

From Nicaragua to the Marratane Camp in Mozambique

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I was working in my country, Nicaragua, as I used to do that: like a private consultant in Public Health in this period working for Management Science for Health (MSH); performing a research about health services cost when I received an invitation from the United Nations Volunteer Program (UNV) which attracted my attention. It was an invitation to become a health and nutrition coordinator for

UNHCR in Mozambique.

It was sound well. I had been in Angola in a mission of service supporting the work of UNICEF in the field of health and nutrition sector in the province of Bie, based on the City of Kuito. My friend I have to tell you that this city was destroyed by the war that recently had finished and I remembered that my stay there had been a wonderful professional and personal experience. I discovered there public health problems in a size that I never had imagined. The burden of malaria and malnutrition in the poor people who lived in the city due to immigration generated by the civil war were impressive. I really had a shock. They were refugees as well, but internal refugees... I think that internally displaced persons is the right word. After many times working like a public health private consultant I felt myself in those cities as a professional and a human being who was performing a social service. I felt myself usefully again according with the main reasons that led me to study medicine: relief the sufferer of another people.

I had received other invitations from the UNV to go to Croatia and to other countries in Asia as well as to come to Mozambique to support the work of other agencies. Some features of this unknown post of "UNHCR health and nutrition coordinator" challenge me. I showed my interest and took an interview in English. So many questions coming from Nadine and other persons about my experience working with refugee people. I tried to do my best. Waiting several days after was confirmed that I had been chosen for the post. Preparing myself thinking that I will meet with a reality similar to Angola and after three days of travel – one stop in Portugal – I arrived in Maputo first and fifteen days gone I arrived in Nampula.

There is a little international community in Nampula. They are working together a little international community very committed with the vision and mission of UNHCR: Japanese, Spanish, Denmark, and Mozambican. The World Refugee Days was my introduction into the world of Marratane Camp. I fell in love with the African culture! Those rhythms hit my blood and reminded me of the Atlantic Coast of my country where I lived with our black people and I was working. The boss had to go to Japan to try some health problems and rest a little bit. For my surprise I became in charge. Official in Charge was my new and brilliant title in addition to my duties as a health and nutrition coordinator. It has been a good opportunity to learn about the overall work of the agency in the country. Save the Children came as an Implemented Partner I started to work with them and the Health Ministry to understand first what was happening and second how we can improve the health situation in the camp. The preparation of the annual country report was a lesson learned. Now I am enjoying my work and discovery every day the

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refugee world with its special features: courage, conflicts, hope, sufferer, self-reliance.

Thanks UNHCR for gave me the chance to known a little bit about this refugee world full of challengers and to serve again the people in need!