

UPDATE 26 MARCH 2020

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAMME

WINDHOEK INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Over the last few days, COVID-19 has expanded rapidly in many developing countries. In South Africa there were 106 cases a week ago, and 709 cases yesterday. The UN secretary general Antonio Guterres has warned that unless the world came together to assist, millions of people could die. While health systems are overwhelmed in developed countries such as Italy and Spain, most developing countries are simply and utterly un-prepared to deal with a crisis of this scale. Especially at risk are refugee camps in war-torn countries, and informal settlements.

One week ago, Development Workshop Namibia (DWN) and the Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) launched the COVID-19 Emergency Programme for Windhoek's informal settlements. In a first phase, the programme aims to set up 20,000 hand washing units ('Tippy Taps') in Windhoek's informal settlements, and provide residents with accurate information on COVID-19 and how to prevent infection. Funds have now been secured, materials and personal protection equipment bought, and volunteers trained. 17,000 pamphlets and posters have been printed and are being distributed. The programme has full support from the relevant Constituency Councillors.

Yesterday Wednesday the programme initiated in Windhoek's northern informal settlements, in the Moses Garoeb Constituency. A team of 15 trained volunteers set up 55 hand washing units on this piloting day, within a period of 3 hours, and with each unit shared between an average of 3 households. As the team becomes practiced and works normal hours, it will be installing some 130 units per day, reaching an average of some 400 households.

This coming Friday the 27th, a similar team of 15 volunteers will initiate in Samora Machel constituency, and early next week, two equal teams in Tobias Hainyeko and Khomas East constituencies.

By mid next week, a total of four teams with 60 volunteers will therefore be installing some 500 units a day, reaching to 2000 families. Over 10 days, this will be 5000 units reaching 20,000 families, and in 20 days, 10,000 units reaching 40,000 families. There is a real chance to reach out to a majority of informal settlement households (approximately 65,000) within a short period of time.

DWN and the NCE provide the logistical support to ensure that all volunteer groups have enough materials

at all times. Materials are bought in bulk and stored at the NCE office. For each of the four groups there is one dedicated 4x4 bakkie with driver, delivering materials to the respective group and assist with distribution in the field. The DWN team is driven by 10 dedicated recent graduates and student.



The 'green shirts' of Moses Garoeb

As this operation rolls out, there is a need to initiate two additional processes in parallel:

1. Develop and implement a similar emergency response programme for latrine construction, as COVID-19 does spread through faeces. This has not been an issue in developed countries (where everybody has a toilet), but is rapidly becoming a major challenge in countries like Namibia, where a majority of informal settlement residents defecate in the open.
2. Initiate preparatory activities in towns across the country

We would like to appreciate the rapid and essential contributions of following institutions:

- **Debmarine-Namdeb Foundation:** NAD 434,000 (paid)
- **GIZ:** support to vehicle rental, purchase of hand washing kits and other substantial logistical contributions
- **Housing! For Future (Germany):** EUR 10,000
- **FirstRand Foundation:** pledge for support
- **B2Gold:** sponsoring of 150 face masks

More funds are urgently needed to scale and sustain this intervention for the coming 2-3 months.

PLEASE SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE FOR PICTURES ON YESTERDAY'S FIELD INITIATION OF THE PROGRAMME

