

MAKERERE



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Complementary approaches to strengthen covid-19 preventive measures among fishing community

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About the project

Small pelagic fishes e.g. Mukene are harvested using siene netting. The fishing operation is strenuous, hence requires at least three or four persons per boat to effectively haul the net. A standard fishing boat is divided into three compartments. The middle section of 1.5 to 2.0 metres long, used by crew for hauling activities. In view of the COVID-19 preventive measures, the crew cannot maintain social distancing. Additionally, fishing crew frequently abscond and are joined by new members, usually with unknown medical history, increases the risk of transmitting COVID-19. Upon return to the landing sites, the fishing crew interact with a crowd of other actors (processors, boatowners and traders), thus increase risk of COVID-19 transmission and spread. This project therefore, a) developed a two-crew-operated fish hauling system (MAKHAUL), b) set-up and operationalized the village COVID-19 taskforce, c) established linkages between district, subcounty and village taskforces and d) strengthened village COVID-19 committees by provision of handwashing facilities and training as complimentary approaches to enhance compliance to COVID-19 preventive measures. The project also recommended i) adoption of batch arrivals of fishing-boats and staggered fish auctioning, ii) demarcation of fish processing (drying) areas and iii) adoption of virtue (online) fish transactions. For sustainability, the project recommended; a) private sector engagement to scale-up MAKHAUL and b) the district should allocate a certain percentage of the 25% revenue generated to remain at the landing site to facilitate COVID-19 activities. The project activities were implemented at Nkombwe Landing site in Ngogwe Sub-county, Buikwe district and Wanseko Landing site in Kigwera sub-county, Buliisa District between July and November 2020.

2. Value addition of the project (solution the project is contributing)

1. The MAKHAUL technology ensured effective social distance between fishing crew – a contribution to reducing transmission and spread of COVID-19.
2. The technology also increased the efficiency of hauling, catching the required quantities of fish in a short time. The shortened fishing time also allowed fishers ample time to rest and return to the landing site.
3. The framework comprising of clear and documented terms of reference and respective roles of taskforce members ensured effective operationalization of village COVID-19 committees with tangible outputs. Within this framework, a representative from subcounty taskforce was nominated on the village taskforce–as conduit for information exchange between taskforces and provision technical backstopping.
4. Empowered village COVID-19 taskforce with foot-operated handwashing facilities and provision of valuable information through training reinforces the capacity committee members to support community compliance
5. Linkages between taskforces at different levels were strengthened

3. Good practices

The project instilled the following practices among the stakeholders:

1. Ease dissembling of the MAKHAUL system by the fishing crew and storage in dry place to minimize rusting of and for safety
2. Supervision and provision of security of the COVID-19 facilities procured at the landing site by a designated committee member of the taskforce.
3. Staggering of fish auctioning activities by the beach coordination units and the fisheries office
4. Feedback within the members of taskforce – weekly meetings and with other taskforces at different levels

4. Success stories (If applicable and documented)

- a) The formation of a functional village COVID-19 taskforce at Wanseko and Nkombwe level with clear terms of reference.
- b) The communities uploaded the formation of the village COVID-19 taskforce
- c) Appreciation of the MAKHAUL technology by the boatowners and fishers

5. Project and community testimonies (Testimonies from those engaged by the project team) (If applicable)

- Foot-operated handwashing station: *this washing station is the only one of the kinds, we shall endeavor to keep it* – Chairperson - Wanseko Village COVID-19 taskforce.
- Project result sharing session: *This is one of the few teams to share project results with the community* - village members, Kigwera Subcounty Chairperon Wanseko
- Handwashing: *Thank you for training us how to wash hands, we have been wetting our hands in water and think we are clean* – trainee at Nkombwe. *We have just been washing one hand* - trainee in Wanseko

- MAKHAUL: *This technology is very good and it will ease our work” - Fishers; We have been suffering with getting and maintaining workers, but with this machine, you look for one person and maintain on worker” - Boatowner.*
- Establishment and training to Village taskforces to contribute to managing pandemic affairs at landing site: *The district has been planning to set-up village committees but have not found money. This project is timely to work with us to set-up committees at least at one village – CAO Buliisa*

7. Engagement pictures

8. Lessons learnt

- Prior communication to stakeholder facilitates implementation of projects and fulltime involvement of communities from inception enhanced adoption.
- Research team should be prepared and flexible for eventualities