

In Hai Aljabal, a community of approximately 4,000 people in El Geneina, West Darfur, trash is not always cleaned up immediately. When trash or “solid waste” lies around, it can become a breeding ground for flies, insects and other so-called vectors which can spread Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) and other diseases. However, thanks to WHO volunteers, this is now no longer an issue.



Mohamed Tageldin (r) explains to youth in his community how to dispose of solid waste to support AWD control.

Mohammed Tageldin (42) is a driver for WHO. In his job, he also received training to become a community volunteer. Mohamed learned that piles of trash can be a source of AWD infection, because flies use the waste as a breeding ground and spread AWD, as well as other diseases.

A clean environment on the other hand, where solid waste is managed properly, keeps people healthy.

When Mohamed saw the trash piles in his community, he worried about the health of his neighbors and friends. “Every day, after work, I ride home on public transport”, Mohamed said. “I noticed that a big pile of trash had been growing near my house in Hai Aljabal, which is also close to the market.”

Mohamed: “I wanted to do something about the trash, because I knew from my work at WHO that people would get sick if I didn’t act. So, I talked to the tea sellers and butchers. I asked them all for a small contribution to buy fuel and burn the waste. Then, I simply started digging. At first, people just stood and watched as I was working, but when I kept going, more and more began helping me.” Together, the volunteers dug up several wheelbarrows full of trash and collected it for burning. With the trash gone, the risk of AWD or other illnesses spreading to the community is now much smaller, and efforts at stopping the spread of AWD will be more effective.

News of Mohamed’s activities even spread to the neighboring camp for Internally Displaced People, where community leaders and camp residents also began cleaning up solid waste. As a result, hygiene in the camp is at a higher level and no significant health issues have emerged.

Finally, Mohamed’s community action, serving his 4,000 fellow community members, was noticed by the State Ministry of Health. To support his good work, the authorities endorsed the improvement of trash management. Officials even instructed the locality administration to maintain the new standard of hygiene and to keep following up, to ensure the positive development continues.

WHO is responding to the outbreak of AWD in all of Sudan’s 18 states, including by strengthening solid waste management. By providing technical guidance to State Ministries of Health, as well as supplying essential cleaning tools like shovels and wheelbarrows to communities, WHO staff are helping to stop the spread of AWD.

Friday 26th of April 2024 11:05:45 AM