



COVID-19 AND INVISIBLE COMMUNITIES

YOU'VE SEEN THE NEWS NOW DISCOVER THE STORY





Anna Nyakaria- 77 years



We are closed following government directives that all schools should be closed.

We used to pick children from their homes, place them in a shelter that we call day care, feed them porridge in the morning, lunch, and give them a sendoff porridge at 4 PM.

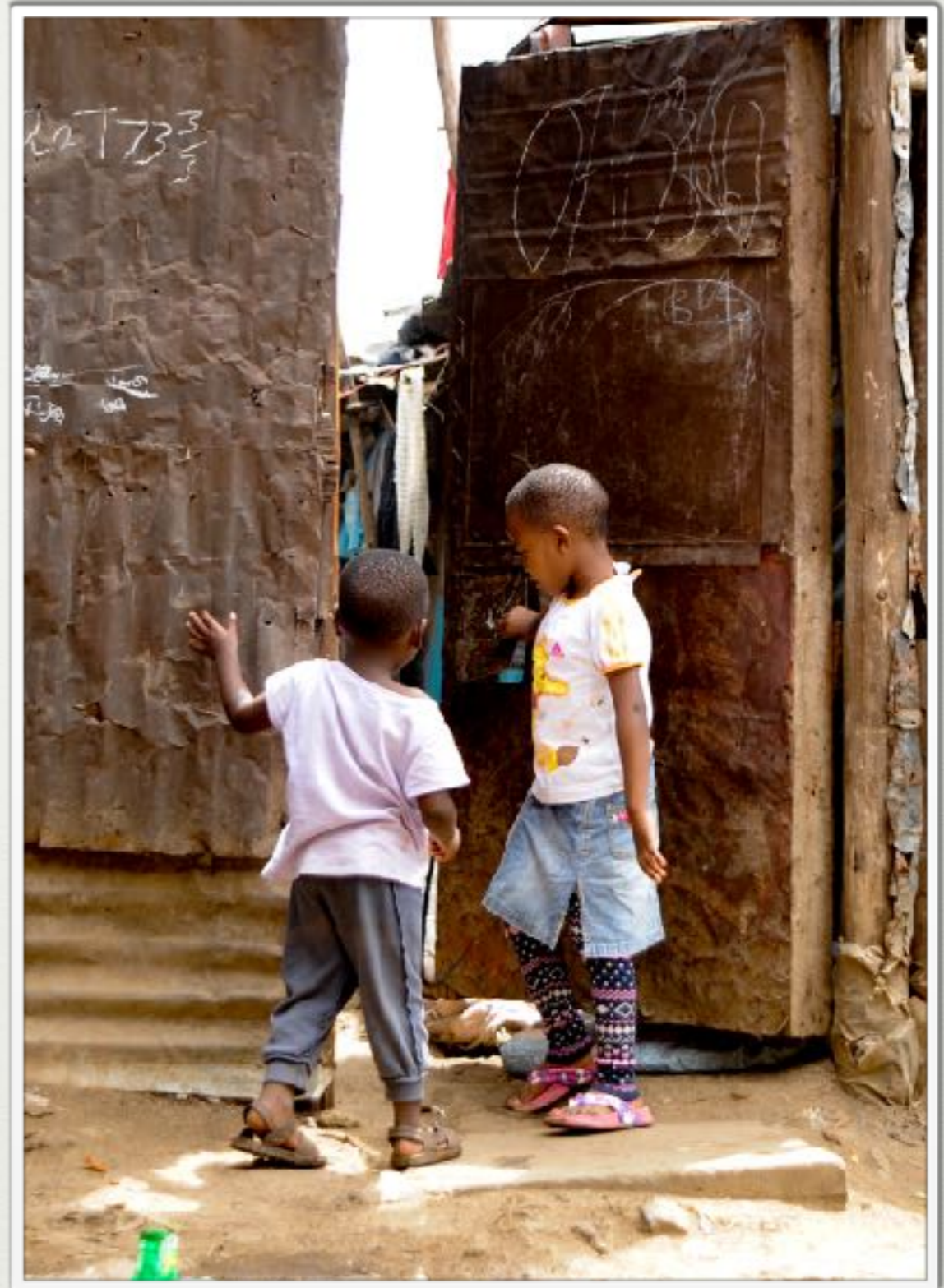
Korogocho

Nyayo village

We have 95 children every day to take care of their parents are single mothers who work in Estates as cleaners.

The mothers used to lock their children in houses as they go to find work, children would be starving, cry the whole day, get sick, and many would die out of neglect. The mothers were only being practical as Mama Fua you can't show up to someone's house with a child on your back, no one will give you work.

This program has been running for two years with 31 mothers getting direct help from us, at the moment they are back to locking children at their houses. They have to fend for themselves, no one can stay in the house even for a day.





We had employed six workers they were all jobless today.





Shopkeeper

My customers have reduced buying essentials by at least 50% this week alone.

So, families that were buying one milk and bread daily are now only buying it 3 times a week at best.

I am already having discussions with some who want credit, they hadn't even cleared last month's debts, so I am worried that I will never get that money back, it looks like bad debt to me already.

You see this business is about relationship I know my customers very well on what they can and do and what they can't afford. I am afraid they have to go to work daily to sustain themselves.

In case government people announce a shutdown, they should come up with a plan on how to feed people here daily. You can't tell people who were struggling before in the invisible market to die in their houses.



Benson Muli- 42 years





People here understand the risk but let me ask you, don't you think we deal with diseases here and poverty every day? This is normal to us and maybe, abnormal for you guys (middle class).



We have understood the government message about health safety and we try to provide water and such, however we can't completely not handle money. How do I get 10 shillings MPESA transaction for salt?

Business Korogocho



Grace Okeyo- 42 years

I get my goods from Meru, in good times, we would be getting three times supply from the farms there, and clear selling them on a day or two.

This week we only have got one supply only and as you can see the Banana are still here with us, we have only sold about 30% of that stock.

Transport has been interrupted, we are being told it's now more expensive to move the Banana's from Meru due to the restrictions. Police are stopping the trucks and demanding more money than is normal, so the transporters are passing the cost down to us.



Korogocho
Market

Banana Seller











Rita Awino- 20 years

Beautician Korogocho Market

My customers usually come from far to get their hair done here because we are cheap and we have quick moving hair.

Since coronavirus our customers haven't come to us they are fearing we have it and we will infect them.

We are not hoping for a lockdown because I have a small child, 8 months, and I need to feed him that's why I come to the roadside and make hair.

We are reduced to two customers a week from 5 to 6 a day. Life doesn't make sense at all and I don't know what to do with this new situation.





Anthony Kinuthia- 45 years

If people are struggling to buy food can you imagine anyone buying clothes?

As you can see the general trend in the market is that people are reducing spending or they don't have money to buy things. So, I am stuck with my Mitumba stock.

Business was good, we could make 5,000 in a good day this week I can't even tell you I have 1,000 shillings from selling clothes.

Hawker

Korogocho Market



This shutdown should be something for middle-class and the rich, government should shut down those areas, here we are struggling to feed ourselves and we have to do it every day.













Posho Mill attendant Korogocho Nyayo village

Customers don't spend as much as they used to if I were to compare it to during holidays where children will be at home.

We are used to doing two bags of maize flour in a day the whole of this week we are doing half a bag every day. So, people have reduced their normal intake of Ugali .

We hope this thing goes quietly as we can't manage a complete shutdown. Sometimes I do credit to my usual customers, I am already doing 10 debts this week, highest than any other time I have ever done.



Josephat Mongela – 45 years











M-Pesa/Attendant

On a normal working day, we service 10 to 15 customers in a day transacting substantial amounts, mostly business people in the market.

At the moment, we have reduced to 7 so I too have had to scale down business.

So, when government suspends school and give instructions they should be aware of its consequences, my two children are at home, feeding them three meals a day is not an easy thing.

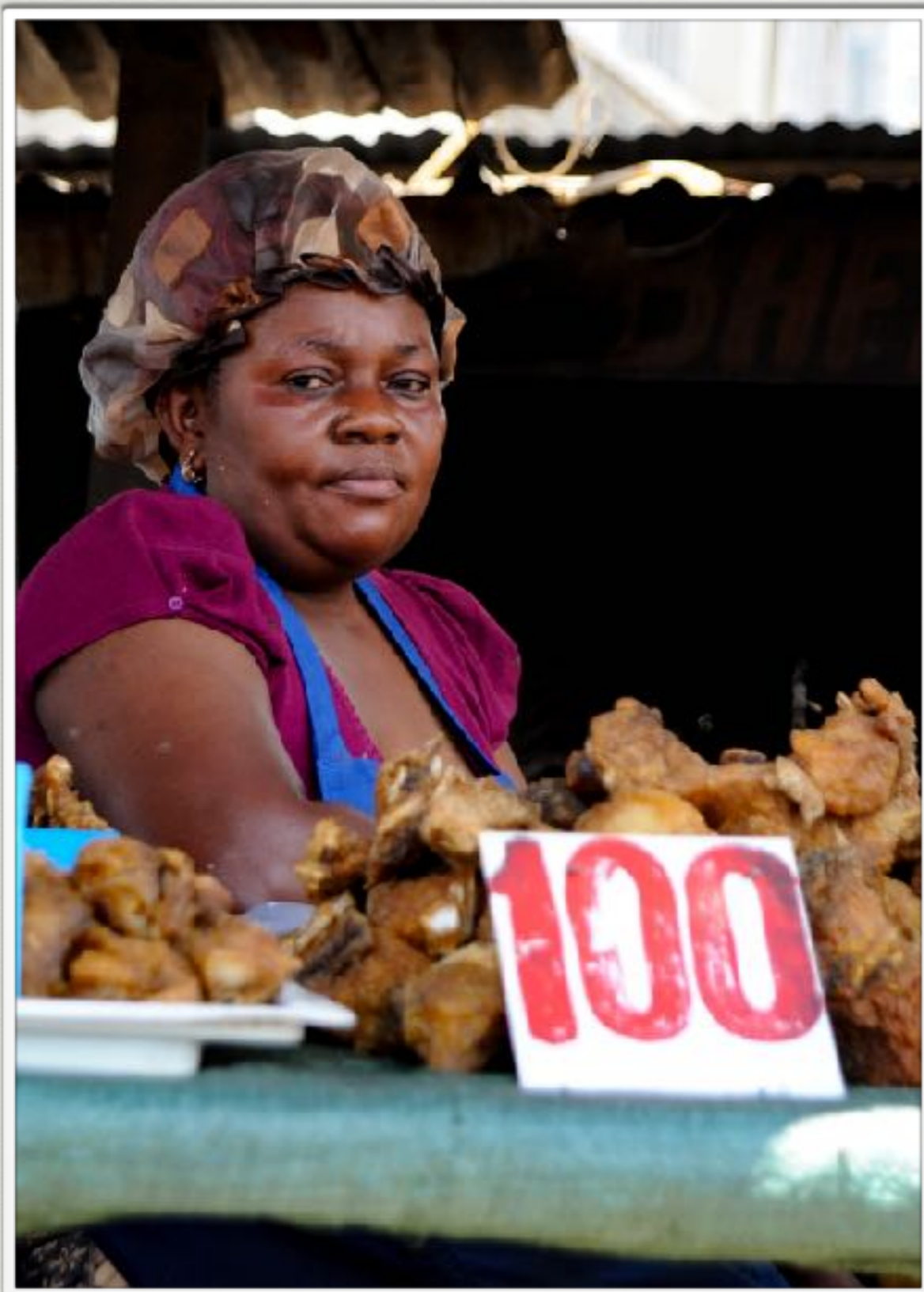
Bundles costs money if at all they are to try and study, no one in government has given us a proper plan on how our children can continue with proper education. They keep making announcements that affect us without giving a thought.



Elizabeth Wateri- 37 years







Rita Ambuso- 45 years

Fish Monger Korogocho Market

The silver lining here is that my competitors who selling Chinese fish are out of business, they all closed down.

People are worried that all our fish comes from China so my job now is to convince customers that this fish comes straight from Lake Victoria and it is not one of those packed fish in boxes.

Despite this, business is not as vibrant as it should have been, people now know and can differentiate between fish from China and ours from the Lake but they don't have money to spend as they usually do.

This would be a good time for government to help local businesses and take care of its citizens, but you know they don't know how to do that. They only take care of themselves.







Cereal Seller | Korogocho
Kisumu Ndogo
village

Business is not that bad to be honest, my products are very useful to people living in the slums.

I sell maize and beans, this is a good meal and cheap for families now that you have children at home and you have to provide 3 meals a day.

The only challenge is that I might run out of stock because our beans come from Tanzania, the border closing is not good for us.

The transporters have already warned us on the interruption on that route, the interference on that supply chain will be bad for my business and my customers.

I consider my business a public service as I show residents here how to live cheaply and on a budget.



Rosemary Awour- 41years











Lilian Akoth -38 years



Selling greens is one of the businesses that was affected immediately they announced coronavirus, people are fearful and our products coming from upcountry was interrupted immediately.

Getting the goods from upcountry is usually a delicate matter, there are too many people involved and we hear some county governments have closed down some markets, the effect is that there is less vegetables getting to us in Nairobi.







