

GENDER connect

GENDERConnect is a monthly publication of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) desk of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). It chronicles WANEP's interventions and initiatives in its efforts towards actualizing the WPS commitments across the region. This maiden edition is dedicated to the COVID 19 interventions.

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MEMBERS OF THE WOMEN CSOS RESPONSE GROUP IN SENEGAL AT A MEETING: THE GROUP DONATED ESSENTIAL ITEMS TO ALLEVIATE IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Stories from the Frontlines

The Coronavirus aka COVID 19 was first reported in Wuhan – China on December 31, 2019. By February 2020, the pandemic had assumed global proportions affecting more than 4 million people in 175 countries (May 01, 2020), recording nearly 300,000 deaths and more than a million recoveries. According to statistics from the World Health Organization of May 12, 2020, 53 countries in Africa have been affected with 63,119 cumulative cases, 2,331 reported deaths and 22,975 reported recoveries. The spate of the pandemic resulted to governments imposing stringent measures in an effort to contain the pandemic. Some of these measures included border closures, ban on international travels, partial/total lockdowns, restriction of movements, shut down of schools and ban on public gatherings among others.

The pandemic still rages on with disastrous economic, political and social consequences particularly in the West African region already overwhelmed by other human security challenges! COVID 19 has come to worsen a bad situation, especially for women who always bore the brunt of conflicts and wars as well as

suffer disproportionately within the political, social and economic governance space. The real impact of the pandemic may not really be determined in the face of inadequate data disaggregation. Also, from the onset, there was no deliberate attempt to capture the magnitude of the pandemic on women due to the fact that earlier cases were mostly men.

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) through its National Early Warning System (NEWS) has been monitoring the impact of the pandemic and its disastrous effects on all aspects of human security. WANEP has utilized its Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) program to make significant interventions and contributions towards alleviating COVID 19 impact on women across the region. This maiden edition of **GENDERConnect** is dedicated to the work of WANEP on the field. It chronicles the practical interventions being carried out on a daily basis by WANEP in its efforts to actualize its commitments to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.



SENEGAL

As part of efforts to alleviate the devastating impact of COVID 19 on women and children, the Women Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Response Group, an umbrella membership organization of civil society groups, including WANEP, donated various essential items to the Ministry of Women, Gender, Family and Protection of Children. The donations were received by the Minister Ms. Ndeye DIOP Dieng, who promised to continue collaboration with the Group.

Making the donation, a representative of the Group said the gesture was to establish solidarity and renew their commitment to collaborate with the Ministry. Some of the items donated included rice, vegetable oil, soap and

sanitizers. The Group also recorded a 30 seconds video to raise awareness on the COVID 19 pandemic in the local dialects of Wolof, Peulh, Serrer and French.

NIGERIA



WANEP-Nigeria has been utilizing live radio discussions aired on seven radio stations in seven states across the country to generate awareness and educate the populace on the Coronavirus Pandemic. The program tagged; “Women’s Voices for Peace,” has tackled various topics on the impact of COVID 19 including safety measures and strategies to ameliorate the impact of the pandemic on the society. Discussions have covered the COVID 19 pandemic from a gender perspective and its impact on mental health, gender-based violence and youth restiveness. The issue of stigmatization was also explored. In addition, the network produced situation tracking documents and conducted an online survey to document incidences of SGBV during this COVID 19 period to gather statistics of prevalence for appropriate referral services and interventions. Through the #COVID19 response team, palliative items were shared to the elderly in Jago village, Ibadan, Oyo State of Nigeria to cushion the effects of lock down on vulnerable groups.

THE GAMBIA

WANEP-The Gambia with funding from UNDP conducted community radio sensitizations on the COVID-19 pandemic in West Coast Region (WCR), Lower River Region (LRR), Central River Region (CRR), Upper River Region (URR) and North Bank Region (NBR) of the country. The sensitization was to generate awareness on the need to adhere to WHO guidelines to suppress and prevent the spread of the virus, promote strict adherence to social distancing and good

personal hygiene measures among others. They also donated hand washing equipment to the SOS Children’s Village and the schools for the blind and deaf.



GUINEA

The Young Peace Ambassadors, a youth group and members of the **WANEP-Guinea** peer mediators club, mobilized resources (approximately 1200 euros) to purchase and distribute protection kits in their localities. They held series of awareness-raising sessions to educate the populace especially youth on preventive measures against COVID 19 pandemic.

SIERRA LEONE

WANEP-Sierra Leone distributed food items to support poor households during the lockdown in Western Rural Area of the country. They carried out weekly advocacy and awareness raising activities through live radio discussions to sensitize the community on COVID 19 preventive measures.



FAST FACTS COVID 19 – Gender disaggregated data (as at May 2020)

Country	Female	Male
Cote d’Ivoire	39%	61%
Ghana	40%	60%
Nigeria	29%	71%
Sierra Leone	72	85
Togo	33%	51%



COTE D’IVOIRE

WANEP-Cote d’Ivoire carried out several sensitization initiatives including video messages in the main languages spoken, created posters to disseminate information on the pandemic and distributed health kits to vulnerable groups. The GOFEHF group, which WIPNET Cote d’Ivoire is an active member of, distributed health/hygiene kits in 108 markets of the Autoname District of Abidjan. The network further carried out awareness activities in eight markets in Cocody and 14 markets in Abobo and distributed food and health kits purchased with resources provided by Médecins Sans Frontières to women community leaders and women victims of violence.



