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# STORIES FROM THE COVID-19 2021





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The outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to adversely impact all socio-economic sectors. Worldwide, countries are battling with high rates of morbidity and mortality, unprecedented economic contraction, and recession. Productivity and demand for goods and services are on the decrease leading to the COVID-19 induced de-industrialization. In Southern Africa, over 80% of the active workforce depend on the informal economy for their livelihood, as cross border traders, vendors, and small-scale informal manufacturers. The long-term closure of borders and differentiated approaches of opening the borders has harmed cross border trade.

This publication provides a summary given in short stories of how cross border traders, families of miners and women in communities have been navigating and overcoming the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The partners covered in the stories include the Lesotho Cross Border Traders Association, BoHiKZN, Botswana Labour Migrants Association, Association of Mozambique Miners, Sinqobile Kingdom Empowerment Centre and Cross Border Traders Association of Malawi.

# SUPPORTING CROSS BORDER TRADERS IN LESOTHO

# IMPACT STORY 1: SUPPORTING CROSS BORDER TRADERS IN LESOTHO

## Introduction & Project Background

The Lesotho Cross Border Traders Association (CCBTAL) and Southern Africa Cross Border Traders Association (SACBTA) recognises the irrefutable fact that the global COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented economic crisis in many of its member countries. Governments everywhere are faced with innumerable pressing policy demands on how they can safeguard their most vulnerable citizens during the crisis and simultaneously deal with the economic impacts.

Lesotho is a landlocked country and conducts significant trade with South Africa; the closure of the borders due to COVID-19 left the cross border traders entirely vulnerable and with limited opportunity to generate income. It was difficult for the traders to carry on with their normal trade activities. To gain an understanding of the nature of the situation, and the needs of the traders, a survey was conducted to gather the required data.

The COVID-19 Economic Impact Surveys was a joint initiative by Lesotho Cross Border Traders Association (CCBTAL) and Southern Africa Cross Border Traders Association (SACBTA), with the support of Southern African Trust in partnership with the Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO). One of the activities of the project was to collect data on the economic impact of COVID-19 on the informal cross border traders in Lesotho. The survey aimed at collecting data on three main aspects, including:

- Institutional Health Assessment for CCBATL and its national affiliates,
- Membership Survey to update the membership database for effective communication especially to the various categories of traders, women, youth, and men.
- Emergency Needs Assessment to provide information on how traders can better navigate the new border situations, assessing whether traders can do business without having to cross the borders.

## Status Quo /Progress Milestones

Two consultative meetings were conducted in the two areas, namely Ha- Pita and Qoaling. 107 people participated in the survey. A total budget of R 30,000 was reported to have been spent on the project. These covered fuel, communication, lunch and refreshments, conferencing venues as well as bank charges.



## Key Findings

- The participants shared their views on the need for strengthened public health surveillance;
- To provide further research support on the survey;
- Government needs to implement electronic cash transfer programmes;
- Governments should allow easier movements at the border posts providing a safe environment;
- Government and its agents need to provide support to traders in having easier access to the COVID-19 vaccine;



- There is a need for the cross border traders to join the CBTA organisation, to create visibility, more support and access to services to support cross border traders;
- Capacity building on using Information Technology, to aid the transition to using digital platforms and paperless systems being implemented at the border';
- There is a strong need for collaboration between SACBTA partners for the purpose of coordination among cross border traders to access relevant information on new border regulations or new measures being introduced, which could hinder or advance their trade.

## Key Challenges

The following key challenges were reported by participants at the time of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Restrictions on the borders (like COVID-19 certificates) and the cost of the COVID-19 certificate R1 300.00 with regards to affordability
- Lack of transportation due to limited number of travellers
- Perishing goods due to bad business
- Expensive goods
- Lack of capacity
- Emotional trauma caused by COVID-19
- There is a need for cash transfer programmes to make things easier in these difficult COVID-19 times.
- Not having a globalized market mindset. Despite the notion that we live in an interdependent globalized economy, situations like the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed the vulnerabilities and negative impacts of closing geographical borders. Countries have resorted to prioritising their own needs and leaning hard on



multinationals to function nationally for survival in their own homelands. Government needs to open up for innovation and creativity on self-reliance, especially on basic commodities and developing their markets.

- Not identifying the right platform, data, and technology: it is argued that many “large players” have access to technology due to their deep pockets. While that is true, many traditional businesses have demonstrated the value of platform thinking whereby they build an ecosystem for their customers to connect their needs, despite dissimilar services.
- Not thinking about the future in a different way: it is becoming apparent that business leaders who believe things will return to “business as usual” are at a huge disadvantage. COVID-19 will have permanent consequences on the future of every type of company in every type of industry. While many leaders talk about future, very few do something truly effective about it. It is essential that futuristic thinking be adopted by business leaders.
- Government and its agencies, including NGOs, should assist in creating the necessary awareness on food hygiene and personal training among traders. This is essential in combating COVID-19 spread among traders.



# **GIRLS SPEAK IN KWAZULU NATAL! A VOICE FOR CHANGE**

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## IMPACT STORY 2: GIRLS SPEAK IN KWAZULU NATAL! A VOICE FOR CHANGE

### Introduction & Project Background

BohiKZN was established in 2004. The organisation implemented the Rapid Response Project which aimed at providing psychosocial support for women and girls. The programme was designed with the girl-child in mind, to support them through the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic. COVID-19 lockdown resulted in travel bans and closure of schools which affected most girls as they were left with no access to the school support system. Furthermore, most of the girls were confined in abusive homes with several families failing to provide basic commodities like food and adequate shelter. It is with this background that BohiKZN utilised the COVID-19 relief funding it received to mobilise women's organisations at community level to work towards ensuring that public health education messages on risk and prevention strategies, were reached by all women and girls through the use of community radio and social media technology. Bulky text messages were also utilised to reach out to participants in their HIV/AIDS prevention programme.

### Status Quo

The organisation successfully held three meetings to facilitate and train 35 girls on their rights and also to have a voice on issues that affect them. A march was well conducted in collaboration with Mufolozu TVET College with the thrust to create awareness of the plight of Gender Based Violence.

### Progress Story

Training of girls on expressing their rights and voice on issues directly linked to them was successfully implemented. Questionnaires were disbursed to infer from school-going girls their prevailing home atmosphere and possible lockdown effects on their life. Anxiety and stress were nominated as the key parameter with 70% of the girls willing to share their experiences. These support sessions came as a relief ticket to leave their homes during lockdown, giving them excitement and satisfaction as they shared and related with their challenges and further acquired advice on resolving the ordeal.

Furthermore, the organisation managed to spearhead a march in partnership with Mufolozu TVET College, which aimed at inciting community awareness on fighting against GBV. Guest Speakers were invited on Mandela Day to inspire young girls within the community on how to take care of their bodies and build their confidence. Beneficiaries of the BohiKZN mentorship programme shared their experiences on the impact of the programme on their personal lives. Sanitary towels and soap were also distributed to the girl attendees at this event.

The ultimate goal of the organisation was to assist victims experiencing GBV, however funding has been flagged as the limiting factor to accomplish the desired goal. The aim is to deliver training in order to create a pool of readily available community trainers that can promptly provide required services. The quest of the organisation is further oriented on creation of a communication channel to train and facilitate survivors on how to respond when faced with danger. It has so far identified the rural areas of Klapmuts, Dunoos, Kraaifontein, Mitchells Plain, Musipumelele, Goodwood and Wynberg as their target areas.

## Key Milestones

- The project managed to provide girls with a safe platform to express themselves without fear of being stigmatized or judged.
- Beneficiaries of the project were awarded the opportunity to set new goals for their lives which resulted in some school dropouts resuming school.
- Many parents appreciated the programme as a safety net for their girls from drug use, relenting to peer pressure and early teenage pregnancy.
- The project managed to restore confidence and guided participants to make informed choices about their lives, an impact clearly seen in a transformation in one young woman's life who intended to commit suicide.
- The campaign increased visibility and advocacy on GBV, as well as granting opportunities for young people to socialize as they worked together on the campaign.

## Project Efficiency

- Widespread advocacy on GBV reaching most targeted girls through social media platforms;
- Project efficacy on responding to real time COVID- 19 challenges.

## Project Effectiveness

- Girls and women were awarded a platform to tell their stories, through songs and poems which brought shared experience to assist in resolving current challenges, including COVID-19 related matters;
- Some girls managed to set new goals for their lives, which resulted in some school dropouts resuming school;
- The programme acted as a safety net for the girls to escape stigma and shame, which could push them towards undesirable activities.

## Project Relevancy

- Considering current COVID-19 restrictions, the GBV support sessions provided the girls with relevant information to aid decision making, to curb the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 restrictions;
- Social media has been the relevant platform for larger reach on advocacy and addressing the current challenges on GBV.

## Project Sustainability

- WhatsApp groups created can go a long way to continuously empower girls with shared experiences and mitigation measures when faced with GBV challenges;
- A plan to train trainers affords a viable platform for continuous engagement, hence facilitating quicker solutions to address GBV challenges at community level.



## Key Challenges

- Delays on recruitment of the girls into the programme, stemming from necessary consent for minors from for guardians.
- Deferrals on acquiring quotations due to closure of accommodation facilities during COVID-19 lockdown.
- Tracking challenges on WhatsApp platforms, since some participants logged in would not participate or stay through the entire session.
- Misuse of data provided in advance to beneficiaries.
- Inadequate data funds as the programme gained popularity in the community.
- Continuous reports of abuse from some guardians, despite the online support BohiKZN provided.

## Lessons Learnt

- BohiKZN is a well-reputed organisation, which reassured parents allowing their girls to attend the project sessions, despite fears of letting their girls out during lockdown.
- It is critical to comprehensively plan and design the project in order to appropriate its costs holistically to avoid shortages and surprises.
- Plan for flexible designs in project implementation where possible, to enable prompt resolution of challenges on the ground.

## Mitigation Measures

- BohiKZN provided additional funding to the project, in addition to the funds received from Gender Links. This was because they had to offer food parcels to some of the guardians, provide sanitary towels, masks, sanitizers and thermometers for the team leaders. To overcome this, they requested other partners like the Department of Social Services to assist with more funding.



## HELP FOR MINERS & FAMILIES IN BOTSWANA

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## IMPACT STORY 3: HELP FOR MINERS & FAMILIES IN BOTSWANA

### Introduction and Project Background

BoLAMA - Botswana Labour Migrants Association is a non-profit community organisation that advocates for the rights of former migrant mineworkers (founded from the Silicosis Regional Class Suit Project undertaken by DITSHWANELO - the Botswana Centre for Human Rights). The mandate of its existence is to instil a human rights approach in response to persons who are victims of previous mining undertakings. Some of the channels used to promote the rights of victims include human rights advocacy, capacity building, awareness campaigns and service provision to restore dignity to the victims. BoLAMA was a beneficiary of the SAMA COVID-19 Emergency Grant that aimed at assisting those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, through conducting membership surveys and emergency needs surveys among mining communities. The project distributed free COVID-19 relief packages to the victims, including the vulnerable BoLAMA members. This report gives an overview of the impact story realised through the Emergency Grant intervention. An account of the overall activities implemented, including the challenges and mitigation measures considered, have been iterated below.

### Status Quo

All of the one hundred BoLAMA beneficiaries nominated for the Emergency Grant received food parcels and COVID-19 relief utilities. Considering that the budget could only cater for a specific number of beneficiaries, not all members were assisted. It is noted that there are more needy members that still hope for a chance of the same assistance.

### PROGRESS STORY

Project beneficiaries were sourced from the BoLAMA ex-miners database who were most vulnerable and most affected by the pandemic. Two hundred people were selected from the database and assessed, of which 100 needy members were shortlisted. Based on this, quotations were sourced, and food hampers were purchased and distributed according to the selected list. A pandemic care pack which included sanitizers, gloves and masks formed part of the hampers. Fifty COVID-19 hampers were distributed to their recipients and the remaining 50 hampers were entrusted to focal people to distribute to satellite offices for members far from the distribution centre.

### Key Milestones

- Amid the outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic, many members are struggling, so this project presented some relief and hope to members, which is aligned to the objectives and mission of the organisation.
- The organisation has a robust focal team that represent the satellite offices that made it possible to vet members qualifying for the COVID-19 hampers.

#### Project Efficiency

- Project was able to respond in real time to the COVID-19 challenges to vulnerable ex-miners.



## Project Effectiveness

- Project managed to meet the needs of the BoLAMA members, especially in sanity restoration to ex-mine workers, in relation to COVID-19 challenges.

## Project Relevance

- Considering current COVID-19 restrictions, providing food parcels met the basic needs of the BoLAMA members.

## Project Sustainability

- Such short-term interventions enable members to trust the organisation's capacity to consistently fight for the members' human rights and wellness.

## Key Challenges

The limited funds presented an obstacle, as the budget only afforded the opportunity to distribute 100 hampers to BoLAMA members. There is still a vast membership who direly need support.

## Lessons Learnt

More funding is needed to appropriately assist in relieving BoLAMA members of pressing COVID-19 challenges. The membership will be grateful if more budget can be provided to attend to more members.





## IMPACT STORY 4: Sinqobile Kingdom Empowerment Centre (SKEC)

### Introduction and Project Background

Sinqobile Kingdom Empowerment Centre (SKEC) is a non-profit organisation established in 2014 that offer empowerment programmes and reach communities through outreach, projects and programmes. The aim is to facilitate communities to acquire skills development, economic development, family restoration, youth empowerment, and child development. Simultaneously, the organisation seeks to address various social ills such as poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, prostitution, drug/alcohol abuse and HIV/AIDS.

Having considered the above background, SKEC was empowered to propel their brainchild forum entitled "Girl Talk". This is a project that provides enormous opportunities for girls to express themselves, share their deep and painful life experiences without fear of being judged or ridiculed. Girl Talk forum is a support group that offers counselling and sisterhood support for young women in need and in crisis. To enhance this objective, Girl-Talk! Mobile App was developed and launched through funding from Links, UKAID and Southern Africa Trust, with the aim of complementing the existing Girl Talk forums. It is envisaged that most remote areas that are hardly accessible, could be reached through social media platforms to give a fair share to every woman and girl child, irrespective of their geographical barriers.

### Status Quo

The Girl Talk! Mobile App has been utilized as the platform to impel the Gender-based violence programmes which includes AYOBA (Abanqobi Youth Orientation Benefit Agency), a campaign by Sinqobile that offers at-risk youth the opportunity to make a dramatic change in their lives. Sex Worker Outreach Programme (SWOP) is an existing campaign to assist and rehabilitate sex workers wanting to leave the sex trade and assist women to reclaim their lives with dignity and sensitivity.

### PROGRESS STORY

Girl Talk StopGBVapp has a target of reaching a minimum of 50 000 throughout its entire lifetime. Initially, preparations were executed with the Girl Talk! Mobile App which involved the testing phase and launch of the App by the end of September 2020. It has been confirmed that the StopGBVapp has already been launched as a vibrant, colorful and interesting platform to communicate about gender-based violence. The App is currently live and available on google play store for download and can also be downloaded on the website; [www.stopgbvapp.com](http://www.stopgbvapp.com). Online marketing and promotion of the App has been successfully implemented, as well as radio interviews to advertise the App to the community. Monthly Girl Talk forum campaigns have been implemented across all nine provinces of South Africa.

The Girl Talk Forum Online Challenge is currently underway, inviting ordinary girls and young women to interact on the various StopGBVapp social media platforms, and to submit their videos, songs, poems, art, speech and creative material to fight GBV. Influencers, celebrities and activists as StopGBV ambassadors are and will continuously be invited to interact on the App and to use their influential voices to change behaviour to fight GBV and join the #MillionVoicesAgainstGBV Movement.

## Key Milestones

- StopGBVapp has been launched, fully developed and is currently running live, ready to be downloaded on all Android and IOS devices from the Google Play Store.
- Singobile Kingdom Empowerment Centre has further received special recognition by the Local Council and community of Soweto. Visibility and publicity have been showcased through a front-page newspaper article published in the Soweto Urban Newspaper, alerting community members to fight Gender-Based Violence. Radio interviews were conducted with RainbowFM 90.7 and MamsFM Radio 98.7 to introduce and promote the StopGBVapp.
- StopGBVapp is not just a Links/UKAID/Southern Africa Trust project to be implemented over the duration of the COVID-19 Rapid Response contract period, but a lifetime project that Singobile Kingdom Empowerment Centre aims to implement over a minimum of three years.
- Being fully developed and live, Singobile Kingdom Empowerment Centre is proud of the work undertaken by its development partner, Eli-Jireh Networks (Pty) Ltd, in developing StopGBVapp.
- StopGBVApp offers a broader platform to reach out to young women/men to discuss GBV daily and come up with practical, measurable and realistic solutions to stop gender-based violence and other forms of abuse that are widespread in South Africa.

## Project Efficiency

Widespread advocacy of GBV reaching most targeted women and girls through social media platforms.

## Project Effectiveness

Girls and women are awarded a platform to tell their GBV-related stories, through songs and poems, bringing shared experience to learn to resolve current challenges.

## Project Relevancy

Considering current COVID-19 restrictions, social media has been the relevant platform for larger reach on advocacy and addressing the current challenges on GBV.

## Project Sustainability

Once an App is launched and further enhanced to be available on data free platforms, continuous reach is therefore guaranteed for generations.

## Key Challenges

- SKEC struggled to find a suitable and affordable platform for optimum app development and hosting during the development stages of the Girl Talk StopGBVapp.
- Limitations on physical interactions to advertise the StopGBVApp to targeted audiences due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Due to social distancing requirements and restrictions on social gathering, there has been reduced organisational visibility and reduction in social interactive campaigns that were planned to increase App interaction and ultimate download and usage.
- Insufficient funding makes it difficult to further market and promote the App and to host it on the WIX platform.

## Lessons Learnt

- SKEC realised that it is expensive to have StopGBVapp as a data free app, as this requires additional funding or donation of approximately R200 000 over 3-year period. It was decided that it was best to launch with current resources, then further apply for additional funding.
- COVID-19 restrictions enhanced creativity in digital marketing, as physical promotions have been limited. Government and agency support in terms of resources will further enhance in this direction.

# SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CROSS BORDER TRADERS IN MALAWI



## IMPACT STORY 5: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CROSS BORDER TRADERS IN MALAWI

### Introduction & Project Background

The COVID-19 Emergency Grant was used to undertake a study into the impact of COVID-19 on Cross Border Traders in Malawi. The study aimed to conduct a rapid situation and needs assessment of informal cross border traders targeting national level and border specific issues. The study was conducted in three regions, namely Central, Northern and Southern regions to find out the critical challenges that small-scale Cross Border Traders face during COVID-19. The sampling of the study covers three chapters of traders i.e. Mchinji, Karonga and Mwanza respectively.

Three specific objectives guided the studies:

- To assess the situation as relates to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on operations and welfare of Cross Border Traders;
- To identify needs that would facilitate cross border trade during COVID-19 pandemic without subjecting SSCBTs to health risks;
- To unearth the gender related challenges such as gender-based violence and limited access to health services at border control posts.

**The methodology included** collection and analysis of both primary and secondary data. Literature review in getting a deeper understanding of the situation, analysis of the scope of needs and highlighting important issues that need further investigation.

*Primary data* was collected with interviews conducted with the small-scale Cross Border Traders (SSCBTs) sampled from the membership of the Cross Border Traders Association (CBTA) to appreciate their experiences conducting cross border trade amid the border restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of those CBTA members who responded to individual interviews, 220 were women, 89 were men and 145 were youth. Interviews were also conducted in a focus group discussion and through phone calls with the Mchinji Chapter in Central Region, Karonga Chapter in Northern Region and Mwanza in Southern Region, as well as the CBTA to appreciate broader perspective on the challenges faced at border post following the advent of the pandemic.

**Challenges/ Limitation of the study** - the assessment was done when the border was closed, due to the new wave of COVID-19 pandemic. This led to the non-availability of the ICBTs at the border. Respondents for individual interviews were, therefore, obtained and sampled from a list from Cross Border Traders Association of Malawi.

## Status Quo / Findings

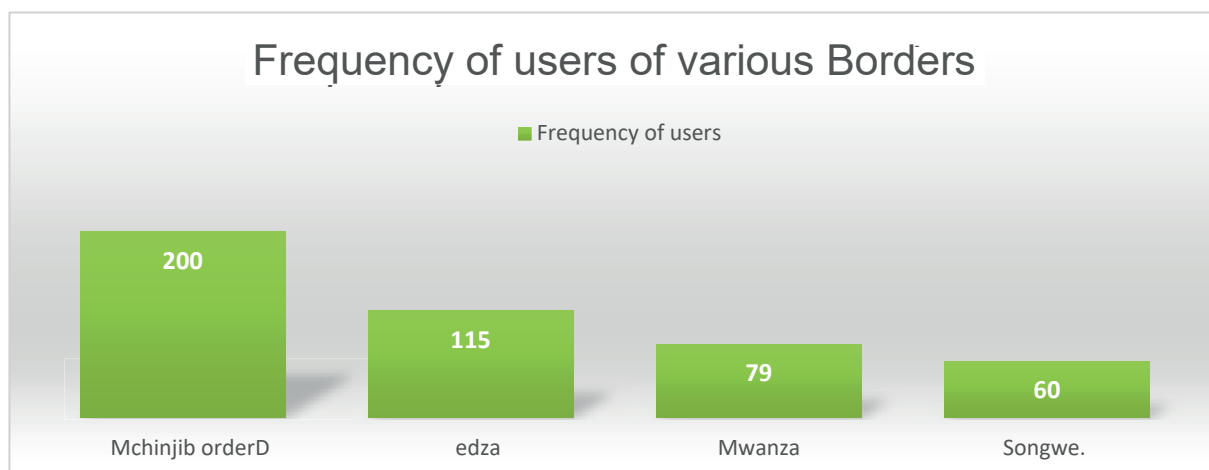


FIGURE 3 THE BORDERS MOSTLY USED BY RESPONDENTS

Of the 454 SSCBTs who participated in individual interviews, 200 said they use Mchinji border, 115 mentioned Dedza, 79 mentioned Mwanza, 60 mentioned Songwe. The finding shows that while some ICBTs ply their trade between Malawi and one other country, others trade in more than one country. Focus group discussions with selected ICBTs in Mchinji corroborated the skewness towards Mchinji border, suggesting that most traders ply between Malawi and Zambia. Two reasons for this: first the Mchinji border is the nearest-to-destination border, so it is convenient to traders; secondly, during the pandemic, other key borders such as Mwanza faced strict closures because of the measures taken by the destination countries, while Mchinji was still on partial operation for some of the time.

## Demographics and Main Economic Activities at the Border

As alluded to in the foregoing discussion, the majority of small-scale cross border traders are women. Of those registered with the Cross Border Traders Association of Malawi, an estimated 80% of ICBTs are women and based on the findings from interviews, they are young adults. The age for respondents in individual interviews ranged from 22 years to 62 years with an average of 33 years.

## Profile of SSCBTs and ICBTs Using the Border

This section presents a profile of SSCBTs in Malawi and this profile is not particular to the COVID-19 period - it is the normal structure of ICBTs. The ICBTs are small to medium scale entrepreneurs, with the majority being women. In the context of Malawi, a micro entrepreneur is too small to be SSCBT. As indicated earlier, according to the CBTA, of the total membership of 2 650, about 1 676 are female, representing 75% of the total membership, and 524 are young people.

With regards to the nature of trade undertaken by these SSCBTs, 70% of the respondents said they were engaged in the business of importing goods and selling them in Malawi. Of the respondents, 28% said they were involved in both exporting and importing, while a mere 2% said they were engaged in exporting. This buttresses the known fact that Malawi is an active exporter. These findings show that SSBTs are yet to embrace technology in conducting their business.

## Key Challenges (COVID-19: Challenges and Impact).

- From the findings of the study, it is apparent that the SSCBTs have faced considerable disruptions in their business undertakings due to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Although there have been measures at national and border specific level to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, there are still challenges that need to be addressed at policy and strategy level, to ensure that SSCBTs continue to earn a living amidst the pandemic.
- Much as the country has made strides to address issues affecting women in business and other undertakings, the study has revealed that there is still much to be done by
- Government and NGOs to ensure that the rights and dignity of women are protected.
- Loss of business capital by traders due to reduced business during COVID-19.
- Low business turn-ups due to lockdowns and restrictions.
- Closure of the markets during the pandemic, leading to further reduced business across the border.
- No access of loans for traders to ease the impact of the COVID-19 situation.
- Information dissemination by Government and supporting NGOs on what traders can do during the pandemic to improve on trade needs.

## Lessons Learnt

### Impact of COVID-19 on ICBT at the Border

ICBTs reported to have been hit hard economically by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the notable measures government has employed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, is the closure of the borders for a limited timeframe. At the time the programme team visited Mchinji border, it was closed for a period of 14 days due to the spike in second wave

infections. Under strict border closure requirements, only relief and essential products were being allowed entry by freight under tight controls, as per the SADC Guidelines on

Harmonization and Facilitation of Cross Border Transport Operations across the region. Most SSCBTs were therefore cut off from business because they could not meet the requirements as per the guidelines.

Even where the movement for ICBTs is allowed due to partial opening of the border, there are other restrictions that remain a hurdle to the ICBTs and SSCBTs, principally, the requirements to produce a COVID-19 negative test certificate to facilitate passage. The ICBTs unanimously submitted that the MK36, 000 (roughly US\$50) payment required for the test certificate is too high and militates against the profitability of the businesses.

Another new challenge that has emerged as a result of COVID-19 outbreak, is the sharp rise in transport cost. One way transport fare from Lilongwe to Lusaka has increased from MK15, 000 (US\$20) to MK 30,000 (US\$40). This has been necessitated by the reduction in sitting capacity as well as a decrease in the actual buses operating on the route, due to the emerging restrictions. Both men and women interviewed had the unanimous view that transport cost is high and is crowding out their margins. However, there was no assertion that such a cost would hamper trade if allowed to be conducted freely across the border, but it has the potential to make the business less rewarding.

## Recommendations & Way Forward

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are put forward to help address the plight of the distressed SSCBTs, prevent further spread of COVID-19 and address the gender concerns prevailing at the borders:

- The border agencies and the Trade Information Desk Office should prepare and distribute leaflets with easy-to-read information about the COVID-19 pandemic, how it spreads, the risks, prevention measures, etc. These leaflets would better be distributed at entry points or trade information.
- SAT should continue funding CBTA to produce more booklets on Women Cross Border Trade.
- Partners need to support cross border traders with seed recovery which serves as capital (revolving fund support).



# FOOD INSECURITY AFFECTED FAMILIES IN MOZAMBIQUE

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## IMPACT STORY 6: ASSOCIATION OF MOZAMBIQUE MINERS (AMIMO) AND THE FOOD SECURITY GRANT SUPPORT IN MOZAMBIQUE



### Introduction and Project Background

The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 has not spared Mozambique from declaring a state of emergency, coupled with various lockdown phases being implemented on particular seasons. Partial lockdown culminated into extended periods due to the rise in confirmed cases, which has turned out to be the order of day across the world. The government of Mozambique declared a State of Calamity following the fuelling of the COVID-19 second wave in the African region. COVID -19 pandemic has not only been viewed as a public health matter - it has had a greater effect on food security considering transport restrictions within and across borders, which resulted in constrictions on the supply chain and restrictions on the food chain. The grant that Southern Africa Trust supported AMIMO in coordination with SAMA, has gone a long way in addressing immediate food needs of AMIMO's retired mineworkers, especially TB patients as well as their dependents.

Food parcels were distributed to 60 people, of whom 40 were women (spouses and widows of Mineworkers) were beneficiaries of the food aid programme. The photographs show the contents of prepared food hampers with the respective contents listed below.

- 10kg maize meal
- 5kg rice
- 2L fish oil
- 3kg sugar
- 3 mediums soap bars
- 1kg salt
- 0.5kg OMO washing powder
- 1 x 50 surgical mask pack



## PROGRESS STORY

The distribution of food hampers was coordinated from respective districts divided between Maputo and Gaza provinces. The collecting points were dispersed accordingly in Machava, and Xai-Xai in Gaza. Visibility of this activity was enhanced by coverage through RAM-TV which interviewed some of the beneficiaries and AMIMO representatives, as shown in the pictures below. Some of the questions were directed to beneficiaries, inferring their perceptions on the benefit they received from AMIMO.

A heart of gratitude and appreciation was expressed to AMIMO for the food parcels received with a hope that this work of AMIMO will continue. The community cry further echoed voices with a hope that respective partners will continue with the good work to alleviate poverty in their constituencies.



Figure 4 AMIMO Deputy President TV Interview during beneficiaries briefing on food hamper

## Project Effectiveness

- Community leaders invited to the ceremony expressed appreciation and congratulated the AMIMO team for the great project, which was effective and relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated uncertainties.

## Recommendations

- Community leaders request that the project be continued as it is unknown when COVID-19 will come to an end.

## Lessons Learnt

- The project managed to inspire community leaders who further promised to work on a similar programme towards COVID-19 mitigation.
- The donation greatly impacted on AMIMO's core activities and played a major role in the lives of its members, as expressed by one of the AMIMO representatives in a statement given below.

"On behalf of the Association of Mozambican Mineworkers (AMIMO), I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to SAT for the food baskets extended to miners and their families during this COVID-19 crisis. We want to say 'Thank You' from the bottom of our hearts for the generosity you demonstrated. The donation greatly impacted what we do and has played a big role in the lives of the unemployed, elderly without social protection, and the mostly vulnerable communities like orphans, childcare givers and child-headed households in this critical time of lockdown. On behalf of all beneficiaries, we appreciate the support provided and extend the thanks to KAWENA for the patience and dedication of its staff." (Moises Uamusse, Secretary General Association of Mozambique Miners)