



Mukuru Promotion Centre
Empowerment Step by Step
Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy
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Information V

Period 25th May – 22nd June 2020

An Update to our Supporters, Friends and Partners regarding the works of Mukuru Promotion Centre and the CoVid19 Pandemic



Not a virus but lack of food

The little girl is from our disabilities centre for children, Songa Mbele na Masomo. Her family went to Mwingi, Kitui County around 200kms east of Nairobi when the President made the CoVid19 announcement. She became very sick after two months of little food. The family arrived back in Nairobi and is receiving immunity boosters and nutritional supplements from the Clinic. We are pleased to report that she is improving.

Scientists continue to try and find reasons for low numbers of corona virus transmission within Africa by comparison with North and South America. The youthful population is seen as a big factor. Also, the amount of virus and disease many Kenyan populations, especially those within slums, have been already exposed to may have given them a resilience that other populations may not have. Some scientists are concerned that the amount of handwashing and sanitizers used may have an adverse effect on immunity. They are also baffled by the percentage of asymptomatic cases which account for 80% to 90% of Kenya positive cases. The announcement by WHO that asymptomatic cases do not spread the disease brought great surprise and relief. Those who are asymptomatic will not now be taken to quarantine centres in Government institutions or in hospitals as before. They are cautioned to self-quarantine for 14 days. Still quite a number wonder if WHO could be mistaken. Those who have slight cold like symptoms are now required if at all possible, to be cared for at home. Those who cannot be isolated at home will still have to access isolation wards or centres.

The genetic signatures on the viruses found in Kenya show that they came from China, South Africa and Europe. It is believed they were present in Kenya for quite some time before the first confirmed case was announced on the 5th of March and before the lockdowns were announced. There are more men dying of CoVid19 in Kenya than women. No live virus has been found in breastfeeding milk, thankfully as the majority of babies in Kenya are breastfed.

Two Chinese firms were found guilty of illegally testing people and of selling kits to the Ministry of Health which were invalidated. They were also found guilty of distributing invalidated laboratory reagents. The test kits and protective gear that was donated by Jack Maa were stolen. They were in Government hands in warehouses at the airport. This is shocking when they are desperately needed. The shortage of test kits is a great challenge. Only hot spots in Nairobi and Mombasa are tested together with areas where cluster outbreaks have taken place. All those entering Kenya are tested before being allowed into the country. There is a concern over the high percentage of Tanzanian and other drivers testing positive.

On the 5th of June both Eastleigh in Nairobi and Old Town in Mombasa were permitted to open after having been closed for four weeks. This was a big relief to many. The traffic jams in Nairobi were severely affecting the city as the roads surrounding Eastleigh are important routes connecting a network of roads. Both Eastleigh and Old Town are highly populated areas where huge commerce takes place. Thousands of people were left jobless, unable to access or transact business during the month's lockdown.

Some of the effects of the CoVid19 pandemic are worse than the pandemic itself. Gender based violence allegations have increased immensely during the lockdown and curfew. There is a 30% increase in defilement and domestic violence (*Margaret Kobia, 5th of June*) reports. Unemployment has soared with millions now suffering from little or no income. Hunger and malnutrition are on the increase. People in need of treatment are reluctant to attend hospitals and health centres in case they pick up an infection. Hospitals are reducing staff salaries due to lesser in and outpatients.

The Kenya Wildlife Service is struggling to keep afloat with the loss of tourists and gate fees. Recently the third white Rhino was born in Nairobi National Park bringing joy and hope and showing that the Rhino are at their ease there. This year the migration will happen with very few spectators. Many people make their living from the normal huge numbers who come to witness the spectacle and it helps to keep the parks going.

There is a great decline in production, importing and exporting. Tusky's Supermarket and Shoprite have fired over 100 staff. They also have not paid their suppliers. It seems the Waterfront branch in Karen did not pick up business and is not doing well. Kenyan athletes who had expected to do

very well in track events are without income for months. They have received some help from the Government. The number of youths joining criminal gangs has rocketed especially in heavily populated areas like slums. Brutal gangs like Mungiki, whom the Government was thought to have squashed have re-emerged striking fear and extorting protection payments from traders. Some of the gang members are used by politicians for their own advantage. Blood donations, which traditionally were sourced from secondary and college students are now dangerously low. They will have to request from a more diverse population. However, quite a number do not want to donate for free and then have hospitals and health centres charge highly for the same donation when needed by patients. The corruption within the blood donor services has put people off donating.

Police brutality especially in extremely poor areas and during the curfew rose during the pandemic. A number of private schools are in danger of collapsing including our neighbouring school, St Mary's Viwandani. We are extremely grateful to say that the MPC schools have stayed afloat due to the help of Mercy Solidarity fund and DKA Austria.

The Government passed a budget which targeted the informal sector, small businesses, pensioners, to make up for tax loss by the Government from loss of commercial activity. People who are already skipping meals and walking miles to and from work, now have to pay tax. While they suffer such great hardship, flagrant spending continues by Government officials in spite of growing debt. Those affected are terribly angry.

At present four hotspots are on alert in Nairobi. These middle class areas are Westlands, Kileleshwa, Hurlingham and Lavington. These contain and surround Kibera, Kangeme and Kawangware slums. So far there have been no positive cases in South B or the Mukuru slums.

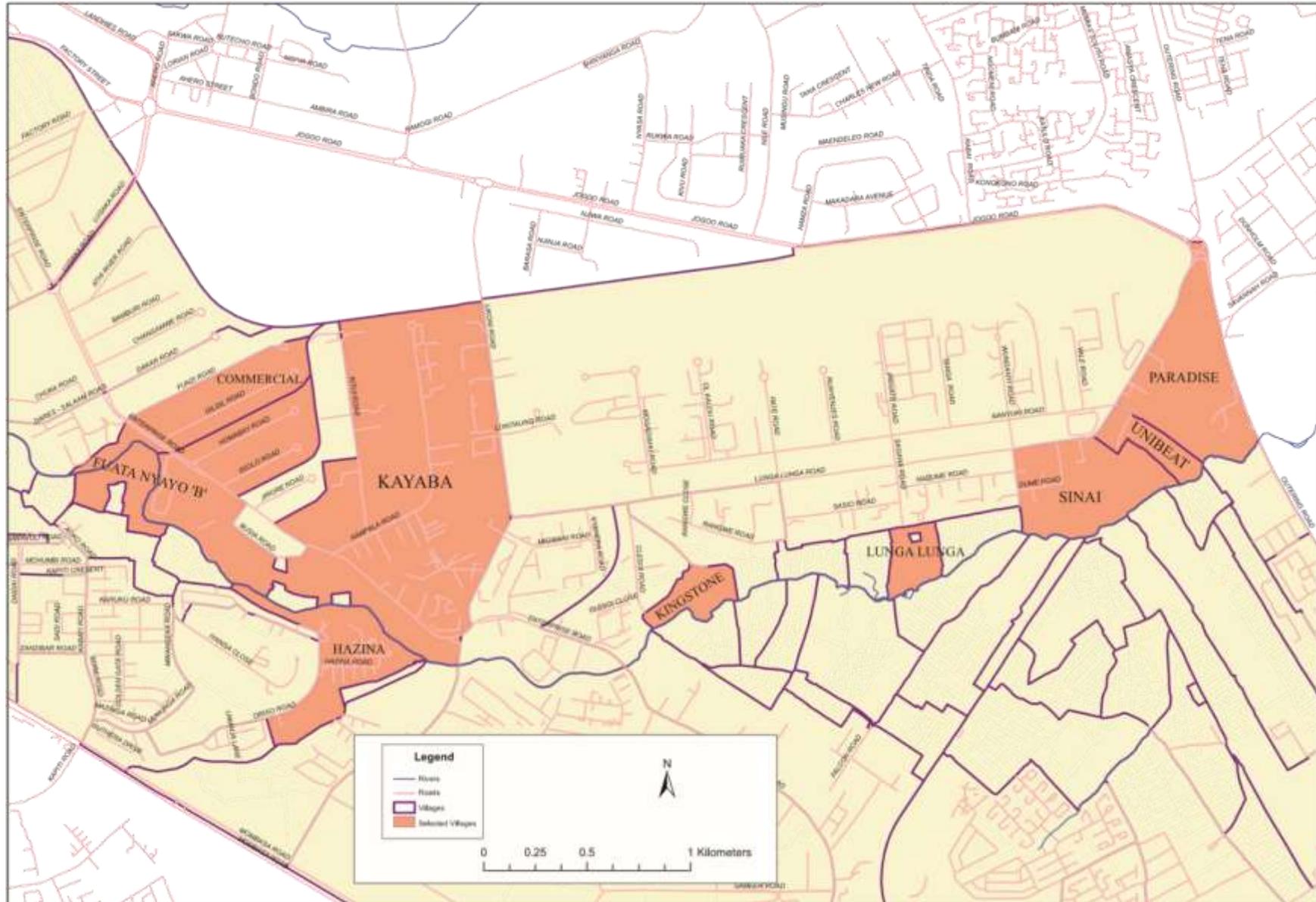
Last Wednesday, a CoVid19 Summit took place. There were 13 African leaders who joined the Chinese leader via video link up to discuss the situation and the shortages of test kits, protective equipment and medications. China has committed to assist and has cancelled debts of some African countries while cancelling the interest on debts for other countries.

We mentioned earlier that the greatest threat to lives in Kenya is food security. The Mukuru residents' normal access to income comes from basic jobs such as cooking, cleaning, washing clothes or casual labour jobs. This source of income has dried up leaving them living day by day and dependent on food parcels from generous donors. Team Pankaj has continued throughout the month providing food hampers to 590 families in the Mukuru catchment area. We also received food donations from other smaller donors. The social workers identified the most disadvantaged vulnerable. The network system that we do have in place at MPC helps to mobilize the hampers quickly and effectively. The social workers, together with the community health volunteers and community leaders organise the food distributions. The maps below show the areas that MPC is trying to cover. The first one shows the 5 different MPC sites (red markers) and the other one comes from the Kenyan Bureau of Statistics showing the Mukuru catchment area.

MAP OF MUKURU PROMOTION CENTRE SITES



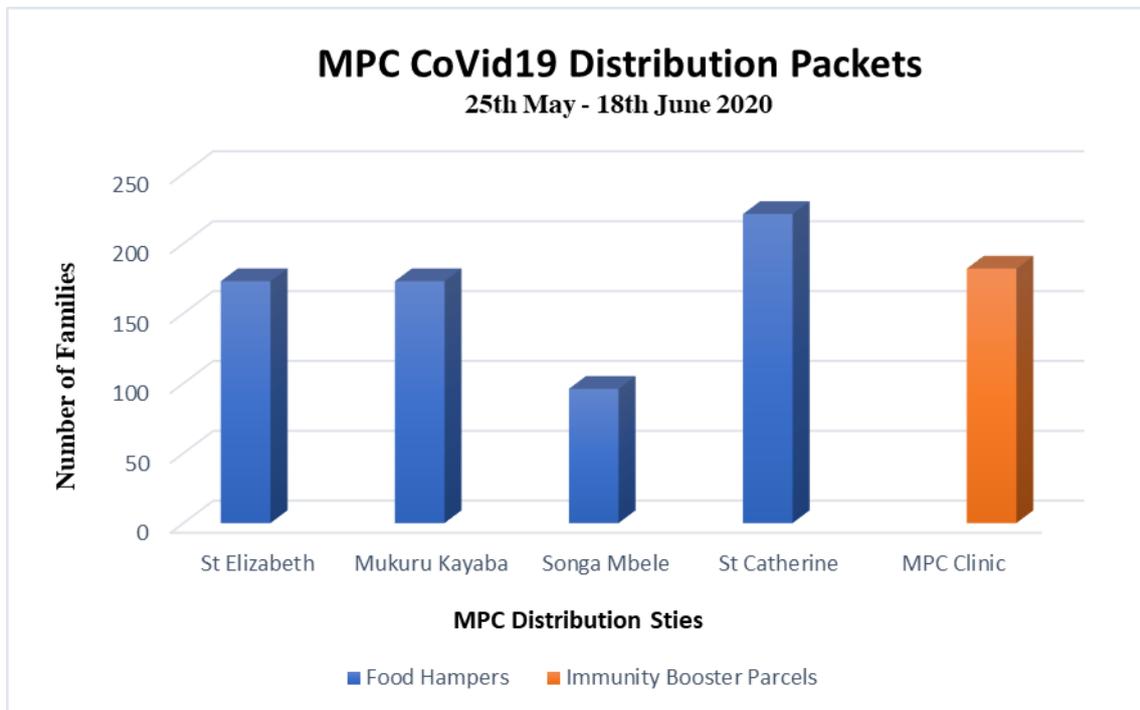
MUKURU SLUM



The different MPC social office sites cover a number of villages within their specific area, each outreaching to thousands of residents.

1. St. Elizabeth's Lunga Lunga starts around Tetra Pak and continues east for 3kms to Donholm slums.
2. Mukuru Kayaba covers Kayaba and continues south for 2 kms to Hazina slums
3. Songa Mbele na Masomo covers Kisii village and parts of Kayaba slums within a 1kms radius.
4. St. Catherine covers Commercial and Fuata Nyayo slums within 2 kms radius.

We are thankful for other smaller contributions from Melvin's Tea company. We continue to distribute the immunity booster parcels from the Clinic to patients. The distribution of food and immunity booster parcels since 25th May to 18th June 2020 are:



Water plays an important role in containing the spread of the virus so good personal hygiene habits are essential. We received a visit from Stanbic Bank, Ms Njiru and Rotary Club, Mr Kaveso and Mr Kavuti who donated a special tank for handwashing. The boys from the Rehabilitation Centre provided a small entertainment skit to show their appreciation.



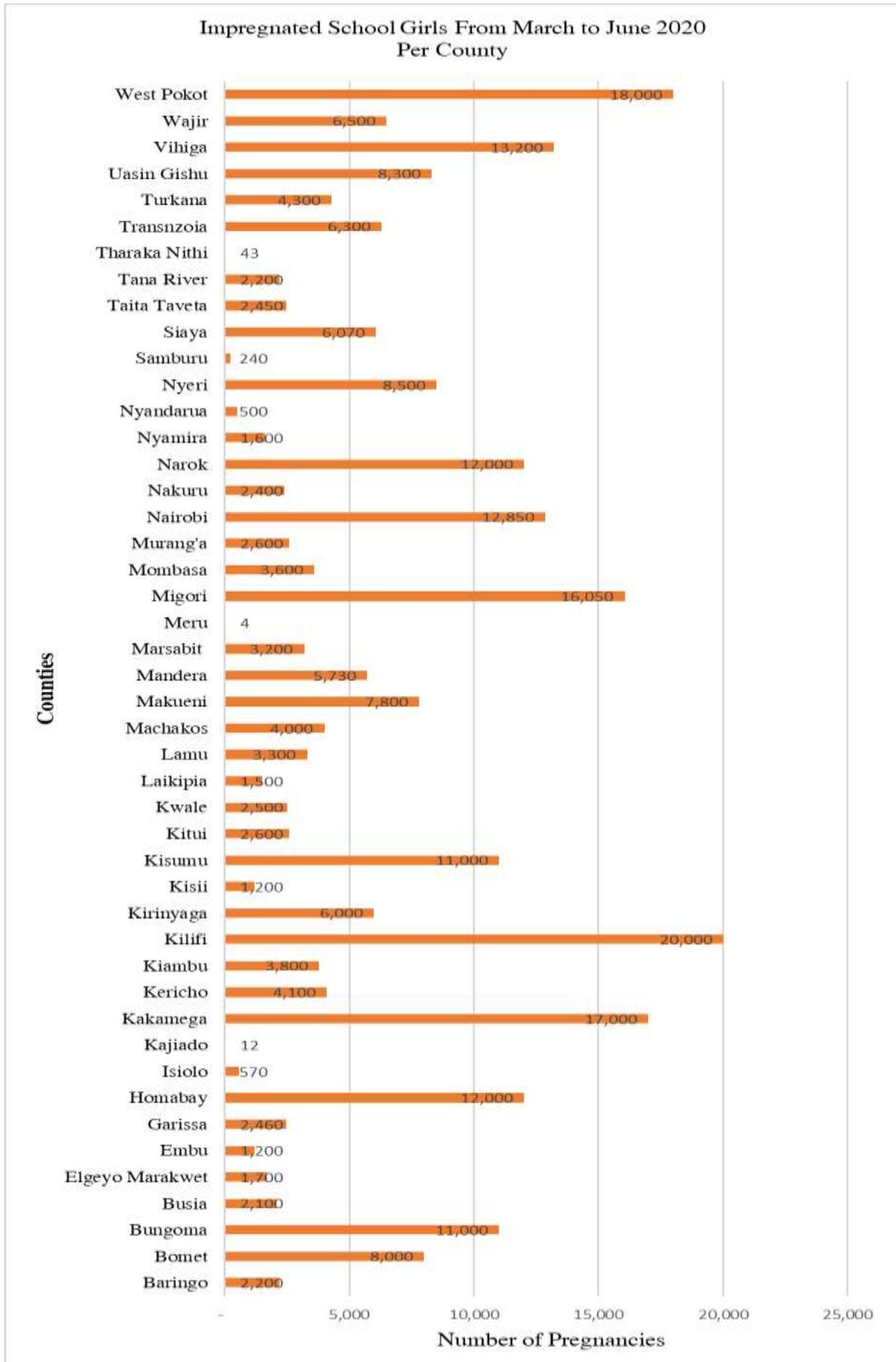
Representatives from Kerry Group, which is an Ireland food flavour manufacturing company visited the Clinic and the Rehabilitation Centre during the month. They also gave donations to the Rehabilitation Centre boys as well as nutrition packs to the malnourished patients at the Clinic.



The Rehabilitation boys thank the Kerry Group representatives, Leslie, Rosemary and Jane for their care and support.



Kerry Group nutritional packets for the malnourished patients from the Clinic.



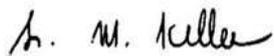
(Source: County Health Departments)

It seems that the social impact of coronavirus has resulted in huge increases in the number of teenage pregnancies. The above graph shows the distribution of 262,679 pregnancies across the 47 Counties in Kenya. The different County Health departments released the staggering numbers recently.

The reasons for high numbers for pregnancies is that Clinic visits were counted and the number of children and teens who made those visits. However, one child or teen could have made more than one Clinic visit, though mostly the pregnancy was discovered on the first visit and many would have made only one so far. The numbers being one issue but more importantly, it seems many of the cases involve defilement by their own fathers, relatives, neighbours. There has been quite a reaction from Kenyans especially over the children of 13 and 14 years old. There has been a big rise in reporting rape cases. There certainly is a strong argument to re-open the schools earlier, but they will remain closed until September.

We are very thankful to God that none of our 140 staff have been infected or taken ill with the virus. Many of them travel across town in packed matatu's (minibus) to keep the work of MPC advancing to the most vulnerable in society. The number of cases in Kenya as at 23rd June was 4,797 with 125 deaths and all of these people had pre-existing conditions.

We will continue to keep you updated. Thank you for your support.



Sr Mary Killeen