

## **Information for churches on the corona emergency fund for international churches**

October 15, 2020

Since March 2020, Samen Kerk Samen Sterk ([www.steunkerken.nu](http://www.steunkerken.nu)) has launched the corona emergency fund for international and migrant churches. We have now been able to process a first and second round of applications.

As of the autumn of 2020, it has become clear that this situation will continue for some time. A corona vaccine will probably not be available until the summer of 2021. Until then we have to adjust to a much more limited way of living. This also has consequences for churches.

Samen Kerk Samen Sterk has now made a plan how to support the international churches for as long as necessary and as long as there is money in the emergency fund. We are not going to call for a third or fourth round of applications, but want to lay down guidelines for applications for the next 12 months.

### **The emergency fund is managed by SOFAK. What can churches apply for with SOFAK?**

The central question is: how are you as a church going to stay in contact with your community in the coming months, in a corona-proof way?

It is important to see what works for your community. What are their needs, what do they want, and what don't they want? The answer to this can be different for each church. We don't want to impose anything on churches, it is up to you to think what works best for you. Explain to us as well as possible in your application, why you think that your plan is the best approach for you. We will give a few examples.

#### **Example 1 - digitization**

A church is currently renting space in a community center, with a temporary lease contract that can easily be terminated. The church notices that many people are not coming to church at the moment. Therefore, the church decides to terminate the lease, and continue fully online. The church has noticed that a lot of people are participating online, and they are reaching new people there as well. The church does however need proper digital equipment. This costs money, and therefore they submit an application to SOFAK.

#### **Example 2 - diaconal aid**

A church notices that many people are in (financial) trouble because of the corona crisis. They have lost their jobs or their business has gone bankrupt. Some people, who are old or ill, do not dare to go outside. The church decides to help these people by having a group of volunteers deliver groceries every week, cook for them or pick up medicines at the pharmacy. Or they organize an activity for children, so they have some fun and the parents get some rest. In this way the church can keep in touch with their people. To be able to organise this, they need money, and that is why they submit an application to SOFAK.

### **Example 3 - fixed costs**

A church has its own building and has to pay the mortgage. They have asked the bank to make an arrangement and the bank is willing to accommodate them. Still, it remains difficult to pay for the building, and the church does not want to lose its building. Therefore, the church submits an application to SOFAK for help in supporting the fixed charges.

### **Example 4 - own idea**

A church has a very creative idea that SOFAK itself would never have thought of. Money may be needed for this as well and an application may be submitted to SOFAK. The most important question that needs to be answered convincingly in this application is: how are you going to stay corona-proof in contact with people in the coming months?

### **SOFAK will take a few other factors into account:**

First of all, churches that have never received money from the emergency fund will be given priority over other applications. Of course, all applications must meet the criteria.

Secondly, the budget of the emergency fund is limited. When it runs out, we will try to raise funds again, but we cannot promise or guarantee that we will succeed. We are dependent on donations from others. That is why it is very important that churches keep thinking about other sources of income besides SOFAK. We don't have enough money now to keep doing what we have been doing for the past six months for another year.

Thirdly, we want to distribute the money fairly and help as many churches as possible. We try to be as wise as possible and keep up to date with current developments, in close consultation with coalition partners of Samen Kerk Samen Sterk. Our coalition partners are available for advice and help, are happy to think with you about finding alternative solutions, and can help you fill in the application form.

Churches in The Hague can contact Andrea van Dijk of the Hub Den Haag (andrea@maraprojecten.nl).

Churches in Rotterdam can contact Karin de Schipper-Visser of SKIN-Rotterdam (karin@skinrotterdam.nl).

Churches in Amsterdam can contact Moses Alagbe of the PCC (malagbe2@yahoo.com).

Other churches can contact Madelon Grant of SKIN (madelon@skinkerken.nl).

For more information you can always contact SOFAK via [info@sofak.nl](mailto:info@sofak.nl).

We wish you well and pray for strength, peace and health for you, your church and your loved ones.