

Easter in Mozambique

Greetings from John and Hilda! We wish you all a wonderful Easter weekend as Christians around the world celebrate the amazing grace of a risen Saviour! Here in Mutarara, Good Friday was honoured and we will yet find out how Easter is celebrated. I will be bringing out a chocolate bar I have been hiding for us to share on a special occasion. Mmm...it will be good!



Our project here in Mozambique is quickly coming to an end. In this project, 2000 households have received assistance in three different villages. Each of these households has received three rations, each ration consisting of 50kg corn and 10kg cowpeas which will feed a family of 6 for a month. We have been working together with another work project which teaches conservation farming and is in the second year of a four year program in which the recipients learn better farming techniques. As these beneficiaries were adjusting to these new techniques, many of the crops were damaged because of extensive flooding

and drought. Through this learning time, the farmers have seen how certain techniques, such as mulching, preserved the moisture and made their crops more resistant to drought. So, even though there was no rain, people were learning from this and finding ways to combat it.

Irrigation is another important aspect of this project. There is a huge need for treadle pumps here. A pump will serve about 10 farms and provide irrigation to ensure a bigger yield.

Another project funded by the government is a tree planting program. Each of our beneficiaries was given a fruit tree to plant and care for as part of our food program. Within a few years, these mango trees will produce fruit for a one month period.



Our food project is aimed to supplement these farmers and other highly vulnerable people as they implement these new techniques. To make these beneficiaries self sufficient is the ultimate goal.

Our final distribution is over and some of the people have had a decent harvest and will survive until the next harvest. There are many others who are more vulnerable and when their bags of food are empty, will have to resort to eating water lily bulbs which have no nutrition. We will pray for them and that another program will come to continue to assist.



As we were handing out bags of food, there are always those who stand out in your mind. A gentle sort of fellow sat in his wheelchair, waiting patiently for his turn to receive food. His young son pushed him forward to collect. I spoke with him and was told that he has a wife and three children. The children have finally been

able to attend school these last three months because of the food given to their family. Usually, the children would not be in school because they would need to go looking for food to eat. They were barely surviving on one meal a day. Our hearts went out to this family and when a bag of corn was left at the end of the distribution we immediately decided to visit this family and give them the extra bag.

When we arrived at their home, we met his man's wife and saw that she also was partially crippled and had great difficulty in walking. Most homes in the village are mud brick homes with grass roofs. This family lives in a tent with holes in the canvas. Inside the tent there is nothing but a broken grass mat for their family to sleep on. God had led us to the right family to bring extra help.

A woman approaches me at one of the distribution sites. She has tears in her eyes as she clasps my hand in both of hers. She is so thankful that she can feed her small family which includes her three orphaned grandchildren. They will have food tonight!



Another woman giggles as she puts her hand on her best friend's arm. She has received food from CRWRC and says that her family shares with her friend's family. Now they all have food!





Of course, there are stories where human nature and greed have tainted the good spirit. At these times we are so thankful for our field staff who know the language and are very efficient at dealing with the crisis. The result of dishonesty is the loss of the beneficiary card and because the needs are great, there are few who want to take this chance.

Now, John and I are busy with the End of Project Surveys. We have put together questions and formulated spreadsheets on which the results will give us a picture of the success of this program. We have interviewed leaders and workers and tabulated the answers. We will finish off the financial statements and send reports to where they are needed. We have listened to the people, their stories and have had glimpses into their lives. We have laughed with these people, cried with these people and prayed with these people....and taught our neighbourhood the “Hokey Pokey”!

And then we will take the recommended R&R time to recollect. This, we will be doing in the way of a Safari in Kenya for a few days before returning home in mid-May.

Please keep us in your prayers as we finish off our work here in Mozambique and prepare for our return to North America. (...and would you please turn up the heat there for us!!)

Blessings to you all,
John and Hilda Van Gysse

