

FIGHTING COVID-19 IN CHAD

Chad is the world's third most vulnerable country to infectious diseases*.

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in Chad in March 2020, the country faces numerous difficulties in controlling the spread of coronavirus. Its entire population of more than 15 million people is at risk. Various international organisations provided assistance at the start of the pandemic but these interventions were predominantly short-term, finishing after the first wave.

The Chad Government's COVID-19 response is in urgent need of support – and this is an opportunity for us to help in a way that leaves a legacy of sustainable improvements to the health system in one of Africa's most vulnerable countries.

How Tackling deadly diseases in Africa is helping to save lives

The Tackling deadly diseases in Africa (TDDA) programme was approached by Chad's Ministry of Public Health to help in the fight against COVID-19. Funded by UK aid and led by DAI Global Health, TDDA was already collaborating with the Government of Chad to strengthen the country's preparedness against infectious disease outbreaks.

When COVID-19 struck, TDDA quickly adapted its Early Response Mechanism (ERM) programme. Rather than focusing on pre-crisis preparedness alone, we pivoted to provide urgent assistance that prioritises key gaps in national pandemic responses.

We fast-tracked our evaluation of possible partners, assessing their capacity to complement the national response. We identified national civil society organisations (CSOs) with the potential to deliver fundamental public health work at the local level, and at the scale needed. We provided technical, operational and safeguarding capacity building support to our CSO partners throughout the life cycle of the projects to ensure the partners are well placed to respond to this and other disease outbreaks in the future.

In Chad, our assistance was delivered via partnerships with Alerte Santé and the Agence de Développement Economique et Social (ADES) - two local CSOs, working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health.

TDDA - Alerte Santé COVID-19 project

Active in the highly populated South, including Mayo-Kebbi Est and Mayo-Kebbi Ouest, this initiative focused on communication and building the role of communities. It also strengthened health checks at Chad's borders once these were reopened, to prevent travellers with COVID-19 from spreading the infection to their local contacts.

Who benefits?

- 735,782 Chadians reached through door-to-door awareness-raising activities
- 595,000 people reached via radio messaging on COVID-19 awareness
- 11,164 travellers screened for COVID-19 at points of entry
- 85 health centres provided with handwashing facilities, hand sanitizer and no-contact thermometers
- 340 community leaders and 194 community health workers trained on COVID-19 public health messaging and infection control best practices, paving the way for future peer-to-peer education

"On a work trip to Bongor, I spoke to a 70-year old grandmother who told me that thanks to our community health workers visiting households, she knows how to protect herself from this disease." *Dabsou Guidaoussou, Chad Country Coordinator, TDDA*

* INFORM Risk Index

TDDA - ADES COVID-19 project

Our partnership with ADES provided targeted assistance in the N'Djamena, Logone Occidental and Logone Oriental regions, which are prone to disease outbreaks. We supported vulnerable communities and provided training and PPE as well as bolstering surveillance and contact tracing. We also helped raise public awareness, using channels that made large-scale public gatherings unnecessary.

Who benefits?

- 338,522 people reached through door-to-door awareness raising activity, including over 4,000 refugees
- 117 food kits and 3,000 hygiene kits provided to vulnerable people in quarantine and their close contacts
- 122 people given psychosocial support
- Communities in six districts received sanitisation materials (e.g. disinfectant gels, chlorine, soap, hand washing devices)
- 2,130 contact cases followed up
- 30 contact tracing relays provided with a total of 6,000 protective masks
- 205 radio spots and 100 tv spots aired
- 18 outings by loudspeaker vehicles
- 20 traditional public criers mobilized in remote areas for 30 days each
- 30 new community information relays created in N'Djamena, including the purchase of phones and provision of phone credit.

“In important locations such as mosques, churches and markets, we were able to provide hand-washing facilities. We taught people proper hand-washing techniques and how masks should be worn.” *Dabsou Guidaoussou*

Progress in Chad

TDDA's intervention filled critical gaps in Chad's pandemic response which would otherwise have remained unaddressed. The situation remains precarious, however. In two of the provinces where ADES is working there has been a welcome sharp decline in cases. This contrasts with a lack of progress and broadly stable picture in most other regions. Meanwhile, relaxation by the population and delays to other services have led to a worrying resurgence of cases in N'Djamena province.

Governments, their partners and communities must all remain vigilant until the declared end of the pandemic. The resurgence of COVID-19 in N'Djamena shows there is work still to be done to improve people's awareness and encourage greater adherence to preventive measures.

With urgently needed additional resources, TDDA and its partners are well-placed to continue their assistance in Chad's fight against the COVID pandemic and extend these interventions into the Eastern, Northern and Toukra districts. What's more, our focus on building capacity within our partner organisations, coupled with our strategy of close collaboration with Chad's Ministry of Public Health, means that our work is building a legacy of stronger partners and stronger partnerships, better placed to detect health threats and to respond to them quickly and decisively in future.

“We are putting out a call for more support to sustain these achievements, the momentum we've built, the appetite we've stimulated with health authorities. Our partners can continue essential community engagement and we can continue supporting authorities to fight this pandemic. We will really strengthen our legacy.”

Dabsou Guidaoussou

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