

Trócaire

CAPACITY STATEMENT

RESPONDING TO COVID-19 IN THE WORLD'S MOST VULNERABLE COUNTRIES



Clinical Health care workers in Kenya, sensitising the community on COVID-19. Information and awareness is important to prevent the spread of the pandemic. Photo : Victoria Nthenge

THE COVID-19 HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

“Covid-19 is threatening the whole of humanity – and the whole of humanity must fight back. Global action and solidarity are crucial.”

Global Humanitarian Response Plan – Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic is a public health crisis unlike any other in the modern era. Global confirmed cases now exceed 3.5m, with over 245,000 deaths and 213 countries affected worldwide¹. Many countries, especially low-income, fragile or conflict-affected countries, are experiencing devastating public health impacts, associated gendered socio-economic impacts and the prospect of a slow and difficult global economic recovery. A recovery which will cause severe hardship on the poorest part of the world’s population.

For many of the countries where Trócaire works, the pandemic exacerbates already complex humanitarian and development needs. Communities are already coping with food insecurity and malnutrition, natural disasters, conflict and displacement as well as the lack of access to basic services such as health, water and sanitation, housing and education.

In some cases, government institutions are fragile or non-functioning and fundamental rights and freedoms are not protected. All of these factors make responding to the spread of Covid-19 extremely challenging.

There are now indications that, unless rapid and sustained action is taken, the Covid-19 crisis will lead to massive food insecurity and famine in some parts of the world.² It is estimated that an additional \$6.7 billion³ is needed to tackle the Covid 19 crisis, though a long-term recovery plan will necessitate far more resources.

The poorest and most vulnerable are already being disproportionately impacted in all countries but the effects of this are likely to be felt even more keenly in the lowest-income countries, where 45.2% of people already live below the international poverty line of \$1.90 a day.⁴

¹ <https://covid19.who.int/>, 06 May 2020

² <https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-chief-warns-hunger-pandemic-covid-19-spreads-statement-un-security-council>

³ The Global Humanitarian Response Plan for Covid-19 <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-humanitarian-response-plan-covid-19-april-december-2020-ghrp-may-update-0>

⁴ <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/category/LIC>

TROCAIRE'S RESPONSE

Trócaire is currently delivering life-saving humanitarian responses and long-term development programmes in eighteen countries in Africa, Asia, Middle East and Central America.

Humanitarian preparedness and response are central to Trócaire's mission and strategy. Trócaire focuses on responding to the needs of the most vulnerable in a crisis. We provide a range of emergency supports to crisis-affected communities including basic needs, shelter and healthcare.

In doing this we prioritise ensuring women and girls are protected. Trócaire adheres to the Sphere Humanitarian Charter, the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) and the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross Movement and Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief (1994), underscored by International Humanitarian Law.

In addition, Trócaire delivers long-term development programmes focussing on the core sectors of protecting human rights and democratic accountability, promoting equitable access to and use of natural resources such as land and water and promoting women's empowerment and preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Trócaire uses integrated programming across these sectors to ensure communities benefit from coherent responses across the development-humanitarian nexus.

In responding to Covid 19, Trócaire is leveraging our expertise in protection and women's empowerment. We do this by embedding Safe Programming (Protection Mainstreaming) into all our responses to ensure that we avoid causing harm. In doing so we respect people's safety, dignity, rights and access to impartial assistance. We deliver programmes that are built on the participation and empowerment of crisis-affected communities.

Our women's empowerment approach includes a survivor-centred, multi-level and multi-sector approach to protecting the rights of women, girls and at-risk groups. We have a focus on preventing, mitigating and responding to GBV, and ensuring women's active participation in decision making that affects their lives.

Partnership : Supporting local actors to respond

Trócaire's central approach to programming is our partnership approach which we have developed and honed over the last forty-six years. This delivery model uniquely positions us to deliver a rapid and coherent response to the Covid-19 crisis through working with our established networks of local partners, including women-centred organisations.

Together we can implement a response in a context where international access is extremely limited. Our partners are often situated within the communities we work with, providing valuable intelligence on the experiences and needs of communities, and an ability to respond directly and timely.

Through our partnership approach Trócaire provides:

- Partner due diligence and capacity assessments using our Partner Capacity Assessment Framework,
- Fund/partner grant management, monitoring and oversight,
- Organisational, financial and technical capacity strengthening,
- Remote accompaniment of partners for programme delivery and grant management,
- Ensure local partners are guided by international standards (Sphere, CHS, IASC guidance etc),
- Local advocacy and linkages with international policy processes.



Checking temperatures for fever symptoms to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Habiba Mohamed, one of Trócaire's health workers, checks the temperature of Mohamed Abdi Ali at Luuq hospital, in the Gedo region of Somalia. Photo : Trócaire.

OUR STRATEGIES

Direct Responses to Covid 19:

Risk Communication and Community Awareness and Mobilisation

Trócaire is pivoting existing programmes to minimise the risk of excessive mortality and morbidity related to Covid-19 through community awareness, engagement and mobilisation. All Trócaire programmes are mobilising communities to promote societal behaviour change to prevent and mitigate the spread of the pandemic. This is done through ensuring community access to reliable and accurate information, and proactive Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) campaigns.

Trócaire is supporting multiple means of raising awareness. These include radio campaigns, using church and mosque loudspeakers, hotlines, podcasts and webinars, and even house to house calls where feasible. These messages are being conveyed through a wide variety of actors including officials, village development committees, women’s groups and church leaders. Training is also provided to staff, local partners and community focal points to operate safely whilst minimising risk to themselves and beneficiaries.



Kaddy Mansaray, Chair of the Funkia Market Women's Association provides COVID prevention information at the market with a poster and megaphone. Trócaire's local partner SEND Sierra Leone is engaging communities on COVID prevention measures.
Photo : Jonathan Bundu / Trócaire

Access to Water and Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) services

Trócaire is conducting intensive campaigns on handwashing with soap and personal hygiene. We are supporting existing WASH systems to ensure services and products are available for confined households, vulnerable groups, exposed collective sites and public spaces.

When required, Trócaire is distributing hand-washing materials, restoring and repairing water supply and handwashing stations. We are making sure they are accessible to children and people with disabilities in community spaces e.g. health facilities, schools, markets etc.



Handwashing station at Akara Health Centre in Somalia as part of COVID-19 prevention activities.
Photo : Trócaire

Supporting and strengthening health-systems

In Somalia, Trócaire has been supporting the delivery of high quality essential health services, including management of health facilities, mobile clinics, maternity care and regional and district health-system strengthening in the Gedo region for over ten years.

In response to the Covid-19 crisis, we are working with local health authorities to do:

- Screening at the entrance of health facilities. To date 6,890 individuals (3,869 females, 3,021 males) were screened at health facilities and border points.
- Identification and equipping of isolation centres;
- Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) for staff at health facilities
- GBV response through remote training for focal points on GBV hotline



Trócaire's COVID prevention activities in Belet Xawa, Somalia. Photo : Trócaire

Responses to Covid 19 Secondary Impacts:

The Covid-19 pandemic is producing a range of socio-economic impacts going far beyond the immediate public health impacts. Restrictions introduced to curb the virus are having devastating effects particularly on urban dwellers whose livelihoods are at risk. Rural small scale famers, mainly women, who are precariously reliant on having access to their farms and market are also affected. IDPs and refugees living in crowded camps, lacking access to essential services and supports, are also being impacted.

Emergency Food security and Livelihoods (EFSL)

In response to Covid 19, Trócaire is adopting innovative and locally adapted responses to food security and livelihoods needs. This involves setting up organic vertical gardens and perma-gardens, piloting weather-resistant crops and polytunnels, investing in women's collectives and transferring cash assistance through local money lenders.

Trócaire is supporting small-scale farmers to protect their production, plantation and harvesting through the distribution of essential inputs (cash, vouchers, seeds and home gardening kits). We also support access to markets, input stockpiling (seeds and tools) and information sharing on post-harvesting storage and food preservation practices.

As increased lockdown prevents people from harvesting their crops, accessing markets and participation in the seasonal cropping will be critical. Remote technical support to farmers is being channelled through messages, videos via smart mobile phones or podcasts.

Non-farming activities will include key support to Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and existing Village Savings and Loans (VSLAs) and small businesses. This will be done through a range of measures including the provision of capital, linkages and engagement with potential e-commerce delivery providers and training.

Access to financial services, in particular credit, is being supported to keep small businesses open, especially for women who are often excluded from the formal finance economy. Cash transfers will be given and linked to other programme activities to meet immediate food and cash needs. Moreover, Trócaire will support the connection with existing Social Protection systems and advocate for the inclusion of the poorest households and women into these systems.

Food and Nutrition Security (FNS)

Trócaire will implement immediate actions to maintain food access and security, including social protection measures and emergency food assistance that protect the most vulnerable, including infants and children, the elderly, people with disabilities. Special attention will be made to children who might lose access to school-based nutrition programmes and thus their primary source of nutrition.

Interventions to develop and strengthen existing “online and offline” platforms for dissemination of key information and messages promoting and supporting optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, particularly breastfeeding, will be put in place.

In the face of movement restrictions and the consequent impact on food supply chains, Trócaire will explore market supply chains coordination and safe access as well as consider distribution of nutrition supplies and Infection Prevention and Control goods. We will target the most vulnerable groups, especially breastfeeding mothers.



With lockdown in place due to COVID, many in Kenya can't work, and are now going hungry. Here, Leah Andiva receives food rations from John Ndura of Trócaire's local partner SJDJ at St. Joseph Christ the King Church in Kangemi.
Photo : Reuben Wachira

Women’s Empowerment, Protection and GBV

In the context of COVID-19, Trócaire is working to ensure that women’s and girls’ safety and wellbeing is protected. This is being done by maintaining and extending the reach of essential and lifesaving GBV services, and by strengthening health systems and institutions to ensure the provision of essential GBV health and psychosocial responses.

Trócaire has implemented continuity plans to ensure that the provision of lifesaving GBV services (including psychosocial support, GBV case management services and referrals) can continue and expand.

Adaptations include:

- Implementing rigorous infection prevention and control measures,
- Pivoting to provide essential GBV services through health facilities,
- Helplines / phone-based case management and psychosocial support,
- Updating referral pathways to highlight existing / new services,
- Safety planning with at-risk women and girls for lockdown restrictions.

Trócaire’s programming promotes women’s empowerment and seeks to ensure women’s opinions and needs are included in all decision making.

Protecting Human Rights and Civic Space

Emergency measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 should always be carried out in strict accordance with human rights standards, on a temporary basis, and in a way that is specific and proportionate to the public health risk.

Governments globally are taking measures to restrict human rights and civil society space within the framework of a national Covid-19 response. In some of our programming countries (in particular non-democratic and authoritarian states) there is concern States will use the crisis to extend their power, exert further control and further erode civil society space.

In these situations, Trócaire is tracking and monitoring the situation, identifying situations such as:

- Targeting of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and particular minority groups,
- Usage of unlimited emergency powers,
- Targeting of critics,
- Excessive use of force,
- Mass-digital surveillance by security agencies,
- Imposing censorship and preventing access to reliable health information.

Where threats are acute, Trócaire is supporting provision of security and psychosocial support to HRDs, and advocacy and litigation to challenge this.



Nangeya Magi (40) member of a protection committee in DRC. The protection committee in Butiaba village in Ituri support survivors of sexual and gender based violence to access services provided by Trócaire partners. They provide a 'listening point' in the village which is a safe place for survivors to seek help and access GBV specialised services.

Photo : Garry Walsh / Trócaire



*IDP Camps in Kachin State in Northern Myanmar are currently closed for visitors. Normally you can walk in and out but because of the threat of contagion the gates have been locked closed.
Photo : RANIR*

IMPACT

- Since the beginning of the Covid-19 epidemic, Trócaire has supported local organizations providing Covid-19 prevention and response services to affected populations;
- In 2019, emergency programme supported by Trócaire reached almost 2million people across Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East;
- Since 2010, Trócaire has been running 27 health facilities in the Gedo region, Somalia, serving over 150,000 people annually with health and nutrition services;
- 166,000 people living in extremely dangerous environments in Sudan received primary healthcare provided by Trócaire partners;
- Trócaire disaster risk reduction activities reduced the vulnerability to natural disaster of 115,000 people in Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua;
- In 2019 alone, Trócaire provided multi-annual grant support and capacity building to 350 civil society organisations and local authorities, supporting localised emergency response and development programming;
- In Myanmar, Trócaire designed a localisation transition that, in 2018, handed over our largest grant to a local partner, after having significantly strengthened their capacity.

EXPERTISE / CAPACITY

Trócaire has fully staffed country offices in fifteen countries and support remote programming in Pakistan, Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel and South Kordofan. We work through multi-disciplinary teams which are designed to provide maximum financial, management and technical support to our local partners. These staff are part of adaptive and agile teams which can be mobilised rapidly or deployed individually to provide specific technical or operational services.

Our dedicated specialist teams at HQ level bring critical strategic and technical expertise as well as surge capacity to support rapid responses. Our staff can also act as mentors, instructors or as part of training teams. We provide training, advisory services and mentoring on our niche areas such as Protection in humanitarian response, Women’s Empowerment and Citizen’s Advocacy.

Through reciprocal arrangements with our international Caritas counterparts, Trócaire accesses specialist technical experts on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Shelter and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) where required for emergency response.



Handwashing awareness sessions in IDP camps in Kachin State, Northern Myanmar with local partner KMSS. Mr. King Lar washes his hands in Maina IDP Camp.
Photo: Ms. San Ja



COVID-19 prevention campaigns in Sierra Leone.
Photo : Jonathan Bundu

TRÓCAIRE GLOBAL

Trócaire is an international development and humanitarian NGO headquartered in Ireland with offices in eighteen locations in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Central America. Trócaire was established in 1973 as the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Trócaire delivers high quality, cutting-edge programmes through a dynamic model of partnership with local church and secular civil society organisations in our countries of operation. With annual funding in excess of €70m from public fundraising and a variety of institutional donors, Trócaire currently supports 350 programmes worldwide. Our programmes focus on sustainable livelihoods and resource rights, women's empowerment/GBV and humanitarian response.

Trócaire is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards and safeguarding as well as excellence in financial management, transparency and accountability.



Handwashing awareness sessions in IDP camps in Kachin State, Northern Myanmar with local partner KMSS. Daw Ndu Roi Shan and Daw Hpau Chyang Kaw at Lawng Hkang Camp.
Photo: Ms. Seng Nu



Left : Volunteers provide information about COVID prevention in IDP camps in Kachin state in Myanmar.
Photo : Yawng Htang / RANIR

Above: Recording a radio programme on COVID 19 in Makeni, Sierra Leone. *Photo : Gibrillatu M. Bangura, AAD-SL*

TRACK RECORD: KEY PROGRAMMES

Community Health and Nutrition through Local Governance and Empowerment (CHANGE)

Country: Somalia (Gedo region)
Donor: DFID (SHINE Programme)
Total value : £7.1m
Start/End Date: 2016-2021

Trócaire is part of a consortium of actors delivering the CHANGE component of DFID's SHINE programme. We are the lead implementer for the delivery of high quality essential health services, including management of health facilities, mobile clinics, maternity care and regional and district system strengthening in the Gedo region of Somalia.

The programme reaches over 200,000 people annually. It uses quality of care data as the focus of ongoing system strengthening work and advocacy with Government at the local and national level. The programme includes support to community governance structures including District Health Boards (DHBs) and the CHANGE programme continues to lead the way in developing systems at the district and regional level, building local government ownership leading to mobilisation of resources from the community such as to support renovations and training on accurate forecasting of supply needs, reducing wastage.

Strategies to support the protection of women, girls and at-risk groups and respond to GBV are embedded in Trócaire's healthcare model. These include the creation of private consultation rooms in Trócaire health facilities; establishment of referral pathways; Clinical Management of Rape, including provision of Kit 3; and ongoing training for key stakeholders on survivor-centred responses and psychosocial first aid.

INSPIRE (Interventions to Support Protection and Resilience)

Country: Multiple
Donor: Irish Aid (HPP)
Total Value: EUR 3.9 million
Start/End Date: 01/01/2019 – 31/12/2021

The Irish Aid (HPP) grant is a multisector humanitarian intervention that reaches 546,943 programme participants in protracted crisis settings in eight countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Myanmar, Somalia, South Kordofan, South Sudan and Uganda.

A core component of this response is the INSPIRE programme, which focuses on protection of women, girls and at-risk groups, including specialised GBV prevention and response, in fragile and conflict-affected contexts as well as situations of protracted displacement.

Across all contexts, the intervention is done in partnership with local organisations, and the model is rooted in local context and culture, with a focus on community-led and locally adapted supports that

are underpinned by survivor-centred principles. As such, intervention strategies vary, but include a focus on response activities, for example:

- Safe spaces for women and girls,
- Specialised, focused and non-focused psychosocial support,
- GBV case management,
- Health responses to GBV, including clinical management of rape,
- Survivor-centred legal aid and provision of dignity kits).

There is also a focus on transforming systems and social norms (e.g. awareness raising and skills development with service providers, community leaders, etc.).

In Ituri Province, DRC, the response combines a one-stop shop model, where survivors and those at risk can access medical, psychosocial, legal and socio-economic support in one location, with outreach and mobile services to more remote areas.

In Kachin, Myanmar, the response is centred on group-based psychosocial support, recreational activities and life skills sessions in women's and girls' spaces, along with referral and case management. In Lebanon, individual and group psychosocial support has included Participatory Action Research led by women living as refugees in Beirut and the Bekaa Valley where they used art to collectively explore their experiences of coping.

Across the programme, Trócaire and partners have explored how to safely and ethically measure outcomes within specialised GBV programming, and have focused on tools to measure individual coping capacity, using a questionnaire administered by a skilled psychosocial service provider. For example, in Kachin State in Myanmar, 69% of women participants in the GBV programme maintained coping capacity and 26% improved coping capacity in the context of ongoing adversity and conflict-related stressors.

Making Progress Visible: Applying Design Thinking to Safely and Systematically Measure the Inter-Agency GBV Minimum Standards

Country: Global, Myanmar, South Sudan

Donor: ELRHA Humanitarian Innovation Fund (funded by DFID, MFA and SIDA)

Total Value: GBP 249,643

Start/End Date: 01/01/2020 – 30/09/2022 (33 months)

This consortium project is led by the Global Women's Institute, and implemented in partnership with the GBV Area of Responsibility and Trócaire's local partners TOCH (South Sudan) and KMSS (Myanmar). It involves designing and testing new M&E tools for GBV programmes in emergencies.

The pilot is expected to result in a new, easily accessible, safe, ethical and survivor-centred M&E framework that is appropriate for use by all GBV actors in emergencies. This framework will be a companion guide to the *Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Programmes*, (2019).

The development and implementation of the Inter-Agency Minimum Standards on GBViE are a key deliverable of the Call to Action on Protection against GBV in Emergencies, under outcome 5 on

specialised GBV programming. Representing the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence, Trócaire was a core member of the GBV Minimum Standards Task Team, and in this project is providing technical input on the development of the M&E framework and prototype design, along with leading on coordinating testing with local organisations, TOCH and KMSS, at the country level.

The intention is to improve the usability of the *Minimum Standards* indicators through an iterative, field-focused, human-centred design approach to develop and prototype data collection and visualisation tools, with a particular focus on outcome-level indicators.

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