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TSURO TRUST

NEWSLETTER

CYCLONE IDAI STORIES



The Cyclone Idai Story : Foreword

BY BACKSON MUCHINI TSURO TRUST'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"I heard about the approaching cyclone Idai on social media and on news sites on different platforms. As the cyclone gathered speed and approached the Mozambican shores, several scenarios were plotted in terms of its path on land.

On Sunday at around 6 in the morning I called the acting District

Administrator and asked him to convene a stakeholders' meeting on Monday to discuss and come up with contingency plans in preparation for the cyclone. He dismissed my plea! Come Monday we discussed this within TSURO and advised staff to closely monitor the approaching cyclone. On Tuesday, I assigned our project officer, Mr.Chitaka, as he was participating in a meeting on Infrastructure and Development chaired by DDF, to discuss the approaching cyclone. The meeting chair did not see the importance of the issue and thus it was not included in the agenda. At my home in Zimunda village there was a lot of commotion on Wednesday evening. I got out twice to check out on my mombes (cows) which were restless and mooing. The dogs had joined in and were howling. I tried to calm both the mombes and dogs without success. And this commotion continued till daylight.

As I drove back home from Chimanimani village around noon on Thursday, it had started drizzling, and it was getting stronger by the hour. I got home and started making my preparations for the cyclone - loading chicken feeders to the bream, opening drains at some damming points and informing my staff to go to their homes. The following day, Friday, the rains were very intense accompanied by strong winds. By late afternoon it was very clear we were headed for a disaster, with the rivers which confluence near my home, Munyanyazi, Mhakwe and Biriiri rapidly swelling. By 6pm I left my home in the hills and headed for a night at the Hotsprings. Waters in the Biriiri, Shinja, and Mvumvumu rivers were already splashing over the bridges when I made my escape into the flatlands.

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BY BACKSON MUCHINI TSURO TRUST'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"I did not sleep that night; my mind was running wild. What had happened to my colleagues in the hilly parts of the district, what of the TSURO members, what had become of my shops at Muuyu, what of my hives along the streams, what of my home - my animals, and in my mind questions like this kept on coming. I called all the phone numbers of people I knew in Chimanimani village and no one was reachable. None of the TSURO staff were. I called my friends in Nhedziwa who informed me that the lower bridges namely, Matsororo and Nhedziwa had been washed away. Early morning, I was at PORET with Mr. Piti.

Information then started filtering in about the disaster which had hit the eastern parts of the district. I then drove back through Chikwizi to try and reach my village. I got as far as Mhakwe and slept over. Early next morning, I then left my vehicle at the confluence of Mhakwe and Matanho rivers and trekked to my home. The foot trails in the hills had turned into streams. It was also intermittently drizzling. I got home and saw water all over the place, and in fowl runs, cattle, goats and sheep pens. Several fowl were dead! I could not reach Muuyuweburi to check on my shop.

Information I got was that the floods had washed away all the hives, 35 in total, which were along the river as well as the perimeter fence. I changed clothes for warmer ones, packed my bag, called a number of staff including Chief Raymond Saurombe, and stated planning for relief efforts. I asked for volunteers from amongst the staff to hike to Chimanimani village to set up operations."

"I got out twice to check out on my mombes (cows) who were restless and mooing. The dogs had joined in and were howling."

MR. BACKSON MUCHINI

Risitu Valley subject to great loses in living memory

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CYCLONE IDAI THE DEVOURER.

Retired Colonel Kaneta is a resident in Kopa area under chief Muusha in ward 21 of Chimanmani East. When Cyclone Idai wreaked havoc in his community he had to offer his homestead as a place of refuge for the survivors. Feeding and dispensing of medication for the survivors was done at his household. "The disaster emanated from heavy rainfalls which caused the huge trees to be uprooted and the destruction of mountains leading to formation of boulders and rocks which clogged the bridges and caused flooding. Continuous build-up of rubble, rocks, boulders and logs being swept away by the water onto the bridge created too much pressure such that it collapsed and water flooded into the residential area and destroyed 78 homes. These were homes to government agencies namely District Development Fund(DDF), Agricultural Rural Development Authority(ARDA), registrar general offices, Agriculture extension officers, veterinary officers, Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) workers. In addition, there were also residents for Risit Valley Fruit Growers Association and Risit valley tea growers. All these houses were destroyed." The community was caught unaware, the community members had initially witnessed Cyclone Eline hence they took Cyclone Idai lightly thinking its severity was not going to be any greater than Cyclone Eline. Saturday the 16th of March came as a shock to Colonel Kaneta. The place that he knew as Kopa that was hyper with activities, with numerous households and an orchard with mangoes, bananas, naartjies had changed over night. A single house remained and he could only see the red roof, the bottom part was immensely covered in water. He could not believe his eyes as to where the shops, motor spares, a mini garage, carpentry shop, abattoirs had gone to. He was so sure disaster had struck his motherland. Immediately, he picked up his phone to call the Provincial Development Coordinator(PDC) to notify him of the sad loss and also to seek for any form of assistance. The total number of people who passed on at the Kopa settlement were a total of 299 known permanent residents. Those who had visited or came for business purposes remain unknown. The remaining shops had all goods soaked in water. When the water flooded the Kopa area people had to use a rope to cross from the police station to the safer side by the road side. Some managed to pass but the majority of the people were unfortunate since when they were in the midst of crossing a strong wave of floods strongly displaced a huge lorry that was stationed upstream and it was carried downstream by the floods along with the people holding on to a rope. All the people who were holding on to the rope were sadly swept away. All of them perished only 1 body was found the rest went missing even up to date. Mr. Kaneta only saw the people who had survived in the early morning of the 16th, he had doctors assisting people at his house which was also the distribution point for food and other resources to the community. He turned his garage into an emergency clinic where doctors stayed to treat those who were sick. TSURO Trust was the first organization to support their community.



COLONEL KANETA (RIGHT)
AND VILLAGE HEAD MAMBIKA
(LEFT)

"When Cyclone Idai wreaked havoc in his community he had to offer his homestead as a place of refuge for the survivors."



BY ROSEMARY MUDZINGWA

Food insecurity perpetrator Cyclone Idai.

BY ROSEMARY MUDZINGWA

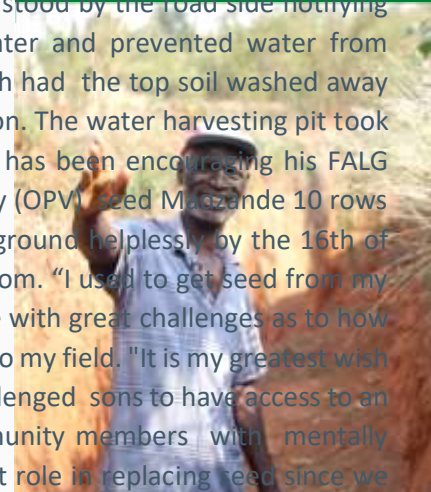
"Agro-ecology

Reduce

John Mhlanga is a farmer in ward 16, a father of ten. Two of his sons are mentally handicapped. John is a Farmer Action Learning Group (FALG) member and a mental health coordinator in his ward. He has assisted several people in his ward and beyond using his indigenous knowledge on use of different herbs to cure different illnesses. During the Cyclone Idai era, the community members realized that a gully that he had self-made as a water harvest pit saved his homesteads from being destroyed by the floods. The pit

metres deep, 1,5 metres wide it is 100metres long. "On the 15th of March 2019, I saw that the water harvest pit was overflowing. That was a sign to me of eminent flooding since this had not happened before. I stood by the road side notifying school children to return to their respective homes. The water harvesting pit collected water and prevented water from destroying my field which is within my compound". Such was not the case in other fields which had the top soil washed away with only huge rocks remaining behind rendering the place not fit for any agricultural production. The water harvesting pit took him many years to erect and it saved a great purpose during the cyclone Idai period. John has been encouraging his FALG members to do the same. Mr. Mhlanga had a field in which he planted Open Pollinated Variety (OPV) seed Madzande 10 rows variety. The field had maize almost ready for harvesting but had fallen and was lying on the ground helplessly by the 16th of March 2019. He found half his field covered with stones not knowing where they had come from. "I used to get seed from my harvest which I sold and used the income to pay school fees for my children. Cyclone Idai came with great challenges as to how to generate income as well as food. We lost 600metre pipes which drew water from the source to my field. "It is my greatest wish to have those pipes replaced and if there could be funds available to cater for my mentally challenged sons to have access to an inclusive toilet since mine got destroyed during Cyclone Idai. This applies even to all community members with mentally challenge family members who lost toilets during the cyclone Idai phase. TSURO played a great role in replacing seed since we got 15kg bean seed, 2kg finger millet seed 10kg maize seed and 100metre pipes." John Mhlanga makes use of the land which survived the cyclone Idai disaster and is hoping to get more pipes so that he can water his field to improve his crops' growth. He has managed to clear some stones on some sections of his field which was affected by Cyclone Idai and has already planted his OPV Madzande 10 rows for the 2019 /20 agricultural season.

JOHN MHLANGA is 2



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seek refuge at their neighbor's house. "Every time I think of the cyclone, I still cannot believe that it happened it still feels like a dream to me. It changed my life so much and I wish I could get rid of these thoughts and never think of the cyclone again." Melia really seemed traumatized by what happened on the night of the cyclone. She mentioned that she did not do well at school after cyclone idai because all that she could think about was the cyclone and all the things that they lost during that time. "Although life was hard for us, with nowhere to start from we were happy to receive assistance from TSURO it couldn't have come at a better time. We received food hampers, blankets, kitchen ware, mattresses, solar lights, clothes and dignity kits (pads, towels, under wears, and other toiletries and cosmetics). Other came just to talk to us and to play with us, this made us forget about the cyclone as we had something to entertain us. We still continue to get assistance from TSURO and other organizations and were grateful for that, now I wish to find assistance with school fees. Melia's mother has started a vegetable garden around her tent and poultry farming as a way of raising money to support her children. As a family they are seeking to be assisted with capital to start income generating projects that will assist them in their day to day living."

MELISA SAZI

"The asbestos fell off, and immediately we all ran out of the kitchen. In the process of fleeing my mother fell and she was hit by a rock on her leg but we managed to take her out. I had never seen such a thing in my life".



Girl Child traumatized by cyclone Idai disaster

BY COURAGE CHAUKE

15 year old girl, Melia Saizi is a survivor of the dreadful Cyclone Idai. She lives with her mother Rudo Woyu and her four siblings, at Nyamatanda camp site a temporary home after their house was destroyed by Cyclone Idai. Melia was at home with her family during the night of the cyclone. "When we were told that there is a cyclone that is coming to Chimanimani, I never thought that it would be destructive as it was. I thought it would just rain and the following day all will be back to normal. It rained the whole day and as the day progressed the intensity of the rain and the wind increased. Trees and crops started falling down. Later in the evening around 7pm we prepared supper, suddenly the rains became worse, the house began to shake, water started coming into the kitchen and it put out the fire. In no time the water had already reached my knee level. The asbestos fell off, and immediately we all ran out of the

kitchen. In the process of fleeing my mother fell and she was hit by a rock on her leg but we managed to take her out. I had never seen such a thing in my life” Melia's home was swept away and they were left with nothing. That night they went to



Local traditional leadership active participating in the cyclone Idai devastated community.

BY ROSEMARY MUDZINGWA

Mr. Raymond Saurombe is a chief in Chimanimani as well as the social mobilization officer at TSURO Trust. He narrates his ordeal which took place on the 16th of March a day after cyclone Idai had affected Ngangu areas where TSURO Trust is located. He was then a security officer at TSURO Trust. "All staff members had been told to stay at home". He had to drive from his home 30km away to TSURO Trust premises. When he arrived it was raining profusely. Around 11am he decided to return home. As he was driving back home, trees were falling and he had to drive cautiously. When he got to a bridge in Saurombe village it was already overflowing. That very day it rained intensely in Saurombe village and he was amazed by the lightning which was striking as if it was on the ground. He later discovered it was not lightning but was the effects of the rolling stones. The situation persisted the whole night. On Saturday morning his homestead was completely surrounded by water he could not move to the next homestead till the following morning. He then managed to find a plateau where he went to make a call to the District Development Coordinator (DDC) whose phone was not reachable because of the disrupted network services. He then managed to reach the Provincial Development Coordinator (PDC) in Mutare. The PDC immediately planned a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) team which was to attend to the chief's area in particular to the boarding school Biriri High School since the Chief was not sure of the availability of food for the learners. Phones were not functional and Chief Saurombe had to go back to Chimanimani to check on the impact of cyclone. He decided to use a rope to cross rivers to get to where the TSURO Executive director was. Upon meeting they then travelled to Mutare to purchase food to distribute in the community. In his community the top soil was seriously affected especially the "Zunde ra Mambo" (communal field for the chief's granary), and wet lands utilized for agricultural purposes were affected (sugarcane & yams plantations, garden). A footbridge to access Biriri hospital and school was damaged, bridges disrupted, small livestock swept away. The community has been trying to rebuild the foot bridge, the council has also embarked on rebuilding the bridges and TSURO has provided seed to the community and trainings in that community for them to bounce back better.

The community has bounce back better."

**CHIEF SAUROMBE
RAYMOND**



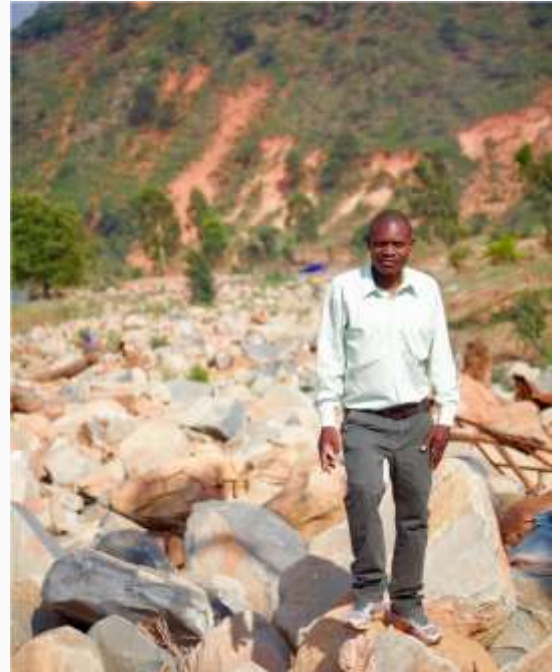
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Rusitu Valley subject to great loses in living

BY ROSEMARY MUDZINGWA

In 2019, Farai Gumisai was a learning facilitator at TSURO Trust resident at of TSURO Trust's knowledge centres. On the 15th of March 2019, it rained heavily all watching through the window he saw the fowl run completely destroyed his poultry because the the speed of the wind was far too much he just had to stay safe indoors."I was totally destroyed. Beside my main house there was landslide which rested just night he heard a huge knock on the door, "it



was my neighbor her house had been swept away she came to seek for refuge at my home. I accommodated that family for close to a month. As if that was not enough, all roads were closed by mud slides and we suffered in accessing buyers to purchase our fruits. The grinding mills, toilets and houses got severely destroyed. There was no network coverage, no electricity, all communication became non functional." The community had to share the limited resources left within their locality. Farai could not move at all till Saturday morning when he sought for network coverage on mountain tops. When I arrived at Derera that's when I started to see messages on my phone with an instruction to go to Kopa and assess the situation since people had been seriously affected." He rushed to Kopa where he met with Colonel Kaneta and they started mobilising resources from TSURO, other Non Governmental Organization (NGOs) and Government of Zimbabwe.



Despite the challenges at his own homestead he had to forgo his own challenges to first assist the general community. Farai managed to gather information on the deceased, the injured and the homeless. "I would walk from Muchadziya to Kopa it was not easy because I was crossing flooded streams and rivers. It took me about 6 to 7 hours to reach Kopa". He would visit the TSURO Village Groups and gathering information on the challenges they were facing this made it easier for the community to be assisted through the assistance rendered to them by TSURO.

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Sleepless night on the roof top.

BY ROSEMARY MUDZINGWA

"Suddenly, the room
began to have water
springing
from the ground my
house got flooded, I
sought
refuge on the roof top
together with my 3
children present at
home
that day together with
my husband."

CHENAI CHAGWIZA

“My name is Mai Mwaamba or Chenai Chagwiza from ward 13 Marumauta village in Chimanimani district. I am a mother of 8 children. In 2019 we experienced Cyclone Idai, it changed our normal way of life as we used to keep farmer saved seed, drying vegetables, small livestock production and were engaged in other various farming activities. On the 15th of March 2020 as the rains continued to rain, I was outdoors. I rushed back home I crossed a bridge, the water level was beyond the peak of the bridge. I realized soon the bridge was going to be destroyed and it indeed fell. As I got home, I gathered my children in one of the rooms I thought was safe. Suddenly, the room began to have water springing from the ground my house got flooded, I sought refuge on the roof top together with my 3 children present at home that day together with my husband”. Early in the morning she moved around her homestead to see if all was well within her homestead. This event occurred just after we had received trainings from TSURO on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)”. She first noticed her vegetable solar drier top glass cover shattered into pieces. This was her greatest sorrow since she knew one of her sources of income had been crippled. Up to date the solar drier remains unfixed since the time it was affected by Cyclone. Her household property was soaked in water and her pallets with goats was seriously affected she only managed to see only 4 goats out of a total 10. The tank together with the community taps were also destroyed. However, TSURO Trust managed to provide a community tap in ward 13. As of now, the roads in their community are still not yet reconstructed. Buses are no longer able to reach their area they are using more of private vehicles which charge higher fares than Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO) buses. They travel with alternative transport and at times they travel with their farm produce on their heads to reach their



target markets.

“I managed to get 3 X 100m of water pipes from TSURO as well as seed in the form of 10kg maize seed, 15kg bean seed and 2kg finger millet seed. We were more than glad especially as women because we had lost so much seed and we got relieved from the stress of not having seed at our households. “From the lessons provided by TSURO, I have managed to regain chickens, goats, and hares that I lost during the Cyclone.” The tragedy affected our mental welfare since the community lost some members and total distraction of some households. Chenai had an apiary close to her homestead it had 11 Kenyan Top Bar hives (KTB) some were swept away by the Cyclone Idai and she was left with only 3. She has since added one more hive after the destruction by cyclone Idai. She is maintaining her hives with her 15 year old son.



Photo Gallery

DISASTER



RELIEF AND RECOVERY



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Website <http://tsurotrust.org/>