



JPIC Voices

Being Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World

Cor Unum Covid 19 Fund: Finding new ways to support those in need

After listening to the needs of the provinces around the globe, the General Council decided with the Treasurer General to launch a new fund for use in Society ministries to aid those profoundly affected by COVID-19.

COVID-19 Global Pandemic

The COVID-19 global pandemic had a significant effect on life within the Society. The Superior General wrote in a letter to the Society on 23rd March 2020, “The world has changed in the last week; it has mobilized all of us and the daily life of everyone is deeply shaken. We have heard from many provinces and each one is taking the necessary steps to deal with this unprecedented situation, particularly in the care of our elder sisters.”

As the pandemic extended throughout the year and while governments approached it in different ways, the charitable activities and daily lives of the members of the Society were affected in each province. Ministries and projects had to close or reorganise to operate in a new way, schools moved lessons online and meetings became more regular on Zoom rather than face to face as travel became impossible. There was also a significant impact in relation to managing the finances within the Society, including challenges in distributing funds to local communities as well as a decrease in income from loss of salaries and decreasing interest rates.

Cor Unum COVID-19 Fund

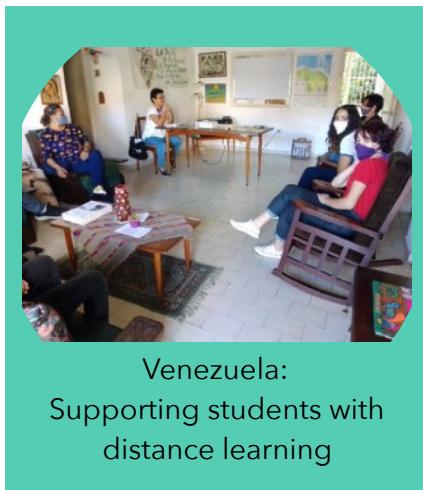
After listening to the needs of the provinces around the globe, the General Council decided with the Treasurer General to launch a new fund for use in Society ministries to aid those profoundly affected by COVID-19. Through the generosity of donations from provinces, as well as a small contribution from Generalate funds the **Cor Unum COVID-19 Fund** was created in June 2020.

Funds were distributed twice during 2020. Firstly during the summer supporting larger projects for the reopening of schools or ministries or smaller projects to help provinces who changed the way that they providing services as a result of COVID-19. A second round of funding was distributed in November for projects for alternative income generation (e.g. re-training) and projects focusing on JPIC or climate change.

There was a wonderful response to this call for solidarity within the Society. During the first round of funding, seven provinces received funds which supported more than 20 projects across 11 countries. During the second round of funding, six provinces received funds for 25 projects across nine countries.



Haiti: Preparing food for sharing within the community



Venezuela:
Supporting students with
distance learning



Kenya: Farming project at
the St. Charles Lwanga
Health Centre Chekalini

Examples of the projects included:

- Chad: Start-up of a vegetable garden project to provide food to a local community in N'Djamena including drilling for boreholes to supply water (apostolic service project), help with the construction and repair of houses for disaster victims (in the case of the floods in Bongor and N'Djamena) and the installation of solar panels.
- Democratic Republic of Congo: Provision of protective equipment against Covid-19 and improvement of the water supply by renewing the pipes in the health care centre in Kipako.
- Egypt: Support for 80 girls living in an orphanage in Cairo, to pay for school fees, equipment and internet connection to allow online learning and food.
- Kenya: Micro-business training for school staff and parents of the school in Kibera, Nairobi who have lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic.
- Uganda-Kenya: Working with the health care Ministries in Moroto (Uganda) and Chekalini (Kenya) to establish projects to strengthen the knowledge on prevention of COVID-19 in the communities of the vulnerable population.
- Haiti: Support of the staff and students of the Simón Bolívar Educational Center in Balan, Haiti through the provision of food for families and payment of salaries for teaching staff.
- Peru: Creating a virtual platform that facilitates communication and the pedagogical work of teachers in the public institutions of the Society in Peru through the provision of a Zoom licence for institutions for one year, 5 laptops for teachers and assistance for internet access for students.
- Venezuela: Assistance to the students in the communities of El Peñón (Cumaná) and Coche (Caracas) to support them with new forms of distance learning with the provision of equipment and internet access.

- India: Support of an organic farming project in Bhokar to provide training to local farmers, set up compost bins in local villages, cultivate organic vegetables (including employment of local women), prepare vermi compost, and set up solar panels.
- Indonesia: Development of land of the local parish in Bandung, Indonesia, working with the local parishioners to grow food for their families, encourage the growth of self-esteem and prepare the infrastructure for appropriate land management.
- Philippines: Supporting a project to plant different varieties of bamboo, including the giant bamboo, along the riverbanks of the Marikina watershed system in the Philippines. This will provide food, fuel, and materials besides the beneficial effects on river bank stabilization and the climate.

In March 2021, the General Council agreed to a third round of funding from the Cor Unum COVID-19 Fund. For this round of funding, provinces were asked to submit applications in relation to the provision of vaccines, mental health projects, and economic development. These applications will be reviewed in mid-May with distribution of funds in early June.

Helen Harrington
Chief Financial Officer

UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65)



The 65th UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65) was held virtually from March 15-26, 2021. The priority theme was *“Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.”* Delegates to CSW65 for the Society of the Sacred Heart were Lisabeth Kelly and Sheila Smith rscj.

The Society of the Sacred Heart participated in CSW65 in three ways:

1. Jointly submitted a written statement to UN States on the elimination of violence against women
2. Virtually attended the CSW65 Civil Society Forum, which ran parallel to the official CSW government program
3. Co-sponsored a parallel event on domestic violence and degradation of our common home

Action for Haiti:

JCoR (Justice Coalition of Religious) at the United Nations, which includes the Society of the Sacred Heart, met with some religious congregations on the ground in Haiti and some members of the Confederación Latinoamericana de Religiosos (CLAR).

They wrote a letter that will hopefully open conversations with the Permanent Missions to the UN to which it is addressed, and motivate them to intervene generously and quickly in appropriate ways.

In the letter, JCoR expressed deep concern over the rapidly escalating unrest in the Republic, and sought support in facilitating a response that prioritizes the safety, well-being, and freedom of the Haitian people.



Justice Coalition of Religious

Justice at the heart of global transformation



H.E. Mrs. Linda Thomas-Greenfield,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative,
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

29 April 2021

Excellency,

As United Nations representatives of congregations of Catholic Sisters, Brothers, priests and partners in mission, many of whom have active ministries in Haiti, we write to express our deep concern over the rapidly escalating unrest in the Republic, and to seek your support in facilitating a response that prioritizes the safety, well-being, and freedom of the Haitian people. We have been alerted to the increasingly volatile situation on the ground by our colleagues in the Conference of Religious in Haiti and several of our ministry partners there. Over the last few weeks, we have been in close communication with them in order to listen to the experience of the Haitian people and to gain deeper insight into the complex and evolving circumstances with which they are grappling.

Here is what we are hearing...

There is one concern expressed by our mission partners in Haiti is security. People are living with the constant threat of random acts of violence – daily kidnappings, killings, and other forms of intimidation. They are avoiding traversing the streets – even to attend to daily needs – for fear that they will not return home alive.

There is no protection for citizens and no real governance of the country. With more than two thirds of the parliament dissolved, dictatorial rule by decree having ensued, the closure of the judiciary and tribunals, and rampant police corruption, no one is working for the safety and well-being of the people. Haiti is in a state of total chaos, the trajectory of which the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince has described as “a descent into hell.”

Earlier this month, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Haiti issued a long statement on the unrest and violence in Haiti. One sentence seems to capture the essence of what Haitians are experiencing on a daily basis. It reads: “...The country is at the edge of an explosion. The daily life of the people is death, assassinations, impunity and insecurity. Discontent is everywhere, in almost all areas.”

Our Haitian colleagues have expressed very clearly that, **given the current state of affairs, free and fair elections are impossible at this time.** The insistence of the United States and other members of the international community on expeditious conduct of elections is incompatible with what Haitians are experiencing on a daily basis. They know that free, fair,

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Update: Preparation for the High Level Political Forum

The Sacred Heart Delegation has begun preparation and training for participation in the High Level Political Forum on Social Development (HLPF) to be held from July 6-15, 2021.

The delegation comprises: Gloria Diaz Brochet (COL), Maria del Carmen Jamaica (COL), Miren Lumbreiras (ESP), Pilar Pavia (ESP), Chiaki Hatanaka (JPN), Yasuko Taguchi (JPN), Maricruz Trigueros (MEX), Noemi Escobar (MEX – educator of the Sacred Heart), Graciela Heymann (UN-NGO Volunteer), Sheila Smith (UN-NGO Representative), and Ana Blazquez Ubach (Interpreter). Members of the Sacred Heart delegation are from four of the UN States that will present a Voluntary National Review (VNR) in July. Each country's VNR highlights their progress in achieving the SDGs.

The Sacred Heart training involves:

- Becoming familiar with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will be reviewed at HLPF this year
- Analysing how the SDGs are integrated with province priorities and the four JPIC imperatives in Artisans of Hope
- Understanding the VNR process and the role of civil society
- Participating with other faith-based and civil society organizations by using the platforms for input available to civil society

Our goal in participating as a Sacred Heart delegation is to bring the voice and concerns of our peoples on the ground to the discussions at HLPF. We will do so through side-events, statements to UN States, analyzing the Voluntary National Reviews submitted by countries, and providing input into shadow reports. All of our work involves collaboration with others.

Resources



COVID-19 Vaccines: Resources for Church Leaders

The Vatican COVID-19 Commission published this resource that can be helpful for use in parishes, clinics, schools, social service agencies, and beyond.

[Click here to access the resource.](#)



Laudato Si' Week 2021, which was held on May 16-25, was the crowning event of the Special *Laudato Si'* Anniversary Year, and a celebration of the great progress the whole Church has made on its journey to ecological conversion.

Laudato Si' Week 2021 was also a time to reflect on what the COVID-19 pandemic is teaching us and on how we can prepare for the future with hope.

[Click here to access the general program and resources.](#)



JPIC
Learning
Hub

The website of the
JPIC Learning Hub
is now available:
<https://rscj-jpic.org>

**This is a work in progress.
We need your help to build the site.**

Send your contributions to: rscj.jpic@gmail.com

*Special prayers for these
places that cry
for peace and healing.*

Click on the links
for more information



<https://www.covid19india.org>



[DRCongo: A letter asking for
an end to the massacre in Beni](#)



[Haiti: Continuing unrest](#)



[Colombia protests](#)

*"In prayer we come to Him
with everything that
touches our life,
with the sufferings
and hopes of humanity."*

RSCJ Constitutions #20