

# COVID-19 Response: Conacmi - National Association Against Child Abuse Guatemala



## PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

From the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, Conacmi has monitored vulnerable families, over the telephone, to establish priority levels for those most at risk.

Conacmi uses trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy in their work with children, at all times adapted to account for the stage of development and individual characteristics of each child. Their methodological approach involves identifying the emotional state of the child in question, as well as any risk factors within the home, and then placing the child at the appropriate stage within their model of care.

Psychosocial support (PSS) is provided in the context of the whole family. Whilst focused attention is given to children and adolescents, Conacmi also supports mothers, fathers and care givers in order to strengthen the family core. In the context of COVID-19 and working with families remotely, Conacmi is using 'Brief Therapy', which focuses on finding solutions for specific problems which arise.

In order to establish the best mechanisms for engaging with families at this time, Conacmi conducted a survey to ascertain their levels of access to different communication technologies. The results enabled Conacmi to build their plan for delivery of psychosocial care, which takes place primarily through a weekly WhatsApp video call. Most families Conacmi works with have 'pay-as-you-go' phones, so Conacmi is supporting them with phonecards to facilitate their keeping in touch.

“Psychosocial support is provided in the context of the whole family...in order to strengthen the family core.”

## MONITORING RESULTS

Conacmi continually monitors its care provision. It has established a space for social workers and psychologists to come together to review cases, the lessons learned, and to make decisions and improve practice. This continues during COVID-19.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

- 1 Food and water supplies**  
Conacmi delivers regular food parcels to the families in greatest need. They also provide vouchers that can be exchanged in supermarkets. They have supplied water pipes to three communities.
- 2 Homes for those living on the streets**  
Following implementation of a curfew those living on the streets have had nowhere to go. Conacmi has coordinated with a partner organisation to create two homes, funded by donations, and has provided them with supplies and medicines.
- 3 Building networks**  
Conacmi coordinates with 25 organisations all working together to share information, exchange materials and provide messages of hope to the families they support.
- 4 Sharing materials**  
Conacmi provides families with materials to support them through this time. These include activities to be used with children, and resources to help with stress management.



By practitioners, for practitioners.

## COVID-19 CONTEXT

As of mid-May, there were 1,342 confirmed cases and 29 deaths from COVID-19 in Guatemala. The Government took its first steps to contain the virus in mid-March, including the complete suspension of any non-essential work activity. This was met with great controversy by businesses. A curfew was imposed between 4pm and 4am with very punitive measures in place for those breaking it.

The majority of the population depend upon the informal economy making it very difficult to stay at home if they are to support themselves. Violence in the home against women and children has increased as a result of these measures. US deportations of migrants have increased COVID-19 cases and deportees face huge challenges with personal safety once back in Guatemala. The health sector is insufficiently prepared to deal with the crisis.

## ABOUT CONACMI

Conacmi's work focuses upon the prevention of violence against children and young people; particularly sexual abuse. It provides victims with practical help to overcome their trauma.

Through direct support services, help to institutions to strengthen their responses, and research into cross-generational violence, Conacmi works to keep future generations protected from abuse.

Find out more: [www.conacmi.org](http://www.conacmi.org)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Family for Every Child is a diverse membership network of civil society organisations based around the world.

How We Care is an innovative platform for those working with children and families, across the globe, to share their practice. Our vision is that through the exchange and learning facilitated by How We Care, organisations' family care practice and programming will be strengthened, with improved outcomes for the children they support.

Sign up here: [www.howwecare.community](http://www.howwecare.community)

