



Mukuru Promotion Centre

Empowerment Step by Step

Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy

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Information XII

1st February 2021 – 31st March 2021

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

Twelve months have elapsed since Kenya recorded its first CoVid19 case on 13th March 2020. The country has recorded a cumulative total of **131,116** confirmed cases with **2,153** deaths within the period. The fatality rate for the 12 months **1.64%**. This percentage is considerably lower than many European countries. (*Source: Ministry of Health Kenya and WHO*).

During February and March, we received interesting research from a number of health organisations which causes doubt for the African continent and how best to manage the pandemic. African voices and research are needed to guide the local pandemic responses. Only 4% of CoVid19 research is relevant for Africa according to BMJ Global health and that 4% mostly came from research centres in Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria.

The Kenya Government has announced a three phase inoculation program. The first phase targets are set to vaccinate 1.25 million by June 2021. The 2nd phase from July 2021 to June 2022 with a target of 10 million vaccinations. The 3rd phase will target 5 million and will begin in 2022. The first and second phases will target Front-line workers and people over fifty. There is a low vaccine uptake from medics who were the first group to be offered the vaccine. A group calling themselves “Catholic Doctors” objected to the vaccine and published their objections in the Nation (daily newspaper). They claim the vaccine is unnecessary. They are instructing people to wear their masks, observe hygiene and seek treatment early when sick, but avoid the vaccine. This is in contrast to advice from Pope Francis I and Bishops.

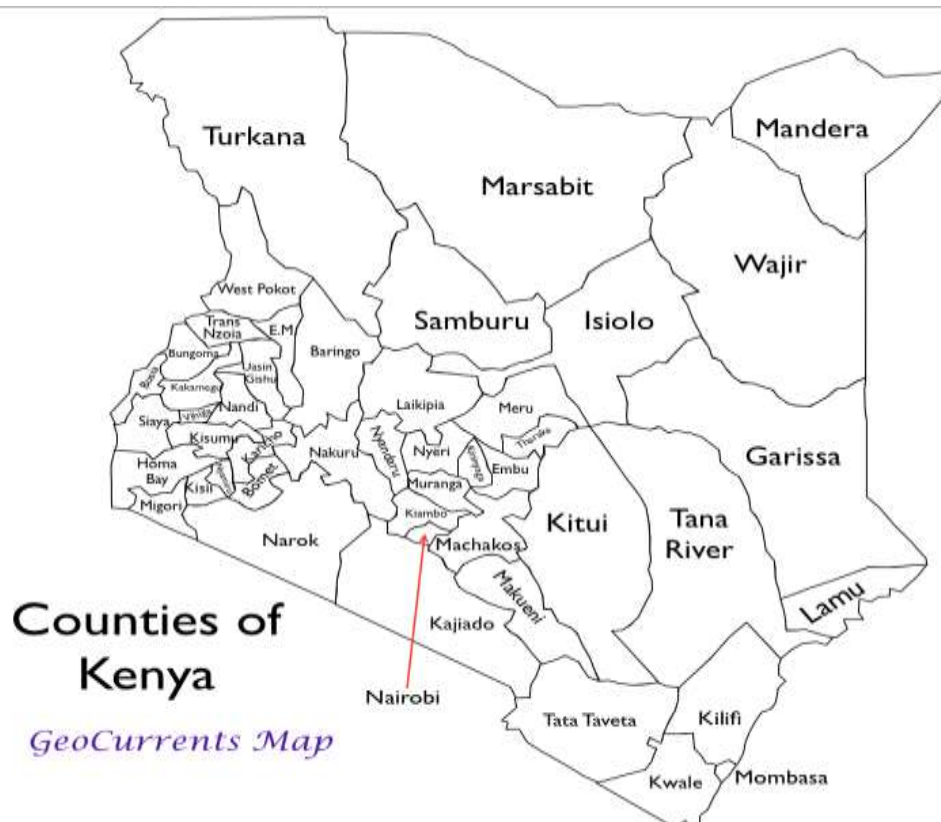
On 9th March a warning was given that infections were rising and experts warned of a third wave. It was noted that there is a severe shortage of oxygen in many counties in Kenya. This third wave of CoVid19 is much worse than the previous waves as more people are hospitalised and more are dying. Within two months there were 364 deaths recorded.

As the CoVid19 confirmed cases, the death and hospitalised figures rose, there were repeated calls for something to be done to control the spread. There is “*a lot of impunity, wilful neglect and criminal irresponsibility*” (*CS Health, Mr Mutahi Kagwe*) as far as keeping to the health regulations are concerned. We are all called to exercise personal responsibility. By the mid-March alarm was raised that CoVid19 had reached a positivity rate of 13%. The numbers of

those admitted in hospitals and to intensive care units shot up from a few hundred to over a thousand within the month. It seems that the more lethal strain of the virus was spreading quickly in the country. It is much more aggressive than the previous strains.

Kenya is now recording a positivity rate of 17.5%. The average death rate from CoVid19 has doubled. Hospitals are not able to cope with the rise in patients needing emergency and ICU treatment. Medics are unable to do the necessary surveillance to know the strain of virus they are dealing with or find out more about it. The microbiologists do not have the reagents necessary to detect new variants of the virus they suspect are spreading in the community. It is suspected that the South African variant and that of the UK, are both present here in Kenya. Mombasa has many available ICU beds as the virus spread is not growing there. The general public there are keeping to health regulations after being affected in the first wave and this has paid off.

Two thirds of those catching the virus are men between the ages of 30-39. From the death statistics 7 out of 10 men die with half of the men over 60. Half of all infections are in Nairobi. (*Source: Ministry of Health March 2021*). Sadly, 3,451 health workers have had CoVid19 and 32 have died including 13 doctors. Yet health workers who were offered the vaccine first were very slow to take the offer. In our own clinic only 50% of the health staff were vaccinated. The other staff refused. It seems to be the same all over the country. The focus is now on the elderly. Those over 58 are invited to go for the vaccine.



President Kenyatta announced another lockdown at the end of March. The bars and hotels were shut as well as places of worship. No movement is allowed from 5 counties of **Nairobi, Machakos, Kiambu, Kajiado and Nakuru**. This is to reduce the spread from those counties to the rest of the country. The news of the lockdown caused desperation in the slums and among hospitality and casual workers everywhere. There is no economic relief for them.

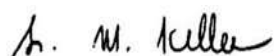
Pleas were made to the President from the hospitality, transport, entertainment and tourism federation to ease the CoVid19 restrictions. Their losses over Easter will cause some of their businesses to fail. The coastal hotels had bookings from many residents over Easter. They had ordered supplies of food only for the bookings to be cancelled. It is a disaster for them. Travellers Beach Hotel (Mombasa) alone lost 4.6 million Khs (\$US 43,000) over the cancelled Easter booking. Many courts all over the country have cancelled court hearings due to workers who are positive and need for those they had worked with to quarantine. The rate is very high among the prisoners.

From the lockdown people were given a two day window to return home if they had travelled to other counties. Matatus (local buses / coaches) raised their fares, some by 100%. University, college and vocational students were among those trying to return home as colleges were closed suddenly. They were ordered to vacate hostels. The lockdown is for two months and has caused massive job losses. The main reasons given for losses are reduced revenues and loss of market for goods and services.

For our own students there has been relief as well as frustration. The secondary national exams for Form 4s (KCSE) were allowed to proceed but the vocational training students, who were to do their exams in April have been suspended again and were not given any new dates.

Those who stole the funds for the management of CoVid19 walk free. None of them have yet been charged. The Public Investment Committee continued to question the KEMSA Board over CoVid19 losses. The 7.6 billion shillings (\$US 71 M) has not been accounted for. The hospitals and laboratories were starved of funds while officials off loaded the funds. There is a huge shortage of oxygen cylinders as Kenyans are holding on to 20,000. They are asked to return them as they are urgently needed to treat CoVid19 patients.

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



Sr Mary Killeen

Kenya – March 2020 – March 2021: 131,116 CoVid19 reported cases with 2,153 deaths.