

My WFP work to support education in Mozambique

Akiko Houzan

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Special Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of WFP's Dispatch of Volunteers

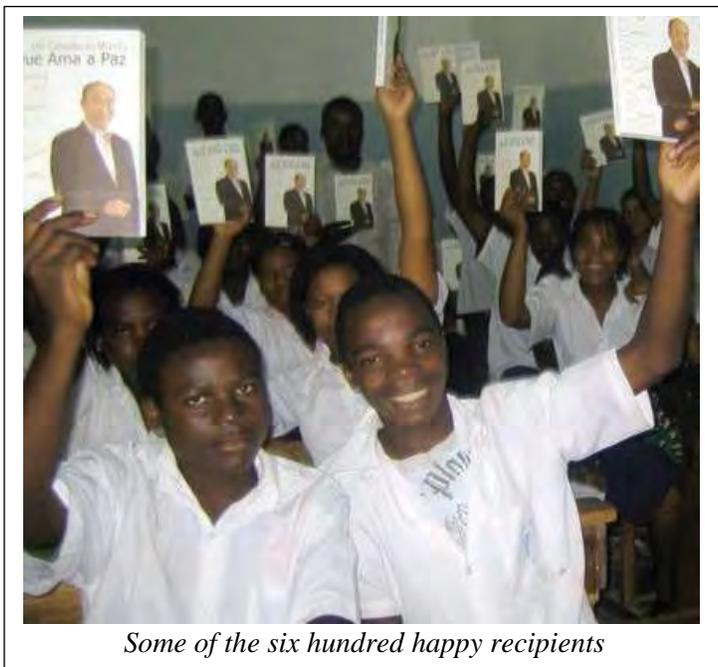


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Mozambique is in the southeast part of Africa. After experiencing colonization by Portugal, it gained independence on June 25, 1975. Soon after independence, a civil war broke out. This was actually an African proxy for the cold war. Victims of the civil war reached one million; the war also displaced another five million people. This war has been called the most tragic war in Africa. In late 1992, two years before we entered Mozambique, a ceasefire agreement was concluded; this brought an end to the sixteen-year civil war.

We entered Mozambique in 1994. Having been devastated by the long civil war, the country ranked as the world's poorest. We decided to support and to focus on education and therefore opened a middle school in 1995. Even though it was a ramshackle school with a thatched roof, we saw an increase in the number of students every year. Hence, we began building a new concrete school in 1997. In 2001, we opened a high school.

I had the following experience ten years after my arrival, in 2005. My mind and body were utterly exhausted and I was thinking of ceding the school to the Ministry of Education and returning to Japan. For the past ten years, I had been unable to play my role as a mother to my three children. I had an exchange of memoranda regarding the ceding of the school with the Ministry of Education and began preparations to transfer the school over a period of six months.



Some of the six hundred happy recipients

Two weeks before the actual transfer was to take place, True Father told me, "You must not hand over the school. If you do so, all the sacrifices you made until now will come to nothing." I renewed my determination and submitted a cancellation of the transfer to the Ministry of Education. Nine years have passed since then. The number of students that have graduated from the school is over nine thousand. Among the graduates, more than three hundred and fifty have gone on to attend national universities.

Presently, more than six hundred people connect to the school -- we have around five hundred and fifty students, forty teachers and fifteen volunteer workers. Thanks to this, we were able to distribute more than six hundred copies of *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen* in a day. Korea sent us the books.

Among the graduates, there are some who became members after going to university; they joined CARP and later received took part in the Blessing Ceremony. In 1995, two sisters saw True Mother in a dream. In the dream, she told them, "Meet the president!" Soon after, we started arranging to meet the president. A month later, we were able to meet then President Chissano at the presidential residence. In addition, someone who was then a presidential aide became the Mozambique UN ambassador and by renting a room at the UN for WFP made it possible for True Mother to give a speech there.

When I was dispatched to Mozambique, my children were seven, five and four. A few months after my dispatch, my oldest daughter suffered a car accident and passed away. Later, I gave birth to my fourth child, our youngest daughter. My children were especially lonely without their mother, lonelier than I. I could see them only once every year or two. My husband was my pillar; he did everything to support the family. Raised in an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation, my oldest son and second daughter attended Sun Moon University. They both received the blessing.

My first daughter, who had passed away from the car accident, received the second-generation spiritual blessing last year. I sincerely offer my gratitude to True Parents for protecting our family behind the scenes.