

# ANATERCIA'S STORY

## MOZAMBIQUE



### [Watch Anatercia's Story on Vimeo](#)



Anatercia carries corn next to her fields in Gaza province, Mozambique. Photo: Emidio Josine

Anatercia, 12, lives with her brother, mother and elderly grandparents in a small hut in a rural village in the Gaza Province, in southern Mozambique. Like many rural communities, her village has no electricity, hospital, secondary school or supermarket.

Anatercia's father died when she was four and her mother has struggled with chronic health issues ever since. As her grandparents aged, her grandfather developed blindness and her grandmother could no longer walk to their farm.

Their crops, including corn, beans, sweet potato and cassava, withered from a mixture of neglect, irregular rainfall, and both droughts and floods. Mozambique's long coastline, sprawling river delta, environmental changes and variable climate make it particularly vulnerable to natural disasters.

As harvests were often poor, they were unable to sell food to earn an income and the family often went hungry.

In Mozambique, nearly two million people currently face severe food insecurity, due to the combined effects of frequent natural disasters, the conflict in northern Mozambique and COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>

As Anatercia took on more and more responsibilities around the home to try to support her struggling grandparents, her education began to suffer, as she travelled up to five hours to collect water every day.

"We have run out of food several times," Anatercia says. "I help my family with the farm, cooking, fetching water and firewood, and caring for my mother."

Something had to change.

In 2017, Anatercia's family joined the Integrated Rural Development Program, run by Caritas Australia's local partner, Caritas Regional Chokwe. The program provided initial support to the family through food baskets, seeds, school supplies and a school uniform for Anatercia.

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Caritas then helped Anatercia's community to install a gravity irrigation system on their farm, as well as a system of water taps in the village. Anatercia's grandmother participated in training in sustainable farming techniques to help the family to produce enough food to eat and to sell.

"After completing the program, we managed to have food from our irrigated farm, even without rain," Anatercia says. "I have enough time to take care of my mother because I have water close to the house, I am studying here in the community, and the farm gives us food all year round," Anatercia says.

Caritas Regional Chokwe's Program Co-ordinator, Cacilda Tam San, says Anatercia's resilience is inspirational for her community." Anatercia has demonstrated maturity beyond her years, by zealously carrying out difficult tasks that under normal conditions are performed by adults. We're now helping her family with community counselling and most importantly, she can complete her studies as well."

Over 5,600 people in the region have directly benefitted from this program so far, with over 24,000 people have benefitted indirectly, due to the extension of water pipes throughout the community.

Although the nearest secondary school is 10 kilometres away, and affording school materials remains a challenge, Anatercia is keen to continue her studies. She dreams of becoming a nurse to help people like her mother, so that community members don't have to walk long distances for medical care.

Thanks to your generous support, Anatercia's health, education and quality of life have improved, along with the outlook of her community for future generations.

<sup>1</sup> [ReliefWeb](#)



Photo: Emidio Josine

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### TASK 1: Discussion

- A. What were some of the challenges faced by Anatercia as a 12-year-old girl growing up in Mozambique?
  
- B. Explain how Caritas Australia and their partners in Mozambique have supported Anatercia, her family and her community?
  
- C. How has your support of Caritas Australia impacted Anatercia's hopes for the future?
  
- D. Which Catholic Social Teachings do you see reflected in Anatercia's story?
  
- E. What have you learnt about ecological justice from this story?

### TASK 2: Water Quiz

Anatercia's community needs water to be able to grow food crops all year round. Test your knowledge on water around the globe using the [Water Quiz](#)

What fact surprised you the most?

### TASK 3: Same but different

Think about your 12-year-old self, then draw a Venn diagram showing the differences and similarities between your life and Anatercia's life. Think about food, water, leisure, education and health.

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### A CATHOLIC WORLDVIEW (JUDGE)

*The future starts today, not tomorrow.*

*St Pope John Paul II*

*How would you interpret this quote? What does it mean to you personally?*

### FAITH IN ACTION (ACT)

Jesus fed 5000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish

[John 6: 1-14](#)

Read and discuss this scripture.

How does this miracle teach us how to respond to the issue of food security in our world?