

“For Such a Time as This”

Urban Mosaic’s Response to COVID-19



Overview

We are grateful to have successfully completed the first two phases of our four-phase COVID-19 Pandemic Response in just 4 months. As of July 31, Mexico has rocketed into the top three nations in terms of COVID deaths and top 6 in terms of infections (up from #7 and #11 respectively, just a month ago); we believe that these reported numbers are lower than a grimmer reality, due to the poor tracking and response of the Mexican government. The first two phases largely focused on: communication about and prevention steps for the virus; launching of scores of church-based SHALOM groups; food security for pastors, community leaders and their families; setting up of hand-washing stations; and, distribution of desperately needed masks, disinfectants, and anti-bacterial gel for local health clinics and hospitals, impacting over 30,000 people. We believe that, under God, these efforts have saved the lives of many – and have prepared communities to now address the even more troubling challenges of the months ahead. We continue hoping for the best, but are now seriously preparing for the worst, throughout Phase 3 (June-August) and Phase 4 (September-December) of Urban Mosaic's COVID-19 Response.

What We've Done: Phases 1 & 2 of the Pandemic

Communication and Prevention: Three months ago, in March, we formed people into small organized units, using WhatsApp, via our health clubs, youth clubs, citizen committees and faith communities. Together we handed out 11,000 soaps and informational flyers, directly speaking to over 3,000 families, encouraging people to take COVID-19 seriously, and identifying homes with people with pre-existing conditions and those older than 65. During the last two weeks of March, we ran workshops for kids, youth, and mothers in the streets of our communities, in small groups of 10 or less with all protective measures in place. These mobile workshops moved from street to street, educating participants on the reality of the virus, including how to recognize the signs of the disease, participate in community tracing to prevent the spread of the disease, develop emotional resiliency, and prepare to facilitate home care and self-quarantine.



Spiritual Development: We launched an intercession campaign where over 150 churches and 28 organizations participated, praying Psalm 91 every day for 91 days. We also equipped 62 churches in Mexico and Colombia, to make a transition from public worship services to start small home groups and home churches. We developed and distributed practical materials and guidelines to run these (virtual) "Shalom Groups" (our term for small groups) and to train group leaders. Over 150 "Shalom Groups" have already been established, with a total of 1,300 participants.



Water: According to UN Habitat, installation of adequate handwashing stations in informal urban settlements is a critical component to combat the contagion, given that many there have no access to clean water. As a result, Urban Mosaic purchased 101 large (290 gallon) water tanks and installed handwashing stations in 101 different locations in urban-poor communities on the east side of Mexico City. These stations are supervised by church committees and citizen groups. We secured an agreement from the Water Department of the State of Mexico to regularly refill these tanks in order to provide continued access to sufficient water to populations living in the most vulnerable conditions. 25,000 people are now able to access to water for handwashing and personal hygiene purposes, in communities with no running water.



Food: As congregation members lost jobs, pastors lost incomes; and community leaders found no more work, monthly generous food baskets were given to 229 distressed leaders and pastors once a month during the past three months.



Our goal to invest in these leaders was guided by the idea that many of these leaders are giving back to their congregations and communities. In Phase 3 & 4 we will move from direct food assistance to a more sustainable solution to increase their food security.

Health Care: We donated personal protection equipment (400 high security masks, 2500 medical grade masks and 8,000 face masks), surface disinfectant and antibacterial gel to six hospitals and health centers in the eastern region of Mexico City, which had received almost no protective materials from the government. In addition, our small health center is the only health care provider in an area of over 15,000 people. We stocked the community/health center with basic medicines (paracetamol, hand sanitizer and honey-based cough medicine), and prevention supplies, in order to attend to our vulnerable population when needed.

What We Will Do: Phases 3 & 4 of the Pandemic

As we move into the next two phases, we have shifted from the immediate needs and crisis response, to integrating this response into our existing programs and framework. While the duration of the pandemic remains unseen, it is clear that life will not return to “normal” for some time and so processes must be adapted to move from relief to longer-term sustainable solutions. That said, we will focus our response along 5 main areas: 1) Holistic Community Development & Strengthening Civil Society, 2) Equipping Missional Churches, 3) Community and Emotional Health, 4) Kids and Youth and 5) Economic Development. All our programs have been adapted to respond to the reality of COVID, but leveraging Urban Mosaic’s methodology of listening, developing local leaders, and working toward holistic, sustainable transformation rooted in the Missio Dei.

Focus Area #1: Strengthening Civil Society and Holistic Community Development:

Food Security: We are dramatically increasing our response to food security issues. As mentioned above, the economic impact of the pandemic has been devastating for many residents, including our community leaders and key pastors who are not receiving tithes and offerings. After the initial crisis response, we are now moving into mid-term food security interventions, where 200 leaders (150 in Mexico and 50 in Colombia) will receive 5 laying hens each, so they can count on regular egg production by placing the hens in their patios or small backyards. An additional 75 leaders will receive one male plus three female rabbits each, to start rabbit meat production for their families. We will furthermore help 150 leaders start small vegetable gardens on their patios or rooftop, in addition to cultivating two community vegetable gardens (roughly 1,400 m² of space). We will also start two small fish farms and cultivate 3 ha of land in Colombia to produce corn and beans. To encourage the participants to use the ingredients of the vegetables, rabbits, eggs, as well as soy and amaranth, we will produce a community recipe book on how to use the inputs, with the support of the participants themselves. Finally, we will adapt two areas to start two chicken farms with 500 hens each (Colombia and Mexico) that will produce a combined 20,000-25,000 eggs per month. In total, 425 key leaders and their families will initially benefit from this food security program that will be fully producing by the end of Phase 3. In a second reproduction phase, an additional 250 leaders will be included in the program, which means we will impact a total of 675 leaders and their families by years’ end. While food security is not our core business, we have contracted professional help to run the small chicken farms, rabbit production, upkeep of laying hens, vegetable gardens and cultivation of the community garden and agricultural land.



Community Development & Crime Prevention: While the COVID pandemic continues to rage, we're also facing a pandemic of violence with new records plaguing Mexico. To address the widespread violence, we will continue to work with and grow a total of 125 citizen committees, representing 1,500 local families. Together, these citizen committees will help improve social trust and community resilience in their city blocks, by: a) implementing at least 10 community/school improvement projects that range from street paving, to access to wastewater system, instalment of street lighting, improvement of school sanitary infrastructure etc, impacting at least 4,000 community residents. In addition, at least 50 of the citizen committees will also function as neighborhood watch groups, installing solar-powered community alarm systems on their city blocks and improving street lighting, which will directly impact 6,000 of their neighbors who will benefit from increased security, improved community cohesion/trust and enhanced community-police collaboration. We can confirm that assault rates in the city blocks we've been involved with so far have been reduced, per the police departments of Chimalhuacan and Los Reyes La Paz.

Advocacy & Anticorruption Work: To change fragile cities, we must engage systemic injustice and opaque government institutions, including corruption, particularly in times of COVID where much public spending on the pandemic is being diverted and misappropriated. Over the last year we made progress on various fronts: pushing for the ratification of the Law of Citizen Participation for the State of Mexico (which we sponsored); this winter we helped establish the Municipal Anti-Corruption System for the City of Los Reyes La Paz and are now presiding it (among the first five in the entire country), helping create more transparency and accountability of public funds spent. On a federal level, Urban Mosaic is part of the 30-member GIAO (Research, Analysis and Opinion Group of the Transparency and Anti-Corruption Commission of the Federal Congress), chairing the sub-group focused on civil society issues. In that role, we've been working hard to push for the ratification of new legislative initiatives that would make natural emergency/disaster-related spending (including earthquake and COVID-related public spending much more transparent in order to reduce corruption in public acquisitions. Finally, we're in the process of developing a publicly available scoring system which we will publish online to evaluate large municipalities in the State of Mexico, regarding their compliance with the National Anticorruption System and Transparency Laws, so as to help/hold municipal authorities accountable.

Focus Area #2: Equipping Missional Churches

Spiritual Development. During Phase 3-4 we will continue with a monthly time of intercession for the peace and justice of our cities, with at least 2,000 families from 100 churches participating. We expect that 200 virtual "Shalom groups"/home groups will be established by the end of the year, with about 2,000 participants, which will mostly meet via WhatsApp/Zoom groups or in small family units, using our discipleship materials based on 26 Values to build a Culture of Shalom. We believe these "Shalom Groups" will become the primary units to care for those vulnerable in their streets. We will also continue with our formal training and equipping of 60 church pastors and their churches via our Nehemiah Challenge process (50 in Mexico and 10 in Colombia). The goal is to help these faith leaders and churches embrace a holistic theology based in the Missio Dei and adopt a ministerial praxis of listening to their neighbors and tangibly getting involved in the needs of their communities via missional projects that will benefit their neighbors. We expect that over 400 new unchurched people will join a spiritual formation process.

Digital Resources & Educational Platform for Urban Leadership School: In the difficult time ahead, we need to provide hope-filled leadership and messaging, based in sound theology and praxis, to the communities and churches we serve, both in Mexico and Colombia. We started to brainstorm a variety of values that might undergird a thriving church, which has now led to the creation of a resource entitled "26 Values to Build a Culture of Shalom" (one value to be considered each week for six months), supported by daily Bible lessons and video presentations. Each value is stated succinctly, i.e. Listen Generously, Speak the Truth in Love, Rejoice Always, etc., and is presented in a powerful way to help church members serve their local churches and communities effectively in pursuit of living abundant lives. While most people don't have access to streaming internet in the communities we serve, the majority have access to smart phones and WhatsApp, which we will use extensively to reach our eventual network of over 200+ "Shalom Groups". What's more, we're transitioning our Urban Leadership School online and during Phase 3 we hope to launch the beta-version for a well-organized and user-friendly online platform to help leaders, churches and "Shalom Groups" access pertinent and practical multimedia and written materials. Through this platform we will also offer online trainings to



roughly 200 church and community leaders in the following focus areas: Theology of the Missio Dei; Community Organizing/Development; Work with Children & Youth; Community & Emotional Health; Disciple-Making & Church Planting; Psycho-Spiritual First Aid. Our hope is that this platform will become a reference point for many leaders, churches and home groups in our network, helping them gain the necessary tools to engage the difficult times we live in.

Focus Area #3: Community and Emotional Health

Health Care: Our goal is to provide primary care consultations to (non-COVID) patients via our small existing health center. We will furthermore outfit one of our organizational vans into a functional mobile health care unit, equipped with a stretcher, oxygen tank, first aid kit, glucometers, and more. Through the mobile unit and our community health center, a doctor and nurse will serve 2,000 patients, providing primary medical care in urban communities with little access to health care, and referring 300 patients who need more help to specialized health services. We will also distribute 1,000 wheelchairs in Phase 3 and 500 more in Phase 4, assisting those in desperate need. Finally, we will continue to grow our family health clubs, with a goal of finishing the year with 40 health clubs, impacting 400 families. Participating families will grow healthier homes (hygiene, nutrition, disease prevention, sanitary infrastructure, water, healthier relationships, child raising). What's more, participating families will be able to buy 1,100 liter water tanks at a reduced price (half the market rate), in order to improve their sanitary infrastructure. If public schools open up again in August, we will relaunch our Healthy Schools program in 25 participating Kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, reaching over 5,000 kids & youth with preventative health education, while improving the health conditions inside these schools.

Health Monitoring: In addition, we will launch a contact tracing and early detection program by training and overseeing the work of 100 health monitors in the next months, employing training adapted from John Hopkins University. In order to improve early detection, the health monitors will implement a "Community-Based Surveillance Tool" with GPS mapping (using CommCare software), to identify suspected or probable cases in the community based on symptoms. People with symptoms will be given medical-grade masks, if possible, and advised on how to use them. They will also be equipped with prevention methods that can decrease their risk, including a pulse oximeter. Finally, advanced cases of COVID will be connected to the necessary agencies and/or authorities. "Contact tracing" of potential COVID patients should also be done to prevent the spread of the outbreak. Since the government is not implementing any type of contact tracing in our communities, we have identified this as a strategic intervention to help limit the spread of COVID and save as many lives as possible. The 100 health monitors will be selected from our youth and community leader programs; they will receive a little stipend which provides some income when employment prospects are increasingly dim. A final goal, is to analyze the data gathered by the health monitors to create an official report and press kit that we will present to journalists, municipal and health authorities, outlining how many people are really affected in our neighborhoods, in order to: a) raise awareness of the true scope of the crisis, since no real data exists in our areas, and b) drive greater attention and investment to the vulnerable populations we serve.

Psycho-Emotional Care: COVID is not just negatively impacting the physical and emotional health of urban por city dwellers, but also causing much emotional harm. In May we worked with two trainers from Umbral, to offer a total of 63 local leaders basic arts-based tools to deal with pain and trauma and help them develop greater emotional resiliency. To continue in this effort, starting in early September we will launch a pilot program, by training 30 pastors and community leaders at a certificate-level in "spiritual and emotional first aid". This *Certificate in Psycho-Spiritual First Aid* will give participants the basic tools to grow in their ability to offer trauma-informed basic counseling to vulnerable individuals and families affected by the violence, trauma, lack of hope and emotional upheaval caused by the pandemic and economic crisis we are experiencing. Our goal is to provide direct coaching and counselling to 150 individuals/families during the pilot phase of this project.

Focus Area #4: Kids and Youth



Kids & Youth: In the month of May we readapted our child intervention methodology and began to pilot small kids’ clubs of 6-8 kids/club that would meet in patios and on the street. We are continuing to grow this readapted program and project to launch a total of 200 kids clubs impacting over 1,500 kids in the remainder of the year. These kids’ clubs, run by local churches, community and youth leaders use the Right-to-Play methodology, our 26 values to build a culture of Shalom, emotional resilience, physical health with a focus on COVID prevention, academic help and children's rights with a focus on child protection. In case schools don't re-open in late August, we will readapt these kids’ clubs to become educational clubs, using a street education model developed by other groups. We will furthermore work with a total of 250 youth leaders (150 in Mexico and 100 in Colombia), equipping them via a peer-education methodology to impact 1,500 of their peers with a focus on COVID prevention, emotional resilience, peace and sex education. Finally, 150 of these youth (100 in Mexico and 50 in Colombia) will be incorporated and disciplined via 15 Shalom clubs. If public schools open up again in August, we will relaunch our Youth-as-Agents-of-Change program in 7 secondary and high schools, helping at least 1,500 youth with critical life skills education.

Focus Area #5: Economic Development

Economic Development: In Phase 4 we hope to develop business plans for different types of micro-businesses that will function during the pandemic. Towards that end we're taking a broad-based approach, by GPS mapping and color-coding the types of businesses that currently exist in the communities we're working in, in order to analyze the data and create business intelligence reports to identify the types of critical businesses that do not yet exist, and/or opportunities that have not yet been taken advantage of in certain geographic locations. The goal is to use these business intelligence reports to create franchise-type businesses that can be launched in different locations of the urban poor communities where we work. Our goal is to help launch a minimum of 50 micro-businesses to reactivate the local economy, providing seed capital and training the micro-businesses in these vulnerable areas to run their businesses efficiently and creatively.

Costs of Project

In the initial crisis response in Phases 1 & 2, we spent a total of \$75,000. As we have revised our annual plan for Phases 3 & 4 to integrate the COVID-19 Response into our existing initiatives, we anticipate the total annual budget for the COVID-19 Response to be **\$360,000**, which would allow us to implement our holistic interventions that would both respond to the pandemic and build upon the existing community processes.

2020 COVID-19 RESPONSE	Cost
Focus Area #1 – Strengthening Civil Society	\$79,500
Food Security	\$37,500
○ 200 Units of Laying Hens (each unit has five hens)	\$7,500
○ 75 Units of Rabbits (each unit has a buck and three does)	\$7,500
○ 150 Units of Vegetable Gardens	\$5,000
○ 2 small chicken farms for egg and poultry production	\$5,000
○ 2 community vegetable gardens	\$4,000
○ 1 small fish farm for fish production	\$4,000
○ Farming of 3 ha of land (corn and bean production)	\$4,500
Community Development & Crime Prevention	\$32,000
○ Drainage Community Project	\$12,000
○ Pavement Community Project	\$15,000
○ Public Safety Projects	\$5,000
Advocacy & Anticorruption	\$10,000
○ Follow-up to process for Law for Citizen Participation	\$10,000



Focus Area #2 – Equipping Faith Communities	\$29,000
Spiritual Development	\$16,000
○ Coaching and Accompanying Leaders through Nehemiah Challenge	\$8,000
○ Missio Dei and Emotional Health Trainings	\$5,000
○ Church Planting School and Shalom Groups	\$3,000
Digital Resources	\$13,000
○ Creation of Online Platform	\$5,000
○ Creation of Multimedia Content	\$3,000
○ Graphic design and video production	\$5,000
Focus Area #3 – Community & Emotional Health	\$63,500
○ Equip and Operate Mobile Health Unit	\$2,500
○ COVID Health Monitors	\$25,000
○ Hire part-time Doctor and Nurse	\$12,500
○ Finish Equipping of Community Center	\$3,000
○ Purchase of Basic Medication and Additional PPE (gloves, masks, sanitizers, gowns, etc.)	\$9,000
○ Healthy Schools Program	\$1,500
○ Healthy Homes and Healthy Families Program	\$10,000
Focus Area #4 – Kids & Youth	\$30,000
○ Kids Clubs	\$8,000
○ Youth COVID Health Monitor Program	\$10,000
○ Youth Sports Program	\$6,000
○ Youth Discipleship (Shalom Groups)	\$2,000
○ Youth as Agents of Change (Community Leadership)	\$2,000
○ Youth Leadership School	\$2,000
Focus Area #5 – Economic Development	\$28,000
○ Seed Capital for 50 Micro-Businesses	\$20,000
○ Creation of a custom application to activate local economy	\$3,000
○ Technical Assistance, Training and Coaching for Micro-Businesses	\$5,000
Transversal Axis – Leadership Development	\$55,000
○ Training and Leadership Development	\$15,000
○ Project Management & Staff	\$40,000
	TOTAL Phase 3 & 4
	\$285,000
	Phase 1 & 2
	\$75,000
	Grand Total
	\$360,000

To date, we have raised \$240,500 toward this goal with **a remaining need of \$119,500.**

We continue to work diligently to secure funds for this effort which has become our most important and central work this year and will lay the foundation to solidify community processes for the year to come.

Conclusion

Phases 1 and 2 of Urban Mosaic’s COVID-19 Pandemic Response saved lives, strengthened community infrastructure, and provided emergency food, water and supplies to communities in need. Now, as the virus spreads, we must enable key community and church leaders to survive, provide health services to thousands, work with children and youth, offer psycho-pastoral care, and offer crime-prevention, infrastructure development, economic development, and





digital resources and an online training platform to encourage and assist those in dire circumstances. In total, 30,000 people have already been impacted through these interventions.

We project that the already present epidemic of (domestic) violence in our countries will only grow in coming months, as people's stress levels increase due to home confinement and economic hardships. Children, in particular, are at greater risk of exploitation, violence and abuse when schools are closed, jobs are lost, and movement is restricted. We will address some of these issues in Phase 4 but believe that additional efforts starting in 2021 will be needed to fully respond to these critical issues. In the meantime, thank you for your prayers as we seek to be salt and light and bearers of hope in our fragile cities in Mexico and Colombia.

Contact Information

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