, while the country has experienced recurrent and regionally differentiated forms of violence since the end of the civil war. These include low-intensity armed confrontations between Frelimo and Renamo in central Mozambique, urban unrest linked to economic crises, and, most significantly, the violent insurgency that has erupted in the northern province of Cabo Delgado (European Commission, 2024). The insurgency reached its peak in 2025 as “for the first time since hostilities began, all 17 districts of Cabo Delgado have been directly affected, and more than 1.3 million people have been displaced – many multiple times” (United Nations News, 2025).

The outbreak of organised violence in Cabo Delgado began with coordinated assaults on police stations in Mocímboa da Praia (Cabo Delgado) by a small, unidentified group. In its early responses, the Mozambican government portrayed the violence as externally orchestrated and attributed it to manipulated youth and foreign influences (Sidumo et al., 2024, p. 2). Following these events, the government implemented extensive security measures, including the closure of several mosques and the detention of over 300 people, among them religious figures and foreign nationals, mainly Tanzanians (ibid.). Over time, the conflict evolved into a protracted guerrilla war (Morier-Genoud, 2020, p. 396). The group, locally known as al-Shabaab and later internationally referred to as ISIS-Mozambique (ISIS-M), gradually expanded its territorial reach and operational capacity. In July 2019, it eventually pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (ISIS), after which ISIS began claiming responsibility for attacks in Cabo Delgado (Sidumo et al., 2024, p. 1; Morier-Genoud, 2020, p. 396). Since then, the government of Mozambique has sent troops to the north, securing towns and villages and hunting insurgents, thereby containing the conflict to a geographical area covering about half of the province (around 30,000 square kilometres) (Morier-Genoud, 2020a, p. 396). As a result, international attention intensified, leading to the involvement of foreign military actors, including private military contractors, Rwandan forces, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (ibid.).

Based on the intensity and duration of hostilities, as well as the armed group's organisational capacity, the conflict in Cabo Delgado qualifies as a non-international armed conflict (NIAC). As Bakare and Ojedukun (2024, p. 92) argue, the sustained armed violence between the Mozambican state and a sufficiently organised non-state armed group meets the threshold of the Common Article 3 and Additional Protocol II-type conflict. “Finally, it is submitted that the intervention in the conflict by external parties does not have a consequential influence on the prior classification of the hostilities as a non-international armed conflict”, as the affiliation that contributed to this internationalisation of the conflict did not fundamentally alter its locally rooted character (Bakare and Ojedukun, 2024, p. 92).

Building on this overview, the following sections analyse the conflict dynamics in Cabo Delgado through a multi-dimensional lens. As Pigou and Opperman (2021, p. 5) note, there is considerable disagreement regarding the causes of the insurgency and the relative weight of different factors, underscoring the need for an integrated analytical approach. This chapter tries to move beyond mono-causal explanations by examining the jihadist framing and securitisation of the conflict alongside its structural political-economic drivers.

4.7.1 The "Jihadist" Label

The insurgency in Cabo Delgado is often portrayed as a manifestation of global jihadism, which has profoundly shaped both domestic and international responses and presents the main narrative around the conflict. Yet, while the armed group adopted jihadist rhetoric and pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2019, this framing often obscures the locally rooted origins of the movement and the conditions under which violence emerged. Some scholars emphasise Islam as a key factor, arguing that young Muslims were radicalised through the influence of preachers from Kenya and Tanzania (Morier-Genoud, 2020, p. 397).

However, Islam has a long and deeply embedded presence in northern Mozambique, shaped by centuries of coastal trade, cultural exchange, and everyday social practice (Bonate, 2010, p. 573). The group commonly referred to as Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama'a (ASWJ), locally known as al-Shabaab, emerged around 2007 as a small, locally grounded religious movement. Often described as a sect, it was characterised by religious conservatism, social withdrawal, and opposition to state authority, seeking to establish a counter-society based on sharia principles (Morier-Genoud, 2020, p. 401).

In its early phase, the group lacked the organisational and military characteristics typically associated with jihadist insurgencies, and there is little evidence of systematic weapons training prior to 2015 (ibid.). The shift towards armed violence occurred gradually between 2015 and 2016 and was closely linked to increasing repression by both mainstream Muslim organisations and the Mozambican state (ibid., p. 404). As social withdrawal became increasingly untenable, violence was reframed as a legitimate means of transforming state–society relations.

Yet, these dynamics intersected with historical patterns of political exclusion, particularly the dominance of Christian Makonde elites aligned with Frelimo over Muslim Mwani and Makua communities (ibid., p. 405). Such asymmetries are less the result of religious difference per se than of colonial and postcolonial governance structures that unevenly integrated northern Mozambique into the state. Under Portuguese rule, coastal Muslim communities were marginalised, while Christianised inland groups, especially the Makonde, were later incorporated into liberation struggles and post-independence state institutions (ibid.).

Although the pledge of allegiance to ISIS internationalised the conflict symbolically, it does not conclusively indicate a takeover by ISIS. While media cooperation and communication links intensified, there is limited evidence of substantive changes in organisational structure, tactics, or command (ibid., p. 406). Nevertheless, the Mozambican state reinforced the jihadist framing. In 2019, President Filipe Nyusi officially classified the violence as terrorism, a designation formalised in 2020 by the National Defence and Security Council (Sidumo et al., 2024, p. 2). As Pigou and Opperman observe, this framing emphasised the threat's external nature while "downplaying its local roots and drivers" (Pigou and Opperman, 2021, p. 1). The following section turns to these structural drivers to analyse them more closely.

4.7.2 The Extractivist North and the Dissatisfied Youth

Beyond these religious and securitised interpretations, the escalation of violence in Cabo Delgado must be situated within Mozambique's broader political economy. Recruitment patterns suggest that participation in the insurgency has often been driven by material incentives, coercion, social networks, and grievances linked to poverty, dispossession, and state violence, rather than ideological commitment to global jihad (Morier-Genoud, 2020, p. 397). Scholars similarly argue that material deprivation, particularly poverty, marginalisation, and the lack of prospects for young people, constitutes a central driver of the conflict, with religion functioning primarily as a "rallying point" or cloak (Morier-Genoud, 2020, p. 396).

Despite its wealth of natural resources, including gas, rubies, graphite, and timber, Cabo Delgado consistently ranks among the poorest provinces in Mozambique, with high levels of illiteracy, food insecurity, unemployment, and limited access to basic services (Hanlon, 2022, p. 8). Historically, the province has been deeply embedded in international trade networks. As Hanlon notes, "Cabo Delgado is a coastal province and has a long trading culture. Key products traded internationally have included ivory and other wild animal products, marine products, timber, and gemstones. All are now illegal or restricted" (Hanlon, 2022, p. 6). The criminalisation of these livelihood strategies has undermined local economies without providing viable alternatives.

These dynamics reflect patterns of uneven development and centre–periphery relations. While extractive projects generate substantial revenues for political elites and transnational corporations, local communities remain largely excluded (see chapter 4.6).

In Cabo Delgado, large-scale land acquisitions for gas infrastructure, mining concessions, and security zones have displaced thousands of households, often with inadequate compensation and limited participation: "almost all land in the province has been given on concession to prospectors, investors and mining companies" (Sidumo et al., 2024, p. 3). In 2019, Gemfields agreed to pay USD 8.3 million to settle 273 claims of killings, severe

beatings, and house burnings linked to security operations at its ruby mine. These included allegations of 18 killings and nearly 200 cases of torture, beatings, and sexual abuse, many resulting in long-term injuries (Hanlon, 2022, p. 7). The development of LNG projects further intensified grievances. For many communities, the arrival of the gas industry was experienced as a shock: “outsiders coming in expensive 4x4s but no jobs for local people or contracts for local businesses” (Hanlon, 2022, p. 7). Corporate social responsibility initiatives have largely failed to mitigate these tensions. For example, TotalEnergies’ 2022 vocational training programme, which aimed to train 2,500 young people, including displaced persons, focused on basic skills such as carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work (Hanlon, 2022, p. 8). Yet the company did not commit to hiring trainees, as the short training periods did not meet the technical requirements for LNG jobs, which typically require long apprenticeships. As a result, such initiatives risk being perceived as tokenistic rather than transformative (ibid.). Expectations of employment, development, and improved livelihoods were rapidly replaced by frustration and disillusionment, particularly among young men facing chronic unemployment and social exclusion. Taken together, these dynamics illustrate how many extractive projects in Cabo Delgado have functioned as enclave economies, generating limited linkages to the local economy while excluding displaced communities from meaningful economic inclusion. As Macuane et al. (2025) note, “this sentiment of exclusion [...] and the neglect of local populations and their difficult integration into the resource economy have been identified as among the causes of the conflict in the north” (p. 16).

Analytically, these processes can be understood as forms of state-mediated dispossession, in which access to land and resources is systematically restructured in favour of capital accumulation and elite interests. The resulting socio-economic inequalities have not only deepened material deprivation but have also eroded trust in state institutions, reinforcing perceptions of injustice and abandonment. In this context, violence emerges not simply as an expression of ideological radicalisation, but as a response to long-standing experiences of exclusion and dispossession.

In addition, youth marginalisation constitutes a critical link between structural exclusion and armed mobilisation. Informal livelihoods, which often offer income and a sense of belonging, were increasingly criminalised, reinforcing perceptions of the state as extractive and coercive (Sidumo et al., 2024, p. 3). Operations targeting illegal mining and informal economic activities were accompanied by arbitrary arrests, harassment, and violence, further eroding trust in state institutions (ibid.). Recruitment into the insurgency has therefore frequently been driven by economic incentives and experiences of state violence rather than ideology. “The insurgency mobilizes based on local perceptions about exclusion and marginalisation, in a clear anti-state and anti-Frelimo discourse. Some youth in the

north speak of the insurgency as an opportunity” (Orre & Forquilha, 2023, p. 2). As Hanlon notes, “increasing corruption and poverty, the ostentatious display of wealth by elites and a lack of local trickle-down benefits led to growing local discontent [...] From 2019, the insurgents began recruiting from outside the immediate war area with promises of jobs” (Hanlon, 2021, p. 5). Consequently, religious networks offer alternative forms of income and belonging (Sidumo et al., 2024, p. 3).

4.7.3 Conflict as an Outcome of Uneven Development

Taken together, the conflict dynamics in Cabo Delgado reflect the violent outcome of Mozambique’s broader development trajectory. Rather than an isolated security crisis or a purely ideological insurgency, the violence emerges from long-standing patterns of uneven development, elite capture, and exclusionary resource governance. The convergence of large-scale extraction, land dispossession, youth marginalisation, and state violence has produced an environment in which armed mobilisation becomes both a means of survival and a response to structural exclusion. The extractivist actions have tended to benefit foreigners and only a few Mozambicans in the national elite, while the state has failed to create welfare and governance institutions. “Youth in the north are deeply imbued with scepticism against the regime ruling over the situation that produces wealth for some (in the south/Maputo), but exclusion and marginality for many (in the north)” (Orre & Forquilha, 2023, p. 2). This challenges dominant narratives that portray the conflict as primarily religiously motivated and instead highlights the centrality of socio-economic exclusion and repression in shaping the insurgency’s social base. The prioritisation of resource security over civilian protection has been particularly evident in the spatial concentration of military efforts around LNG projects, underscoring the close connection between resource politics and security governance in Cabo Delgado.

Addressing the violence and contributing to peacebuilding in Cabo Delgado therefore requires a multi-dimensional approach. The effectiveness of external interventions, such as those by the European Union, depends on whether they address these structural roots or merely provide military stabilization for the extractive industry. Scholars warn from poorly designed or implemented peacebuilding projects targeting the youth, as they risk boosting the insurgency: “Any programme that ends up being seen as feeding the clientelist machine of the state and party elite will therefore end up being counterproductive in countering the insurgency” (Orre & Forquilha, 2023, p. 2). Without confronting the underlying political-economic drivers of exclusion and dispossession, securitised responses risk reproducing the very conditions that sustain the conflict.

4.8 The European Union in Mozambique

After outlining the main political, economic, and social characteristics of Mozambique, as well as its structural challenges and resource-related dynamics, this chapter now turns to an examination of the European Union's presence in the country.

The cooperation goes back to 1985, when the EU established their Delegation to Mozambique in Maputo (Delegation of the European Union to Mozambique, 2021b). The EU's engagement in Mozambique spans multiple sectors, reflecting both broader geopolitical interests and specific development, energy, and security priorities: "Relations between the EU and Mozambique cover political, economic, trade and development cooperation" (Delegation of the European Union to Mozambique, 2021a). The EU-Mozambique partnership is structured around three main priorities: (1) Growing Green, (2) Growing Youth and Governance, (3) Peace and a Just Society. These priorities integrate energy considerations with broader peacebuilding, development, and security objectives and are closely linked to the EU's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Delegation of the European Union to Mozambique, 2021a).

Therefore, this chapter focuses on two interrelated dimensions that are most relevant to the research interest of this thesis: 1) peacebuilding, development, and security interventions, and 2) the economic and energy context.

Generally, scholars have noted that EU engagements on the African continent "have achieved tactical successes, [yet] they remain constrained by limited mandates, political ambiguity, and growing anti-Western sentiment in Africa (often fuelled by competing foreign actors), raising deeper questions about the possibilities and necessities of Europe's long-term role on the continent" (Vogel & Horvath, 2025, p. 44). The Afrobarometer survey from 2022 (Afrobarometer, 2025b) concluded that over one third (36%) of Mozambicans perceive EU's engagement in Mozambique as somewhat/ very positive (p. 4). Nevertheless, 22% perceive it as somewhat/very negative (ibid.) Understanding the scope, modalities and underlying rationales of EU involvement in Mozambique is thus essential for analysing how external actors interact with post-conflict and resource-rich settings and for assessing the potential (and seemingly ambivalent) influence and perception of international support on peacebuilding processes.

4.8.1 EU's Peacebuilding Engagement

The EU defines itself as a “key partner of Mozambique’s key partners in promoting peace and democratic governance through dialogue and reconciliation” (Delegation of the European Union to Mozambique, 2021a). The EU’s engagement in Mozambique’s peacebuilding domain, within the Triple Nexus, currently encompasses a range of interconnected activities within an integrated approach to peace, development, and humanitarian assistance (Brown et al., 2024, p. 573).

Since the escalation of violence in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique has increasingly relied on external actors to address the complex combination of security challenges, humanitarian needs, and socio-economic disruptions caused by the insurgency. As Pigou and Opperman (2021, p. 3) note, “retooling and training Mozambique’s military will take time”, and despite support from multiple partners, including the EU, the Government of Mozambique continues to face ongoing security threats. International assistance has been provided not only by the EU, but also by Rwanda, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the United States, and other actors, each contributing military, humanitarian, and technical support (Sidumo et al., 2024, p. 2). The EU’s engagement in Mozambique’s peacebuilding context can be grouped into four interlinked areas: (1) military and security sector support, (2) humanitarian assistance, (3) governance and democratic processes, and (4) socio-economic resilience and youth-focused programming.

One central pillar of the EU’s security engagement has been the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission. Initially launched in July 2021 as the European Union Training Mission in Mozambique (EUTM Mozambique), this initiative was designed at the request of the Mozambican government to support the “Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique” (FADM) in strengthening their capacity to respond to insurgent threats, particularly in Cabo Delgado (Sidumo et al., 2024, p. 2). EUTM Mozambique provided operational preparation and specialised training, with a focus on counter-terrorism tactics, logistical self-sufficiency, and compliance with International Humanitarian Law and human rights standards. The training covered a broad range of topics, including leadership development, unit cohesion, logistics management, and the integration of legal frameworks into operational planning (EUTM Mozambique, 2022; Franco & Bernardino, 2025, p. 1).

In 2024, the mission evolved into the “European Union Military Assistance Mission in Mozambique” (EUMAM Mozambique), with an extended mandate until 30 June 2026. “EUMAM MOZ aims to ensure that the Quick Reaction Forces (QRF) units trained by EUTM Mozambique become self-sufficient, thus contributing to the creation of a safer and more secure environment in Cabo Delgado. It assists by mentoring, advising, and giving specialised training” (EUMAM Mozambique, 2025). Furthermore, the EU supports the Rwandan Defence Forces (RDF) with EUR 20 million through the European Peace Facility

(EPF) in order to contribute to the fight against the insurgency in Cabo Delgado (Franco & Bernardino, 2025, p. 342; Fauvet/ Agência de Informação de Moçambique, 2025/03/06). This development reflects the EU's application of the nexus approach, which links capacity building in the security sector with procedural mentoring in governance and the promotion of legal norms, including human rights and international humanitarian law, to enhance institutional sustainability.

Second, alongside this security sector support, the EU provides humanitarian assistance to communities affected by conflict and climate-related disasters, which constitutes the second pillar of the Nexus approach. Implemented through DG ECHO (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations), the EU's humanitarian portfolio addresses immediate needs, including food security, shelter, water, sanitation, health, and protection services, with EUR 17 million allocated in 2025 (European Commission, 2025c). In Mozambique's northern provinces, this support has included Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) interventions, such as the construction and rehabilitation of wells, water points, and latrines, as well as the training of local water committees to manage infrastructure in displaced persons' camps and host communities (ibid.). This engagement gained renewed urgency in early 2026, when Mozambique was struck by one of the most severe floods in centuries, further exacerbating already fragile living conditions in conflict-affected regions. In response, the European Union deployed multiple humanitarian airlifts to the country. "The supplies, valued at 552,000 dollars (465,500 euros), include health, water, sanitation, and hygiene materials, nutrition, education, and child protection, as well as tents that will be used to create "safe spaces for children", temporary health clinics, and other essential services in the areas most affected by the floods" (European Newsroom, 01/27/2026). These efforts are often coordinated with non-governmental partners such as CARE International and are implemented within the broader nexus, designed to link lifesaving support with medium-term resilience (European Commission, 2024).

Third, the EU supports social cohesion projects through the NDICI and remaining IcSP programmes, aimed at mitigating tensions between displaced populations and host communities, thereby acknowledging structural drivers of conflict and contributing to peacebuilding in Mozambique. This recognition is explicitly articulated in one of the few donor-authored policy documents, the Northern Resilience and Integrated Development Strategy (ERDIN) from 2021: jointly developed by the World Bank, the African Development Bank, UNDP, and the European Union, the strategy identifies the conflict in Cabo Delgado as rooted in internal dynamics, noting that "at the root of this insurgency are perceptions of inequality, exclusion and marginalisation [and] perceptions of injustice in the distribution of benefits and opportunities arising from extractive activities" (Hanlon, 2022, p. 2; CDD,

2022). In this sense and under the EU's governance and peace portfolio, programmes implemented by civil society organisations focus on community dialogue, conflict mediation, and reconciliation processes. In alignment with the 2021-2027 Multi-Annual Indicative Plan for Mozambique, these initiatives are designed to strengthen social fabrics weakened by prolonged violence and displacement, aligning with the Triple Nexus approach by bridging developmental support and peacebuilding aims (European Commission, 2021b, p. 12; p. 33). In this context the EU emphasises that "in the forthcoming period it will be essential for the EU to engage in Mozambique in line with a comprehensive humanitarian-development-peace triple nexus approach in order to address the underlying fragilities and chronic vulnerability that turn shocks and stresses into humanitarian crises, with the ultimate objective to help people recover from those crises" (ibid., p. 3). Against this backdrop, the EU's engagement encompasses governance and democratic processes, which are considered essential for sustainable peacebuilding. Through the Support to Democratic Governance in Mozambique programme, the EU invests in electoral integrity, civic participation, parliamentary oversight, and institutional reform. This programme supports mechanisms such as citizen election observation, electoral reforms, and capacity-building for domestic oversight bodies, including in anticipation of general elections (ibid.: pp. 32–33). For example, the 2024 EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) deployed observers across the country and produced a final report with recommendations for strengthening future electoral processes, focusing on transparency, accountability, and institutional trust (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2024). The EU Delegation in Maputo further issues public statements emphasising the need for political restraint, citizen security, and credible dispute resolution following elections, reinforcing its role as a partner in electoral governance (ibid., p. 5).

Responding to socio-economic drivers of instability, the EU has increasingly incorporated youth empowerment and livelihood programmes into its portfolio. Recognising that marginalisation, lack of economic opportunity, and weak social integration can create conditions conducive to radicalisation, EU programming supports skills development, entrepreneurship, and employability initiatives targeted at young people (European Commission, 2021b, pp. 7–9). These activities form part of the Growing Youth priority within the EU–Mozambique Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021–2027. Projects under this priority aim to enhance technical and vocational training, facilitate access to micro-finance for young entrepreneurs, and support youth-led organisations engaged in community development. The objective is to strengthen positive livelihood alternatives for youth, thereby reducing the appeal of illicit or violent economic pathways (ibid.).

Moreover, in coordination with national and local authorities, EU development partners support anti-extremism awareness and prevention initiatives that integrate socio-economic

empowerment with messaging on peaceful coexistence and civic engagement. These programmes often combine community outreach, educational campaigns, and targeted support for at-risk youth (ibid., p. 25). Throughout these programs and projects, the EU works with so-called “Civil Society Organizations” (CSOs) to “create an EU shared framework for engagement with CSOs to improve the impact, consistency, and visibility of EU and EU Member States” (European Union, 2021a, p. 1). Their main objective is to benefit from their local knowledge, strengthen civil society and domestic accountability, and “contribute to a more enabling environment” (ibid., p. 2).

Finally, although Mozambique does not host many transcontinental migrants, given that approximately 55% of Mozambican emigrants reside in South Africa, displacement driven by armed conflict, environmental shocks, and livelihood insecurity has significantly contributed to internal mobility and cross-border movement (IOM, 2024, p. 10). In this context, migration is not addressed as an isolated policy field but is embedded within the EU’s broader external engagement frameworks. This is reflected in the EU–Mozambique Partnership Dialogue of 2025, where both sides have reiterated their commitment to “continue working together to deepen their cooperation through enhanced diplomatic engagement” and agreed on “a rules-based international order, regional integration and the peaceful resolution of disputes” (EEAS, 2025d, p. 2). Within such a framework, migration-related concerns are implicitly linked to peace and security cooperation. Through regional mechanisms, the EU connects development cooperation, governance support, and stabilization efforts with migration governance. The Africa–EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue, for instance, promotes a comprehensive approach encompassing legal migration pathways, protection of displaced populations, prevention of irregular migration, and return and reintegration under the Joint Africa–EU Strategy (European Commission, 2025a).

Taken together, this points to a nexus-based approach in which peacebuilding, resilience-building, and institutional support are simultaneously framed as contributing to regional stability and to the management of displacement and mobility dynamics.

Therefore, the EU’s peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique is multifaceted. Through the interconnected strands, the EU operationalises a Triple Nexus approach that reflects the EU’s broader policy orientation in fragile and post-conflict contexts, seeking to align security, governance, socio-economic, and humanitarian initiatives to address both immediate vulnerabilities and structural drivers of instability and conflict in Mozambique. Throughout all these strands, the EU wants to be in touch with civil society and aligned with human rights standards by promoting them throughout its programs: “The EU also supports Mozambique’s progress on human rights [...]. Its support strengthens human rights institutions and national defenders, with particular attention to combating gender-based violence and advancing the rights of women and children through legal and policy reforms.

More broadly, the EU promotes the integration of human rights and civil society participation into national policies, helping ensure that Mozambique's development agenda is inclusive and aligned with constitutional principles and international human rights standards" (Delegation of the European Union to Mozambique, 2021a).

4.8.2 EU's Economic and Energy Context

Besides these engagements, "the EU and Mozambique enjoy strong and expanding trade and economic relations, rooted in shared interests in sustainable growth, regional integration, and long-term prosperity. As one of Mozambique's main trading partners, the EU supports the country through trade agreements, investment, and targeted technical assistance" (Delegation of the European Union to Mozambique, 2021a). Mozambique is granted preferential access to the EU market, notably through the EU–SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The agreement is intended to support trade liberalisation and regional integration, while positioning Mozambique more strongly within the SADC and facilitating access to European and wider international markets (ibid). Alongside the EU-SADC EPA, Mozambique is also strengthening its engagement in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a major initiative to create a single market for goods and services across Africa. In this context, the EU actively supports Mozambique's integration into the AfCFTA, providing technical expertise and financial assistance to align national trade policies with continental objectives, thereby enabling the country to take full advantage of intra-African trade opportunities and foster regional economic development (ibid.).

Besides, it is important to highlight that the EU's engagement in Mozambique also extends to the country's resource and energy sectors, as Mozambique's significant natural gas reserves and other resources make it a key partner for international cooperation. The EU pursues this engagement through a range of programmes and initiatives targeting the energy and extractive sectors, while simultaneously addressing broader external policy objectives (European Commission, n.d.-e). This coordinated engagement involves the EU, its Member States and EU-related financial institutions, operating under frameworks such as the EU-Mozambique Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP) 2021-2027, the Global Gateway strategy and Team Europe¹⁵ initiatives, which pool actions and financial resources to jointly and coherently pursue development, security, and external policy objectives in partner countries (European Commission, n.d.-e). In this context, Mozambique is one of the largest beneficiaries in Sub-Saharan Africa of the EU's Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe (NDICI Global Europe), with

¹⁵ „Team Europe in Mozambique brings together the EU, the European Investment Bank, and 11 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden). Working together, we support these shared priorities through coordinated action under the Global Gateway and other joint initiatives" (European Commission, n.d.-e).

approximately EUR 605 million allocated in grant funding for 2021-2027, including investments in energy infrastructure (European Commission, n.d.-e).

Within this framework, the EU's engagement in the energy sector focuses on improving access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy through technical assistance, infrastructure investment, and regulatory reform. Under the Global Gateway initiative, significant investments are aimed at the green energy transition. For example, approximately USD 57 million has been committed to the construction of a National Control Centre for Energy Infrastructure, which aims to strengthen the nationwide production and distribution of renewable energy (EEAS, 2024).

Key lines of these actions include (European Commission, n.d.-e):

- Regulatory support and enabling environment for private investment: Technical assistance supports energy sector planning, fosters conditions for private sector participation and mobilises private finance for energy projects, aligning with the EU's goal of expanding access to clean energy and supporting Mozambique's climate adaptation strategies.
- Infrastructure investment in renewables and grid expansion: Investments cover solar and wind energy projects, rehabilitation of hydropower facilities such as the Cahora Bassa plant and expansion of national transmission networks to improve reliability, particularly in underserved regions.
- Energy efficiency and access programmes: Support is provided to the national utility to reduce non-technical losses, modernise distribution and increase electricity delivery at scale.
- Subnational sustainable energy planning: The EU has supported Sustainable Energy Action Plans for provinces such as Zambézia and Nampula to increase local access to energy through targeted strategies and frameworks (European Commission, n.d.-e).

In line with these programs, the EU supports Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and investment. PPP mechanisms, such as GET FiT Mozambique, supported by institutions such as the KfW, provide tariff incentives and risk mitigation to enable private renewable energy projects, illustrating how coordinated policy environments and EU-linked programmes are facilitating private capital participation in Mozambique's energy transition (GET FiT Mozambique, 2026).

Additionally, Instruments such as blended finance operations through the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD), as well as initiatives such as GET.invest and ElectriFI, aim to create bankable project pipelines and attract both public and private investment (GET.invest, n.d.; European Commission, n.d.-a). Global Gateway business further facilitates dialogue between EU and Mozambican stakeholders, focusing on energy

transition, critical raw materials, digital infrastructure, and sustainable supply chains (European Commission, n.d.-e). In this sense, European companies such as TotalEnergies and ENI play a leading role in Mozambique's energy sector, underscoring the direct link between large European corporate investments and Mozambique's energy economy and export markets (CIDSE, 2023).

Overall, the EU's engagement extends beyond sector-specific interventions; it is embedded in broader policy frameworks linking economic cooperation with political dialogue, institutional support and regional stability. In this sense, the EU Delegation in Maputo not only coordinates bilateral cooperation and aligns programmes with Mozambique's national strategies but also supports the country's integration into continental trade frameworks, promotion of inclusive and sustainable development and alignment with global policy objectives, thereby ensuring that EU support contributes to both national and regional long-term prosperity.

While this analysis focuses on the European Union as a collective actor, it is important to briefly acknowledge the role of individual EU member states in these contexts, some of which have been directly involved in Mozambique through bilateral initiatives. For instance, Portugal, under a framework agreement for bilateral cooperation, deployed 60 soldiers to Cabo Delgado in 2021, operating alongside but independently from EU-level frameworks (Club of Mozambique, 2021). At the end of 2025, during the 6th Portugal–Mozambique summit, both sides discussed cooperation across multiple sectors, including foreign policy, infrastructure, energy, and public administration (Governo da República Portuguesa, 2025). In this context, they agreed on over twenty bilateral legal instruments, including a credit facility of up to EUR 500 million to support Portuguese business activities in Mozambique (ibid.). Other member states pursue distinct sectoral priorities: France, among other projects, currently supports projects addressing gender-based violence (Agence Française de Développement, 2025), while the Netherlands, in addition to other initiatives, focuses on food security (Kingdom of the Netherlands, n.d.). Beyond structured formats, member states provide ad hoc support, such as Sweden's humanitarian aid following floods (Club of Mozambique, 2026). These activities, conducted via local embassies or public–private partnerships, illustrate that member state activities often align with overarching EU priorities such as stabilization and resilience yet remain shaped by historical relationships and thematic priorities, which contribute to shaping overall thematic focuses.

Beyond the EU, Mozambique is embedded in a landscape of diverse international engagement. The United States and the United Kingdom primarily focus on security cooperation and counterterrorism (Massango, 2026; U.S. Department of State, n.d.). These engagements are often driven by strategic concerns regarding regional stability and

resource security (U.S. Department of State, 2025): “U.S. interests in diversifying and increasing its supplies of critical minerals and liquefied natural gas (LNG) have elevated opportunities for cooperation with Mozambique and reaffirmed the importance of a stable region” (Fontaine & McKinley, 2025). In contrast, China represents a different mode of engagement centred on infrastructure and trade (Club of Mozambique, 2023). This involvement reflects a development-oriented logic prioritizing state-led delivery: “Chinese investments in Mozambique are focused on infrastructure, energy, and natural resource extraction, in addition to a growing corporate presence in strategic sectors of the Mozambican economy” (Club of Mozambique, 2025a; Kiryakova et al., 2025). Similarly, India’s presence in energy and trade reflects a commercially oriented strategy driven by access to African markets and maritime interests (Impact and Policy Research Institute, 2025; Mishra, 2021). While a detailed comparison lies beyond this study, this constellation highlights that Mozambique constitutes a multi-actor intervention space in which external engagement is shaped by overlapping yet differentiated logics.

In this context, all engagement with international actors is guided by Mozambique’s National Development Strategy (ENDE 2015-2035; ENDE 2025–2044) (República de Moçambique). While there is significant convergence between national goals and external interests, particularly regarding infrastructure and energy, the relationships are characterized by a constant process of negotiated statehood. Maputo’s focus on industrialization and the Ergo-corridors aligns with China’s Belt and Road Initiative and India’s maritime trade interests. Similarly, the government’s need to secure the Rovuma Basin gas projects coincides with the security and energy-security logics of the U.S., UK, and EU. Overall, Mozambique has a strong focus on macroeconomic growth based on resource extraction (BTI, 2026). Nevertheless, discrepancies arise when external “logics” clash with national priorities. For example, while the EU often ties aid to governance reforms (conditionality), the Mozambican government frequently prioritizes immediate military stabilization and state-led infrastructure without external interference (ibid.).

Ultimately, these overlapping but often contradictory agendas require ongoing, strategic negotiations. By leveraging the plurality of external actors, the state attempts to bridge the gap between its domestic developmental needs and the strategic interests of its international partners.

5 Empirical Findings and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative research conducted for this thesis. While previous chapters outlined the EU's peacebuilding strategies, normative claims, and policy frameworks, this chapter shifts the focus to the empirical realities of EU engagement as experienced by those directly involved in EU-supported interventions. By foregrounding local (expert) perspectives, the chapter assesses how EU peacebuilding is perceived and shaped by resource politics and strategic objectives.

The analysis emphasizes key themes emerging from the interviews, which are discussed in relation to the EU's own self-representation, highlighting gaps between rhetoric and practice.

1. Institutional and Operational Structures

This chapter brings together the different perspectives explored throughout the analysis by comparing conceptualizations of peacebuilding, the EU's normative claims, and the local perceptions of these claims. It also examines the EU's approach to local engagement, contrasting stated commitments to participation with how inclusion is experienced in practice, including the role of administration structures in shaping these dynamics and revealing underlying power relations.

Drawing on the idea that such structures shape both the design and implementation of peacebuilding interventions, the chapter explores how these dynamics manifest in the EU's engagement in Mozambique. Bureaucratic procedures, funding mechanisms, and coordination structures are not merely technical features; they can also indicate whether interventions are primarily top-down and state-centric or allow space for locally driven initiatives (Autesserre, 2014, p. 250). Analysing these institutional dimensions provides insight into the EU's peacebuilding approach's underlying logic and orientation, particularly in relation to its effectiveness and perceived legitimacy.

Generally, rather than reiterating earlier chapters, this chapter focuses on elements that help uncover potential discrepancies between EU rhetoric and local experience, while acknowledging that the empirical material of the EU is largely standardized, as it primarily draws on publicly available sources and a single written response from EUMAM Mozambique (O1), which itself follows an official and standardized format.

1.1 Conceptualizing Peacebuilding

Within the European Union's external action, peacebuilding is conceptualized as an integrated, multidimensional process in which security, development, governance, and diplomacy are closely intertwined. When it comes to peace itself, the EU recognizes the importance of positive peace by emphasizing “a sustainable multidimensional peace in

which wellbeing and combating inequalities are also key, [...] comprising reconciliation, respect for the rule of law, free elections, equal political and social opportunities, a free press, civil society participation, economic growth – i.e. acting beyond mere declarations to actually put ideas into practice” (European Parliament, 2019)

Peacebuilding is therefore not limited to post-conflict reconstruction but encompasses the entire conflict cycle, ranging from prevention and crisis response to long-term stabilization and development. As stated in EU policy documents: “The EU ensures an integrated approach to conflicts and crises by using the comprehensive toolbox at the EU’s disposal – at all stages of a conflict, from prevention to crisis management – in order to contribute to sustainable peace. The EU strives to deliver stabilisation and peace, [...], combining conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding in an effective way” (EEAS, 2021).

Peacebuilding is thus understood not as a singular intervention but as a comprehensive governance strategy aimed at addressing both immediate security threats and the structural drivers of violent conflict, such as poverty, inequality, and weak state institutions. Further, central to the EU’s peacebuilding logic is the assumption that security and stability constitute necessary preconditions for sustainable peace. In the context of Cabo Delgado, this logic translates partly into a security sequencing, whereby the establishment of basic security conditions is framed as a prerequisite for development, humanitarian assistance, and political dialogue. The EUMAM MOZ statement repeatedly emphasizes that without security, neither sustainable development nor the safe return of displaced populations is possible: “There can be no sustainable development or safe return of displaced populations without security. Strengthening FADM capacities is essential for re-establishing state presence and rebuilding trust with local communities in Cabo Delgado” (O1, p. 2). Within this framework, security is not presented as an end in itself, but as an enabling condition for broader peacebuilding objectives. Accordingly, the EU conceptualizes military assistance as an integral component of peacebuilding rather than as a purely coercive or counter-insurgency tool: “Military assistance is part of the peacebuilding process, within the EU integrated approach to crisis management” (O1, p. 5).

Similarly, the absence of armed violence is consistently identified as the core condition for peace among the interviewees: “for the Cabo Delgado communities, for them, peace would start by not having war” (I5, l. 95–96). Another interviewee emphasizes that “armed violence is the key issue affecting peace” and links the broader concept of peace to opportunities for people to live meaningful and aspirational lives (I1, l. 131–134).

Beyond the absence of conflict, local actors also highlight the importance of social cohesion, trust in institutions, and inclusive processes. Peace is described not only as a condition of non-violence but also as a state in which communities can thrive, participate in decision-making, and have access to essential resources: “that is not enough. Because they have

lived with no war for some time, but peace was not there. It was not there because they had so many people starving with no essential means to live. While at the same time, some group of people were having so much. And that for them create not a peaceful community” (I5, I. 97–101). These perspectives emphasize the relational and distributive dimensions of peace, showing that local communities associate peace with fairness, dialogue, and recognition of their rights. Several interviewees further stress the role of community agency and incremental change in peacebuilding. Accordingly, peace comes from within, where success is often framed not as immediate transformation but as small, tangible changes that strengthen the capacity of communities to voice concerns and influence outcomes: “We define success as changes. If we manage to see [...] more well-formulated, more conscious communities who can raise their voice, but also to be able to contribute, not always us alone, but to contribute to changes in favour of the people on the ground” (I3, I. 132–137); “we as communities, we need to make our part in building peace” (I1, I. 324–325). Linked to this is the importance of creating safe spaces for dialogue, particularly for marginalized groups such as women and youth, as a foundational step toward building trust and fostering peaceful interactions (I6, I. 414–419).

Overall, local conceptualizations of peace partly align with the EU’s approach, particularly in recognizing both security and broader elements of positive peace. However, while the EU articulates these dimensions at the normative level, local actors place stronger emphasis on their lived and socio-economic realities, including justice, inclusion, and community agency. This suggests less a fundamental divergence than a difference in how peace is prioritized and experienced in practice.

1.2 *Normative Claims and Tensions*

This section contrasts the EU’s normative claims with local perspectives in Cabo Delgado to highlight emerging tensions, particularly where commitments to peacebuilding, development, and local engagement diverge from lived experiences shaped by conflict, resource extraction, and socio-economic marginalization.

1.2.1 *EU’s Values-Based Peacebuilding Engagement in Mozambique*

The European Union is frequently characterized as a “Normative Power”, a concept that emphasizes its role as an actor committed to promoting human rights, gender equality, democracy, and international humanitarian law in its external action. This normative image is explicitly reiterated in official EU communications, which state that:

“In the face of rising global uncertainty and multiple crises, the EU remains firmly committed to promoting and protecting human rights and democracy. Beyond being a treaty obligation,

advancing human rights, the rule of law, and democracy are key priorities that shape the EU's external action" (EEAS, 2025c).

In the Mozambican context, this normative positioning is further reflected in the EU's response to the post-electoral situation. Following the elections, the EU publicly expressed concern regarding multiple reported human rights violations, emphasizing the need for accountability and adherence to democratic standards (Delegation of the European Union to Mozambique, 2025). Such statements reinforce the EU's claim to act as a guardian of normative principles, particularly in contexts marked by political instability and conflict.

This normative framing is also embedded in the EU's broader strategic engagement in Mozambique under the Global Gateway strategy. Within this framework, the EU highlights objectives such as "promoting decentralisation, elections, and anti-corruption" and "strengthening civil society and human rights protection" (European Commission, 2025b). These priorities are operationalized through the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Mozambique, which explicitly aligns EU interventions with the principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of "Leaving No One Behind". According to the MIP, this principle is intended to guide EU engagement by ensuring that groups often excluded or marginalized, including persons with disabilities, children, women, and girls, can meaningfully participate in all priority areas of EU cooperation and benefit equally from EU support (European Commission, 2021b, p. 4). By foregrounding inclusion and participation, the EU presents its engagement as socially transformative and normatively grounded.

Regarding its military engagement in Mozambique, official communications as well as the received statement from EUMAM Mozambique, consistently portray the EU's involvement as non-executive, advisory, and capacity-building oriented. Rather than framing the mission as a combat or stabilization operation, the EU emphasizes its role in supporting the professionalization of the Mozambican Armed Forces (FADM), with the stated objective of enhancing civilian protection and advancing human security. Within this framework, "human rights, international humanitarian law and gender equality" are explicitly highlighted as core guiding principles of the mission (O1, p. 1); "Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law is integrated into all EUMAM MOZ activities as per our mandate" (O1, p. 2). Central to this normative framing is the integration of the "Women, Peace and Security" agenda and the principles of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, alongside specialized training modules focused on civilian protection and the prevention of gender-based violence (O1, p. 1; p. 3). By emphasising that EUMAM MOZ is "guided by the principles" of the CSDP (O1, p. 3), they stress their commitment to "diplomacy, development aid, humanitarian assistance, climate action, trade policy, and human rights - to deliver a tailor-made response to each crisis. [...] [which] allows the EU to combine its soft power

with military tools, helping to promote peace, stability, and European values globally” (EEAS, 2025e).

By foregrounding these elements, EU communications construct an image of military engagement that is normatively restrained, humanitarian in orientation and transformative in intent, rather than coercive or primarily security driven.

Overall, this rhetoric positions the EU as an actor whose external interventions in Mozambique are guided by values, professional expertise, and international norms rather than by narrow political or economic interests. In doing so, the EU reinforces its long-standing claim to normative distinctiveness in international peacebuilding and security governance.

1.2.2 Local Perceptions of the EU’s Normative Engagement

So, while the European Union claims, in official documents and in its EUMAM MOZ statement, to adopt a normative approach to peacebuilding, the interviews reveal a nuanced, and at times ambivalent, perception of the EU’s normative engagement in Mozambique.

Respondents largely acknowledge that EU initiatives promote democracy, human rights, and participation at both community and governmental levels and that these efforts have tangible effects on local governance and civil society (I5, l. 164–167). One interviewee strongly emphasized the visibility of these values in practice, stating that they are “very reflected. Besides the projects that they support, even policies of the EU, democracy, human rights are always there. [...] And we have [...] policy rules that we need to follow in order to respect human rights and to respect democracy. [...] So, the contribution of the European Union in this topic is really very, very, very high and very important. [...] And we really realize that wherever you go and there is a project which is in the area, there is any project funded by the European Union, you see even the behaviour of the people engaged in those projects, even the behaviour of the community that is starting to assume to those values” (I8, l. 143–158). Another recurring theme across the interviews is the EU’s support for democracy and participatory governance through community-based structures such as Village Development Organizations (VDOs). These organizations serve as platforms where members are elected by the community and participate in decision-making processes that are subsequently communicated to government authorities and partners. In this way, VDOs foster both procedural democracy and local accountability: “the key element of our programming with the EU is village development organizations, which exist in each and all villages where we implement the programming. And these are democratically elected people. They have regular elections” (I1, l. 179–181). Beyond such formal electoral procedures, the EU’s engagement also encompasses the promotion of basic human rights

and social inclusion. Interviewees described how training sessions and project structures incorporate focal points for education, health, gender, and peace, thereby ensuring that different dimensions of rights are addressed within communities (I2, l. 274). In addition to community-level interventions, one interviewee emphasized the EU's efforts to transmit normative principles within the military and security sector under EUMAM: "And the instruction that they are giving to defence forces, it's not like it's just fighting the terrorism, but also the issue of human rights, the issue of preventing gender-based violence" (I8, l. 384–386).

However, despite these positive assessments, several respondents noted a persistent gap between EU rhetoric and practice, particularly in security and military support. Although the EU emphasizes human rights in its programming, interviewees referred to instances in which EU-supported security forces operating in Cabo Delgado acted in ways that contradicted these norms. Resource constraints, insufficient training, and logistical shortcomings were described as contributing factors: "Even those trained security forces [...] were in Cabo Delgado untrained and unequipped. [...] We have had a lot of incidents of security forces violating human rights. Sometimes because they have no food, [...] they mistreat communities" (I5, l. 128–132). Although the interviewee avoided directly blaming the EU, they emphasized that "the way EU was supporting, it was not really the right way in some instances" (I5, l. 133–134).

Similarly, EU statements regarding elections and local conflicts were perceived by some as not fully reflecting realities on the ground, thereby affecting the Union's credibility: "One of the ways we see is the statements that they issue after elections. Those statements sometimes are so biased, are not really depicting the realities on the ground" (I5, l. 177–179). This contributes to what respondents explicitly described as a normative inconsistency or a "normative gap": "Yeah, there is a gap between the EU's rhetoric and their actions. There is a gap" (I5, l. 439). In particular, the EU's support for Rwandan forces in Cabo Delgado was described as a source of irritation and scepticism. The continued EU support to Rwandan forces was described as "unbelievable" (I5, l. 135). This criticism is not limited to the situation in Cabo Delgado itself but is embedded in broader regional dynamics, especially Rwanda's controversial role in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as Rwanda has repeatedly been accused internationally of supporting armed groups in eastern DRC and of benefiting from the region's conflict economy, particularly in relation to mineral resources. Although the EU is, on one hand, sanctioning Rwanda because of its support for the M23 rebel group (Fauvet/ Agência de Informação de Moçambique, 2025/03/06), the EU's support to Rwandan security forces is perceived by some interviewees as contradictory to the Union's normative commitments to human rights and conflict prevention. One respondent articulated this concern in explicitly geopolitical terms:

“the EU supports the Rwandan forces (in support of Cabo Delgado), the equipment and all those other things. [...] they are putting so much resources in there. Rwanda is a poor country, that is a very small, poor country, that today is a powerful country. And one just asks where those powers come from. So, if you link Rwanda with DRC, now you understand all the bigger pictures. And we have those guys sitting in Cabo Delgado doing whatever they want. Unfortunately, with the international community, compliances and support” (15, l. 339–346). The irritation therefore stems not only from the EU’s operational choice to channel support through Rwandan forces rather than directly strengthening Mozambican defence forces, but also from the perception that the EU may be indirectly empowering a regional actor whose role in neighbouring conflicts remains highly contested. In this sense, the issue reinforces the previously mentioned perception that “there is a gap between the EU’s rhetoric and their actions”, particularly when normative commitments to human rights and regional stability are weighed against strategic security partnerships.

Nevertheless, the overall impression among interviewees is that the EU’s normative framework is recognized, internalized and increasingly reflected in local behaviour, including across diverse ethnic and religious groups. Projects are perceived as having contributed to community cohesion and the promotion of respect for human rights and democratic principles, even in contexts characterized by significant social fragmentation:

“Even in Cabo Delgado, we have 15 main ethnic groups, [...]. But the way in the districts, in the districts when the European Union, there is any project, you see even the community members, even the people in the community, the way they act, the way they behave between them, even you don’t, you don’t even discover that there are three ethnic groups here. [...] But why? Because people have learned that each one has an ethnic group, has a religion and we need to respect each other. [...] Something like 20 years before, there were civil conflicts between two ethnic groups, [...]. But from 15 years up to now, those situations are not happening. But it’s just the contribution of such organizations that are coming with this policy of human rights, respect each one’s religion and ethnic group, so that together we get it” (18, l. 157–174).

In sum, local perceptions depict the EU as a normatively driven actor whose support for human rights, democracy and participation is visible and appreciated at the community level. At the same time, gaps between policy rhetoric and operational practice, particularly in security and electoral support, remain a central challenge. This dual perception illustrates the complex realities of EU peacebuilding in Mozambique, where normative ambitions interact with political and practical constraints, resulting in both meaningful transformations and ongoing tensions.

1.3 *Local Engagement in Cabo Delgado*

This section examines the EU's approach to local engagement in Cabo Delgado by outlining its stated commitments to participation and local ownership, and by considering how these commitments are reflected in practice, with particular attention to the ways in which local actors are involved in peacebuilding processes.

1.3.1 The EU's Approach to Localism

The European Union repeatedly emphasizes its commitment to an “Integrated Approach” to peacebuilding, which seeks to combine security, development, humanitarian assistance, and political engagement in a coherent and mutually reinforcing manner. According to official EU planning documents: “In the forthcoming period it will be essential for the EU to engage in Mozambique in line with a comprehensive humanitarian-development-peace triple nexus approach in order to address the underlying fragilities and chronic vulnerability that turn shocks and stresses into humanitarian crises, with the ultimate objective to help people recover from those crises” (European Commission, 2021a, p. 3). Within this architecture, different EU instruments, military and civilian, in Mozambique assume differentiated but complementary roles (European Commission, n.d.-e). Together, these interventions are presented as mutually reinforcing elements of a comprehensive peacebuilding strategy that seeks to stabilize the security environment while simultaneously fostering institutional development and political inclusion.

A central pillar underpinning all these approaches is the emphasis on local ownership, partnership, and cooperation with local actors. Across its policy documents, the EU consistently presents local engagement as a prerequisite for sustainable peace and effective intervention. In principle, this includes cooperation not only with state institutions but also with civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based actors, and local non-governmental organizations. Yet, in the case of EUMAM MOZ, cooperation is primarily articulated through close collaboration with Mozambican authorities and national institutions. High-level strategic summaries emphasize coordination with state actors and international partners, while the role of broader civil society remains largely abstract and under-specified: “EUMAM MOZ cooperates closely with Mozambican authorities and coordinates with other national and international actors, contributing to the stabilisation and security of Mozambique” (O1, p. 3). This framing reflects a state-centric interpretation of local ownership, in which partnership is largely equated with engagement at the governmental and institutional level. By contrast, the inclusion of civil society actors, local communities, and grassroots organizations is less visible in the official descriptions of the mission's core activities.

However, EU non-military programs increasingly acknowledge the importance of civil society organizations within the Triple Nexus framework. In line with broader debates on “localisation” in humanitarian and peacebuilding practice, the EU emphasizes the need to rely more strongly on local NGOs and CSOs in partner countries in order to enhance sustainability, contextual relevance and access to affected populations: “The EU increasingly relies on local non-governmental and civil society organisations (NGOs and CSOs) in partner countries to implement its policies. This ‘localisation’ aims to ensure sustainable interventions based on local knowledge and to better reach the intended beneficiaries, while reducing overhead costs. Yet, many local organisations lack financial and human resources, which hinders their capacity to meet EU compliance criteria and fully participate in Triple Nexus frameworks. They are thus frequently excluded from substantive decision-making processes and treated as subcontractors for International NGOs or CSOs rather than equal partners” (European Parliament, 2025). This assessment introduces an important qualification to the EU’s localisation discourse. While local ownership is repeatedly emphasized at the normative level, structural barriers, such as complex compliance requirements, limited financial capacity, and administrative constraints, seem to challenge meaningful participation of local CSOs. These tensions are also acknowledged in the EU’s Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Mozambique, which repeatedly highlights the central role of civil society organizations in strengthening governance, promoting accountability, and holding state institutions to account. At the same time, the repeated emphasis on capacity building implicitly reflects the EU’s recognition that many local CSOs face significant constraints in engaging with EU funding instruments and policy frameworks (European Commission, 2021b).

Taken together, the EU’s Integrated Approach and Triple Nexus framework in Mozambique articulate an ambitious vision of peacebuilding that foregrounds conflict sensitivity, local ownership, and inclusive participation.

1.3.2 *Local Perspectives on Participation and Local Ownership*

So, while the EU repeatedly emphasizes local participation and ownership as core principles of its Nexus approach, the interview material reveals a more ambivalent picture, marked by both enabling practices and significant structural limitations.

A recurring theme across the interviews is that participation largely takes place within frameworks and objectives predefined by the EU. As one interviewee explained: “Now the EU will put out a call for proposals, very often they define what is the general objective and sometimes the specific objectives, and then the organizations run with their proposals what they think can be done in order to achieve the objectives which European Union require. So, it’s not a totally open process. The European Union is clear about what they, what they

require from the funds they have available" (I4, l. 277–281). This highlights that participation is structured and conditional: while local actors are invited to contribute ideas and approaches, they must align with externally determined priorities and parameters. As another interviewee succinctly noted: "Well, they're considered within the framework that is already designed. So, you cannot go beyond the framework. Yeah, but if your ideas fit in that framework, they easily take it" (I5, l. 278–279). Thus, local ownership is formally encouraged but substantively bounded, reflecting a predominantly top-down approach in which strategic direction and agenda-setting remain largely with the donor.

Despite these constraints, several interviewees described instances of flexibility, dialogue, and co-creation, particularly during project design and implementation phases. One respondent emphasized the collaborative nature of certain projects: "It [the project design] was done by us. We had cooperation conversations with EU as we were designing it. And I said that there was this element of co-creation throughout this project. [...] The two cycles incorporated the priorities that are coming out of communities" (I1, l. 269–276). The interviewee added: "It's a conversation where [...] you discuss challenges, you can discuss adjustments that are needed" (I1, l. 255–257). These accounts suggest that, under certain conditions, especially in longer-term engagements, the EU allows room for adaptation and contextual responsiveness. Such co-creation processes can enhance local agency by enabling communities and implementing organizations to shape priorities, methods, and project focus beyond mere implementation.

Nevertheless, the interviews consistently point to a persistent "participation gap" between the EU's normative rhetoric and practical influence exercised by local actors. Consultation is sometimes perceived as selective, procedural, and occurring only after major strategic decisions have already been taken. As one interviewee summarized: "[...] at the end of the day, it's the EU that defines the main purpose of their funding" (I4, l. 285). Another respondent articulated this imbalance more explicitly: "To get a partnership of equal, there's a lot of roads to go. You can feel that power imbalance, right? That the donor is speaking now. And the donor is now giving you directive and you have to follow. Nevertheless, there's a bit of conversation, as I said, which is better than some donors where you cannot even suggest or speak. You just do whatever is there and that's it. So, the EU has that room where you can have that conversation, you can go along, but within the framework that they have designed. And also, you have to keep in mind that you're speaking with the donor" (I5, l. 285–291). Similarly, this interviewee stressed the misalignment between formal participation and actual decision-making power: "[...] what can make those initiatives more sustainable would be to provide a room where local actors can really drive the seat [...] Instead of saying, 'Ok, we have money that funds this, only two million if you can do A, B, C and D'. And that is prescriptive kind of support. The other way round will provide more

ownership where actors on the ground, they know the context, they know what they want” (I5, I. 448–454). Together, these statements illustrate that bottom-up approaches are often operationalized as controlled consultation rather than as mechanisms of genuine power redistribution. Local actors are positioned primarily as implementers within donor-defined agendas, rather than as equal partners shaping strategic direction. At the same time, interviewees highlighted innovative EU practices that challenge this pattern, particularly its support for informal grassroots organizations representing marginalized communities: “They [the EU] were the first donor to start supporting informal groups at village level [...] and that's very important in order to promote a new grassroots civil society emerging from the base [...] they were able to make funding available which other donors weren't able to do or weren't willing to do” (I4, I. 195–200). Such initiatives demonstrate a genuine commitment to social inclusion and local ownership, particularly in contexts where formal civil society structures are weak. Yet, another interviewee highlights the limited direct connection between local CSOs and the EU, emphasizing the hierarchical distance between communities and EU institutions “I don't think people have any relations to EU locally, but of course our partners. [...] but the NGOs we've been working with, [...] they would like to have a good relation to the EU. But [...] the communities have very little idea about the EU. So, it's at another, if you understand me right, it's at another level when you ask about how do people see the EU, it's at another level” (I3, I. 310–315).

Overall, the interview findings reveal a dual nature of EU participation mechanisms. On the one hand, enabling practices, such as co-creation processes, support for informal grassroots organizations, dialogue-based engagement, and capacity-building, can foster local agency, innovation, and social inclusion. On the other hand, constraining structures, predefined objectives, donor-driven frameworks, and persistent power asymmetries, limit local influence over project design, priorities, and resource allocation. One interviewee connected this critique to broader questions of development models, which were partly perceived as Eurocentric and universalizing and, as a result, potentially limiting the transformative impact of EU interventions: “I think that is one of the things I see that could be more impactful. Trying to promote more local ownership, more local knowledge, more local driven development. [...] there's a need of rethinking the, the economic model that we are using. More of local beneficiation can come through so that economically more resources are left in the communities and in the country” (I5, I. 217–223). Taken together, these dynamics highlight both the potential and the limits of the EU's current approach to participatory, locally owned peacebuilding.

1.3.3 Administration, Funding and Reporting

Building on the discussion of direct participation, this section now examines the administrative, funding, and reporting structures that further shape the context of EU engagement. These underlying mechanisms not only organize interventions but also reveal existing hierarchies and the distribution of decision-making power, thereby shaping the scope and nature of local participation. Understanding these structures further provides a foundation for assessing the sustainability and effectiveness of EU-funded projects on the ground.

Overall, the interviews reveal a multifaceted picture: on the one hand, EU support is widely appreciated and recognised as valuable for local peacebuilding and community development. One interviewee summarised this as follows: “Overall European Union is [...] a very good partner. [...] They are open and they are flexible for changes” (I2, I. 545). On the other hand, multiple administrative and structural constraints significantly affect local actors’ ability to operate effectively. These constraints point to a form of administrative power through which the EU indirectly shapes local priorities, partnerships, and agency:

Many interviewees emphasised that EU project design and proposal procedures are highly complex, making them particularly challenging for smaller local organisations with limited experience with international funding mechanisms. One participant noted: “Because an EU proposal, first of all, is not a simple process. We’re talking a small local organization we say provincial level, district level, for them to be able to submit a proposal is quite a challenge that they would need to probably contract a consultant to be able to put a proposal together” (I4, I. 133–136). Another interviewee reinforced this point, highlighting difficulties in navigating annexes, reporting templates, and technical requirements: “The project design and project submission is quite complex. I think you know well the EU model and the annexes that exist so it’s quite a complex process for an organization that maybe doesn’t have much experience in that area” (I4, I. 104–106). These statements suggest that administrative complexity functions as a gatekeeping mechanism, privileging larger NGOs or international organisations with sufficient bureaucratic capacity, while smaller local actors face systemic barriers to direct participation.

To mitigate these challenges, the EU provides sub-grants and micro-projects through larger organisations that act as intermediaries to reach smaller CSOs (I4, I. 177–186; I6, I. 179–203). This model was also critically reflected upon. One interviewee from a small local CSO expressed a clear preference for direct funding: “being directly funded, I think that even the opportunity to grow, even the visibility of other organizations, is much better than working under other organizations” (I8, I. 498–503).

Another central concern raised by several interviewees relates to the frequency and level of detail required in EU reporting processes, which create significant operational burdens.

As one participant explained: “We have used a lot of time to deliver reports every three months. [...]. And the other thing is that they have very strict [...] objectives and monitoring tools, which are sometimes difficult to fill in with when you are working in an area in conflict. And then we have had problems to get the money flowing, because [...] every three months you have to prove that you have used your funds for the quarter to get new funds released” (I3, l. 144–151). These findings indicate that funding delays are often directly linked to bureaucratic requirements, impeding project continuity and limiting responsiveness to local needs. Another interviewee highlighted the consequences for smaller partner organisations: “I think that we could tell them a lot more if we did not have to follow all these bureaucratic rules, which are necessary [...], because if not, we don't have money to fund the activities out in the field. And the NGOs we have been partnering with, they are so small that if they miss a quarter of financing, then they will have to sack people or people will leave them and find other things to do” (I3, l. 338–343).

While these frameworks are, to some extent, understandable given accountability and coordination requirements, they nevertheless complicate project implementation in conflict-affected contexts. Accordingly, local actors expressed a strong desire for greater flexibility in staffing, project timelines, and funding duration: “I think our recommendations would be first of all to make sure that the funding is [...] for medium or long-term so a minimum of three-year funding, ideally five-year funding [...], which gives enough time to create the capacity and see the changes happen” (I4, l. 235–236).

Despite these constraints, several interviewees acknowledged that the EU is often open to dialogue and responsive to constructive feedback, particularly regarding project adaptation: “[...] during this project, this project in European Union was flexible for us to adapt agreements, the approaches because it was not possible to implement as we have decided in the beginning” (I7, l. 164–166). This suggests that administrative constraints are not entirely rigid and that there is space for negotiation and adaptation, pointing to potential pathways for enhanced local ownership and more participatory implementation.

Overall, the findings illustrate that administrative procedures and reporting requirements shape the operational realities of EU-supported projects in Mozambique. While EU funding remains essential for local peacebuilding interventions, it simultaneously imposes structural constraints that limit flexibility, local agency, and long-term sustainability

2. The Political Economy of Peacebuilding in Cabo Delgado

To move beyond a purely programmatic assessment of the EU's peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique and to critically examine whether it is primarily normatively driven or shaped by strategic interests, this chapter analyses the political economy Mozambique, underpinning its involvement, particularly in relation to security dynamics, resource governance, and broader geopolitical considerations in Cabo Delgado.

2.1 Structural Frictions in Resource-Rich Regions

Looking at the interview data, the interviews point to deeper structural tensions that characterize resource-rich regions such as Cabo Delgado. These tensions are not perceived as isolated governance failures but as systemic patterns that repeatedly emerge where large-scale natural resource extraction intersects with weak redistributive mechanisms, limited community participation, and geopolitical competition. Several interviewees framed the situation through the lens of a fragile or distorted "social contract". As one respondent noted: "Yes, it's what we call 'social contract'. And they have to show that they have good intentions to be able to continue, you know, having that good relationship to be seen as an institution that we can, you know, resolve to. [...] But what I'm saying is that support is coming with a cost" (I5, l. 408–412). Support, whether from corporations, the EU, or the state, is thus not rejected per se, but perceived as embedded in asymmetrical relationships. Assistance is rarely neutral; it is intertwined with expectations, dependencies, and trade-offs that are not equally distributed.

Furthermore, a recurring theme in the interviews is the structural link between resource abundance and instability. One respondent generalized: "Yeah I think it's everywhere in the world that we have natural resources of this kind of quantity the problems always occur [...], be it local destabilization or people come from the outside to destabilize [...] I don't see that's any very much different to Mozambique" (I4, l. 174–178). Similarly, another interviewee described the phenomenon more sharply: "If you look at worldwide everywhere where you have big natural resources, you have conflicts. So, it's a curse actually" (I3, l. 160–162). This articulation closely resembles classical "resource curse" narratives. Yet, interviewees did not frame conflict as inevitable. Rather, they emphasized the political and economic structures surrounding extraction. One respondent explained: "The root of the conflict is an economic struggle in Africa where civil society is not counted in and where civil society has actually a very small role to play among these big international companies and a government which is only interested in its own" (I3, l. 456–459). Here, conflict is not merely a by-product of resource wealth but a consequence of exclusionary governance arrangements that marginalize civil society and local communities from decision-making processes and benefit-sharing. Across almost all interviews, perceptions of exclusion

emerged as a central driver of dissatisfaction. One interviewee stated: “there is so little in terms of community benefits to those initiatives. And that fuelled most of the perceptions of communities. All of them, they perceive that they are left behind, they're left out and their resources are being exploited without them being benefited” (I5, 42–45). This perception is reinforced by lived experiences of displacement and loss (I1, l. 441–443). Another respondent summarized the dynamic succinctly: “That it's a rich area. People are not benefiting from it. So, dissatisfaction is bigger, and conflict emerges from that, from dissatisfaction” (I1, l. 307–309). Interestingly, the interviews reveal two competing interpretations of causality: “One [...] is conflict is good to make resource extraction cheaper [...] suggesting that conflict is instigated somehow by natural resource extraction. And others see it the other way around, where it's because of richness of the region and people not benefiting from it, it leads to conflict. We don't know exactly which one is the more prevailing, but we see the presence of the two” (I1, l. 309–314). This dual interpretation underscores the structural ambiguity of the conflict: extraction may both generate grievances and benefit from instability. Thus, the structural friction lies not in extraction alone, but in the gap between potential collective wealth and actual distributive outcomes. Taken together, the interviews depict Cabo Delgado not merely as a site of insurgency, but as a structurally strained resource frontier characterized by exclusionary governance, weak redistribution, geopolitical energy interests, and fragile social contracts. Therefore, the EU's engagement operates within and becomes part of these structural frictions. Even when framed as peacebuilding or development support, interventions unfold in a context where resource extraction, perceived injustice, and socio-economic marginalization remain unresolved. Against this backdrop, it becomes crucial to examine the EU's entanglements with economic interests, including its linkages to the private sector, to assess whether its engagement addresses or reproduces these underlying dynamics. These dynamics shape local perceptions of the EU's objectives and set the stage for examining how peacebuilding initiatives are implemented on the ground.

2.2 Economic Interests

The European Union predominantly frames its engagement in Mozambique through a normative lens, emphasizing peacebuilding, human security, governance reform, and sustainable development. In official communications, economic interests are rarely foregrounded explicitly. When economic dimensions are articulated, they are typically situated within trade and regional integration frameworks, such as the EU–SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) or support for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), rather than within the peacebuilding discourse itself. In its peacebuilding narrative, the EU presents itself primarily as a value-based actor rather than a geopolitical

or economic stakeholder. However, the interview material reveals that, among local and international actors operating in Mozambique, perceptions of EU engagement are more ambivalent and are frequently linked, directly or indirectly, to economic and resource-related interests.

Several interviewees articulated a cautious but recurring suspicion that economic considerations may underlie at least parts of the EU's involvement. One respondent reflected: "I mean, maybe thinking, seeing what happens in other countries, maybe they are really engaged in helping us, but there is something that they need from us. [...] People may think that the economic interests are behind the help that we are receiving. I don't know. I'm not saying that there is that interest, but sometimes maybe" (I8, l. 352–357). This statement illustrates a recurring theme: while not all actors explicitly accuse the EU of pursuing economic self-interest, there exists a widespread sense that assistance and strategic interests may be intertwined. The hesitation in the wording ("I'm not saying that there is that interest, but sometimes maybe") reflects both political caution and structural ambiguity. Other interviewees were more direct. One person stated: "It's really evident that even if we have a lot of humanitarian and development interventions, I think personally that the very objective behind the strongest one at least, it's an interest and it's an economic interest" (I6, l. 648–650). Similarly, when explicitly asked whether EU engagement is influenced by economic or resource-related interests, one respondent answered succinctly: "I have no doubt" (I5, l. 390). Another interviewee elaborated that peacebuilding and economic motivations may coexist: "I think it's a little bit both. There are economic interests, but I also think that the European Union has a genuine interest in peacebuilding, but you can't exclude the economics from the equation" (I3, l. 243–245). This "both/and" framing appears frequently across the interviews. Rather than portraying the EU as purely self-interested or purely normative, many respondents describe a dual logic: genuine peacebuilding ambitions operating alongside strategic economic considerations.

Nevertheless, the geopolitical context, particularly the global energy crisis and the war in Ukraine, was repeatedly mentioned as an important background factor. One interviewee observed: "I think globally, there is a big issue of sources of energy. Here we are talking about natural gas. And we know the global crisis that's going on there. The war in Ukraine is also creating that. [...] So, I would say probably the European Union looks at that as well" (I1, l. 366–369). The same respondent continued by pointing to the involvement of European member states: "If you relate to the fact that there are at least two state members that are at the forefront of it, the Italian Eni and the French Total, who are part of the European Union. [...] Yes, even if it's not explicitly said, yes. But if you look at these days, the situation is changing, and governments are being more explicit about it as well. The Trump government has said that, right? It's not about just aid; it's about looking at our

interests and how they will put that forward” (I1, l. 169–175). Importantly, the interviewee notes that while the EU as an institution may not openly articulate these interests, member states increasingly align aid and cooperation with strategic priorities (I1, l. 375–377). In this regard, one interviewee referred to Italy’s “Piano Mattei” as an example of how development cooperation can be explicitly linked to energy diversification and migration management: “the hidden objective is that we are trying to diversify our energy provision around the world, of course, and in exchange we offer development to these countries. So, development by financing projects and the other objective is to reduce migration [...] and then at the end it’s just because Italy wants to get the oil and gas. [...] and I can see it also at the European level. It’s evident that at the end of the day, the biggest interest is another one, and it’s not making the world a peaceful place or at least not just that” (I6, l. 155–167). Although this statement reflects a clearly political and critical perspective, it illustrates how national strategies of EU member states shape perceptions of EU-level engagement. Even if institutional EU documents emphasize normative goals, local actors often interpret these engagements within broader geopolitical and energy-security dynamics.

Besides, several interviewees linked the intensity of international engagement in Cabo Delgado directly to the presence of natural gas reserves. One participant noted: “sometimes what happens in Africa, there is always conflict in those countries where it is exploration of those resources. So, of course, sometimes it’s easier to connect the economic interests” (I8, l. 140–142). The same respondent observed a geographical concentration of international support: “I’m here in Cabo Delgado, I see that the engagement of the European Union and the other organizations is different from other parts of the country. In the other parts of the country, there is almost, there is no expression of those organizations [...] maybe they are really engaged in helping us, but there is something that they need from us (I8, l. 347–354). This perceived unevenness reinforces suspicions that engagement is partly resource-driven. Similarly, another respondent reflected critically on the EU’s evolving position on fossil fuels: “EU used to have a very strong position on fossil fuels. But that strong position is no longer there in practice. It might be in paper, but in practice, no” (I5, l. 353–354). Such statements do not necessarily accuse the EU of direct complicity but highlight perceived inconsistencies between normative commitments and practical engagement.

Nevertheless, not all interviewees framed economic interests as dominant or problematic. One respondent emphasized the long-standing nature of EU–Mozambique relations: “Oh, yeah. No, I really don’t think so. Because [...] it’s a bilateral relationship with the country and it started way before the resource boom” (I2, l. 199–200). The same interviewee argued that EU support to civil society may actually serve as a counterbalance: “they are trying to make a balance, to build the capacity to [...] control, so that there’s a balance between the

economic gain of those companies, but also the social gain as well” (I2, 202–204). Another respondent noted that the EU funds multiple actors simultaneously: “Because some donors, they just fund either government or private, but EU was funding civil society, was funding the government, which is okay and funds private, which is okay” (I5, l. 152–154). These perspectives suggest that EU engagement is perceived by some actors as an attempt to balance economic, governmental, and civil society interests rather than privileging one exclusively.

So overall, the interviews reveal that economic interests are widely perceived as an underlying dimension of EU engagement in Mozambique, even if they are not explicitly foregrounded in official peacebuilding discourse. While some respondents emphasize the coexistence of genuine normative commitments and strategic considerations, others view economic and energy-related interests as the stronger driver.

Hence, the data does not produce a uniform assessment; instead, it points to a structural ambiguity. This perceived entanglement between peacebuilding and economic interests sets the stage for a more detailed examination of the role of the private sector and the emerging security–resource nexus, which will be explored in the following section.

2.3 The Strategic Role of the Private Sector

The data suggest that private sector actors in Cabo Delgado are not perceived as operating independently, but rather as structurally embedded in and closely connected to European political, security, and development involvement in the region. European energy corporations such as TotalEnergies and Eni are repeatedly referenced not only as companies operating in Mozambique, but as actors closely linked to EU member states and broader European geopolitical interests.

Several interviewees explicitly connected the conflict dynamics in Cabo Delgado to the presence of such companies, stressing that “all this conflict is directly related to the presence of these massive oil and gas companies. Most of them are European” (I6, l. 504–505). The fact that Eni is Italian and TotalEnergies is French was not mentioned incidentally; it was invoked to underline that the EU cannot be treated as external to the extractive political economy. Referring to Total as “a French-owned company, which brings government and private together”, the interviewee suggested that the role of France may even “jeopardize the position that EU has as a collective” (I5, l. 355–358), especially given ongoing human rights accusations against the company in Europe (Oxfam, 2025). The conclusion was sharp: “It’s very difficult to demarcate yourself if you are supporting the cause” (I5, l. 362). This perceived inability to demarcate reflects a broader legitimacy dilemma. While the EU presents itself as a normative peacebuilding actor, its member state corporations are leading actors in fossil fuel extraction in a conflict-affected region. As one

respondent put it, since these are European companies, “the European Union should be more exigent on how they deal with local communities, how they really try to complement the damage they are causing” (I6, l. 678–680). Here, responsibility is not attributed solely to corporations but extended to the EU as a political entity expected to regulate and hold them accountable. At the same time, interviewees described how extractive governance is embedded in formalized mechanisms of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and revenue redistribution. Beyond formal redistribution mechanisms, interviewees highlighted a structural paradox within the NGO landscape. As one respondent observed, “a lot of NGOs are financed by the same Eni, because they have this social responsibility part of their budgets that they have to use for social impact interventions” (I6, l. 515–517). In this way, private sector actors become directly involved in development and peacebuilding initiatives, positioning themselves alongside and in interaction with both EU-funded interventions and local communities. The dilemma emerging from this constellation was articulated pointedly: “a lot of projects are funded by the problem” (I6, l. 520). Additionally, an interviewee noted the increasing involvement of the private sector in peacebuilding, a trend that may extend to EU engagement as well: “We have met with donors, not necessarily EU, who told us we are shifting now. All our support will be through or with or involving our own private sector. So, you will see less money for just an education project, but you will see more money for an economic development project involving our own private sector as well. So, it tells you that people are making more to support this aid to their own interests” (I1, l. 382–386). This circular dynamic reveals how corporate social responsibility, development programming, and extractive activities are deeply and increasingly entangled, blurring the lines between those generating harm and those tasked with addressing its consequences. While some respondents acknowledged that the EU is “trying to mitigate all the bad consequences” (I6, l. 507) of extractive operations, through youth empowerment, job creation, and economic development programs, these efforts were widely described as insufficient and structurally unbalanced. One interviewee argued that the “effort put on one side trying to mitigate all the bad consequences and the impact, negative impact, of these huge companies, it’s really not balanced” (I6, l. 511–513). Accordingly, the disruption of ecosystems, livelihoods, and social structures cannot be offset by relatively small-scale development interventions. Thus, EU peacebuilding projects are somewhat perceived as compensatory rather than transformative. The governance practices of corporations themselves were also questioned. According to one respondent, companies “praise themselves to be in contact with the communities”, yet agreements are often “copy-paste [...] the same from one area to another”, written in Portuguese and made available online, limiting communities’ ability to scrutinize them (I3, l. 178–181). As a result, “the communities

are the losers” (I3, l. 185). This critique reinforces the perception that extractive governance structures are technocratic and exclusionary, rather than participatory.

Within this geopolitical and economic context, EU security engagement acquires particular significance. The EU’s “non-lethal support” and training of Mozambican security forces (EUMAM Mozambique) was intended to support stabilization.

However, the spatial concentration of security forces raised further concerns. Palma was described as “overcrowded” (I5, l. 135) with different security actors, and the area around Afungi, where Total operates, was said to be “over guarded” (I5, l. 137). This spatial configuration fuels suspicions that security support may prioritize protecting extractive infrastructure. As one respondent cautiously stated, “maybe they are empowering those defence forces so that they can protect the business. So, we don’t know, but I’m not sure” (I8, l. 323–324). Even this uncertainty reflects a broader erosion of trust and aligns with observations of corporate activities in post-conflict regions. As Jill Shankleman notes, “the company that is in charge of the project has its own guard force, which is backed up on a permanent or incident-response basis by government forces, police, or the military”, which can have negative impacts on the local population (Shankleman, 2012, p. 54). Ultimately, several interviewees framed the issue in distributive terms. Multinational companies “are making money every year”, while “the people of Mozambique are becoming poorer and poorer” (I1, l. 450–454). Natural gas extracted in Cabo Delgado may ultimately supply European markets, given the presence of European players. What is demanded instead is a genuine “balance, not just economic gains for European and other foreign companies, but also for communities to benefit from those resources” (I2, l. 238–240).

Altogether, the interview data suggest that the EU is perceived not solely as a peacebuilding actor operating alongside extractive corporations, but also as structurally embedded within the political economy of LNG exploitation. Through member-state companies, geopolitical energy interests, security support, and development-mitigation projects, the EU becomes part of a governance architecture that simultaneously generates and seeks to manage instability. This produces a fundamental double mandate. The EU aims to strengthen civil society, promote human rights, and build resilience in conflict-affected communities. Yet it is also associated, through its member states, energy security concerns and security cooperation, with an extractive model widely perceived as fuelling inequality, dispossession, and potential militarization.

3. EU's Engagement in Cabo Delgado revisited

Building on the previous analysis of EU project structures, strategic interests, and identified gaps, this chapter revisits the EU's engagement in Cabo Delgado, drawing on local perspectives once more. It critically considers the effectiveness and practical impact of EU initiatives, as well as local perceptions of the EU's credibility and legitimacy in the context of the ongoing conflict.

3.1 Legitimacy and Credibility

This category examines how the European Union is ultimately perceived by local actors and implementing partners, particularly in light of the tensions and contradictions identified in the previous sections. This category therefore explores how these ambivalences shape the Union's perceived legitimacy and credibility in Mozambique.

Overall, interviewees described the European Union as a significant and, in many respects, comparatively progressive actor within Mozambique's peacebuilding and development landscape. Several respondents emphasized that, unlike many donors who focus predominantly on short-term humanitarian relief and emergency response, the EU maintains a longer-term engagement in governance, social cohesion, and institutional development. One participant stressed that the EU is "one of the major donors who work in this thematic area on social cohesion, governance", highlighting that while many actors remain focused on emergency activities, the EU "have this side of emergency, but also, they keep working on development side" (I7, l. 79–82). In a protracted crisis setting such as Cabo Delgado, ongoing for nearly a decade, this continuity was perceived as particularly valuable (I7, l. 84–87).

The EU was also frequently portrayed as accessible and open to dialogue. Implementing partners highlighted the Union's flexibility during project implementation, its willingness to adapt agreements when initial plans proved unrealistic, and its comparatively close follow-up mechanisms. One respondent described the EU as "a very good partner" (I2, l. 545), underlining its openness and flexibility for change: "it's always been a progressive donor in the sense that it's always open to listening to innovation" (I4, l. 43–44). Others emphasized that the EU has historically been receptive to civil society organizations, at times serving as one of the few donors willing to engage consistently with local actors on issues such as governance, peacebuilding, and human rights. In contrast to donors that channel funding exclusively through government institutions or prioritize narrowly defined sectors, the EU was described as funding government bodies, civil society and, in some cases, private sector initiatives, thereby occupying a distinct position in the donor landscape: "For so long time, EU was the only voice to really receive civil society, I wouldn't say complaint, but request for support [...] [...] Even the projects that I'm talking about just show that, you

know, EU was there to support different actors within the landscape. Because some donors, they just fund either government or private” (I5, l. 147–153). At the same time, this broadly positive assessment was accompanied by a recurring awareness that EU support is embedded in political and economic considerations. As one interviewee put it: “I’m not saying that their support is not welcome. [...] But what I’m saying is that support is coming with a cost” (I5, l. 410–411). This notion of “cost” did not primarily refer to financial conditionalities, but rather to underlying economic interests. Several respondents expressed the view that economic considerations, particularly those related to resource extraction and broader geopolitical strategies, shape the credibility of the EU’s engagement in Mozambique. One interviewee expressed this view explicitly: “This does in fact impact the credibility of the EU for me” (I5, l. 394). Such questions of credibility became particularly salient in the context of the support for the Rwandan defence forces (I5, l. 337–346), the national elections and the connected subsequent post-election crisis. Several respondents referred to widespread protests and allegations of electoral fraud, during which the EU’s role as an election observer came under scrutiny. In some civil society circles, the EU was perceived as having implicitly legitimized a contested government by accepting the election results (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2024). As one participant described, people questioned „what is the interest of EU in promoting national dialogue in the way it is being promoted? And the answer is, okay, because they want now to have the new government on their side to continue what is called the uhm the new approach that the EU has of resource exploitation, “the gateway” or whatever they want to call it” (I5, l. 396–400). In this interpretation, EU engagement was seen as strategically aligned with the goal of ensuring political stability and maintaining cooperative relations with the incumbent government, potentially in light of ongoing economic partnerships. One interviewee said that this spread the “perception that the fraud is left by institutions such as EU” (I1, l. 408). Besides, several respondents argued that financing should be used to implement locally defined priorities “instead of driving the agenda or the frameworks that are really drawn in some way in Europe” (I5, l. 467–469). In this reading, development risks remain externally steered rather than locally designed and structurally transformative.

Yet, such statements are rarely translated into outright rejection of the EU as an actor. Rather, they reveal a more nuanced and ambivalent positioning. Even critical voices often acknowledged the EU’s constructive contributions, its openness to dialogue, and its comparatively balanced programming approach. Indeed, many respondents combined criticism with constructive recommendations rather than rejection. Suggestions included revising the way dialogue between the EU and projects takes place, conducting systematic lesson-learning from past peacebuilding and natural resource governance interventions and further strengthening integrated approaches such as the “triple nexus” (I5, l. 475–480; I6, l.

672–674) These recommendations indicate continued engagement and expectation, a sign that the EU is still perceived as a relevant and responsive partner. The critique therefore appears less as a wholesale delegitimization and more as a call for greater consistency between normative commitments and political practice.

Collectively, the findings suggest that the EU's legitimacy in Mozambique is characterized by conditional trust. The Union is widely regarded as an important and, in many respects, supportive partner, particularly in contrast to donors perceived as more narrowly focused or less engaged with civil society. At the same time, its credibility remains sensitive to perceptions of economic self-interest, corporate accountability, and political alignment in moments of crisis. EU legitimacy does not rest on the absence of contradictions, but on how convincingly it navigates the intersection between values, strategic interests, and local expectations.

3.2 Effectiveness and Practical Impact

Overall, the effectiveness of EU-funded peacebuilding interventions in Mozambique is perceived as tangible yet structurally limited. Interviewees consistently describe meaningful improvements at the community level, particularly in social cohesion, institutional capacity-building, and local empowerment. At the same time, they stress that these achievements remain fragile and constrained by funding cycles, bureaucratic rigidity, and broader political-economic contradictions.

At the local level, respondents report observable improvements in security and cooperation in areas where EU-supported projects operate. While these improvements are not described as systemic transformations, they are regarded as significant in fragile contexts: "In some places, it was possible to see improvement in security" (I1, l. 61). Over successive project phases, the scope of intervention has also expanded considerably. As one respondent noted, "I think in the first and the second phase, we have 64 communities, and now in the third phase, we are reaching more than 215 communities" (I2, l. 98–99). This expansion is presented as an indicator of both institutional learning and growing outreach. Another central dimension of effectiveness concerns the relationship between internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities. Interviewees describe how initial tensions over land access gradually shifted toward shared arrangements and cooperative structures. One respondent illustrated this development as follows: "So, at the beginning, there is no way to share the lands. But currently [...] some of the internal displaced, they are president of the VDOs. And it means that they are playing very important roles [...] Even if we are looking for gender issues, currently there is VDOs, which are leading by women" (I2, l. 299–323). Such examples are framed as "success stories" (I2, l. 374), particularly because they demonstrate restored trust, inclusive governance structures, and increased participation of

women and displaced persons. Beyond cohesion, effectiveness is closely linked to capacity-building, awareness-building, and political agency. Projects not only create dialogue spaces but also actively encourage communities to use them to claim rights and influence decision-making processes. As one interviewee explained, “I think the main positive outcome is to provide community and their institution with a room for capacity building. [...] Most of the institutions of the communities that today are having some expression is thanks to the support that the EU is providing [...]. For me, that is the biggest, biggest benefit. Today, communities can really understand even the policy and law” (I5, l. 418–422). Another one stated that “this capacity building with local civil society is concrete. It's something that you can really see. [...] So, like concrete knowledge has been produced. [...] they will be hopefully able to access funding directly and not just with an intermediary, [...]” (I1, l. 541–548). Therefore, capacity building emerges as one of the most tangible achievements. The long-term nature of such transformations was repeatedly emphasized. Dialogue is described not as an immediate solution but as a generational investment: “When you develop dialogue [...] you can't take it away from them. [...] that is in long-term [...]” (I3, l. 373–379). Similarly, strengthening local women's agency is described as a visible step forward: “we have seen some very strong women putting their demands up against the duty bearers [...] It is a step forward for conflict resolution and also for communities to be aware that they are actually in the last two benefits from the wealth that is extracted from their communities” (I3, l. 381–386).

Despite these achievements, interviewees repeatedly stress that sustainable impact depends on local ownership and long-term engagement. As one respondent put it succinctly, “we need to build it from within. We need to build ownership” (I2, l. 101). This aspiration raises questions about how far ownership can develop within pre-structured project frameworks and externally defined funding logics. Similarly, one participant suggested that the projects could achieve greater impact if local communities were genuinely able to take the lead and shape the direction of the interventions themselves (I5, l. 449). Time horizons are identified as a key structural limitation. One interviewee reflected critically: “I would value the project at the end after 36 months as a success, but we were actually only started to get a hold on the structure” (I3, l. 154–156). Similarly, long-term engagement is described as a precondition for measurable impact: “If it's a long-term project, [...] at least a three-year project then you have a possibly substantial impact. If it's a one-year project, it's very difficult because it's very little time to make a change” (I4, l. 97–99). Short-term funding cycles are thus seen as undermining sustainability. As another respondent noted, donor funding becoming increasingly short-term makes it difficult “to sustain the action” (I4, l. 230). Resource limitations further constrain effectiveness. Several interviewees pointed to insufficient budgets and staffing capacities: “So sometimes what is

happening is the resources that we have are not enough to cover their project. So is this coming in as a challenge for us" (I2, I. 402–403). Furthermore, bureaucratic requirements also restrict flexibility: "But the problem is that I think that we could tell them a lot more if we did not have to follow all these bureaucratic rules [...] because if not, we don't have money to fund the activities out in the field" (I3, I. 338–339).

Another recurring theme is the tension between peacebuilding activities and urgent socioeconomic needs. In highly vulnerable communities, dialogue initiatives compete with immediate concerns such as food, water, and employment. As one respondent explained:

"So usually, when they see an organization or civil society organization coming to the community. They are thinking about maybe their first needs. Like food, water and other things. And sometimes we, we are not providing what they are looking for at that moment" (I2, I. 384–387). This highlights a structural limitation: peacebuilding efforts that lack tangible livelihood improvements may struggle to sustain engagement. Several interviewees therefore call for stronger livelihood components and long-term economic opportunities that persist beyond EU funding cycles (I6, I. 378–386).

Operational instability further complicates implementation. Recurrent displacement weakens community structures (I2, I. 424–427). In addition, insufficient coordination between humanitarian and development actors has at times unintentionally generated new tensions, particularly when aid distribution created perceptions of unequal treatment between IDPs and host communities (I2, I. 434–442).

Overall, many respondents describe EU interventions as mitigating rather than transformative. While they acknowledge that projects empower communities and strengthen local voices, they question whether these gains outweigh broader structural dynamics (I5, I. 368–372). Multiple interviewees described EU efforts as limited attempts to compensate for the negative impacts of large-scale economic engagement, arguing that the balance between mitigation and structural transformation remains uneven: "yes, of course, European Union, through these kinds of projects, is trying to mitigate all the bad consequences of this presence here. Of course, it's trying. I think that the effort is really limited, I mean and it's not providing real opportunities for people to overcome this disruption of the ecosystem that they're facing [...] I think that the effort put on one side trying to mitigate all the bad consequences and the impact, negative impact, of these huge companies, it's really not balanced" (I6, I. 508–513); "With some of the projects, peacebuilding, whatever other projects, it helps in some way to mitigate. But if you weigh in those projects and the huge support that they provide to, you know, the defence forces and to TOTAL directed to France, then you start wondering if they're really helping mitigate it. You know, they do both. But if you weigh in, you can see that the higher weight is on the

negative side” (I5, I. 368–372). This highlights that, for some, the impact of EU peacebuilding is regarded as constrained or limited in scope.

In sum, EU peacebuilding interventions in Mozambique are widely regarded as effective at the micro-level. They have strengthened social cohesion, enhanced civil society capacities, empowered women and youth, and fostered participatory governance structures. However, their transformative potential remains structurally bounded by short funding cycles, socioeconomic deprivation, bureaucratic constraints, resource limitations, and tensions between grassroots peacebuilding and macro-level security and economic strategies.

6 Synthesis and Theoretical Anchoring

To anchor the findings in the theoretical Background related to peacebuilding approaches, the findings point to a tension at the core of contemporary EU peacebuilding debates.

On the one hand, the EU's approach in Mozambique largely aligns with the idea that sustainable peace can be fostered through the promotion of democratic governance, civil society participation, rule of law, and institutional capacity-building, reflecting liberal peacebuilding ideas (Barnett et al., 2007, p. 36). Yet, in its official discourse, the EU explicitly emphasizes support for bottom-up dynamics, grassroots engagement, and locally driven development, which, in some instances, distinguishes it from other donors and aligns with ideas from critical peacebuilding scholarship. This is reflected, for example, in its support for community-based structures, civil society organizations, and inclusive governance mechanisms, as well as efforts to engage informal local actors (European Parliament, 2025).

On the other hand, the empirical findings suggest that these participatory ambitions are embedded within externally designed frameworks. The emphasis on participatory structures, local governance mechanisms, and capacity development reflects a belief in gradual transformation through institutional strengthening and normative diffusion, in line with assumptions of an emancipatory liberal approach (Newman et al., 2009, pp. 8–9; Natorski, 2011, pp. 5–6). Participation in this context remains largely facilitated and guided rather than fully autonomous, as local agency is exercised primarily within predefined strategic, financial, and administrative parameters. When viewed through a critical peacebuilding lens, these same dynamics reveal underlying power asymmetries and structural constraints. The findings suggest that participation often remains confined within externally defined parameters, limiting local actors' ability to shape priorities or influence resource distribution. This reflects a broader critique within critical scholarship that (liberal) peacebuilding tends to reproduce existing hierarchies by embedding local actors into externally driven governance frameworks (MacGinty & Richmond, 2013, pp. 763–764). Rather than redistributing power, participation can serve as a mechanism of incorporation, in which local agency is acknowledged but ultimately subordinated to donor priorities and global governance logics (Bargués-Pedreny, 2020, pp. 237–240). It is at this intersection that Maschietto's (2016) argument becomes analytically useful: The observation that policies intended to foster bottom-up governance dynamics are themselves initiated and structured from the top down. As noted, "the main policy to promote bottom-up governance dynamics has come from the top down, a problem that pervades peace-building activities more generally, in particular state-building reforms" (Maschietto, 2016, p. 115). The findings from Mozambique illustrate this duality: participation is neither absent nor purely instrumental, but structurally conditioned. The EU's approach simultaneously enables local

agency at the micro-level while maintaining control over strategic decision-making at the macro-level. This reflects the hybrid nature of contemporary peacebuilding, in which aspirations for participation and inclusion are continuously shaped, negotiated, and constrained by structural power relations highlighted in critical approaches.

Linking these observations to resource and conflict-related theories situates EU peacebuilding in Mozambique within a political-economic context. As highlighted in the literature, resource-rich and conflict-affected environments are characterized by complex interactions between economic interests, governance structures, and conflict dynamics (Bruch et al., 2016, p. 3). In such contexts, peacebuilding interventions cannot be analytically separated from questions of resource governance, distribution, and external involvement. From this perspective, peacebuilding is embedded in broader structures of global inequality and dependency, in which external actors simultaneously support governance reforms while operating within economic and geopolitical frameworks that shape the scope and direction of these interventions (Jakobeit & Meißner, 2019, p. 610; Le Billon, 2001, p. 580). In this context, the EU's engagement in Mozambique can be understood as situated at the intersection of multiple, partially overlapping peacebuilding logics. Rather than representing a coherent or unified model, it reflects a layered and relational approach in which normative commitments, institutional practices, structural conditions, and political resource economy interact in complex and sometimes contradictory ways. This hybridity points to the inherently contested, context-dependent nature of contemporary peacebuilding in fragile, resource-rich settings.

7 Conclusion and Answering the Research Questions

After presenting the empirical findings and relating them to the theoretical framework, this final chapter concludes with the study's central insights. Drawing on both the empirical analysis and the conceptual foundations outlined earlier, it aims to consolidate the main findings and provide a comprehensive answer to the research question. In doing so, the chapter reflects on how theoretical expectations align with empirical observations and highlights the broader implications of the study's results.

1. Is the EU's peacebuilding in Mozambique driven by normative values or by economic interest politics?

The European Union presents itself as a normative actor committed to promoting peace, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, grounded in its foundational values as codified in the Treaty of Lisbon. These principles are not only pursued internally but are also projected externally, where the EU seeks to advance international peace, sustainable development, poverty reduction, and adherence to international law (European Union, n.d.-a). While the empirical findings point to a certain duality between normative aspirations and strategic interests, they ultimately suggest that the EU's peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique cannot be reduced to a simple dichotomy between the two. Rather, the EU simultaneously pursues normative objectives and geopolitical considerations, with the relative weight of each becoming visible in moments of political tension. On a programmatic level, the EU clearly projects itself as a normative actor. Support for dialogue platforms, gender-sensitive governance structures, civil society strengthening, participatory mechanisms, and long-term institutional development reflects an explicit commitment to values-based engagement. Several interviewees emphasized that the EU remains one of the few actors consistently investing in governance reforms and structural development, focusing on human rights rather than exclusively on short-term stabilization or humanitarian relief.

However, when assessed against the criteria of Manners (2002), Normative Power Europe (NPE), as further conceptualized by Forsberg (2011, p. 1191), the picture becomes more ambivalent. Again, a normative power is expected to:

- (1) possess a normative identity,
- (2) behave according to norms,
- (3) use normative means of power,
- (4) pursue normative interests and
- (5) achieve normative ends

The EU clearly possesses a normative identity and actively articulates it in Mozambique. It also employs largely normative means through dialogue facilitation, governance reform, capacity-building, and human rights language, rather than overt coercion.

Yet tensions emerge over whether the EU consistently adheres to norms, pursues normative interests, and ultimately achieves normative ends, particularly when security and economic considerations intersect with political realities. For example, the aftermath of the contested elections constitutes a central topic regarding the EU's normative credibility. While the EU deployed an election observation mission and formally documented irregularities, several interviewees perceived the Union's subsequent political positioning as partly legitimizing the incumbent government despite credible allegations of fraud.

This created a significant normative dilemma: If democracy and rule of law are core normative commitments, why were these not defended more robustly when challenged?

This generated uncertainties that broader strategic interests, including continued cooperation with the Frelimo government in a resource-rich context, may have outweighed a confrontational defence of democratic norms. Nonetheless, the empirical data do not prove intentional prioritization of economic interests. Yet, the perception of selective norm application is politically consequential. Normative power relies not only on formal adherence to values, but on consistent performance under pressure. The elections exposed these normative limits: democracy promotion appears to operate within boundaries defined by concerns over political stability and strategic continuity. This contests the quote cited earlier in this study, in which Catherine Ashton, then High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, characterized human rights as "a silver thread that runs through everything we do in external relations" (European Commission, 2010). While such statements underscore a strong normative commitment, the empirical findings suggest that it is the way these commitments are operationalized that ultimately determines their impact. Another, and even sharper, contradiction emerges regarding Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Several interviewees explicitly questioned the EU's support for the Rwandan Defence Forces through the EPF, while Rwanda has repeatedly been accused of involvement in destabilizing dynamics in eastern DRC.

This creates another broader normative tension: The EU promotes peace, rule-based order, and respect for sovereignty. Simultaneously, it financially supports a military actor accused of undermining those principles elsewhere. Even if justified within a security-cooperation framework aimed at stabilizing Cabo Delgado, this policy weakens the EU's claim to normative consistency. For local actors in Mozambique, such contradictions fuel suspicion that security partnerships may override principled commitments. Drawing on Kavalski (2013), this relational aspect is reinforced: "normative powers are those actors that are recognized as such by others" (p. 247). Consequently, weaknesses or inconsistencies

observed by local actors can limit the EU's normative authority, as it is continuously shaped and constrained by how it is accepted and validated in practice across different contexts. Furthermore, across the empirical material, human rights, gender equality, and participatory governance are promoted, but primarily within a framework that prioritizes institutional continuity, state capacity, and macro-level stability.

From this perspective, the EU does not abandon norms. Rather, norms are embedded within an interest-sensitive hierarchy. The "normative gap" identified in the analysis is not simply an inconsistency, but a structural constraint: norms operate within the boundaries set by geopolitical and economic realities.

Another dimension concerns the question of who is ultimately empowered (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, p. 25). While EU programs aim to strengthen local institutions and civil society, interview data revealed recurring challenges and frustrations regarding ownership and authorship. Here, Autesserre's (2014) critique becomes relevant: "[...] the obsession with quantifiable outputs and the rituals of visibility, reporting and impartiality further widen the chasm between interveners and their local counterparts [...] These dominant modes of operation prevent local authorship" (Autesserre, 2014, p. 250). Several interviewees described similar patterns: bureaucratic procedures, donor-driven frameworks, and predefined reporting logics that limit genuine local agency. In this sense, the EU may simultaneously empower local actors and reproduce asymmetrical hierarchies of expertise and control. Normative power can unintentionally become a form of "self-empowerment", where projecting values consolidates the EU's international status even if transformative local ownership remains limited.

In sum, the EU's peacebuilding in Mozambique is neither purely exploitative nor fully transformative. It represents a hybrid form of stabilizing normative engagement: Norms are genuine and institutionalized, and normative instruments are widely used. Local actors often recognize the EU as comparatively constructive, yet normative commitments encounter visible limits when they intersect with political alliances, security partnerships, and broader strategic-economic considerations in a resource-rich context. The EU thus embodies a constrained normative power. It fulfils several NPE characteristics but struggles with consistent norm-prioritization under geopolitical pressure. Ultimately, the EU's legitimacy in Mozambique rests on conditional trust. Its engagement is perceived as meaningful and often beneficial, particularly in governance and in support of civil society. However, credibility erodes when strategic calculations become visible or when normative enforcement appears selective.

The EU's peacebuilding is therefore best understood as a continuous negotiation between values and interests, a negotiation that reveals not the absence of norms, but their structural fragility within a geopolitical order shaped by security imperatives and economic

interdependence. This finding resonates with broader debates in critical peacebuilding literature. While contemporary interventions increasingly emphasise local ownership, “doing no harm”, and hybrid partnerships grounded in mutual learning (Bargués-Pedreny, 2018, p. 138; Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, p. 12), scholars argue that a persistent gap remains between emancipatory rhetoric and implementation (Bargués-Pedreny, 2020, p. 237, 240). The Mozambican case reflects this tension: although the EU promotes participatory governance and inclusive dialogue, structural constraints, security priorities, and bureaucratic practices continue to limit transformative potential. The analysis situates the EU not outside this critique, but within the broader structural dilemmas that characterise contemporary liberal and post-liberal peacebuilding efforts.

II. How do resource interests influence the EU's peacebuilding in post-conflict states?

This analysis of the EU's normative claims partly reveals the potential economic interests underlying its engagement in Mozambique. Regarding the second question, which explicitly focuses on the role of resource wealth, it appears that resource interests influence EU involvement less through direct, extraction-oriented policies within peacebuilding projects and more indirectly through the broader stabilization and external engagement frameworks in which these projects are embedded. While EU programming does not openly present economic objectives as part of its peacebuilding agenda, initiatives such as the Global Gateway integrate broader economic and infrastructure-related interests, including those linked to extractive industries and energy transition.

Mozambique's position as a resource-rich state, particularly regarding natural gas and other extractive sectors, situates it within European geopolitical and energy considerations. In practice, this partially manifests in the EU's arrangements for political stability, security cooperation, and regional partnerships. Peacebuilding interventions operate alongside military training missions, support for regional security frameworks, and involvement in the governance of extractive and energy resources. Interviews revealed that European extractive companies, including TotalEnergies and ENI, maintain a significant local presence, with some engagements linked to the militarization of extraction sites. This underscores the indirect yet structural influence of resource interests on EU peacebuilding: governance and civil society support are promoted, but always within a framework that safeguards strategic economic and security priorities.

In parallel, private actors have gained increasing prominence within the peacebuilding landscape (Abramov, 2010, p. 481). While it is not the economic interests of the companies themselves that drive EU interventions, EU engagement is deeply entangled with these actors through Public–Private Partnerships, CSR, ESG frameworks, and financial

instruments supporting infrastructure and development projects (Abramov, 2010, p. 481). This entanglement means that resource and economic considerations can indirectly shape the scope, prioritization, and implementation of peacebuilding efforts (Lie, 2024, p. 1326). A closer look at Mozambique's FDI-driven economy illustrates this dynamic: among the main countries of origin for FDI from January to June 2025, the Netherlands (36.3%) and Italy (19.4%), both EU member states, ranked the top two, reflecting diversified capital inflows across extractive, manufacturing, and other sectors (Club of Mozambique, 2025c). In this sense, the EU's development initiatives, as part of the Tripe Nexus, are structurally influenced by the presence and integration of private actors, aligning normative objectives with strategic and economic interests, without implying that corporate actors are the direct drivers of EU policy. The interviews further show that local actors are aware of these dynamics. While the EU is recognized for supporting dialogue platforms, civil society, and participatory mechanisms, respondents highlighted that economic and corporate linkages, particularly those associated with European companies operating in Mozambique, can constrain or frame these normative aims. As one participant noted, EU engagement in governance and human rights is embedded within a broader logic in which "the exploitation of resources continues the same production model where extraction is in the country, and raw material is shipped to Europe or other parts of this world" (I5, I. 400-402).

In this sense, resource interests do not manifest as open economic directives within peacebuilding projects, but rather as structural conditions that shape their implementation, scope, and local reception. This entanglement is embedded within broader EU engagement in Mozambique's economic and energy sectors. The EU actively supports the country through trade agreements, regional integration frameworks such as the AfCFTA, and the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement, as well as technical assistance and investment programs targeting energy infrastructure and the green transition. Through instruments like the Global Gateway, NDICI Global Europe, and coordinated PPPs, EU policies mobilize private investment while simultaneously pursuing governance, peace, and development objectives (European Commission, n.d.-e).

Overall, the EU's peacebuilding in Mozambique is structurally shaped by resource and energy interests and by its entanglement with private actors: interventions are implemented within frameworks that integrate political stability, security, regional partnerships, and economic engagement. While normative objectives such as governance reform, human rights promotion, and participatory mechanisms are pursued, they operate alongside and sometimes are constrained by strategic-economic considerations. This duality reflects the EU's careful balancing act between normative peacebuilding and the protection of its broader geopolitical and economic interests.

III. How do local actors in Mozambique perceive the EU's peace policy?

Local perceptions of the EU's peacebuilding in Mozambique are characterized by ambivalence, reflecting both appreciation for its progressive engagement and caution regarding its strategic positioning. On one hand, nearly all interviewees emphasized the EU as an exceptionally progressive and reliable funder. Many highlighted that the EU has consistently been among the first donors to genuinely embrace a "localism" approach, prioritizing the inclusion of smaller, community-based, or grassroots actors and adapting projects to local contexts (I4, I. 195-200; I2, I. 545). This commitment is seen as being continuously reinforced over time, rather than implemented as a one-off measure. Compared to other international donors, the EU stands out for its openness to dialogue, flexibility in project design and implementation, and a stronger engagement with governance and civil society. Interviewees repeatedly noted its long-term orientation: rather than simply providing funds, the EU accompanies projects throughout their lifecycle, fostering trust, creating a sense of partnership, and aligning interventions with local priorities (I1, I. 249-257; I7, I. 268-277). This sustained presence and responsiveness significantly enhance the EU's positive perception among local actors.

On the other hand, credibility is conditional and context-dependent. Many interviewees pointed to situations where EU actions intersect with politically sensitive areas, particularly national elections, security cooperation, or projects linked to resource extraction, as influencing their perception of the EU. In these contexts, some civil society actors perceive the EU as aligned, or at least entangled, with government interests and economic priorities, such as partnerships with EU-based companies operating in Mozambique's resource sector (I5, I. 394; I1, I. 408). This recognition contributes to a potential legitimacy gap. Even actors who value and trust the EU's contributions often stressed that credibility cannot be assumed in all contexts: while its engagement is broadly constructive, it is inevitably shaped by structural and strategic constraints, and local actors remain attentive to where normative commitments may intersect with political and economic interests.

Furthermore, the EU's bureaucratic and procedural frameworks shape local perceptions and the effectiveness of its interventions. Security routines, an emphasis on quantifiable outputs, and reporting rituals and impartiality can widen the gap between international actors and local counterparts, often signalling the superiority of the former. As Autesserre (2014) observes, these modes of operation "prevent local authorship and decrease local ownership" (p. 250). In Mozambique, such practices can constrain bottom-up approaches, limit responsiveness to local needs, and reduce both the legitimacy and practical effectiveness of EU initiatives. In particular, funding structures reinforce these dynamics. The empirical data revealed that direct access to EU funding is often limited to larger

organizations, while smaller, local CSOs typically receive support through sub-grants administered by intermediary organizations (I4, I. 177–186; I6, I. 179–203). Such funding arrangements also influence perceptions of the EU's engagement in Mozambique. The reliance on intermediaries can reduce local agency and visibility, making EU interventions appear more distant or top-down. While sub-grants extend the reach of EU support, they simultaneously reinforce hierarchical structures, affecting the perceived inclusiveness and legitimacy of peacebuilding initiatives. Consequently, local actors experience EU engagement as a combination of meaningful support and structural constraints, in which opportunities for genuine local ownership are partly constrained by bureaucratic procedures and the funding architecture.

In sum, these findings underline the dual perception of the EU: as a progressive, flexible, and long-term-oriented donor that actively promotes localism and civil society engagement, but also as a strategically positioned actor whose credibility is conditional on the political and economic contexts in which it operates. The EU's positive reputation is therefore inseparable from an awareness of its broader operational and strategic entanglements, which local actors continuously negotiate in their assessment of its peacebuilding interventions.

IV. To what extent can the EU's peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique be considered effective in addressing the drivers of conflict in Mozambique?

The effectiveness of the EU's peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique must be assessed in light of both its immediate outputs and the structural conditions that underpin local conflict dynamics. Empirical evidence suggests that EU interventions have achieved measurable successes in promoting dialogue, capacity-building, and social cohesion. Local actors frequently emphasized the tangible benefits of these programs, such as enhanced skills in negotiation, institutional interaction, and engagement with government and corporate representatives on more equal terms. As one participant noted: "You can't take it away from them that they already have been trained in how to dialogue, how to meet government, try to meet government representatives and company representatives on equal terms. That you can't take away from people" (I3, I. 374-378). Other respondents highlighted concrete outcomes, including strengthened local civil society, social cohesion, and participatory governance initiatives, which are experienced as practical and visible improvements in community engagement (I6, I. 541-543). These achievements demonstrate that EU programs can effectively foster social cohesion, as a central element for mitigating immediate conflict risks and enabling dialogue between diverse actors (Zupančič & Pejič, 2018, pp. 11–12; Paffenholz, 2021, pp. 367–368).

However, assessing effectiveness solely in terms of social cohesion and governance support risks overlooking deeper structural challenges. Drawing on structuralist and Marxist perspectives again, illustrate that peace cannot be considered sustainable if it fails to address economic exploitation and persistent inequalities (Richmond, 2020, p. 86). Considering that in Mozambique, the concentration of natural resource wealth, extractive practices by multinational companies, and uneven regional development persist as underlying drivers of conflict (Orre & Forquilha, 2023, p. 2). In this context, short-term agreements over resource sharing can prevent immediate outbreaks of violence, but longer-term stability depends on institutional reforms that ensure equitable access to resources, reduce reliance on state rents, and promote accountable governance (Le Billon, 2001, p. 580). In this sense, structural inequalities remain largely unaddressed, limiting the transformative potential of EU interventions.

Interview data illustrate these limits. Several participants raised concerns regarding the persistent influence of European extractive companies and the uneven resource distribution: "People are displaced. Land becomes suddenly available because everyone is leaving. And that's something that some people conclude. Other people make the opposite conclusion. That it's a rich area. People are not benefiting from it. So, dissatisfaction is bigger, and conflict emerges from that" (I1, I. 305-308). Besides, one interviewee highlighted that EU support for foreign security actors, such as Rwandan forces, has weakened the authority and credibility of the Mozambican national military, weakening long-term legitimacy and local trust (I5, I. 337-339).

Moreover, structural dynamics of funding, again, shape the scope and effectiveness of EU peacebuilding engagements. The support often flowing through sub-grants or intermediary international organizations can reduce local agency and autonomy. As Mathews (2021) observes: "If local organisations find themselves always competing for funding with international NGOs who are also presenting themselves as local, then what hope is there for the development of a genuinely home-grown civil society, accountable to its communities and able to chart its own path?" (Mathews, 2021). Such critiques resonate with broader debates in critical peacebuilding: sustainable peace requires locally led, bottom-up approaches that empower home-grown actors and strengthen accountability to their communities, rather than primarily channelling resources through externally controlled or intermediary structures.

In sum, EU peacebuilding in Mozambique can be considered conditionally effective: it successfully supports dialogue, capacity-building, and local cohesion, mitigating certain conflict dynamics in the short and medium term. Yet, its effectiveness in addressing the root causes of conflict, particularly structural inequalities, resource-driven economic exploitation, and the empowerment of genuinely local civil society, remains constrained. Sustainable

peace would require systemic changes in wealth distribution, governance of extractive resources, and local empowerment that extend beyond the current reach of EU programs. In this sense, EU engagement functions as a stabilizing and supportive force, but its transformative potential is circumscribed by structural, economic, and procedural constraints.

These insights point to potential paths for enhancing the transformative impact of EU interventions. Drawing on critical and Adaptive Peacebuilding perspectives, the EU could further integrate locally led, iterative, and context-sensitive approaches that respond dynamically to local capacities and priorities. Adaptive Peacebuilding, as theorized by de Coning (2023, pp. 28–29), emphasizes collaboration with local communities, problem-driven and goal-oriented programming, continuous learning and adaptation, and participatory decision-making. Applying these principles, the EU could broaden and strengthen local ownership even more to ensure interventions are even better aligned with community priorities and adapt projects in response to evolving social and political dynamics.

In practice, adopting Adaptive Peacebuilding could allow the EU to learn from ongoing local feedback, consequently including smaller, locally driven CSOs, experiment with diverse strategies in response to emerging challenges, and systematically adjust interventions to achieve more transformative, justice-oriented outcomes. In this sense, it represents a concrete avenue for the EU to leverage critical peacebuilding insights and strengthen the long-term impact of its interventions toward genuinely sustainable peace.

8 Limitation and Future Research

While this study has provided a power-theoretical assessment of EU peacebuilding in Mozambique, it also reveals several underexplored dimensions that merit further scholarly attention. In particular, the structural entanglements between peacebuilding, corporate engagement, security assistance, and regional geopolitics require more systematic and multi-scalar investigation.

Future research should further investigate the intersection between EU peacebuilding and European corporate engagement in resource-rich conflict contexts. While this study has demonstrated how economic interests shape local perceptions of EU credibility, it has not systematically analysed the regulatory and accountability frameworks governing European companies operating in Mozambique. A deeper examination of corporate due diligence mechanisms, ESG standards, and EU trade policies could reveal whether the normative commitments articulated in peacebuilding discourse are institutionally extended to the private sector. Such analysis would be crucial to assess whether the EU's stabilizing peace policy can evolve into a more structurally coherent and transformative model and whether it might allow for greater local ownership and bottom-up agency.

In this sense, the emerging field of Environmental Peacebuilding (EnP) could provide an important conceptual lens. EnP is understood as the investigation of “the transformative potential of environmental cooperation” and is based on the assumption that “the mutual benefits of cooperation outgrow the self-interested rationale of conflicts and can contribute to the pacification of coupled human-nature systems in a durable and multifaced way” (Dresse et al., 2019; Hamilton, 2024, p. 15). Therefore, studying the interrelations between environmental issues, extractive activities, and peacebuilding could illuminate how resource governance and environmental cooperation intersect with stabilization efforts, potentially offering new pathways for transformative impact.

In addition, future research should examine more closely the securitization and militarization dynamics surrounding extractive zones in Cabo Delgado. Several interviewees emphasized that heightened military presence in conflict areas is not unexpected per se. Yet, they observed that security deployments appear particularly concentrated around extraction sites and corporate compounds. Given that Mozambican security forces receive EU training and support, this raises important empirical and normative questions about whether external security assistance may indirectly contribute to the protection of extractive infrastructure rather than community security. A systematic investigation into the relationship between EU-supported security actors and the spatial distribution of militarization in resource zones would provide a more grounded understanding of how stabilization and extraction intersect in practice.

Furthermore, the regional dimension of EU security engagement warrants deeper scrutiny. Two interview partners questioned the EU's decision to finance and support Rwandan forces operating in Cabo Delgado, while limiting its assistance to training and advisory roles for Mozambican armed forces. For some local observers, this arrangement appeared paradoxical: it potentially weakens domestic military capacity while empowering a foreign force whose regional role, particularly in relation to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), is politically sensitive. The perceived entanglement between Rwanda, eastern DRC dynamics, and EU security partnerships complicates local interpretations of EU neutrality and normative consistency. Comparative or regionally embedded research could therefore explore how EU support to third-party security actors reshapes regional power balances and affects the credibility of its peacebuilding agenda.

In total, these dimensions suggest that future scholarship should move beyond project-level analysis and instead examine the structural interlinkages between corporate accountability, security assistance, regional geopolitics, resource governance, and environmental cooperation. Only through such multi-scalar and integrative analysis can the full implications of the EU's stabilizing peacebuilding model and its potential for more transformative outcomes be adequately assessed.

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I. EU Instruments as part of the Triple Nexus

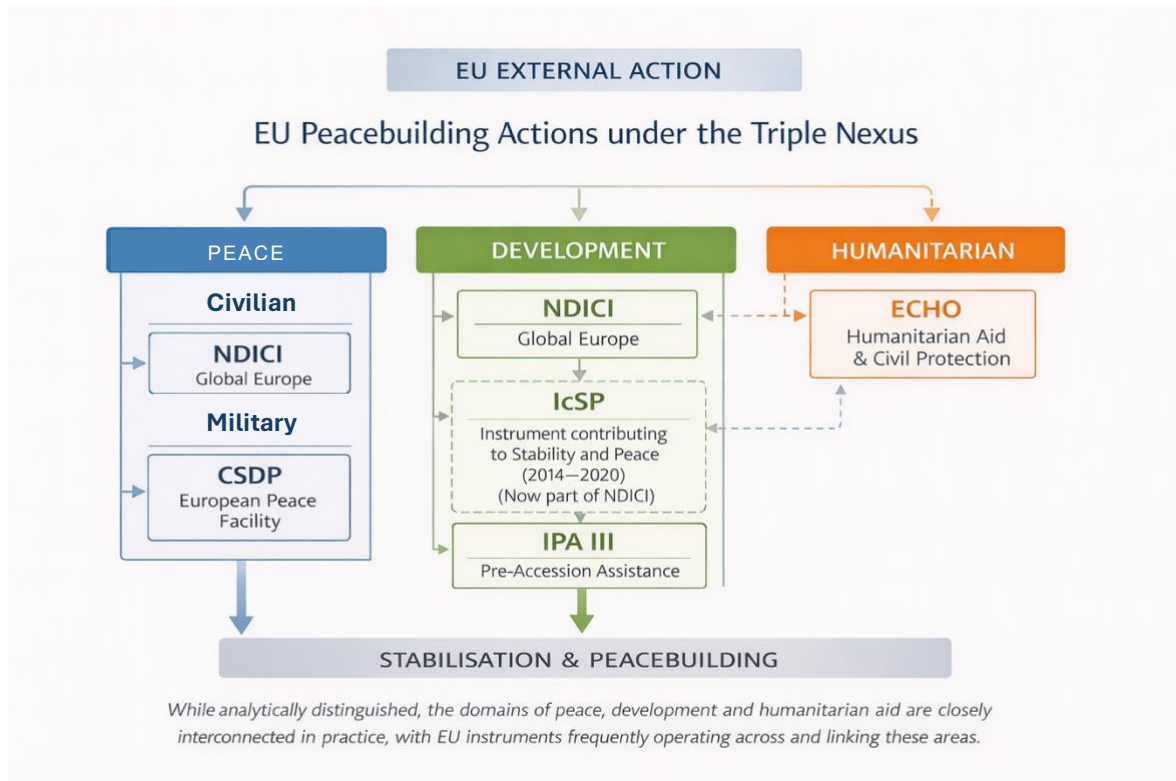


Figure A1: Simplified Overview of the Institutional Architecture of EU External Action Instruments (Own illustration)

The EU combines peacebuilding, development financing, and humanitarian assistance instruments within an integrated framework often described as the Triple Nexus, as illustrated in Figure A1.

This appendix provides additional background information on these main instruments. While these instruments are referenced in the main analysis, the following section offers a more detailed overview of their institutional structure, objectives and operational logic.

a) NDICI – Global Europe

The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI – Global Europe) represents the European Union’s primary financial instrument for external action for the period 2021–2027. Introduced as part of a broader reform of EU external financing, the NDICI merged several previously separate instruments, including the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Development Fund (EDF), and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). Through this consolidation, the EU aimed to simplify its external financing architecture and increase flexibility in responding to complex international challenges (European Commission, 2021a; European Commission, n.d.-e).

The instrument provides financial support for development cooperation, crisis response, neighbourhood policy, and peacebuilding initiatives. Its activities include governance reform, conflict prevention programmes, support for state institutions, economic development initiatives, climate action, and humanitarian-development coordination. In contrast to earlier EU instruments, the NDICI does not treat peacebuilding as a standalone policy domain but integrates it as a cross-cutting objective within a broader framework of development cooperation and foreign policy (ibid.).

Conceptually, the NDICI reflects the EU's shift towards a more integrated Security–Development–Peace Nexus, emphasising resilience-building, governance reform, and stabilisation in fragile contexts.

b) CSDP – Common Security and Defence Policy

The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) constitutes the operational pillar of the European Union's security and defence engagement. Established within the framework of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the CSDP enables the EU to deploy civilian and military missions abroad in order to address crises, prevent conflict escalation and strengthen international security (EEAS, 2025b).

CSDP missions operate under the legal framework established by the Lisbon Treaty, which grants the EU the capacity to conduct missions outside its territory using both civilian and military assets. These missions are guided by the so-called Petersberg Tasks, which include humanitarian and rescue operations, peacekeeping, conflict prevention, disarmament activities, military advisory missions and post-conflict stabilisation (Kmec, 2022, p. 2).

In practice, CSDP missions can be divided into two main categories: civilian missions and military operations. Civilian missions typically focus on monitoring, rule-of-law assistance, security sector reform, border management, and institutional capacity-building. Military operations, by contrast, may involve training missions, stabilisation operations, or executive tasks aimed at maintaining security in fragile contexts (Moser, 2020, p. 1).

Over time, the emphasis of CSDP missions has increasingly shifted towards capacity-building and security governance, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected regions. From a liberal peacebuilding perspective, these missions aim to professionalise security institutions and strengthen state authority (Kmec, 2022, p. 62).

c) IcSP – Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace

The Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) was the European Union's dedicated financial instrument for crisis response and conflict prevention between 2014 and 2020. Designed to operate in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, the IcSP enabled the

EU to provide rapid and flexible funding for interventions addressing emerging crises, mediation processes, and stabilisation efforts (European Commission, 2014).

The instrument supported a wide range of activities, including conflict early warning systems, mediation initiatives, support for civil society organisations, security sector reform programmes and post-conflict stabilisation projects. Unlike many traditional development instruments, the IcSP was specifically designed to respond quickly to rapidly evolving political and security situations (ibid.).

Although the IcSP was formally integrated into the NDICI framework in 2021, its core policy logic continues to shape EU approaches to crisis response and stabilisation (ibid.). From a conceptual perspective, the IcSP reflected key elements of the liberal peacebuilding paradigm, particularly its emphasis on institutional strengthening, governance reform and stabilisation.

d) ECHO – Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) is responsible for the European Union's humanitarian assistance and disaster response worldwide. Unlike other EU instruments, ECHO operates under internationally recognised humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence (European Parliament, 2025).

ECHO provides emergency assistance to populations affected by armed conflict, natural disasters and humanitarian crises. Its activities include the delivery of food assistance, medical aid, shelter, protection for vulnerable populations and logistical support for humanitarian operations. In addition, ECHO coordinates the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which enables EU member states to provide coordinated disaster response support both within and outside the EU (Brown et al., 2024, pp. 575–576).

Although ECHO does not explicitly pursue peacebuilding objectives, its activities frequently interact with broader EU development and stabilisation strategies. Humanitarian interventions often create the conditions necessary for longer-term development and peacebuilding initiatives. This interaction reflects the growing importance of the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus, which seeks to better coordinate humanitarian aid, development cooperation and conflict prevention policies.

e) EPF – European Peace Facility

The European Peace Facility (EPF) is an off-budget financial instrument established in 2021 to strengthen the EU's capacity to support international peace and security. Unlike most EU external financing instruments, the EPF is funded directly by EU member states rather than

through the EU budget, allowing it to finance activities that would otherwise fall outside traditional development funding rules (European Commission, n.d.-c).

The EPF enables the EU to provide military assistance to partner countries, including training, equipment and infrastructure support for armed forces. It also finances the EU's contributions to international peace support operations, particularly those led by regional organisations such as the African Union (ibid.).

In recent years, the EPF has gained increasing political relevance, particularly in the context of the EU's response to global security challenges. While the instrument is framed as supporting peace and stability, it also reflects a broader shift toward a more security-oriented dimension of EU external action.

f) IPA III – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III) provides financial and technical support to countries preparing for EU membership. Covering the period 2021–2027, the instrument aims to assist candidate and potential candidate countries in implementing political, institutional and economic reforms required for EU accession (European Commission, n.d.-g).

IPA III focuses particularly on strengthening democratic governance, rule of law institutions, public administration reform and economic development. It also supports sectoral reforms in areas such as environmental policy, infrastructure development and social policy alignment with EU standards (ibid.).

Although primarily designed as an enlargement instrument, IPA III also plays an important role in promoting stability and conflict prevention in regions neighbouring the European Union. By supporting governance reforms and institutional capacity-building, the instrument contributes indirectly to peacebuilding and stabilisation efforts in politically sensitive regions.

II. Interview Guide

The interview begins with a brief introductory statement (context, anonymization, usage, etc.).

1. Introduction & Background

Main Prompt: Could you briefly introduce your organization and your role within it?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
In which regions of Mozambique do you primarily work, and what are the key challenges there?		
Main Prompt: How long have you or your organization been working with the EU in the field of peacebuilding?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
What does "peace" concretely mean to you?		
Main Prompt: Could you describe some of your key peacebuilding activities, programs, or methods?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
Can you give a specific example of a project you've implemented?		Methods e.g., mediation, community dialogues, support for local governance, trauma healing
What strategies do you use?		
Under which EU program is your project implemented?		

2. Perceptions of the EU

Main Prompt: As some of your peacebuilding projects are funded by the EU. How do you perceive the EU's role in peacebuilding in Mozambique?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
What does it mean to be a 'supportive partner' in this context?	supportive partner, an external donor, or an actor with its own interests?	

Main Prompt: Have your perceptions of the EU changed over time?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
Why/ Why not? Expectations/ visions at the beginning vs. reality/today		

3. Norms & Local Relevance

Main Prompt: The EU emphasizes values such as democracy, participation, and human rights in its programs. Do you find these values relevant and helpful in the Mozambican context?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
Can you provide specific examples of where you've seen the EU's stated values reflected in their programs? And are there instances where you feel they haven't been?	In what ways do, if any, the local understandings of "peace" differ from those promoted by the EU?	
Main Prompt: The EU is often said to follow a liberal peacebuilding model. How does this model fit Mozambique's realities?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
How, if at all, does the EU demonstrate openness to alternative approaches, such as community-led, hybrid, or critical peacebuilding?		Liberal model: focusing on state institutions, democracy, economic liberalization
Main Prompt: In what ways do EU programs incorporate local agency, traditions, and knowledge systems?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
What are the main challenges or gaps you've observed in this area? How does your organization concretely integrate local voices and traditional mechanisms of	Bottom-up structures implemented?	

conflict resolution into EU-funded programs? How flexible are EU frameworks when it comes to adapting to local contexts and timelines?		
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4. Implementation & Cooperation

Main Prompt: How does the collaboration with the EU work in practice?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
What does a typical workflow look like? What are the different phases of the program, from design to implementation and evaluation? What is your organization's specific role in each of these phases?	Program design and implementation Modes of local participation	
Main Prompt: Are your perspectives and needs considered within the projects, that are in cooperation with the EU?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
Would you describe the relationship as a partnership of equals, or does it feel more donor-driven? Can you share an example where cooperation with the EU was especially successful, or particularly difficult?	How does EU funding shape project design and priorities?	

5. Regional Focus: Cabo Delgado

Main Prompt: In Cabo Delgado, peacebuilding intersects with resource extraction. How does your organization address the conflicts and grievances around resources in this region?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
Can you provide a specific example of a project that addresses resource-related conflicts? How do you see the EU's role in addressing the conflicts and grievances around resources in this region?	EU's role	
Main Prompt: Do EU-funded projects help mitigate local tensions related to resource exploitation and displacement, or do they risk reinforcing them?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
What specific methods or strategies do you employ to engage with communities, the government, and private companies on these issues? From your perspective, how are issues such as land rights, resettlement, or resource benefits being addressed—or neglected—by EU programs?	EU's approaches to mitigate	

6. Resources & Interests

Main Prompt: Do you believe that the EU's engagement in Mozambique is influenced by economic or resource-related interests?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
If so, how do these interests affect peacebuilding initiatives?		e.g., gas projects

Main Prompt: Does this impact the credibility of the EU for you?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
If yes/no, why/why not?	Normative claims vs. „realities on the ground“ local perceptions of EU 's involvement in the extractive sector	

7. Opportunities & Challenges

Main Prompt: Overall, what positive outcomes have you seen from EU-funded peacebuilding projects in Mozambique?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
What specific changes have you seen in communities as a result of this work?		e.g.: improving security, reducing local grievances, supporting reconciliation, empowering communities.
Main prompt: Where do you see the biggest challenges or shortcomings?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
Are there blind spots?		Blind spots might be: ignoring the socio-economic drivers of the insurgency in Cabo Delgado

8. Reflection & Criticism

Main Prompt: From your perspective, is there a gap between EU rhetoric (peace, values, partnership) and its actions in practice?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
If yes, how does this affect trust and sustainability of peacebuilding programs?	Local perceptions Sustainability of EU projects	
Main Prompt: What recommendations would you give the EU to improve its peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique?		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
What kinds of dialogue exist between your organization and the EU Delegation regarding lessons		

Interview Guide

learned and contextual adaptation?		
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9. Factual Questions

Final factual questions (if not already clarified during the conversation):		
Follow-up Impulses:	Checkpoints:	Notes:
	Gender Job Title/ Position	

10. Last Question

From our side we will come to an end now. Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't talked about yet, that is important to you?

Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your thoughts and experiences!

III. Consent Form for the Collection and Processing of Interview Data

Information

Project Title: The European Union in Resource-Rich Post-Conflict Contexts

Researcher:

Supervisor:

As part of a master's research project at the University of Vienna, I am studying the European Union's peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique, particularly how EU-funded programs contribute to peace, stability, and local resilience in conflict-affected and resource-rich regions. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All identifying information will be anonymized or pseudonymized, and only selected excerpts may be quoted in academic publications or presentations to ensure that participants cannot be identified. Audio files and transcripts will be stored securely. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from the study will not result in any negative consequences.

For any questions, please contact:

Participant Consent Form

I, _____,

Yes No

have been sufficiently informed about the study and had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐
☐

give my consent to the audio recording of the interview

☐
☐

agree to participate in the study.

☐
☐

understand I can withdraw my consent at any time without providing a reason.

☐
☐

understand that anonymized excerpts may be used in academic publications or presentations.

☐
☐

(Location, Date)

(Signature of Participant)

(Location, Date)

(Signature of Interviewer)

IV. Interview 1

The following transcript is from an interview, as part of a research project on “The European Union in Resource-Rich Post-Conflict Contexts,” focusing on how the EU’s peacebuilding initiatives contribute to peace in Mozambique. The interview was held with a local expert (E1) from Mozambique working for an NGO involved in the implementation of EU-funded peacebuilding projects. In the transcription, the speakers are labelled as Speaker 1 (S1) for the interviewer and Speaker 2 (S2) for the interviewee. Both participants provided informed consent for the use of this transcript for research purposes.

- 1 S1: So, I would start the recording now if that's okay, and would ask again if you: do you
2 consent to participate in this interview? [00:15]
3
4 S2: Yes, I do consent. [00:18]
5
6 S1: Perfect. Uhm, so at the beginning, could you just briefly introduce yourself, your
7 organization, and also your role with it? [00:28]
8
9 S2: Okay. My name is [Name1]. I'm [Position 1] of the Aga Khan Foundation in
10 Mozambique. [00:37]
11
12 S1: Okay. And how long have you or your organization been working with the European
13 Union in the field of peacebuilding? [00:48]
14
15 S2: Uhm [...] Since 20 – late 2019. [00:54]
16
17 S1: Okay. And in which regions of Mozambique do you primarily work, and what are the key
18 challenges there? [01:04]
19
20 S2: We operate in northern Mozambique, which we are there affected by a conflict. Uhm,
21 the area includes the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa, and Nampula. [01:23]
22
23 S1: Okay. And uhm, could you describe some of your key activities, programs, or methods
24 that you use in northern Mozambique? [01:36]
25
26 S2: Yeah. It has – it has changed, evolved, according to – towards the changing situation.
27 Big changing situations. Uhm, when we first started in 2019, the whole idea was to work

28 with youth in the areas surrounding neighbouring affected regions. And the whole idea was
29 to involve youth in activities related to helping a few numbers of displaced people who are,
30 who are uhm [...] leaving the affected regions and coming to safer regions. So, we were
31 working in those neighbouring safe regions. And through the project with the EU, youth
32 would be equipped to, to understand the situation of the displaced ones, understanding that
33 there were diverse – there were within specifically with adults, you have elderly and youth
34 themselves, you have children as well. And the project would give them, provide them with
35 the means to do concrete actions as well, such as, let's say, there are some, some children
36 who have come, need to go to school. And the school may not have enough classrooms.
37 So, working with the community and the schools to add an additional classroom using local
38 materials and using local expertise and youth would be in the front line of doing that. So,
39 the whole strategy was to create opportunities for young people in safe regions,
40 neighbouring affected regions, conflict affected regions, to help the victims. So, creating the
41 situation where they would identify themselves as close to the victims and not the
42 perpetrators. And hopefully not willing, by virtue of doing that, not willing to join the
43 perpetrators, so the combatants. So, sitting on the side of the ones affected by violence and
44 not the perpetrators of violence. It evolved – So that was the first approach. That's what we
45 did. The situations where we selected as the neighbouring areas, which were safe, also
46 became attacked. So, the project needed to go further. In this case, further south, because
47 those regions were also affected. And that integration of displaced people with support from
48 youth could not happen in those regions. So, we had to go down. And then there was
49 something else that happened over time. Initially, the numbers were not that big. Tens of
50 thousands was significant but was nothing compared to what happened a year later. It was
51 a massive displacement, having reached 1.3 million at a given point in time of displaced
52 people. So, from tens of thousands to over a million. And it was, the project just adapted to
53 it. But it was kind of forced by communities, communities that know it's not enough just
54 youth. This is a massive thing. In some villages, in some districts, in fact, the number of
55 displaced people was even bigger than the resident population. So, youth alone could not
56 do it. So, the project then moved to not just involve youth, but also involve other forces in
57 the community, including the adult ones. Maintaining youth as part of those helping the
58 displaced ones, but also involving adults and other structures of the community. So that
59 was kind of another phase of it. And then, as the conflict continued, it was expected not to
60 be so long, or it was hoped not to be so long, other issues started to emerge. In some
61 places, it was possible to see improvement in security. So, people started receiving
62 returnees. But there were other people who, because they have stayed there for many
63 years, four or five years, they were also deciding to stay in the accommodation areas and
64 not go back to their villages of origin. So, the project evolved to start to look not just

accommodating displaced ones temporarily, as that was the expectation, but starting to understand that it would be definitive, final integration into communities of new people. While at the same time, I'm saying some people would still want to go back, depending on improvement of the situation. So also, helping those who wanted to go back to their areas. And because the project didn't have the means to operate in, in, in kind of risky areas, though they were said to be safer or increasingly safer. So, it focused on working with communities to make sure that at least people were relying on good information to make those decisions. Creating a network of communication, of information sharing, so that whenever people want to make a decision, we would have a network available for them to consult, to ask, to know, because some people were still residing in those areas, some people have already went back to scan the situation. So, the information could be shared, and there was official information coming about security as well, so people would have access to that, normally they would not have. And there was a third element to it as well. There were people, who were involved in violence, but in different situations, some because were kidnapped, kept in captivity, and were somehow able to leave the zones, and coming back, but there was suspicion in their resident communities, why were you there for so long, and how did you come back? Are we accommodating here a combatant for espionage, for intelligence, because you are for so long there? There are people, who are fighters themselves, who were recruited to fight, and for whatever reason they were able to leave, escaped or just were released; we don't know, but there was that as well. There are people, who are coming now, who are from this area, but they will spend a number of years there, and we don't know. And there are those who we know as well, because there are suspicions here and there that they were fighting, but they want to come back and stay here, how do we deal with that? So, the project started to evolve to also start to deal with that. And in all those phases, one thing was common throughout the project was we were always working with what we call uhm village development organizations. This is a group of 15 to 25 people that are elected and to lead the development, the planned development of their own villages, using mostly the means that they had available and whenever possible reaching out to other entities such as ourselves or the government for additional support. So, in all those phases, our project was, our interlocutor on the ground was the village development organization. [11:22]

S1: Thank you. [11:24]

S2: I hope it helped you. [11:27]

S1: Yes, it did. And the projects are still funded by the European Union? [11:34]

102

103 S2: Yeah, it is. I think we believe that it's because of its encouraging results that it is now in
104 its third three-year phase. [11:46]

105

106 S1: Ah, okay. And do you know under which European program this is structured? [11:57]

107

108 S2: I think the first two were under IcSP, which is a program for conflict – for conflict uhm –
109 I don't have the right name, but I think it's IcSP. [12:13]

110

111 S1: Okay. [12:14]

112

113 S2: And in Mozambique now it's – that was uhm – we dealt with the regional unit based in
114 Kenya, Nairobi, for the first two cycles. And now in this third cycle, current third cycle, we
115 are dealing with unit in Mozambique based in Maputo. And I think it's under stability. I don't
116 know exactly the name, but it's related to stability. [12:54]

117

118 S1: Yeah, okay. And just to clarify, in the discussion there are a lot of different
119 understandings of peace. So, what is the Aga Khan Foundation's understanding of peace?
120 [13:15]

121

122 S2: In the context of Cabo Delgado, it relates to one: the absence of the armed conflict,
123 which exists right now, the violent extremism. Uhm but let's say that's the overall or the key
124 element to it. But there are associated elements to it. Because they can maintain the
125 tensions as high as well. And we talk about trust on institutions; the social contract needs
126 to be strong. If it is broken, it becomes anarchical and violence can continue. The other
127 element for it is it also relates to people's aspirations. If you just live on a day-to-day basis
128 with no aspiration, promise, anything, you can't do anything. Because you don't have a goal
129 that is not today, living today. So, to me, this really correlates with aspirations as well. And
130 those aspirations, as humans being, people want the best for themselves, for their families,
131 for their communities. If you lose this, the opposite can happen quickly. You can try to get
132 what you want out of (others?) rather than understanding the social origin. So, to me, as
133 things are – because it's so obvious, armed violence is the key issue affecting peace. But
134 peace in itself will come with the absence of this violence and drivers for people willing to
135 live together, to thrive in their lives, taking and having opportunities for them. [16:00]

136

S1: Okay. And we already said the European Union is funding these projects, but how do you perceive the European Unions' role in Mozambique directly? Is it more like a donor or also a supporter? [16:18]

S2: I think it's all you said, right? It's not just one. And then you will see the European Union as we talk by virtue of some level of co-creation we have had in the first two cycles where it was, [...] uhm we didn't go for it through a poll, but they identified on the ground and one of them was the Aga Khan Foundation. We engaged in a conversation to understand each other and the common objectives we would have, and how we would work together, and so in that sense it's not just that the process of cooperation makes you not just a donor because you are part of it, and you want to be part of also discussing, bringing ideas, discussing possible actions, etc. Making, creating a situation where resources can and would be good and would be used to have more impact. So, I think it takes it beyond just a mere donor to be a fair partner. And if I look at the EU, broadly what they are doing as a donor, what they are finding, I think they position themselves, but that's me interpreting it, as an enabler of well-being for the people and an enabler of development for Mozambique. So, looking at critical areas, where to put resources, which are related to improving the quality of life of people, mostly. So, I see that rather as an enabler, it's a good way of describing it, but I think it plays that role. [5] [19:04]

S1: Can you hear me? I feel like the connection – [19:12]

S2: Ahh, you stopped hearing me for a while? [19:16]

S1: No, it's okay I think I got all of what you said. I also noticed that some of the EU-funded projects are listed as ended on the official database of the European Union, but are still described as active on, for example, your website, and you just told me they are still ongoing. Do you know how this arises? [19:47]

S2: I think it's just not up to date. I think the ones that are closed are the first two cycles. And the third cycle, which is building on what we have been doing over the two initial cycles, it's, it will enter soon the second year of a three-year cycle. [20:18]

S1: Okay. And the European Union emphasizes values such as democracy and participation and also human rights. Do you feel like these values are relevant and also reflected in the program and projects in Mozambique? [20:38]

S2: Uhm, I must confess I don't know what's happening with others. So, I cannot tell for others, but for sure. But I know about projects that are focused on citizenship, at strengthening civil society. So, I think from that perspective, without knowing exactly what the outcomes of those projects are, at least it positions itself as to promote democracy, participation, improved citizenship. I think it does that from knowing that they – I don't know if it translates into the outcomes that are expected. That's a different thing. In our specific case, as I said, the key element of our programming with the EU is village development organizations, which exist in each and all villages where we implement the programming. And these are democratically elected people. They have regular elections. They report back on what they do to their own constituencies, their own communities. So, in regard to the project we are implementing together with the EU, democracy is a key element. [22:28]

S1: Okay. Do you still see instances, situations, or projects where you feel like these values haven't been reflected? [22:39]

S2: I don't have the full scope of it, so that I can speak for ourselves. I cannot say for EU broadly speaking, if each and all. I know some are focused on that. In fact, we are discussing a partnership, a case of partnership on one of the – on one of EU's initiatives that is focused on citizenship and civil society strengthening. Uhm so in that case I can see that, that value of democracy. But others, of course, I don't know. [23:28]

S1: Okay. And I don't know if it's something you know, but the European Union is said to follow a liberal peacebuilding model. So, it's focusing on state institutions, economic liberalization, and democracy. Do you feel like this model fits to Mozambique's realities? [23:54]

S2: Say it again? So that I understand well what you are trying to ask me. [24:05]

S1: So, there is this liberal peace building model, the approach that the European Union is following, which includes, besides democracy, also focusing on implementing strong state institutions and focusing on economic liberalization. I don't know if you can say anything about that. But if you can, do you feel like this model fits to Mozambique's realities? [24:41]

S2: Yeah, uhm, I will say yes. And I think somehow my previous responses have touched on that, too. I did refer to investing on the social contract, which relates to citizen trusting the state institutions, that represent the state. That's part of what we do as well. Uhm, as I said, the village development organizations are a key piece to it. The program entails

constructive dialogue and collaboration with state institutions. So, in our case, it looks at proving that it's not the aim of this one project to reinforce state institutions. But it builds on the expectations that state institutions will be strong and above all open to working with citizens and their institutions, community institutions, etc. I see interventions as well, EU-funded interventions. We are part of one, which focuses on entrepreneurship, particularly for youth. We are understanding that economic development is part of the equation. We talk about war, conflict, part of the response that relates to opportunities, to aspirations, and aspirations are also related to economic opportunities. People need new investments. It's also supporting that, as far as I'm concerned. So, I would say yes. I think that holistic approach to peace entails different domains. If you can call that a liberal approach, yes, I would say yes. [27:17]

S1: And you already said that the EU is in dialogue also with the civil society and local organizations. So, in what ways do the programs incorporate local traditions and local knowledge? [27:44]

S2: Uhm, I cannot speak for others again. But in our case, by virtue of working with village development organizations, which is putting in driver's seat of local development, the communities themselves, people they elect to form these institutions. When it comes to practical actions, what they use is local knowledge, local practices, it's based on local experiences. One key element let's say it's conflict resolution, conflict mediation, conflict prevention, conflict resolution. And they use their own practices there. So, the project stimulates them to use local knowledge, local understanding of the context and existing experiences as well. We do have conversations around that with communities. And we may bring some suggestions there, but we already have these mechanisms and we build on those mechanisms. How do we do? We bring the Council of Elders to come; we identify people with what is expected in the community as well. We bring parts, the representation of the parties that are affected by that conflict or part of that conflict or foreseeable conflict. And we sit down and we work, which is part of local way of doing conflict resolution. So, with regard to our project, it supports that. I cannot say if other projects do that. [29:36]

S1: In this regard, do you feel like the European Union is flexible when it comes to adapting to local contexts and timelines? [29:44]

S2: In our case, yes, fully flexible. [29:47]

S1: Okay. And as the EU is a huge institution, I am very curious about how the collaboration with the EU actually works in practice. Like, how does a typical workflow or an adaption look like in reality? [30:10]

S2: Actually, with the EU we have a different way of working and that comes with monthly conversations. There are big problems at the time. It involves people on the ground, it involves people within AKF (Aga Khan Foundation) at the management level and people of the focal point (of EU?). Sometimes they may bring other people, they may invite colleagues of theirs to come and have that conversation, which is not common to other projects we have with other donors. And I find it interesting, because it's not just a report that you are submitting from time to time. It's a conversation where, of course, you talk about the progress that you are making, but at the same time you discuss challenges, you can discuss adjustments that are needed. It makes it more flexible. Which is good for us. [31:20]

S1: And was it like that from the beginning? You said that your cooperation started in 2019 and was it like that from the beginning?

S2: Yes, it was (agreed/great?) from the beginning. We would have monthly conversations and that would be part of the kind of monitoring model of overall progress. [31:46]

S1: And the initial project design, for example for your social cohesion project, was it designed by the European Union or already in cooperation with, for example, you or other local organizations? [32:07]

S2: No, it was done by us. We had cooperation conversations with EU as we were designing it. And I said that there was this element of co-creation throughout this project. Uhm in the first two cycles. The third cycle was a call for proposals, we submitted our own ideas, but it was already building on something that was going on for two cycles. The two cycles were kind of, sort of, co-creation. But it was us putting forward what we saw on the ground, what communities were telling us, and the adaptations that are referred to also relate to how the first cycle was done, and then the second cycle incorporated the priorities that were coming out of communities. [33:07]

S1: Okay, and can you share, or is there an example, like a specific example, where cooperation with the EU was especially successful or maybe particularly difficult? [33:22]

283 S2: Uhm [...] look, when I said that it evolved from working in certain districts, which then
 284 were affected, and we had to move to other districts, it was a good example of flexibility
 285 here. It was fast, and because we had these meetings monthly, they could know what the
 286 situation was. I believe that without all that, that those elements leading to flexibility, saying,
 287 no, we submitted this project to work in district A and B, now we are moving to not work in
 288 district A and B, to work in C and D, I think would be extremely difficult. But because there
 289 was this understanding, there were regular conversations. It was just fast to do that. So,
 290 which is to me a good example of a flexible and consequential relationship. [34:38]

291

292 S1: Okay. And now I want to look more specific on northern Mozambique, like Cabo
 293 Delgado. There, peacebuilding also intersects with resource extraction. How does your
 294 organization address the conflicts around resources in the region there? [35:06]

295

296 S2: [...] Can you ask it again? I think the connection – [...] [35:16]

297

298 S1: Yes, of course. [...] So, in northern Mozambique, peacebuilding intersects with resource
 299 extraction. And how do you or your organization, your projects, address this issue there?
 300 [35:34]

301

302 S2: We don't really. We understand that the conflict is happening in an area where there
 303 are natural resources. And we understand that people see that as well. We understand that
 304 people can take different conclusions. Some people may see one being the result of the
 305 other. In the sense that conflict is coming because there are resources available. And some
 306 people do see violence as a tool. Meaning, if the place is affected by conflict, practically,
 307 that can benefit extractives because there is no access, there is no control. People are
 308 displaced. Land becomes suddenly available because everyone is leaving. And that's
 309 something that some people conclude. Other people make the opposite conclusion. That
 310 it's a rich area. People are not benefiting from it. So, dissatisfaction is bigger, and conflict
 311 emerges from that, from dissatisfaction. And we see this through two interpretations. One,
 312 because the first one I was saying is conflict is good to make resource extraction cheaper.
 313 Land is made available. So, in a way, suggesting that conflict is instigated somehow by
 314 natural resource extraction. And others' see it the other way around, where it's because of
 315 richness of the region and people not benefiting from it, it leads to conflict. We don't know
 316 exactly which one is the more prevailing, but we see the presence of the two. Uhm, what
 317 do – In our case, we are focused on integrating people under the existing circumstances.
 318 We know that things won't change overnight. That the benefits of those natural resources
 319 won't be seen immediately in people's lives. It's huge, but (what?) Because it takes good

planning and great commitment to make sure that people benefit from them and it needs to be planned. And we don't think this country has been able to do that, to have a long-term plan with immediate actions on the ground to make sure that people do not lose through other benefits. So far what we see is people are losing. they get displaced, their living conditions deteriorated, access to social services are more and more difficult because the war itself also destroys schools, hospitals, make roads not possible, make the region inaccessible. So, for us, it's to say to people, no matter what, we as communities, we need to make our part in building peace. Because without peace, nothing will translate into quality, increased quality of life, increased opportunities. That needs to come, but let's focus on this. Others are doing their part; the army is doing its own part. We know that you still need to fight. It's not something desirable, but fortunately in the case of Mozambique, it's needed. So that will continue. Those who are working on opportunities, let's say the government, should do their part, should rebuild schools, should train teachers, should rebuild hospitals, should create new hospitals. But as far as we are concerned, our commitment has been working with communities. For us, there is a conflict, there is a resource issue, natural resource extraction, we know all that. It may not be so transparent. We hope that if we as communities, we work strong and are legitimized to put forward the aspirations of the people in the community and have the mechanism to protect their interests, they will be in a much better position to influence the development and make sure that the water, that is coming out of natural resources is serving also people there. So basically, I'm saying we understand the situation, we know people have their own perceptions, but we focus on let's do our part. And as we do our part and are strong in doing that, our position will be stronger because those institutions will be stronger, our voices will be heard, we will be sitting on the table at their level. Not the national government, but where they are, they will be able to do that. So that's our stance on it [...]. [42:06]

S1: Okay uhm [...] and do you know how the European Union is addressing these resource issues? [42:20]

S2: I uhm [...] it's my interpretation, based on what we do with them and some knowledge of things that are here. Uhm, I think EU is pretty conscious that you cannot take out these elements from the equation. The extraction and exploration of natural resources, conflict, devastating impact on people and that it needs to contribute to a situation where Mozambique and those regions as well where extraction is happening, see benefits from extraction from natural resources. I think they have clear visions for that. And that needs different approaches to it. I think EU has been talking with the army, providing non-lethal support to Mozambique army. At the same time, they are also supporting projects like ours,

right. So, to me, it tells me that they are aware. They may not have a public position on it, but they understand that they need to do something to counter the current situation, to change it. So, they are not, let's say, a passive accomplice to it. We understand and we want to do something about it and we are doing as much as we can through this project. If it's sufficient, I don't know. If more needs to be done, I believe yes. But actually, they know.

[44:37]

S1: And do you believe that the European Union's engagement in Mozambique is also influenced by economic interests or to which extent is the EU following merely normative interests? [44:59]

S2: [...] Uhm again, it's interpretation. I think globally, there is a big issue of sources of energy. Here we are talking about natural gas. And we know the global crisis that's going on there. The war in Ukraine is also creating that. So, the tensions that we see globally. So, I would say probably the European Union looks at that as well. And if you relate to the fact that there are at least two state members that are at the forefront of it, the Italian ENI and the French Total, who are part of the European Union. Obviously, others may exist as well with direct interest in it or partnering with it. Yes, even if it's not explicitly said, yes. But if you look at these days, the situation is changing and governments are being more explicit about it as well. The Trump government has said that, right? It's not about just aid; it's about looking at our interests and how they will put that forward. And frankly, I don't see directly from EU, but you can see from state members that we are changing as well to align more our cooperation to our aid as well to our interests as well. [47:03]

S1: What do you mean by that? Can you explain this further? What do you mean by changing and adapting to your own interests as well? [47:12]

S2: Yeah, look. We have met with donors, not necessarily EU, who told us we are shifting now. All our support will be through or with or involving our own private sector. So, you will see less money for just an education project, but you will see more money for an economic development project involving our own private sector as well. So, it tells you that people are making more to support this aid to their own interests. So, I'm not saying directly with EU, but as I see from state members, I can kind of speculate that the EU will probably also have that present. But I have no elements now to say EU is doing that. But I can say yeah. [48:28]

S1: So, you already mentioned like Total and other – like the private sector playing more and more a role through maybe public-private-partnerships or other initiatives. Does this for your impact the credibility of the EU in general? [48:53]

S2: Uhm [...] I think in the case of Mozambique, it's not necessarily linked to the situation in the north, but it's linked to something else that happened recently in this country. Elections. Elections in Mozambique happened last year and resulted in a kind of a post-election crisis where the country was paralyzed by protests on the streets and many sectors of civil society or many organizations or many forces in civil society accused the EU of legitimizing a government that in their view was on it – could maintain the party that has been ruling since independence of Mozambique 50 years ago, was maintained there by fraud in elections. And EU was part of the observation of that and they said it's okay. And people said, we are saying it's not okay, but you are supporting and saying it's okay, you are supporting the government. So, in the end people brought that as a key issue and I think that is something that EU should be conscious, I think they are conscious but also should see how to really position itself. Because civil society and particularly EU with social media are very engaged in the political sphere and when people have no voices they go to demonstrations, massive protests on the streets and you see that is to me something to be taken seriously. The perception that the fraud is left by institutions such as EU. [51:10]

S1: Ahh yes, okay. And you already said that there are multiple positive outcomes coming from your peacebuilding project or the peacebuilding initiatives in Mozambique generally. Where you also see challenges or maybe shortcomings at the moment? [51:30]

S2: Yeah, there are challenges, of course. Uhm one is derived from the fact that this has been coming from a long conflict and when you have a long conflict you start to have multiple challenges. The ones that I referred to, people, you start to have people who are in their 20s, 5 years ago, in their 18s, in their teens, late teens, now they are getting married in other places, so they need, they are not returning. So, if you change the demographics, changing demographics means that it will put pressure on existing, in accommodating areas it will put pressure on social services, in economic services it will put pressure on opportunities as well because you start to have crowded areas. And what is there in terms of water points is not any longer available, is not any longer sufficient. It was not sufficient before but now it's even more pressurized by the situation. Housing, health, education, all. So, so not ending this conflict but rather having it continuing is to me a big, big, big challenge. The second challenge, that I think I referred to as well is if overall the country fails to address, in those regions we are talking about, to address the wealth redistribution,

creation opportunities, that will in and of itself is creating and will continue to create further drought for violence, for dissatisfaction, for people willing to resolve using, resolve their lives, meeting their aspirations, probably using other means and probably violence because violence is something that is present in their lives so it will start to be a tool as well. So, I see a big challenge with many ramifications. [54:20]

S1: And looking at these challenges or shortcomings, do you have recommendations to maybe future project or programs by the EU? [54:39]

S2: Well, I think the intensification of efforts to end the conflict and intensification of the system that provides for opportunities for people which comes with using the resources as well that are coming out of resource extraction. If that is achieved, I think it will be a win-win situation because as I said, you have European actors extracting them, right? But if it is for the benefit of everyone, right now it's just, I don't know if anyone is already benefiting from it because it's in early years of exploration. But so far what I know is people are losing for sure. They have lost their houses, they have lost their livelihoods, they have lost faith and now they are losing their dreams as well for the future. So, if it– so that to me is a key issue. [56:03]

S1: So, when I understood you right, it's also about equality in these resource extractions, creating wealth for not just small groups or institutions but for the people in Mozambique, to everyone? [56:23]

S2: Yes. Yes. Yes, because what you see globally is these are multinationals, these are big companies, they are making money every year, year after year after year and you may not see the same happening to the people that live in those places where they are getting their raw material from, right? In the contrary, the people of Mozambique are becoming poorer and poorer. That's something that the prediction needs to be resolved and it should be a win-win situation. These resources are to be used elsewhere in the world, right? Natural gas is not necessarily in Mozambique. Maybe the bulk of it will end up in Europe because you have European players there. So, it cannot continue to be just these are getting rich, people are getting what they need for their own development, but Mozambican people are losing. [57:28]

S1: Yes, okay, thank you. Well from my side this would basically be all my questions, but I just wanted to ask, is there anything you want to add that we haven't talked about yet that you feel is important in this context? [57:46]

466

467 S2: No, I think we said it all. We touched on multiple things. I want to wish you success in
468 your endeavour. I hope it goes well for you and I hope that this conversation has been useful
469 for you. [58:03]

470

471 S1: Very, very useful and also, I just wanted to thank you of course but also telling you that
472 you are doing really amazing work on the ground in Mozambique. [58:16]

473

474 S2: Thank you. [58:16]

475

476 S1: And yes, thank you also for sharing all that information with me. [58:21]

477

478 S2: You're welcome. [58:23]

479

480 S1: And I just wanted to propose if you – when I'm done writing my thesis if you are
481 interested in getting some of the results. I can send them to you because you were also part
482 of – [58:35]

483

484 S2: Yes, I would appreciate that. [58:37]

485

486 S1: I will definitely do that. And also, I just wanted to ask if maybe you know someone from
487 your particular project on the ground who would also be willing to talk to me because I need
488 a few more interviews as well. If you know someone, I would be very happy if you could
489 share information, maybe give them my contact information or talk to them and – [59:10]

490

491 S2: What I will do is in our email conversations I will copy a colleague of mine. She is our
492 program coordinator. She is closer to the ground than myself. So probably she will have
493 other perspectives on what we have talked about. And probably can enrich your work as
494 well. So, I'll do that. [59:35]

495

496 S1: That would be amazing. Yes, thank you so much. [59:39]

497

498 S2: You're welcome. [59:40]

499

500 S1: Yes, then that would be it from my side. Yeah. [59:44]

501

502 S2: Okay. I wish you good luck. [59:46]

503

504 S1: Yes and I'll reach out to you as soon as I'm finished. But it can take a couple of weeks
505 to months until I'm done with my work. But I will definitely reach out. [59:59]

506

507 S2: Yes, thank you for that as well. We'll keep in touch, bye. [1:00:02]

508

509 S1: Yes, thank you too. Bye. [1:00:03]

V. Interview 2

The following transcript is from an interview, as part of a research project on “The European Union in Resource-Rich Post-Conflict Contexts,” focusing on how the EU’s peacebuilding initiatives contribute to peace in Mozambique. The interview was held with two local experts (E2/E3) from Mozambique working for an NGO involved in the implementation of EU-funded peacebuilding projects. In the transcription, the speakers are labeled as Speaker 1 (S1) for the interviewer and Speaker 2 (S2) and Speaker 3 (S3) for the interviewees. All participants provided informed consent for the use of this transcript for research purposes.

- 1 S1: Yeah, so then I would start the audio now – [00:13]
- 2
- 3 S2: It's a part of ethical issues. Yeah, so I will consent. You can record the call and no
- 4 problem. You can share in academic environment. It's okay for me. [00:20]
- 5
- 6 S1: Okay, perfect. [00:22]
- 7
- 8 S2: Okay, so maybe I will also introduce myself before I pass to [Name 2]. I saw that she
- 9 has already joined the call. So, my name is [Name 1]. I'm a [Position 1] (of the social
- 10 cohesion project), which has been implemented in Cabo Delgado, Niaça and Nampula in
- 11 north of Mozambique, which is funded by European Union. So, it's a 42-month project,
- 12 which is about three years. And we are implementing in the ground in nine districts. So, I
- 13 think we will have more information during the discussion. So over to you, [Name 2]. For
- 14 now, we are just going to introduce ourselves. And [researcher] is asking for us to record
- 15 this call. And myself have already consented. And over to you. [01:23]
- 16
- 17 S3: Hi, [researcher]. Hi, [Name 1]. [inaudible] apologize. I am travelling through a very
- 18 limited internet. [01:33]
- 19
- 20 S1: Yes, no worries. [01:36]
- 21
- 22 S3: So, I will make my best to participate. If I'm not able to talk, I'll write in the messages.
- 23 My name is [Name 2]. And I'm the [Position 2] for the Aga Khan Foundation of Mozambique.
- 24 Pleasure to meet you. [01:51]
- 25
- 26 S1: Yes, nice to meet you too. And I hope it's okay for you, too, that I audio record this
- 27 meeting, so that I can use it for my research. [02:03]

28

29 S3: Yes, yes you can. [02:07]

30

31 S1: Okay. Uhm- [02:11]

32

33 S3: [connection lost - S3 leaves the call] [02:16]

34

35 S1: Oh, I think we lost [Name 2]. But yes, you already briefly introduced yourself. But maybe
36 you can tell me a little bit more, maybe both of you later, how long you've been working with
37 the organization and how long exactly you've been working with the European Union in
38 cooperation. [02:44]

39

40 S2: Okay, I can start myself. I'm currently going for one year. And on 1st November, I'm
41 working 1 year for AKF (Aga Khan Foundation), particularly for this project, which is funded
42 by the European Union. But I have other previous experience with other organizations. But
43 it was not in this topic of social cohesion project. So maybe I will give you more background
44 about the project. And then we can, after that, go into the discussion. So, this project, as I
45 mentioned at the beginning, had been started on 1st October 2024. But we had other
46 projects, which had been implemented. We are currently in phase number three. I think
47 [Name 2] is the right person to speak about the previous phase that had been implemented
48 in Cabo Delgado. So currently, the project is funded by the European Union, but also by the
49 AKF UK. And the objective of this project is to support the internal display and the
50 community around to decide about their future in terms of what they want to be, in terms of
51 safe return, but also in terms of - Because there is other internal display, which want to
52 maintain their homes on the resettlement camps. So, we have to ensure that they are doing
53 it in a safe way. But also, there is others, which want to return to their origin zone. And this
54 project is also supporting them to return very well. So how we can- how we do that? We
55 expect to support them, providing information regarding security, in terms of the conflict
56 zones, but also, we are supporting them to engage with other members into the community,
57 but also with the government and other civil society organizations. So, our approach is
58 based in the community, where we want to ensure that this project could bring sustainability
59 by empowering local community. Currently we have community 'Village Development
60 Organizations', which is an informal civil society organization that is supporting us with a
61 key message, but also with activities that are implemented in the ground. But also, this
62 group is a leading initiative of promoting development, but also social inclusion into the
63 community. So, for us this is a better approach, because we ensure that the people, which
64 we provide technical assistance, they remain in the community and they can also continue

with those activities, even without our support or without our presence in the field. So, this is basically the project. We are working with internal display, with children, with men and women, but also, we are working with [older/all the?] people. So, in all our activities, we are prioritizing the vulnerable groups, but also, we are providing priority to the internal display, because the project is supporting them to decide about their future. So, on this phase, in terms of activity, we are focused on six activities. [06:53]

S3: [rejoins call]

S2: The first one is providing support for the community village development organization. It could be technical, but also it could be financial support, to implementing about more than 1,000 projects in the community. But also, we are supporting the community to organize and promote elections, because the VDOs (Village Development Organizations) members, they have been elected by the community members, so they have to apply to be the members and they should have to be voted. But also, we are supporting the community and the VDOs to promote dialogues with government, but also with other organizations, in terms of changing synergies, but also in terms of sharing the different needs that they have in the community. But also, the VDOs are engaging with those at [inaudible] to provide necessary support for the community. But also, we are supporting them to conduct research, which will bring information about security, about return, but also about any additional needs that they may need into their social insertion on the community. So, we have also a communication unit, which is supporting them. But this communication unit is led by the community, so we are providing mobile phones to the community members and they use this mobile phone to collect information, but also to share different information about security, but also about good things which are happening in the community. So those members are receiving training to collect, but also to analyse information before they share. So, this is a little overview of the social cohesion project that we are implementing in this phase before we move. So, I will maybe forward to [Name 2] in two minutes or so, so she can talk about the phase of this project. Thank you and over to you, [Name 2]. [09:28]

S3: Thank you. I hope you can hear me. Well, I think the previous phase of projects, there is no difference between- because it's just an extension in terms of the expansion. The first phase started with the pilot in one district and then this, the second phase, we expanded a little bit more and now in the third phase, I think in the first and the second phase, we have 64 communities and now in the third phase, we are reaching more than 215 communities. I'm too [inaudible], but I hope to just mention- for us, our strategy of social inclusion is: we need to build it from within. We need to build ownership. So, it must start from communities

and not from us. So that's why we're working with the local structure. It could be with a Village Developed Organization, or it could be any other kind of local structure, like a club or a committee. It doesn't matter the designation, but it must be a local-promoted organization. We build capacity. We support their creativity in terms of what they think can contribute to social cohesion in their community. The main objective is that we need to leave capacity there. We need to build ownership and we need to also prepare them to be able to realize this with different access. So, we normally also support this Village Developed Organizations to organize dialogue events where other NGOs, other actors like government, private sector, they come together with the community, they discuss what are the breads of this community, how they can support them in order to address things that they believe that contribute to divide people in their community. So, I think that's what I can add from my experience. [11:55]

S1: Thank you. And uhm you already said that the project is going on in northern Mozambique. And I know that, especially in Cabo Delgado, that peacebuilding intersects a lot with resources and resource extraction issues. So, is there anything where your project addressed this part of the conflict and grievances around resources in the region? [12:32]

S2: I can, maybe I can start. Like, directly we can say no, but as we are engaged with the government and the VDOs to discuss different issues and needs from the community, those topics usually uhm- because the community, they want to know about the resources, how they share with them, how they can use the resource to develop their community, but also to develop all the promise. So, what is happening, we're supporting the VDOs to organize meetings with government, but also with private sector, including those who are working on maybe mining, maybe on petrol. They also join on this meeting. We have a good example in Montepuez, where ruby mining usually joins in supporting VDOs. So, they have a space to discuss different issues with different private institutions or private companies. But as you know, we are currently, we are not working on the region where the petrol and gas. So, for now, we did not have a chance to discuss with those companies, but the ones which are working on mining and ruby, we had a chance to, in the same room with the community, to have those meetings and discussions. And they have some commitment with community to providing support in terms of uhm their initiative, like if they want to promote [portuguese: empreendedorismo?], like a financial business, something they are able to support in them, which is something which is really very important and bring a very good impact into the community. So, yeah, I think you [Name 2] also have something to say regarding this topic. [14:50]

138

139 S3: [long pause]

140

141 S1: Okay, maybe the connection-. I don't know. [14:59]

142

143 S2: Maybe, maybe, yeah. Maybe it's a connection issue. [15:03]

144

145 S3: [message in the chat: "Hearing with cuts...but I think [Name 1] said it well"]

146

147 S2: Yeah, but it's a really big, very big issue because the gap in the different research which
148 have been done in Capo Delgado, specifically, they show that people are being joined with
149 terrorists or with no armed group because of, vulnerably- because they are not feel that they
150 are being part of the resource or they are not being part of uhm, they are not joined on this
151 cake, like what the country is getting because of the resource. And even like if there is any
152 opportunity for work, they are coming people from foreign country or from other province
153 and the local people, usually they don't have a lot of opportunity. So we know that a lot of
154 people are concerned because of it, but we are trying on this project to bring different actors
155 to discuss and to find better solution to include people, including providing technical training
156 to ensure that they also can have similar abilities that people who are working on their
157 project have and ensure that they also can contribute for working. Yeah, thank you. [16:29]

158

159 S1: And also, you said that there are a lot of uhm, oil, gas mining companies. Are these
160 European companies or what kind of companies are you talking about? [16:46]

161

162 S2: Can you repeat please? [16:54]

163

164 S1: The companies that you talked about that are in the mining or gas, oil sector, are these
165 European companies? [17:06]

166

167 S2: Uhm, some are European. Just to mention an example, we have TotalEnergies, which
168 is a French company. We have some other which is subcontracted, like Renco, like other
169 companies. But we have like in the mining sector, there are the Chinese, there are the
170 Australian, but also, they have [inaudible] with Mozambican companies. Some of them,
171 even in the petrol sector, there is a percentage which it's a block of the government of
172 Mozambique. So, both the countries are working on the projects. But we have other from
173 Africa, which are also providing some service. [18:00]

174

175 S3: [message in the chat: "We pass the message to the communities that they must make
176 use of decision-making space to lobby for fair and transparent distribution of benefits from
177 mining activities. Both foreigners and local companies working in joint ventures or suppliers
178 of service to Oil n gas"] [18:01]

179

180 S1: Okay, thank you. Both of you. I see your, [Name 2], messages on the chat as well. So,
181 as there are also European companies involved, then do you believe that the European
182 Union's engagement in Mozambique is also influenced by economic and resource-related
183 interests? [18:25]

184

185 S2: I think I can say no, because the relationships between the government of Mozambique
186 and the European Union is coming for a long years, even before the resources come in. We
187 believe that it's a part of the relationship that we have as a country with Europe. But we
188 believe that it's not because of this EU engagement. But maybe [Name 2] will also write in
189 chat. This is a very difficult question (laughing). [19:06]

190

191 S1: Yes, it is, I know (laughing). [19:07]

192

193 S3: Did you get [inaudible]. Please repeat the question. [19:18]

194

195 S1: Yes uhm. We've been talking about also European companies being active in
196 Mozambique. So, my question was, if you think that the European Union's engagement in
197 Mozambique is also influenced by economic or resource-related interests? [19:38]

198

199 S3: Oh, yeah. No, I really don't think so. Because as [Name 1] said, it's a bilateral
200 relationship with the country and it started way before the resource boom. But of course, I
201 also understand that the support the European Union is providing to civil society, they are
202 trying to make a balance, to bring uhm- build the capacity to [log in/logic?], capacity to
203 control, so that there's a balance between the economic gain of those companies, but also
204 the social gain as well, for the community, especially the community in [inaudible]. So, I
205 think they're trying to build both sides, both sides of [inaudible]. [20:44]

206

207 S1: Okay. And both of you already said that you are usually in meetings with the government
208 and I also suppose with the European Union as well. So uhm how- how is the collaboration
209 with the EU work in practice? [21:17]

210

211 S2: You mean the government, yes? [21:19]

212

213 S1: The European Union. [21:21]

214

215 S2: The European Union. Okay. Yeah, we have the focal point of this project, just to mention
216 an example and the EU is aware about everything, what we are doing, what are the
217 challenges and other additional needs to the community. We usually share with the focal
218 person of the European Union on call or on the meeting that we have. But also, I believe
219 that if they are funding this project, it's because we had a really good collaboration and
220 discussed with them, giving the information of what is happening on the ground. And they
221 also check the reports and different information and they have taken the decision to working
222 with us, but also to work with the communities in Cabo Delgado. [22:27]

223

224 S3: Apart from that, I wanted to add that apart from that, we also normally support research
225 or evidence documentation processing, so that everything that we learn, any process we
226 engage with the community, we engage with these companies to try to document some
227 evidence. And we use that evidence to showcase them in public events that we organize,
228 either conference, workshops, or any other events that we participate in. And normally, the
229 European Union is present. We invite the European Union to those dialogues so that they
230 can also be part of looking for solutions to the problems that are on the ground. [23:20]

231

232 S1: So, just to understand you right, do you feel like they consider your views and your
233 expertise within the project design and implementation? [23:36]

234

235 S3: Definitely, yes. And that's why they actually embrace this approach that we are
236 promoting of strengthening communities to be able to defend but also lobby for their own
237 interests. So that's a buy-in from them. Based on the experience of other countries, they
238 embrace that. And as I mentioned, they want to- we need to make sure there's a balance,
239 not just economic gains for European and other foreign companies or even local companies,
240 but also for communities to benefit from those resources. [24:25]

241

242 S1: Okay. And also, the European Union, they emphasize values such as democracy and
243 human rights and participation. And do you feel like these values are reflected and relevant
244 in the projects in Mozambique on the ground? [24:52]

245

246 S2: Yes. In the project, this approach has been implemented, it's been working. But, you

know, in terms of different issues, in terms of human rights, democracy, into the communities, they would come with some gaps. But the project is engaged on those topics of democracy, of human rights and other important topics. So, the first thing, even to create the VDOs in the community, we are doing a democracy process where the VDOs, potential members, they have to apply for that and the community have to vote them. So, we are teaching them how to organize the democracy elections, but also all the decisions that the VDOs want to take, they are consulted, they are discussed with the community first before taking the information audits, the decisions that they have to take to the government. Because some decisions or some important decisions which they have to take, they have to share with government and other partners. So, one of the things which we are teaching them is if you want to make any change, if you want to take any decision, in the name of the community, you have to go back and ask them if this is why, what, are you expecting, or no. So, this is the thing which we are also engaged with. In terms of human rights, we are providing trainings, but also, we are engaged with them in the community to ensure that they have to respect the principle of human rights in the country, but also in the global. So, most of them, they are aware of that. But, you know, if we have a conflict and there is a zone in which the conflict is really very high, so there is a lot of issues in the human rights topics and us as a project, but we could not sometimes have a sense of those places. But we received some information and report of human rights issues, but unfortunately, we just uhm been limited because of those situations, but issues of human rights uhm in Cabo Delgado, especially in the district where the conflict is also ongoing currently. So, yeah. But in terms of community where we are working, the cases are coming very, very few and we believe that this is a result of the work which we are doing with other organizations, including the government of Mozambique, I think. [28:07]

S3: Yeah and maybe what we can add is that the structure of the VDO is actually designed to make sure that all human rights are satisfied. So apart from the, from the voting, you have focal points for education, for health, for gender, for peace and reconciliation, for what else? For all these basic rights that people have. So, we want to make sure that there are people advocating for access to different services, for access to different needs. And we teach, we introduce those topics in trainings you know from a human rights perspective. But as [Name 1] was saying, we are operating in a conflict zone. And sometimes we are dealing with, we are interacting with other organizations with different approaches. And there are cases of human rights violations, a few once in a while. But then we also embrace the synergy exchange with organizations that are able to deal with human rights violation cases. Like we have these, how do you call it, hotlines, you know, that people can denounce

any case of violence. And then they also provide reference on where to seek support in those cases. So that's how we are working. [30:05]

S1: So how do you, within your project, define peace or success? Like what is it that you say, okay, this is successful, this is the peace that we envision? [30:32]

S2: Okay, so maybe we can check a little bit before. Because when the conflict started, a lot of people have been displaced and have looked for a new place. And there are different barriers in terms of language, in terms of social, cultural issues. But also, there are different needs and overlap in terms of needs of public service. So, the hospitals were coming full, the schools were coming full. And the native people, usually they would say that those services are coming full because of you, because you are coming here. And there is no more medicaments in the hospital. And the other issue, it was about sharing the land for building houses, but also for agriculture. And one of the things which the project is doing, or has been done successful, is to engage with those communities to ensure that people are coming to their community because of this situation of conflict. So, they have to receive and stay in a- with good relationships with them. So, at the beginning, there is no way to share the lands. But currently, when we go back to the community, we can show that they are sharing learning, they are sharing the schools. They are also working together to promote development, to identify needs, which is something which was not happening. So, this is something which can- which is really brought us in terms of good things which are happening in the community between the displaced and the hosted people. So, yeah, there is a VDO, as I mentioned before, which is a group which is composed by community members, but also by internal displaced. So, this group makes a really very good job to engage with different people in the government and local authorities to ensure that they can work and live together with people. Because some of internal displaced, they decided that they will not go back to their origin zone because they are feeling well in the community where they are currently living. Some have already built a house for staying there, definitely. And even if they organize an event, any football, they usually play together. They usually go together to the different activities which they are promoting in the community. And there is a lot of good stories which the internal displaced, they share with us in terms of good covenants. But also, they were able to engage with the government to build the new rooms and the schools. So, this is a result of working between the internal displaced and the host families. So those are some good examples which I can share with you at this moment. Because the VDO have a different structure. There is a president, a vice president. There is a focal point of health and a focal point of other related areas. So just to tell you that some of the members, they are president of the VDOs. I say that some of the

internal displaced, they are president of the VDOs. And it means that they are playing very important roles. They are in a privileged position in the VDOs, which at the beginning was really difficult to find a situation like this. Even if we are looking for gender issues, currently there is VDOs, which are leading by women. And there is a community which one of the VDO member is someone who has very been trusted. And sometimes he responds in terms of community issues, or he is also able to participate in the official event from the government. What we are seeing currently, the government is able even in an official event to invite the internal displaced to participate. Because they currently know that those people are here to stay or those people are part of our community or of our people. Thank you.

[35:37]

S3: So maybe what I can do is to summarize what [Name 1] was saying. That our main indicators of social cohesion and peace it's uhm- The first is inclusion. Because as we said before, the IDPs [Internal Displaced People] didn't have access to land. They didn't have access to services. We used to have some conflicts about the access to water. And the host community members, they would ask the IDPs to wait until they finished with fresh water. And later, the IDPs didn't have access to water. So, this was clearly a conflict, created tension in communities. So, inclusion is the first. The second is trust, as you mentioned. Now before, the IDPs didn't have access to this local structure or any other kind of association. But now, they are trusted with leadership positions. They are trusted with – some of them are treasurers. Some are [inaudible] of the association. So, trust is the second. When we see the local trust in the IDPs in the community, that's a positive indicator. But also, we have the tracking of those things. [inaudible]. Since the beginning of the project, we do the baselines. But also, we consider what we can do. Frequently, just to check to what extent people are improving in our fields. You know, between different groups in the community. So, this is another. So, we see that it's a reduction of conflicts in the community. It's also an indication that people are learning to trust and live together and don't have such tension. [inaudible] [37:50]

S1: And do you feel like these indicators of success are also the same for the European Union? [38:06]

S3 & S2: [crosstalking] [38:16]

S3: I think they are the same. Oh. Sorry for this (laughing). [38:20]

S2: I was asking you to come again. I didn't get the question. [38:25]

357

358 S1: Yeah, I can repeat the question. So, both of you have been telling me how you assess
359 success within your project. And my question was if you feel like the European Union uses
360 the same indicator for success or peace? [38:47]

361

362 S3: You want to go ahead [Name 1] or I can start? (laughing) [39:04]

363

364 S2: No, you can start. I think it's a really good question. It's a really good question for the
365 [Position 2] (laughing). [39:13]

366

367 S3: Well, yes. [inaudible]. I'm defending this, yes. Because I don't know if you have access
368 to the social barometer report. Which is like an international standard research tool of social
369 cohesion. So normally when we design our indicators, we receive these international
370 standards. And normally the donors as well, they are following the same standards. So,
371 once we get a call for proposal. And we submit a proposal suggesting that they approve
372 it. We assume that the donors also like it. Thinking in terms of measurable success. So far,
373 we are now in the third phase of implementation of this project. And they have been happy
374 with our reporting. Apart from just putting indicators. It's Success stories. Showcasing those
375 indicators like trust. [inaudible] the opportunity to restart life for IDPs. So far, they [inaudible]
376 we have been getting positive feedback. Indicating that we are [reliable?]. [40:47]

377

378 S1: Okay. And now we've been talking a lot about success. But do you also see- or where
379 do you see the biggest challenges or shortcomings? [41:04]

380

381 S2: Yeah uhm. I can start and then [Name 2] can add. I think the first challenge is about
382 security issues. Especially in the districts where we are working. Because we have a very
383 limited access to the field. So, this is one of the challenges. But the other one is bringing
384 expectation to the community. Because we are working with people who are very
385 vulnerable. So usually when they see an organization or civil society organization coming
386 to the community. They are thinking about maybe their first needs. Like food, water and
387 other things. And sometimes we, we are not providing what they are looking for at that
388 moment. We know that there are other organizations which are going there to provide those
389 items. But you know that the needs are too higher than what we are providing. So, this is a
390 very big challenge which we are facing every day in the community. Because yeah
391 sometimes they are looking for immediate needs. Like they need food, they need water,
392 they need medicaments, or any other kind of assistance. So those are the two things which
393 I would like to share with you in terms of challenges. Which are really impacting in this social

cohesion project. But also, there are other natural phenomena. We had cyclones, we had floods and the roads are coming closed. And yeah, sometimes we- because on this project we have what we call a small initiative from the communities. But sometimes they have to develop a small project to get this fund. Sometimes they develop a higher project which needs a higher amount which the project doesn't have. Because like we have this approach. Because we want to bring together the people. So, they usually join that they are going there to see their project, to implement their project. And there is a space to discuss, to have a good discussion between internal people and hosts. But also, with all the community members. So sometimes what is happening is the resources that we have are not enough to cover their project. So is this coming in as a challenge for us. Yeah, but also, we have gender issues. Maybe participations of women on the important decision into the community. It's something which we are, we are- I can say it's on our control currently because we are engaged with the community, we are engaged with men. But we are engaged to [influence?] people just to ensure that if we are doing something in the community, we have to ensure that women also can participate. Because sometimes when we are going to the important meeting like a conference, like provincial or other meeting and we engage the community to participate on those meetings. If you say that we are inviting 10 members of the community, sometimes are coming 8 men and 2 women. So, this is a concern that we are facing. But we are working, we are engaging them to ensure that they can include more women. But also, can give a space to them to express themselves. Because sometimes they can come and stay on their site without space to speak. Because in terms of social norms in the community, the women, they are usually- they are there to hear the men speaking and the important decision and the last word is coming from the men. But those are social and cultural issues which we are bringing and discussing with the community. They are coming, they are currently understanding. But also, there are other organizations which are really focused on those topics. And we know that there are good results coming or being done. [46:05]

S3: Yes, well, I really want to say that or what I can tell is that we need to [ask?] it as well. We live in a conflict zone. People are always moving around, especially the IDPs. When there is kind of stability in their place of origins, they retreat. Then when something happens, they come back. Sometimes they are not coming back to the same community. So, we are constantly working with different people. And sometimes it, it weakens the structure that we are building in those communities. So, this is something that we are trying to address in terms of ensuring that we have contacts of all the IDPs. So even if they are not here, they are living elsewhere. We are making the VDOs to continue to make a renewed contact with those people wherever they are. So that at least we make sure that the person that we

started with, they are taking that message wherever they are going. And see if it can work. But we are still trying to do anything. We are not sure if it will work. The other challenge that I can add is also about some organizations contributing to, to, to the sense of discrimination. Especially the humanitarian agents. Because I will give you an example. Sometimes the humanitarian- during the pilot phase in 2022, we supported the VDOs of Metuge District to be able to promote dialogue in the community. And ensure that host community members could uhm share land with the IDPs. Share land, share their houses, their food with the IDPs. Before the humanitarian agents arrived. That was already happening at that point. They were sharing, they were living together. They started to live together. Then the humanitarian agents came and started to give food only to the IDPs. And not to the host community members. That's when they started to say, "Ah so when you came, we helped you. And now when help comes, it's only for you and not for us". So those are the kind of, it's just one example. But it often happens when they don't involve the local community members. So, we are really struggling to coordinate with them. To make sure they can use those leaders, the local organization, to coordinate their support in the communities. Because it's kind of weakening what we are doing. And spoiling the tension between the different identity groups. And the third, of course, the third challenge is that it's not easy to quickly build trust. And sometimes the intervention, long-term, short-term intervention, they don't help. For us, I think that the European Union has been working with us since [2002?]. It gives us time to build more trust between different identity groups. But some other interventions in social cohesions are like three years, one-year interventions. And that doesn't help. It's not easy to bring different people to live together. So those are the small comments that I can add. [50:28]

S1: Yes, thank you. Also, both of you said that there are cultural issues sometimes. And also, [Name 1], you've been talking about gender issues. And that you, in your project, want to improve the participation of women. Is that, for example being sensitive to gender issues, something that is required by internal factors of AKF or by the European Union? [51:02]

S2: Yeah, it's a project indicator. But also, it's a part of the AKF commitment. So, in all the projects that we're implementing in AKF in the world, there is a gender topics and gender sensitivities. So, it's not a part of the European Union requirement, but it's also part of our commitment as an organization. And yeah, maybe- Yeah, I think it's fair. [51:44]

S1: And also, you said that sometimes you cannot hold up to the expectations that you find in the communities because you just don't have so much resources. How do you negotiate how much resources or funds you get? [52:09]

468

469 S2: Yeah, as I mentioned at the beginning, that the VDOs have a lot of opportunity to
470 engage with different partners, including the government. But they also can use their proper
471 resource or local material to solve some issues or to cover some needs. Because there are
472 some needs which they can contribute in terms of using local material or in terms of people
473 working. But sometimes there is a big infrastructure, like a water, like a school. They engage
474 with government and different partners. So, what we are doing usually, we are talking with
475 them, we are supporting them to prepare an engagement meeting and they invite the
476 partner and the partner usually supporting them. [53:05]

477

478 S3: [connection loss: S3 leaves the call]

479

480 S2: So, what we are doing, we are using, we are supporting them to like- if we have a river,
481 there is people from this side and this side and we are supporting them to make the bridges,
482 like to meet with those different partners to engage them and provide the necessary support.
483 Yeah, because there is a lot of needs. And because of this conflict, there is a lot of
484 organization, humanitarian organization, but also development organization, which we
485 discuss with them, supporting them to identify the needs. And on those district and provincial
486 forum, they had the opportunity to share with the community what are the needs at that
487 moment. [53:55]

488

489 S3: [rejoining the call]

490

491 S2: Yeah, this is the way that we are using to ensure that gaps related with our budget
492 limitation can be addressed into the community. So, we have a good story and I can share
493 with you here that one of the things is, one of the communities was looking for school. We're
494 supporting them to engage with the government, they engage with the government, the
495 government providing some rooms. We have an example, which is in Chiúre, one of the
496 districts, where we are implementing the project. There were problems with water points.
497 Some rehabilitation was needed. We supported them and they organized a meeting with
498 different partners and one of the organizations had been supporting them to rehabilitate
499 three water points. So those are some examples that I can share with you how we address
500 those budget limitations in terms of community initiative or community needs. [54:59]

501

502 S3: [inaudible] [55:06]

503

504 S2: I didn't hear you, [Name 2]. Do you have an issue? [55:20]

505

506 S3: No, I was saying no addition from my side (laughing). [55:25]

507

508 S1: Ah, okay (laughing). Yeah, so now it's already my last questions and I want to take a
509 look at the European Union again. So overall, as you told me, your project is really doing a
510 great work and also the cooperation with the European Union seems to work out well. But
511 what recommendation would you give to the European Union to improve its peace-building
512 engagement in Mozambique? Is there something that you would tell them, if you could?

513 [55:59]

514

515 S2: Yeah uhm. For now, I think they are doing too much, because currently, I don't know if
516 you are aware, we have a national dialogue, which has been supported by the European
517 Union, which has been done into the ground. So, there are different things which are going
518 into the community, discussing with people about trying to find solutions for peace, but also
519 for social cohesion and for good relationships between people, between people and the
520 government, between government and people. So, this is something which is too
521 much. Maybe for those experts, myself, I can recommend them to maybe try to scale up
522 this dialogue, because I know that it's happening in all the districts, but sometimes there are
523 people which are not going to the district, they are really in the community. So, if it's possible
524 that the European Union continues to engage with the Mozambique government to
525 providing this national dialogue at the community level. I know that people of the community
526 are participating, but I feel that they are not really participating well. But also, I think the
527 European Union can play a really important uhm- they can be a really very good player if
528 they have a straight link very well, the dialogue between the government, but also
529 supporting the government of Mozambique, providing an electronic system for the elections,
530 providing an electronic system for different issues that we are facing. Because if we look
531 back, one of the problems that divides us as Mozambiquans is the elections, because there
532 is no transparency, because people are concerned about transparency about trust so it's
533 something that if we- at the end of this national dialogue could be electronic, this will be a
534 very good achievement. So yeah, the other thing, I think uhm it's, it's about the communities
535 which are in the zones, which the conflict is it's too high, they also need to be looked but
536 also, they need to be engaged on this, on those discussions regarding the peace the peace
537 in Mozambique. Yeah, for now I think it's. Yeah. [58:59]

538

539 S3: Yeah, maybe what I can add in that is from a budget perspective. Sometimes we have
540 some limitation in terms of staffing. I'll give an example now, we are we are working we
541 have to work in 215 communities and we were limited in terms of having local facilitators so

sometimes we have to stretch ourselves (laughing), make sure these communities they have assistance but it's not enough so this is the recommendation I could give that some flexibility in terms of allowing us to get the proper staffing in the project but overall European Union is a good, a very good partner. They are open even in this issue of staffing we are in dialogue with them. They are open and they are flexible for changes but maybe for the future they could consider more openness in terms of staffing as well. And we are also in dialogue with them for another initiative which will invest in integrating, digitally integrating local organizations, both in terms of using digital tools but also in terms of leveraging digital tools for better transparent management process. I'll give an example: most of our civil society organization, they have members spread out in the entire country. And they don't have enough money to have a general assembly for accountability. So, by building their digital capacity we want them to leverage the digital tools to be able to organize that national calls with all their members and continue you know, this accountability process and not just avoiding them because they don't have funds to organize that physical assembly. So, this is something where we are also dialoguing with them just to give an example how they are open and they are really looking forward to contributing to the democracy not only from a government perspective but also from a civil society perspective as well. [1:01:50]

S2: Yeah, something is coming on my mind, that I would like to yeah- In terms of scale up the European funds not only in North but also in Centre and South of Mozambique. Because especially before the election which has been over the last year there is a lot of problems in terms of social cohesion, in terms of good relationships between people and the government. So, I think it's really important even in a small pieces, we try to support in those two regions of Centre and South of Mozambique to discuss more about peace and social cohesion. Because if we look even two or three years ago there was a conflict in Centre of Mozambique which was affected Manica, [Tete?] and Sofala. But in terms of social cohesion initiative, peace building initiative there is not too much like in North of Mozambique. So, I think it's really important to bring everyone on the same boat to avoid any kind of conflict in the future. Yes, thank you. [1:03:22]

S1: Yes, well thank you so much. So that would basically be all my questions. I just have one more question to [Name 2]: I think [Name 1] you said it at the beginning, but [Name 2]: How long have you been working on the project or for the Aga Khan Foundation? [1:03:43]

S3: [long pause]

S1: Okay, maybe your connection is not- [1:03:56]

579

580 S3: Sorry, I was speaking on mute. No, I joined Aga Khan in August 2022. So, I'm like in
581 my third year now. [1:04:09]

582

583 S1: Okay, well then as I said that's basically all from my side. Is there anything else that you
584 feel like is important to mention that we haven't talked about yet? [1:04:27]

585

586 S2: Well, from my side, no. Maybe just to share with you that my younger sister is also
587 [Name 3] (laughing). [1:04:47]

588

589 S1: That's funny (laughing). [1:04:48]

590

591 S2: Okay, but also, I think if you need any additional information from us, don't hesitate to
592 let us know. But also, we have been working with Joaquim Chissano University, which has
593 been supporting us with some research. I think if you need more information, we can
594 connect you with them. Maybe it will be helpful for you. They are really doing a lot of
595 research on social cohesion in north of Mozambique. It's a public university, so we have
596 good relationships with them. If you are interested, you can introduce yourself and they can
597 provide you more information. I think it will add value for your dissertation. [1:05:35]

598

599 S1: Yes, I would really appreciate that because I would really like to include more
600 information from local perspectives and research. [1:05:45]

601

602 S2: Yes, I will definitely do it. So, they are a public institution, they don't have official emails.
603 But I will introduce yourself and then I will send them WhatsApp to make sure that they can
604 do an arrangement to meet you. [1:05:57]

605

606 S1: Yes, that would be great. Thank you. [1:06:03]

607

608 S3: Nothing also from my side, just to ask if it will also be good when you complete this
609 dissertation with us. [1:06:12]

610

611 S1: Yes, I will definitely share my outcomes with you, but it can take a little bit. So, I plan on
612 being done by January or February. So as soon as I'm finished, I will share my outcomes
613 with you. Definitely. [1:06:32]

614

615 S3: Oh, that's fine. Yes. [1:06:37]

616

617 S1: Okay, well, thank you then. Thank you very much for your time and also sharing all that
618 information with me and your experiences. I'm really grateful for that. [1:06:54]

619

620 S2: Of Course. Good Luck for your dissertation. Bye. [1:06:57]

621

622 S3: Yes, Bye. [1:07:03]

VI. Interview 3

The following transcript is from an interview, as part of a research project on “The European Union in Resource-Rich Post-Conflict Contexts,” focusing on how the EU’s peacebuilding initiatives contribute to peace in Mozambique. The interview was held with one local expert (E4) working for an NGO involved in the implementation of EU-funded peacebuilding projects. In the transcription, the speakers are labeled as Speaker 1 (S1) for the interviewer and Speaker 2 (S2) for the interviewee. All participants provided informed consent for the use of this transcript for research purposes.

1 S2: What I thought is that of course when you have to personalize the EU and the way they
2 function, there is quite a lot of criticism about the way that EU go ahead with this kind of
3 project. So - I keep getting messages from my political background. I don't know how to
4 block the Facebook and all the information. So, there will come some information in the
5 app. [00:31]

6
7 S1: It's okay. [00:32]

8
9 S2: Okay, what I have prepared here is that I have so many documents that you can't even
10 imagine. But I would like to answer some of your questions verbally and then we can add
11 to your questions at each question when I can send you further information. Could we do it
12 like that? [00:55]

13
14 S1: Of course, of course. [00:57]

15
16 S2: Would that serve you? Okay, what I have found in all these documents, because it's a
17 project of 36 months in a war area in Cabo Delgado. So, we have changed strategy and we
18 have also changed approaches along the way due to the conflict. But I have just uhm
19 summoned the project. I've only been working with this project, but we have tried to contact
20 other organizations who also worked with conflict resolution in Mozambique. And they were
21 not very forthcoming because they were very busy themselves. So, I will say that we didn't
22 have- we tried in the beginning, we tried to do a common baseline with, I don't remember
23 who it was, but you probably have the other projects, one in Tete, one in another area that
24 EU supported in Mozambique. But we actually didn't manage as Oxfam to have a close
25 collaboration with them. And we thought that it was a little bit of waste of personnel and
26 effectiveness that we did not manage to work to combine our efforts, but that didn't
27 materialize. [...] So if you have other activities and I know that EU have had other conflict

28 resolution activities in Mozambique over the same time slot that we were, that we've been
29 working. [02:38]

30

31 S1: Yeah, so I was also talking with people from other organizations from Mozambique
32 already. And I also have some more interviews scheduled with other Organizations. And
33 yeah, but did I understand it right that Oxfam didn't really manage to work there in the end
34 or? [03:09]

35

36 S2: To work where? [03:11]

37

38 S1: In Mozambique. [03:12]

39

40 S2: Of course. [03:13]

41

42 S1: Okay, so maybe you could, could you just- [03:17]

43

44 S2: No, no. My point was that I would have liked to collaborate more with the other NGOs.
45 On the other hand, we managed to scale up our activities to a national level. We had a
46 conference with actors at national level on conflict resolution and extractives. So that was
47 one of the objectives was to upscale so that you could have an impact on policy at national
48 level. So that was one of the objectives where I think we managed quite well. But, okay, I'm
49 [Name 1]. I've been working in Mozambique since 70, before you were born. Since 79, I
50 think. I arrived in Mozambique and I've actually, with an interruption of five years, I've been
51 working in Mozambique for 30 years. And I came back to Denmark in 2008, 2009. And I
52 was immediately employed by Oxfam. So, I continued working in Oxfam with Mozambique.
53 And then I was also lucky to be allowed to work in West Africa. So, I've worked a lot in
54 Burkina Faso and in Niger. [04:49]

55

56 S1: And when did you or Oxfam started to work with the European Union? [04:58]

57

58 S2: We started with this project we started in 2020, I think. I've got the project description
59 here. You haven't got it? [05:10]

60

61 S1: No. [05:10]

62

63 S2: Okay, so we can just quickly run through it. But we started in 2020, so we worked 2020,
64 2021, 2022, 2023, a little bit into 2024. So, it was a 36-month project, three years. [05:28]

65

66 S1: And maybe you could briefly describe the project [05:34]

67

68 S2: I'll do that now. [...] Can we share screen? [05:44]

69

70 S1: I think so. yes. [05:47]

71

72 S2: I think it's me who have to share screen. Yes, let me see [...] I think I have to do
73 here. Share window. I hope. [...] Are you on? [06:16]

74

75 S1: Yes, it's working. [06:18]

76

77 S2: Okay, so this is the, what do you say, the cover or the summary of the action. So, the
78 objective is to strengthen the capacity of all stakeholders for conflict mediation and inclusive
79 dialogue to the benefit of mining and conflict-affected communities. This is what I have been
80 working with through my whole career. I've been working to give civil society a voice at local
81 level, especially in planning. [Position 1] especially to give them a voice on budgets and
82 activities at a local level with focus on women and youth. And I've been working with this
83 always and I've been working with this on legislation in Mozambique, which have actually
84 good legislation on this. The question is then how it is implemented. So this was also the
85 idea of the, the project to support civil society and community actors in three selected
86 districts. So, we had two districts in Cabo Delgado and two districts in the south, in
87 Inhassoro and one district in [Gurué?]. So, it was three particularly very different areas
88 because one area in Cabo Delgado, there was a war going on and in the south, there was
89 a big South African company exploiting natural gas. So we were in the north, in the center
90 and in the south. And to develop an existing multi-stakeholder space for conflict mediation
91 and dialogue, that has been our objective. And as you can see here, the target area was
92 Cabo Delgado. We had to leave the district because there was too much warfare going on
93 there. So, we selected the district of Montepuez and the district of Palma. And uhm let me
94 see [...] Montepuez is rubies and Palma is graphite, with a big agreement with Tesla on the
95 graphite production. But the focus is to start a dialogue based on the extractive affected
96 communities and to try to make some agreements in the triangle between government,
97 company and local community. But in close collaboration with the local government. And
98 also, of course, the provincial and national government. But this triangle, it is where we see
99 that we have been working. Another important thing in the project and then I'll end because
100 I think it's quite clear and I can send you this. Another important thing for us has been to
101 avoid creating parallel structures. To avoid creating structures which will disappear when

the community, uhm when project ends. So, we have tried to build on existing structures and existing dialogue spaces and try to develop these spaces into something more participative and into something which is more benefiting the communities in case. We have worked with this a lot in Sierra Leone. I have worked with this and we managed to get legislation improved in terms of mediation and dialogue between communities, companies and government. I have a lot of material on that too. So, I don't know if, have you got questions more to this? We have got here the objective, the target group, the final beneficiary, estimated output and main activities. And I think you can say that we have actually followed this outline throughout the three years. Apart from one thing that we have included small scale projects, which I don't remember if it was foreseen here, but we set aside some money for small scale projects in the extractive industry affected communities with focus on women and youth. So, we initiated 21 small scale projects from north center, all in total 21 small projects. And then we of course worked with local NGOs. We had one NGO in Cabo Delgado, one NGO in the center of the country and one in the south. And these were NGOs who had a bit of experience working with dialogue and extractives and conflict resolution. [12:26]

S1: Was this project under the European Union funding as well, or did that come later? [12:39]

S2: Only European Union funding. [12:41]

S1: Okay. And how do you perceive the European Union's role in peace building in Mozambique? [12:51]

S2: [...] Should we follow your questions or are we just going about like this? [13:01]

S1: Yeah, I mean you can also just keep- [13:06]

S2: Is it enough introduction now? [13:11]

S1: Yeah, I'd say so, especially if you could send me this document as well, then I can read through it after. [13:15]

S2: Sorry, I haven't sent it yet, but- [13:23]

S1: No, that's totally fine. [13:24]

139
140 S2: Okay. So, you have the EU role and approach in peace building. That is what you are
141 asking about now. I think the EU would like to be involved more in peacebuilding, but as it
142 is with all big organizations, they have a very superficial approach to it. I don't know if they
143 have a model for peacebuilding, but I know that it has been it has been troublesome to work
144 with their demands for bureaucracy. We have used a lot of time to deliver reports every
145 three months. And there has been a lack of understanding in the EU head office in Kenya,
146 Nairobi and there's an EU office in Maputo, Mozambique. There has been a lot of exchange
147 of stuff so that you kind of had to start from rock bottom every time. And the other thing is
148 that they have very strict, what do you say, objectives and monitoring tools, which are
149 sometimes difficult to fill in with when you are working in an area in conflict. And then we
150 have had problems to get the money flowing, because you have to, every three months you
151 have to prove that you have used your funds for the quarter to get new funds released. So,
152 in this project, we have had a lot of, what to say, a lot of periods where we have had no
153 funding due to the demands from the EU, which was difficult to fill in in details from what
154 was actually happening on the ground. I would say that the project, I would value the project
155 at the end after 36 months as a success, but we were actually only started to get a hold on
156 the structure, the partners, the NGOs and the communities we were working with in the third
157 year. So, what would have been benefiting the communities and our objectives would have
158 been to continue for a couple of years. My recommendation would be when you work with
159 the EU, you should put aside at least 25% of your time slot for the project, you should put it
160 aside to an inception phase where you would organize the structures, the stakeholders, the
161 way we are going to work together and so on. If you start right on, then you will lose valuable
162 time. So, you should kind of foresee that a project like this in a country which is at war, at
163 least for a part of the project, with so many stakeholders, it takes some time to get the okay
164 from all levels and from all stakeholders. Also, because I would describe Mozambique as
165 an autocratic state now or on its way to be autocratic and there's a lot of diplomacy and a
166 lot of acceptance you have to work very hard on if you want to have all the stakeholders in
167 line. Some of our partners, NGOs, have actually had difficulties working with provincial and
168 local government. On the other hand, sometimes when we had some constraints at local
169 level, we have been able to get help from provincial level. The central level has played a
170 very, very down-tailed role in this project, but we managed actually to make a seminar with
171 all stakeholders, also the local stakeholders, that's very expensive, but they all came to
172 Maputo and we made a request to the government to change legislation so that the
173 percentage that the community gets out of the extractive that takes place in their area
174 should be well defined. It's not today, it's 2.75 percent and now I think it's more, it's five, but
175 nobody knows why it's 2.75 percent and the legislation around this is very blurred and it's

very difficult for the community to actually get anything out of, what do you say, to get any benefits and any economic out of this. The companies are putting up a lot of rules and they are bursting, they are, what to say, is it bursting? They praise themselves to be in contact with the communities, but our impression was that these agreements between the companies and communities, these agreements are in the first place often copy-paste, I mean it's the same from one area to another. They are in Portuguese, they are on the net, so communities and community representatives don't have a role and don't have a chance to be able to scrutinize, to see "are these agreements with the company, are they really to our benefit and do we really get what is promised in the agreement at the end of the day?". So, the communities are the losers. The government, the provincial government and to some extent the local government are, are, what to say, are aligned with or iniquitous to the companies. They are not in favour of supporting the rights of the communities. When it comes to conflict resolution, I mean, our approach has been that when you are dealing with conflict resolution, it's a good thing that you have something tangible to talk about. Instead of only talking about conflict resolution, if you take your point of departure in, for example, extractives in the community, then you have some tangible to discuss, because for the community it is important that they can see that there is some tangible outcome of all these meetings and all these discussions and things like that. We had a baseline made with some, what to say, consultants and I have an extract on that baseline with recommendations, which I will also send to you, which talk about, it's a very, very extensive baseline, but it has interviewed all stakeholders in the north, center and south and the situation is very difficult, different between north, center and south, of course, because you have the war going on or the conflict going on in the north. So, I thought that this baseline, I don't know if you want to see the whole baseline, but I have an extract of the baseline and it also has some recommendations. [22:05]

S1: Yeah, that would be great if you could send that to me, too. Okay, so now you've been saying that a lot of times local agency structures or just the locals are not benefiting from some of the discussions in Mozambique, especially with the companies, but how do you see it with the European Union? I mean, a lot of projects are funded by the European Union and also designed or partly designed by the European Union and how do you see the European Union to include local agencies or local knowledge? [22:51]

S2: The EU has been very focused on making some seminars at local level, not local level, but provincial level to set up some seminars where you once more discuss with government companies and local stakeholders. So, I think they have been very focused on that, but often the local conditions, the conditions on the ground, it drowns in the discussion with the

government and with the company and the company have taken us in, they have nursed us and they have lied to us and they have explained to us how well they are functioning both in Cabo Delgado and in Yesoro, but on the ground they are doing exactly what they want to do and they are not very well, they are not very flexible in relation to what you say in changing conditions on the ground. So, the companies are there for their profit, but they are sensible to their reputation internationally, they are sensible when you try to discuss with them. So they are rated, the Ruby company in Montepuez is rated as one of the most flexible and sensible companies to community demands and the Graphite company in Palma, they are the two districts in the north, have also been rated relatively high, but there have been strikes in both these areas and there have been conflicts and some people have been killed. So, when we talk about reconciliation and peacebuilding, it has been quite tough and we have talked to the companies Oxfam and with our partners, both at national level, their headquarters at national level and in the provinces, we have talked with them. So, it's uphill, but on the other hand, I think what we have been able to contribute with, that is organization. If communities are organized and if they are trained to dialogue, then they get a better end result. But you have to do some awareness building with community and particularly with women and youth. [26:07]

S1: So, you have been saying that there are a lot of times companies involved, I suppose also European companies. And especially in Cabo Delgado, the resource extraction is a big issue when it comes to the conflict there. So, do you feel like that the European Union's engagement in Mozambique is also influenced by these economic or resource-related interests that of course also relate to foreign companies there? [26:52]

S2: Of course. [26:54]

S1: Okay then I'll ask a little different. Is it also connected with the peace building part, like do you feel like they are involved in peace building because of their economic interests? [27:10]

S2: I think it's a little bit both. There are economic interests, but I also think that the European Union has a genuine interest in peacebuilding, but you can't exclude the economics from the equation. [27:31]

S1: And I mean, you also have been saying that the people that suffer in these extractive regions, they do not benefit most of the time from any extraction that is going on there. And

when the European Union is empathizing, for example, mining companies, do they risk reinforcing conflict or issues in that region? [28:08]

S2: Well, I can refer to a meeting in the south, in [Yasur?], about the gas extraction. And the community there, they had entered an agreement with SESAL, which is the big gas extractive companies in the south. And what they told us at the meeting where we had the local representatives and community members present together with the local government representative at a very low level, at locality level and they told us that they had signed an Agreement, a five-year agreement with the company and the government. And we were three years into this Agreement and they have received nothing of what was agreed and signed upon in this agreement. I mean three years into a five-year agreement, they have seen nothing from the things that should have been initiated in the agreement, which is it's typically it's typically infrastructure. It's typically schools, health, health center, access to water as each of those basic infrastructure things that the that the community demands. The community very seldom demands further training or further training for women or they demand tangible, tangible things like water infrastructure, schools, health center. And I think that is also what the companies are offering. But when the agreement is written in Portuguese and then is put into the drawer and then three years passes and they have seen nothing. And then there is a very big fear factor in civil society in Mozambique. I don't know if you have followed the upcoming or the election. What happened in the beginning of the year. And I've just been traveling around. I was in Mozambique in November last year. And it has really been back-to-back to very, very tough. What do you say? Interventions when people are protesting against this rigged this rigged election. So, people are afraid to speak out. And sometimes with good reason. [30:51]

S1: Well, the European Union emphasizes values such as democracy, participation, human rights. Do you feel like these values are reflected in the in the EU's peacebuilding engagement? [31:10]

S2: They are reflected in the project when you read the project and the way we have been working. That is what is the key issue on the agenda. And I mean, companies are not completely untouched by their reputation and also by people's demands. So, you can get a long way with, with dialogue. But sometimes also you end up in a, in a, in a strike and in the in the, in violence, violent meetings. You also have the- We had people in Cabo Delgado, you have got all the insurgence, I'll call them that, people who give an [inaudible] to all the young people and then ask them to join them. And that has been increasing over the last couple of years. So, uhm yeah, I think we had some gains from, from dialogue, from the

dialogues with the communities. Also, because one of our partners in Cabo Delgado, which is called "AMA- Associação do Meio Ambiente", they have been working with these dialogues for years. So, they know the people, they know the government, they know the communities and they have actually been doing very good work with, what do you say, trying to enforce the voice of the young people and women in the communities. [33:04]

S1: Mhh. So, at the beginning you already said that sometimes the cooperation with the European Union isn't easy at times. So, where do you see the biggest challenges or shortcomings when working with the EU on peacebuilding engagements in Mozambique? [33:30]

S2: Well, I don't know. I think they are understaffed and I also think that they are not capable of going into what is actually happening on the ground. And I think the, what do you say, the formulas, the demands for the monitoring of the project are focused more on that we don't want any fraud to happen with our investment than focused on the quality of the work that is going on. There's a lot of demands on how many people, how many times, how many, but not digging very much into what is actually the quality of the different intervention of the project. So, I think you would need to get this on stage. You would need to have a revision of the way that the dialogue between the EU and the different projects are taking place. [34:41]

S1: And do you feel like these shortcomings impact the credibility of the EU in Mozambique, locally? [34:53]

S2: I don't think people have any relations to EU locally, but of course our partners, which is Oxfam and which is the NGOs, the three NGOs or four NGOs we've been working with, they thread carefully because they would like to have a good relation to the EU. But the community has, the communities have very little idea about the EU. So, it's at another, if you understand me right, it's at another level when you ask about how do people see the EU, it's at another level. And the government, the government of course want to have a good relation to the EU. [35:40]

S1: And also, you've been telling me a lot about your project and on like the local governance, empowering youth and women. And how do you define success within your project? And do you feel like that the EU's definition of success or peacebuilding is the same? [36:04]

S2: We define success as changes. If we manage to see and it can be millimetres, it can be very small changes or it can be changes in a national legislation. But the success is to have more well-formulated, more conscious communities who can raise their voice, but also to be able to contribute, not always us alone, but to contribute to changes in favour of the people on the ground. [36:46]

S1: Do you feel like that, I mean, the EU is funding a lot of these projects, do you feel like their definition of success is the same? [36:59]

S2: Well, it should be, shouldn't it? (laughing) [37:02]

S1: Sure, but it might, when it comes to the interest of the EU, maybe they define it a different way. [37:18]

S2: I think that the EU staff I have met, they have actually been very focused on women's participations and youth participation. But the problem is that I think that we could tell them a lot more if we did not have to follow all these bureaucratic rules, which are necessary for us as the project managers, because if not, we don't have money to fund the activities out in the field. And the NGOs we have been partnering with, they are so small that if they miss a quarter of financing, then they will have to sack people or people will leave them and find other things to do. So, the flow, or the dynamic of financing is very, very important to these projects. And you can imagine if you have a project of three years and you only really have take off to one and a half year into the project, if then, if your financing is stopped for three months or half a year, then the whole thing is going to dissolve into something which can't give any result. My wish would have been that when we had the whole thing set up in the third year, that we could have had a possibility of continuing for a couple of more years to make our gains sustainable. But that was not possible. Luckily, these NGOs we were working with, the local NGOs, they continue and particularly in Cabo Delgado, they are very experienced. So, I mean, they continue their work, but it would have been much more reasonable and efficient if we have had a possibility of extending the whole set up, because it's a big set up in three different areas with all the stakeholders and things like that. And that was not a possibility. The project simply ends. [39:29]

S1: Do you know why they ended this project, even though it would have been necessary for sustaining sustainable? Is this made transparent by the EU? [39:38]

S2: That's not within the structure of the EU. You have a project of 36 months. You can have a no-cost extension. And I think we had, I don't remember, but I think we had a no-cost extension for, was it six months or three months, but that's to end the project, to end all the reporting, the administration, the budgets. Within the EU system and that's fair enough, you put out a competition for 36 months and 36 months, that is the end. We tried both in Maputo and in Nairobi and it was absolutely no. [40:26]

S1: But do you feel like then that the EU engagement even contributes to sustaining conflict resolution or long-term peacebuilding? [40:38]

S2: Definitely yes, because when you engage local people in dialogue, when you improve the self-esteem of women and youth, but it could be much better. There's such a lot of waste of financing and of the structures, which will, although we try to build on existing structures, some of the energy disappears when the financing stops. But I think that, I mean, I'm a Dane and I believe in dialogue. And I think when you develop dialogue and when you put local people and local community leaders on stage, this is not a waste. You can't take it away from them that they already have been trained in how to dialogue, how to meet government, try to meet government representatives and company representatives on equal terms. That you can't take away from people. So, if you manage to enforce these dialogue spaces, I think that that is, you talk about long term, that is in long term, there we are on the right path to conflict resolution and to democracy. But it's a perspective of several hundred years. It's nothing that happens within 36 months. But I think we have seen in this project, we have seen some very strong women putting their demands up against the duty bearers, who are very strong and who are the fear factor, as I told you, it's also something which lies heavily on people's shoulders. But of course, it is a step forward. It's not a step backwards. It is a step forward for conflict resolution and also for communities to be aware that they are actually in the last two benefits from the wealth that is extracted from their communities. And this awareness building, I think is very, very important. And particularly, we have been working with youth. We have been working with young people. And now they've just been killed, 500 of them and there's 4000 in jail up to the election, which took place in October last year. So, I mean, people's will to expose themselves, to criticize government or to criticize a big company, it lies in a very small place for years ahead, I think. But I think that projects like this can contribute to build more confidence and to build a much better organization at the different levels. I think that the project has also had an impact on government employees, on the duty bearers, who are exposed to dialogue with communities, with their criticism and with their grievances. And I think that is also a benefit. It's not only the communities, but it's also their government and the upscaling, as

we call it, of the grievances of the communities to provincial and national level. So, my answer is yes, but my answer is also that there's a lot of bureaucracy and there's a lot of understaffing in the EU. And there's a lot of monitoring that could be done with emphasis actually on the changes and not emphasis on "is there a fraud or is there not a fraud? And how are the projects for the last three months? Can you present this in exactly the way that we want it to be presented?". And I think that is, of course, a big international organization. This is not particularly for the EU. [45:51]

S1: So, you just told me that there are a lot of great impacts and success going on and it really is contributing to local governance structures and stuff like that. But you also talked about shortcomings and gaps in the programs. So maybe just to summarize this, what recommendations would you give to the EU to improve its peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique, if you could just tell them now? [46:23]

S2: Can you see my screen? Well, I'll send this to you. This is the main finding and recommendation for our baseline study. And of course, something has changed. This baseline study was done one and a half year into the project and we can only hope that some changes have been achieved in the last one and a half year. But I think this gives a very good- there are recommendations, that's why I show it to you now. It gives a very good idea of what you could do to make things better. [47:18]

S1: And from you personally, as you said, you've been working in Mozambique for a long time and you got to know the local people there and also the structures of the government and of EU. So, from you personally, what recommendations would you propose? [47:42]

S2: I actually don't know. The situation is so dire that I really don't know. And the government is very, very smart. In the moment you have, for example, an administrator who cares about the community, he is immediately transferred to another district. FRELIMO has been in power since 1975. And they hold the communities completely in a very tight grip. And it covers everything from the different level of government down to the traditional authorities, down to the schoolteacher. I mean, if we go down, it's very difficult to be a critical citizen in Mozambique right now. Young people are tired. And young people spoke out in this election campaign that they were fed up with the party and with the government. But if you just kill people after that, as is happening in Tanzania right now and in many other places in the African continent. I don't know, I think that when you develop a dialogue and if you put women and youth on stage on, what do you say, on tangible and factual discussions, which is not political, but which is about, we want our 30% of, what do you say,

433 the benefits, or our 10%, which is written in the legislation. I mean, I think you have to work
434 very factually to be able to gain anything with the government. If you see the
435 recommendations, which is on your, I don't know if it's on your here, recommendations,
436 have you got that with the yellow stripes on your screen? [49:49]

437

438 S1: No, I have a description of the action on the screen. [49:54]

439

440 S2: Okay, how do I get back to our, where we started? [49:58]

441

442 S1: I mean, it's also, you can send them to me if it's not- [50:06]

443

444 S2: yeah okay [50:07]

445

446 S1: Okay. Well, so what you've been saying is that in Mozambique, the situation is very
447 difficult because it's within every structure. So, do you feel like that the European Union is
448 also addressing like the roots of conflict, or are they only addressing the symptoms of the
449 conflict? [50:32]

450

451 S2: How do you address the root of conflict in Sudan? And how do you address the root of
452 conflicts in Ukraine? How do you address the root of conflicts in Tanzania right now and in
453 Mozambique? The root of conflict is that there's a party which is completely indifferent for
454 the situation of the population as far as they can go. Sometimes things happen where the
455 government and where the people in power feel threatened. So they go uncompromised or
456 they put out something which is just candy, which has no, but the root of the conflict is an
457 economic struggle in Africa where civil society is not counted in and where civil society has
458 actually a very small role to play among these big international companies and a
459 government which is only interested in its own, not even survival, but to benefit the most
460 from the situation and from the natural resources that the country has. If you look at
461 worldwide everywhere where you have big natural resources, you have conflicts. So, it's a
462 curse actually to have these, to take this into your policy so that you make agreements with
463 the big companies which are not to the benefit of the country. And Mozambique could be a
464 very rich country, but that counts too for a lot of other countries, or a lot of other countries,
465 but particularly a lot of other countries on the African continent. So I don't know how, but if
466 you have to be a little more subtle, then I think what the EU can do and what we can do as
467 an international NGO and the local partners is that they can try to train people to
468 organize and to give them a voice so that they can enter in a dialogue, a reasonable
469 dialogue with the stakeholders, with their own traditional authorities and with the local

government and with the government all the way up through the system. So, I think that EU is trying to do its very best, but I don't think that the European Union would like if you really had a harsh criticism on Mozambique, if you wanted to withdraw because it's actually an autocracy and it's actually undermining human rights and things like that. I don't think that you could get any agreement on that in the European Union because they also have to play the game. But a project like this opens some possibilities and I think that actually our partners have done, our local partners have done very well under the conditions and we have tried to support them, Oxfam, the best we can. But I admire the local partners who are going on, working with communities and working at local level in spite of the dire situation that the country is in. And I hope that in the long run and in the long perspective, it will get better. But if you don't pay your tax, I mean, you can build one school in an area, but that's nothing in comparison with what they should contribute to the local communities, of course. And then you have all the pollution and the destruction of the environment and the dislocation of people from mining areas where you put people in places where their field is gone, their survival, the possibility for surviving has completely disappointed and you built a lousy house for them, which is almost falling down the day it's built and it's the women who suffer most on this. So that is not very uplifting, [researcher] (laughing). [55:38]

S1: No, but it's very valuable to get your knowledge and experience and what you think about the situation. Because I've been doing a lot of research, but I have for myself never been to Mozambique. [55:53]

S2: Why did you choose Mozambique? [55:59]

S1: I just, you know, I've been, I study international development in Vienna, it's a very critical study. And yeah, so throughout I've been having a focus on the African continent a lot and also on resources and how they contribute to conflict but also peace. And I just found Mozambique especially interesting because with the peace agreement of 1992, you know, officially there is this peace agreement, but in reality, there is no peace for the people there. And especially with the elections last year, I just found it very relevant to study on since the EU is very active there right now. And also, with the resource issue involved in Cabo Delgado. So yeah, that's why I chose Mozambique. [57:00]

S2: Have you been in contact with the Center for Public Integration? CIP? [57:07]

S1: Not yet, but I will note that. [57:15]

S2: But they have made a report which is called "25 Years of Election Fraud" and it's a report of six pages or something like that. It's very easy to read through and it is about how the party has managed to orchestrate fraud in every single election since 1992. and its scientists at the CIP, Centro de Integridade Pública, who have written this study. I'll send that, that was number three. I'll send that to you too. And then perhaps I can send you our final report. [57:58]

S1: Yeah, that would be also great, thank you. [58:01]

S2: I mean the project document, the final report and the baseline and, uhm what do you say, this study of elections because it has something to do with peacebuilding. And also, apart from rubies and graphite and precious wood and gas, which is TOTAL and which is all this, you have a lot of, you have gemstones, semi-precious stones. You have a lot of and then you have big natural resources, parks and things like that. You have a lot of resources. But and then Mozambique is prone to cyclones and inundations and droughts and yeah. So, for me, it's a love affair which has ended very bad. It started as a love affair, in '79 because Mozambique gained independence. And then there was two or three years where FERLIMO tried to Marxist-Leninist, which is also not always a good idea, but they tried to do it their way, but they had no support anywhere, only from east Germany and a little bit from Russia. So, they had to change their melody and they embarked on the Social Adjustments in 1984/85. So, yeah. [1:00:14]

S1: Yeah, well thank you so much for all this information and also for sending me the documents and recommendations. So, from my side, that would be it, but if there is anything you feel like is important to talk about, which we haven't talked about yet, feel free to add anything. [1:00:42]

S2: Yes, I'll send you these documents, but I would like to see your thesis when it's finished. [1:00:47]

S1: Yes, definitely. It can take a little bit though. I plan on being done by February/ March. [1:00:57]

S2: Oh, that is quite soon. [1:01:00]

S1: Yeah, but still, I mean I don't know what happens but that's how I planned it at least. And I will definitely send you my thesis as soon as it is done. [1:01:11]

544

545 S2: Okay. So and uhm you can just come back to me and then once more I apologize that
546 it was so difficult to get a hold of me. But yeah. Okay [researcher]. And good luck. And I'll
547 just send these things to you right after. And it is anonymous. I mean I have been very
548 harsh, particularly in the criticism of the government of the state of Mozambique and I would
549 of course like to be able to travel to Mozambique again so yeah. [1:01:56]

550

551 S1: Of course. All identifying information will be anonymized of course. [1:02:02]

552

553 S2: You see the fear factor creating everywhere. [1:02:02]

554

555 S1: Yeah [1:02:04]

556

557 S2: Okay [researcher]. Thank you very much. [1:02:09]

558

559 S1: Thank you too. Thank you very much. [1:02:09]

560

561 S2: Good Luck, Bye. [1:02:11]

562

563 S1: Bye. [1:02:11]

VII. Interview 4

The following transcript is from an interview, as part of a research project on “The European Union in Resource-Rich Post-Conflict Contexts,” focusing on how the EU’s peacebuilding initiatives contribute to peace in Mozambique. The interview was held with two local experts (E5/E6) working for an NGO involved in the implementation of EU-funded peacebuilding projects. In the transcription, the speakers are labeled as Speaker 1 (S1) for the interviewer and Speaker 2 (S2) and Speaker 3 (S3) for the interviewees. All participants provided informed consent for the use of this transcript for research purposes.

- 1 S1: Perfect. Yeah, so maybe, could both of you introduce yourself quickly and also the
- 2 MASC Foundation? [00:13]
- 3
- 4 S2: [...] Hi, my name is [Name 1], I'm [Position 1] at MASC. [00:25]
- 5
- 6 S3: I'm [Name 2], [Position 2] of MASC Foundation. [00:33]
- 7
- 8 S1: And how long have you been working in the Foundation and how long have you been
- 9 working with the European Union? [00:43]
- 10
- 11 S2/S3: [inaudible] since 2007 [inaudible] working [long pause] [01:41]
- 12
- 13 S1: Uhm sorry, I don't know if you can hear me, but your connection is not very good. Maybe
- 14 we turn off our cameras so that the connection works better? [...] Do you hear me? [02:01]
- 15
- 16 S2: Yeah, how's that? [02:02]
- 17
- 18 S1: Okay that's way better. I couldn't really understand you because of the connection. So,
- 19 maybe you can start again? I'm sorry. [02:09]
- 20
- 21 S2: Okay, so I was saying that we've both been in MASC since it started in [2007?] and
- 22 we've had contracts with the European Union since then. There's been some years we don't
- 23 have contracts. But [inaudible]. [02:45]
- 24
- 25 S1: And could you maybe describe some of your key activities or programs that you are
- 26 doing currently? [02:53]
- 27

28 S2: [long pause] Uhm yeah, we have programs in the area of peace and social cohesion.
29 We have programs in prevention of violent extremism. We have programs in the area of
30 good governance. We have programs in the area of livelihoods and political dialogue. 03:28

31 S1: And they are all funded by the European Union? [03:31]

32

33 S2: No, no, the European Union is one of the co-financers of the political dialogue. In the
34 past they financed the programs of good governance. Uhm, they financed programs of [S3
35 whispering in the background] support to grants and capacity development support to non-
36 government organizations. So, they financed the cross-sectional activities. They also
37 financed co-financed strategic plan many years ago. [04:15]

38

39 S1: Okay and how do you perceive the European Union's role in the peace building structure
40 in Mozambique overall? [04:30]

41

42 S2: [long pause] It's a funder but it also gives technical assistance when we require. And
43 it's always been a progressive donor in the sense that it's always open to listening to
44 innovation. And uhm it's always invited us into the different roundtables and debates that
45 are going on. So, it's been a very good donor. [05:22]

46

47 S1: So, would you say that they also really incorporate local agency and knowledge that
48 comes really from the ground and from the people who are partnering with them? [05:39]

49

50 S2: They do because they are supporting civil society organizations through MASC. So,
51 they're building a capacity of local actors. They were one of the first donors to agree to
52 support informal grassroots organizations. That was very innovative. So, they've always
53 been open to try and reach the other part of civil society, not just the formal part but also
54 the informal part and civil society movements as well. [06:15]

55

56 S1: If I understand it right, for example, MASC Foundation functions as like a bridge
57 between the EU and the civil society. And how does this look like in practice? [06:33]

58

59 S2: We have a double function. We used to be just a grant-maker and capacity development
60 organization and that was done through call for proposals. Then the call for proposals were
61 assessed against an agreed criteria in terms of the necessity, the evidence supporting the
62 necessity, the desired results, the indicators, participation of the community in the action,
63 the budget, is the budget linked to the activity, is it value for money, is it sustainability? So,
64 all of these factors were taken into account with the assessment and then we do a grants

committee which takes the final decision which the donors are welcome to be a part of. And then we build up the capacity through training and then start funding. So, in that sense MASC is the bridge between the donors and the civil society organizations. [07:40]

S1: Okay and you know the EU emphasizes values such as democracy, human rights and participation in its peacebuilding programs. Do you find these values reflected in the programs or projects in Mozambique? [07:58]

S2: Values of MASC and civil society? [08:05]

S1: Yes. [08:07]

S2: Yeah, I think so. I think we had a large program which was the planning program and that one was around creating local capacity development. Like I say, then began to support informal grassroots organizations which meets the needs of the most marginalized. Those people don't normally have a voice. Those organizations that don't normally, aren't able to normally finance access to donor funding because the complexity, because of the requirements, etc. So, in that respect European Union has always tried to meet the need and they've also financed, they financed [Mobilize?] which was a governance IT program, aimed at youth to try and get youth more involved in government through the use of internet etc. So, they've- and at the other side of the coin they're now funding the policy, the national dialogue process which shows that they also, they not only go to the grassroots stuff, but they also finance the high-level advocacy as well. [09:25]

S1: And for MASC Foundation what is your understanding or definition of success? Like how would you as an organization define that term success and what are indicators for a successful work? [09:43]

S2: Uhm, depending on the type of project but we always try to carry out a baseline in the localities or villages where we're working in terms of people's degree of participation, degree of social cohesion, degree of peace and if a project has an economic arm in terms of people's earning power and access to financial opportunities. So based on those indicators then we, we try to demonstrate the impact of the project. If it's a long-term project, if it's a three, at least a three-year project then you have a possibly substantial impact. If it's a one-year project it's very difficult because it's very little time to make a change. [10:45]

S1: And how does the collaboration with the EU work in practice? Like what does a typical workflow from program design and implementation to reporting look like? [11:01]

S2: The project design and project submission is quite complex. I think you know well the EU model and the annexes that exist so it's quite a complex process for an organization that maybe doesn't have much experience in that area. Once you get the - if you're assessed [fairly/ favourably?] then you'll get a brief question and answers around some clarification on the proposal which is okay, it's fine. In terms of the reporting, the reporting is very detailed. The European Union are very, very sharp in terms of making sure they get the information they require so there's quite a lot of open support, clarifying questions they want to foster or what they want to understand in terms of the quantifiable information and they have a lot of frames online which is also quite complex to use. [12:18]

S1: And would you say that your perspectives and needs are considered within these processes? [12:32]

S2: Sorry, can you repeat that question? [12:36]

S1: Would you say that local or the perspectives of MASC are considered within these processes? [12:44]

S2: Yes and no. If it's a grant-making project that's okay because the burden stays with us so we're quite a large recognized civil society organization so we can manage the level of requirements from the EU in terms of reporting and so they're well framed in terms of the complexity and then we grant out to other organizations so they're able just to respond to us in a more simplified manner so in that kind of situation where we're the grant market then there's no problem in terms of EU and local organization interaction. If it's a direct project from EU to a grassroots organization which doesn't happen very often because of the complexity and the bidding process, then it makes it a little more difficult. [13:43]

S1: And why does it make that difficult? [13:48]

S2: Because an EU proposal first of all is not a simple process. We're talking a small local organization we say provincial level district level for them to be able to submit a proposal is quite a challenge that they would need to probably contract a consultant to be able to put a proposal together. [14:10]

138 S1: Okay and in some regions of Mozambique such as in Cabo Delgado, peacebuilding
139 also intersects with resource issues. Are there projects or programs from your organization
140 that address these issues around resources in the region? [14:32]

141

142 S2: Around resources or around conflict? [14:39]

143

144 S1: Around both. [14:41]

145

146 S2: Yeah we have projects in both areas we have peace ambassadors, peace ambassadors
147 are people voted by the community, elected by the community to be able to resolve
148 community conflicts, district conflicts, they're trained on how to be able to mediate conflicts
149 with how to refer conflicts so that that's one of our main approaches which is across all the
150 projects we implement. And we also have we have projects running in conflict areas where
151 we use a mixture of peace ambassadors, savings groups, community development
152 organizations and political and religious dialogue in order to be able to work in those kinds
153 of contexts. [15:37]

154

155 S1: And how do you see the EU's role in addressing conflicts around resources? [15:45]

156

157 S2: [long pause] So, resources [inaudible] access to the natural resources, the percentages
158 that people should be receiving from the companies? [16:21]

159

160 S1: Yeah, for example like when it comes to natural resources which is a big issue especially
161 in the north of Mozambique, right. So how do you see the EU's role in addressing these
162 conflicts that intersect with resource extraction? [16:43]

163

164 S2: [long pause] So sorry we were just consulting it. So we see that they have two
165 interventions, one intervention is their economic opportunities for the youth, the youth is one
166 of the main target groups in these areas of conflict and natural resources and the second
167 one is around their support- they support the Mozambique government in terms of the
168 training of military training and equipment of military in order to be able to maintain the
169 stability within the region linked to the problem of natural resources. [17:56]

170

171 S1: Okay and related to this do you believe that EU's engagement in Mozambique is also
172 influenced by economic or resource related interests? [18:07]

173

S2: Yeah I think it's, it's everywhere in the world that we have natural resources of this kind of quantity the problems always occur but it's in terms of destabilization in the areas where you have natural resources be it local destabilization or people come from the outside to destabilize it that I think is across the board yeah I don't see I don't see that's any very much different to Mozambique. [18:44]

S1: And does this for you impact the credibility of the EU also? [18:50]

S2: I think I've never seen any complaints against the EU, I've never seen anybody questioning EU's role in this they're one among many donors in the area and of course there's also the private sector companies so each one is trying to define its role so the UN is going very much in terms of infrastructure UNICEF is also in the area of child nutrition, child welfare, the private sector is focusing mostly on the economic part in economic employment for producing business enterprises for youth and the EU and other donors are looking at the component of governance participation like I say some job creation as well. [19:46]

S1: Okay and like what positive outcomes have you seen from EU-funded peacebuilding projects in Mozambique in relation to the MASC foundation like what positive outcomes yeah have you seen? [20:03]

S2: I think the most positive outcome we can say is the fact that they were the first donor to start supporting informal groups at village levels so they were the first donor that recognized a civil society is far more expensive than just your formal registered organizations and that's very important in order to promote a new grassroots civil society emerging from the base so that was very, very [inaudible] for them. They were able to be able to make funding available which other donors weren't able to do or weren't willing to do and the second thing is the EU was one of the first to recognize the value of social enterprises community, social enterprises as a form of stability within the community and stability of action as well so those two things alone made an impact across civil society landscape. [21:01]

S1: And for you when you say they, they started recognizing grassroots and just the importance of civil society what does this mean for the MASC foundation? what specific methods do you use to really engage with these communities? [21:19]

S2: We have different models the main model is the "community development association", which is a, which is an informal entity elected by the, elected by the community. They rate

the members to be part of it but then it's design, it's that they design what they call a "dreamer" which is their own vision of their village and what they hope to see in the next two years. We train them on how to, based on that, first of all resolve their own problems internally without relying on government or a [representative?] of MASC and then we teach them how to make a plan of action and interact with local governments so we create a bridge between them and local government then they take their issues to local government and they take issues up to district government so we teach them in terms of, in terms of planning in terms of advocacy at the same time creating government's capacity at the same time. [22:26]

S1: And so now you've been saying that there are a lot of positive outcomes from EU funded projects, but where do you see still challenges or shortcomings when it comes to the cooperation with the European Union? [22:45]

S2: Uhm, yeah there's been a lot of success and there's been challenges as well. Challenges around getting issues from local level up to national level, challenges in terms of government other than limited funds to be able to resolve all of the problems being raised by the community and challenges in terms of some of the donor funding not in terms of European Union but donor funding becoming very short-term so sometimes a one-year project or one-and-a-half-year project which makes it difficult to sustain the action. [23:28]

S1: So, what recommendations would you give to the EU to improve its peace building engagement in Mozambique? [23:43]

S2: [long pause] Yes, yeah I think our recommendations would be first of all to make sure that the funding is for the, for medium or long-term so a minimum of three-year funding, ideally five-year funding although we know that's very difficult in terms of planning from the head office, which gives enough time to create the capacity and see the changes happen. Secondly would be focusing on certain provinces and certain districts so you create a model which can be then replicated so we don't dance around the province's different districts, so we try and we try and focus the support in one area. The third would be to for them to maintain this niche of being able to support the grassroot- organizations, women's service groups, youth incubators, these are the two groups which are in greatest risk if you like at the moment and those groups which have been most involved in especially youth in terms of the post-election programs and also most linked to the [inaudible] in the north so these are the target groups we need to, we need to really support. And also, be open to the sustainability question in terms of looking at different social enterprises within the

community that can support the community long term once the European Union is gone which once MASC is gone and helps the community resolve their own problems. [25:57]

S1: And maybe also could you share an example or examples where the cooperation with the EU was especially successful or maybe also particularly difficult? [26:10]

S2: I think from the planning project which finished last year we had we had a number of evaluations on independent evaluations maybe we can share those with you and you can see the evaluators. [26:30]

S1: Yes, yeah that would be great. Thank you. Also, maybe you could, because in the beginning it was still a little bit bumpy because of the internet connection, maybe you could repeat how long you two have been working with the MASC Foundation and how long with the European Union? [27:08]

S2: We've both been in MASC since the beginning, 2007, so we have 18 years in MASC and we've been working since the beginning of MASC we've been working with the European Union at different moments not a continuous project. There have been years where we didn't have any support sometimes we had long-term support I think we had a five-year project with them for planning we've had individual projects that have also been over the course of two years and we've also at the moment doing the process of political dialogue with them so they've been one of our regular partners since the since we started up but obviously it's not continued no dialogue and support continually over 18 years. [27:57]

S1: Okay and just for my understanding how does that work? Does the MASC Foundation, are they designing the projects and then asking if the EU is willing to fund them or how is this process working? [28:16]

S2: Now the EU will put out a call for proposals, very often they define what is the general objective and sometimes the specific objectives and then the organizations run with their proposals what they think can be done in order to achieve the objectives which European Union require. So, it's not a totally open process. The European Union is clear about what they what they require from the funds they have available and MASC will run for the proposal if we're, if we're successful it'll either be a direct implementation project or EU would have defined it as a grant-making project. If it's a grant-making project, then we do a call for proposals for other organizations to run our funds and then it kind of runs out like

285 that. So, at the end of the day, it's the EU that defines the main purpose of their funding.
286 [29:23]
287
288 S1: Okay. Yeah, so that would basically be it from my side but if there is anything that you
289 want, both of you, want to share maybe that we haven't talked about yet or give some
290 specific examples on something we've already talked about then feel free to add anything.
291 [29:47]
292
293 S2: No, I think if we share the evaluation with you then you'll see what was achieved with
294 the EU. And maybe I'd like to know what's going to happen at the end of this. Are you going
295 to reproduce your - or are you going to share the results with us? [30:15]
296
297 S1: Yes, so I will definitely share my finishes dissertation with everyone that participated in
298 an interview, of course. So, you'll get my results as I will share them with both of you. Uhm,
299 I plan in being finished by maybe March. Uhm so it's going to take a little bit longer, but I
300 will come back to you with the results. And everything, as I said in the beginning, will be
301 anonymized so your name will not be published in my thesis. [30:53]
302
303 S2: Okay, thank you very much. [30:58]
304
305 S1: I thank you, both. [30:58]
306
307 S3: Thank you. [31:02]
308
309 S2: Okay, bye. [31:03]
310
311 S1: Bye. [31:03]

VIII. Interview 5

The following transcript is from an interview, as part of a research project on “The European Union in Resource-Rich Post-Conflict Contexts,” focusing on how the EU’s peacebuilding initiatives contribute to peace in Mozambique. The interview was held with one local expert (E7) working for an NGO involved in the implementation of EU-funded peacebuilding projects. In the transcription, the speakers are labelled as Speaker 1 (S1) for the interviewer and Speaker 2 (S2) for the interviewee. All participants provided informed consent for the use of this transcript for research purposes.

1 S1: Okay, perfect. So yeah, maybe then you could start by briefly introducing yourself and
2 the organization you're working with, or you have been working with in your case. [00:15]

3
4 S2: (laughing) No, it's a bit weird. Yeah, we start talking while I'm just, I was just wrapping
5 up my relationship with Oxfam as the [Position 1] for Mozambique. And at the same time, I
6 was the [Position 2]. Yeah, so we come to an end in terms of my contract. That's why I just
7 asked if that is okay. I won't really speak on behalf of Oxfam, because that is not right. But
8 I can take you through the experience that I have been exposed using that position, of
9 course. [01:09]

10
11 S1: Yeah, of course. In which regions of Mozambique have you been primarily working?
12 [01:15]

13
14 S2: You know, as an organization, we work in the country, in all provinces, with some focus
15 in few, being Inhambane, Gaza, Nampula, Zambezia, Cabo Delgado and Niassa. Those
16 are the provinces where Oxfam has a specific program. But they also have programs that
17 are countrywide, more on advocacy and support to civil society. [01:59]

18
19 S1: Okay. And so, during your time with Oxfam, these were all EU- funded peacebuilding
20 projects? [02:11]

21
22 S2: Yes, Oxfam implemented a project called "Natural Resource Governance and Peace
23 Building". That project was being implemented in three provinces, Inhambane, Sofala and
24 Cabo Delgado. And those were projects where the focus of project funded by EU, not only
25 for Oxfam, but also other civil society that were implementing different kinds of projects.
26 Yeah, so in that sense, Oxfam implemented in those three provinces. And Oxfam just
27 choose those provinces because of the three different experiences that you can have in

terms of conflict. Inhambane has a longstanding gas exploration. And Sofala at the time was very promising with prospect of starting something around Gaza as well. Although until today it's not started. Then Cabo Delgado, you have a prospective exploration at the time, but with a very advanced stage. Because of that, the project chose those three provinces to be able to compare the level of conflict in each one of the three provinces. Yeah, so that is what I can say as an introduction. Thank you. [04:05]

S1: And what did you concretely do in these different projects in terms of methods and strategies on the ground? [04:19]

S2: Yeah, in fact, Oxfam worked with local organizations, local civil society organizations to engage communities that are affected by those natural gas explorations to understand how they see the project. And then if there is any potential of conflict, what can be done to prevent those conflicts? And by doing some studies, we realized that although there's a level of difference, there is a common feature, which shows that there is so little in terms of community benefits to those initiatives. And that fueled most of the perceptions of communities. All of them, they perceive that they are left behind, they're left out and their resources are being exploited without them being benefited. [05:44]

S1: And then what was the key objective? [05:55]

S2: The key objective was more to understand the nature of conflict and also the nature of strategy to prevent or to at least set up some mechanism to build peace around those. That was the main objective. But by doing that, the second objective also was to empower communities and local actors to be able to participate in those developments. [06:38]

S1: And how did you engage with the locals on community levels? [06:49]

S2: Normally, we had meetings, community meetings, community leaders' engagement, which is meeting with them and also providing some kind of training in terms of understanding, you know, the objective of most of those projects. Although they have a primary objective of producing income to them, profit, there is an agreement with the government that, well, these projects should contribute to the state budget by paying their fees and taxes, but also there is a requirement for them to provide what is called "social responsibility", which would be to really engage directly with the community and provide some kind of improvements. So, those discussions were undertaken in every community. And the second line related to the community benefit was more to discuss the portion of

money that is sent through the government back to communities, so that communities can use that money to develop their own projects. And that is what is called the "6.75%". So, some of the key meetings were discussing that, how this works, what is the objective of this, how to use that to even advocate with the government to be able to allow communities to get that money, because at the time, the money was not even reaching out to communities. And still today, the mechanism is not so clear in terms of the communities getting that money directly and planning what they want to do. There is a manual that is developed by the government, but the question is who designed this manual. [09:24]

S1: And during these meetings, was it like that you trained the community leaders to engage with the government by themselves? Or did Oxfam engage more like a bridge to collect all the information from the community and then forward them to the government? [09:49]

S2: Normally, our local partners they are the ones organizing and leading the discussions with communities and trying to get community members that can organize a kind of groups or committees that can engage government, can even engage the companies themselves. So that was the main way of engaging. Oxfam would just provide that technical backstopping to those organizations. And those organizations were the main contact with communities. The second level is to undertake studies. So, Oxfam could commission study and we get the results of the study and we use that to advocate with the community at a very high level. [10:56]

S1: And you've been saying also that Oxfam was evaluation the level of conflict and also the level of peace. So, in your understanding, or maybe the understanding of Oxfam, what is your definition of peace and successful work? [11:24]

S2: What we're trying to do is to get communities to define themselves. What they believe is a peaceful living where gas is being exploited. That is not Oxfam's definition. We try to get community definition to that, how they see peace, how they see a potential to build peaceful living around their communities. And in a nutshell, all the communities, they came with a clear understanding of what a peaceful living would look like. First, for example, for the Cabo Delgado communities, for them, peace would start by not having war. And that is the first step for a peaceful community or society for them. And they say, that is not enough. Because they have lived with no war for some time, but peace was not there. It was not there because they had so many people starving with no essential means to live. While at the same time, some group of people were having so much. And that for them create not a peaceful community because there is no clear benefit for all the member of communities.

Some are getting something; others are not getting anything. So that for them, this was not a peaceful society. And they went even beyond that to say for them to be able to live with companies that are exploiting their resources. The first thing is that the company, they should speak to them. Before doing anything, they should, because not just consulting, speaking and discussing what are the area where people, when they are settled, where these people should go. And if they go there, how they will continue their livelihoods. So that should be a discussion and coming to an agreement. But they said in one of those meetings, that at the beginning, that was happening. The discussion with some representative of companies, but they feel that at some point the government started to say, "ah, you know what? This is too much for community. We should only give this one so that, you know, they continue their life". But that is a perception. And for us, that perception was more because of weak communication, weak presence of the government. In most of the discussion, the government was not there. If it was there, it was represented at a very lower level, without skills to really coordinate the discussion, because some communities say government should be the one coordinating the discussions with company so that the agreements that are signed speaks to the needs of people, but also to the needs of the province or the country. [15:44]

S1: And as a lot of peacebuilding projects in Mozambique are funded by the EU, do you feel like the European Union has the same definition or understanding of peace? Do you feel like that's also their objective? [16:06]

S2: Yeah, it's a bit confusing sometimes. For example, when the EU started to support for Cabo Delgado to support a peaceful transition, I would say, the EU decided to support, as they call it, "non-lethal support to Mozambique". And one of the things was trying to train the security forces in Maputo and in some other provinces, but they have not given any military equipment. And as a result, even those trained security forces, they were in Cabo Delgado untrained and unequipped. And even the supply chain for their food was not there. And as a result, we have had a lot of incidents of security forces violating human rights. Sometimes because they have no food, they get into community, they want food, they mistreat communities, community members and all those things. And that happened because, not to blame the EU, but the way EU was supporting, it was not really the right way in some instances. And just right now, the EU continues supporting the Rwandan forces and that- it's not Oxfam speaking, it's me, sorry. That, for me, is just unbelievable. It's unbelievable. The way EU saw things, but I don't think it's the right thing. Yeah, if you go, for example, to Palma today, Palma is overcrowded by different security forces, overcrowded. And if you just go near to Afungi, where Total is having the compound, that

is over guarded. And I don't know if EU is still supporting, you know, the logistic of those guys. To me, that is not right. But I'm taking you away from the main- (laughing). [19:28]

S1: No, actually, not at all. I also have some questions to that issue later on. So, you've been saying also right now that in some ways, the EU is not really doing it the right way. So, how do you perceive the EU's role overall in the peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique in terms of positive things? [20:01]

S2: Sure, there are so many positives. For so long time, EU was the only voice to really receive civil society, I wouldn't say complaint, but request for support. And EU was supporting or giving means and even some technical knowledge to civil society organization, how to engage human things, peacebuilding things. And that is very positive. Even the projects that I'm talking about just show that, you know, EU was there to support different actors within the landscape. Because some donors, they just fund either government or private, but EU was funding civil society, was funding the government, which is okay and funds private, which is okay. So, there's a lot of positive. My criticism, though, is regarding the Cabo Delgado issue, where they decided not to support beyond training. And they decided to support the Rwandan forces. Which for me doesn't make sense. [21:35]

S1: Yeah. And you've been also talking, a little bit about human rights not being respected, not directly by EU forces, but as a result of EU engagement. However, the EU really emphasizes values such as democracy, participation, human rights in its peacebuilding approach. So, do you still feel like these values are reflected in their EU peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique? [22:16]

S2: Well, most of these values are there, you can see. You can see that they try their best to support democracy, including elections. They try to support human rights. As I said before, for so long time, they were the only space where civil society could find support for human rights issues. And that is happening. One other criticism, though, is when it comes to elections. And they have positions that I can understand why those positions, because EU is a member state-based organization. So, they cannot go beyond some boundaries in terms of pressuring the government of one country. Although that country is not a member state. But I know the diplomatic boundaries that they need to observe. But sometimes you ask yourself, if they could not do much in terms of supporting to prevent most of the issues that are happening around elections. I don't know how familiar you are with elections in Mozambique. We have been battling for so long to have transparent, just, fair and respected elections. And the last one just went overboard. As an outcome of that, I believe you know

that we had this uprising that destroyed the country [literally?]. So those things, the EU could, in my opinion, do a little bit better in terms of position themselves. One of the ways we see is the statements that they issue after elections. Those statements sometimes are so biased, are not really depicting the realities on the ground. I believe that even if they issue a statement, things might continue to go the way they go. But at least you see positions that the EU is saying this is not acceptable. I see the EU playing a very big role, for example, in the current process of what they call "inclusive national dialogue". I see them playing a huge role, which is positive. However, I don't know the depth of that engagement in terms of using that leverage to pressure the government to do the right thing at the right time. [26:03]

S1: So, when I understood you right, you feel like most of the time their values are reflected, but you feel like that, especially within the issue around the elections in Mozambique, they should have issued a statement or intervened more as part of their peacebuilding approach? [26:30]

S2: Yeah, yeah. They could have issued a much stronger statement. [26:38]

S1: Okay. And the EU for quite some time and in some parts is still, following a liberal peacebuilding approach where they partly focus on strong institutions and economic liberalization of a country. So, do you feel like this model or this approach fits to Mozambique's realities? [27:10]

S2: Well, Mozambique has been in those reforms for quite some time, trying to follow that liberalization and many other pathways. Looking at the outcome, one sometimes asks if the pathway is the right pathway. Because if it was right, over 30 years of economic liberalization could have brought some different outcomes. But we're still in those days back then. So, for me, the real change hasn't come through and people have not benefited yet. I can't blame the EU for that. Most of the countries for EU come from that background of economic liberalization. And for me, it brings in the issue that the World Bank and IMF, they're doing one-size-fits-all kind of approach. And the result is that we are not moving. I blame our own people, our own leaders. However, the supporters of the leaders and our own people, they have some kind of responsibility to support in the right way. I feel that we're not using the right economic model for the country. I'm not the right person to say so, but I feel that. [29:28]

S1: And what do you feel like should change? I mean, I know it's a huge question. But yeah, in your opinion, how do you see the EU adapting or changing its approach by for example incorporation local expertise since you just said that it usually was more like a one-size-fits-all approach? [29:48]

S2: Yeah, I think that is one of the things I see that could be more impactful. Trying to promote more local ownership, more local knowledge, more local driven development. If you go to the big corporations, those corporations should first and foremost look at the country before looking at the bigger market that they want to supply. So, there's a need and that is a big question as you said, there's a need of rethinking the, the economic model that we are using. More of local beneficiation can come through so that economically more resources are left in the communities and in the country. [31:13]

S1: And when you say more local ownership and more local knowledge, do you feel like there is already a little bit of that? [31:28]

S2: There's a bit of that, there's a bit of discussion in the extractive sector, there's a bit of discussion of this local content and I think that is a very basic attempt. Local content will not be the solution; it's not a solution but it's a step towards finding a right way of doing that. Yeah, so there's a little bit of that discussion of local content but one of the biggest issues even in that local context is the state capture by elites, the local elites. That's why I said I blame my own leadership. Yeah, you know the local elite is really, really, really enforcing those liberal things that are coming because they see benefit for themselves, not for the common citizen. And that mindset, corrupt mindset, it's one of the things that promote what is currently being seen around where, for example, big corporations: they come, they extract whatever they extract and they take everything because the little that remains, remains with those elites. The local elites are becoming richer and richer and richer, but every citizen is becoming poorer. [33:20]

S1: And now also to shift a little bit the topic again to the actual work you're doing on the ground, or you have been doing with Oxfam. How does the collaboration with the EU work in practice, like how does a typical workflow from project design to project implementation look like? [33:56]

S2: Well, the workflow was quite good. In the sense that it was a great interaction from the way it goes in terms of providing guidelines to respond to calls, because most of them are calls. The EU provided that education of the society about the call through setting up

meetings before any organization submits a proposal. Then after submitting a proposal, when selected, there was a great discussion. Sometimes it takes so long. Some projects, they took us like one year and a half or more to really sign a contract. So, it's a long discussion. That helped to mature the understanding but sometimes jeopardize the expectation that you create in the organization that are involved. For example, in the last years, the EU worked more on consortiums. So, if a consortium is selected and you take more than one year and a half discussing, the level of understanding within the consortium might vary and the expectation can be defeated. But in terms of interaction, in fact, there's a huge interaction. And there is also interaction in the implementation itself. In the last maybe 10, 15 years, EU set up this way of working where there's a level of monitoring that still sits within the EU at the commission level in the country, while most of the implementation sits in the consortium or the organization that is leading the consortium. And that also provides a room for learning, mutual learning, which is good. Yeah, I think those are the highlights I have in terms of the interaction with the EU itself, the ways of working and all this. [36:40]

S1: And when you say that it's usually via calls from the EU, is it like they set the main objective and you can present your idea of how a project could look like? [36:58]

S2: Yes, yes, yes. And now the EU has key partners with which they continue the conversation, even without a specific project. For example, if there's a change of the strategic cycle, they involve those organizations for reflection so they can incorporate in their strategy design. And that also is good because they can capture the feeling from various actors. [37:38]

S1: And you said that it's a very long process from the idea of a project until implementation. Within this project, do you feel like your ideas or generally local ideas and needs and perspectives are considered within these processes? [38:04]

S2: Well, they're considered within the framework that is already designed. So, you cannot go beyond the framework. Yeah, but if your ideas fit in that framework, they easily take it. [38:27]

S1: Okay. And would you generally describe the relationship as a partnership of equals, or does it feel like more donor-driven? [38:39]

S2: (laughing) To get a partnership of equal, there's a lot of roads to go. You can feel that power imbalance, right? That the donor is speaking now. And the donor is now giving you directive and you have to follow. Nevertheless, there's a bit of conversation, as I said, which is better than some donors where you cannot even suggest or speak. You just do whatever is there and that's it. So, the EU has that room where you can have that conversation, you can go along, but within the framework that they have designed. And also, you have to keep in mind that you're speaking with the donor. [39:34]

S1: Okay. And do you feel like EU programs allow space for what we've already touched on, for local ownership? [39:52]

S2: Well, I can feel that drive in the last three, four, five years thereabout, where they even put in their directives that we want local leadership, meaning local organization to lead consortiums. Yeah. And that you can feel. However, there's always that leg that is left behind. It's "Ah you know what, when we have a local organization trying to do, we have to work even more and harder to get things done in terms of reporting, the quality of reporting, the quality of financial management", all those things. So, they feel they want to go locally, but also, they feel going locally means more work for them and more risk for the funds. They still feel that. As a locally driven organization, Oxfam has been also advocating for localization and any time that gets fund, trying to say, okay, we got this fund, but we want to partner with local organization so that local organization can also implement, can also be empowered to have their own project going. Yeah. So yeah, you can see that. It's willing, but also, it's a bit reserved in terms of the capacity that they have to really accompany local players. [41:54]

S1: Okay. And we already talked a little bit about Cabo Delgado, where peacebuilding intersects with resource extraction, obviously. And how were you or Oxfam addressing these conflicts in the region? [42:18]

S2: Yeah. That is a complex thing itself. Started to try to understand the conflict way back in [1917/1970/2017?], when the first attack happened. Oxfam was working inside Cabo Delgado. Had an office in Macomia, which was the epicenter of most of the attack after Mocímboa, the prior. Yeah. And Oxfam had to close the office there because of the intensity of attacks and more importantly, because the conflict was not understood at the time and the capacity for our humanitarian response was not at the level to stay in a conflict zone. So, it was decided to close the office in Macomia. But with time, Oxfam tried to understand, as many other actors try to understand the conflict and try to see how to address or at least

to contribute to minimize the impact of the conflict on people. It's where we got the funding with the EU to try to run that peacebuilding initiative. And Oxfam was believing that peace building was a priority in the Cabo Delgado region. And still believe that together with response to emergencies, trying to support the communities that are being displaced all over. But at the same time, doing the high-level diplomacy or advocacy, if you like, humanitarian diplomacy, if you like, trying to discuss with the government, with other actors, what are the things that went wrong and need to be concerted. And at the end, Oxfam also believed that things went wrong before the conflict came in. There was a lot of inequalities in the province and the province was left behind in most of the development indicators. And that fueled the feeling that they were not part of the bigger picture. When the resource boom came in, those underlying things were not really taken into account. Things started just running, they wanted to explore here and there without looking at those previous contexts. Hence, the conflict just erupted. And even with that, the government took so long to recognize that there is a conflict, there is extremist violence. It took so long time. When they decided to really start reacting, they were not prepared. And they reacted in a very unusual way, which just helped to spread the conflict. The going out and calling the Rwandans and all this was one of the biggest mistakes. As a result, today, the national force is not respected in any way in the province. Remember what I said before, the EU supports the Rwandan forces, the equipment and all those other things. Not only the EU, but we also know many other countries at the individual level, they are putting so much resources in there. Rwanda is a poor country, that is a very small, poor country, that today is a powerful country. And one just asks where those powers come from. So, if you link Rwanda with DRC, now you understand all the bigger pictures. And we have those guys sitting in Cabo Delgado doing whatever they want. Unfortunately, with the international community, compliances and support. [47:21]

S1: And you already said that the EU is supporting Rwanda's forces as part of their approach to address the conflict in Cabo Delgado. So, how else do you see the EU's role in addressing the conflict around resources in the region? [47:48]

S2: Well, one big thing is that the resources that are fueling the conflict today, are more related to fossil fuel. And EU used to have a very strong position on fossil fuels. But that strong position is no longer there in practice. It might be in paper, but in practice, no. Because if you look at TOTAL, Total is the leading company in Cabo Delgado. TOTAL is a French-owned company, which brings government and private together. So, the role of France in all this might even jeopardize the position that EU has as a collective, because they are promoting fossil fuel. They are promoting that very strongly. And I believe you know

today that TOTAL is being now accused by other organizations in Europe to violate human rights. And that comes by chance. It's a fact. All those things are not really benefiting the position of EU. Unless EU clearly, you know, demarcates itself from those practices. Yes, but it's very difficult to demarcate yourself if you are supporting the cause. [49:42]

S1: So, you've been touching on that, but I still wanted to ask really directly. Do EU-funded projects help mitigate those conflicts or local tensions related to resource exploitation, or do they risk reinforcing them? [50:12]

S2: With some of the projects, peacebuilding, whatever other projects, it helps in some way to mitigate. But if you weigh in those projects and the huge support that they provide to, you know, the defense forces and to TOTAL directed to France, then you start wondering if they're really helping mitigate it. You know, they do both. But if you weigh in, you can see that the higher weight is on the negative side. [51:03]

S1: But when you say they do help in some parts, how are issues of land rights replacement or resource benefits addressed by the EU in Cabo Delgado? [51:20]

S2: Yeah, for example, the peacebuilding project that Oxfam implemented and other projects in that line, they support communities which build their capacity even to understand what is going on and then try to position themselves. And that is a help that I really appreciate, because otherwise, those actors will not have resources even to support their communities. And I know some of the projects, they really address the issue of resettlements, the issue of land grabbing. They address those through local organization or international non-governmental organizations that are working in those areas. Yeah, that support from the EU is really precious. [52:20]

S1: And so, you already touched on this too, but overall, do you believe that EU's engagement in Mozambique, peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique, is influenced by economic or resource-related interests? [52:40]

S2: I have no doubt. [52:48]

S1: And does this impact the credibility of the EU for you? [52:54]

S2: I would say yes. This does in fact impact the credibility of the EU for me. In the circles where I navigate, there's a lot of discussion. So, to bring you back to the election, even for

this election and people ask themselves, what is the interest of EU in promoting national dialogue in the way it is being promoted? And the answer is, okay, because they want now to have the new government on their side to continue what is called the uhm the new approach that the EU has of resource exploitation, "the gateway" or whatever they want to call it. Yeah, so that the exploitation of resources continues the same production model where extraction is in the country and raw material is shipped to Europe or other parts of this world. That interest, you can even sense that it's there. So, I have no doubt that it's all economic interests driving most of the things that the EU is doing. [54:25]

S1: So, do you feel like for them, peace building is used more as a tool for maintaining or implementing good relationships with Mozambique and the Mozambique people? [54:45]

S2: Yes, I can say yes. Yes, it's what we call "social contract". And they have to show that they have good intentions to be able to continue you know, having that good relationship to be seen as an institution that we can, you know, resolve to. Yeah, I think that it's clear. I'm not saying that their support is not welcome. Yeah, that is not what I'm saying. But what I'm saying is that support is coming with a cost. And that cost for us. [55:38]

S1: Yeah, yeah. And also, you've been saying that there are positive outcomes also from EU engagement in Mozambique. What are for you the main positive outcomes you've been seeing? [55:55]

S2: Um, I think the main positive outcome is to provide community and their institution with a room for capacity building. I think that it's one of the biggest outcomes. Most of the institutions of the communities that today are having some expression is thanks to the support that the EU is providing with other few, you know, donors, European donors or from other continents. For me, that is the biggest, biggest benefit. Today, communities can really understand even the policy and law around [disrupting?]. Because a lot has been invested to educate those communities and their institution, even to create leaders with some understanding in the community. The EU has been playing a huge role. [57:17]

S1: Mm hmm. And where do you see the biggest shortcomings or challenges in the EU peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique? [57:31]

S2: Yeah, I think the biggest shortcoming for me is the inability of EU to detach itself from punishing the authorities. The day EU will say, "OK, here you are crossing the line. Please,

we are not partner on this". Yeah, the day that EU will be able to do that, I think most of the negative perceptions will go away or at least will be minimized. [58:13]

S1: Mm hmm. And from your perspective, how do you see a gap between EU's rhetoric like promoting peace and partnerships and all these values we already talked about and its actual actions in practice in Mozambique? [58:36]

S2: Yeah, there is a gap between the EU's rhetoric and their actions. There is a gap. That's why I was saying the day that EU will manage to detach itself from that rhetoric and demarcate, then the perception that people in the national society have much change. So, the gap is there. There's a rhetoric of one thing, but the practice is showing differently. [59:10]

S1: But how do you feel can the programs or projects still contribute to sustainable peace? [59:25]

S2: Well, I think it can contribute. However, what can make those initiatives more sustainable would be to provide a room where local actors can really drive the seat. You see, for example, say, "Ok, civil society on the ground, come up with your idea what you want to do to support peacebuilding or support a sustainable development in the area". Instead of saying, "Ok, we have money that funds this, only two million if you can do A, B, C and D". And that is prescriptive kind of support. The other way round will provide more ownership where actors on the ground, they know the context, they know what they want. They come and say, "Ok, we have been trying to solve this problem this way. Can you support us with money that can allow us to implement A, B, C and D?". And they sit, discuss and they approve that. I think if we do this way, we might be closer to have some kind of sustainable innovations. [1:01:08]

S1: OK. Yeah, so maybe to wrap this up, you already said or you already probably gave some recommendations to the EU. But if you could tell them now, what would be the recommendations you would give to the EU to improve its peace building engagement in Mozambique? [1:01:33]

S2: Yeah, I think one recommendation would be, please listen to the community. Listen to the community and the institution of the communities so that you know what they want and how they want to do what they want and try to get that right. So, any finance could be used to implement those instead of driving the agenda or the frameworks that are really drawn in

some way in Europe and come to be implemented. I think that kind of development will not support the country to lift the living status of the population. So that is one recommendation. Second recommendation, I would really recommend to the EU to rethink the way they support the military side of the conflict in Cabo Delgado. They have to rethink that because the way it is being taken now, I see as contributing as part of the problem than as part of the solution. So that is a second recommendation I would really give to the EU. And finally, I would give another recommendation: If they could bring all the interventions that they funded in the last 10 years, 10, 15 years around peacebuilding, you know, natural resource governance, bring them and try to extract the lessons that each one of those interventions has and discuss with society in Mozambique, say what is that we can learn and we can really use to improve our [inaudible]. So that would be really good in terms of, you know, doing things in a different way to get different results. [1:04:02]

S1: And just one last question in regard to what you just said. You said that they should rethink their approach when it comes to their military approach in Cabo Delgado. What would, in your opinion, be more useful when it comes to their engagement in the military situation? [1:04:26]

S2: For me, well, yeah, strengthen the national forces. As a sovereign state, Mozambique needs a strong, capable, well-trained force that know human rights, know all the details of how to deal with conflict without stepping on people's rights. I think that it's the way EU should position itself instead of supporting Rwanda or supporting any other force that is there. [1:05:21]

S1: Okay. Thank you so much. Well, that was my last question. So, from my side, that's it. But if there's anything you feel like is still important when it comes to the topic that we haven't talked about yet, you can really just add anything. [1:05:41]

S2: Well, I think, yeah, we've touched most of the things. Unless I think of any other thing, I can just send you a text. But I'm okay now. [1:06:02]

S1: Okay then thank you so much. This was actually really helpful and valuable. And also, if you want, I can send you my results as soon as I'm done, like my thesis or parts of my thesis. [1:06:21]

S2: I would really love that. [1:06:23]

506 S1: I would appreciate that. It can take, like I plan on being finished by March. So as soon
507 as I'm done, I can send it to you. [1:06:34]

508

509 S2: Yeah, I would appreciate it. That would be a good tool for our work in the field. And I
510 would say, you know, good luck with your thesis. It's a very, very interesting thesis. Yeah,
511 good luck. I know how the hustle of writing, yeah, sometimes can be so challenging.
512 [1:07:02]

513

514 S1: Yes (laughing). Thank you so much for sharing all the information. [1:07:11]

515

516 S2: Have a nice rest of the day. [1:07:18]

517

518 S1: Yeah, you too. Thank you. Bye. [1:07:22]

IX. Interview 6

The following transcript is from an interview, as part of a research project on “The European Union in Resource-Rich Post-Conflict Contexts,” focusing on how the EU’s peacebuilding initiatives contribute to peace in Mozambique. The interview was held with one local expert (E8) working for an NGO involved in the implementation of EU-funded peacebuilding projects. In the transcription, the speakers are labelled as Speaker 1 (S1) for the interviewer and Speaker 2 (S2) for the interviewee. All participants provided informed consent for the use of this transcript for research purposes.

1 S1: May, then you could also start by briefly introducing yourself and also the organization
2 you're working with. [00:10]

3
4 S2: My name is [Name 1]. I work for CEFA, which is an Italian NGO, as [Position 1] for this
5 peacebuilding initiative: Kujenga Amani, it's the title of the project. CEFA is a non-profit
6 organization that started working in Mozambique in 2016, mostly on rural development, so
7 our historical focus is on agriculture, mostly nutrition. But in the last years, around the
8 countries where we operate, we also started to implement projects on human rights,
9 peacebuilding and cohesion, especially in East Africa, so mostly in Kenya and Somalia. And
10 then when this cultural proposal came out, it was regional, so involving not just Kenya but
11 also Tanzania and Mozambique, CEFA prepared a project proposal for the three countries.
12 So, this Kujenga Amani project is actually implemented in the three countries, especially in
13 the coastal areas of the three countries in the Swahili coast. I can show you, if you want, a
14 brief presentation on PowerPoint, so maybe you can get more information. [01:51]

15
16 S1: Yeah, that would be great. [01:54]

17
18 S2: I could also share it with you later. [...] Okay, it's this one. Tell me if you can see it.
19 [02:04]

20
21 S1: Yeah, I can see it. [02:05]

22
23 S2: Okay, great. So, the first thing to say about this presentation is that it's a presentation
24 on a program, not a project. The program is made of two different projects implemented by
25 two Italian NGOs, which are CEFA. So, I will talk from the side of CEFA, but I will present
26 you the program because there are two really similar projects going on. The target areas
27 are the same. We actually also share a similar title because our project is "Kujenga Amani-

Building Peace on the Swahili Coast" and the WeWorld project is "Kujenga Amani - Pamoja", which "means we build the peace together". So, we really share a lot on these two projects and they were actually selected in the same call by the European Union. So, the donor asked us to work together, not as partners, but in synergy, not to duplicate actions and to optimize all efforts and also from the point of view of the expenditure of budget. So, we are not actually working together as partners, but in the three countries, we are in constant communication and coordination to, let's say, have the best results and not be doing the same activities and the same things. Okay, so I wanted to put it in presentation mode. Okay, the aim, the overall objective of the program is to empower youth of the coastal border areas in Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique to become peacebuilders and agents of change, positive change in their communities. These are the three areas where we work in Kenya. You can see it's Kwale County and Mombasa County, so coastal areas. Tanzania, we work in Tanga region and Mtwara. Mtwara is bordering with Mozambique, with north of Mozambique and in Mozambique, we work in Cabo Delgado. In these districts, which are not actually the bordering districts with Tanzania, but are mostly the southern district of the province. And this is also important to mention that actually the southern district of Cabo Delgado is not like the hotspot areas of the conflict, of the ongoing conflict, or at least were not the hotspot area like three years ago. Now, recently, we are having more attacks and more direct impacts of the conflicts in also the southern districts. But why we selected the southern district? Mostly because of the experience of CEFA in these kinds of initiatives and the operational context, which in the north of the project is really, really complex, because, of course, we should face several security issues. We also lack the experience of working in really like violent and conflict affected areas. So, we are mostly working in the south, where the highest number of IDPs, dislocated people, from the conflict have moved throughout the conflict period. So, this is why not in the north or not in the most affected areas of the northern Mozambique. Whenever you want to ask me something, feel free to interrupt me. [06:18]

S1: Yes, thank you. [06:19]

S2: So, these are the three program components, which actually are the logic intervention in all the activities. So, all the activities have an understanding component, a skill development and then an engaging and community awareness component. So basically, we start with all the stakeholders and group of participants, understanding through, for example, conflict analysis workshop or consultation with community, trying to identify and map all the tensions and conflict that they perceive in their community. So, that we also start from a really participatory approach and targeting the real like conflict intentions perceived

by community. Then we have these components of skills development that we develop throughout all the stakeholders of the project in different kind of activities and with different kind of methodologies. And then we have a third component, which is engaging. So, asking, asking, I mean, implementing activities where the stakeholders that pass through all the process are asked to act more concretely. So, for example, well, I will not say it now because the presentation will go through it. But, you know, for example, all the parts of the community consultations and with the community dialogues, which are actually co-facilitated from youth that pass through all the process. Ok and community awareness is working mostly through artistic and cultural activities open, like in open areas in the community to reach like a large number of people being sensitized on how to be resilient, how to create and enhance social cohesion. These are our target groups of the project. So young women and men, young members of civil society organizations, peace activists, students and teachers, journalists, not just journalists, but professionals that work in the media sector. Then we have traditional and religious leaders, formal and informal peace and security structures, peace and security committees, for example and security actors and governmental authorities. So, these are the four groups of stakeholders, key target groups that we have in the program. These are our approaches, methodologies, so I will not go into each of them, but we adopt a gender sensitive and conflict sensitive approach. We actually also have both CEFA and WeWorld have like technical partners in our project, expert on peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity approach that train the staff at the very beginning of the project. So, that's something I actually thought about before this call, that it might be interesting for you to talk to, for example, our partner NGO, which is called the Agency for Peace Building, because they also can give you, I mean, they are the real expert on peacebuilding more than I am. So, maybe it might be interesting for you to talk to them as well. They are an Italian NGO also based in Italy, but they did a lot of activities, especially the first phase of the project, which was more like studying and analyzing the context, the local context. So, then we have this community-owned and community-led approach because we work mostly at the community level but involving really a lot of the community in all the phases of the project on the cycle. So multi-actor collaboration, as you could see in the slide before, we are working with really a different multi-stakeholder's approach. So, we work really with all kinds of people in the community from the authorities to their youth, like also the at-risk youth. Our approach is also youth-centered and throughout the project we are also trying to make it youth-led. So, we involve youth not just as participants, but as real active agents. So, that's why, for example, we are doing a lot of training with youth to make them able to co-facilitate with us some activities, also to change the narrative around the bad narratives around youth that there is now perceived by the authorities, the security forces, etc. Then, yeah, we adopt this methodology. It's like using a lot of cultural traditions and media arts activities and practices

to promote peace and also to be an entry point to share this with the community. And we adopt also a human rights-based approach on all the activities. Okay, so basically these are the methodologies and approaches. Okay, this slide I think is not relevant now because it's like a resume of all the interventions that we have, so I think we can skip it for now. And here we have number one, so the first component, which is understanding. So now we are going throughout all the activities included in this component. In this slide and the next ones also, they are divided in two because actually the left side is what WeWorld have done and the right side is what CEFA has done. We also did some things together, but it's just for you to understand why it's divided in two. So actually, we both started the project by the space of mapping of stakeholders in the communities where we decided to work. So actually, CEFA firstly did this document which is called "Geographical Hotspot Scoping and Targeting Approach" to identify which areas we wanted to have as target areas, geographically speaking. Then once we defined where we would work, we have this space of mapping of stakeholders including local authorities at different administrative level, but just at the local level. So, I mean, for example, in Mozambique, it's at district as community, district and provincial level. We are not working with national level authorities. Then we mapped all the media professionals, local CSOs, community groups, peace and security structures, schools and religious leaders. Then our partner, our peacebuilding expert partner, "Agency for Peace Building", together with PCI, which is the partner of WeWorld, conducted a baseline survey and a conflict analysis on the local context. So, it was actually a field work conducted in all the three countries. I think that in this PowerPoint, you can also enter the link where you can see and read this conflict analysis if you want to go deeply inside it. Then both CEFA and WeWorld had this academic research component. It was slightly different. There were two different research. The CEFA one was conducted from this researcher from the University of Urbino in Italy. The focus was to identify symbolic spaces or cultural practices that could be useful to be used or methodologies to be used to promote peace in all our activities in the rest of the project. So, actually, the idea of using theater or artistic events was also a result based on the results of their research. Also in the same component, as I told you before, we started by having all these rounds of conflict analysis workshop at community level. So, from the CEFA side, we started by having not mixed group workshops. So, what does it mean that we, for example, map and select youth leaders in all the communities, local authorities, women, religious leaders and security actors. And with each of those groups, we had this workshop on conflict intentions, identification and mapping, trying to identify from their point of view, what are the main drivers, what are the main tensions in your community and who do you think would be responsible to address that conflict or tension and how would you think would be efficient, how would you fix the problem, let's say. So, we collected all these insights from these participants in this

component. And it was also very interesting because we based a lot of the next activities on the findings of this preliminary phase, let's say. These, for example, are some of the more recurring tensions in Mozambique that resulted from the conflict analysis workshop. So, we have issues around governance, youth exclusion from civic and economic opportunities, patronage network, corruption, but then also problems with the security agents, especially between youth and security. Also, we actually had last year the elections, the new elections, so that this tension was really evident to see. Resources conflicts and access to basic services, especially on land governance, access to health care, water. I would also add school. I mean, the school system is not so efficient. And then social and community conflicts. So, we have both intergenerational, interethnic, faith-based conflicts, crime, of course, due also to lack of livelihood opportunities in the district where we work. And tensions between host communities and IDPs, persons and conflict over gender dynamics and gender-based violence. And then tensions around humanitarian aid, because actually one of the biggest results of these workshops were that humanitarian NGOs or entities are very often the cause of new conflicts, especially when we are, for example, I don't know, delivering kits, food kits or any kind of kit. And we target just IDPs and we don't look at the needs of people that were already there. So, new conflicts come out and this was very evident through this exercise of understanding how they perceive our presence in the region. Okay, so now we are entering through component two, so skills development. We worked with media, with a workshop on how to better talk to youth or how to change the narrative through media around youth. Conflict-sensitive reporting, peace journalism and gender-sensitive communication approach. We worked with a group of media that actually started with these activities, but then we are still working with some of them and we link them to the local CSOs that we selected to further work together. Then I will also explain that part. Then for youth, we had this mentorship training, which were preliminary to each peace and dialogue caravan, which include also the conflict analysis workshop. And this mentorship day, the objective is to have youth as leaders, not just as participants. So, it's a day of mentorship and capacity building to make them able to co-facilitate with us. So, it's also on communication skills, public speech, etc. Then we trained, we firstly mapped, selected and trained local CSOs around the three countries, CSOs that were youth-led or women-led. We also are doing, actually this is an activity ongoing, training with security forces on human rights-based approach in their security operations. And we also have all the part of training with schools, which was actually made, implemented with the aim of having these clubs' creation in school and to try to achieve a certain level of sustainability of the activity also after the project. So, this is why we choose, for example, the methodology of training of trainers, so to be able also not just to implement ourselves the activity, but to involve school directors, also the public administration for education to try to provide

sustainability to these activities also after the three years of the project. And then we can go to the component three, which is the engaging component. In Mozambique especially, I will focus on Mozambique because actually it's a lot, talking to each project that the CSOs are implementing. But basically, what happened is that for these target groups, so local CSOs, we started by mapping them. Then we opened a call of interest that we sent, like we sent an invitation to make an application for this project to be involved as a CSO, as a local CSO. So, we selected 10 of these CSOs and we started capacity building process that we are implementing since actually the very beginning of the project. So, we trained the CSOs on the very beginning of the peacebuilding. So, what does it mean, peacebuilding, which are the activities that we can or initiatives that we can implement with the objective of having more peaceful communities. Then we have a more like technical trainings, set of trainings on writing proposals, all the organizational structure, how to improve that. Also, the financial components of the project, so how to report financially our activities. And after all this process of training, we opened a call for proposal to arrogate sub-grants. So, the 10 CSOs applied to this call and 6 of them have won these grants. So actually, with these grants they are implementing micro-projects, I would say, because of course we are not talking about a lot of budgets. But in Mozambique we have 6 local organizations implementing their projects, just to have an idea of the size of the grant. We have 4 of them working with a budget of 8.000 euros and 2 of them working with a bigger budget of 15.000. These are projects that are around 5 to 9 months, depending also on the size of the budget. [25:51]

S1: Sorry to interrupt, so these grants that you are sub-granting are part of the EU funding, basically? [26:03]

S2: Exactly, yes. This is a specific activity of the project, which was the sub-granting of local CSOs and the implementation by them of these initiatives. And actually, this is a bit different, the approach from CEFA to WeWorld, because we are actually financing sub-granting projects. So, the size of the grants is a bit bigger, the duration of the initiative also is a bit longer. WeWorld is financing more initiatives, so the number is larger, but they are like smaller initiatives and they are working mostly with CBOs, so community-based organizations, smaller ones, so it's a bit different approach. And it was also decided at the very beginning, because the activity was really the same, so we decided, okay, we cannot target the same CSOs, so CEFA will go with the more structured ones and WeWorld will work with the more community-level ones. So here you can see the topics of the project that we are having here in Mozambique. We have some of the CSOs, two of them working on youth economic empowerment, two of them working in schools through not the same but similar methodology that we used with the Kujenga Amani Project, which is creating

213 school peace clubs and we have two of them working on gender-based violence, sexual
214 and reproductive rights. All the eligible activities and the topics of the Call of Proposal were
215 based on the findings of both the conflict analysis that we did at the very beginning, but also
216 the results of the community-level conflict analysis workshop. So, for example, youth
217 economic empowerment, working more on the livelihood component, was not really directly
218 related somehow to peace-building initiatives, but we know that there is a really evident link,
219 so if you don't have an income, if you don't have an opportunity to sustain yourself, it's more
220 easy to get involved in criminal activities or in violent extremism, etc. So that was also a
221 recommendation that we received from a monitoring consultant contracted by the European
222 Union, that actually was really insisting on the lack of livelihood components in this project
223 is a problem, because actually it's really important to address somehow also that
224 component. So, we included the possibility to implement initiatives that were actually linked
225 to the livelihood sector. And with these CSOs, once we had the grants, we didn't disappear
226 at all, we were doing a constant monitoring. And we are providing technical support.
227 Because even if they have already been training, the objective and the approach that we
228 have is that also the implementation phase is inside the framework of the capacity building,
229 so it's just putting in practice what you learned but through continuous monitoring by our
230 staff. So, we organize capacity building sessions online, we monitor the activities, we have,
231 we created all our reporting system for them to report as the activities and the project, etc.
232 So, it's really an ongoing work throughout all the initiatives. This is a really specific activity
233 of WeWorld, so I will not go into that. Okay, this is the activity that targeted schools. So, with
234 schools, we also, we started from mapping, selecting, then training patrons and matrons,
235 we call that way, but it's just teachers responsible for, let's say, the establishment of the
236 Peace Clubs. So, we have this training of training on how to create and manage the Peace
237 Clubs. In Mozambique, we also developed a small manual on that and then there was a
238 phase of official establishment. So, in all the three countries, we created these new Peace
239 Clubs in school, both primary and secondary, but I think it's more secondary school. And
240 these clubs then would have the possibility to, for example, implement activities suggested
241 from the manual. In Kenya, we organized a lot of competition between clubs. I mean, the
242 methodology was slightly different from country to country because also we are working
243 with local partners. So, for example, in Kenya, the local partner is really an expert on these
244 thematics, so they planned and organized different activities. In Mozambique, due to
245 security reasons, we couldn't really organize activities between schools, not to ask students
246 to move a lot from one district to another, but this was the main objective of the Peace
247 Clubs, to have these students engaged in peace-building initiatives, activities, sensitization.
248 In Mozambique, we have also these Theatre of the Oppressed workshops and exhibitions,
249 also training. It was actually training how to be an actor. So, they would identify attention or

conflict in their school and represent it through theatre. And we will have this final event in Dar es Salaam, which was actually planned for December 2025, where we will bring together representatives from all the Peace Clubs of the three countries together in Dar to exchange experiences, lessons learned, but also to be together and knowing that even in the other two countries, there were youth creating the same dynamics. Probably these events will not be possible to be implemented in December because of the situation, political situation in Tanzania, but it is still planned to be implemented next year. Then we also have a sport component, which was actually linked to schools, especially in Mozambique. ^In the same schools that we identified and selected, we actually organized these sport tournaments for peace, which was actually made of, yes, games, football games, but each football team, we have like two teams per school, one female and one male team and each team passed through a three-session workshop on three different topics, which were human and rights children, sorry, human and children's rights, gender equality and conflict mediation. Also, this activity had a final regional event in Dar Es Salaam, but just Kenya and Tanzania were able to participate and actually this was just because of costs, because Tanzania was based in Tanzania, so the teams of Tanzania were already there. The Kenyan teams traveled from Kenya to Tanzania in private transport, but land transport, it was an autobus. From Mozambique, of course, we cannot travel by land, so it would be really too expensive to buy flight tickets for an entire football team, so that's sad, but it's really due to budget limitations. But we played the final games here, I mean, at the district level. Okay, so this is also very, very WeWorld-based, I wouldn't go into this, media campaigns. Yeah, as I told you before, we also work with media, so starting from that first sensitization workshop, we then selected some of those media professionals to work with the youth from the local CSOs in this activity, which is called "Youth Media Working Groups" and the objective is to highlight the work and give visibility to the work of each sub-granted CSO. So, they actually have this three-day workshop where they learn how to work with photography, how to use social media to disseminate their activities and results of the projects, or for example, they participate to radio debates and then there is a phase of field work where each CSO member is together with a media professional and they collect all the material to create these media campaigns on the projects that are being implemented by the CSOs. This is also an activity ongoing, so I don't have a clear idea of the results, but they are working on this at this right moment. Okay, so yeah, this is also more community awareness activities. We have this big phase of youth-led intergenerational dialogue in the three countries. How do we organize dialogues? We started with the conflict analysis workshop with different stakeholders. Then, with all this conflict analysis, we identified the more recurring conflicts and tensions and we organized thematic dialogue around the most recurring conflicts and tensions, inviting representatives from all the group of five

287 stakeholders together with relevant authorities at the local level, relevant for the tensions
288 and conflicts mapped and identified. So, this is the first phase of dialogues. Then, now we
289 are working on the elaboration of our policy brief that collects all the work of analysis that
290 we did with the communities and the idea is to come up with this policy brief, which is
291 actually made jointly with WeWorld. So, we are also collecting all the results from their
292 conflict analysis. Once we will have this final document, we will enter our more advocacy
293 phase and basically, we will disseminate and present this policy brief to higher-level
294 authorities. So, maybe for a couple of days we will be with the provincial authorities, not just
295 the district level. I cannot tell you really a lot on this because it's still something that we are
296 actually doing. We are finalizing the policy brief, but the idea is to inform policy makers, at
297 least at the provincial level, on how the communities that were involved in the drafting of
298 the document perceive the conflicts, what they are actually asking as solutions and trying
299 to inform them and to share all this work that we did with the relevant authorities. And then
300 we have other community awareness activities that were all along the project period. We
301 do mobile cinemas in communities, skit expos, which are actually cultural and artistic
302 performances and the use of theatre of the oppressed to disseminate good practices, to
303 represent first the dynamics of conflict that we observe and to ask the community to act
304 directly in order to try to think about the solution or think about what is the problem in this
305 representation, in this dynamic. Okay, yeah, these are the key challenges and response
306 strategies that we are actually facing, we face and we are still facing and the way we are
307 trying to address them. Yeah, so basically the capacity of local CSOs, it's limited, so we
308 really had to work constantly and really close to each CSO, to each local CSO, so even if
309 we had all this training process with them, in some cases it was not really sufficient, so we
310 had to do more and more and more in order to be, to make them able to implement the
311 projects. And this is also due to the difference between CSOs, because we are working with
312 some CSOs that are more structured and that already have implemented some specific
313 projects, for example, some of others were more specialized on gender issues, so they
314 were lacking experience in this field, so we really had to also provide individual mentorship
315 and support to each of the CSOs. Then, as the project were written, I mean, as the original
316 proposal were written, there were not a lot of linkages between CSOs and media, so the
317 activities involving media were a bit like not linked to other components of the project, so
318 that's why we decided to add this activity, use media working groups, where we put media
319 actors sensitized and trained with the local CSOs implementing projects working together.
320 That is, I already told you before, the lack of livelihood component and the need to establish
321 linkages with other development or humanitarian programs. Our sub-grantees are actually
322 implementing projects on youth empowerment, economic empowerment, we are
323 developing a joint mapping of the existing private and public actors and programs that are

providing livelihood opportunities for youth, so the idea is also to disseminate and to create a sort of referral system, because we are not able to provide this component actually of livelihood, but at least we are trying to function as referrals. For the school's engagement, there was a real risk of not being sustainable with this creation of Peace Clubs, because we were actually thinking about "how can we assure that after the project the Peace Clubs will still function and will still be there?". This is a big question that I still have personally, because it's not really easy to get this sustainability, but that's why we, for example, had the training of trainers, we included the public administration for education in each country and we are trying actually to push the public administration on education to try to include the Peace Club strategy, the Peace Club mechanism inside the school curriculum. We didn't actually have a confirmation yet, but we are working on that. Yeah, well, security conditions, of course, especially in Mozambique, we are working in an emergency context, so it's very unpredictable always, even if actually we are working in the southern districts, which are not the most hotspot area, but still we are facing and several problems with uhm to security, so of course we have to be flexible always and we have to monitor the situation constantly. Program limitation, no, program combination, yeah, limited opportunities to have joint activities from uhm with CEFA and WeWorld , but we are actually working a lot on this, because we always coordinate, we have like these monthly meetings, but we figured out that actually some activities could be implemented together, also targeting a larger number of participants, so we are planning some activities together and we already did something together. And the last is, yeah, the youth engagement, but also this, I told you before, it's worth trying not to target youth just as participants, so we don't want to have just having youth participate to our activities, but we want to try to make them be leaders of the initiatives. Okay and that's all, sorry if I run a bit, because I know that it was really long [46:46]

S1: Yeah, but that was a very - that gave me a very good insight. I still have a few questions though, but thank you for that insight, it was very helpful to understand all the structures within the program and just generally, when did the program start and for how long is it still going on? [47:11]

S2: Okay, it started in March 2023 and it's a three years program, so it will end in March 2026, maybe we are, no, not maybe, it's sure we are asking an extension, but I think we will just go until the end of April, so it's just a one month extension, yeah. [47:34]

S1: Okay and as the program is funded by the EU, how do you perceive the EU's role in this program? [47:49]

361
362 S2: Well, I would say, I would say, I perceive it, at least I perceive it as a real funder, it's
363 really interesting that, for example, they had this consulting agency called "Altai", that were
364 actually contracted by the delegation, European delegation in Nairobi, to monitor these
365 projects from the very beginning, so we received a mission in April, I think, the first year of
366 the project, it maybe was not April, but slightly after the start date of the project, then at the
367 meter of each project and then I think we will have a last mission at the very end. So this
368 was really interesting, because it was the way how European Union were actually able to
369 monitor the activities and not just reading the reports, because otherwise we cannot have
370 like an idea of what is actually going on and it was really interesting, not just because they
371 came to see the activities, but because they provide us recommendations to improve the
372 impact that we could have with the projects and the recommendations were not just for
373 CEFA, or not just for the implementing partners, but for EU as well, as donors, so how is it
374 relevant to provide funds on these kind of activities in this context. "Is it actually responding
375 to real needs, or is it not doing it the right way?" So for example, for Mozambique it's a bit
376 different context from the other two countries and in Mozambique it was really evident that
377 these kind of initiatives are really important, yes, but maybe we should have a more strong
378 component of livelihood, because it's really hard to have the engagement, the real
379 engagement of people, especially youth, if you're not working also on that part, so okay,
380 "why should I participate to your dialogues, it's really nice to talk about this and how I should
381 be a peacebuilder, but I don't have a work, I cannot study, I don't have opportunities", so I
382 mean it's really hard to get the involvement, the real engagement and interest of young
383 people, because it might be not perceived as a priority for them, yeah, so yeah, I mean I
384 perceive European Union as a founder, but also in other experiences I also, I always have
385 this feeling, but in this case for Mozambique, I think they had a really more deeply interest
386 in understanding how is it working. This kind of activities in this context, that we received
387 the visit of the FPI focal point for this project two weeks ago and it was really a surprise for
388 me, for my colleagues, because he's actually a really high, high level person, so we didn't
389 expect him to come to Mozambique, maybe to Kenya, yes, because he's also based in
390 Nairobi, but he decided to visit just one area of the project and it was Cabo Delgado. So
391 that's, I mean, because they are really interested in knowing if it's having an impact, so from
392 one side I was really happy and he thought the project is having an impact, but also a lot of
393 limitations. One of the limitations is that he thinks that working at the community level is
394 really important, but we should try to link the micro level to the macro one, so not just like,
395 yeah, working with local authorities is fine, but trying also to, even with the policy, even with
396 the conflict analysis, trying to link the local conflicts and tensions to macro dynamics in the
397 regions. And he also told us that FPI is really unlikely to fund this kind of initiatives, long

period initiatives, because they are all, they are financing mostly crisis response projects, so short initiatives from 12 to 18 months, so in the short time we will not receive another opportunity to actually keep working on this thematic, at least with the FPI and of course we have different instruments that I hope will be there, but yes. [53:14]

S1: And just also an overall question, how do you as an organization or within your program define peace or peace building and what is it that you see as success? [53:32]

S2: Okay, I think that something that came out actually from all the activities that we did is that- it's really hard to define peace, but at least I can say that through promoting dialogue or really like communication and open communication between different community members that are not really keen to talk to one to each other, this is really the key and it's really an entry point to build more peaceful communities. So creating space where you are providing actually a safe space to talk about what you think, what you perceive as a problem, what you think would be a solution, so I think that really here, especially in Cabo Delgado, everyone at the community level, every people here knows that there is a conflict, [inaudible] a taboo to talk openly about it. Oh I- I thought you were gone because it freezes for a moment. So actually, yeah, I think that providing these kind of spaces which are safe and which are yeah, given the opportunity to people to be able to speak up and giving also voice to the ones that not always have the possibility to have it, especially youth or women. So, I think that the key for peaceful communities is having the possibility to interact freely and to provide spaces where they can do it, yeah. [55:39]

S1: And the EU usually emphasizes values such as democracy, participation, human rights, do you feel like these values are reflected in their programs and work in Mozambique? [55:55]

S2: Well, yes, somehow, even if for example, with our specific project, there were not like a specific component or activities on, for example, civic participation as a really specific topic. We didn't have activities targeting or addressing the theme of democracy or human rights, yes, of course, we actually have that as a transversal topic throughout a lot of activities, so I would say yes, also the training we are doing with the security actors, I'm trying to talk to them on this human rights-based approach where during their work, especially after all this violence that we are seeing now, especially during the pre- and post-electoral periods, but I mean, also in Europe, this is something really relevant, so here it's even worse, but the problem with the security officers is that security actors is that they lack completely the respect of human rights while they are working, so yeah, for some topics, I would say they

435 are addressing these through these initiatives, but for some other specific, maybe less.
436 [57:38]

437

438 S1: Okay and you already said that the EU really wants to engage civil society even more.
439 How you feel like they, by designing these projects and programs, incorporate local agency,
440 knowledge and traditions already? [58:01]

441

442 S2: Sorry I didn't really get the question. [58:09]

443

444 S1: Uhm in the program design processes, how do you feel like the EU does incorporate
445 local knowledge and local agency? [58:24]

446

447 S2: Ah okay. To answer this question, I think I should have read the actual call for proposals
448 when it was published. Unfortunately, I was not there and I was not working with CEFA on
449 this but uhm. What I think generally, is that from the time the call is open until the time the
450 project is implemented, not always what was written is still valid, is still there. And
451 sometimes the European Union or other donors as well, are not really flexible to adapt the
452 activities that were actually proposed by their implementing partner to the current and the
453 actual context. So, I would say that, yeah, I mean it's relevant at the macro level, it's
454 relevant. I wouldn't say, but again I'm not sure because I didn't read the call, it was so much
455 based on a deep study of the very local context. Or maybe, because something that really
456 made us crazy at the very beginning with the donor was that in the call for proposal, it was
457 not mentioned that the projects that the EU wanted to finance have to be "PCVE" projects,
458 so "preventing violent extremism". It was not mentioned, not once, but then it came out that
459 that was the idea, that was the objective, but it was hidden. And they decided to finance two
460 projects, the CEFA and WeWorld projects, implemented by two NGOs that were not experts
461 on PCVE, which is a really complex and specific theme. And we didn't mention it in our
462 proposal. So it was a bit tricky at the beginning to understand what they expected from us,
463 but we were saying, okay, but you didn't ask for that, we didn't write about that, we are not
464 experts on that very thematic, so we are not going to Mozímboa da Praia, which is actually
465 the region in the district where the insurgents are really taking control to try to work directly
466 with the recruited youth. We don't do that, because it's not something that we can invent
467 from one day to another, you have to be prepared to work in such a complex context. So,
468 we are working, if we want to say that we are working on PCVE, yes, we are working, but
469 at a very primary level, so with all the community, sensitize the community, but not directly
470 with all the people. So, at the very beginning, it was a bit that the tricky part, that maybe

what was in mind of you was slightly different from what was in our mind when we wrote the proposal. [1:01:52]

S1: But then they considered this? So how, at the end, how flexible were they when it came to these considerations? [1:02:03]

S2: No, I must say that we actually had a very, very good relation then to our focal point in EU and they were really flexible in understanding what we had in mind. They also organized, I think it was October of the first year of the project, a workshop in Nairobi with all the staff from the project and it was a workshop to really find and trying to make more effective our theory of change. So not to distract them and to make them targeting directly violent terrorism, but trying to harmonize it, trying to make it more achievable in the local context. So, knowing and having already some months of experience in the local context, how do we want to treat each context? Because also one thing that was maybe a bit, it was not really specific, it was not how to say that. We are talking about two, three countries, three contexts, which are really, really different. So that was evident also from the call. So, they had, they gave us the opportunity to be flexible and to adapt to each specific context. So, it's right, we are working with the Swahili coast, we can make it a region, but don't remember, I mean, that we are working with people that don't even share a language because in Mozambique, Swahili is not the language, not even English. So, it's really hard to put them all in the same, you know, but yeah, but then they were really, really flexible. And also, I would say that these monitoring consultants, this agency that was actually contracted by them, themselves, was really useful to make them understand that they should be flexible because otherwise we will not achieve every single indicator that we put in our [inaudible]. Yeah, so no, they were extremely flexible after these interactions that we had in the beginning. [1:04:41]

S1: And also, I know that it's not specifically an objective of the program from CEFA, but in Cabo Delgado, peacebuilding really intersects with resource extraction. So, how do you perceive EU-funded projects in helping to mitigate these issues around resource extraction? [1:05:12]

S2: Well, this is really, I don't know how to answer because I think that, I mean, of course, all this conflict is directly related to the presence of these massive oil and gas companies. Most of them are European, so actually, as you well know, I'm Italian, so Eni is one of the, the big ones here. I think that, yes, of course, European Union, through these kinds of projects, is trying to mitigate all the bad consequences of this presence here. Of course, it's

trying. I think that the effort is really limited, I mean and it's not providing real opportunities for people to overcome this disruption of the ecosystem that they're facing because, I mean, maybe with other programs more, like, I don't know, there are a lot of projects on, for example, youth empowerment, youth economic empowerment, job creation, etc. But I think that the effort put on one side trying to mitigate all the bad consequences and the impact, negative impact, of these huge companies, it's really not balanced. And actually, one of the dilemmas that I'm personally living is that I know a lot of NGOs, I mean, unfortunately, not shaped by the very actual moment, but a lot of NGOs are financed by the same, Eni, because they have this social responsibility part of their budgets that they have to use for social impact interventions. So, for me, it's really crazy to know that NGOs are actually working to address a problem that is not just because of Eni, not just because of these, but mostly because of these, with their money. So, it's crazy. And this is something that is happening here. I mean, a lot of projects are funded by the problem. But this is really personal. I'm not talking from CEFA; I'm talking from my point of view. [1:08:02]

S1: Yeah. And do you feel like in terms of this, that the EU's peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique is also influenced by its economic or resource related interests when it comes to the European companies? [1:08:18]

S2: Yes, I think it is. Yeah, it is related. Yeah. [1:08:25]

S1: And does this for you impact the credibility of the EU's peacebuilding engagement or the EU in general? [1:08:37]

S2: Well, in my opinion, somehow, yes. Yeah. Then, of course, it depends on how then it's communicated, how it's- I mean, I'm not saying that this is not having an impact. Of course, it has an impact. But if you see it from a macro point of view, yeah, of course, it's a bit [mimicking a scale with hands]. Yeah. [1:09:05]

S1: Okay. And you just said that, of course, it still has an impact. So maybe just to summarize, what positive outcomes have you seen from EU funded peacebuilding projects? [1:09:22]

S2: Well, one of the biggest successes, I think, is really practical actions. Like, for example, this capacity building with local civil society is concrete. It's something that you can really see. So, if we take the six CSOs that started from the very beginning of the project until now, they really achieved a level of knowledge on specific topics. They know how to

implement some activities. They know how to write a report on the how-to financial reporting all the activities. So, like concrete knowledge has been produced. And this is something that I really am really proud of. So, this is also nice, because they will be hopefully able to access funding directly and not just with an intermediary, which is an international entity or NGO. So, the idea is also to link local CSOs that has all the knowledge of the context, real knowledge, to the big donors, for example, European Union, because then you will have a proposal written really on the basic needs, realistic needs of the context. So that's the big achievement that I think we could call achievement. Then other components are really interesting. For example, all the process of community conflict analysis, then dialogue, then policy brief, then advocacy phase. It's really interesting. I cannot still say if it's an achievement or if it will really achieve the objective, because of lack of time, because even if it's a three years project, to see the real impact or to see really you have achieved the results, you have promote really a change, or if policy makers and the CSOs will actually act, trying to address what has been identified at the community level. Unfortunately, we will not be able to see it in the three years of the project. But I think it's something that is really interesting now, starting from the very community level and then bringing this voice to the higher institutions. So, I would say that that's also an interesting part of this specific initiative. [1:12:17]

S1: And how is this right now? Do the CSOs also engage with, for example, the European Union or representatives at government level? Or is it always through implementation partners like CEFA that they get in contact with higher representatives? [1:12:44]

S1: You mean the community with the higher-level authorities? Well, now it depends. I mean, they can get in contact, they can reach higher levels, but it's always without the opportunity to actually be in a dialogue. For example, the local government and the current party in power in Mozambique, which we know has been there since ever, they have a presence that you can feel at the very micro level. So, they would organize, I don't know, like open discussion, open dialogues with the project, with the community. So, they meet the community. We don't have the problem that the government doesn't reach the micro level, but how, I mean, the way they do it, it's really embarrassing. I mean, I've been in an activity, I was in an activity of the project. It was not expected that we received a visit from the government, but suddenly it was there something, someone from Maputo, from the Ministry of Youth, so something really unexpected. And they decided to interrupt the activity because they wanted to collect feedback from the community on issues, problematic issues in their community regarding youth. So, it was something amazing. I said, "wow, they are really collecting this". Then it was so empty, the meeting, because they actually were like

really formal people, so that the people in the activity were completely shy and they were not able to talk. They just said their name, then a big silence came in and nobody was really able to talk to them. So and it was okay for them to have meeting the community, collecting names of a few people and say, okay, we did the consultation, now we go back to Maputo and write the policy for youth in that district. So, I mean, it was really, so it's the presence, you can feel it, but there is really a fear from communities to the power, also the guarantee here, it's extreme. So, when you have a boss, then that boss has another boss, it's really like a crazy relation. So, they are not able to freely to talk to higher level authorities. [1:15:50]

S1: And when it comes to the EU, is the EU, for example, you said that recently EU representative from Kenya visited Mozambique and they engaged with CEFA, but did they also engage really with the community level people? [1:16:17]

S2: We were, we actually tried to plan a field mission with the focal point, because we wanted him to meet the real participants, the real core of the project. Then, unfortunately for security issues, he was not allowed to go out of Pemba, but we invited representatives from each group of stakeholders, more or less, to participate to a focus group discussion. So yes, he actually had the opportunity to meet them and I was really happy, because we didn't have any kind of communication problem. All the people were really confident talking about what they did, or what was their participation in the project activities. They also gave recommendations actually to the European Union on how to take this and that, especially that they think that the budget should be higher to continue the activities, of course. Yeah, but it was really, really nice to see that people that participated in these two and a half year projects were not shy or didn't fear to talk to this big German guy from Nairobi. Also, he was really nice, so it's also how you approach people and here the authorities or the government are very formal, you have to talk to them and you refer to them as "excellentissimo", so it's really like your majesty, so you can perceive the level of formality that there is in this country. But no, with the European Union here, with the visit, it was really nice to see that everyone was feeling comfortable. [1:18:24]

S1: And still within the programs or with the cooperation with the EU in general, where do you see the biggest shortcomings or challenges that are still there? [1:18:41]

S2: With this project or in general? [1:18:43]

S1: Within the cooperation with the European Union. [1:18:46]

S2: I think that this, maybe specifically on this building initiative, which is not an area in which I feel to be an expert, but... [1:19:08]

[Editor's Note]

Due to a brief technical interruption for approx. 4 minutes, this section of the interview was not captured in the audio recording. The following summary is based on written notes taken during the interview:

The interviewee emphasized the challenge of limited project durations of a maximum of three years within EU-funded initiatives. This time frame often restricts the ability to generate lasting impact, to monitor sustainability and to assess whether engagements genuinely contribute to peacebuilding at the community level.

Additionally, the interviewee referred to the EU's "triple nexus" approach (humanitarian–development–peace), explaining its relevance for programming in northern Mozambique.

[End of Editor's Note]

S2: ... multidimensional approach that doesn't just focus on peace building but has in mind also the humanitarian and the rapid response to crisis and a development or a livelihood component that can provide people with the ways then to also think on how we can be peaceful and how we can change the context. [~1:23:43]

S1: And just also to summarize you, we've been also talking about the double function of EU within, you know, on one hand there's this peace building and humanitarian side and then there are the European companies being part of the issue on the other side. So, from your perspective, is there a gap between EU rhetoric, like their values and building peace and its actions in practice? [~1:24:18]

S2: Uhm, I mean, it's really evident that even if we have a lot of humanitarian and development interventions, I think personally that the very objective behind the strongest one at least, it's an interest and it's an economic interest. So unfortunately, I don't see that this component is more, how do you say that is- [...] Okay, yeah, so I think that, yeah, it's evident that the interest is more economic. Then of course we can try to mitigate somehow our European impact and presence in these countries where we extract or we have other interests. But I don't know, I don't see it as the real priority for EU. Also, I don't know if you know the Italian new strategies called the "Piano Mattei", which is actually, the hidden

objective is that we are trying to diversificate our energy provision around the world, of course and in exchange we offer development to these countries. So development by financing projects and the other objective is to reduce migration, which is crazy because even if you achieve a bit of development promotion in the country where we operate, it is well known that the first step, the first link between development and migration is that you make it more easy to people to go out because you are creating an income so they can actually migrate easily. So even that "Piano Mattei", it seems that it's to promote this development in other countries and then at the end it's just because Italy wants to get the oil and gas. I mean, this is really also my political position and I'm really critical on this issue and I can see it also at the European level. It's evident that at the end of the day, the biggest interest is another one and it's not making the world a peaceful place or at least not just that. [~1:27:27]

S1: I think this is my last question. So overall, what recommendations would you give the European Union to improve its peacebuilding engagement in Mozambique? [~1:27:37]

S2: I think that one recommendation is to, as I said before, combine it with not just peacebuilding component, but combining with a humanitarian response and a development response and that would be adopting a "triple nexus approach", but I think that it's already being there. I mean, the European Union has that and of course there are projects on that, but in my experience of this exact project. And then I would also say that I don't know where we have this really high impact, negative impact from big, big companies working here. Since they are European companies, I think that European Union should be more exigent on how they deal with local communities, how they really try to complement the damage they are causing with, for example, I don't know, training, professional training that could after provide jobs, maybe inside the same company, but for local people. So, acting as an actor who can better negotiate the conditions of these huge companies, the government of Mozambique in favour of the local communities, because otherwise we don't really see the needs of people here. Yeah, I would say that. Well, sorry, it's really hard for me to express myself. [~1:29:38]

S1: No, that was perfectly fine. So that has been my last question. So, from my side, that would be it. But if there's anything you feel is important that we haven't talked about yet, you can add anything. [~1:28:52]

S2: Okay, for now, no, but really, I think it would be really nice for you, interesting for you, if you want and have time to talk to our partner from the Agency for Peace Building. I think he

692 has really much more experience and maybe also another point of view on the situation. So
693 maybe it would be interesting. [~1:29:18]

694

695 S1: Yeah, I would like that. Maybe, I don't know if you have the contact details, or maybe
696 you could forward my contact details to them or the other way around. [~1:29:33]

697

698 S2: I can send you an email with this PowerPoint and I can send you there the address,
699 email address. [~1:29:39]

700

701 S1: That would be great. And also, I don't know if this is possible, but since you've been
702 working with a lot of the CSOs, I don't know if you feel like it would also be possible to
703 maybe talk to one of the representatives of one CSO. I don't know, you have more
704 experience in that field. I also don't speak Portuguese. But if you feel like that would be
705 possible, that would be also great to really get also a perspective of people from the
706 communities. [~1:30:10]

707

708 S2: Yeah, I was actually thinking of who could be interviewed in English. I think that one of
709 the representatives actually speaks English quite well. So let me ask him, just to be sure.
710 And then I can ask him if it's okay for him to be interviewed. I think that there's no problem
711 and I will put you in contact. [~1:30:37]

712

713 S1: That would be also really amazing. And also, if you are interested, as soon as I'm done
714 writing my thesis, if you want my results, I can send them to you if you are interested.
715 [~1:30:43]

716

717 S2: Yeah, I would be really interested. It's really like a popular theme you're working on. So,
718 it's really interesting. [~1:30:51]

719

720 S1: Yeah, I plan on being finished by maybe March. So as soon as I'm done, I can send my
721 results over. [~1:31:01]

722

723 S2: Okay, great. And good luck with the work. [~1:31:07]

724

725 S1: Well, thank you so much. And I really appreciate you getting me in contact with both,
726 agency for peacebuilding and maybe a representative of CSO. [~1:31:15]

727

728 S2: Great, great. Then also, if you want to speak to, I don't know, if you reach out also
729 WeWorld, maybe I can also give you contacts from their side because they're implementing
730 kind of the same project, but you can talk to different people. [~1:31:35]
731
732 S1: Yeah, that would be great. Well, thank you so much. [~1:31:39]
733
734 S2: Thank you. Have a nice day. [~1:31:42]
735
736 S1: Thank you. You too. [~1:31:42]
737
738 S2: Bye. [~1:31:43]

X. Interview 7

The following transcript is from an interview, as part of a research project on “The European Union in Resource-Rich Post-Conflict Contexts,” focusing on how the EU’s peacebuilding initiatives contribute to peace in Mozambique. The interview was held with one local expert (E9) working for an NGO involved in the implementation of EU-funded peacebuilding projects. In the transcription, the speakers are labeled as Speaker 1 (S1) for the interviewer and Speaker 2 (S2) for the interviewee. All participants provided informed consent for the use of this transcript for research purposes.

- 1 S1: Okay. Then I start the audio recording now. Do you have any questions yet? [00:09]
- 2
- 3 S2: Um, no. [Name 2] already told me the conditions on what you are doing so, I am okay.
- 4 [00:18]
- 5
- 6 S1: Okay, perfect. Okay, so maybe then you could start by also briefly introducing yourself
- 7 and also the organization that you're working with. [00:31]
- 8
- 9 S2: Okay, so [researcher], give me one minute, please. [00:35]
- 10
- 11 S1: Of course. [00:37]
- 12
- 13 [short break]
- 14
- 15 S2: I'm sorry, I'm sorry. [00:54]
- 16
- 17 S1: Don't worry. [00:56]
- 18
- 19 S2: So, uhm my name is [Name 1]. I am a [Position 1] in “Association Progresso”. I am in
- 20 this position for three, four months. Before that, I was the [Position 2] here in Mozambique.
- 21 [01:20]
- 22
- 23 S1: And in which regions do you mainly operate? [01:25]
- 24
- 25 S2: Mostly on north of Mozambique. In Niassa, Cabo Delgado provinces. But also in
- 26 Maputo, that is where I'm based. In Maputo, we have some programs here. But we are

working for more than 30 years. And the main region was always in the north, Niassa and Cabo Delgado. [01:53]

S1: And why in the north? What are the specific challenges there? [01:58]

S2: North because in the north of Mozambique, you find it's a place where you have more poverty. And more poverty, low level of education of people. And low development, poverty development. Even now, when you look for the situation of all over the country, you will find that the north continues to be the - you find the most vulnerable people there. That's why we decided to focus on this region of the country. [02:44]

S1: And how long have you been working with the European Union in this field? [02:51]

S2: For more than 10 years. For more than 10 years. We started with the European Union in 2004-2005 with the "literacy program". And since then, since that time, we continue to work with the European Union. We stopped one, two years. And we have another contract. And right now, we are working with Aga Khan. But in the past, we have directly financed with the European Union. [03:34]

S1: And maybe you could- Can you describe some of your key peacebuilding activities that you did or that you still do with the European Union? [03:55]

S2: Okay. We have two experiences. One experience was focused on the education, literacy for children and adults in local language. I think that this was the biggest project that we have implemented with the European Union in the north of Mozambique. Yes, in Niassa and Cabo Delgado. So, the project was focused to illiterate adults and kids, producing some materials, training teachers with the better methodologies, teaching methodologies. So, it was focused on this. And another project that we have at the European Union was related to youth empowerment. In Cabo Delgado, which is a province affected with conflict, as we know. So, in the beginning of this conflict, we designed a project just to empower the youth, just to avoid them to go to the fields, the war fields, because this not identifying the armed people, they want the youth. So, this project was to work with the youth, training them and trying to pushing them to the right places to give them voices, to talk about the problem, the challenge. So, we developed some activities just to provide them with positive things, like training, sports activities, cultural activities, just to arise awareness of the importance to participate in society and not on the war. And the last projects were two projects, the "social cohesion", so these projects were implemented in Niassa and Cabo Delgado province with

"Aga Khan". So, these last projects are more focused to build this social cohesion of people, displaced people and the people who receive these displaced people, just to ensure that they have a peaceful, peaceful living. So, we organized them in groups that we call them the "community development groups". And these groups, they are trained in many, many thematic areas, just to reinforce the community capacity to address their own problems.

[07:13]

S1: And so right now, at the moment, you don't have a project with the European Union, right? [07:23]

S2: We have this with Aga Khan [07:32]

S1: Okay, yeah, sorry. How do you perceive the role of the European Union in all these peacebuilding activities? [07:39]

S2: I think that they have a very important role. Actually, they are, I think, one of the major donors who work in this thematic area on social cohesion, governance. Many donors in these situations are more focused to activities more related to emergency. So European Union, have this side of emergency, but also, they keep working on development side. And I think that this is a very good thing because we are in this situation in Cabo Delgado, for example, for more than almost 10 years. So, we need to move to development. So, many donors are moving very, very slowly. So, you have European Union with constant funding for this development aid. So, I think that they have a very, very important role and they are very open to hear our approach and our ideas. They give us some tips, but they are not so strict. They are willing to hear about us, what we're feeling in the field and what they can help and join this opportunity with them to create some innovative activities that will reinforce the communities. And strengthen them. [09:37]

S1: Okay. And since you've been working with the EU for quite some time, have your perceptions of the EU changed over time? Like from the beginning when you started working with them up until now? [09:54]

S2: Yes, I can see some changes. For example, in the past, I think that they were also focused on education. But right now, for example, their attention, I think that almost moving for governance and to reinforce the capacity of the communities to be agents actually in development. So, they are more on this side than in the past that we have this opportunity, for example, for implementing our school project education. Right now, you [can/can't?] do

that. So, for us, Progresso as an organization with a strong basis on education. So right now, we are changing, we change a bit our focus or we spread our focus for areas as a governance, for example. So, I see that they change. [11:06]

S1: And I don't know if you've been working with Progreso for that long, but when they started working with the European Union, what was the expectation of your organization that's been coming with working with the European Union? And how was this in reality then? [11:25]

S2: Well, it's a very, it's a very difficult question for me, because when I worked with Progresso for 12 years and when I arrived here, they already have these strong relations with the European Union. And I think that we have a good relationship with them. So, it's difficult for me to answer your question, but we have a good relationship. We work with the different technicians there. For sure, when we change one to another technician, which one have the thoughts, the way of working, so we need to bring [inaudible]. But this long experience with the EU helped us to continue and engage with them with no problems. [12:32]

S1: Okay. And the EU usually emphasizes values such as democracy or participation in human rights. Do you find these values relevant and reflected in the engagement in Mozambique? [12:51]

S2: Yes, I find it. Even for our organization, one of our values is participation. And we know that participation is important for development. You can't develop a place, a person, a country without participation of these people. So, I think that these values are aligned with us. They are aligned with our country policies that will also reinforce the importance of participation. We are a very young democratic country, so we have some challenges on this issue of participation. But we are making some efforts. [13:49]

S1: Okay. And do you feel like these values are also reinforced by the EU within the projects? [14:00]

S2: Yes, yes. It's a very strong value. All these calls for proposals, they reinforce that it's important to have participation in all levels, national levels, community levels, even with the partners. So yeah, it's very strong. [14:29]

S1: And uhm you said that the EU is one of the donors that is more open to local knowledge and to local approaches. Can you maybe explain this a little bit further? [14:46]

S2: [...] Yes. As I said, we have been working for more than 10 years. So, in the past, for example, the project that we were implementing with them was a very different approach. All the approaches that we proposed there was an education project. So uhm [...] we had a progressive approach about education for adults, literacy for adults. So, they were open to experience and to allow us to implement our approach. In all of the calls for proposals or requests for proposals of EU, they always value this local knowledge. They ask to have new initiatives, bring new things. So, I think that they are very good. [16:13]

S1: And you said that especially during the call for proposals, they really incorporate local knowledge. But how do you feel like is this, once the project is getting implemented? Because especially in conflict areas, situations can change pretty fast, obviously. How flexible is the EU when it comes to these adaptations to local contexts and situations? [16:45]

S2: I think that they are flexible. One of our projects we started to implement without war, so the war is more immense. And we need to change, for example, the locals. We need to change some approach that our government feel that this approach can be harmful for the community. It's always something that they are not aware of - Hello? [17:23]

S1: Hello. Yeah. Hello. [17:29]

S2: Hello. Yeah. [17:32]

S1: Yes, can you hear me? [17:33]

S2: My internet. Yeah. I lost the internet. Uhm ok. So, I was saying that during this project, this project in European Union was flexible for us to adapt agreements, the approaches because it was not possible to implement as we have decided in the beginning. Because we don't have, in that time, we did not have the war. So, when we started, now we have the war. So, we can't go to this or that district. We can't do this and that things because the communities can think that we are maybe with the armed people or government. So, it was a very sensitive project for that time. So, they were very, very open to change and to adapt to the project for the circumstances. I remember that during the development of this project, also the country was affected of floods and some schools were destroyed. So, we asked them if we can help some communities. It was a very different thing that the project was

designed for. But they allowed. So, I think that when you explain and they feel that it's relevant, they are open to make some adjustments. [19:03]

S1: But when you say that you have to explain and then they have to see if they find it relevant, do you also see like shortcomings or challenges when it comes to situations like this? [19:20]

S2: Sorry? Can you repeat? [19:23]

S1: Uhm, you said that they are sometimes open to adjust projects to local situations, but do you also see challenges or gaps when it comes to situations like this? [19:37]

S2: Yes, it's a challenge. [inaudible] So when you have situations like that, you have to go over to have a conversation. You have to explain that it takes some time to make some amendments to the contract. Because this kind of changes, it requires amendments on the contract. So, depending on the officer in charge, it can take time. But it's not a challenge at all. We have to take [risks?]. They are flexible. We have many situations to ask, for example, for extended, non-cost extension of the projects, reallocations, budget reallocation, changing one or another activity. And we know the procedures and they have good technicians that advise us on time and they explain to us, for example, how long it can take these or that change to happen. So, I think that it's very easy. [21:12]

S1: And so, you said that the cooperation with the EU usually starts with a call for proposals. And then how does the collaboration with the EU work in practice after that? Like once you agreed on a project, then it comes to the project implementation, how does the cooperation with the EU work? [21:42]

S2: Well, we have good experience in this process. They have a clear schedule of the activities and the accompaniment that they give to us. They are open always when we need some help or when we have a question for them. They are open to help us. They have regular monitoring that are scheduled with the partner before the implementation of the project. [22:23]

S1: And then do you have like weekly or monthly meetings, reporting or how does this work? [22:31]

210 S2: We have annual reporting, but we can have for now, because we are not funded directly
211 for the EU, so for now it's different. But in the past, the report is annual, it doesn't change,
212 it continues to be annual. But they schedule meetings quarterly or six months. It depends
213 on the situation. [23:10]

214

215 S1: And who do you report to right now then? If it's not directly to the EU, who is it right
216 now? [23:20]

217

218 S2: Aga Khan. [23:19]

219

220 S1: Ah, yeah, okay. So, maybe let's move on to Cabo Delgado, in the north of Mozambique,
221 as you said, there is a conflict going on. There, peacebuilding also intersects with resource
222 extraction a lot and resources in general. And how does these conflicts be addressed by
223 EU peacebuilding projects? [23:55]

224

225 S2: I didn't get your question. Can you repeat please? [24:04]

226

227 S1: Sure. So, in Cabo Delgado, peace building intersects with resources, right? So, my
228 question is, how does, if so, Progresso address these conflicts or symptoms of these
229 conflicts in the region? [24:23]

230

231 S2: We are not working directly on this issue of resources. Yeah, we are not working on
232 this. We are more on education, social cohesion. And even in social cohesion, we are trying
233 to not be so involved with this. Sometimes we can be confronted as an opposition party or
234 so. We, as a Progresso, we are not interested to fight this stuff. [25:12]

235

236 S1: Yeah, of course. But maybe also from your experience, how do you see the EU's role
237 in addressing the conflict in Cabo Delgado directly? [25:29]

238

239 S2: I think that they have a very important role. When I look for the last call for proposal,
240 they are focused on these kinds of proposals to address the peace, to address these
241 conflicts, even in questions related to natural resources. So, we are not working on that. But
242 we see many, many requests for proposals related to this. [26:06]

243

244 S1: Okay. And do you feel like such EU-funded projects help mitigate local tensions when
245 it comes to resource exploitation or do you feel like they also risk reinforcing them? [26:23]

246

247 S2: I think that they help to mitigate. When I see the proposed approaches that they have,
248 it's just to mitigate, empower the communities, giving voices to the communities, just to fight
249 for their rights. So, I think that they reinforce the peace and not the conflict. Yeah, I didn't
250 hear that European Union is linked to a conflict or partners with a team is linked to a conflict.
251 I didn't hear. [26:57]

252

253 S1: Yes, but as there are European companies working in northern Mozambique, which
254 maybe also contributes to the people's frustration. So, this is why I just wanted to ask if, for
255 example, you believe if the EU's engagement in Mozambique is also influenced by
256 economic interests? [27:27]

257

258 S2: I don't know. I never think about it. Yeah, I never think about it. Because I never think
259 about it. I can see another countries, isolated countries that I can feel it, but I didn't hear
260 about some interests, some actions related to EU. Some countries of EU that I will not
261 mention here, but directly, yeah, it's difficult. [28:09]

262

263 S1: Okay, well, then overall, what positive outcomes have you seen from the EU funded
264 projects in Mozambique overall? Like what successes have you noted? [28:29]

265

266 S2: Yeah, I think that one thing that the EU promoted is peace, is participation, as we have
267 mentioned before. And I feel that one of the results that we can see on integration of the
268 EU is this participation. We have a society more active, more aware of their rights and how
269 to address the government, how to fight on their rights, right? So, I see that EU have a role
270 very important on this matter. It's an issue that we don't have so many donors working on
271 that. So, I think that we have good results on this, on democracy. EU works, for example,
272 on the ending of one of the wars that we have in one region here in Mozambique. So, they
273 work hard to bring peace. And I think that the, the, the [...]. It's not a country of the EU, I
274 forget the role, but the EU was very involved in this process. Even in the past, we always
275 had the European Union involved in all this working for peace building. So, I think we have
276 good results on this. [30:26]

277

278 S1: Okay and where do you see the biggest challenges still or shortcomings overall? [30:35]

279

280 S2: Challenges in what? [30:42]

281

282 S1: In the projects or in the cooperation with the EU. [30:48]

283

284 S2: Uhm [...] I don't know. [...] I don't think that the EU is a very difficult donor. [...] It's a
285 donor that you as an organization have to be very organized with systems in place. [...]
286 Maybe because we have some good experience with the EU. I don't feel they are very good
287 on the accomplishment of the rules, that it's very normal. Other donors are not like them. I
288 think that. [32:00]

289

290 S1: So, you said now a few times that the European Union is in some areas easier or better
291 than other donors when working with them. What is it that makes the European Union a
292 good donor? [32:20]

293

294 S2: I think that for our experience, the flexibility during the implementation of the projects,
295 this accompaniment also during the implementation of the project. Because some donors,
296 they give you money, they go and come to see the results. So, this process of the European
297 Union to accompany, to follow up the implementation and help you to deliver better results.
298 I think that it's a good thing. [32:59]

299

300 S1: Do you also feel like that- you said that you are reporting to them, but are they also in
301 direct touch with you on the ground? [33:16]

302

303 S2: I didn't get you. [33:39]

304

305 S1: You said that you are reporting to the European Union or now to Aga Khan, for example.
306 But when it was funded directly by the European Union, was the cooperation only with
307 funding and reporting or do they sometimes visit or how does this go? [33:56]

308

309 S2: It was a partnership. It was a partnership. It's like a partnership. So, it was more than
310 reporting. They were always in uhm. Oh, my English (laughing). They accompanied the
311 projects and they were always here just to ask if we have some doubts, we have some
312 questions, we are facing some challenges. [34:30]

313

314 S1: Okay. That sounds like a really good cooperation, really. But still, are there some
315 recommendations you would give to the EU if you could right now? [34:43]

316

317 S1: Well, I didn't think about that. But one of the challenges for us and other organizations
318 during the process of applying for projects funded by the EU was the rate of contribution of
319 the organization because sometimes you have to contribute to the project. And, well, it's not
320 so easy to contribute to that, to have to find this contribution. So, it's a challenge we faced,

321 time faced and it was a challenge. So, if they can improve on this, but I don't, I have no
322 doubts about this because it's a policy, it's a policy for them. So, it's very difficult to judge.
323 But we have also one challenge in one of our partnerships because we didn't understand
324 very well the contract. So, it's important to make sure to explain the contract to the partners
325 and they make sure that we understand very well the contract. So, yeah. [36:13]

326

327 S1: But are the contracts in English, Dan, or are they in Portuguese? [36:20]

328

329 S2: No, in Portuguese. [36:21]

330

331 S1: Okay, but I suppose it's in a very, very formal language then? [36:24]

332

333 S2: Yes, yes, yes. It was in Portuguese. And even they say that, oh, it was a mistake. It's
334 important to sit and explain very well the partners, yeah, before the beginning of the
335 implementation. [36:54]

336

337 S1: Yeah, sure. Of course. Well, then from my side, this would be all my questions already.
338 I don't know if you have anything to add that you feel like is important that we haven't talked
339 about yet. You can add anything, of course. [37:10]

340

341 S2: I think no. No, no. [37:18]

342

343 S1: Well, I just wanted to propose that if you are interested, I can send you my results of
344 my thesis as soon as I'm done. It will probably take until March or something. But I can
345 send, I will definitely send them over to you if you are interested. [37:38]

346

347 S2: Please, please send. It will be a document, a very important document to inform us for
348 the next actions, even in the projects that we are implementing. Because I see that you are
349 working in Cabo Delgado? [38:00]

350

351 S1: Yeah, it's mostly focused on Cabo Delgado, yes. [38:02]

352

353 S2: Yes. So sometimes we miss information about this region. So, I think that your thesis
354 will bring some very good information. [38:16]

355

356 S1: Yeah, hopefully. Well and then I have one last thing to ask. You said that you are not
357 directly working in the conflict zone because obviously it's very hard to work in conflict

358 affected areas. But do you know a CSO or an organization that does work in the conflict
359 zone directly? [38:41]

360

361 S2: No, no, no. There are many organizations there. I can send you by email. My colleague
362 who is working in Pemba, he can update me. Because when some district is attacking all of
363 us, we go to the Pemba city. So sometimes you can think that our progress is working and
364 [inaudible] have an attack. So, let me check with my colleague just to make sure. We have,
365 for example, Safe The Children. We have [inaudible]. And Wiwanana. But let me check with
366 my colleague just to keep you up to date. [39:39]

367

368 S1: That would be great. That would be great. Well, thank you. That would help me a lot
369 because it's really hard to get in contact with smaller CSOs. But it's important to me that I
370 do not only talk with big organizations but rather with local people and local organizations.
371 So that would be great if you could connect me. [40:03]

372

373 S2: Yeah, I will help you. Can you just email me just to remind me? [40:11]

374

375 S1: Yes, definitely. Well, then, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me. [40:14]

376

377 S2: Thank you. You're welcome. [40:22]

378

379 S1: Bye. [40:22]

380

381 S2: Bye. [40:22]

XI. Interview 8

The following transcript is from an interview, as part of a research project on “The European Union in Resource-Rich Post-Conflict Contexts,” focusing on how the EU’s peacebuilding initiatives contribute to peace in Mozambique. The interview was held with one local expert (E10) working for an NGO involved in the implementation of EU-funded peacebuilding projects. In the transcription, the speakers are labeled as Speaker 1 (S1) for the interviewer and Speaker 2 (S2) for the interviewee. All participants provided informed consent for the use of this transcript for research purposes.

S1: Recording now, okay. Well, maybe you can also start by briefly introducing yourself and your organization. [00:09]

S2: [...] Thank you. I don't know whether you can hear me. Cause I'm on the road but I think you can hear me? [00:22]

S1: Yes. [00:22]

S2: You hear me perfectly? [00:26]

S1: Yeah, I can hear you. [00:28]

S2: Okay. So, my name is [Name 1], as I just told you. Currently, I'm working in an organization called “Forum Terra”. “Forum Terra” is an organization based in Capo Delgado. Capo Delgado is one of the provinces of Mozambique. And actually, it's the province where we have the struggle these days, because we have a kind of a [inaudible] in our province. So, we are here in Capo Delgado. And Forum Terra is an organization, it's a local NGO and it works with several areas, like land, rights of land and natural resources, peacebuilding and gender. And these are some of the activities that Forum Terra is engaged in. We are based in Pemba, Pemba City. And we have been working with several other organizations in terms of natural resources management. We have helped to organize committees, local committees, which we call "community committees for natural resource management". And we have also worked with women in Palma. So, Palma is one of the districts where the natural resource, like gas, it was covered. And somehow, women are left behind when there are initiatives. So, we implemented the project there, where we work with women and giving them an opportunity to do some income-generating activities. And we have also worked with the [inaudible] in Montepuez. So, that initiative was mainly to give opportunities,

because we have some parts of province where we think that the exploitation of natural resources, it's very high. So, it's endangering the environment. So, we had that initiative to make sure that people, instead of devastating forests for charcoal, so that they had some activities where they were busy doing something to generate some income while leaving the natural resources. Now, we have this initiative with the Aga Khan Foundation. And we are mainly helping the Aga Khan Foundation to take on some activities. The activities, we call them "community development committees", or "local development committees". So, these committees can somehow, as I told you, that you have that structure in Cabo Delgado. And there are so many people who fled from those areas where the terrorism is high, like in the north of the province and somehow, they went to other districts. And when they are in those districts now, they are new people, they have nothing, they have no knowledge. And also, it happens that when someone faces a problem with terrorism, even psychologically, physically, there is something that has to be paid attention to. So, we are working with Aga Khan in that initiative of trying to bring them together and to promote peace. So, briefly, our organization is like that. We have now more than [...] and the, the organization, started in 2006. So, as you see, we have something like more than 20 years. So, briefly, this is my introduction and my organization. [05:41]

S1: Well, thank you. And did I understand you right, that your project with Aga Khan currently is financed by the European Union? [05:52]

S2: Yes, yes. [05:57]

S1: Okay. And are you also working directly with the European Union or is it through Aga Khan currently? [06:07]

S2: Currently, our funding is from Aga Khan, directly from the European Union. [06:15]

S1: Yeah, okay. And how long have you, in general, been working in EU-funded projects? [06:22]

S2: Actually, this is the first time our organization is funded. [phone ringing noises]. Can you hear me? [06:41]

S1: Yeah, I can hear you. [...] Okay uhm - [06:46]

S2: Yes and I was saying, this initiative with the funds of the European Union, it's like we started it last year, this year, in June. So, it's a new funding. This is the first time that our organization is working with funds of the European Union. [07:08]

S1: And could you repeat again how the project is called? [07:13]

S2: Yes, this project the "Cohesus"-project. And "Cohesus" means cohesion. So, cohesion means that we are together on that case. So, the aim of this project is that, as I said, we have people coming from the areas where there is terrorism. Sometimes they are traumatized and when they arrive in new areas, sometimes they are not well received. So, the main object of this project is to make people that those who are coming from outside and those who are local, they come together. This is one of the objectives. But another objective, because the situation of terrorism in Cabo Delgado, somewhere in the beginning, the reasons were not very clear. So, when it started, people said that it has a Muslim origin, that the Muslims, they don't like other religions, or they don't like the government. But later on, what was understood, we had many youths joining those groups. And this young people, sometimes they were not all of them Muslims. So, one of the reasons is that maybe we have many young people without opportunities, without employment and without opportunities. And they find that if they go, they join those groups, they may have some opportunities, like an opportunity to gain some respect. So, one of the objectives of this project is to give to the youth alternative occupation through sports, sport for example. We know that when people are engaged in sports, sometimes they feel busy and they probably may not be joining those groups. So, this is another objective of this project, to give the people opportunities to keep busy and happy, so that they don't end up joining those extremist groups. [10:07]

S1: Okay. And how do you perceive the role of the European Union in these peacebuilding projects? [10:18]

S2: I think that the European Union is contributing a lot in Mozambique. First, through this project that they have funded directly to communities. Because I think this is a direct funding to communities, so that the communities, youth in the communities, they can have a source of income and also to have opportunities to get together, so that they don't end up joining extremist groups. But the government in the higher level and also the contribution that is given, because before joining this association, I also had the opportunity to work for a local association. But of course, this was not directly from the European Union. It was the European Union through the International Organization on Migrations. So, what we did, it

was to get every two weeks to put together people, so to discuss it, we call them "peace labs". So, to discuss, because some issues that the conflict or starting problems, maybe there are things that the community can solve, the local government can solve. But if these situations are not resolved in time, they can turn into a conflict, a big conflict. So, I think this contribution of the European Union through this organization, this small part, because I cannot talk about the help that the European Union is giving the government. Of course, we understand that the European Union is helping the government, but most of the people are still doing, like training. So, I mean, in the local community, it is these small funds that seem to be small, they have a great impact in keeping peace and keeping people together and contributing to peace building. So, this is my opinion. [12:52]

S1: Okay, well if I understood it right, you try to give the people perspective so that they don't join extremist groups. But how exactly do you do that on the field? Like, what is it that you employ to keep them from joining these extremists? [13:18]

S2: As I was saying before, there are two ways that we do it. Actually, we like playing football and so on. So, it's possible, even when we have some, sometimes we organize teams here, like a country or a village team. So, even this team between villages, when there is a day when they play, almost everyone, every youth are there. But these people, these young people, sometimes they don't have, they don't have, like, even they don't have balls, like balls and they don't have any rewards. So, these small funds that we organize, like, we are organizing here a challenge, let's play, like, that village and that village. When there are those kinds of sports, youth are joining. Some are joining to play; others are coming to watch. So, this time when they are busy playing football, we think that they are not enjoying the other groups. So, uhm [...] sorry [...] and if we give them some opportunity to do something that they can generate income, because unemployment here in Mozambique, the rate of unemployment is very high. It's very high. So, if we have many young people without employment, if they don't do nothing, maybe what they think to gain some income is maybe to join those groups. So, that's why the other thing that we do is just to see the local resources that we have and to empower them to do some business, small business, so that they can have some source of income and then don't think to join a group to gain money. These are the two main objectives that we are pushing. [16:31]

S1: And you know, the European Union emphasizes values such as democracy, participation or human rights. Do you feel like these values are relevant in Mozambique and also reflected in the projects? [16:50]

138 S2: Uh can you repeat it? Sorry. [16:58]

139

140 S1: The European Union emphasizes values such as democracy, participation or human
141 rights. Do you feel like these values are reflected in the projects in Mozambique? [17:12]

142

143 S2: Yes, yes. They are very reflected. They are very reflected. Besides the projects that
144 they support, even policies of the EU, democracy, human rights are always there. For
145 example, even our organization, though we have not directly been receiving the funds
146 through the European Union, but we receive from Aga Khan, who receives from the
147 European Union. And we have the strict policies that we need and policy rules that we need
148 to follow in order to respect human rights and to respect democracy. Yes, yes. So, the
149 contribution of the European Union in this topic is really very, very, very high and very
150 important. As you know, we have here so many, many initiatives and projects which are
151 supported by the European Union. And we really realize that wherever you go and there is
152 a project which is in the area, there is any project funded by the European Union, you see
153 even the behavior of the people engaged in those projects, even the behavior of the
154 community that is starting to assume that those values. Mainly when we talk about
155 democracy, human rights, of course, we are in a country where you can find, one be
156 different, but you can find groups. And sometimes when the groups are different, sometimes
157 we may think that it's difficult to manage it. Like we have, we are in Cabo Delgado, we have
158 15 main ethnic groups, even in every district, in every village that you go, you may find three
159 different ethnic groups. But the way in the districts, in the districts when the European Union,
160 there is any project, you see even the community members, even the people in the
161 community, the way they act, the way they behave between them, even you don't, you don't
162 even discover that there are three ethnic groups here. If you are not from, for example, we
163 are talking about, let's say, Mocimboa da Praia, if you are not from there, you will not
164 discover that here there are different ethnic groups. But why? Because people have learned
165 that each one has an ethnic group, has a religion and we need to respect each other. So,
166 in that way we can work together. But this, because years ago, I mean, like we are talking
167 about the situation of terrorism is very high. Something like 20 years before, there were civil
168 conflicts between two ethnic groups, like Makonds and the Mwanis. The problem is that in
169 2000, there was a problem, a kind of unrest, but a local unrest, where the Makonds were, if
170 you find a Mwani, you should beat him, or the Mwani should beat him. But at that time, we
171 didn't have many projects acting in those places. But from 15 years up to now, those
172 situations are not happening. But it's just the contribution of such organizations that are
173 coming with this policy of human rights, respect each one's religion and ethnic group, so

that together we get it. So, the conversation, of course, is very important. It's having a great impact in Mozambique. [21:40]

S1: Right now, you are working through Aga Khan with the European Union, so in what ways do you feel like that these European Union programs incorporate local knowledge and local agency and local traditions into their project designs? [22:09]

S2: Well, of course we are working through Aga Khan. But let me try to answer your question. Because, our organization, we have been trying also to apply like the narrative to European Union and other organizations. So, what I understood because, of course, in my organization, I'm engaging also in trying designing projects for fundraising. And what I perceive from the concept, they ask always, they ask for some contribution of the community. Not contribution in terms of materials, but also contribution in terms of knowledge or resources which are in the local community. Even in that project that we are now with Aga Khan, one of the, of course, we are helping the community to implement the project. We call them community projects based on the community initiative. But those projects, one of the things that they ask is that the project must be based on resources which are local, which comes with something to have, but some resources must be local. And also, sometimes even if they are, I remember one of the most likely, if an organization which is international and wants to implement something in Mozambique, they must have some people from Mozambique, or they have to join local projects, I mean local organizations, because the local organizations are the ones who know what are the real problems of the country, the real problems of the province. So, I think that although we still didn't have the funds directly from the European Union, but from the concept, not from the initiative we have with Aga Khan, I think the European Union always asks that the local knowledge, local people, there must be inclusion of the local knowledge, local people and local resources. [25:07]

S1: Okay. I mean, working in a conflict zone or in a region that is affected by conflict obviously can be very challenging and also situations change really fast. So, how flexible is the European Union when it comes to adapting the project to local timelines or to just local situations? [25:43]

S2: Yes. I can answer from the knowledge I have. Of course they are flexible. I know some Organizations that were implementing a project in Mocímboa da Praia, because it's something like two years, so the situation started to get calm and the things were now starting. So, we have another organization that I know, but after some time, the situation

started to worsen again. So, they asked to the donor that don't have this situation here, but the project can be implemented in Mueda instead. Mueda is one of the organizations near Mocímboa da Praia. So, they accepted and they said, even because some of the people which were in Mocímboa da Praia were fleeing to Mueda. So, they said, no, we think that there are 10 people that we are helping, so they allowed. So, I mean, I think that they are flexible. At least at this level, so at a higher level, I'm not sure. [27:13]

S1: And do you, I mean, if so, do you see also challenges when it comes to this topic? [27:21]

S2: Yeah, of course there is a challenge. I mean, because, of course, flexibility is very important. It's very important, but I think that there are some organizations which are not really flexible and it's really challenging, mainly challenging for small organizations, local organizations that are implementing the initiatives on the ground. Sometimes it happens that they say that, no, our target is this region. So, you don't have to move from this region. And, of course, it's challenging. There are situations that are happening. And, of course, it's a big challenge, because some organizations, they end up saying, "okay, we will continue. There's no problem". But, while there is a problem, I don't know whether you understand me. [28:48]

S1: Yeah. No, I think I do. [28:54]

S2: Yeah. They say, "no, there's no problem. I will continue. Because we are not flexible and you said that this activity must be implemented here". But on the ground, I feel that these activities, they cannot be implemented because there's this situation. And if I say, "no, this situation, the situation now is not really good for these activities. Let me change to another place". Then some are like "no, you need to, we said that we need these activities to be implemented in this region". Because you are small, sometimes you need resources, even then. You end up saying, "okay, I will implement". But while you know that we have problems. At the end, you will know that the indicators are not, we have achieved objectives, are not achieved. It's only then, we will say, I told you that it's impossible to do that. So, in the ground, those situations happen. There are organizations that are not flexible. We're funded to implement these activities in this region. Because now we have many organizations coming to implement because we are in Cabo Delgado, but the conflict, the terrorism is in the north of Cabo Delgado. There are organizations that say that these initiatives are for those people who are in the north of Cabo Delgado. And if you apply for funding, it's to go there. Then you go, the situation of course is good, but after two months,

248 the situation comes worse again. And the other organization does not allow you to change.
249 So, you sign the funding, so you continue in the same area where it is said that the initiative
250 must happen. [31:02]

251

252 S1: And also, how does the cooperation through Aga Khan with the European Union work
253 in practice? Do you also have to do reports to the European Union or only to Aga Khan right
254 now? [31:21]

255

256 S2: Right now, we just report to Aga Khan. We just report to Aga Khan. Aga Khan then
257 reports to EU. Because Aga Khan, they have two organizations working in the same
258 initiative, but in different areas. So, we report to Aga Khan, then Aga Khan reports to EU.
259 [31:46]

260

261 S1: Okay. And when it came to project design, did Aga Khan and EU designed the project
262 or was your organization already involved too? [31:59]

263

264 S2: Actually, our organization was involved. What happened at the Aga Khan, it was like
265 they asked for concept notes and each organization had to apply. And then they evaluated
266 and we were the selected ones or one of the organizations selected. So, there was like
267 guidelines, what the European Union and Aga Khan need from "Cohensus". So, our
268 organization had to design these small projects. There's a big project which was designed
269 by Aga Khan, but this small project that we are implementing, we had to design it according
270 to the objectives of the European Union and of Aga Khan. [32:59]

271

272 S1: You now say that the small projects, you had to design it in terms of the objectives of
273 Aga Khan and the European Union, but do you feel like that your perspectives were still
274 considered during this process? [33:17]

275

276 S2: Yes, uhm of course our ideas and our design was impacting. Because uhm when they
277 asked for the concept notes, as I said, we have communities and we have a project called
278 "Cohesus" and we need the organization to help the local communities to implement
279 projects related to peacebuilding. So then, it was like the big objective. But now the specific
280 objectives, the specific ideas, they came from us. [34:18]

281

282 S1: And also, your organization is working a lot around the topic of resources and especially
283 in Cabo Delgado, obviously, peacebuilding intersects with resource extraction issues. Do

you feel like that EU-funded projects help mitigate those tensions around resource exploitation, or do they risk reinforcing them? [34:47]

S2: They really help in mitigating the problem, they contribute for mitigation, not enforcing the situation. If we talk about natural resources, for example. Because what happens here, people cut trees for charcoal to sell and sometimes they cut trees for firewood and not use to sell. And our integration, one of the objectives is to sensitize the communities, to show them the bad impacts that may occur when you devastate the four places, what happens in impacts. And we give clear example for it. For example, here in Cabo Delgado, it was normal sometimes to go to the north to see like elephants, zebras, along the way. But now you see nothing. And also, even there are changes in the rainy season. Years before, like from October, it started to rain and people started to sow, to cultivate in October. But now, the rain starts in December and sometimes they are not enough. So, those are examples that we give to them, that these are really direct impacts of climate change. Even if they don't know what climate change is, we give this example. So, sensitizing is one of our big objectives. The community must be aware that when they do that, the consequence is like that. And as we sensitize, we tell them to stop cutting trees to sell, stop doing this. That's why we give those alternative sources of income, so that they give up using cut trees to sell and they have some other business. Like the honey production. We have honey production. We have implemented like pottery for women. And we have here some stoves. They are local stoves, but we call them improved stoves. They use charcoal, but the quantity of charcoal they use is very less than ordinary stoves. So, we sensitize them to use these kinds of stoves. And also, we teach them how to make these stoves and to sell to other people. And it becomes a source of income generating resource. At the same time, they also contribute to sensitize other people to reduce the use of charcoal. [38:17]

S1: In the north of Mozambique, there are also big European companies like Total, for example, extracting natural resources. So, maybe in terms of this, do you feel like that the European Union's engagement in Mozambique is also influenced by economic resource-related interests? [38:45]

S2: Well. This is difficult to answer. Well, I don't know. Maybe it may happen. But directly, I don't know. It may happen. We don't say that it may not happen. It may happen. But, of course, I'm not sure. Of course, what we know is that when it comes to exploitation of natural resources, like natural gas, petrol, sometimes we know that this is business. There are people who say that, you know, anyone coming to contribute is coming to business. So, it may happen, but I'm not sure. Of course, we have Total here, which is trying to implement

those projects of natural gas exploitation. And, of course, the European Union is contributing, as I said before, is supporting the defence forces in training. So, maybe we don't know. Maybe they are empowering those defence forces so that they can protect the business. So, we don't know, but I'm not sure. [40:17]

S1: Yeah, I mean, obviously, this isn't something that anyone could ultimately know. But does this kind of engagement also impact the credibility of the European Union overall for you? [40:29]

S2: [...] Pardon? Sorry? [40:37]

S1: Yes. I can hear you. Should I repeat the question? [40:43]

S2: [...] Yes, please. [40:54]

S1: Yeah, I mean, does this, so that the European Union might be also influenced by economic interests, does this, for you, impact the credibility of the European Union? [41:12]

S2: Well, I think, yes, somehow, yes. Yeah, because what it says, it's like when there is exploitation of natural resources, like natural gas, petroleum, sometimes what happens in Africa, there is always conflict in those countries where it is exploration of those resources. So, of course, sometimes it's easier to connect the economic interests. I'm not saying that there are economic interests, but ordinarily, it's easier to think that there is a connection. But seeing what happens in other countries, the experience of other countries and seeing also the engagement, sometimes it seems that the engagement in those areas where there is exploitation of natural gas, the engagement is higher than the other areas. I see, I mean of course, uhm I'm here in Cabo Delgado, I see that the engagement of the European Union and the other organizations is different from other parts of the country. In the other parts of the country, there is almost, there is no expression of those organizations. And here, in Cabo Delgado, the interest is high in helping, like the force to train them, the military forces, so that they can deal with the terrorists. So, someone who does not really uhm how can I say? One of my people say, I mean, maybe thinking, seeing what happens in other countries, maybe they are really engaged in helping us, but there is something that they need from us. I think that I should be – I'll try to use my phone. I think my computer is losing battery. But so, it happens. People may think that the economic interests are behind the help that we are receiving. I don't know. I'm not saying that there is that interest, but sometimes maybe. [44:00]

358

359 S1: Mm-hmm. Yes. But maybe to summarize, what positive outcomes have you seen from
360 EU-funded peace building projects in Mozambique overall? [44:14]

361

362 S2: Well, as I was saying before, there are really positive outcomes, starting from the
363 communities, the cohesion in the communities. There are good examples. It's not only Aga
364 Khan that is implementing those projects related to peacebuilding, but as I said, there are
365 other organizations funded by the EU for peacebuilding. And we see that the cohesion in
366 the communities has really increased and it's positive, because we have, in the beginning,
367 sometimes even people fleeing from one region to another region, they were not hosted
368 positively. They were regarded like strangers. But nowadays, that's not what's happening.
369 Because these EU-funded projects, all the committees, it was compulsory that some of the
370 members, the majority of the members should be people coming from other regions, being
371 from the total region. So, it was hard for people to get together. But nowadays, you don't
372 even understand that this one had come from another tribe, it came from another region,
373 which is secure now. You don't realize that there are people from different parts. So, this
374 cohesion has improved. And I would say thanks to the integrations of those projects funded
375 by the EU. [...] [46:21]

376

377 S1: And- [46:21]

378

379 S2: And uhm yes- [46:21]

380

381 S1: No, keep going, I'm sorry, I didn't want to, to interrupt. [46:30]

382

383 S2: Okay. Even, I was saying, even if in terms of, because the EU is not working only with
384 communities, but they are also working with the governments. And the instruction that they
385 are giving to defence forces, it's not like it's just fighting the terrorism, but also the issue of
386 human rights, the issue of preventing gender-based violence. And the situation has
387 improved a lot. Because we had sometimes, in the beginning, there were reports that even
388 people were abused by the defence forces. But I think that because there was that issue,
389 that there was lack of knowledge of human rights. But since, because the EU officially had
390 started to help even the government, that was just in the beginning of this situation. And
391 from now, it's not normal to hear that there was a kind of situation that the military has
392 abused someone, has abused ladies. Because they went through this training. They went
393 through this training. So, I think that's a really positive aspect that we can mention. [48:14]

394

395 S1: Okay and where do you still see the biggest challenges or shortcomings still? [48:26]

396

397 S2: Well, of course. Challenges? Maybe we know that we still need more. We still need
398 more. There's too much work that must be done. Even these activities that they were saying
399 that help with cohesion, that help the youth not think about joining those groups. Those are
400 challenges. But which I think that we, as a small organization, as Mozambicans in general,
401 we are still far to take over those situations. Because as a country, we are still troubled, we
402 still struggle. We have several challenges. And we, as an organization, also we have
403 challenges. Because to take on those activities, of course, always you need funding. If you
404 think that we need youth to get something, you can teach them something to do, like to be
405 a carpenter or to do something to generate his employment. Teach him how to do good
406 agriculture so that he can be busy trying to do something to earn some income. But we
407 really struggle how to get started. We have a big challenge to get how to get started. To
408 give you an example, as I told you that we as an organization, of course, we are something
409 like we have now almost three years, but we are still small. But why we are still small?
410 Because we don't have enough resources to implement our activities. And to get funding
411 from those organizations, it's not easy. It's a big challenge. To get funding from the
412 European Union or other organizations, it's really a big challenge. Even trying to apply to
413 an organization, but unfortunately, directly from the European Union, we could not get it yet.
414 Because it's really a big challenge. One of the challenges is that, of course, there is funding
415 for the European Union, but the requirement to get that funding is not easy. Yeah, they are
416 not easy. There are some requirements that a local organization may not be able to get that
417 chance to be funded. And if it's a big organization, the bigger organizations are not based
418 like in Cabo Delgado, for example. Or sometimes they are not based in Mozambique, for
419 example. And if they get funded by the European Union, they are free to choose where they
420 go. And they will not say that they are going to Cabo Delgado. Why? They say "no, there is
421 a challenge in Cabo Delgado". But we are here, we know where to work. We know that the
422 situation of terrorism, from outside may be something very, very dangerous. But we are
423 here and we know that, of course, there is terrorism, but this situation is in this point, that
424 point and that point. But you can implement it at this point, that point and so on. So that's
425 one of the big challenges. It's not easy to get the opportunity to be funded by the European
426 Union or other big organizations. [52:46]

427

428 S1: Okay. And overall, from your perspective, is there a gap between EU's rhetoric and its
429 actions in practice? [52:58]

430

431 S2: Sorry? [53:05]

432

433 S1: And also from your perspective, is there a gap between EU's rhetoric or its values and
434 its action in practice? [53:13]

435

436 S2: Well, of course, I would say that there is a gap. Although some might seem to be
437 misunderstandable, but there is a gap. There is a gap. Maybe, if there are opportunities to
438 contribute to local communities, maybe they should stratify the funding opportunities. Like
439 to have opportunities for local organizations and opportunities which are the most general,
440 that international organizations are really the organizations that can implement it. But
441 looking at the situation that we have in Mozambique, specifically in Cabo Delgado, of
442 course, there is a need for opportunities designed for the real situation of Cabo Delgado.
443 Because if the interventions are generalized, definitely there will always be a gap. There will
444 always be a gap. And that gap may contribute that the interventions of the EU at the top are
445 not seen that will reach the communities. So, if the interventions are to reach the
446 communities, there is a need to stratify the intervention, I would say. Not to generalize.
447 [55:10]

448

449 S1: Okay. So, do I understand you right? That you mean that because right now very small
450 and local organizations don't really get the opportunity to be funded directly from EU
451 because the EU rather uses bigger internationalized organizations and then they just sub-
452 grant their fundings? [...] Hello? [...] Are you still there? [...] [56:08]

453

454 [interviewee joining the call through another medium]

455

456 S1: Hello? [56:09]

457

458 S2: Hello again. Sorry my battery was empty. [56:21]

459

460 S1: So, I was just asking if I understood it right. I don't know if you could understand my
461 question? I can also repeat it again. [56:34]

462

463 S2: Okay, you can repeat it. [56:35]

464

465 S1: I just wanted to see if I understood you right. So as far as I understood you, right now
466 smaller local organizations don't really have the opportunity to get directly funded by the
467 EU, but the EU rather chooses bigger international organizations and then they sub-grant
468 their fundings, right? [57:07]

469

470 S2: Yes, but not- even if they have some organization. I just want to correct the
471 "international". Of course, there are some national organizations, but they are not small.

472 [57:30]

473

474 S1: So as a small organization, you would wish that it was easier to get funded directly by
475 the EU? [57:38]

476

477 S2: Exactly. But because of the fact that these organizations that go in the ground, they
478 know that the situation is in the ground. So, if there was that possibility of also funding
479 directly the small organization, I think that it would be a big contribution for the situation.

480 [58:04]

481

482 S1: So, is it for you a disadvantage that you are funded, for example, through Aga Khan
483 then? [58:11]

484

485 S2: Actually, no. Actually, no. It's an advantage. Because why do I say that it is an
486 advantage? Because this is an opportunity to grow. Aga Khan is a big organization. Working
487 with that organization, it also helps to contribute to the reputation of the organization. So,
488 it's not an advantage. [58:40]

489

490 S1: So, compared to being funded directly by the EU, this would be better, being directly
491 funded? [58:51]

492

493 S2: Yes. [58:51]

494

495 S1: Better why? Because there is more funding then? Or what is exactly better when being
496 directly funded? [59:00]

497

498 S2: Being directly funded, I think that even the opportunity to grow, even the visibility of
499 other organizations, is much better than working under other organizations. Of course, it's
500 not like the funding may be huge, because the funding depends on what is the initiative.
501 Yes, it's not like the funding may be different, maybe huge or small, but the visibility and the
502 chance for the organization to grow and show what it can do to help the communities, I think
503 it's better than when it's directly funded, than when it comes under other organizations.

504 [59:54]

505

506 S1: Okay, I understand. Well then, this was my last question. But if there is anything, that
507 we haven't talked about yet, that you feel like is important, feel free to add anything. [1:00:15]
508

509 S2: Uhm well, actually right now I think I am okay. I have nothing else. But if any idea comes
510 later, I can contact you through your Email. And also, if you have anything that you would
511 like that I have or a question that you forgot, you can continue writing through email. But
512 right now, I think that's it. [1:00:45]
513

514 S1: Okay. Well, thank you so much and also, if you are interested in reading the results of
515 my thesis, I can send it to you as soon as I am done writing. [1:00:59]
516

517 S2: Oh, thank you. I would appreciate that. [1:01:02]
518

519 S1: okay yes. It can take a little bit longer though. I plan on being finished by March.
520 [1:01:05]
521

522 S2: Alright. Have a nice work [1:01:12]
523

524 S1: Well yes. Thank you so much, again. [1:01:18]
525

526 S2: Of course. Bye. [1:01:19]
527

528 S1: Bye. [1:01:19]

XII. Interview Response (written) EUMAM MOZ**INTERVIEW RESPONSES – EUMAM MOZ MOZAMBIQUE****Normative Foundations & Concepts of the EU**

How does the EU/EUMAM MOZ define “peacebuilding” and how is this reflected in Mozambique?

The EU defines peacebuilding as an integrated approach that uses external policy tools like security, development and diplomacy to build sustainable peace and prevent violent conflict. It encompasses a wide range of activities, including conflict prevention, mediation, strengthening the rule of law, supporting democratic development and addressing underlying causes of conflict, such as poverty and inequality. The European Union Military Assistance Mission in Mozambique (EUMAM MOZ) is part of the EU’s Integrated Approach to the crisis in Cabo Delgado, which combines political dialogue, humanitarian aid, peacebuilding, security and development.

The EU often refers to its missions as contributing to “stabilisation.” How is “stability” defined and measured within EUMAM MOZ and how does it differ from “peace”?

The EU defines military stabilisation as a transitional and multifaceted approach to crisis management that combines military action with civilian, political and humanitarian efforts to reduce violence, support legitimate local actors and create conditions for long-term peace.

EUMAM MOZ aims to ensure that the 11 Quick Reaction Force (QRF) units that were trained under EUTM are fully autonomous by June 2026.

To what extent are values such as democracy, human rights and participation central in practice?

Human rights, international humanitarian law and gender equality are at the core of all EUMAM MOZ activities. The Mission includes specialised training and advisory components on the protection of civilians, conduct and discipline, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and the promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Security and Militarisation (EUMAM MOZ)

EUMAM MOZ represents the EU's second military mission (following EUTM) in Mozambique. How does this military engagement relate to the EU's broader peacebuilding agenda?

EUMAM MOZ is part of the EU's response to the request of the Government of Mozambique to support its efforts for peace and security in Cabo Delgado. It is a nonexecutive mission providing advisory and capacity-building support, not engaging in military operations. Its goal is to support the creation of the security conditions necessary for development, political dialogue and humanitarian assistance.

To what extent can military assistance and peacebuilding be seen as compatible goals?

Military assistance is part of the peacebuilding process, within the EU integrated approach to crisis management.

There can be no sustainable development or safe return of displaced populations without security. Strengthening FADM capacities is essential for re-establishing state presence and rebuilding trust with local communities in Cabo Delgado.

How is success defined and evaluated for EUMAM MOZ — what indicators or benchmarks assess progress?

EUMAM MOZ mission is to ensure that the 11 QRF units operate autonomously, self-sustainably, professionally and in line with international human rights and humanitarian law standards, until June 2026. EUMAM MOZ is a non-executive mission, operating outside of Cabo Delgado, supporting/advising and mentoring the FADM, in line with IHL and IHRL.

How does EUMAM MOZ ensure that its activities align with human rights and conflict sensitivity standards?

Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law is integrated into all EUMAM MOZ activities as per our mandate.

Critics argue that the EU's increasing reliance on security and defence instruments risks a "securitisation of peacebuilding". How would you respond to such critiques in the Mozambican context?

This question falls outside the Mission's mandate.

Motivations & Interests

Are EUMAM MOZs goals mainly normative, or also shaped by political/economic interests in Mozambique?

The Mission responds to a formal request from the Government of Mozambique and is guided by the principles of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy. Its objectives are solely focused on human security and regional stability.

To what degree do natural resources shape the EU's engagement in Mozambique?

This question falls outside the Mission's mandate.

Do you see tensions between peacebuilding objectives and the EU's economic or commercial interests?

The Mission is non-executive and solely focused on security and stability.

Implementation & Cooperation

How are Mozambican NGOs, community organizations and civil society involved in EU programs like EUMAM MOZ and what challenges arise in working with local partners?

EUMAM MOZ cooperates closely with Mozambican authorities and coordinates with other national and international actors, contributing to the stabilisation and security of Mozambique.

Has the EUMAM MOZ mission faced challenges in balancing security imperatives with local trust-building and conflict prevention efforts?

No (see answer above).

How does the EU engage with European or foreign companies as part of its peacebuilding and stabilization efforts (e.g. through public-private partnerships in post-conflict reconstruction)?

This question falls outside the Mission's mandate.

Regional Focus: Cabo Delgado**How does EUMAM MOZ address the insurgency and humanitarian crisis in Cabo Delgado and which specific measures or programs have been put in place?**

EUMAM MOZ recognises the complex challenges in Cabo Delgado. Its role is to support the FADM in becoming more prepared and effective in protecting civilians through advising and mentoring activities.

In the first year, EUMAM MOZ has organised, in close collaboration with FADM, more than 15 programmes, involving more than 500 Mozambican military personnel in different areas, such as logistics, mentoring, leadership, legal, gender advising, civil military cooperation and communication.

EUMAM MOZ is the successor of the EUTM MOZ (2021-2024), whose mission included achievements such as training 11 QRF units with a total of 1700 military personnel, developing and certifying more than 100 Mozambican instructors, enhancing the FADM counter-terrorism capabilities, promoting adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law, aiming to support FADM to better protect the civilian population.

How are local grievances (e.g. displacement and gas exploitation) incorporated into EU responses?

This question falls outside the Mission's mandate.

How does the EU balance short-term stabilization (security) with long-term peacebuilding in this region?

Short-term stabilisation is a prerequisite for long-term peace. EUMAM MOZ's objective is to assist the Mozambican Armed Forces in maintaining security.

What role should military training missions play in long-term peacebuilding and where are its limits?

EUMAM MOZ is a Military Assistance Mission. The EUTM MOZ ended in September 2024.

With EUMAM MOZ the focus has shifted from training to advising/mentoring the Mozambican armed forces. The renaming (from EU Training Mission to EU Military Assistance Mission) reflects this change.

Criticism & Reflection

What are some main challenges or critiques, for example regarding EUMAM MOZ priorities or methods and how is the EU/EUMAM MOZ adapting to them?

The EU conducts regular strategic reviews and adjusts its work in coordination with Mozambican authorities and EU Member States.

In your view, is there a gap between the EU's official rhetoric on peacebuilding and its practices in Mozambique?

EUMAM MOZ operates under a clear and transparent mandate, focused on tangible outcomes, strengthening the FADM and upholding human rights, while complementing other EU instruments.

What are the biggest risks or unintended consequences of military-centred peace interventions?

This matter falls outside the scope of the Mission (see answer 3.3)

If a future phase of EU engagement in Mozambique would be imagined— what would an ideal transition from military training to sustainable peacebuilding look like?

Military assistance is part of the peacebuilding process, within the EU integrated approach to crisis management. Any decision on the Mission's future will rest with the EU Member States.

XIII. Coding Frame

Code	Sub-Code	Sub-sub-code
Conceptualizing Peace		
	Peacebuilding as a long-term transformative process	
	Stabilization as short-term "containment" of conflict	
EU Project Design & Cooperation		
	Project Objectives & Methods	
		Short-term
		Long-term
	Approaches	
		Community-Based & Bottom-Up Approaches
		Conflict-Sensitive
		Security-First Approaches
		Liberal Approach
	Cooperation Structures & Workflows	
		Funding Mechanisms
		Administrative Management
		Communication & Coordination

	Power Relations & Hierarchies	
		Decision-Making Power
		Aid Conditionality
		Accountability
	Outcomes, Impacts & Effectiveness	
		Positive Outcomes
		Shortcomings & Limitations
Local Perception & Knowledge		
	Local Knowledge Integration	
		Meaningful Inclusion of Local Actors
		Tokenistic Participation
		Respect for Indigenous Peace Practices
	Ownership & Autonomy	
		Local NGO Autonomy
		Financial Dependency on EU Funding
		Sustainability of Project Impacts
	Perceptions of the EU's Role	
		Positives
		Negatives

		Recommendations from Local Actors
EU's Strategic Logic & Motives		
	Normative Value Claims	
		Human Rights & Democracy Promotion
		Rule of Law & Good Governance
		Gender & Social Equality
	Economic & Resource Interests	
		The Private Sector as Strategic Stakeholder
		Energy Security & Resource Extraction
		Market Access & Trade Liberalization
	Geopolitical & Security Objectives	
		Counter-Terrorism & Regional Stability
		Migration Control & Border Management (Security-Migration-Nexus)
Cabo Delgado: Conflict & Peacebuilding	Conflict Drivers & Context	
		Resource Extraction & Local Grievances
		Terrorism & Insurgency
	EU Direct Engagement	

		Humanitarian Interventions
		Military Engagement
Political Context		
	Recent Elections	
	Governance Structures	
Analytical Friction & Decoupling		
	The Value-Interest Gap	
	The Participation Gap	