

Chapter 14

People's Responses to COVID-19 Containment Measures in Selected Areas in Nairobi County, Kenya: Dynamism of Nairobians in Response to COVID-19

Kenneth Wanjau
Karatina University, Kenya

ABSTRACT

The chapter details how various categories of people have shown resilience in responding to the devastating effects of COVID-19. It focuses on Mwiki residents in Kenya. The chapter focuses on how various youths and women developed an entrepreneurial spirit to overcome economic challenges that arose because of the government curfew. The chapter narrates various case studies of how Nairobians are resilient when faced by a pandemic. The people's response to this catastrophe and the restrictive measures continue to draw curious interest. Whereas some gave in, many others continue to soldier on in creative ways to survive.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps of all the debilitating pandemics in recent times, Covid has been the most ravaging. The entire world seems to have been caught off guard. The Advanced, Developing and Least Developed nations of the world were all devastated as human systems came crashing to a halt; Education, Commerce, Industries, Health Systems, Entertainment or the laugh Industry, Music Industry, Places of Worship- literally all aspects which give human life a structure collapsed.

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The containment measures announced by the government in March 2020, included a raft of measures such as curfews, locking off high risk counties (where infection rates were high), mandatory wearing of masks, sanitizing of hands, social distancing, restricted movements, banned public gatherings which resulted in closure of learning institutions, businesses, churches, eateries amongst many others. The people's response to this catastrophe and the restrictive measures continues to draw curious interest. Whereas some gave in to the pressure of the pandemic, many others continue to soldier on in creative ways to survive. People looked for opportunities to make a living and still do so during this uncertain Covid pandemic period. Some two professionals who lost their jobs due to Covid restrictions had the following responses, and I will quote verbatim;

I have simply embraced the new normal and I have learnt to adjust my life to the uncertainty about basic needs. I ask questions like, Do I need to invest? Do I need to go to school? Do I need to build a house? I am living with uncertainty a day at a time...living basic life, waiting for an uncertain tomorrow

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

The main focus will be the response of the youth to the Kenyan Government's COVID-19 containment measures, the children and some key sectors of the economy that have some impact on the youth especially in the informal settlement of Nairobi in Mwiki, Kibera, Mathare in the outskirts of Nairobi City as well as middle income estates in Nairobi such as Garden Estate, Thome VI, Roysambu and Kasarani. However, other parts of the country may be included to emphasise the responses. My discussion will cover the responses of the Government, the citizenry especially the largely youthful population and children using pictorial evidence. The effects of Covid-19, responses and roles played by other stakeholders such as the media and financial institutions will also be highlighted.

The mission of this chapter is to find out how various categories of people and some sectors of the economy have shown resilience in responding to the devastating effects of Covid 19 with special emphasis on the youth and children.

Issues, Controversies, Problems

The concerns raised in this chapter are the containment measures resulting in the growing infections and deaths related to Covid 19. These raft of measures include lockdowns, curfews, and restricted public gatherings (14th. June2021, WHO) which have resulted in some of the following;

1. The new protocols have instilled sound hygiene practices such as hand washing, sanitizing, hand-washing, sanitizing, coughing with precautions, reduced visits to hospitals for normal flues.
2. Neighbourhoods have organised for tuition for their children since online classes may be untenable or unaffordable to the poor especially in the slums or low income brackets
3. Innovative people have taken advantage of new opportunities presenting themselves in the digital space and organized and bolstered online businesses as we shall see in the discussions taking advantage of government interventions.
4. Churches that were previously purely in person have realized and exploited the huge potential of online church services. During an interview on Hope Radio- Bishop Oginde of CITAM said the

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