



## COVID-19 Project Closure Meeting

Venue : Virtual      Date: 20-October-2021

### Meeting Minutes

#### Background

UNDP working with national partners, implemented a project in response to COVID-19 aligned to the UNDP's COVID-19 Response, using the three-pronged policy offer on the COVID-19 – readiness, response, and recovery. The project implementation ended in December 2020, with some of the remaining activities concluded in March 2021.

UNDP held a virtual end of project meeting to reflect on the results achieved with respect to project objectives, lessons learnt and prospects for sustainability. The meeting was held on the 20th October 2021 from 14:00 – 16.30hrs.

#### Participating stakeholders

- UNDP
- UN RCO
- Ministry of Development Planning
- Bureau of Statistics

#### Participating Grantees

- Lesotho Red Cross
- World Vision International
- Partners in Health
- Dices Entertainment
- Development for Peace Education

#### *Presentations*

##### UNDP

Background on the global UNDP's COVID-19 response and how it was aligned with the Government of Lesotho (GoL) response to the pandemic. In assisting the GoL to respond, UNDP partnered with government, private sector, street vendors associations, and local and international NGOs.

UNDP award 7 grants to community-based solutions to assist in combating some of the challenges brought about by COVID-19. The grants focused on among others, economic resilience and social cohesion, communication and advocacy.

The support was also extended to Ministry of Health through the development of Bophelo-Ka-Mosebeletsi application used by MoH Village Health Workers (VHW), to



collect screening data from individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms and submit such data to Health Care Facilities (HCF) in real-time for quick HCF response. This was deployed in Mokhotlong and Quthing covering over 680 village health workers. To support this initiative, 1081 smart mobile devices were procured, and they are used by the village health workers for the screening. Ambulances, medical equipment and PPE were procured for both Ministry of Health and NDSO.

Additionally, 50 hand washing stations were designed and installed in various health care facilities across the 10 districts. 15 more were installed at densely populated areas around Maseru municipal.

Support further extended to Ministry of Small Business Development in the assistance of the design and development of a register and database for informal business operators in Lesotho to ease access to development and access to support services to the sector. This platform is meant to assist GoL to deliver support services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure availability of up-to-date data to enable implementation of policies in support of the sector.

To further assist the MSMEs facilitate a local virtual market for agriculture producers and consumers to enable business continuity in communities at the time of COVID-19, to enable farmers access to the market while there were movement restrictions, a marakeng application was developed.

### **Lesotho Red Cross**

Lesotho Red Cross grant focus was around awareness and advocacy around curbing the spread of COVID-19 among youth. The objectives were to promote safe lifestyles and promoting cultural changes that youth can use to avert COVID-19 amongst youth. The project was implemented in Maseru, Mafeteng, Leribe and Butha Buthe.

#### Challenges

- COVID-19 restrictions including limited movement which limited the engagement and interaction with identifies beneficiaries
- The closure in schools and unavailability of youth due to their various schedules made it difficult to implement the project
- There are logistical challenges and the pandemic panic that even affected Lesotho Red Cross staff

#### Opportunities

- Technology was used as a new way in which messages could be passed to the target group, such as whatsapp, facebook
- Youth have a great potential to pass the messages they have to their peers, communities and families, hence it is important capacitate them and involve them in areas where they are concerned and affected
- There is need to work on advocacy for vaccines to avoid hesitancy and including other chronic illness, i.e. HIV



## Partners in Health

Capacity building for village health workers screening and contact training and training and patient management Qacha Nek and Mokhotlong, and MDRTB treatment supporters were trained in all 10 districts in Lesotho. The villages health workers visited patients on quarantine on a daily bases to monitor their progress and adherence.

### Challenges

### Opportunities

- Confidence of village health workers increased as they were able to contribute towards government response to COVID-19 in a timely manner.
- There was improved collaboration between village health workers and health facilities nurses
- The project used a digital application and the comcare application to collect and record their data which was shared with health facilities. There is need to learn more about the application so as to identify linkages with Bophelo-Ka-Mosebeletsi

## World Vision Lesotho

The project focused on youth aand women on economic strengthening initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was achieved by training youth and women on business opportunities that exist within the pandemic by provision of entrepreneurship skills. The focus was on trainings and capacity building, where they were empowered on how to voice their needs and hold service proviers accountable on what had been promised to them. The project was implemented in Mohale's Hoek.

### Challenges

- Project beneficiaries not complying to COVID-19 regulations as their immediate need was
- The duration of the project was limited as when beneficiaries were catching momentum the project ended
- The youth reluctant to take part in development initiatives as their immediate need is quick cash

### Opportunities

- One of the groups that was trained was able to have access to a market where they supplied ShopRite with vegetables
- Youth groups were able to start enterprises.
- Trainings were more important that giving hand-outs
- There was an opportunities for collaborations with other partners such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Small Business Developments among others





## Development for Peace Education

Grant focus was to tap into power that community has in protecting itself against COVID-19, utilizing and optimizing the power and influence of chiefs and councilors. There was inclusion of other influential structures such as schools, businesses, farmers and churches. There were focus groups of the key people that was meant to mobilize, support, and ensure compliance within the communities. The identified groups were capacitated with skills that they could use to

### Challenges:

- Chiefs and councilors not adequately approached and involved by government in decision making in relation to COVID-19 issues
- Community members were not responding and adhering to the COVID-19 regulations as they felt that they were too far away from the problem and they felt that they were not adequately approached as well
- Community members were able to produce masks, however there was no market within their communities as masks were being supplied from Maseru, i.e. Ministry of Education supplied masks for children

### Opportunities

- Community leadership and villagers formed and set their own community by-laws in response to COVID-19 dealing with outsiders and those coming back home from South Africa. This assisted in the Ministry of Health as those who entered were sent to the health facilities or the Ministry was informed about such individuals.
  - These structures assisted the voices of communities to be heard as issues discussed were shared with the parliament committee dealing with COVID-19 which was elevated to parliament
  - These community structures were seen to create an opportunity for other issues such as COVID-19 vaccine education

### **Discussion**

- Common issues across the partners as LRCS and WVI were both targeting youth and the use of technologies. The lessons shared between the two will be beneficial moving forward
- There is need for packaging of the technologies used during COVID-19; primers around technologies generated around technologies used as responses. The partners to submit a short brief of the technologies
- The linkage between the work of PIH with village health workers and the Bophelo-Ka-Mosebelets. There is need to engage with PIH which will assist in the adaptation of the BKM application by Ministry of Health
- Engage with WVI in access to markets by farmers, the lessons to feed into the Green Value Chain project



- WVI to share success stories of the beneficiaries with UNDP
- There is need to have a platform where partners can share the work they are doing and see how best project can be integrated for a wider reach and impact

## Approval

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