



Mukuru Promotion Centre

*Empowerment Step by Step*

*Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy*

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

## Information IX

*5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020*

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

As at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020, Kenya had a total number of **55,192** CoVid19 confirmed cases, **996** deaths and **37,442** recoveries since March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The fatality rate is at 1.80% and the recovery rate is at 67.8%. Men seem to be more prone to the virus than women at 63% compared to 37% for women. *(Source: Ministry of Health Kenya and WHO).*

On 12<sup>th</sup> October, the CS Education, Dr Magoha announced the opening of schools for exam classes only being Grade 4 and Standard 8 classes in primary, and Form 4 secondary students. There was a lot of debate for and against opening of schools. The face to face learning also began in universities. The huge movement of the population took place in order for students to resume studies. There were many political meetings and campaigns around the country without the social distancing rule. This led to an increase of CoVid19 contagion and to an increase in deaths. The deaths seem to still be related to underlying health conditions.

Head teachers of boarding schools objected to the Government directive that schools purchase rice from one central source. The Education Task Force has recommended that all remaining primary and secondary pupils return to school by November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. A number of schools were unable to open. Some schools in Baringo and Bogoria have been submerged by the rising water in the lakes. Over 4,000 children are affected. Some private schools were unable to open due to lack of funds leaving 55,000 students stranded. Parents are forced to look for admission in other schools. Many students returned to school without any fees. The Headteachers, especially in boarding schools, complained that they could not run the schools due to lack of funds and requested the Ministry of Education to direct parents to pay, or face children being sent away. Parents who lost jobs, are appealing for more time to pay the school fees.

Schools were requested to have adequate water supply for handwashing, to disinfect the schools and to have temperature checks and sanitizer. Some funds were released by the Government for this task. All school children and staff have to wear masks. Masks were supplied by the Government to some schools.

Schools are not to be closed over sporadic positive cases among staff and learners. Those affected are to be isolated. Seeing the spike in infections it is doubtful that the remaining students will return to school on 2nd November.

The building of the new railway has forced 3,000 people out of their dwellings and businesses in Nakuru. People had leases from the old Kenya Railway and had settled there for many years and the value of the property increased. Others had only recently paid leases of 15 to 30 years. The traffic disrupted the highway by the numbers trying to salvage their properties after demolition during the night.

Concern was raised about the thousands of students who failed to turn up for school prompting fears of mass dropouts. MPC were missing 100 primary school children in Grade 4 and 28 in Standard 8. The number of Form 4 students missing is now down to four. One was pregnant, one is an orphan, whose sister was supporting him and two younger brothers, before she died recently. He was working at a car wash to support himself and his siblings. We have arranged for him to return to school on Monday and take his younger siblings into care. One had gone back to the grandmother as parents lost their jobs and could no longer stay in Nairobi. He will join a local school and return to do the exam as he is registered in St Michael's. We do not yet know the fate of the last student.



*Through our generous donors MPC continues to distribute essential packages to needy families*

## **Medical**

Researchers in USA claim that countries that vaccinate their children against tuberculosis have much lower CoVid19 infections (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*). The states of New York, Illinois, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida where children are not vaccinated have much higher rates than countries like Kenya where children are vaccinated.

The infection rate among medical staff is rising. The improper removal of personal protective gear is given as one of the causes of infection. Most of the medics who test positive, recover. Operations and other medical procedures, including vaccinations and check-ups have been cancelled in many hospitals.

The Aga Khan Hospital warned that they had noticed increased numbers seeking admission from Nairobi and surrounding counties. It would appear that Nairobi and Mombasa are experiencing a second wave. Kenyans, like the Europeans and Americans, have let their guard down, believing the virus was disappearing.

The concern was raised by the rising numbers of CoVid19 sufferers, and about inaccurate reporting by the Ministry of Health. Kenyans have been blamed for the rise in numbers, that they do not obey the directives. The full opening of the economy especially bars, is another factor quoted. The rise is seen, especially in the rural areas. Nairobi has still the highest number of cases but is closely

followed by Bungoma, Nakuru, Turkana, Mombasa, Kilifi, Uasin Gishu, Kisumu, Kisii and Meru. Other counties also have positive cases.

A number of organisations have been founded to support breast cancer sufferers, many of which could not access treatment since the CoVid infection outbreak. Those who are hospitalised are not allowed visitors. Their isolation leads to hopelessness, feeling unworthy and giving up. Many cancer patients have died during this time.

There is concern that having CoVid does not mean you will be immune to the disease. It was reported that children are super spreaders of the virus though least affected themselves. More testing is now being done in Nakuru and other rural towns. Courts and County Government operations are disrupted due to infected staff.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> October hospitals reported a looming health crisis as 90% of beds were occupied. Critical hospital admissions have risen from about 10 a week to 18 a week. It seems there is a more virulent strain of the virus now than there was in the first phase. The Aga Khan Hospital is not taking any new admissions of CoVid affected persons, while Nairobi Hospital has converted 4 wards to deal with the increase in patients. Other hospitals also report increase in patients with many coming from Counties surrounding Nairobi and not from the city.

There has been poor health management in some Counties due to strikes by medical workers. The majority of those becoming affected are between 20 and 39, but 66% of those dying are over 50 years mostly with underlying conditions. Kenya's CFR is between 1.8 and 1.9 per cent while globally it is 3.2 per cent.

Last week alarm was raised on the toll on hospitals with workers testing positive. Infection control protocols are not being followed in many facilities. As at 28<sup>th</sup> October 1,295 infections, and 17 deaths have been reported involving medical staff. Complaints have been made that some staff were ordered back to work even after testing positive. The Ministry repeatedly appeals to Kenyans to follow guidelines. The rising cases in Counties have jolted the County administrations to act by cracking down on the those acting recklessly in public places.

The Ministry of Health warns that measures will have to be taken in order to avoid health crisis as resources will not cope with increase of CoVid19 patients. Yet in many parts of Kenya people eat, drink, and make merry with little regard to the risk of infection. Bomet town is an example where tea farmers were paid recently, and all night parties took place with party goers taking little or no precautions and dancing without any social distance.

The vaccine trials continue with 360 volunteers now joining the 40 volunteers already participating. We are hopeful that the trials will be successful.

## **Economy**

The Lockdown affected all parts of the economy, but none more so than the transport and the hospitality industries where the greatest suffering is felt. In the real estate sector, the demand for leasing and renting office space has decreased considerably. Many of those shop leases in shopping malls had to pay huge leasing fees in advance yet had no customers for almost three months. Business is beginning to recover in some sectors though.

The number of people living in extreme poverty in sub Saharan Africa, was reducing, from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 689 million in 2017. However, with CoVid19 the number is ascending again. According to the World Bank, in Kenya alone, the number who lost their livelihood is 1.7 million. Many of the 1.7m live in slums or have newly come to live in slums due to job losses, are without income. Businesses were able to get easy loans, or so they thought, but are now shocked as banks demand the high hidden interest.

Hoteliers at the coast appealed to the Government to curb the spread as hotels will suffer if it is not done. Thousands of workers who had been laid off resumed work in early August when the Government relaxed measures and allowed them to reopen and to sell alcohol again. The passengers without masks, will not be allowed to enter taxis or Uber – ‘no mask, no ride’.

CoVid19 infections are now firmly in rural communities. Counties in Nyanza, Eastern, Rift Valley and North eastern have joined Nairobi and Mombasa as hotspots.



*Hotel in Mukuru slum*

CoVid19 has produced some innovations. Brian Nyagoi, 28 years old came up with a start-up kit for employers and employees working from home. Mr Theodore Angweni founded Revision Wise, a digital tool designed to save publishers from their heavy losses and make content available to students. Dr. Tanvi Shah, founded Daktari, a digital health tool designed to curb the spread of CoVid by enabling patients to see doctors remotely. Mr Wilfred Chege, a 20 year-old student, started an online supermarket, called Shule mall (school) mall, which sells school items for students online. These include uniforms, tickets, textbooks, and stationery. He is among the finalists at the entrepreneurship World Cup, Kenya.

We were informed to brace ourselves for tough new measures to curb the spread of CoVid19. We have not yet been informed of the new measures. It is not possible to lockdown again due to the huge numbers who would be deprived of income. Barely three weeks after relaxing rules on public and social gatherings the infections have soared. Customers to bars who do not observe social distance, and crowds attending political campaigns are seen as a danger to the others.

There have been a number of high profile public figures during the month. The death of Mr Kitonga, who chaired the committee that drafted the present Constitution was reported in the media on the 25<sup>th</sup> October. He died two days after traveling from Nairobi to attend funeral. He arrived on Thursday, met with the family and extended family, attended a funeral on Friday at which he collapsed and was taken by his wife, 75 km away to Machakos, where he was pronounced dead on arrival. It was presumed he died of heart attack. However, it seems that two other family members have also since died, raising the suspicion that he may have had CoVid19.

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

*Sr. M. Killeen*

*Sr Mary Killeen*