

Call for Case Studies on Emerging Issues of Social Accountability in Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic within Eastern and Southern Africa Countries

Background

The outbreak of coronavirus (COVID19) is not only a public health emergency causing loss of life and human suffering; it also poses a major threat to the global economy and extraordinarily impacts the social-economic lives of humanity. Health systems in both high and low-income countries have struggled to provide adequate COVID-19 testing and care¹ with negative impacts on the continuity of services for non-COVID-19 health care². The COVID-19 outbreak is particularly detrimental to members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations, including people living in poverty, older persons, persons with disabilities, youth, and indigenous persons.³ Populations are vulnerable to not only infections, but also negative impacts of national responses that have been dominated by lockdowns exacerbating poverty, domestic violence and mental health problems.⁴ There are tremendous concerns about such impacts on the healthcare system and social policy in a number of African countries.

Social Accountability and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic got everyone, including governments by surprise. As a result of this, many countries have struggled over the past year to define their national response. Because things are happening fast, a number of mistakes have been made along the way. We have noted that processes like budget allocations and reallocations have been highly rushed and in an irregular manner in some cases. Parliament has for instance been in the spotlight for allocating itself UGX 10 billion without following proper procedure. Further to this development partners such as the World Bank and other multinational donors have provided COVID-19 emergency funds in addition to a number of

loans that government has continued to approve. The dominance of the private sector as major players in the national response is widespread.

Practitioners on accountability and social action in health have gone through varying experiences during this COVID-19 period. While some were constrained by the lockdowns, others have been contributing to the national response. Maintaining the oversight role through social accountability remains critical even as countries begin to open up from the lockdowns. The current efforts towards vaccination and continued testing of COVID-19 calls for continued and renewed efforts towards social accountability.

Call for Case Studies

The Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) under the PAI – COPASAH partnership invites submissions for case studies on practices and emerging issues of social accountability during the COVID-19 pandemic within the Eastern and Southern Africa region from practitioners on accountability and social action in Health. The case studies should document, showcase and highlight best practices, successes, challenges, lessons learned and innovations towards the practice of social accountability in the health sector during COVID-19.

Application instructions

Eligible individuals or organisations can submit a write-up of **Ten (10) pages maximum**. This writeup should include: an introduction about yourself or organisation, areas of focus, constituencies you work with, the problem or issue and a methodology/approach/mechanism you have used as a social accountability practitioner during COVID-19 and lessons learnt.

These case studies should be submitted to **info@cehurd.org** and copy **muhumuza@cehurd.org**. The application deadline is **15th March, 2021 at 23:59 EAT**. A panel of reviewers will evaluate the cases studies and select the **best four case studies** to be awarded a **grant of Two Thousand Five Hundred United States Dollars (USD 2500)**.

1. AshifaKassam, "We are naked against the virus': tales of despair from Spain's hospital frontline," 29 March 2020, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/29/coronavirus-madriddoctor-hospital-desperate-supplies>.

2. RTL News, "Judge forbids abortion pill by mail despite corona crisis," 12 April 2020, <https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nieuws/nederland/artikel/5088361/corona-maatregelen-quarantaine-abortuspil-post-rechter>

3. United Nations. Everyone Included: Social Impact of COVID-19. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/everyone-included-covid-19.html>

4. Human Rights Watch India, "COVID-19 Lockdown Puts Poor at Risk," 27 March 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/27/india-covid-19-lockdown-puts-poor-risk>