One Health Central and Eastern Africa (OHCEA) soon rebranding to Africa One Health University Network (AFROHUN) is present in eight countries in Africa. As a university network, OHCEA’s core business is working with member and other universities, governments and other stakeholders to create an appropriate environment for developing a global One Health workforce.

OHCEA is therefore keenly engaged in pandemic management processes in the 8 countries.

Our OHCEA COVID-19 Weekly Briefings provide a snapshot of what we are doing as well as some key developments in the countries.

NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE...
Welcome to our Third OHCEA COVID-19 Weekly Briefing. We once again connect you to our teams in the countries where we are present, and our contribution to national COVID-19 response efforts.

A few insights from the countries in the OHCEA region....

RWANDA
Rwanda government steps up COVID-19 social messaging campaigns
In general, the stay home strategy is holding very well. Police patrols every corner of the city and defaulters are returned home. Anyone who hides a case (person suspected to be suffering from COVID-19) can be prosecuted and fined or imprisoned. A whole range of sensitization methods are being used, including Police using drones over the city creating awareness about social distancing. There are increasing social media methods in the community sometimes with comic pictures that help strengthen understanding.


Content contributed by By Dr. Denis Zofou - OHCEA Cameroon Country Manager

CAMEROON
Cameroon makes mask wearing compulsory in public, triggering local production
Compulsory wearing of face-masks in public spaces in Cameroon is implemented since April 13th, 2020 as one of additional measures in response to COVID-19.
Local production of masks and other related tools is highly encouraged, under the supervision of the Minister of Scientific Research in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, following the technical standards and specifications to be published by the Ministry of Industries and Mines.


Content contributed by By Dr. Denis Zofou - OHCEA Cameroon Country Manager
**UGANDA**

Students Join COVID-19 Response Efforts bringing on Board the One Health Approach

The Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) Student One Health Innovations Club (SOHIC) formed a One Health students’ COVID-19 technical working group which was formed to join the forefront in this fight. The zoonotic nature of the disease made it important for One Health students to contribute to One Health approaches for its prevention and curtailing the effects. The ten-member working group is contributing to the fight through online sensitization campaigns to counter the information overload and misinformation, creating a platform for students to discuss personal interventions and innovative ways to solve impacts of the pandemic. Through research and participating in the Africa CDC Institute for workforce development weekly webinars, the group is able to get facts and more ideas to fight the pandemic. All information and interventions of the group have One Health principles embedded.

Meanwhile, the Makerere University SOHIC have designed a poster to support the COVID-19 response. The poster still under production (below), will also use the One Health approach to create awareness about the pandemic and discuss prevention interventions.

Content contributed by By Ms. Angella Musewa - OHCEA Uganda Country Manager

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**KENYA**

Kenya students join the innovations pace as they produce inexpensive ventilator

The Country has enhanced its testing capability, with over ten thousand individuals tested. Testing to be upscaled, starting with targeted areas and eventually to the wider population. The country has also witnessed innovations out of this crisis. This ties in well with the lessons learned during the various webinars that many people in the region have participated in. Some of the innovations highlighted include:

- A prototype of an inexpensive ventilator for use in local hospitals, developed by students at Kenyatta University.
- Local industries plugging in to fill the shortfall created by interrupted import supply chains and in doing so, manufacturing PPEs for medical workers on the frontline. In addition to Kitui County Textile Company that was highlighted last week, others include Shona EPZ Limited, Bedi Investments Limited and the National Youth Service.
- There are other local industries that were also noted to have diverted their regular commercial production to support Kenya’s COVID-19 response by manufacturing soap and disinfectants – for free distribution by Government to frontline health institutions, vulnerable groups and communities.
- The government has observed that there is an increase in economic sectors that have been hardest hit by the pandemic and its effects.
- County Governments to receive a 3-month waiver from the Kenya Medical Supplies Agency (KEMSA) requirements for the purchase of masks and PPEs. The waiver to apply to sourcing of the products locally.

The government is working towards formulating a Post COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan

Student One Health Innovations Clubs take up learning opportunities

Students of the University of Nairobi and Moi University through their various SOHICs participated in various webinars organized within the past week. These included Drug Use in Prevention and Management of COVID-19 Infection and a COVID-19 Webinar with a Focus on Human Rights.

Content contributed by By Dr. Sam Wanjohi - OHCEA Kenya Country Manager

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**ETHIOPIA**

OHCEA Ethiopia in Public Education drive led by Dean Abrha Bsrat

Mekelle University College of Veterinary Sciences Dean, Dr. Abrha Bsrat has played a key role in creating awareness about COVID-19 prevention. Using mass media; radio and television, he has engaged and responded to key questions and concerns from members of the public. The public especially was concerned about the safety of meat that is to be consumed. There were also concerns as to what recommendations need to be made for operations of meat markets since reports indicate that the outbreak started in an animal market in Wuhan, China. This includes information that should be given to farmers who come to markets to sell their livestock.

Dean Abrha Bsrat

Mekelle University College of Veterinary Sciences

Content contributed by By Dr. Sam Wanjohi - OHCEA Kenya Country Manager
the markets to sell their animals, how people should handle money in the crowded market conditions during shopping for the upcoming holidays, any hint as to when the pandemic is likely to end as many households are fast running out of food and money.

The engagement with the public and government entities indicate a great interest and hope that the work OHCEA does, will help address some of the issues related to outbreaks like COVID-19.

**TANZANIA**

**OHCEA Tanzania provides leadership for COVID-19 response critical decision making**

The Tanzania OHCEA Country Manager (CM) was requested by the Ministry of Health to chair a sub-committee of the National Disease Surveillance Task Force and to deliberate and justify why the general public should wear cloth face masks. A series of Zoom meetings were held over three days to discuss this issue. In attendance were representatives from MOH (Chief Medical Officer, Epidemiologist and others), Zanzibar equivalents, WHO, CDC, UNICEF, MUHAS, TPHA, AMREF, Benjamien Mkapa Foundation, and others. After lengthy discussions and after realizing that there were many asymptomatic cases in Tanzania, the subcommittee recommended that mask wearing should be enforced to the general public, especially in high risk areas such as hospitals, isolation centres, markets, shopping centres and bus terminals to prevent COVID-19 from spreading. The sub-committee also recommended that the other measures currently being applied should continue. These are hand washing with soap and water and sanitizers in addition to ensuring there is adequate physical distancing.

The Country Manager was also invited by the President of the Tanzania Medical Association to participate in a Zoom meeting to provide guidance on what the association would present to higher authorities regarding the situation of healthcare workers in Tanzania during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By way of limiting transmission, schools and universities and other training institutions were closed on 19th March but transportation system, churches and mosques continue to operate. The government has encouraged everyone to wash hands with soap and running water and or sanitizers as well as physical distancing. However, wearing of cloth face masks for the general public has not been enforced so far but many organizations and government departments are putting in place bylaws to wear the masks.

**Content contributed by Professor Japheth Killewo - OHCEA Tanzania Country Manager.**

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**SENEGAL**

**Universities Distinguish themselves in innovating for COVID-19 Response**

Senegalese universities are active in the fight against COVID-19. In early April 2020, students from the Department of Chemical Engineering at UCAD’s Ecole Supérieure Polytechnique (ESP) produced hydroalcoholic gel and gel automatic dispensers that can be ordered in local languages. The ESP donated 1,000 litres of gel to Ministry of Health as a contribution to the COVID-19 response. They were followed by students from the chemistry department of Assane Seck University of Ziguinchor who also produced hydroalcoholic gel for the benefit of the southern region of Senegal.

Another academic institution; the Polytechnic School of Thies (EPT), whose teachers have manufactured an artificial respirator also distinguished itself in the response to COVID-19. The prototype was presented to the press. This prototype is expected to be validated by the country’s health authorities and that resources be mobilized for its production at a large scale. The designers have ensured that it will be possible to manufacture about 100 respirators per week depending on the equipment that will be put in place. [http://www.mesrgov.sn/prototype-de-respirateur-artificiel-a-lept-les-concepteurs-veulent-plus-de-moyens-pour-une-production-a-lechelle-industrielle/](http://www.mesrgov.sn/prototype-de-respirateur-artificiel-a-lept-les-concepteurs-veulent-plus-de-moyens-pour-une-production-a-lechelle-industrielle/)

**Content contributed by By Dr. Berihu Gebrekidan - OHCEA Ethiopia Country Manager.**

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**OHCEA Ethiopia stepping in to support government addressing fears and concerns around new prevention strategies. Here the OHCEA Country Manager was hosted on a radio station**

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**In the community for an awareness creation program on COVID-19**

Content contributed by By Dr. Berihu Gebrekidan - OHCEA Ethiopia Country Manager.
A multisectoral observatory is also being installed by academics in order to better help decision-making and evaluate COVID-19 pandemic impact.

Content contributed by By Dr Sara Danièle Dieng – OHCEA Senegal Country Manager

MY OPINION

COVID-19 AS A WICKED PROBLEM AND KENYA’S ONE HEALTH RESPONSE

By Sam Wanjohi – OHCEA Kenya Country Manager

Globalization (including global travel and trade) has for long been noted to be one of the driving factors for pandemic risks, which has been proved with the recent emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 presents in a manner that is “both pernicious and problematic to address, is tied to multiple stakeholders’ interests, with gaps in knowledge and scientific uncertainty and fragmentation, and is highly complex with undefined cause which is hard to understand and articulate”. In other words, COVID-19 is a classic example of a wicked problem, defined by Rittel (1973) as a social or cultural problem that is difficult or impossible to solve for as many as four reasons including:

1) Incomplete or contradictory knowledge
2) The number of people and opinions involved
3) The large economic burden
4) The interconnected nature of these problems with other problems.

While implementing solutions for wicked problems, different interest groups can have both positive and negative effects. This has been witnessed in the measures that Kenya has implemented in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. For instance, some of the recommended measures are physical and social distancing and staying at home. Whereas these were meant to “flatten the curve”, an increase in gender-based violence cases have been reported. Other examples include the yet to be determined psychological and physiological effects of the stay at home measures, loss of livelihoods for many in the informal sector & reduced incomes for some in the formal employment, reduced earnings for business owners e.g. restaurateurs & others in the hospitality industry and increased vulnerability for populations across various ages and socio-economic groups, among others.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the way of life of various populations, if not all, around the world. Kenya is no exception. The occurrence of unanticipated and unintended consequences upon implementation of mitigation measures, has highlighted the need for an enhanced coordinated One Health response. This calls for creativity and innovation, working across disciplines, sectors and cultures, among other spheres. It requires a SYSTEMS THINKING approach.

A look at Kenya’s response efforts indicate that this is what the government is trying to do and the efforts are appreciated and laudable.

THE STUDENTS WEIGH IN...

Going to the hospital when having Covid-19 is a hope for many to get better, but also more efforts should be in preventing it because the more we don't prevent it and just wait more days till it got worse is a high risk of infecting many. Hence more burden to the health facilities which is sometimes beyond their power, but it will be simple if we get this right and comply to the requirements. Because now it's not only doctor’s ability to keep us safe rather each sector’s efforts is need to keep all safe. SOHIC’s goal of achieving optimal health outcomes recognizing the interconnection between people, animals and their shared environment needs everyone effort to be achieved. “TOGETHER WE CAN WIN THIS BATTLE “, Innocente Kabasinga, University of Rwanda - Rwanda.

We thank God to see this day again. Here in Tanzania still we are taking all measures on preventing ourselves from Coronavirus. But still in some places within the country including some regions that have no confirmed cases, some people still need education because they are ignoring taking on the preventive measures compared to places like Dar Es salaam”, Jitahidi Nosa, Sokoine University of Agriculture - Tanzania.