

Diaconia ECCB, the Czech Republic, June 2020

Dear friends,

this is a letter of greetings that we are sending You from Prague.

Besides, we'd like to provide You a few information on current situation of Diaconia during the pandemic crisis.

A lot of things have been changed in last three months - events, measures, needs, fears.

Emergency phone lines provided by Diaconia have recorded a threefold increase in the number of calls. People deal with fear of illness, loneliness, questions of the future or existential worries.

Diaconia has launched an extra, summer edition of "Shoe Box" campaign. This time the collection is focused on tools for home schooling and distant education. If COVID born technical and educational issues are left unaddressed this will set children from low-income families further back and fix their social disadvantage.

Besides, there is an ongoing collection "We are with you". It focuses on people, esp. families, who have been living on a tight budget for a long time and have now found themselves in a very difficult situation due to the loss of income. This collection has been launched and generously supported by the Czech Brethren Church.

We have also launched a new website to express our gratitude and to support the excellent work of the people providing various forms of social care. The appreciation of their endeavour takes place by videos, pictures and short messages that have been shared on Facebook or Instagram accounts with the hashtag #dekujemepecovatelkamkam.

The wave of solidarity through the "Letters for Joy" initiative of Diaconia in connection with the coronavirus crisis brought joy to seniors of residential facilities that have been in isolation for almost 3 months. Adults wrote letters, children drew pictures and wrote beautiful messages, whole classes from primary schools took part.

The expenses of Diaconia have increased.

- buying protective equipment,
- adaptation to capacity measures (compulsory reserves) in residential facilities detaching beds, premises, employees in case of occurrence of virus there,
- overtime work of employees and other additional staff related costs
- restrictive measures that closed down most social services of Diaconia for more than two months

Internally, Diaconia is presently focused on support of social entrepreneurship and the educational center. It is important that we secure the restoration of operation there.

In particular, Diaconal Academy, an educational and training center, is providing not only our own employees obliged in further education in the field of social work, it supports also sheltered jobs such as cleaning teams. During the forced nationwide quarantine all their activities were suspended. The revenues stopped as well. For the re-start of its training activities, for which it has been set up, the Academy needs financial assistance: to renew

educational process, to pay salaries to trainers, social entrepreneurship workers and other employees of Academy, etc. Calculation of a financial loss of Academy in the last months is high and it seems that the facility will not be able to do without financial assistance. Similar situation applies for social enterprises that Diaconia runs also at other places of the country, employing its clients.

We're trying to get back to normal. The measures are still ongoing, but we are already restarting our services. This is a lot of work. What is needed for this? Prayers and commitment.

Thank you for your interest in how we are doing and what we are dealing with.

Lucie Slámová