



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Rebuilding Lives at the Border: Assistance and Protection of Migrants and Refugees" - Mozambique / South Africa Phase¹

Presentation:

This Executive Summary presents the key aspects of the research report: ***Rebuilding Lives at the Border: Assistance and Protection of Migrants and Refugees" - Mozambique/South Africa Phase***, which marks the third and final stage of the research program developed by the Scalabrinian Centre for Migration Studies (CSEM), between 2015 and 2019.

The results of the research were presented and debated at the International Conference: *"Rebuilding Lives at the Borders: Challenges in dealing with migrants and refugees"*, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in December 2018. The purpose of the event was to facilitate the exchange of different local, regional and international experiences, working methodologies and strategies for humanitarian interventions with the mobile population in different working contexts.

Background

The MSCS Sisters work in Ressano Garcia, on the border between Mozambique and South Africa, through the João Batista Scalabarini Centre and the Casa de Acolhida Maria Mãe dos Migrantes. The work of welcoming people in situations of mobility predominantly involves: young and intern migrant children, who migrate looking for better living conditions; returnee migrants, left at the border by South African police, often without money or conditions to return to their places of origin; and people, especially women, who seek to cross the border in order to reach South Africa, often irregularly, making them susceptible to being victims of crimes such as human trafficking.

Objectives:

The research sought to understand the migratory context on the Ressano Garcia border, located between Mozambique and South Africa, as well as the type of service –support and protection– that is provided by the Scalabrinian Sisters in the region.

¹ Research team consists of Tuila Botega, Igor B. Cunha and Paulo Inglês.



Specific objectives:

Given the overall objective, the following specific objectives were defined:

1. Understand the internal and cross-border migration of migrant children and youth in Ressano Garcia;
2. Understand the phenomena of forced migration, especially the case of returnees.
3. Systematize the socio-pastoral action developed by the MSCS Sisters in the region, seeking to identify the strategies of action they use;

Theoretical aspects:

The theoretical and conceptual basis of this research is the Core Guideline of the CSEM Studies and Research Program, entitled Protagonism of Migrants and Refugees, which refers to an approach to the promotion and defense of the life and human dignity of subjects in a situation of mobility, highlighting their capacity of agency. Similarly, the migratory process is recognized as essentially human, positive, and diversity as rich, where migrants and refugees are protagonists of their acts.

Other theoretical references that underlie the research are migration as a resource for daily reconstruction (INGLÊS, 2019) and child mobility and survival strategies (COLONNA, 2009). Conceptual choices reinforce a purposeful perspective of the migratory phenomenon, highlighting creativity, the human capacity to adapt to new challenges, *agency* and, ultimately, protagonism.

Methodological aspects:

The predominantly qualitative research adopted a different technique, seeking jointly to respond to the project objectives. It had a stage of documentary analysis and bibliographic reading seeking an approach to the context of Ressano Garcia and the migratory flows that mark the reality of this border between Mozambique and South Africa. At this stage, the study of the MSCS Sisters' work in the region was also made, based on the annual reports and projects of the João Batista Scalabrini Centre, from 2014 to March 2019.

From September to October 2017, field research was conducted in Ressano Garcia and

CSEM - Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios

SRTV/N Ed. Brasília Rádio Center Conj. P - Qd. 702 - Sobrelojas 01/02 - 70.719-900 - Brasília - DF - Brasil

+55 61 3327 0669 | www.csem.org.br | csem@csem.org.br



region. In addition to an ethnographic immersion in the border village, Gaza, Inhambane, Xai-Xai, and Maputo were visited. In this instance, semi-structured interviews and observation activities were conducted with participating returnee migrants, specifically children and young hawkers, MSCS Sisters and Scalabrini Centre staff, volunteers and activists, as well as informal conversations with key institutional actors such as NGO representatives, law enforcement authorities and middlemen.

Also, in December 2018 and February 2019, another visit was made to Ressano Garcia and new face-to-face interviews in Brasília/Brazil, respectively, to collect more information about the MSCS Sisters' care in the Ressano Garcia border region.

Results:

By appropriating a perspective that understands migration as something that is part of people's lives, and not as a problem to be controlled and solved, the service of the MSCS Sisters in Ressano Garcia with migrants generates impacts on the life trajectories of people in mobility. To cope with the diversity of profiles and situations, the mission develops emergency assistance projects and activities and longer acting strategies in an attempt to reconcile immediate attention with long-term actions. The following are the main research results:

1. Emergency assistance is based on humanitarian aid to migrants in their most basic needs, such as food; clothes and shoes; means of communication for contact with the family; payment of return tickets to the place of origin or at least to reach the capital, Maputo; accompaniment of sick people to health posts, donations of hygiene kits, among others. Immediate assistance reaches most of the returnees, with whom, a personalized welcome and awareness work is carried out, seeking to inform them about the dangers inherent in irregular border crossing, as well as to raise awareness of the benefits of regular migration, especially for the prevention abuses and vulnerabilities at the crossing. This humanized care by the Casa de Acolhida team at the border post, which is the scope of the immigration police, makes a difference to those who are going through a moment of great discouragement, which is a humanized response.

The work that the MSCS Sisters do in providing documentation for people in mobility is a way of interfering with the immigration process itself in an attempt to make it more humane, or at least to control the possible damage and dangers that irregular immigration implies.

2. Within the scope of long-term monitoring and action strategies, migrant children and youth are the predominant profile. The attempt to focus on their life trajectories in the area of care and protection is a response to a context of vulnerability and poverty. The activity seeks to encourage and guarantee access to an integral education, not limited to school

CSEM - Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios

SRTV/N Ed. Brasília Rádio Center Conj. P - Qd. 702 - Sobrelojas 01/02 - 70.719-900 - Brasília - DF - Brasil

+55 61 3327 0669 | www.csem.org.br | csem@csem.org.br



education, but offering other professional perspectives through vocational workshops, such as courses, in addition to providing spaces for socializing and performing playful, cultural activities, leisure, and collective interaction. Examples are the English and carpentry courses, as well as the football championship, in which young migrants themselves are encouraged to organize, giving them the opportunity to be protagonists of their actions, as well as an opportunity for fun and integration through sport.

Ongoing awareness-raising work is done not only with children but with society at large and with employers, providing information on children's rights to go to school, to receive their wages correctly, thus helping create awareness and focus on working relationships, decreasing exploitation.

Another important initiative concerns the mediation that the Scalabrini Centre mediates between children and employers in cases of conflict or disagreement. For example, a bank account is available for boys to be able to save their income as hawker and handle their own money. In addition to providing greater beneficiary autonomy from employers, it minimizes the chances of being exploited and not receiving the combined salary. This role that the MSCS Sisters play in Ressano Garcia's local society as a “mediating authority” also devises an action strategy for the protection of victims of exploitation and a way to prevent violations from recurring.

3. As a working methodology, the projects rely on the so-called activists, who are mostly young people who have already gone through the activities of Casa de Acolhida, and who was hired by the projects to help the activities progress. It is a way to offer humanized care and closer to the reality of the beneficiaries, as it enables communication in local languages.
4. Working in a border region with a mobile population is a challenge for monitoring and continuing adherence to the activities offered at the MSCS Mission in Ressano Garcia. Another aspect to be achieved concerns the increased participation of migrant girls in the activities offered by the Scalabrini Centre. This profile presents even more vulnerabilities within the universe of beneficiaries assisted, due to their gender condition, considering that they work in the area of domestic services and care in the private sphere, within the employers' houses, being susceptible to the possibility of sexual exploitation.

Final considerations:

It can be inferred from this research that the MSCS Mission model in Ressano Garcia understands that migrants in general, and children and young people in mobility, are specifically vulnerable people; without denying, however, their status as subjects of rights with agency capacity. In other words, it understands that they are not merely victims of an adverse context, but

CSEM - Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios

SRTV/N Ed. Brasília Rádio Center Conj. P - Qd. 702 - Sobrelojas 01/02 - 70.719-900 - Brasília - DF - Brasil
+55 61 3327 0669 | www.csem.org.br | csem@csem.org.br



protagonists who actively act in the elaboration of survival strategies and the reconstruction of their lives and trajectories on the border, being their protagonism only to support and propel them.

CSEM - Centro Scalabriniano de Estudos Migratórios

SRTV/N Ed. Brasília Rádio Center Conj. P - Qd. 702 - Sobrelojas 01/02 - 70.719-900 - Brasília - DF - Brasil

+55 61 3327 0669 | www.csem.org.br | csem@csem.org.br