

Support, solidarity, and uninterrupted support: Batonga's COVID19 strategy in Benin

March 30, 2020

Dear donors and supporters,

Since before the first case of COVID19 was reported in Benin, Batonga has been working tirelessly to equip the communities and girls we serve with the information and support they need to face this pandemic.

Our strategy is built around three objectives: safety and protection for all (short and medium term), ensuring solidarity and uninterrupted support (medium-term), and impactful strategy for a changed context (medium and long term).



1. SAFETY AND PROTECTION FOR ALL

Our first objective is to make sure that every member of the Batonga family is safe and well prepared for the physical, emotional and mental realities of this pandemic. Activities have focused on:

- ensuring all staff have access to information & knowledge about how to prevent transmission, work in this new context, and keep safe. We have printed, plastified and shared informational posters in all 15 communities in which we work, as well as distributed a Batonga Mentor COVID19 Handbook with all information needed to support community during pandemic. We have hosted community discussions about COV19 and are pursuing a partnership with local radio to deliver awareness raising messages throughout the next few weeks.
- ensure women-led entrepreneurs trained by Batonga can produce antibacterial soaps in a number of communities we serve. Several soap businesses were launched in the past two years with Batonga's support. We will be conducting several training of trainers in small groups to ensure Batonga mentors covering all villages know how to produce this much needed commodity. Mentors will help distribute soap to most in need families and girls.



Community talks around Batonga COVID19 posters last week.

2. SOLIDARITY AND UNDISRUPTED SUPPORT



Our second objective is to ensure that our solidarity networks continue to be effective and that Batonga provides uninterrupted support in new forms. Mainly, this means:

- supporting our mentors as they lead community response, with both coordination and resources. We will be creating and supporting "accountability groups" that will enable mentors to conduct home visits with the hardest to reach girls, deliver antibacterial soap to families, and provide much needed counseling and mentoring to girls.
- develop radio content for a weekly radio show focused on building the resiliency skills and emotional well being of our target audience. We will be looking at making some of our key lessons available in other format as well in the next few weeks.



Women-led businesses like this one will be scaling up their production of antibacterial soap with the support of Batonga, so all girls and their families can have access to this important product.



3. IMPACTFUL STRATEGY FOR A CHANGED CONTEXT

Our third objective is to come up with an alternative program model to our clubs, in the case clubs cannot resume for a number of months.

We will be:

- working with local leaders and our Batonga Mentors' network to develop a six month plan offering a number of services to girls and young women.
- partnering with local institutions such as the health center and others to ensure a holistic approach to mitigating COVID19 in the communities we serve.
- supporting the women-led businesses we have helped create and grow through safe strategies that aim at ensuring business stability during these uncertain times.

For more information about Batonga's COVID19 response and strategy, please email emilybove@batongafoundation.org

www.batongafoundation.org

