



RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN GHANA: THE IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION AND RESILIENCE

The covid-19 pandemic is fast turning into a humanitarian crisis: the concern is that the number of positive cases will increase dramatically in the coming weeks and it is expected to hit hard especially the poorest. The country's health infrastructure cannot cope and resources to help overcome the economic impact are seriously lacking, particularly remote rural areas, where ActionAid is present since 30 years.

Through this project ActionAid proposes an urgent response by implementing immediate actions, spreading information about prevention measures, distribute non-food items such as soap and sanitizers to 6,000 particularly vulnerable groups and distribute protective equipment to 5 rural clinics. The project also intends to support livelihoods, both in their immediate needs (providing food items to among 2,000 needy families) as well as to assure continuity to livelihood programmes of 15 women and youth groups (for a total of 500 people) which will help build their long-term resilience.

To act now means saving lives and build long term resilience.

Duration: 8 months: May-December

Target areas: remote communities in Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Middle and Southern zones.

Amount needed: 160,000 CHF

The challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic is rapidly spreading in Ghana: over 5,127 cases have been reported as of 11 May, compared to 3,091 only a week before. The COVID-19 pandemic is not only a health issue with potentially fatal consequences, it has serious economic and emotional implications for

the women and children, people living in poverty, vulnerable people and informal sector workers. The efforts by the government to support affected vulnerable groups, are inadequate and insufficient for the hard-to-reach and deprived communities as well as many vulnerable and at-risk populations with whom we work. Many among the poor are more concerned about surviving hunger, than they are about surviving COVID-19; flouting the partial lockdown directive in search for food and other essentials they expose themselves to infections. The basic hygiene practice of sanitizing hands or handwashing with soap under running water is a luxury many cannot afford because of the challenge of access to water and economic ability to purchase soap and sanitizers. While the government's directive now recommends wearing of nose masks when in public spaces, many people, especially in rural poor communities, cannot afford purchasing them. These areas are also the places where there are practically little, or no health care access and people live communally, thus increasing the risk of spreading the disease.

What we propose to do

Our aim is preserving livelihood for the vulnerable and extremely poor, by providing immediate relief and speed up recovery through a two-phased intervention:

- 1) Emergency relief: promoting preventive measures by widening ActionAid's sensitization campaign, distribution of sanitation kits and food items to the most vulnerable and protective equipment to rural clinics.
- 2) Recovery and advocacy; continuing improvement of the livelihood and support for youth and women groups so that they can re-establish their lost livelihoods.

Our response will target rural poor and hard to reach community in these 3 regions. The specific target group of our activities are: female headed households, people with disabilities, other vulnerable women (particularly pregnant women, older women accused of witchcraft and single mothers.

The result we expect to achieve are:

1. Prevent the spread of COVID-19 amongst the vulnerable people. To do this we will:
 - a) Provide non-food items (soap, hand sanitizers, nose masks and sanitary pads) to 6,000 vulnerable people in rural communities
 - b) Provide protective equipment to 5 rural clinics and health centers in target areas
 - c) Promote sensitization and awareness campaign at national and regional level on prevention the spread of the virus. Working closely with regional and community radio stations, announcements and jingles will be aired, in local languages where necessary, that promote key messages sourced from the WHO and Ghana Health Service websites.
2. 2,000 among the extremely poor and vulnerable people will receive basic food items to help them bridge their immediate food needs, as a result of the impossibility to earn income as a result of this pandemic
3. 10 Women and 5 youth groups for a total of 500 people will have received recovery support so that there are able to rebuild their livelihoods through skills training, Village Saving and Loan Association etc.
4. Implement a national advocacy campaign for the provision and expansion of gender responsive public services for the vulnerable through traditional and social media.

ActionAid in Ghana

ActionAid has been working in Ghana since 1990, in 11 of the 16 administrative regions: Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Savanna, North East, Bono, Bono East, Ahafo, Volta, Oti and Greater Accra regions. Our focus in these regions is on education, sustainable agriculture, and women's rights. We also work with young people throughout Ghana helping them to set up sustainable livelihoods, through vocational training in skills including tiling, plumbing, embroidery, and poultry farming. We know the area well and we have built over these years trust of local partners and communities.

WE CAN FIGHT COVID-19 TOGETHER

Avoid public gatherings. Keep a safe distance of 2-3 meters from people



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txvJHTb5iB4>

In response to the pandemic we have already activated our staff, and a large groups of volunteers to help with information and prevention campaigns,

including videos and posters <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCcyqV8bAvc&feature=youtu.be>

We recently also have been able to set up safe houses for women that suffer domestic violence <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfmOqU8hWCM>.

For this project an emergency response team will be constituted to lead and coordinate the implementation of the project. They will give strategic directions, monitor and report on the status of implementation. We will coordinate our work with key stakeholders such as Ghana Health Service. The response will be monitored and reviewed on monthly basis according to ActionAid standards, to ensure we attend to any emerging issues during implementation.

ActionAid Switzerland

ActionAid Switzerland is part of the ActionAid federation: we are present in more than 40 countries. ActionAid Switzerland is a tax-exempted charity, registered in the Canton of Ticino. We support the work of ActionAid in different countries.

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