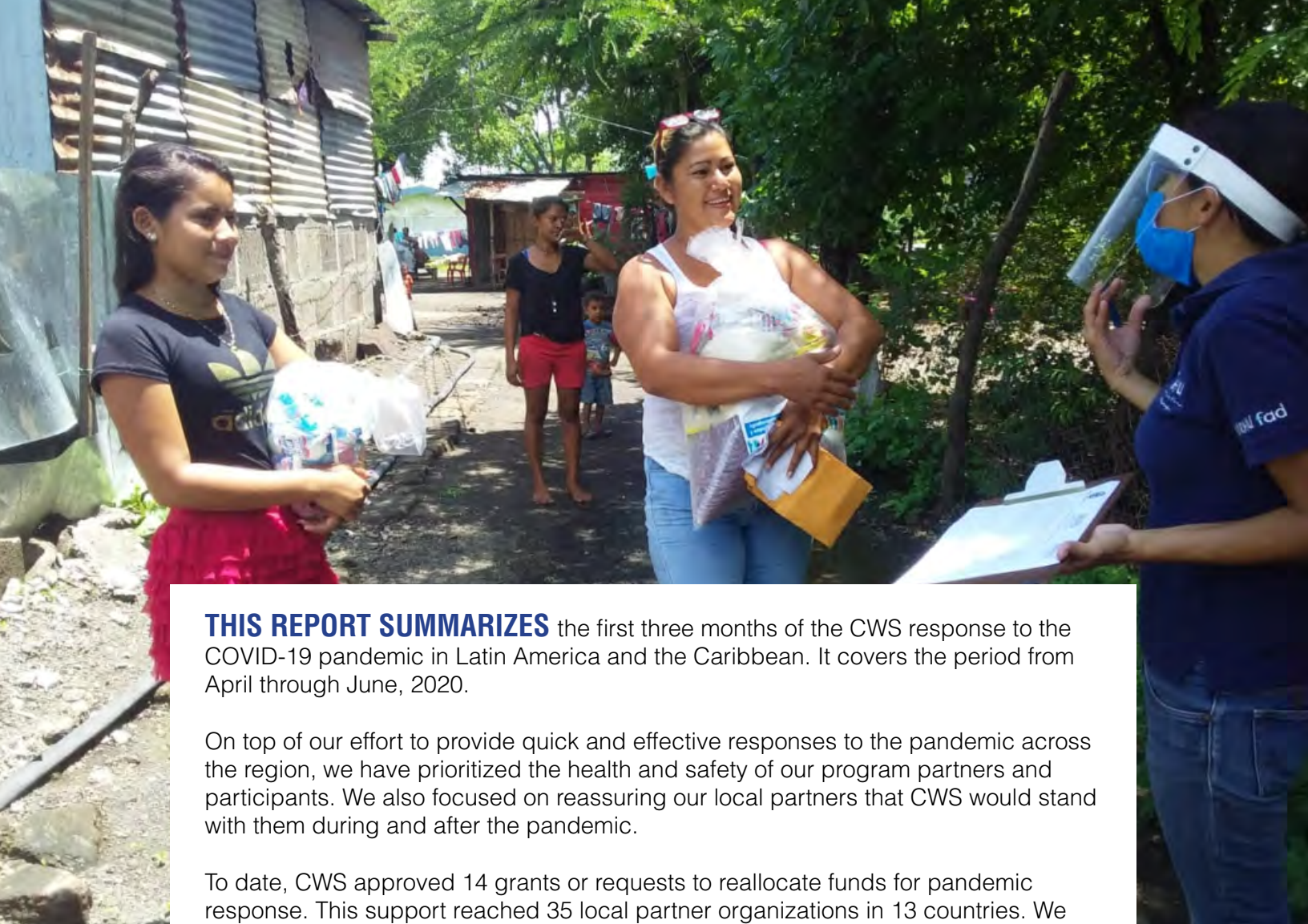




**13 COUNTRIES,
ONE RESPONSE.**

Coronavirus Response in Latin America & the Caribbean

April - June 2020



THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES the first three months of the CWS response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean. It covers the period from April through June, 2020.

On top of our effort to provide quick and effective responses to the pandemic across the region, we have prioritized the health and safety of our program partners and participants. We also focused on reassuring our local partners that CWS would stand with them during and after the pandemic.

To date, CWS approved 14 grants or requests to reallocate funds for pandemic response. This support reached 35 local partner organizations in 13 countries. We also supported supplementary regional and global humanitarian advocacy that was rooted in local communities' needs and demands.

From a Mexican network of migrant shelters that served about 3,600 people to a local community-based organization that supported 23 street children and their families in metropolitan São Paulo, Brazil, our partners delivered emergency food assistance, hygiene supplies and personal protective equipment. All of it was purchased locally. They also focused on sharing accurate COVID-19 information and messages; counseling; school supplies for children; rehabilitation of rural livelihoods and family agriculture; emergency rental support; and local and regional humanitarian advocacy.

CWS-supported rapid response efforts benefited Central American, Mexican, Venezuelan and Haitian migrants; returnees; asylum seekers; host communities; the elderly; urban and rural children and youth; indigenous and Afro-descendant families in hard-to-reach areas; prisoners' families; renters in urban areas; and NGO workers.

In a region marked by inequalities, the pandemic aggravated many forms of violence and injustice. But it has also stirred many Latin Americans' commitment to life in abundance and peace with justice. Humanitarian advocacy was an integral part of CWS partners' response to COVID-19 since the beginning. CWS has stood in solidarity with them since day one.

CWS is a member of the ACT Alliance, and our response was aligned with the stated desired outcomes of the ACT Alliance's global pandemic response.

Who has the CWS response reached?

The CWS response has focused on reaching some of our most vulnerable neighbors in the region, including:

- indigenous families in hard-to-reach areas
- incarcerated women and their children
- families with relatives in prison
- migrants and host communities
- survivors of gender-based violence
- seniors and older adults

We also focused on supporting the safety and well-being of colleagues in partner organizations.



What other challenges are we facing?

The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded and exacerbated other challenges in the region, including:

- Prolonged political crisis and drought in Northwest Haiti
- Drought in Northeast Dominican Republic
- Dengue outbreak and prolonged drought in the Paraguayan and Argentinean sections of the Gran Chaco region
- Abandonment and humanitarian disaster situation in most Latin American prisons
- Rising levels of xenophobia and discrimination against Venezuelan migrants in South America
- Extremely low response to Hurricane Dorian
- A food crisis brewing in the Dry Corridor, and other areas of Central America, due to the drastic drop in income, less production and marketing, which have affected the availability, access, consumption and use of food.



What are some response highlights?

- Youngest person served: a one-month old baby in Mexican shelter
- Number of solidarity grants issued: 14
- Number of countries reached: 13
- Number of partner agencies: 35
- Number of new partners: 4
(Fundación Paz y Esperanza in Ecuador, MTE-Rama Liberados y Liberadas in Argentina, REDODEM in Mexico, Tierra Viva in Paraguay)
- First response operation: March 31, when our partner Colectivo Artesana delivered food and hygiene supplies in three women's prisons in Guatemala



THE CARIBBEAN

The Bahamas

Hurricane Dorian Response: In response to a ban on group meetings, we co-sponsored a media campaign to promote community cohesion and share accurate information and raise awareness among Haitian communities of COVID-19 and gender-based violence on local cable TV, internet and radio stations.

Partner:
International Organization on Migration

Haiti

In the Northwest Department:

- we supported partner AGEHPMDNG to provide supplies to 500 families. Each family received some combination of a bucket, chlorine, liquid soap, water purification tablets and sanitizer. They also provided 15 buckets to the offices of the Administration Council of the Communal Section of the 6th and 7th communal sections of Jean Rabel.
- we supported partner GRADAID to provide two bars of soap and two pounds of chlorine to each of 42 families. Distributions are ongoing, and eventually distributions will also include hospitals.
- we supported partner KED as they facilitated community health agents to communities and health centers for awareness raising. We also helped them distribute supplies such as buckets, soap, water purification tablets, face masks, toothbrushes and chlorine to 250 families.

Nationally:

- we agreed to conduct a Rapid Needs Assessment of older people and people with disabilities in Port-au-Prince and the Northwest Department with Help Age International.
- we co-led a webinar on Sphere Standards for Humanitarian Action for ACT Alliance members and partners in Haiti.

Internationally, we worked with partners and the Avina Foundation to explore possibilities for how to make Haiti more visible in Latin America and make Haitian voices heard.



The Dominican Republic

We organized COVID-19 preparedness sessions for 30 members of older people associations in two communities in San Juan de la Maguana.

A solidarity grant to Plataforma NNAPES member Caminante helped them provide emergency food aid and hygiene kits to vulnerable families. This included families with children who work on the street or with incarcerated family members. Caminante also provided psychological support to families and children that requested this service and were identified during the distribution.

Partners: Servicio Social de Iglesias Dominicanas, Caminante Proyecto Educativo

MEXICO & CENTRAL AMERICA

Mexico

- Thirteen migrant shelters across Mexico, all of which are members of the REDODEM network, used rapid response funds from CWS to reach 3,592 people. The shelters used the funds to build up food and cleaning supplies reserves; upgrade water and sanitation infrastructure; restock medicine boxes; improve ventilation and thermal comfort; design and implement early detection and rapid response measures to prevent COVID-19 spread among migrants and staff; and distribute hygiene supplies and accurate COVID-19 information to respond to growing stigmatization of migrants.
- With funds redirected from an ongoing CWS program, our partner Caminamos Juntos provided emergency cash support to 20 families who had been deported from the United States. These funds helped the families cover rent and food costs.
- We provided a grant to Plataforma NNAPES member REDIM in Mexico City, who used the funds to provide food packs to 21 indigenous families with incarcerated members.

REDODEM members reached migrants, returnees, people facing homelessness, asylum seekers, refugees, LGBTQI+ people and unemployed or evicted migrants. Almost a quarter of shelter guests were minors, including children traveling with or without their parents or guardians, and adolescents.



Guatemala

Through a grant to Plataforma NNAPES member Colectivo Artesana and support to food security partner Conferencia de Iglesias Evangélicas de Guatemala:

- we provided hygiene kits and cleaning supplies to 150 prisoners in three women's prisons. Additionally, 115 children under 4 years old who live with their moms in the prisons received supplementary food.
- we adapted the way that key agriculture inputs in our food security program in Nebaj in Quetzaltenango are purchased and transported, so that this work could continue while taking COVID-19 precautions.



CENTRAL AMERICA (CONTINUED)

Panama

We issued a small grant through Plataforma NNAPES to Morada de Restauración, Member of the National Network for the Rights of Children. They used it to provide food aid and hygiene supplies to 30 especially vulnerable families who have incarcerated members. They were also able to organize recreational activities for the children.



Nicaragua

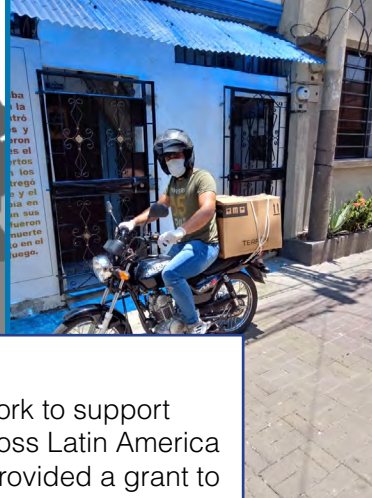
We issued a small grant through Plataforma NNAPES to Instituto de Promoción Humana in Managua. They used that grant to provide food baskets, school supplies and counseling to 30 families in Managua. They also used it to purchase personal protective equipment for staff as they continued regular program operations.



SOUTH AMERICA

Ecuador

As part of our ongoing work to support Venezuelan migrants across Latin America and the Caribbean, we provided a grant to Paz y Esperanza Ecuador. They used it to provide food and hygiene packages to 200 families in May, June and July. These families live in low-income parts of the city of Guayaquil, and most are Venezuelan migrants.



Argentina

In the city of Buenos Aires, we issued a grant to Plataforma NNAPES member Association of prisoners' families, or ACIFAD. They used this grant to support their COVID-19 response, including:

- monitoring prison conditions and the government's COVID-19 preparedness plans for prisons;
- counseling for women and children with incarcerated relatives;
- conflict resolution and mediation in prison conflicts that arose from a lack of government COVID-19 preparedness plans; and
- finding new ways for children and families to communicate with incarcerated relatives.

Through a small grant to the Rama de Liberados, Liberadas y Familiares del Movimiento de Trabajadores Excluidos, we provided food assistance and hygiene supplies to 30 women under house arrest in Buenos Aires and their children.

In partnership with Fundapaz and Junta Unida de Misiones in the Chaco region, we:

- provided funds so that five new construction crews could build rainwater harvest systems and cisterns in hard-to-reach communities;
- supported youth-led initiatives to combat the rise in gender-based violence as lockdowns went into effect;
- provided legal and counseling assistance for women in situations of gender-based violence; and
- helped 600 indigenous people in isolated communities apply online for COVID-19 emergency social benefits from the government.

Brazil

We issued a small grant through Plataforma NNAPES to Projeto Meninos y Meninas de Rua. They used it to provide food and hygiene supplies to 23 especially vulnerable families in São Paulo. These are families whose children work on the streets or who have members who are incarcerated.



SOUTH AMERICA (CONTINUED)

Across the Chaco

For about 11 weeks, a professional psychologist that CWS hired provided remote psychosocial support to 35 people from five partners working in the Chaco region of Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. When the pandemic started, this region was already facing drought and an outbreak of dengue fever. The pandemic raised levels of stress, fear and anxiety even while workloads grew. The counseling support included group and individual sessions as well as workshops.



Chile

We issued a small grant through Plataforma NNAPES to EnMarcha. They used it to provide food aid and hygiene supplies to 94 vulnerable families in Santiago de Chile. These families have incarcerated members, some of whom are under house arrest.

Bolivia

Through a grant to our partner Centro de Estudios Regionales de Tarija in the Chaco region, we provided health supplies, personal protective equipment and critical information to 280 families in hard-to-reach areas and to 13 health workers in the health clinics that serve them. This is a high-risk area for COVID-19 because lots of migrant workers in the oil industry come and go between this area and the epicenter of Bolivia's COVID-19 crisis, the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

Paraguay

In Paraguay's Chaco region, we worked with partners to:

- provide a month of food assistance, hygiene kits and COVID-19 information to 477 indigenous families;
- provide seeds and animal health kits to 270 families;
- connect these families to primary, maternal and child health care from the Ministry of Health; and
- plan for 200 more families to receive supplies and support in coming weeks, and to support indigenous leadership in their COVID-19 advocacy efforts.

Partners: Catholic Diocese of Benjamin Acebal, civil society organization TierraViva and Comité de Iglesias.



ADVOCACY & CAPACITY BUILDING

WEBINARS & PRESENTATIONS

- April 2: we co-hosted a webinar for CWS partners on “Older People & COVID-19” alongside Help Age Latin America. A total of 31 people from six countries joined.
- April 22: 196 people attended a [virtual press conference](#) on COVID-19 and children with incarcerated parents in Latin America organized by Plataforma NNAPES, the Mexican Network of Children Advocates and Tejiendo Redes network. The event also reached 3,200 people on Facebook.
- May 22: we offered a webinar on “NGO Management and staff team care in an emergency context” to our partners across Latin America.
- June 12: [Virtual meeting](#) with the Executive Secretary of the Inter American Commission of Women, Alejandra Mora Mora, and her team. The objective of the meeting was to present to them the impact that the COVID-19 crisis has on female relatives of prisoners in the Americas. Ms. Mora invited the presenters to prepare and send a document with information and recommendations for this to be included in their “Argumentario” and for the Commission to prepare a communication to be distributed among their contacts.

ADVOCACY IN WRITING

- In late March, we sent a letter to the U.S. Congress on lifting U.S. sanctions on countries affected by COVID-19, including Venezuela and Cuba.
- In early June, we contributed language to a [letter calling on U.S. Senate and House Leadership for Aid to Latin America and the Caribbean](#). The CWS language encouraged supporting less visible groups at high risk who are not at the center of COVID-19 prevention efforts, such as the incarcerated and their families and rural populations experiencing pre COVID-19 humanitarian stress.
- We contributed a section on “Protection of Prisoners’ families” in Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s Guidance Note, [“COVID-19: Focus on Persons Deprived of Their Liberty.”](#)
- We contributed to UN Rapporteur special report on Right to Housing & COVID-19 with a document on migrant renters and persons evicted in Latin America with testimonies gathered from Chile, Peru and Colombia.
- CWS, as the organization that represents Plataforma NNAPES on international spaces, participated in and supported the production and publication of the:
 - INCCIP Survey Results. In April 2020, INCCIP circulated a survey to people on its mailing list to gather information about the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on children with incarcerated parents around the globe. The questions and results are outlined [here](#).
 - Child Rights Connect Working Group on Children with Incarcerated Parents [statement](#) on COVID-19 and children with incarcerated parents. Our team worked with Penal Reform International, Quakers UN Office and Child Rights Connect to produce guidelines on COVID-19 and children with incarcerated parents. Our partners shared the guidelines in some relevant webinars at the European Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Congress on Justice with Children.

LOOKING AHEAD



AS THE PREDICTED GLOBAL RECESSION

sets in, the majority of people in Latin America and the Caribbean will continue to struggle to meet their basic needs. This will continue to affect people in both urban and rural areas.

We should never underestimate the immense challenges that structural inequalities and weak governance will pose in the region's ability to move forward. But we must also recognize the unfailing determination that people across Latin America continue to show as they recover from these tragedies with little or no external support.

While the pandemic is still gaining strength in many metropolitan areas across the region, CWS stands ready to accompany and support our partners' efforts to make COVID-19 recovery just and inclusive, especially for the forgotten and invisible at the end of the line. CWS partners will support COVID-19 efforts and amplify the voices and demands of urban women, men and youth in the informal economy (garbage collectors, domestic workers, street vendors and construction workers), renters, migrants and children in at-risk families.

In rural areas, CWS continues monitoring and is preparing to respond to hurricane season 2020 developments in the Caribbean basin, as well as to seasonal weather events that affect livelihoods and lives of families relying on subsistence farming in Central America and the Gran Chaco region of South America as well as the Northwest of Haiti.

THANK YOU to individuals, congregations and member communions for their prayers, financial support and accompaniment.

STORIES FROM THE RESPONSE

Mexico

- [Protecting Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Others Across Mexico in the Face of Coronavirus](#)
- [Food & Hygiene Supplies for families with relatives in prison](#)

Haiti

- [Country video update](#)
- [A dark situation gets darker in Haiti because of COVID-19](#)

Guatemala

[Food, Hygiene Supplies & PPE at women's prisons in Guatemala](#)

Honduras

[A very special delivery in Honduras](#)



Ecuador

[Food & Hygiene Supplies for 200 Families in Ecuador](#)

Brazil

[Food & Hygiene Supplies for Families of Children who Work on the Street in São Paulo](#)

Paraguay

[Food & Hygiene Supplies for 270 Families](#)

Argentina

[From the Shadows to the Negotiating Table](#)



CWS PARTNERS

- Plataforma NNAPES members:
 - REDIM, Mexico
 - Colectivo Artesana, Guatemala
 - INPRHU, Nicaragua
 - REDNANIAP, Panama
 - Caminante Proyecto Educativo, Dominican Republic
 - Projeto Meninos e Meninas de Rua, Brazil
 - EnMarcha, Chile
 - Asociación de Familiares de Detenidos, Argentina
 - Gurises Unidos, Uruguay
- REDODEM members in 12 states of Mexico
- Caminamos Juntos, Guanajuato, Mexico
- Fundación Paz y Esperanza, Ecuador
- Rama de Liberados, Liberadas y Familiares del Movimiento de Trabajadores Excluidos, Argentina
- Fundapaz, Argentina
- Junta Unida de Misiones, Argentina
- Centro de Estudios Regionales de Tarija, Bolivia
- Pastoral Social de Benjamin Acebal, Paraguay
- Tierra Viva, Paraguay
- GRADAID, Haiti
- AGEHPMDNG, Haiti
- KED, Haiti
- IOM Bahamas
- Servicio Social de Iglesias Dominicanas, Dominican Republic
- Help Age International





PHOTO CREDITS: Cover: Pastoral Social Benjamin Acebal | Page 1: INPRHU
Page 2 (top to bottom): EnMarcha, INPRHU, DGSPG, EnMarcha, Pastoral Social de Benjamin Acebal, Projeto Meninos e Meninas de Rua
Page 3: Caminante Proyecto Educativo | Page 4: REDODEM (top) and DGSPG (bottom)
Page 5: INPRHU (all) | Page 6: Fundación Paz y Esperanza (top two) and Projeto Meninos e Meninas de Rua (bottom)
Page 7: EnMarcha (top) and Pastoral Social de Benjamin Acebal (bottom) | Page 9: REDODEM
Page 10: AGEHPMDNG (top), CASM (middle), ACIFAD (bottom) | Page 11: INPRHU