

June 2020

Easter holidays in confinement



Easter holidays used to be a time of celebration for young pupils who had the opportunity to spend two weeks without having to wake early to go to school. Now Covid-19 has turned it into a time of confinement, where they are now eager to go to school. Social media has remained the only means of contact.

“I never thought I could spend a whole week without leaving this compound”, exclaims one of 5 students who live with us at home. But the number of cases keeps increasing. Schools and churches remain closed. We still celebrate our Sunday devotions in families or online. Yesterday, we had the opportunity to celebrate the Holy Communion. But only the pastor had to stay 3 hours waiting for members to come one by one, take the Holy Communion and go back home.

At least we are grateful that the Ebola epidemic that reappeared in the East of the DRC in April has been officially declared over by the Minister of Health last Thursday. Meanwhile a new Ebola epidemic has started in the North-West of the country.

What has been going on in the area of relief and food security among partners?

1. Relief work among partner churches

As if Covid-19 were not sufficient, some parts of the continent have been affected by floods and land sliding, causing casualties



and loss of property. In Uvira, with support from CBM, the CBCA was able to assist the victims of floods with food, mattresses and iron sheets while providing counseling to survivors living with trauma. In Rwanda and South Sudan, partners are working on projects to assist people deeply affected by the lockdown due to Covid-19, especially elderly pastors

and widows, who have no alternative to survive during this time of confinement.



Another project is in the pipeline to provide food

assistance to returnees in South Sudan both in terms of food assistance but also as a first step towards food security and livelihood activities.

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2. Ecological farming and vocational training



Despite Covid-19 restrictions, cocoa nurseries in Buyinga have produced their first seedlings and they are ready for distribution to pygmy farmers.

On the other hand, vocational training provides also the opportunity to sensitize project beneficiaries



on preventive measures against Covid-19. People living with disabilities develop good abilities when they commit themselves to some professions such as cooking as they can help them to develop their own enterprise or work in restaurants.

3. Village saving and loan associations, an opportunity for access to small credits.



The VSLA program has been wholeheartedly adopted by most of our beneficiaries and during the last quarter,

many associations have distributed the result of their savings and interest. This has helped them to cope with this time of confinement. The challenge is that they cannot meet as usual during this time of Covid-19.

4. Food security projects.

The introduction of kitchen gardens and small animals such as rabbits and chicken in Muku has



contributed to improve food diversity. Small animals not only facilitate access to proteins and money for small needs but they also produce manure which helps in soil fertilization. Our staff visit farmers regularly to provide advice and treatment to fight against animal diseases which very often discourage our farmers.

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Cassava and sweet potatoes harvest in Uvira was very encouraging as the fields were not much affected by the floods.

The food security projects in Rwanda and Kenya came to an end this year.

Despite the confinement, we have been able to conduct end of project evaluation online and we have started planning need assessment for forthcoming initiatives.

5. Meetings and visits

With Covid-19, all movements have suddenly come to a stop. However, new technology of information has made it possible to keep in contact with all our partners and co-workers.

We had our Africa regional team meeting last week and even though we could not meet face to face, it was a real occasion of updates and new planning with readjustments taking into account the current situation. Our weekly chapel with colleagues in Canada helps us to feel part of the CBM family despite the distance and the confinement.



We are developing our network of development officers from partner churches which will help us to exchange experiences while waiting for the opportunity to meet face to face. That network will help us to get access to field activities in Rwanda, Kenya and South Sudan.

Perspectives for 2020

We keep praying that the situation may come back to normal so that we may pursue our dreams around the following activities:

- Create a network of development officers in the partner churches to facilitate mutual learning and exchange of experiences for the sake of capacity building in project management in the context of Covid-19
- Visit to South Sudan and FEBAC projects
- Accompany AEBR and ACC&S and CBCA in need assessment and new project development
- Remain alert on situation of vulnerability among partner churches.

Word of appreciation

We are grateful that in a situation where the whole world is affected by Covid-19, CBM is still committed to hold the hand of its partners so that they may grow together and go together through the dark times.

Concluding remark

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up (Galatians 5:9)

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If you wish to become a Partner in Mission, please contact Barbara Keys at: bkeys@cbmin.org or you can use the address and phone number listed below.

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