

CATALYSING SOCIAL COHESION IN NIASSSA:

Empowering youth agency for resilience, culture of tolerance and peace in Cuamba

- Young people are generally much better positioned to promote a culture of peace and tolerance among their peers. They have a talent for communication and mobilization. Engaging and working together with young people remains a top priority in policies, programs and capacity-building efforts to prevent and combat violent extremism. Having these as one of the fundamental assumptions, the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD) held, between the 13th and 17th of September, the training of 60 young people from the Youth Hub in Cuamba, within the scope of the Social Cohesion program in northern Mozambique.



The district of Cuamba is in the southern part of Niassa Province, 295 km from Lichinga (the provincial capital), bordering on the north with the districts of Mandimba and Metarica, on the south with the districts of Mecanhelas and Gurué (in Zambézia Province),

to the east with the districts of Lalaua and Malema (in Nampula Province) and to the west with the district of Mecanhelas. Agriculture is the dominant activity and involves almost all households. Agriculture is practiced manually on small farms with crops based on local varieties.

The Cuamba Administrator, João Júlio Manguiji

The Cuamba Administrator, João Júlio Manguiji, officially opened the Youth Hub training, having reiterated the district government's openness to collaborate with the Social Cohesion program. "We humbly want to appeal to all the actors in this program and, in particular, to the trainers, to teach the course so that the performance indicators and the established objectives are achieved".

For this occasion, the Administrator left some recommendations to the trained youth, highlighting for the necessity of collecting the knowledges, so that they can contribute for the development of the district and building the peace, in a context, where terrorism tends to expand to other provinces of the north of the country. "The youth must understand very well the meaning of social cohesion is, because we have the situation of terrorism. The problem started in Cabo Delgado, but we had similar situations here, more specific in the district of Mecula. And in these last days we are having similar situations in Nampula".

In this context, João Júlio Manguiji defended that the youth must be more vigilante, for they are the most vulnerable group of the recruitment. "The youth are influenced and manipulated into going to Cabo Delgado. They receive



job promises, but there is no job there. We ask the youth here of Cuamba that they don't follow these groups. You here, for example, will learn about business, and here in our district we have the conditions to develop projects. We are creating conditions for that the youth can be businessmen", affirmed Júlio João Manguiji.

The President of the Pemba Municipal of Cuamba

Besides the Administrator, there were also present in the official opening of the training, representation the President of the Pemba Municipal of Cuamba, Isidro Ismael Sacure. In his intervention, he talked about the importance of the training of youth of that municipal, highlighting that the Municipal defends the empowerment of the youth. "We thank nevertheless for the fact that this training talks about topics related to Entrepreneurship. This because one of the biggest problems that the youth of our district have and of the country in general, is related to unemployment. The Government and the companies are not able to accommodate all the youth, for there the necessity of the youth to pay attention to this training.



Muchanico Mataide

Muchanico Mataide 21 years old, did his Studies in the Ngungunhane industrial institute. He is member of the Youth Hub of Cuamba and he wants to have a more active role in the development of the his district.

He considers the training a great experience as he learned how to defend the rights of his community, how he can identify problems and the mechanisms to gather solutions for them. "The CDD taught me to have realistic goals and to work hard to achieve them. I have a dream of opening a logistic company of various products to produce an income for me and my family, but also to create jobs the youth of my community".

Muchanico Mataide tells us that training expanded his vision regarding his rights and of his community, and the mechanism of community participation. "Many times, the youth don't participate in the process of decision making because we don't know how to. But as of now we know, for example, that how as a group of Youth Hub can present our ideas and point of view



about our district, being available to collaborate with the district government in certain topics related to the youth".

Leonel Borene

Leonel Borene is an university student and he classifies the training in the Youth Hub as an eye opening experience. "The training gave us the tools of leadership, as we learn to communicate and persuade our pairs so we can together develop actions towards the development of Cuamba. The module of civic engagement was that most caught my attention, especially because of the idea of influencing the youth on being more engaged in building a common good".



Mariamo Chale

Mariamo Chale is a law student, and she considers that the training was a moment of great learning and an unique opportunity of acquisition of knowledge relevant to actively participate in the community. The young lady confirms that before the training she didn't have sufficient information that motivated her to collectedly and in an organized way act in the processes of governing of her district. "My dream is to be a lawyer and manager of an association that defends rights of the disfavored. I urge the youth not to choose easy routes to achieve success, under the possibility of joining terrorist groups".



Zaida Nipuite

"I have the dream of being a lawyer because I don't agree with injustice. The dream is to defend the "; Said Zaida Nipuite, a 17-year-old young lady, student of Cuamba high school. Besides learning practical tools for defining and achieving her goals, Zaida affirmed that she liked the lectures taught in the module regarding the abilities of the XXI century. It was here where she learned how to use new technologies to conceive projects of community development and to Entrepreneurship.

The social cohesion program in the north of Mozambique is an initiative led by the civil so-



ciety (CDD, IESE and MASC foundation), with support from Swiss Cooperation. The targeted group are youth and women, seen as “agents of change” not only individually but also collectively. The agents of collective change also includes public institutions that have an interest, capacity and ideas to contribute on the economic, political and social inclusion, to better the capacity of

State response and services.

As was done in the district of Angoche and Chimbunila, the training on Youth Hub of Cuamba included five modules, namely (i) Civic Engagement, (ii) Conflict Resolution and Negotiation, (iii) Leadership, (iv) XXI Century Ability and (v) Entrepreneurship and Community Project Development.





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