

## Virus update Mozambique with permission from DMG–Missionary Verena

Dear Friends,

Many of you have already asked what the situation is like here in Mozambique regarding the virus. It took a lot longer for it to get here, but a few days ago, the first case has now been "officially" confirmed, but many think that it had already been here for much longer (all countries around us had cases registered much earlier).

As of Monday, March 23rd, all schools and universities have been closed for a period of 30 days initially, but we think it will be more than 2-3 months than just 30 days. This also means that our Bible School has been closed since Monday.

The corona crisis will probably be very different for us in Africa than in the West, since we generally do not have a good health care system and many (including young people) are already burdened with various diseases (HIV; TB etc.). We currently expect a "grace period" of 2-3 weeks, after which we might see an increase in sick and dying people. Social distancing is almost impossible here, since a family often lives in one room with 6-8 people... Many approaches from the West have to be re-considered and contextualized here.

As a missionary team, we are now trying to prepare for the upcoming virus wave and have had meetings with the Ministry of Health in the past few days. We will make our Bible School buildings available as a centre for the distribution of info material, paracetamol and ORS solution (for oral rehydration). It seems that our semi-finished building (foundation and roof) is ideal for this as it protects from sun and rain, but people will still not be in close quarters.

In the next 2 weeks, there will be many more conversations with the Ministry of Health, training for helpers, and also a lot of planning for eventualities at team level.

Please do keep us in your prayers - we appreciate it.

Verena

### **News update with permission from Tim George, Director SIM, Mozambique**

Life has been a bit hectic lately as I am sure it has been for many of you as well. Here in Mozambique, we have 8 confirmed cases of Covid-19, all in the capital city of Maputo. However, there is only one machine available for testing in the whole country, so we aren't sure what the actual statistics are. While all of you are dealing with lockdown right now, life is pretty much continuing as normal here. Although the president declared a state of emergency just today, it is near impossible to keep Mozambicans in lockdown. They won't eat if they don't go work in their fields. Their houses are single room mud huts with no windows or lights. You can't keep them inside for any length of time. All schools and churches have closed and we are not allowed to meet in groups of more than 50 people. Most people are happy about no school as their children are available now to go work in the fields, but it is impossible to keep Mozambicans from attending funerals in large numbers. Yesterday, we saw a funeral of hundreds of people gathered together. Today, Tim has travelled to a funeral, where he is trying to keep the elderly isolated and make everyone wash their hands. It seems like an impossible task here.



We have had to close the Bible school. The students are very disappointed, but we are making homework available for them to come and pick up on a weekly basis. We are hoping our second year students will still be able to graduate come December.

We are also involved in a project to set up information centers to help educate the people here on what coronavirus is, the symptoms, and how to prevent it. We have been printing pamphlets, and buying supplies. We plan on opening 4 centers where people around the city can go and receive information, soap for hand washing, and paracetamol for their sick family members. Some of our students from INTEL will help run these centers.

Tim, being director of our team, also has had to arrange all of our emergency protocol for our team here. In the north of Mozambique, there is little to no medical services available and with all borders being closed and flights not going out, we are all pretty much stuck here with very little medical care. We have exactly 0.5 respirators in our province since the one the hospital has doesn't work all the time. Even a broken arm or leg, could be really devastating right now. It has been quite a stressful time trying to make plans in a time of so many uncertainties.

Personally we are all very sad as a visit from Michele's parents had to be cancelled as well as our anniversary trip that we had planned while they were here. We have spent about 2 weeks trying to reunite two teenagers with their families. We had a 15 year old American girl here that came right before everything went crazy. Her flights home were cancelled and after much arranging and figuring and refiguring, thankfully, we finally got her sent back to the States with an embassy flight just yesterday. The other is an Australian boy, a good friend of Traeger, whose parents are stuck in South Africa as they are in complete lock down. He has been with us for 2 weeks now and will be here at least another 3 weeks until South Africa ends their lockdown. We could not find any way to get him to them.

We really would appreciate your prayers for the health of our team, and our family. For our friends and students here, and all the people of Mozambique, as a sickness like this could have devastating effects on the country. In these times, we are so thankful that we have the Hope of Christ and that He is so much bigger than all of this. We pray that his kingdom is furthered through this time of suffering. May the God of all comfort and peace be with each one of you.