

## Tzu Chi Distributes Rice to 3,300 Needy Families in Zimbabwe

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On July 6 and 7, the foundation distributed rice from Taiwan to more than 3,300 needy families in Harare, capital of the southern African state of Zimbabwe. The volunteers also served hot meals to 3,000 people at the same time.

The foundation shipped 120 tons of rice from Taiwan to Zimbabwe; it took one month for the shipment to reach the port of Durban in South Africa. It was then delivered by train to the final destination. In preparation, over 100 local Tzu Chi volunteers began home visits in the villages of Epworth and Retreat.

The distributions were held on July 6 and 7. Each household received a pack of rice and one Tzu Chi signature eco-friendly blanket, made of recycled PET plastic bottles. The volunteers handed out the rice and blankets to warm not only the stomachs of the recipients but also their hearts.

It was a major logistical effort. First, local volunteers re-loaded 120 tons of rice, with 10 kgs in each bag, into different trucks. In Epworth, 85 volunteers were divided into three teams and spent one week to visit neighborhood communities to survey and invite those in need to the distribution. On July 6th, 158 volunteers gave out the rice and blankets to 1,800 households at Rusununguko Primary School. During the distribution, they sang, danced and shared touching stories and the missions of Tzu Chi with the recipients.

In Retreat village, 124 local volunteers made similar preparations over four days; they separated into six teams to visit care recipients. On July 7th, 146 volunteers held the distribution in the village; they took every opportunity to share the experience of Tzu Chi with them. They finally completed the distribution at 7:30 pm; 1,570 households benefited.



During the distributions, a team of 14 volunteers were busy preparing hot meals. On only four stoves, they kept cooking and the smell of food attracted recipients to gather. Children were served the simple, but delicious hot meal first. A total of 3,000 people were served.

There is another 60 tons of rice from Taiwan on its way to Zimbabwe for those families in need. Soon it will be distributed by the volunteers.