

COVID-19 Public Awareness Campaign in Uganda

Tackling deadly diseases in Africa (TDDA) has mobilized support to help the national COVID-19 responses across all six of our focus countries.

Since February 2021, we have supported a COVID-19 public awareness campaign to give people the information and tools they need to curb the pandemic in Uganda. Our partners have organized community dialogue meetings with over 1,000 people in four southwestern districts. Together, we talked about the importance of simple measures like handwashing, sanitation and correct mask wearing in preventing the spread of the virus. We also discussed how to recognize the signs of COVID and the need to report to a health facility quickly once symptoms appear, or when you have had contact with someone with these symptoms.

Perhaps the most valuable part of the community dialogues were the question-and-answer sessions. No question was too small or too embarrassing. We clarified false information and talked about ways of recognizing whether something is fact or myth. We also helped build a shared understanding of the small things we can all do in our daily lives to stop the spread of COVID.



“TDDA, along with our programme partners, supports the Ministry of Health and district COVID-19 taskforce to deliver this activity”, comments TDDA Team Leader Jeffrey Mecaskey. “It is vital that our work aligns with the efforts of local authorities as well as the wider national response. We aim to strengthen capacity and core competencies needed to prepare for and respond effectively to any outbreak, as well as the specific challenges posed by COVID-19 here and now.” Before holding community dialogues, the Ministry of Health prepared the ground in discussions with the communications and district COVID-19 taskforce teams. These meetings, held at district health headquarters, were a crucial step in planning the rollout of community engagement in rural areas.

Dr. Winyi Kaboyo is the Uganda country coordinator for Tackling deadly diseases in Africa. Reflecting on the success of this approach, he added:

"This new community engagement initiative shows exactly why programmes like Tackling deadly diseases in Africa are important. We are deeply embedded in the work plans and priorities of national authorities, so our interventions help deliver on Ugandan ambitions for health security. To do that, we work through the government at every level, from speaking to communities about the importance of handwashing, to working with ministries to develop ambitious, evidence-based plans and procedures for better health."