



COVID-19 and the Youth Question Africa

KENYA CONCEPT NOTE



CCRDA
Consortium of Christian Relief &
Development Associations



Canada 

Impact, Response and Prevention

The COVID-19 crisis has severely disrupted youth livelihoods, access to education, employment and participation in governance processes, decision-making and public life. It is envisaged that the long-term impact of the crisis will exacerbate their vulnerability and exclusion. At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis has the potential to promote youth agency by encouraging innovation, strengthening intergenerational dialogue and promoting social accountability. Against this background, this project seeks to generate evidence on how youth, despite the exclusionary practices, can be at the forefront of action and policy responses to mitigate and address the impact of the pandemic. The main research question that this study will answer is: How do we ensure that youth-led social accountability programming for COVID-19 is gender-responsive, inclusive and has meaningful participation so that the voices of the most marginalized have equal representation for transformed societies?

Using applied research which adopts a gender-transformative approach based on the mixed methods paradigm, the project will analyze how youth (young women and young men) are transforming the public health and socio-economic landscape created by COVID-19 by advocating for transparent and accountable responses to the pandemic. Focusing on Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda, the project will seek to bridge the divide between excluded youth and their governments, and coordinate responses using a data-driven, evidence-based approach. It will improve governance mechanisms by promoting meaningful youth engagement in social accountability and advocacy of the COVID-19 pandemic thus promote the four pillars of SA (transparency, participation, response and monitoring) and therefore contribute to build trust between the citizens and local governments when it comes to decision making. These strengthened partnerships will lead to a more inclusive socially cohesive society that recognizes and empowers youth as leaders and partners in transformational social change. It will enhance their engagement in performance monitoring and provide feedback that will lead to responsive allocation of resources to fight COVID-19.

The goal of this work is to take the initial steps towards improving and enhancing youth engagement in social accountability and advocacy of the COVID-19 pandemic by better understanding young people's own

perspectives on the barriers they are facing and their needs to effectively advocate and enhance their engagement, within the context of existing principles and practices. The primary aim was to review and consolidate the latest evidence on successful strategies for youth-led citizen monitoring and oversight of public and private resources, and on citizen participation in public resource allocation and decision-making to improve livelihoods during the pandemic. Citizen-led social accountability programming is to ensure

inclusivity and meaningful participation, so that the voices of those most marginalized have equal representation. We believe that active citizens empowered with information, ways to effectively communicate their message, and access to decision makers can drive the type of change necessary to fundamentally galvanize social, economic, and political reforms to transform their societies. This research project is two-pronged: government accountability for the effective management of COVID-19 resources, policies and budgets and youth-led gender responsive social accountability programming. It is thus important to understand the dynamics of CSOs and how they interact to allow inclusion/exclusion of different actors, recognizing power differences both within and between civil actors to ensure these are not reproduced. This project seeks to strengthen partnerships and trust between the governments and citizens by meaningfully engaging male and female youth as transformative change agents of their communities in public oversight for improved public service delivery throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and afterwards. This will happen at the individual, household, community, sub-national, national, and regional level.

The project proposes the development and implementation of a COVID-19 Vertically Integrated Social Accountability and Advocacy Framework (COVISAF) to complement formal IGAD Member States' oversight mechanisms of implementing Regional Response Strategy for COVID-19 pandemic. COVISAF will enable the documentation of reliable, contextually-grounded local data analysis and rapid feedback to communities and authorities to inform policies and decision making. The focus will be on primarily governments taking responsibility for commitment and actions, answering for them by explaining and justifying them to rights' holders and being subject to a form of sanction where commitments and responsibilities are not fulfilled.

The project will provide rapid support to on-going work, innovate new ways of learning and sharing; and enhance capacities to inform current

and future policy and practice solutions that will strengthen the overall governance of the crisis and its aftermath. The project will emerge with recommendations for governments, development actors, civil society organisations, youth organizations, and regional actors. It is expected that the Intergovernmental Authority on Development will consider the perspectives, needs and experiences of young people in the implementation of emergency responses. Ultimately, the project will generate lessons on how to ensure that citizen engagement, social accountability, collaboration and inclusivity are embedded in the management of public health disasters, pandemics, emergencies and crises.

Five institutions will form a consortium to implement this project: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), IGAD-CEWARN, The OSSREA Kenyan Chapter, Makerere University and Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association-(CCRDA-Ethiopia).