

CaritasNews

CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU

#160 | WINTER 2020

HOPE IN EMERGENCY

COVID-19: How your support gives hope during and after the pandemic.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: Resilience in Jordan, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Cambodia.

OUR COMMUNITY: Thank you for your compassion and generosity supporting the most vulnerable.



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity

THANK YOU

The lasting impact of COVID-19 on the livelihoods, education and health of those who already live on the edge is potentially disastrous. With your support, over the past few months, you have made it possible for us at Caritas Australia to expand and adapt our programs to prevent the spread and reduce the risk of coronavirus in these vulnerable communities. We have been overwhelmed by your generosity, giving hope to people you will never meet. Thank you.

It's in emergencies, of all types, that the true strength of the Caritas network is revealed. Our partners are already on the ground and know the communities affected. This means that when a crisis strikes, they can respond fast to assist the most vulnerable.

In this edition of Caritas News, we highlight how your impact gives hope during and after the coronavirus pandemic, in places like Jordan, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Cambodia. We also celebrate the powerful community initiatives which you have spearheaded. Artists like Gary Pinto, Guy Sebastian and Mahalia Barnes raised their voices in an online 'Loungeroom Sessions' concert to help support vulnerable communities globally.

Here at Caritas Australia, we never lose hope that the transformation of communities and indeed our world can occur. I've seen the power of hope in communities from Timor-Leste to India, from Indonesia to Bangladesh. Your support gives them that hope and empowers them to realise their dignity. Together, with God's grace, we can build a more just world.

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Writer/Editor: Daniel Nour

Design: Three Blocks Left Design – threeblocksleft.com.au

Cover: A little girl washes her hands in a village in Afghanistan.

Caritas network staff recently distributed posters and warnings about the signs of the coronavirus as well as possible ways to prevent it. Photo: Stefanie Glinski, Catholic Relief Services.

All photos Caritas Australia unless otherwise stated.



With gratitude,

Kirsty Robertson

Kirsty Robertson
Chief Executive Officer
Caritas Australia

**CATHOLIC
SOCIAL TEACHING
PRINCIPLES**

Look out for
the CST icons
throughout
this edition.



**Dignity of
the Human
Person**



**Care for
Our Common
Home**



**The
Common
Good**

CARITAS IN THE LOOP



GLOBAL RECOVERY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The world has been facing a crisis. In its scope and impact, COVID-19 has been called the most disastrous pandemic of the 20th Century.

Yet for countries with limited or uncertain access to essential health care and hygiene supplies, the challenges are much worse and the impact catastrophic.

COVID-19 has spread fast, infecting millions of people globally since the pandemic started and killing hundreds of thousands. In over 200 countries, the crisis has forever changed the way we live.

With your support, hope has emerged from this time of uncertainty and through strong community partnerships, resourcefulness and a speedy response, communities are shoring up their resilience to recover from the impact of the coronavirus.

In **India**, one in six people lives in urban crowded conditions 'unfit



For communities in Benin, West Africa, the Caritas Network is supporting Governments with lifesaving social distancing and hygiene practices to protect community health workers and patients from exposure and transmission of COVID-19.

Photo: Hugues Ahounou/Catholic Relief Services.

for human habitation', according to recent Indian Government data. That's where initiatives like the Community-Led Governance program have been working with in-country partners on the ground to support some of the most vulnerable families on how to reduce the risk of infection within their communities.

In **Cambodia**, we have been educating communities about the need for social distancing and good personal hygiene practices, such as regular handwashing.

In **Bangladesh**, together with the wider Caritas network and thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, we have been able to distribute health kits and personal protective equipment, preventing the spread of the virus through good hygiene.

Your support changes and saves lives in the face of a pandemic like COVID-19.

Visit caritas.org.au to find out more.

SOME MESSAGES OF LOVE FROM CARITAS AUSTRALIA SUPPORTERS TO THE HEROES ON THE FRONT LINE OF COVID-19:

"Thank you to all the courageous people on the front line of COVID-19.

You do amazing work. Blessings to all of you."

– Trish Scott

"Thank you for your selfless efforts, your compassion and your care. Know that the country and the world admire and pray for you."

– Walter Hamilton

"To all the ordinary people doing extraordinary work. Thank you."

– Nina Dellazoppa

"Congratulations on the great humanitarian work you have done for those most vulnerable to COVID-19. You are such an inspiration to me. It is people like you who help me to see that humans are awesome people and you inspire me to help others."

– Cameron Smit



Promotion
of Peace



Subsidiarity and
Participation



Preferential
Option for
the Poor



Solidarity



Economic
Justice

HAVE YOUR SAY

All over the country, Caritas Australia's committed supporters invest in the empowerment of the world's most vulnerable communities.

Here are some of the questions and comments we have received from our kind community of supporters.

Dear Caritas Australia,

Sorry, I feel I am in the higher aged group that doesn't donate online. However, I have posted my yearly donation last week.

It is a trying time for all and I feel we have all been experiencing hardship of some kind though it is pleasing to see some of the younger generation truly helping the elderly.

Keep up the good work. Thank you.

Kind regards,
Janice, Wishart, QLD

Dear Janice,

Any support which you're able to give us goes directly to the communities most affected by poverty and injustice and we are deeply grateful for it.

We also love to see youth leading the charge in their communities! Many of our programs focus on empowering youth with basic food and amenities which allow them to complete their education.

For example, one of the young women featured in the last edition of Caritas News, Tawonga from Malawi, is well on the way to completing her education. Though she was often sick due to hunger, a lack of safe drinking water and poor sanitation, she is now overcoming all of these difficult circumstances with your support of Caritas Australia's work.

Dear Caritas Australia,

We thank you for keeping us up to date with all your wonderful emails. We donated through our Parish this year via the envelopes. I sincerely hope this COVID-19 lockdown time does not interfere with the generosity of people to continue to support Caritas Australia.

Sincerely,
Loredana and Mario, Concord, NSW

Dear Loredana and Mario,

More pressure is being felt across all of our programs and emergency responses because of COVID-19. One of the main reasons for this is the more urgent response needed from programs and staff workers. The money raised goes to our existing programs, including very much needed Water, Sanitation and Hygiene projects, as well as toward new COVID-19 measures which help contain the spread of the disease in the most vulnerable communities. These include critical education, food and hygiene support, protective equipment and clean running water.

Dear Caritas Australia,

From a global perspective, I consider myself as one of the lucky ones financially. I am more than happy to make any humble contribution I can to further justice and freedom of opportunity to those less fortunate. My spiritual faith is a wellspring for me, consequently as a Catholic, Caritas Australia was my obvious choice to contribute towards in alleviating poverty in its various forms.

Patrick, Perth, WA

Dear Patrick,

Your commitment enables us to continue to deliver many positive and life-changing programs in communities across the world and to live out Christ's Gospel message which says, "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)



We would love to hear from you! Have your say published here by writing a letter to questions@caritas.org.au or by calling 1800 024 413.



Caritas network staff are on the ground, providing an emergency response in the wake of COVID-19. Photo: Jean Khoury, Caritas Lebanon

COMING TOGETHER IN TIMES OF CRISIS

CORONAVIRUS IMPACTS REFUGEE COMMUNITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

➔ **F**or Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, the challenge of struggle and displacement is now being compounded by a new and silent killer, the coronavirus. Yet the strong community and family ties of the refugee diaspora bind and empower them, in spite of the hardships of their displacement.

Suzy McIntyre, Caritas Australia's Program Coordinator, Global Programs & Partnerships, explained how the COVID-19 emergency demands new ways of working.

"We are standing in solidarity with our courageous colleagues in Lebanon and Jordan as they work to keep people safe through online awareness campaigns, the

provision of personal protective equipment, and the distribution of food and hygiene kits," Ms McIntyre says.

In **Jordan**, the Caritas network is implementing new preventative measures across the country, including:

- Remote learning activities for Caritas supported education programs, as all in-school programs have been suspended.
- Medical and humanitarian programs have been modified to ensure approved social distancing and hygiene practices are followed.

In **Lebanon***, where the whole country is in lockdown to prevent

the spread of COVID-19, the Caritas network is providing:

- Training on Infection Prevention and Control Measures, including awareness sessions about respiratory hygiene, hand-washing and social distancing, to frontline Caritas staff.
- Cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment for shelter staff as well as nurses.

Your support is empowering Syrian communities in Lebanon and Jordan to move past COVID-19 and into a more safe and stable future.

Please visit caritas.org.au to make a donation and save lives today.

* Along with your generous support, this project is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



REFUGEE CAMPS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS

BANGLADESH'S ROHINGYA MORE VULNERABLE THAN EVER

COVID-19 has hit Bangladesh hard. More than 41% of low-wage earners, including rickshaw-pullers, small traders, house maids and day labourers are losing work and facing challenges caused by panic-buying and restrictions placed on people's movement. →

The annual monsoon season brings additional challenges for Rohingya communities.
Photo: Ismail Ferdous, Catholic Relief Services.

COVID-19 outbreak in Bangladesh

→ **C**COVID-19 has hit Bangladesh hard. More than 41% of low-wage earners, including rickshaw-pullers, small traders, house maids and day labourers are losing work and facing the challenges caused by panic-buying and restrictions on people's movement.

The spread of COVID-19 in the Rohingya refugee camps, such as Cox's Bazar, adds more pressure to the already burdened infrastructure and social services, endangering the 1.2 million Rohingya living in tightly crowded conditions with limited access to sanitation and good hygiene.

Eleanor Trinchera, Program Coordinator for Nepal & Bangladesh, spoke of her fears for the future of communities.

"The shelters are so small and families cramped in such tight spaces, making it very difficult for people with the virus to be isolated and separated from their families. Rations are limited and movements are restricted, so how will communities and families in need pick up their rations from the distribution centres? It's dangerous for people to come into close contact with each other and so physical or social distancing needs to be maintained," Ms Trinchera said.

"In addition to the risk of COVID-19, the monsoon season is coming. This will increase the spread of the virus and the vulnerability of the 1.2 million people in the camps. Caritas Bangladesh is investing in tie-down shelters to protect people from the onslaught of extreme weather conditions."

With the help of generous people like you, Caritas Australia's response in Bangladesh is two-fold: working with Rohingya living in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, in South-East Bangladesh, as well as in long-term development programs in eight regions of Bangladesh. In both responses, COVID-19 demands that the Caritas network establish new ways of working to prevent and slow the outbreak of infections into the future.

HOLDING ONTO HEART AND HOME: TASMEE'S STORY

Tasmee* is a 19-year-old mother whose husband works as a Caritas WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) volunteer. She's deeply frightened of the strange new disease called coronavirus, which is looming over the camps. Her father died during his journey to Cox's Bazar and she worries that she may lose her daughter, Nur* as well.



Tasmee with her baby girl at her home.
Photo: Inmanuel Chayan Biswas,
Caritas Bangladesh.

"I am really worried and feeling afraid a lot. I don't want to lose 'my heart' Nur. I lost my dad while coming to Bangladesh and I know the pain of losing beloved family members. I don't want to lose any of my family members especially my Nur and my husband. I can't survive without them," Tasmee says, bursting into tears.

But Tasmee has learnt much from her husband's training with Caritas.

"My husband told me to wash our hands with soap. He is very much concerned about this matter for last few days. Now I am used to this practice. This practice helps me to prevent the disease as well," she says.

Maintaining cleanliness is hard in such cramped conditions, but your support is fostering lifesaving practices for women like Tasmee and their families, across Cox's Bazar.

* names changed to protect privacy

CARITAS BANGLADESH COUNTRY WIDE RESPONSE

- Supply of essential need such as hand sanitisers and face masks.
- Cancellation of all unnecessary staff trips.
- Encouraging strong hygiene practices like regular hand-washing.
- Supporting local authorities with self-isolation and social-distancing practices.

Your support is saving lives across Bangladesh by shoring up essential food, medical and emergency supplies. Your generosity empowers Bangladeshis to move forward beyond the challenges of the pandemic, with hope.



CAMBODIANS CHART A PATH FORWARD

CAMBODIANS OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

Communities can access essential supplies for COVID-19 prevention. Photo: Mr Kang Lorn, Project Assistant of ARD, Caritas Australia.

In Cambodia, around 4.5 million are vulnerable to falling back into poverty when exposed to economic and other external shocks, according to the World Bank. Through your support, quality health and education programs are being made available as urgent priorities in the response to COVID-19.

➔ **A**ccess to healthcare has been challenging for many Cambodians due to limited national health funding and infrastructure.

Caritas Australia is working across Cambodia to bolster communities in the face of these challenges.

Chanthea Nou, Caritas Australia's Program Coordinator for Cambodia, spoke of the immediate coronavirus emergency response offered by Caritas Australia, through your generosity.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been

doing lots of work in country in response to COVID-19. This includes providing face masks, hand sanitiser, working with local partners to provide soap to the poorest communities and to raise awareness through banners and mobile loudspeakers to deliver information about COVID-19," Mr Nou said.

"I personally believe that the communities of Cambodia will get through this. Receiving information from Caritas Australia programs has helped them to become much more aware and to prevent them from falling ill."

"Our partner and the local communities are working really well together to deliver and make use of emergency support, including food supplies. I strongly believe we'll get through it."



Project staff provide soap to health centres and police posts. Photo: Mr. Soun Yuoy project staff of SK, Caritas Australia.



YOUR SUPPORT CHANGES LIVES

Caritas Australia's CEO Kirsty Robertson recently visited Cambodia and told us about her experience there:

"Only a few months ago, I visited a community you help us assist in Cambodia. I met loving, hard-working families, some of them living in cramped conditions. Many of the young children I met were being raised by their grandparents, as their parents worked on their farms or far from home.

The challenges they face are typical of many of the communities we work in from the Philippines to India, Africa and beyond.

But for all the hardship, I also saw hope. I left feeling inspired, knowing that the work you help us do is changing lives. When I left, I made a promise to continue our work with their community."

Your support enables us to expand our work in response to COVID-19 in many ways:

- Sharing COVID-19 prevention messages through banners, posters and leaflets.
- Providing face masks and protective equipment to health centres and community health offices.
- Installing handwashing facilities and distributing sanitation materials including soap.
- Providing emergency food support to those whose livelihoods are most impacted by the pandemic.

Your support provides emergency and long-term relief to communities most vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19.

By hosting an event for Women for the World this coming September, you are standing in solidarity with millions of women who experience poverty and injustice. Funds raised will go towards Caritas Australia programs to bring about positive change for women and their communities during these difficult times.

To find out more go to:
www.womenfortheworld.org.au



OUR COMMUNITY

Photo: Kerry Stone, Caritas Australia.

PUSH-UPS FOR PROJECT COMPASSION

In Victoria, the amazing students of Notre Dame College, Shepparton didn't let isolation stop them from fundraising for Project Compassion this year.

Instead of doing their usual 8km Caritas Ks walkathon, this time the students held a virtual event 'Push Up for a Hand Up'!

Each student was asked to film themselves doing as many push-ups as they could do. All push ups were filmed and added to the student's house tally.

The students and teachers at Notre Dame competed all day and live streamed throughout, showing the PC stories and

some special guest interviews, such as our CEO Kirsty Robertson and Sandhurst Diocesan Director Kerry Stone.



So far, the students have raised \$2,930, and there is more to come!

Thank you Notre Dame College, Shepparton for your wonderful generosity!

LISTENING TO OUR NEIGHBOURS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

By Susan Duric – Fundraising Team Member



Over the last several months, I have been talking to supporters of our regular giving program, *Caritas Neighbours*, to learn how they have been coping with the coronavirus pandemic.

Calling supporters across Australia, I have heard a variety of familiar stories of concern, but also hope, love and commitment.

Many of you have shared your struggles to master the use of unfamiliar technology, the challenge of juggling the responsibility that you have at work with the need to school your children at home and the pain of not being able to give a hug to your family members and friends.

You have also told me why you choose to support your Neighbours each month. Trust that we will use any gift that you provide wisely coupled with a fervent belief that we must uphold human dignity by helping the most vulnerable, have been the two most common reasons.

Our work helping our Neighbours is only made possible by supporters like you. Thank you for your generosity and solidarity.

When you become a Caritas Neighbour, your support strengthens our work to help more children, women and men globally.

Become a regular giver today. Call us on 1800 024 413 or learn more at caritas.org.au/neighbours



LOUNGEROOM SESSIONS: A CONCERT FOR COMPASSION

On Saturday, May 9, ARIA award-winning and multi-platinum selling recording artist, Gary Pinto, hosted a free online concert for Project Compassion.

He was joined by artists such as Diesel, Carmen Smith, Bobbie Lee Stamper and Matt Gresham and through generous viewers like you, raised over \$14,000 for the work of Caritas Australia in the most vulnerable communities around the world.

"I believe that as a whole world, as brothers and sisters, we are connected. We have a common humanity and we have the spirit of God living in us and we need to be able to communicate with each other and share



each other's burdens," Gary said of the song he created for Caritas Australia.

Listen to Gary's Project Compassion hit, Walk with Me at bit.ly/2Tfz5ml



Fred Fiegert from Temora, cutting his 90th Birthday cake with his grandchildren (two grandsons absent). Photo: Maree Pinney.

LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Helping others is what makes us happy. Leaving a legacy of love is easy!



Caritas Australia would like to congratulate our dear supporter Fred Fiegert from Temora NSW on his milestone 90th Birthday. Fred has lived through the depression, WWII, droughts, bush fires and floods and continues to demonstrate the incredible resilience required to navigate life on the farm. He is an old boy of St Gregory's College, Campbelltown and continues to partner and share his values with Caritas and the world's most marginalised.

To leave an enduring legacy of love, call our Gifts in Wills Specialist on 1800 024 413 or download the wording for your Will at www.caritas.org.au/legacyoflove



Caritas Australia acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians, past, present and emerging, of the land on which all our offices are located. This edition may include images or words of indigenous people who may be deceased.



Caritas Australia is fully accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Please note: some of the programs featured in this issue of Caritas News are funded by Caritas Australia and the Australian Government.



Caritas Australia is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).



The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) is the national regulator of charities.



Caritas Australia is a proud member of CAN, a group of eleven Church-based overseas aid and development agencies committed to empowering people and providing avenues for them to overcome injustice and poverty.

FOR THE LATEST UPDATES HEAD TO:



24-32 O'Riordan St,
Alexandria NSW 2015



1800 024 413 (toll free)
9am – 5pm AEST Mon – Fri



questions@caritas.org.au



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www.instagram.com/caritasaust/

MIX logo

Your donation will continue to save lives now and help the world's most vulnerable communities rebuild their future after the COVID-19 pandemic.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TODAY.



☐ **YES, I WILL HELP WITH A GIFT TODAY!**

Below are some examples of how your donation can help:

- ☐ **\$45** could help provide critical community education about protective measures to help prevent infections.
- ☐ **\$125** could help provide hygiene kits and personal protective equipment to those in need to contain the spread of the virus.
- ☐ **\$300** could help provide essential water, sanitation and hygiene services to protect those at enormous risk.
- ☐ **My Choice of:** \$ _____

☐ **YES, I WILL BECOME A MONTHLY SUPPORTER:**

I would like to provide ongoing monthly support as part of the 'Caritas Neighbours' program:

- ☐ **\$18** PER MONTH ☐ **\$27** PER MONTH ☐ **\$51** PER MONTH OR ☐ **My choice of:** \$ _____ per month

MY PAYMENT DETAILS

☐ **CHEQUE** ☐ **MONEY ORDER** ☐ **CREDIT CARD**

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex ☐ Diners

Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Expiry date: _____ / _____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

☐ **BANK TRANSFER** to Caritas Australia
Bank: Commonwealth – BSB 062 438 – Acct 10072432
Ref. FY20NL

☐ **PLEASE DIRECT DEBIT MY ACCOUNT MONTHLY**

I authorise Caritas Australia to debit the above amount from my account identified below on the 15th of each month. Acting on my written instructions the user may, by prior arrangement and advice to me, vary the amount for future debits.

Account name: _____

BSB: _____ Account no. _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Before payments commence, Caritas Australia will provide you with a full Service Agreement and confirmation of your details regarding this arrangement. Payments will be deducted on the 15th of the month or the next normal business day.

MY CONTACT DETAILS

Supporter ID: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Title: _____ Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Mobile: _____

Suburb: _____

Email: _____

- ☐ I would like my receipt sent to my email address to help save administration costs and make sure more of my donations goes where it is needed most.
- ☐ I would like to receive information about leaving a Gift in my Will to Caritas Australia.
- ☐ Please tick here if you do NOT want to receive Caritas News in the future.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

Complete this form and return to **Caritas Australia**

Call us on **1800 024 413** with your credit card details

Donate online at **caritas.org.au/give**



Caritas
AUSTRALIA

**End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity**