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**A Study about the Use of Forest in the Bufferzone of Limpopo
National Park (Mozambique)**

JULIANE BLUM

Georg-August Universität Göttingen, Department of Forest Inventory and Remote Sensing, Germany

Abstract

In the course of a GTZ internship in Mozambique in 2008 a field study has been made. The internship occurred within the GTZ Advisory Service on “Sustainable Forest Management and Conservation”, which cooperates with the Limpopo National Park in Gaza district in south-western Mozambique.

The study examines the use of forest in the bufferzone of Limpopo National Park, specifically in the village Mkumbe. It focuses on the use of forest trees and shrubs and shows the diverse and extensive ways in which the inhabitants of Mkumbe use the forest. Sixty-five tree and shrub species have been identified as well as three grass species, two liana species, two palm species and two succulent species. Twelve amongst the sixty-five trees and shrub species are very important species, as are one grass and one agave species. Men and women were asked to evaluate the importance of the respective trees hierarchically. The results showed no significant differences between the sexes. But differences appeared when it came to the question of how men and women used the trees. Women use non-wood forest products, mainly fruits. They further use branches as fire wood for cooking. Men use trees primarily as a building material and to fabricate items of practical use. Nearly all parts of trees have a purpose. People use the roots, bark, fibres, rosin, fruits, leaves and wood of the trees. They use them as medicine, fire wood, food, building material and a base for drinks as well as to sell for profit and for rituals and ceremonies. This study illustrates the life-saving function of the forest for the inhabitants of Mkumbe and how it contributes to their livelihood.

The qualitative study contains four group interviews and twenty-six individual interviews. They were realised during a period of seventeen days of permanent presence in the selected community within the bufferzone of the Park. A bachelor thesis resulted from the field trip.

Keywords: Gender, Limpopo National Park, livelihood, Mozambique, non-wood forest products, use of forest