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CORONA VIRUS AND ITS EFFECT OF THE LOCKDOWN IN NIGERIA.

So far the corona virus has increased in our country and it keeps increasing daily. We also have people recovering from it at the same time people die from it. The government are doing their best to reduce the cases day by day and opening hospitals for infected people.

It’s a mark of the impact of the ongoing lockdown in Lagos which has left[lower-income households especially vulnerable](https://qz.com/africa/1831785/coronavirus-citizens-in-africas-informal-economy-try-to-survive/). An initial two-week lockdown has since been extended and, with cases still rising, it’s yet unclear if the lockdown will be lifted or eased soon. While the need for a lockdown might have seemed inevitable amid the Covid-19 outbreak, its abruptness (the government only gave citizens 24-hour notice), has left millions of low income households battling hunger.

“When you talk to people [who come for food], there’s anger and confusion about the lockdown,” Adebajo says. It’s a reality that extends across other African countries that have responded to the outbreak with lockdowns, leading to calls for African leaders to [adapt their coronavirus response measures](https://qz.com/africa/1836458/curfews-not-lockdowns-will-slow-covid-19-spread-in-africa/) to the realities on the ground.

For its part, the Nigerian government has only provided cash relief to 3.6 million poor households during the lockdown*—*a tiny figure in a country where 95.9 million people live in extreme poverty. Having [surpassed India](https://qz.com/africa/1313380/nigerias-has-the-highest-rate-of-extreme-poverty-globally/) as the country with the most extreme poor people in the world in 2018, Nigeria now also ranks among the 16 countries globally where [extreme poverty rates are still rising](https://worldpoverty.io/map).

The government’s inability to cater for its poor reflects a long-running lack of a functioning, nationwide social welfare system. While president Muhammadu Buhari’s administration has attempted to set up more social intervention programs, from feeding school children to [cash transfers](https://qz.com/africa/1355526/nigeria-is-trying-to-spend-its-way-out-of-extreme-poverty-by-throwing-money-at-its-poorest-people/), the stark realities of the ongoing lockdown show those efforts are nowhere near enough.

The People’s Food Bank is just one of several citizen-powered welfare initiatives that have sprung up in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Pop musician BankyW [currently runs](https://twitter.com/BankyW/status/1250812789125525509?s=20)a similar food bank in the Lekki area while Food Clique, an eight-year old non-profit focused on distributing food to the poorest households, has had to rapidly scale up operations in the face of increased demand during the lockdown.

Beyond physical food bank drives, tech savvy Nigerians are also leveraging the internet as a tool for social relief. Over the past month, two major online donor platforms have been created to anonymously crowd-source and distribute donations to recipients in need. [AngelsAmongUs](https://angelsamong.us/) allows anyone with the means to anonymously send small donations (an average of $13) to its growing list of over 1,100 recipients who have signed up within its first 25 days of operations. Justin Irabor, founder of the platform, says anonymous donors have already disbursed around four million naira ($10,000) to about 700 people.

For its part, [WeAreTogether](https://wearetogether.ng/), another online donor platform, is partly funded by a coalition of prominent Nigerian tech startups, including payments company PayStack and video streaming platform, iROKOtv. The platform has disbursed 10,000 naira each ($26) to nearly 1,600 recipients and has raised 17 million naira ($44,000) in its first 12 days.

It’s a part of a wider move by Nigeria’s tech community which has [notably stepped up to the forefront](https://qz.com/africa/1828438/coronavirus-nigerian-tech-startups-step-up-to-assist-government/) of Nigeria’s coronavirus response. Health startup Lifebank has created a national register of medical equipment for Covid-19 treatment, including ventilators and respirators while Hotel booking platform Hotels.ng has partnered with hotels to create isolation centers across Nigeria. One year-old genomics research startup 54gene has also launched a $500,000 fund to boost local testing capacity for coronavirus.

Since starting the People’s Food Bank, Adebajo says the family has received cash donations of around six million naira ($15,000) from a network of friends and family supporting the project. The donations will prove crucial as the sharp rise in the number of daily food recipients at the food bank suggests demand for relief will continue to grow. It’s a reality other philanthropic initiatives are witnessing too.