CORONAVIRUS INTERNATIONAL:  
NATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY ON 22 OCTOBER 2020

The coronavirus crisis is hitting the world’s most vulnerable people the hardest, exacerbating problems such as social inequality and poverty. Together with SRG SSR, Swiss Solidarity will be holding the ‘Coronavirus International’ National Day of Solidarity on 22 October 2020 to benefit these people. This fundraiser is also supported by our partner relief organizations, which for months have been fighting the consequences of the pandemic worldwide. All donations received will be used to support the work of our partner NGOs in countries where existing crises have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Since March, we have raised over 42 million Swiss francs to deliver aid in Switzerland. The funds will be used to support more than 150 aid projects run by 114 organizations helping people in Switzerland who have been hit particularly hard by the pandemic and its fallout.

‘We can overcome the coronavirus crisis, but only if we extend our solidarity beyond our borders’, said Roland Thomann, Director of Swiss Solidarity. ‘People are suffering hardship, and without immediate additional international humanitarian assistance, we run the risk of seeing already fragile countries being further set back in their development. In developing countries, the consequences of the pandemic are often proving worse than the coronavirus itself: poverty, famine and disease are on the rise, and progress in health and education is threatened. For families in precarious situations, the initial restrictions have led to many lost livelihoods. For day labourers, there is no safety net apart from humanitarian aid. According to the World Bank, 100 million people are at risk of sinking into extreme poverty. Refugees living in cramped conditions are unable to protect themselves from infection. Pregnant women are at risk of losing access to primary health care. According to the WHO, 80 million unvaccinated children are at the mercy of easily preventable diseases.

Extending existing humanitarian aid

In early July, Swiss Solidarity released two million Swiss francs from its emergency relief fund to support the delivery of aid by its partner relief organizations worldwide, especially where the pandemic is having a particularly devastating impact on people’s lives—refugee camps, slums, war zones and extremely impoverished countries. Nine partner NGOs are already running information and prevention campaigns in seven fragile countries, covering such important topics such as preparing for the pandemic in refugee camps (Bangladesh, Tanzania), setting up hand washing stations (Yemen, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Myanmar) and procuring personal protective equipment (PPE) for medical staff (Yemen, Haiti, Myanmar, Mozambique, Bangladesh, Tanzania). However, the available funding is far from sufficient.

Thanks to the donations made to ‘Coronavirus International’, our partner aid organizations can, for example, provide bridging aid in the form of cash assistance, thereby alleviating the negative economic impact on poor and marginalised population groups. They can also provide support in the areas of education, training and protection for children and people at risk, and they can ensure the continued delivery of health services focusing on the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 and other health issues.

Over 42 million Swiss francs donated for aid in Switzerland

Switzerland as well is facing challenging times due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, the Swiss have shown solidarity with people severely affected by the social and economic impacts of the pandemic. Over 42 million Swiss francs was donated within two months. To date, more than 35 million Swiss francs of this has been allocated to some 150 projects throughout Switzerland that are providing emergency aid, relief, food aid and financial assistance. Further project applications are under discussion.

People in Switzerland who have been severely affected by the crisis and its fallout are facing precarious situations due to uncertain or lost employment opportunities. These are mainly the working poor, refugees and undocumented migrants, homeless people and sex workers. Applicants also include many young people and students now in need due to the loss of side jobs and uninsured work.

Wide-ranging assistance

The scope of the projects supported so far by a total of 114 Swiss organizations—including our mandated and experienced partners Caritas Switzerland and the Swiss Red Cross—is broad. Thus, people who find themselves in a precarious situation due to income loss are supported with food parcels or financial aid. However, assistance also includes services such as transport, care, and help at home for the elderly and people with a disability. Swiss Solidarity supports projects that focus on people who depend on non-governmental services. The aid projects complement the services of the public authorities and insurance companies and help people who find themselves in crisis situations because of the pandemic.

Donations can be made online at [www.swiss-solidarity.org](http://www.swiss-solidarity.org), by bank transfer to postal account 10-15000-6, with the mention ‘Coronavirus International’. Throughout the National Day of Solidarity, pledges can also be made by phone, toll free at 0800 87 07 07.

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Swiss Solidarity federates the solidarity of the Swiss population in favour of victims of natural disasters and conflicts, as well as people in need, in Switzerland and abroad. Independent foundation created by the SSR, it co-funds projects of 26 Swiss NGOs active abroad with donations from the public, private companies, as well as cantons and municipalities. Swiss Solidarity ensures proper use of these donations through in-depth analyses and evaluations conducted by experts in compliance with international standards for emergency aid, reconstruction and rehabilitation. In Switzerland, the foundation finances projects for people in need. In the wake of severe weather in the country, it supports individuals, communities and SMEs suffering major damage. Since 1946, Swiss Solidarity has collected more than 1.8 billion Swiss francs in donations. More information on [www.](http://www.bonheur.ch/)[swiss-solidarity.org](http://swiss-solidarity.org/) or on [media.](http://medias.bonheur.ch/)[swiss-solidarity.org](http://swiss-solidarity.org/).