

KEDOUGOU, FIGHTING FOR RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

KEDOUGOU, LUCHANDO POR LA RESILIENCIA ANTE LA COVID-19

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1. Background

The virus was confirmed to have reached Senegal on 2 March 2020, when the country reported a case of COVID-19 in a foreign visitor through its early warning system.

On 5 March 2020, the Kedougou Health District convened an emergency meeting to set up its COVID-19 response and management committee. It was decided to draw up a pandemic preparedness plan modelled on that of the National Committee for the Management of Epidemics (CNGE).

The response plan resulted in the launch of several training, communication, community engagement, equipment installation, infection prevention and control, and monitoring/evaluation programmes, as well as control measures at the point of entry.

Since the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Kedougou region has opted for an inclusive and multisectoral response with the launch of numerous preventive actions.

The situation remained under control until 23 May 2020, when the district of Kedougou recorded its first case of COVID-19, in a Senegalese young man who had returned from Burkina Faso by motorbike on 17 May 2020, via a village at the Senegalese border. The patient was declared cured after ten days of treatment and there have been no positive cases in the region since then. However, the risk remains real due to the presence of epidemic foci in many parts of the country, the reopening of places of worship, schools and businesses and the easing of containment measures, including the resumption of inter-regional transport.

II. Actions taken as part of the covid-19 response

Actions launched as part of the management of COVID-19
Crisis unit established at the district level
Local development committee dedicated to COVID-19 set up at the district level
Local development committee dedicated to COVID-19 set up at the neighbourhood level
Local radio ad campaign on COVID-19 prevention
COVID-19 awareness ads broadcast on local cable TV channels
Advocacy meeting held with the Education and Training Inspectorate to discuss holding life lessons on COVID-19 in schools
Training of school principals and representatives of the local press on COVID-19
Life lessons held in schools and Koranic schools
Awareness-raising visit on COVID-19 prevention held with hotel and hostel personnel
Poster campaign in public buildings
Training of all nurses and midwives in the public and private sectors on COVID-19
Creation and training of a watch and alert committee for COVID-19 prevention, and guide to community engagement
Training of community health stakeholders
Training of community leaders on COVID-19 prevention
Awareness-raising caravans organised in villages
Training of firefighting personnel
Reporting and investigation of community alerts
Training of members of the regional hygiene brigade
Training of law enforcement personnel
Social rallies on COVID-19 organised at garages, markets and public works companies
Training of Red Cross staff and youth association personnel on COVID-19
Local handwashing facilities manufactured for the use of households
COVID-19 awareness-raising visits conducted by hygiene officers in restaurants and other meeting places
ThermoFlash and handwashing facilities installed in border police stations in Fongolimbi and Ségou
Health posts equipped with ThermoFlash systems, surgical masks, FFP2 masks, gloves; handwashing facilities, alcohol-based hand sanitizer and soap
Inbound travellers subjected to quarantine and daily monitoring
Religious leaders and traditional medicine practitioners given guidance on community engagement
Handwashing facilities installed in large mosques and observance of social distancing

III. Strong points of the response

- Establishment of a response and epidemic management unit
- Development and implementation of the response plan
- Functionality of the integrated disease surveillance and response system at the community level
- Implementation of awareness-raising activities at all levels
- Multisectoral approach adopted in the fight against COVID-19 (health; Security and Defence forces; education and other sectors)
- Support from technical financial partners in the purchase of equipment
- Training of community health stakeholders and all doctors, nurses and midwives
- Installation and training of monitoring and alert committees at the village and neighbourhood level
- Provision of protective equipment and materials at health posts

IV. Weaknesses of the response

- No dedicated emergency fund
- Insufficient monitoring of entry points
- Inadequate waste management system
- Providers not trained in the management of malnutrition in the context of COVID-19
- No policy for tracking, tracing and treating health workers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

“The virus isn’t going anywhere, but together, we will prevail”.

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