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BÓTHAR NEWS UPDATE **SPRING 2021** www.bothar.ie



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Field Update: **MALAWI**

UPDATE: **EMERGENCY RESPONSE APPEAL IN MALAWI 2020**

Please read these reports from Bóthar's project partners SSLLP, who have been helping our programmes in Malawi support the fight against COVID-19.

This project was implemented by Bóthar's longstanding partner Small Scale Livestock and Livelihoods Programme (SSLLP) in Malawi. This project supported the prevention of primary and secondary transmission of the COVID-19 Viral disease, mitigating its impact among vulnerable programme beneficiaries and their communities in the Karonga district. Specifically, this appeal aimed to achieve three objectives:

1. To provide critical information and counter misinformation on COVID-19 in 1,000 farmers directly+ 2,000 farmers indirectly. SSLLP targeted communities in the Karonga district. 2. To support the implementation of the Karonga district preparedness and response plan to COVID-19. 3. To increase knowledge on necessary behaviour change, sanitation and hygiene as a COVID-19 control mechanism of all targeted households.

Together fighting COVID-19; SSLLP taking Action in Northern Malawi

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) was first tested and confirmed by health authorities in Malawi in March, 2020. Since then, nearly 10,000 cases have been confirmed in-country and 200 fatalities have been registered. The global and regional COVID-19 crisis has created numerous immediate challenges for Malawi as a country and also in areas where efforts to improve lives of rural people, particularly women, were getting grounded. In Malawi, all manner of people are affected; lives have been lost, the resources

are disappearing fast and hospitals are full beyond capacity. The government lost two senior cabinet ministers in one day.

With agriculture, small scale trading and casual labour being the main source of livelihood for rural populations in the country, the COVID-19 outbreak and the subsequent measures by the government and private sector to curb the crisis, have rendered the lives of most people, particularly women, very difficult. In the Karonga district, where SSLLP has



been working with support from Bóthar Ireland, the situation is bleak. The Karonga district is one of the points of entry into Malawi from Tanzania through the Songwe border in Karonga.

Continued...

Bóthar, Old Clare Street, Limerick V94 X4X9
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Field Update: **MALAWI**



SSLLP is responding in the Karonga district based on the support gaps in the district response plan. SSLLP is delivering assistance and support for the SSLLP programme communities and the 3 health centres where SSLLP is implementing projects with support from Bóthar Ireland. The action is being implemented in areas in the district where SSLLP is implementing the safe water for rural communities' project. The overall goal is to support the prevention of primary and secondary transmission of COVID-19 and to mitigate the impact among vulnerable

programme beneficiaries and their communities in the Karonga district. Access to the right information and behaviour change are key to ensuring that Malawi averts this crisis.

So far, we have managed to engage local authorities at the frontline, while also training key stakeholders such as area and village development committees, community artisans, volunteer campaigners and traditional doctors who are a key cog in the primary health care system. Huge gaps remain in the fight against COVID-19 and at the same

time, the undesirable handling of borders with particular mention of the Mwanza and Dedza borders that are bringing in busloads of returnees from the Republic of South Africa, making the situation even more precarious. Hope and faith are going to be as important as the concerted effort by all stakeholders amid the new wave and strain of COVID-19 rocking the very foundations of Malawian Society. Partnerships between global players are just as important as actions by national governments and citizens.

Changing from within during COVID-19

Tumpale Kaonga's way of earning a living is not an ordinary one. She operates in a space where disease is only seconds away. COVID-19 is a serious concern to all but to her it is just another experience in the vulnerability of day-to-day life. She is now a community volunteer thanks to the SSLLP project supporting the COVID-19 response in the Karonga district. She is among a total of 40 volunteers trained to conduct door-to-door campaigns to raise awareness, provide the right information and counter misinformation in the communities of Kasoba and Iponga in the Karonga district.



A Trainer of Trainers approach was used to train the volunteers. The training included key messages of *COVID-19 prevention and control and behaviour change*. Women and children were given ample participation as they are key in the fight against the pandemic. *"My first day felt like I had not received any training and for a moment, all my previous confidence built through years of engagement with disease disappeared underneath my legs. My thoughts were firmly placed on one thing; little known Tumpale is going to talk to people about COVID-19. I was afraid"* Tumpale Kaonga (21st August, 2020).

Fast forward a few months later, Tumpale is beaming with pride over her contribution to the cause. The second wave of COVID-19 has brought with it a lot of suffering and loss but in Tumpale's eyes the fight can only be won one way; through selfless support to the cause by everybody. Her position is emboldened by the realisation that if COVID-19 prevails there will be no one and nothing left. The community has renewed hope seeing a seemingly outcast like Tumpale taking a frontline role in fighting a disease that has completely disrupted everyday life everywhere.



Field Update: **MALAWI**



Mask Making in rural Malawi: “I will play a role; the story of a gentle tailor giving hope to a community.”

The COVID-19 Response Taskforce in Malawi announced new measures to curb the spread of COVID-19; face masks, social distancing, avoid crowds and regular handwashing are among the usual measures. Everyone must mask up in public places according to the Taskforce at a press conference in Lilongwe. 400 miles away in Kasoba village in the Karonga district, a family is contending how to get a single sachet of cooking oil to add some adventure to the afternoon meal. This is the sad reality for most families in the areas where SSLLP is working. They simply cannot afford to purchase masks even with the knowledge that their very life could depend on it.

Upon recognising this serious gap in making face masks is a reality for thousands of people in rural areas of Karonga, a tailor trained by Ngara community college who

owned an Arts and Craft shop at the Karonga town market decided to take action. She worked with SSLLP to train rural tailors on how to make reusable cloth-based face masks but still felt she could do more.

Within days she made a very important decision. She was going to provide a free mask production service for the communities of Kasoba and Ipanga and anyone looking to get a much-needed face mask. So far, she has made a total of 500 face masks and the number is growing. While people wait at the production line she takes time to discuss the dangers of COVID-19 and the best approaches to preventing infection and managing a positive diagnosis.

“People bring me their pieces of cloth and I make the mask within minutes and it gives me great hope that I might just have contributed

to fighting this deadly pandemic,” she says to Tiana, the SSLLP district coordinator for Karonga. She hopes that she can get her hands on two or more sewing machines and with the help of other volunteers they can produce thousands of masks to help the effort against the COVID-19 pandemic.



CALL FOR CALVES

Give a calf now so a family in the developing world gets an in-calf dairy heifer.

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T: 061 414142 | E: patmullins@bothar.ie



**SPRING
APPEAL**

Field Update: **KOSOVO**

Cows for Good - the impact of one cow on a family in Kosovo

Please read this report from Tahir Tahiri, Meshqerra, Kosovo, Bóthar's project partner.

This is an excellent example of how a cow donation has impacted and improved the life of small farmer Burim Osmani and his family. They live in Cernica in the Gjilan municipality. Burim has been a beneficiary of the Bóthar programme and received his in-calf heifer in February 2020.

The Osmani Family has six members. Burim is the head of the family and he is 40 years old. His wife, Mevlide, is 42 years old and they have two sons, Fatlumi aged 17 years and Flamer aged 15 and two daughters Zejnepi, aged 10 years and Lulja aged 8 years. The only income source for the family comes from agriculture and livestock. After an initial visit by Bóthar's project partners, Meskerrha, there was no hesitation selecting this family to be a beneficiary.

After the donation, which was seen as a sign of good luck, their in-calf heifer calved. Burim was so



Farmer Burim Osmani and his wife Mevlide outside their home in Cernica, Kosovo. Their home was built by Burim's uncle at the end of the war.

Photo Credit: Ilmi Mrasori

happy that his family would soon benefit from surplus milk. Burim works very hard and spends most of the working day on the farm and out in the field. Unfortunately his wife Mevlidja suffers from several illnesses, the main one is epilepsy, which means she has to rest a lot and can't do a lot of the farm work. Mevlidja is supported by the Ministry of Social Welfare and receives around €60 per month but most of these funds go towards her medications. The boys help Burim on the farm and the girls help their mother in the home.

Before the onset of the pandemic, the cow took away all Burim's worries because she was milking approximately 15-18 litres per day.

The family took what they needed at home and sold the surplus to the community for 0.50 Euro / litre. During the months of the pandemic from March to December 2020, this surplus secured the family an additional income of approximately €80-90 per month. These funds were used for the education of their children and other family needs. The family were also able to buy seeds for the small area of agricultural land that they have access to. Here, Burim cultivates corn, wheat and various vegetables.

This one-cow support for a poor family is a good example of giving hope for a better life.

God bless you for supporting our families in Kosovo!



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061 414142 maureen@bothar.ie



[TAX REBATE]

Look out for your tax rebate form in the post later this month. Don't forget to follow the

3 simple steps so we can claim an additional 45% on your donation.

Contact Aisling Matthews Tax Rebate Manager
Freephone: 1800 268 463

Field Update: **PERU**

COVID-19 prevention virtual training programme

*Please read this report from
Bóthar's Programme Manager
International Development, Patty
Abozaglo*

In Latin America and the Caribbean, Peru is the fifth country reporting the highest death figures by COVID-19. In remote rural communities of the Amazonian jungle in Peru, health structures are practically inexistent. Health centres are abandoned. In the context of the pandemic, health promoters trained by the Ministry of Health ten years ago, are playing a key role to assist communities to prevent the disease.

With Bóthar support, the Secular Association of Missionaries of the Apostolic Vicariate of Jesús in Yurimaguas and the Municipality of San Gabriel de Varadero worked together to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in 580 families (indirectly 5,200 people), including community authorities and 45 health promoters (volunteers)

trained in 15 Shawi and Kampu Piyabi native communities based by River Paranapura, District of Balsapuerto, Yurimaguas, Province of Alto Amazonas, Loreto, Peru.

The project set up a COVID-19 prevention virtual training programme where 45 community leaders (men and women) were trained as health promoters. A radio campaign took place on two local radio stations (Radio Betania and Radio Oriente) to help keep the population fully informed on measures to prevent COVID-19 among the indigenous population in this very remote part of the Peruvian rainforest.

Reports received show that during the first wave of the virus, some of the native population fled to the jungle to isolate themselves. Despite some getting the virus, they survived using their own traditional herbs (including boiled lemon and ginger, onions and eucalyptus). Others combined these with conventional medicine from the med kits which included ivermectine, paracetamol, aspirin clorfenamine, prednisone and azithromycin. For those who survived, the challenge now is to get their strength back especially the elder ones.



Hand-washing is a key message in the fight against COVID-19.

Forty five health promoters of fifteen native communities, in coordination with local authorities, participated in this project, carrying out information dissemination activities for the prevention and control of COVID-19. House to house visits by health promoters were done, distributing prevention kits for children too. Children and adults learned the importance of social distancing, washing their hands frequently and wearing masks.

The project helped native communities in remote parts of Peru affected by COVID-19 to learn about COVID-19, understand the symptoms, the risks and ways to prevent it. Medicinal kits were distributed too. Villagers felt empowered as they increased their knowledge and understanding of the virus in addition to the traditional way to heal in their own culture. They reached 700 families when originally 580 families were originally targeted.

Promotors and members of the community are grateful for the support received from Bóthar which helped them at this very difficult time for their communities. The challenge continues as Peru starts the second wave of the pandemic.



Training in the community gave a greater understanding as to how to prevent the disease from spreading.

Get your school involved



Book a speaker to do a virtual class talk



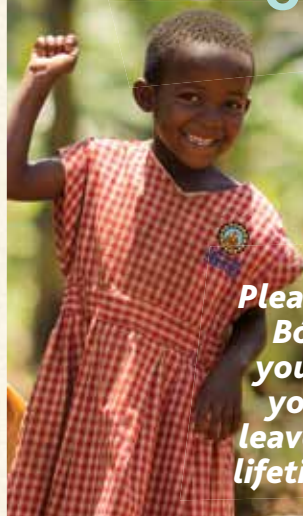
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Further information is available on our website www.bothar.ie

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Please remember Bóthar when you are writing your Will and leave a legacy for lifetimes to come.

If you would like to talk to someone about it in confidence, please contact Maureen Purcell on **061 41 41 42** email maureen@bothar.ie or please speak to your solicitor.

www.bothar.ie

MARCH for Bóthar

Join in the spirit of being Irish this March, the month of St. Patrick's Day!

Please support our projects in Nepal

Bóthar is asking people from all over the world to join with them in the march against poverty by taking to the streets and walking throughout the month of March in a bid to raise funds to help lift struggling families out of poverty.

Will you walk either 4km or 30 minutes a day?

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" - Lao Tzu

Will you come on the journey with us?

SIGN UP TODAY



If you would like to register your interest contact Barry
Tel: 061 414142 Email: barry@bothar.ie



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Set a target of 100km and get your friends and family to support you.

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