

Kenya and other east African countries due to informal employment settings in the region. He added that Kenya faced shutdown orders on a similar timeline to California's shelter-in-place guidelines.

"Most people are living on two or three dollars a day," Miguel said during the meeting. "The consequences of such a lockdown could be quite different than what we experienced in rich countries."

According to data presented by Miguel during the meeting, earnings per capita among rural Kenyans studied fell more than 20% due to COVID-19, with additional drops in weekly consumption per capita from approximately \$14 to \$11 per week.

The team also measured an uptick in children skipping meals and domestic violence incidents involving children amid the pandemic.

"The numbers are quite severe," Miguel said at the event.

Despite loosening lockdown restrictions in Kenya in May, Miguel said recovery in the country thus far remains largely undetectable.

Another effect of COVID-19 is expanding social protection programming, according to CEGA panelist Paul Niehaus, a UC San Diego economics professor and co-founder of the nonprofit GiveDirectly.

Niehaus presented data on cash transfers delivered through GiveDirectly, which he said is currently conducting an experiment on universal basic income in rural Kenya. According to Niehaus, there is current evidence that cash transfers are helping to alleviate food insecurity amid COVID-19.

Another CEGA affiliate, UC Berkeley economics assistant professor Supreet Kaur, subsequently expanded on cash transfers, citing the need for both immediate and long-term aid for those living in poverty throughout the pandemic.

"Those urgent needs that people have today — for food, for health, for health fees — are the same needs they are going to have a month from now," Kaur said at the meeting.

In terms of addressing urgent needs, CEGA co-director and UC Berkeley professor Joshua Blumenstock discussed approaches for targeting social protection through alternative data sources, including artificial intelligence.

According to Blumenstock, satellite imagery processed with artificial intelligence identifying regions that need to be prioritized for humanitarian aid, by analyzing conditions on the ground, including housing density and road quality.

Blumenstock concluded the meeting by noting the importance of improved data responding to the COVID-19 crisis, in terms of facilitating both public health and humanitarian responses.

"Better data can also help evaluate whether the existing programs are working or whether they're not which, again looking forward, can help the design of the most effective policies," Blumenstock said during the event.

Contact Hanna Lykke at hlykke@dailycal.org and follow her on Twitter at [@hannaathearstDC](https://twitter.com/hannaathearstDC).



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CAMPUS

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2020

UC Berkeley event addresses COVID-19 economic impact on global south



WIKIMEDIA/CREATIVE COMMONS

BY [HANNA LYKKE](#) | SENIOR STAFF

LAST UPDATED JUNE 11, 2020

UC Berkeley hosted an event Wednesday addressing the economic impacts of COVID-19 and recovery initiatives in the global south.

During the event, an installment of the ongoing “Berkeley Conversations: COVID-19” series, campus economics professor and Center for Effective Global Action, or CEGA, faculty co-director Edward Miguel said COVID-19 poses greater risk among

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