We are all members of a fragile human family

The Good Shepherd International Foundation supports the Good Shepherd programs in low and middle income countries to address the root causes that generate poverty and injustice, promoting an inclusive and sustainable development for the most marginalized and vulnerable.

When the COVID19 was declared a worldwide pandemic in March 2020, GSIF responded in consultation with key personnel from Africa, Asia Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East. The spreading of the pandemic prompted GSIF and its partners to re-discover themselves as members of a global, fragile, but united human family.

We planned together new ways to provide the necessary support to Good Shepherd programs worldwide for vulnerable women, girls and children as this global crisis exacerbated pre-existing conditions of poverty, isolation, discrimination, affecting disproportionally the most fragile.

During the last year, most schools, training centers, day-care programs, outreach activities, services to migrants, run by Good Shepherd people had to be shut down or reduced to minimum, leaving thousands of girls, women and children in extremely precarious conditions, at risk of relapsing in situations of child labour, prostitution, trafficking, domestic violence against children and women, malnutrition, extreme poverty.

This vast population could not count on proper housing, electricity, water, food and was therefore extremely vulnerable to the risk of being infected, as they live in communities where the health services are inadequate to respond to such a crisis.

Our Covid19 Global Response helped prevent the spread of the virus with education, awareness raising, production and distribution of sanitizers and PPIs among the most marginalized and vulnerable members of the communities.

It also helped mitigate the negative economic impact of the countries' lockdown with immediate relief to the families by distributing food kits and vouchers. Support was given also to medical and paramedical facilities in areas or countries where the national institutions didn't provide specific health/PPI support.

Continuing to support the most vulnerable

Based on our initial rapid assessment, we envisioned alternative plans to support the Good Shepherd local programs in providing services and carry on essential activities such as:

- distribution of hygiene kits, food packages and vouchers for families
- teachers giving classes remotely online or via Whatsapp for children
- advocacy campaigns online for migrants’ and marginalized people’s rights
- delivering protective equipment and providing health support in the poorest communities and most isolated villages
- converting the soap production made by women engaged in local income generating activities into sanitizers and using sewing machines to make masks, and assemble sanitary kits for the local population;
- awareness raising initiatives on hygiene and Covid19 prevention, considering local traditional cultures and habits
- offering psychological counseling online or via phone for migrant women and women affected by domestic violence.
The GSIF Covid19 Global Solidarity Project

To support the efforts of our local partners, as GSIF we launched an appeal for emergency funds from existing donor agencies and from within the Good Shepherd Congregation to support the GSIF Covid19 Global Solidarity Project.

Thanks to the immediate and generous support of many Good Shepherd Units and donors, the Covid19 Emergency GSIF Global Solidarity Project was launched and implemented in 25 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America, to continue to protect the most vulnerable and reduce the impact of Covid-19 especially on women, girls and children.

The project was able to reach more than 83,000 people who were mostly vulnerable families in a situation of deep and immediate need. 76% of the people reached by GSIF Covid19 Global Solidarity Project were those who had not received any government assistance, the most vulnerable and marginalized. The presence of the Good Shepherd sisters in the communities and their knowledge of the pre-existent conditions and needs of people enables the project to provide a timely, effective and coordinated emergency response for those people that were left behind by the government support.

The vast majority of the beneficiaries (83%) were reached with activities of immediate response for prevention and protection from Covid19. These included:

- distribution of food and water, food vouchers, face masks, hand sanitizers, wash basins, disinfectants, cleaning detergents, etc.

- awareness programs and orientation on COVID19 preventive and protection measures, helping to avoid contagion and to learn a life routine for prevention.

The project helped also improve long-term resilience of the beneficiaries (including the launch of micro-entrepreneurial activities with effects extended to the post-covid phase) and to upgrade the IT equipment of the project staff and beneficiaries, facilitating the implementation of the activities planned even during the lockdowns in the different countries.

As of March 2021, GSIF managed to support 40 programs from 25 countries, impacting directly 83,149 beneficiaries.

25 COUNTRIES

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83,149 Beneficiaries

40 Projects

- Promoting COVID-19 Prevention and Health
- Supporting Girls, Women and Children with Protection and Education
- Supporting Families with Food Security and Livelihood
- Strengthening Safety and Capacities of Local Partners