

REPORT ON ESWATINI CATHOLIC NURSES' GUILD COVID-19 ACTIVITIES

The eSwatini Catholic Nurses' Guild did not sit and relax since the pandemic started. The activities started with St. Theresa's Clinic which geared itself for the pandemic. All the staff were trained on COVID-19, and plans were made to have all persons (staff, patients and visitors) going through clinic screened. This was to ensure that staff are protected from getting infected especially when they are at work, and anyone coming through the facility was also protected. Support in training was received from the Ministry of Health, mother Hospital (Good Shepherd Mission Hospital), other partners and the office of the Bishop who mobilized funding for PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) from the Italian Bishops which were distributed to all Catholic health facilities in the country. This made the activities in the clinic possible as there were the necessary equipments. To date, none among the staff at St. Theresa's Clinic got infected by COVID-19 virus.

The Guild also applied for funding to sensitize and disseminate health information to the hard to reach areas in the rural communities. A total of 20 young people from Parishes in areas that reported high numbers of COVID-19 infections in the country, were trained to be champions in the dissemination of health information in their communities, and some were from refugee camps. The project was launched by His Excellency the Bishop of Diocese of Manzini, Bishop Jose Ponce de Leon. They moved from door to door and used forums/gatherings within the communities (Community meetings, during Mass, and other church denominations gatherings). The youth did a good job as they also did a skills transfer by training their peers as well, and they also identified needy families in their communities who had no access to general health information because they had no radio. The families were supplied with portable radios so that they can listen to health education and information from the Ministry of Health and other partners. This also benefited the school-going children who were not attending school because of the pandemic. Since lessons were continuing over the national radio station, they also had an opportunity have access to those lessons. This project saw a total of 150 families benefiting the radios which will serve as source of more health information and the school children listening to lessons broadcasted live through the local radio station.



Figure 1: His Excellency the Bishop Jose Luis Ponce de Leon presenting the radio to one of the beneficiaries during the launch



Figure 2: Some of the youth, the Champions, during the launch of the project



Figure 3: His Excellency the Bishop demonstrating how the radio is used



Figure 4: The youth during their final meeting with the Guild Executive at the end of the project



Figure 5: International President, Dr. KhosiMthethwa, delivering parting shots to the youth during the final meeting

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