



**MEDICAL  
TEAMS**  
International

## Sanofi and Medical Teams Collaborate for Long-Lasting, Life-Saving Results Urgently Fighting COVID-19 in Uganda

**“THE BEST PREPARATION FOR TOMORROW IS TO DO TODAY’S WORK SUPERBLY WELL,”** said prominent Canadian physician William Osler more than a century ago. Through its generous commitment of resources, **Sanofi Espoir Foundation**, the philanthropic arm of the global healthcare leader currently working on a COVID-19 vaccine, has enabled Medical Teams International to live out this truth through its disease preparedness work in Uganda. This pro-active collaboration between Sanofi Espoir Foundation and Medical Teams has reaped benefits in terms of lives protected and saved.

Resources from **Sanofi Espoir Foundation** helped enable Medical Teams to fight the spread of Ebola in Uganda in 2019 and prepared it to expertly respond to COVID-19 in Uganda, helping to slow its spread. According to the World Health Organization, Uganda, a nation of 45 million people, has had 2,426 cases of COVID-19 and 25 deaths as of August 2020. By contrast, the United States, a nation of 331 million, has had approximately 5.6 million cases and more than 176,000 deaths as of August 2020.

Medical Teams is UNHCR’s lead health and nutrition implementing partner in more than 20 refugee settlements and at western border entry and transit centers in Uganda. The organization provides comprehensive primary health and medical screening services to more than one million people, including refugees from Congo, Burundi, South Sudan, as well as host Ugandans. Medical Teams works through 70 health facilities, more than 1,600 local staff and a network of more than 1,500 Village Health Teams (VHTs).

Medical Teams, through funding provided by **Sanofi Espoir Foundation**, was able to mount a significant Ebola virus disease response from February 2019 to May 2020, gaining invaluable learnings and protecting countless refugee children and families. Medical Teams provided medical screenings to more than 55,000 people at 27 Points of Entry along the Uganda-DRC border, trained 522 community volunteers on community-based disease surveillance, and trained 175 health workers on cholera, measles, and hemorrhagic fevers. In addition, Medical Teams supported 20 health facilities in high-risk

districts with essential medicines and supplies, including PPE and isolation and screening tents.

In March 2020, Medical Teams began implementing COVID-19 preparedness measures, bolstered by its previous Ebola preparedness work funded by **Sanofi Espoir Foundation**. Thanks to protocols put in place through this



work, staff and volunteers who received training—and the facilities supported with supplies and structural improvements—are well-positioned to continue providing high-quality infection prevention and control measures.

For example, in March 2020, Medical Teams identified and safely transported a 57-year-old man (who later tested positive for COVID-19) to an isolation unit at Adjumani General Hospital. The patient had physically contacted his family members, unknowingly risking their lives. Medical Teams health workers identified all of his family members, isolated them at the COVID-19 case management unit, and later screened them for the disease.

“I was informed about a case to pick up,” said Rasul Swale, a driver with Medical Teams. “It was not like the usual cases, but a COVID-19 suspected case. COVID-19 being a very contagious disease, I was scared for my life and

my family, but I knew it was my responsibility to ensure other people’s lives are saved.”

To further equip Medical Teams Uganda’s courageous and dedicated staff, health

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messaging has been translated into different local languages, and screening and isolation infrastructure improvements are ongoing at all 65 Medical Teams’ health facilities (plus support to three district hospitals and three landing sites on Lake Albert).

Additionally, there has been coordination with District Health Officers to repurpose existing health units to COVID-19 isolation and treatment centers, and surveillance and contact tracing are underway. Medical Teams has participated in a national task force for Risk Communication and a Community Engagement Working Group, and VHTs have conducted door-to-door sensitization. Also, 1,250 family hygiene kits and PPE supplies arrived in early May 2020 to support staff.

Medical Teams Uganda staff are grateful that the impact of COVID-19 has largely been contained in their country, and the organization is committed to continuing to ensure the safety and well-being of its staff and all whom they serve.

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To discuss partnership opportunities,  
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