

Skills Development in the time of Corona: Liquid Soap Making

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Hand washing is one of the precautionary measures against coronavirus recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health (MOH). JESE with support from Simavi under the WASHFIRST Project is implementing skilling of women groups in Ntoroko district with an objective(s) of maximizing/promoting hand washing scaling down unemployment and poverty during the Covid times. The demand for sanitary products like soap has spiked, presenting a viable business opportunity that women groups, youths and persons with disabilities could take advantage of to earn a living in these uncertain times. Since the implementation of the WASHFIRST Project, women have been hit by poverty for in most cases they are the providers for their households .With this, JESE is skilling women groups in order to get them financially stable again. It organized trainings with selected women groups had to attend a one-day course in liquid soap making in Ntoroko district in Kanara town council, Kanara and Butungama sub counties. The trainings were done in their communities and in small batches (of 20 people) in respect to the restrictions against public gatherings. Following the training, each women group was given a set of start-up equipment and materials to get the group going immediately. Below is the experience of the first batch of women trained; the impact COVID-19 has had on their livelihood as well as what they hope to use this newly acquired skill for in this time of COVID-19 and beyond:



Rwentuhe women cultural group and and Bakyara twekambe tailor's group in Butungama Sub County undergoing training in liquid soap.



Kobusinge Stella 30 years, a single mother of 4 children as well as the chairperson of Rwangara Women's boat hiring group from Kanara Sub County says, I had a restaurant that I was running before Corona, with the lockdown my business was affected tremendously. My finances became a gamble. The floods worsened the situation and we had to shift to internally displaced camp. Now am excited to have something I can produce for promoting sanitation at home, sale for income and take good care of my family.



Banura Roseline of 42 years, a woman councilor and a member of Kanyansi women's association, Kanara Town Council adds that before the Corona virus outbreak, I was hawking ladies shoes around the town. With the lockdown, my business was not doing well. I was not earning anything. I resorted to operating a women's hair styling salon which also faced many challenges including shortage of soap. I am now happy to have learnt this skill, since the demand for liquid soap is high in this area and in neighborhood DRC following the precautionary measures advised including washing hands regularly. Now I know I will use it at home, salon, be able to sell to acquire money for settling other basic needs and save money in our group.

JESE is to carry out more skills trainings in Ntoroko, to continue empowering communities affected by Covid-19. A crisis can present an opportunity to learn a new skill, serve the community all the while earning money for sustenance. We look forward to opening more opportunities like these for women during this COVID-19 crisis and beyond!