

SOCIAL COHESION IN NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE

Strengthening the Capacities for Youth Agency for Local Development and Social Cohesion in Chimbunila, Niassa

- CDD conducted the training of 60 young people in the district of Chimbunila, Niassa province, as part of the Social Cohesion Programme, from 6 to 10 September. Divided into two classes, each consisting of 30 young people, the trainees were trained in five competencies, namely (i) Civic Engagement, (ii) Conflict Resolution and Negotiation, (iii) Leadership, (iv) 21st Century Skills and (v) Entrepreneurship and Community Development Projects.



The district of Chimbunila borders with the city of Lichinga, to the north with the districts of Lago, Sanga and Muembe, to the west with Lake Niassa and the Republic of Malawi, to the south with the district of N'gauma and to the east with the district of Majune.

With an area of 3,494 km², Chimbunila comprises two administrative posts and five villages: the administrative post of Chimbunila, with three villages, and the administrative post of Li-one, with two villages¹. Its population is estimated at 72,500 inhabitants, according to the INE 2007 census².

Chimbunila has several potentialities in terms of natural resources, but, as shown in the District Strategic Development Plan (PEDD: 2015 - 2019), the district has few socioeconomic interventions, especially in the interior areas and in the main town, which has fertile arable land where a variety of food crops are grown. It also has forestry, wildlife, cattle and fishing resources of great economic value that, if exploited in

a sustainable way, may contribute to the local economic development.

The majority of the population works in agriculture. The main challenges facing the district include:

- Insufficient qualified human resources;
- Lack of conservation and storage capacity for agricultural products;
- The frequent uncontrolled burning and deforestation, the use of inappropriate agricultural technologies, low fertility, soil erosion and consequent loss of biological diversity and sustainable production;
- Insufficient sanitation network and existence of endemic diseases such as malaria, diarrhea, tuberculosis, acute respiratory infections and HIV-AIDS;
- Precarious teaching-learning conditions and high illiteracy rates, especially among people over 25 years of age.



The young people of Chimbunila are aware of these challenges, to which can be added the violent extremism that plagues Cabo Delgado province, with tendencies to spread to Niassa

and Nampula provinces. Thus, with the training, they feel more prepared to be agents of change in promoting youth resilience to violent extremism and disseminating messages of peace.

¹ <https://www.niassa.gov.mz/por/Ver-Meu-Distrito/Distrito-de-Chimbunila/O-Distrito>

² [https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chimbonila_\(distrito\)](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chimbonila_(distrito))



Marcia Cáximo said participating in the training was something incredible. “My dream is to become a doctor to take care of others. I enjoyed the training because I learnt how to be self-confident and lead my destiny.”

Marcia further stated that in her spare time she enjoys studying Islam because for her it is something that purifies, it is peace and love. “I want to take this opportunity to send a message to young people who are recruited into the ranks of terrorism based on fallacious religious discourses. They should not accept to join terrorism because no believer in Allah can take the life of his brother in the name of Him,” she added.

In turn, Eliseth da Conceição Alberto said that one of the biggest difficulties she faces in the district is participation in decision-making processes. “Our leaders make decisions that have to do with youth and don’t involve us. But with this training I have learnt that I can take the initiative to participate in these processes”.

Eliseth made it known that she has always wanted to lead groups. With the programme, she acquired tools to be able to realize her dream in an impactful way. “One of the things I didn’t know is how an apparent weakness can be turned into an opportunity. I like to play football, and here in the district there is no girls’ football team, I have to join the boys in order to play. But I know that there are other girls who like it and know how to play, but don’t have the courage that I have to go and play with the boys. This training has shown me that this is a gap that I can fill because football is my passion”.



FARUK AUHALO

Faruk Auhalo is 18 years old and attending grade 10. Initially, he didn't like going to school, but with time he realised that it is the key to success. Faruk is a music producer and says that in Mozambique, it is very difficult to evolve and achieve success as an artistic producer, especially for young people in the districts. "But one of the things I have learnt from this training is that we must have self-confidence and work hard to achieve our dreams."



JACKSON CHICO

Jackson Chico is another young man who has benefited from the training at the Youth Hub in Chimbunila. "I couldn't afford to study because my parents didn't have enough income to buy school materials. That's why I started studying very late. I would go to the farm with my parents, and there I learnt how to prepare the soil. With this learning, I gained a passion for agriculture and began to think about investing in this field. When I heard that a Youth Hub would be set up in Chimbunila I signed up because I knew there was an entrepreneurship module."



Jackson Chico said he enjoyed the experience because he learnt a lot: "The thing that caught my attention the most was the business plan. The way the trainers demonstrated that a good plan can catapult our business was very important to me. As I said, I really want to invest in the agricultural business.

The Chimbunila government authorities are both open and optimistic about the results of the initiative. This impression was shared during the courtesy visit made by the CDD team to the District Directorate of Education, Youth and Technology Services, led by Alice Mário Valen-

tim; and to the District Directorate of Economic Activities, led by Francisco Manuel Machono.

The Social Cohesion Programme is implemented with the support of the Swiss Cooperation. It is an initiative led by civil society (CDD, IESE and MASC Foundation) that aims to strengthen social cohesion in Northern Mozambique. The main target groups are youth and women, seen as "agents of change". The collective agents of change also include public institutions that have interest, capacity and ideas to contribute to economic, political and social inclusion, improve state responsiveness and service delivery.





Belmira Correia, leader of the Youth Hub of Chimbunila, with the Director of the District Services for Economic Activities (Francisco Macho) and the Director of the District Services for Education, Youth and Technology (Alice Mário Valentim).



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