



BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY ONLINE 2020: REBUILD BETTER

FIVE INSIGHTS: NATIONAL COLLABORATION PLATFORMS FOR REBUILDING BETTER: THE CASE OF ACTION AGAINST COVID-19 IN EAST AFRICA

DATE: **FRIDAY 17/07**

THEME: **COLLABORATION**

FORMAT: **WEBINAR**

SPEAKERS

■ **Rob Burnet**, CEO, *Shujaaz Inc*

■ **Christian Doyen**, Chief Commercial Officer, *BRCK Inc*

■ **Anila Gopalakrishnan**, Health and Wellness Director, *Unilever*

■ **Manwa Magoma**, Advisor, ITC, *Government of Kenya*

■ **Maggie Rarieya**, Head of Secretariat, ITC, *National Business Compact on Coronavirus*

■ **Elsie Wandera**, CEO, *Heroes for Change*

■ **Moderator:** Zahid Torres-Rahman, Co-Founder and CEO, *Business Fights Poverty*

IN THIS SESSION, HOSTED WITH THE **NATIONAL BUSINESS COMPACT ON CORONAVIRUS IN KENYA**, OUR PANELLISTS DISCUSSED THE THEME OF THE DAY, COLLABORATION, IN RELATION TO THE SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE THAT TOOK PLACE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL IN KENYA TO FIGHT COVID-19. OUR SPEAKERS TOUCHED ON TOPICS RELATED TO HOW THE INITIATIVE WAS CREATED; HOW THE WORK IS BEING DONE AND WHAT THE POSITIVE IMPACTS HAVE BEEN ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND ON THE YOUTH; AND HOW WE TURN PURPOSEFUL PARTNERSHIPS INTO DRIVERS FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGE.

KEY INSIGHTS

A CRISIS CAN BE USED TO MOBILISE NEW NATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

The **National Business Compact on Coronavirus in Kenya (NBCC)** was created three days after the first COVID-19 case was identified in the country. The initiative is a public-private partnership involving companies from several sectors besides government and public agencies. In the words of Maggie Rarieya, "our mission is to limit the spread of infection and protect livelihoods across Kenya and Africa." The platform works through a unified communication platform that shares trusted information on public health with

the aim of raising awareness among the public; it sets up hygiene facilities and distributes protective equipment for the benefit of vulnerable populations; and it supports the government's logistics effort to reach people for tests and building up special quarantine facilities.

OUR MISSION IS TO LIMIT THE SPREAD OF INFECTION AND PROTECT LIVELIHOODS ACROSS KENYA AND AFRICA.



COLLABORATIONS WORK WHEN EACH PLAYER HAS A CLEAR ROLE AND CLEAR RESPONSIBILITIES

The NBCC was capable of bringing together different government agencies and multilateral institutions, multiple companies and business networks from several sectors, NGOs and community based organisations, and digital experts. Each of these players have their role and their responsibilities, but together they have the same goal, which is to deliver on the NBCC's mission of not leaving anyone behind in the fight against COVID-19. Moreover, the initiative has been successful in partnering with young people in local communities and enabling them through digital tools to contribute to the national effort while at the same time taking action to help their families and friends.

COLLABORATIONS BENEFIT FROM THE INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The success of NBCC is an example of a multi-stakeholder collaboration at the national level which not only integrates public and private partners but also includes groups that are usually ignored and not seen as part of the solution - notably the youth, in this case. Embedding inclusion into collaborative initiatives is key as these initiatives benefit from different points of view in their decision-making processes, bring together more hands willing to contribute to a positive effort, and expand their reach through the networks and community connections of young people. As Elsie Wandera put it, "let's be intentional about inviting these young people to the table, let's not make it like a PR stand. They are actually solution providers."

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DIGITAL TOOLS WILL HELP YOU MOBILISE OTHERS QUICKER

Anila Gopalakrishnan highlighted that "we really need to improvise a lot faster on digital behavioural change; at a time like a pandemic you need to move at speed", and Rob Burnet explained how digital tools helped bring Kenyans to NBCC. They used communication apps, big data tracking, and user-generated videos to ensure that the voices of young people were being heard in decision-making processes. Also, they created multi-platform campaigns focused on young people to increase awareness and understanding of COVID-19 and make sure that they were engaged and informed. Finally, they invested in mobilising young people to act by connecting them to hygiene stations while encouraging them to support their communities. In the words of Rob, "the response that we have seen in Kenya [from young people] has been: let me do something, give me a task, I want to be able to help."

COVID-19 IS SHOWING US THAT AN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION CAN HAPPEN IN A MATTER OF WEEKS, IF NOT MONTHS.



CHRISTIAN DOYEN HIGHLIGHTED THAT “WITHOUT THE ABILITY FOR AVERAGE CONSUMERS TO HAVE EASY AND AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO ENGAGE IN [INTERNET] NETWORK-BASED ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, THE EMERGING MARKETS WILL CONTINUE TO LAG BEHIND IN COMPARISON TO THEIR PEERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY GLOBAL ECONOMY.” YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DEEPLY AFFECTED BY THE PANDEMIC.

INTERNET ACCESS IS A KEY WAY TO SUPPORT CONSUMERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Christian Doyen highlighted that “without the ability for average consumers to have easy and affordable access to engage in [internet] network-based economic activities, the emerging markets will continue to lag behind in comparison to their peers in the 21st century global economy.” Young people have been deeply affected by the pandemic. School closures imposed an educational rupture for many, lockdowns and social distancing measures meant they lost contact with friends and cultural activities, and the economic shock will be especially hard for people who are looking for their next job. As Manwa Magoma said, “COVID-19 is showing us that an industrial revolution can happen in a matter of weeks, if not months.” In Kenya, when the pandemic started, a partnership between the government and a tech company extended 4G internet connection through balloons to areas that did not have internet before. This way, organisations, like NBCC, were able to keep in touch with young people, inform them about

public health measures and how important they are in spreading trusted information, and opened possibilities for young entrepreneurs to take their businesses online and avoid some of the economic damaging effects of the pandemic.

RESOURCES

- **How to Build and Mobilise a Local Coalition:** https://snipbfp.org/C19_TK_Platforms
- **National Business Compact on Coronavirus:** <https://www.covid19businessresponse.ke>
- **Shujaaz COVID-19 Barometer:** <https://www.shujaazinc.com/publications/29-05-covid-19-barometer>
- **Amref joins Unilever in Launching “Heroes for Change” Programme:** <https://amref.org/news/amref-joins-unilever-in-launching-heroes-for-change-programme/#gsc.tab=0>
- **Unilever’s work on improving health & well-being supports:** <https://www.unilever.com/sustainable-living/improving-health-and-well-being>
- **NBCC Handwashing Campaign, Kenya - an example of collaborative action:** https://snipbfp.org/C19_TK_Handwashing