Factsheet

COVID-19 : Swiss support in Tajikistan

Last updated: February 2021

Funding: SDC (Humanitarian Aid, East Cooperation), SECO (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs)

Implementing partners: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Aga-Khan Development Networks (AKDN), Aga-Khan Foundation (AKF), Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH), Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH), UNOCHA, Caritas CH, Oxfam

Other partners: Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP), Ministry of Education and Science (MES), Committee of Emergency Situations (CoES), local authorities on province and/or on district levels.

Total budget (as of 31.12.2020): 3.5 mio. USD approx.

Switzerland's engagement

The Swiss Cooperation Office in Dushanbe contributed to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in Tajikistan. It supported the Government of Tajikistan and operated in close coordination with other development and humanitarian partners and diplomatic representations. Projects took into account the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls and people with physical disabilities and involved them in project identification and implementation. Swiss cooperation applies the principles of "do no harm". For context information, please refer to the UN Situation Reports.
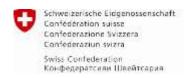
RE-ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FROM EXISTING PROJECTS

Swiss TPH: Enhancing Primary Health Care Services (Sino) Project (111'000 USD approx re-allocated)

Swiss TPH re-directed 100'000 USD of the ongoing project. The project procured protective gears of front-line health workers and other medical supplies such as gowns and masks in Shanghai and from local suppliers. Health care workers of Dushanbe, Rudaki, Vose, Khamadoni, and Konibodom districts were trained on how to detect, trace and treat patients with COVID-19. Trained health workers disseminated the information and education materials to the population in the mentioned districts.

AKF: Integrated Health and Habitat Improvement Project (IHHI) in Rasht Valley (225'000 USD)

The project purchased medical supplies and non-food items like protective outfits, gloves, masks, disinfectants, thermometers, rubber shoes, glasses, antiplaque coats, medical spray devices and bedding sets for the total amount of 63'000 USD. These items were distributed to the medical facilities in all seven districts of the Rasht valley through the newly established COVID-19 response Task Forces (one per district). In a second phase, the project implemented COVID-19 response activities, defined based on the emerging needs in the Rasht valley. Another activity included the support to the Rasht district hospital for control and prevention of communicable diseases, including COVID-19. About 13'500 USD out of total amount were used for purchasing 44 beds, 6 multifunctional medical beds, 25 small bed-side tables, and bedding accessories for these facilities.

SECO-funded projects

In the frame of SECO -funded projects, several SMEs are benefited from advice and mentoring support. "Insoft" and "Guldaston" companies were able to shift their core activities to the production of protective masks and medical protective outfits, while creating job opportunities.

AKDN: Khorog Urban Resiliency Programme (236,804 USD)

Due to the mountainous remoteness, frequent natural hazards, growth of population and poor infrastructure, Khorog city is very vulnerable to pandemic. Within the programme some activities are reprogrammed. In order to help most vulnerable ones, who have lost livelihoods or remittance income due to the pandemic, the programme used Food for work approach. All these identified families have been involved in labour opportunities, i.e. construction process of Youth centre and water supply system and were paid cash.

Also, the Programme created a coordination and Government support structure with involvement of the Deputy Prime Minister, Governor, Mayor, donors, the private sector and communities to oversee the implementation of health and resilience interventions for the city and the Oblast. A municipal data platform provided regular updates and monitoring of health and resilience information. The platform will be connected to a network of open centers within national and oblast level government institutions to enable rapid data sharing, reporting and analysis about the COVID-19 situation.

OXFAM: COVID-19 interventions - Tajikistan Water Supply and Sanitation

The project re-allocated 280'000 USD (approx) to mitigate the impact of the pandemic in three districts. To support the rural communities in preparedness and prevention of COVID-19, WASH infrastructure of additional 9 schools and 8 medical facilities in Rudaki, Kulob and Muminabad districts were improved.

SPECIFIC INITIATIVES:

UNICEF: Strengthening the capacity of the national health authority and raising awareness of people in COVID-19 (Parts I – 50'000 USD, II – 200'000 USD and III – 315'000 USD)

This project includes three initiatives: The initial support (USD 50'000) was provided to the MoHSP through UNICEF to develop basic information material about infection prevention measures such as social distancing and hygiene. Border entry points and quarantine centres were supplied with disinfectants and protective outfits for the staff.

The second initiative worth USD 200'000 was directed to enable frontline healthcare workers to comply with infection prevention and infection control standards. Disposable gowns, disposable coveralls, sanitary gloves, masks, waterproof boots, and thermo-scanners were handed over to the authorities. 50'000 booklets and 38'000 posters with relevant information about Covid-19 were printed and distributed to medical centres, hospitals and public places. The project conducted community mobilization through specific training

courses on key information such as signs and symptoms, prevention and therapies, and for healthcare workers on case management, essential infection prevention and control measures.

Together with the EU, Switzerland funded a large shipment of sanitary material and equipment from China organized by UNICEF. Switzerland contributed 315'000 USD to the overall project costs of 1'874'250 USD.

Caritas: Soap and disinfectants for Khatlon region (95,000 USD)

To mitigate the spread of virus, the project distributed masks, liquid hand soap, antiseptic hand sanitizers and chlorine to frontline health care workers, support staff, virus affected patients, and their accompanying relatives or caregivers. Sixty medical facilities (hospitals, medical centres, maternity houses, and polyclinics) in Khatlon oblast (Bokhtar and Kulob cities and all 24 districts of Khatlon oblast) are supplied with these items. A nursing home for the elderly in Yovon district has also been supported to protect long-term residents and staff from the risk of potential infection.

AKAH: Enhancing national preparedness and response capacity to contain the spread of COVID-19 (Part I-50'000 USD, Part II-165'397 USD, Part III- 54'800 USD approx)

To enhance the national capacity to contain COVID-19, the project equipped the quarantine centres in Dushanbe and Murgab district of GBAO with necessary basic infection prevention supplies. The total package of items handed over though AKAH to CoES includes masks, Oxolin ointment, disposable gloves, medical autoclave sterilizers, mattresses, petrol generators and chlorine.

With the second support, AKAH repurposed the summer camps in Roshtqala, Rushon districts and Khorog as quarantine zones/alternate treatment sites. Four zones were equipped with food and basic care facilities for returnees from other parts of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and China.

Another activity included purchasing wheat flour and add to the exciting food reserve of the region to prevent the increase of price for essential food items. At the same time food baskets distributed to vulnerable families to help them to maintain their basic nutrition status.

International Secretariat for Water (ISW): Stop the Progression of the COVID-19 in the Northern Part of Tajikistan-Sughd (50'000 USD approx.)

The project aims at slowing down the virus through basic awareness raising on hygiene attitudes and distribution of medical supplies (masks, disinfectants, sanitizers).

The project conducts a rapid yard survey in hot spot areas to determine the health status of family members. As COVID-19 testing kits are not sufficiently available, the survey will help medical staff in mapping the situation and take further actions. More than 1,000 posters and 1,500 stickers on sanitation are distributed in public places (markets and shops) and boarding schools of the region. The project conducts a mass media campaign about virus prevention. In order to promote hygiene practices in public facilities, masks and disinfectants are distributed to 13 hospitals, 13 medical facilities and 80 boarding schools.

AKF: Food Security in Tajikistan (392'337 USD approx)

The COVID-19 outbreak has a negative impact on the population of rural and remote areas heavily dependent on agriculture and remittances. Limited access to agricultural products, low water and land productivity, lack of high quality seeds and fertilizers can exacerbate food insecurity, malnutrition and vulnerability to the virus. The project aims to reduce such vulnerability through: food and cash support to 1'000 most poor households in Sughd, Khatlon, GBAO and Rasht Valley; rehabilitation of four irrigation canals in B.Gafurov, Ishkashim, Sh.Shohin and Laksh districts to increase the agricultural production of 1'000 smallholder farmers, distribution of seeds and fertilizers to farmers; improve the extension services in the project target areas.

Association of Disabled People "Mehrbakhsh": COVID-19-Support for disabled people (26'000 USD approx.)

SDC supports people with physical disabilities who are among the most vulnerable during the pandemic. The hygiene and sanitation kits with sanitizers, soaps, shampoo, masks and gloves are distributed. At the same time, 100 booklets about the virus prevention with Braille scripts are published. A video clip about proper sanitation behaviour, (also with sign translation) is produced and broadcasted through mass media.

UN OCHA: Secondment of a Humanitarian Aid Officer (100'000 USD approx.)

Upon official request from UN OCHA, SDC recruited a Humanitarian Affairs Officer (HAO) for seven months, who successfully supported the UN Resident Coordinator and OCHA in their coordination, communication and monitoring duties in response to the COVID-19 and looming humanitarian crisis.

Regional WFP Cash-for-Work (CfW) Project in Rasht Valley (1'1 mio USD)

Under the CfW activities, WFP provided cash transfers to vulnerable households in five districts of the Rasht Valley, which helped to meet the immediate nutritional needs of those most at risk while engaging able-bodied family members in fast-track activities to rehabilitate community infrastructure. These activities strengthened medium and long-term resilience among the vulnerable affected population to rebound from socio-economic shocks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

OTHER INTITIATIVES:

The Swiss Surgical Team (SST) (55'500 USD)

The Swiss Surgical Team donated infection prevention materials for local hospitals, along with equipment for operation rooms. The material handed over to the National Medical Centre in Dushanbe, to hospitals in Khorog and Qabodiyon included gloves, gowns, masks and sanitizers antiseptics to protect health care workers.

Since 2013, every six months a team of Swiss doctors (mainly surgeons and anaesthetists), medical technicians and nurses have shared for free their know-how with doctors and other medical personnel in three regions of Tajikistan. SDC and the Aga-Khan Foundation provide logistical support. For more information about SST please see: www.swiss-surgical-team.org

Further information

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