

A LONG-TERM APPROACH TO RELIEF FOR VICTIMS OF CYCLONE IDAI IN MOZAMBIQUE

When Cyclone Idai tore through Mozambique in March 2019, it left deep scars in this already impoverished country, among them massive human losses and displacement, and serious structural damages. Thanks to its long-standing relationship with local partners, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund was able to support victims shortly after the disaster while increasing their long-term resilience.



In the Beira IDP camp, a family has access to clean water through the system built by Oxfam. Credit: Micas Mondalane/Oxfam

If cyclones are always synonymous with damage, their destructive effect tends to be multiplied in fragile states. Almost a year after it touched ground, Cyclone Idai is known as one of the worst tropical cyclones on record to affect the African continent, with a death toll of more than a thousand and close to 200,000 displaced in Mozambique alone. The magnitude of the damage and the acute humanitarian crisis that followed prompted the Steelworkers Humanity Fund (SHF) to support reconstruction efforts with a contribution of \$20,450 through three partner organizations with solid bases on the ground: OXFAM Québec, the Mozambique-Canada Maternal Health Project (PSMMC), and local human rights organization the Association for Community Legal Support and Defence (AAAJC).

In the days following the disaster, camps for internally displaced people were set up in various locations across the country to provide shelter to thousands of Mozambicans who had become homeless. The SHF support to Oxfam Québec contributed to ensuring drinkable water and hygiene kits to entire families living in those camps.

When Idai destroyed the roofs of the maternity ward and staff houses at the Quewene Rural Health Centre, local health workers had to continue providing much-needed assistance to the community. Created as a result of a partnership between the University of Saskatchewan and the Inhambane Provincial District of Health, the Mozambique-Canada Maternal Health Project serves over 7,000 through the Centre, improving sexual, reproductive, maternal and newborn health in the province of Inhambane. The SHF provided funds to assist with the rebuilding and repair of the structures, once again allowing its staff a safe environment to provide care for women during pregnancy and delivery.

Finally, the SHF had been partnering with AAAJC for many years by supporting projects that promoted human rights



A truck transporting drinking water to the Beira IDP camp, where more than 2000 people have taken refuge. Credit: Micas Mondlane /Oxfam



The Quewene maternity ward after Cyclone Idai. Credit: PSMMC

and address poverty in Mozambique by giving a voice to communities affected by multinational companies. After the cyclone, a special emergency response was granted to restore their livelihood, providing school supplies to 2,000 children from the region around the city of Tete who had been affected by the historic flood.

Cyclone Idai had dramatic effects in Mozambique as well as Zimbabwe and Malawi. As the prevalence of extreme weather increases, those are among the countries that contribute the least to generating greenhouse gasses leading to climate change. Moreover, their weak infrastructure and public services are the direct results of a global economic system that maintains their populations in poverty, making them more vulnerable to natural disasters. This is why the Steelworkers Humanity Fund's approach does not end at emergency relief funds; because as much as short-term assistance is important, longer term, transformative projects are essential in order to break the cycle of poverty.

To learn more about the Steelworkers Humanity Fund

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Satellite photo of Cyclone Idai approaching Mozambique on March 14, 2019



Steelworkers Humanity Fund

234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 800
Toronto, ON M4P 1K7

Phone: 416-487-1571

Fax: 416-487-9308

Email: humanityfund@usw.ca

UNITED STEELWORKERS
USW
MÉTALLOS