THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUNG PEOPLE IN KENYA

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COVID-19 and the Youth Question in Africa: Impact, Response and Protection Measures in the IGAD Region Project

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KENYA

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The development of this report on COVID-19 and the youth question in Africa is a culmination of key informant interviews and focus group discussions with respondents from civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, members of County assemblies, and community-based organizations. Special thanks go to the youth and community elders who were involved in the focus group discussions for their active participation and insightful contributions. Their valuable contributions have indeed formed a larger proportion of the report.

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List of Acronym and Abbreviations

Boda Boda	Motorcycle transport providers
CBO	Community Based Organization
COG	Council of Governors
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FDG	Focus Group Discussions
KII	Key Informant Interview
MCA	Member of County Assembly
NERC	National Emergency Response Committee
NYS	National Youth Service
OSSREA	Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa

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Executive Summary

COVID-19 pandemic, a public health crisis has translated into a socio-economic predicament to developing countries of Africa, Kenya included. As the healthcare systems in the African countries grapple with managing the virus, discovery of new strands has produced devastating challenges. It has exposed inadequacies of healthcare systems and made external interventions paramount. Nonetheless, the government of Kenya generated a stimulus fund to cushion its citizens and their businesses from adverse effects of COVID-19. There are indications that the youth in Kenya, comprise a significant proportion of a group that may have been greatly affected by COVID-19 pandemic in some way. They have experienced job losses and closure of businesses rendering them incapable of meeting basic household needs.

This study addressing COVID-19 pandemic and the question of youth in Africa, a Kenyan perspective, is one of similar studies conducted in other African countries of Ethiopia and Uganda, all mandated by OSSREA. It highlights key governance issues of COVID-19 management; socio-economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic; peace and security matters associated with COVID-19; environmental concerns; social well-being of household members; and emerging issues. It was conducted in 3 Counties of Busia, Mombasa and Nairobi within selected Sub Counties giving valuable information on youth involvement in mitigation of COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya.

Research assistants collected data through key informant interviews and focus group discussions with participants from NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, Members of the County Assemblies, youth groups, community elders, among a range of stakeholders in COVID-19 management in the country. The study revealed that the youth were minimally involved in the governance of COVID-19 pandemic, probably because the response to the pandemic was considered an emergency and therefore government of Kenya used existing administrative structures (Government Ministries, County Governments, and County Commissioners) to govern and manage the pandemic. The youth need to be empowered in order to meaningfully contribute to governance issues at all levels as the study revealed some lack capacity to be considered resourceful.

The study also revealed that a significant percentage of households could buy basic food items, purchase medicine, successfully access public transport and had stable access to electricity during the pandemic, an implication of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 not being too devastating. The social well-being of household members though, show a relatively high percentage needed medical services since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and access to medical services seemed a challenge to both gender. Peace and security was a major challenge particularly during curfews as citizens were being extorted by security personnel and some youths were recruited into criminal gangs due to economic pressures. Gender-based violence and domestic violence were on the increase during lockdowns and curfew period. The youths were involved in environment management through clearing of the bush, drainage openings and cleaning of markets through the KAZI KWA VIJANA (jobs for the youth) initiative.

The study recommends that the government should demonstrate fairness to all citizens in providing healthcare related to COVID-19 crisis and institute necessary measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 disease. This is because of the belief citizen hold that the government is able to address the crisis and citizens as well, are willing to abide by the measures. Also, the youth are heterogeneous as stated by one key youth informant, therefore, identification and categorization of youths will make it easy to understand their unique needs and address them effectively. Lumping them together leads to missing out the uniqueness that would enhance productive engagement and addressing of their needs effectively. Further, capacity building should also target youth of all gender, especially in governance issues to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to meaningfully participate in governance issues at all levels. Both youth-led CSOs and government officials need soft skills to strengthen State-CSOs interaction for proper social accountability. This can be done through seminars and workshop managed by CSOs in partnership with government, NGOs and other supporting organisations like OSSREA, IGAD, UNESCO, World Bank, among others. Finally, funding of CSOs by government will go a long way in grassroot youth engagement. The local government administrative structure may only provide a legal basis to oversee youth mobilization, but may not actively participate in youth capacity building. Therefore, CSOs government funded forums are more ideal to empower youth of all gender.

LIAISON OFFICER OSSREA - KENYA CHAPTER

1.0   Introduction

This report gives an overview of the qualitative analysis of key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDS) that were conducted with youths, opinion leaders, local administration, political representatives and leaders of various civil society organizations (CSOs) in Busia, Mombasa and Nairobi Counties of Kenya. Similar surveys and analyses were conducted in Ethiopia and Uganda by OSSREA chapters of respective countries. Five institutions formed a consortium to implement the 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.

Figure 2: Introduction Meeting with Dr. Truphena in Mombasa

Figure 1: Focus Group Discussion at Ziwa La Ngombe - Mombasa

response, its impact and prevention with the youth being considered as the treatment factor. Data was analyzed by the selected county teams at the County levels. This final report is based on those County qualitative reports and uses statements from research participants to exemplify the results. The aim of the qualitative interview analysis is to illustrate and complement the results of the statistical analyses conducted and captured in an earlier report by OSSREA. It is aimed to:

- illustrate and complement the results of the statistical analysis captured in the initial report by OSSREA on the question of the youth in Africa;
- generate knowledge that will enable bridge the divide between Kenyan youth and their governments at all levels using a data-driven, evidence-based approach;
- strengthen partnerships (between government, CSOs, CBOs and Community Members) that will lead to a more inclusive socially cohesive society that recognizes and empowers youth of all gender in addressing society challenges and becoming valuable partners in transformational social change;

1.1   Background

A youth is defined by the 2010 Kenyan Constitution as any individual between 18- and 35-years age bracket. They form approximately one third of the Kenyan population and therefore a significant constituent that need to be harnessed for social and economic development of the nation (Kenya National Bureau of Statistic, 2019). If properly planned for, the country can reap the demographic dividend from the current youthful population and attain the aspirations of Kenya's vision 2030. The Youth need to be empowered appropriately and allowed to participate in transformation of the country, by government at all levels creating an enabling environment since COVID-19 pandemic has created a disruptive and relatively volatile environment. Opportunities exist for Kenya to adopt best practices of youth engagement from successful cases worldwide, but also to generate tailor made home solutions on the question of the youth factoring in supportive gender-specific approaches necessary to address vulnerability faced by male and female (Department for International Development ,2017).

The Kenya Constitution of 2010 made citizen participation a central part of Kenya's governance system regardless of age, race, colour, gender or political affiliation. Participation of the citizenry is recognized in Article 10 of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya as one of the national values and principles of governance. Article 174(c) provides that the object of devolution is to: "enhance the participation of people in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them." Additionally, Article 184 (1) (c) also requires that mechanisms for participation by residents be included in the national legislation relating to urban areas and cites governance and management, and Articles 196, 201(a), 221(5) and 232(1) (d)among others provide provisions on public participation (Kenya's Constitution, 2010; National Assembly of Kenya, 2017). Therefore, the importance of public participation, the youth included, cannot be over emphasized enough.

The answer to the COVID-19 and the youth question in Kenya can be found in their (youth) participation in governance opportunities either individually or in a self-organised form that is legally recognized, at both national or devolved levels of government. Despite the likely benefits of youth participation in governance and the presence of guidelines (County Public Participation Guidelines, 2016), the youth seem to have been left on the periphery of governance decision making. The Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution (CIC) in Kenya, noted in its final report on implementation of devolved government that public participation was inadequate due to limited knowledge of the Constitution. The already established partnership between County governments and CSOs, who (CSOs) have created links with communities could be crucial

in creating links and networks that will facilitate more public participation particularly for the youth.

The COVID-19 pandemic *socio-economic impact in Kenya* is partly exacerbated by the huge number of people living in poverty, and the precautionary measures have continued to have a negative socio-economic effect on the workers and businesses as well (Development Initiative, 2020). It is possible that the youth are likely to experience a far greater impact in the long term as the labour force and business entities continue to grapple with the novel disease. The lockdowns and curfew experienced in Nairobi and Mombasa Counties, have dwindled the revenue streams from the youth in business leading to eventual closure of their ventures and generating challenges of meeting their basic needs such as food and house rent (National Cohesion and Integration Commission, 2020). The negative socio-economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic has made the youth vulnerable to manipulation by perpetrators of violence such as politicians and easy prey for recruitment into violent extremism, crime and terrorism with a hope of gaining some pecks for survival. Nonetheless, the youth are reliable agents of peace in their communities (ibid).

1.2   Study Objectives

This research study is the third in our series of studies in the COYOQA Project. It covers two research objectives (4 and 5). We sought: -

   (i)   To investigate the gendered socio-economic impact of COVID 19 pandemic on the Kenyan youth and their livelihoods.
   (ii)   To examine the contribution of policy makers in COVID-19 pandemic response on meaningful Kenyan youth engagement in governance.

1.3   Research Questions

Four research questions have been answered in this study. They include: -

   (i)   What is the gendered socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the Kenyan Youth livelihoods?
  (ii)   What are the pathways to meaningful youth engagement in social accountability for social justice and good governance?
  (iii)   Where are the gaps in knowledge and policy?
  (iv)   What investments can be made to promote youth inclusion in COVID-19 pandemic response and general governance in Kenya at all levels of government?

1.4   Limitation

The survey was conducted at a time that coincided with Covid19 virus pandemic related public health restrictions. Lockdowns and curfew limited live data collection. However, the exercise was allocated more time to maintain credibility of the study. COVID-19 protocols were observed to guarantee safety of respondents and in some cases Key informant interviews were conducted via telephone.

2.0   Literature Review

When the World Health Organization (WHO) recognized coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) as a pandemic on 11th March 2020, the president of Kenya made pronouncement that effectively closed all learning institutions on 16th March 2020[1]. Other institutions and business entities came up with measures to mitigate the pandemic as organizations allowed employees to work from home[2], others rescheduled shifts and leave without pay leading to loss in work hours, others laid off employees or literary shut down rendering employees jobless (ILO, 2020). Notwithstanding the direct health impact of COVID-19, the associated insidious socio-economic effects became more pronounced compelling Countries, like Kenya, to develop mitigation strategies to cushion her citizenry. The government set up a stimulus package that targeted businesses and disadvantaged communities, to stabilize businesses and enable communities meet their basic needs.

COVID-19 has had adverse effect on several sectors of the Kenyan economy in particular; tourism, agriculture, manufacturing and trade resulting in real threat to people's jobs and livelihoods (UNDP Policy Brief, 2020). The prolonged lockdowns and curfews in the cities of Mombasa and Nairobi, made a bad situation worse as workers in the hospitality sector were laid off, businesses underperformed and manufacturing sector slowed down due to restricted exports. Figure 1 summarizes channels of potential socio-economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic as developed by UNDP.

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[1] ILO Report 2021, Digitalization in teaching and education in the context of COVID-19: Kenya Digitalization, the future of work and the teaching profession project. ILO Report 2020
[2] ILO Report 2020, Teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. A practical Guide
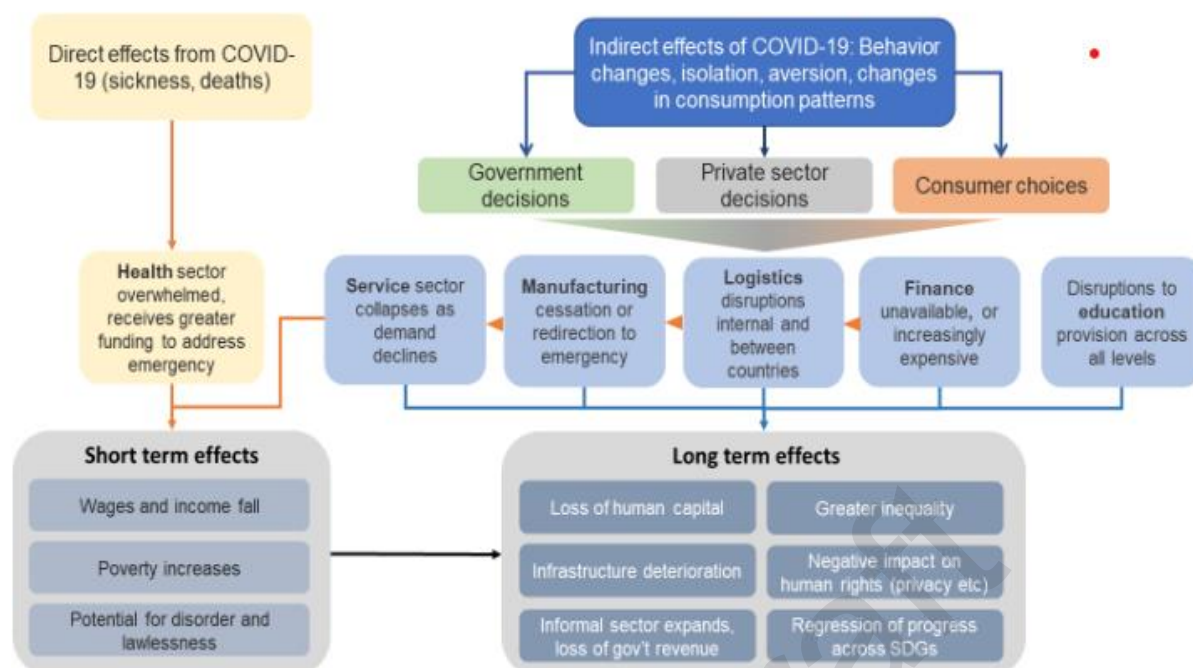
Figure 3: Channels of Potential Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic[3]

The youth in Kenya constitute a third of the population and anticipate impact of COVID-19 pandemic if not drastically curbed will have a far-reaching undesirable effect on the country as a whole (Kenya National Bureau of Statistic, 2019). Its important that the youth are cushioned against socio-economic threat associated with COVID-19 pandemic to guarantee attainment of the country's vision 2030 goals. The social well-being of the youth will be a key component of Kenya's transformation into a middle-income industrial state[4]. COVID-19 and its containment measures of social distancing and self-isolation may cause stress that eventually degenerate into depression if not quickly addressed. Uncertainty associated with COVID-19 pandemic can drive the youth into mental health problems.

Youth involvement in governance has been enshrined in Kenya's constitution of 2010 that made public participation a central component of governance[5]. For proper governance citizen trustworthiness of the government is an important component. This determines uptake of government prescribed measures however unattractive they are (Tsai & Morse, 2019). Perceived fairness in service delivery by a government brings a sense of equality that is necessary for government to properly govern. Civil servants can be trained to develop positive attitude towards

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[3] UNDP Policy Brief, it highlights
[4] Kenya' Vision 2030 https://vision2030.go.ke/
[5] Kenya's Constitution of 2010 http://www.kenyalaw.org/lex/actview.xql?actid=Const2010 Article 174(c), Article 184 (1) (c), Articles 196, 201(a), 221(5) and 232(1) (d)

citizens leading to fair service delivery[6]. Government has to be seen to be able to handle challenges in the society. This is a component of governance that privileges a government in its endeavour to serve its citizen.

COVID-19 pandemic containment measures of self-isolation, lockdown and curfews, contributed to limited access to livelihood opportunities. This generated economic pressures that led to youth engage in criminal activities causing unrest in their communities. Incidences of sexual and gender-based violence increased as well as tension emanating from perception of unfair access to livelihood[7]. Community initiatives intended to improve peace and cohesion have been hampered by COVID-19, social distancing and other restrictions. Thus, an already fragile social cohesion has been further eroded by COVID-19, and the mitigation measures designed to combat the virus. Peace building strategies that will generate more buy-ins from the youth of all gender make peace more durable and facilitate growth and development in communities (Obi & Kabandula, 2021).

COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to produce overwhelming solid waste in hospitals, public spaces and homes. The demand for personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves, disposable plastics, respirators, and syringes has been on the increase worldwide. When movement is restricted huge accumulation of waste will arise posing a serious environmental risk particularly in incidences of poor waste management (Campbell, 2007). Urban forestry and green spaces are considered to be a nature-based solution in urban sustainability and fundamental element for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Borelli et al, 2018). Environmental enhancing activities like urban green spaces and improved forest covers aid in mediating air pollution from industries and motor vehicles in mega cities, controlling urban climate through cooling effect, tree vegetation acts as windbreaks and control urban flooding ((Tyrvainen et al, 2005). Funding for environmental conservation was limited during COVID-19 pandemic leading organization cutting down on staff and general activities. The cessation of environmental management can turn catastrophic in future.

3.0   Methodology

This report presents the findings of a mixed research design study, undertaken in three Counties of Kenyan namely Busia, Mombasa and Nairobi. The study engaged 735 respondents. The respondents were picked through random sampling for quantitative data and purposive sampling for qualitative data. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to acquire qualitative data. The key informants comprised of youths, opinion leaders, local administration, political representatives and leaders of various civil society organizations

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[6] Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (2015) National Values & Principles Of Governance http://www.knchr.org/Portals/0/CivilAndPoliticalReports/National%20Values%20and%20Principles%20of%20Governance.pdf

[7]International alert 2021. The impact of COVID-19 on peace and conflict dynamics A case study of Korogocho informal settlement, Nairobi, Kenya https://www.international-alert.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Kenya-COVID-19-Impacts-Korogocho-Full-EN-2021.pdf

(CSOs) in Busia, Mombasa and Nairobi Counties of Kenya. FGD were also conducted with organized groups and youths within specific communities in the study regions. Questionnaires and research interview schedules were primary tools for data collections.

The data collection team comprised of enumerators, supervisor, FGD and KII facilitators. Research assistants distributed and oversaw questionnaire completion. The research assistants were recruited in a process overseen by OSSREA personnel as well as research quality training conducted. Data control and quality check protocol during data collection was agreed upon and adhered to throughout the process.

Depending on a given key informant, relevant questions were lined up in line with study objectives and research questions. For instance, an interview of a political leader such as an Member of County Assembly (MCA) would border on governance and leadership while for CSO's member would be on advocacy and youth engagement. Telephone interviews were conducted where the key informant was not available to participate in a face-to-face interview. Most interviews were on a face-to-face format. OSSREA Monitoring Evaluation Coordinator provided the technical, administration and logistical support during the data collection process. Data collected was done stage-wise, first analyzed based on individual Counties and then later condensed into this final report.

4.0   Findings

The data was collected through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. It was then summarized and presented in tables, charts and verbatim.

4.1   Overview of Respondents and their Characteristics

The response rate for the study was 97% and a total of 394 male and 341 female respondents were interviewed from 3 Counties of Kenya namely Busia, Mombasa and Nairobi. The study was conducted by undertaking household surveys using survey CTO, conducting Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions. 39.3% of the respondents had completed secondary school, 16.7% completed bachelor or higher university education level, and 12.4% had attained diplomas and certificates from TVET institutions.

The sub-locations that were involved in the study included Budalangi, Malaba, Matayos and Busia Town in Busia County; Likoni, Nyali/ Kisauni, Changamwe/ Jomvu and Mvita in Mombasa County; and Kibra, Kasarani and Starehe in Nairobi County.

4.2   Analysis and presentations

These data was collected through key informant interviews and focus group discussions and coded into categories that the study had identified and developed in the theoretical review of literature, and collective agreement of research team as the study evolved. The findings were coded under the following headings governance; socio-economic impact; peace and security;

environment; social well-being; and emerging issues. There was some variation between the three Counties most probably because Nairobi and Mombasa Counties had experienced lockdowns and curfews, which was not the case with Busia County. Therefore, the magnitude of engagement of youth in the CBOs and CSOs, and generally in the response towards COVID-19 pandemic varied across the three Counties.

Preliminary investigation involved probing measures to reduce risk of contracting COVID-19, sources of information on self-isolation and social distancing, and steps government or local authorities are taking to curb the spread of COVID-19.

4.2.1   Measures to Reduce Risk of Contracting COVID-19

The study investigated the knowledge respondent had on measures that can reduce risk of contracting COVID-19. Table 1 shows distribution of their response.

Table 1: Percentage Gendered Distribution of Measures to Reduce Risk of Contracting COVID-19

Measures	BUSIA		MOMBASA		NAIROBI		TOTAL		Grand Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	F	M	
Hand washing	83.0	82.8	85.9	89.5	89.7	89.5	87.0	86.0	86.5
Use of Sanitizers	66.0	60.7	70.7	76.6	83.8	86.3	74.0	73.0	73.0
No Handshake/ Physical Greetings	25.8	31.1	38.4	35.5	23.5	12.6	28.0	28.0	28.0
Use of Masks	84.3	80.3	88.9	90.3	86.0	85.3	85.0	86.0	86.0
Use of Gloves	6.3	5.7	11.1	7.3	6.6	1.1	5.0	8.0	6.0
Avoid Travel	12.6	8.2	10.1	14.5	16.9	2.1	9.0	13.0	11.0
Stay at Home Unless Necessary	17.0	16.4	39.4	44.4	32.4	8.4	24.0	28.0	26.0
Avoid Crowded Places or Gatherings	51.6	40.2	48.5	52.4	53.7	33.7	43.0	52.0	47.0
Maintain Social Distancing	69.2	57.4	56.6	71.8	69.1	62.1	64.0	66.0	65.0
Avoid Touching Your Face	17.6	19.7	12.1	16.1	22.1	3.2	14.0	18.0	16.0

Note: M – Male F - Female

The findings reveal that hand washing and use of masks were thought to reduce risk of contracting COVID-19 disease while use of gloves was rates lowest as a measure to reduce risk of

contracting COVID-19 disease. Avoiding to touch your face and avoiding to travel also was seen as measures that least reduced contracting COVID 19 disease.

4.2.2 Source of Information on Self-Isolation and Social Distancing

The Study seek to find out the respondents' source information on self-isolation and social distancing. Table 2 shows the distribution of their responses.

Table 2: Source of Information on Self-Isolation and Social Distancing

Information Source	BUSIA				MOMBASA				NAIROBI			
	M		F		M		F		M		F	
	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%
Poster/Billboard/Flyer	49	30.8	37	30.3	20	20.2	34	27.4	45	33.1	24	25.3
Radio	107	67.3	62	50.8	61	61.6	70	56.5	96	70.6	51	53.7
Television	107	67.3	66	54.1	83	83.8	106	85.5	104	76.5	67	70.5
SMS	49	30.8	36	29.5	17	17.2	30	24.2	22	16.2	12	12.6
Phone	48	30.2	31	25.4	27	27.3	39	31.5	34	25.0	16	16.8
Newspaper	43	27.0	27	22.1	22	22.2	31	25.0	46	33.8	17	17.9
Social Media/Facebook/ Twitter	91	57.2	49	40.2	71	71.7	79	63.7	82	60.3	61	64.2
Healthcare Workers	18	11.3	13	10.7	25	25.3	16	12.9	8	5.9	2	2.1
NGO Worker	5	3.1	7	5.7	10	10.1	10	8.1	1	0.7	1	1.1
Other Outreach	10	6.3	6	4.9	8	8.1	12	9.7	0	0.0	1	1.1
Local Authority	39	24.5	27	22.1	12	12.1	19	15.3	9	6.6	5	5.3
Neighbours /Family	11	6.9	18	14.8	12	12.1	32	25.8	3	2.2	2	2.1
Traditional Healer/Pastor/ Faith Based Healer	19	11.9	19	15.6	7	7.1	14	11.3	2	1.5	1	1.1

Note: M – Male   F – Female   Fq - Frequency

The findings show that radio and television were the main source of information on self-isolation and social distancing for both male and female respondents across the three Counties. NGO workers were the least source of information on self-isolation and social distancing to both male and female respondents. This imply that for information to reach more people radio and television may be the best options.

4.2.3   Steps Government or Local Authority Took to Curb Spread of COVID-19

The study interrogated the respondents believe that the steps taken by government and local authority would curb the spread of COVID-19. Table 3 show the distribution of responses.

Table 3: Steps Government or Local Authorities Took to Curb the Spread of COVID-19

	Busia				Mombasa				Nairobi			
	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%	M	%	F	%
Advised citizens to stay at home	52	33	39	32	50	51	75	60	65	48	48	25
Restricted travel within country/ area	33	21	23	19	25	25	32	26	45	33	20	10
Restricted international travel	19	12	12	10	8	8	16	13	8	6	5	3
Closure of schools and universities	42	26	25	20	21	21	33	27	47	35	20	10
Curfew / lockdown	138	87	94	77	88	89	102	82	102	35	69	35
Closure of non-essential businesses	20	13	9	7	22	22	37	30	32	24	7	3
Building more hospitals or renting hotels	6	4	8	7	4	4	9	7	5	4	2	1
To accommodate patients	9	6	11	9	2	2	6	5	1	1	1	1
Provide food to needy people	12	8	21	17	4	4	10	8	3	2	2	1
Open clinics and testing locations	12	8	6	5	10	10	21	17	12	9	5	3
Disseminate knowledge about the virus	31	19	20	16	33	33	61	49	37	27	31	16
Don't know	6	4	20	16	0	0	61	49	8	6	31	16
Other, specify	17	11	7	6	10	9	14	11	10	7	10	5

The findings reveal that building more hospitals, accommodation of patients and restriction of international travel was believed by both gender to least curb the spread of COVID-19. Curfew/ lockdown, citizen advised to stay home, closure of schools and universities, and restriction of travel within the country was believed to curb the spread of COVID-19. This implies that the

measures instituted by government like curfew/ lockdown were thought to be able to curb spread of COVID-19 and there likely to get citizens' support.

4.2.4 Governance of COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Youth Involvement

Governance encompasses structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation. In line with response to COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya, both central and devolved governments were involved in providing governance in prevention of its (COVID-19) spread as well as monitoring its impact. The National Emergency Response Committee (NERC) on Coronavirus coordinated national, and helped The Council of Governors (COG) established the cross - sector COVID -19 Secretariat to coordinate counties' response and recovery strategy.

4.2.4.1 Perception of Government Involvement in the COVID-19 Pandemic Response

The argument that government may have not been involved in curbing the spread of COVID-19 disease was probed during the key informant interviews and focus group discussions. There was mixed response with participants stating their experiences. Most respondents agreed that the government was involved but the level of involvement seemed to vary with some indicating that government was fully involved while some stating the involvement was inadequate. For example: -

In Nairobi County the elders in Landimawe area of Mukuru informal settlement noted that *"the government response to the pandemic was particularly good."* While in Bundalangi in Busia County the informant stated, *"the responses that were made by national government were not adequate."* On the other hand in Mombasa an informant from a civil society organization indicated, *"there was a very good initiative that was given by the Governor and the County commissioner they formed a County Emergency Committee."*
This implies involvement of Mombasa County administration in the response towards COVID-19 pandemic.

Generally, The National Emergency Response Committee (NERC) on Coronavirus coordinated national level intervention, and helped The Council of Governors (COG) establish the cross - sector COVID-19 Secretariat to coordinate counties' response and recovery strategy. Sentiments from some respondents gave an impression that government response to COVID-19 pandemic may not have been felt in some areas, probably due to coordination of COVID-19 pandemic mitigation being conducted at head offices at national and County levels. This could have elicited responses of government not getting involved in COVID-19 pandemic mitigation.

4.2.4.2 Perception of Youth Involvement in the COVID-19 Pandemic Response

The government relied on existing administrative structures (Devolved government and County Commissioners) to work with development partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other government agencies to review evolving threat

from the outbreak of COVID-19. This ultimately, limited direct youth engagement at governance levels in the response to COVID-19 pandemic.

In Busia County, for instance, an informant from a CSO acknowledges County government effort but asserts that the youth were excluded when he notes,

> *"we also realized the County set up a multisectoral COVID emergency team that was from both County and national government, chaired by either the governor and the county commissioner but again the space of youth in this is unrecognizable…."*

On the other hand, a CSO member from Budalangi in Busia County, stated that the youth were involved in some meetings. He emphasized that,

> *"there were some youths who were involved like those at SIASA place, those ones were involved……. we had several meetings with them and at least two, three from SIASA place and also the NGOs were also bringing some youth…"*

Nevertheless, the CSO further argued that the youth found it difficult to participate effectively as he remarks that,

> *"But as I've said, things were being done haphazardly, So the voice will be there if the government reaches out to them. And it has been very difficult for the youth themselves, to go to the government, because know the way African governments are, they will come to you if they want you to do something. You take the initiative of going to the offices then it raises eyebrows, what are they looking for? Why do they want this information?"*

This illustrates the fact that the youth are treated with trepidation whenever they seek information from government offices. It implies that the youth could not take initiative to visit government office, but only wait until they are sought for by government officials.

4.2.4.3 Trustworthiness, Citizens Treatment and Government Ability

Investigation of youth involvement in governance of COVID-19 response further probed trustworthiness of local authority in managing the COVID-19 crisis, citizens treatment by government when providing COVID-19 crisis healthcare, and government's ability to provide healthcare to address COVID-19 crisis. Figure 3 shows the response distribution.
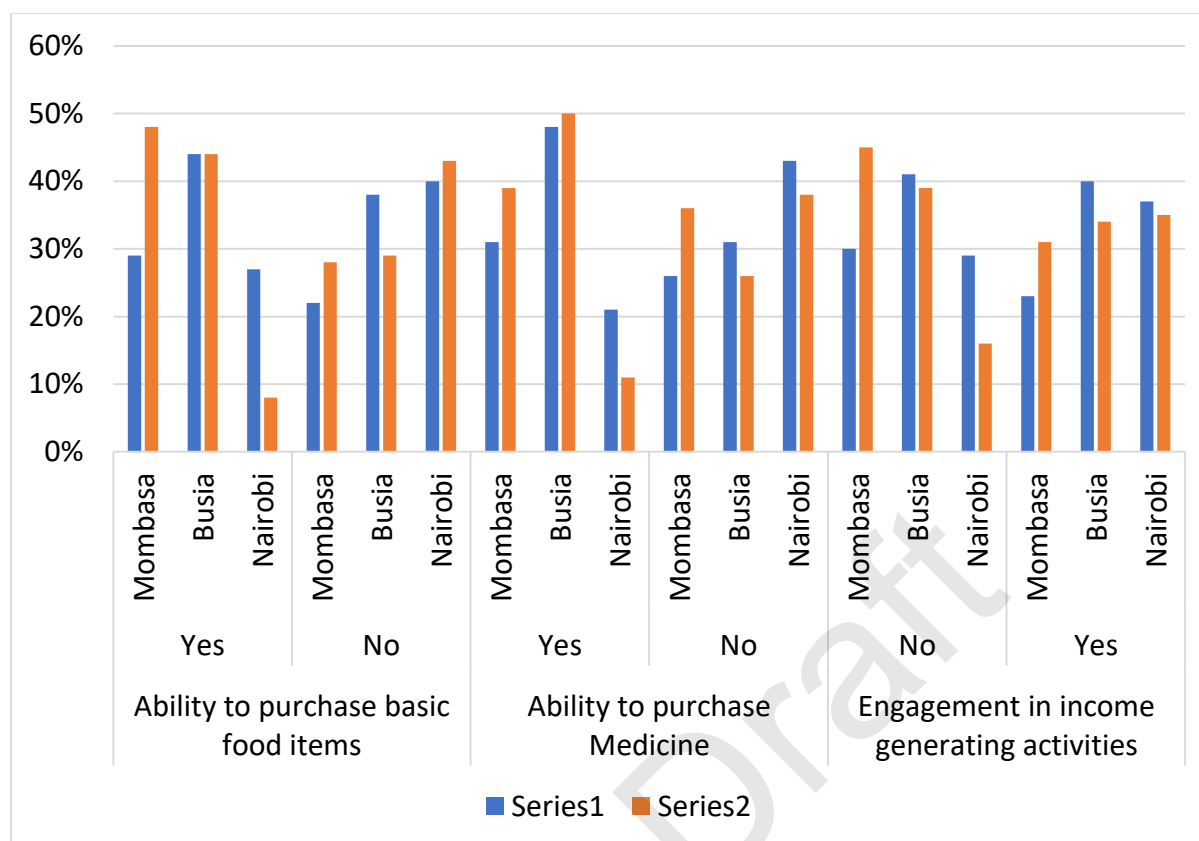
Figure 4: Governance Aspects in COVID-19 Response

Trustworthiness of government is a key governance component that is critical particularly in incidences that require voluntary compliance of citizens with government policies, like the case with COVID-19 pandemic mitigation measures. It can increase citizens' tolerance of measures that seem punitive or disruptive. Investigation if the respondents trusted the government's way of managing COVID-19 crisis show a balance between those who disagreed and those who agreed, at 30% each. Those who strongly disagree were 19% of the respondents. This implies the government need to put in place strategies that will help increase trust among citizens in the way it's managing and will continue to manage COVID-19 pandemic crisis, in order to limit devastating effects of noncompliance with COVID-19 mitigation measures.

Good governance demand fair treatment for all citizens regardless of age, ethnicity, race or gender. Fair treatment especially in public service delivery, increases trust and reduces suspicion of government by citizens, which would likely arise in the way people affected by COVID-19 pandemic in one way or the other were handled. An examination by this study found out that 19% of the respondents strongly disagree that government was treating all its citizens fairly when providing healthcare related to COVID-19 crisis, 30% disagree, 19% were neutral and 32% agreed. This implies that not all citizens are treated fairly by government when it comes to providing healthcare related to COVID-19 crisis. The government may need to focus on improving attitude of civil servants towards citizens highlighting value of equality as enshrined in the SDGs.

Government's ability to effectively respond to a health crisis of the magnitude of COVID-19 pandemic, minimizes wide spread impact of the disease. The cessation of face-to-face interaction in most workplace meant that COVID-19 pandemic transformed from a health crisis to a socio-economic crisis. Since it was a novel disease it in one way expose the inability of many countries public health systems. Therefore, this study interrogated Kenyan government ability to provide healthcare to address COVID-19 crisis. The findings reveal that 11% strongly disagreed that the government was able to provide healthcare to address COVID-19 crisis, 23% disagree, 22% were neutral, while 44% agreed that government was able. This imply that most respondents believe that the government was able to provide healthcare to address COVID-19 crisis.

4.2.5   Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 and The Question of Youth

The UN's framework for immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 crisis warned that COVID-19 pandemic is far more than a health crisis since its economic and social effect in the long run may outweigh public health impact. In Kenya for example cessation of face-to-face mode of learning in all institutions of learning in March 2020, led to most private schools being unable to pay salaries to the teaching and non-teaching staff, subsequently sending their staff on unpaid leave. Some institutions closed all together rendering staff unemployed and hence household were likely to experience challenges in meeting their basic needs.

Households experienced changes in their access to basic needs as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. There were incidences of hiked prices of commodities due to restriction in importation which affected prices of basic food items and medicine. The study investigated ability of households to purchase basic food items and medicine. It also probed if household members were engaged in income generating activities. Figure 4 shows response distribution.
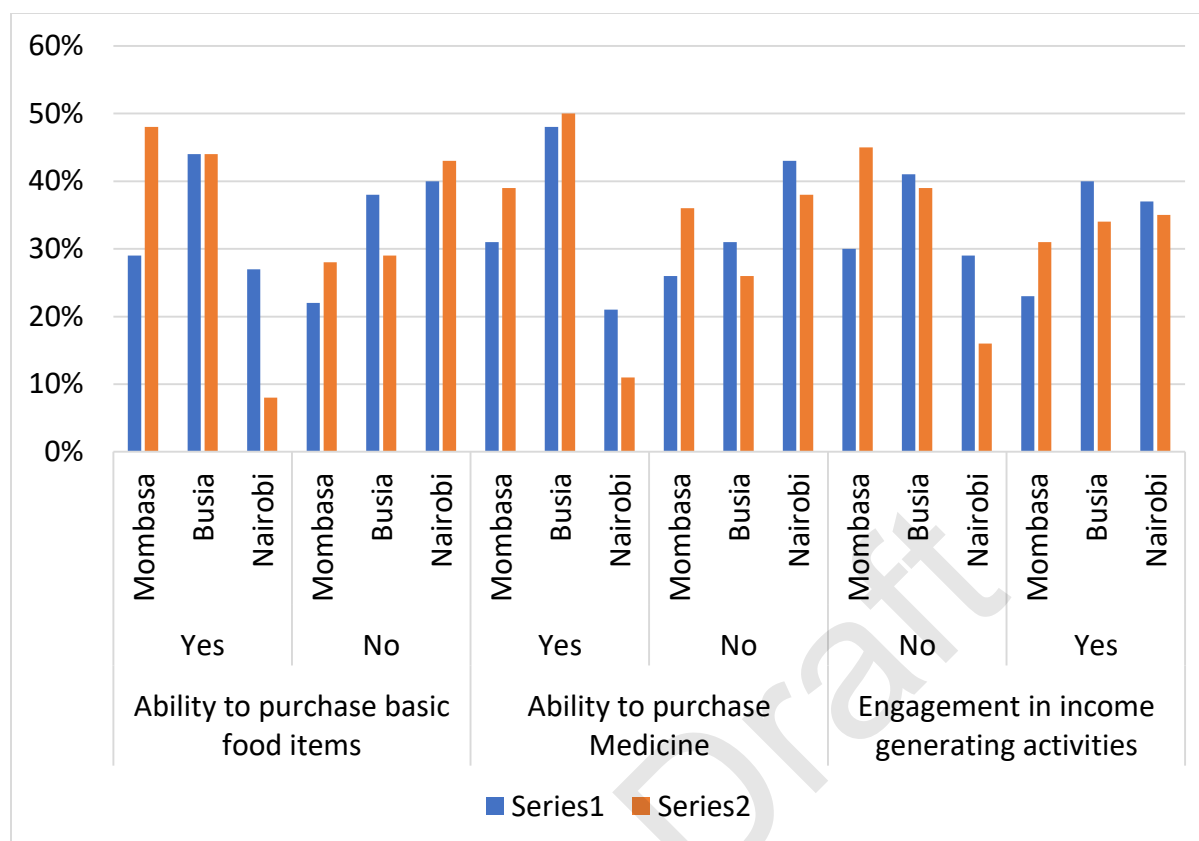
Figure 5: Aspects of Socio-Economic Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic

The results revealed, in terms of gender, that 54.3% of respondents who disagreed that they were not able to buy basic food items were male, while 45.7 were female. Only 8% of female respondents in Nairobi County agreed that they were not able to buy basic food items, Mombasa had 48% and Busia 44%. 29% of male respondents agreed that they could not buy basic food items, 44% in Busia and 27% in Nairobi. 40% of male respondents that disagreed were from Nairobi, 38% from Busia and 22% from Mombasa. Generally, 41.8% of the household respondents of both gender agreed that they could not buy basic food items and the other 58.2% disagree. This imply still a significant percentage (58.2%) of households could buy basic food items during COVID-19 pandemic.

Ability of households to buy medicine since the outbreak of COVID-19 disease was probed. 51% of household respondents who agreed that they were not able to buy medicine since the outbreak of COVID-19 were male, while 49% were female. 54% of respondents who disagreed that they were not able to buy medicine were male, while 46% were female.

The study sought to find out if the respondents were engaged in any income generating activity during COVID-19 pandemic. They were asked if during the pandemic they worked for pay, did any kind of business, farmed or other activities to generate income, even if only for one hour. Gender-wise, Mombasa County registered the highest percentage of females (45%) who did not get engaged in any income generating activities, followed by Busia County with 39% and Nairobi

County with 16%. Busia County had the highest percentage of male respondents getting engaged in income generating activities at 40%, followed by Nairobi at 37% and Mombasa at 23%. The percentage of male respondents not engaged in income generating activities in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties, may have been contributed due to either layoffs or business closures.

The situation in some parts of Busia County (Bunyala region) was compounded by natural disaster (flooding) the key informant stated that,

> *"it was very evident and during that time we had serious floods in Bunyala and made people to relocate as things were destroyed completely."*

The government allocated funds to cushion the youth and their businesses. The challenge was that the youth were not aware of how they could access the funds and its disbursement was erratic. The informant further states when asked if the funds arrived,

> *"yes, it was in the government but in actualization there was nothing, as the youths were not aware if there was a package allocated to them. What happened is that, they were called at a forum and given kes.100-200 and that's it."*

In Kibra, Nairobi County one of the informants stated, *"for me here at Kibra I did not see any kind of fund, as everyone used to have their problems."* In Mombasa a youth business owner who was a key informant, had no idea funds had been allocated to cushion her business. She said, *"it's the first time am hearing about it"*

These illustrates incidences where actual involvement of youth was hazy and information was not shared properly, hence lack of knowledge of funds meant to help mitigate COVID-19 challenges or when disbursed funds actually reached their areas. The net effect was the youth benefit less from funds allocated to cushion them from adverse socio-economic effect COVID-19 pandemic.

An initiative by government to cushion the youth dubbed "KAZI MTAANI" was undertaken in many Counties. In Busia County the youth were many and were allowed to work in turns as stated by the MCA. But at times money was not remitted on time. CSO member said,

> *"KAZI MTAANI was done and there was participation of youths and kept on changing so that everyone can participate but it had its own challenges as the people who were in charge, there was a time their money was not remitted and we had to raise the issue and it was released. Apart from that there was work given to youths of cleaning the markets, it has been seven months without pay."*

In Nyali, Mombasa County, the initiative was referred to as "KAZI KWA VIJANA". The key informant indicated, "The KAZI KWA VIJANA helped in supporting the youth as an alternative means for livelihood". He further stated that,

> *"The cash transfer programs from different stakeholders namely; national government, World food program and SHOFCO really helped the youth even though the process was a bit opaque in terms of the selection criteria for the beneficiaries."*

In Kibra, Nairobi County, the informant respond shows that some youth were left out when he says

> *"KAZI KWA VIJANA did help but it did not help everyone, first of all the KAZI KWA VIJANA initiative was only accessible for those having National identification cards, it also involved a lot of corruption in that there were youth who had two jobs and KAZI KWA VIJANA was a part of it so it did not end up helping those vulnerable without jobs during this time."*

Generally, government effort to alleviate socio-economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the youth, had its own share of difficulties, from logistical to implementation challenges.

4.2.6   Peace and Security During COVID-19 Pandemic

Due to economic pressure some youths resorted to criminal activities that disrupted peace and caused security threats. For instance, a CSO member from Busia states;

> *"most of the youths are at the informal settlements and we have so many young people who are in gang groups which they are terrorizing people. So, the first thing we did is we tried to have conversations with the youth from the informal settlement because there was a rise in crime, there was a rise in deaths as a result of gun violence, there was a rise in smuggling of goods around the border, so we formed a small consortium of four organizations to try and bring the peace to the community and try to engage the youths as they are engaged deeply in the violence."*

The CSO member when asked if the emergence of gangs were as a result of COVID-19, the member said,

> *"Yes, because there was a lot of recruitment going on because they are idle, they have nothing to do as they were no jobs, we were able to even disguise ourselves to go and interact with them so that to have a relationship with them and telling them that they have a voice."*

This implies there were incidences when peace got disrupted as unemployed youth were easy lots to be recruited into groups that caused insecurity. Peace and security were even more challenging during the curfews in Kibra, Nairobi County. A challenge for community members to observe curfew rules as well as extortion by security personnel. One of the informants said,

> *"it was really a challenge as most people were flouting the curfew hours due to the lack of having food to eat as per the curfew hour when the lockdown starts and because of this the rate of criminal activity went up. The security officers really did a commendable job but there are some who used it as an opportunity to make cash for those who were passed the curfew hours."*

Gender based violence was reported especially during lockdowns and curfew period. In Mombasa one informant used a two-thong strategy. He said,

> "We have done it in two ways as we did set up a call center where we were encouraging people to report any issues … there was a fund that we got from the European union and specifically it was cash transfers to people who were affected by gender based violence"

4.2.7   Environment Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

Funding for environmental conservation grew thin as most resources were spread towards health-related issues. Some NGOs recalled staff and halted operations or slowed down their operations due to reduced funding from donors. Therefore, there were instances were personnel with the right environmental conservation skills were not available on the ground. This temporal cessation of proper environmental monitoring and conservation, turns to be catastrophic in future.

The risk associated with the spread of COVID-1 exacerbated environmental degradation as staff in NGOs and other environmental conservation organization and agencies got stretched during this period limiting their effectiveness. It's ideal that the environment is not neglected to a level that it experiences degradation as rehabilitation will be costly.

Compliance with mitigation measures prescribed by WHO and Ministry of Health would in the long run minimize environmental harm. Knowledge held by community members plays a significant role in conservation of the environment. The study therefore investigated the knowledge respondent had on measures that can reduce risk of contracting COVID-19. Table 4 shows gendered distribution of their responses.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Measures to Reduce Risk of Contracting COVID-19

Measures	BUSIA		MOMBASA		NAIROBI		TOTAL		Grand Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	F	M	
Hand washing	83.0	82.8	85.9	89.5	89.7	89.5	87.0	86.0	86.5
Use of Sanitizers	66.0	60.7	70.7	76.6	83.8	86.3	74.0	73.0	73.0
No Handshake/ Physical Greetings	25.8	31.1	38.4	35.5	23.5	12.6	28.0	28.0	28.0
Use of Masks	84.3	80.3	88.9	90.3	86.0	85.3	85.0	86.0	86.0
Use of Gloves	6.3	5.7	11.1	7.3	6.6	1.1	5.0	8.0	6.0
Avoid Travel	12.6	8.2	10.1	14.5	16.9	2.1	9.0	13.0	11.0

Stay at Home Unless Necessary	17.0	16.4	39.4	44.4	32.4	8.4	24.0	28.0	26.0
Avoid Crowded Places or Gatherings	51.6	40.2	48.5	52.4	53.7	33.7	43.0	52.0	47.0
Maintain Social Distancing	69.2	57.4	56.6	71.8	69.1	62.1	64.0	66.0	65.0
Avoid Touching Your Face	17.6	19.7	12.1	16.1	22.1	3.2	14.0	18.0	16.0

Note: M – Male F - Female

The findings reveal that hand washing and use of masks were thought to reduce risk of contracting COVID-19 disease while use of gloves was rated lowest as a measure to reduce risk of contracting COVID-19 disease. Avoiding to touch your face and avoiding to travel also was seen as measures that least reduced contracting COVID 19 disease.

There were cases of youth groups with knowledge in environmental management. For instance, an informant in Kibra states,

> *"this organization is youth oriented and participate in the development and sustainable environment and we look at mitigating community health. We happen to be a lucky group that we were contacted by the UN habitat and we got trained and facilitated on Corona and we did Corona advocacy for one year and also, partnered with medical peers who facilitated what we were doing."*

In Budalangi, Busia County the youth had to deal with other environmental challenges caused by floods in Bunyala region. They were involved in relocation of masses and supplying masks to displaced people. The informants said,

> *"…during that time, we had serious floods in Bunyala and made people to relocate as things were destroyed completely. the national government came in handy. And even the transport sector started ferrying this people"*

The relocated people could not continue with their regular business and activities.

The environment was also managed by creating shelters where community members could wash hands and have their temperatures checked. The informant from Budalangi, Busia County said,

> *"to me from my experience, the organization that chipped in was the UN, they chipped in by giving us tents with water and soap to wash their hands and also, they were able to sustain the people who were doing sensitization, and also checking people's temperature. The tents were stationed at different areas, at every stage and people were not allowed to board the matatus without washing their hands and even accessing their homes. Red cross was also moving around they were giving soap and also took phone numbers of people and sent something small to sustain themselves during this time…."*,

These activities guarantee safe environment for the general public.

A member of County Assembly stated how he managed to keep the environment and engaged the youth.

> *"the youths were in groups, there were some who were involved in environmental sanitation which was then conducted by the County government, they also ensured during food distribution they were able to ensure that the process was smooth without any difficulties."*

The youths cleaned the environment as part of KAZI KWA VIJANA programme. They drained stagnant water and cleared bushes in most cases. This created clean safe environments where pests and mosquitoes were minimal, hence fewer incidences of people falling sick and visiting hospitals.

4.2.8   Social Well-being in the Face of COVID-19 Pandemic

It is desirable that the social well-being of household members enables them to function normally. This will allow them meet their individual goals and contribute effectively to national development. Restrictions of movements and layoffs in some instances would contribute to stress and may affect the mental health of individuals. Cases of gender based violence and sexual harassment were reported, breakdown in marriages, increased drug abuse among the youth, lack of food and inability to pay school fees for school going children, among others.

Also, most health facilities were preoccupied with handling of COVID-19 cases to a level that access to medical services was limited yet there was more need for healthcare services. The study examined households need for medical services since COVID-19 outbreak. It was checked if the respondent or any member of the household needed medical services since the pandemic. The study also, probed the respondents or members of their households' access to medical services during COVID-19 outbreak in the 3 Counties.

Since people use public transport more often to work and undertake personal chores, the study interrogated household members use of public transport services. This was interrogated by asking if the respondents or a member of their households needed to make use of public transportation services (e.g. formal bus, informal bus, rideshare). Furthermore, the study sought to know how successful the respondents or their household members were in accessing public transport. Figure 5 shows aspects of social well-being that were interrogated and their distribution.
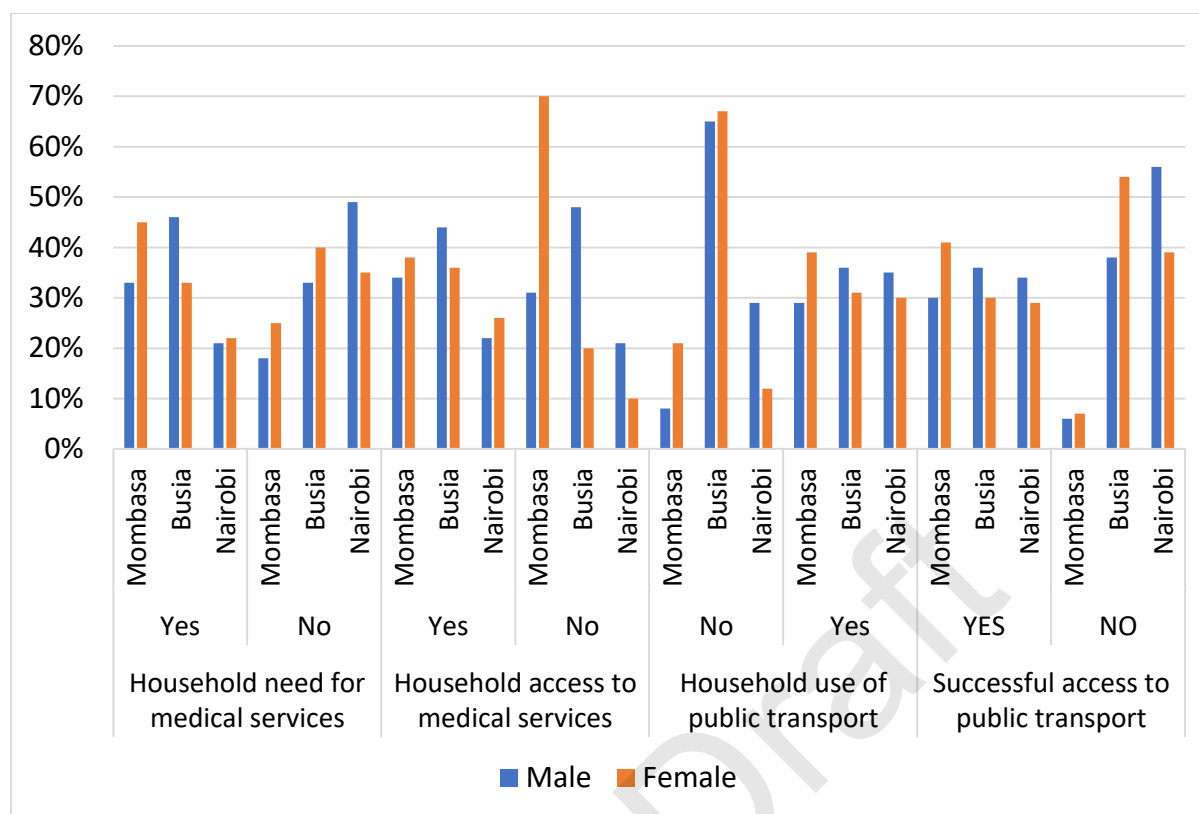
Figure 6: Aspects of Social Well-being

The results show that 33% of male or members of their households in Mombasa County needed medical services since the pandemic outbreak, 46% in Busia County and 21% in Nairobi County. The female registered 45% in Mombasa County, 33% in Busia County and 22% in Nairobi County. The figures imply that a significant number of people needed medical services or members of their household since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

Access to medical services seemed a challenge as stated by male respondents in Busia County (48%) and female respondents in Mombasa County (70%). Overall inability to access medical services was seen in Mombasa County with 50% of the respondents who said they couldn't access medical services coming from the County. Busia County had 35%, while Nairobi had 15% only.

Busia County had a high percentage of respondents who said "No" i.e. 65% male and 67% female to use of public transport. Mombasa County had the lowest percentage of males (8%) saying no while Nairobi registered 12% female being the lowest in the 3 Counties. For using public transport, all the three Counties had overall figures being close e.g. Mombasa 33%, Busia 35% and Nairobi 32%.

95% of male and 96% of female respondents indicated that they successfully accessed public transport, and 5% of male and 4% of female respondents stated they were not able to

successfully access public transport. Results reveal that relatively most respondents and their household members access the public transportation successfully.

Social well being was a challenge as illustrated in the focus group discussions. For instance, an informant from Kibra, Nairobi County illustrated a negative approach to recruiting the youth for KAZI KWA VIJANA. It borders sexual harassment of women, by stating,

> *"the government played their part and facilitated in their own way, the problem is at the county level as the government has to work with people who are at the ground level and the persons that were in charge of the KAZI KWA VIJANA initiative used that as an opportunity to manipulate the women so as they can get their names registered in the initiative."*

A CSO member from Busia highlights social challenges when she states,

> *"we got to experience early teenage pregnancies and also prostitution was being practiced at this area. There was a lot of promiscuous activity around the area…."*

Also, in Kibra, Nairobi County some families experience instability during COVID-19 pandemics. An informant said,

> *"We really tried our best to help those affected as COVID-19 brought a lot of stress to people and some saw the wives as the source of the problem then fights happen…"*

The youth leaders tried to sensitize community members against violence. The informant further said,

> *"whenever the fights happened, we usually took the appropriate action and reported to the law and the law takes its course. We also took this opportunity to sensitize people as many were affected and they have to learn how to peaceful co-exist with one another as you cannot end up solving the problem by jailing everyone."*

In Budalangi, Busia County, due to floods and loss of livelihoods stress arose when school going children resumed learning and parents were expected to pay school fees. An informant said,

> *"It was tough as when students were going to school the schools were demanding for school fees and to some there was no income to be able to pay fees right away so trouble started and lucky the Cabinet secretary of Education said the schools should not send Kids home but the schools had no money."*

Cases of suicide were cited as family demands could not be met due to lack of resources.

One of the key informants from Mombasa stated how they ensured food was supplied to needy members of community. She stated,

"I was in charge of food distribution….. And we also fundraised to give relief packages and I think by the time we were closing we had given to around one hundred and thirty households."

This was a measure to alleviate food insecurity among vulnerable members of the community.

The county government of Mombasa initiated a Covid-19 vaccination drive targeting mental health patients. This would guarantee the well-being of community members who could not take care of themselves. But, in some cases COVID-19 vaccine was treated with trepidation. When an informant was asked if the people were aware of availability of vaccines and how they were taking information being shared about COVID-19, he simply said some youth considered the vaccine fake. This is likely to affect the uptake of the vaccine and generally community well-being.

A summary of other issues captured during KIIs and FGDs included: -

- Neglect of other diseases. More attention was given to COVID-19 disease that Maternal and child health suffered, for example. Community members avoided health facilities for fear of contracting COVID-19 in the process of seeking medical services. Cases of medical staff or healthcare providers contracting COVID-19 led to limited interaction between community members seeking health services and medical staff. The net effect is that patients with other diseases like HIV/AIDS failed to access medical help putting them at increased risk.
- General community social welfare was disrupted. Schools serve as centres of socialization and provide safety to children as parents go out on their daily work schedules. Closure of schools exposed children to risks of gender-based violence and teenage pregnancies. Some teachers in private schools were not paid salaries on regular basis hence disrupting sources of income for families. Some had to look for alternative sources which were not forthcoming. The impact was felt more especially when the measures to curb the spread of the disease were instituted like curfew and lockdowns. With job losses in many sectors health needs for family could not be met as some private hospitals charges even higher fees due to COVID-19.
- Increased mental health challenges. Most youths were restricted to their homes and had no facilities like counseling services at their disposal. With a lot of uncertainty and job losses as businesses closed down, there was an increase in mental health challenges. Families were breaking up leaving children depressed and with little guidance. Increase in cases of street children and child prostitution was witnessed.

Informants in Kibra Nairobi indicated that they conducted a survey to establish the community needs. He stated,

"we did a survey, and that survey had some questions on the breadwinners of the families, and ensured that with whatever you have answered you get cash or food and basic items" . This ensured the well-being of community members.

4.2.9 Emerging Issues

There were efforts by CSOs to network and disseminate information on COVID-19 as well as undertake oversight. In Busia an informant stated that,

"we have social media groups where, all our members are in this platform, we make sure we share information, budget information and even the circular because currently we are doing a project on gender mainstreaming of the budget process and public participation but we are focusing on youths, women and people living with disabilities."

So social media is emerging as a tool for networking for CSOs. These networks are important in sharing and managing some oversight roles they play in government activities.

An informant from Legendary Art CBO in Nairobi, responding to the question if people were aware of the COVID-19 vaccine and how they were taking the information being shared indicated that *"It has a lot of Stereotypes"* and also *"youth say that the vaccine being injected that its fake"*. This definitely affect the uptake of the vaccines.

Other issues highlighted included: -

- Interrogation of the place of Indigenous medicinal knowledge in management of COVID-19 and related health challenges.
- Recognition of science -policy interface, as informants from County assemblies intimated on weak link between science-based initiatives and policies. This in itself contributes to inability to roll out or test inventions at lower levels. The reliance on policies at the central government level makes it difficult.

4.3   Answers to Research Questions

In summary what are the answers to the research questions?

(i)   What is the gendered socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the Kenyan Youth livelihoods?
- Both the male and female youth were able to buy basic food items and medicine but access to medical services by their households was a challenge. The youth still needed to use public transport during the COVID-19 crisis to work and address personal issues. They were able to successfully access public transport.
- Most household livelihood depend on wage employment and most youth are engaged in buying and selling businesses/ hotel and restaurants. As COVID-19 ravage businesses the

negative impacts are likely to arise if businesses close down or government institute measures to curb the spread of the disease such as lockdown and curfew.

(ii) What are the pathways to meaningful youth engagement in social accountability for social justice and good governance which we have evidence?

- The CSOs have demonstrated closer contact and better understanding of the youth and the activities they engage in on a regular basis. They are better placed to mobilize youth and in partnership with government and other collaborating agencies and institutions, to effectively initiate meaningful programmes of building capacities of youth in issues like budgeting and laws governing public participation.

(iii) Where are the gaps in knowledge and policy?

- Youth lack definite forums for engagement that address their issues and that can equip them with relevant skills and knowledge to adequately participate in governance issues or social accountability. They are assembled is diverse forum meant to address different community issues hence gaps in their knowledge.

- Policy gaps exist in that local administration treat the youth with trepidation and hence do not create enabling policies to facilitate activation of constitutional mandated rights for the youth. Therefore, they have remained ignorant of their expectations and policies to support activities they are to undertake are lacking.

(iv) What investments can be made to promote youth inclusion in COVID-19 pandemic response and general governance in Kenya at all levels of government?

- The Government need to work closely with CSOs and CBOs to help first those who are skilled and have lost their jobs, be engaged in governance activities in line with COVID-19 pandemic response. Since it may require a bit of orientation it can be done at County levels. Secondly, the youth who lack skills but have lost their jobs may need training or retooling to be effective. This may need short trainings and if possible, placement of these individuals.

- A stable and sustainable measure that promote youth inclusion in COVID-19 pandemic response strategies is to allow more transparent systems in place for delivery of equipment in health facilities as well as COVID-19 mitigation funds to businesses and youth generally. This can be through timely sharing of information at County and relevant ministries websites.

4.4   Brief Summary of County Reports

4.4.1   Busia County

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
KII with CSO member from Budalangi	• There were food shortages as we rely on Uganda for food supplies and businesses shut down especially those that relies on cross border business. Crime rates also rose as businesses closed and job loss rate increased. • At some point the doctors also went to the strike making the situation worse. There was an increase in teenage pregnancies as reproductive health services were no more. As a result of the 7pm curfew, many youths where clobbered by police sustaining injuries yet hospital services were poor. • Money sent by central government cause trouble as there are no clear structures. So, people were just spending horrendously. • The stimulus package and supplies of masks and sanitizers was done by the politicians, from the County and governor's office. These supplies were taken into the MCAs offices and so those friendly to them accessed the supplies. • There were serious floods that compounded COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The transport sector was affected leading to low supply of masks especially in the camps where people were restricted. COVID-19 protocols were not observed as the camps were congested. Property was also destroyed or lost.
KII with Willis Sumba a CSO member from Seme here in Busia county	• Busia is a transit County and a border County where there is a lot of movement with porous borders that are difficult to control. There is a lot of movements including trucks from different countries a fact that made Busia a COVID-19 hot spot at one point. • Over 60% of the population of Busia County of almost 1 million are youths. • The UWEZO fund that has been available even before COVID-19 was avoided by youths as it was riskier to invest during lockdown. • On social accountability it was problematic as people were not aware that the government had a budget of 251 million for COVID in the county. So, a few people that the CSOs reached could get the

	information and ask questions about the funds, and there were indications of losses due to corruption. • The youth representatives at the nation youth council Busia chapter infrequently engaged the youth at the lower level and hence difficult to raise their concerns at the legislative level. So, information flow in either direction was poor. • The CSOs facilitated youth to go and participate in decision making, though *Boda Boda* riders had their own structure that enabled proper engagement.
KII with Patrick Obuongoya an MCA in Busia County Assembly	• COVID-19 led to a lockdown as well as cessation of County assembly sessions. Though, there were extra ordinary sittings between the executive and assembly where we actually shared on health and the budget. Level of emergency preparedness was discussed and a County emergency committee was also formed. • Ministry of health at the County level put up a team to sensitize the community against the virus and they did that through public announcements by use of a van which was going to the whole county and also through the ward and village admins they were able to share with the community on what the government is doing during this period. • Policies were formulated but takes quite a while to be actualized as there is need for effective public participation before finally arriving at a conclusion. So, basically what the assembly did was to fast track policies on youth and health sector
KII with Douglas Barasa from County Education Office	• Not all students reported back to school once they reopened after the COVID-19 pandemic face-to-face learning cessation. Also, not all teachers were vaccinated but we are talking to them to get vaccinated so as they are protected. • Teachers of 58 years and above were asked to stay at home as the risk of infection was high for them. At one point they were asked to work from home but the challenge was that Online classes could not work as most schools are not connected to the internet. • Teachers were trained on how to mitigate against the spread of COVID-19 in the schools. They also did guidance and counseling to students (both boys and girls) to minimize teenage pregnancies for

	the students and parents not to chase their children from home in the event the got pregnant. • Schools were also given additional desks and chairs to facilitate social distancing. This was difficult in the flood prone Bundalangi area.
KII with Sarah Martha the Vice Chair of Civil Society Organization Network. Works for *Dhamira Moja* and KCDF (Kenya Community Development Foundation)	• Majority of the youths lost their jobs, and they came back to stay in the villages. Some joined gangs that terrorize people. Some youth got engaged in prostitution. We engaged them with UN women and WISE – an CBO dealing with security, which brought peace minimizing violence extremism among the youth. We also partnered with national government and faith-based organizations to help youth who were in gangs. • A partnership with RED Cross, KCDF, Lottery International, among other organizations enable acquisition of masks and sanitary pads that were distributed to villages. • The civil society organizations are creating awareness of COVID-19 pandemic and resources allocated for mitigation through social media groups. we make sure we share information, budget information and even the circular because currently we are doing a project on gender mainstreaming of the budget process and public participation but we are focusing on youths, women and people living with disabilities. • Food distribution was done by the county government. During this period the county government worked with the CSOs to ensure the provision of services to the community. Then there was also the construction of water tanks, distribution of soap, and hand sanitizers that was done.

4.4.2 Mombasa County

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
Ziwa La Ng'ombe FGD at KICOCEP Hall	• Young people selling mitumba business were cut out of their lively hood since the importation of mitumba clothes were banned.

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
	• The issue of drugs abuse was on the rise as youth were using the economic stimulus money to take drugs. • Rise in gender-based violence that is highly attributed to the lock down. • The cash transfer programs from different stakeholders namely; national government, World food program and SHOFCO helped the youth even though the process was a bit opaque
KII with The County Youth Director – National Government (State Department of ICT), Mr. Charles Ayako	• Cushioned and incubated 20 groups youth groups by buying tools for them. • Loans were advanced by government to the youth through affirmative funds and also used "Mbele na Biz" program to give seed grants. • The "Ajira digital program" by the national government came in handy for those who could access the internet where youth were trained on different skill sets. • The youth were engaged in low level manufacturing by producing mask, which were collected and distributed by government hence generation of some income.
KII with Sarah Nyawa – A Youth in Business	• COVID-19 pandemic largely affected the youth in small scale business especially due to the high Levies and taxes. • There were low sales and the ban on mitumba importation due to the new guideline which forced youths to look for alternative business to sustain themselves. • The travel ban further worsen the situation since one could not import new stock nor trade in some other counties which led to loss of clients.
KII with Feiswal Oketch – People With Disability (PWD) President & Chair of Global Opportunity Youth Nertwork (GOYN)	• Previously PWDs were allowed to work in the CBD areas of Mombasa town but were later chased away due to the restrictions that came with the pandemic. • The visually impaired were equally affected by technical issues like reading the COVID-19 messaging since the government did not factor in the issue of special messaging for example braille.

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
	• PWD youths were not meaningfully engaged in the decision making like COVID-19 protocols but only involved during the implementation which led to priority mismatch since the interventions provided were not speaking to the needs of the youths living with disability • Only 5% of the PWD youth received the national funds transfer from the government. Both county and national government did not involve the youths with disability any decision-making process.
KII with Amal Mohammed. - Youth in the Henna Business	• The business had to close due to COVID-19 protocols. • Some youth came up with innovative interventions of selling vegetables during lock down and came out in large numbers to participate in "Kazi Kwa Vijana" initiative. • The youth also volunteered in food distribution exercises.
KII with Alfred Sigo – CEO Pwani Youth Nertwork	• There was use of graffiti for development of COVID-19 messaging. • A good number of youth lost their jobs and businesses also closed leading to anxiety, fear and mental health issue amongst the youth in Jomvu Sub County. • Close down of youth spaces and centers due to curfews and other COVID-19 measures like social distancing, self-isolation and working from home.
KII with Mahmood Noor – Taskforce Member Covid 19 Comitte/National ICT and COVID Committee – State Department of ICT	• through a joint account between Red Cross and the county they were able to raise 7M dollars to feed 130,000 families in Mombasa County with the relief food. • 8,700 youths willingly joined the intervention efforts to support Kenya Red Cross. 3000 youths supported in food distribution and 200 young people volunteered to educate people at the Kenya ferry services on the precautions to take to avoid contracting Covid-19. Unfortunately, he noted 10 of them contracted COVID-19 in the process of helping. • The rate of the job loss in Mombasa County was standing at 38%. Many young persons opted to join gangs and in one-month Mr. Mahmoud together with the district peace committees rehabilitated 300 youths who accepted to reform from being militia gangs.

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
	• Through the national ICT and COVID-19 pandemic committee the young people were able to earn a living from the gig economy like courier deliveries of food and products. • Kenya Red Cross got some funds from the European Union to support the cash transfer program for the gender-based violence survivors. The money was used to support them for 3 months where they would get between kes. 3000-8000. There were also interventions also included provision of dignity kitty to the women and girls • Kenya Red Cross put up a hotline number that the community would call when they were in distress or needed some products or food delivered. The youth volunteered in manning the stations and call centers. The toll-free number also allowed people to call when they needed fresh water.
KII with Godfrey Ndungu – Sub County GBV and Adolescent Officer, Mombasa County Government.	• The cases of gender-based violence rose in huge numbers during the COVID-19 pandemic and even the post recovery stage. Both young men and women experienced gender-based violence. • Gender-based program that involved training of the health care workers on forensic management of gender-based violence and preventive measures was set up at County level. • Some of the groups that worked with the health department were; kadzandani creative, talanta ni kazi organization and epic youth groups for peer to peer education. • Kadzandani creative conducted online twitter storms and social media COVID-19 awareness. Also, different organizations engaged in sports as alternatives to violence during the pandemic.
KII with Mary Maina – Executive Director CEFRESSA	• young people were not meaningfully engaged in the formulation of COVID-19 policies and responses processes. • The civil society reference group played a critical role in demanding for accountability and public participation in the process. • Some of the governance responses during the COVID-19 period were counter-productive and marred by corruption which impeded the success of the interventions. • The issue of teenage pregnancies and child abuse was on the rise. Some institutions took it upon themselves to speak to the emerging

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
	needs, i.e. SOLGIDI organization gave psycho-social support to 14 young girls aged between 17-29.
KII with Julius Owino – CEO Kenya Coast Tourism Association	• The tourism information centre was really affected and most of the staff had to be put on pay cuts. This largely affected the tourism sector which previously had 40,000 gazetted beds we currently have less than that and they lost 6000 jobs out of which youth are the majority of people who lost their jobs (aged between 25- 30). • The tourism sector led an advocacy that saw the government release a kitty for the tourism sector worth 3Billion which ended up to be used in hotel refurbishment instead of cushioning the youth and hoteliers in general. The COVID-19 cash transfer did not consider youth from the tourism sector.
Hezekiah Adika – Chair Coast CSO Reference Group	• The civil society organizations were part of the COVID-19 committee that is chaired by the county commissioner and the governor. Part of their mandate in the committee included providing checks and balances to the entire process. • The first intervention that civil society spear headed was social media advocacy for the County to approve the supplementary budget of the COVID-19 funds as per the PFM act of 2012. The other intervention was on the availability of water in informal settlements and Mombasa in general, after the intervention the county directed all the later to the communities after stopping the channeling of water to the hotels. • The CSO also guided and mitigated the conflict and backlash that had erupted during the distribution of food in old town. The CSO had continuous radio talk shows to sensitize the communities on the COVID-19 guidelines. • Most of the families getting vaccinated are Indian families as opposed to other residents

4.4.3   Nairobi County

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
KII with Area Elders-Landmawe (Mr. Joseph Juma & Mr. Onesmus Muteti)	• The pandemic had contributed to rising cases of youth unemployment and desperation in the area, which in turn led to other vices like growing crime, use of drugs, and increasing tensions in families. • they were tasked to note down the names of residents who would receive the stimulus packages, such as the cash transfer program, from the government. Nonetheless, the elders noted that there was some corruption in this process as the stimulus packages would be handed out secretly to a select few. • The government also had a cash transfer program in which various residents from the area received a monthly amount of Kes. 4025. This money was from the COVID-19 response committee. This went on for 4 months. • red cross was also involved in sending out cash; sometimes kes. 7000, and sometimes kes. 4000. They would often use a set criterion which would entail: age, health status, marital status (where widows would profit more.)
FGD with male youth in Mukuru Kwa Ruben.	• Artists and creatives who depended on performing gigs in entertainment centers, more so in the evenings, lost their work opportunities when clubs and bars were closed down. Also, local youth engaged in *boda boda* businesses experienced a loss of income due to restrictions during curfew hours. • Increase in cases of depression, suicidal tendencies and general mental health challenges. • The local government, through Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS), dug 5 boreholes which supplied free water to the residents of Mukuru and provided water bowsers which supplied regular water to the residents. They also, engaged the youth with jobs through the Kazi Mtaani program. • The artists, who had lost their sources of income, changed their working approach and started using online platforms to sell themselves and their skills. They also partnered with organizations that support art, such as PAWA 254.

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
KII- Sam Odhiambo from FECCLAHA	- Stated that COVID-19 had not significantly affected youth in the area. He mentioned that he had not witnessed instances of COVID-19 among the Mukuru population, and highlighted that because of this, COVID-19 was perceived as a myth in Mukuru. For instance, he mentioned that youth in the area only wore masks when they saw the police, hence the practice did not emanate from a consciousness of their health, but from a fear of the police. - There were some youth who were killed by police during curfew period, and the cases had been launched with independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA).
KII with Zelpha Ingasia- executive director USAWA CBO in Majengo Slum	- Her organization teamed up with YADEN East Africa to create awareness on mental health services, was actively engaged in food drives and donations derived from Visa Oshwal and distributed masks and PPE equipment to locals. - Usawa CBO, for instance, received support to conduct mental health awareness among the residents of Majengo slum area. They also conducted sensitization on the pandemic, and how it affected the local communities among others. - The local Community Health Volunteers (CHVs), and organizations like St. Johns community shared data they had on vulnerable households in Majengo area. Some youth were enlisted to conduct door to door data collection from the households for purposes of mapping the households. They then shared the local information with the local chiefs from the area, which was later used in accessing vulnerable groups.
KII with Ken Kimeu- Executive Director Twaweza 254 - a local CBO based in Majengo area that worked on peace building.	- He stated that the pandemic had revealed the weak nature of the family structures in the area, owing to the large number of families that suffered divorce and separation. - Youth lost their jobs and sources of livelihoods. - police brutality was noted as a significant concern in the area as the police would even arrest youth during day time hours for no particular reason. - The CBO mentored young people through providing a platform for them to raise their voices and concerns.

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
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KII with Moses Omajoni- Executive Director Legendary Art CBO, a local organization that had been actively involved in supporting the youth through art and film in Majengo area.	• The CBO conducted a rapid response, and dialogue engagements with youth on the challenges they were facing and also advocated for the *kazi mtaani* program in their region. • They were active in the sensitization, and promotion of awareness on the COVID-19 vaccine and tried to deal with stereotypes perceptions about the COVID-19 vaccine in their region. • They produced a film on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic among the youth. • The youth created self-help groups like car wash sites. They were involved in garbage collection and cleaning the drainage systems in their areas. They rescued and helped the elderly. They advocated for "*kambi safi*" which were areas free from violence and crime.
KII with Innocent Kefe – a communications officer from Arigatou International	• Many youth lost their jobs and job prospects kept dwindling for active youth who were seeking to grow and expand their careers. Also, there was reduction in engagements as more work shifted to online platforms. This disadvantaged the youth as many of them lacked the gadgets and the resources to actively and meaningfully engage in the online space i.e., internet, laptops, good phones etc. • A change in domain for the organization occurred as less of peace building occurred as efforts were directed to COVID-19 mitigation.
KII with Dandora area Member of County Assemble (MCA) - Hon. Cyrus Ongware Matare	• He described in depth the state of the world, and Kenya since the pandemic began early March 2020 by sharing a lot of data and information on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the entire world, and Kenya as well. • He also engaged on depth the measures, input, and the policies that the national and local government had enacted to benefit and empower the local citizen. He highlighted that youth had been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and had suffered significant problems including unemployment, gender-based violence and breakup of families. • He noted that the implementation of the COVID-19 regulations also had an effect on the youth. For instance, the curfew requirement

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
	forced many youths to their residences early, a situation that many youths were not accustomed to. He noted that while the youth adhered to the regulations early on, they became weary and stopped following the government protocols. • The MCA also talked about the *kazi mtaani* program which had greatly benefited youth in his ward.
FGD- female youth from Dandora	• COVID-19 disrupted their studies for both secondary schools and college going students. Their parents lost their source of income, and there was a rise in domestic violence. Instances of police harassment in the area increased, more so targeting the youth. • The ladies highlighted that since the pandemic began, they had also gained a lot of positive experiences. They had learned how to be independent and look for diverse sources of income to support themselves and their parents. They also learned lessons on emotional resilience and the power of gratitude.
FGD with Male and Female Youth of Kibra Green CBO	• Unemployment was regarded as a serious problem in the region, as many youths lost the income generating opportunities and activities they had before the pandemic. • one of the youths noted that whereas police historically did not have a good relationship with youth in the region, instances of police brutality increased in the area since the COVID-19 pandemic began. They noted, for instances, that beatings of youth by the police increased in the area. However, they also noted that some of the police did a great job in fighting COVID-19, while others did not. • The youths noted that lack of toilets was a significant problem, and proved even worse during the night curfews, especially for people who needed to use washrooms during night hours. This also affected the observers of Ramadhan who wanted to observe evening meals with their friends and families. • The youth participated in setting up hand washing stations and facilities from various donors, training from MSF, distribution of stimulus packages from Red Cross; and distributing masks, and hand sanitizers from UN-Habitat.

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
	- The national government implemented the *Kazi mtaani* programme for youth in the region. However, there were various challenges involved which included: - The program required youth to have ID cards which excluded many vulnerable youths who needed the program. - There was a lot of corruption in the program. There were instances of ghost workers enlisted as youth. - The program was touted as inefficient as Kibra slum largely remained the same as before. In fact, it was highlighted that the waste collected from one area would get dumped in a different area. - It was alleged that the supervisors of the program misused their positions to hand out the jobs to their friends and families. - The youth also highlighted that while some of the residents in Kibra received a lot of support and aid, some took advantage of the aid. They would get so much food that other started reselling for profit. The youth remained perennial beggars. - There was also a lot of deception and corruption in the distribution and dissemination of aid packaged.
KII with Mwanaisha from Metta Kenya	- She noted that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the implementation of their activities as an organization. Nonetheless, they were able to accomplish a COVID-19 response team. - They conducted mapping and sensitization exercises for community health volunteers where they were educated on reproductive and maternal healthcare; they worked actively and closely with county health departments of various counties; and conducted various dissemination forums in counties. - They facilitated some changes in the communities. For instance, after their intervention, various *boda boda* riders got passes to ensure that expectant women and mothers accessed reproductive health services.

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
	• With regard to Social accountability, they conducted roadshows, engaged community members on twitter on various topics, and sensitization of the relevant personnel on COVID-19.
KII with Maxwell Musungu from Nikuze Africa a local CBO based in Lucky Summer area of Nairobi	• He highlighted the major challenge in his region as food, and economically empowering women and youth. • Through his organization, they were able to mobilize with other organizations, got food, and served 300 families with food for one month. • They trained women on soap making, so they could be independent; got some funds to enable women start businesses, like selling vegetables, so that they could sustain themselves; and secured employment for some youth i.e., like freelancing photography and videography. • Money was sent by central government for the elderly and the women. The rate was Kes. 2000 per week for a month. • There was *kazi kwa vijana* program for the youth, but the problem was in payment. Some have never received any payment. • Household identification was done through the *nyumba kumi* initiative, and through the chiefs. People were not honest as they gave their own contacts and their people. So many CBOs were not engaged in this process. You had to be known to get the opportunity. No food was received/ distributed. There was a lack of trust toward the youth.
KII with Zaina – Haki Africa a Human Rights Organization	• Some of the activities and engagements through which they supported youth also included food distribution exercises through Red Cross and AMREF, coordination on COVID-19 sensitization and community engagement on COVID-19. • COVID-19 led to increase in crime rates particularly the minors in brad daylight. Some were killed in mob justice incidences. There was an increase in numbers of people wanting to go to the Gulf region to seek for business/employment opportunities.

Persons/ Locations and Data Collection Approach	Selected Highlights from KIIs and FGD
	• Mental health challenges increased, which contributed to gender based violence and many other social vices, impacting the youth negatively.
KII with Kevin Bwire a program Officer from TISA - Institute for Social Accountability	• From a study they conducted, 70% of people in their study area had lost their businesses and income as a result of the pandemic. Some were selling their business stock to survive. He noted that these people did not have access to credit facilities, nor received any government support. • He highlighted that youth were very active, and had formed informal social protection groups amongst themselves where they could adequately support one another. They would buy each other food. They shared the results of the report with the COVID-19 monitoring groups at the national levels. He noted that some of their recommendations were noted at the national level. • As an organization, they are also part of the consortium with Transparency International where they were evaluating accountability of COVID-19 funds at the national level. • He also noted that while as an organization they reached out to the government regarding the utilization of the COVID-19 funds, there was no response. Therefore, access to information was a significant problem.

4.5   Best Practice

The three Counties of Busia, Mombasa and Nairobi, where the study was conducted have environments that can be described as rural for Busia County and urban informal settlements for Mombasa and Nairobi. These areas have populations characterized with low incomes, high unemployment rates, detached from main stream governance, inferior security and health systems, poorly maintained environments, and prevalence of violence. Measures put in place to contain corona virus spread like, working from home and curfews, unintentionally exacerbated the challenging environment. However, there are a range of interventions that were put in place that can be described as best practices.

Kazi Mitaani

In all the three counties the youth were engaged in short term employment schemes dubbed 'KAZI MTAANI'. This was a National Hygiene Programme (NHP) that was initiated as a social protection scheme by government to cushion vulnerable citizens in the informal settlements against adverse effects of COVID-19 pandemic. This scheme provides employment opportunities in the short term, as well as market-oriented skills that position them better for future employment. Since the youth were employed in their localities it made it easy to harmonize their work schedule with their own routine household survival activities. They were also engaged in assignments that improved the environment like tree planting, bush clearing, opening drainage and road maintenance. Under this scheme, local suppliers were sought and locally manufactured goods were given preference, like in making and supply of protective masks. The programme generally enabled engagement of youths in productive and gainful employment that contributed to minimizing socio-economic pressures resulting from job losses and business closures due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Another best practice can be tracked from the supervision of KAZI MTAANI programme. It was by personnel from National Youth Service (NYS) who ensured work schedules, safety and quality standards are met and adhered to, under the guidance of implementing agencies. For instance, Kenya Urban Road Authorities (KURA) and Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA) provided standards on bush clearing and drainage unclogging activities. In the case of garbage collection, various County (CECs) in charge of environment aa well as municipal managers, in some instances, provide guidance. In some areas, 'Nyumba Kumi' elders did the supervision in cases where NYS personnel could not be deployed. The use of NYS personnel to supervise the programme minimized costs on recruitment, orientation and training that would have been necessary if supervisors were to be mobilized from the general public.

Use of Internet

The use of internet to mitigate COVID-19 pandemic was also one of the best practices witnessed. Meetings in some NGOs, CSOs and government agencies were scheduled on online platforms since face-to-face interactions were prohibited. Environmental conservation trainings were conducted online as well as attempts to help learners continue with syllabus coverage at different academic levels was done by government via radio and internet. Sensitization of the youth on COVID-19 pandemic was at times accessed through global online platforms. An increased online comedy skits, dances and social commentaries kept people restricted in homes entertained and informed. There was use of graffiti in developing COVID-19 pandemic messages that eased informing the general public on mitigation measures. The use of internet technology facilitated operations in many organizations and enhanced continuity in their activities as they still observed government measures that were put in place to contain spread of COVID-19.

Kenya Red Cross

The creation of hotline numbers to address challenges in the communities was one of the best practices that managed interventions in COVID-19 crisis early enough. The Kenya Red Cross put up a tool free hotline number that the community would call when they were in distress. The manning of the call centres was done by youth volunteers. Community members would call the number when they needed waters, food supplies and other products delivered to them. This limited movements and helped contain spread of COVID-19.

CBOs and CSOs

- They initiated and mobilized youth in mask, sanitizers and food distribution. Some CBOs were involved in construction of water tanks and ensuring water could be taken to homes to limit interactions of community members that would increase risk of COVID-19 spread.
- They created social media platforms for sharing information on COVID-19 spread, mitigation and budgetary allocations by central and County governments. The also used the platforms for educating the youth on budget formulation like the case of KCDF in Busia County.
- They set up programmes to handle extreme violence associated with loss of jobs and COVID-19 related stresses. This was through engagement programmes that helped the youth become productive people in the communities they were especially in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties.
- Some CSOs mobilized financial resources that were disbursed to distressed elderly community members to alleviate challenges arising from COVID-19 pandemic. The money was intended to purchase basic food items.
- CSOs ensure social accountability particularly to the resources allocated to the County government. In Mombasa County they made their own audits and also informed the County governments the most need areas.
- There are cases where CBOs helped in listing *Boda Boda* riders to movement of the sick during curfew hours. This minimized fatalities in the event of sickness at night.

4.6   Recommendations

- The government should try to demonstrate fairness to all citizens in providing healthcare related to COVID-19 crisis and institute necessary measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 disease. This is because of the believe citizen hold that the government is able to address the crisis and citizens as well, are willing to abide by the measures.
- The youth are heterogeneous as stated by one key youth informant, therefore, identification and categorization of youths will make it easy to understand their unique needs and address them effectively. Lumping them together leads to missing out

uniqueness that would enhance productive engagement and effective addressing of their needs.

- Capacity building should also target youth and more so of all gender, especially in governance issues to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to meaningfully participate in governance issues at all levels (central and devolved governments). Both youth-led CSOs and government officials need soft skills to strengthen State-CSOs interaction for proper social accountability. This can be done through seminars and workshop managed by CSOs in partnership with government, NGOs and other supporting institutions like OSSREA, IGAD, UNESCO, World Bank, among others.

- Funding of CSOs by government will go a long way in grassroot youth engagement. The local administration government structure may only provide a legal basis to oversee youth mobilization, but may not actively participate in youth capacity building. Therefore, CSOs government funded forums are more ideal to empower youth of all gender.

- Mainstream gender inter-sectionality for equity-to avoid anti-discriminatory policies into emergency recovery responses.

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