



Mukuru Promotion Centre

*Empowerment Step by Step*

*Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy*

[www.mercymukuru.co.ke](http://www.mercymukuru.co.ke)

## Information VI

23<sup>rd</sup> June – 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020

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

As at 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020, Kenya has a total number of **17,975** CoVid19 confirmed cases, **285** deaths and **7,833** recoveries since March 14, 2020. The fatality rate is at 1.6% and the recovery rate is at 43.6% with 44 critical cases in ICU. (Source: WHO).

The measures that were put in place by the Government have had an impact both socially and economically in Kenya. Kenya is no different from other countries, but it is a developing country with no welfare supports for its citizens which has devastating consequences to the very poor. The financial distress to industries and organizations has been disastrous. The lockdown crippled factories, restricted movements kept millions of people largely confined in their homes. Hence most people could not fend for themselves and provide the necessities for their families. Children have also been affected as face-to-face learning ceased and schools closed to minimize the spread of the virus.

#### **Impact of School Closure**

It was claimed earlier on that children were not at risk of being infected. Now, the authorities are stating that children are at risk of infection if they are in close contact with adults who have already been infected. For the thousands of children who attend our schools they are in danger of other social issues due to poverty.

Apart from the fight of not spreading the virus, there has been a sudden surge of teenage pregnancies. There are more than 17 million students out of school. The prolonged closure of schools has increased child labour with the pressure to balance household chores and home schooling which mainly affects girls. Girls are forced to take up the roles of homemakers and to take care of younger siblings. In addition, many vulnerable children are faced with human rights abuses at the very hands of their parents, who are meant to protect them. Children in our society are a collective responsibility and thousands of them are expecting other children. Strangely enough, the teenage pregnancies that have been reported can override the number of Covid-19 infections by tens of thousands.

Thankfully, the President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta stated that any pregnant teenager shall be permitted to continue her education. He further stated that any primary or secondary school manager found disobeying the directive will face the consequences.

Two teenage boys were knocked down and injured after being found raiding illegal gambling premises. The two boys aged 14-15 were later found dead in the forest. Dozens of teenagers were arrested in Nakuru as they shot pornographic videos and held parties against the Government's health policy.

Across Nyanza, Western and South Rift regions, the effects of the pandemic on families have seen parents push their children into mining, hawking, fishing and bodaboda (motorbike taxi) businesses. In Bomet and Kericho counties, children are also engaged as tea pickers in small and largescale farms.

The National Emergency Response Committee briefing last week stated that violence around the country has increased by 30%. There are 5,000 rape survivors and 70% of these cases are girls under the age of 18 years and 5% are male. Our social workers, counsellors and child protection officers will be working flat out to support the victims.

As at 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the Government reported that the virus has now spread to 47 Counties. It is no surprise that the two most populace Counties, Nairobi and Mombasa have the highest number of reported cases. Nairobi had **2,428** cases and Mombasa had **1,304** cases.

There has been a shortage of swabs for testing which has proved a great obstacle in Kenya's fight against CoVid19. However, a student from Kenyatta University has invented a swab that could significantly test large numbers of Kenyans at an affordable cost Kshs. 100. The new invention is also user friendly for health personnel.

Currently, the Government has trained over **60,000** community health volunteers, who have been deployed to all 47 counties and have so far reached over 12 million households. With Counties such as Nairobi and Mombasa continuing to experience an increase with infections, most of whom are asymptomatic, the Government sought that it was only practical to have the home-based programme. The Government also announced a strategy to set up **300** bed isolation units in all the 47 counties. As at 7<sup>th</sup> July the program had achieved the target in 23 counties. Kenya has 28 laboratories that can conduct the testing.



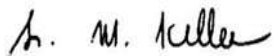
*Immunity Booster Parcels*

Mukuru Promotion Centre continues to provide services through our social and health services. The immunity booster parcels continue to be distributed to the malnourished in the community. The Clinic averages around 120 patients per day. So far, the Clinic has made three referrals of suspected cases of CoVid19 to the Government facility. Hunger is a much bigger problem for the residence of Mukuru slums.

The Education Cabinet Secretary declared that there would be no national examinations and schools would re-open in January 2021. There was a backlash by different stakeholders and this decision has been reversed. If schools are able to observe the social distance of 1.5m then they can have face-to-face classes with the students. We are grateful for the change as we need to get our students out of the slums to protect them. Our next biggest concern will be to support the young girls who find themselves pregnant. If we do not reach out and support them there could be many botched backyard abortions. Currently, we have identified 18 teenagers from Mukuru who are pregnant.

It is a fine balancing act between keeping the economy functioning and keeping people safe. After the three month partial lock down the President reopened the economy by lifting travel restrictions. Individuals are required to exercise caution and take heed of the safety measures that have already been put in place. Domestic flights resumed on July 15 and international flights are expected to resume on August 1. Churches, mosques and temples can hold services under the health guidelines but, those who are under 13 years and above 58 from prohibited from accessing places of worship.

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



*Sr Mary Killeen*