

World Vision Insider

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Floods Displace 1.25 Million in Africa

An estimated 1.25 million people in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and South Africa are now homeless due to massive flooding from torrential rains that have swept through Southern Africa since early February.

Entire communities have lost their homes, crops, and livestock. Water supplies are contaminated. Cases of malaria, respiratory illnesses, and diarrhea are on the rise in hospitals, many of which have lost access to electricity. An exact death toll is not yet available.

World Vision helicopter rescue teams have been plucking children and families out of trees and other high areas where they have endured cold, wet nights without food. Even after the waters recede, recovery will take months if not years.

WV's long history in the region and ongoing operations have enabled a quick response. WV has committed to raise \$7 million from its offices around the world to assist more than 130,000 flood survivors in the region. Staff have prepositioned survival kits which include blankets, plastic sheeting, and utensils. More than 27 tons of food have been gathered for distribution by plane, with more food expected to arrive soon.

In a second phase, food aid will be combined with agricultural assistance and health care to help surviving families reestablish their livelihoods.

- In **Mozambique**, as many as a million people have been displaced. WV is providing food, survival kits, and health care, and will soon provide seeds and tools to help reestablish local farming. WV plans to assist 80,000

flood survivors in Mozambique.

- In **Zimbabwe**, about 350,000 people have been displaced. WV plans to provide relief assistance to more than 25,000 people in the hard-hit areas.
- In **Swaziland**, waterborne diseases and malaria have spread quickly. WV plans to provide food for 20,000 people, repair schools, and rebuild houses.
- In **South Africa**, water supplies are contaminated, and clinics report a dramatic increase in cases of diarrhea. Food is now being delivered by helicopter to affected areas. WV plans to help provide clean water and health care to 11,000 people, and to assist with building repairs.

Please pray that World Vision and other aid agencies are able to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the flood victims.

Rich Stearns, WV President, Reflects on Visit to Romania

While visiting several World Vision projects in Romania last month, my wife, Renee, and I saw both signs of hope and shocking sights of despair and poverty.

We visited a World Vision-assisted school that seemed to bubble with joyful children full of hope and promise. We also made our way through state-run orphanages packed with abandoned children, many handicapped, and all in need of adult love.

One of our most disturbing stops was at a 10 foot by 10 foot shack in Cluj. Just a few steps from the railroad tracks and about 100 yards from retail shops,

fine restaurants, and taxi cabs we saw poverty more hopeless than anything I've seen in my travels to Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

A grandmother, her two daughters, and their two daughters, each two years old, live here with no electricity, water, or sanitation, in a single room with no windows. A small stove is their only protection against the sub-zero winter temperatures.

While one of these young women has bravely taken her daughter back from the state-run orphanage, she has little to look forward to. The grandmother cried as she asked why Romania's president

has not done something to help them. She and her girls have been forgotten by their government and are invisible to the rest of the world.

In our country, we have safety nets like Social Security, Medicare, and welfare that provide some minimum benefit to our poorest. But in Romania, there is no such safety net. Thankfully our staff in Romania is maximizing its available resources to help as many families like this as possible through microenterprise development, the provision of food, clothes, and medical care, and educational assistance for young children.

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