

Liz and Sergio Vilela

Renewal and resilience

December 2020

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Welcome friends to our latest prayer letter, where we will share how we have had our strength renewed and about the resilience that we see in people here. The year is nearly over and we know it hasn't been easy for anyone, but we give thanks to God for His faithfulness and goodness to us.

We hope you find encouragement from reading this prayer letter.

Sergio: Hope Farm is a Catholic project that is involved in several areas of work in the community. The farm is located in the Dombe district, which was one of the places that suffered most from Cyclone Idai, and also one of the places where most people lost their lives and practically all villages lost everything. I met the person in charge of the farm at a meeting at my home organized by the Brazilian consulate, with all the Brazilians who were affected by the Cyclone. We talked and the idea came together from BMS and Hope Farm to help one of the communities to construct a mill to clean corn and make flour, which is one of the main foods here in Mozambique. In order to coordinate this project, I had the opportunity to stay at Hope Farm, visit the projects and stay at their drug rehabilitation centre for people with all types of addictions.

It was a very good time, where I could hear from some young people. They are real people, with real stories. There was this young man who lived with his mother and every day she would leave at the same time to go to church. Time passed and one day he went to her bedroom to call her and she was lying in bed dead. That young man was just a 7 year old child and the negative impact that had on his life led him to the world of drugs..... but God with his grace has given hope to that young man by bringing him to Hope Farm where he received acceptance and an opportunity to start over.



Just now we have been able to have a nice break away from Beira. It was great to get out the city and go and stay in Vilanculos for a few days at a beautiful beach, about seven hours away from Beira. Even though it rained, it was nice to rest. We then went on a further ten hours to the capital, Maputo, where we saw a few friends and prepared to cross the border to South Africa. Sergio needed to get checked out by the doctors as there were a few concerns, but we give thanks to God that he is well. It just made us more aware how important it is to look after our health, especially being in a country that doesn't have reliable health care. While in South Africa we were able to take the children to the cinema, go to a water park, and see some animals at Kruger, whilst taking the necessary Covid-19 precautions. God has been so good to us and we give thanks for him, especially for protecting us on our journey and for the children being so good in the car as we made our 17 hour journey home. We now feel we have a renewed vision for our ministries, Church, and as a family.



Liz: Before our holiday, I had 6 clients for play therapy. I finished working with four of them and two of them need more time. I give thanks to God for this ministry that He has given me and the opportunity to see children grow in self-confidence and to improve their social skills, among other things. I can't go into specifics due to confidentiality, but through the process in play therapy it's amazing to see how speech becomes clearer with confidence, how children realise they can achieve something, how they find solutions to problems in their play, and how they find their voice. I am nearly coming to the end of my Diploma course when hopefully I can officially be called a play therapist, but I still have a lot to learn and I look forward to seeing how God will use play therapy to heal and transform children's lives in the coming year.



When we were in Vilanculos, we noticed how Covid-19 had really affected the people there. It is a small town that relies on the tourist economy but since the borders closed and people stopped travelling, their lives have become difficult. Many hotels have closed down and when looking for a restaurant for dinner during the week, it was hard to find one. For a country that is already very poor, many people are now even poorer. However, the Mozambican people already know that they can't sit around and wait for someone to help them, as help won't come. They get up and look for anything they can do to earn some money. Many have turned to fishing in order to provide for their families. Their resilience and strength

is incredible. Let's pray that the government will be motivated to give support to their people and that they will find encouragement that comes from God.



Please pray for:

- Hope Farm and that the mill project works out and is a blessing for the community.
- Continued good health for the whole family.
- For the children who were doing play therapy and those who will continue, and for opportunities to minister to others in this way next year.
- For the community in Vilanculos, that tourism will pick back up again and people will be encouraged.

We know that this Christmas will be hard for many, whether feeling lonely, missing loved ones or suffering from ill health.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, the Bible says "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."

This is our prayer for you during this festive period. May you receive encouragement from others and from God's Word this Christmas.

With big hugs from the Vilela family.

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.

