Covid-19 Communication Update

Malawi Update #17 04th September 2020

The information in this update is collected from UN Agencies and NGOs

Highlights

- 4050 braille materials on awareness and prevention of COVID-19 for visually impaired persons produced.
- 1,800,000 people reached with COVID-19 preparedness and prevention messages using local communication channels.
- Production and finalization for SGBV child-friendly booklet:
- Completed preparations for recording of COVID-19 radio messages and programs for the fishing communities.
- Orientation of Community structures on COVID-19 prevention.
- Orientation of Theatre for development groups and care group promoters to support Covid-19 message dissemination.

1. Risk Communication and Community Engagement

**UNDP**

- UNDP continues to share social media posters and videos on COVID-19 awareness, prevention, symptoms and addressing myths associated with COVID-19 on its social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter).
- UNDP worked with Faith Mussa in the production of a COVID-19 song, in English, Chichewa and Chitumbuka. The song is being disseminated through social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp.
- UNDP continues to support Public Affairs Committee (PAC) with COVID-19 messaging at the national and community level. PAC has produced stickers, videos and other educational materials on various COVID-19 prevention messages. Below is a summary of activities:
  - With support from UNDP, PAC worked with a local organization to produce cloth masks with COVID-19 messages to prevent its spread. The masks will be distributed through PAC structures across the country.
  - 75 slots worth of airtime on national and community radio stations on COVID-19 key messages. The radio stations include Zodiac, Times radio, Radio Islam, voice of Livingstonia, MJ, Maziko and Radio Maria.
  - Social media flashcards on COVID-19 Messages that ran over 60 days on Zodiac and Times social media pages; with an outreach and media hits of over 1 million, including those beyond Malawi.
- UNDP is supporting Parliament with ICT infrastructure and connectivity to ensure that the Hansard and Audiovisual sections sit in multiple rooms to observe social distancing during the upcoming sitting of parliament.
- UNDP Malawi is working with a media agency to produce a short video highlighting the first-hand stories of high-profile survivors of COVID-19. The purpose of the video will be to inspire hope and drive the reality on the ground. The video will also aim at showing a stand of solidarity with Front line workers. The video will be disseminated on UNDP social Media platforms and TV stations.
- UNDP Malawi is currently testing a newly developed USSD Contact Tracing application in Chichewa and English to prevent, minimize and contain the spread of Covid-19 in Malawi, working in collaboration with the Malawi University of Sciences and Technology. The data will be used to map out possible outbreaks in hotspot areas. The USSD application, which is in its development stage, will be integrated into the Ministry of Health’s COVID-19-19 short code menu.

**UNICEF**

**Strengthening Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)**

UNICEF has continued to support implementation of risk communication and community engagement interventions using various delivery platforms with funding from UKaid. The number of people so far reached with COVID-19 messages through door to door, mobile van and community drama sessions and social media now stands at about 798,000 including about 50 with disabilities.

Regarding radio and TV broadcasting, through partnership with Malawi Institute of Journalism, close to 5,800 radio and TV spots have been broadcast so far. Using the radio monitors in the 12 districts that UNICEF is targeting, over 3,000 radio listeners have been interviewed to understand their knowledge on COVID-19 as heard from the radio. Out those interviewed, about 2,900 (over 90 percent) listeners were able to recall the messages.

Also in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare under the Spotlight Initiative. UNICEF is supporting the development of a coordinated, harmonized and structured approach to working with traditional leaders in Malawi to deliver the COVID-19 response, promote...
gender equality and positive social norms. In the past week, district consultations with traditional leaders and district councils took place in Likoma, Kasungu, Nkhotakota and Ntcheu districts. A total of 129 participants took part in the consultations.

**Human Interest Stories and External Media**

- UNICEF continues to support Zodiac in disseminating COVID-19 messages through panel discussions which will be aired on both radio and TV, as well as airing of TV documentaries. In the reporting period, the first panel discussion on the role of religious leaders in fighting the pandemic was aired.

- As part of supporting government in sensitization messages, UNICEF is conducting a Wear a Mask campaign. Posters have been developed for social media containing quotes from health workers on COVID-19 prevention and the use of masks. The health workers are part of the Rapid Response team from Lilongwe District Office, who are receiving support from UNICEF with funding from UK Aid.

- UNICEF continues to promote youth participation through U-Report, a mobile youth engagement platform designed to gather young people’s voices and address issues that they care about. In the reporting period, there have been 846 sessions on COVID-19 pages with an average of 52 seconds. On social media, UNICEF continues to share messages on COVID-19 prevention and awareness. During the reporting week, our messages engaged about 369,000 online audiences on all three platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). UNICEF regularly updates its dedicated COVID-19 page on its website with latest news and information on UNICEF and its partners’ response to COVID19 in Malawi.

**DCT**

- This week DCT has reached out to a total number of 59,601 people with COVID19 messages. 18 Traditional Authorities have been targeted this week in the 10 targeted districts of Mwanza, Blantyre, Mchinji, Dowa and Karonga, Neno, Chiradzulu, Kasungu, Chitipa and Likoma Island. DCT this week also conducted an orientation meeting on COVID 19 messages with 35 Primary School Headmasters from 5 districts of Karonga, Blantyre, Mwanza, Dowa and Mchinji in preparation for the reopening of schools. Their major role is to carry out health talks with pupils on COVID19 related issues. Among other activities conducted this week were Door to Door awareness raising, public announcements, whistles stop awareness raising through the use of mobile vans, one on one interaction, radio programmes and engagement meetings at both district and community level.

**United Purpose**

- With funding from UNICEF, UP reached 25,359 people through hand washing promotions in Thyolo district. Hand washing demonstrations are conducted in strategic points i.e. at hospital entrances, markets, tea making factories and other public places.

- Through support from UNICEF, UP continued to engage community radio stations in Chitipa-Tuntufuye radio station, Thyolo-Mzali radio, Chikwawa-Gaka radio station and Nsanje-Nyanthepa radio to disseminating COVID19 prevention messages. 1,570,000 people are expected to be reached through these community radio stations with a coverage of up to 13 districts in the southern and northern Malawi.

- Again with support from UNICEF, UP distributed 10 posters on COVID-19 prevention to Nyamadzere primary school borehole committee in Nsanje district.

**FAO**

- FAO and the Department of Fisheries have completed preparations for recording of COVID-19 radio messages and programmes for the fishing communities. The programmes will be aired on Chisomo community radio in Salima, Bembeke community radio in Dedza and Dzimwe community radio in Mangochi, with funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

- Equally, dissemination of messages to orient households on how to manage COVID-19 risk and continue with farming and caregiving activities has continued in additional districts (Karonga, Chitipa, Nkhata Bay, Kasungu, Mzimba, Nkhotakota, Salima, Mulanje, Chiradzulu, Thyolo) with support of DAES. DNHA, FAO and UNICEF through KULIMA and Afikepo projects.

**UNCHR**

- SGBV child-friendly booklet: An SGBV child-friendly booklet was under production and was finalized. This booklet includes the basic knowledge about SGBV and the referral pathways in COVID-19 pandemic. This booklet was written using simple words which children can understand, and this will be distributed to the community through the community-based organizations and used as an education material for youth/women activities.

**USAID ONSE**

- USAID ONSE conducted RCCE activities reaching 5908 persons in the districts of Balaka, Chitipa, Dowa, Karonga, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Mangochi, Mulanje, Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Ntcheu, Mchinji, Dzirazi, Ntcheu, Machinga, Mangochi, Zomba, Blantyre, Neno, Mwanza, Mulanje, Nsanje and Chikwawa districts. (MRCS and movement partners, UNICEF, GIZ and MoH)

**Malawi Red Cross Society of (MRCS)**

- MRCS reached 1,800,000 (882,000M; 918,000F) people with COVID-19 preparedness and prevention messages using local communication channels like community and national radio stations, van publicities, mobile cinema, billboards, hygiene campaigns and megaphone covering Chitipa, Karonga, Mzuzu, Mzimba, Salima, Nkhotakota, Lilongwe, Mchinji, Dedza, Ntcheu, Machinga, Mangochi, Zomba, Blantyre, Neno, Mwanza, Mulanje, Nsanje and Chikwawa districts. (MRCS and movement partners, UNICEF, GIZ and MoH)
**Oxfam**

- Awareness raising community campaigns on COVID-19 and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) in Lilongwe South West constituency with Member of Parliament Hon Jean Sendeza on 3 September 2020. The campaigns target health centres, local leaders and community members. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be distributed at the campaigns.
- Ongoing awareness raising on COVID-19 and EVAWG. Social media updates on COVID-19 and EVAWG campaigns have had a cumulative reach of 9,289 impressions in August.
- Ongoing development of radio programmes on COVID-19 and teen pregnancies engaging youth, male champions, mother groups and community at large to be aired on Yoneco FM. The programmes are expected to reach 4.9 million people.

**LGAP**

In continuation of community feedback collection on COVID-19 response through radio platforms, listeners continue to demonstrate right knowledge, attitude and practices of prevention measures against the pandemic as captured by the following radio stations:

**Nkhotakota Radio**

- In most health facilities in Nkhotakota, patients without face mask are not attended/treated until they put on face masks.
- Despite Covid-19, most communities have welcomed the idea of re-opening schools so that cases of pregnancies that have arisen should be reduced or stopped altogether.

**Maziko radio**

- In most communities, people are now aware of Covid-19 in terms of how it spreads and how to prevent it, but lack capacity to access face masks and soap due to their low income.
- In some hospitals/Health Centers, there is shortage of personal protective equipment which is putting health workers at risk of contracting the virus a situation that has left some patients unattended to as health workers are also afraid of contracting the virus.
- Some people want Government to consider providing water buckets and soap in public places like the markets.
- Stigma is making some people not to disclose or seek medical attention whenever they feel signs and symptoms of the Covid-19.

**MBC Radio 1**

- On use of face masks, most people expressed knowledge of the need to wear masks to prevent themselves against the virus. However, some people say they only use masks when going out to the market or grocery where there are a lot of people.
- Some people say if the country is to get rid of Covid-19, people should follow preventive measures and stop their negligence.
- A woman from Kawale in Lilongwe pointed out that people who are not adhering to preventive measures, it's because they haven't tested to know whether they have the virus or not and are not sick yet.

**Mudziwathu Radio**

- In Mchinji, businesspeople have agreed to ensure all people that are using markets follow all preventive measures such as washing hands with soap or hand sanitizer.
- Some youths say they are always reminding their friends about the importance of wearing face masks and frequently hand washing with soap.
- When conducting Bank M’khonde meetings, community members say they always remind each other on preventive measures of the pandemic.
- Police in Mchinji are encourage everyone to wear face mask when visiting police stations.
- Police have been distributing free face masks to the poor and sensitizing communities on preventive measures through community dialogue.

**Neno FM Radio**

- Communities say it is important for Government to encourage smallholder farmers continue with preparations for the coming agricultural season regardless of the pandemic, while observing prevention measures.
Outcomes

- Orientation of Community structures on Covid 19 prevention
  - Lilongwe: 25 Citizen Voice members, 378 cluster leaders and 14 promoters
  - Dowa: 48 Citizen Voice members, 95 cluster leaders and 5 promoters
  - Nsanje: 8 members of Umoyo TFD and 2 Care group promoters
  - Mangochi: 31 members (5 GVHs, 5 VHCs, 5 ASPs, 5 VACs, 5 HSAs, 6 VDCs)
  - Chikhwawa: 10 members of Chisomo TFD group, 4 promoters, 4 cluster leaders and 4 HSAs
  - Blantyre: 10 members of Chimembe TFD group, 6 promoters, 4 cluster leaders and 4 HSAs

- Radio jingles being aired daily (12 times a day) on Ndirande FM to raise awareness on Covid-19
- Theatre for development groups oriented on Covid-19 prevention to support message dissemination at household level
- Traditional leaders and religious leaders in Kasungu have been engaged to support sensitization campaigns.
- Supported Covid-19 TOTs for community structures in Mangochi district

Successes

- Community structures oriented on COVID 19 message dissemination.

Update of the Activities conducted so far

- Orientation of communities structures on Covid-19 prevention in Lilongwe (25 Citizen Voice members, 378 cluster leaders and 14 promoters) and Dowa (48 Citizen Voice members, 95 cluster leaders and 5 promoters)
- Supported Covid-19 TOTs for community structures on COVID-19 prevention in Mangochi (31 members were oriented)
- Engagement of traditional and religious leaders to support with community sensitization on Covid-19 in Kasungu (56 religious leaders and local leaders have been oriented)
- Orientation of Theatre for development groups and care group promoters to support Covid-19 message dissemination at household level in Nsanje (8 members of Umoyo TFD and 2 care group promoters oriented)
- Orientation of Theatre for development groups, Care group Promoters & Cluster Leaders to support dissemination of messages on Covid 19 prevention in Chikwawa. (10 members of Chisomo TFD, 4 promoters, 4 cluster leaders and 4 HSAs were oriented)
- Airing of Radio jingles (12 times in a day) on local radio to raise awareness on Covid-19 in Blantyre (Ndirande FM) and orientation of Theatre for development groups, Care group Promoters & Cluster Leaders to support dissemination of messages on Covid-19 prevention at household level (10 members of Chimembe TFD group, 6 promoters, 4 cluster leaders and 4 HSAs were oriented)

Compilation of Insights of Covid-19

1. Perception of the Community (Lilongwe and Dowa)
   - Covid-19 is for the rich
   - Attacks individuals who engage in promiscuous activities
   - It is a disease for the elderly
   - Covid-19 only attacks white people due to the cold weather

   How the community has received this information
   - Through radio
   - Through Public Announcement on mobile Vans
   - Through community briefings by Health Surveillance Assistants
   - Print materials distributed by health officials

   Health services provision with consideration to Covid-19
   - Reduced public gathering awareness meetings by health officials
   - Distribution of Covid 19 leaflets

2. Perception of the Community (Kasungu)
   - Covid19 attacks rich people only

   How the community has received this information
   - Through Public Announcement on mobile Vans
   - Through radio
   - Through community briefings by Health Surveillance Assistants
   - Through Covid19 leaflets distributed by health officials

   Health services provision with consideration to Covid-19
   - Distribution of Covid-19 leaflets to the Traditional and religious leaders
   - Awareness using PA systems by health officials
3. Perception of the Community (Blantyre)
- The disease is for the white people only
- Covid-19 attacks people who are HIV/AIDS positive
- Covid-19 is a disease of the rich people

How the community has received this information
- Through Public Announcement on mobile Vans
- Through Covid19 leaflets distributed by health officials
- Through community briefings by Health Surveillance Assistants
- Through radio

Health services provision with consideration to Covid-19
- Awareness using PA systems by health officials
- Provision of toll-free number by health officials
- Briefing of Volunteers to help information dissemination on Covid-19

Strengths
- Community structures helping with information dissemination on Covid-19
- Mandatory use of masks in most of the public facilities i.e. Health facilities
- Preventive measures like hand washing helping a lot.

Threat
- Non-adherence to preventive measures by community members i.e. the use of masks
- Some communities feel isolating a Covid 19 patient is part of discrimination i.e Kasungu

Opportunities
- Presence of Community structures to support message dissemination
- Presence of implementing partners (NGOs) to support interventions
- Technical material and financial support from Central level

2. Coordination

Overall coordination of communications and C4D contributions towards the national Covid-19 response is through the Public Communication Cluster led by Ministry of Information, Civic education and Communications Technology. Ministry of Health also technically coordinates Risk Communication and Community Engagement on the Covid-19 response. The UN has a C4D Coordination Group, a platform which brings UN and NGO partners together to discuss risk communication and community engagement issues, exchange knowledge and share communication resources to support awareness raising and behavioural change efforts. UN Communications Group leads overall crisis communication strategy for the UN in Malawi under the guidance of the UN Resident Coordinator and UN Country Team.

3. Digital Outreach

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