



# THE WATSAN EYE

*Is an email newsletter produced by UWASNET to share highlights and the contribution of CSOs in the Water and Sanitation sub-sector.*

April 13<sup>th</sup>—17<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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## Are CSOs Contributing to the National COVID19 Response Plan in Uganda?

### Editorial

**A**re CSOs contributing to the National COVID19 response plan in Uganda? The answer is yes!

This edition of the WATSAN Eye newsletter focuses on the contribution of CSOs to the national Coronavirus response in Uganda.

Since the confirmation of the Coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, Government has since enforced a number of measures aimed at curbing the spread of the disease.

Currently, there are 54 confirmed cases in Uganda.

The measures put in place affected not only the way we live but very much also the way we work.

A number of organizations are working remotely i.e. staff facilitated to work from home because the imposed lock-down hindered movement of people. Equally so, social distancing was encouraged as a mechanism to stop the spread of the disease. Only “essential” workers are permitted to go to their work-places.

Regardless of this, a number of non

-state-actors including CSOs are contributing to the national efforts to curb the spread of the virus in Uganda.

This newsletter highlights the contribution of UWASNET member organizations towards curbing COVID19 in Uganda.

If your organization is contributing to curbing the spread of COVID19 in Uganda, please email a one-pager with details and pictures to [raanyu@gmail.com](mailto:raanyu@gmail.com) for publication. **Please send in the stories by April 23rd, 2020.**

## Secretariat mobilizing resources towards curbing the spread of COVID19 in Uganda

**T**he UWASNET Secretariat is mobilizing support towards initiatives aimed at curbing the spread of COVID19 in Uganda.

The Secretariat is working in collaboration with the National Hand Washing Secretariat and is mobilizing its membership towards this cause. UWASNET recognizes that the COVID19 pandemic impresses upon cooperation among government, donors and non-state actors including citizens to strengthen health systems and ensure that eve-

ryone, everywhere has access to safe water and improved standards of sanitation and hygiene.

For UWASNET, this is an opportunity for the whole world to acknowledge what WASH sector stakeholders have been advocating that ‘... handwashing with soap can prevent the spread of diseases like COVID-19 in addition to slow down the spread of diseases like Ebola, diarrheal, cholera, pneumonia and intestinal worms’.

UWASNET’s efforts are also aimed at advocating for the prioritization of

the sector in national planning and budgeting having seen the impact of COVID19 to the economy and other sectors. Through coordination of its members, UWASNET will also share lessons learnt towards effective management of future WASH related disease out-breaks in Uganda.

So far, members including WHAVE Solutions, IRC Uganda and Engineers Without Borders have contributed towards implementing activities in the concept note. The Secretariat is still reaching out to other members.

# WaterAid Uganda in joint handwashing campaign with KCCA to counter COVID19



*(L-R) Jane Mselle Sembuche, Country Director WaterAid Uganda & Samuel Sserunkuma, Deputy Executive Director KCCA demonstrating how foot operated valve, water saving handwashing tank works. The tank has two handwashing outlets. – two people can wash their hands at the same time. Photo: WaterAid / James Kiyimba*

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, WaterAid Uganda handed over 60 hand washing tanks to Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) as part of a joint campaign to counter the spread of Coronavirus in Kampala city.

The hand washing facilities were handed over to Mr. Samuel Sserunkuma, the Deputy Executive Director, KCCA by the Country Director of WaterAid Uganda, Ms. Jane Mselle Sembuche.

“We appreciate the support from WaterAid. In this partnership we are going to teach many people the value of hand washing with soap in the fight against Coronavirus. Good hand hygiene protects you and those around you. One of the most important contributions we can make to slowing down transmission

of COVID-19,” said Mr. Sserunkuma.

In her speech, Mrs. Sembuche reiterated the importance of regular and effective hand washing with soap and water as a preventive measure against COVID-19.

She called upon other development partners to join the campaign.

The 150-liter capacity tanks are to be connected to piped water supply and distributed in different public places including markets to enable public handwashing with water and soap. In addition, these tanks are fitted with a water efficient tap and



*Asha Bamutaze from ATC fixing a sticker with handwashing messages on the tank. Photo: WaterAid / James Kiyimba.*

foot operated valve to minimize contamination and touching of the tap when washing hands.

The tank has two handwashing outlets. – two people can wash their hands at the same time.

# World Vision launches a UGX3Billion COVID19 Emergency Response in Uganda

On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, World Vision launched a US\$1,010,000 (UGX3Billion) COVID19 Emergency Response to support the refugee communities in West Nile and 53 districts that World Vision operates in. The funds were from its different programmes i.e. health, education, water and sanitation, livelihood and refugee response to its COVID19 Emergency Response Programme, which seeks to promote preventive measures to slow the spread of the virus, support health systems, provide children and their families' multi-sector support during the crisis.

World Vision partnered with Ministry of Health to set up isolation centers with mattresses, provide food for suspected cases, train Village Health Teams (VHTs) to carry door to door sensitization with megaphones, distribute hand washing facilities and soap to households and health centers, provide personal protective equipment for health workers, carry out sensitization and awareness campaigns and support coordination activities at district level.

The response was kicked off with a handover of 4,050 boxes (40,500 bars) of soap to the Office of the Prime Minister. The soap is to support about 150,000 vulnerable children and people with special needs in refugee settlements.

The response will primarily target children under World Vision care and follow up in Bidibidi, Phino, Imvepi, Parolinya, Omugo and Adjumani refugee settlements.



*World Vision handing over 2,560 liters of liquid soap and other items to the Arua District Health Officer.*

*All Photos from the World Vision website [www.wvi.org](http://www.wvi.org)*

"Today we are delighted to hand over this soap to support the struggling refugee communities here in West Nile," said Mary Njeru, the Acting World Vision Refugee Response Director in Uganda.

Additionally, World Vision has also given logistical support including over 1,000 liters of fuel, vehicles to facilitate district task force, media air-time, medical supplies and megaphones to be used by the local authorities in sensitizing communities about the spread of virus. World



*World Vision's Refugee Response Director, Mary Njeru handing over soap to an official from the Office of the Prime Minister*

vision is continuing to seek additional resources for what it sees as a potentially longer-term intervention.

*Story adopted from World Vision website [www.wvi.org](http://www.wvi.org)*

## Lifeline & Everflow Africa contribute to COVID19 response in Apac & Kwanja districts



*EverFlow mechanic Peter Elak wears a protective face mask and gloves while spraying disinfectant on the hand pump in Anamoringo community before conducting a repair.*

**I**n the face of the COVID19 pandemic, access to water and sanitation is critical to protecting the lives and health of community members.

As an early responder, EverFlow became a member of the Apac district COVID19 Task Force and was given a special movement permit for essential maintenance and repair activities for water points.

To keep water flowing in Uganda's rural communities, Lifeline took into consideration EverFlow's critical and essential activities, to identify and strengthen our role in stopping the spread of the virus, as well as the relief needed for rural communities and hand pump mechanics (HPMs).

As of March 30th, 2020, Lifeline and Everflow Africa were implementing the following procedures in line with

the Government of Uganda's guidelines;

- ⇒ Suspend ongoing WASH activities that involve community gatherings and contact
- ⇒ Affect a moratorium on community fee collections for April 2020
- ⇒ Suspend disconnections for communities that have defaulted on their fee
- ⇒ Halt routine maintenance operations for April 2020
- ⇒ Continue operating the toll-free hotline and provide emergency repairs, taking additional measures to limit exposure and sanitize pumps before operations
- ⇒ Pay our contracted HPMs a relief salary for April 2020

in-spite of no fee collections and communicate these updates by radio, phone and letters to our customers, local government, hand pump mechanics, and partners.

In 2017, Lifeline Fund developed and launched a social enterprise called EverFlow Africa to provide professional maintenance and repair services as a way of addressing challenges in both water access and pump functionality.

At present, EverFlow serves over 25,000 people in 64 communities. After 2+ years of service, customers are enjoying an average up-time of 99.6% -- only 1.3 days of downtime per year.

# Wells of Life supports Mityana district response to COVID19

**A**s part of response to COVID19, Wells of Life purchased 400 boxes of bar soap (10,000 pieces of bar soap) and distributed them as follow,

- ⇒ 200 boxes (5,000 pieces of bar soap) given to the Regional Hospital of Mityana through the district
- ⇒ 100 boxes (2500 pieces) given to the Ministry of Health
- ⇒ 100 boxes to the Catholic parish of Kkungu Parish in Bukuya sub-county, Kassanda district

In addition to this, Wells of Life received approval from the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Mityana to continue with the rehabilitation of broken boreholes in Mityana district.

In April 2020, Wells of Life has planned to repair 10 wells and raise funds to repair 50 more wells and drill 30 new wells in Mityana, Kassanda and Mubende districts throughout the year.

“It is of high importance that during this period, rural communities have access to safe water and be provided the minimum tools such as soap to help them maintain good hygiene. Our small intervention in helping the government and the communities of rural Uganda in their quest of staying healthy and protect themselves in front of this pandemic,” said Adrian Laurentiu, Country Manager of Wells Of Life.

“It is a small donation that Wells Of Life made to the Government and people of Uganda but as we always say, every drop matters and every life counts in our quest of elevating



*Adrian Laurentiu, the Country Manager, Wells Of Life handing over the soap to the Mityana district officials*



*Pascal Olinga, the WASH Program Advisor of Wells Of Life handing over soap to Father Lawrence Mwangi*

the life standard of rural communities of Uganda,” said

Adrian Laurentiu, the Country Manager of Wells Of Life.

# ACTS Uganda prepares staff and community members for COVID19 emergency

Following the announcement of the first case of COVID19 in Uganda, and the subsequent announcement of the closure of all borders, an alternative plan of action was pursued in response.

All normal activities that were being implemented under the work plan were stopped immediately, and an Emergency Response Plan was executed in a timely manner, in order to prepare both staff and communities for COVID19.

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020, ACTS Uganda purchased required relief items and information tracts namely; jerry cans, bars of soap, strings, nails, sanitizer, bleach, gloves and masks.

ACTS Uganda sensitized the community members on COVID19 using a megaphone hang on a car that was driven through the community. Information was shared on COVID19 is spread, the symptoms and how to prevent infection.

The distribution of the soap and other items was done. The distribution exercise took two days covering 17 villages namely; Kogabi, Kicuzi, Rugarama, Kinyamugara, Kategure, Kabende, Buraziru, Kabuha, Katerera, Ryakashunsha, Mulangala, Kagorogoro, Kitehe, Ryakagumba, Mahuha, Rwemambo and Muture including Kicuzi Health Centre II

Before the distribution commenced, a meeting with key stakeholders in the project area witnessed the delivery of the relief items at Syroma Primary School. The meeting comprised of Village Health Teams (VHTs), Councilors, Health Assistant, WASH leads, LC1s, LC2 and



*ACTS Uganda officials handing over the soap and jerry cans to the local leaders*

LC3. Village names were read out and materials amounting to the number of households given by LCs dispatched for distribution.

The distribution team per village comprised of a VHT, two / one ACTS Uganda staff and an LC1. One ACTS staff aided by some local leaders and caretakers stayed at the storage venue to watch over the items left for security purposes.

At every distribution point, a message introducing ACTS Uganda and talking about how Covid-19 spreads, washing hands with the aid of posters / tracts was shared. Tippy tap construction demonstrations were also carried out. Posters on washing hands were put up in trading centers. Distribution lists were written by ACTS staff and in other locations by Chairpersons and/or VHTs to avoid cross contamination using pens.

An evaluation meeting was held where staff shared lessons learnt and suggested areas of improvement and achievement. During this meeting 3 more villages in addition to the initial 14 were cited. These included Ryakashunsa where the ACTS Camp is situated.

## **Challenges faced**

The time allocated to the distribution exercise was limited to two days and thus home to home visits were done partially. This could impact whether the supplies reached every household targeted. A follow up on distribution lists from village leaders was done so as to have complete records of all households who received the relief items.

The communities thanked ACTS Uganda management for this kind of responsive programming and hinted that the exercise gave God glory.

## A Chance for Children supporting vulnerable groups with food

**A** Chance for Children is supporting vulnerable groups of children to have access to food during the lock-down imposed by Government of Uganda as a way of curbing the spread of COVID19 spread in Uganda.

Mr. Ceaser Lukango, the Chairman

of the organization said they are sending staff on motorbikes to deliver food items to the physically handicapped and HIV positive children in the villages of Kakinda, Lubajja, Sekanyonyi and Busunju in Mityana district. Part of the food package includes sugar, beans, posho, rice, cooking oil and soap.

Apart from this, the organization teaches and sensitizes them about washing their hands with soap as a preventive measure against COVID19.

These children are part of the programme supported and run by the organization.

## Action Against Hunger supporting sensitization of communities in Kyangwali on COVID19 prevention

**A**ction Against Hunger is supporting the sensitization of communities in Kyangwali refugee settlement. The organization is conducting radio talk-shows on Kagadi Kibaale community radio where the District Health Officer is

engaged to give accurate information on COVID19 and answer people's questions COVID19. The organization is also supporting communities with hand washing with soap facilities to wash their hands with soap.

Elena Vicario, the Head of Programs and Acting Country Director at Action Against Hunger said that the organization was in talks with SIDA to adjust their current budgets to support the COVID19 response plan in Uganda.

## Action for Human Rights and Education Initiative Uganda supporting dissemination of accurate information on COVID19 in Arua district

**A**ction for Human Rights and Education Initiative Uganda is part of the Imvepi Inter-Agency Task Force on COVID19. Ms. Emily Adania, the Programme Manager at the organization says

that they are supporting the dissemination of accurate information on COVID19. She said that UNHCR produced flyers in the local languages and they are disseminating these flyers to the community members. The organization is also

supporting dissemination of this information on radio and through the mobile public address. She said that they are supporting communities to adhere to the guidelines put in place by Ministry of Health and the President's directives.

## Catholic Relief Services rehabilitating boreholes in Napak & Nakapiripirit districts

**C**atholic Relief Services (CRS) is supporting the rehabilitation of eleven (11) boreholes in Napak

and Nakapiripirit districts.

CRS will also distribute eighty-eight (88) hand washing facilities, jik, and liquid soap to health faci-

ties in Napak and Nakapiripirit districts.

## Evidence Action supporting Village Health Teams (VHTs) to disinfect borehole handles and dispensers

**E**vidence Action will be distributing 240,772 bars of soap in eleven (11) districts in Eastern Uganda.

The organization will also facilitate Village Health Teams (VHTs) and

volunteers to disinfect frequently touched spaces and places like the handles of boreholes and the chlorine dispensers.

This is effective in killing the coronavirus on metallic surfaces.

Evidence Action will also support Village Health Teams and Water User Committee members to sensitize people on the need for frequent hand washing with soap as a preventive measure against COVID19.

## Fields of Life to support health workers with Personal Protection Equipment

**F**ields Of Life has planned to begin supporting health workers in three health facilities in Kampala with Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), which is essential for their own protection as they support patients.

On top of this, Fields Of Life will install hand washing with soap facilities in seven (07) urban poor settlements including Namuwongo, Kibuli and Kusugu. This is planned to commence next week.

Upon receiving permission from the RDC's office, Fields Of Life will support sensitization efforts,

distribute hand washing with soap items including sanitizers in districts in Teso region where they work including Namutumba, Butaleja, Kumi, Amolator among others.

They plan to also install hand washing facilities at water points to facilitate hand washing with soap for community members who come to collect water.



*Personal Protection Equipment wore by health workers in Philippine*



# Youth Environmental Services modeling COVID19 community response plan in Busia

**B**usia District is situated at the Eastern border with Kenya. Busia Municipality is the Ugandan part of the Busia agglomeration, divided by the Ugandan / Kenyan border.

As a busy border town and commercial market center, Busia faces a highly fluctuating and steadily increasing cross border population. For this reason, its social problems are more challenging than in other towns of comparable size.

Mobile cross border and host populations in Busia are at disproportionate risk of acquiring and spreading the virus due to overcrowding, poor access to safe water and sanitation and limited access to health services.

The Government of Uganda has put in place efforts to address the epidemic in Busia border, but young people and their families need to know how to protect themselves from catching and transmitting coronavirus.

The government imposed severe movement restrictions and contact restrictions on the entire populations, such as stay at home orders, social distancing, self-isolation and quarantine which is threatening the livelihood, if applied over long period of time, also because the baseline transmissibility of the virus in overcrowded communities with poor hygiene is likely to be higher.

YES modeled a more targeted approach by mapping the most at risk hot spots for intervention and developed a mobilization strategy e.g. places like drinking joints, trading centers, border community. YES

provided mega phones to inform the public about the epidemic.

YES also printed the World Health Organizations (WHO) health guidelines on COVID-19 prevention for distributions, YES

supported photocopies of 1000 IEC materials for the district.

Following the presidential address to the nation, the chairman Board of Governors and the Executive Director convened standing meeting with key based project staffs to know what is essential in the fight against COVID-19.

Staffs were advised to communicate to the office in case of any suspected cases in their community, be vigilant and always get updated news on radio and television from Ministry of Health.

During the District security meeting, where YES representative was present, 4 key areas that needs intervention are highlighted below;

- Need for a availability and access of safe water, and access, because then Busia had taken 3 days without water, and the



*YES Busia participating in the planning meetings for COVID19 response in Busia*

community members converging in the water spring to collect unsafe water for domestic use.

- The need to promote the role of individuals and households in spread and prevention of COVID-19 through improved behavior change.
- Checking the behavior and movement of commercial sex workers, trucker drivers from Kenya and also addressing the movement of men with multiple wives in different locations.
- Provide support for the frontline medical staffs on duty, their drivers and what guidelines are in place for arresting suspects, confinement and crowding, including provision of handwashing facilities at the police entrance.

# Caritas Gulu Archdiocese interventions on COVID19



*Members of the COVID19 task force members attending meeting at the RDC's office in Kitgum Municipality*

Since the outbreak of COVID19 in Uganda, Caritas Gulu has been following it very closely and taken into consideration all the guidelines given by Ministry of Health Uganda and the World Health Organization (WHO), the Humanitarian Standards Partnership (HSP)/Sphere and Caritas International.

The followings are the key interventions carried out by Caritas Gulu Archdiocese on COVID19

- ⇒ Disseminated information on COVID19 to all the staff through email, social media and posters.
- ⇒ Put in place hand washing facilities in front of offices and ensures that people wash their hands with soap before and after leaving offices.
- ⇒ Bought and gave face masks to staff.

- ⇒ Suspended field activities and meetings.
- ⇒ Most staff are working from home with effect from 25/03/2020, with the exception of essential staff who have remained in office for coordination purposes.
- ⇒ Has joined and always attend meetings for COVID19 district task force of Gulu, Pader and Kitgum.
- ⇒ Has made contributions in term of fuel to support the district task force.
- ⇒ Writing concept notes to donors seeking for support towards fight against the disease. When any of the concept notes written to donors succeeds then we shall begin implementing some activities in target locations.

Caritas Gulu Archdiocese is the Emergency Relief and Development

arm of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Gulu. It's vision is 'A peaceful and prosperous society where self-reliance, love and care for the vulnerable prevail'.

Its mission is to promote peace, social justice and integrated development in line with Christian values.

Caritas Gulu has three programmes; Social justice, Humanitarian response and livelihoods.

Livelihood programme works toward supporting improved community infrastructural development, access to safe water, sanitation, household income and increased agricultural production/productivity and environmental conservation.