

COVID-19 | AFRICA

Zimele Wethu Foundation | South Africa

The Zimele Wethu Foundation (ZWF) in South Africa was forced to close their office and stop visiting communities on the 23rd of March when the national lockdown began, which is in effect until April 16th.

These measures were enacted just as leaders of the foundation were coming out of a time of prayer for the 5th year of the strategic plan they had been working toward since September 2015. The team had been excited and ready to begin putting this plan to action by going out to engage with communities; they are very depressed about the abrupt stop.

We took the time in March to train Cluster Level Associations and Self-Help Groups on Covid-19. We demonstrated correct hygiene techniques and disperse hygiene supplies for individuals and households. The lockdown put a stop to our original plan to continue with more training.

Prayer Requests:

- Sustained protection for those in the poor communities where ZWF serves and beyond. While we are grateful to God that there are no Corona Virus cases in the rural communities so far; we can't imagine what would happen if even one person becomes infected. In most communities, social distancing is practically impossible. Primary health care services are few, there is no running water, and no spacious housing.
- Encouragement and hope among the ZWF staff and participants as we work to rebuild the social and economic ruins that the virus will leave behind. Small businesses that the program participants were building are shut down. The capital that was meant to be invested in these small initiatives was diverted to meet immediate needs during the lockdown period.
- Provision for our program participants after the lockdown. Pray that God will provide relief support and resources to help recapitalize the restart of small businesses, social initiatives like home-based care, and orphan care.

Humanitarian Organization for Lasting Development (HOLD) | DRC

The Humanitarian Organization for Lasting Development (HOLD), a social center in the Democratic Republic of Congo, had to close classes. Community activities have been suspended and Peer Educators continue to shelter in place. While minimal services at office has been maintained, we did not meet for our Monday debrief to avoid contamination between staff. I read great fear and panic on the faces of my colleagues behind their medical masks as we learn that the number of cases of the virus are increasing.

Without accompanying strategies, the measures that the government has taken are largely ineffective against the virus. Local flights continue regularly, roads and markets continue to flood with people, and public transport remains crowded. The cities of Goma and Gisenyi closed their border. There is a scarcity of food in the markets with food prices have tripled. The population is largely unaware of the magnitude of the problem because they lack access to information and only false rumors are at their disposal.

SIRDEP | Cameroon

Currently there are no confirmed cases of the virus in the region. The staff at our office are aware of the preventative measures they must take in order to stay safe.

We have placed two buckets of water and soap in-front of the office. Any person (staff or visitor) entering the office must wash their hand with soap and water. Once inside, staff and others must disinfect their hands with hand sanitizer. Meetings of no more than twenty people are allowed to be organized on the field and members must stay about one meter apart for each other at each gathering.

Prayer Requests:

- That the virus will not cross from other regions into the North West Region of Cameroon, particularly into Bamenda.
- That the population will adhere to WHO preventive measures.
- That those who have tested positive for the virus will follow up with medical advice.
- That people will voluntarily submit themselves to testing once they identify symptoms of Covid-19, and that those coming from an area where cases have already been detected will quarantine themselves.

ECCSSE | South Sudan & Ethiopia

The VOC project and other CWR projects are being impacted as Ethiopia and Kenya are hit by Covid-19. Thankfully, the virus is currently contained in Addis Ababa and Nairobi. So far no fatalities have been reported among those infected. The two countries have shut down schools and Kenya has closed all international flights.

For the time being, there are no reports of the virus in South Sudan or Uganda where more than 1 million people live as refugees. However, we fear for the safety of refugees and IDPS living in South Sudan, as their situation is already fragile. If the disease spreads there, it will be a unique catastrophe.

While our projects beneficiaries and staff are all safe, we have minimized field visits until the situation improves. We ask for your continuous prayers for protection from the virus, the countries impacted, and the world at large.

CEUM Medical | Democratic Republic of Congo

On March 24, the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo declared a State of Emergency and issued a travel ban between provinces as at the time Kinshasa (the capital) had confirmed 48 cases. As of 4/3/2020, Kinshasa has 118 cases, Goma has 3, North Kivu 1, and Beni 1. Currently there are no known cases of COVID-19 in the provinces where the CEUM resides: North Ubangi, South Ubangi, and Mongala.

PCP is communicating regularly with the CEUM Medical team regarding their response to COVID-19 before cases reach the region. Currently, the CEUM goals are to raise awareness and educate people in all villages and communities through the following activities:

- Medical teams are preparing radio presentations for people in Karawa to be aware how to protect themselves (hand washing, social distancing) and know the symptoms of Covid-19.
- PCP and the PCP Medical Ambassadors are preparing a response to assist the CEUM Med. Staff in their preparations for the presence of Covid-19 in their areas.

Other projects continue, though adhering to COVID-19 guidelines. Bridge construction continues but with a group of 10 engineers. The Karawa Coffee Project continues as planned.

The fact that the CEUM is in a more remote, rural area of the country is to its advantage at this point, especially with travel restrictions between provinces. With these restrictions comes a slowing of the economy which could tip an already perilous economic condition into a downfall. There is also still a significant lack of clean water for hand-washing, PPE materials are often used multiple times due to lack of resources, other basics such as soap and disinfectants are not widely available and prices on these materials are already on rising.