

Report Date: September 10th 2020

Project Name:	CECI COVID-19 Project
Project Goal:	Adequately Support PLWDS & Elderly Persons to Fight Coronavirus
Project Location:	Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, Zone3, Yumbe District
Project Number	A-06390-04
Project Period:	3 Months
Implementing Organization	Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI)
Reporting Period	1.06.2020 – 31.08.2020

Introduction

Community Empowerment for Creative Innovations (CECI) UGANDA received funding from Oxfam Novib to respond to the dire humanitarian situation created by the COVID-19 Pandemic among the most vulnerable refugees and host communities. The **CECI COVID-19 Response Project** aims at supporting PLWDS and elderly persons in Zone 3 Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement to fight COVID-19 through providing essential hygiene supplies (such as soap, hand sanitizers, and face masks), coupled with door-to-door educational teaching on COVID-19, increasing their access to timely and reliable information on COVID-19 and other available information that might benefit them through providing them with portable AM FM radios and dry cells and recording a multiethnic coronavirus song so as to enable them undertake COVID-19 Corona Virus preventative measures.

The Overall Goal of the project is to support PLWDS & Elderly persons in Zone 3 Bidi Bidi Refugees Settlement to effectively respond and prevent the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific Objectives of the project include;

1. To provide essential hygienic items like soap, sanitizers and face masks, coupled with door-to-door educational teaching on COVID-19 to 80 households of PLWDS & Elderly persons in Zone 3 Bidi Bidi Refugees Settlement as these will enable them undertake COVID-19 Corona Virus preventative measures.
2. To increase PLWDS' and elderly persons' access to timely and reliable information on COVID-19 and other available information that might benefit them through providing portable AM FM radios and dry cells to households of 80 PLWDS and Elderly persons in Zone 3 Bidi Bidi Refugees Settlement.
3. To increase awareness on COVID-19 in South Sudanese refugees hosting districts of Uganda through recording a Corona Virus Awareness song in at least 7 languages commonly spoken and understood by refugees namely Dinka, Nuer, Bari, Arabic, Acholi, and English, with South Sudanese musicians from multiethnic backgrounds.

What have you done to date, in terms of numbers and outputs?

Staff Recruitment and Planning Meetings



Staff planning meeting at the CECI Koboko Office. Photo: Patrick CJ

CECI kick started the “**CECI COVID-19 Project**” project with staff recruitment and orientation. In light of the Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) and Ministry of Health (MoH) guidelines on COVID-19, the recruitment was transparently done internally and Bosco Lokosa, Amude Stella, and Vita Geoffrey were recruited as Project Coordinator, Project Officer and Finance Assistant respectively. These received and signed off letters of appointments defining job titles, roles and responsibilities, terms and conditions, and code of conduct. The recruitments were followed with twofold

orientation meetings on duties, project overview, deliverables, beneficiaries, goals and objectives, timelines (work plan), MEAL frame and budget. Subsequently, three project staff planning meetings attended by 6 (M=4, F=2) people were conducted at the CECI office in Koboko where procurement plans, weekly workplans, market research results analyses, activities concept notes and budgets, reporting templates, and evaluation committees were formed and done to enhance planning, coordination, project implementation and donor compliance.

Inception Meeting with Key Community Leaders, OPM, UNHCR



Figure 2: Mr. Banga the UNHCR Focal Person remarking during the inception meeting

To officially start the “CECI COVID-19 Project” in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, Zone 3, Cluster 2, CECI launched the project with an inception meeting on 14th July 2020 at the Mercy Corps Youth Innovation Center in Bidi Bidi Zone 3 during which refugee and host community leaders (RWC III, II, & I, LC1s, Zonal PSN Secretary) from the 5 clusters of the Zone, and stakeholders (OPM, UNHCR) received overall information concerning the project. The meeting commenced with introductions, remarks

and the project coordinator Mr. Bosco Lokosa spelling out the project overview, goals and objectives, activities, target beneficiaries, duration and stakeholders’ roles, among others. The UNHCR focal person, Mr. Banga Abubakar, commended and warm-welcomed the project, strongly urged that the intervention attend to Persons Living with Disability (PLWDs) and elderly persons in cluster 2, appreciated CECI for the continuous efforts to provide support to fellow refugees, and thanked Oxfam for supporting local initiatives in the following words *“Gone is/[are] the day[s] when partners used to come with their own people to do work [themselves]. It is a time where local initiatives need to be encouraged, so that if there is support like what Oxfam is doing, is the way now to go.”* The Zone Commandant (OPM), Mr. Kwizera Benon, thanked the initiative for including the host community in the response and wound up the meeting by calling for clear accountability to community and donors, routine report submission to OPM and UNHCR, and working in close coordination with other partners to compare notes. The meeting attended by 14 (M=12, F=2) people was conducted in consideration of the COVID-19 social distancing preventative measure to protect the attendees. Attendees sat 2 meters away from one another, and sanitized before and when coming out of the venue.



Figure 3: Inception meeting at Mercy Corps Hall on 14th July 2020, Bidi Bidi

Community volunteers' recruitment and orientation

To ease implementation of project activities in the various villages, a team of 6 (M=2, F=4) community volunteers were recruited among whom 5 are refugees and 1 host from Jomorogo Village with the support of local community leaders. These on the 21st July, 2020 were oriented on their roles and responsibilities, project overview, target beneficiaries, beneficiary mapping tools and reporting templates. The orientation was concluded with the volunteers receiving their work equipment (reflector jackets, sanitizers, masks, files and work documents-reporting templates, beneficiary mapping tools and item distribution sheets).

Mapping of beneficiaries and distribution of hygienic items and radios

CECI engaged regularly with the community leaders like Refugee Welfare Council (RWC) 1, 2&3, LC1s, Block Opinion leaders and the PSN secretaries of the targeted villages to identify and map out the most vulnerable households of Persons living with disabilities (PLWDs) and Elderly persons within the cluster to benefit from the program activities. Consequently, 70 (M=35, F=35) households were mapped out in the following categories: 32 PLWDs, 38 Elderly persons above 60 years, 10 children living with disabilities, 12 host and 58 refugees. The beneficiary mapping was conducted according to village blocks to ensure that all the blocks of the 3 villages that form Cluster 2 of Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement are included among the beneficiaries. This was done using a “Beneficiary Mapping Tool” developed by CECI. ([See Tool here](#)). The mapping was followed by subsequent distribution of 350 bars of soap for handwashing, 350 pieces of reusable facemasks, 70 hand sanitizers, 70 battery-powered AM/FM radio receivers and 280 pairs of dry cells to 70 refugee and host community households of PLWDs and Elderly persons benefiting 451 (M=203, F=248) people including children, youth, women and men with each household receiving 5 bars of soap, 5 facemasks, 1 hand sanitizer, 1 Radio and 4 Pairs of dry cells. The hygienic items distribution was carried out by CECI Staff and volunteers who equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) moved on foot from one household to the other in respect of the SOPs that forbid crowding and restrict movement of people, and who also facilitated door-to-door general educational teaching on COVID-19 including its cause, transmission and prevention during which 451+ children, youth, women and men from both the refugee and host community were equipped with basic knowledge on



Figure 4: CECI Field Coordinator, Alex Khemis, at the household of one beneficiary in Village 5 during the distribution of hygienic items in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement.



Care giver of PLWD attends educational teaching on COVID-19 together with her household in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement's Cluster 2



CECI Field Coordinator offers Elderly household training on how to operate the radio, wear mask and do handwashing



COVID-19 Pictorial poster pinned at a water point in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement

Coronavirus origin, transmission and prevention, and distributed over 200 Coronavirus Pictorial Posters in commonly spoken local languages like Bari, Arabic and English to households and selected public places such as market, water points, health centers and the cluster food distribution point (FDP). The RWCs, LCs and beneficiaries said the project has significantly flattened the difficulties that PLWDs and Elderly face in undertaking preventive measures against COVID-19, filled serious information gaps experienced by these communities, and enhanced community knowledge and general understanding of COVID-19 – its cause, transmission, spread and control/prevention in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement's cluster 2. The RWC III chairman, Mr. Wenger Moses, appreciated the project in the following words: "Thanks CECI for the initiative..... In cluster 2, which I come from, I now see increased practice of regular hand washing with soap, wearing facemasks when in crowds or moving out of home, as well as improved general personal hygiene of the beneficiaries and their families as they use the soap for multiple purposes something which I think is critical in COVID-19 prevention."

"I have been hearing about masks but never knew what they really were and even how to use them but at least now we have masks in our home and can use them well, these days I wear my face mask every time I move out of home (.....) we are now able to wash our hand regularly with the soap we received not as before where we were using ash due to lack of soap. We even use the soap for other

purposes like bathing and washing clothes," stated the care giver of Musa Bukki, a 75-year old PLWD during an interview conducted to collect feedback from the beneficiaries.

There has also been increased community access to timely and reliable information on COVID-19 and other relevant information such as news, family affairs through the distributed radios, as well as boosted attendance of primary pupils to the home learning program, this, has reduced idling and loitering of children, thus facilitating the stay home preventive measure.

“.....we never had a radio since our arrival in 2016 and so, we had to always wait for information from the community leaders who also need to be first fed with information. Unlike before, my family and I now access information timely again, after receiving a radio from CECI. My family now attend to news, radio talk shows, and closely follows the COVID-19 situation right at our home..... These days my children don’t miss any of the home learning lessons being conducted on radio. Thank you for educating my whole household first, we are using the items received rightly.” remarked Cosmas, father to Bosco Aloro (a 15-year Child living with disability), one of the project beneficiaries. A total of 483 people, with the greatest percentage (54% or 259) being female, were reached during the 3-month CECI COVID-19 Response Project period in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement’s Zone 3. Reached include PLWDs, Elderly, Children and youth, adults, Community leaders, OPM and UNHCR.

The #CoronaAwareness Song Making

The #CoronaAwareness song recording initiative is part of the ‘CECI COVID-19 Project’ activities that the Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI) is implementing in Bidi Bidi Refugee settlement, Zone 3, Cluster 2, Yumbe District with funding from Oxfam IBIS through Oxfam Novib. The song making began with identification of Five (M=3, F=2) talented and community-oriented South Sudanese and Ugandan musicians from multiethnic backgrounds, and selection of a highly skilled and top-rated producer and studio, to work on the song. The process was executed with support from the South Sudanese Music Star – Saab Jay Strategy– who ensured quality, professionalism and diversity. Selected musicians signed contracts clearly entailing terms of engagement prior to participation, and were oriented on the COVID-19



Singer Jackia UG on the mic voicing a verse during the corona awareness song creation and recording sessions at Malcom Records in Arua, Uganda. *Photo:*

SOPs (Standard Operation Procedures), Corona Awareness song overview and introduced to the key questions and areas that needed capturing in the song making (e.g. What is Corona Virus? How does it spread? Who is at risk? What are the signs and symptoms? How can it be prevented?). The song lyrics was jointly developed based on these questions acting as song requirements that helped artistes so much in curating verses.

Recording sessions at the studio served beyond co-creation and rehearsal delivering a unique platform for education, networking, friendship,

collaboration, and talent development with the producer and lead musician offering a safe space and professional guidance that enriched creativity and innovation among artistes throughout the two (2) and half days of song making in the studio – Malcom Records. The musicians namely Saab Jay, Jackia UG, Fify Hafy, Alwizzy, Khaled TBangz, and producer Joshman worked collaboratively as a team irrespective of their

diverse ethnic backgrounds illustrating the power and role of music and youth in addressing COVID-19 and its related effects among both refugee and host communities. (see the [List and Biographies of the Artistes Involved](#).) Key issues addressed in the song include COVID-19 origin, transmission, signs and symptoms, and prevention. (see the link [Corona Awareness Song Lyrics](#) for lyrics of the song) The song entitled **'It's Real and Dangerous'** was produced in languages commonly spoken by both refugees and host communities that is Arabic, Bari, Dinka, Nuer, Lugbara, and English, and emphasizes the need for these communities to practice COVID-19 preventive measures. (the audio of the song is available on the link ['It's Real and Dangerous' by CECI UGANDA](#))

Launching of the Corona Awareness Song

The 'It's Real and Dangerous' corona awareness song has so far been officially premiered and is already on airplay in some of the most listened to radios in West Nile such as Arua One FM, Radio Pacis, Spirit FM, Radio Purchase which are most followed by refugees particularly in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, Yumbe District. In Juba, South Sudan, the song is now airing on City FM and Advance Youth Radio. Presently the song is receiving a lot of views online and offline, of these 2 out of 3 people affirm the song is very good and

educative saying it has communicated to them messages that will greatly improve awareness and contribute to changing the negative community attitudes towards the COVID-19 preventive measures set out by the ministry of health and the president of Uganda. *"...this song is really nice, easy to understand (...), and it cuts across with over 5 languages in it. It sends us [refugees] the messages about COVID-19 in our very own local languages reminding us all to stop keeping the handwashing facilities like picture – which is what we do."* remarked one caller Denis from Abirmajo in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement during the premiering of the song on Arua One FM on Sunday 2nd August 2020.

"...what makes this song unique among other Corona projects that I worked on is its consistency with the ministry of health guidelines, and the simple and many languages represented. Since (...) many people the



Official premiering of the song on 88.7 Arua One FM on 2nd August 2020 with the team of musicians that worked on the song. Photo: Patrick CJ



CECI Project coordinator Bida Simon introducing the purpose of the song during its official premiering on Arua One FM. Photo: Patrick CJ

corona message has not been reaching particularly because of language, this song fills this gap. It provides these communities a better chance to learn and protect themselves from Corona.” Said Joshman, Producer of the Corona Awareness song at Malcom Records

Feedback collection

The CECI COVID-19 Response Project staff together with Community Volunteers conducted various follow up meetings with the beneficiary households during which they assessed and evaluated the project activities and impacts to the beneficiaries. In order not to gather many people together, the collection was done from door to door. This proved very effective as it facilitated free sharing of information with all household members including children giving their views of the project.

“This project came timely and targeted groups of people that have almost been forgotten in the community....., giving 5 bars of soap to support a PSN household is something I am seeing for the first time. This will cut costs that these most vulnerable groups would incur to purchase items like soap, since these rely largely on selling a portion of the food ratio so as to buy such items,” said Khemis, former village 5 chairperson, during the distribution of the items.

How have you coordinated with the stake holders in your areas

From the start of the Response, CECI has been in close coordination with key community leaders and stake holders such as the RWCs, Block Opinion leaders, OPM and UNHCR right from the project inception meeting, identification and recommendation of community volunteers, beneficiary mapping through to distribution of items to the beneficiaries. Working with the community leaders proved vital in ensuring that the project benefits people from the different blocks of the three villages in Cluster 2 with the host community inclusive. To prevent duplication and provision of services to same groups of people, CECI shared the lists of beneficiaries of the CECI COVID-19 Response project with office of the RWC III, UNHCR, and OPM. ([See lists here](#))

Are there any emerging issues? What are the causes?

In the due course of the project implementation, and while coordinating with the community leadership, there are key emerging issues identified as below;

Increasing teenage pregnancy: The closure of schools as one of the preventive measures of COVID-19, has resulted into idleness among school going children, especially school going girls. This together with the lack of sex education for teenage girls has led to higher rate of teenage pregnancy as compared to that before the outbreak of the pandemic. Also, girls are facing serious difficulties in accessing sanitary towels, and Sexual Reproductive health education as this used to be in schools thus increased early pregnancies and early marriages in the Zone.

Increased need for cash support: the 30% food reduction by the World Food Program (WFP) and the COVID-19 crisis and prevention measures is making it harder for vulnerable groups like PLWDs and Elderly

persons to meet their household basic needs as these used to depend on selling a portion of their food ratios, financial tokens from relatives which they no longer access, to meet them. At least 6 out of 10 PLWDs and Elderly persons expressed grave need for cash support to enable them maintain a healthy diet, meet basic health needs, and afford clothing.

Increasing SGBV cases: Gender-based violence (GBV) exists in every society worldwide and is exacerbated in emergencies; whether economic crises, conflict or disease outbreaks. Pre-existing toxic social norms and gender inequalities, economic and social stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with restricted movement and social isolation measures, have led to an exponential increase in GBV as many women and girls are in 'lockdown' at home with their abusers while being cut off from normal support services.

Any challenges you are experiencing or you foresee?

A few challenges were encountered in the due course of the project implementation as detailed below;

1. Most beneficiaries lack solar systems for charging the radio batteries. This implies that should the dry cells given out get used up, as some are already, then those families who don't have charging systems and can't afford to get other dry cells will miss out important information and programs that are conducted on the radios. Additionally, it was noted that it's not very safe to distribute dry cells as there have been tendencies of people using it to commit suicide.
2. Scarcity of radios in the market leading to increase in the prices of the available few. This, together with the increase in prices of soap has forced us to reduce the number of target beneficiaries from 80 households to 70 households, a figure way too low compared to the existing number of elderly persons and PLWDS in the cluster.
3. The number of items especially the masks and sanitizers given out were not proportionate to the number of members in the different households. This still leaves household members at high risk of contracting COVID-19 should any one member, lacking a mask contract the disease. In addition, most of the beneficiaries lack hand washing facilities, and the existing few are in bad condition (leaking) and need replacement, as a result some do not regularly practice the hand washing measure.
4. Some of the beneficiaries, especially the elderly, do not know any other language apart from their mother tongue and/or Arabic. This has made it impossible for them to acquire important information being presented on the radio in other languages.

How can we support as Oxfam?

We would like Oxfam to support us with more funding to support more vulnerable persons to fight COVID-19, provide the beneficiaries who lack charging systems with solar systems and conduct COVID-19 related programs on radio in languages understood by most south Sudanese refugees. For the case of the number of items, CECI plans to conduct an assessment on the number of members in a household in case of implementing a related project in the future. In addition, we would like Oxfam to support CECI with a means of transport (particularly a motorcycle) to support Project Coordinators frequent movement to field to follow up project activities and collect feedback.