



OMEP Kenya Report on Covid-19 Situation in Kenya and Useful Non-financial Aid

Kenya reported its first covid-19 case on 12th March, 2020. Since then, the infection cases have been increasing and today the number stands at **887** with **400** recoveries and about **50** deaths. Measures were put in place to curb the spread, including closure of all learning institutions and public places including churches and mosques. A countrywide dusk to dawn curfew and cessation of movement to and from major towns were imposed for 21 days. These were extended to a further 21 days by the president in his speech on 16th May 2020 until 6th June 2020. Cessation of movement to and from neighboring Somali and Tanzania was also imposed, owing to high numbers of infections at the borders.

Economy

The government is opening the economy gradually. A few approved eateries are now allowed to operate, though the effects are evident in slow business.

Health

The Ministry of Health noted a drastic drop in number of people seeking medical services in hospitals and health facilities. Many people have resorted to traditional herbs and online prescriptions due to fear of visiting the hospitals in the wake of covid-19. This has significantly affected the antenatal and post natal clinics, with very minimal records of essential child immunizations vaccines administered. The Ministry noted the dangers attributed to this in the foreseeable future. The current

government directive however is of mandatory covid-19 testing for all patients before any other medical service is offered.

Education

All learning institutions were closed on 15th March, 2020. Schools are yet to reopen amid pressure of national exams that are to take place at the end of the year. According to statistics released by the Kenya National Examinations Council, (KNEC), **1,938,667** candidates will sit for the final primary and secondary examinations in 2020, with **1,187,517** sitting the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education, (KCPE) examinations while **751,150** candidates sitting the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education, (KCSE) examinations.

Ministry of Education has formed a task force committee to collect data and advice on strategies of reopening schools.

NON-FINANCIAL AID

1. Awareness and campaign creation

There is need to demystify covid-19, fight stigma and myths related to the pandemic. This can be done through community awareness and campaigns.

2. Technical support

Networking with relevant organizations and community workers will provide a strong team that will complement government's effort at the grassroots, by providing services like testing, home visits and disseminate vital information on self-care and referral hospitals.

3. Material support

Covid-19 has caused serious economic effects. Jobs and businesses have been lost. There is dire need for essential materials which include;

- Food
- Masks
- Water
- Soap
- Sanitizers

4. Environmental support

Fumigation – this is necessary especially in slums and public places to curb the spread of covid-19.

Water points – there is need to have enough water points to encourage hand washing with clean water and soap.

Assign volunteers – They will help in rendering said services in various points and specialization.

5. Educational support

There has been a lot of anxiety among school going children whose learning has been interrupted due to the pandemic. Lives of young children have been disrupted. Their rights of association and leisure have been infringed. Most of these children live in populated slums with no play grounds where they can play or exercise. School is the only place where they get these opportunities and the closure is a threat to their physical as well as mental well-being.

i) **Toys, story books, drawing books, art materials** and **stationary** will be very useful for their mental and emotional well-being.

ii) There is need for **counseling** and **psychological support** for candidates who are exhibiting anxiety, both primary and secondary candidates. No reassuring

information has been relayed directly to them in as far as their education and national exams are concerned.

iii) There is need for parental and caregiver empowerment to enable their engagement in child development and well-being. Most parents are not trained teachers or counselors and so they do not know what to do with their children in this prolonged stay with them at home and period of anxiety.

6. Psychosocial support

i) **Parental guidance and counseling** – there has been a notable increase in domestic violence in households since the stay-at-home orders were issued. This has been attributed to economic setbacks among other factors. Online counseling and support groups will be of great help. Family stability is key for a child's well-being.

ii) **Children homes** - These are rescue centers for orphaned and abandoned children. In normal circumstances, they occasionally interact with external visitors and well-wishers. With the current economic turmoil, they are experiencing hardship in acquiring the most basic.

- They will benefit from material support like food, masks, soap, toys, story books and writing materials.
- They need counselors to bring them up to speed with the happenings.
- It is necessary to train workers in children's homes on hygiene, basic first aid and how to promote children right even in the midst of this pandemic.

7. Health and hygiene support

Importance of hand washing cannot be over emphasized. However, there have been challenges in this practice.

- Campaign should be increased.
- Additional water points need to be provided.
- Production of homemade soap and disinfectants should be supported.
- Fumigation of environments especially slums will be of great help.

Conclusion

Households have been greatly affected by this pandemic. The effects are in all areas. This means that combined strategies are needed to mitigate the effects. OMEP Kenya recognises that by working with our communities as well as other organizations we can address key gaps that will give children, households and communities what they need to survive this pandemic.

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