

After World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and called upon Governments to scale up their response to contain it, **SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL (SI) Myanmar shifted to an active risk reduction phase and worked on the preparation of an emergency phase** in case of an outbreak in country, in particular in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps where SI is operating in Kachin and Rakhine States.

As an **active WASH actor** in Myanmar as well as in the humanitarian coordination, SI elaborated its preparedness and response plan according to **technical guidelines and scenarios issued by WHO, UNICEF and Global WASH Cluster**,

## 1 SCENARIO-BASED STRATEGY

SI adapted its activities and response based on the **3 scenarios defined by WHO**:

-  **Scenario 1:** no imported or detected cases in Myanmar – restriction on gatherings but no movement restriction.
-  **Scenario 2 – essential:** less than 10 imported cases were detected with minimum Human-to-Human transmission in Myanmar/area of intervention. Critical outbreaks but epidemic has not yet become self-sustaining in human populations – movement restrictions.
-  **Scenario 3 – critical:** Human-to-Human transmission in Myanmar on a large scale. The number of cases will grow exponentially (doubling every week or month) over time and rapidly spill over outside of Yangon – outbreak properly declared and lockdown for most movement except lifesaving activities.

## 2 PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITIES

These activities were designed to enable SI to promptly respond to a COVID-19 outbreak and/or to the restriction of access to the camps/host communities where it works.

-  **Increases surveillance** and keeps constantly track of new cases, with three main objectives: duty of care, prevention of harm to beneficiaries, continuity of programming.
-  **Coordinates** with the WASH and Health sectors, and other WASH partners to ensure harmonization of approaches across actors and understand gaps as well as SI's possible involvement to fill them.
-  **Prepositions 3 months' contingency stock** to respond to the outbreak and to ensure lifesaving activities (mainly material for water supply and rehabilitation of latrines, fuel for desludging pumps, soap and disinfection material, 1-month of hygiene kit).
-  **Adapts SI's current WASH activities** to prevent the spread of the disease and focus on main prevention activities: safe water supply, hygiene and Infection Prevention and Control activities.

## 3 RESPONSE TO OUTBREAK

As the **main risks of contaminations are through direct contact** with an infected surface and, at a lower level, through water, SI proposes the following main actions in the response in case of COVID-19 outbreak:

-  **Ensuring the refilling of the extra hygiene** items for handwashing and household level disinfection.
-  **Ensuring the refill of soap** for communal handwashing stations and the disinfection of communal WASH infrastructures.
-  **Ensure safe water supply**, with the chlorination of all water points or installation of a bucket chlorination.
-  In close coordination with the health actors to early detect cases of Acute Water Diarrhea outbreak, SI will prepare a contingency stock at camp level for possible **distribution of Oral Rehydration Salts and Aquatabs**,
-  **Disinfection of communal WASH facilities** (latrines, water points, tap stands) **as both prevention measure** (disinfection once a week at least) **and as a response** (in the sub-block/cluster of the affected households and surroundings),
-  Based on the outcomes of the coordination with the Camp Coordination, Camp Management (CCCM) and health partners, SI is willing to **support health partners on strengthening Infection Control and equipment of Quarantine Facilities**,
-  Based on outcomes of the coordination with the Food Security Cluster, SI is willing to **support in-kind/cash for food response** for those vulnerable households which lost their income due to this crisis, **if requested by World Food Programme (WFP)**.

## 4 PREVENTIVE MEASURES IMPLEMENTED

Precautionary measures have been immediately taken for all activities, among which:



Performing hand hygiene frequently with soap and water



Avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth



Practicing respiratory hygiene by coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow, and immediately washing hands with soap:



Avoiding mass gatherings



Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), especially face masks



Maintaining social distance (a minimum of 1 m) from individuals

## 5 COVID-19 ACTIVITIES IN KACHIN STATE

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL Myanmar conducted COVID-19 related activities in **10 camps in Bhamo and Momauk (Lweigel) townships, which reached 8,472 individuals:**

- **Donation of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials** to disseminate the preventive measures,
- **Hygiene promotion sessions and weekly trainings** using pamphlets, loud speaker, booklets, vinyl, posters, to raise awareness,
- **Installation of 50 sets of hand washing stations with liquid soaps and vinyls** for a sustainable access to hand washing infrastructures and to improve personal hygiene behavior in the camps,
- **Distributions of 10 cleaning kits to camp leaders and WASH Working Groups** members to improve the community's hygiene situation,
- **Disinfection of all WASH communal facilities** to prevent the spread of any disease,
- **Distributions of 2,369 COVID-19 essential items kits** (soap and disinfectant) to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 outbreak in IDPs camp,
- **Donations to the General Administration Department in Bhamo, Momauk and Shwegu townships** (non-food items, hand washing station and personal protective equipment) to support quarantine facilities to meet the needs of the returnees.



Hand washing station  
Robert camp, Bhamo



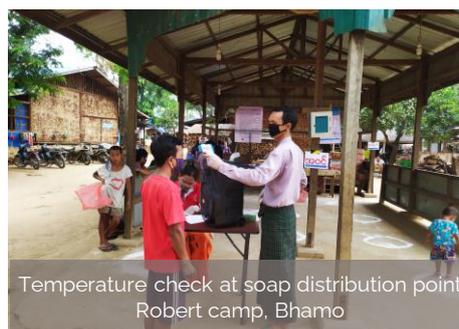
Disinfection of WASH communal facilities  
Phan Khar Kone camp, Bhamo



Cleaning kit distribution  
Edin camp, Momauk



Physical distancing during soap distribution  
Htang Nya camp, Lweigel, Momauk



Temperature check at soap distribution point  
Robert camp, Bhamo



Donations to the General Administration  
Department, Shwegu

## 6 COVID-19 ACTIVITIES IN RAKHINE STATE

### Focus on Water Scarcity in Pauktaw



Monsoon season gives way to a long period of drought, inducing water scarcity, which strongly affects IDPs in camps and villages around Pauktaw.

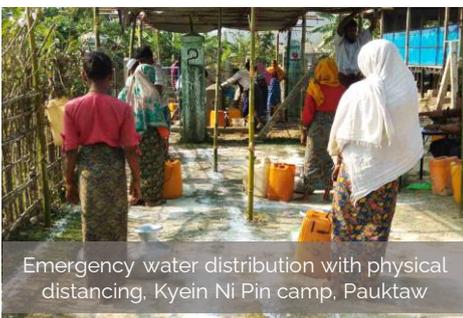
In 2020, the depletion of resources and the first signs of water shortage appeared as early as March, one month earlier than in 2019. To mitigate the impact of the shortage, SI raises awareness among the population about using water moderately.

During the water scarcity period, SI is responding with emergency water supply through water boating and remote pumping.

To anticipate this crisis, SI pre-positioned additional stock of hygiene supplies as well as to look for ways to increase the amount of water available per person per day.

In Pauktaw township, SI implemented COVID-19 related activities in 4 camps and 1 village, reaching 22,534 individuals:

- Hygiene promotion and awareness sessions in small groups, using loud speakers, IEC materials,
- Installation of 86 hand washing stations with soaps,
- Distributions of 11,572 hygiene kits comprised of carbolic soaps, laundry soaps and sanitary pad packs,
- Pre-positioning of contingency stocks: 5,862 kits (soaps, aqua tabs, chlorine, Oral Rehydration Salts),
- Weekly disinfection of WASH facilities, mainly latrines, tap stands and hand pumps.



Emergency water distribution with physical distancing, Kyein Ni Pin camp, Pauktaw



Hand washing station Kyein Ni Pin camp, Pauktaw



Hygiene kit distribution Kyein Ni Pin camp, Pauktaw

### Focus on the Sludge Treatment System in Sittwe



Since 2014, SI is operating a Sludge Treatment System (STS) in Sittwe camp, managed through the OXFAM/SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL (OXSI) consortium. It is treating daily 35m<sup>3</sup> of sludge generated in 13 IDP camps, 6 days a week.

From the pits, the sludge is transported to the STS using tractors. With COVID-19 cases in country and restrictive measures implemented by the authorities, access to the camps is not ensured for SI staff and equipment. There is a risk tractors won't be allowed to move among the camps to reach the STS.

To mitigate this risk and ensure business continuity, SI trained 24 camp-based SI and SCI staff on manual desludging to enable them to continue desludging the pits in case of a total lockdown due to a COVID-19 outbreak.

Through a consortium with Oxfam, SI carried out COVID-19 related activities in 11 camps in Sittwe township, reaching 87,092 individuals:

- Hygiene promotion and awareness sessions,
- Distributions of hygiene kits to 16,069 households,
- Installation of hand washing stations for 16,069 households,
- Training of 24 camp-based SI and Save the Children (SCI) staff on manual desludging,
- Weekly disinfection of WASH facilities, of which 2,076 boreholes, 228 public latrines, 120 child friendly latrines, 382 school latrines, 3,587 household latrines, 300 menstrual hygiene management bins.



Social distancing during a distribution Baw Du Pha camp, Sittwe



Latrines disinfection Baw Du Pha camp, Sittwe



Water point disinfection Baw Du Pha camp, Sittwe

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