

SOCIAL COHESION PROGRAMME LAUNCHED IN NORTHERN MOZAMBIQUE, IN NAMPULA

## The Programme aims to catalyst youth and women agency for social and economic transformation in northern Mozambique

- After the ceremony in Maputo that took place on 5 October 2021, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), in partnership with the Civil Society Support Mechanism (CSSM Foundation) and the Institute of Social and Economic Studies (IESE) launched on Thursday, in Nampula City, the “Civil Society Action for Social Cohesion in Northern Mozambique” programme.



Funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the programme focuses on strengthening the response capacity of formal and informal decision making institutions to initiatives led by youth and women, by improving access to public services and the protection of human rights; transforming youth and women into agents of change, contributing to inclusive local economic development and building a sense of trust, belonging and reconciliation

Speaking on behalf of the Swiss Cooperation, Nobre Canhanga argued that the “Civil Society Action for Social Cohesion in Northern Mozambique” programme reinforces the responsibility of all stakeholders to give young people positive life prospects for their future. “The programme aims to promote the constructive and civic engagement of young people and women as intervening agents in social, political and economic spaces, making them more inclusive and thus helping to consolidate the process of inclusive governance and development”.

The programme has a long-term commitment - it is expected to end in 2033 - and different phases of implementation. “We hope that in the evaluation of the first phase that ends in 2023 we will have positive outcomes and that they will contribute to the improvement of living conditions and an environment of healthy coexistence between different communities, actors, public and private institutions in Northern Mozambique”.

Nobre Canhanga said that the findings of studies done on the conflict in Northern Mozambique show that part of the problems are rooted in the strong sense of social exclusion, inequalities in the distribution of national income, worsening extreme poverty, limited access to basic services such as education, health and water, and others that have been increasing social injustices.

“In 2018, in collaboration with our partners, CDD, IESE and the CSSM Foundation, we conducted in-depth studies to better understand the roots of the conflict and structure an interventionist approach to address the sources of conflict in the region. This is how the findings and conclusions of the studies presented by the three organisations helped to build the programme called ‘Civil Society Action for Social Cohesion in Northern Mozambique’, the Swiss Cooperation representative argued.

Looking at the historical cooperation



relationship between Mozambique and Switzerland, Nobre Canhanga noted that the relationship was always based on trust and on assumptions of neutrality and respect for Mozambican institutions. “We are always interested in partnerships founded on honest dialogue and which aim to create instruments and mechanisms for the development of the country. Our relations with the Mozambican State founded on trust meant that in 2016, the Mozambican Government, Renamo and the Swiss Government together sought the paths for peace and political stability in Mozambique. In 2019 it was possible to sign the agreements on the cessation of military hostilities as well as the Maputo Definitive

Peace Agreement between the Government and Renamo”.

Representing the Secretary of State of Nampula, there was Cachimo Raul. In his short speech, Cachimo Raul said that the province feels honoured to host the programme of “Civil Society Action for Social Cohesion in Northern Mozambique”, and expressed interest in working with all civil society organisations and strategic partners in development projects. “We want to reaffirm our commitment to do everything possible so that the objectives of this programme are achieved. Do not be afraid to contact us to resolve any difficulty you may encounter on the ground”, Cachimo Raul said.

## “What has broken what makes us cohesive in Northern Mozambique, if we ever were?”, questions Arsénio Cuco, lecturer at UniRovuma

Academic Arsénio Cuco began by defining social cohesion as the degree of consensus of the members of a social group on the perception of belonging to a common project or situation. “Social cohesion refers both to the effectiveness of the instituted mechanisms of social inclusion, and to the behaviours and evaluations of those who are part of society”. Among these mechanisms, Arsénio Cuco highlights youth employment, educational systems, the ownership of rights and policies to promote well-being, equality and social protection. And he notes that the behaviour and evaluation of subjects can cover various areas, such as trust in institutions, social capital, sense of belonging, solidarity, acceptance of social norms of coexistence and willingness to participate in collective projects.

Regarding the challenges of social cohesion in Northern Mozambique, the academic argues that the first step is to find out what breaks what makes people cohesive in that region, if they ever were. This would involve knowing whether the instituted mechanisms of social inclusion, such as employment, education, health, policy to promote equality, well-being and social protection, are being implemented rigorously. “In Northern Mozambique, do people have confidence in the institutions, the public ones in particular? Or do they have a sense of belonging to this



ARSÉNIO CUCO, ACADEMIC

thing that is conventionally called Mozambique? For example, to what extent do the people of Nampula identify themselves in the Provincial Assembly? How does it connect with the population of Nampula? The same questions can be asked in relation to the Municipal Assemblies and our representatives in the House of the People (Parliament of the Republic)”.

“Today we are discussing decentralisation, but I don’t know if in Nampula we know what that is. I don’t know if we have the dimension of the figure of the Secretary of State and the Provincial Government. Do we identify ourselves with the way we are served in our public institutions? These things create fissures that lead us to a certain way of thinking that can lead to situations of violence. When I talk about violence, I am not only referring to armed violence. Violence is present in all social spheres.”

Despite several public appeals to the need to value dialogue, Arsénio Cuco believes that daily practice shows that there is little dialogue. “These are aspects to be taken into account in the programme of social cohesion in Northern Mozambique. We have to recognise all the problems that create fissures among Mozambicans and discuss them without taboos. One of the big problems that I notice is the fear of calling a spade a spade. While we do not call ourselves to touch these wounds that lead to fissures, it will be difficult for us to build social cohesion. Social cohesion will come about when Mozambicans in the North of the country identify themselves with public institutions performance. Social cohesion must also mean our capacity to put up with each other to the extent of our differences, that is, our capacity to tolerate each other”.

## “We will contribute to strengthening the relationship between citizens and State authorities by supporting platforms for dialogue”, Maura Martins, MASC Foundation

“CSSM Foundation has social cohesion as one of the pillars of its strategic plan, so this programme represents the continuity of the work we have been doing in Cabo Delgado and other provinces. From the experience of the work we have been doing, we know that social cohesion is only possible with the involvement of all, it will make sense if we manage to involve the most vulnerable populations, like women, children and youth. Social cohesion will be possible if people feel that their rights are being respected. We want this work of social cohesion to move forward



MAURA MARTINS, FUNDAÇÃO MASC

for the benefit of the provinces covered. As CSSM Foundation we want to join forces, respect diversity and seek consensus between the different actors, contributing to the betterment of this country. We will contribute to strengthening the relationship between citizens and State authorities, support platforms for dialogue, implementing activities aimed at building peace, reconciliation, resilience and livelihoods of the most vulnerable communities, through political, economic and social strengthening of savings groups and village development committees.”

## “Research can help us understand the weaknesses of social cohesion and the capacity to respond to factors threatening social cohesion”, Salvador Forquilha, IESE

IESE participates in the programme through two components: research on the one hand, and monitoring, evaluation and learning on the other. Salvador Forquilha, a researcher at IESE, argues that research can help to better understand the dimensions of social cohesion in Northern Mozambique, such as the sense of belonging, trust in institutions, economic inclusion, political participation, political legitimacy, security and justice. Research can also help to understand the weaknesses of social cohesion and the capacity to respond to factors threatening social cohesion. “Research can produce evidence to feed into the interventions of our partners in the programme (CDD and CSSM Foundation) and to have better informed advocacy. We will do action-research, because we want the knowledge produced to be useful in the implemen-



tation of this social cohesion programme in Northern Mozambique”. As research topics, Forquilha says that IESE will prioritize what he calls the barometer of social cohesion; the analysis of the political economy of the conflict in Northern Mozambique; the inter-religious dialogue in Northern Mozambique; and others that will emerge from the process of implementation of the programme itself. “As for the monitoring, evaluation and learning component, we have already started to set up a system linked to the research dimension; we will design and implement a baseline of the programme that will help us to better understand the progress to be made throughout the programme; we will design evaluation studies of the programme disseminating the results that we will be getting throughout the programme”.

## “Our perspective is for young people to be agents of transformational change in Northern Mozambique”, Magda Mendonça, CDD

“We look at this programme with great satisfaction and we intend to implement it with great seriousness and professionalism. The idea is to attract more people and institutions to join CDD, IESE and CSSM Foundation in implementing this programme of social cohesion in Northern Mozambique. The population of Cabo Delgado is suffering from the consequences of violent extremism, a problem that has erupted because there have been problems in some foundations of social cohesion in that region. The programme aims precisely to remedy these problems.



Our perspective is transformational; to transform the current context through an approach where governance is geared towards inclusive growth and sustainable development. We will do this by empowering the transformative potential of our youth, through the promotion of our youth agencies in Nampula, Cabo Delgado and Niassa, and through youth leadership academy and linkages in the local, provincial, national and global context. We want young people to be the agents of transformational change, to lead the process of inclusive growth and development.”



**EDITORIAL INFORMATION**

<p><b>Property:</b> CDD – Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento  <b>Director:</b> Prof. Adriano Nuvunga  <b>Editor:</b> Emídio Beula  <b>Author:</b> Emídio Beula  <b>Team:</b> Emídio Beula, Julião Matsinhe, Dimas Sinoa, Américo Maluana e Betuel Chau  <b>Layout:</b> CDD</p>	<p><b>Address:</b>                  Rua de Dar-Es-Salaam Nº 279, Bairro da Sommerschild, Cidade de Maputo.                  Telephone: +258 21 085 797</p>	<p><b>CDD_moz</b>  <b>E-mail:</b> info@cddmoz.org  <b>Website:</b> http://www.cddmoz.org</p>
--	--	--

PROGRAMMATIC PARTNER	FINANCING PARTNERS