



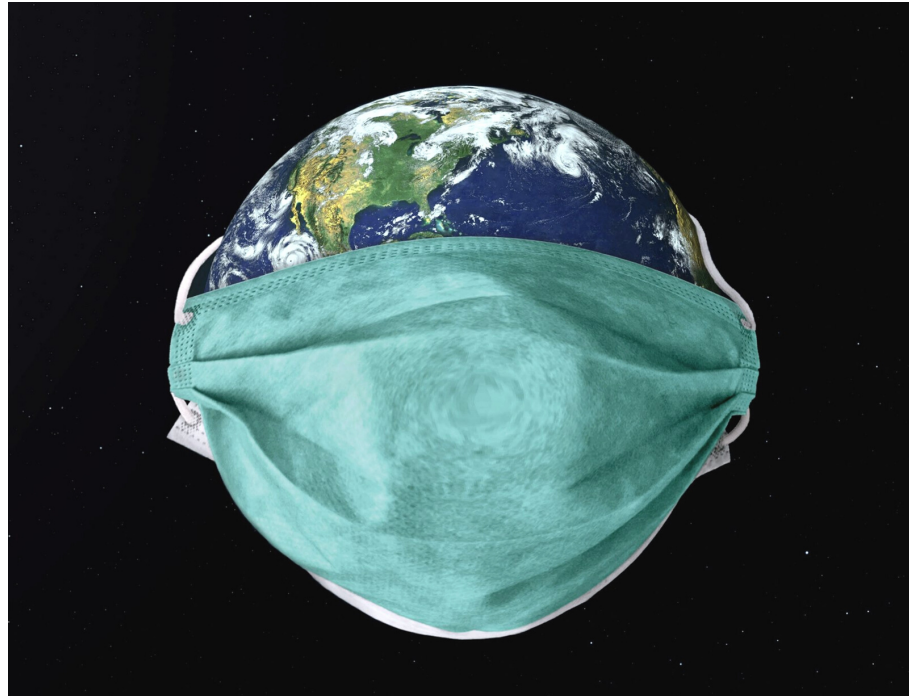
# SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER

Help A Child, P.O. Box 271 Oregon, WI 53575

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.*  
*Psalm 46:1-2, NIV*

This spring has been unlike any other. Like many of you, we are following stay-at-home guidelines, working from home, managing our kids' distance learning, and navigating our own feelings of loss and grief. But this we hold onto: God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

And so we thank God for our warm homes and food to eat, and we ask God to help us practice with others the kind of generosity He has shown to us. We share this story as a reminder that there is always work to be done in the name of Jesus. And we thank God for your partnership in this! Blessings to you and yours.



## COVID-19 in DRC: 'Just' Another Virus

*By Lineke Mook, International Communication Advisor, Help a Child*

"Good bye, take care," I hear myself say. I wave to my colleague before I end the call and then take a deep breath. There's a pile of paper in front of me. On it are the notes of the conversations with colleagues from different countries where Help a Child is working. These notes make one thing painfully clear: the poorest in the world are the ones losing out in this global disaster. Again.

Take DRC. This enormous country faces the almost impossible challenge to beat not one, not two, but three deadly viruses. In the ongoing fight against Ebola and measles, COVID-19 is 'only' a newcomer. Not that it's taken up lightly, of course. The largest cities have already gone into lockdown and the borders are closed, as colleagues Jonathan and Jean-Pierre tell me via a somewhat weak video call connection with our Help a Child office in Goma. *(turn page)*

All this was done quite unannounced, probably to prevent a large flow of migration like in India. That means that Jonathan and Jean-Pierre will not be able to be reunited with their families in the coming weeks.

My colleagues do not dwell too long on their personal suffering though. They are particularly concerned about the poorest. Many people are daily laborers and collect just enough money in one day to pay for a meal for that day. Most of the daily work has now come to a standstill; there is simply no buffer, no safety net, and therefore, no food.

Another concern is the medical capacity of the country. The country's only COVID-19 test center is located in the capital, Kinshasa. Because of the distances, it can take 10 days for someone with symptoms to be tested and to receive the results of that test. They don't need to explain more.

"What can we do? What options do you see?" I ask them.

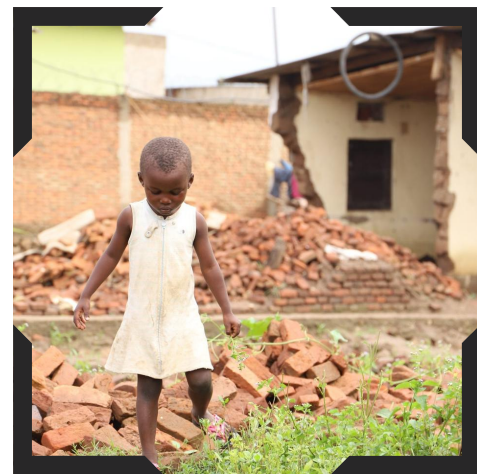
"NGOs like Help a Child play a very important role in this

situation," says Jonathan. "In our project areas, we have mapped out the most vulnerable people. That insight is lacking at government level."

"Secondly, we are already doing a lot of WASH and awareness raising. We train health workers to reduce Ebola and other diseases. Therefore, a first step would be to train these health workers on COVID-19. They can sensitize the population in the rural areas, because most people are not even aware of this new virus at all. We want to distribute soap and water and install handwashing facilities in public places such as markets and schools, and make sure that hygiene can be respected. Over the past few days we have been working with our partners on a plan and now we are waiting for funding."

"At the same time, we are concerned that many poor people will be hit harder by the measures than by the virus itself," adds Jean-Pierre.

"Prices have tripled in just a few days time. People will more likely die from hunger than from corona." ■



### ***Final notes:***

Thank you for your responses to the survey! Your input helps us know what you want to hear about. And it's clear you're interested in how Help a Child is working for the spiritual needs of sponsored children and families. Look for more communication on that soon!

You get letters from your sponsored child, and they'd love to hear back from you! Tell them about your family, send a picture, tell them how you're praying for them. All letters can be sent to:

*Name and number  
of sponsor child  
C/O Bethany Sherstad  
Help a Child  
PO Box 271  
Oregon, WI 53575*