

Our COVID Calls

World Vision reaches the most vulnerable in the world, helping children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice

We challenge you to strengthen Australia's impact and get behind these recommendations:

- 1. Support an inclusive economic recovery in the Indo-Pacific**
- 2. Prioritise ending violence against children**
- 3. Build the stability and resilience of fragile communities**
- 4. Contribute to the global humanitarian response**

Our COVID Calls

World Vision reaches the most vulnerable people in the world, helping children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. But COVID-19 threatens to undo the great progress we have made. We welcome the Government's aid rethink "Partnerships for Recovery", pivoting Australia's international development work to COVID-19 response and recovery.

World Vision already partners with the Government in our shared vision for a stable, prosperous and resilient Indo-Pacific in the wake of COVID-19. We stand ready to further support Australia's response to the challenges facing our region and the world's most fragile contexts.

World Vision works on the frontlines of the coronavirus crisis in the most vulnerable communities. We see the challenges first hand and know the areas of greatest need.

The scale of impact is tremendous, and it requires a response above the ordinary.

To further build on your COVID-19 response, we urge you to get behind these recommendations:

1. Support an inclusive economic recovery in the Indo-Pacific
2. Prioritise ending violence against children
3. Build the stability and resilience of fragile communities
4. Contribute to the global humanitarian response

Children are the hidden victims of COVID-19. The serious challenges far beyond the pandemic – the hidden impacts on children – are not yet front of mind. Unless we act now to address the impacts on children, such as the increased risk of violence, exploitation and disruptions to education, then the repercussions of COVID-19 will permanently damage our future.

The Government's vision for a stable, resilient and prosperous Indo-Pacific can't be achieved without an intentional focus on children, the region's future leaders.



Regional COVID-19 snapshot

World Vision’s rapid assessments in Asia show COVID-19 has devastating impacts on lives and livelihoods.

World Vision surveyed 26,269 people in mid-2020 for a first-hand understanding of COVID-19 impacts. This survey spanned nine countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, The Philippines and Sri Lanka.

Here are our top findings from this original COVID-19 research:

Loss of livelihoods is the biggest impact of COVID-19, forcing many households to reduce their food intake or even sell assets.



93% of Asian households have had their livelihood impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Casual wage workers, the largest segment of many Asian economies, are the hardest hit.



Monthly incomes have dropped drastically In Nepal, average monthly income has dropped 86% from US\$199 to US\$27 since the pandemic.



Only one in three households in Asia are now able to afford basic food supplies.

Children are the invisible victims as reduced incomes force many parents and caregivers to take desperate measures that harm children.



One in three children in Bangladesh are being sent to beg or work in high-risk jobs.

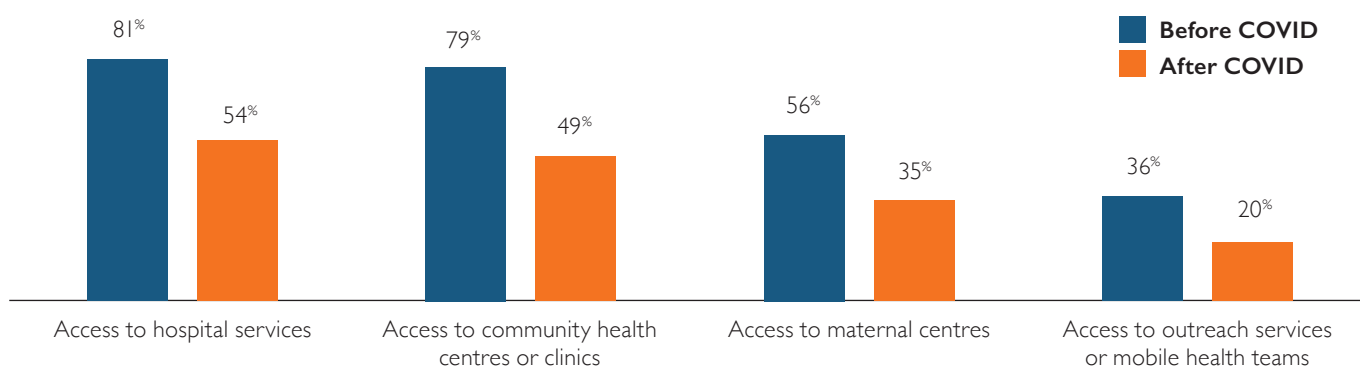


69% of children experienced physical or psychological punishment from caregivers in the past month.



28% of children are eating two meals a day or less in the wake of the pandemic.

Access to basic health services has drastically decreased due to reduced incomes, lockdowns and overstretched health systems.



Based on these findings, up to 85 million households across Asia have no or limited food stocks, 110 million children are going hungry, and 8 million children have been pushed into child labour or begging.

Urgent action is needed.

Support an inclusive economic recovery in the Indo-Pacific

Empower vulnerable households, especially women, in PNG, Solomon Islands, Indonesia and Bangladesh to rebuild livelihoods through inclusive markets.

Why

For many countries in the Indo-Pacific, economic impacts exceed the health crisis of COVID-19. It is estimated \$250 billion will be slashed from trade across industries in the Asia-Pacific region. Thousands will lose incomes and livelihoods, making them more vulnerable to future crises. World Vision data shows that loss of livelihoods is the biggest concern of households. As families struggle to cope with disrupted incomes, our findings show that many households are choosing to eat less and are even turning to child labour and child marriage.

What

World Vision welcomes Australia's focus on economic recovery in "Partnerships for Recovery". We recommend this should be built on inclusive, sustainable growth. The region's economy can only fully recover if markets are strengthened and made more inclusive. This would broaden trade opportunities, build future market resilience and empower people to lift themselves out of poverty.

We recommend Australia's work in market systems be scaled up to support markets to better service poor households, with a real focus on supporting marginalised people's participation in emerging markets, especially women.

Australia's market-based programming in developing countries has the potential to secure sustainable livelihoods for millions of people in the Indo-Pacific. But current approaches often focus too narrowly on macro market forces, looking only at high-level system change. In doing so, these programs can neglect to build the capacity of the marginalised to participate in those markets so they can earn incomes, which in turn reduces poverty and reinforces regional stability.

How

Australia should scale up projects that have a dual focus of improving how markets function and supporting the poor to participate in those markets. The Government's work with the private sector to strengthen markets in the region is delivering strong results, but this could be strengthened by

equipping those excluded from the market system (such as people living in poverty, women and youth) with the skills and knowledge to participate in markets.

World Vision has proven this approach in the region with our Inclusive Market Systems Development approach. In Indonesia, for example, annual incomes of participating households increased 265 percent in just two years. As part of the regional economic recovery from COVID-19, we recommend that this inclusive market systems approach be expanded to ensure recovery efforts are as inclusive as possible. Ensuring that funding facilities are designed to support both markets and households will broaden trade opportunities and make the regional economy more resilient.

World Vision sees potential to develop new or expand existing programs across the Indo-Pacific, with a focus on PNG, Solomon Islands, Indonesia and Bangladesh, to target both densely and widespread populations, all of whom are greatly affected by the economic downturn.

In response to COVID-19, World Vision is supporting the economic recovery of 70 countries by helping save and rebuild livelihoods and implementing a variety of cash, voucher and savings interventions. Alongside this market-focused support, World Vision's microfinance subsidiary, VisionFund, is helping one million micro- and small-business owners and savings groups in 28 countries to recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19.



Prioritise ending violence against children

Safeguard Pacific children from increased risk of violence during and after lockdowns by investing \$55 million in specific programs.

Why

Violence against children is at epidemic proportions in the Pacific region. COVID-19 increases this risk.

More than 70 percent, or 4 million children across eight Pacific countries, experience violent discipline at home. This includes a staggering 2.8 million (75 percent of the child population) in PNG alone. One in 10 adolescent girls in the region experience sexual violence.

World Vision anticipates a major spike in the cases of children experiencing physical, emotional and sexual violence, both under lockdown and in the months and years to come. We have already received anecdotal evidence of a spike in household violence since the pandemic. Not responding to this significant social challenge undermines Australia's relationships with the Pacific and its responsiveness to community needs in the region.

Ending violence against children has a triple dividend: it immediately improves the lives of vulnerable children, builds their health, capacity and productivity for future life stages, and lays the foundations for strong development outcomes for the next generation.

What

Violence against children in the Asia-Pacific region costs \$231 billion (or two percent of regional GDP). But it attracts only 0.1 percent of Australian aid. We call on the Government to invest \$55 million in the next three years in programs to reduce violence against children in the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

World Vision commends the Government for its work as a strong advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment through the aid program. This is especially important as societies feel the

strain of COVID-19. While World Vision welcomes the focus on reducing violence against women, we urge the Government to have a specific twin focus on ending violence against children. By preventing violence from occurring in childhood, adult violence can also be reduced.

How

Violence against children can be prevented. NGOs, churches and community organisations have worked tirelessly to prevent and address violence against children. There are proven models, such as World Vision's Channels of Hope for Gender and Channels of Hope for Child Protection, which work through existing faith-based networks to promote healthy, positive relationships. Such models can be scaled across the Pacific to change community attitudes and reduce violence against both children and women.

In Vanuatu, World Vision works with churches and Sunday schools to teach respectful relationships and non-violence. The program has been well received by teachers, parents and religious leaders. The curriculum helps reduce bullying behaviour and improve attitudes towards girls, aiming to reduce violence against women and children.



Build the stability and resilience of fragile communities

Support three multi-year resilience programs so fragile communities can withstand current and future shocks in the wake of COVID-19.

Why

We applaud the Government's deep commitment to our Pacific neighbours. But we also recognise that global stability, not just regional stability, is important for Australia's interests and for the global fight against poverty.

Even before COVID-19, humanitarian crises were lasting longer and affecting more people. The average length of humanitarian responses increased from about five years in 2014 to nine years in 2018. These communities now face yet another crisis: COVID-19.

COVID-19 deepens the vulnerability of already unstable and conflict-prone communities. It may even create new fragility hotspots. More than 80 percent of the world's poorest people will live in these fragile contexts by 2030, so it is more important than ever to build their resilience to social, economic and environmental shocks.

What

Durable solutions – not short-term “band-aid” responses – are needed in these fragile places. Multi-year, resilience-focused programs improve the economic, social and environmental resilience of communities and households so they can cope with multiple crises and avoid conflict.

Resilience programs strengthen coping strategies, diversify livelihoods, make agriculture more productive and increase food security. This is critical to address the root causes of vulnerability and to avoid future outbreaks of violence in the wake of COVID-19.

NGOs like World Vision actively work with communities in fragile contexts. We urge the Government to directly support NGOs in fragile contexts, who work with communities on the ground and understand the challenges first hand.

How

We call on the Government to support three multi-year, community-focused resilience programs in the most fragile contexts in the world such as Somalia, Syria, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Iraq. Multi-year planning and funding lowers administrative costs and creates long-term solutions in the wake of COVID-19.

World Vision strongly recommends the Australian Government maintains a focus on building resilience in fragile contexts. It's important to regional and global stability and the scale of humanitarian need. The Australian Government has already funded multi-year resilience programs in Somalia, for example, and this legacy should be built on, given the promising results.

The Somali Resilience Program (SomReP) supports families to withstand shocks such as drought by diversifying their livelihoods, improving their risk management and supporting other coping mechanisms. Despite a prolonged drought, project participants reduced their use of negative coping strategies and experienced greater food security and resilience than those outside the program.



Contribute to the global humanitarian response

Give Australia's fair share – \$252 million – to the UN COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

Why

COVID-19 is a global crisis needing a global response. The pandemic threatens all of humanity – so all humanity must fight back.

Australia has shown leadership globally by funding the development of a COVID-19 vaccine and pioneering a global inquiry into the root causes of the pandemic. We call for similar leadership for Australia to stand with the rest of the world and support the humanitarian effort.

This global response should include prioritising hot spots, such as places affected by conflict and crowded refugee camps where social distancing is near impossible.

What

We call on Australia to contribute its fair share – \$252 million (or US\$179m) – to the United Nations COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. This is based on the UN call for countries to contribute to the US\$10.3 billion needed, proportionate to their wealth.

This is the UN's largest ever humanitarian appeal.

This funding would provide essential laboratory materials for COVID-19 testing, supplies to protect health workers and medical equipment to treat the sick. It would bring water and sanitation to places that desperately need it in the world's poorest countries, and help prevent COVID-19 aftershocks causing famines in the world's hunger hotspots.

As of the end of August, 2020, Australia has contributed US\$25.8 million to the international humanitarian response. This is below comparable countries like Japan (US\$207m), the UK (US\$181m), Germany (US\$175m) and even Kuwait (US\$36m).

While Australia's international COVID-19 recovery effort is focused on the Indo-Pacific, the humanitarian response should be global, supporting people in greatest need. This is a fundamental principle of humanitarian work.

The health, humanitarian and economic challenges arising from the pandemic require solidarity and a global response at a magnitude never seen before.

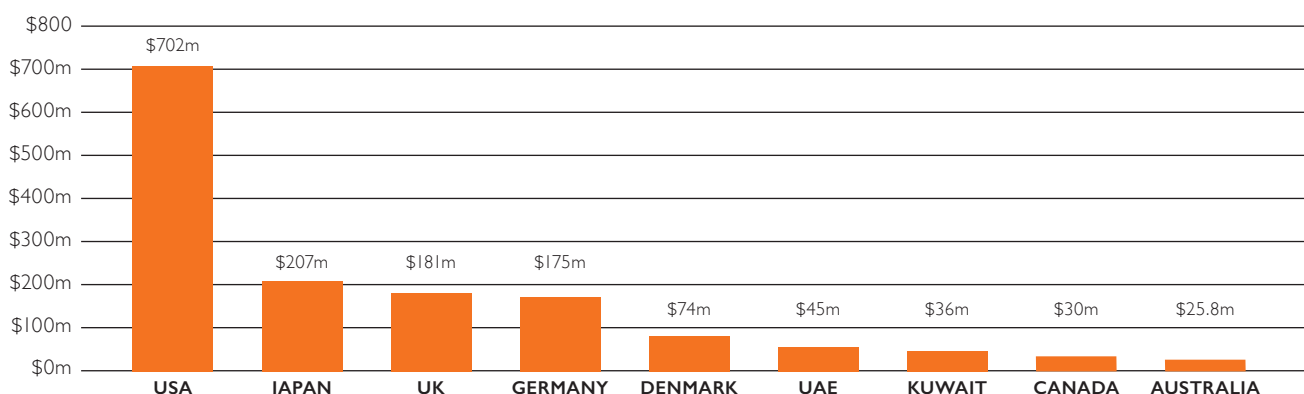
How

The UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan is the best mechanism to address the global humanitarian impacts of COVID-19 because it has a global reach. By taking a global approach, the UN can prioritise hot spots, identify gaps, coordinate responses and reduce duplication.

When making its fair share contribution, the Government should ensure adequate reporting and accountability is in place and that the funding is used in accordance with the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles.

No new funding is required. Australia has earmarked \$500 million per year for global humanitarian funding to address crises and conflicts. This funding can be drawn on to contribute Australia's fair share to this COVID-19 crisis.

Country contributions to UN COVID-19 Humanitarian Response (US\$m)



Source: UN OCHA (current as at August 2020)

2004 TSUNAMI

PM John Howard on the \$1 billion of Australian aid for Indonesia:

“This is a human tragedy on a scale that none of us in our lifetime have seen and it does require a response above the ordinary.”

2020 PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has marked a new era in human tragedy – a response above the ordinary is urgently needed.

How will Australia respond this time?

To find out more visit:

www.worldvision.com.au