

## Little Gestures in Action No. 38

### Sports Days: The opening whistle

There are times when impact cannot be measured in numbers.

It is measured in laughter or in the smile of a child who has just scored a goal or recited a poem in front of more than 120 people.

This May, something special took place.

For the first time, the children gathered on the grounds of Xai-Xai Secondary School and at the Escolinha do André premises for the first edition of the Sports Days at Crescer Com a UPG (CCUPG).



### From the pitch to the classroom, from the classroom to the stage

Women's football. Men's football. Poetry. Theatre. General culture. Txuva. Traditional dances. The programme was designed to go beyond sport because we believe that growing up also means competing with fair play, expressing oneself with courage, getting to know others and recognising oneself in them.

In the women's football match, the CCUPG team showed determination and won 1-0. In the men's match, the game was more closely contested – and CCUPG came out on top once again, with a thrilling 4-3 victory.

But when it came to the educational categories, the tide turned.

In General Knowledge, the children from the ESC and the Communities answered all the questions correctly. In Poetry — with the theme ‘Abduction of Minors’ — it was the ESC that shone. In Drama, with the theme ‘Exploitation of Minors’, the Communities group took to the stage and left the room in silence.



But the day saved the best for last. The Xingomane group from Banhine performed traditional dances from their community and turned the closing ceremony into a moment that no one there will forget in a hurry. This is what happens when you give children a stage.

## More than just a competition

Mum Elisa set the children a simple challenge at the start of the day: to use this moment as an opportunity to socialise and share the traditions and customs of each community.

And that is exactly what happened.

Because when children from different communities come together, sharing a playing field, a meal and a stage, they are building something that no curriculum can teach on its own: a sense of belonging to something greater than themselves.

These days proved that it is possible to learn with joy. That sport and culture are not the opposite of education — they are part of it.

## And this is only the first edition!

### New faces, the same commitment

At a gathering that brought together new and returning scholarship holders, the opening minutes were taken up with introductions. Names, faces, stories. But the meeting soon took on a deeper dimension.

The more experienced scholars spoke openly: about the challenges of the journey, the responsibilities that come with the scholarship, and what has changed in their lives since they joined the programme. The new scholars listened. They asked questions. And, word by word, they began to understand what it truly means to be part of this.

Halfway through the meeting, new and returning scholarship holders were set a mini-test. Not to assess their academic knowledge — but to encourage reflection. To understand where each of you stands, what you have already grasped about the programme, and what you still need to explore further.

A simple way of saying: we're keeping an eye on your progress.

And we want you to do the same.



When the meeting ended, the new scholarship students left with a clearer picture of the path ahead of them. The returning recipients left reflecting on where they had come from.

**And everyone left knowing that they are not alone on this journey.**

This is how the scholarship programme works – not just as financial support, but as a network. A community. A shared commitment amongst those who believe that education changes lives.

**And it does. Every day.**

## Distribution of food baskets in São Vicente

The day began with full seats and familiar faces.

Coordinators, children, staff, scholarship students and Sister Maria — everyone was there. As is now customary, the distribution doesn't begin the moment the baskets leave the team's hands. It starts earlier — with a brief meeting where we speak openly about what's going well and what needs improving.

This month, the topics were practical and straightforward: the study support rooms, school uniforms and school cleaning.



## The scholarship student who took to the stage

Alfa, a university student supported by the ALG Scholarship Programme, gave a talk on family planning. She clearly explained what it is, how it works and why it is important for young people, families and the community.

She spoke about the methods available, the choices each person can make, the risks of early pregnancy and the role of sex education in prevention. With the confidence of someone who has studied the subject and wanted to share it with the community that has watched her grow up.

In the end, the message was simple: the right information, at the right time, changes decisions.

## And then, the food baskets

Each family received: 5kg of rice, 3kg of beans, 1kg of salt, 2 bars of soap, 1 litre of oil and a tin of sardines.

**The essentials, guaranteed. For another month.**

