



STAR GHANA COVID-19 RESPONSE PROJECT: Info-for-all project

The current global uncertainty and inadequate professional knowledge about the COVID-19 pandemic makes it hard for the public to understand the overall scope of it, particularly given contradictory interpretations and commentary in both traditional media and on social media. Some of the speculations and misinformation reflect mistakes or unfounded attempts by “experts” to answer questions, with an emphasis on ways to cope with the unfamiliar phenomenon, which are misinterpreted or misreported by journalists and other content creators and inadvertently repeated or shared by citizens.

Unfortunately, this misinformation has the tendency to overshadow the much-needed education and information that needs to reach ordinary citizens to protect themselves and those they come in contact with. Also, most of the information about pandemic is usually circulated on online media platforms which are not accessible to persons in the rural areas and those without internet access. To compound these challenges, the circulated information and communication around the pandemic in Ghana, are mostly in English which further eliminates the semi-literate and illiterate Ghanaian.

In view of the above, Penplusbytes’ STAR Ghana Foundation funded Info-for-all project proposes to use innovative new digital tools to improve access to relevant COVID-19 information by all citizens and to support both government and other civil society efforts in curbing the spread of the virus and flattening the curve as well.

The project will achieve the above goal by filling in the existing knowledge gap about the pandemic through the deployment of an information for all platform that will use a mashed up two-way communication tools such as bots, mobile (SMS & WhatsApp) and other audio visuals (motion graphics & infographics). This will be complemented with traditional media engagement with the ultimate aim of not leaving anyone behind in accessing COVID-19 related information and the ability to provide feedback and an input on how best government’s policies and interventions can be structured to respond directly to the needs of citizens.

The ultimate aim of this intervention is to increase the effectiveness of inclusive actions by state and non-state actors towards the elimination of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The “info-for-all” project is anchored around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 3 (Good Health and Well-being); 5: Gender Equality and 10: Reduced Inequality. It is premised on the fact that information empowers, the disinformation disempowers which endangers lives and leads to confusion and discord. Therefore, an access to accurate, timely and reliable information by all persons will be key panacea to adhering to government directives

and guidelines by health officials to help curtail the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the end, the project is expected to support innovative mechanisms for linking citizens' voices with state actors for more responsive policies and services.

The key beneficiaries of this project will be all Ghanaian citizens, with specific focus on vulnerable persons (persons with disabilities, women, the aged), rural populations and young persons.