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What moves women in this particular time of crisis?

Sadly, as a result of the Covid pandemic, the coordinating committee of Andante, CoCoA had to cancel the annual Study Days which should have been held in Baden Baden in May. As a consequence, CoCoA felt it was important to stay in touch and try and support our member organisations during this particularly challenging time for women. We know that the pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities, as across the world women earn less, hold less secure jobs and are the majority of single parent households. As access to paid work diminishes women face an increase in domestic duties like childcare, home schooling and caring for sick family members, while others must combine these duties whilst working from a home office.

Lockdown has exacerbated the problems of domestic abuse and cases have surged, France reporting an increase of 30% after one week of lockdown.

However, women have always been able to show great resilience and respond to changing situations.

We hope that by sharing the strategies developed by our member organisations we can give each other new ideas and help and support each other as we all adapt to the changed environment we face today.

Ten member organisations responded to the questionnaire we sent out to all member organisations in September.

These were;

ACFL, [Action Catholique des Femmes du Luxembourg](#), Luxembourg

KAV, [Katholischer Akademiker/innenverband](#), Vienna, Austria

KDFB, [Katholischer Deutscher Frauenbund](#), Germany

kfd, [Katholische Frauengemeinschaft Deutschlands](#), Germany

KNR, [Konverentie Nederlandse Religieuzen](#), The Netherlands

KVD, [Katholiek Vrowen Dispuut](#), The Netherlands

NBCW, [National Board of Catholic Women](#), U.K.

SHCJ, [European Province, Society of the Holy Child Jesus](#), U.K.

SKF, [Schweizerischer Katholischer Frauenbund](#), Switzerland

UNKV, [Netwerk Katholieke Vrouwen](#), The Netherlands



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The KNR gives support and advice to religious orders and congregations in the Netherlands.

The SHCJ is an international religious congregation which works collaboratively in educational, spiritual, pastoral, social and healthcare ministries.

The ACFL is an ecclesial movement in Luxembourg which brings women together to deepen their Christian faith and supports members in fields of religion, culture, social commitment, further education and administration.

SKF has around 130,000 members in Switzerland and is committed to the rights of all women in society, church, business and politics.

The NBCW is a forum in which Catholic women share views and consult with the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

UNKV is an open network for individuals or organisations which organises an annual meeting day on a philosophical/social theme and originates from the umbrella organisation of the national Dutch movement.

KAV is an Austrian organisation which represents and promotes women's interests from a Christian point of view, with lectures as their main focus.

Kfd is the largest German organisation with around 450000 members, which promotes women in church, politics and society.

KDFB represents around 180000 German members in 1800 branches, who are committed to equal rights and actively participate in shaping politics, society and the Church.

KVD members in the Netherlands belong to circles and provides women with a network that inspires them to inform public opinion concerning society, politics, church and religion.

The responses to the questionnaire were often very similar with events being cancelled and organisations turning to online methods to hold meetings and support members, especially with digital prayer and spiritual support.

KVD managed to meet outdoors at times and felt because of digital contact there was a connection at a deeper level between members.

ACFL managed some small-scale events including a 4.5km meditative walk for Creation Day. They also used Facebook to post spiritual input every week, as well as starting a three-quarter hour for me meditation. Concerns included women's issues being sidelined as Corona issues are foremost in everyone's minds, although there is now more cooperation within ACFL and solidarity in action.

KDFB opened a campaign website and opened a blog, 'What moves women in this particular time of crisis?' Creative ways were quickly set up, so the cancelled Deaconess Day became a digital event. A virtual coffee break on the topic, "Synodal Way" was a success, which will be continued and the action week at the start of October, "For me, For you, For the climate" went ahead.



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Kfd adopted a slogan to encourage, "Faith, Love, Hope." They posted online prayers and digital services and hosted an action week, "Women, who owns the world?" which focused on sustainability by way of local pilgrimages. Their concerns included exclusion for those without online access and the problems for women with work, home schooling, healthcare and domestic abuse.

UNKV sent out newsletters and turned to zoom and telephone. They established small groups to consider Corona issues and highlighted the issues around lack of physical contact.

SKF informed local cantonal associations and were able to be put in touch with risk groups and help locally with practical issues, for example shopping. They have started the 'Herbs' campaign which will promote awareness for the preservation of creation, with scope for action.

KAV in Austria has lectures as their main focus, but as these were cancelled they were able to post these online as videos and via you-tube, which could have reached a wider audience.

The NBCW have turned to online communication and meetings. The bioethics committee chaired by Mary McHugh have issued a document, "Decision making in the coronavirus pandemic. What options you have about treatment at home or in hospital." And the social responsibility committee have produced a resource pack, raising awareness of domestic abuse. Both documents are available on the NBCW website.

Everyone is missing the human contact, although member organisations were all trying to support members and even hoping online meetings, prayer groups, action campaigns and lectures could offer possibilities of reaching wider audiences and achieving greater participation.

Nevertheless, CoCoA is so looking forward and hoping it will be possible to see you in the flesh in Riga next July.

We hope you all stay well.

The CoCoA

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