

# JPO Story: innovation for gender and disability issues in Mozambique

## Background

I have a Bachelors degree in Government and International Relations from Universidad Externado de Colombia and MSc in Economics and Business Administration (Major in Creative Sustainability) from Aalto University-Finland.

I have always been strongly interested in working with issues related to global development and human rights. Before getting my position as a JPO, I worked with civil society and learned about issues concerning gender equality, and became interested in initiatives concerning girls' and women's empowerment.

Slowly, I realized that I wanted to experience how an organization like the UN can push the goals for sustainability and development forward.

Since the UN works with a variety of actors including government, civil society, and the private sector, I knew the interventions coming from that end could have a bigger impact. It was then when I decided to apply for a position at UNFPA. This agency seemed to be a perfect match for my interests. Its mandate concerns gender matters, and I realized my work could contribute directly towards a world where all women and girls have control over their lives, can take their own decisions, and are able to participate actively in society.

## Assignment

I work as a programme analyst on innovation. I have been engaged in tasks to provide technical support on identification, development and implementation of innovative products and services related to UNFPA mandate in Mozambique. For instance, I supported the building, testing and launch of two M-Health applications that aimed at providing youth better information on sexual and reproductive health and offered a platform to find advice and support to gender based violence survivors.

I have also participated in the development and pilot of two innovative systems, Real Time Monitoring platforms, RTM, to improve the availability and use of quality, disaggregated national data as well as to strengthen case management related to Gender Based Violence (GBV) and obstetric fistula (OF) in Mozambique. Named as InfoViolencia and InfoFistula, both systems have been developed in partnership with the national government and private companies which has enabled me to coordinate multi stakeholder groups and interact with a great variety of actors at national and provincial level.



*Nathaly Guzmán Figueroa is a Finnish-sponsored JPO working on innovation for UNFPA in Mozambique.*



I have also supported and provided technical advice on disability to plan and implement successfully a programme on inclusion of young persons with disabilities in Mozambique called We Decide. I have supported two of our major programmes, Rapariga Biz and Spotlight, to come up with strategies to ensure inclusiveness especially regarding people with disabilities. Rapariga Biz is a girls' empowerment programme to end child marriage and Spotlight is a programme aiming at eliminating gender-based violence.

Inclusion of vulnerable groups is a priority, so I have been supporting in the planning, design, and implementation of activities that can increase the participation of vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities. As part of my tasks, I have designed and facilitated a Training of Trainers session on disability to increase knowledge on disability and raise awareness on possible tools and activities to improve inclusion in programme activities. Soon, I will be participating in workshops to disseminate the recently published UNFPA guidelines on disability inclusion where actors from different sectors and at different levels will get hands on advice on how to ensure their every day work is more inclusive.

### **Advice to prospective candidates**

It is important you understand the work of the different agencies if you want to make a good choice. The work is different depending on the agency, and your work can vary depending on the mandate of the organization. If you are moved by content, you should have a look at the mission of the different agencies and the type of work they do. I think it is worth practicing for the interview as UN uses the competency-based process which has its own specificities. If you are applying to a specific country, it is good if you have some knowledge on the local context and language.



*Being a JPO has been a multifaceted and enriching experience full of challenging, inspiring, and gratifying endeavors. A great opportunity to acquire broader perspectives and knowledge, strengthen your skills, and engage in tasks that truly aim at solving global challenges and improving the lives of the most vulnerable.*