

# Situation Report

9 September 2020



## Delivering on Mission in Kenya during the Era of Covid-19: Personal Protective Equipment and Safe Water



*CMMB puts mothers and children at the center of our work. Covid-19 makes them more vulnerable than ever.*

### The Covid-19 Toll across CMMB Countries, Jul 7 and September 9

	HAITI		KENYA		PERU		SOUTH SUDAN		ZAMBIA	
Date (MM/DD)	7/7	9/9	7/7	9/9	7/7	9/9	7/7	9/9	7/7	9/9
Cases	6,371	8,376	8,250	35,356	305,703	691,575	2,021	2,552	1,895	13,112
Deaths	113	214	167	607	10,772	29,976	38	49	42	300

### COVID-19 THREATENS PROGRESS IN CMMB COUNTRIES

As stigma and fear continue around covid-19, many families have stopped seeking healthcare. Our challenge is to raise public awareness, improve health workers' protection, and urgently promote proven life-saving antenatal care, child immunization, and antiretroviral therapy while protecting families and health workers from covid-19 infection. CMMB Kenya's staff have proved energetic and innovative in response. Our PPE donation to Kitui South was featured on a national television broadcast (June 20, Kenya Citizen TV).

### THE VIEW FROM KENYA

The World Health Organization has reported a slowdown in the rate of new infections in Kenya, for as-yet-unknown reasons. However, the number of daily reported deaths is relatively high, and the nation is on the defensive. Bars are closed, restaurants open only until 7 pm, and sales of all alcoholic beverages prohibited. Restrictions have been put on church services' size and duration. Although universities open in September, with many precautions, other schools will remain closed through January. The nightly 9 pm–4 am curfew remains in effect until October. Famine and deteriorating socioeconomic conditions threaten social peace.

Nairobi now accounts for most infections, with the greatest suffering in the city's sprawling informal settlements. Here, where every citizen is vulnerable, covid-19 has exacerbated the crippling challenges of daily life. Population density makes restrictions on contact and social distancing next to impossible.

By contrast, few cases are found in Kitui County, even fewer in its Kitui South Sub County, the remote, rural site of CMMB's signature program, Children and Mothers Partnerships (CHAMPS). But across Kenya, people remain concerned, especially healthcare workers (HCWs) with jobs in dispensaries, clinics, and hospitals, and the community health volunteers (CHVs) who provide information and referrals in homes. HCWs and CHVs alike fear becoming sick themselves and then infecting their families—especially if no personal protective equipment (PPE) is available, as was common in the pandemic's early days. Deaths of prominent Kenyans and frontline HCWs from covid-19 have exacerbated such fears. And because of government social distancing restrictions, gatherings of friends and other coping mechanisms are no longer a possibility. This is the context in which CMMB Kenya is operating.



ABOVE: CMMB staff present covid-19 prevention items to Siaya County officials. CMMB has ensured that health facility storerooms are well stocked. RIGHT: CMMB trained CHWs on proper handwashing and other IPC skills. Photos by Vincent Ondiek / CMMB.

### THE CHAMPS KENYA RESPONSE TO COVID-19

- **Community Engagement.** CMMB has worked assiduously to support communities to do all possible to combat the virus—to ready health workers with PPE and knowledge and to advocate for prevention—while continuing ongoing programs, working within government-imposed restrictions.
- **Needs Assessment.** At the onset of the pandemic in Kenya, CMMB did a needs assessment of all 44 Kitui South health facilities. The assessment pointed to huge gaps in equipment, PPE, skills, and critical health information.
- **Collaboration.** Findings in hand, CMMB worked with county and national Ministry of Health response mechanisms to establish response teams across Kitui’s eight sub counties. These teams coordinated distribution of handwashing needs, essential medicines, and PPE; covid-specific HCW and CHV trainings; and community sensitization and awareness radio campaigns.
- **Action.** CMMB worked hard to develop CHV capacity to raise community awareness about and prevention of covid-19 and to enable CHVs to work safely, protected by PPE. In line with measures for infection prevention and control (IPC), CMMB also developed virtual training materials and disseminated them through social media to HCWs across widely dispersed, hard-to-reach areas. In addition, CMMB provided handwashing needs and disinfection supplies to the 44 facilities. Gauging the gap in government health supply capacity, CMMB stepped in to procure and distribute essential commodities to prevent interruptions in key maternal and child health services.

*“Right now, drivers are out there supplying PPE. HQ support on PPE has been incredible—very different from what we are seeing with other organizations and Nairobi public hospitals.”*  
—James Kisia, MD, Country Director, CMMB Kenya







ABOVE: Water tanks at Our Lady of Lourdes Mutomo Hospital now facilitate rainwater distribution there; pipes connect the tanks to seven wards, including two where newly delivered moms can wash their hands without going outdoors. RIGHT: CMMB has also provided water tanks to eight Kitui South Sub County schools. Now students can wash their hands to prevent disease transmission, and Ngali Primary School has enough water to last a year. BELOW: Where pure, fresh water is not available, CHVs supply water purification sachets to families, with support from Procter & Gamble.

■ **Water for Drinking and Infection Prevention in an Arid Land.** Kitui South Sub County suffers perennially from unreliable rainfall and long droughts; water scarcity and contamination translate to daily struggle. Young children who should be in school must fetch water; a 10-kilometer walk leaves them exhausted before they ever open a book.

Safe WASH practices remain pivotal to curbing spread of covid-19 infection in health facilities, schools, households, and public places. Just in time to meet this additional water need, a generous friend of CMMB mobilized family and friends to fund bringing water to eight underserved schools (six primary, two



*“One thing is sure: Among staff and community health volunteers, there is huge dedication. CHVs are doing incredible work integrating covid-19 and behavior change messaging. It speaks to their preparedness, their flexibility, their ability to adapt. To respond to needs on the ground, the program stretched existing resources and found new ones. The staff has been good at switching gears—reflecting their good training, project leadership, and strong relationships with community, counties, other stakeholders. Our areas have not had too many people in hospital—largely because of the work done by our teams.”*

*—James Kisia, MD,  
Country Director, CMMB Kenya*

ABOVE RIGHT: CMMB provided dignity kits to vulnerable teen girls. BELOW: A “curfew pass” enabled motorbike operators to drive pregnant women in labor during curfew without fear of fine.



secondary) and the CHAMPS base and main local referral hospital, Our Lady of Lourdes Mutomo Hospital, which serves 43,000 people every year. Each of the eight schools received four 10,000-liter tanks, guttering, and roof repairs to facilitate rainwater collection. At the hospital, three ablution blocks were added, along with 50,000-liter water tanks and pipe connections to seven wards.

■ **Focus on Women.** Fearing a fine for breaking curfew, pregnant women who went into labor at night often delayed leaving for the clinic, putting themselves and their babies at risk. CMMB worked with the sub county security council to create a special pass permitting them, and anyone driving them, to travel outside curfew hours. When CMMB found women skipping antenatal care for fear of becoming infected at the facility, CMMB provided face masks. Separately, CMMB also gave dignity kits to 424 adolescent girls from poor families (each with a six-month supply of sanitary towels, a bar of soap, and an undergarment) to shield them from extreme vulnerability. CMMB worked with school health matrons to develop the kits.



**CURFEW PASS**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Client: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of transporter: \_\_\_\_\_ Village: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ID: \_\_\_\_\_

The above - named person has accompanied a patient to the health facility indicated below.

Name of Health Care Worker: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone contact of HCW: \_\_\_\_\_ Health Facility Stamp: \_\_\_\_\_

 

**ABOUT CMMB** Rooted in Catholic social values, CMMB brings transformative hope to vulnerable women and children through life-changing services. Inspired by the example of Jesus, we work globally to deliver locally sustainable, quality health solutions to the most vulnerable. Evidence and best practices ground our work and data drives learning. We quickly respond to crises around the world, providing donated food, emergency supplies, and medicines and collaborating with hundreds of partners.