

STAD-UGANDA COMMUNITY RESPONSE PROGRAM FOR COVID-19 REPORT



STAD/YWCDO RESPONSE TEAM

APRIL 2020



This project was made possible with funding from Haëlla, ETWA, Brenda Low, STJSTP church, STAD supporters & COVID-19 Task Force, Koboko District, Uganda

Preamble

Appreciation

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Haella foundation for the financial support extended to the people of Uganda and in particular Koboko District in the fight of this noble cause when all nations in the world are seeking for financial support to mitigate the effects of the CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC.

We would also like to thank the Government of Uganda together with the District task force of Koboko under the leadership of the Resident District Commissioner (RDC), for granting us permission to undertake the project activities; the office of the Chief Administrative officer (CAO) and the Political leadership of Local Council Five (LC5) for guiding us within the SOP's of the country and providing a conducive environment for our operation.

Lastly, we thank Project manager the Director of STAD for her undaunting sense of humor and lobbying capacity to ensure that communities in Africa are supported during this horrific period of COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. This would not be possible without your support.

May God continue to bless those who contributed in one way or the other to this fund.

ABBREVIATIONS:

STAD: Support Trust for Africa Development

YWCCO-Youth and women community Development

CSO's- Civil Society Organization

CBO's-Community Based Organizations

SOP's –Standard operating Procedures

LC1's –Local Council One officials

H/H –House hold

PM-Program Manager

FM-Finance Manager

ETWA- European Third World Association

STJSTP- St John & St. Philip Church

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FAM-Finance and Administrative Manager

CM-Community Mobilizer

RDC-Resident District Commissioner

CAO-Chief Administrative Officer

LC5-Local Council 5.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Support Trust for Africa Development –Uganda (STAD) received funding from Haëlla Foundation in the Netherlands to conduct an awareness raising under the theme **“COVID-19, COMMUNITY RESPONSE PROGRAM”** following the declaration of COVID-19 as a world pandemic outbreak by WHO on 11 February 2020 calling for public health Emergency response internationally.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Countries all over the world including Uganda issued measures to combat the spread of the Corona virus which include washing hands with soap after every 20 minutes, use of hand sanitizers, social distancing, wearing face masks, travel bans from other countries and staying at Home,

The president of the Republic of Uganda on 30th March 2020, issued out more fresh guidelines effective 1/04/2020 to prohibit movement of people within the country including private cars.; All non-food stores/shops to be closed except shops selling pharmaceuticals and Agricultural inputs and Super -markets with clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS) to be followed.

These measures unfortunately cannot be afforded by many poor communities in the county. This therefore prompted STAD to seek the funding to help combat the spreading of COVID-19 virus in its community.

3.0 PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The purpose was to help STAD develop a program response mechanism to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the communities in Koboko District.

3.0 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives to be achieved:

- a) strengthen the technical capacity of STAD volunteers for improved knowledge on prevention of COVID-19 and other health related diseases
- b) Train women to enhance their skills in local liquid soap making, sewing of aprons and nose guards
- c) Sensitize communities on Healthy Behaviors like hand washing, avoiding hand shake, social distancing among others.
- d) Purchase essential basic relief food items and distribute to the needy and vulnerable for survival during the lockdown

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- e) Buy plastic water Jerricans for communities for washing hands

4.0 IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

The program was jointly implemented by the following partners

- a) STAD,
- b) Youth and Women community Development Organization (YWEDO)
- c) Koboko District Task Force
- d) The Local Council leaders

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

a) Community Sensitization Awareness Campaign

STAD management and YWEDO conducted Community sensitization awareness campaigns on COVID-19 and prevention measures of COVID-19 using a mobile public address system playing messages on the preventive measures speakers in the entire district of Koboko. This was done through a vehicle drive that was donated by the Women Member of Parliament for Koboko District Hon. Margaret Baba Diri with technical support from the District Task Force and permission from the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) Koboko who is the presidential contact person and chairperson of the District Task force.

The campaign was conducted from 27th /03/2020 to 13th/04/2020 and covered the sub counties of Media, Lobule, Dranya, Ludara, Abuku and Koboko Municipality.



YWEDO/STAD opening the Awareness campaign drive in the sub-counties

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b) Training of volunteer staff of STAD and YWCDO as prevention response team

STAD Management conducted a COVID-19 prevention training session for the response team in preparation for the community intervention. The training was conducted at YWCDO. Other invited stakeholders include the LC1 Task force official of the Village, the Program Manager-STAD & the Coordinator/ Women Leader YWCDO.

Volunteer staff response team in training session



Women Chairperson YWCDO-Rose Leya giving a speech



LC1 village Chairman& COVID taskforce head Gbulanganga Village giving his speech during the training session

c) Training of STAD & YWCDO staff and other volunteers in liquid soap making

A four-day training session on making liquid soap was held from 14th April 2020 to 17th April 2020. A trainer was hired to conduct the training program. The trainees include staff of STAD and YWCDO and other volunteers. A total of 9 women and 4 men were trained. During the training, the Program Manager –STAD in his speech guided the trainees that the training should be able to equip the trainees with skills for making liquid soap for use in future to earn a living and become self-reliant’.



Staff and volunteers in the training sessions & raw liquid soap materials

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i. Welfare and refreshments

The trainees were provided with meals and refreshments during the training sessions including break tea and lunch.



Trainees enjoying meals during the training

ii. Training products

Through this training, the trainees were able to gain relevant skills to produce 350 liters of liquid soap for 70 households. Initially, the target was to produce 250 liters for 50 households but during the mapping process, it was discovered that the number of desperate households was higher than planned and STAD had to step in with additional contribution for the 20 households



Trainees putting branded stickers on the ready-made packaged liquid soap in 5Litre jerricans

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d) Training of women in making packing bags and Aprons.

With the help of YWCDO sewing machines, women were trained on how to cut and sew the bags and Aprons. 50- and 20-meters Cotton materials were purchased and used for making bags & Aprons respectively. A total of 5 women were trained from 18th -19th April 2020 at YWCDO premises. A total of 70 packaging bags and 6 aprons for the response teams were made. The bags were used for packing the food items and were labeled with COVID-19 brand as a way of creating awareness on the pandemic whenever they use the bags for other purposes.



Women in training session for sewing the packing bags and aprons and products made

e) Consultation with the District Task force for permission to purchase and distribute relief food items to the needy and vulnerable communities

The management of STAD took the initiative to seek formal permission to distribute food and other essential items to the needy and vulnerable communities as guided by the SOPs. Permission was officially granted after understanding the genuine cause of the program.

Below: The district Task Force having a meeting and in attendance were all agencies working in Koboko including UNHCR, WFP, ACTION AGAINST HUNGER, STAD, POLITICIANS



f) Purchase of food items

The team from STAD purchased a number of essential food items such as maize flour, beans, cooking oil, salt and silver fish (Ngeje) to cater for an estimated 70 households.



Coordinator YWCDO giving a hand in offloading the purchased items from the truck into YWCDO store

g) Distribution of food items to selected communities

The needy and most vulnerable people (Refugees, elderly, the sick in hospitals, widows, child headed families, pregnant women) were identified with the help of the local council leaders in 3 separates village of Pakayo, Ayimini and Bango in Midia sub county-Koboko District. The selected villages are within the area of operation mandated by the District authorities during STAD registration process. These food items were planned for 50 households with 8 people on average per household giving an approximate number of 400 people but due to the desperate situation and hunger within the community and the additional contribution from STAD, the number of households increased to 70 and a total of 560 people benefited.

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The distribution process went on well and was a success with only 3 absentees mainly the sick in hospitals whose food items were collected the next day by their attendants after verification by STAD community mobilizer with the help of the LC1's.

Refugees residing in the local communities' gladly receiving food relief from YWCDO women coordinator & STAD program Manager



The elderly, women, children and disabled receiving food items



The elderly above 70 years of age being supported by their grandchildren in carrying the food items

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A section of widows receiving their food items

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

A number of challenges were encountered during the implementation of the program and below are some of the highlighted areas.

- h) Due to the lockdown, there was scramble for food items in the limited market stalls given that distant suppliers were not able to move with their food items to markets. This led to further prices increase in basic food items.
- ii) Most of the food items were purchased between 20th -22nd of April 2020 from Koboko market and delivered to the YWCDO stores using a small van or cart at very high cost.
- iii) The increase in the number of the beneficiaries from the initially planned (50 households to 70 households) created a lot of pressure on STAD and its finances as budgeted.
- iv) There was an outcry from the rest of the community members seeking for the same support like the vulnerable groups causing rift and blaming STAD for being selective or discriminative as COVID- 19 impacts on everyone discriminately.
- v) Since STAD's operation is meant to be in the whole sub-County of Midia which has over 10 villages, this project targeted only three (3) villages given our limited resource. As such similar vulnerable groups in other villages in the same sub-county could not get this support from STAD
- vi) STAD was unable to purchase the hand washing water jerricans as planned due to limited budget and lack of planning in the initial budgeting process. Financially, the jerricans were expensive and targeting 70 households would be beyond our budget.

ACHIEVEMENTS/SUCCESS STORY

- i. Despite the increased food prices, the team was able to bargain, purchase the basic food items and re-adjust the quantities to benefit everyone (70 households). Each family was able to get 3 kilograms of beans, one litre of cooking oil, and 2 gallons of Ngeje as opposed to the planned 5 kilograms of beans, 2 litres of cooking oil and three gallons of Ngeje respectively
- ii. Following the financial constraints and lockdown measurements, the task force teams could not afford to hire a car to transport to reach the beneficiaries in their families. But through the LCs, beneficiaries were contacted on 25th April 2020 to come to get their food items from YWCDO premises on 27th April 2020 at different intervals and time frames to observe social distancing.
- iii. The Community also appreciated the food relief items and liquid soap given to them by STAD as it is going to push them for some two to three weeks as most of their hopes were on the government for any government relief interventions in terms of food supply and also easing of the movement restrictions
- iv. Trainees reported that the training session acted as a refresher course as some who took long without sewing and at the same time, such knowledge will greatly continue to impact them in future to undertake self-sustaining projects.

LESSONS LEARNT

1. One lesson learnt is that there are many vulnerable people in the community who need support. Sampling specific villages cannot fully support the cause of STAD's operation boundaries
2. Another lesson is that the effect of corona virus is heavily felt by everyone in the community because when STAD was randomly selecting the vulnerable persons, those who are not vulnerable were curious to learn why STAD chose those categories of families yet all of them have been affected by the Corona virus.
3. STAD also learnt that COVID-19 is here to stay since there is no vaccine so far discovered. So, the communities need to get prepared to live with the virus just observing the necessary health guidelines given by the WHO.
4. There is need for flexibility while implementing projects with limited funding amidst high demand, alternative means need to be devised for the communities. For instance, when we

failed to give out the water cans, we advised them to use other containers like buckets or even 20 litre jerry cans by drilling a hole, fix a tap on the bottom side & get a mixture of the liquid soap & water into the container for washing hands. Secondly, we reduced food quantities to meet the increased number of 70 households.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We recommend for donor support in long term interventions especially on health education, and follow up of awareness raising to see if communities are following some of the measure especially on social distancing, greetings given the fact that a household has an average of 8 persons and live either in one big compound or one tukul or house etc.
2. Since COVID-19 is likely to have a long-time effect on people, we recommend that donors interventions should include livelihood support in skills development in Poultry farming, metal works & fabrication, repair workshops, sustainable agricultural practices like kitchen gardening etc. These are livelihood activities that the youth and some of the elderly can ably continue to operate despite the lockdown as the government has allowed such businesses to operate.
3. We also recommend that donor funding should be increased during such community emergency responses given that we still have a huge gap of vulnerable and un supported people in the remaining villages in the sub-County and the District of Koboko as a whole.
4. We recommend funding to other areas such as psycho-social support counselling and guidance, home visits, legal services, trauma healing & stress management. COVID-19 pandemic has not only caused loss of Jobs, business activities and revenue to the government but it has caused un-told suffering in most families. Sexual gender-based violence activities are on the rise in most homes because parents could not afford to provide for their families. There is loss of lives of family members not because of CORONA virus itself but other diseases given that, they could not afford to treat them timely.
5. On the part of the government of Uganda, we recommend that there should be an open policy within the standard operation procedures to allow the operations of civil society organizations and community-based organizations so that they can reach the local persons deep in the villages with ease. Currently, most movements have been eased on UN agencies and International NGO's yet the CBO's/CSO's still have limited operations.

CONCLUSION

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In nutshell, the food relief and liquid soap distribution was timely during this difficult period of COVID-19 especially given the level of extreme vulnerability that the families identified by STAD are experiencing. It will be so crucial to have such intervention even at a massive level which will go a long way in reputing STAD at local and International level.

Report by
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