



# **Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JeCCDO)**

## **Emergency Intervention Project Proposal**

**Awareness raising on COVID19 and Emergency Nutrition,  
Hygiene & Financial Subsidy for Vulnerable Households**

**June 2020**



## 1 Introduction

At the end of this first half of 2020, cases of COVID-19 are showing **worrying signs of acceleration in Ethiopia**. The Ethiopian Government Ministry of Health are announcing positive case increases every day.

While all countries must cope as best as possible with COVID-19, for Ethiopia and countries like Ethiopia the same response mechanisms are not possible.

Reasons such as the following: **limited health infrastructure, limits to public awareness campaigns, high density dwellings, and hand to mouth subsistence** (which makes lockdowns not feasible), all make Ethiopians extremely vulnerable to COVID-19.

Without intervention now, the pandemic will take many lives and cripple the financial future of many families.

This Emergency Intervention Project Proposal by Jerusalem Children & Community Development Organisation (JeCCDO) aims to prevent the spread of the virus in the most vulnerable areas and address the critical socio-economic challenges the pandemic presents, in particular to women and children.

To this end, JeCCDO presents this Project Proposal to its esteemed partners to consider the urgency of the proposed intervention and the need for partners extended support. Support from partners will be critical enabling JeCCDO to save lives and contribute to manage the pandemic.

## 2 Proposed intervention areas

The proposed intervention areas include Hawassa, Bahir Dar, Debre Berhan, Bishoftu Towns, and Addis Ababa City Administration.

**This report in particular focuses on the critical challenges in Debre Berhan where JeCCDO works in partnership with EthiopiAid.**

Administratively, the town of Debre Berhan is divided into 9 urban Kebeles, of which Kebele 02, 06 and 08 are the special focus of both JeCCDO's original community development project and COVID-19 proposed emergency intervention. The residents of these Kebeles constitute large majority (42.2%) of the town's total population. Significant proportion (47.2%) of the households in these Kebeles is headed by women.

**These Kebeles are among the oldest and most impoverished parts of the town. Almost all citizens live below the poverty line** in peripheral and congested settlements. The majority work in the informal sector and their **lives depend on daily remunerations.**

In Debre Berhan, there is **high population density** coupled with high migration. The town too is critically challenged by **poor infrastructure and shortages of water.**

## 3 Socio economic effects of COVID-19

### 3.1 Economic impact and women headed households

Almost all target households earn **low, unsecure income from very small retail businesses and casual work** including daily labour and small petty trades, which cannot resist shocks that affect the economy at the macro or micro level.



These people were already at risk. Now their **already very limited source of income and opportunity to work have become significantly reduced** because of vast, regional job cuts in manufacturing (14,000 job cuts within weeks of COVID-19) and government advice for people to stay at home.

With so many households headed by women and because women are identified as vulnerable citizens for many other reasons to follow, supporting them at this critical time is essential. Support now will ensure survival through this pandemic and maintain the progress that has been brought about by JeCCDO's community development project so far. Without support now, there is a strong possibility women and families will be forced to return to their previous way of life of extreme poverty and begging on the streets.

### 3.2 No food security and falling nutrition

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, purchasing ability has already fallen negatively affecting the majority of the local population.

The poorest do not have the financial capability to stock food items for a week let alone a month. They are **not able to guarantee food for a day or two without going out to work** and to shop for food. Many women-headed households are already reporting exposure to food shortage and severe hunger. For mothers who breastfeed (about one-quarter of women in targeted groups), this now puts the **health of their baby in immediate risk of malnutrition and growth stunting**.

Food in markets has increased excessively and prices out those who still have some form of income. A shortage of pharmaceuticals is another growing challenge.

### 3.3 Shortages in water and lack of sanitation

One of the protection mechanisms against COVID-19 is washing hands and using hand sanitizer. Given the current water shortage in the country, even in Addis Ababa, JeCCDO's target groups face a critical challenge in accessing water pipelines. Even if there is a nearby facility, it is still difficult to regularly access water due to power shortages. **Most target households in Kebels 02, 06 and 08 have no access to tap water, toilets, or other basic needs.**

Moreover within a small compound (200meter square) several families live together, each renting a single room. Such **close living arrangements do not allow for social distancing** measures and this along with lack of basic hand washing measures means **any one outbreak will spread rapidly**.

In addition to the above, there is an increase in the cost of sanitary materials plus market shortages. This risks a health crisis amongst women. Reports are of **women forced to choose between food-related costs and sanitary material costs**, further deteriorating the health, hygiene & sanitation of women in particular.

### 3.4 Increases in gender based violence

As reported by the United Nations and development organisations, gender based violence (GBV) is rising once more. Debre Berhan fits the category for increases in GBV: poverty is rife, survival uncertain, women and men out of work, and family living is more strained by the day.

Reports from JeCCDO team and government bureaus are arising of **woman headed households being targets for domestic violence**. As their means to bring in income erodes, husbands who are also out of



work and feeling powerless are resorting to violence.

So too are **women and children on the street highly vulnerable** to physical violence, sexual violence and exploitation during crisis.

### 3.5 Inefficiencies in COVID-19 awareness raising and public engagement

Although there is awareness-raising aired through different media channel, there are still gaps in terms of unified messaging and reaching those with limited access to media outlets, including children out of school.

First there still remains misunderstanding and confusion around messaging. For example, the way some medias are communicating about quarantine has been frightening and misleading. According to a report from the Ministry of Health and Federal Police **quarantine is perceived by some people, including educated people, as another form of jail or imprisonment**. Consequently people are frightened about it and hide potential symptoms of COVID-19 as well as actively escape from being quarantined. As a result, this provides a chance for the virus to rapidly spread and affect many people.

Second much news is broadcasted by TV, radio, and billboards. **For economically disadvantaged community members, for households without access to electronics, or for those living on the streets, this news is not accessible. Billboards too are not the right medium for people who are unable to read.** This means great swathes of the public have a limited awareness about the pandemic and the precautions required.

Finally, schools are closed in the country to safeguard students from COVID-19, however it is observed that students and children are going outside their home and playing with peers. As such, awareness raising with parents to manage their children to stay at home needs to be undertaken.

## 4 Objective of the emergency intervention

Specific objectives of the emergency intervention include;

- Providing nutrition or food items for women, children and families facing starvation
- Increasing water access and hygiene opportunity for household and community
- Improving financial resilience for vulnerable women headed households
- Protecting and pre-empting Gender Based Violence against women and children
- Improving the awareness of the community towards COVID-19 and enabling community to take proactive and protective action

## 5 Proposed intervention strategies

### 5.1 Provision of emergency nutrition/food items

**Unconditional transfers of food items to stricken households.** Essential food items include edible oil, corn, flour, cereals, powder milk, etc. The average quantity of these items will be determined based on the number of household members.

**Stand-in and stock locally prepared food.** Prepare locally-made, long-lasting meals for segments of the community with total lack of income and high-risk household members, for example mothers with babies. One example is to prepare sundried and crushed Injera (commonly used Ethiopian bread) which is locally



known as “Dirkosh” that can be semi powdered, packed and distributed.

## 5.2 Increased water access and hygiene items

At a household level packages of **soap, hand sanitizers and sanitary materials** will be distributed per family member per household.

At a community level, JeCCDO with local **community organisations will establish community hand washing points for those without ready access to water** from the pipelines plus purchase and install reservoir containers with a capacity of about 400-600 volume/litres next to pipeline access points to ensure continual availability of water irrespective of power shortages.

## 5.3 Subsidize rent, business & basic costs for those in greatest need

This will cover one or more of a) house rent, b) trade supplies to keep women’s small businesses afloat when profits are down, or c) everyday food supplies.

For b) trade supplies, this is so women have a means for income generations when the economy recovers.

## 5.4 Protecting target groups from Gender Based Violence and preventing cases

JeCCDO, in collaboration with respective government bureaus and offices, proposes to open **emergency/temporary shelters** and provide for basic needs for women and children experiencing violence or on the street. Given that the schools are currently closed, these school compounds and classrooms will serve as a temporary shelter until the schools re-open.

It is also pivotal to pre-empt this violence from occurring. JeCCDO will muster and train **more volunteers and case workers to undertake follow-ups of target groups** to report and take an immediate action upon any susceptible signs of GBV.

## 5.5 Community Covid-19 awareness and protective action

Awareness of Covid-19, how it is spread and what behavior is most effective in limiting the spread of the virus is a critical strategy.

**Work with existing local FM and/or radio station to address with unified messaging** the protection and safety mechanisms as well as key quarantine and pandemic myths.

Work with existing community case workers and volunteers who have **established rapport and high level of trust with local people to share public safety information**. Where possible, contact will be made through the use of mobile phones but house visits safely undertaken will be needed as well. Workers can serve as para counselors for wellbeing support as well as a source of reliable information. More volunteers will need to be recruited, trained and linked up with local resources and government bureaus.

Start an awareness outreach program for those without electronic media and those on the streets through making use of JeCCDO’s **available vehicles and amplifier/loudspeakers to air key messages** across the streets and villages.