

Feed a child this **Christmas**

## Principal notices a change after children receive nutritious food

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Clarissa Nakulenga, who has been the principal of Nicuapa School in Mozambique for the past 10 years, chuckles cheerfully between questions in an interview.

"I am happy with the mission I was given," she tells the JAM crew who visited her school earlier this year.

JAM was there to assess its impact in the internally displaced people's (IDPs) camps it is currently serving in the province of Cabo Delgado, northern Mozambique. Clarissa's school, in the district of Montepuez, has taken in a lot of children who had to flee their homes because of the ongoing conflict in the region.

The province has rich gas reserves, but the people who live there are very poor and do not benefit from such wealth. This has caused tension and led to some insurgent groups wreaking violence on innocent families. According to the World Food Programme, with whom JAM has partnered, more than 700 000 people have been displaced in what is becoming one of the “world’s fastest-growing displacement crises” and a “hunger emergency”.

Innocent people have lost their homes, their livelihoods, their crops and animals. Many have lost members of their families too.

Part of JAM’s response has been to launch a school feeding programme in host schools whereby children are given a red bowl of highly nutritious food each morning. In just over a month, Clarissa has noticed the changes. Not only for the IDPs but for the host community as well.

“Before JAM’s school feeding programme, we struggled to retain children in school,” she says. “We had about 25 in each stream, now we have 50-60!

“We even had a child who quit her school and came here when she found out about the food,” she says, breaking out into her signature laugh once again.

Besides children wanting to attend and stay at school, she has also seen an improvement in grades.

“At school, if children have food, they learn better,” she says, adding that a good foundation lays the path to better options in the future.

“If this project [school feeding programme] continues, the school will gain, the community will gain. Numbers will increase and dropouts decrease. Pupils will have the motivation to come back.”