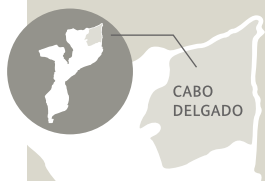


The entrepreneurial journey of Bertina

A woman surviving conflict and displacement in Northern Mozambique

Cabo Delgado in northern Mozambique has been plagued by violent conflict since October 2017. Non-state armed groups (NSAGs) have repeatedly carried out attacks against the population, resulting in numerous civilian casualties and the forced displacement of over one million people. As of August 2023, over 668,000 people remain internally displaced in Cabo Delgado due to the ongoing conflict, while at the same time, some 571,000 people have returned to their places of origin – yet often to destroyed homes and infrastructure, poor living conditions and a lack of access to protection and even basic services.



Bertina eventually met her husband, David. The couple married in July 2022, and now live in a house in the Chuiba neighborhood near Pemba city, together with six other relatives of the couple, all children.

In Pemba and other districts in Cabo Delgado hosting displaced people, there is a significant lack of livelihood opportunities for them. Solutions that enable IDPs to rebuild their lives and become active members of the host communities are therefore crucial. Recently, Bertina took part in an entrepreneurship training conducted under the Nexus Norte project, which is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on behalf of the German Ministry for Cooperation and Economic Development (BMZ). The project aims to sustainably improve the living conditions of IDPs, refugees, and members of host communities in the northern provinces of Mozambique.

Bertina's road to recovery

Bertina (29) is one of the many internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern Mozambique. She fled from Palma to Metuge following attacks on March 24th, 2021 – one of the most violent attacks by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) since the outbreak of the conflict. While fleeing with her family, her wounded cousin died in her arms and her sister and niece were kidnapped for nine months before they managed to escape. From Palma, Bertina and her family fled to the resettlement centre in Metuge, where

Back home in Palma, Bertina had a well-established catering business, selling ready meals such as chicken, spaghetti, and rice. Now, in the Expansão neighborhood, she sells basic goods such as rice, coffee, tea, sugar and juice from a stand she built with her relatives. The training helped her to set up this new business. She receives up to 50 customers a day, including regulars, and is able to save enough money each month to help support her children's education and put some aside.



Photo left: Bertina (in the middle) with her relatives.

Photo top: Bertina with a customer at her stand in Pemba, Cabo Delgado.

Photo bottom: Bertina counts her daily sales.



Photo: Bertina at the end of a working day at her stand.

Entrepreneurship support under the Nexus Norte Project

From September 2022 to September 2023, the entrepreneurship project in which Bertina participated benefited 1,934 people with technical vocational education and training (TVET) activities in selected districts of Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces. The trainings covered skills in demand across the labor market, such as cooking, refrigeration, electrical installation, painting for civil construction and masonry, as well as general business skills. Entrepreneurship support is particularly important for IDPs like Bertina, as employment and income opportunities are limited, making self-employment an important means of facilitating access to income generation.

Bertina still misses her home, but is happy to have the chance to rebuild her life. “I would like to go back home to Palma,” she says, “but my heart just does not forget all the trauma we experienced there”. For her and many others like her who have been uprooted by violence, participation in this project is a chance to recover.

“I am happy to have this opportunity,” says Bertina, “I feel pride and love for what I do. My life has changed as I am not worried about money all the time anymore. Now life is in my hands. The training made me understand that one only achieves something big by going step by step”.

Issuer	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH www.giz.de
Contact	Nana Odoi, Sector Coordinator Displacement and Migration Nana.Odoi@giz.de Helena Cikanda, Deputy Project Manager Helena.Cikanda@giz.de
Address	GIZ Mozambique C.P. 2766 Av. Francisco Orlando Magumbwe N° 976 Maputo, Mozambique
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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) www.unhcr.org
Thais Braga, Project Manager Braga@unhcr.org
UNHCR Mozambique Representation Rua Pereira Marinho N° 179 Maputo, Mozambique