Announcement

World No Tobacco Day: May 31, 2020

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**COVID-19 and the Right to Health; Strengthening Citizens Participation in the Response**

KANCO under COVID-RBA Multi-sectoral Initiative, participated in a webinar panel discussing: **COVID-19 and the Right to Health: Strengthening Citizen’s Participation in the COVID-19 response.** The webinar was towards strengthening the grassroots voices by sharing citizen experiences and making key recommendations to inform people centered responsiveness at national and county levels.

Addressing the issue of the challenges faced by communities in the COVID-19 pandemic, Executive Director KANCO Allan Ragi, stated that ‘Communities have demonstrated that they can fight against diseases with the right support, to effectively combat the pandemic, they need to be at the Center of the Response.’ He impressed that the lived experiences of the communities should inform the public health intervention strategies by considering the perspectives of citizens.

Maureen Murenga, Lean On Me, speaking on accountability and transparency in the COVID19 response impressed that ‘Human rights should be the backbone of the health response and thus must be safeguarded.’ She cautioned that even as stakeholders focus on the pandemic, there are other epidemics that need to be addressed in Kenya, to curb more deaths that are likely if other areas like HIV, Malaria etc. are neglected.

Angela Nguku, White Ribbon, speaking on Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the access to RMNCH and other health services in Kenya, talked on the importance of a coordinated multi-sectoral effort, with a clear community engagement strategy to guide citizen engagement.

Brezhnev Otieno, Amnesty International Kenya, speaking on practical considerations in monitoring, documenting and reporting health rights violations stated, ‘We must find a way to destigmatize and decriminalize Covid-19.’

Dr. Catherine Ngugi, Head NASCOP, reitered on the need for a concerted multi-stakeholders efforts to adequately tackle the pandemic in appreciation of its newness and diverse challenges., ‘If we have ideas to finding solutions to this response, then the ministry of health encourages citizens and partners to share insights so we can move forward together as a country.

The overall discussions impressed on the overall need for accountability, greater involvement of communities and engagements for concerted efforts in fighting the pandemic.
World Health Assembly calls for Concerted Efforts to Fight the Pandemic

The first virtual 73rd World Health Assembly, held between 18 and 19 May 2020, made a landmark resolution to bring the world together to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The resolve was unanimously adopted by more than 130 countries.

The resolution called for the intensification of efforts to control the pandemic, equitable access to and fair distribution of all essential health technologies and products to combat the virus. However, The United States voted for a World Health Assembly resolution that provides for universal, affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics but with reservations.

The forum further called for an independent and comprehensive evaluation of the global response, including, but not limited to, WHO’s performance.

The unanimous message from the delegates was that global unity is the most powerful tool to combat the outbreak and called for development of roadmap for controlling the outbreak.

In his closing remarks, WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus acknowledged that COVID-19 had and continues to rob many lives, and livelihoods, shaking foundations of the world and threatening international cooperation. He however, observed that it has reminded us that we are one human race despite our differences and that we are stronger together.

The World Health Assembly will reconvene later in the year.

Social Economic Survey on Covid-19 on Households: Reveals General Increase in Hardship

A survey by National Coordination Committee on the Response to the Corona Virus Pandemic (NCCRCP), on households’ Economic Impact Assessment seeking to provide data to facilitate formulation of appropriate strategies to respond to economic effects of the disease was conducted.

The study revealed an overall increase in the cost of transport of up to 51.7% with Migori County topping the list and Turkana County recorded the least at 77.2% and 24.4% respectively.

Further, nationally over 30.5% of households were unable to pay rent for the month of April 2020, attributed to reduction in earning/income of up to (52.9%).
In terms of health, the study found out that 17% of the households reported having at least one member with a pre-existing medical condition. One out of every eight households, reported that a member sought health services during the period under review with majority (30.5%) seeking the services from government hospitals.

In terms of information, about 99.4% of adults age 18 years and above had heard about Coronavirus through Radio and Television. According to the survey, 97.2% of households cited soap and water for hand washing as the main method that one can use for protection against Coronavirus.

In regard to education; nationally, more than half (57.9%) of the households have members who usually attend learning institutions. Home schooling was reported as the main coping mechanism used by majority (42.8%) of the households to continue with learning. Notably, 24.6% of households with members who usually attend any learning institution were not using any method to continue with learning.

Still I Rise is an NGO providing world class education to refugee and destitute children around the world and a Member of the KANCO Consortium, with operations in six countries including Kenya. The objective of the Kenya mission is to establish the first International School for refugee and destitute children of the continent, offering an internationally recognized diploma, free of charge.

With the advent of the pandemic, the NGOs main objective has been temporarily put on hold, but has not altered who they are. Through a partnership facilitated by KANCO the NGO partnered with the Ministry of Health, in responding to the pandemic, providing their beneficiaries with basic personal protective equipment.

Through the partnership with the MOH, the NGO has been distributing sanitary equipment in all of Nairobi, sub-counties, in the informal settlements who are adversely affected by the pandemic.

The supplies towards prevention of the spread of COVID-19 include masks for both adults and children. In response, the MOH has applauded the NGOs effort terming it as impactful and long overdue.

Still I Rise Country Manager Giovanni Volpe, appreciated KANCO’s support saying ‘We are happy and grateful that Still I Rise’s first operational initiative was marked by a decisive success. And we are even happier to owe this moment of gratification to the great support network that KANCO provided us with’.

The NGO is seeking to open the first Africa’s International School for refugee and destitute children, by the end of the year.

**Supporting the Covid-19 Response; Distribution of Sanitary Equipment**

*Extreme right, Still I Rise Country Director and Some of the beneficiaries of their Support*
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