Kilwa Women Take Lead in Emergence Response

By Steven Bernard, Kilwa LRP Coordinator

As part of sharpening women’s leadership skills in emergencies, ActionAid Kilwa Local Rights Programme LRP) conducted training to Women’s Reflection Action Circle leaders in Njinjo and Maranda wards where floods wreaked havoc.

The objective of the training was to help women understand their role from family to community level during emergencies.

With the current COVID 19 crisis, the women leaders are using the knowledge to provide awareness in their communities. This is to ensure that community members are aware of measures to help curb the spread of the corona virus that has affected the whole world.

Also, as a result of the capacity building the trained women leaders were the ones taking a lead in the food distribution process to victims of the floods in the affected villages of Njinjo and Matandu ward.

Rukia Maguruka, a member of TUJIWAKI explains that the leadership skills acquired from Actionaid enabled them to take a leading role in food distribution to their fellow community members affected by floods in Njinjo and Kipindimi.

“We led the whole process of distributing food at the same time educating the community about the preventive measures of Covid 19. I believe the experience has created a lot of confidence in us and we will be taking charge when need be,” she said.

Maguruka added that due to the strong understanding of their communities, it was easy for them to manage the process and were able to address disproportionate impact of emergencies on women and girls.

“Community members have been very pleased to see us, their fellow women from their community leading and conducting the food distribution process. We made sure people stayed at the required distance to prevent COVID 19 infections; we prioritized people with special needs such as the disabled, the elderly and pregnant women,” explained Maguruka

“We are happy and we appreciate ActionAid for their support, especially the decision of empowering women from the community to lead this exercise. There has been a great deal of transparency in this food distribution exercise than ever before,” said Selemani Rajab (70), a Kipindimi villager.

Items distributed during the process included 23,390kg of maize flour, 2,366 litres of cooking oil, 3,800kg of beans, 23 boxes of ball pens, 10 boxes of pencils, 21 cartons of exercise books. All items worth 44.6 million

Women are often the worst affected in emergencies, as well as the first responders. ActionAid ensures power is shifted to women leaders to address existing power imbalance.

Pili Kuliwa, resident of Kivinje, Kilwa District, leading awareness session on COVID 19 before food distribution to flood victims.

Preparations for food distribution
ActionAid Empowers Mafia Community to Fight COVID-19

By Mafia LRP Team

With the Coronavirus continuing to ravage the world, concerted effort is needed to curb the spread of the deadly pandemic.

It is against this background that ActionAid Tanzania recently organised a one-day training to 10 Community Development Facilitators and 13 representatives of women’s groups in Mafia District on response and adaptive measures to take a leadership role in tackling COVID-19.

The training that was held on the 10th of May 2019, at Caritas Hall in the district, was aimed at building capacity to participants in identifying COVID related symptoms, preventive measures and also dispel myths and rumours around the pandemic.

The DMO said that Mafia is one of the districts in which its residents are not aware and do not adhere to a larger extent to measures meant to curb the spread of Coronavirus.

Through the training, he said, participants will be able to teach the community on the symptoms of the disease, preventive measures, reporting mechanisms and fighting discrimination against COVID patients.

He encouraged participants to use the knowledge they gained to enlighten other members of the community on how best they can protect themselves from the Coronavirus.

“This disease is real and deadly. Those we were relying on and depending on their help, surrendered and left everything to God. This is a war and the world is taking measures to curb this virus by enlightening people on the best ways to protect themselves,” he said.

A participant, Husna Salmini from Kilindoni Ward said, “Before the training on Coronavirus, we were getting different information from social media of which some of the information was correct while the other was wrong. Some people were saying this disease has not been detected here in Mafia, the doctors are just scaring us, and everyone is just saying what he or she knows.”

We thank ActionAid for organizing this training and bringing the DMO who enlightened us and cleared the air that COVID 19 cases have been recorded here in Mafia. And, in various areas of the district many people do not put on face masks because they do not have enough education.

“I will visit all Bodaboda ranks to make sure all riders put on face masks and I will also talk to women and men (especially those in polygamous marriages) to educate them on how to protect themselves and their families from the deadly virus.

Another participant, Omari Ibrahimu from Gongo Village said that the seminar has helped them much because they got first hand information on COVID 19, and not what they were getting from different sources.

“I will go and enlighten the community that we have to take this disease seriously and fight against it. We are not supposed to fear but build capacity for us to be able to fight against the pandemic. I have learnt a lot and I believe members of the community I will educate will benefit a lot and change for the better towards curbing the spread of the virus,” he said.
As the world steps up the fight against the deadly COVID 19, popularly known as coronavirus, ActionAid Tanzania has joined the struggle to help put an end to the pandemic.

Through its Tandahimba and Newala Local Rights Programme (LRP), AATZ joined forces with women’s rights groups, Red Cross Tanzania and local government authorities to spearhead awareness campaigns and activities in the community.

The LRP supported the distribution of posters and brochures with relevant messages, which were received by the LRP from the Regional Medical Officer. The posters were distributed to public places such as local government offices, health facilities, restaurants, bars, buses, market places, local brew clubs, mosques, and churches, while the brochures were distributed to 5,600 households.

Audio recordings with relevant approved messages were saved in flash disks and/or memory cards and distributed to ‘bodaboda’ ranks in Tandahimba township, Mahuta, Nanyang’a, Kitama, Kitangali, Mkunya, Chikongoli, Ruvuma, Mhambwe, Newala town, Maundo, Mchichila and Namikupa. These areas with large population. The recorded audio was also provided to local radio stations which are Newala FM and Masasi FM.

Women groups were sensitized, oriented and involved in awareness creation whereby they participated in the distribution of brochures to households and placing posters in public places.

Over 5,600 households were reached in both Newala and Tandahimba districts while 1,000 posters were placed in various public places.

The LRP team and LGAs officials were also invited for a radio programme focusing on awareness creation on the virus, what ActionAid is doing before and during the pandemic, what efforts the local governments have done and finally their call to the government.

Although the local governments in Newala and Tandahimba had done a lot to ensure the community is protected from COVID 19, the response from people in some places especially in rural areas is not positive due to lack of adequate information about the pandemic.

Some challenges include; Social distancing remains a problem in many parts of the district, Some of the health centers are not adequately equipped with necessary facilities to handle patients and prevent transmissions, Inadequate access to public supply of water in most of villages limits people from regularly washing their hands.

The other challenge is that some campaign informations are not inclusive because illiterate people and visually impaired persons can not access written materials. Also, there are a lot of myths about COVID 19 as people associate it with sinners and that it is God’s punishment to sinners.

As a way forward, the LRP will use Public Address (PA) system to reach five wards in Newala where a PA vehicle provided by the local government did not reach. These wards include Maputi, Lengo, Chiungwe, Mkunya, and Nambunga.
The outbreak of the deadly covid 19 occurred at a time when ActionAid Unguja LRP was implementing the “Prevention of Violence Against School Aged Children project in North Unguja,” which aimed at promoting children’s rights and protecting them from all forms of violence.

The project works with school clubs, school management committees, parents and teachers by building their capacity on violence prevention both at school and home.

But as a result of the pandemic, the government was forced to close all schools to prevent the spread of the novel virus, a move that brought with it challenges to the government, school children and education stakeholders.

Some of the major challenges facing children include preventing them from enjoying their right to education and exposing them to various forms of violence. On the other hand, the girl child is traditionally double disadvantaged as she spends most of her time helping the family with household chores.

On the other hand, with the deadly virus continuing to ravage the world, Unguja LRP, as of 28 April 2020, reported 105 COVID-19 cases, 36 recoveries and 1 death.

It is against this background that Unguja LRP organised training for Local Government leaders on children’s rights and Covid 19 prevention on the 21st of April 2020 at North Regional Offices.

The training, which was organised in collaboration with Regional Administration Office, brought together regional and district education officers, planning officers, social welfare officers, health practitioners (Medical doctors), statistical officers, officer responsible for people living with disabilities, regional education director etc.

The aim of the training was to capacitate participants on child rights and COVID19 prevention so that as leaders, they take necessary measures in their areas to ensure that children continue to get their rights to education, are protected from all forms of violence while at home, as well as raising awareness to the community on preventing the spread of coronavirus.

Officiating the training, the Regional Education Officer, Mr Mshamara Kombo, said his office recognises the need to protect children especially during the period when they are supposed to stay at home due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“I appreciate ActionAid for organizing this kind of training. My office will collaborate with all other stakeholders in ensuring that children get their rights to education,” he said.

During the training, participants were oriented on children’s rights and Promoting Rights in School Frame work and reflected how these rights can be maintained during the lockdown period and how children can be supported and protected from various forms of violence. Presentation on Covid-19 was made by North B District Medical Officer.

Participants advised that LGAs should organise and supervise the development of learning packages by subject teachers which would be collected and dispatched to parents.

Also, it was agreed that in order to down-stream the knowledge to wider community members, local leaders, parents and shehia coordinators be involved and enlightened on child rights and COVID 19 preventive measures so that they become ambassadors in their respective areas.

In the discussion, it was noted that the government has insisted citizens to take necessary precautions including wearing face masks, practicing hand washing with soap all the time, and avoiding unnecessary gatherings, to prevent the spread of the virus, but still majority of people are reluctant and are not adhering to such directives, something which calls for more awareness in the community.

Participants also called upon the government to distribute preventive gears immediately after they are donated to prevent the spread of the virus.

As part of resolutions, it was agreed that ActionAid in collaboration with Regional Government extend the knowledge on child’s rights and Covid 19-prevention to community members immediately by organising six zonal meetings targeting Shehias, co-ordinators, school teachers parents and members of school management committees, and at the same time plan on how they can support children to learn during the lock down period.

The Unguja LRP Coordinator, Bakari Khamis, said that ActionAid will continue to work closely with local government authorities in North Region to ensure that children enjoy their rights and are duly protected from all sorts of violence including protection against the lethal virus.

ActionAid intends to reach out to local leaders, teachers and parents in a bid to strengthen their knowledge of child rights and ensure that they spread the knowledge in their localities to protect children from abuse and COVID 19.
Empowering Community Groups to Lead COVID-19 Awareness

By Kilwa LRP Team

ActionAid Tanzania through its Kilwa Local Rights Programme (LRP) recently conducted training to members of the women rights association (TUJIWAKI) and youth organisation (KIVODI), in the district, to enable them raise awareness to community members on COVID 19 pandemic.

The main objective of the training was to equip participants with knowledge and skills on COVID 19 response mechanisms, do’s and don’ts, how to curb the spread of the diseases and use of protective gears and other preventive measures.

Participants were expected to use the knowledge to train community members in 10 wards of Kivinje/Singino, Lhimalyao, Mandawa, Mitole, Njinjo, Miguruwe, Mingumbi, Somanga, Kinjumbi and Namayuni.

The training which was facilitated by Dr Daudi Seleman, an Epidemiologist Surveillance Officer - Kilwa District, was also aimed at enabling women to learn and exercise their leadership roles to enable them lead from family to community level.

It also empowered them to participate in the distribution of Protective and Preventive Equipment to 30 villages while churning out education specifically to the households that cannot afford access to masks and sanitizers.

The training that involved 25 participants from both women and youth platforms, focused on increasing participant’s understanding of COVID 19, history, causes, ways of spreading, symptoms, preventive measures and the curing process. The discussions helped to clear all doubts, myths and misinformation and empowered them to relay the same information to members of the community in their respective villages.

Also, during the training, participants met representatives of the District COVID 19 Committee and explored together challenges faced by the community in as far as the pandemic is concerned and ways to tackle them.

According to participants, some of the challenges include; Lack of clear understanding on COVID 19 pandemic especially in remote villages (lots of perceptions and myths); Lack of clean and safe water to the community as they fetch it from nearby rainwater dams; inadequate health workers who can frequently educate people on the virus, and lack of protective gears to health workers.

Participants identified the most risk groups and places to be given priority including district health care workers, bodaboda riders, bus stand, churches and mosques, ocean shores where fishing is done, Vicoba and micro finance groups, and guest houses. The most high-risk group in terms infection are children, elderly people, women, and people living with disabilities.

At the end of the training, participants formed a small taskforce of ten members (Seven females and three males) which will be directly linked to the District COVID 19 Committee team and share information on the progress of interventions made from village, ward up to district level. Sharing of the information will be done through periodic reports.

Dr Daudi Seleman an Epidemiologist Surveillance officer- Kilwa District, facilitating the training session.

Njinjo, Mitole and Miguruwe representatives presenting their plan on how they are going to engage the community during the training.
AATZ Response Plan To COVID-19

Tanzania being part of the global village has not been spared from the outbreak of COVID-19. As of 28th April 2020, Tanzania reported 480 cases of COVID-19, 167 recovery cases and 16 deaths. (not recent data)

The government has made remarkable efforts to control and contain transmission and spread of the pandemic including; Mandatory quarantine for incoming travellers (visitors and Tanzanian Citizens) to undergo self-isolation for 14 days on arrival, advise to members of public to avoid non-essential travel to COVID-19 affected countries, suspension of social gatherings eg seminars, forums/sports activities, Closure of schools and colleges, Public education activities for sustainable public awareness and community sensitization to take preventive and control measure e.g wearing mask, ensuring frequent hand washing.

Despite government efforts in responding to the pandemic, challenges still exist including only few community members affords to buy preventive hygiene items such as sanitizers and masks due to poverty at household levels, Inadequate access to public supply of water in most of villages which limits people to regularly wash their hands, some of the health centers not adequately equipped with necessary facilities to prevent transmissions eg prevention gears for staff.

Also, most of information is not inclusive for example posters cannot be accessed by illiterate people and the visually impaired persons

In responding to the situation, ActionAid Tanzania is planning to work with people living in poverty especially women and young people to support them to respond to COVID-19 pandemic as well as hold the government and other actors accountable.

Planned interventions include capacity building of local organizations particularly women’s organizations, youth movements and other allies to do vulnerability analysis and develop preparedness and response plans, and advocate for government accountability in responding to needs and services of citizens during the pandemic.

Key activities:

Aware building:

- Awareness raising, to communities/school management committees and frontline service providers, using available information from the Government of Tanzania and WHO to create awareness in the community, use of social media and community radio to educate communities and support in translating and distributing the available publications from WHO in local language.

- Hold discussions with district authorities to influence the LGAs to use the available resources to organize orientation and educate frontline public servants on prevention and control measure.

- Conducting meetings with very few influential members of COVID 19 response committee and school’s management committees to discuss on the support of children schooling at home and their safety while they’re at home.

Direct support:

- Provide hygiene kits to women led COVID-19 response committees and partners.

- Work closely with COVID 19 emergency committees at districts and support them in planning and implementation.

- Support in provision of water supply in communities where they don’t have access to public water services.

- Train selected women’s rights organization members to produce locally made face masks and distribute to increase access and availability of the same to needy especially frontline service providers, COVID-19 response women led committees and partners

Advocacy:

- Advocate for involvement of women and young people and supplies of hygiene equipment at health centres and other public services

- Advocate for increased supply of water and sanitation facilities in rural areas

- Advocate for sustainable public health and pandemic preparedness awareness and inclusion in the legal, policy and administrative frameworks in Tanzania.
From The Media

Elimu ya corona kut nyumba kwa nyumbani

Na FLORENCE SANAWA

From The Media

Elimu ya corona kut nyumba kwa nyumbani

By Correspondent Beatrice Philomen

ACTIONAID Tanzania and Mtwara Region authorities have embarked on a new campaign to intensively educate the public on how to contain the spread of Coronavirus. The project, which is implemented through Local Rights Programmes (LRP) which have been implemented in Tandahimba and Mtwara districts also involved stakeholders such as Red Cross and Faith based organizations in the region and mostly targets residents living in rural areas.

Mtwara authorities, NGO partner on new campaign to arrest spread of coronavirus

ACTIONAID Tanzania has donated food relief items worth 44.5m/- to support flood victims in Njombe and Mtwara wards in kishwaka district, Lindi region. Project coordinator at ActionAid Tanzania at the handover ceremony said that the aim is to ensure that communities get basic needs for them to respond to the challenges posed by the flood victims.

ACTIONAID Tanzania local rights programmes commences lives in Tandahimba District

By Correspondent Beatrice Philomen

ACTIONAID Tanzania has donated food relief items worth 44.5m/- to support flood victims in Njombe and Mtwara wards in kishwaka district, Lindi region. Project coordinator at ActionAid Tanzania at the handover ceremony said that the aim is to ensure that communities get basic needs for them to respond to the challenges posed by the flood victims.

Note: This photo was taken last year before CORONA!