

Yemen Civil Society Solidarity Fund
Youth Peace Leaders Project

COVID19

The response and the community solutions

Field Study in Al shamaytain district – Taiz governorate /Yemen

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Introduction

The local community lives in Al Shamayatain district in light of bad health conditions like all of the Yemeni community, so if the country is unable to respond and its role becomes weak and its health services are in a fragile situation, what can community members work to face the Coronavirus, citizens are unable to provide the lowest safety Requirements to protect themselves from Coronavirus virus, which makes their lives vulnerable to the risk of infection with this virus, which the major countries of the world have not been able to face.

Improve your society organization IYSO, tried to get closer to the community to know the extent of their response to dealing with Coronavirus. The idea of conducting this poll came when the organization's staff decided to implement a community awareness campaign in the district, before starting this, questions had to be asked about the nature of the awareness campaign. Is it will be useful for as long as there are a lot of awareness campaigns implemented by many organizations at the level of Yemen with different tools, means and methods of awareness?

As a civil society organization, the situation requires us, to do something to improve community awareness. Therefore, before the campaign we planned to conduct a survey or a quick study to find out the extent of community's response and what it thinks and what is proposed of solutions related to responding for coronavirus, to come out with information that can be help to design the activities and interventions that are consistent with community needs according to available capabilities.

Objective and methodology

In fact, the aim of this study was to identify the extent of community's response to dealing with coronavirus and to know community solutions to face the epidemic and to obtain ideas and proposals that can be developed and design activities that suit community needs and contribute to providing a minimum level for awareness and mitigate the spread of the virus in community.

The methodology of collecting information was through questionnaires and interviews with a sample from community in 15 areas in Al Shamayatain district, some of the interviews were online, in addition to that the team worked to conduct an analysis of information circulating about the health conditions in the district, and also monitoring and analysis of daily news circulated in the Social communication sites and its impact on community,

The target community

This study or poll targeted the local community in Al Shamayatain district 80 km from Taiz city centre, where 15 local communities were identified in the district / areas surrounding Al turbah city, Contributed in conducting this study and providing us information 30 members of youth initiatives with whom the IYSO works in the Al Shamayatain district within "youth Peace leaders project" supported from saferworld, these initiatives working in 15 communities in the district.

The results of the study will be shared with the members of these youth initiatives and IYSO will support them to implement activities in their community to improve the community's response to dealing with covid19, and this enhances the role of youth in these initiatives and enable them to work on improve the community's response ,and this will be positively to enhance social cohesion in their local community ,also this is a qualitative addition that has filled the gap that led to suspension of project activities during the period of the coronavirus outbreak in Taiz city .

Overview on the health situation

In light of the current conditions, the health sector in Taiz and in Al Shamayatain district in particular is in the deteriorated conditions, community suffers from the spread of viral fever diseases with the absence of the

slightest support, equipment, protective supplies and simple protection means , the Citizens say that all health centres in the Al Shamayatain district complain of neglect and lack emergency medications, the suffering of community is not only limited to the deterioration of the health status, but also complain of difficulty in accessing health centres because of their distance from them , As citizens incur many costs when take patients to centres and a long time, which may affect the patient due to the delay of the ambulance and sometimes it may lead to his death, many of citizens complain of their lack of a specialized health centre equipped with health facilities and tools, and examination of covid19.

One of the citizens said that when the Coruna virus began spreading for the first time in Al turbah, they were transporting the patient to public health centres, not equipped with examination equipment and solutions, in addition to the lack of equipment or toilets in them, this contributes to an increase in coved infection in these poor health centres.

The citizens in Al-Shamayatain district appealed to the government, the National Committee to deal with the epidemic, and the Health Office in Al turbah city to speed up the processing of the Khalifa General Hospital, at least, and to provide it with tools, test solutions, medical equipment, sterilizers, and hygiene tools to face outbreak of the Coronavirus virus to be a centre that receives cases infected with the Coronavirus virus, as the hospital is in a permanent movement to receive patients from many areas, in addition to receiving sick cases from other districts.

The hospital suffers from a severe shortage of medical personnel, laboratory equipment and solutions and other necessary equipment and supplies, especially in light of the outbreak of coronavirus in the region.

During the conduct of this survey, the local authorities issued a decision to depends the Al-Akhahelah School as a Quarantine health for travellers coming from other governorates to Taiz Governorate; where many of detainees at the school complained that the centre lacked the health facilities and tools, and virus-testing devices, in addition to the lack of equipment and that caused chaos and riots inside the school in refusal of detention in these conditions, followed by allowing families to leave the school, with no role Local authority to monitor the situation in the school's health isolation centre.

All that happened in Alturbah city are simple spraying and sterilization activities carried out by some youth initiatives, and partial curfew decisions have been issued by the local authority, but all of this is not considered a work that fulfils the purpose because it was not implemented according to a health plan supervised by one party.

The citizens indicated that they called for measures to be taken in light of the lack of medical capabilities, such as calling for stopping the movement of citizens between the governorates and not detaining them in places that turn into a source of the epidemic, as happened from the detention of some citizens in the school, which had been decided as a place for health isolation.

Unfortunately, the role of government is completely absent, and the role of local authority has been limited to issuing a set of decisions and procedures, but it has not been activated or working to follow up and monitor compliance with the decisions.

The effect on the level community awareness

The Yemeni community faced the Coronavirus virus with irony, especially as a result of the worsening situation in Yemen, and they wrote hundreds of publications and tweets about it, whose content differed on the epidemic according to the various variables in the world, and even at the level of measures taken by the government or Houthis in the country ,

The virus was a material for ridicule and Jokes for many social media pioneers, many of whom began to feel sad about the deteriorating health situation in the country, and their fear of the effects of the virus if Yemenis were infected with it

As we all know that the percentage of ignorance in the Yemeni community is very large and this had great negative effects on the community in receiving rumours and contradictory lies and believed and dealt with on the basis of them , Here, the negative effects began to appear in the Yemeni community between lying and mockery, and looking to them as blemish and shame on all those suspected of contracting the virus in the community.

On the other side, some Yemenis have taken social media as important means to raise awareness about the epidemic and its seriousness, make known about it and its symptoms, how to prevent it, and advise some of them and warnings about it, and it produced many artistic and creative works for that.

Study Results

The study focused on collecting information according to the following main themes:

- How citizens deal with the coronavirus pandemic and how well they respond to prevention instructions based on their awareness and potential.
- How well does the community accept to educate about Coronavirus and how they interact with it? And knowing the reasons for not accepting the awareness.
- Knowing the opinions on how to get the community to interact with the awareness campaigns, and knowing methods or means that can be followed in the awareness process.
- Knowing the sources of obtaining information related to Coronavirus.
- Knowing how trust the community is in the local authority in facing Coronavirus, and knowing their expectations about that.
- Knowing the community solutions and recommendations to face covid19

The response to deal with covid19

Regarding to how community deals with covid19 and the extent response of protective instructions, the study explained that 55% they do not care about covid19 and they never committed the instructions, whereas 35% they deal carefully but don't committed the instructions of covid19.

As for 10% deal carefully and follows instructions under the circumstances of covid19.

The interactions with awareness on covid19

According to the knowledge of community's opinions about the extent of their acceptance and their interaction with campaigns of awareness which targeting community ,the study showed that 48% accept awareness and the level of interaction is middle, 22% accept awareness and the level of interaction is high, 37% does not accept and don't interact with awareness.

The reasons that made the community does not accept awareness is as follows:

1. Poor families do not have basic needs this reason made them ignore awareness. When you aware families how to wash their hands and they do not have soap and water how will they accept awareness or listen to you? To make them interact with you, during the awareness you should give them cleaning materials.
2. The repetition of awareness from organizations, this made the community look for that as losing money no more.
3. Most families need food before awareness.
4. The conflicting of news about spread of covid19 in Yemen made people unbelievable the virus exists.
5. Rumors, contradictory lies mockery of covid19 had affected of their awareness.
6. The local authority did not make decisions to close Qat market which made people unbelieve of covid19.
7. The spread of other diseases such as "Mukarfes" with covid19.

Regarding to knowing the views of society about the way that makes them accept awareness, we found the follows answers: -

1. Distributing hygiene and sterilization materials to families during awareness.

2. Use the awareness method that is suitable for the cultural, Educational and economic situation of community.
3. Educators must be influential and have good methods appropriate for community awareness.

The response to wear mask

The reconnaissance showed that 81% of Al-Shamayatain people does not wear mask, Whereas 15% wear mask regularly and 44% use mask irregularly

The reasons why community does not wear mask is as follows:

The first reason is the economic situation and high cost of living effected on poor families because some of them depend on daily income and some are suffering from unemployment so they cannot provide protective materials also mask. these families are about 76%of society members.

The second reason is they do not believe on virus covid19 and they consider it a rumor lie, those people is about 48%.

The third reason is wrong view of society that made some people not commit to wearing masks because of the irony they face or looking at it as being outside the framework of society's behavior and those people is about 35%.

The response to stay at home

The study showed that 88% did not respond for the warning of stay at home to protect them from virus covid19 and the said that they doing their job normally and the reason behind that is some families are depending on daily income.

The reconnaissance showed that 8% committed sitting at home and this families deals carefully and has high consciousness about virus in addition to their good economic potential also they have fixed income sources, 4%committed sitting at home but not regular.

The response to compliance with Prevention Instructions

Regarding to the community acceptance and benefits from awareness campaigns, the study showed that 62% of those surveyed said they have benefited by awareness,

Regarding to the Compliance with Prevention Instructions with people which are promoted in various media sources or field campaigns, the study showed the following result:

44 % washing their hands with soap and water an average of once to twice a day.

21% covering their mouth and nose during sneezing.

13% Keep maintaining physical spacing.

52% No shaking hands.

32% Keep sterilizing their hands an average of 1 - 2 times a day.

5 % Keep sterilizing the tools in their home.

Sources of access to information and prevention instructions

The study showed the society depends on obtaining information and prevention instructions of coronavirus Virus from different sources:

16% through wall posters.

58% via social media (42% WhatsApp, 12% Facebook, 4% other means).

8% via radio and television.

18% through community dialogues.

Community trust in local Authority

During the survey, 71% of those surveyed said they don't trust the local authority and the government to deal with the virus.

As for the community's expectations about the role of the local authority in confronting Coronavirus, the answers were mixed, 45% said that they expected the local authority to act on issuing curfews and bans on travel between governorates , 40% said they did not expect anything positive, 10% said they expected to spray and sterilize the streets and support health centers, while 5% did not give any answer.

A community member said: " How can we trust the government that has not provide anything to health centers in an exceptionally difficult situation and said for example, hospital health workers are living in difficult conditions because they do not have the necessary prevention tools that will help them to carry out their tasks.

Among the opinions that we obtained, one of the citizens says that the local authority wants to do everything, but it is impotent because it lacks the capabilities and needs support from international organizations, as well as need to unify efforts between them and international and local organizations, as one of the members of the community committees in Al-Azaz area says: The weakness of the capabilities of the local authority is evident through its decision that the Al-Akhahele School be a place for quarantine, and it later became clear that it is a place that lacks the capabilities and medical equipment.

Community Solutions and Recommendations to confront Coronavirus

Regarding to solutions that community considers important and will contribute to improving the response of citizens and prevention of coronavirus, we have obtained the following responses:

1. The formation of a community emergency group from the community itself in each region and make a training to them to carry out emergency tasks, early warning and isolation at the community level, mobilize support for poor families who are affected by injury, provide food and health needs to families in isolation through campaigns to raise funds and promote human solidarity within the community itself, in addition to spreading awareness in the community.
2. Preparing a Training for women and volunteers in each community on ways to produce sterilization and face's masks in homes from simple items, and distribute them to others, especially poor families due to high prices and inability to buy.
3. Establishing electronic platforms or networks to exchange information and spread an everyday awareness, as well as monitoring and reporting cases of injuries in the community to health authorities and taking safety measures at the community level.
4. The establishment of community pharmacies to provide free treatment to poor families.
5. Creating temporary mini-markets in each community and abolishing large markets to address congestion.
6. Providing first-aid community centers and training volunteers in each area to perform ambulance procedures for patients because hospitals are unable to receive cases and so that such cases are not exposed to HIV infection and then spread infection in the community.
7. Demanding the intervention of organizations to provide hygiene kits containing medical supplies and , especially during awareness campaigns so that the community can accept awareness as well as provide food for families, especially poor families.
8. Uniting efforts between the local authority, local civil society organizations and international organizations to provide possibilities for confronting Coronavirus.
9. Providing spraying and sterilization services to eliminate mosquitoes in residential neighborhoods that cause coronavirus virus and possibly more deadly diseases.
10. Cooperation between local and international organizations, community members and those interested in social works because it is a source of strength for all to overcome the repercussions of the Covid-19. As societies, they don't only look for organizations that exist only in prosperity, but are in dire need of them to intervene quickly in times of crisis.
11. Urging initiatives and components of civil society, depending on their area of activity, to intervene to situations in response to the pandemic by providing food aid, cleaning materials, sanitary materials, such as medical muzzles, especially to poor families.
12. Asking the local authority to provide Centers with the necessary supplies, and preparing a place for health isolation to deal with Coronavirus, also it is necessary to direct organizations to work intensively in this bad situation, there must be networking and unifying efforts between the local authority and the governmental offices and civil society organizations which must be intensified

awareness campaigns to raise awareness among citizens, because citizens are ignorant of the seriousness of this virus and many people underestimate.

