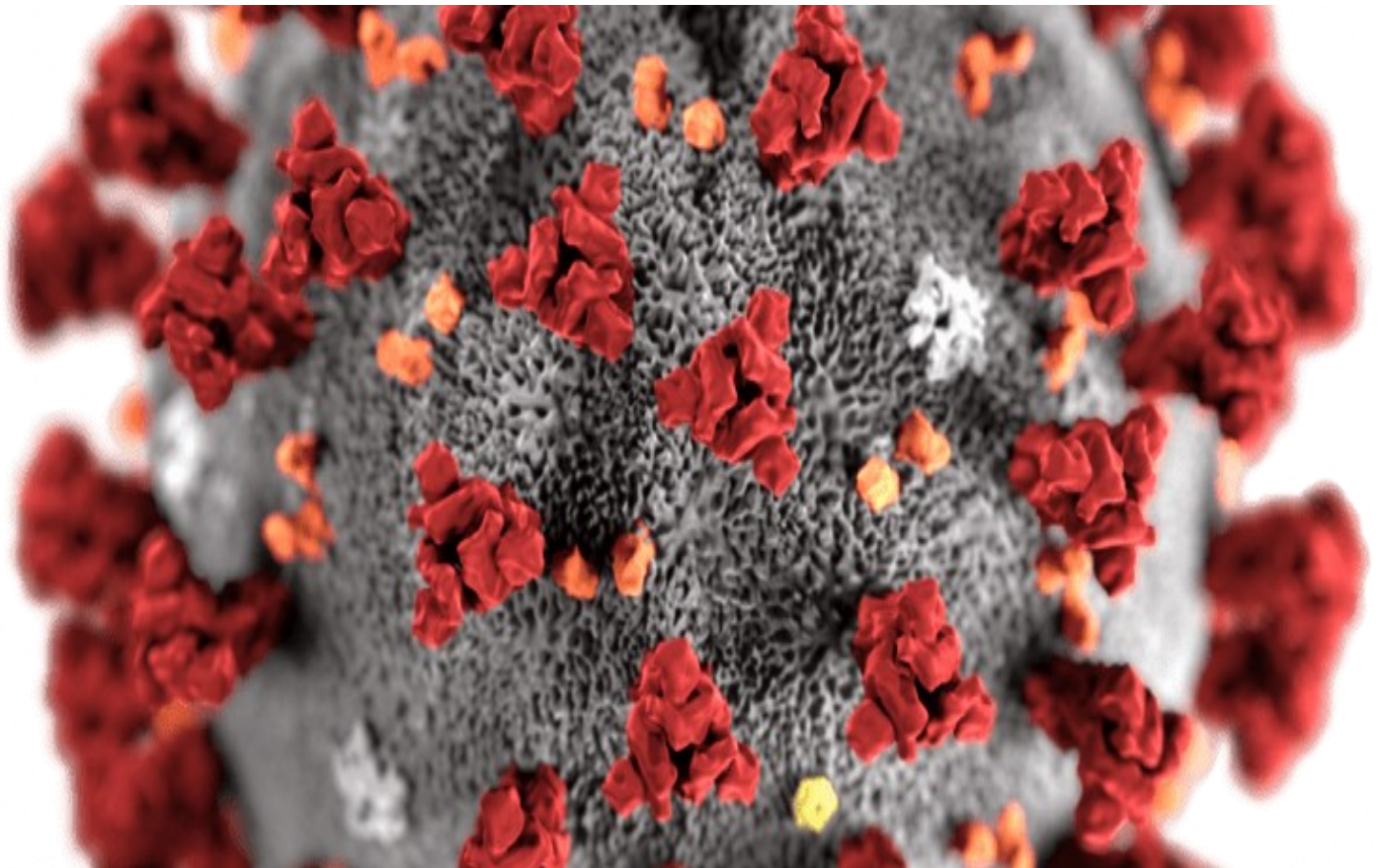


FUTURE IN OUR HANDS THE GAMBIA

NEWSLETTER

May 2020



SPECIAL ISSUE: COVID-19

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IMPACTS OF COVID 19 ON THE WORK OF THE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT UNIT



Kebba Jobe, and Kemo Kinteh, Program Officers from FIOHTG's School Development Unit answers some questions about the impacts of the Covid 19 on their work:

- How does covid-19 affect the unit you are working at?

The School Development Unit is affected like any other unit or institution around the world. We are tasked to conduct in-service teacher training on pedagogy to help teachers improve their knowledge and skills in the classroom as we know professional development is an ongoing [long term process] and our method require direct- physical contact but WHO guidelines and government regulations on the covid-19 has been an obstacle to this. As a result we could not proceed with our activities. This could be a setback for the unit in term of fund utilization and coverage.

-Which project is on hold because of this?

The projects that are on hold for the School Development Unit of FIOHTG due to the COVID-19 are: *The In-service teacher training on pedagogy, Keep Our Girls In School Project, the Education For All Campaign* and the proposed *World Children Prize project.*

- What are the consequences for the children that were going to benefit from these projects?

The consequences to the children who were benefiting from these projects is that there will be a very big variance between the children in the rural communities and the urban, because children in the urban have the access to the media when it comes to online classes like radio, television whilst the rural children more especially where SDU is operating do not have access leading to a break in their academic studies.

- And the future for the children, will their education be affected by the covid-19?

It is already manifested beyond all reasonable doubt that children's education are all at halt. This is because, all academic institutes are closed and no child could proceed to the next grade as a result of an incomplete syllabus.

A win over COVID 19 is something we really wish to see happen soon but it also gives us a proactive thinking for future emergencies.

Editor's Note: This interview was conducted by Jeannete, our Swedish intern.

Stay home, stay safe!



M&E OFFICER SAYS ALL ORGANISATIONS HAVE TO REPLAN AMIDST THE COVID-19



Annually and quarterly, sometimes monthly and weekly, organisations have to strategize their operations. For FIOHTG, units prepare annual and quarterly plans which are later translated into monthly plans. However, due to Covid-19 which has led to FIOHTG suspending most of its activities to adhere to national regulations, most of the plans have to be suspended. For example, the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit has to suspend its first and second quarterly monitoring because our monitoring system requires us to gather communities and hear from them. It is very participatory. Furthermore, keeping our staff from

exposure was another reason. We have to see whether the third quarterly monitoring can take place or not. What this means is that there may be only two monitoring exercises for the rest of the year. But apart from the scheduled monitoring exercises, most of our community training exercises aimed at helping communities develop monitoring skills in line with our system had to be cancelled for the first and second quarters.

Since the Monitoring Unit can be considered as an anchor to other programme units, naturally the unit cannot operate without other units performing. For example, we keep track of the activities of the other units. As the other units are not operating, there is no activity to track. The other units are also affected because with Covid-19, they have to hold on with their activities. For the School Development Unit, it has to wait for government to resume operation and then work. What this means is any rush to complete the syllabus by state authorities would mean FIOHTG had to rush to support teachers cope when schools resume. Meanwhile, the suspending of activities generally affects project schedules and the delivery of milestones. This is not just for FIOHTG but all other organisations. Management must strategise with donors, implementing parties and beneficiaries.

On the other hand, just as the World Health Organisation has warned, we do not know when exactly Covid-19 will disappear or whether it will stay like HIV, therefore organisations including FIOHTG may have to adapt/adopt new strategies to continue operating during Covid-19. For instance, we may have to shift some SDU Programmes either online or using the traditional media like Radios and Televisions. For instance, our regular teacher training may be taken online let say on zoom or Google classroom so that teachers can continue to learn the necessary skills. May be we can take the trainings to the television and radio and ask the teachers to follow. Tracking participation for this may be difficult and effectiveness may be difficult but we need to think along these lines. Similarly, the Community Development Unit may have to adopt a similar approach. However online platforms may not be feasible for many of the communities we serve where electricity is a challenge. One possible solution would be using the community radios.

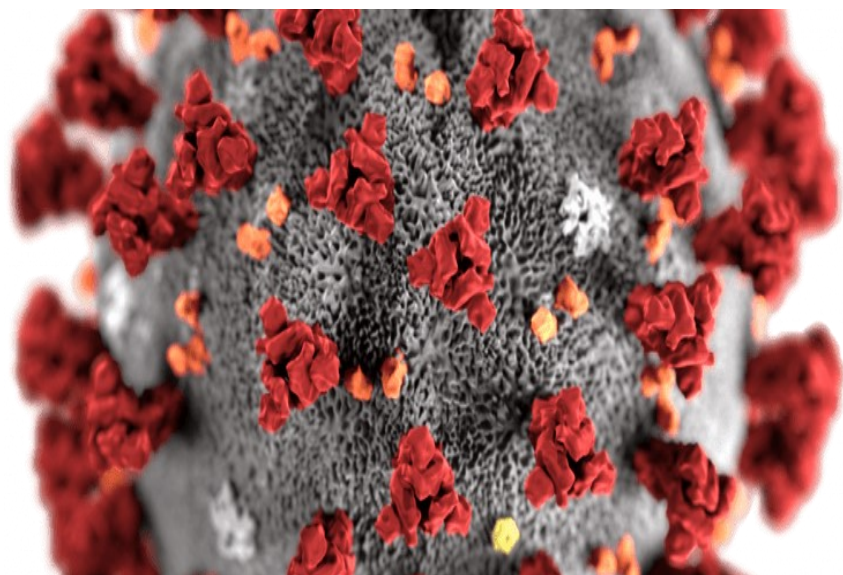
If Covid-19 is going to stay longer, I hope and pray that it does not, organisations have to continue operating but in a new way. However, if it goes away now, we can continue on the old routines. But at least some mode of operations may have to change. Finally, NGOs like FIOHTG must be prepared to address some basic needs in communities. Many families would be susceptible to poverty after this pandemic.

Muhammed Lenn, FIOHTG's M&E Officer

Stay home, stay safe!



THE GAMBIA CONFIRMS 25 COVID-19 CASES AT END OF MAY



The Gambia has recorded 25 confirmed Covid-19 cases as of 31st May 2020, according to the Ministry Health. The country has so far registered one death while 20 patients had been discharged from hospital after recovery. 3 of the 4 people currently hospitalized are males. Also, except one, all the remaining patients have imported the infection. The Ministry did also state that 19 persons have been released from quarantine while 15 have been released (65th Situational Report of the Epidemiology and Disease Control Unit, Ministry of Health of the Gambia).

The Gambia so far has registered few locally transmitted cases. As the country continues to register imported cases despite the closure of the borders, it is important that the state strengthens measures at non-formal entry points. The residents of the country must also help in this endeavor because most of the 600 KM long borders between the Gambia and Senegal is so porous. We must all work together to ensure that Covid-19 is defeated.

STAY AT HOME, STAY HOME

4 COVID-19 MYTHS

Myth 1: Antibiotics cure Coronavirus

Antibiotics cannot cure Covid-19 as it belongs to the Coronaviruses family. Although, the use of antibiotics may be recommended during complications arising from bacterial infection when one has the virus. It is not meant for treating the virus. Therefore, the use of antibiotics as a preventive means is useless says the World Health Organisation

Myth 2: Drinking Alcohol prevents or cures Covid-19

Drinking Alcohol does not prevent or cure Covid-19. In fact, drinking alcohol is dangerous and deadline.

Myth 3: If you can comfortably hold your breath for 10 seconds without coughing you don't have Covid-19.

This is another myth and it is not backed by any scientific evidence

Myth 4: Adding more pepper and salt to your food or soup prevents Covid-19

This is also a myth and it is not based on scientific evidence. However, a soup with pepper may soothe the throat when one has a sore throat.



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Do you have a story or an event for the next newsletter?

If so, we would like to hear from YOU!

Thank you for your support!