

# Emergency Preparedness Bulletin

December 2002

Issue No. 15



*The block that Save the Children built at Kanyaga School. (See story on page 3)*

## Editorial

Disaster management involves the readiness to predict and prevent disasters, or reduce their impact. It also involves responding to and coping with the consequences. An understanding of this helps to improve the ability of communities to cope with the effects of disasters by strengthening their capacities for disaster-preparedness and post-disaster effects. With the role of the community in disaster planning established, the impact of disaster response is strengthened. This is central to development work.

In this issue of the bulletin we will focus on the concept of response and how it should be linked to development.

After a disaster has taken place, aid organisations respond by protecting victims from the immediate dangers. Currently, most agencies are in the field providing people with food and other basic items. This type of immediate response is timely and consequently few hunger-related deaths have been recorded. However, we also need to think through the issues of recovery and rehabilitation, i.e. how these people will pick up the pieces following outside intervention. In the long term, are they better or worse off after intervention?

Concerns have been raised regarding informal settlements. Although much has been done in this area to improve general living conditions, the issue of recovery has not yet been explored in great depth. Income-generating projects have been introduced but they have been greatly affected by current economic changes. The little that people get is used to source food

instead of reinvesting in the project. This perhaps calls for agencies to revisit the idea and devise ways for communities to sustain themselves, whilst the projects are running. Another option is to introduce food-for-work schemes where communities will be asked to work on the project to get food in return. This will enable the project to thrive as the income generated can be used for other purposes.

Some have argued that it is difficult to apply the concept of recovery to communities in peri-urban areas where the camps are meant to be temporary. We have seen some getting stands, whilst some have already started constructing houses. This is an opportunity that can be explored by assisting those who can not afford to construct standard houses. Organisations can assist with building materials and the communities do the rest. For example, we have seen Kanyaga community in Makonde District contributing to the construction of a classroom block and toilets with the financial assistance of Save the Children and the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe. The same principle applies to the peri-urban areas.

As we enter a new year let us try to find lasting solutions to some of these problems, especially for the informal settlements, disaster victims and other marginalized groups whose lives have become dependent on aid.

## Table of contents

- ❖ Editorial
- ❖ Linking disaster relief with recovery
- ❖ Kanyaga school receives donations
- ❖ Silveira House scores a first
- ❖ Dominican sisters assist hungry people in Hatcliffe extension
- ❖ Hunger bites in Nyaminyami
- ❖ Workshop participants visit Tsholotsho flood victims
- ❖ Resources
- ❖ ZINISA membership list

## Linking disaster relief with recovery

When disaster strikes, organisations rush to the 'hot spots', but when they go, victims are usually left at the emergency or relief phase with no consideration given to issues of their rehabilitation and recovery. This can have devastating effects, since the gap between emergency phase and rehabilitation may be further widened by the sudden withdrawal of aid and a lack of follow-up to determine the processes for recovery.

Disasters cause destruction of property and critical services in development and loss of life. Years of development can be wiped out in seconds. Resources intended for development are diverted as they become necessary to the recovery of victims. It is crucial for organisations to respond to disasters in time, so as to reduce the impact of disaster.

Disaster response involves actions or activities carried out during and after a disaster, which include immediate



*This disabled man still lives in a tent and one hut with his family two years after the floods.*

relief. On the other hand disaster recovery considers the activities and decisions to be taken after a disaster, with a view to restoring victims to their former living conditions. Disaster recovery has two major elements: rehabilitation and reconstruction.

In considering response, we should look into the ability of the victims to continue with normal life after intervention. Humanitarian organisations should strive to avoid continually having to return to the same areas and responding to same disasters year after year. It is important to build up the capacity of local communities and disaster victims to recover effectively from the impacts of disaster, and to promote sustainable development.

In areas that were affected by floods, such as Tsholotsho, Chipinge, and Chimanimani, organisations acted swiftly in response to distress calls. They assisted in search and rescue, and also provided relief food and temporary shelter. However, after the emergency phase, most organisations moved out, abandoning these victims who had received little or no assistance for rehabilitation, such as the reconstruction of their houses. Victims often

return to an even harder life and are vulnerable to further disasters, such as food shortages, diseases from polluted water sources and exposure to the cold. This is why there should be a link between response and recovery.

The resettlement of victims in safer or better areas is a welcome idea but considerations should be made regarding their capacities in relation to social, physical and economic vulnerabilities. New settlements always lack basic services such as water, education and health facilities.

In giving relief to drought victims, long-term recovery plans such as improving the viability and sustainability of agricultural production should be considered. This not only involves the provision of seeds but also imparting knowledge of better farming methods, better storage of grain and rebuilding livestock necessary for draught power.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has brought another difficult dimension to the issues of recovery. Of particular concern are orphans and children staying with ill patients. Some children have dropped out of school because their parents are ill or have passed away. Due to the economic difficulties, relatives may not be able to take care of them. This exposes children to abuse and other vulnerabilities. However, some organisation have revived the Zunde Ramambo project, with a view to empower communities to help orphans and children in difficult circumstances. Others have established child care committees to look into child welfare issues. By so doing orphaned children will be able to recover from the loss of their beloved parents, whilst hope is instilled to children living with ill parents.

Community education programs should address the use of available resources and skills within the informal settlements. This will promote individual and community development by enhancing their capacity to cope with disaster effects. In so doing our efforts will not only address the issues of emergencies but also long-term development activities.

The Emergency preparedness team wishes you a disaster free festive season.

## **Kanyaga school receives donations**

Having realised the desperate situation at Kanyaga Primary School, with children cramped in very small spaces and sitting on the ground, Save the Children donated a two-classroom block, educational materials and furniture to the Kanyaga community in Makonde District, Mashonaland West Province on the 8th of November 2002. The assistance package was valued at over four million Zimbabwe Dollars.

Save the Children decided to intervene when it came to their attention that the school had only one classroom block for an enrolment of about 1600 pupils. Pupils were having lessons under trees, with teachers using very small boards, on which the writing was hardly legible. Learning was through dictation. In the rainy season the pupils sat on wet floors, on the ground or in areas that exposed them to the changing weather.

It was against this background that Save the Children launched the assistance programme through the provision of building materials that were not readily available. The community provided the locally available materials, which included bricks, sand, water, thatch, and labour for the construction of the block. In turn, Save the Children provided cement and construction accessories, window frames and panes, doorframes, and roofing timber. The organisation also assisted with furniture for four classrooms and desks for the teachers.

At a colourful handover ceremony that was attended by the Minister of Education, Sport and Culture, Dr. Chigwedere, Mr. Chris McIvor, Save the Children Country Programme Director, said that the organisation was committed to empowering the communities build on their own capacity.

The enrolment at Kanyaga School is expected to increase due to the sudden influx of people to Kanyaga, Chihwiti and Gambuli communities.

Apart from giving porridge, Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe also donated thirty Blair toilets to the school.

## ***Silveira House scores a first***

SILVEIRA House's advocacy program has seen families from informal settlements of Harare receiving stands from the government. More than two thousand stands were allocated early this year to people from Dzivarasekwa and Hatcliffe Extension to ease congestion caused by the influx of people from nearby farms.

Silveira House implements an advocacy programme that aims at improving the lives of the marginalized through lobbying and capacity-building. It chairs the ZINISA Sub-committee on Lobbying and Advocacy. The programme focuses on three communities: the peri-urban areas of Harare, Matebeleland North and South and Mashonaland East, Wedza in particular.

In Harare's peri-urban areas, the programme's thrust is to ensure that the thousands of people who have been living in squalid holding camps for more than ten years have access to permanent houses and settlements, and better living conditions. The breakthrough was necessary for these people to get permanent settlement which was not easy to accomplish.

Early this year, Silveira House, in collaboration with other ZINISA members, held negotiations with the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing. It agreed to allocate two thousand and forty stands in Hatcliffe to informal settlers from Dzivarasekwa and Hatcliffe Extension after realising that the population densities in these areas were causing considerable health problems.

"The living conditions in the three informal settlements are inhumane and deplorable," said Mr. Musona of Silveira House. "The situation they are living in does not allow them to have long-term plans since the camps are supposed to be temporary." He indicated that their organization is also educating people about improving their living standards through income-generating projects in the face of harsh economic conditions.

A visit by the Emergency Preparedness team indicated that some have taken up their stands and that construction has already started. There are still a few who have yet to relocate, citing financial problems. Due to the difficult economic situation, it is not easy for some people to construct standard houses as required by the city by-laws. The community leader of the new settlement in Hatcliffe told The Emergency Preparedness team that some organizations had shown interest in providing assistance. "We have appealed to a number of organizations for assistance, the response that we got is quite pleasing," he said.

A number of factors have contributed to the mushrooming of informal settlements. Rural urban migration has resulted in rapid population increases, whilst the current economic hardships, retrenchment, and the high rate of unemployment have also contributed significantly to the numbers squatting on urban peripheries.

---

---

*The Emergency Preparedness Bulletin is a monthly publication of Zimbabwe Network for Informal Settlement Action (ZINISA).*

*Comments and articles can be forwarded to:*

*The Information Officer, Tapiwa Gomo*

*10 Natal Road, Belgravia Harare*

*Tel: 793198-9/727508 Fax: 251883.*

*Email: tapiwag@scfuk.org.zw*



## **Dominican sisters assist hungry people in Hatcliffe extension**

The drought that hit Zimbabwe this year virtually wiped out subsistence production of maize and other crops, causing a severe food shortage. This, coupled with the high rate of unemployment, has brought misery to families in informal settlements whose lives depended on the availability of casual labour in nearby farms. Food has become unavailable or is very expensive.

In response to this emergency a Roman Catholic body, the Dominican Sisters, has expanded its humanitarian assistance in Hatcliffe Extension by providing food to destitute people, orphans and poor families. "The programme started early this year catering for orphans, but after realising that even children at play centres were coming to school without food we expanded the programme. We have now included 150 children from play centres," said Sister Patricia Walsh. However, she also indicated that food had been difficult to get: "Initially food was not easy to get but we are pleased that we now have enough to cater for the people we are looking after."

Children receive a daily ration of nutrimeal and milk at the play centres, in the mornings and the afternoons. The Sisters also give food to 300 families in the same settlement who are ranked among the poorest. The beneficiaries receive 15kg of mealie meal or 25kgs of rice, kapenta, milk, 5kg beans and 3 litres of cooking oil. "This ration is enough to maintain a balanced diet during these difficult times," said Sister Walsh.

Malnutrition has also impacted heavily on HIV/AIDS patients in most informal settlements, yet there was no one available to lend assistance as all were caught up in the same web of famine. As a result, the Dominican Sisters also include patients on their feeding programme, visiting patients every Wednesday and providing them with food, medicine and other basics. "With the current state of things, it is difficult for us to get food. Even if we get it sometimes it is not enough," said one patient. "We hope the Dominican Sisters will continue to assist us. The feeding scheme and the home-based care programmes give us hope. They also feed my child, whom I was finding difficult to take care of, given my health condition. They are doing a great job," she continued.

The Dominican Sisters have vowed to continue with their programmes until the situation improves

---

---

## **Hunger bites in Nyaminyami**

The current food emergency has reached a critical point, with gloomy-faced children seen scavenging for food far and wide. Hunger and malnutrition have become major threats to the lives of children left on their own as their parents go to look for food.

Reports from Nyaminyami indicate that two children are believed to have died from starvation and others are known to have fainted from lack of food. Chief Mola told The Emergency Preparedness bulletin that the food situation has drastically deteriorated in the district.

Recently a young boy is reported to have fainted due to hunger. "We were in the middle of a workshop when a teenage boy came shouting for help. He told us that there was a boy who fainted because of hunger," said the source. Chief Mola rushed to the scene where the villagers had already prepared porridge for the boy to eat. After the boy regained consciousness, he told the villagers that he had gone for more than two days without food. His parents had gone to Chalala to source food for the family. It could not be established when the parents will be back.

In another report, two children are said to have died after they allegedly ate cassava and other wild roots, which were not well prepared. Chief Mola confirmed the incident but the parents of the children refused to comment. However, the Chief indicated that people do not want to speak out as they feel embarrassed.

Some girls at CAMFED hostels in Mola area were failing to attend school due to hunger. Their parents could not send them any food because they did not have enough for themselves. The boarding school was forced to close days before the official end of term so that the pupils could travel back to their homes.

The situation is expected to improve as Save the Children which is feeding social welfare cases in Nyaminyami is set to expand the programme early January.

---

---

## **Workshop participants visit Tsholotsho flood victims**

In its continued effort to equip partner organisations with skills and knowledge in disaster management, Save the Children (UK) in conjunction Civil Protection Unit facilitated yet another workshop in Tsholotsho on disaster response, rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery, covering issues on programming and planning for emergency response and the post-disaster phase. The workshop ran from the 18th to the 22nd of November 2002.

The workshop introduced participants to strategies for effective disaster response and recovery with particular reference to floods. It also covered child welfare issues in emergency situations such as abuse of children in holding camps. Reporting methods and ways of preventing child abuse were also explored. Project planning for rehabilitation and recovery was covered in depth with reference to Tsholotsho flood disaster. The workshop also emphasised the need for gathering accurate

information and use of appropriate dissemination channels before, during and after disasters.

After three days of discussions, the participants visited Tsholotsho Gwayi flood victims. This gave them the opportunity to evaluate activities carried out during the flood disaster so as to improve future response. In the process of data gathering, participants learnt how to assess vulnerabilities and capacities through observation. Data on response and rehabilitation was gathered and the information obtained will assist in improving areas of weaknesses.

Several organisations responded during this disaster period, which subsequently became a good case to learn from. This comes amid concerns by some sectors of society, particularly the press and some beneficiaries, who query the effectiveness of response by other agencies. The timeliness of operations, and the type, quality and quantity of relief materials have raised debate, and the problem of closing the gap between relief and recovery still remains an issue.

Commenting on the workshop, Sichengiso Mazambani, a DDF officer indicated that: "The project planning presentation helped us with the ideas of identifying feasible projects for victims than just imposing. We also learnt the importance of consulting the victims before a decision is made. Some victims refused to move to the new settlement because they were not consulted." Another participant also indicated that many people are still recovering from the effects of the floods owing to the sudden withdrawal of aid. "Some have lost their property and they have not yet recovered. This shows that there was no recovery plan for the victims," said Mr Mpala, a police officer.

The workshop was attended by senior staff from Matebeleland province, District Development Fund officers from Lupane and Tsholotsho, NGO staff, the police, University lecturers and students, and other interested individuals from the area.

## Resources

SAVE The Children has an extensive resources center with reports, papers and articles on disaster preparedness. The resource center is situated at the offices at 10 Natal Road, Belgravia and is open from Monday 8:30 am to 4:30pm for individuals interested in disaster preparedness and response. For more information on the resource center contact Tapiwa Gomo at 793198/9 or 727508. You can email at [resource@scfuk.org.zw](mailto:resource@scfuk.org.zw)

Recent acquisitions include:

- ❖ Alex de Waal, *Famine crimes: Politics and the disaster relief industry in Africa*. Indiana University: USA, 2002
- ❖ Hugh, Mathew, *Children and community regeneration*. UK: Save the Children, 2000
- ❖ Devereux, Stephen, & Simon Maxwell, : *"Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa"*, Great Britain ITDG Publishing 2001
- ❖ Bill Forse, *Where there is no vet*. Great Britain, Oxfam, 1999.
- ❖ *Managing supplementary feeding: Introductory guidance notes*. Zimbabwe, DFID, 2002
- ❖ Amartya Sen, *Poverty and famines: An Essay on entitlement and development*. Clarendon Press: Great Britain, 1997

**Please note that back issues of The Emergency Preparedness bulletin can be obtained from Save the Children Resource Center at the above address.**

## **WEBSITE REFERENCES**

- ☞ Drought monitor: [www.drought.unl.edu/dm/](http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/)  
Contains information on drought monitor, climatic conditions, a file with information on past events as well as information on other institutions.
- ☞ Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN): [www.enonline.net](http://www.enonline.net).for current field exchange, guidelines for nutrition in emergencies and other reports.
- ☞ National Drought Mitigation Center: [enso.unl.edu/ndmc](http://enso.unl.edu/ndmc). Includes general aspects about droughts, its impact, its planning and different methodologies to develop a drought management plan.
- ☞ ND Information Center: [www.drought.noaa.gov](http://www.drought.noaa.gov) provides information on drought and climate conditions, latest events, and drought status.

## **ZINISA MEMBERSHIP LIST**

- Inter country People's Aid (IPA):** Effie Malianga Tel: 746175/776304
- World Vision:** Daisy Mafumba Tel: 301715/306581
- Save The Children (UK):**  
Chris McIvor/Angela Rugara 793198/9
- Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe (FCTZ)**  
Godfrey Magaramombe Tel: 498332/498326
- Farm Orphan Support Trust (FOST):**  
Lynn Walker Tel: 309800
- New Life Ministries:** Elliot Tel: 700020/2
- Martin Luther Church:** Mrs Kruger Tel: 794723
- Silveira House:** Ignatious Musona Tel: 491066/7
- Mashambanzou Trust:**  
Patrick Smet Tel: 610937/610079
- Dominican Sisters:** Sr Walsh Tel: 720841
- ZIMNAMH-** Mrs Munyuru Tel: 728538
- Roman Catholic Church:** Fr Netekwa Tel: 091334891
- Independent member:**  
Sue Martin Tel: 882801