

EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT RESPONDS TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



COVID RELIEF: 15 MONTHS INTO THE PANDEMIC Soon after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Episcopal Relief & Development quickly mobilized and began providing essential emergency support to our partners here in the US and around the world. Since March 2020, we've funded 61 international emergency response initiatives, reaching nearly 600,000 people through community-led activities. We've also partnered with 20 dioceses to provide COVID relief throughout the US.

As the crisis evolved, we broadened our emergency response to include the economic and social impacts of the pandemic, with an emphasis on stemming the rising tide of food insecurity and economic instability. We are continuing to provide direct cash transfers and food. We also continue to secure basic sanitation and hygiene supplies, access to clean water and critical information related to COVID-19 prevention and control. Here are just a few of the many regions where we're having both an immediate and longer-term impact.

In **Angola**, we are working with local partners on engagement efforts in six underserved communities to promote behavioral changes related to COVID-19. Efforts include equipping community agents to promote key sanitation and hygiene behaviors at the household and community level, reaching 30,000 households.

In **Colombia**, we're partnering with the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative to assist indigenous communities, which have been the hardest hit by the coronavirus in that country. There are no intensive care units in these communities, which means there are no respirators. The geographic distance, coupled with the communities' limited resources and government restrictions on mobility,

have further isolated these populations. Our outreach seeks to provide for critical needs such as food, sanitation items and clean drinking water.

As you may know, right now the pandemic is surging in **India**, and the country is overwhelmed. Episcopal Relief & Development is supporting our partner, CASA India, to provide assistance that includes COVID-19 educational awareness campaigns and supplying personal protective equipment and hygiene kits to rural communities.

CASA is currently targeting 15 villages in the Nandurbar District of western India. Due to the remote locations of the villages and lack of Internet connectivity, many in the communities are unaware of how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, community members are at higher risk of complications from COVID-19 due to malnutrition and weakened immunity. CASA's response supports these marginalized communities that have not been assisted by other relief efforts.

Our US Disaster Preparedness Program is working with dioceses throughout the **United States** to provide COVID-19 related relief. In Texas we are partnering with the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas to provide COVID-19-related medical care and testing to vulnerable communities in the Rio Grande Valley. Additionally, the diocese is providing internet access for undocumented and low-income children returning to school online, food assistance for migrants living in encampments across the border and assistance to churches with food pantries. To address food and household needs, the diocese is distributing gift cards to impacted families.

In the months ahead, Episcopal Relief & Development and our partners remain committed to responding to the many impacts of the pandemic while advocating and working for the equitable distribution of vaccines. The need to address the social, economic and health needs of communities, particularly in less resource-rich countries, remains a high priority.

Please don't hesitate to offer prayers for our neighbors in India and in all places continuing to struggle with COVID 19.

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