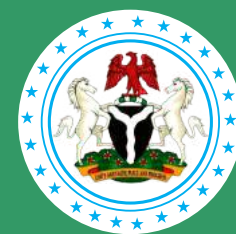




Photo of Covid-19 RCCE Champion of Rivers State Hon. Justice Eberachi Suzette Nyesom Wike and the Chief of UNICEF Field Office Dr. Guy Yogo in Rivers State Government House



RIVERS STATE RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (RCCE)

2nd Edition 4th May, 2020

MESSAGE FROM HER EXCELLENCY, HON. JUSTICE EBERECHI SUZZETTE NYESOM WIKE, THE WIFE OF THE GOVERNOR OF RIVERS STATE.

COVID-19 COMMUNICATION IN RIVERS STATE: OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

It is with deep humility and gratitude that I accept your appointment as UNICEF's Champion for Communication and Community Engagement as part of the ongoing and very productive partnership between UNICEF and the Rivers State Government towards the fight against the COVID -19 pandemic. May I also use this opportunity to thank UNICEF for all her work here in Rivers State over the years and especially during these very trying times. The distinguished UNICEF brand has continued to deliver unparalleled excellence, service and professional sacrifice. • RIVERS STATE'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19: It is no longer news that we here in Rivers State, just as the entire human race, are at war for our very existence with the Corona virus also known as COVID 19, a faceless, borderless, merciless, constantly mutating, relentless foe. Therefore, like the bird 'Eneke', who said that since men have learnt to shoot without missing, he has learnt to fly without perching, in order to survive this pandemic and achieve its eradication in Rivers State, we must imbibe a behavioural change in matters of hygiene, engage in mass dissemination of authentic



PROTECT YOURSELF, STAY SAFE;

TIPS ON COVID-19 PREVENTION

- ✓ Regular and thorough hand washing with soap under running water; the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer is also recommended.
- ✓ Social distancing is key. Maintain at least 1 & half meters (5 feet) distance between yourself and anyone. Avoid crowds and follow the stay-at-home advisory.
- ✓ Endeavour to practice good respiratory hygiene: when sneezing or coughing, cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve at the flexed elbow or with a tissue. Then dispose-off the used tissue safely, immediately.
- ✓ Exposed persons should stay home if you feel unwell with symptoms like fever, cough and difficulty in breathing and notify relevant authorities immediately.
- ✓ DO NOT SPREAD FAKE NEWS. Citizens are advised not to abuse social media and indulge in spreading misinformation that can cause panic and lead to danger.

FOR EMERGENCY CALL:

STATE- (08056109538, 08031888093 & 08033124314)
NCDC - (080097000010)

communication on the nature, prevention, spread and plan of action in the event of a detected infection. In line with this, the Rivers State Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) has formed 5 Rapid Response Teams, reached out to the private sector and built a strong pillar of CSOs through community engagement, to disseminate risk communications on COVID-19 across the 23 LGAs in the State. I wish to particularly acknowledge the efforts of UNICEF as a stakeholder with the RCCE in presenting Rivers State with a Model Public Hand Washing Facility to be replicated in some public institutions in Port Harcourt. I lend my voice with UNICEF to call on the Government, well meaning Nigerians, all Community Based Organisations, the Corporate Society, Health Associations such as the Nigerian Medical Association, Medical Women Association, Lady Pharmacists, Maison De Frontier/ Doctors Without Borders and even the Press and press based associations such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists, National Association of Women Journalists as well as Legal Based Associations such as Nigerian Bar Association, FIDA (International Federation of Women Lawyers) and other professional associations, Non Governmental Organizations and other civil based organisations to aggressively communicate their encouragement of hand washing in communities across the LGAs by sponsoring, facilitating, mobilizing and constructing replicas of this public hand washing facility with illustrative and worded literature displayed, to educate the public on how to properly wash their hands.

• AGGRESSIVE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: It is with a sense of urgency that I earnestly reiterate the desperate need to train and recruit as many people and organisations as possible to join in disseminating risk communications and galvanising community engagement platforms aimed at ensuring that communities in Rivers State are conscientiously engaged and empowered to fight against the COVID 19 virus. • ASYMPTOMATIC RED FLAGS: As the RCCE continues to embark on several sensitization missions across the State, the importance of effective mass communication of the COVID-19 virus cannot be overemphasised. Ignorance and uncertainty in understanding or the handling of risk factors such as dangers posed by asymptomatic carriers of the virus can greatly increase the spread of the virus since an asymptomatic carrier of the virus may be unaware of the fact that he/she is infected, even after 14 days post infection. He/she can then unknowingly infect others who on their own part, have no cause to actively avoid the asymptomatic carrier, owing to the absence of any COVID-19

symptoms. Emphatic communication on the use of face masks and other protective gear by the general public should be prioritized as a preventive measure. • COMMUNICATION ON THE RISK OF RE-INFECTION: With available data on the mutation of the virus, there is no medical certainty that persons who recovered from COVID-19 are immune from being re-infected. The general public should be enlightened on the experimental nature of such cures and the risk of re-infection and spread of the virus and the employment of cautionary measures in the use of face masks, gloves and other protective gear. • REACH OUT MORE: In addition to improved health and hygiene practices, collaborations among stakeholders, effective communications on eradicating COVID -19, the Rivers State Government, UNICEF and many other well meaning persons and organisations have reached out in cash and kind to the less privileged in a bid to alleviate their suffering and provide succour and encouragement during this challenging period. This, amongst others, is one of the positives thrown up by this pandemic which has proved Nigerians to be the warm, caring and empathetic people who look out for not only their relatives and neighbours, but also people they hardly know. This is "The True Nigerian Spirit". While appreciating these very laudable efforts, there is so much more to be done. I wish to encourage us all to reach out even more so, especially to the many people and their families who depend on daily earnings to feed their families daily.

Many of us have close working relationships with some of these persons and they include people like our electricians, plumbers, laundrymen/women, mechanics, hairdressers etc. who depend on daily earnings to feed their families. Our religious leaders and guides should also not be forgotten. Let us remember them all and bless them with our prayers and our substances as much as we can at this difficult time, even without their solicitation. As we combat the physical threat to our health by the corona virus pandemic, we cannot but help acknowledging the miracle of the silver lining shining through the dark clouds of confusion, despair, fear, loss, suffering and death exemplified by the endurance of the human spirit, random acts of kindness and compassion to and among total strangers, courage displayed at the front lines rendering essential health services and many selfless sacrifices that have renewed the faith of many and revealed the average Nigerian to be his/her brother's/sister's keeper in the midst of lock downs, social distancing, hunger, loss of jobs and loved ones and other challenges. There is more to be done, let us do much more. Thank you for your time and attention. God bless and keep you and your families and God bless Rivers State. May 1, 2020.

JOIN US TODAY: Through collective efforts so far, we have reached out to over 120,000 people in the state. Please join us as we fight the Virus out of our State in particular and our Country in general. We are the State coordinating Pillar for Risk Communication and Community Engagement in Rivers State. We are already collaborating with United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), WHO and other notable CSOs in the State. Are you a Civil Society Organization, Private Sector, Donor, Philanthropists, Individuals? We are waiting for your call to be part of us. Your role is already defined in our strategic work plan.

Contact us +234 704 485 4315
E-mail riversrcce@gmail.com
Twitter https://twitter.com/RiskRivers
Facebook https://web.facebook.com/rivers.rcce
(SEND US FRIEND REQUEST)

OUR VISION

Healthy and Prosperous Rivers State with Zero COVID-19 Case.

OUR GOAL

To ensure that communities are well engaged, capacitated and empowered across the State in the fight against COVID-19 Pandemic.

OUR MISSION

- 1) Providing a model for the State Government on what Community Engagement and Risk Communication involves in the fight against COVID-19 Pandemic, in order to strengthen the existing institutions in the state.
- 2) Engaging Community Existing Institutions as "Agent of Change" to Combat Community Transmission of the COVID-19

- 3) Engaging Religious Leaders as agent of Change in complementing Community engagement by reaching out to their members.
- 4) Empowering and engaging community local Artisans/ Institutions in solving COVID-19 basic needs that will mitigate the spread of the disease based on feedbacks and risk analyses of what the communities really want for effective compliance.
- 5) Working with organized private sectors and CSOs in Identifying areas of need and engaging communities through empowerment interventions to tackle the need. E.g empowering community women to produce soaps, local artisans to manufacture handwashing facilities, governments and private bodies to provide water supply. This will go a long way in combating spread of diseases in our communities.

PARTNERS/SPONSORS



Various Stakeholders are Supporting Rivers State Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Pillar to Respond Effectively and Efficiently to COVID-19 Pandemic in Rivers State



The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) has appointed Her Excellency, Hon. Justice Eberechi Suzzette Nyesom Wike, the wife of the Governor of Rivers State as COVID-19 Risk Communication and Community Engagement Champion.

Wife of the Rivers State Governor, Hon. Justice Eberechi Suzzette Nyesom Wike accepted to be the Champion and has called on non-governmental organisations and public spirited individuals to emulate United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) by joining hands with Government at different levels to fight corona virus.

Speaking at the Government House, Port Harcourt on Saturday 2nd of May, the Wife of the Rivers State Governor said such collaboration would lead to greater success. "I will also use this opportunity to encourage every other organization to emulate what we are doing today in the sense that we can set up so many more hand washing units in different parts of the public and even private centers. *"She thanked UNICEF for appointing her UNICEF Champion for Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) in the state. She reiterated her commitment to lead the fight against community transmission of Corona Virus in the state: "I have noted the plan of action you have left. Going forward, what it is that I need to do is to support the plan and make sure by giving my word that I will do everything that I can within my power as God gives me grace to make sure it is a success."*

She commended the efforts of Mr. Governor in preventing the spread of the disease in Rivers State. "I commend the strong leadership provided by the Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike regarding overcoming the challenges of COVID-19."

UNICEF praised Justice Eberechi Suzzette Nyesom Wike for accepting to be a UNICEF Champion for risk communication and community engagement in the state. "We appreciate your acceptance to be the champion in the collective engagement of the people of Rivers State to stop the spread of Corona Virus. We all need to put an end to the pandemic. UNICEF is supportive of Rivers State and its people. Looking at the scenario worldwide, communication is the way to go. That is why your acceptance to be the champion of risk communication and community engagement for COVID-19 will transform the lives of the people of Rivers State. It will demonstrate that you are a frontline foot soldier against COVID-19." UNICEF Chief of field office Dr. Guy Yogo then presented the plan of UNICEF to be rolled out across the State to prevent the spread of Corona Virus. He said one of the strong elements of the fight is building strong partnerships to check the spread of Corona Virus.

Highpoint of the occasion was the symbolic display of hand washing by the Wife of the Rivers State Governor.



In order prevent community Transmission of COVID-19, there is greater need for everyone to add the use of face mask as an additional guard to their preventive measures. In order to meet this demand, there is need to look inward by identifying the existing capacity in our communities and engage them. RCCE is using this medium to inform us that we already have this local capacity here in Rivers State. During our outing, we came across various types of face mask manufactured here in Rivers and are being used by the people. Most of them are far better than some that are being imported to the country. If we are to prevent community transmission, attention should be shifted towards engaging communities to start producing locally made face mask and make it available within their communities, since this capacity is already available in almost all the communities.

We hereby call on Government, CSOs, Private Sectors to channel their resources to these home- made materials. The benefit is ten folds. It will not only help us to prevent community transmission of persons-to-persons, but also will help in engaging the community by boosting compliance, empower the people and the State's GDP. These institutions are expected to encourage the communities to go into mass production and buy it from them instead of importing these materials. By so doing, community will be engaged and will act less to oppose the government and do more to engage themselves to stand against COVID-19. So, while the rich may continue to patronize those imported face mask since they have the means, the masses are better protected with cheaper but effective locally made face mask.



The need for Civil Society Organizations to come up in complimenting the efforts of Rivers State government cannot be over emphasized. The Rivers Indigenous NGOs and Civil Society Network (RINGOCS) is already doing this in the state and we are recognizing them and call for others to follow suit.

The network had identified community artisans, trained them on how to make home-made face mask, Alcoholic based hand sanitizer, soap/detergents and disinfectants. The trainees where empowered and engaged for mass production of these products in their various categories. The products were distributed by the Network free of charge to the community people to encourage compliance.

If you are part of Civil Society Organization, Private Sector, Donor, Philanthropists, Individuals and you are already doing something in this area or contemplating doing something, kindly see this New Letter as an official invitation for you to join the Pillar of the State government. We need you to become part of us in preventing community transmission of this COVID-19 Pandemic. You can always reach us through our contacts.



The children are not left out in the fight against the community transmission of Corona Virus. This is true in the case of Peliaiah of 6. Peliaiah has a message for her peers. She built a house to teach people on stay at home and inscribe it with COVID-19 messages. "Corona Virus is outside, Stay at home, wash your hands with soap and water, use face mask if outside" Peliaiah is among the millions of pupils who could not resume school because of COVID-19. She is concerned because she wants to go back to school. She can't wait for schools to resume. *"This Corona Virus did not allow me to travel to see grandma during April holiday and now I can not go back to school. I want to teach my fellow children how to wash their hands so that they will not fall sick"*

She is ready to teach her peers on proper hand washing. She had already produced video training for her peers on effective hand washing, home-made face mask and alcoholic based hand sanitizer. According to her, her holiday trip was abated and now she cannot even resume school. Please, let's join Peliaiah in raising awareness against community transmission of COVID-19. Her younger brother (thiel) had joined her in her campaign against Covid-19. She's now calling on others to join her in raising awareness. View her videos through this link: https://drive.google.com/open?id=1TF3SxIVRU4d8ID9B_A1LTLv2vh56GqNA

Because of the outstanding way she is contributing to the fight against COVID-19 in Rivers state, RCCE is recognizing Peliaiah with Award of Excellence in Risk Communication. Please kindly contact RCCE for her details.

Scan for Video Link



Madam Grace who is a local tailor who stays in Udi Street in Port Harcourt has taken it upon herself to start sewing face mask and reduced the price far lower than what is obtainable in the

market to make it affordable for people to purchase. *"Sometimes I dash (meaning giving it out free) to people who don't have money."*

We also realized through her that some pregnant women may not be able to wear those face mask that are commonly available due to tightness. She is making some that would fit Pregnant Women. *"This pregnant woman has told me to make one that will suit her condition"*. Grace is determined to volunteer herself to assist in her neighborhood to engage them on the need to prevent community transmission of the disease. If supported she can produce and share within her community to ensure that every one in her community is protected by wearing this mask.

Because of the outstanding way she is contributing to the fight against COVID-19 in Rivers state, RCCE is recognizing Madam Grace with Award of Excellence in best practices. Kindly contact RCCE for her details.



The Energymatics Filling Station in Port Harcourt, Rivers State is an outstanding example of compliance that we are expecting from all other filling stations in the state. They ensure that all their staff are on face mask while on duty. More interestingly is that, they did not import from outside the country, they patronized the locally made face mask from Rivers State. Before entering their mini mart, there is automated dispenser for hand sanitizer. Same is provided for all staff since they handle and deal with cash.

We are using this medium to appreciate the level of compliance, encourage them not to relax and encourage others to emulate their good example of compliance.

Because of the outstanding way Energymatics is complying with the COVID-19 safety guidelines in Rivers state, RCCE is recognizing Energymatics with Award of Excellence in Compliance. To learn more from Energymatics kindly contact RCCE for their details.

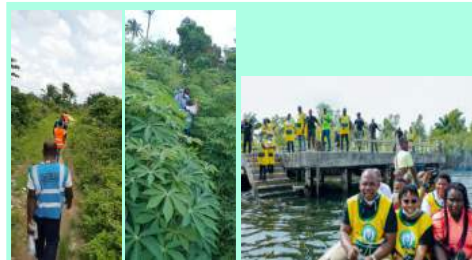


The Fulani Communities are not left out. Alhaji Ibrahim Woke, who is a member of the Rivers State Jamaatu Masril Islam through the RCCE has taken it upon himself to sensitize all the Fulani in their various settlements in the state.

Although Alhaji Ibrahim is from Rivers State, he speaks Hausa and Fulani languages fluently which serve as a comparative advantage to him. *"I am well known by them and they are happy to listen to me."* He spoke to them on the need to speak-up if there is anyone who is suspected to have Covid-19 symptoms among them and always drop the Emergency contact with them.

"I have always asked them if they have any member who is sick and if they know the signs of Corona Virus." Mr. Ibrahim is now member of the state Rapid Response Team moving from one Fulani Community to another.

I have visited, Elele Fulani Settlement in Ikwerre, Obiri-Ikwerre in Obio/Akpor, Eleme Fulani Camp in Eleme L.G.A and Okrika.



The Rapid Response Teams (RRT) of the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) are determined to comb the nook and cranny of the state. They are now reaching far-to-reach communities amidst accessibility challenges. The busy path ways in the adjourned communities is an indication of stay at home compliance in our dear communities. Communities are becoming well sensitized and there is now some high level of compliance in those places already reached. They have also reach out to places where palliative materials are being shared. Although the activity of the rapid respond team are more concentrated in Port Harcourt City and Obio/Akpor LGAs due to logistics.

We are using this opportunity to call on government, private sectors, philanthropist, donors and well meaning Nigerians to support the Risk Communication and Community Engagement Pillar of the Emergency Respond Team for COVID-19 in Rivers State. There is need to reach out to other LGAs in the state to increase our chance of preventing community transmission now that the state is relatively low in community transmission.



How do you think our entire communities will be like if all communities can have a person like Wali. Shawn Wali is the Youth President of Egbelu-Ozodo Community in Obio/Akpor Local Government.

Wali has taken it upon himself to ensure that all the business owners in his entire communities comply with minimum standard of preventing the spread of Corona Virus in his Community. He moves from one shop to another not only to encourage them but also to enforce compliance. Since he had already earned their respect and being the youth leader he was able to succeed in doing that. His message is simple, *"if you are not protected and don't have the means of protecting others don't open shop, don't open market."* Shawn Wali is ready to mobilize the youths against anyone or institution who is not willing to comply. The Community is now taking responsibility to defend and protect their communities from the spread of the disease.

For us to successfully prevent community transmission in the state, all community leaders, the youth, women associations and other community based institutions must wake up and defend their communities. They should ensure high level of compliance with the use of face mask, social distancing, regular hand washing, border protection, business owner compliant, market user compliant, established community wash dog and community engagement (through home-made face mask, hand sanitizers, soap among others). Other Youths are advised to emulate Wali in their respective communities.

Because of the outstanding way she is contributing to the fight against COVID-19 in Rivers state, RCCE is recognizing Wali with Award of Excellence in best practices. Kindly contact RCCE for his details.



As part of home training for children while staying at home, children had been included in the on-going sensitization on Corona Virus.

Children as agent of change have the potential of disseminating the preventive measure messages through per-to-per methods as well as children-to-parent. RCCE as part of their plans will be including theatre for development in their strategy towards ensuring behavioral change in children.



Sarah Onita a final year pharmacy student of University of Port Harcourt in Rivers State had just made home-made alcoholic hand sanitizer .

After seeing WHO specifications on hand sanitizer production online, she started a trial version which she made available for her immediate family. The finished product was successful and of high quality. Since then, Sarah has started producing for the public. *"Now people are ordering it, even churches"*. Remember that Sarah is a final year student and she is now contributing her quota to support Rivers State in her fight against COVID-19. As the call for community engagement increases, let us continue to make use of our local resources to produce more of these products.

Because of the outstanding way she is contributing to the fight against COVID-19 in Rivers state, RCCE is recognizing Sarah with Award of Excellence in best practices. Kindly contact RCCE for her details.