

IN PARTNERSHIP

September 2023



Safe Water Provides Fruit for the Future

GMP Relief and Development partner Showers of Blessing is known for providing safe water to communities in Zimbabwe. Having installed a borehole at Palawani School, they are now collaborating with the local school in a tree planting project.

Palawani School has 226 students and 24 acres of available land. The tree planting project will help to conserve local fruits and give the school a new source of income. It also allows students to learn planting and harvesting and involve them in environmental and climate change interventions. Thanks to a borehole, the school had enough water available for the tree planting program to begin.

Boniface Mpofu, Showers of Blessing Director, shares that there is also a cultural significance of teaching children how to conserve indigenous fruits. "So it is not lost," he said. One of the students, Welcome, helped plant some of the first trees at the school. He said the tree project had already given him the opportunity to leave a green footprint at school. He hopes to "show off" his tree to his future children one day.

In November 2022, students planted 70 indigenous trees, including pines, mangoes, oranges and guava. Children like Dorcas, who helped plant the seedlings, are excited about

the fruits that their younger siblings might one day enjoy. She said, "The trees planted will provide fruit which my sister will be privileged to enjoy".

Christopher Hove, Palawani School Headmaster, says fruit planting will ensure the school's future sustainability; offering a business opportunity through selling fruits within their community. He said it will also "assist kids who are financially challenged and subsidise school fees".

The tree-planting project encourages parent participation. Boniface shared that some parents can't afford school fees. However, they may be able to contribute to school fees by working in the school garden. Boniface explained, "Parents could be involved in planting seedlings or clearing garden areas". This way the school can subsidise fees for those who contribute their time.

Providing safe water to a community has a variety of long-term benefits. Waterborne diseases drop, schools open, and countless new community projects are enabled! Showers of Blessing now want to help initiate these community projects where possible.

Boniface is optimistic about the tree planting project's potential. He is already discussing plans for students

to participate further. He hopes, together, they'll be able to create a nursery, and establish student drama groups relating to the environment, climate change, and mitigation. This will help students educate others in their community.

Students like Andrew believe that these newly planted trees will transform their school. He compared trees to clothes saying, "They give cover and dignity to a place". The newly planted trees will make his school a place to be proud of.

This tree planting project would not have been possible without the borehole drilled at the school. When you take the Safe Water September challenge you help fund not only projects giving water, but the life-changing projects that become possible once a community has access to safe water.

It's not too late to join the challenge. You can also donate during September and learn more online at www.safewaterseptember.org.au



Showers of Blessing Trust's (OSBT) project is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

News & Events

Safe Water September

It is time to celebrate the tenth year of Safe Water September! Drink nothing but water all September and raise funds for safe water projects in Zimbabwe, Vanuatu and Bangladesh. Visit the website to sign up, donate to the challenge or learn more! There are lots of impact stories to read and videos to watch. Visit www.safewaterseptember.org.au

The Voice: A Christian Consideration (Online Event) Wednesday 20 September at 7:30pm-9pm (AEST).

An opportunity to hear from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian Leaders about the upcoming Voice to Parliament referendum. Hosted by Global Mission Partners (the mission, relief and development agency of Churches of Christ Australia). You can register online at <https://bit.ly/GMPVoiceOnlineEvent>

Father's Day

Happy Father's Day from all of us at GMP! As we celebrate Father's Day in Australia, we'd like to thank all father figures in our community. One father in Zimbabwe is reaping the harvest of safe water in his community. Before a borehole was installed in his village, Tapera struggled to water his garden and had to walk with his wheelbarrow three kilometres to fill buckets at the nearest water source. Now, with water within 500 metres of his home it means better health for his growing family and allows him to water crops to provide food and a sustainable income.

Vanuatu Cyclone Response

Thank you for your generous support towards the Vanuatu Cyclone Response. The appeal is now closed. \$22,320 has been raised and all funds after administration costs have been sent. The Conference of Churches of Christ in Vanuatu (CCCV) is working with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Vanuatu Christian Council and provincial governments to help people recover after the destruction caused by the cyclones. Read Madeline's story on page 4.



Dear Friends,

Did you know that this September is the 10th time people of all ages have taken on the Safe Water September challenge?

Last year, around three quarters of challenge takers were 25 years old or younger — a potent reminder and encouragement that young people across our country are active in mission and passionate about God's mission of justice and care for the last, the lost, and the least.

One of the things we have learned from our partners over the past 10 years is that water brings transformation. It colours every area of life, from health, to hygiene, to education, to farming, to business, and into the home. When muddy brown water becomes blue, clear and clean, lives are changed.

The people of Zvishavane, Zimbabwe, have had their water sources contaminated with asbestos fibres and cyanide because of mining. Lindiwe, a resident of 20 years, told us about the river, "The fish die. The people die. This is our past history. People dying." Lindiwe's village needed permanent access to safe water. "Sometimes we go to the town and buy drinking water," Lindiwe said. But "if you had breakout of diarrhoea, it would be so expensive to buy water for a family of five".

Showers of Blessing installed a borehole in Lindiwe's village in May this year!

With this borehole, they will no longer need to bathe in the "oily" river. Moreover, Lindiwe is looking forward to using the water for horticulture. "Growing tomatoes,

carrots, butternuts [pumpkin] for our family. Also, for our cattle to drink safer water," she said.

Over the last 10 years, the Safe Water September community has raised more than \$1.2 million for safe water projects. If we assume it takes as little as \$25 to give one person access to safe water, that's around 48,000 lives transformed through safe water since we began. That's as huge as it sounds (and it sounds huge)!

And these days our partners do much more than water on its own. The team at Showers of Blessing in Zimbabwe can work with communities for longer, ensuring that they have access to education for hygiene and business development. They are installing solar-powered bores, so that elderly people and people with disabilities can access safe water without assistance.

It's a privilege and a blessing to be able to support our partners at Showers of Blessing, the Conference of Churches of Christ in Vanuatu (CCCV), and the Community Advancement Forum (CAF) in Bangladesh through Safe Water September.

Water colours lives, and transforms them in every way, paving the way for better outcomes for whole communities. I look forward with anticipation for the ways God will use the transforming impacts of safe water over the next 10 years, and how much more will be accomplished together!

Mitchell Salmon,
embody National Coordinator



SPOTLIGHT

Showers of Blessing Trust's (OSBT) project is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP)

A Borehole: The Heart of a Village

Have you ever thought about what it would be like to see Safe Water September's impact for yourself?

Jessie Skelly visited safe water projects in Zimbabwe during 2019. At the time he was the embody Mission Catalyst in NSW. He had taken the Safe Water September (SWS) challenge and was eager to see the water projects that the SWS challenge supports.

Visiting Zimbabwe, Jessie was confronted by what he saw. The land was dry and lifeless. Drought had ravaged the earth.

Jessie travelled to remote villages with Showers of Blessing Director, Boniface Mpofu. For many years, Showers of Blessing, have given safe water by installing boreholes in rural communities. "I loved hearing Boniface's wealth of expertise in regard to the water projects," Jessie noted. Boniface is passionate, skilled and knows how to engage with the local community.

Jessie was greeted at the first village by women, with tears flowing down their cheeks. A borehole had recently been installed. The land once again felt the refreshing sensation of water upon its surface. The people, revived, were thankful for its presence.

The borehole had changed their lives. The women who greeted Jessie with tears expressed joy and thankfulness. "What touched me the most was how those women had their basic dignity restored, by being able to simply clean their clothes. This is something that gave them self-worth," Jessie said.

To hear story after story of lives changed was overwhelming for Jessie. "My main desire in going was

to see the impact on the ground of the money raised through Safe Water September," Jessie said. Observing the transformation that a borehole creates in a village encouraged him.

Many people shared their stories with Jessie. One mother in the village told Jessie that she uses the water to grow vegetables. She sells her vegetables from the community garden to buy schoolbooks for her kids.

Another had been leaving her house at 5am with all her children to collect water and buy vegetables. This meant the children missed school. They would return home hungry around 9pm. With the borehole installed close to home, her children won't have to miss school.

Others shared how they walked 12km to collect water, which was dirty because local cattle shared the dam. Then there were people risking their lives collecting water from crocodile-infested waters. The borehole has helped to reduce illness from dirty water and given them a safe way to collect water.

According to Boniface, a borehole is the heart of a village. It needs looking after above all else. Hearing this, Jessie remembered a passage from the Bible. "This reflection brought another layer of depth and meaning to Proverbs 4:23; From the heart flow the springs of life." Like the way water flows from a borehole, giving life!

A borehole brought life to this village. "I was most amazed by the holistic transformation that takes place in these communities," Jessie explained. The borehole has helped to reduce illness and provide a safe way to collect water for over 1,000

people. "This was a much larger number than I could ever have fathomed," Jessie marvelled.

Thanks to people like you taking the challenge, we have raised over \$1.2 million since our first challenge in 2014. This has enabled life-changing water, sanitation, and hygiene projects in Zimbabwe, Vanuatu and Bangladesh.

"It's amazing to see how in over ten years the work has spread so rapidly. And so many different communities have been impacted and changed," Jessie shared.

There are still many villages who don't have access to this life-giving water. Sign up and take the Safe Water September challenge today so that more people can experience this transformation. By giving up your favourite drinks, you can bring life back to communities that don't have access to safe water.

And, this year, for the first time, you can have the chance to visit our partners for yourself – just like Jessie. If you raise \$500 or more, you'll be invited to apply to visit our partners in Zimbabwe in 2024. You could see the effects of your SWS challenge first-hand.

For Jessie, there's no doubt of the impact we can have. "I am convinced that Safe Water September and other initiatives will continue to have a long-lasting impact in the lives of local Zimbabweans."

Experience how safe water can change lives and transform communities. Visit www.safewaterseptember.org.au for more stories and videos.

We Won't Forget People like You, Madeline

Peter Bryant from the Conference of Churches of Christ Vanuatu (CCCV) has continued to visit many members of the churches in Port Vila who required emergency help and support after the damages of Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin. One lady was Madeline.

Madeline has displayed resilience and determination to rebuild her life.

Her husband passed away and some family came to live with her. The house they lived in was already damaged from Tropical Cyclone Pam. So, when Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin hit, the entire structure was demolished.

Faced with the challenge of finding a new place to live, she must now pay rent. The emotional and financial burdens of losing her home are high.

Peter reported, "Madeline set to tidying all the timbers to underneath some she-oak trees at the front of

the property, with the assistance of her family who were still nearby". Madeline could not face removing the old bathtub, hand basin and toilet from the foundations that remained.

Peter also reported that Madeline wants to build herself a new smaller house. "We gave Madeline a large heavy-duty green tarpaulin for her newly planned house, to protect it during the building stage. The cash allowance and gardening kit will help her with the day-to-day needs she has now that she has the extra financial burden of renting," he said.

Through it all, Madeline remains grateful for the help she received and remains hopeful for a brighter future. "Thank you for your heart in coming and not forgetting me," Madeline said.

Thank you for your generous support towards the Vanuatu Cyclone Response.



The appeal is now closed. \$22,320 has been raised and all funds after administration costs have been sent. The Conference of Churches of Christ in Vanuatu (CCCV) is working with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Vanuatu Christian Council and provincial governments to help people recover after the destruction caused by the cyclones.

Meet Carly, National Church Relationships Manager

Hello, my name is Carly Cassidy and I am thrilled to be taking on the role of National Church Relationships Manager with Global Mission Partners. I have a passion for all things missional, so I am very excited to be stepping into this role. I am also the current Mission Minister at One Church in Blackburn, Victoria. I think that will give me a unique perspective, and I'm sure that there will be a nice synergy between the roles. It was through my role there at One Church that I first crossed paths with Global Mission Partners. I have taken a team to visit a project in Indonesia, and to visit an International Church Partnership in the Philippines. Listening to the stories and seeing the work being done by the locals was so inspiring!

A little bit more about me, I am married with three children and a fur baby. Before I started with Global Mission Partners I was a Chaplain in two different Primary Schools, which I loved. Especially when I managed to get my church so involved in the school. I am all for community engagement! In my spare time I love to be active. I play basketball twice a week, and when its not too cold I love going for a surf, or out on the stand up paddle board. I wouldn't be an official Melbournite if I didn't love coffee, so don't be surprised if you get an invitation to join me at a café sooner or later.

I am really looking forward to connecting with you all, and promoting the wonderful work of Global Mission Partners. Thank you!



Scan the QR code to watch a video from Carly! Churches can contact Carly at carly@gmp.org.au