



Photo: EDM/Mozambique

Electricidade de Moçambique Increases Women's Participation in the Power Sector

Fewer women than men participate in the labor force around the world. In Mozambique only [52 percent](#) of women are employed, compared to [80 percent](#) of men. Over 80 percent of the women employed in Mozambique work in the agricultural sector, while only [three percent of women work in industry](#). To increase women's participation in the male-dominated energy sector, USAID's Engendering Utilities partnered with [Electricidade de Moçambique](#), a Mozambican power utility.

[Electricidade de Moçambique](#) (EDM) provides electricity to nearly 30 percent of Mozambique's population. Only 18 percent of the utility's 3,400 employees are women, and few work in technical, engineering, or leadership roles. In 2018, Engendering Utilities began supporting EDM to address gender inequities at each phase of the employee lifecycle. By improving the organization's recruitment and hiring practices, the utility has widened its pool of qualified candidates, improved business efficiency, and increased economic opportunities for women in Mozambique's traditionally male-dominated power industry.

"When we conducted our first gender assessment in 2017, only five women worked in the [energy] generation directorate," said Celia Naitiniane Langa, Head of Policy Development and a Gender Manager at EDM. "We were building the Maputo Thermal Power Plant and our CEO and Board of Directors committed to staffing the power plant with more women. With committed leadership, and with the help of our Engendering Utilities coach, we were able to change our hiring procedures to increase the number of women at the utility."

EDM MOZAMBIQUE

EDM has been Mozambique's electricity company since 1977, two years after Mozambique gained independence. In 1995, EDM became a public company.

In 2018, EDM partnered with Engendering Utilities to increase gender equality and economic opportunities for women across the organization.

Of the company's 3,400 employees, 18 percent are women.

EDM seeks to achieve a 40 percent female workforce by 2030.

SETTING TARGETS

EDM plans to have a 40 percent female workforce by 2030. To jump-start progress towards this goal, the utility set a target to fill 50 percent of all new positions at the utility with women. By 2030, 1500 of the jobs that the utility expects to create will be filled by women. Engendering Utilities coaches supported EDM to revise language used in jobs ads, improve candidate application screening techniques, use targeted hiring practices, and engage technical schools to bring more qualified women into EDM's workforce.

“We started by analyzing our job profiles,” said Ms. Naitiniane. “Our Engendering Utilities coach taught us how to make profiles more gender-inclusive and more attractive for women. We learned how to help women be more successful in the application process. We helped candidates fill out their applications, prepare for interviews, and prepare for the written test. We continued our support for women into the onboarding process, where we offer foundational skills training for successful female candidates when they first join the company.”

By changing outdated procedures and supporting women to improve their performance at each stage of the hiring process, EDM was able to recruit and hire more women.

LOOKING FORWARD

Today, women represent 41 percent of the employees at the newly constructed Maputo Thermal Power Plant, and the utility plans to hire more women with their upcoming recruitment drive to fill over 250 positions. EDM believes employing women in meter reading and collections roles will improve the utility's financial performance. [Engendering Utilities has found that](#) employing women to conduct community outreach can improve community relations in high-loss areas. EDM believes that employing women in meter reading and collections roles will increase its revenue by as much as \$2 million annually.

Companies that set ambitious gender equality targets must also ensure internal structures are in place to support the organization's growing female workforce. As more women joined EDM's workforce, cultural biases and stereotypes came to light, particularly among male technical staff and managers. The utility worked with Engendering Utilities to counteract these biases to ensure women were able to thrive at EDM.

“EDM enjoyed support from the board and senior managers who were committed to supporting a gender strategy,” said Jasmine Boehm, Engendering Utilities Change-Management Coach for EDM. “But there were some dynamics at the manager-level—preconceived notions about what women can and cannot do—that were presenting challenges.”



The utility began by conducting an internal assessment, including a staff survey, to better understand gender stereotypes related to women's performance at EDM.

“Myths about women in the workplace began to surface,” said Ms. Naitiniane. “For example, men would say things like ‘women are always pregnant’ or ‘all the women at the power plant are pregnant,’ which the data showed was not true. Another myth or male perception was that women are always absent due to their caregiving responsibilities at home. But when we looked at the logs and the data related to absenteeism, we actually found that men had much higher absentee rates than women in the company.”

The company continues to conduct internal outreach and communication with staff to address these myths and misinformation, and build a corporate culture that is empowering and supportive of women. Today, 589 women work at EDM, and the utility continues improving gender equality at each phase of the employee lifecycle. EDM is in the process of finalizing a gender strategy, and has formally adopted gender equality as one of the three pillars of its business strategy. As a large and prominent employer in Mozambique, EDM's gender equality initiatives have the potential to radically alter workforce policies at companies across the country.

“Gender equality is not only a priority for EDM, but it is also a core value,” said the CEO Marcelino Gildo Alberto. “The company feels gender equality is imperative to decision making and business conduct, and we believe it is a key factor that will enable universal access to electricity in Mozambique.”

ABOUT ENGENDERING UTILITIES

When women serve as leaders and employees, businesses benefit and company performance improves. USAID's Engendering Utilities program works with companies, organizations, and agencies around the world to increase women's participation in male-dominated industries. By introducing gender equality initiatives at each phase of the employee life cycle, the program expands job opportunities for women while enhancing company performance. Recognizing that gender-equitable teams build better businesses, EDM partnered with Engendering Utilities to continue advancing gender equality across the organization.

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