

INCIDENT NUMBER: 02/2019

**FIRE DISASTER
WUPPERTHALL
3rd January 2019**

Nature of Incident:	Fire Disaster
Area:	Wupperthal (Cederberg Region)
Province:	Western Cape
No of victims/families:	200 victims / 53 Homes
Team Leader:	Lester Sedras
Date Incident Occurred:	30 December 2018
Date Responded:	03 Jan 2019
Type of relief aid:	Hope Kits
Quantity distributed:	150
Number of Salvations:	Unknown
News Links:	https://ewn.co.za/2019/01/18/watch-wupperthal-fire-53-houses-destroyed-and-200-residents-displaced

1. BACKGROUND

On the evening of 30th December 2018, residents of the rural town of Wupperthal were called to assist as a fire began to rage out of control as strong winds lifted lit coals and cast them onto adjacent dry vegetation. The fire started as a direct result of the lighting of a braai facility. The residents were ill-equipped to deal with the resultant blaze and the town does not have a local fire department. With the dry vegetation and strong winds prevalent, the nearby homes with thatched roofs quickly caught alight. Several homes were evacuated immediately, along with church parsonage and the church admin block. An entire hostel was also razed to the ground but the students were fortunately away on vacation.

2. DISASTER / DAMAGE ASSESSMENT:

Although 53 homes in total were destroyed, we are grateful that there were no casualties. The final number of people affected by the devastation rose above 200. Several dwellings were completely destroyed and have to be completely re-built. The re-building process will take several months as the historical nature and status of the town requires the re-building process to be done according to certain specifications. Several other structures such as the Post Office and a local restaurant were also destroyed, leaving many bread-winners without a means of income for several months. The local council will house these families on a rugby field in a 1,000 seater marque tent.

3. SHORT TERM RELIEF ISSUED

150 Hope Kits were issued as families begin the painful process of re-building. The disaster victims are to be housed in 1 large marque tent for several months until the debris is completely removed and the necessary infra-structure is restored. Outside assistance from Disaster Management and Local government is on-going along with the RESPOND coalition of churches in conjunction with the Moravian Church in Wupperthal.

4. BENEFICIARIES

The Hope Kits were issued to the Moravian Church pastor, Rev. Radcliffe, who was the on-site coordinator through whom all necessary aid was channeled in accordance with the directions as set out by the town council. All affected family members received the necessary aid as well as the necessary counselling through the church.

5. Testimonies or Possible stories of interest:

Of particular interest is the story of **Restorative Grace** which became evident through conversations with the Mayor, Mr Farmer, who was in attendance with the ward councilors along with Rev. Radcliffe. They echoed words of comfort as well as words of God's Grace. Being surrounded by mountains, the words of the Psalmist came through when it was echoed "I lift up my eyes unto the hills, from where does my Help come from?" Seeing the 150 Hope Kits, along with several other items which had been transported for 3 hours from Salt River in Cape Town, served to mitigate the fears that these residents would not be left to their own devices, but that God's Grace has provided yet again.

Compiled By:-

Name: Lester Sedras

Company: RESPOND coalition of churches

Title: Lead Facilitator

Date: 04 Jan 2019

IMAGES AND CAPTIONS:

Image

Caption



The raging fire and the extent of the damage done in Wupperthal.