VRA MEDICAL DIRECTOR URGES STAFF WITH COMORBIDITIES TO STAY AWAY FROM CROWDED PLACES

Medical Director of the Volta River Authority (VRA) Health Services Limited, Dr. (Mrs.) Rebecca Acquaah-Arhin, has urged Staff of the Authority and its allied subsidiary companies with documented comorbidities to avoid crowded places and manage their health conditions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

She said Staff with underlying health conditions such as; asthma, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, among others, are more susceptible to the virus and therefore must tread cautiously.

Speaking to VRA NEWS, Dr. (Mrs.) Acquaah-Arhin reiterated that, Staff with such conditions would have to ensure they keep their ailments under control by eating healthy foods, religiously taking their prescribed medications, manage their body weights, and endeavour to undertake regular exercises according to their health.

→ Contd. on pg. 2

How to Stay Safe

- Avoid crowded places
- Avoid close-contact settings
- Avoid Confined & enclosed space
Contd. from pg.1

... stay away from crowded places

She added, “They must strictly observe all the World Health Organisation's (WHO) protocols and the President's guidelines on COVID-19, and if possible take advantage of the Authority’s “Working from Home” policy, depending on their work schedules, in order to stay away from crowded environments.”

VRA COVID-19 Task Force

Touching on how VRA is fighting the pandemic, Mrs. Acquaah-Arhin stated that for the purposes of ensuring a well-coordinated effort, VRA set up a “VRA COVID-19 Task Force” led by the Chief Executive, Mr. Emmanuel Anwiti-Darkwa. She explained, “the Chief Executive leads and coordinates the various in-house COVID-19 Task Force groups, set up to manage our emergency preparedness plan. Under his direction, the specialized groups: Management Task Force (headed by Director, Real Estates and Security), Four Health Services Task Force groups (headed by the Medical Director), AMC Task Force (headed by Manager, AMC, Mrs. Vivian Yebuah), and the VRA Enclaves Task Force (headed by the Director, Thermal SBU) provide urgent technical, scientific and administrative actions to support Management's move towards the containment of the virus to ensure the safety of all Staff and stakeholders,” she stated.

VRA’s effort against COVID-19

Commenting specifically on how VRA is fighting the pandemic, the Medical Director stated that, since its inception, Management has been proactive in putting in place the necessary aggressive measures intended to control the spread of the disease. The objective according to her is to protect the lives of staff in the mainstream VRA and its subsidiaries to ensure business continuity. She stated, “We are monitoring and evaluating a lot of measures put in place to stop the spread of the virus. We have intensified public education and sensitized staff and the people in our communities of operations and trained them on how to wear PPEs for screening, identification, isolation and treatment of the COVID-19 disease. We have provided facemasks and sanitizers for the staff and regularly fumigate our work environments; we are collaborating with stakeholders in the operational areas to ensure the enforcement of the safety protocols.”

Dr. (Mrs.) Acquaah-Arhin said other measures put in place to contain the spread include the setting up of various screening points in all VRA work locations and hospitals. Adding, “Facilities have been made available to hold suspected cases, quarantine exposed persons and isolate positive cases.” She said VRA was collaborating effectively with the District Health Disease Surveillance teams to conduct contact tracing of positive cases in VRA and in the communities. “So far, we have contacted and quarantined all staff who had travelled or received visitors from abroad during the initial stages of the disease”.

She disclosed that VRA has made provision for patient monitors and working to provide ventilators to manage the COVID-19 disease. “We are also working in close collaboration with the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research for testing equipment to enable us run COVID-19 tests at our health facilities”.

Managing CSM and COVID-19

Responding to a question on how VRA/NEDCo Staff in the northern part of Ghana should conduct themselves in the midst of the outbreak of Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM) and COVID-19, she stated that, “As a preventive measure, the Staff as a matter of urgency should receive vaccination against CSM. In addition, those in close contact with CSM patients in households must take the prescribed medications to decrease the risk of transmission to themselves and others, as well as practice good personal hygiene.” She further entreated them to avoid crowded and public areas, and adhere strictly to the COVID-19 safety protocols.

— Contd. on pg.3
... stay away from crowded places

Appropriate Facemask & Usage

Dr. Acquaah-Arhin noted that using the appropriate facemask was critical to curbing the spread of the pandemic. To this end, she advised on the need to get the right size of facemask, explaining that “a good face mask should have three layers (3 ply), and should be as good as the N95 facemask. She urged the staff not to choose facemask because it is nice, but check if it is a 3 ply before buying.”

She continued that, it was prudent for all to wear the facemask when undergoing strenuous exercises in a group or team, unless all the team members had tested negative within the last 14 days. “If you are exercising or jogging alone in an open space, or in your home alone, you do not have to wear facemask. If you are exercising or jogging in a group in an open space but close together you must wear your facemask and practice physical distancing,” she stated.

Non-Orthodox Treatment

Regarding the use of non-orthodox treatment, she counselled staff on the use of non-orthodox treatment regimens and immune booster compounds, explaining that, there is no known non-orthodox treatment regimens against the virus. The only non-orthodox method is to boost the immune system by eating fruits and vegetables, drinking water, taking recommended antioxidants (e.g. natural cocoa), vitamin C, getting adequate rest, exercising in moderation; and cutting down on fats, carbohydrates, alcohol and other negative lifestyle choices.

“Braising” Against Covid-19

She said VRA’s approach to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic is aligned with our corporate strategy with the acronym “BRAISE” and urged all the staff to observe the protocol as stipulated therein:

Concluding, Dr. Acquaah-Arhin advised that with the surge of COVID-19 Positive cases in Ghana and treatment centres becoming full, it was imperative for us to consolidate our efforts in the fight against the pandemic in order to bring the number of cases down and eventually eradicate the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keep Safe and Keep Everybody Else Safe!
KICKING OUT COVID-19
– KUDOS TO VRA MANAGEMENT

Lawrence Quartey (CSR-E&SDD)

There is no doubt that Coronavirus (Covid-19), which many still refer to as an invisible enemy, has changed the rhythm of our lives as we face it today. It has affected every facet of our lives, leaving many questions unanswered.

Global economies are crumbling, and national leaders are confounded, with little clue as to what steps or measures to take.

Companies are folding-up, and those surviving are either downsizing or adopting measures to reduce salaries and favourable work conditions. Religious leaders across the globe and especially in Ghana and Africa, are on their knees calling on their Gods to intervene.

Sadly, we still have not found a vaccine or actual treatment medicine. We are currently relying on various protocols (measures) and on what to eat or take to boost our immune systems to survive.

In Ghana, organisations like the Volta River Authority have embraced bold decisions to keep their employees safe in the work environment. They are implementing policies that promote safe working and living conditions, bringing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principle to the front line of focus.

The good thing happening is that the pandemic is redirecting CSR to the protection of people. This is essentially the heart of corporate social responsibility, which promotes ethical policies to support individuals, communities and the environment. Companies need to make a profit, but that should also improve people's lives and the planet they live in.

International labour standards encapsulate the idea of a human-centred approach to economics and development, and the need to support businesses and protect workers.

People are the most important assets a company has. They ultimately determine the success or failure of businesses. This is why as staff of VRA we should be happy with decisions so far taken to protect staff safety and health. Right from the onset, Management has been on top of the fight against the ravaging virus. It has put in place across-the-board measures that have helped to protect employees' safety and health.

In line with its occupational health and safety policy, the Authority rolled out strategies to ensure the safety of staff, families, communities, clients, and other stakeholders who visited VRA's offices. It placed a ban on all staff overseas travels and set up an in-house task force to implement strategies and provide weekly update to the Chief Executive of the Authority.

Sensitisation on the disease also took place in all VRA's locations in Accra, Akosombo, Akuse and Aboadze. Our impacted communities were not left out as the virus knows no boundaries. Our hospital facilities and various office locations demarcated isolation wards and holding rooms and, started screening all persons who visited including making adequate provision for sanitizers, and PPEs necessary for effective monitoring of the possible spread of the virus.

Wearing of facemasks became compulsory for all staff and visitors.
even before it was made mandatory nationwide. Guidelines for wearing and handling of nose masks and other PPEs were subsequently developed for staff.

When the lockdown was lifted, Management directed all departments to prioritize shift-working system. 50% of departments' staff now work from home or on vacation.

Once again, the Authority introduced all these measures before the International Labour Organisation (ILO) introduced its Covid-19 Pandemic new guidelines for protecting workers in the workplace. The new guidelines are urging employers to consider the impact of business decisions on workers' families and to support greater social protection wherever possible.

Unlike other institutions, we in VRA are lucky at such a time like this. Instead of downsizing as other companies are doing, we continue to enjoy existing working arrangements in addition to free access to quality health care, which the ILO has advocated.

Management has done its bit and now incumbent on us workers to augment the efforts to protect our families and ourselves so we all win the battle against the virus.

We should, therefore, cooperate with Management and follow the procedures put in place and report any symptom arising from work. We owe it a responsibility to protect others and ourselves from being infected during the course of our work.

Let me end with these quotes from the UN Deputy-Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed who stated during a digital meeting of the Forum's Covid-19 Platform that: "The number one thing to focus on is employees and customers". When it comes to taking care of employees, he added, the goals should be: "keep them well, keep them employed and keep them mentally healthy."

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A.I.S RECIEVES GOV'T PPE KITS

Michael Danso, CCS/CSD, Accra

June 22, 2020 to prepare for their final examination.

Receiving the A.I.S share of the items, Headmaster of the School Mr. Julius Kog-Der noted that the items were made up of three veronica buckets, two thermometer guns, 10 gallons of liquid soap, 10 rolls of tissue paper, 231 bottles of hand sanitizer and 462 pieces of face masks.

He expressed the school's appreciation to the government and assured the kits will be put to good use for its intended purpose.

He said the school Management will ensure that the prescribed safety protocols were followed by students and staff to protect them from contracting the virus.

The Senior High School (S.H.S) department of the Akosombo International School (A.I.S) has received its share of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) promised by government towards the fight against the spread of COVID-19.
AKOSOMBO POWER HOUSE GANTRY CRANE RENOVATED BY VRA MAINTENANCE TEAM

Linda Appiah, Community Relations, E&SDD, Akosombo

The Mechanical Maintenance team of the Hydro Generation Department of the Volta River Authority (VRA), has carried out a general overhaul and maintenance work of the upstream West Gearbox of the 450 ton Gantry Crane at the power house.

The Gantry Crane is an essential hoisting equipment used for heavy loading and unloading mechanism and, maintenance of the Akosombo power generators.

Assistant Chief Technician Engineer and leader of the team, Ing. Benjamin Adjartey Opata, indicated that the crane broke down with excessive leakage from the upstream west inner and outer gearboxes, but could not be repaired due to lack of ancillary parts which made it immovable.

“We were however determined to maintain it internally without engaging foreign hands which usually cost the Authority huge sums of money.

We designed and fabricated different types of Jigs in-house to facilitate the dismantling process”, he noted.

He added that the rational to refurbish the gearbox was not only to make the crane functional but also to demonstrate to Management that knowledge acquired by the team at the training school was being put to good use.

Ing. Opata expressed gratitude to Management for the confidence reposed in the team and support it received during the execution of the project.

The nine-member multi-discipline team was made up of: Benjamin Adjartey Opata, Asst. Chief Technician Engineer, Ing. Dennis S. Anyomi, Senior Mechanical Engineer, Cyrus Mackey, Senior Technician Engineer, Eric Osei-Owusu, Head Maintenance Mechanic, Musah Kwame Owusu, Senior. Maintenance Mechanic, Abdul-Rahman Issah, Maintenance Mechanic, Joseph Abel, Senior. Heavy Equipment Operator, John Polley, Heavy Equipment Operator and Mohammed Yahaya, Tradesman.
COVID-19 SHOULD NOT BE AN EXCUSE FOR TARGET FAILURE

The insurgence of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has changed the way of life for everyone in the world today. It has adversely dealt a big blow to all segments of the economy including the power sector.

As we know, the pandemic has changed the general world of work and this may persist even after COVID-19 but organizations that are agile and flexible are proving to be further ahead in their survival strategies. One of such organizations is the Volta River Authority (VRA).

Since the early stages of the virus, Management of the Authority has been very proactive with measures taken to protect the workforce and stakeholders. As a people centered organization with a dominant safety culture, the Authority in line with its occupational health and safety policy, rolled out strategies to ensure the safety of staff, families, communities, clients, and other stakeholders who visited VRA's offices.

First and foremost, it placed a ban on all staff overseas travels and set up in-house task force groups to implement the strategies and provide weekly update to the Chief Executive.

Public education on the disease also took place in all VRA's work locations in Accra, Akosombo, Akuse and Aboadze and by extension to our impacted communities.

Our hospital facilities and various office locations demarcated isolation wards and holding rooms and, started screening all persons who visited including making adequate provision for hand sanitizers, and PPEs necessary for effective monitoring of the possible spread of the virus.

Management made wearing of facemasks compulsory for all staff and visitors even before it was made mandatory nationwide. Guidelines for wearing and handling of nose masks and other PPEs were subsequently developed for staff.

It will be recalled that, when the lockdown was lifted, Management directed all departments to prioritize shift-working system with about 50 percent of the workforce in a department now working from home. Others have proceeded on leave where necessary.

Folks, unlike other institutions where the pandemic has necessitated downsizing, we in VRA are lucky at such a time like this as we continue to enjoy existing working arrangements and remuneration in addition to free access to quality health care.

The VRA NEWS is of the view that Management has done its bit very well and now incumbent on us to augment its efforts by following the procedures put in place and report any symptom arising from work. We owe it a responsibility to protect others and ourselves from being infected during the course of our work.

That notwithstanding, the pandemic has taught us a number of valuable lessons, among which is how necessary it is to improve our workflows and more importantly learn to work remotely from home which has now become the 'NEW NORMAL'.

The VRA NEWS team is advocating that, working from home should not be a basis or cover for non-performance and failure to meet individual and organizational targets for the year.

Let us all strive hard irrespective of the existing challenges to make our singular contributions count for the overall success of the Authority.
VRA MANAGEMENT’S COMMITMENT STATEMENT ON COVID-19

VRA Management is committed to protecting the health, safety, and overall well-being of its workforce and families, visitors and communities through the implementation of appropriate and acceptable protocols at our operational and work locations to combat the spread of COVID-19.

‘KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, WASH YOUR HANDS AND SANITISE REGULARLY’ ‘MASK UP ALWAYS; NO FACE MASK NO ENTRY’
ENFORCEMENT OF COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS IN AKOSOMBO

Ben Quashie, Community Relations, Akosombo

Safety equipped frontline worker screening at the Security Control Barrier

People queuing to cross to Akosombo township at Combine Barrier being screened
AKOSOMBO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OBSERVING THE COVID-19 PROTOCOLS STRICTLY

Ben Quarshie, Community Relations, Akosombo
VRA Supports Kokono D/A Basic School Canteen Project

Linda Appiah, Community Relations, E&SDD, Akosombo

The Volta River Authority (VRA) has as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy supported the Kokono D/A Basic School with GH¢3,000.00 towards the construction of its new canteen project.

The Community school, with a total pupil population of 200, near New Combine in Akosombo in the Asuogyaman District appealed to the Authority with an estimated budget to enable them construct the canteen for the school.

Making the presentation on behalf of Manager, Corporate Social Responsibility; Mrs. Rhoda Arthur, Senior Community Relations Officer stated that “this gesture to the school would go a long way to boost the worth of the students who will be at the helm of affairs in the near future”.

She said the Management in fulfilment of its commitment towards supporting the development of education in all its impacted communities agreed to assist the school purchase 30 bags of Cement, a packet of Roofing Sheet and the cost of workmanship fee as requested.

The Assistant Headmistress, Madam Gladys Darkey, receiving the cash donation on behalf of the school revealed how timely the donation was and expressed their gratitude to VRA for the continuous support over the years.

Present at the short ceremony was the Coordinator and Chairman of the School Canteen Project, Mr. Moses Bosu and some Staff of the school.

Be ready to Fight Covid-19

# Be Informed | Be Prepared | Be Smart | Be Safe
The Volta River Authority (VRA) in partnership with TICO of TAQA have jointly presented assorted COVID-19 relief items to the Shama District Assembly (SDA), and four other communities in the district that fall within the VRA-TICO operational area, for the fight against the pandemic.

The items which included: veronica buckets, plastic tables and chairs, gallons of liquid detergents, tissue papers among others were shared among the SDA and Aboadze, Abuesi, Dwomo and Lower Nchaban.

Making the donation on behalf of the two organizations, the Director, Thermal Generations SBU, Ing. Edward Obeng-Kenzo said since the outbreak of COVID-19, VRA has been making frantic efforts to protect its staff, their dependants and stakeholders within which it operates.

He said by virtue of the fact that these communities were impacted by the operations of both power generating companies “it is our duty to ensure the well-being of our communities at all times. So today’s donation form part of our Corporate Social Responsibility efforts towards improving your safety and security against the virus”.

Mr. Obeng-Kenzo noted the Authority has over the years demonstrated commitment towards the impacted communities by constantly providing support in the areas of education, sanitation, career guidance and attachment opportunities for its scholarship beneficiaries to learn on the job while preparing them for the corporate world.

The Head of Human Resource (HR) at the TICO/TAQA, Mrs. Felicia Opoku-Folitse said her company was happy to have partnered the VRA in making the items available to the communities for their use.

She said COVID-19 is real considering the staggering and life threatening impact it has had globally and urged traditional authority’s and opinion leaders to enhance awareness creation about the pandemic and help support key stakeholders in the fight against its wide spread.

Receiving the items on behalf of the District Assembly and communities, the District Coordinating Director, Mr. Richard Blevi and the Chief of Aboadze, Nana Kobina Attom III expressed their gratitude to the VRA and TICO/TAQA for the support and promised to make good use of them.
Now something practical and honest about Covid-19

Dr. Faheem Younus: Head of the Infectious Disease Clinic, University Of Maryland, USA

We may have to live with COVID-19 for months or years. Let us not deny it or panic. Let us not make our lives useless. Let us learn to live with this fact.

You cannot destroy COVID-19 viruses that have penetrated cell walls, drinking gallons of hot water - you will just go to the bathroom more often.

Washing hands and maintaining a two-metre physical distance is the best method for your protection.

If you do not have a COVID-19 patient at home, there is no need to disinfect the surfaces at your house.

Packaged cargo, gas pumps, shopping carts and ATMs do not cause infection. Wash your hands, live your life as usual.

COVID-19 is not a food infection. It is associated with drops of infection like the 'flu. There is no demonstrated risk that COVID-19 is transmitted by ordering food.

You can lose your sense of smell with a lot of allergies and viral infections. This is only a non-specific symptom of COVID-19.

Once at home, you do not need to change your clothes urgently and go shower! Purity is a virtue, paranoia is not!

The air is clean, you can walk through the gardens (just keeping your physical protection distance), through parks.

Wearing gloves is also a bad idea; the virus can accumulate into the glove and be easily transmitted if you touch your face. Better just to wash your hands regularly.

It is sufficient to use normal soap against COVID-19, not antibacterial soap. This is a virus, not a bacteria.

You do not have to worry about your food orders. However, you can heat it all up in the microwave, if you wish.

The chances of bringing COVID-19 home with your shoes is like being struck by lightning twice in a day. I have been working against viruses for 20 years - drop infections do not spread like that!

You cannot be protected from the virus by taking vinegar, sugarcane juice and ginger! These are for immunity not a cure.

Immunity is greatly weakened by always staying in a sterile environment. Even if you eat immunity-boosting foods, please go out of your house regularly to any park/beach. Immunity is increased by EXPOSURE TO PATHOGENS, not by sitting at home and consuming fried/spicy/sugary food and aerated drinks.

Compiled by: Dr. Emmanuel Sowah, VHS Ltd
TEMA VRALA DONATE SANITARY PADS TO FEMALE STUDENTS OF NII OGLIE MODEL '1' BASIC SCHOOL

John W. Chobbah, Community Relations/E&SDD, Tema

The Tema branch of the Volta River Authority Ladies Association (VRALA) has donated dozens of sanitary pads to members of the Girls Club of the Nii Oglie Model '1' School as part of activities to mark its 20th anniversary.

Since its establishment two decades ago, the VRALA has been an ambassador of the Authority giving prime focus to public education campaigns, girl child education and other social activism events.

Mrs. Vivian Aidoo Andoh, a Senior Nursing Officer at the VRA Hospital, Accra said the female adolescent pupils were sensitize on Girl Child personal hygiene etiquettes relating to menstrual hygiene and proper disposal of sanitary pads.

She admonished them to maintain cleanliness at all times to make them physically, psychologically and emotionally active.

“As prospective ladies, there is the need to prevent body odour and you can do this by bathing twice daily, using deodorants, lime or ashes. You need to keep your hair, fingernails, genitals and ear hygienic at all times in order not to contract diseases and infections”, she advised.

She demonstrated how the young girls should brush their teeth effectively in order to avoid and control bad breath, and urged them to care for their foot and toes as well.

When asked why the number of menstrual cycle days vary among women during question and answer session, Mrs. Andoh explained that the environment, weather and eating habits of women are some of the factors that cause such variations and urged the girls to eat balanced diet.

Headmistress of the School, Madam Seraphim Worwornyoo expressed her gratitude to the association and mention that her school had benefited immensely from Corporate VRA through its Community Relations Officer, Mr. John Chobbah. She appealed to executives of VRALA to consider adopting the school to coach and mentor the female pupils to prepare and shape them for a meaningful future.
Teamwork, A Corporate Value & the role of a Team Leader/Supervisor
Haruna Abubakar, VRA Hospital, Accra

Teamwork is key, but it does not happen automatically. Keeping a business team running smoothly can be challenging, especially when budgets are lean and expectations are high. Every team leader needs to figure out the best way to lead and motivate, but a few baseline principles will keep you pointed down the right path. To create a functional team that is reliable and committed to delivering the goods, the leader has to exhibit these traits:

Know Your Role:
While you may be the leader of the group, your primary concern must be the group itself. Even if you are a hands-on leader, remember you are also there to coach, evaluate and mentor. Make time to attend to each of these areas regularly.

Understand the Value of Your team:
A team leader cannot accomplish the team's objectives by him/herself, so work hard to help your team’s job. Remove obstacles, work through glitches, and fight for the resources your employees need to achieve their goals and objectives. As a leader, you must place value on each member of your team. Respect their uniqueness, traits, and individual psychological make-up. Never, for a moment should a team leader undermine the personal and intellectual capacity of a member, in the discharge of their duties.

Keep Fairness in Mind:
A good team leader has to avoid putting his/her ambition above that of the team because other team members can do things that will be counterproductive. Team leaders make unpopular decisions from time-to-time, but he/she will retain his/her team's respect if he/she is fair-minded.

Treat Your Employees Like Adults:
Few things undermine respect and enthusiasm in teams, such as criticism, nepotism, favoritism, or bullying. Allow team members the opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions on sensitive and important matters concerning the business in meetings, give them the benefit of the doubt, and never lose sight of their potentials and individual career goals. Do not foist ideas, suggestions down the throat of team members, open up to suggestions and alternative opinions.

Be transparent and Honest:
The decision-making process, tendering process, must be carried out publicly with the foreknowledge of every team member. All arguments for and against any proposals, decisions must be made public and remain publicly archived. Transparency engenders accountability.

Keep a Positive Mindset:
Great team leaders keep a positive mindset by accepting complete responsibility of the whole group for everything that went awry. They refuse to criticize, complain, or blame others for anything.

Optimistic enthusiast:
The most important quality a team leader can develop and must possess for personal and professional success and happiness is optimism. Terrific leaders look for the good in every situation, no matter what goes wrong. Leaders see setbacks, not as an obstruction but instruction, and they seek to learn valuable lessons in every setback. Additionally, optimistic leaders, look for solutions to every setback. Moreover, optimist, continually think, and talk about their goals, they always look forward rather than backward.

Notes:
1. https://www.projectsmart.co.uk/the-role-of-the-project-manager.php
2. Brian Tracy, “21 great ways to stop procrastinating and get more done in less time”. Eat That Frog, 2017.

--- Contd. from pg. 16 ---
Teamwork,
A Corporate Value & the role of a Team Leader/Supervisor

Take It One Step at a Time:
Difficult tasks are accomplished in personal, business, and professional life by discipline and taking them just one-step at a time. In accomplishing a great task, one must step out in faith and have complete confidence that your next step will become clear. Remember- Leap and the net will appear!

Monitoring and Reporting Progress
With a lean budget and high expectation, great team leaders continuously measure their processes and activities that help them achieve their set objectives and goals. This will ensure the team is not deviating, and that the processes are best, and the goals are not far from reach. The result of every business process is to pass judgment about the project or program, make adjustments to improve its effectiveness, and to inform decision-making.

HOW TO WEAR A NON-MEDICAL FABRIC MASK SAFELY

Do’s

- Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides
- Cover your mouth, nose, and chin
- Avoid touching the mask
- Clean your hands before touching the mask
- Clean your hands before removing the mask
- Remove the mask by the straps behind the ears or head
- Pull the mask away from your face
- Store the mask in a clean plastic, resealable bag if it is not dirty or wet and you plan to re-use it
- Remove the mask when taking it out of the bag
- Wash the mask in soap or detergent, preferably with hot water, at least once a day
- Clean your hands after removing the mask
- Inspect the mask for damage or if dirty
PWALUGU MULT-PURPOSE DAM PROJECT KICK-OFF WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

Laud Evans Ofori, Communications Officer, PMDP

Mr. Prah addressing a community durbar

The Volta River Authority (VRA) has held series of stakeholder consultative engagements with traditional authorities and opinion leaders of 15 communities earmarked to be impacted by the construction of the Pwalugu Multipurpose Dam Project in the Talensi District of the Upper East Region.

The communities include: Kurugu, Zongoiri, Kontintabig Dasang, Naboukin, Nyogbare, Kugri Natinga, Takore, Kaadi, Nafkolga. The rest are: Mognori, Nakosigu Fong, Gbango, Nakpanduri, Tusuk, Timonde.

The respective Municipal/District Chief Executives (MDCEs) of the various municipalities and districts met the VRA team, led by Mr. David Prah, Senior Executive Liaison for Stakeholder Engagement, on arrival.

Addressing separate gatherings, Mr. Prah noted that the engagements were part of preparatory events for the official commencement of the project and, used the opportunity to introduce the project contractor and surveyor to them.

He said Power China Construction Company would construct the project with support from A-M Surveys Limited, Losa-Mills Consult Limited and Rudan Engineering Limited who will demarcate the boundaries for the project area.

He said an organization like VRA takes cognizance of the value of cultural, social and community corporations as key long-term sustainability and socioeconomic development ingredients.

In this respect, he said it was worthy to show respect to the custodians of the land by giving them a briefing on the project for their corporation and support for its success.

Mr. Prah urged the youth to learn skills that will make them eligible for the 70% local content employment quota for the project.

It will be recalled that on November 29, 2019, President Akufo-Addo, cut sod for the construction of the Pwalugu Multipurpose Dam estimated to cost $993 million.

The Project when completed will have a dam with an elevation of 165m near the Pwalugu bridge on the White Volta River and with a maximum reservoir area of 350km2, a powerhouse consisting of two turbines with 60MW of installed capacity.

It will also have an irrigation scheme consisting of a 12M high weir and canal network including main, primary, secondary and tertiary canals for 20,000ha of land and a 15km overhead line for export of power to an existing transmission line.

The dam will also provide protection from the perennial floods that occur in the White Volta basin during the rainy season and manage spillage of water from the Bagre dam in Burkina Faso.
MANAGING YOUR TIME
AS A CAREER WOMAN IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Time management has been a challenge for many in various fields of life especially career women and they are still wondering why they are unable to manage their time effectively.

Amidst this novel coronavirus pandemic, we find ourselves in abnormal times. Life is not as it used to be, posing a lot of challenges in our day to day activities. Some women must work from home, cater for their children who are now “out of school”, plan for the family and undertake other activities from time to time.

How can these women appropriate their time effectively and still stand tall as great career women?

This piece seeks to discuss few factors that can guide women in such a situation. It must be noted that managing time effectively depends on one’s decision, discipline, and priority.

It is important for such women to start with a To-do list. A to-do list serves as a guide to what one has to do in order of preference. First things first and this helps to save time to handle other assignments.

Set goals and task and try to complete them. A determined career woman will set goals and ensure she completes them according to schedule.

Career women must embrace the power of “No”. You need to learn to say “No” to things that will redirect your focus. If you need to finish that report within four (4) hours, do not put it aside and start making unnecessary calls.

Women are known to be multitasking as they can perform more than one task or activity at the same time. However, in these abnormal times, to manage your time effectively, do not try to multitask. Concentrate on one activity at a time, finish with it and move to the next to save time and save your energy to build up your immune system.

One needs to consider Establishing boundaries between work and home. Schedule how many hours you spend on your work and focus on achieving your most important work goals. Work hard and know when to stop and undertake home activities.

In as much as you want to achieve a target Be flexible. If there is the need for changes in your work plan do not hesitate to do amendments and continue with the plan.

Managing your time effectively as a career woman gives you confidence when you evaluate your achievements at the end of the day.
PROJECT RISK MANAGEMENT - PART 2

Corporate Risk Management Unit

Introduction

We continue our series on project risk management. The first episode published in the VRA Newsletter last quarter, focused on the meaning and phases of project life cycle and zoomed in on the VRA Project Life Cycle. It further looked at common risks at the project identification stage and proposed some mitigation actions to ensure that implemented projects become successful.

This current episode discusses risks common to the second phase of the VRA project lifecycle i.e. Project Detailed Preparation Stage.

1. Project Detailed Preparation Stage

The Project detailed preparation stage is where detailed planning of project activities is done, after approval. It involves in-depth assessment of the project's socioeconomic, financial, technical and environmental viability. These are amplified in the Project's Business Case. Requirements for land acquisition, permits and regulatory demands are also addressed at this stage.

The key deliverables of this stage are the Project Feasibility and/or Front-End Engineering Report that contain Critical Success Factors and Draft Procurement Documents. In short, a comprehensive suite of project plans, which sets out a clear project roadmap is created. There is also a comprehensive risk register update for the project at this stage.

COMMON RISKS AT THE DETAILED PREPARATION STAGE

1. Incomprehensive Risk Register for the Project

This can be due to lack of clear risk management approach/method and therefore inadequate risk assessment for the project, which can lead to failed or challenged project.

Solution:
Risk Management is critical at this stage. Risk is captured at all stages of a project but detailed risk assessment, i.e. applying a standard risk management method, is critical since resources and contractual commitments ensue after this stage. There must be enough information about the project to enhance understanding of what is being assessed. A well-developed project Charter defining the project objectives, scope, participants/stakeholders etc. helps to develop a comprehensive project risk register. The risk assessment must be done with the help of risk management experts, to identify all possible risks and their corresponding mitigating strategies before going into any agreement with contractors and suppliers.

2. Not Identifying and Leveraging on Positive Risks

Negative risk implies something unwanted that has the potential to derail a project, while positive risks are opportunities that can affect the project in beneficial ways. Focusing only on negative risks and not leveraging on positive risks and other critical success factors would result in missed potential benefits.

Solution:
The future is uncertain, therefore estimating project cost and duration as a range makes an estimate more accurately expressed than as a single number. To determine an accurate estimate range for both cost and schedule, risk and other uncertainties must be quantified and factored into the estimation. Also, expert advice must be sought if the project type is unfamiliar. Use proper estimation instrument e.g. a bottom-up budgeting approach for cost

3. Wrong Estimation of Time and Budget for the Project.

Often times, project budget and time estimates go unreasonably wrong, thus rendering decisions based on them useless. Inaccurate/poor estimation of cost and time for the project may be as a result of

- Inadequate, unreliable or irrelevant information
- Estimates being best guesses and not based on standards or trend
- Inadequate time and resources devoted to the estimation process.
- Not consulting or involving relevant experts in the estimation process.
- Lack or inadequate attention to the effects of key risks on the projections or estimates
- Estimates being outdated; generally the more current the estimates the more reliable

Solution:
Use proper estimation instrument e.g. a bottom-up budgeting approach for cost...
estimation to arrive at reasonable estimates.

4. Inadequate Identification of Project Constraints

A project constraint is anything that limits the range of solutions or approaches affecting the project. Every project will have its own set of constraints which are risks that will ultimately impact its success or failure. Triple constraints, for example, is the combination of the three most significant restrictions on any project i.e. scope, schedule and cost. Risk in this context is intertwined and acts like a lever, i.e. a pull on one directly affects the other two constraints. Inadequate or non-identification of these constraints can create crisis at the other stages of the project.

Solution:
All key constraints on the project must be identified, well defined and response strategies provided. The extent of identification of the key constraints informs how the project will proceed and be in readiness to address challenges that come up. Communicate with the sponsors, customers, and other key stakeholders, and educate them on the constraints. Agree and plan response strategies to these constraints.

5. Improper Planning:

Improper planning could lead to project failure. There could be hidden flaws in a project plan or unknown factors that can impact the success of a project. Plans may encompass too much in too little time and based on insufficient data. Improper planning of projects may cause more problems in the project execution phase e.g. scope creep which usually escalate project time and costs.

Solution:
Planning is the cornerstone of every project. Comprehensive planning of all activities of the project (knowledge areas) is critical to the project success. Detailed planning of stakeholder engagements and communication, risk management, etc. must be carried out. Much effort and time must be invested into the project planning and continuous review of plans during the project detailed preparation. It is even advised that an average of 30-35% of the project total effort must be invested into project planning.

6. Inadequate Identification of Skills and Competencies needed for the Project.

Various skills and competencies are needed for the project success. Inadequate identification and planning of these core skills and competencies needed, can strain the project. There could be proper planning but without skilled personnel identified to carry out the activities, the project would face challenges.

Solution:
Plan well the type of skills and competencies needed, when needed and how they can be acquired. Document the core set of skills and competencies required to accomplish the expected assignment, and match each person's skills against the list or matrix. Close the skills gap by outsourcing, using external experts and advisors.

7. Lack of Clear Plan to Manage Scope Change or Change Orders

Change or variation orders results in scope creep which usually escalates project costs and time. Often in conjunction with design errors. Change orders are one very common reason for cost overruns in construction projects.

Solution
Carefully and proactively plan for scope changes and establish how they should be addressed. Establish a clear change control process for reviewing and approving reasonable changes and rejecting less feasible ones.

For example, certain companies, in construction projects, use software to simulate different scenarios/solutions for scope changes and budget accordingly at the pre-construction phase. This makes it a much easier process to calculate different solutions ahead of time to be able to find a new level of functionality, while reducing extra resources used in engaging stakeholders over such changes.

Conclusion

Project detailed preparation phase is a key stage in the project life cycle that has many associated risks. A well and carefully planned project identifies and set out measures during the detailed preparation phase to overcome unnecessary risks in the subsequent phases of the project. Projects must therefore be expertly planned with focus on eliminating most of the risks in the activities that would come up in the subsequent project phases to allow for smooth project implementation.

Stay tuned for the next episode!
Coronavirus (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has been identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness globally.

**SEVERE SYMPTOMS**
- High fever (100.4 or higher)
- Pneumonia

**PRIMARY SYMPTOMS**
- Fever
- Runny nose
- Dry Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Body Aches

**TRANSMISSION**
Spread from person to person through sneezing or coughing.

Respiratory droplets containing the virus can remain on surfaces even after the ill person is no longer near.
Management has directed all staff of the Volta River Authority (VRA) to make wearing of facemasks a habitual practice during work hours to avoid a possible spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease within its corporate environment.

The directive follows a random office-to-office assessment by a team of medical staff from the VRA Health Services Limited about the wrongful wearing and handling of facemasks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by staff.

Based on the team’s recommendations, Management, in a circular dated May 21, 2020 and signed by Mr. Bernard Kofi Ellis, Deputy Chief Executive (DCE), Services, directed that "facemasks are to be worn at all times during work hours".

“The “NO MASK NO ENTRY” is very real and must be applied once you step out of your home till you return. The mask must be worn at all times, everywhere till you get back home except when eating or drinking”, the circular stated.

It further instructed that; “avoid touching the mask while using it, if you do, clean hands with alcohol based hand sanitizer or wash with soap under running water”.

Another means to stem the spread is to replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damped, not to re-use nor share it with someone.

It stated that it is mandatory to wash hands before and after wearing a facemask and ensure it covers your nose, mouth and chin, making sure there are no gaps.

The circular obliged everyone, not to leave our used masks within the reach of others. It said, “Regularly clean surfaces-desks, key-boards, mouse pads, mouses, door handles, arm rests, lift knobs/buttons, stair rails-with alcohol rub or with soap and water”.

Corona is real cried the town crier from the depth of his voice And the earthly clouds weep pools of tears unceasingly over your tyranny. 

Our tomorrow is bleak says a priest. For the world is at war with an invisible enemy whose antidote remains a Mistry.

Corona is a shameless coward who stole the collective joy of the world. Why must you seek to bring humanity into Extinction? when all we did was to name you after a symbol of power. 

Corona Corona Corona, be bold to embolden your prey. For you have caused enough pain and anger to the world.

And farewell thee is our daily prayers for your tyranny.

Corona is real so let us learn to sanitize to remain alive.
“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies . . . The man who never reads lives only one.” – George R.R. Martin.

According to Ben Okri, reading is an act of civilization; it's one of the greatest acts of civilization because it takes the free raw material of the mind and builds castles of possibilities.

Reading is great but I believe it must be practical, and relevant to our lives and where we want to be, to some degree.

Many people read for various reasons. Some read for pleasure, to acquire knowledge, to expand their world view, to make them confident and to help them contribute effectively during discussions. Others also read to challenge their peers that they are the best readers and can read such number of books within a period.

Despite reading for various reasons, many others who have the desire are struggling to cultivate the habit of reading leading to frustration.

This article aims at highlighting a few points that will propel an individual to take up reading as a habit and some of the benefits one stands to gain in reading.

Cultivating the habit of reading is an individual affair because we read different books to serve different purposes. This is the beauty of being individuals. Reading is something personal. One needs to decide, determine, and act.

First of all, whoever wants to read should know where his interest lies and why he wants to read. Is it for pleasure, for academics or career related? We are not all in the same stages of our lives, neither do we all share the same fields of interest. So, when you are able to determine the interest and the reason, get the books and just start!!!

It is important to set a time for reading: A time when you will not be disturbed or be interrupted by phone calls, kids, internet, and television. Make the time so special and enjoyable. You may decide to spice your reading with a cup of tea with biscuits or a favorite drink by your side. Decide how many minutes you will read. As a starter, begin with a few minutes and improve upon it. Before you realize you are hooked.

Set a goal for yourself and be disciplined. How many pages can I cover within this specific time and make sure to achieve your goal.

Be committed and dedicated. Ensure that you abide by what you have decided to do and strive hard to work towards it. Be dedicated to constantly reading and developing your knowledge base concerning your field of interest. Then, you commit to continually improving in that area. That is where you will stand out the most.

Continuous reading improves better writing skills and expands one's range of vocabulary. A good researched piece of writing could easily be differentiated from an ordinary piece of writing.

Reading widens our points of reference. It helps a lot to expand one's mind and improves memory. There is always something new to learn, that could impact our lives in a significant way.

Reading books inspire creativity, critical thinking, increase empathy, and offer plenty of other incentives to go and enjoy some word power.

The more one reads the more his stress level decreases and improves.

When we are reading a book, we are feeding our brains. This is how food nourishes us in whole. It improves our language. The books we read create the language in which we converse so the better kind of books we read, the more refined our thoughts and activities become.

A rapper by name Tray Deere in an interview on Vlad TV once said “to become an extraordinary rapper, in the sense of being able to rap, and impress people with lyrics, you have to read. He then went on to say that “reading is essential for progression in life. You have to keep learning to grow”.

Make reading a part of your everyday life and you will never regret you cultivated that habit.
Our Mission:
The Volta River Authority exists to power economies and raise the living standards of the people of Ghana and West Africa. We supply electricity and related services in a reliable, safe and environmentally friendly manner to add economic, financial and social values to our customers and meet stakeholders’ expectations.

In The Next Issue:
- Exclusive interview with a recovered COVID-19 patient
- Update on the Kpong GS Retrofit Project

Please send your concerns, questions, congratulatory messages, issues, worries, suggestions, etc., to corpcomm@vra.com

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