



Seize the Moment, Create Good Affinities

Ever since mid-March 2019, I cannot stop thinking about the African countries affected by Cyclone Idai. The images of the devastation linger in my mind, and that is why I keep on mentioning it. I have been hoping that you, I, and everyone can bring our love together, and lift these people out of suffering and into hope.

Disasters are cruel, but they draw kindness and compassion. Tzu Chi volunteers from 8 countries joined the relief effort. Although the affected areas are considerably large, our volunteers do whatever they can for all the places they can reach, including the distribution of food and basic tool kits. The medical relief efforts soon followed. In mid May, the superintendents of Hualien, Dalin, Taipei, and Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital, together with the medical staff from TIMA, assembled a team and carried out medical outreach in Sofala Province, Mozambique.

These people affected by the disaster are merely strangers to us, who live thousands of miles away and require several connecting flights to reach. However, our volunteers and doctors attended to their needs despite the hardship. This is the



demonstration of “soothing minds with kindness, and treating illness with compassion”, an integration of charity and medicine. Unfortunately, there are too much pain, and too little can be done. There are people who were severely ill, seeing a doctor for the first time. “How far is the hospital,” I asked. “About two hours drive,” they replied. Think about it, how can a sick person walk that far? No wonder many patients realized for the first time that “people wearing white robes are called doctors”.

There were Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) practitioners who went with the team. Their acupuncture effectively relieves pain and improves limb strengths. A local medical school was hoping that Tzu Chi could assist them in learning TCM, since TCM treatment is far less equipment-dependent. When our doctors visited the school after the outreach, they realized that the region has been in short supply of medicine, and that trained medical students are often recruited into trading, rendering their knowledge and skills useless. The team seeks to work with these medical students in extending their medical career as part of the mid- to long-term relief and development program.

Tzu Chi seized the opportunity to launch its relief effort after Cyclone Idai with Mozambique as the center of operation. This is a form of blessing. We will plan a long-term strategy aiming to reduce poverty in the country, and helping them to secure a better future.