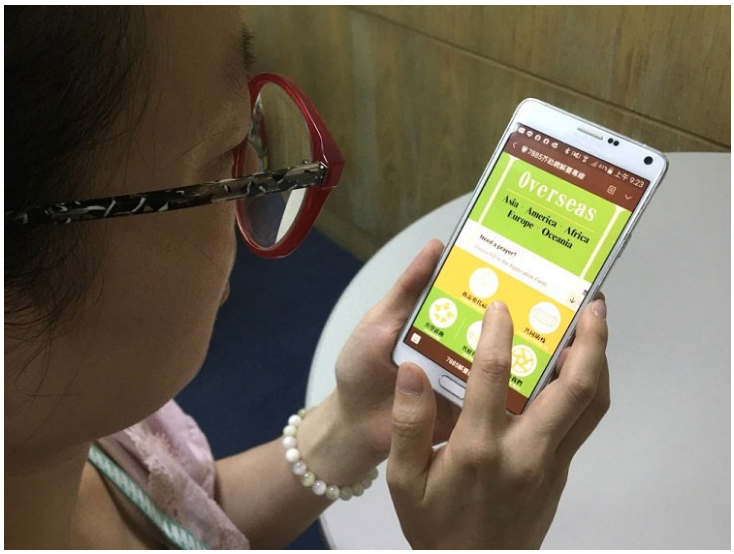
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Taiwan offers COVID-19 pandemic counselling

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Worried Chinese away from home can turn to the 7885 Mustard Seed Helpline to ease their concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic



In response to the severe and negative effect that COVID-19 has had on people's physical and mental health,Taiwan-based social welfare organization, The Mustard Seed Mission, has launched an official account on Line, a popular social media application. The new service - the 7885 Mustard Seed Helpline - brings inner peace to callers by providing a venue where worried individuals can chat one on one with a pastor in tandem with the loving care and assistance of over 100 pastors.

Due to the fast spread of the virus worldwide, the service is in the process of adding pastors who can converse in more than 20 languages with the aim of lending a comforting ear to Chinese travellers and residents abroad and easing their concerns.

Since the outbreak of the virus, many people have felt themselves trapped into negative thought patterns due to shrinking income, unemployment, limitation on daily activities or social distancing. Thanks to a collaboration with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and the Taiwan Graduate School of Theology, the Mustard Seed Mission brings together experienced pastors to care and pray for callers voicing concerns. While Taiwan has recorded a decline in the number of COVID-19 cases, many countries are experiencing a widening outbreak, making the service that will soon be available in more than 20 languages, including Mandarin, English, Japanese and German, all the more indispensable.

Yu-Fen Chien, training director of the 7885 Mustard Seed Helpline as well as professor and Counseling Center director at the Taiwan Graduate School of Theology, said that training in empathy is an important concept in the counseling industry. Callers are greatly comforted in the process of feeling understood, as their negative emotions have an appropriate outlet. Shu-Ti Chang, a pastor who has been living in Germany for the last eight years, attends to callers in four languages, Mandarin, Taiwanese, English and German.

Anyone interested can log on via the LINE app, search ID: @187yfeyj and access the service at no charge by voice or by text, or visit https://www.facebook.com/MSelearing, where anyone who would like to study at home can access and safely share an abundance of educational materials.