

Liz and Sergio Vilela

The effects of quarantine in Mozambique...

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www.bmsworldmission.org/lsvilela

Dear friends,

We are so glad to be able to communicate with you all in this time of difficulty. This week we were reminded of the passage in Romans 5:1-5 about the way that in difficult times, God is shaping us and teaching us to depend and trust more and more in Him as He is by our side through it all. This is easier said than done and as we will discuss in this letter, the amount and type of suffering is different for each person...

Most of you will know about the PEPEs that I (Liz) work with, pre-school programmes run by Churches. Here in Mozambique, all educational facilities closed at the same time as in the UK, so since mid March with Church congregations not meeting and parents not paying the monthly PEPE fees, many PEPE teachers have not been receiving their already small monthly 'salary'. So with the donations that have been given, they received their first small offering last week. They expressed their gratitude and one person said they now had some money to buy rice for the family. BMS were also able to provide funds for the PEPE coordinators to prepare worksheets for the children to do at home. Thanks to your support to BMS this work has been possible; children are able to continue with some of their learning at home and teachers are able to buy food for themselves. We plan to continue providing this support over the next couple of months while we are in quarantine.

At the moment we are all healthy and in some ways we have gotten used to quarantine life. The children have school in the mornings with mum, and mum and dad manage to keep quite busy doing jobs in the house, working on projects, meetings, communications, studying, oh and the whole family has been kept busy looking after the 9 puppies that were born at the start of quarantine. We've found homes for most of them and we will keep two of them, Toby and Daisy. These puppies arrived just at the right time and have kept the children very occupied. Our Church here is using WhatsApp to send material to Church members to use on Sundays and everyone is doing ok under the circumstances. Both of our families in Brazil and England are healthy and we are grateful to God for this. The President has extended our current state of emergency until the end of June and as cases are rising considerably, we continue to wait, as most of us are, trusting in God to see us through.



Linda, who helps at our house and with the children (see photo of her below), spoke to me about what is most difficult for Mozambicans at this time. She told me that thieving has increased in the area where she lives, as many people are hanging around and don't have a lot to do. She said that there is a group of local young men with a reputation for stealing. The other day, one of them stole a plastic chair and ran off to his parents house. The community found him there and the parents told them that they could do whatever they needed to do with him as they were tired of his behaviour. So they beat him up and then took him to the police station.

Schools are closed and many children are left at home on their own while the parents go to work or go looking for work. There is a family that live near to Linda. The mum goes out early to try and sell sugar cane, tomatoes, etc. The dad works but he has no job security and works when he can. The three girls are left alone in the house and wait to eat until one of the parents comes back with some money to buy something to eat. Sometimes that happens only at 8 or 9pm.



The police don't let people sell products in the streets after 6pm, and many have learnt that the hard way, as Linda told me. If someone is still selling at this time, the police come along with their big dogs to create fear and many people already run. Then they get their piece of metal to hit whoever they find disobeying. Not only that but Linda said that the police take the food or products that they are selling and put it in their cars, even the little BBQ that they use to cook chicken. One evening about 5pm, the firemen were seen turning on their hoses and squirting groups of people who were still at the market to get them to disperse.

Many children have not been studying since March (the school year only started in February) either because no one is around to facilitate them or they don't have the money to pay to get photocopies of the material (as the schools don't give it out for free). When it's time to go back to school, with 70-80 students in a classroom, it will be very difficult to control. Will they cancel this school year? We wait to find out what will happen.

Thank you for your prayers for us and for Mozambique. We are praying for you also.

Please continue to pray for:

- PEPE teachers and the PEPE children - for protection and providence
- Good health and protection for our family
- Linda and her family, and for peace in the communities

We also ask that you pray for peace with the terrorist attacks happening in the North of Mozambique (it is very far away from where we are). Many people have been badly affected by this and it is a difficult and unsettling time for the locals there.

Romans 5:1-5 mentions peace, grace, patience and hope, all of which we receive from our Heavenly Father. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever, Amen.

Liz and Sergio

If you would like to support Liz and Sergio Vilela by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.

