Sister Ursula Agge told us about the current situation at MMM Mukuru Health Centre, situated in the middle of the second biggest slum in Nairobi.

‘The health centre started in 1995 and has gained the trust of the more than 900,000 people currently residing in the informal settlement. We offer a wide range of services. These include antenatal, postnatal and child welfare clinics, outpatient services, a non-communicable disease clinic and TB/HIV clinics. We also provide routine and TB laboratory tests and HIV testing and counselling. We reach out to the community with gender-based violence interventions, home-based care, social welfare and psycho-social supports, and improving hygiene and sanitation. Social workers and community health volunteers visit homes are an important link between the health centre and the community, initiating community conversations.

MMM Mukuru has boldly have taken up the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and are responding in different ways in the Mukuru slums. We immediately took precautionary measures both inside and outside the facility. We purchased personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect the staff. We disinfect the offices and compound after work each day and provide hand washing points and soap for everyone coming into the facility. We are also lobbying for hand washing points in the community.

Staff members and management were sensitized by the Ministry of Health in Nairobi County with knowledge about COVID-19. We then raised awareness with all our patients within our facility and reached out with information to the larger community. We are continuing this because a lot of false information is being circulated through social media.

Because the area we serve is an informal settlement with a high population and overcrowding, there is a high risk for rapid spread of the disease. We are therefore engaging with community leaders to create awareness in households about COVID-19 and are encouraging social distancing using megaphones.

In summary, with effect from 16 March 2020, we have taken these precautionary measures to combat the spread of Covid-19:

1. We changed the point of entry of clients to the health centre. Triage is now done at the gate instead of at the outpatients’ department. This is so every client is screened before going to reception for registration. Screening includes all staff and every client entering the facility on a daily basis.
2. We have hand washing points at the health centre entrance for all staff and clients. They wash their hands properly with soap and water before screening. We also have these at the entrances to the different departments so all patients can wash their hands at every point.
3. Sanitizers have been made available in the different departments. These will be used as needed: we have been told that the best thing to do is hand washing.
4. N 95 masks, goggles and gloves are available especially for health workers who consult clients directly. This is to follow the standards of personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by the WHO.
5. Sanitizer is available for the driver so he can use it whenever he is out of the compound on errands.
6. We are disinfecting all rooms in the health centre daily after work to keep the facility safe and to prepare for the next day.
7. We are observing the social distance of 1 meter between all staff and clients as much as possible to break the chain of transmission.
8. On 19 March, two staff members attended COVID-19 training organized by the Ministry of Health. The next day the two staff members gave us sensitization, supervised by the doctor in charge of Embakasi East and the disease surveillance personnel for the sub-county. The doctor and surveillance personnel made their contributions and answered questions.
9. We have continuous health talks on COVID-19 at our facility throughout the day, besides the normal schedule of health talks on other illnesses.
10. All health workers are using the standard case definition as a guide for detecting people with COVID-19, as directed by the Ministry of Health.
11. We have prepared a tent to serve as an isolation room for any suspected cases.
12. For our support groups with more than 15 members, we have arranged that meetings be held on different days so appropriate space can be maintained in seating arrangements.
13. Above all, we continue to have our daily prayer with all staff and clients before we begin work each day.

**Mater Misericordiae Hospital**

Sr. Dr. Martine Makanga is consultant paediatric surgeon at the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, run by the Sisters of Mercy in Nairobi. She told us about some of the plans the hospital staff are making to deal with patients.

“We have prepared a wing of 26 beds for COVID-19 patients. We have merged all the remaining patients – 38 in one ward – theatre, surgery. The maternity and intensive care unit (ICU) remain.

‘Kindly pray for me. We are sealing the wards and putting in the isolation. By Monday if everything is ready we will start receiving those patients.’