



STAD-UGANDA 2020 CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION REPORT



1.0 Introduction

Support Trust for Africa Development (STAD) –Uganda received funding from the church of St John and St Philip and well-wishers to support the most needy and vulnerable groups with some food items for 2020 Christmas Celebration. **Christmas & Easter Celebrations** started in 2016 and have become a yearly event at Youth & Women Community Development Organization (YWCDO). It's all about showing love, compassion and giving HOPE to the South Sudanese & Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) refugees and nationals (local communities, church leaders, politicians, children, women etc.) in Koboko District as one big family loved by God for a peaceful co-existence.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown measures (gatherings of many people were restricted); 2020 Christmas celebration was limited to Gbulagbulanga village, Teremunga ward and Koboko Municipality in Koboko District only. This was a shift from the previous Christmas and Easter celebrations where one refugee settlement and parish in one sub-county in koboko was selected to host it under a specific theme that addresses social – economic, Social Gender Based/domestic violence (SGBV), girl child education, negative traditional and cultural practices, early and arranged forced marriages, conflicts over meagre resources such as land, water etc. These events proved to be effective tools for bringing all people from different social, ethnic religious and political affiliations together without any prejudices.

1.1 The 2020 Christmas celebration was twofold:

- 1) To disseminate knowledge on COVID-19 to the beneficiary
- 2) To distribute food and non-food items to specific target group and activity for youth and children.

1.2 Main Activities undertaken included:

- Briefing the local council one (LCI) of Gbulagbulanga village on the criteria for identifying and selecting the beneficiaries. Main focus groups are the refugees, Persons with Disability (PWD), orphans, single family household heads, elders and widows.
- Purchase of items and distributions.

About 55 beneficiaries were identified and selected as follows: 17 single households, 16 elders, 14 widows, 6 PWDs and 2 orphans. Each group of the beneficiary were identified and were checked physically in terms of personality & residence before registration. The community mobilizer made home visits to each of the beneficiaries and asked them to come for the distribution of items at YWCDO on 23rd December 2020. The visit by the community mobilizer was to verify the beneficiaries identified by the LCI as requested by STAD.

1.3 Dissemination of information on COVID-19.



LC1. Mr. Alayi Sebbi addressing beneficiaries

STAD team and the village LCI hosted the beneficiaries at YWCDO. All the beneficiaries attended except PWD limited by their severe condition. The key speakers were the LCI, program manager and finance manager. Followed by open discussions with the beneficiaries.

The LCI officially lunched the meeting by appreciating STAD and the donors particularly the church of St. John and Philips for supporting the beneficiaries in his village. He emphasized that COVID-19 still exists and can have more devastating effects on the beneficiaries than any other group when the SOPs are ignored. He therefore urged his community members to always wash hands and observe social distancing among, stop shaking hands and wear mask to stay safe and save lives.

The program manager- praised the beneficiaries especially the elders and PWD for attending in person. He also emphasized on the challenges and impact of COVID-19. It doesn't only take away the lives but has posed serious financial challenges to humanitarian organizations who may want to support the poor suffering people. He appealed and requested the beneficiary to be extra careful wash hands, avoid public gathering etc. to reduce spread of the virus.

The finance manager - urged the beneficiaries to utilize the food and non-food items sparingly especially the liquid soap. He advised the beneficiaries to wash their hands frequently with the liquid soap. Most importantly, he urged the beneficiaries to report any signs and symptoms of corona virus to the health leaders. He ended by briefing the beneficiaries on the distribution process by observing the COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Comments and request from the beneficiaries. A beneficiary praised and thanked STAD and all stakeholders for the support. They requested STAD to continue involving them in other interventions. Another beneficiary suggested that, STAD should lobby and support by providing vision aiding equipment for the blind people in the community.

1.4 Distribution of food and Non-Food Items (NFI).

The distribution process was conducted jointly with the YWCDO Women Coordinator Mrs. Rose Leys. It was the most remarkable activity of STAD projects which excited and was appreciated by the beneficiaries. Food and NFI were placed on tables and beneficiary were lined up to pick their items. Each received liquid soap for washing hands and cleaning surfaces, posho, beans, cooking oil, sweets, biscuits and silver fish.



LCI and YWCDO women coordinator handing items to the beneficiaries



2.0 The Youth and children Christmas celebration 26 December 2020

The main aim of organising a separate Christmas for the youth and children was to bring the children, elders and the parents together to address or discuss challenges faced by parents and children during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Over 300 children and adults (parents, guardian and guests) attended. Various Speeches from different people focusing on Christian parenting followed by various entertainment activities by the children.

Speeches by children leader and a parent's representatives



The children leader holding her child while giving a speech.

It is a privilege to be with children together with the parents in this celebration. We as children leaders are happy to see the parents of this children and I pray for the organizers and the person who came with this idea I pray that God should bless him or her, I hope you will enjoy the activities of these children. I want tell every child that, it is your day - sing, dance and participate as this a way learn and use the talents God gave you. Thank you for listening God bless you” Mary Christmas and happy New Year.



Creative dancing, poem reading etc.



Time for games - children very active and happy



Time for celebration and partying

Conclusion

The Christmas package was implemented at a period where many vulnerable heads of household would not afford high food prices and expenditures. Therefore, support to these beneficiaries was timely and highly appreciated. However, some of the **challenges faced were that Gbulagbulanga village constitutes 70% vulnerable age groups making it difficult whom to and not select. Those not selected complained for unfair selection and increased food prices December being a Christmas period**

Recommendations.

- The need to send finances quite early enough especially during Christmas period, prices of all food items tend to go high.
- The beneficiaries had food and NFI was the best gift ever in the 2020 Christmas season.

- STAD and donors were sincerely appreciating for their financial support amidst COVID-19 challenges.
- There is need for proper planning on the side of STAD regarding the number and amount of food and NFI to be distributed



THANKS, GOD FOR ALL THE BLESSINGS AND MERCIES IN 2020. BYE TILL 2021