

# HANDS AT WORK IN AFRICA

TOGETHER CARING FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE



## Thank You!

With your help, Hands at Work has been able to mobilise the local church to respond to the unique needs the communities faced due to the drought. Across South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi drought relief activities including; seeding planting and fertiliser, bulk purchasing of maize and other staple foods, rain water catchment and providing nutritional supplements are taking place.

To learn more about specific activities, visit our website:  
[handsatwork.org/Drought-Response](https://handsatwork.org/Drought-Response)

## DROUGHT CRISIS - THE RESPONSE

In early 2016, Hands at Work launched emergency drought relief efforts in order to respond to the severe crisis being played out across many of its Southern African communities. These relief efforts were met with a global response and through this, many life-saving initiatives were put into place.

A year later, we are now experiencing a good amount of rainfall across most of our targeted drought relief areas: South Africa (mainly Oshoek area), Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi. There is a cautious optimism about the success of the coming harvest, due in June.

## WHAT DOES 2017 HOLD?

Though there have been steady rains falling in 2017, and the crops in most areas are looking healthy, there continue to be threats to securing the harvest, due between May and July, which raises uncertainty.

### **Potential risks include:**

**Pests:** Some crops across our communities have already been affected by the African Armyworm, which target the stalk of the plant as it grows. Additionally, there is evidence that the Fall Armyworm, which eats the maize itself, is becoming entrenched across Southern Africa. At present, armyworms have been found in parts of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and neighbouring Namibia.

**Rain:** It is only through consistent rainfall that the current crops will produce a good harvest yield. Rain must fall consistently until April/May time. In contrast, if too much rain falls beyond May, crops may be flooded and will rot. There have been isolated cases of flooding and crops rotting because of too much rain.

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Visit our website for the most up-to-date information on Hands at Work's response to the Drought Crisis in Southern Africa.

[handsatwork.org/DroughtRelief](https://handsatwork.org/DroughtRelief)

## HOW ARE WE MOVING FORWARD?

In 2017, Hands at Work has relief activities planned until the crops are ready to harvest and to improve long-term access to clean drinking water in affected countries. Activities include:

- Continuing with the ongoing relief efforts outlined above, including seven days-a-week feeding, breakfast provision, inclusion of Care Workers and their dependents and inclusion of Primary Care Givers in feeding programs, and providing safe, clean drinking water. Preparations are being made currently with these communities to end these efforts the month after crops are harvested.
- We are working closely with those families who were assisted with planting this year to ensure, as best as possible, that sufficient seed is kept for next year's planting.
- We are improving long-term access to clean drinking water in communities through boreholes, wells, rain catchment, and water storage to be filled by trucks.

Because there are still risk factors, Hands at Work is assessing the situation in each community on an ongoing basis. In the next two to three months we will have a better idea about what the crop harvest will be. If there are situations where crops have failed, costs have risen due to crop failure elsewhere, or where there is insufficient access to safe drinking water, given the rain pattern, we will respond appropriately. To enable us the flexibility to allow for these activities, we are keeping funds in reserve. If these funds are not required at this time, we will begin a conversation about how to continue to use these to build the resiliency of our communities and to strengthen Hands at Work's capacity to respond in these situations.



Hands at Work's Regional Support Teams are currently pulling plans together to build the resiliency of our communities, particularly in areas of food security and safe, secure drinking water. We will apply some of the lessons we have learned through this drought crisis to strive to reduce vulnerability in our communities. We will communicate more soon, as these plans come together. The activities will be a mix of boreholes, rain-catchment, water storage and filtration; developing creative ways to strengthen local food security through community gardens at Life Centres, sourcing more food locally, and increasing our capacity to store bulk food; and continuing to strengthen vulnerable communities by our daily efforts to strengthen Care Workers to care for vulnerable children and their families.



Because of the incredible response by people to the appeal to give towards drought relief and because there is still some uncertainty around the crops for this year, we will not actively pursue further funds for drought relief. If the situation changes over the next three months, then we will have to plan accordingly.

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**PRAYER** The global response to the drought crisis has been incredible. From the very beginning, Hands at Work saw this as not just a crisis, but a true opportunity to stand in solidarity with those who were suffering. It has been through a global call to prayer, to fasting and to generosity that the relief efforts have been possible. The call is still the same: pray for the communities affected by the recent drought. Pray that the rains remain consistent and the harvest is healthy. Pray for a growing resiliency in our communities and for Hands at Work to support them in the best ways. Thank God for this unique opportunity we have had to align ourselves to the suffering of those so precious to Him.