A Clean Bill of Health
Proper hygiene is saving lives in Mozambique

Helena’s husband, Justino, left their village to become a laborer in the city eight years ago, leaving her to care for their then two-year-old son, Ezequiel. She didn’t know it at the time, but the moment he turned down the road, she became a single parent.

Sadly, this is fairly typical for mothers in Maciene, Mozambique.

With no support arriving in the mail and no sign of her husband, Helena has done what she could to make ends meet. She makes just enough to keep her and her now 10-year-old son fed, but not much else. When Esperança’s Community Health Activists visited her home, it was no surprise that they found it rundown and unsanitary. When hunger is an issue, hygiene takes a back seat.

What mothers like Helena don’t know – ignoring hygiene can be a deadly mistake.

Cholera, diarrhea and tinea capitis, a fungal infection of the skin, are all rampant in villages like Maciene due to a lack of hygiene. It’s estimated that 120,000 people die from cholera every year, and diarrhea kills 2,195 children every day. In fact, it’s the second leading cause of death among children under the age of 5.

As scary as that is, all that’s required to keep these dangers at bay for families like Helena’s is

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some knowledge and a little bit of ingenuity.

First, the connection has to be made between the lack of hygiene and disease. A relationship of trust, through regular visits and dialogue from Esperança’s Community Health Activists, is required before the link is not only understood, but believed. But then, it’s no good telling families like Helena’s to wash their hands after using the latrine, to wash their dishes and to bathe regularly when they can’t afford soap.

That’s where ingenuity comes in.

One of Esperança’s core tenants is giving a hand up, rather than a hand out. Instead of giving families soap that would soon be gone after the educators leave, we teach families like Helena’s how to make their own using the ashes from the cooking fire.

We point them to a native creeping plant called “lihlehlwa” or Devil’s Thorn, which can be used to make shampoo and detergent for clothes. We demonstrate how dried plants can serve as brooms to keep dirt and dust off eating surfaces. And we help construct storage areas where dishes can be kept clean.

All of these changes combined make for a tidy and safe home.

It’s not an easy adjustment to make. Practice is required before these hygiene habits take hold. But we make sure all that practice comes with praise and encouragement from our Community Health Activists – knowing that each day is a step toward a healthy family.

Mothers in Mozambique are learning how to make soap, shampoo and detergent from Esperança’s Community Health Activists, keeping their families safe and healthy.

The situation families like Helena’s find themselves in is not ideal – not by a long shot. But the good news is, they have one less threat to worry about. Diseases caused by a lack of hygiene have the power to absolutely destroy a family without warning. Thanks to your partnership, Esperança is safeguarding these families and giving them a clean bill of health – one workshop at a time.
Biting Pain
How you helped bring relief to little Yilson and 62 others!

For the past few years, Gerald Estrada has been a part of Esperança's fair-trade coffee cooperative program in Los Alpes, Nicaragua. Hundreds of families work together to run a coffee bean plantation and export their product. Involvement in this project changed the lives of the Estrada family by increasing profits and pride in their work.

But recently, Gerald ran into a problem of a different sort.

His three-year-old son, Yilson, began suffering horribly from the effects of poor oral hygiene. His teeth bled every time he brushed, and chewing became unbearable. Despite an improved financial situation, they had nowhere near enough money to afford a visit to a dentist.

Gerald was powerless, until he heard about Esperança's newest initiative through his work at the co-op: medical brigades! Even better – one of these brigades was coming to his village!

It is only through the support of friends like you that Esperança's Medical Brigade team, consisting of a doctor, nurse, and dentist, have been traveling to rural communities around Nicaragua to provide primary, dental, and pediatric care. Fortunately for Gerald, the next stop was Los Alpes.

Little Yilson received his first ever dentist visit from Dr. Rivas – right in their local church.

Fortunately, Dr. Rivas was able to bring relief and education to Gerald’s son and 62 other patients in Los Alpes that day, forever changing the community’s perspective on the importance of oral hygiene.

“We are very happy for the help and the excellent attention they give us. God bless you for what you do, and I hope you continue helping more poor people like us!”

Rollover Your IRA for Good!

By taking a distribution from your IRA this year, you will likely pay more in taxes and may even reach a higher tax bracket. Rolling over part of your IRA’s “required minimum distribution” or RMD to Esperança can help reduce your tax bill while supporting our efforts to help the unfortunate throughout the world.

Double the benefits! An IRA charitable rollover gift can benefit both you and Esperança! Contact your IRA administrator to get started with your gift. While you will not receive an income tax deduction, you will not pay taxes on any distributions made to Esperança.
Hope in Mind How you helped change Teresa’s outlook and her life

15-year-old Teresa Armella had a rough start to life. She lives with her parents in a run-down neighborhood of Tarija, Bolivia. Her father is an alcoholic and her mother is terminally ill, putting strain on the family and causing them to fight constantly. Unable to cope by herself, Teresa fell in with the wrong crowd at school.

Soon the chaos at home began to spill over to Teresa’s school life. She began picking fights. Her grades took a nosedive.

But in 2017, Teresa found hope in a new program at school. Her principal presented her with an opportunity to join a new therapeutic group provided by Esperança.

Esperança’s Mental Health Promotion project provides emotional support to the area’s most at-risk youth. Students who participate in these groups are invited by the principal and faculty based on behavior.

Teresa and a group of 30 of her peers meet two to three times a month. Currently, there are four groups, or 119 participants in all, who engage in educational activities, share with their classmates what they have been working on, and spread the word to prevent violence in the school environment.

When we asked Teresa what she’s learned, she says, “I realize that I must take responsibility for my problems. I must be a better daughter, understand my mother, forgive my father, and try to get along with my brothers. I realized that I must stay away from bad friendships.”

Esperança’s Mental Health Program is making great strides in the lives of students like Teresa. But there are more waiting for seats to open up before they can experience this kind of hope and guidance. Next year, with your support, we hope to expand and reach 150 students or more with this life-changing course correction!