



Global Partnerships Endure Through Times of Crisis



The COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold at home and around the world. Many of us have been practicing social distancing in our own homes and neighborhoods, knowing that when we stay home, we can save lives. On a global scale, the pandemic continues to escalate and impact many communities.

During this time of uncertainty, the presence and support of our wider Church is more important than ever.

Week of Compassion is in conversation with partners around the world who are working to respond to the needs

emerging from the pandemic and who continue to engage in ongoing relief, refugee and development work. Some communities deal with realities that make social distancing impossible. In densely populated refugee camps like Cox's Bazaar, disease could spread quickly. Our partners work hard to anticipate challenges like this and think proactively about how to keep people safe.

This outbreak has also made life more difficult by restricting travel. Many who were already struggling now have an even harder time getting what they need. Partners in Jordan who are active with the Syrian refugee community were able to distribute supplies in the few days before the community went on lockdown. Since then, they haven't been able to access the refugee communities. This is the case in many places where existing restrictions have been amplified; where foot travel is still permitted, but cars can't travel between cities.

Even with so much focus on COVID-19 right now, disasters continue to occur. In many areas, this pandemic comes on the heels of another disaster, complicating relief and creating unprecedented challenges. In Egypt, mid-March thunderstorms brought widespread flooding, causing severe damage and loss among the poorest of the population. Our partners are still in the process of responding to that emergency, even as the impact of COVID-19 reaches the area. "In such circumstances," says Peter Makari of Global Ministries, "the witness and commitment of our partners to be present and to respond to existing needs—with support from our Disciples members and congregations through Week of Compassion—are inspirational."

Week of Compassion responded and continues to provide support to

address these layered emergencies. Through our partners, we are helping to distribute health protection kits and educational materials preventing the spread of disease like COVID-19 by increasing sanitation in the villages and providing for basic needs. At the same time, this support allows for the continued response to the flooding: providing temporary housing, food, clothing, and clean water. The program includes provision for long-term response that will address the needs of farmers impacted by flood damage--work that will help restore life and livelihood once the crisis has passed. This forward-looking investment brings more than just help; it brings hope.

When disaster happens on this kind of global scale, it requires a global response. Week of Compassion remains committed to working with partners around the world, leaning on our long history. Relationships established over many years now situate our wider Church to respond to places of great need, even as we face our own crisis here at home.

Even when the world feels small, our Church is present in many places--through our shared faith, by your generosity, and with the presence of our partners. We hold space in prayer for all of these lives together, knowing that God has given us all that we need to respond to even the greatest need. In these uncertain times, the work we continue to support is an important reminder: that no matter how "distant" we may feel from each other, we are never alone.

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