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Factors behind Africa's Covid-19 success

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Introduction

Africa is currently having a good pandemic response in contrast to the dire expectations predicted by experts earlier in the year. The United Nations had joined the chorus of [expert predictions](#) that argued that Covid-19 would have disastrous effects on Africa. The [basis of the prognosis](#) is largely due to the lack of health and other essential infrastructure in several of African states. In contrast, Africa appears to be having success with the pandemic in terms of infection and death rates from the virus.

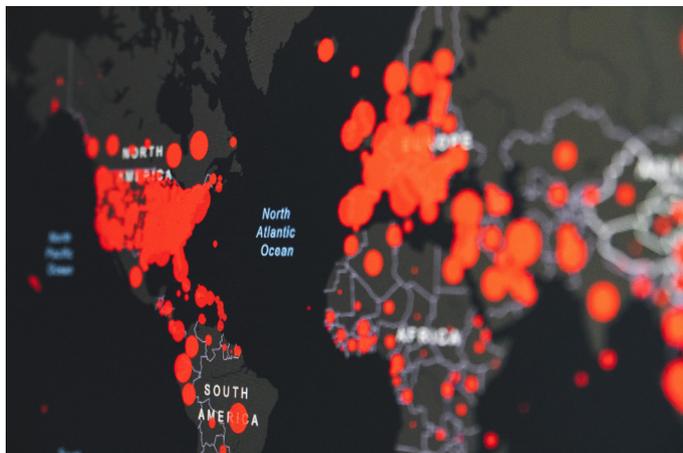


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The predominant approach, in response to the pandemic, has been total lockdown of the society (total lockdown) on one hand. States often start easing lockdown restrictions, to flexi-lockdown, when the virus is under control. It appears that several

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African states began easing lockdown restrictions sooner than most western countries. Several factors may be responsible for this including: the lower than expected infections and fatalities, the [negative effect of total lockdown on the economy/society](#) (for instance the food shortages and increase in crime - [South Africa](#), [Nigeria](#) and the work of the newly established Africa Centre

for Disease Control and Prevention. These factors can be categorized into two groups: success by default and success by design.

Success by Default

The contributory factors for Africa's success are as varied and diverse as the continent. However, we will briefly highlight some of the obvious factors which are helping the continent combat the pandemic. Several factors influenced African states initially to choose total lockdown including the events in Europe and USA, as well as their economic disadvantage and lack of essential infrastructure essential to fight the virus. Hence it made sense to limit the effect of the virus. However, these same factors are behind the unexpected success with limiting the effect of the virus. As such, they can be said to have caused success by default in the fight against the pandemic in Africa

Some of the contributory factors to Africa's success include:

1. Previous recent experience with an epidemic - The continent has, like much of Asia, had experience of addressing infectious diseases (HIV and recently Ebola).
2. Demography – young, active and healthy population. Most of Africa's states have a large young and active population group due to the

poor infrastructures and the economy. The effects of the economy lead to a dearth of an older generation, low level of obesity and certain illnesses all of which are susceptible to covid-19 fatality.

3. Effects of the economy on the demography has made so many of Africa's young (especially in the rural communities – which [constitutes up to 60% of the continent](#) – default to sports and other physically intensive lifestyles such as walking, cycling and non-mechanical/industrial farming.

Success by Design

[The Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) may arguably be one of the key reasons that African states are successfully combating the pandemic.

... a coordinated plan to test, trace and treat in the continent.

The African CDC was only established in 2017 to address some of the epidemics such as Ebola. It has been instrumental in putting together a strategy with African heads of states to ensure scientific advice on frontier closures, screening and lockdowns are made available to states. It worked to [create a coordinated plan to test, trace and treat in the continent](#). The United Nations and other international institutions and charities such as the Wellcome Group have contributed to the efforts of Africa's CDC.

Other deliberate steps that have contributed to the success of several African states are the [early total lockdown of the countries and planned strategies](#) of a few states, to address the Pandemic

In conclusion, the quick easing of lockdowns is one indication of success in the continent's fight against Covid-19. Most African states are limited in their ability to apply the other measures required to combat the pandemic. Yet, a combination of the factors explored above has contributed to the low fatalities in the continent. At the end of this pandemic, the numbers may show Africa's efforts to be as successful as the likes of Taiwan and Vietnam.



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