



CONSELHO CRISTÃO DE MOÇAMBIQUE

CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF MOZAMBIQUE



Dialogue meetings on the role of churches in the context of violence against marginalized groups, such as LGBTI people.

16, 18, 28 January to 2 February

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1. Introduction and Findings

As part of the human rights project implemented by the Christian Council of Mozambique, with funding from the FRI, it held 8 dialogue meetings between religious leaders, young people, Lambda representatives, between the 16th, 18th, 28th of January and 2nd of February. with 96 participants, were held in the following churches: African Methodist Episcopal Parish at km 16, Evangelical of Christ in Mozambique, Churches of the Good Shepherd, Church of Christ Nampula, there were 2 days of dialogue in each church. It had the following teachers: Pastor Júlio Langa, Dr Maria Judite, facilitator Zelda Cossa, Mrs. Jorgina Mbuga.

- 1.1. Specific objectives of the action/activity:
2. Training of facilitators (role of facilitators),
- 3.3. Dialogue on the role of churches in the context of violence against marginalized groups, such as LGBTI people.

1.1. What was the immediate result of the Activity

- Trained 80 facilitators around the fight against the marginalization of LGBTI people and more.

3. Dialogue Meetings in the African Methodist Episcopal Church

During the training the facilitators, with the help of the Facilitator's Guide as a supplement to a body entitled, the role of churches in the context of violence against marginalized groups such as LGBTI¹ to explain the role of the facilitator and provide detailed guidelines for the training program based on the supplement.

The following topics were addressed: on the role of the facilitator, responsible for the organization and execution of the training program, through the method and rules of dialogue, in the same context the four practical steps for a successful management of the training program were addressed. 1st step: Be well prepared; Step 2: Learn how to switch between the Facilitator's Guide and the Supplement; 3rd step: Learn how to manage group discussions; 4th stage: finished the training of the last day.

On the first day, several topics were also addressed, including: facilitating the dynamics of groups and safe spaces;

Series of a body: Human dignity; Violence based on gender and humanity as a single body, which addressed:

¹ LGBT, L-lesbian; G-gays; B-bisexual; T-transgender; intersex.

- Human dignity, gender-based violence, how churches should relate to the current situation for marginalized groups like LGBTI people

On the topic of humanity as a single body, OBS page 14 was read, followed by plenary discussions involving everyone.



Figura 1. Group of Facilitators and Teachers of the Dialogue Method.

Therefore, these were the interventions presented in the African Methodist Church, represented by Pastor Tui, according to which, for the churches to have a safe environment, it is necessary to create a solid friendship, creation of rules of coexistence that allow equality of the dialogue.

Faced with these presentations, a question arises as follows, “**taking advantage of the space granted and without wanting to despise this social layer (of the LGBT), what are they doing to sin**”?



Figura 2. Intervenção durante o Dialogo

In this regard, Dr. Maria clarified that “God made Man and made Woman, with that he added that what defines Man and what defines Woman is sex, but there are people who are born with two sexes and with that questions, “do they cease to be children of God? He also explained that this fact has to do with human diversity, on the other hand, he clarified that the manual also provides biblical passages that frame discrimination against LGBT people, in that sense, according to him, the church must fight against discrimination against these people. .

According to Wanda, a member of the LGBT, often when people go to read a book, they carry with them certain stereotypes and try to feed them at all costs, being able to even disagree with what is written, on the other hand, when they read the same book with an open mind, it is possible to learn, still in its wake, states that “in social sciences an object can be seen in several precepts”. Adding to Wanda's thinking, Doctor Maria Judite states that, in various circumstances, when someone wants to harm someone, people look for appropriate passages, as an example, she clarifies that the Apartheid system lived in South Africa, "was based on on a biblical foundation.”

Responding to the question about sin, exposed above, Rev. Agostao Zita clarified that on television it was reported that “a man was walking on the public road with a folder containing bone remains of people, a sign that he had murdered a person to benefit from his organs”, with this, the pastor clarifies that many people, with a main focus on albinos, are afraid to leave the house, go to school or any other place, because they do not live in peace, in his point of view, the Church cannot remain oblivious to these situations.

Looking at the case of LGBT people, the pastor said that “thank God, in Mozambique there is still not a serious problem of physical violence against marginalized people, in the past, psychological violence predominates and is very strong”. In his approach, the Pastor states that it is necessary to find the best ways to protect these people, so that the context of HIV/AIDS that has leveraged high levels of prejudice is not portrayed, especially by people in the churches and in the church itself.

In the perspective of the General Secretary, “it is good for the church to understand these issues, so that the world can understand, because if the church does not understand, the world will never understand, therefore, if there is no understanding of the church, that is to say that she will be a stranger to God.”

Still in his wake, he states that, if the church had not understood the AIDS situation, the world would be very far from understanding until the present day, in that sense, many people would be marginalized, many people would be killed and probably there would be a place only for the infected with HIV/AIDS.

During the session, still in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, those present were defining the concept of human dignity according to their perspective, where in a summarized and consensual way, they affirmed that “human dignity are civil, spiritual rights that the person is born with”.

In relation to human dignity and violence, they stated that “human dignity is the valorisation of the person in relation to sex, social class and race, on the other hand, violence is the withdrawal of these values in relation to the person”.

Regarding the topic of Sexuality, Doctor Judite sought to find out if anyone had ever heard about it and what they understood. In this regard, some members of that church responded:

- Human sexuality is people with opposite sexes;
- Human sexuality has to do with the sexual preference of each individual, that is, with whom the person wants to have a sexual relationship.

Having done that, Doctor Judite, used the definition presented by the WHO and present in the supplement, however, she clarifies saying that, "sexuality encompasses many things, such as sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, sensuality, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction (which is the ability to have a child), however, it was based on this explanation that Mr. Inocêncio, belonging to Lambda, used the word to explain the concepts behind the acronym LGBTI.

4. Dialogue Meetings at the Church of the Good Shepherd

Opening the event, the General Secretary of the CCM began by explaining the context of the emergence of HIV/AIDS in the world, in his explanation, he clarified that in the beginning there was no remedy for that disease, however, he states that the disease is not over yet, it is still present in the social fabric and we live with it because it has already been discovered how to live with this disease and with infected people.



Figura 3. General Secretary Raising awareness among the members of the Church of the Good Shepherd

“People living with HIV/AIDS were stereotyped, called prostitutes or adulterers among other names, in the end, people ended up losing their lives, died from the disease and also died from discrimination”.

In relation to this, he explains that with covid-19 we went through almost the same circumstances, “people were/are forced to stay in isolation, in some places they suffered discrimination, largely by people from the churches, but the WHO discovered a method so that we at least get immunized and the church has done and has done its role of raising awareness and social mobilization so that there is no stigma and that people get vaccinated, the church seeks to provide the answers because it is for the good”.

As for the method, in this church the members were divided into groups, done that, the groups defined the concept of marginalization and its relationship with violence and how churches can follow the example of Jesus in his ministry to marginalized groups in the following perspectives:

- Marginalization is the act of excluding, violating, discriminating against another similar person because of his appearance or advantages. As an example of those who suffer from marginalization, street children, albinos and homosexuals stand out;
- The relationship that exists between marginalization and violence can be found in social exclusion in relation to several aspects. For example, poor family support leads adolescents to choose the drug route and, consequently, to the world of crime, on the other hand, racism stands out, in this way, the path between violence and racism is very close. , as an example, the murder of the American Jorge Floyd, who was brutally killed by a policeman, stands out;
- First, it is necessary to understand how Jesus acted with marginalized people and if you will realize that Jesus walked, ate and slept and approached marginalized people, this group includes the sick, prostitutes and in general, he walked with sinners. Jesus showed himself to be love and he showed love to people as a whole. Therefore, the church can follow Jesus' example if it remembers that we are all "one body", it must exalt equality among believers, it must act with love towards one another, it must approach and converse with everyone. Likewise.

Ms. Verónica Sitóe, a member of Lambda, presented the theme, “sexual diversity and homosexuality”, where, using the supplement, she explained to members about how homosexuals are treated, bringing an aspect according to which in some countries they still criminalize homosexuality, something that fortunately Mozambique does not criminalize. On the other hand, as explained by Sitóe, there are certain connotations according to which heterosexuals are designated as normal and homosexuals as abnormal, a fact that Sitóe contests, explaining that “in sexual orientation, there is no normal and abnormal.

In turn, Sitóe asks, “*will the way parents educate their children impact their sexual orientation*”? She also adds that “*the fact that a man washes the dishes at home will not influence her sexual orientation, just as if a woman changes the light bulb in her house, it does not mean that in the future she will be homosexual*”. She concluded.

Believers were unanimous in saying that homosexuality is not something that is transmitted directly, either by touch or by socializing, such as covid-19, they also say that there is no compatibility between touch and becoming homosexual, however, affirm that there are some biblical scriptures

that condemn and as a church the right thing is to live from the holy scriptures, however, they also say that LGBT people are welcome in the church, because they believe that with the word of God it is possible to heal.



Figura 4. appreciation of the Supplement by the members of the Church of the Good Shepherd

5. Dialogue Meetings At Igreja De Cristo Zambeze

In this session, Pastor Júlio Langa, Professor of the Dialogue Method, began by explaining the objectives of the dialogue in relation to the church, clarifying that “the objective is to bring information to the Churches, in a sense in which several meetings had already been held. with the senior leaders of the CCM member churches and Churches of other Councils that unite different countries, on this matter, in order to create a dialogue on marginalized minorities.

Still in his explanation, Mozambique was not an exception, as he invited the top leaders as a way to find a platform to dialogue about the marginalization, violence, discrimination and inequalities that exist within the churches.

After that moment, it was decided to explain the acronym LGBTI, which at first allowed church members to express their positions in relation to the concepts and these are the answers:

- A Lesbian is a woman who is emotionally, physically attracted to another woman, note that this answer was provided by a member of Lambda;

- As the discretion of a lesbian was already evident, the community concluded that it was a man who is attracted to another man;
- In relation to a Bi Sexual, a large part of the community stated that she was a person of two different sexes;
- Regarding the Transsexual, a large part of the community had never heard of it, a fact that a member of Lambda clarified saying, “that it is a man who dresses like a woman, or a woman who dresses like a man and feels good if they treat you about how you are dressed;
- As for the inter-sex, Rev. Júlio Langa explained that “they are those people who are either born with both sexes, or because they have female or male organs inside.



Figura 5. CCM Collaborators and Members of the Zambezi Church of Christ.

According to the explanation, “when a baby is born, it is sought to know in advance what the baby’s sex is, however, in this case, the baby’s sex is often unknown, normally, there are certain characteristics that are expected to be seen in a man. and that are expected to be seen in a woman, and society watches over and demands these characteristics”.

In this Church, General Secretary João Damião Elias, speaking about dialogue and marginalization, clarified that ***“we are here to understand the mystery of life, because there is a lot that we still haven't discovered, life is a very large field because every day we discover new things so God always reveals himself to us. The person is the image of God, we can try to understand the physical state of the person, but if we take the time and talk to him, we will discover a lot of what we think he is”***. He concluded.



Figura 6. Group Dialogues.

6. Dialogue Meetings at Igreja De Cristo Nampula

The last dialogues were held at the Church of Christ Nampula, and in this session the Secretary General of the Christian Council of Mozambique, João Damião Elias, clarified that, “for there to be spiritual growth there must be love, unconditional love, even in his perspective, love is divided into three types, “there is love, as it is said in Greek, agape, which is a type of love in which the individual loves anyone unconditionally without the other person doing anything to be loved. , also has the love “Phileus” *a Greek designation, which is a love of the family, which one would say, for example, I love him because he is my brother, I love him because he is my friend, finally, there is “erosse” love, which is a type of love between two people, is conjugal love*”, *the General Secretary adds, the person may even have high academic levels and high monetary possessions, however, if there is no love, all baggage is useless. for nothing, it has no value.*”



Figura 7. General Secretary talking about love for others

In view of the presentation of methods of dialogue and discussion of concepts by facilitators and church members, the following question was presented by one of the members ***“do we treat homosexuality as a sin as the bible emphasizes in 1 Corinthians? Do we treat it as a sin like drunkenness, fornication and adultery, or are we going to normalize it”?*** According to the member, at some point we are taking the issue to the side of the debate and forgetting the religion component.

According to Ms. Esperança Zico, the first fact that we must take into account is that we were created in the image and likeness of God, however, she assumes that everything that is new to the ears and eyes takes time to be understood by the people. people, depending also on the context in which they come from, on the other hand, assumes that, “changing a mind is a process”, he further clarified that, the members who make up the Senate of the Christian council when the subject was presented to them for a long time was led to be debated by them because each one had their understanding on the subject, however, time and clarification allowed these dialogues to be replicated at the level of the churches, nevertheless, the role of the church is to love the neighbor, every believer has a right to respect in the house of God, no one is superior to another, for God, no one has more rights than another.

In relation to the question about sin, Ms. Esperança Zico, a collaborator of the CCM, clarified that there is no way to measure sin, all men are sinners and only God must judge”.

According to one of the believers, it is difficult to debate these issues, in the same way, it is complicated to point the finger and call someone of a certain sexual orientation a sinner, it is conceived in such a way that many of them work for the church and are good people, that way , adds saying that, “I preferred to remain ignorant of the characteristics of the Homosexual to create stereotypes”.



Figura 8. Debate on marginalization. Frank Lileza, Lambda member

On marginalization, church members assume that it is a complex issue and difficult to frame in the church, as it is very complicated for the Church to assume that it marginalizes its believers due to the differences verified.

In the explanation of the facilitator Regina Valerius, many believers use the explanation of Sodom and Gomorrah to expel the brothers from the LGBTI community, to marginalize, to say that they are not accepted as the body of Christ. Bringing an example, he explained that “there was a member of a Lesbian sexual orientation church, but it was unknown to church members, his work for the church, shows an enviable and almost irreplaceable importance, in the past, it decides to reveal itself one of the believers as a sign of his trust, but who had taken the information to the ears of almost every church, done that, his position in the Church is withdrawn from him and he begins to suffer humiliation and discredit, all that importance went away in a "blink eyes”, the gift offered by God could no longer be used, all this for simply revealing his guidance”. She concluded.

7. Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from this seminar is that people must follow God's teachings and be guided by love, as the Secretary General emphasized, people must be more human and accept coexistence based on unity and diversity.

The lack of knowledge of many matters by the church cost the lives of many children and adults, we highlight the intersex people, who due to the fact that they were born with two sexes, traditional midwives and other non-traditional midwives, took their lives calling the baby a curse, we also highlight the discrimination, stigma to Libyans, gays and transsexuals, who often hear cases of suicide, school dropout and poor circulation on public roads due to violence, physical, emotional and psychological.

The Church's action is emerging, so that we can have a world of love and peace, a world of acceptability, a world in which the church is less aggressive than the society that needs it.

8. Attachments



Figura

9.

Group

Dialogues



Figura 10. Group Dialogues.



Figura 11. Members of the Church of the Good Shepherd.



Figura 12. Veronica Sitóe, Member of Lambda.



Figura 13. Inocencio, Lambda Member, creating a dynamic



Figura 14. Members of the Church of Christ Zambeze and the lambda.

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