



CLEAN-UP IJORA PROJECT REPORT

Led by

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1. INTRODUCTION

This One Health community-based project was conceptualized as a result of World Health Organization's statistics that states that over 12.6 million people global deaths occurred in 2012 as a result of people living or working in an unhealthy environment. Unhealthy environments are usually complicated by improper waste management, pollution, and other bad environmental conditions. Owing to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the relevance of environmental health in the spectrum of One Health cannot be overemphasized, as the recent outbreak erupted from a wet market in Wuhan, China. "One Health" is a concept that recognizes the connection between "Human Health", "Animal Health" and "Environmental Health". Therefore, the project was aimed at Market Trader's working at Ijora Fish Market, a wet market at Ijora Olopa, in Apapa Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos, Nigeria. The LGA where the fish market is situated is of significance in terms of the global traffic at the popular Lagos Port, which is presently one of the biggest docking ports in West Africa.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the One Health community-based project is to advance community waste management practices through sensitization, advocacy and research. The three focal points implemented to address this includes: waste management & environmental health awareness (with a focus on the One Health approach), market clean-up, and quantitative research to understand the perception of market residents on waste management practices. It is expected that the output from the research will improve understanding of environmental health and waste management practices, serve as an instrument in advising markets and other relevant stakeholders at local governments on the way forward from wrong practices. The research would also play a key role in influencing policies that would effectively address the waste issues in our municipalities using Ijora Olopa, Apapa Local Government area, Lagos, as a case study.

3. VISION

Lagos State, being one of the most highly populated states in Nigeria is faced with serious challenges of waste management. In addition, wet markets in Lagos are potential hotspots of future epidemics and pandemics of zoonotic origin. Bad environmental actions are often due to a lack of understanding of the risks and hazards involved in partaking in them. The vision is to reduce the number of deaths caused by unhealthy environment annually, and also to halt possible zoonotic epidemics that may erupt from wet markets in Lagos State.

4. SOURCE OF FUNDING

A small grant was awarded by Madam Foluke Areola, a 2020 OHAM Mentor through One Health and Development Initiative (OHDI).

5. KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Awareness and Sensitization on the need for proper community waste management practices and positive environmental health behavior at the Ijora Fish Market, Ijora Olopa, Lagos State.
- Dissemination of survey questionnaires to understand the perception and needs of the market traders and other residents on proper waste management practices.
- Donation of clean-up items used in the project to promote positive environmental actions in the market.
- The provision of a banner that outlines the necessary steps required for handling community wastes.
- The use of indigenous language (Yoruba and pidgin), and social media to get the message across to the residents of the market and other stakeholders at Apapa Local Government Area.

6. CHALLENGES

- Funding
- Attitudes of some market traders

7. DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF THE PROJECT

The project was based on three (3) focal points: awareness and sensitization on waste management and environmental health practices, environmental (market) clean-up, quantitative research to ‘understand the perception of market traders on waste management practices’. On 28 November 2020, Iyiola Oladunjoye, an environmental microbiologist and fellow of the “One Health Advocacy and Mentorship Programme” led a team of volunteers to the Ijora Fish Market at Ijora Olopa, Lagos, Nigeria, with a mission to advance waste management practices and environmental health through sensitization, advocacy and research in Nigeria.

The project was a great step in approaching and tackling environmental health challenges at one of the biggest and well-known seafood market residents at one of the largest docking ports in Africa – the Apapa Local Government Area. The Ijora metropolis is well-known as a suburban region with waste management challenges. Therefore, awareness of waste management and environmental health was raised from a “One Health” lens. Afterward, a market clean-up exercise was conducted and survey questionnaires aimed at understanding the perception of the market traders on environmental and waste management practices were distributed. Results and deductions from this research would be directed at advising relevant stakeholders about a positive way forward at the market and local government levels.

After the volunteers converged at the Ijora Olopa Bus stop at nine o'clock in a customized One Health and Development Initiative (OHDI) t-shirts, the whole programme started by meeting with the Head of Market 'Iya Oloja' and other top officiating leaders of the market, to inform them about the reason for our visitation and we aligned our purpose of coming, they welcomed us and gave their full support in allowing smooth and undisturbed processes. This was followed by the introduction of the team, organization, and a brief welcoming address by Iyiola Oladunjoye-the program officer, who also assigned to each team member the role to play in contributing their quota in making the program a success.

Two of the volunteers named Ridwan Adebayo and Yusuff Jimoh proceeded with the first session "awareness" by approaching the market men and women, creating awareness on the reason and purpose of our visitation to the market. These two volunteers discussed in detail the effect of an unhealthy environment on humans' and animals' health. They also discussed the likelihood of infectious disease transmission via the Environment concerning man and animals, hence the need for proper waste management. Much emphasis was placed on the WHO statistics, which states that unhealthy environment contributes to 12.6 million global deaths in 2012, as a result of people working or living in such environments.

The second session kicked off shortly with the focus on "cleaning". We proceeded with the distribution of the cleaning materials amongst ourselves, assigning and tasking groups into various segments of the market, we cleaned up the whole market environment which was our means of sensitizing them about the need to clean their environment – stepping beyond theory to transformative action! We believe that this would serve as an encouragement to the market residents, that through collective efforts they can always make their environment clean and safe to live in. The market traders' associations were impressed by this act of our community service. All clean-up items were gracefully donated to the Market Traders' Association.

The third session of the project, which was based on survey and interaction, was quite interesting and revealing, as we engaged almost 70% of the Ijora market people, asking series of questions to know and understand their views and knowledge about waste management, and the effect of an unhealthy environment to the human health. We also asked questions about their methods of waste disposal, and we discovered they have several challenges with waste management in the market, some of which include: lack of waste collection units within the market, disposal of waste into receiving water bodies, collection of waste by market waste scavengers, and inadequate intervention from the government. Whilst diverse opinions were presenting themselves, these issues remain prominent concerns amongst market residents. However, most market traders make active efforts in ensuring good waste management practices.

In conclusion, we were able to sensitize the fishmongers at Ijora to the importance of proper market cleaning in achieving positive One Health outcomes as well as preventing zoonotic infections that may arise from wet markets like theirs. We achieve this by communicating effectively in indigenous languages (notably Yoruba—an indigenous language, predominant in southwestern Nigeria) and Pidgin English. According to Debbie Olajide, one of the volunteers and intern at the West Africa Academy of Public Health, the fish market traders seemed to have little to just enough knowledge of waste management and how it can directly or indirectly affect their health. They were eager to learn and showed remarkable interest in

improving their environment. We believe that insights from data gathered would offer remarkable insights into their understanding and way forward.

As part of our efforts to follow-up with the progress of the market regarding waste management, we discussed with Mr. Malik Tosho, an official at the market about the influence and impact our project has made so far, on the 24th of December, 2020, he confirmed that the market stakeholders are now taking active steps in achieving better and positive environmental outcomes in the market.

We are very optimistic that this community project would play a key role in influencing policies that would effectively address the waste management issues in our municipalities, using Ijora Olopa, Apapa Local Government area, Lagos, as a case study. The Apapa Local Government area where the fish market is situated is of significance in terms of the global traffic at the popular Lagos Port which is presently one of the biggest docking ports in West Africa.



8. PHOTO SPEAKS

a. Awareness And Sensitization on Waste Management and Environmental Health Practices



Figure 1: The team of volunteers displaying the project banner at the Ijora Fish Market



Figure 2: A volunteer describing One Health approach to a market resident



Figure 3: A volunteer explaining the concept of zoonoses between animals and humans



Figure 4: A volunteer listening to the concerns of the market traders



Figure 5: Discussions going on between volunteers



Figure 6: Awareness and sensitization about the purpose of Project Clean-up Ijora with the head 'Iya Oloja' of the market

b. Environmental (Market) Clean-Up



Figure 7: Volunteers preparing clean-up items and allocating segments of the markets for clean-up to themselves



Figure 8: Market Clean-up in action!



Figure 9: Volunteers cleaning seashores of the Ijora Fish Market



Figure 10: Proper packaging of wastes for disposal



Figure 11: A proportion of the market after clean-up



Figure 12: Donation of clean-up items to the head 'Iya Oloja' of the market

c. Quantitative Research to ‘Understand The Perception Of Market Traders On Waste Management Practices



Figure 13: Data gathering using survey questionnaires at the market



Figure 14: Understanding the perception of unskilled laborers on waste management practices in the market



Figure 15: The project officer collating the survey questionnaires



Figure 16: A volunteer aiming to understand the market trader's understanding of environmental health and waste management



Figure 17: Data gathering in action!



Figure 18: Data gathering in action!

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This One Health-community based project was successfully implemented regardless of the challenges faced. The market traders and other residents of Ijora Fish Market were impacted by the awareness of environmental health and waste management practices from a “One Health” lens. The impact of the programme was amplified by social media. It is therefore recommended that these kinds of projects continue, most especially in the light of infectious disease outbreaks of zoonotic nature from wet markets.

10. NEXT STEPS

We would be completing a research report based on the data collected at Ijora Fish Market from the deployment of survey questionnaires and other data collection tools.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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