



ITALIAN AGENCY
FOR DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION



SOAP MAKERS CLEAN UP IN SUDAN'S COVID-19 RESPONSE



ITALIAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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LIVELIHOODS TURNED RESPONSE

Job training has been a long-term focus for Italian Development Cooperation in Sudan. Facing soap shortages, these trainees have mobilised to support local communities.

COVID-19 has placed unprecedented global pressure on essential health supplies, putting the most vulnerable at risk of 'missing out'. In Sudan, this means hundreds of thousands in Khartoum's poorest urban area, Mayo.

Facing a national outbreak, the Government, development partners, UN agencies, NGOs and civil society have mobilized. Purchasing and distributing health and hygiene supplies, sharing information with community members, and protecting at-risk groups are just some of the ways UNDP and other organizations are assisting.

But the task is significant, health supplies are running low, and new solutions are required.

For two years Italian Development Cooperation has supported UNDP-provided job training for vulnerable women and youth in Mayo, creating alternatives for those potentially forced into conflict or crime. Soapmaking has been a popular and lucrative option for trainees, and one suddenly in high demand.

Adapting existing projects to COVID-19 response, Italian funding enabled UNDP to commission 18 previously trained soap makers in Mayo to rapidly and COVID-19-safely produce 5,500 bottles of liquid handwash, and purchase 1,500 extra bottles.

Combined, this will protect 42,000 people.





With soap produced or purchased, networks of community advocates and local NGOs HOPE Sudan and Badya Center - supported by local taxi company Go Cars and revolutionary icon Alaa Salah - supplies were distributed, safely, to those most in-need in Khartoum's Mayo locality.

Thousands of vulnerable households were visited, with the opportunity also utilized to distribute critical health information and advice.

Combining outreach efforts, local markets, health facilities, places of worship and other community facilities were also visited to distribute health information materials.

Additionally, having served as an effective and rapid response inspiration, similar efforts have commenced in White Nile and Sennar States.

"Responding to COVID-19 takes every resource we can muster. It's not a traditional pandemic approach, but with Italy's support previously trained soapmakers have supported community health and provided much needed revenue to those that need it most."

- UNDP Resident Representative Selva Ramachandran



SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROTECTION

While regular soapmaking increased the income and quality of life of those trained, the extra UNDP-requested work has ensured they are better financially equipped to cope with the COVID-19 crisis and lockdown.

For women in some locations, it was also an opportunity to support the COVID-19 response directly, with some forging additional profit (on top of wages) to ensure extra soap could be produced and distributed.

Additionally, following the success of this initiative, **UNDP Sudan is exploring kickstarting domestic production** of personal protective equipment nationwide for livelihood creation.

Together these efforts ensure national and regional health needs can be met, health protected, livelihoods established - and provide a cushion against the socio-economic shocks of COVID-19.

Discussing her new livelihood before the outbreak, Halima (below, bottom right), a soapmaker trained with Italian support, said:

"Before [the training] we were just a bunch of poor women sitting around doing nothing and with no income. Now, we sell our products in the neighborhood markets and hospital, each of us makes an average monthly income of 1200 SDGs, and our income goes to paying school fees for our children."





42,000

Highly vulnerable people in Khartoum's poorest urban area reached with soap distribution, produced or purchased by Italian-support trained soapmakers.



150

Women and at-risk youth in vulnerable and marginalised communities provided soapmaking or other livelihood training in Sudan, thanks to your assistance.



16,300

Other Sudanese directly benefiting from Italian support to UNDP, through vocational training, safe water access or education facilities.



24,500

Bottles of soap, sanitiser or similar products produced to date nationwide in response COVID-19. Production is on-going.