



ALLIANCE MISSIONS DURING COVID-19

How is The Alliance is managing the challenges and care needs of our more than 700 staff around the world?

Many of us have heard news from Alliance international workers (IWs) we know during the COVID-19 crisis. But as the impact has become global in its proportions, how does Alliance Missions approach the crisis as a whole? Tim Crouch, vice president for Alliance Missions, answers some key questions.

How are we are working with and caring for our International Workers all around the world?

Alliance Missions (AM) leaders have been working with IWs in affected areas of the world since mid-February. By early March, as it became clear the virus would spread broadly, AM leaders began acting out of a global strategy for all our workers. This strategy called IWs to exercise wisest preventative measures in their ministry locations – much like we’re doing in our own U.S. hometowns. At the same time, leaders began to address IWs in the most vulnerable situations on a case-by-case basis. At this time, only four IWs have been ill with what may have been COVID-19 (testing is often not readily available in some locations). All four have recovered.

Why this approach? Why would we not bring all or most workers back to the U.S.?

It quickly became clear that the virus will affect a high number of locations before it diminishes. This makes lots of temporary relocations less logical. It also means that one of the most risky challenges for IWs is travel. Travel both creates opportunity for the spread of the virus and presents very complicated challenges of its own. Some workers who were in transit became delayed for days—or even stranded—as borders began to close. Five kids of IW families remain at a boarding high school where classroom work is suspended, unable to fly home to families because of closed borders. Today some IWs are unable leave ministry locations, while others who were away cannot get back.

Are there many examples of more vulnerable situations needing other approaches?

There are about 60 international workers who have needed—and been able—to temporarily move from ministry locations. These are mostly cases of IWs in a higher-risk category, living in places with scant medical services where borders have been closing. In some cases these IWs have been able to move into situations that should be workable for months, including beginning an early home assignment. A few, however, have been or still remain in situations that are less sustainable. Helping these IWs land in a better place for the duration is a key focus of care and funding decisions for the coming weeks.

With COVID-19's impact on the world economy, what implications are there for Alliance Missions?

The economic impact upon us all leads to challenges for The Alliance. Budget adjustments have been made that impact travel, events and ministries, as well as a reduction in compensation level of our IW families. The impact varies in some details across various local economies of the globe. In many locations IWs are reporting and responding to the concerns and needs of the people among whom they live.

Has ministry drawn to a standstill for our international workers?

Like most of our U.S. churches, our international workers' ministries have had to change; yet with challenge comes opportunity to serve. In many cases, our teams have found ways to serve the suffering and to help spread understanding of good hygiene and social distancing practices. Online classes and services have multiplied. Some ministries serving only dozens now have thousands joining in online. In some places of hard soil, people have opened their lives to Jesus as they join in digital community in their time of need. Alliance Missions is committed to caring for each of our international workers in order that God will use them in His own ways in this unprecedented time. As a matter of fact, this year's [Great Commission Day Offering: Caring in Chaos](#), which was launched this week, is a *key way* to help keep Alliance Missions staff in place and active where this crisis is opening hearts to the love of Jesus.

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