

GROUNDTRUTH COVID-19 BAROMETER

Week Ending
15/MAY

Issue 7

At Shujaaz Inc, we're continuing to harness our SMS, USSD and social media channels to capture the experiences and stories of young people across our network. This week, we've focused in on the impact the COVID-19 crisis is having on disrupting access to Sexual Reproductive Health services – supported by video reports filmed by our network of 'SuperFans'. Elsewhere, stories from across our network continue to demonstrate the stark impact this crisis is having on their livelihoods – their faith in government and, increasingly, on their faith in the future.

**"AM I SUPPOSED TO BUY
CONDOMS OR AM I
SUPPOSED TO EAT?"**

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES DISRUPTED AS URGENT DEMAND SURGES

Over the last seven weeks, we've been closely tracking the impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures on a range of sexual and reproductive health indicators. This week, our network of 3,000+ 'Superfans' have been speaking to young people in their neighborhoods, to gauge the impact of the crisis on their sexual and reproductive health.



**"YOU KNOW THIS IS KENYA,
THERE'S NO HELP FOR ME –
ONLY FROM GOD."**

After brief periods of separation in the first month of lockdown, young people are finding ways to meet up with their partners again – but their stashes of contraceptives have long run out. As lockdown continues, fans in our network report struggling to afford or access condoms and contraceptives. They also report struggles to access antenatal services – including access to safe terminations and maternal care. Reports from past epidemic outbreaks in West Africa suggest we can expect a surge in unplanned pregnancies in the coming months.

SMS AND SOCIAL MESSAGES

"I am with my girlfriend all the time; I can foresee unplanned pregnancies happening."

MALE, 20, TURKANA

"Cause we are in a total lock down I can't go to buy [condoms] in the shop or get the government ones for free."

MALE, 21, KITUI

"My FP (contraceptive) is depleted, and I don't have any money to buy more."

FEMALE, 22, TRANS NZIOA

"I need P2 (emergency contraceptive pill) urgently."

FEMALE, 19, LAMU

"As u know, we are just in the house and the rate of which am having sex is very high, therefore higher chances of getting pregnant."

MALE, 22, KILIFI

"DJB with this situation of just staying at home one need to stay ready and protected or else you can easily get pregnant.."

FEMALE, 22, NAIROBI

"My wife is pregnant and due to the corona threat, we fear visiting the clinics."

MALE, 23, MOMBASA

"If you are pregnant you are supposed to be with your partner but unfortunately corona has separated me, and my partner so am going through the pregnancy journey alone."

FEMALE, UNKNOWN

64% OF YOUNG PEOPLE URGENTLY NEED SEXUAL OR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

In the first month of partial lockdown, 45% of young people said they were isolating without their partner (17 April, N=2,503). Of those who said they were isolating with their partner, only 13% reported not having access to contraceptives. However, as the lockdown has endured into a second month, young people in our network report that they are reconnecting with their partners, finding new relationships or having casual sex. In fact, without work or school to go to – fans in our network report having more sex than usual.

However, the COVID-19 crisis has disrupted the contraception supply-chain. Previously, young people could access condoms or emergency contraception from kiosks, pharmacies, public clinics, bars, clubs and University campuses – many of which have been shut by partial lockdown measures. Falling incomes are making contraceptives an unaffordable luxury. In an SMS survey (N=830) this week, over half of respondents said they 'urgently need' a form of contraception.

Q: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU NEED URGENTLY?

56% NEED AN SRH SERVICE

	None of the above %	Condoms/contraception %	Pregnancy-support %	Pre-natal/Post natal %	All of the above %
TOTAL					
All ages	36	32	9	6	9
MALE					
15-19	31	51	5	7	7
20-24	34	47	6	4	8
>24	40	40	0	20	0
FEMALE					
15-19	46	24	12	7	11
20-24	36	33	14	8	9
>24	50	50	0	0	0

Sample Size: 830 | Poll Date: 12/05/20

PREGNANCY SUPPORT DISRUPTED

Messages and interviews with our fans over the last fortnight also highlight that some are struggling to access pregnancy, pre-natal or post-natal services. Stories from our network suggest that some clinics are turning away patients – whilst others say they're reluctant to visit clinics, because of fear of contracting COVID-19. Messages from our fans suggest that rates of early or unwanted pregnancies are likely to increase – we are also hearing early reports of young people who are turning to unsafe abortions to terminate pregnancies.

At Shujaaz Inc, we continue to work closely with our partners to support young people to take control of their sexual and reproductive health, and to direct them to available services. It's vital that sexual and reproductive health services are sustained – and adapted to overcome new barriers during the COVID-19 crisis.

SMS AND SOCIAL MESSAGES

“There is no money, most people have lost their jobs, they are dying of hunger.”

FEMALE, 20, MURANG’A

“DJ B, please advise us – how can we survive during this time?”

FEMALE 18, KISII

“I try to imagine when the end of this Corona calamity might be and I can’t get an answer for sure these are the times we have hardships.”

FEMALE, 21, KITUI

“I work in the shamba. I have grown thin and I do not see this coming to an end. I miss school.”

MALE, FACEBOOK

“Where I am the state is not good at all and it is deteriorating.”

FEMALE, 18, KAKAMEGA

“[Things will get worse because] the increase in the number of Corona Virus cases is high and the cost of living is also high.”

MALE, FACEBOOK

“Right now maybe someone has their savings and you should know that there are no jobs and if there are there the money is little. When the savings are depleted then what? You just live in problems.”

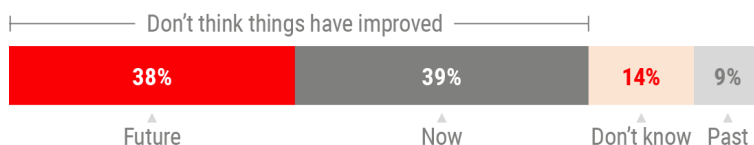
MALE, 19, MOMBASA

“HOW CAN WE SURVIVE?” YOUNG PEOPLE THINK THE WORST IS STILL TO COME

Over the last 7 weeks, young people across Kenya have told us that they’ve lost their livelihoods; that their incomes have collapsed; and that hikes in the cost of food and travel have left many in their communities going to bed hungry.

This week, we set out to gauge whether young people felt there had been any improvement – and to understand how hopeful they felt about the future. Only 9% of respondents (N=975) said they felt things had improved (that the worst period has passed).

Q: WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST DIFFICULT PERIOD OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS? A TIME IN THE PAST, NOW, OR A TIME TO COME IN THE FUTURE.



Sample Size: 975 | Poll Date: 12/05/20

77%

Overwhelmingly, most young people (77%) felt that they were either currently experiencing the worst period, or that the worst times are still to come.

Fans in our network identified either fear of increasing cases of COVID-19 infection in Kenya, or their ability to earn money as the reason for believing things would get worse. Tighter lockdowns in Eastleigh and Mombasa have also raised concerns about more severe quarantine measures to come. Young women were more likely to think that the worst was coming – whereas young men were more likely to say they were currently living through the worst time.

As we have highlighted previously, the default position for young Kenyans is optimism. In last year’s nationally representative survey, 96% said they expect things to improve year on year. The coronavirus crisis is eroding that default impulse to optimism and hope.

In this time of rapid upheaval, young people must be actively engaged in the conversation about Kenya’s future – and reassured that plans and policies are in place to support them.

At Shujaaz Inc, we know that having faith in the future, and a sense of ‘agency’ or control in determining a more positive future, is crucial to young people’s overall wellbeing and resilience. Without that sense of hope and agency, young people are much more vulnerable to economic, social and health crises – and youth communities risk being left more volatile.

SOCIAL AND INTERVIEW MESSAGES

“People here feel like if the government wanted it to work effectively, they would announce total lockdown and give food to everyone at least for two weeks.”

FEMALE, MOMBASA

“It [lockdown] will partially help. What is important is all of us to take the measures by the ministry of health seriously. .”

MALE, FACEBOOK

They could have closed the airport before enforcing a lockdown.”

MALE, FACEBOOK

“The other day when the government decided to demolish houses around Korogocho, I was so disturbed, like why did they choose such a time when people are vulnerable. The government did not consider people living in those places. .”

FEMALE, NAIROBI

“Where do they expect people to stay, get food or even move with this current lockdown? The government has failed its people again and this also makes me remember the floods issue. This is a national disaster, but they are not taking it seriously, at least corona people can recover but floods its destruction and deaths.”

MALE, NAIROBI

“I am a community volunteer and my job entailed conducting meetings, and dialogues with my community members on different topics but since the covid 19 pandemic I have not been able to do this work because of the government directives. .”

FEMALE, NAIROBI

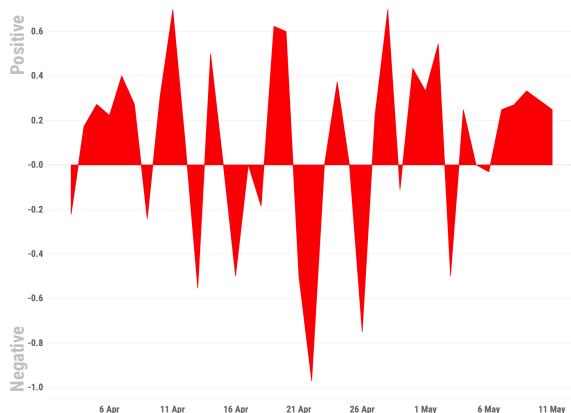
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED – BUT GETTING ANGRY

67%

In our USSD poll two weeks ago (N=2,838) 67% of young people held a strong opinion about the extension of partial lock-down measures in Kenya; 44% were in support of the decision, whilst 23% opposed it. In significant moments, when young people’s lives are directly impacted by government policy, we often track increased engagement in governance issues. Young people quickly transition from feeling disconnected, to active engagement; when they proactively inform themselves about policies and form their own opinions about key decisions.

Young people in our network are becoming increasingly vocal and informed about the government’s response to COVID-19 and are beginning to share their own solutions and ideas. Analysis of social media conversations over the last fortnight, show that conversations among young people are increasingly polarised.

AVERAGE SENTIMENT MAP: DISCUSSIONS ABOUT GOVERNANCE ON SHUJAAZ PLATFORMS



Particular negative spikes in polarising conversation have been linked to the stricter lockdowns in Eastleigh and Mombasa – and around news of mass demolitions of housing in Kariobangi – which left many homeless, during a time of crisis. More negative sentiment surrounded recent flooding and the impacts of locust swarms on food security. To avoid further erosion of trust in government, it is vital to revive and encourage consistent dialogue between young people and local and national leaders; so that young people’s voices and concerns are heard. We are using our Shujaz platforms to support that process – but for lasting change, young people must be able to see that their needs are being met and reflected in policy decisions too.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY TO PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM RADICALISATION

At Shujaz Inc, we know that there are four key social risk factors that can leave young people vulnerable to radicalisation of all forms; social isolation and loneliness, a lack of role models, separation from community support and lacking opportunities to contribute positively to their community. In times of economic and political turbulence, it’s crucial that young people are engaged and mobilised in positive community action, to maintain these vital support systems.

FAN STORIES

01

MESSAGE

"It has not been easy for me as there is very little money I get now and sometimes I rely on the food donations."

WHO IS SHE?

A Shujaaz 'SuperFan' and community organiser living in Nairobi

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I am a community volunteer, my job entailed conducting meetings, and dialogues with my community members but since the covid 19 pandemic I have not been able to do this work.

Right now, I have volunteered myself in another organization to help in the sensitization and creating awareness about covid 19. It has not been easy for me as there is very little money I get now and sometimes I rely on the food donations that are brought to our community by well-wishers.

Majority of my community members are tensed and anxious because of the fear of being arrested by not following the directives. Other than that they are ignorant about the whole pandemic, you will find them not washing hands at all despite the tanks and soap being available.

Another thing I feel that the curfew doesn't make sense at all, I mean if they want to stop the spread of the virus then they would have announced a total lockdown and supply food to people till they contain the situation. The other day when the government decided to demolish houses around Korogocho, I was so disturbed, like why did they choose such a time when people are vulnerable. The government did not consider people living in those places. Some managed to get help while others have nowhere to go till now. This was the most unfair thing the government did. In terms of the flood, I feel the government should just focus on corona more as it is all over and floods only happen to some parts of the country.

02

MESSAGE

"Majority of the small business people like boda-boda, grocery, kiosks and shops continue with their operations because they have no other means of survival."

WHO IS SHE?

An 18-year-old student, living in Kwale with her family – trying to study despite the impact of COVID-19.

“

I am currently a student at form 2 and ever since the first case of corona was confirmed, our teachers asked us for phone numbers that would help us communicate while we stayed home. They created WhatsApp groups for us that we use till date for learning. My mom gives me her phone every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The rest of the days I help her with farming.

In my community, people are more scared of the curfew than corona virus because the police have been going round beating people who they find outside past the curfew hours. As for corona, people used to take it lightly initially but when they realized that the neighboring county "Mombasa" started having cases and they keep on increasing daily, they decided to be more cautious. Everyone is following the government directives keenly though not everyone stays home.

Majority of the small business people like boda-boda, grocery, kiosks and shops continue with their operations because they have no other means of survival. Last week people in my area got food from a nearby primary school which was being distributed to help the less fortunate.

My biggest worry are students because, some don't have electricity, smartphones, and the ongoing floods that is making concentration to school work impossible. You can't study when such things affect you. Within our area people fear corona more than the floods situation because red cross always come to rescue the affected families.