

PROJECT BRIEF

Destigmatizing Chinese Communities in the face of COVID-19: Emergency Management Actions to Address Social Vulnerability in Toronto and Nairobi

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Chinese communities around the world are facing impacts to their personal wellbeing and livelihoods by way of discrimination and Sinophobia (anti-Chinese sentiment) due to COVID-19. Toronto, Canada and Nairobi, Kenya represent two globalized urban centres with significant Chinese cultural communities who have been facing social impacts from COVID-19. By performing rapid response research, we can better understand social and policy countermeasures to mitigate the threats communities face from this and future Public Health Emergencies of International Concern (PHEIC). Our research team will:

- 1) Examine how Chinese diaspora communities in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada and Nairobi, Kenya are understanding and reacting to the novel coronavirus by studying social impacts and coping strategies.
- 2) Engage with vulnerable groups (children, women, elderly, etc.) within Chinese communities using participatory action research approaches to counter misinformation about COVID-19 and share emergency management and public health practices and resources relevant to the health crisis.
- 3) Share findings with emergency management professionals in both countries and collaboratively develop a culturally-specific public education campaign to support efforts to destigmatize Chinese communities during the COVID-19 PHEIC in both Toronto and Nairobi.
- 4) Use social media and knowledge sharing events to educate the broader community on the true impact of misinformation, disinformation, stigma and fear, with the hope that this will improve community cohesion during the outbreak phase, in recovery, and for future resilience.

With a dual focus on Toronto and Nairobi, this research adds particular value as Kenya is a low to moderate income country on the African continent that has been identified by the World Health Organization for prioritized support on the basis of close transport and trade links with China. The project design enables cross-cultural learning and comparison.

Our Canada-Kenya-United States joint research team has received Letters of Support from academic institutions and emergency management and public health authorities in Toronto and Nairobi, which will enable meeting of research objectives.

For more information, please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Aaida Mamuji at amamuji@yorku.ca, 416.736.2100 ext 33875.

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