

Community Engagement in COVID-19 Prevention

The ordinary Kenyan citizen wants his family to be healthy and safe. She also has the required agency to make wise choices if given the right tools to do so. Let's find the right tools by showing communities how to stay safe while still living their lives.

Lessons from the Ebola response in Sierra Leone: Communities must be central to their own prevention and recovery. The 2015 Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone painfully revealed both the critical importance of engaging communities in crisis response and prevention and the reality that there were virtually no channels for doing so in practice in the early days of the outbreak. Given the deep levels of social mistrust towards the government, only community structures, such as *Peace Mothers*, were able to mobilize prevention and response initiatives within their communities.

Goal: To build strength-based public health and security messages contextualized for Kenya regarding COVID-19

Activities:

1. Develop Kenya contextual Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials using Kenyan illustrators to show what it means to live safely in the community with COVID-19, partnering with Ministry of Health, the National Police Service, County Administrators like the Chiefs, the private sector and community groups. Translating the messages into as many vernacular languages as possible (currently supporting English, Swahili, Sheng, Luo, Luhya, Kalenjin, Somali, and Akamba. Actively seeking translators for Maasai, Kisi and Turkana, as well as, any other Kenyan languages.
2. Create an open-source Google Site for sharing the posters and other materials so people can select, download and print them. Here is the site: <https://sites.google.com/green-string.org/covid-19-kenya/home>
3. Fundraise for CBOs and informal community leaders to print the flyers and sensitize the community on good prevention practices, as well as, developing donations of cloth masks packages for vulnerable families.

How you can get involved:

1. Share the google site throughout Kenya for use in COVID19 work at community level, with the private sector using the IEC materials
2. Help with fundraising for local groups (particularly youth groups) to do community sensitization, include printing of the IEC materials.
3. Support the initiative to provide Cloth Masks (reusable) and educational stickers to vulnerable families including, "How to Wear A Mask", "Why We Need to Wear Masks," and "How to Clean a Cloth Mask". Available in all languages. Estimated cost 1000-1400ksh for a family of 4-6 (8-12 masks for 6 months with daily wear). With local tailors once trained able to make between 600-700ksh a day making the masks. The Family Cloth Mask kits can go into monthly food packets for vulnerable families.
4. Support pushing the messages out using other social media channels.

IEC Examples



Green String Network is a registered Kenyan NGO. We are multi-disciplinary team of peacebuilders, community development workers, psychologists, artists, police officers and researchers designing trauma-informed interventions. This is done through the use of artwork and storytelling. We have working relationships with the National Police Service (NPS), the Mombasa County government, community based organizations (CBOs), and a network of social healing volunteers across the country.

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