



THE GLOBAL
JEWISH
9-1-1

CORONAVIRUS
RESPONSE

APRIL 6, 2020

JDC Coronavirus Response Update

As the Coronavirus continues to spread, acute humanitarian needs are rising worldwide. As the global Jewish 9-1-1, JDC's expertise and experience are needed now more than ever. We are addressing emerging needs and continuing to serve the tens of thousands of people who depend on us every day. Below are highlights from JDC's Coronavirus response efforts around the globe.

Former Soviet Union: JDC's strategy is to **prioritize lifesaving services**, while minimizing risk to our clients, staff, and volunteers. We are working to ensure that vital services are provided to our vulnerable clients, mainly homecare, food and medicine (as we approach Passover, this also includes the delivery of matzah and other Passover goods). Homecare workers have been provided with protective gear, and to address restrictions on public transportation, we are providing private transportation where necessary to continue to deliver vital homecare assistance. JDC's Call Centers and new hotlines are activating staff and volunteers from their homes, to reach out to elderly clients and help **alleviate loneliness**.

While in-person JCC activities and leadership programs remain suspended for the time being, JDC, through its JCCs, Heseds and other programs, has launched various **online platforms to continue community engagement**. Our Active Jewish Teens (AJT) network launched an online platform and app where teens can share their activities and projects online, including Passover programming and other Jewish content. Over twenty online Passover seders have been organized across the former Soviet Union (FSU), some to be led by these teens themselves. JDC's FSU Leadership Alumni Program launched an online fundraising effort to help Jewish organizations in crisis.

Within our **Children's Initiative**, volunteers are reaching out to help children and families at risk while education facilities are closed. Support includes assistance with homework and online programming.

Israel: Israel is in its fourth week of near-lock-down. While strict regulations are essential in battling the Coronavirus, they are also creating extreme needs amongst the country's most vulnerable people.

Countless **homebound elderly and people with disabilities** became cut off from their caregivers and families. In Israel's lowest-ranked socioeconomic municipalities, JDC is providing a range of critical services including medicine, home repairs, remote therapies, transportation for caregivers, and a call center for virtual assistance. It is also providing vital information and training to thousands of caregivers and volunteers on how to work remotely, and safely, when in person.

Many **at-risk families** have lost their sources of income and are dealing with difficult home situations, including overcrowding and the lack of outdoor space, internet, and necessary



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supplies. JDC is training 2,550 professionals on how to continue providing counselling and therapy remotely, and is providing 7,500 impoverished families with funds to purchase essential supplies.

Over 1 million Israelis are now collecting unemployment benefits; 90% are on unpaid leave, unsure of their job security in the coming months. JDC is working with the Government of Israel to develop **new interventions in the field of vocational training** that will help the newly unemployed re-enter the job market as quickly as possible following the crisis.

In our role as convener of professionals across national government ministries, municipal government, civil society, and the business sector, we are **coordinating rapid, unified responses on a massive scale**. For example, our Cross-Sector Task-Force for the Bedouin Community in the Negev, maps and assigns responsibilities for meeting crisis-related needs, and is developing rapid budgeting-financing-implementing mechanisms for immediate response.

In addition, the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute is providing the Israeli government with real-time data on the effects of the pandemic on the Israeli public, as well as a series of rapid-response papers outlining **critical responses to social dilemmas** during the pandemic. This includes oversight of social services, education for special needs children, foster care and out-of-home placement of children, and solutions for spikes in domestic violence.

Europe: In Europe, JDC continues to reach out to Jewish communities to identify and monitor their growing needs. In addition to ongoing support in areas such as relief, resilience, and community development, JDC has begun to plan for future humanitarian implications of the current crisis.

JCC programming across Europe has shifted to online platforms. JCC Warsaw is offering virtual ulpan, cooking classes, teen activities and children's classes, building on its strong sense of community. JCC Budapest is holding weekly online lectures and learning activities for adults and children. The JCC will also stream a live seder for the community to participate in.

Junction – JDC's young adult network – has organized **food delivery to the elderly** and launched an **online lecture series** targeting single young adults who are isolated at home. YESOD – JDC's initiative for Jewish community professionals – curated a **guide** to help families and individuals plan for their Passover celebrations, and relate to the current reality through a Jewish lens.

JDC is exploring opportunities for **Szarvas**, JDC's premier international Jewish summer camp in Hungary, to continue to serve as a resource for campers and counselors in light of the cancellation of this summer's session. This may include online education experiences like seminars and lectures, or other digital content.

Latin America: Representatives from Jewish nursing homes across Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, and Mexico joined a JDC-hosted training on best practices in **elder care** in the face of the pandemic.



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In **Venezuela**, JDC secured the distribution of kosher Passover supplies to beneficiaries of the community's food program. In **Cuba**, we have ensured the delivery of Shabbat meals and other essential needs to community members. In **Argentina**, JDC has joined a task-force with other leading local organizations to coordinate the community's response to the economic impact of the situation on Jewish lower-middle-class families. In addition, JDC organized a virtual workshop for social workers from 15 Jewish communities outside of Buenos Aires, focusing on the situation of vulnerable Jewish children and older adults in the context of the pandemic.

Africa/Asia: With **India** on full lockdown, the Jewish community is focusing primarily on the needs of the elderly, ensuring that residents of the Bayiti nursing home have essential supplies, medical care, and the technology needed to communicate with relatives. Furthermore, volunteers have been organized to reach out to homebound elderly to help lessen their loneliness and identify urgent needs.

In **Morocco**, JDC is expanding its support of relief and medical services through the Casablanca Jewish community, buying hygiene supplies for the old-age home and clinic, and hiring temporary personnel to ensure extra care and substitute regular workers in quarantine. In **Egypt**, despite the complex logistics, JDC is proceeding with its annual distribution of matzah and other Passover items to isolated members of the Jewish community.

Entwine: JDC Entwine's **virtual meeting place**, **The Thread**, was launched to help young adults connect virtually with their peers while enjoying rich Jewish content such as briefings with JDC experts on responses to global crises, and spotlights on how young professionals in global communities are building community abroad.

Leading up to Passover, JDC Entwine received 1,000 requests for its **ReOrdered Passover Toolkit**. This unique toolkit is expected to be used at hundreds of virtual Seders, reaching thousands of people in 15 countries. Entwine has also joined forces with JDC's social entrepreneurship hub in Israel – Hakaveret – to promote its **Passover Hackathon** by spreading the word to Entwine's network of 30,000 young adults, and by coaching and advising young social entrepreneurs.

International Non-Sectarian Response: While Ethiopia has taken drastic measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the public health risk remains high due to limited health care resources, lack of access to clean water and soap, poor testing capacities and communal lifestyles that spread the disease further. JDC, with its local partners, is supplementing **medical supplies** at four health facilities in Addis Ababa and Gondar, building **hand-washing stations** in densely populated locations, designing materials for the promotion of hand washing and personal hygiene, and carrying out **community outreach** to promote social distancing.

We appreciate the concern and solidarity of our loyal supporters and friends during this critical, unprecedented time. The most vulnerable Jews in the world are depending on JDC, and as always, together we are there for them.