

ARTICLE ON TRAINING OF DISTRICT TRAINERS AND COMMUNITY MOBILIZERS ON COMMUNITY LED ACTION (CLA) SUPPORTED BY GOAL SL AND UNICEF.

BY ALIEU TOMMY

The Community-Led Action approach is based on the premise that communities have the power and the agency to stop the spread of infectious diseases. It recognizes that in every society, communities can and do modify norms, beliefs, and behaviors in response to the conditions around them, and that their collective local actions are at the heart of an effective infectious disease response. The CLA approach, designed by GOAL in response to the Ebola outbreak in 2014-2016, has been a success since creation, and has been adapted successfully to new emerging disease as shown by the recent use in the COVID-19 response and again for preparedness in response to the EVD outbreak in Guinea in February 2021.

As part of their continuous support to the Ministry of Health during trying times of disease outbreak, UNICEF opted to support the CLA mobilization with GOAL SL in 5 priority border districts, Kambia, Karene, Koinadugu, Falaba and Kenema, where GOAL is operational. GOAL SL conducted a two days training from the 3rd to 4th June 2021 at Bombali for 30 District trainers on the harmonized CLA tool of both Covid-19 and Ebola. Trainers were selected from the Public Information Risk communication and Social Mobilization (PIRCSM) pillar in order to participate. The purpose of the training was to orientate district PIRCSM leads on the harmonized tool so they can be able to train their community mobilizers. Supporting Social/Community Mobilisers trained in participatory community engagement approaches to reach and engage communities across the five priority is a key intervention. The aim is to give communities the opportunity to discuss, debate, problem-solve, and innovate in response to COVID-19. Communities will decide how they will adopt the key behaviors in their own unique context and commit to local action together, to stop the spread of COVID-19 and prepare for EVD.

UNICEF together with GOAL SL sees the CLA approach to stop COVID-19 and enhance preparedness of Ebola across the border areas. 30 district PIRCSM trainers were orientated during the two days period. District trainers were taken through the harmonized tool where using participatory facilitation methodology, practical group work, demonstration, discussions etc. Participants were orientated about the Covid-19 and present situation of the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, and were taken refreshed on the 5 steps of the CLA tool , engaging community, preparing for triggering, triggering, support action plans and conducting follow ups. All those steps were well digested for district trainers to be familiar with them so they can be able to train their community mobilizers.

The district PIRCSM later work with GOAL SL for the selection and training of Community Mobilizers , an average of 10 mobilizers were selected in each chiefdom(62 chiefdoms of the five districts) so each district have a total number of mobilizers based on the number of chiefdoms they have. The schedule for the district training at the chiefdom is showed in the table below:

TABLE 1

Districts	Number of chiefdoms	Number of community mobilizers	Training dates
Kambia	10	100	15 th -16 th June 2021,
Karene	13	130	18 th -21 st June 2021
Falaba	13	130	21 st -24 th June
Koinadugu	10	100	21 st -24 th June
Kenema	16	160	21 st -26 th June 2021

The orientation of mobilizers was done within different date in different districts as shown in table 1 above. All training durations was based on the number of chiefdoms in each district. An average of three (3) chiefdoms per training site per district was done. Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) staffs were sent on supervision in each district in order to witness and support the orientation of mobilizers. All mobilizers were orientated through the harmonized tools and later shared into neighborhood unit in each chiefdom where they should cover when once the roll out start.

The main role of the community mobilizers is to facilitate community engagement sessions using CLA tools to trigger community into action, taking collective action to protect the community from COVID19 and Ebola. Supporting Social/Community Mobilisers trained in participatory community engagement approaches to reach and engage communities across the five priority border districts is a key intervention. The aim is to give communities the opportunity to discuss, debate, problem-solve, and innovate in response to COVID-19. Communities will decide how they will adopt the key behaviors in their own unique context and commit to local action together, to stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect border communities against Ebola.

PHOTOS



Orientation of the five border districts PIRCSM leads at Bombali District



Orientation of Community mobilizers at Bamoi Luma Kambia District



Orientation of community mobilizers at Mongo Falaba District



Orientation of community mobilizers at Kabala town Koinadugu District



Orientation of community mobilizers at Foredugu and Kawakwei Karene District