



Mozambique Emergency Response Update



Francisco Thuboy Manguese is a farmer who lives with his wife and six children in Muchambonha village. He is one of the residents in Manica Province, Western Mozambique, who received help from Week of Compassion through our ACT Alliance partner after cyclone Idai. His

family had been hard-hit by the storm: their harvest of sorghum, ground nuts and corn was completely destroyed, and all their livestock were swept away by the floods.

Cyclone Idai devastated Mozambique and the surrounding area in March of this year. The intense tropical storm left more than 1,200 dead, and hundreds of thousands displaced.

In the immediate aftermath, the scope of damage and difficulty of travel in the area meant that relief organizations were overwhelmed trying to meet immediate needs of survivors. Pre-existing infrastructure issues made those efforts even more challenging. Then secondary crises emerged: contaminated water sources caused cholera to spread; and over a million acres of lost crops meant hunger was a concern as well.

“The people in the community were desperate-- they had never seen such a disaster before,” says Job Ngaroita Nguerebaye, ACT Alliance Emergency Response Team Leader in Mozambique. “Crops, livestock, shelter, household items and even family members had just been washed away. Life began in makeshift tents, people depended on food aid and unfiltered water as many water sources were destroyed or polluted. Education was interrupted, as schools had either been washed away or were used as holding camps for the displaced population. The desperate situation was made worse by lack of health services, as health facilities were destroyed.”

Week of Compassion responded through our partner ACT Alliance and supplied food, water, emergency shelter and other critical services to 1.8 million people in urgent need.

But the work was not done. After immediate needs are met following a disaster, the long-term work begins. The people of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi needed to begin rebuilding their lives. Obvious concerns like permanent housing and sources of income would have to be addressed in the

days ahead. At the same time, it was just as critical to provide access to healthcare and psychosocial services for survivors of trauma. The need still seemed overwhelming.

Again, Week of Compassion responded, this time with even more significant support, enabling our partners through ACT Alliance to begin addressing these ongoing needs. In the months since, they have been working constantly to get aid to even the most remote areas. At every stage, our partners worked through existing local efforts and purchased supplies locally to boost the economy.

This kind of support not only empowers people to begin rebuilding their lives, it ensures that the work of rebuilding is sustainable for the long haul.

Six months after the disaster, the transformation is visible. “We see so much more hope,” Nguerebaye says. “Community life is getting back to normal again. We see families rebuilding their homes, eating together, children going back to school. Some families have even started to grow food in small garden plots. The presence of both national and international aid organizations gave hope to the people. They appreciated the fact that they were not alone in managing the situation and that there is a lot of good will, even from people outside the country.”

Now, people like Francisco have hope. “Our life is better now,” he says.

The coordinated response to this disaster, on behalf of our wider Church and as part of the global community, brings to mind these words from Proverbs:

*Do not forsake your friend or the friend of your parent;
do not go to the house of your kindred in the day of calamity.
Better is a neighbor who is nearby
than kindred who are far away.*

As people of faith, we are called to be present where people suffer, ensuring that no member of the human family ever endures alone. Through Week of Compassion, our whole Church shows up in tangible, powerful ways to places of deepest need—even when those places seem very far away. In this work together, we become neighbors to those we may never meet. We witness lives transformed through the power of love and compassion, and the generosity of a body that reaches far beyond the walls of a single congregation.

Supporting the local economy and empowering communities to rebuild and support each other, we ensure that those in need are truly never alone.

Photo: The Lutheran World Federation



1 Texas, (3) Tropical Storm Imelda Relief

2 Florida, Hurricane Michael Long-Term Recovery

3 New York, Hurricane Irma and Maria Long-Term Recovery housing PR and USVI evacuees

4 Nebraska, Long-Term Flood Recovery

5 Palestine Territory, Humanitarian Response

Mission

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