

### **Dear Friends & Family,**

It has been over a month since we arrived so It is time for an update and I thought that I would give you a bit of a run-down of our activities to date. We anticipate doing our first food distribution next week, but a lot has been going on in the meantime to prepare.

Following the environmental assessment I mentioned last time, our first activity after arriving here was to contact our local partner, Igreja Reformada em Mozambique (IRM—which stands for the Reformed Church of Mozambique) and arrange to interview and hire local staff for the work in Mutarara.

We've now hired three field supervisors—one for each village and one field Coordinator, whose name is Wilson Kassamba. These individuals actually work for IRM, but will report to us in the field.

When we contemplated the trip to Matarara, we began to get concerned about fitting our whole team into a Toyota SUV. We figured we could just fit. Then, the day of our departure, the female supervisor arrived with a baby on her back! I've since learned that whenever someone is riding along you always need to ask: "How many are you?"

It was a tight fit for the 220 km of bad dirt road, and the trip took two days because we had some car trouble, but we did eventually make it.

Our first task in Mutarara was to identify the people that are to be the beneficiaries of the food. We wanted it to include the farmers that had received the seed to give them strength to work the farms, but we also wanted to include the most vulnerable people. We did this by means of a Targeting Survey. It was even a bit more complex because the local government leaders also felt they should have a voice in determining who the beneficiaries ought to be. But we think it is all working out OK.

Next, we needed to arrange for supplies. The tendering and contracting of our commodities is done by our donor, Canadian Food Grains Bank. Once this is done and quality assurance testing is arranged we take over the communication to arrange deliveries and dates.

Each delivery will be 100 metric tons of maize and 20 metric tons of cow peas (which are similar to a split pea except they are not split). This food is delivered on four trucks each carrying 30 metric tons. In dealing with such massive quantities, there are bound to be some complications.

One of our challenges has been arranging for warehouse space to house all these supplies. The larger hurdle, however, has been finding a way to get the food across the river. One of the target villages is inaccessible except by boat due to the huge amount of water being released at the Cahora Bassa dam, upstream on the Zambezi River. The dam is releasing up to 6,300 m<sup>3</sup> of water/second.



*A Village Leader*



*Conducting the Targeting Survey*

## PRAYER REQUESTS

We ask for prayers for:

- Ila as she recovers from her infection
- Pete as he continues the IRM assignment on his own through the end of April
- John & Hilda VanGysel as they travel to Mozambique
- Our new field supervisors



CRWRC

*Living Justice, Loving Mercy*

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As a result, all the lowlands were flooded. Even our normal access road was closed and we had to detour thru Malawi for an additional distance. Somehow I was not smart enough to take pictures; it was an event worthy of pictures.

As we were sorting this out, Ila developed a leg infection. It quickly got worse and the local hospital did not even have bandages available to help us.

We had already planned to meet with Jackie Koster, our regional Disaster Relief Manager, to plan the Work component of our Food for Work Project. We had planned to meet her in Malawi. Through friends in Vila Ulongue, we were referred to a mission hospital in Malawi where we brought Ila for care. They took excellent care of her for almost a week and we felt blessed.

The hospital put us up in their guest house, so Jackie and I met to plan while Ila was recovering. So Ila was taken care of and we got our planning done even if it wasn't exactly as we had envisioned it.

Total cost for the week for Ila's hospital care was under \$400. Our lodging at the very nice guest house was \$8/day/person and I had an infection too which was cared for -- cost of \$50. Try that in the America.

But Ila's infection was serious enough the doctors did not want her to go back to hot, humid and dirty Mutarara. They expect her wound will take more than a month to close and heal, so they recommended she return home.

CRWRC sprang into action and made a plan that a new Relief Manager couple (John and Hilda VanGysel) will come to finish this job. They will arrive in about ten days. I will work thru the first food distribution, the new couple will work with me for the second, and then they will complete the project with the third food distribution as I head for home at the end of April.

In the mean-time the work component of the Food for Work project has been defined to plant trees. This is to support a government program to replant many trees that have been cut down for firewood or to make charcoal.

When Ila went home last Saturday I went back to Mutarara thru Malawi (the long way) and a miracle happened. The water being released from the dam was reduced and within a couple days the river depth went from chest high to less than knee high. Yesterday, I was able to drive through the water easily. The river bottom was quite firm and I am sure the trucks can go thru the 2 bad places. Also the warehousing issues have been resolved and we think we have good solutions in place there.

Since we have been to Lilongwe (capital city of Malawi) several times we have also managed to buy and install four new tires since we have had four flats in three weeks. So now I always carry two spares. Enough of my rambling. God bless you all and we will update you again in a few weeks.



*Excited Children*



*Ila with some of the children*



*Ila the patient*