

SEND West Africa Online COVID-19 Situation Update



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We at SEND West Africa believe humanity's most potent weapons against COVID19 are communication, information, and learning. Humanity's ability to design, collect and disseminate information showcasing policies, programs, best practices, failures, and challenges will increase our collective knowledge and skills to identify, attack, and route out COVID-19 from our communities. COVID19 has remained elusive precisely because of humanity's limited knowledge and understanding of its modus operandi.

This online publication is among SEND West Africa's modest contributions to this important and urgent task of informing, educating and mobilizing the global community against COVID-19. Our mission for the publication is to **advocate increased learning and actions to**

mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The update will seek to influence policymakers, researchers, frontline health staff, civil society, and COVID19 activists interested in and working in Africa, particularly in West Africa. The publication will disseminate information showcasing effective policies and management strategies as well as best practices in combating COVID-19.

The SEND West Africa COVID 19 Update will consist of three broad themes: **State, Public and Community Responses**. The section on state responses will focus on national and strategic policies, programs or measures adopted by the government to promote effective prevention and management of COVID-19. In the public response column, actions by government agencies against the spread of COVID-19 will be presented. Also, the public response section will highlight the implications, as well as, the reactions of different groups to policies and actions of government agencies.

Influential groups and key national stakeholders such as faith-based organizations, media houses, and journalists, civil society organizations, private sector bodies and traditional authorities' activities to prevent COVID19 will be covered in this section. The major sources of information for both sections will be newspapers and online publications in Ghana and Sierra Leone.

On the other hand, the community responses will be stories and experiences collected by SEND Ghana's Focal NGOs in the northern, middle and southern belts; and in the case of Sierra Leone, Women in Governance Networks in Kailahun, Kenema, and Kono Districts. These stories will showcase community compliance and experiences in preventing the spread of the COVID-19. The last section will present the opinions of SEND staff about COVID-19 and its implications for society and vulnerable groups in particular. Through these stories, SEND and its community allies' contributions to the prevention of COVID-19 in West Africa will be shared with our readers and development partners.

As we launch the maiden edition, the good news is that Sierra Leone has **not recorded a confirmed COVID-19 case while 97 %** of the confirmed patients in Ghana are nationals and foreigners who recently traveled from Europe, China, Middle East or the United States. However, the leadership of both countries is not taking chances. Sierra Leone has declared a one-year state of emergency, and Ghana has put under lockdown effective March 30, for 14 days, Accra, Kumasi, and Tema, the epicenter of the positive cases. **State of emergency and lockdowns** are among the best practices adopted elsewhere to prevent the virus from spreading. We applaud both governments and their leadership for being proactive.

NB: Our next publication will feature news articles/stories from SEND Sierra Leon and Community responses from our grassroots focal NGOs.