



Adolescent Nutrition: Using Photovoice to explore challenges and opportunities in the food environment



REPÚBLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE
Ministério da Saúde



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World Vision

JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
of PUBLIC HEALTH



in partnership with
Canada

World Vision
MOZAMBIQUE

Photovoice Study Overview

Iron deficiency anaemia (IDA) is one of the leading causes of disability-adjusted life years lost globally among adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 years. In Mozambique, IDA is especially alarming, with 56% of girls aged 15 to 19 years with anaemia, resulting in missed opportunities for physical growth and cognitive development. World Vision, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Culture, conducted adolescent-centred workshops, aided by Photovoice, to explore the experiences, needs, and priorities of adolescent girls regarding their nutrition in Monapo District, Nampula Province, Mozambique.

Photovoice is a participative, formative research method where participants take photographs related to gender and social norms and eating practices (healthy and unhealthy). We used purposive sampling to select 16 adolescent girls between 13 and 20 years of age to participate in the Photovoice activities. Participants were trained on the study objectives, ethics and safety, and basic photography and asked to take photographs during a one-week period on the following topics: 1) Challenges in your environment to eat healthy foods, especially foods high in iron; 2) Opportunities in your environment to eat healthy foods, especially foods high in iron; and 3) Social and gender norms that influence your dietary habits and behaviours. Participant informed consent and assent were obtained, as well as photo release forms.

Photovoice Methodology

To explore the preferences, priorities, needs, and experiences related to the participants' food environment, we conducted two workshops and 16 follow-up individual interviews. Each participant was asked to select one photo that best represented the challenges and opportunities related to their nutrition and health.

Once the participant had selected her photo, we followed the **SHOWeD** Photovoice methodology by asking the following questions:

1. What do you **S**ee here?
2. What is really **H**appening here? (Why did it happen?)
3. How does this relate to **O**ur lives? (How does this photo make you feel?)
4. **W**hy does this challenge (problem) or strength (opportunity) exist?
5. **W**hy is the situation like this?
6. What can we **D**o about this?

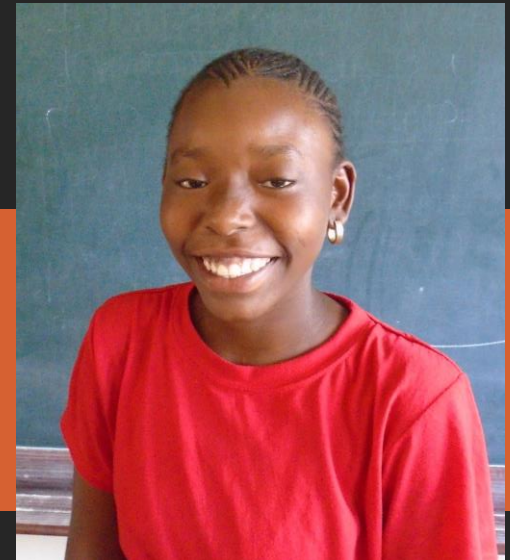
We hope these photos will facilitate a more critical dialogue about how to leverage strengths more effectively and address problems to improve adolescent nutrition in Monapo District, Mozambique.



Gender inequity as a determinant of adolescent well-being.

"...it makes me a little emotional, seeing this sister shelling peas to feed her family, together with her grandmother; it's so difficult for a young woman like her to find herself doing this kind of thing because there are those who say, 'I can't do it because I'm a girl, I feel ashamed.' But since she has two daughters, she tries to feed herself; she tries to find something to give to her family and her children."

Photo and quote by Amissina,
20 years, Monapo District, Mozambique





Food insecurity as a determinant of adolescent well-being.

Photo and quote by Amenina,
20 years, Monapo District, Mozambique

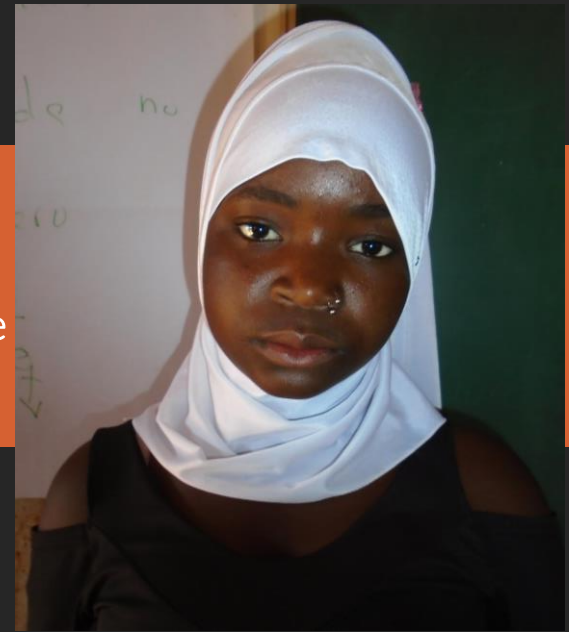


“This photo makes me sad because he [boy in photo] is not well; there is a lack of food. It’s just not right.”

From the adolescent-centred workshops, we learned that during the lean season in February and March, most communities survive on two meals per day of cassava leaves. The photo displays cassava roots. Cassava roots contain 20% of the daily value of vitamin C, but the amount of iron in cassava roots and leaves is negligible.



Photo and quote by Palmira,
16 years, Monapo District, Mozambique



**Social connections as a determinant
of adolescent well-being.**

“...this photo represents my happiness because I like this friend of mine. If I'm a bit upset, she comforts me.”

Social connection is an important value for adolescent girls, and peers can be powerful influences on well-being and decision-making around nutrition.

Grandmothers play an important role in the lives of adolescent girls.

"It [this photo] makes me happy because my grandmother had been at my brother's house for three years. She was ill, [but now she is better]."

Grandmothers are an important pillar in the family structure and valued by adolescent girls.

Photo and quote by Tenisa,
20 years, Monapo District, Mozambique

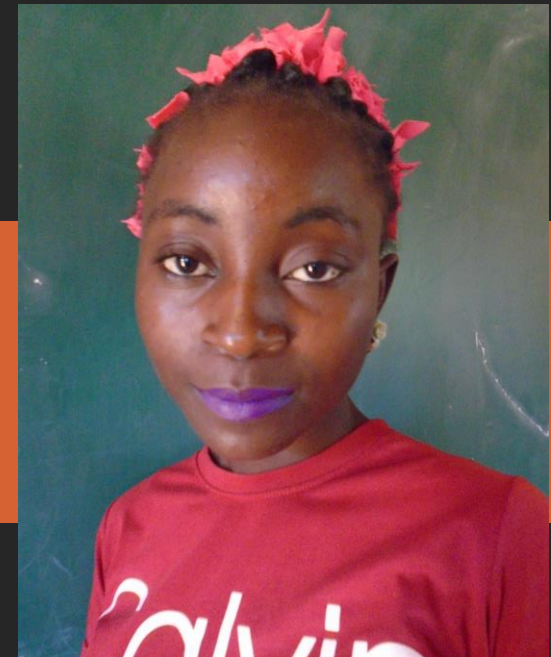
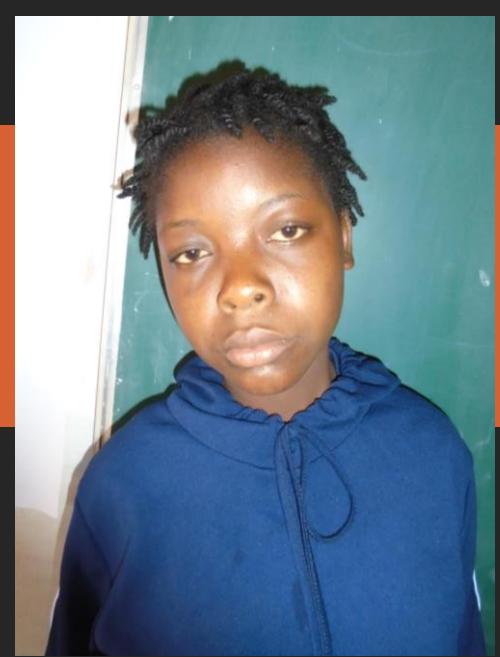




Photo and quote by Sidália Eustáquio, 16 years, Monapo District, Mozambique

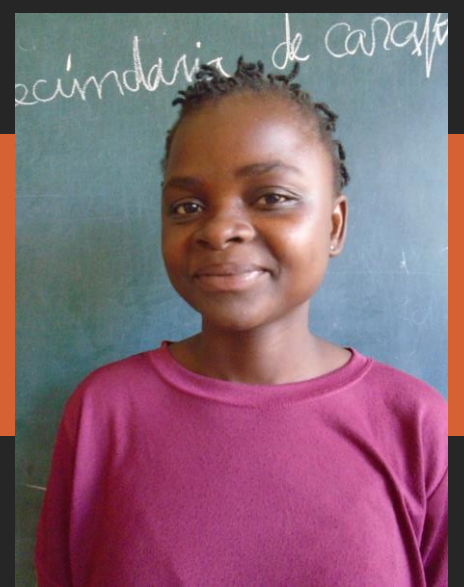


**Maternal and adolescent health
are intertwined.**

"[This photo] makes me happy because there's my mother, my little brother, and the food, which is the chickens...my little brother is dancing, and also my mother. If my mother isn't at home, I won't be well."



Photo and quote by Sara,
18 years, Monapo District, Mozambique



Eating indigenous foods is not shameful.

"This is my favorite [photo]. I took it in my mother's field. There are tomato branches, more moringa, more cassava leaves, more piri-piri branches, more mango trees, and mapira seeds...some people...don't like going to the machamba (fields), they despise it...we shouldn't despise it, because all the things we eat come from the machamba, we grow them and then they go to the store. So we should appeal to the people we have to catch to have our own food so that they don't punish us when we go to buy it."

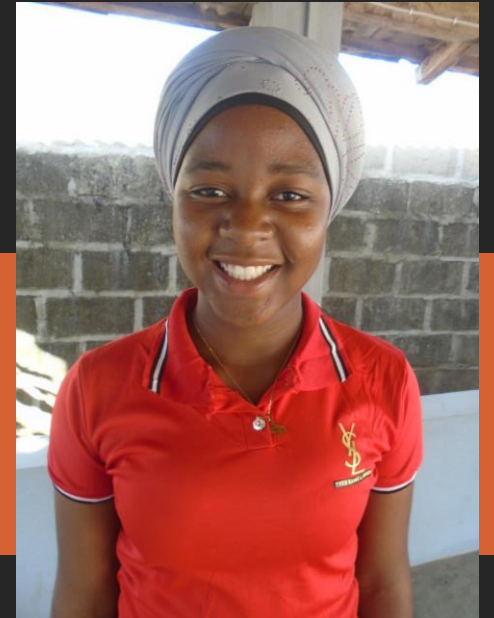


Friendship can provide social and emotional support.

“These girls are important because they are my friends, and emotionally it helps me.”

Friendship can provide social and emotional support, and sports can be an excellent method to build that support among adolescent girls.

Photo and quote by Neusa, 17 years,
Monapo District, Mozambique



Adolescent girls participate in growing food to serve their community.



"[In this photo] is Machamba rice, cut beans, and fine beans. This photo makes me happy. It's important to sow food for the community so it can do well."

Many adolescent girls participate in agricultural activities before or after school and recognize the value of this activity for their community.

Photo and quote by Mimércia,
14 years, Monapo District, Mozambique



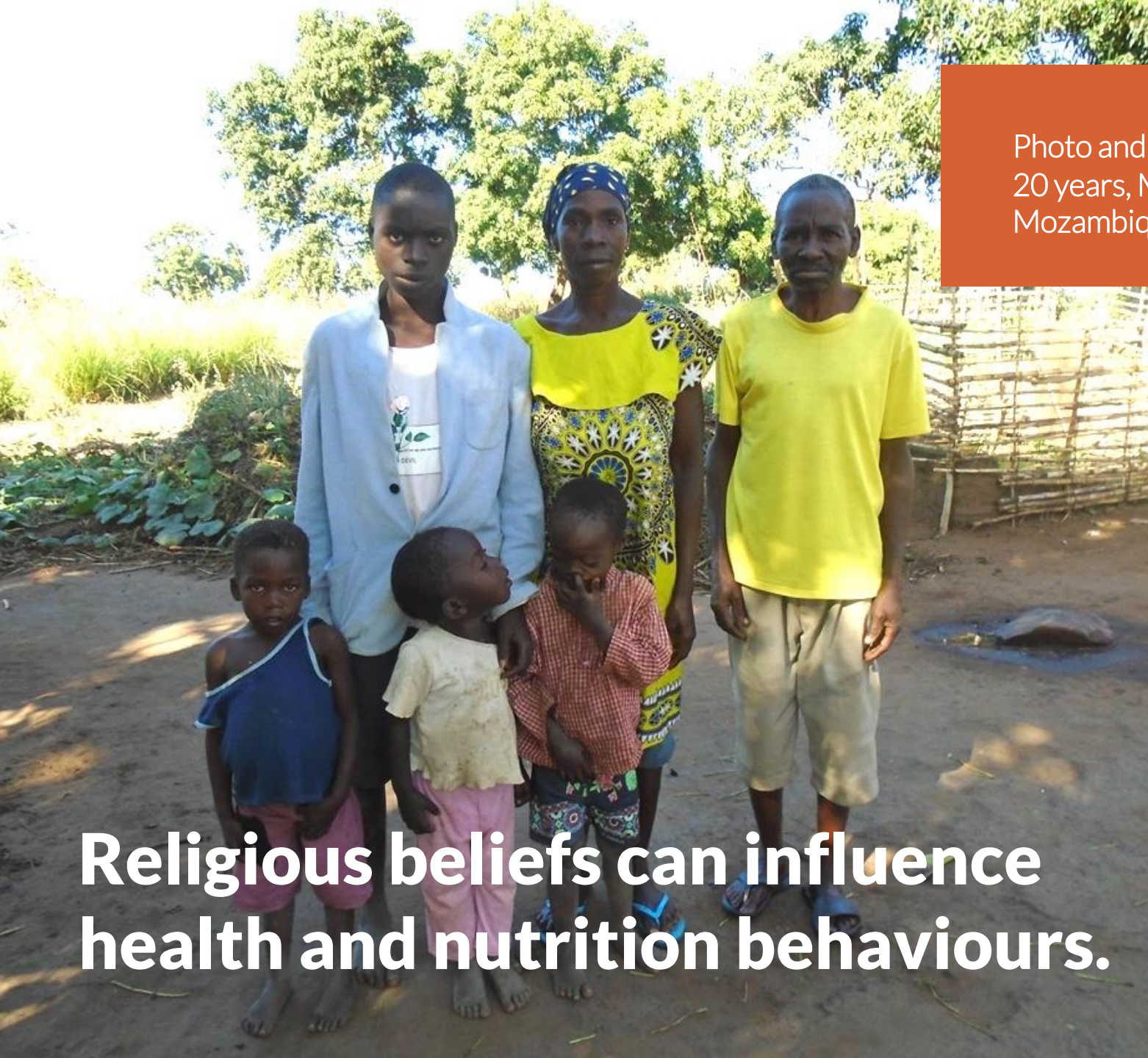


Photo and quote by Hermínia,
20 years, Monapo District,
Mozambique

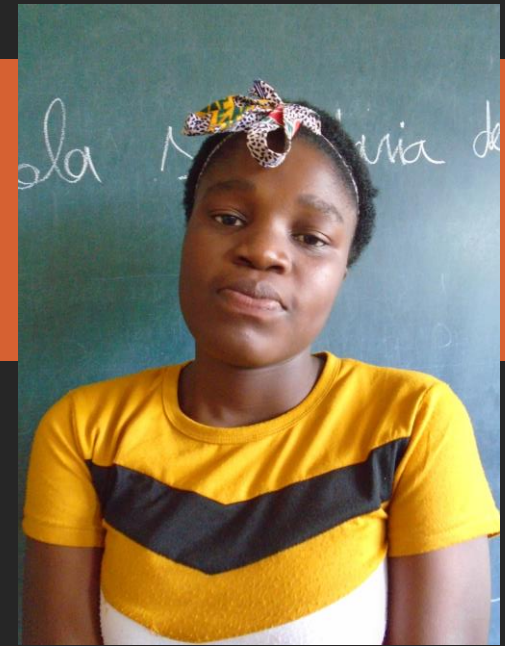


**Religious beliefs can influence
health and nutrition behaviours.**

"[In this photo], my mother was getting ready to go to church; my mother is a Christian and my father is a Muslim...during the famine we didn't have enough celeste (cornflower) and rice for everyone. We ate, and he [my brother] didn't, so my father had to go out to find ways to get celeste for him...there are people who have never had a sick child, maybe God is the one who brought this challenge to our family for us to see."



Photo and quote by Felicinia,
15 years, Monapo District, Mozambique



**Growing food can bring happiness,
health, and satisfaction.**

"[This photo] makes me happy because we planted this field; once it's ready we will eat the lettuce and tomatoes. The girls at the house and the nuns look after the field. I like this photo because it helps me with my diet; with the work of my community, we grow this food for our consumption; it shows how happy I am to continue growing more food."

Family mealtimes can bring strength.



"[This photo] makes me happy because they're my family and I like them. I really like eating with my family. [It is] a strength for me."

Family mealtimes can provide health and emotional benefits for adolescent girls.

Photo and quote by Ana, 17 years,
Monapo District, Mozambique



Markets play an important role in adolescent nutrition.

"I went to the market and saw that I consume these foods on a daily basis. This photo makes me feel good because with the help of these foods, I keep going every day."

The availability and accessibility of food at markets play an important role in adolescent nutrition.



Photo and quote by Brígida, 13 years,
Monapo District, Mozambique



A woman wearing a camouflage jacket over a green t-shirt with a red star and 'US ARMY FSH' text, a pink headwrap, and a pink skirt. She is standing outdoors in front of a concrete wall. There are some bags on the ground in the foreground.

Adolescent girls learn entrepreneurship from their mothers.

Photo and quote by Alima, 13 years,
Monapo District, Mozambique



"It [this photo] makes me happy...because I have a photo of a person who gave me life. [My mother] supports [my diet]. She has one rice [field] and one peanut [field]. When she has no money, she sells it [rice and peanuts] for money, she sells it and eats the rest."

A large, round, silver metal pot sits on a traditional wood-burning stove. The pot is filled with a vibrant orange soup, likely made of tomatoes and peppers, which is bubbling and cooking. The stove is made of dark, weathered wood and sits on a concrete floor. A small, blue and white logo is visible on the wall behind the stove. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Photo and quote by Agira,
16 years, Monapo District, Mozambique



"[The problem in our community] is there are no good roads. [My dream] is that everyone is happy, eats well, has roads...and studies well."

Roads connect communities and link businesses and workers, bringing access to food, goods and services, and employment opportunities.

Adolescent girls recognize the importance of roads.

This project was made possible with the generous support of World Vision Canada's Private Non-Sponsorship Project. It is embedded in the Every Girl Can Initiative, funded by Global Affairs Canada. The project was conducted in partnership with the Mozambique Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Culture and received technical support from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Most of all, we wish to thank each girl who participated in this project and the courage they had to share their challenges, hopes, and dreams with us.



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