

SUMMER 2020

Walking TOGETHER

THE NEWSLETTER OF FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY UK



Responding to COVID-19
Serving the poor in a changed world



**FOOD FOR
THE HUNGRY**

WELCOME MESSAGE

Responding to COVID-19

Dear Friend,
I wonder what your experience of the coronavirus pandemic has been?

Here in the UK there have been many tragic deaths, which have reminded us that life is fragile and that despite all our material and scientific advances, we cannot control everything. They have also exposed inequalities in our society.

At the same time, the pandemic has brought people together. Personally, for me joining together with neighbours

for 'Clap for Carers' has really helped to foster a real sense of community. We have been supporting each other and our wider neighbourhood in practical ways. One neighbour has even entertained us all by marching up and down the road playing the bagpipes!

What a positive legacy of this crisis if it prompts us to consider the most important things in life?

Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". Imagine a world that prioritises loving



your neighbour, giving dignity and opportunity to the most vulnerable and seeking to end poverty and exploitation.

At FH we are committed to this vision. The poor communities within which FH works already have fragile health systems and COVID-19 infection rates are rising. We wanted to outline in this newsletter how we are responding with simple life-saving support.

Thank you for standing with us on this mission.

God bless you.

Ian Johnson
UK Programme Director.



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We are a Christian international development organisation that has been walking with the poor globally since 1971. We tackle the root causes in order to graduate communities out of poverty.

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COVID 19 A FOUR PILLAR RESPONSE

Coronavirus is the biggest global threat we've faced in a lifetime. It has drastically changed the context in which we work and so we have adjusted our response accordingly. Our work is guided by the following 4 pillars.

PILLAR 1
Adapting existing programming to ensure staff and community safety

Our mission to see communities graduate from extreme poverty is unchanged, but we need to be creative in how we use technology - particularly in areas where countries are in lockdown. In simple terms, we are continuing to reach out to communities, churches, leaders and families using adapted platforms (i.e. cell phones, WhatsApp, radio) to raise awareness about the pandemic and keep in touch with community needs. We want to ensure we are walking alongside

those we serve in one way or another.

PILLAR 2
Essential life-saving services
We continue to be committed to this and

where necessary we are transferring resources to emergency response from long term development activity. For example - as you can read about in this newsletter - we have stepped up work among the Rohingya community in Bangladesh.

PILLAR 3
Active reduction of the spread of COVID-19
We have shifted to actively reducing the spread of the

virus in all we do, such as promoting better hygiene.

PILLAR 4
Early recovery
The impact of the virus and associated lockdown will extend

far beyond health consequences. Livelihoods and income generation activity have been curtailed, pushing more people into poverty. Education of children has also been curtailed. We know that women, children and the most vulnerable will be most affected. Domestic violence, child abuse, and gender-based violence are expected to rise. We know we have tools and systems in place to make an immediate impact. The need for our work has never been greater.

As you read through this newsletter, you will see how we are practically working out these pillars across our programmes. Please do remember to pray for FH staff as they walk together with communities to bring about lasting change.



ROHINGYA REFUGEE RESPONSE

In overcrowded refugee camps Food for the Hungry (FH) is taking measures to protect vulnerable populations from COVID-19. Working with Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, FH liaised with Bangladesh's Ministry of Health and the UNHCR to ensure the provision of PPE supplies such as face masks and hand sanitizer. In case of an outbreak, preparations are underway to accommodate people for quarantine in house isolation units and to provide lab capacity for confirming cases of infection. Meanwhile, health and hygiene practices will be promoted by health workers among the Rohingya refugees.

CASE STUDY

SAJIDAH'S STORY

"I heard about COVID-19 and that it can kill people. I knew there were confirmed cases in my community. I have been without my husband for months ever since he went to jail. As a single mother, it has been difficult raising five children even without illness. I started to feel pain in my chest followed by toothache and so I struggled to do household work and focus on caring for my children. My neighbour recommended I visit the FH clinic where I learned about the symptoms of COVID-19. I have been following the protocol mentioned by healthcare workers by keeping my household clean, bathing my children, washing hands regularly and wearing shoes when using the toilet. I maintain social distancing and leave home only to do important work. I am thankful to FH during this hard time. All we can do now is take precautions and pray."

SANITATION IN BANGLADESH

In Southeast Bangladesh, 24 latrines and 12 hand washing stations have been constructed to serve 12 schools in the Bay of Bengal area. This combined with hygiene education throughout the community, has resulted in open air defecation being almost completely stopped, incidences of diarrhea significantly reduced, and provided protection against the spread of COVID 19. Over 2,800 children have been directly impacted where previously, access to sanitation facilities was the worst in the region.

Pupils have participated in lessons with videos and hand washing competitions designed to impress upon them the importance of good hygiene. In the wider community, Food for the Hungry (FH) have set up

Care Groups to share health education with neighbours - including the use of dramas, leaflets, banners, and posters.

A link between poor menstrual hygiene and school attendance also needed to be addressed. Chayri, age 14, explains: "I used to be uncomfortable and embarrassed at school during menstruation because there was no separate toilet for girls. I could not change my sanitary napkin when my period started during school. I could not share with anyone why I was absent and I fell behind in my studies. I was so scared. After joining the FH Child Club, I realised that many girls also feel uncomfortable and miss school for the same reason.



We needed a separate toilet for girls with sufficient sanitary napkins and hand washing materials. Last year FH visited and surveyed our facilities. They constructed separate wash blocks for boys and girls. I can now go to school and study attentively even during menstruation."

FH thanks the Guernsey Overseas Aid and Development Commission for financing this project.





PROTECTING HEALTH IN BURUNDI

Burundi remains the only country in Africa which has no formal policy to curb the spread of COVID-19. The Government's fear is that lockdown will have a bigger adverse impact than the virus itself as most of the population live on subsistence agriculture and labouring. The government has taken some measures, such as airport and border closures and mandatory hand washing



in public places, but gatherings for social activities, education, business and religious observance remain active.

Food for the Hungry (FH) is working alongside the Ministry of Health to provide training for doctors, district chiefs and nurses on COVID-19 prevention measures. Using a revised budget and a new 3-month plan, FH Burundi will aim to protect the health of a population of 1.5 million. Installation of 89 water chlorination and distribution stations will be carried out in health centres, schools, churches, markets and bus stations. Households will be provided with a 5-litre container for clean water which can be collected from the chlorination stations. About 2,200 volunteer community leaders, teachers and health professionals will be supported with hand sanitizer and facemasks while detergent and cleaning materials will be provided for classrooms, churches, and health centres.

COMBATting COVID-19 IN KENYA

Rose Bokayoguyo, who lives in Malabot village in the Eastern Province of Kenya, is a wife and mother of four children. COVID-19 had an adverse impact on the family's normal life. Government directives reduced movement and interaction with others to combat the spread of the virus. Rose operated a grocery shop in the village until she was forced to shut it down because of the

scarcity and inflated prices of fruit and vegetables since the pandemic started. The family has been relying solely on donations from others to survive. Meanwhile, the Food for the Hungry (FH) Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene program (WASH) has been taking care of the family's health by supporting access to safe water, hygiene, and sanitation in Malabot village.



"As a family," says Rose, "when the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Kenya, we were all worried. We knew nothing about the virus and were confused by conflicting information. Fortunately, FH Kenya and the County Public Health Office initiated timely advice on COVID-19. We were educated on modes of transmission and how we could protect ourselves. The need for routine hand washing with clean water and soap was emphasised, along with keeping a minimum of 2-meters distance and ensuring any symptoms of COVID-19 were reported. We have also reduced

movements in and out of our household to minimize exposure to the virus. Every member of the community is vigilant about COVID-19 and we ensure visitors to our village pass the health screening process before they are let in. As for me, I was selected by the County Public Health Office as a champion and mentor of hand washing. My role is to visit households within Malabot, educating them on the effectiveness of hand washing with soap in combating the spread of COVID-19. May Almighty God bless FH Kenya as they continue serving communities and ensuring we have a healthy population."

Seeds of Hope for Uganda



The closure of schools in Uganda - to help slow the spread of COVID-19 - will possibly impact not only education outcomes, but access to food as well. The government may have to choose to reduce budget allocations to education whilst meeting the short-term expenditure to fight the virus. This will not only impact teacher salaries but will result in food insecurity for children and teachers who access their meals at school.

With a slowdown in the rate of COVID-19 infections because of stringent measures put in place to control the pandemic, it is expected that most schools will re-open soon. However, they will then meet some new challenges including limited food supply and finances to purchase the



materials they need. Following a recent government programme of providing meals to pupils, schools adopted planting maize and beans to supplement these meals. Unfortunately, this has been hampered during the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition to the schools' own efforts in providing meals, parents were also helping by contributing grain, but this will not be possible during the country shutdown and the resulting low income at household level.

To help the schools recover from this shortfall in finances and provision, Food for the Hungry (FH) intend to use a 'cash transfer for work' approach. 20 schools will be targeted and parents with children in school will be encouraged to get engaged in land clearing, planting and other crop management practices, for which they will be paid through the cash transfer system. This will provide income for families and help to revive the local economy. FH is also committed to raising funds for the provision of maize seeds and to help re-establish the school kitchen gardens which were previously thriving before the COVID-19 outbreak.

Closure of livestock markets in Kenya



Our UK government financed livestock project in Kenya had been operating for seven months when COVID-19 struck. The aim of the project is to help livestock markets to thrive so that pastoralists can earn more income to feed their families. In response to the pandemic, the Kenyan authorities have banned public gatherings, closed schools, imposed social distancing measures and made wearing masks in public places mandatory. All livestock markets have been closed. This restricts the ability of pastoralists to generate family income. In the short term, we have adapted our project and focused it on COVID-19 response. Together with the local Ministry of Health, we are training local Community Health Volunteers on health and hygiene messages to be cascaded down through the communities, running radio talk-shows, and installing hand washing stations in public places. As soon as the lockdown ends, we will be re-engaging with the market authorities to reopen safely and will be training self-help groups of women in livestock business skills.

UK AID PROJECT IN UGANDA



FH Uganda have been highly active in responding to the lockdown situation in their country. Their staff are mainly working from home, although a small number have been allowed to work from the regional office, following local distancing guidelines. They are now members of the Namutumba District COVID-19 Task Force, which has given ...



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... them additional responsibilities in terms of upgrading local health facilities, training government health staff, broadcasting safety messages and distributing PPE. Some of these activities are being funded by UK Aid as part of their own COVID-response initiative.

Meanwhile, the original nutrition project is continuing, albeit slowly, using remote communications and taking advantage of our network of volunteers who are already embedded within the communities we serve. We are paying particular attention to identifying those especially vulnerable people who so easily get bypassed in times of crisis.

FUNDRAISING CHALLENGE



Unfortunately, closer to home, COVID-19 has meant our major fundraising event for the year - the Ridgeway Challenge as mentioned in our Spring newsletter - has had to be cancelled. We were aiming to raise £60,000 in total from this event to support our ongoing work in Mwumba, Burundi.

We are still committed to raising these funds in other ways and would love you – our community of supporters – to help us. If you have any wonderfully brilliant and creative ways to raise money over the coming weeks whilst we remain in lockdown here in the UK, we want to hear from you.

How about?

-  A sponsored head-shave by your spouse
-  Climbing the equivalent of Mt Kilimanjaro on your staircase
-  A virtual pub quiz for all your family and friends
-  Donate your commuting costs if you are working from home

The possibilities are endless!
Walking Together
 we CAN make a difference

If you are a UK taxpayer, Food for the Hungry UK can reclaim 25% tax for every £1 you give.

giftaid it

I want to Gift Aid my donation today and any donations I may make in the future or have made in the past four years to Food for the Hungry UK. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

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I would like to make a one-off donation of £ _____ towards Food for the Hungry's Covid-19 response work across all of their programmes.

Cheques should be made payable to Food for the Hungry UK and sent to us at 47 Burgess Wood Road South, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 1EL

If you would like to make a direct transfer, our bank details are:
 Barclays Bank - Account name: FHUK Sort Code: 20-62-53 Account No: 40359173
 Please also email us at uk@fh.org to let us know your donation is on its way.

- Please do not acknowledge this gift.
- I am interested in having someone from FH speak at my church.
- I would like to know more about volunteering with FH in the UK.
- I no longer want to receive your newsletter, please remove my details from your mailing list.



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