

COVID-19 FUND RAISING PROJECT

As Ghana recorded its first two cases of COVID-19 on 12th March 2020, the government imposed a ban on all public gathering for four weeks starting Monday, 16th March 2020¹. With the exponential increase in positive cases within a short period due to community spread from visitors and returning travelers, the President imposed a two-week partial lockdown, starting 30th March 2020, of four identified hotspot cities – Greater Accra, Kasoa, Tema and Greater Kumasi. This was a measure to prevent the spread of the virus and help with contact tracing of people who have been in contact with positive cases. The lockdown was extended to another week beginning 13th March, 2020 with possible review². The World Health Organization has warned Africa could be the next epicenter, with the virus potentially killing at least 300,000 people³. As of 22nd April, 2020 Ghana, had recorded 1154 cases⁴, being the highest in the West Africa sub-region.

Since the beginning of the lockdown, various vulnerable groups have called on the government to provide essential services like food, water, protective gears and toiletries as these communities do not have the resources to provide such items for themselves and their families. Over the past three weeks, the government's response to addressing these needs has been abysmal and uncoordinated.

LGBTIQ+ people who are unemployed, underemployed, or lost employment due to the pandemic stay in homophobic and transphobic home. Moreover, LGBTQIA+ people living with HIV (PLs) have been greatly affected by this pandemic. With the already pervasive stigma, discrimination and rejection LGBTIQ+ people by the government and in society generally, there is no way they will be targeted as a vulnerable group to receive any sort of support from government.

Although the President lifted the lockdown of hotspot cities on 19th of April 2020, many LGBTQIA+ small business owners and daily wage earners who are breadwinners had lost their jobs due to the lock down, social distancing and ban on public gathering, are now struggling to meet their basic needs as their available resources are depleting.

Due to this, Solace Initiative in May 2020 embarked on an online fundraising exercise to provide support in the form of nose mask, hand sanitizers and basic toiletries and groceries for vulnerable LGBTQIA+ persons in the country.

Through our efforts, we have raised \$1070 in funds received as of 23rd June, 2020. We have been able to use these funds to support sixty (60) vulnerable LGBTQIA+ persons within Accra (Greater Accra Region) and Kasoa (Central Region) with nose mask, hand sanitizers, groceries and toiletries. Priority was given to Lesbian single mothers, LGBTQIA+, PLHIV (Persons living with HIV) and Refugees who had lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-51904164>

² <https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cnx753jeijlt/ghana>

³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-52323375>

⁴ www.ghanahealthservice.org

The fundraising exercises is still ongoing and we are hoping to raise more funds above our target to assist more LGBTIQ+ persons who are continuously affected by the pandemic.

We want to use this opportunity to say **THANK YOU** to all who have donated and also appreciate those who are yet to donate towards this cause of giving.