

# **AFRICAN TRADER STORIES**

These are the photographic stories told by African traders as they have been presented on exhibitions in Namibia, South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana



**ENNIE PRECIOUS MPHANDE**

Ennie Precious Mphande is a South African trade union leader and activist. She is the national secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA). She has been a prominent voice for workers' rights and social justice in South Africa. She is also a member of the African National Congress (ANC) and has been involved in various social and political movements. She is known for her leadership in the struggle against apartheid and for her commitment to the poor and working class.

**TRADE JUSTICE MUST BEGIN IN OUR REGION SO LET THE POOR SET THE AGENDA**



# ENNIE PRECIOUS MPHANDE

*I have a photograph of me and Sepp Blatter, the Fifa president. I met him when I founded the Malawi Football Association for Women some years ago. I am also a cricket coach, I used to be a school inspector and I am the head of Phadowapo, an association that runs an orphanage, a theatre group and a group for elders. I failed to get into Parliament in 2004 but I will stand again! I trade as much as I can – when I have money to buy the goods. Now I hope to get a bank loan. My husband left me and our six children 10 years ago to marry his cousin.*



## The journey to Zimbabwe (above, below and far right)



It was very early morning and the sun was just coming up over the Mwanza mountains west of Blantyre. I had travelled for less than an hour. I had 15 hours left. I was quite excited. This was not a regular trip. I was not here to trade. I was here to photograph. I sneaked up the camera behind my seat and bag and photographed everything that was interesting through the window.



When we crossed the Zambezi river, halfway through Mozambique, the sun was already high. I took a lot of pictures when crossing that enormous bridge.

People in Blantyre often think that I am rich. Because I do so much. But I am not! Sometimes I cannot even afford to pay the school fees for my children. When I went to Zimbabwe this time I could not afford to buy rice and bring there to sell. It is a good business to sell rice to Zimbabwe. And they need it! For this trip I lent money from my brother to pay the tickets.

I have not been to Zimbabwe for many years and my children was nervous for me to go. We had heard so many bad things. They thought I would be caught by the police and disappear. The politics are complicated in Zimbabwe. I was very cautious.



When I got to Harare I had expected to have problems and difficulties everywhere. But things was so much easier than I had expected! The next couple of days was among the most enjoyable I have ever had. I learned so much.



## Mr Thavanda (top, far right)

The head of the Zimbabwe association for cross border traders, ZCBTA, invited me to their meetings even though I am just a regular member of the Malawi association of traders. I am very grateful and was very impressed on how they work with our issues. It is such an important business in Zimbabwe and so many people live from cross border trading. But there is so many problems also. The ZCBTA work with big organizations and I think we in Malawi have a lot to learn from them. We must work together across our borders to solve our problems!

Mr Thavanda also introduced me to Veronica Kwati. We are so similar and she runs an organization to help people just like I do with Phadowapo. We are both running an orphanage. But her is so much bigger and has so much resources. I learned how to make money out of selling peanut butter and lemon grass.



## The poor (below, far right)

I want to change things from what they are now. I feel great inspiration from what I saw in Zimbabwe. This banner from ZCBTA has the right message for me. Politics is too often decided too far from people. Those that makes decisions must listen to the poor. They are building too many airports while our orphans have nowhere to sleep. They restrict the small businesses instead of the big ones. So that the poor people stays poor and the rich ones get richer.



## The market (top, middle)

I took this picture in Zobwe, Mozambique, when on the bus to Harare. I have never been sitting exactly like this but almost when I sold second hand clothes and shoes on the market. In Phadowapo, my organization for people with HIV-AIDS, disabled, orphans, widows/widowers and old age people, we try to get our members to trade like this. We want them to earn a living.

## The goods (middle)

I photographed these foodstuff at the Chimwankhunda Market. I have traded with all these goods across the borders of Malawi.



The peas are cheaper than beans and can be crushed into powder for cakes. They cost 30 kwacha ( 0,2 USD) for a plate.



The rice is very good for business. You buy 50 kg in Malawi for 1200 kwacha (7,8 USD) and sell in Zimbabwe for 2500 (16 USD) .



Usipa fish are very popular because they are cheap and easy to dry for export. 12 dried Usipa cost 20 kwacha (0,1 USD). This



kind of maize is used for popcorn. Nzima maize, for maize porridge, is larger and white.

## The theatre group (below, middle)



Loveness Kumvenda, Samson Mtavali and Violet Domingo are all HIV positive. They are also part of my Phadowapo theatre group. We raise awareness about HIV-AIDS to prevent people from getting sick. Samson got HIV because he had many girls. In this sketch he points straight at the problem. I think the theatre has an impact. People see us and think about their behaviour.







# AIDA TOMELA

*I live in the Zona Verde close to Benfica in Maputo, Mozambique with my husband James and five children. I travelled a lot to South Africa for more than 20 years, but since my passport expired last year I have not been able to afford a new. Once I lost 160 000 metical (4 700 USD) when the officials confiscated and resold my goods. I really struggled to pay the bank back all what I had borrowed. Now I run the Baracka Bem Vindo, the Welcome Restaurant, where we make chicken.*



## My comfort (top row)



My nephew Antonio, in white, and Richel, in yellow, and my grandchildren Fininha, Maida and Ana Paula are gathered around my youngest grandchildren Elisinha. We meet quite a lot. Especially at the end of the year and at important gatherings. Here we met at my mother Carlina's place in Muamba outside of Maputo.



We had Easter sermon in the Mubucuana parish in Benfica. More than 1 000 people was there. It is not unusual with that many people. We were outside. If it would have rained I don't know what we would have done. The church does not fit that many people. But it has never happened.



My mother was sick so I brought my church ladies to her home in Muamba to cheer her up. The church ladies did it for me, because my mother is very important for me. She is 76 years old and has been sick for some time but I think she is doing better now. We were singing a lot of songs. Here Mrs. Temba and Ema are singing. I do not remember which song it was. I also sing.

## Baracka Bem Vindo (mid row)



Elton takes the evening shift at the baracka. He started working this year and has been good so far. We open at 8 am and sometimes we close at 10 pm. Sometimes, in the weekends, we don't close at all. I spend a lot of time at the baracka. I eat there but I do not eat chicken. That is for the costumers. I eat beans and chima, maize porridge. I collect the money and barbecue the chicken. It is important to get the spices right. We use chicken spices and garlic, tomato and green peppers.



The chicken is imported from South Africa. I used to bring it in myself but now I buy it here. It is a little more expensive but bigger and more tasty than the local chicken. We serve most food at the end of the month. In the beginning of each month we sell some 20 chicken a day (made into smaller portions) but at the end of the month, when those that have work have gotten their salary, we serve 40 chicken or more. One portion of chicken costs 60 metical (1,8 USD).

## Around Baracka Bem Vindo (bottom row)



These ladies sell goat meat to other barackas. I do not prepare goat. They buy the goats in northern Mozambique and transport them down to Maputo, it is a lot of work. We meet every day but I do not know their names.



The neighboring shop sells porcelain, mugs and things like that. It is good to have that kind of things close to the baracka.



These people are on their way home. Often the minibuses are full so they have to use pickups. It is a bit unsafe.



The woman I yellow tried to leave the baracka without paying for her meal. I ran up to her and took this picture to make her pay. Finally the police came and made her pay. It happens that the police is around at night. It gets very rough sometimes when the guests, and other people, drink too much. I was robbed just some days ago. With a gun. But he ran away. It was the fourth time.



Another shop is selling medicine, herbs and spices.



I was walking home from the baracka at 1.30 am. I have seen these homeless children many times. Sometimes I give them food at the baracka. I wish I could do more for them. Nobody really cares for them. It is really sad. And the young ones always get bullied by the older. The big kids take all the good places to sleep.





# MAC MUBANGO SOKO

*I fly to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, from my home in Blantyre, Malawi, a couple of times every month to buy hardware. It is a lot of work and a lot of bureaucracy. The biggest problem is the lack of foreign currency in Malawi. We can simply not get hold of US dollars which is a real restraint to our business. I am now building a big house for me, my wife and our daughter. I hope to quit the travelling in a year or so to start my own building company. I want to spend more time with my family.*



## Blantyre – Dar es Salaam (top row)



Mandala road in central Blantyre. Blantyre Market to the left and further away you can see the Chayamba building. The first tall house in Blantyre built by our former dictator the late Dr. Banda. I have lived here since 1989. When I was a child we moved all around Malawi. My father worked in the correctional services and we moved with his work. I was born in Enthini village in northern Malawi but I never lived there. Blantyre is good! It is the commercial centre of the whole country and I would never want to live anywhere else. Now I study part time business administration here at the university.



I started cross border trading in 1997 when I was 23 years old. Back then it was only to survive. Now it is more comfortable. I started selling curios to South Africa but it didn't pay very well so I started dealing with hardware between Malawi and Tanzania instead. In 2007 I could afford to fly between Blantyre and Dar es Salaam for the first time. It takes two hours instead of two days. I go there by plane and come back by bus to accompany the goods. I spend two weeks every month travelling. When I have flown ten times I get one flight for free.



I came to Dar es Salaam the first time in 2005. Everything is bigger than here. It is not a nice city if you are not doing business. It took a long time for me to find my way but now I have many friends here. This is the Kariakov market, the commercial hub of the city, seen from my window on the eighth floor of Gold Plaza Hotel. I always stay there when I trade.

## The border (to the right)



My goods are being offloaded for customs inspection at the Songwe border between Malawi and Tanzania. It usually takes a whole day to bring everything through and to pay all the fees. Taxes are sometimes extremely high. After the border comes all the road blocks. They are the worst. Sometimes they demand big bribes not to punish us for our goods.

I usually buy some four tons of goods while in Tanzania. It is all kinds of things: spare parts, hinges, spray paint, sandpaper, door handles, metal products, handsaws, spanners, electrical material, light bulbs, scales, window frames, twin wires, mobile accessories and now also all kinds of cosmetics. If you want something I'll find it for you. I buy for about 10 000 USD and then sell in Malawi for about 15 000 USD. I oversee the whole process. I buy the goods, pack the goods, bring it through customs and deliver. My customers trust me, I work a lot.

## My family (below)



I am Ngoni, in South Africa they say Zulu. It is my ethnicity and very important to me. I keep all weapons and dance every year.



Me and Maureen married on December 1, 2007. One of the most important days in life. We are very happy. The priest was Lieutenant Colonel Makata. I paid the lobola myself; four bulls.



My daughter Akuzike is six years old and from a previous girlfriend. She wants to become a doctor. She likes to help other people. I think that is a good plan.

## My brother in law (bottom, middle)



Ganyavu Nthara is married to my sister so we are good friends. All other cross border traders fear him. He has been station manager at the customs office in Songwe and worked with customs for over 20 years. He is incorruptible and always charges according to the book. Now he is at the customs head office in Blantyre. **We discuss a lot! He says that we traders are part of the corruption problem because we do pay bribes to the officials. And we do not report when officials misbehave. I think the authorities should not blame everything on us. We are only trying to make a living. Many of us are very poor. He thinks high taxes at the border are good for Malawi, for us to be able to have our own industry. I think we should rather encourage the small scale businesses. He says that Malawians should get higher prices and not only act as middlemen for Chinese and Indians. I think it can be difficult.**

## My partners (below, middle and right)



Abdu at the Newtahere Stores in Tanzania sells spray paint, handles, hinges and things like that. I am a long time customer. He travels to China and Dubai to buy it. I buy cosmetics, perfume, roll on and things like that from Mama Jerome. It is new business for me but very good. Chufundu Khuni is a good friend of mine. We travel a lot together. She used to be a hair dresser and knows the cosmetics business very well. She helps me with my cosmetics business even though we are competitors. Ram and Aslam buy some of my goods.







# GLORIA KABANGO MWANYONGO

*I was running a good business trading across the border from Blantyre, Malawi, where I live, to Mozambique and South Africa. That was before everything happened. My world fell apart. My goods were confiscated and my closest family all died. Now I'm struggling to support four children and my adopted son. Speaking and listening to other people with similar stories gave me a lot of hope.*



## Nasokos stall (above)



Nasoko has seven children and four grandchildren. She tries to make a living but it is tough. She tried to go to Mozambique to sell her goods. But it was impossible to find a good stall. In Blantyre at least she has a space to trade from.

## Alice, Maggie, Amina, Patricia (top, middle)



Alice was trading in South Africa but got caught in xenophobic violence. People killed others just because they were foreigners, using knives and axes. She got very scared of cross border trading. Maggie says the authorities consider her business as a pastime, but she says it is very serious and needed for her survival. Patricia import cars. But every time at the border the customs officials steal papers and then want money to give them back. Amina does not get her proper documents when paying her taxes at the border. Officials demand payment without receipts. It is impossible to refuse.

## My trips (top, far right)



I did four long trips on borrowed money to document and photograph the cross border trade and the borders and to speak to traders with different stories. When I took this picture I was on a motorcycle on the Mozambique side of the border close to Mandimba. I liked to meet people and get their stories.

## Wonderful (middle)



He was travelling back and forth between Malawi and South Africa to sell curios. Once he went with a truck driver that was taking his mother from Malawi to hospital in South Africa. When they were at the border between Zimbabwe and South Africa they met strange men. One of them shoot the truck driver and his mother with a gun. It was terrible. Wonderful survived but his business was lost.

## Tisunge (mid row, far right)



Her husband was a successful cross border trader but died in a car accident. His relatives took all his things and business leaving her with nothing. With no business Tisunge was desperate to make money for her children and decided to walk with men at night and to sell her body. After some time she felt sick. At hospital they said she had HIV. She cries a lot. How is she now going to support for her children?

## My story (bottom row)



Twambi Mwanyongo was my beloved husband. He was a martial arts instructor for a security company. He was very strong. I took this photo in 2002 at the market where I sold second hand clothes. I had a lot of business back then. I supplied goat meat from Mozambique to Shoprite and dealt with blankets, sheets and clothes. Everything that could keep up the business. Twambi drove the white pickup car back and forth across the borders.

On October 10, 2002, Twambi was thrown off a car and overrun by a minibus. It was a miracle that he survived. He stayed in hospital for more than two years. This picture is from when the tracheotomy was removed from his throat in 2003. Three months later he could whisper. We worked hard to make him walk again. But he was a different person. He beat me, he could take a knife, he did many bad things he would never do before. But he was sick. His brain was growing. Off course my business collapsed. I did try to restart the business and went to South Africa in 2007. But I was tricked and my goods was confiscated. I lost all my cousins money. I lost my good friends.

In 2009 my father died on February 26. My husband was overrun by another car and died on August 18. When my mother Maggie heard of his death she died of a heart attack. That is that. This old picture is of my mother and my children Hansen, Hanna and Hope. I need to support them now.

At this time we live from selling bricks for 5 kwacha each. I need to get back into cross border trading. It would save us.







# PALMIRA CHILAULE

*I run a small restaurant, a baracka, at an informal market in Benfica, Maputo. To supply the baracka and other traders I have been travelling between South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique, where I live, for many years. I trade in all kinds of food. My husband died in 2001, he drank a lot. I have three daughters; my two sons died when they were two and four years old, respectively. We help each other here, that is how we survive.*



## The lobola (above)



Carla, my brothers daughter, is getting married and we had a Lobola, engagement party, for her and her soon-to-be husband.



The boys family pay money to the girls family. We do it only symbolically and Carla "cost" only 2 600 Meticals ( 77 USD).



Carla's friends teased her for the engagement ring and after the formal ceremony we all had good food and a great time together with friends and relatives! On this picture Carla's mother is dancing with her aunt. It was real fun!



## Alexander (below)



Alexander died yesterday, just before I came to leave these pictures. I have known him for almost twenty years, since he was a little kid, and he drank himself to death. It is common here in Benfica. Alexander has been sitting on the doorstep of my baracka for years. I know his parents and all his brothers and sisters and sometimes I gave him soup to eat. But he drank more and more of that strong and cheap alcohol, the Teleçaõ. When I took this picture he was rarely awake, he refused to eat, he didn't do anything. He was married once but they broke up. His parents took him to hospital and they told him to stop drinking. But he did not want to. His parents couldn't save him, nobody could. I would have wanted to include a picture of his bottle. His poison. But I never took it. I want to tell everybody about Alexander and what happened to him so that others can stay away from the alcohol. It destroys our lives. It kills so many.

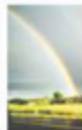
## The border (right and above right)



I was at the Komatipoort border to South Africa, to buy chicken and pork when I saw this. The passengers had boarded a bus in South Africa that had turned out to be stolen. When the bus crossed the border the theft was discovered by the police and the driver and his assistant was arrested. All the goods had to be taken off the bus and the passengers were stranded just there. Some of them could not afford to go on.



To the far left you can see the white minibus in which I was travelling. Here we are the small market at the Komatipoort border. I had bought 150 chickens and 100 kg of pork to bring back to Maputo. My goods was transported in another car. This time when I crossed the border there was not any problems. The officials were clear about what they wanted us to pay and did not ask for bribes. Other times it can be real bad. There is no information as to how much we should pay in taxes so they just charge us whatever they want.



It was very early morning and we were on our way to the border again, two days after the last trip. I go quite often. It was raining heavily! As I saw the rainbow coming on the horizon I knew the rain was going to stop. There is a biblical story about the rainbow that God uses it to give a sign to Noah. The rain always stops when the rainbow comes. I think it is beautiful sign.

## My baracka (below right)



Elena has been working with me for more than ten years. She is responsible for everything, the sales, the stock, the money and all. She is there every morning at 8 am and stays until 7 pm. She has an important story to share. Her husband beats her a lot. They met here in the baracka some years ago and he is so bad to her. Sometimes her face is swollen and blue. But she will leave him now. I have bought her a plot so that she can build her own house and get away from him. Her brothers are strong like ninjas so her husband will never come after her. The problem with bad husbands is very common. We all need to help.



Willma rests in the kitchen. She has only worked a short time at the baracka. She washes the dishes and cooks the chicken and chima, maize porridge, for the costumers.



Some of my costumers. They just hang around, eat, have a beer, talk or relax. I have been running the baracka since 1992 so it is very well known in Benfica. Business is okey but I need to combine the baracka with the cross border trading. Exchange rates are high now so I probably need to rent out my house and move to the backyard.



These frozen chicken at the market are what I mainly import from South Africa. They are big and tasty, but quite expensive. They have to be sold quickly when they are defrosted.









# MAGGIE LONELY MHANGO

*I am the secretary of the Malawi Cross Border Traders Association and I know the problems we face as traders. When I was laid off from the post office I started my trading business. In 2007 I got a micro loan to start selling jewellery and plastic products from a bench at the Blantyre market in Malawi, where I live. Today I run a container shop in Blantyre and a full clothing boutique in the neighboring city of Limbe. Business is doing good and I travel at least once a month to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania to buy stock. I have four children.*



## My shops (above)



Bridget and I used to stand next to each other at the Blantyre market when I was selling goods from a bench, just like her. But it was too stressful to pack everything up and down every day. In 2007 I could afford to get a container instead. It is much better and I can lock it at night. I named it MAMAFACE after me and my children: Maggie, Makhumbo, Florence, Angela and Cesar. I want to make it into a wedding shop. My daughter Florence and Ms. Nyandovie work in the shop in Limbe that I opened in 2009. The business is expanding rapidly! The best selling products are the zitenjes, African garment. We do sell expensive material from Nigeria and Thailand but we mostly sell cheap copies.



## The problems

I have identified 10 problems facing us traders. I want to bring these serious issues to the attention of our leaders.

### Poor transport coordination (right and bottom centre)



This scene is from the bus between the Tanzanian border at Songwe to Lilongwe in Malawi. It is a big problem to have all this heavy and hard luggage in the bus. If an accident occurs many people will die. In Tanzania the buses are forced to have separate trucks for the heavy luggage but in Malawi there is not even weigh bridges and no restrictions. When we cross the border into Malawi all our goods are put inside the bus. We risk our lives to travel this way. I know several people that have died in accidents with overfilled buses.



## High custom charges and tariffs (below)



My best selling goods, the zitenjes, African garment, carry import tariffs and costs of over 120 percent. Competition is fierce and a lot of people choose to smuggle their goods to keep prices down. If you pay all the taxes you simply cannot compete.

## Unnecessary delays at border posts (below)



Malawi border posts close at 6 pm and buses come later. We spend the whole night at the border. Please open for 24 hours!

## Access to foreign exchange/currency regulations (below left)



It is extremely difficult to get foreign exchange for low commission at big banks. They simply do not keep it in stock. However, the same banks run forex bureaus with extremely high commissions. This market should be regulated to make us able to access foreign exchange at low costs! Also, the restrictions to carry Malawi currency out of the country thwart our chance to pay taxes on the return. We are forbidden to carry enough cash.

## International competition (below, right)



These containers in Blantyre are all run by traders from other countries. They are allowed to trade here freely but we are not allowed to trade at all in, for example, Tanzania. That is not fair and it should be the same in all countries.

## Male officials search ladies' bags and bodies

Sometimes there are only male officers searching female traders at the borders. Sometimes it can become very culturally wrong. We would want both female and male officers at all times.

## Lack of good places to trade (bottom, right)



Most cross border traders have poor access to good and safe trading spaces. Agricultural producers and street vendors have each gotten their own places to trade. We would like a system like in Zambia where there is a big Comesa market at which Zambians and cross border traders from other countries are all welcome to trade. This is the Blantyre market.

## Difficulties to obtain loans (bottom, right)



It is very difficult for a cross border trader to access low interest loans from big national banks. You need to be rich and have great security. We have to go to institutions like the Finca with interests of up to 50 percent and very short repayment periods. Many people are bankrupted rather than empowered by these loans. We want our governments to enable a better procedure to get loans.

## Corruption at border posts (bottom, right)



Many border officials ask for bribes to make a smooth clearance. If you do not pay it will cost a lot and may take several extra days. I have reported cases to the central revenue authorities but they asked me for receipts of the bribes. Off course nobody gives receipts! And the border police share the money.

## Poor sanitation at border posts (bottom, right)



At our borders we are required to pay for the use of toilets. This is wrong because the toilets are built by the government and we pay huge import taxes. The toilets also closes at 6 pm. Many people spend the night there and it gets very disgusting.





**TELMA MONJONTE**

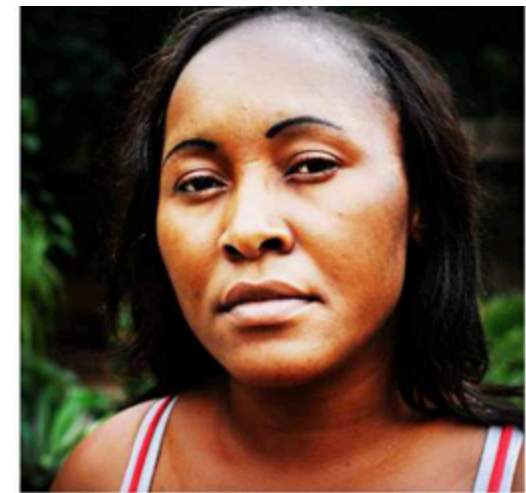
... de sua família, ela se tornou uma das principais líderes da comunidade. Ela é casada com um homem e tem dois filhos. Ela é uma mulher forte e determinada, que não se deixa intimidar por ninguém. Ela é uma mulher que luta por seus direitos e por aqueles que são menos afortunados. Ela é uma mulher que acredita na justiça e na igualdade. Ela é uma mulher que não se dá por vencida. Ela é uma mulher que é um exemplo para todos.





# TELMA MONJONTE

*I have been trading goods over the border between Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland since 1985. The business is crucial for the survival of my family and the 13 people that I share a house with in Maputo, Mozambique. Today, among other things, I import food and cars and sell livestock. I take any opportunity to make life better for the people that depend on me. Business, and life, is difficult sometimes but I want to focus on the opportunities rather than the problems.*



## My business (top row)



Djondji, the boy in the middle, is my good friend. I don't really know who the girls are. Djondji and me are selling cars together. He has been importing cars from South Africa for years, I came along last year. We bring used Dabaizinho cars (imported from Asia via Dubai to Durban in South Africa) across the Swaziland border to Mozambique. It is very good business! And it is much less trouble to import cars compared to potatoes, onions or eggs. Nobody asks for bribes or double tax us for cars. It is kind of strange! If you are poor and do small scale business you get trouble but if you do big things you have no problems.



This is Celia (to the right) and her daughter Tania. We met on a bus a couple of years ago. We were on our way to South Africa to buy fashionable women's clothes to bring back and sell in Mozambique. We travelled together and crossed the border many times. Now cheap Chinese and Brazilian clothes have killed that market. I don't trade in clothes anymore and me and Celia don't meet very often. This is at a birthday party.



My brother Reginaldo works at the president's farm. He has a good job! He has helped me to get into the business of selling and buying livestock. Now I do cattle business quite a lot and it gives good profit. **I need to do a lot of different businesses to be able to survive and support for my children.**

## The border (middle row)



I was taking a car across the Swaziland/Mozambique border when I saw this. The women have 30 trays of eggs on their heads. They cross the border many times. Taxes on eggs are very high and the women are forced into smuggling. If rules were fixed and custom charges lower they would declare and pay for their imports. Of course they would prefer to be legal!



I interviewed these policemen. **They told me that the goods they confiscate at the border and along the roads are resold by the them.** The police and customs officials are illegally making the profits that the traders were hoping for. Everybody, even the police, are making crimes!



The ladies have just had their imported alcohol confiscated by officials in the pickup car driving away. They had taken bank loans to cover their business and are now in financial problems.



These women try to smuggle meat in their car. They put the South African meat (in the blue plastic bag) where the spare wheel use to be and hope not to get inspected at the border to Mozambique. They take a great risk in order to avoid complicated bureaucracy and having to pay bribes.



This is an unofficial liqueur store in Maputo where they sell illegal alcohol behind other products. Their delivery car has just been taken by the authorities so now they are hiding their business and take away the alcohol. I took the picture real quick so they could not see me.

## My life (bottom row)



Carlota, my youngest of two daughters. She is 16 years old and even though she may look tough she is young and speaks like a child. She is in secondary school now and plays basketball. I must thank my parents for helping me taking care of my children! It is not easy! I am alone and I travel a lot with my business. I am truly grateful.



The living room in the house where I was born in 1972. **We are 13 people living here now.** Only four of us have jobs or run businesses and support the others. I lived here the first time until I was 18 and got married. I was divorced in 1999 and then I moved back again. I have now been able to buy myself a plot and hope I can afford to build a house of my own. It would be good to have my own place. I love my parents but we live too close.



This is my grandmother Thema's house close to Xai-Xai in the Gaza province north of Maputo. I was named after her but the Portuguese colonial authorities changed my name from Thema to the more Portuguese sounding Telma. Colonial rule ended in 1974 but I have gotten used to my name.



This is my mother Carlota. She is outside our house. She is doing good but she has had some heart problems.



My father Gabriel has a beer in the garden.



I got interested in these old ladies at a birthday party. Usually young boys sit with beer like this. The ladies kept dancing until 2 o'clock in the morning. I think they are very cute!







# SUDECAR NOVELA

*I lead Mukhero, an organisation that represents informal cross border traders in Maputo, Mozambique. In 1980 I was sent for 10 years to study in East Germany. When I came back nobody wanted my skills and I finally started my business. I imported eggs, chicken and maize from South Africa but I was always abused by officials. My goods were confiscated and everybody demanded bribes. In 2000 I started Mukhero to make things better. Today, I represent more than 700 traders. We are starting to get a voice and we are going to use it!*



## My official life (above)



This picture is from one of my many appearances on national TV. The journalists comes to me as soon as they want to hear the truth about things. I usually make a couple of interviews every week. Sometimes several times a day. If I am on television it does not matter if it is in the middle of the night; nobody will fall asleep when I talk! If the president talks everybody falls asleep. So I'm thinking about standing for president in Mozambique. But that will come later.

My message? Well, I tell people about the real challenges in this country. That poor people do not have any chance to make their living and that rich people and politicians only work to make themselves richer. That is the problem here. As I see it the small scale businesses are one of the most important factors for bringing our people out of poverty. There must also be credibility and accountability in government. The government needs to listen to its people. I try to make them do that. I meet a lot of traders and hear a lot of stories and that is what I tell the journalists. I always have real stories of real cases to present to them. The traders face a lot of harassment and the rules are anything but clear. **Often we do not even know what the taxes are supposed to be and the officials say random prices.** And then they keep our money for themselves!

This picture was taken by one of the traders after a meeting.

## The big meeting (to the right and below right)

The pictures are taken by Lazaro Chiluvaue.



Domingos Tivane is the General Director of the Mozambique Customs Authority. I have known him for a long time.

This time we had a very important issue to talk to him about. Several of our female members had experienced customs officials that had searched their private parts. **They had been sexually abused when they were just doing their work.** When I heard their stories I immediately contacted Domingos Tivane and demanded a meeting.

The meeting started at nine and went on for one and a half hours. Our members stood up to tell their stories and the General Director listened carefully. He promised to deal with the issue at once.



After the meeting we had a big gathering of over 160 members at the Mukhero office at the informal market. All members were happy for the good outcome of the meeting. But a couple of days later we understood that **the meeting had only made things worse.** Domingos Tivane had indeed spoken to his subordinates. But the field officials denied all allegations and then they took revenge on our traders for telling about their crimes. Our ladies were more sexually harassed than ever when crossing the borders. The field officials wants us to keep quiet! But we will not! We will have new meetings again and again and we will claim our rights!

## My private life(below)



This picture is taken by my wife Natalia. I'm sitting in the living room in our house in the Polana Cauico neighbourhood in Maputo. It is a good house, I built it in 1991 when I got back from East Germany. When I got home everything went very quickly. I met my wife, we got the house and four children. Now we are a lot of people!



My sons Sudecar Novela Junior, he's nine years old, and Edno Antonio Sudecar Novela, four years old. Sudecar plays a lot of games on the TV. The TV is new but on the bench to the far left you can see my old East German TV under the cloth. It was an extremely good quality television but it broke because the electricity in Mozambique is different from the one in Europe. I wish I could get it repaired because I will never find a better TV.



These people are living on the same street as me and I got them all out to make a ditch to divert the heavy rainwater from our houses. They all do what I tell them to. The guy in the red football shirt is Dino, my closest neighbour. Else I don't know their names. You know, they all know who I am, but I don't know who they are. It's the same wherever I go.



Khatleen da Evelina Sudecar Novela and Geanna Anita Sudecar Novela, my daughters, 18 and 16 years old. I think Khatleen should study economy and become an economist. That is a good job. All my children should make a good living for themselves! None of my children wants to work with health.