

CWS Update April 2020



Thank you!

We are grateful to you for your generosity to our [Coronavirus Emergency Appeal](#). At a time when so many people are suffering hardship here in Aotearoa you have reached out to others in danger from COVID 19. The first donations will fund personal protective equipment for medical staff in Gaza and Jordan plus emergency food and hygiene kits or cash vouchers for Palestinian refugees. The appeal is likely to be extended to other partners.

Staff are working from home. They can be contacted by phone and email. Jordyn will answer calls to 0800 74 73 72 and emails to cws@cws.org.nz. If you need a receipt emailed, please call her.

Donations are being processed each day.

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Christian World Service is a member of the [ACT Alliance](#) (Action by Churches Together)



Bangladesh: Relief welcomed

CWS made an emergency grant of \$5,000 to partner, the National Garment Workers Federation of Bangladesh. The money is being used to protect many of the country's 4.2 million workers from COVID 19 and hunger. Workers have been trained to educate their colleagues about necessary protection measures. Workplaces are very crowded and therefore dangerous to workers. The NGWF is distributing educational leaflets, safety kits (masks, gloves, sanitizer, soap, tissues and more), and emergency food supplies. Many more workers are in urgent need of food.

On March 26 the country went into 'complete lockdown' and will remain so for at least a month. According to NGWF 40% of workers in the clothing industry have not been paid for March and some 10,000 have already lost their jobs. The people (mostly women) who make the world's clothes and shoes have been hit hard by the economic fall out from COVID 19. Global brands have cut orders, leaving tens of thousands of unpaid Bangladeshi workers destitute and pushing factory owners out of business. Media [reported](#) that export earnings fell by 77.76%. In the first week of April The industry accounts for 80% of Bangladesh's export earnings.

In the Middle East

Lockdowns continue in places where the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees work. Jordan's Prime Minister says the government will soon [ease](#) the tight lockdown. Israel and Lebanon remain in lockdown. Fears [continue](#) for densely populated Gaza hit by COVID19. DSPR's three Primary care clinics are open. Save lives.

Donate now to the [Coronavirus Emergency Appeal](#).

In South Sudan

There are now four COVID 19 cases affecting United Nations workers but so far none in Maridi where our partner the Maridi Service Agency operates schools, an HIV testing clinic, a vocational training programme, help for displaced people and MaridiFM. Schools are closed and markets only open for essential supplies. MSA is organising visitors to every home to let people know how to protect themselves and their community.

Cyclone Harold

Cyclone Harold caused widespread damage in the [Solomon Islands](#), [Vanuatu](#), [Fiji](#), and [Tonga](#) this month. The response to the Category 5 storm has been complicated by the need to protect nations from COVID 19. CWS is assessing how best to respond to people who have lost everything. Donations will be passed on to those who can help. *(Photo Credit : Global Mission)*

From India

Edwin, Programmes Director of Human Rights Foundation, writes, “There is an attempt to militarise the response, most evident in the use of language. Doctors, nurses, and other health and sanitation workers are not 'warriors'. They are not on the 'frontline'. This is not a 'war'. It reveals how much militarisation has seeped into our minds and imagination. There is no enemy in this pandemic. Having an 'enemy' is a necessary condition to justify police brutality or military style orders and suspension of fundamental rights. It has real world consequences in the type of responses, attitudes, and action by the state. Doctors and nurses are healers, not warriors. Our imagination must go beyond war to healing, and our vocabulary needs to reflect that. If not, when we emerge on the other side, it will be an authoritarian world where governments keep their 'emergency powers' as the new norm.”

In Haiti

CWS welcomed a report from the Institut Culturel Karl Lévéque regarding their situation. ICKL lost computers, its generator and other equipment in a major burglary in February, making operations difficult. People live close together and if the virus takes hold in the squatter settlements it could spread very quickly. Writing about the pandemic, Director Marc-Arthur says food prices are rising and there is a lot of distrust of government. ICKL wants to distribute locally made facemasks and megaphones so community organisations can inform people of the virus—a job no one else is doing. ICKL concludes, “Once again I thank you on behalf of ICKL for the immeasurable solidarity you have shown towards us despite the fact that the pandemic is global.”

Debt Relief: First steps

Ahead of the International Monetary Fund's Spring meetings, the G20 (Group of 20 richer nations) [agreed](#) that the world's poorest countries can suspend loan repayments until the end of the year. However, the 77 eligible governments (those with loans from the World Bank's International Development Association) will have to pay interest accrued in this time. CWS supports Christian Aid's [call](#) for full cancellation— these countries have weak health systems and few resources. They need to save lives. For technical information read the [Eurodad Report](#).

In Fiji

SEEP (Social Empowerment and Education Programme) reports they have completed two weeks of supporting the 38 communities with whom they work by phone and there are no infections. Well done!

About Update

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