COVID-19 KENYA RESPONSE
WEEKLY INSIGHTS
Dear colleagues, partners and friends,

This week’s prevalent sentiment resembles what we saw unfold last week: helplessness coupled with a glimmer of hope in the solidarity that Kenyans display whenever they can. The cry for the government to provide livelihood support as expected has been both consistent and persistent. Notably, many voices that reach us, especially from Nairobi, call for help, suggesting that urban dwellers are more harshly hit by the financial meltdown COVID-19 has resulted in than their rural counterparts.

Our radio guests this week included prominent activist Rachael Mwikali who provided only one example of community mobilisation in Nairobi’s informal settlements among the many that came up in the show or we know exist. Whereas such initiatives are necessary and deserve to be applauded, activists and ordinary wananchi alike know that only the government has the capacity and infrastructure to support the many cases of dire need across all the counties in Kenya.

As always, we welcome your thoughts, questions and contributions.

Best regards,

Samuel Kimeu
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P.S. Follow us on Twitter for the latest updates
Je, jamii yenu inafanya nini kuwasaidia wanyonye kutokana na athari za COVID-19?

(What is your community doing to help the most vulnerable during coronavirus?)

The insights below are drawn from 1,013 participants who gave their consent to have their data analysed and sent a relevant response to the question above. Since the beginning of our COVID-19 radio programming in Kenya in early March:

» We hosted 10 weeks of radio shows on Radio Jambo and Ghetto Radio;
» We heard from 7,199 citizens of whom 5,788 opted-in to have their views analysed;
» We received a total of 19,177 messages, of which 15,929 have been included in analysis so far.

Serikali ilikopa hela inafaa isaidie mwannchi sio mwanchi asaidie mwanchi mwenzake mwananchi hana kazi atatoa wapi pesa

The government borrowed money to support Kenyans, not for the citizens to support each other. They don’t have a job so where will they get the money?

Radio Jambo Listener
This week’s guests

Rachael Mwikali

Nairobi is known to breed outstanding grassroots activists. Rachael Mwikali stands out among them. Born and raised in Mathare, Mwikali is an award-winning women rights and feminist activist whose work has attracted international recognition. She is the leader of Coalition for Grassroots Human Rights Defenders, a social movement for the grassroots activists and human rights defenders in Kenya. She also coordinates a Pan-African Grassroots Women Liberation Movement and sits on the board of Amnesty International-Kenya.

Rachael appeared on our radio show on Radio Jambo to talk about community mobilisation in Mathare and the challenges faced (text translated from Kiswahili).

Presenter

Today we have here with us Rachel Mwikali and she will talk to us about what she is doing in Mathare.

Rachael Mwikali

I am a resident of Mathare, was born and raised there. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Kenya on March 13th there have been several challenges. The number one challenge is access to water. We have been asked to stay home and wash our hands regularly but there is no water to wash hands with. So one of the things we have started doing as activists is a campaign to ask the government to ensure there is water because it is our right to access water so that people are able to wash their hands and have clean drinking water.

The other challenge is lack of food. Most people in urban poor areas do not have monthly income and depend on daily wages. They have lost their jobs and thus are unable to afford food for their families. Our group Coalition for Grassroots Human Rights Defenders and with support from friends have managed to provide food to families....
What are citizen voices telling us about COVID-19 in Kenya?

1. Support for those most in need during the COVID-19 crisis is still limited

The lack of support for people to cope during COVID-19 continues to be palpable. A majority says there is no help available in the community (19%), followed by those who say all they can do is ask for help (17.5%) and those who insist that it is the government who can and should help (10.3%).
Voices stating they can do nothing to help the community

Hamna labda usaidizi kwenyu

Nothing is done, maybe we can get support from you.

Man, 38, Kajiado (Ghetto radio)

Sijaona wakitake any action

I have not seen them take any action.

Man, 22, Kiambu (Ghetto radio)

Voices requesting the government to take responsibility

mambo, uku kitengela hatujapata usaidizi wowote ila tu sanitizer moja tu, malandload wanatutoka kwa nyumba, tunaomba serikari isaidie.

Here in Kitengela we have not received any kind of support except for sanitizers. The landlords are evicting people from the houses. We are asking the government to come and intervene.

(Jambo Radio listener)

Mkumbushe gava jo maji imekuwa ngori kuget uku oyole jo pple do suffer

Remind the government that there is water scarcity here in Kayole and people are suffering.

Man, 23 years, Nairobi

Kawangware akuna maji & watu awaogi mikono especially kwa soko na tuma-umia akí surely.

Here in Kawangware there is no water and people are not washing their hands especially in the marketplace, we are suffering for sure..

Nairobi (Ghetto Radio)

So far sijaona usaidizi upande wa Majengo Thika

So far I have not come across any support on the sides of majengo in Thika town.

Man, 23, Kiambu (Ghetto radio)

Uku mbotela so far hakuna kitu yoyote imefanywa

Here in Mbotela, there is nothing going on.

Man, 20, Nairobi (Ghetto radio)
Calls for help are more prevalent in Nairobi

While requests for help come from across the country, Nairobi leads the way with 31% of participants from the wider Nairobi metropolitan area sending such messages, compared to 17.5% average across the rest of the country.

Voices asking for help

*nataka Kujua Kama Watu Wakusaidia Sisi Na Fud Wamefika Uku Mtaa Yetu*

I want to know if the people who are distributing food to the people have reached our area.

*Man, 32 years, Kiambu (Ghetto Radio)*

*Mm ni boy hapa kibera soweto sasa iyo food nimesikia watu wanapewa kunaeda aje mm so far sijawai pata kitu*

I am a boy here in Kibera and I hear there is food being distributed and so far I have not received any kind of support.

*(Ghetto Radio listener)*

*Njaa na mafuriko inamada wadhii kuliko corona*

Hunger and floods are killing people more than corona.

*Man, 23 years, Nairobi*
Despite the adversities, communities help each other where they can.

It’s no longer news that the consequences of COVID-19 on livelihoods have been devastating: with incomes cut short, people are increasingly unable to buy food or pay rent. The strong sense of solidarity that we observed last week, continued to remain prominent. Communities help one another where they can. This includes giving food, clothing, raising awareness and helping in other ways, including being there for one another to provide emotional support.

"kusaidiana kwa chakula na hii ripoti ihikie serekali watusaidie na mask hatuna mask"

We are supporting them by providing them with food. This report should reach the government and they should support us with masks because we do not have masks.

Man, 20 years, Nakuru

"Tunawasaidia na vyakula kadhaa, kama za kienyeji mihogo, viazi vikuu, nduma na mboga."

We are supporting them with food such as vegetables, yams, potatoes and others.

Woman, 21 years, Kisumu

"KUWAPA SAWATI NA NINAEZA PATA LOAN"

By giving them gifts. Also, can I get a loan?

Man, 24 years, Kakamega

"Jamii yangu haina uwezo wakusaidia jamii zingine ila tunaombeana tu!"

My community does not have the capability to support other people in any other way other than praying for one another.

Woman, 25 years, Kiambu

Prevalent themes by gender

![Graph showing prevalent themes by gender](image-url)
Official government communication needs to address concerns about the restrictions in place as well as the virus itself.

Listeners need answers on some of the government measures put in place, including how long they will last. Participants are asking, for example, about the opening of schools and the easing of travel restrictions. Similarly, providing trusted information and answering questions on the virus itself, treatment and transmission continues to be important.

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**Hey curfew itaisha wen?**

When will this curfew come to an end?

*Man, 23 years, Kiambu (Ghetto Radio)*

**Watu wataanza kusafiri lini**

When will people start travelling again?

*Woman, 26 years, Kakamega*

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**Waruhusu wanafunzi wote wa shule ya upili kurudi shuleni ju tukitegemea hi kusoma kwa mtandao tutakuwa tukipotea sana**

Allow the secondary school students to go back to school because if we depend on online learning we will have lost a lot.

*18 years, Kisumu (Radio Jambo)*
Who we have been hearing from so far*

*Total numbers vary as data relies on self-reporting. Only those who opted-in included.