



Peace Boat Disaster Relief Volunteer Center Interim Report: Emergency Relief for Cyclone Idai in Mozambique

Disaster Overview:

“The Worst Cyclone in the Southern Hemisphere”

In mid-March 2019, a strong tropical cyclone, Idai, struck Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. The cyclone made landfall in the city of Beira on the 14th March and took a route to the west while destroying and flooding houses, farming land and community facilities along the way. It is estimated that more than 1.5 million people suffered from the damage caused by the cyclone, and it is being reported as one of the deadliest storm-related disasters that has occurred in the southern hemisphere. The death toll rose to 603 in Mozambique alone and thousands of people have been struggling to even live their everyday lives.



Project Overview:

The Peace Boat Disaster Relief Volunteer Center (PBV) dispatched two staff to Beira, Sofala Province, Mozambique, in April to assess damage for emergency relief. The roofs of most buildings in the city were totally or partially stripped, including the cargo terminal at the airport and government buildings. The dispatched staff attended regular meetings organized by humanitarian agencies, and gathered information about ongoing projects to identify the biggest needs in the affected communities. Many challenges were also found in rural communities where the devastation was much more severe. The PBV has implemented a project in collaboration with a local NGO, to contribute to food security in a community in Buzi District, Sofala Province, where most of the food and harvests in fields were flooded and ruined in addition to the destruction of houses and infrastructure.



Project Location: Buzi District, Sofala Province, Mozambique

Project Period: 10th April 2019 – ongoing

Situation in Rural Communities:

The storm first made landfall in Beira, then headed inland, moving westward over a plain that rivers run through. The landscape ordinarily creates favorable conditions for agriculture, but led to extensive flooding during and after the storm. Buzi District in the south of Beira experienced particularly severe flooding due to the storm.

During the storm, many were rescued from the area by helicopter and boat, while witnessing the water level rising way over head height. In some parts, water from the storm had yet to recede at the time of our visit. The unique features of the landscape contributed to limited access to the affected communities, on top of the considerable destruction of roads and bridges. Timing was also a factor in the prolonged damage the storm caused to the area. The storm struck the central provinces of Mozambique in mid-March, when the fields were filled with produce waiting for harvest. The storm and flooding not only devastated houses but also ruined the agricultural fields, which are the main source of nutrition and income for the rural population. The loss of the harvest amplifies concern over long-term food and economic stability in the region. Residents lost food crops as well as stored seeds and farming tools.



With an emergency relief grant from a Japan-based international NGO, Japan Platform*, we decided to implement a project to contribute to food security in Buzi District, in collaboration with Kulima Beira. Intensive relief efforts were ongoing in a large part of the district, but some communities were left out. The communities we decided to support were among such areas. In consultation with local authorities, we identified a village of around 3,000 households in a rural part of the district as beneficiaries.

When we first arrived, one of the community workers showed us maize cobs covered in mud and mold. He explained that the villagers lost their food and crops, and the moldy maize was the only food they had after the cyclone swept through and flooded the area. We also learned that PBV was the first relief agent to arrive in their village.

*Japan Platform supports emergency humanitarian assistance around the world: <https://www.japanplatform.org/E/>



Our Local Partner: Kulima

During the damage assessment visit, we met a member of a local NGO, Kulima. The NGO has been actively involved in social and economic projects since its foundation in the 1980s, and fostered strong networks in rural communities across Mozambique. They work closely with community leaders and agronomists who could support implementation of the project. The PBV has been delivering the project in partnership with Kulima Beira to support people in Buzi District. Their abundant knowledge and experience on the ground helped us a great deal while we had limited connections and networks in the country.

Food and Seed Distribution Completed!

In order to support the communities' survival until the next harvest, we started distributing food and seed kits in the village in early June. The food kits contain rice and maize flour, both staple foods in the country. The seed kits contain vegetable seeds and sweet potato roots for increased food security and nutrition. We aimed to distribute the kits to households in the village,



with a focus on the most vulnerable. Thanks to the great collaboration with Kulima, we delivered food kits to 3,365 households, and seed kits to 1,500 of the most vulnerable households in Buzi District, by 4th July 2019. Kulima members also offered workshops to the villagers for improved productivity and sustainability.

The PBV intends to send staff members to Buzi for monitoring and follow-up of the program and to explore further needs.

Reporting Session



On 26th June 2019, the PBV organized an event to share project updates in Tokyo. The event was successful, featuring the honorable attendance of Mr Francisco Boavida Zandamela, the Embassy of the Republic of Mozambique in Tokyo. After a presentation from Mr Zandamela on the country and its relationship with Japan, a PBV staff member shared a project outline and updates.

While media coverage on the disaster is limited in Japan, attendees were very interested. The event also served as a fundraising opportunity, with handicrafts from Mozambique available for purchase.

The PBV appreciates all the support of the Embassy, Japan Platform, attendees, and donors for making this project possible. We seek your continued support for the next phase of the project to help those in need in Mozambique. Thank you very much!

Emergency Relief Fund for Cyclone Idai, Mozambique:
https://pbv.or.jp/en/donate/2018_mozambique/

More updates will be shared on the PBV's Facebook page and website:
<https://www.facebook.com/PBVsaigai/>

Published in July 2019



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