

The Hague, 20 March 2020

Dear friends,

In a few weeks' time, our world has changed. CoVID-19 presses us to physically distance ourselves from our loved ones. And that feels counterintuitive, disturbing, and deeply unnatural. To some it even feels as if society's fabric is unraveling rapidly.

It is my firm belief that this is not the case. Over the years, we have developed firm bonds that will enable us to best the current situation. To remain in social proximity is where the real challenge lies.

While the implications of the spread of the Corona-virus are still unfolding, we all experience the consequences. It impacts our daily lives, work routines and social interactions. All of these have seen profound change in a very short time.

It is heartening to see the worldwide unity in response, and to observe that, in spite of the current onslaught of restrictive measures, local initiatives to take care of the elderly and the most vulnerable are going viral. However, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the crisis also leads to stigmatization and xenophobia. Hence, CoVID-19 is a challenge for solidarity as such, as well as our ability to see beyond the situation as it is. To be creative and seize the opportunities at hand. A challenge for which no blueprints exist.

Despite having no blueprints, we aim to jointly meet the urgency of the current situation:

1) The health and safety of yourself, and your constituencies is of utmost importance. We expect changes in your planning in order to limit the risks of spreading Corona. Please share such changes with your program director at Mensen met een Missie, and if need be, he/she can assist and advise you on the choices to make. Furthermore, the current disruptive situation will in many cases lead to a situation in which planned results cannot be achieved in the way they were projected. We hope that, with creativity, new ways of implementation can be found. This might include redesigning the program. If that is the case, let us know and start the conversation. Our program directors will listen and respond, and assist you in this process.

2) Since many governments, including ours, have limited travel severely, we depend more than ever on your analysis and observations. Please keep us informed about relevant developments in your area and within your organization. It will help us to be fully aware of and sensitive to the situation you are in, so we can design support accordingly.

We rely on each other. For support, advice and care. Let us continue to connect people, broaden horizons, and see where meaningful and positive change lies. We can do this. Together.

Know that you are in our minds, hearts and prayers,



Rick van der Woud
Director Mensen met een Missie