

Medical Materials Donated by JTS Korea for Myanmar's Front Line Health Care Workers during COVID-19



Overview

Yangon has been, and continues to be, the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic in Myanmar. JTS Korea generously donated medical materials to assure the health and safety of the medical staff, the patients, the volunteers, and all their families in Yangon. JTS Korea donated more than 110,000 medical materials worth \$130,000 USD to support health workers and medical professionals working in the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic in Myanmar. This distribution was the first emergency response involving a shipment which traveled across international waters. We acknowledge and respect JTS Korea's and Kalyana Mitta Development Foundation's (KMF) ability to make this possible through their dedication and commitment to the emergency response effort.

KMF coordinated the multi-step process of receiving materials at the seaport and distributing them. The process involved acquiring necessary authorizations through the Myanmar Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHS) and other relevant ministries. Additionally, KMF assisted JTS by purchasing COVID-19 Antigen Test Devices in Yangon, Myanmar. The distribution activities involved KMF collaborating with the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) and its volunteers to deliver the medical materials to the Phaung Gyi COVID-19 Treatment Center (Phaung Gyi MTC) and South Okkalar Specialist Hospital in Yangon. MCC has been providing volunteer services to COVID-19 treatment centres and hospitals in Myanmar during the pandemic.

Distribution Process

After being notified by JTS Korea in October 2020, KMF conducted a rapid survey with its partner MCC. The Phaung Gyi MTC and the South Okkalar Specialist Hospital were selected to receive the medical materials based on the survey's results.

Various approvals from Myanmar authorities were needed to receive the items from Korea. Separate approvals were needed to purchase the COVID-19 test kits. KMF coordinated primarily with MOHS to receive the required permission. MOHS also facilitated the process with the Food and Drug

Administration (FDA), National Health Laboratory (NHL) and the Central Medical Store Depot (CMSD).

FDA checked the list of donated items, of which 6 items were approved, but the NHL did not approve the Genedia W COVID-19 Ag test kits JTS wanted to donate. Consequently, JTS decided to buy the PANBIO™ COVID-19 Ag Test Rapid Devices in Yangon. KMF coordinated with the Sea Lion Company to purchase these tests, and contacted FDA and MOHS for the (one time) importation permission. MOHS contacted the Ministry of Planning Finance and Industry for the tax exemption, otherwise the tax may have cost 4,600 USD on the 6 types of imported items. CMSD assisted by providing their import license and making all the clearances at the Yangon Seaport. CMSD worked with Ministry of Transports and Communications and Customs for all the logistics, clearances, and other processes at the Yangon seaport. CMSD further helped KMF receive the distribution permission from their Clearance Department and Distribution Department to assure the distribution was carried out as planned. MCC contacted the Phaung Gyi MTC and South Okkalar Specialist Hospital about the donation process and provided necessary information for the distribution plan.

The cargo ship from Korea took 4 weeks before arriving at Yangon’s seaport on 19 December 2020. On December, 30 and 31 2020, MCC assisted KMF with their volunteers and the Myanmar Red Cross delivered the boxes to the Phaung Gyi COVID-19 MTC and South Okkalar Specialist Hospital. Only designated medical persons were allowed to receive the test kits. More than 110,000 individual items were donated.

The successful distribution was made possible with the cooperation and collaboration of JTS, KMF, INEB, MCC (and its volunteers), and MOHS and all government agencies, in addition to the frontline healthcare workers and volunteers at the two locations.

Types and Quantity of Medical Materials

Description of Item	Quantity	Paung Gyi Covid-19 Medical Treatment Centre, Yangon	South Okkalar Specialist Hospital, Yangon
(KF94) Breathe GO Yellow Dust Protective Masks	30,000	25,000	5,000
Latex powder free gloves	30,000	25,000	5,000
Disposable Protective Coveralls	10,008	9,508	500
Shoe covers	10,200	9,700	500
Face shields (glasses)	10,000	9,500	500
Face shields (film)	10,000	9,500	500
PANBIO™ COVID-19 Ag Test Rapid Device	10,000	9,500	500



Challenges

Although, the bureaucratic government system was complex, time consuming and stressful, the government employees' proactive assistance helped the distribution to be successful. KMF and MCC also prepared to address challenges and further subsequent waves of COVID-19 when developing the distribution plan. KMF and MCC staff and volunteers were at risk of becoming infected. In fact, between April and December, 13 youth among the volunteers did become infected with the virus.

Beneficiaries

Since Yangon is the epicenter during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, most people received treatment at the Phaung Gyi COVID-19 MTC which opened in April 2020. Their medical staff were from Yangon, as well as from hospitals in other states and regions. Since August 2020, Phaung Gyi MTC had approximately 1,000 patients, which were more serious cases. South Okkalar Specialist Hospital had approximately 70 COVID-19 patients, as well as other patients. MCC coordinated with Christian youth from various parts of Myanmar to volunteer at both locations since April 2020.

Summary of Beneficiaries

2 Locations	Direct Beneficiaries	Indirect Beneficiaries
Phaung Gyi COVID-19 MTC Yangon	- 1,000 Patients - 400 Doctors, nurses and other staff - 180 Volunteers	- The families of the patients - The families of medical staff & volunteers - Yangon general population
South Okkalar Specialist Hospital Yangon	- 70 Patients - 31 Doctors, nurses & other staff - 24 Volunteers	
Total	- 1,070 Patients - 431 Doctors, nurses & other staff - 204 Volunteers	