

Young university students join forces to support displaced children in Cabo Delgado

- The violent extremism affecting the northern districts of Cabo Delgado has forced hundreds of thousands of people to leave their homes in the hope of finding safety and shelter elsewhere in the province. Despite the relative safety that the displaced find in the host sites, most are facing various deprivations, especially the lack of basic food items and psychosocial support.





According to data from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), about 850,000 people have been forced to move internally because of violent extremism. Of this number, around 46% are children. A total of 33,000 minors are also estimated to face life-threatening malnutrition, which requires specialised care, especially for children.¹

The lack of humanitarian assistance increases the vulnerability of children and many run serious risks of falling into begging, child labour and sexual exploitation. It was with these aspects in mind that a group of young university students and teachers created, three years ago, an integrated initiative to support displaced children in Cabo Delgado.

It is the initiative ‘Together for Children at Risk’ (JCCR) which provides assistance to displaced children between the ages of 01 and 17. The focus of the JCCR initiative is the shelter centre Metuge, where the largest number of children are to be found.

Using their own funds, the young university students and lecturers carry out various activities such as psychosocial support, provision of health first aid, distribution of food products and meals.

“We help children to improve their mental health to prevent them from falling into depression or having anxiety attacks. Many are sad because they have lost their parents and have been exposed to scenes of extreme violence,” said Vanilde Quelimane, one of the group’s members, during the premiere of “The Young Hour”, a new CDD programme that airs every Tuesday on the organisation’s social networks.

Another member of the “Together for Children at Risk” initiative, Jeferson Emilio, explained that the interventions include recreational activities such as football matches, dance circles, traditional games and other games that help children overcome the sad moments they experienced during the violent conflict.

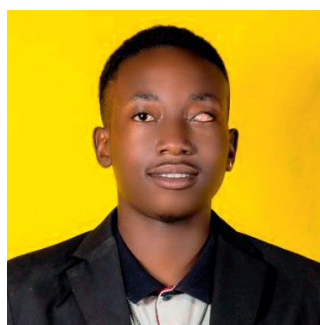
Abide Abilio, university lecturer and one of the mentors of the initiative, said the desire is to expand the project to other places affected by violent extremism. “We want to provide long-term nutritional and psychosocial accompaniment so that the children have a bright future after returning to their areas of origin. We know that soon these people will return to their homes and the signs of war are still there,” said Abide Wilbur.

To identify displaced children who need help,

¹ <https://mozambique.un.org/pt/133547-unicef-reforca-apelo-em-apoio-criancas-deslocadas-em-cabo-delgado>



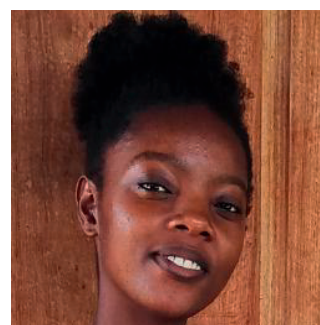
Abide Abdul, Initiative Mentor



Jeferson Emidio, Student



Jessica Alide, Student



Vanilde Quelimane, Student

the young people of the JCCR initiative work in collaboration with local authorities and some humanitarian organisations. "We have a case of a child that we have been following since the first day of his life. It is a baby who was born in the water on the way to Pemba, when his mother was fleeing from the attacks."

Almost five years after the first attack in the town of Mocímboa da Praia, violent extremism continues in Cabo Delgado, especially in the

districts of Macomia and Nangade. The military intervention of Rwandan and SADC troops was decisive in reducing the number of attacks, destroying enemy bases and recovering district villages, administrative posts and localities.


Dozens of hostages were rescued by the joint forces of Mozambique, Rwanda and SADC, after having spent several months in the bush. Some rescued IDPs are in reception centres in different districts of Cabo Delgado province.



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