



RESPONDING TO COVID-19

The Karen Women's Organization

*In this pandemic period, KWO has intervened to **advocate** for at-risk, and vulnerable communities and individuals, so as to **ensure access** to information and basic services.*

ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to maintain close communication with KWO staff and leadership in the refugee camps and districts in Karen State.



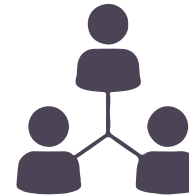
KWO is providing instructions and have developed new guidelines so that staff can carry out their work more safely.



KWO has developed new guidelines for home visits so that our staff and the householders can be protected, but still benefit from essential services.



KWO has created a variety of simple tools for community awareness raising about the prevention of COVID-19 in the Karen language and publicized/distributed them widely in refugee camps and Karen State.



KWO at Central level is in regular communication with KWO in all camps and KWO in districts in Karen State in Burma to share information and update each other with any developments.

COORDINATION MEETINGS

KWO in all areas has been participating in various new coordination meetings at township, district, camp and central level. Some are online meetings and some are small face to face meetings with a few people. All of the coordination meetings focus on the collaboration between relevant service providers about raising awareness in the community for COVID-19 prevention and related protection issues.

PROTECTION

Some of the issues raised by KWO in the Protection Working Group Meetings have been: needs of the most vulnerable, needs of women and children, refugees who are at an increased risk because stalled justice procedures impacting their security, women and children without access to rations.

OUTBREAK RESPONSE

KWO at the central level is participating in online meetings with NGOs, UNHCR and some other community groups. KWO especially advocates for the real needs of refugees and women in the current crisis.

EDUCATION

Some of the education related issues in refugee camps raised by KWO: the need for students and teachers to receive clear information about schools reopening when the new school year starts, what new behaviours will be expected of students and teachers to prevent COVID19, what hygiene resources will be available for schools.

SERVICE DELIVERY

KWO staff have organized themselves: women have sewn thousands of masks, purchased and packed hygiene items (soap, washing powder, shampoo, tooth-paste/tooth brush, clothes for children), purchased and created emergency food packs, including yellow beans, dry fish, cooking oil, tinned fish, chili, and noodles.

To date, in our ongoing activities, KWO has visited approximately **2000** families and has made masks distributed to **5000** people, combined with awareness raising activities. We have also supported those in Ei Htu Hta camp with food support to

vulnerable groups and prepared an emergency food stock so they can still access food with the restrictions on movement in place.

KWO is continuing to run project activities and services as usual, but with the safety and prevention guidelines in place. We are offering emergency services to support vulnerable groups through home visits where staff are providing hygiene packs, nutritional food supplies, masks and information on the prevention and protection against COVID-19 in the camps and in Karen State.

CHALLENGES

KWO has postponed or cancelled all activities or events which involved large numbers of people (eg big meetings, or workshops or special events).

Elderly people living alone, have been identified by KWO in all sites as facing increased and significant hardships now.

BENEFITS

Our essential services were maintained and we could therefore reach out to the most vulnerable people in the community and provide basic life-saving assistance.

In this crisis situation, KWO is continuing to be guided by a compassionate heart and doing our best to protect our community.

CURRENT CONCERNS

We do not know how long the community has to live with this crisis situation, and this uncertainty has an impact on all of us. Some of KWO's planned activities may not achieve their agreed targets set for this year.

Domestic violence, suicide cases may increase in the community.

Ordinary people who survive by small earnings day by day, and with no secure savings, and no government support, will face increasing poverty and hardships.

KWO staff are continuing to lead with a compassionate heart and trying our best to protect the community and making sure that no one is left behind.

FUTURE PLANS

KWO staff will continue to produce masks and distribute to the vulnerable target group.

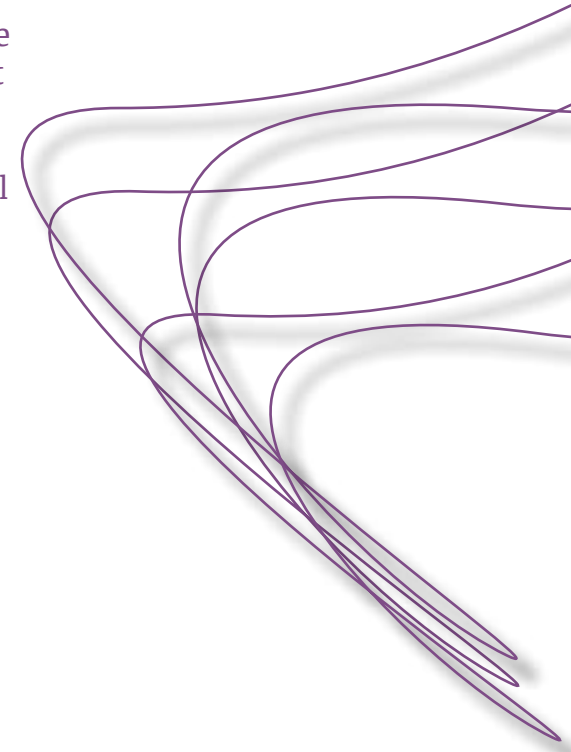
KWO staff will continue to provide hygiene and food packages to the vulnerable target group.

KWO will continue to provide our essential services in the community with a special focus on women's protection.

KWO will take the necessary steps to intervene and lobby for the community to access other avenues of appropriate protection.

KWO will continue to support survivors of violence to access justice in the judicial system.

**DONATE TO SUPPORT KWO'S
EMERGENCY RESPONSE**
karenwomen.org





Photos:
(Left) KWO staff doing home visits in Umphiem Refugee Camp.

(Bottom, right): A handwashing station in use in Mae La Refugee Camp.





Photo:
(Above) KWO staff doing home visits in Mae La
Refugee Camp



Photos:
KWO staff doing home visits in Hpa-An,
Karen State



Photos:

(Left, Top): A family receives a food package from KWO staff during COVID-19 in Mae La Oon Refugee Camp.

(Left, Bottom) KWO provides awareness raising in Ei Htu Hta IDP Camp.



Photos:

An elderly woman receives a food package from KWO in Nu Po Refugee Camp.



Photos:
KWO staff distributing masks made by
KWO in Umpiem Refugee Camp



Photos:
(Above) Residents in Kler Lwee Htu, Karen State, listening to KWO awareness raising on COVID-19

Photos:
(Below) KWO staff in Umpiem making masks for the most vulnerable groups including women & children





Photos:

A case worker provides masks in Doo Tha Htu district and a seamstress makes masks for distribution.



Photos:

(Top left): A field staff distributes a food package in Htam Him Camp.

(Bottom left): Children in Htam Him Camp receive a food package.

Photos:

(Top right): Social distancing practised in Ei Hta Hta IDP Camp during an information sharing session.

(Bottom right) Families in Ei Htu Hta IDP Camp with personal protective equipment.