



UGANDA RED CROSS SOCIETY NATIONAL
HEADQUARTERS

Safer Access Good practices in COVID-19 Response.

Safer access has worked well during most of the activities performed during the pandemic. The SDB team was allowed access in communities and the bereaved families. During SDB, safe access skills are combined with other training notably community engagement to manage the communities however much rowdy they want to be.

Safer access knowledge and skills were also relevant during the food distribution activities in Kampala. It should be remembered that Kampala is the most polarized region of Uganda. The food distribution activity was therefore not only threatened by political influence, but also by other issues such as hooliganism, double dealing, food theft, and generally influence peddling given the various parties engaged. Safer access framework was used by ensuring that volunteers stick to the fundamental principles, as well as context analysis to evaluate their safety during the activity.

Safer access has also helped us during activities such as blood mobilization. It should be remembered that much of the blood collected by the Uganda blood transfusion services is mobilized from places such as schools, places of worship, and markets. With the closure of the facilities, the teams were only left with one option which was the community yet it was not safe to be in the community given the possibility of contamination and possibility of spread of the virus. Therefore, safer access was used in managing these community bleeding sessions by choosing safer locations, seeking clearance from the relevant authorities, implementing the ministry of health guidelines on the prevention of the pandemic such as hand washing and social distancing, and correct use of the available PPEs.

The Organisation ensured to boost its visibility at the onset of the response. This was especially done in the areas of Kampala and nearby districts, where the URCS had taken some time without having responses of such a magnitude. New visibility materials (such as jackets, raincoats, gumboots, etc.) were issued to the branches, the vehicles were branded with new stickers and red flags were installed. However, this could not have worked without the acceptance of the Organisation through massive dissemination that are usually done throughout the year. But it can be said the visibility helped the staff and volunteers to move freely, sometimes beyond even curfew time, given the fact public transport was banned and yet the available red cross branded vehicles had to be used to transport volunteers to their different destinations.

Generally speaking, the integration of safer access framework into the different activities of the Red Cross can be credited for the successful operation during the COVID-19 response. So far, we

haven't had any of our staff or volunteer affected even when they work in risky and insecure contexts, except one incident where there was a bit of laxity and one of the volunteers was bitten by a dog during food distribution activity in Mutundwe parish.