

# Liz and Sergio Vilela

## Prayer letter, September 2018

[www.bmsworldmission.org/lsvilela](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/lsvilela)



### From child protection to play therapy

**Liz:** In August, it was time for the yearly PEPE national conference. Last year it was in the North in Nampula and this year it was in Chimoio, in the central region. There were approximately 71 PEPE teachers at the conference, all ready to have a good time together, learning and worshipping God. The week included lots of classes on topics like children's rights, family visits, PEPE international standards of practice, serving God with excellence, as well as child protection, of course. When I saw that I would have 3 sessions to speak on child protection, my first reaction was how on earth could I do this training again in a different way, as most people there would have already had child protection training by me a number of times. I thank God for giving me the creativity I need to be able to speak about the same subject in different ways, and it seems to get better each time. I spoke about the value we place on children in society, the rights that children have and who is responsible for looking after children in society. We talked about abuse and each group created a drama to advertise against abuse, and how children should be protected in PEPE. At the end we spoke of what to do if there is suspicion that a child is being abused outside of PEPE, which is not as straight forward as in the UK, because we don't have the infrastructure or a justice system here that protects and works for the best interests of the child..... but as long as everyone in PEPE works for the best interests of the child, and helps to educate parents on healthy discipline and how to protect them from dangers, things can change. Nothing is impossible for God.

Sergio also invited me to speak on child protection in his training, which was a great opportunity to speak with Church leaders that have a big influence in their Church and in the community. We touched on various polemic subjects like the man giving up his bed to sleep on the floor so that his pre-teen daughter could have the only bed available, or a child being locked in a room for wetting the bed, or if a man should help his wife to wash the dishes. It was amazing to see the involvement of the participants in the activities we did and to see their eyes opening to the importance of protecting children, and how they need to change personally and as Church leaders in order for this to happen. It

was a new subject to them and they all seemed keen to learn more and have more training sessions on this, with one Pastor explaining how he had learnt so much and realised how important it is to value and protect children.

We want to prevent children from getting hurt physically or emotionally, but it happens for whatever reason in every country. The best way for any child around the world to learn, communicate, and express themselves is through play. I had the opportunity to go to France and start a post graduate certificate in play therapy skills. So I am now a therapeutic play practitioner in training and I really believe that play therapy can help children to help themselves. Whether their outward circumstances can change or not, they can learn for themselves the value that they have and how they can cope with what they have gone through or are going through. I believe that the power of God will be at work in the lives of these children and their families, the school and communities through this new ministry.

### If Eve hadn't eaten the fruit.....

**Sergio:** These last few months I have been quite busy, involved in a few different projects. I have been teaching classes at the Theological Institute on Biblical Theology of Missions. At the end of the course, I gave them some tests and the students think I am a bad teacher because I do not let them use the Bible to do the tests!!



We also had an intensive week to train the pastors and leaders who are part of our project and travel from all

over Mozambique to be with us for a week. During the training in August we had classes on finance and financial planning and different ways of gaining small extra income, using examples from the participants themselves. Finance is always a challenging subject because here the challenge is not the amount of income, but the lack of income. Yet we need to understand that it is not how much we have, but that everything we have belongs to the Lord. (1 Cr 29:11-12) We also had a lesson on marriage and what the law says about it and also what marriage is in the practice of everyday life. It was very interesting to see the participation of all pastors and see their eyes opening to a new way of living and being challenged to leave some cultural habits that oppress wives and do not build their homes. I also started lecturing on anthropology and my second lesson was about the creation of man and the fall of man. It was a lesson that I had to prepare in a special way, because it is taught here that Eve was the cause of all problems because Eve ate the fruit first and induced her husband to eat the fruit, and this is what people believe. So I had to bring a new perspective on this Bible passage, showing the responsibility that Adam had in taking care of and protecting his wife, and at the same time that Adam was next to Eve when she ate the fruit... The students were very interested, and we had several questions, like ....

'Missionary why did Adam eat the fruit?'

'Was the fruit in the middle of the garden sex?'

'Why did God say to leave father and mother being that Adam did not have a father or mother?'

It's very intense, but at the same time very satisfying to see genuine Christians thirsting to learn more from and about God.

Many thanks for your continued support. Please continue to pray for:

- The Action Team that are preparing to come to Beira for 6 months in October
- Liz's placement doing therapeutic play at a local school
- For the Pastors that Sergio is working with and for the class that he is teaching
- The children – for good health and development

### **Liz and Sergio**



If you would like to support Liz and Sergio by prayer and committed regular giving, visit [www.bmsworldmission.org/partners](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/partners) or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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