



Save the Children

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Integridade
 Aspiramos à viver de acordo com padrões mais elevados de honestidade e comportamento pessoal. Nunca comprometemo-nos a nossa reputação e actuamos sempre nos melhores interesses das crianças.

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"We would like to have a better future"



Testimonies of Girls Rescued from Premature Marriages

NORAD Project

Manica Province

Chimoio, 2021

DATA SHEET

Title: *Testimonies of Girls Rescued from Premature Marriages*

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FOREWORD OF BROCHURE

In Mozambique, premature unions are a secular practice with negative repercussions on the health and social development of girls, with around 50% of women having a child or having lived with a man before the age of 18 years. Data from the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare indicates that Manica Province has one of the highest rates of premature unions in the country, recording an average of 30,000 cases per year. The high volume of cases of unions involving children continues even after the approval of Law No. 19 / 2019 approved on the 22nd October on the prevention and combating of premature unions, according to Save the Children field work findings

This brochure documents about 9 testimonials from girls rescued from premature unions in 4 districts implementing the NORAD project, which are Manica, Machaze, Tambara and Macossa in the province of Manica.

We spoke with girls who were married and rescued by members of the Community Child Protection Committees to understand the story of each one of them having been victims of a premature marriage and motivations of the families who married off the girls before the age of 18.

The testimonies are a true reflection that there is a great need for us to continue to disseminate the law and raise awareness among all members of the community (children, parents and guardians, teachers, community leaders, etc.) about the existence of laws that criminalize violence against girls. Furthermore, knowledge of the law is important, so that the number of girls who are married before the age of 18 is reduced.

The testimonies also call for attention to the lack of a clear strategy to support the rescued girls because we realize that parents are not prepared to receive the rescued girls back home from where they had been married, especially in situations where they are already pregnant or with babies. The processing of information and dealing with premature unions until the final decision is very time consuming. Faced with this, some parents find mechanisms to obtain second registration certificates in an attempt to prove that they are over 18 years old.

Aware of these challenges, Save the children will continue to support strategies aimed at reducing the rate of premature unions and early pregnancies in communities, as they translate as one of the most serious forms of violence against children.

Ana Dulce Chiluvane Guizado

Senior Project Manager

STRONG QUOTES FROM THE RESCUED GIRLS

"I was not allowed to go to school while my dream is to be a nurse, I had a complicated delivery, my baby was born prematurely at 7 months and did not cry"

"That gentleman gave me 150 to 200 meticaais when he took me into the woods to have sexual intercourse with him and said that I would be his second wife."

"I didn't know I was going to get pregnant on the first sexual intercourse, and when he found out I was pregnant he despised me."

"They forbade me to go to school while my dream is to be a teacher"

"I didn't like living there, they forbade me to go to school while my dream is to be a teacher".

"I would like SCl to save other children, my husband raped me for 3 days and I cried a lot, when my family came to get me he fled to South Africa."

"Nobody asked me if I wanted to be married, I was taken to live there while my husband was in South Africa and slept with the other children."

NORAD PROJECT RESCUES 60 GIRLS FROM PREMATURE UNIONS

2020 was a very difficult year for many Mozambican girls who spent most of the year confined in their homes with nothing to do because schools were closed and the recommendation was to stay home. Restrictions imposed as preventive measures of Covid-19 took many families to extreme poverty and consequently many cases of violence, exploitation including premature unions have been reported.

The lack of basics meant that some girls were married before the age of 18, some were used as products of exchange whereby their family members arranged marriages for them with older men with some financial power in their or other communities. Others became involved with other young people of about the same age as theirs, who (the bridegroom) ran away from home with the aim of improving living conditions.

Mozambique, like many countries in Africa, have the highest rates of premature unions in the world due to a profound ignorance of the law, poverty, cultural practices among several reasons.

Today many girls between the ages of 12 and 16 are satisfied that they have returned to their parents' homes and they reported to have experienced trauma and suffering. Some parents and / or guardians are accused of forcing minors to marry adult men in exchange for money, material goods or domestic animals like ox or goats.

Last year, Save the Children Mozambique through the NORAD Project strengthened the capacity of 114 Community Child Protection Committees - CCPCs that work with community leaders and the wider community to help prevent and report on child rights issues, also in preventive measures of COVID-19. Coordination with local leadership can resolve non-state issues.

Additionally, through the NORAD Project, SCI in October supported the decentralization and launch of the Child Help Line (Linha Fala Criança -116 which has a provincial coverage to denounce all types of violence including premature unions.

In 2020, through the Community Child Protection Committees and the Child Helpline, -116 Line, about 92 girls who were in premature unions were denounced in Macossa, Manica, Tambara and Machaze, the 4 districts implementing the NORAD project. From this number, 60 girls were rescued to return to their families.

Of the 60 rescued girls, 47 were rescued through the Community Child Protection Committees-CCPC efforts and 13 from the Child Helpline as reported in the table below:

Distrits	N° of cases Registered 2020	N° of Solved Cases CCPCs and community members	N° of Solved cases of Linha Fala Criança (Child Help Line)
Manica	26 cases	13 girls rescued	6
Machaze	26 cases	9 girls rescued	4
Tambara	26 cases	9 girls rescued	1
Macossa	20 cases	16 girls rescued	2
Total	92 cases	47 girls	13 girls

TESTIMONIES OF GIRLS RESCUED FROM PREMATURE UNIONS.

CLAUDINA MANUEL NAISSON 14 YEARS, MESSICA SEDE COMMUNITY – MANICA DISTRICT 10th GRADE

“I was not allowed to go to school while my dream is to be a nurse, I had a complicated delivery and my baby was born prematurely and I cried.”

Her dream of being a nurse almost failed when Claudina was involved for 2 months in a premature union with Elias, 24 years old, who is a photographer by profession.

Last year, Claudina was in 10th grade, she has already done final exams and for what she evaluates she expects very good results although she has had a year of many challenges. When schools were closed for the first time in March because of the preventive measures of COVID-19, she already had a hidden love relationship with her boyfriend Elias, at the beginning of the year she was enticed to live with him and she accepted but did not expect so many challenges for a 13-year-old girl.

When Claudina's mother became aware of her disappearance, she started to make inquiries until her schoolmates and neighbors gave her information about her whereabouts, that she was living with her boyfriend who was already her husband. Claudina's mother approached to find out what was going on, but there was no understanding with Elias' family, the child protection community committees had to intervene with the help of the community leader to rescue Claudina.

After Claudina returned to her family life she discovered that she was 3 months pregnant and she felt she had been cheated. The family and her, had initially thought of aborting the baby. With the support given to the family by the members of the CCPCs, the school principal and other family members, she resumed school despite the pregnancy until the baby was born in July 2020 prematurely at 6 months and it was a very complicated birth.

“She was always a smart girl and didn't know what she was doing even though she agreed to go and live at the boy's house on her own free will but there were adults who were aware of it despite her age of just 13 years. Unfortunately, when we managed to rescue her, she was already pregnant. It was a very difficult delivery so that we stayed in hospital for many months because the baby, in addition to being born premature, did not cry and we were transferred from Messica to the provincial hospital in Chimoio, “lamented Claudina's mother.

Today Claudina is a mother of a baby boy and assumes that she was a failure and did not even realize what was happening. Unfortunately, she got involved in that premature union that had drastic consequences for her life.

“I am not yet old enough to get married and I didn't know what I was going to do at Elias' home when he said to go and live with him. I didn't like living with him, I feel good at my mother's house. There wasn't time to think about the issue because they wouldn't let me. I had to do all the housework, from now on I am waiting for my examination results to come out so that I enroll for the 11th grade. I have a dream of being a nurse to help care for the sick, but I don't know if it will work because I don't know if my parents will be able to pay for my studies and I also have to be brave because my friends will laugh at me because I already have a child and I suffered a lot in childbirth.”

There is no kind of connection and communication with Elias and his family because they threatened that if she left their home, they would not support the child or the expenses of the two as they doing now, but Claudina's mother assumed all the expenses of the two children, Claudina and her son.



Foto 1: Claudina Naisson, 14 years and in 10th grade Messica - Sede Community



Foto 2: Claudina next to her mother Mrs. Palmira Rodrigues Fazenda

VAIDA ANTÓNIO RAPOUSO, 15 YEARS, MUNDONGUARA COMMUNITY MANICA DISTRICT 7th GRADE

"I didn't like living in that family, they forbade me to go to school while my dream is to be a teacher"

Born of a gold mining mother and also a peasant farmer in the community of Mundonguara, Vaida Rapouso is the oldest in a family of 3 sisters. She was orphaned by her father when she was 3 years old. Vaida was involved for 4 months in a premature union with a 22-year-old boy from a community far from hers. Her routine as a normal teenager was going to the market, fetching water and going to school. One of these days a young man made her a proposal for marriage, and she accepted. They organized/hatched a plan for Vaida to run away from home.

On one of the nights in July, she ran away from her home for about 3 months and lived with her husband, during which time they had sex, but she did not become pregnant. Vaida's husband traveled a lot to Zimbabwe because of some business there.

Vaida Raposo told us that the 3 months were not easy. She was in a strange family where the only person she knew was her husband, but he hardly with her as he travelled a lot. Besides waking up at 4 am to go to the field, drawing water and cleaning in the backyard, cooking, her husband and in-laws forbade her to go to school.

“I was no longer enjoying living there, I no longer wanted that husband but I was afraid to come back, housework was very difficult, they were heavier than those I used to do at my parents’ home and they told me not to go to school so that I have time enough to cook for my husband. At my mom’s house we get up early of course but not as early as 4 am. My sisters and I do everything together, we wash dishes together, we cook, we clean the house, we fetch water together, we go to school together and nothing is forced to do. I would like to go back to school.”

Vaida's mother always encouraged her to go to school because it is very important for her better future and and for the fulfilment of her dreams of being a great teacher.

Vaida thanked the intervention of the Community Child Protection Committee leader who had contact with her mother and managed to locate where she was so that they could raise that family's awareness for her to return to school and also return to her family home. After negotiations with the help of community leaders and other community members she was rescued. The Husband she lived with for 3 months has been in Zimbabwe since December, but Vaida was traumatized, **"I don't want to live in this area anymore because I'm afraid he will come back and want to take me back,"** Vaida added.



Foto 3: Vaida Raposo, 15 years in 7th grade in Mundonguara Community



Foto 4: Vaida's mother next to Community leader Mr. Cláudio Serrote

RUTENDO ALFAI DJAMBO 16 YEARS, NHAMDIRO COMMUNITY MANICA DISTRICT 7th GRADE

"That gentleman gave me 100 to 150 meticais when he took me into the woods for sexual intercourse with him and said that I would be his wife."

Rutendo is a 7th grade student at Nhandiro primary school, one of the 122 schools supported by Save the Children NORAD project. She faced a premature union with a man older than her. She does not know his age but she is quite sure that he was an adult man, married and with grown-up children. The proposal was that she would be his second wife and everything would happen with the consent of his first wife. With tears in her eyes because of the sadness caused by the polygamous home, Rutendo says that she was married to a man older than her. When they started dating, the first meetings took place in the woods a little distant from her home. The supposed husband gave her money 150 to 200 meticals that she used to buy clothes at the market.

After a period of months in the relationship, she went to live at this man's home. Days later, negotiations for her traditional wedding started, but Rutendo's father, 53 years old, after being sensitized, refused and with the help of the members of the Community Child Protection Committee managed to rescue the girl, **"I went to live in that gentleman's family and his wife ill-treated me and used to send me to do the family's farm work and all the housework. When I returned home my parents were angry with me and said that I shouldn't have got married to that man because I had to go to school and for sure, I want to continue with school. My father says every day despite being pregnant."**

Rutendo, even though she does not know what her future will be, is pregnant but she is already happy because she has returned to family life and hopes to return to school.



Foto 5: Rutendo Djambo, 15 years in 7th grade
Nhandiro Community - Mavonde



Foto 6: Rutendo with SCI team at a moment of
being encouraged to return to school

LUISA SAMUEL MUTISSE * 12 YEARS, MABUE COMMUNITY – MACHAZE DISTRICT 4th GRADE

"Nobody asked me if I wanted to get married, I was taken to live there while my husband was in South Africa and I slept with other children."

Luísa is a calm and apparently shy girl. Last year she stopped going to school because of the suspension of classes due to Covid-19. She says she has no memory of many things, she just remembers that some people came to her home to talk to her mother and two days later during one night she was taken to the home of her husband who was still working in South Africa.

She stayed only 10 days whilst waiting for her husband to return from the neighboring South Africa while she slept in one of the isolated rooms in the house with other children in the family.

"They only took me to live in that family, nobody asked me if I wanted to marry, I think I'm still a child and I didn't like going to live in that family because I didn't know anyone. I used to wash their clothes, cooked, fetched water and did general cleaning. I didn't sleep with any man because the husband they gave me wasn't there, he works in South Africa. I was waiting for him but they came to pick me up before he returned."

Luísa's mother said that in August of the previous year, a certain family came to give them 5,000 meticals to reserve their daughter so that she marries their son who works in South Africa. The agreement was that the traditional wedding would happen when she was of legal age, and according to her, she did not remember how her daughter went to live in that family. A few days later and without knowing what to do, she spoke to her relative who is the chief of that area.

The chief helped her to recover her daughter from the marriage but she (the mother) had already spent the money, **"I lost my husband very early, I have this girl and a 5-year-old boy who live with me, I have two other daughters who are already in their homes who, because I didn't know, they also married- very early before the age of 18 and they stopped studying but they are already grown up. I accepted the 5,000 meticals because they said it was just to keep the girl until she got married. I have already spent the money and I must pay to save my daughter "** related Luísa's mother.

Luísa did not get to know the alleged husband because she stayed only 10 days and was rescued before his return from South Africa. Thanks to the chief's intervention and other members of the community, Luísa is back to family life.



Foto 7: Luísa Mutisse, 12 years of 4th grade Of Mabué Community



Foto 8: Luísa Mabue next-to the Mabue Community leader, M. Felisberto Bassame

FELISMINA TOMÁS * 13 YEARS, MACU COMMUNITY – MACHEZE DISTRICT 5th GRADE

“I would like SCI to save other children, my husband raped me for 3 days and I cried a lot when they came to pick me up and he fled to South Africa “

Still with a look of fear, Felismina's first words were the call for Save the Children to help save all girls who may be married in other communities. Felismina was married and lived at her husband's house for 3 days and during the 3 days she was sexually raped by her husband "I was raped because he took off my clothes and raped me and I cried even so he threatened me to shut up and continued"

The 13-year-old narrates that it was a very difficult moment because she was not prepared for anything and did not even know what to do and who to ask for help, **“I just realized that I was at the house of the young man who is 21 years old and I was told that he would be my husband. I started to cry and his family was angry with me, my family knew I was there and then they came to get me,”**said Felismina.

When the case was reported, Felismina's husband was detained for a few days but as soon as he got out, he fled to South Africa and no one knows his whereabouts up to this day.



Foto 9: Felismina Tomás, 13 years of 4th grade in Macu Community



Foto 10: Felismina next-to her mother Mrs Maria Tomás

CELINA TITOS MACONE * 15 YEARS, MACHAZE CENTRE COMMUNITY, 7th GRADE

“I didn't know I was going to become pregnant in the first sexual relation, and when he found out I was pregnant, he despised me.”

Celina is an orphan of a mother and lives with her paternal grandmother and aunt, her father never gave due attention to her daughters and she is the youngest in a family of 5 siblings. She started dating a 22-year-old boy who when he learned that she was pregnant fled to South Africa. As she lived with a grandmother and an aunt, when they found out she was pregnant, they suggested that she goes to her boyfriend because they would not be able to support their baby.

In addition to the ill treatment from her aunt, Celina was forcibly taken to the home of her husband's family members where she was ill-treated and the supposed boy spent a month living with her, said he was going to South Africa to work, never came back and did not even a sign that he is still alive. Today Celina lives at the home of her 22-year-old sister who sells tomatoes at the market.



Foto 11: Celina Macone, 15 years of 7th grade in Chitobe Community.

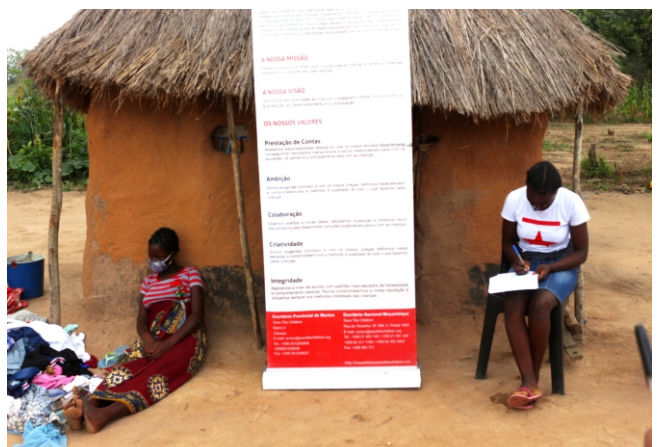


Foto 12: Celina Macone next-to her sister with whom she lives since after she was rescued.

MANINHA PEDRO * 15 YEARS, PHOMBWE COMMUNITY – MACOSSA DISTRICT 6th GRADE

“My Father received 5 litres of cooking oil and 1500 meticaais as payment for me to stay at my husband's house “

Maninha is the 13th daughter of a group of 17 siblings in a polygamy relationship of Mr. José, 57 years old and has two wives. With the dream of being a teacher, the girl from the community of Nhandadza, almost more than 120 kilometers from Macossa village, says she was involved in a premature union which was agreed to by her parents without her having the liberty to choose **“I was married because they came to our home to talk to my father and gave him 1500 meticaais and a hoe. The next day, I went to live in his home, did all housework including dishes, cooking for my in-laws and brothers-in-law who were about 15 people.”**

The community child protection committee helped Maninha to be rescued from a forced union but unfortunately she is almost 4 months pregnant. She really wants to go back to school although she is ashamed, **“I would like to go back to school. I don't know if they will let me go because I am pregnant and my belly will grow, I am afraid my classmates will laugh at me.”**

ISABEL CHARLES * 15 YEARS, POMBWE COMMUNITY – MACOSSA DISTRICT 7th GRADE

“My Father received 1500 meticaais and a hoe as payment for me to stay at my husband's house.”

Isabel is an orphan of mother and has a dream of becoming a nurse when she grows up to care for the sick and the subject she most likes is Portuguese. She is a 7th grade student at Pombwe primary school.

She narrated that one day some people arrived at her house with a set of clothes, capulanas, 5 liters of oil, and 1500 meticaais as her bride price.

Isabel said that she had no support from her father, only from her older brother who supported her until today. the father drinks every day and has 5 wives and many children. **“I feel so bad because my father doesn't help me with anything, neither school supplies nor encourages me to go to school. The only person who helps here is my brother. Unfortunately, my mother passed away and I have five brothers from the same mother and the others are from different mothers. My father and his other wives do not pay much attention to us and he drinks a lot. I went to school**

thanks to my brother who does everything for me and he was the one who helped me dissolve my marriage that my father and stepmother had arranged’.

Isabel's brother is 18 years old and is in 12th grade and intends to take a professional training to get a job and help her sister finish her studies, **“I would like my sister to finish 12th grade and take her teaching course for me to be satisfied because I am responsible for her since our mother passed away”**, said Isabel's brother.



Foto 13: Maninha Pedro, 15 years, 6th grade next-to her father in Phombwe Community.



Foto 14: Isabel Charles, next-to her brother who assist her.

NATALINA MAINATO * 15 YEARS, NHACOLO COMMUNITY – TAMBARA DISTRICT 4th GRADE

"I only have one arm and I feel like I have a miserable life, I can't dream of anything else, my parents drink every day and I wanted to get married to a gentleman."

At Tambara district center, in the north of Manica province, a 15-year-old girl managed to escape a premature union arranged by her suitor's wife and her own mother. The 15-year-old Natália's difficult story began in 2019 when she was attacked by a crocodile while bathing with her friends on the banks of the Zambezi River.

As a result of the attack, Natália saw her right arm mutilated, which posed other difficulties for this girl, including writing. Natália dropped out of school when she was in 3rd class and when she thought about continuing her studies in 2020, face-to-face classes were suspended nationwide as one of the measures to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus.

It was another year with nothing to do and this was a reason alleged by a lady from the community, to entice Natália and her family members to support her in the care of her youngest son in exchange for better living conditions.

It was for 4 months that Natália lived on the other side of her community being provided clothes as preparation, and little did she know that she was being assisted so that she becomes the 3rd wife of a man over 50 years of age. In addition to the child exploitation that Natalina was subjected to, the proposal was for her to be the third wife of a man over 50 years of age with two wives and 14 children.

Firstly, Natalina received clothes as payment for the service she provided such as washing and cooking for the youngest children in the family. **“When they asked me to go and live in that family, the lady said it was to play with her youngest son but weeks later I realized that they were negotiating with my parents so that I could also be that uncle's wife. Thanks to the members of the CCPC who sought me out and found me, my father was detained for 7 days at the police station because the police accused him of having consented and being in the process of negotiating, but he also did not know and fled up to this day.”**

Today Natalia feels free and happy she is going back to school so she can fulfill her dream to be a teacher despite having lost hope she would like to leave Tambara one day to live in another place, “When I went to the man’s home I had no option and did not like living in that house. I was humiliated by my parents, they drink every day, they don’t take care of us, and having only one arm makes everything more difficult,” added Natalia.

SUSANA NOÉ * 16 YEARS, CASADO COMMUNITY – TAMBARA DISTRICT 4th GRADE

"My father received 650 meticaís and 5 litres of cooking oil as payment for my traditional marriage union"

Suzana Noé, 15 years old, was reserved for a boy she says she doesn't know to formalize a marriage union. The boyfriend's family paid 650 meticaís and 5 litres of cooking oil to her parents as the traditional practices of this region, which automatically signifies assumed commitment.

She is the 10th daughter in a family of 27 siblings, her father is a polygamist with 3 wives nowadays but he used to have 4 and the oldest has passed away. Suzana's case also got to the police station and her father was detained for many days and had to pay back the bride price received for the marriage of his daughter.

“I didn't know that guy, I only saw his family here at home talking to my father and then they called me to introduce them. His family left money and 5 liters of cooking oil, I accepted because my father order me to, “Suzana added.

Although Suzana says it is not easy to live in her biological parent's family because her father has many children and they sometimes go hungry.



Foto 15: Natália Maniato, 15 years, 6th grade next-to her father in Phombwe Community.



Foto 16: Suzana Noé 16 years, 4th grade next-to her in Casado Community.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY LEADERS AND CCPCs IN COMBATING PREMATURE UNIONS

Community leaders have an important and indispensable role in influencing changes in the most remote communities. In the government structure, they are people who have the power to influence the grassroots in everything that has to do with policies, changes in attitudes. The leaders are able to disseminate information in their communities and are respected therein. For our project the community leader is the main community mobilizer in their communities and has the power of comprehensive influence.

Within the traditional structure, they have powers to mobilize their communities and achieve desirable results.

Claúdio Alberto Cerrote is a community leader of Mundonguara community. He assumes that there are some situations of premature marriages and he takes opportunities in meetings with communities to raise awareness against early marriages giving examples of the consequences that premature unions cause and brings in his community and also that nowadays it is a crime.

This community leader hopes that the practice of premature unions may come to an end or that the cases will decrease as a result of hard community work to raise awareness and disseminate the law. **“The most important thing is to work together. Now with the implementation of the Save the Children's NORAD project it is much easier to work. Previously, it was just me alone but**

today I have support of Save the Children and I can see from the goods results that we are doing good work”.

The Leader emphasizes the fact that the existence of many cases has a lot to do with cultural practices which makes it very difficult for people to disassociate with this practice quickly, **"There is no advantage to boys marrying early, without a job or any training of some sort, therefore little by little the community will accept the change"**.

The Community Child protection committees are bodies that are specifically focused on prevention, combating and reporting actions. They have the role of ensuring all child protection actions raise community awareness in aspects related to child protection, channel the concerns of related communities with this component to the Office of Attendance, Attorney, Courts and all those who administer justice in the country.



Foto 17: Cláudio Serrote, Mundonguara Community leader.



Foto 18: Member of the child protection Committee in Nhandiro Community

THE ROLE OF THE ATTORNEYS/PROSECUTORS AS MEMBERS OF THE REFERENCE GROUP

Public prosecutors who work directly with the various entities linked to the NORAD project as part of the multi-sector reference group that are part like The Victim Friendly Support Unit , Social Action, Head of Local Administration, Registrar General to , combat violence against children including premature unions, admit that there are much more reports nowadays of abuse cases in communities about situations that constitute the crime of premature unions and therefore there are more cases that are taken to court.

The prosecutor of Manica, Nitson Reis affirms that the work of the community committees of the district of Manica, has been decisive so that the district prosecutor's office as a whole be able to document

information and take those involved in cases of premature unions, to face justice as by the law 19/2019 of 22 October, **“We work with the CCPCs who report cases to us and we are giving guidance on how to deal with suspected premature unions. This crime is quite complex because it drags several people to respond to this act, all made part of it, our greatest challenge is to make this law known by all people of Manica district.’**

In turn, Mauro Saúde, says that the work of publicizing the law should continue at all levels and that is why the awareness raising meetings last year made it possible to have many reports of this type of crime, **“Last year the girls stayed at home after schools were interrupted thus, there was a large number of premature unions but of all the cases that were filed, almost all had an outcome.”**



*Foto 19: Prosecutor of Manica District
Nitson dos Reis.*



*Foto 20: Prosecutor of Machaze District
Mauro Saúde.*

Maria Luisa Timba, the district prosecutor for Tambara, says that the prosecutor's office will not tolerate situations of violation of the rights of the child, especially girls, as long as laws exist that criminalize offenders. **“Everyone will be taken to court and if they are proven, they will be convicted of the crime committed,”** warns Maria Luísa Timba, who adds that law enforcement must complement community education.

Aissa Chicalia for Macossa being part of the reference group with a strong commitment to the prevention and elimination of premature unions, says Macossa is a district with the usual practice of premature unions and polygamy in general and that's what causes premature unions which is a problem. It is a great challenge because it involves families, **“The same people who report cases and when it's time to make statements, the story is told differently. We have no evidence whatsoever, there are cases of falsification of the children's identity card (birth certificates), a violation that the girls themselves deny, then the collection of sustainable evidence and distance between communities is a big challenge for us because we have no means of transport”**



*Foto 21: Prosecutor of Tambara District
Maria Luísa Timba.*



*Foto 22: Prosecutor of Macossa District
Aissa Rachid Chicalia.*