



June 2020

Dear Friends,

Many of you have called or emailed the World's Children office to learn how the children are faring during the coronavirus outbreak-in the orphanages we support in India, Ethiopia and Guatemala.

What's happening with the children in India?

India, where World's Children supports 29 orphanages, mounted one of the most stringent quarantines in the world. On March 21 the government announced a 21-day national lockdown that went into immediate effect. At that time India only had 332 coronavirus cases. The aggressive quarantine kept India from getting hit hard by the virus for a few weeks. But the cost of immediately closing down all businesses, schools, work sites and transportation created an enormous problem for people who were working far from their homes as well as for the impoverished people who had no savings and could not work. The government also mandated that children in the orphanages must go live with their relatives during the lockdown in an attempt to prevent coronavirus outbreaks in the close quarters of the orphanages. If a child had no living relatives or their home situation involved previous abuse, those children were allowed to stay in their orphanage. As a result, some orphanages are virtually empty, while others have kept up to a half of the children.

Caring for the children and many others

We maintain continuous communication with all the home administrators. We learned that the staff maintains constant contact with the children via cell phone to make sure they are okay. Food is brought to these children and their families in far flung villages. Another thing we learned is that those brave women are caring for many, many people. **They initiated feeding programs for displaced migrant workers and impoverished families.** Thousands of hungry people have been fed, and when they weren't distributing food, the staff made hundreds of face masks to give out.

What about the children who had nowhere to go?

As you know, **many of the children either have no parents or they came from abusive home situations. Those children remained in the orphanages** and in addition to the extensive feeding programs their caretakers initiated, the staff also had to care for the children who had nowhere to go. Some of those kids learned to use treadle sewing machines and helped make face masks, both for themselves and to give away to neighborhood people. **Because schools were closed, the administrators had to devise ways to keep the children occupied and learning.** They taught the children new crafts and many hours each day are spent making craft items. Special educational tutoring programs were initiated so the children can continue to learn.



What is the coronavirus situation now in Guatemala, Ethiopia and India?

Guatemala: On March 25 we heard this from Sister Rosa Maria: “Thank you for all the interest of our girls. Thank God we have not had any cases of coronavirus in the town, least of all in the boarding school. **Classes were soon suspended and we were quarantined**, so we have had no difficulties so far.”

And on June 15 she sent this message: “Greetings from Chichicastenango. Thank you for the money you have sent for the girls in the program. They are still at home and from here we are following their situation. **So far none have been affected**, although the economic situation affects their family. What you have sent is reserved for when they can use it.”

Ethiopia: On May 26 we received this news from Nahom Binyam at Bridge of Hope Children’s Village: “Here the government and the people are still under frustration assuming that the worst yet to come. The **cases of the coronavirus are increasing** from day to day now it reaches 655 which were few days ago less than hundred. We are getting enough food for all our children but if things continue same way we will be in trouble to feed all children. The local market is still open anyone who wants to buy food as far as he/she has money can get and buy enough. **The problem is the price for all food items and sanitation materials are increasing at alarming rate.** The money which was enough for a month before the pandemic may not be sufficient for fifteen days now.”

Note: In addition to the coronavirus, Ethiopia is undergoing a **huge locust infestation** which is destroying crops. That is one reason that food prices are increasing so steeply.

India:

We receive emails from all the children’s home administrators once or twice a week. Also, we follow news reports from India. In spite of such a fast and total lockdown, **India has had to extend the quarantine** several times. As of June 15 there were 367,264 coronavirus cases in the country, making it the fourth worst-hit country in the world on that date. **There has been some loosening of restrictions** and people are allowed out of their homes to purchase food or get medical treatment. A special arrangement for train and bus service was started in early May to help transport stranded migrant workers back to their villages.

Schools remain closed and most students have been automatically advanced to their next grade. We have not been able to get your cards and letters to the children because **international postal delivery is shut down** to the country. Several packets containing your cards were returned to our office. We will resend them when we learn that India is again allowing international mail to arrive and be delivered.

Sister Lourdu Mary at Nithya Sahaya Matha Girls’ Hostel wrote this: “Government officials and health workers are coming to the hostel time and again and looking into the facilities to restart the schools, such as sufficient toilets, hand washing basins, sufficient benches and ventilation, etc.”



Uttam Kumar at Balavikasita Orphanage wrote this: “**The lockdown is still continuing** especially in red zones where cases are active, other areas **curfew has been imposed** from 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. The government hasn't declared any opening date yet. As per the government's declaration the schools will start functioning from last week of June for middle and high schools, and for the primary and upper primary the schools will commence from the month of August.

“**The Child Welfare Committee** and District Child Protection Unit from the government side have been following up on the health and welfare of the children, they **are giving advice for keeping the children safe and free from coronavirus**. Zoom meetings were also organized by the government for all the child care administrators on safety measures to be taken during lock down. **We are not allowing visitors and outsiders into the premises**. We wash fruits and vegetables, milk packets, eatable items which come in containers or boxes we sanitize them before using. We are keeping the surroundings neat and clean, maintaining the lavatories, kitchen, dormitories, sanitizing them with disinfectants.”

We asked you to help with two special needs in the wake of the epidemic: **donations for the Healthy Child Fund** (you gave \$9,088) and for purchasing **food for impoverished families** who have no work and no savings (you gave \$11,993). You responded very generously and we are grateful for your support. Recently we needed the Healthy Child Fund to pay for hospital expenses for a boy with an infected broken leg and for a girl having seizures. We also paid for extra soap for handwashing. Luckily there have been no coronavirus medical expenses. We are relieved to know that money is there when it is needed. We have wired funds three times to help pay for food for hungry people as well as to help the children's families who have no income. We continue to wire sponsorship funds as usual and the homes are using that money to care for the children who remain in the orphanage, helping the children who are with relatives, and saving some funds until all the sponsored children return. **Thank you for all you have done for the children and many others who would have nothing without your kindness.**

With loving regards,

David Purviance
Executive Director



World's Children

The Homes Tackle Coronavirus

June 2020



Aldrin, one of the boys at Nambikkai Illam, expresses his understanding of the current situation in this creative drawing.



"We create interest in them in reading skills by making them to read some story books, and other knowledgeable books kept in our library. For small children the sisters will read out stories to them."

—Sister Stella, Nambikkai Illam

"We are following government rules strictly we are not allowing anybody to come and meet children because they may be prone to get sick easily. **We have closed all our gates** not to come in any outsiders. If they come only administrator meets them." —Sister Rosemary, Assunta Asha Nilayam



"We set a time table for the children. In the morning we teach them spoken English classes, math and science. The local government started online classes and our children are following the online classes continuously." —Sister Rosemary



Clean Hands!



"In the afternoon we encourage them to do art, craft, drawings and teach them classical dance." —Sister Regina



"Our children have stitched around 400 masks for the vulnerable children and the adults. We have already distributed around 100 masks to the people who come to take groceries."—Sister Regina



World's Children has wired 100% of donations given for coronavirus relief. Six orphanages are providing feeding programs in their communities for those in need.