

Newsletter

Keeping in Mind Global Mission In South America

IL-P Peru: diakonia in an distressing context

Peru has the highest number of COVID deaths in proportion to its population. The impact of the pandemic is devastating, with 200,000 COVID deaths. With less than 33 million, the country has the highest COVID mortality rate globally: 6,072 deaths per million, as of January 2022.

By the beginning of 2022, almost everyone knows someone who has died of COVID. Experts attribute the disastrous pandemic situation in Peru to a combination of poverty, a collapsing national health system, and the emergence of new strains of the virus.

Poverty manifests itself in various ways in the context of COVID-19, from overcrowding in multi-generational housing, where 70% of the Peruvian workforce is in informal employment, forcing them to violate confinement or go hungry, and where medical care must be paid for and is unaffordable for most.

The government recognizes that adopting a strict shutdown is difficult because staying at home without working is impossible for many. That is why the government announced a series of policies, such as cash transfers, to protect people's livelihoods while asking them to stay at home. But the state cannot deliver cash and food efficiently. People have to leave their homes and stand in long lines at banks to receive cash transfers. Many also have to commute daily to food markets, which have become potential sources of infection.

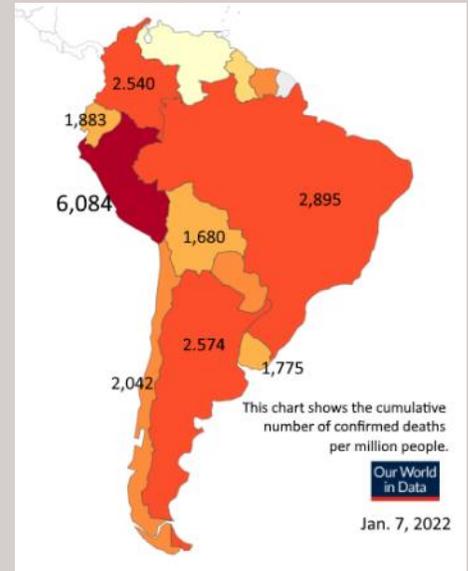
The increase in cases reveals structural weaknesses in the health system. Despite economic growth and general improvements in public health, the health infrastructure was already deficient before the pandemic and insufficient to protect the most vulnerable. In addition, structural inequalities exist within the system, as access to healthcare is determined by wealth, gender, ethnicity, and geography. For example, indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Amazon region are among those who have suffered the most from the epidemic. Lack of access to health services, water, and sanitation and their high rates of poverty and malnutrition placed these ethnic groups in a situation of greater vulnerability.

The impact of Covid-19 deaths is particularly acute among nearly 100,000 children who have lost at least one primary caregiver - parent, grandparent, or adult relative over the age of 60 - to disease-related causes.

Even if one of their parents is still alive, they are called "covid orphans" and face a daily struggle to survive financially and emotionally. Consequences include increased risk of mental health problems, increased vulnerability to physical, emotional, and sexual violence or exposure to domestic violence, and family economic hardship. Even if universal vaccination is achieved, the present and future of children are already seriously compromised in Peru.

In this distressing context, the Lutheran Church of Peru has continued its witness of Christian diakonia by caring for people in need, promoting dignity, justice, and peace in the world, and the care and defense of the environment as an expression of its service to the world.

IL-P's diakonia brings relief and empowerment and promotes rights to people in need through words and deeds as its expression of Christian discipleship. IL-P's diakonia aims to alleviate suffering and promote justice, peace, and human dignity in this overburdened context of life-sustaining demands.



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IL-P: diakonia of all believers serving those in needs, in healing and reconciliation

Every baptized person in the IL-P is called to participate in God's mission of healing and reconciliation, serve the neighbor, and commit themselves to the causes of justice and peace.

The Lutheran Church of Peru understands diakonia as a mandate given to the church, locally, nationally, and globally, and to all Christians as an integral part of discipleship.

In IL-P, diakonia is related, in the first place, to everyday life: the family that cares for its members, especially those most in need, such as children and the elderly; the neighborhood, civil society, and the public arena.

The "diakonia of all believers" is expressed in the immediate personal context and national and congregational programs. IL-P diakonia ministries reach Lima, Trujillo, and Piura in the Northern Coast, Iquitos in the Amazon Basin, and Cusco in the Central Andes.

All images provided by IL-P staff and members.



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Make check payable to "ELCA Global Church Sponsorship" with "Gustavo Driau GCS2045" in the memo line.

ELCA missionaries have helped establish growing churches throughout the world. As a result, we are now part of a much larger story — a global community of more than 77 million Lutherans in 99 countries

PRAYER

Beloved God,

-We pray for IL-P, their congregations, mission and diaconal programs with women health, children and migrants.

-We pray for Presiding Pastor, Rev. Pedro Bullon, for his spirit of courage and right judgment, a spirit of knowledge and love.

-We pray for IL-P companions synods: Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, ad Bishop Mike Reinhart; Lacrosse Synod and Bishop Felix Malpica ; and ELCIC British Columbia Synod and Bishop Rev. Kathy Martin, and companion congregations and global mission committees.

-We pray for the church leaders, for the wisdom and courage they have as they lead us during this challenging time.