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& ΜΕΛΕΤΩΝ (ΙΣΕΜ)

Title of abstract: Effect of Covid-19 on Poverty Reduction through Financial Empowerment to the Youth and Women Living in the Slums in Africa (A Case Study of Kibera Slums in Kenya).

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Abstract

COVID-19 is not only a challenge for Africa and world at large on all spheres of economic systems, but also a test of human survival in all areas of life. To survive the pandemic preparedness and strategies adopted must lead to more resilient measures to future crises. To mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the economic empowerment to the youth and women living in slums in Kenya, Fiscal stimulus packages and emergency measures to financial empowerment gaps have to be put in place in all sectors of the economy locally and internationally to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. This study therefore, focuses on Sustainable development goal (SDG) addressing the eradication of poverty and any other goals that affect youth and women directly in Africa. Those other goals that affect the youth and women in Africa are: combating the spread of HIV and AIDS including other infectious disease like COVID-19 and TB; achievement of universal primary education and financial empowerment for self-reliance and economic sustainability. Kenya has made great strides towards achieving these especially through devolvement of political and economic empowerment to the county governments (there are forty seven (47) county governments in Kenya). The purpose of the study was to investigate how COVID-19 affected the youth and women projects which facilitated poverty reduction and economic freedom strategies. The study adopted descriptive research design and data collected through self-administered questionnaires. Statistical tools like Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel was applied in generating the outputs for both descriptive and inferential statistics. The research findings suggested that COVID-19 affected the youth and women adversely in achieving formal and informal education which had previously inspired most of them to become entrepreneurs. The findings provide an original snapshot of the recent effects of the pandemic, clearly showing that the economic situation for everyone both men and women across the world has worsened since the start of the pandemic. The findings also suggested that COVID-19 also affected adversely the income earned from the activities carried out from income generating projects. COVID-19 affected financial

empowerment to the youth and women, the youth were unable to finance for their own education and training including support to their relatives and neighbors. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic which adversely affect economic activities in Kenya hence, most of the youth and women were very idle and as such, they indulged themselves with taking illicit brews and unprotected sex leading to spread of HIV/AIDs, the youth unlike women ignored the Ministry of Health measures of wearing masks, washing hands with soap and keeping a one meter social distances in all public places leading to high spread of COVID-19. The youth especially men due being idle without any economic activities, involved themselves in activities which led to an increase in crimes and use of drugs. The study recommends that both the central government and county government, NGOs and self-help groups involve the youth and women living in the slums with innovation and creativity projects/activities to enhance self-economic sustainability despite pandemic.

Key words: Empowerment, Government, COVID-19, Youth, Women, SDG