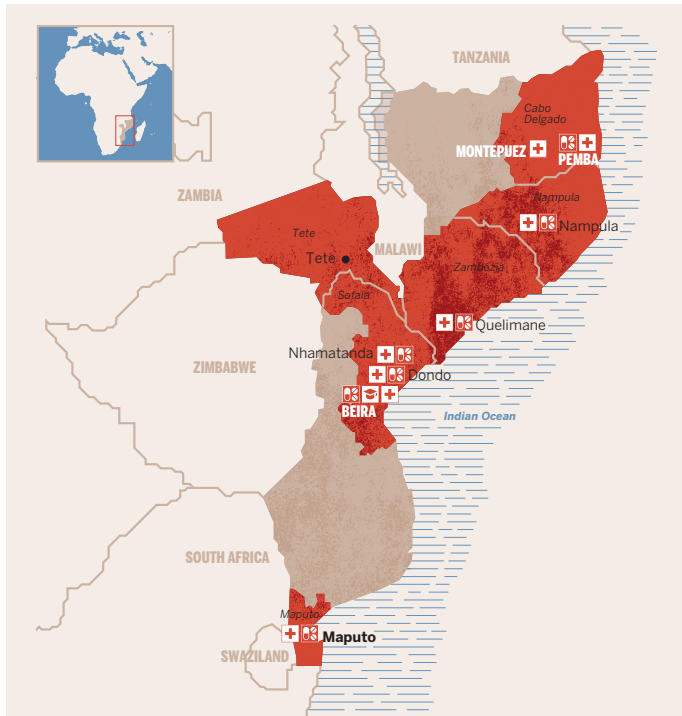


Fighting HIV in Mozambique Closer to Women



2005 and started to be active in the community to fight HIV. The approach aims at working in coordination and integration with national health services in retaining women, adolescents and children in HIV treatment and care. Being HIV positive, they have already experienced the disease first hand, therefore they understand the related problems and difficulties (stigma, discrimination, abandonment from the partner and the family, social and psychological vulnerability among others) and they know how to best approach and engage with other. The name *Kuplumussana* in local language means “to save each other”.

KUPLUMUSSANA main activities consist in:

- actively looking (active search) for and tracing women and children who are HIV positive and have abandoned treatment: women work in pairs and try to look for 5/6 other women and their children per week;
- counselling and psychological support for HIV+ mothers and patients in general;
- accompany HIV+ women from health facilities to their families, to facilitate the communication of the results to their partner and family members;
- counselling for adolescents and youths on sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV prevention at community and health centre level;
- cooking lessons to spread knowledge about good nutrition practices for mothers and their children who contracted the virus (figure 2 and 3);
- theatre and music performances in the community on several topics including HIV/AIDS prevention, antiretroviral treatment, maternal and child health, nutrition and family planning.

Keywords: HIV, women power, urban communities

CUAMM working in Mozambique since **1978**
CUAMM working in Beira since **2000**

HIV IN MOZAMBIQUE

HIV in Mozambique is a crucial public health challenge. In a country of about 28 million people, approximately 2.1 million were living with HIV (PLHIV) as of 2017, out of which only 57% were accessing antiretroviral therapy (ART). New HIV infections reached 130,000 and 70,000 people died from AIDS-related causes.¹ In its 5 year-health strategic plan (2014-2019), the Ministry of Health (MISAU) recognizes the weak investment in the health-network development at **urban level** (where more than one third of the population lives) and the priority of the intervention to reduce the burden of communicable diseases and improve women's health.²

Due to these considerations, CUAMM has decided to reinforce its intervention in the urban setting of Beira, second most important city (more than 500,000 inhabitants), in the Sofala Province, where 16.3% of the population is HIV+.³

CUAMM has been the MISAU's main partner in the decentralization of HIV services from Beira Central Hospital (HCB) to the peripheral health centres since 2003, and has recently strengthened its actions to address HIV/AIDS especially among the young adolescent population (which represents one third of the total population) and women (specifically HIV+ mothers).

CUAMM closer to WOMEN – KUPLUMUSSANA ASSOCIATION

To tackle HIV in Beira in a strategic approach engaging communities, CUAMM has supported the creation of KUPUMUSSANA Association. The group counts about 40 HIV-positive mothers, who came together from the attendance of antenatal care visits (ANC) in HCB in



Figure 1: Kuplumussana Women

MAIN RESULTS FROM 2014 TO 2018⁴

495.811
people reached and
counselled

9691
reached through active search
(more than 2000 people each year)

1289
cooking
lessons

876
theatre
performances



Figure 2: Cooking Lessons and nutrition counselling at the health centre

CUAMM main intervention includes:

- supporting Kuplumussana in the decentralization process from HCB to seven health centres in Beira district in order to be closer to the communities these patients belong to;
- supporting Kuplumussana in the integration within the national health service and in the self-sustainability of the association;
- training and educating Kuplumussana women on HIV/AIDS prevention, antiretroviral therapy and analysis, nutrition, tuberculosis, vertical transmission and methods to increase community awareness and to improve quality of their services;
- providing subsidies to women for their active search of patients who have dropped out treatment (e.g. transport and communication costs);
- supporting/training Kuplumussana in accurate data collection.

The experience of Kuplumussana led to the creation of the **Geração Saudável Association**, a group of young activists providing peer-to-peer support to HIV+ adolescents. Along with peer adolescent, Kuplumussana women have succeeded in involving men and fathers HIV+ in the activities of the association, in a multifaceted effort to tackle the HIV epidemic. Kuplumussana experience demonstrates that interaction between peer-to-peer support groups and healthcare facilities plays a pivotal role in engaging directly women and adolescents with preventive health programmes and in recovering children, adolescents and women to follow-up (Figure 4). Groups as Kuplumussana can provide assistance



Figure 3: Cooking Lessons and nutrition counselling at the health centre

in avoiding stigma and in tailoring care to the individual; furthermore, they have the potential to reduce the workload of the health facilities.

With more than 10 years of experience, Kuplumussana has provided evidence of being able to improve quality of services in a sustainable community approach, which takes care of the quality of interaction.

Finally, Kuplumussana is a clear example of how a grassroots group can become a self-sustained association providing real support to the community and working to achieve SDGs, among which empowerment of women and girls, and ensuring healthy lives by fighting HIV/AIDS.

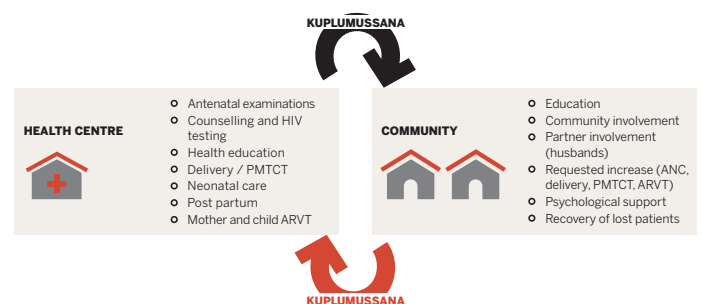


Figure 4: Kuplumussana group: the linking action between community and health system

¹ UNAIDS, 2018. Country Factsheet, Mozambique 2017. [Online] Available at <http://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/mozambique> [Accessed 7 January 2019].

² República de Moçambique, Ministério da Saúde, 2013. Plano Estratégico do Sector da Saúde (2014-2019). [Pdf] Available at <http://www.misau.gov.mz/index.php/planos-estrategicos?download=132:plano-estrategico-do-sector-da-sade-2014-2019> [Accessed 14 February 2018].

³ Instituto Nacional de Saúde (INS) & Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE), 2017. Inquérito de Indicadores de Imunização, Malária e HIV/SIDA em Moçambique (IMASIDA) 2015. [Pdf] Available at <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/PR85/PR85.pdf> [Accessed 14 February 2018].

⁴ CUAMM, 2018. L'associazione Kuplumussana da dieci anni con Medici con l'Africa CUAMM in prima linea contro l'HIV/AIDS. [Internal Report].