

CORONAVIRUS

Putting Women and Girls at the Centre of COVID 19 Response in Ethiopia

In our understanding of the COVID 19 pandemic impact to women, girls and other most vulnerable groups, ActionAid Ethiopia has joined the concerted efforts of all actors in the nation. We extended our support to vulnerable people by supplying different sanitary products that include sanitizer, liquid soap, and hand wash containers with taps, water tankers, face masks, bed-sheets and mattresses with a total worth of about One million Birr that is around 30,000 USD.

On an occasion organized by the government to receive supports from different actors in the country with presence of key media actors, ActionAid Ethiopia's Country Director, Tinebeb Berhane urged the government and all stakeholders and the public at large to make sure that the countrywide COVID 19 mitigation efforts give due emphasis to gender face of the pandemic. In her remarks she urged collaborations and actions around the outcome of the pandemic on women and girls such as gender-based violence, unpaid care work and deep economic crisis of women who earn their daily bread from the informal sector. ActionAid Ethiopia has also released Press Release, via different media outlets in the country and on social media, underscoring the severity of COVID 19 and the prevailing economic and gender injustice against women and girls.



Mattresses ActionAid supplied to the National Committee being transported to the Committee's temporary store in Addis. (Picture taken by Hailu Nurga/AAE)



ActionAid Ethiopia's Country Director, giving interview to a national tv station on COVID 19 response

Our Response at Local Right Programmes (LRPs) level

Our Local Right Programmes (LRPs) were pioneers in their respective communities in giving swift response to the pandemic.

In collaboration with local government structures and the women socio-economic groups that are working with ActonAid Ethiopia, the LRPs implemented different methods to raise the awareness of their communities on the prevention of corona virus. In Decha-Semen Bench LRP, informative brochure were produced and distributed to the public in addition to posting big billboards at different public areas in their woreda/district.

Mobile shows and demonstrations were the methods preferred by some of the LRPs like Ameya LRP, the youngest ActionAid Ethiopia's LRP, to raise the awareness of the public on the pandemic. They worked with the health office of the district and demonstration of handwashing guided by health professionals and public education on how to use the sanitary products that were supplied by ActionAid to combat COVID 19 was given.

The supports ActionAid Ethiopia provided were crucial in filling the gap of health facilities to provide their usual services. In Beke and Gute districts of Elfeta LRP, 200k.m west of Addis, Beke and Gute health centres were desperately in short of sanitary supplies and water for their health service delivery before ActionAid supplied sanitary products like liquid soap, sanitizers and water tankers to address the prevention of COVID 19 in their districts. This has made the health providers feel safer and serve their community with dedication amid COID 19 pandemic.

“Now that ActionAid has supported us with sanitary products. The health staff are



Using the COVID 19 prevention billboard, a woman teacher in Semen Bench gives explanation to the youth and nearby



Covid 19 message billboard in Genia market, Semen Bench



Handwashing demonstration given by health professionals in Ameya LRP

motivated and are feeling safer. Customers also wash their hands with soap before entering the compound. We are grateful to ActionAid for making this happen in our district as this hard time.” said Mr. Ebissa Wakeye, Head of the health Centre in Gute district.



Customers washing their hands before entering Beke Health centre for health service

Women-led Saving and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) and Women Watch Groups (WWG) that ceased their monthly savings and meetings due to COVID 19 threat were also supporting for the distribution of sanitary products and awareness raising activities in districts where LRPs of AAE were operating. As the result of the provision of the support to protect the executives and their members, these women groups resumed their savings and meetings. Moreover, in all LRPs these community structures are playing oversight role throughout the distribution underpinned by MoUs.



‘We have informed our members to come one by one for payment and discussed among committee members to work safely but there was no preventive material in our office. We are thankful to AAE that the committee members got sanitizer to use while collecting cash at monthly level. We thank ActionAid for considering our problem and helping us in preventing ourselves.’ Said Dese Diro Dese Diro, a cashier of Bekemtu SAACO of Haro Tufticha Kebele.

Dese the cashier and Batire, head of the SAACO collecting cash from a member having the sanitizer on their table. (Picture taken from AAE Ethiopia LRP)

Among the sanitary products supplied by ActionAid Ethiopia in Guna Begemdir LRP, 800km north of Addis, was a locally manufactured foot-pedal handwash machine manufactured in collaboration with the nearby university - Debretabor University. Community members and government officials are excited using it.



WWG leader testing the foot-pedal handwashing basin supplied by ActionAid Ethiopia →

Amid all these efforts, much is expected from all stakeholders to effectively prevent the spread of COVID 19. In one of the handing over ceremonies, a woman district administrator and chairperson of Women Watch Group in Guna mentioned that there are concerns that should be addressed. *“Though we are not opening our office to serve our women due to COVID-19, women facing various forms of violence are knocking our doors requesting our support and we are linking them to women and children affairs and police offices. I fear that if the situation becomes worse, women will be negatively impacted and the task force especially health office should focus on raising awareness on COVID 19 to the community regularly.”* she added.

In all the LRPs, sanitary products and orientations in line with awareness creation were distributed to Women-led Saving and Credit Cooperatives, Women Watch Groups, health workers, police officers and members of woreda task force that are moving at different public areas like markets, public transport stations, etc. Besides, ActionAid Ethiopia’s Statement of Solidarity urges all parties to make women, girls and children the center of COVID 19 prevention and mitigation efforts.

In most of the solidarity events, community elders, women group leaders, the youth and the media were in attendance, and media outlets in Amhara and Tigray regional states broadcasted news coverage on their channels <https://youtu.be/5oNS6RJYJ3w>

All the LRPs outlaid an approximate of 700,000 Birr That is 18,000 GBP for COVID 19 response. The response will continue as per our program framework that is developed.

The sanitary materials being tested by the COVID 19 command post in Raya Azebo. (Picture taken by: AAEA/Raya Azebo team. ➡)



AAE Country Director, Mrs. Tinebeb Berhane handing over sample of the mattresses to representative of the National COVID 19 Mitigation Task Force in Addis Ababa



AAE's Janamora area representative (middle) handing over the sanitary products to district task force.

