

Vuk'uzenzele



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May 2020 Edition 1

Our heroes on the COVID-19 Frontline

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Healthcare workers to screen people at their homes

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COVID-19: SA's eight-stage plan

situation where we have just over 1.8 million people infected," says Professor Karim.

"When a country reaches 100 cases, the epidemic grows at a rapid rate – what we call an exponential curve – that reflects the high number of new infections that occur almost daily. When you have this exponential curve and new cases increase rapidly, people need medical care and the medical system gets overwhelmed," he said.

South Africa was entering an exponential curve before lockdown. On 26 March the country began to see a decline in cases. Following this, it reached a plateau, where it was seeing a similar number of cases every day – between 60 and 70.

This is a very different situation to other countries. "No other country has been able to reach a stage where you get that kind of plateau," said Professor Karim.

Why is SA different?

There are three possible reasons why South Africa's path is different.

The first is that we could

Allison Cooper

Government's novel coronavirus (COVID-19) interventions, especially the national lockdown, have been successful in slowing down the disease's spread.

This is according to South African epidemiologist and infectious diseases specialist Professor Salim Abdool Karim, who is also the chairman of the Ministerial Advisory Group on COVID-19.

At a briefing held with Health Minister Zweli Mkhize recently, Professor Karim

presented an overview of the epidemic, its early trajectory and the country's eight-stage plan for tackling the virus.

On a positive note, said Professor Karim, the lockdown has bought us time. "We cannot end lockdown abruptly. It will undo all we have achieved."

Professor Karim said the world's first cases of COVID-19 probably occurred in November 2019, but the first reported case was on 19 December in Wuhan, China.

"In the short four months that we've known about the virus, we have seen it go from a small outbreak to a

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CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

• From page 1

not be doing enough testing, especially in the public sector. The second is that the reduction of cases could be genuine.

"The overall number of tests increased in the past two weeks. That reduces the likelihood that it's just simply a lack of testing. There has to be a third explanation... It's most likely due to some genuine effect... It's not something we can say definitively, but we can say that it's the likely situation. We still need to do more in terms of testing," he said.

The first wave of cases in SA came from people who had travelled overseas and brought it back to SA. The second wave came from people who had contact with these people and the third wave is community transmission.

While SA expected to see a large growth in cases due to community transmission, its efforts to locate people who could have come into contact with infected people has slowed the rate of community transmission.

"South Africa has a unique component to its response... We are being proactive," said Professor Karim. He explained that 28 300 health-care workers are going door-to-door to screen people for COVID-19 and refer them for testing if needed.

The first four stages

South Africa has an eight-stage plan in place to tackle COVID-19.

Professor Karim said SA's first stage response to COVID-19 was preparation, including setting up laboratories, starting testing and educating citizens.

The second stage was pri-

mary prevention, including declaring a national state of disaster, introducing social distancing and hand-washing, closing schools, controlling the number of people attending gatherings and closing the borders to international travel.

The third stage was lockdown and the fourth stage was surveillance and active case-finding.

"Community transmission levels will guide the next steps and the lockdown," said Professor Karim.

A systematic easing of the lockdown would be implemented to reduce the risk of rapid transmission.

Stages five to eight

Stage five will focus on hotspots, including surveillance, spatial monitoring and outbreak investigation and intervention teams.

Stage six will focus on

medical care, when the virus peaks in SA, and will include surveillance on case load and capacity, managing staff exposures and infections, building field hospitals for triage and expanding ICU bed and ventilator numbers.

Stage seven focuses on bereavement and the aftermath, including expanding burial capacity, regulations on funerals and managing psychological and social impacts.

Stage eight focuses on ongoing vigilance, including monitoring and admin-

istering vaccines, if available.

The ongoing surveillance programme will include house-to-house screening and testing, health worker surveillance one day each month and a national surveillance day, per month, for schools, mines, prisons and big companies.

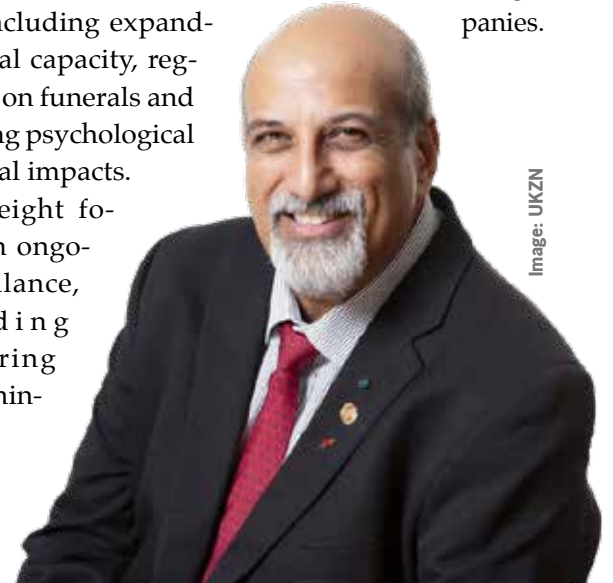


Image: UKZN

■ South African epidemiologist and infectious disease specialist Professor Salim Abdool Karim who is also the chairman of the Ministerial Advisory Group on COVID-19.

App tracks COVID-19 symptoms

More Matshediso

Empowering yourself with accurate information on the coronavirus (COVID-19) is very important to your health and wellbeing.

To make this possible, a web-enabled App called CoronaFighter has been created and developed by Dr Jarrad van Zuydam and Dr Rick Diesel from InsightFit, and teams at Sigma Digital and Lead Robot, to provide citizens with accurate information about the virus.

Dr van Zuydam says most

of the information contained in the app is sourced from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), which is a national public health institute that provides reference microbiology, virology, epidemiology, surveillance and public health research to support the government's response to communicable disease threats.

The NICD also serves as a resource of knowledge and expertise of communicable diseases for the African continent. The institution assists in the planning of policies and programmes to respond

to communicable diseases.

"Over 30 super-talented volunteers from the Civitas Founder Network and Knife Capital's Grindstone climbed in to build the CoronaFighter app in one week. The app allows you to track your symptoms through a simplified automated self-monitor process," says Dr van Zuydam.

By providing users with the tools and information they need for self-monitoring, CoronaFighter reduces pressure on testing points and protects its users from the risk of infection presented by the testing centres themselves.

Due to COVID-19's tendency to present symptoms slowly and be passed along incredibly easily, users are encouraged to self-monitoring as soon as possible.

Speaking on behalf of the developers, Paul van Zyl of Sigma Digital says the platform was developed as

an open-source initiative to ensure that users get the best possible support.

"The app was designed to collect data to provide medical authorities with reactive feedback on where COVID-19 hotspots are, and aids in providing crucial data so that medical resources can be used in the most efficient way possible," he says.

He adds that the easy-to-follow test gives South Africans an accessible way to compare their current health profile to the latest NICD guidelines.

To test yourself for COVID-19 using the app, simply sign-up on www.testforcovid.co.za with your email, phone number or Google Account. Give CoronaFighter a brief medical

and travel history, and the app will be able to tell you what the latest NICD guidelines suggest you do next.

Citizens who want to volunteer their time and skills or donate to this cause may e-mail team@testforcovid.co.za



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Help for our vulnerable citizens



Many countries around the world have imposed coronavirus lockdowns with a view to saving the lives of their citizens. We have done the same in our country, but our lockdown has revealed a very sad fault line in our society that reveals how grinding poverty, inequality and unemployment is tearing the fabric of our communities apart.

There can be no greater anguish than that of a parent whose children cry out to them for food, but they have none to give.

There can be no greater injustice than a society where some

live in comfort and plenty, while others struggle at the margins to survive with little or nothing at all.

Yes, these are the residual effects of a fractured and unequal past. But they are also a symptom of a fundamental failing in our post-apartheid society. The nationwide lockdown in response to the coronavirus has gravely exacerbated a long-standing problem.

Over the past few weeks, we have been confronted with distressing images of desperate people clamouring for food parcels at distribution centres and of community protests against food shortages.

We have also had to contend with allegations both disturbing and disgusting. A number

of provinces have received reports that callous individuals, some of them allegedly government officials, are hoarding or selling food parcels earmarked for the needy and destitute, or diverting them to their friends and families.

If there is found to be substance to these allegations we will deal with the individuals concerned harshly.

With the declaration of a national state of disaster and the imposition of a nation-wide lockdown we entered uncharted waters. South Africa has never had to deal with a public health emergency of this magnitude.

We had to act quickly to save lives. And we must acknowledge that in the days and

weeks that have followed, the provision of support to our country's most vulnerable citizens has been slower than required, and that lapses have occurred.

However, the payment of social grants has proceeded relatively smoothly, and after a number of technical challenges, the food distribution system is being streamlined.

Imposing a nationwide lockdown at very short notice presented several challenges. We have had to weigh up the proportionality of the national response and the extent of restrictions we would need to impose.

We ultimately chose to err on the side of caution. And as the presentation by the Ministry of Health indicated recently, enforcing a lockdown at the time we did has slowed down the rate of infection and, more importantly, bought us time to prepare for a probable surge in infections in the coming weeks and months.

We had to consider the impact on an already floundering economy in both the long and short term, and the impact of this substantial disruption on the livelihoods of millions of people.

We had to consider what weeks of confinement to the home would mean for the employed not paid regular salaries, for the unemployed and those seeking work, for those in casual or seasonal employment, for those in the informal sector, for the indigent and for the vulnerable.

Cabinet will finalise a set of measures to respond to the impact of the lockdown on the livelihoods of our people. This has been preceded by a range of engagements with a number of stakeholders including business, labour, religious organisations, civil society and the Presidential Economic Advisory Council.

The social partners have

put forward a number of proposals on interventions that could address the immediate vulnerability of the poorest of the poor, most of whom rely on social assistance to survive.

We will scale up welfare provision during this period to help households living below the poverty line.

Even when the nation-wide lockdown is lifted, its effects will continue to be felt for some time to come.

Those fortunate to have a steady income will be able to return to their jobs; but for millions of others this will be a lost month where they would otherwise have found temporary work, done business in the informal sector or saved money earned to meet their family responsibilities.

Food support is a short-term emergency measure. It will need to be matched by sustainable solutions that help our most vulnerable citizens weather the difficult times that are still to come.

I wish to thank the many NGOs, religious groups and ordinary citizens who are donating money and volunteering to help feed the hungry and destitute.

Alleviating hunger is not an act of charity. It is an imperative for any society that is founded on respect for human rights.

We are at a point in our battle with the pandemic where complacency could prove disastrous. I call on each and every one to remain vigilant, to continue to abide by the regulations, and to keep safe and keep others safe.

As government we will be providing information on the direct interventions we are taking to shield our most vulnerable citizens from the grim prospect of starvation.

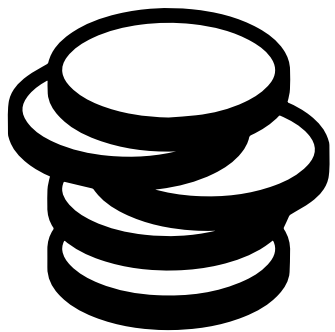
Among the many difficulties our people face at this time, wondering where their next meal will come from should not be one of them.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

COVID-19 in numbers

Allison Cooper

Vuk'uzenzele shares figures that have so far defined the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) experience and intervention made by the South African government in partnership business, religious groups and non-profit organisations.



R356 million: The amount paid out by the Unemployment Insurance Fund by 9 April.

11 000: The number of water storage tanks delivered to communities in need, across the country, by 9 April.

R2.2 billion: The amount raised by the Solidarity Fund by 9 April.



154: The number of shelters accommodating the homeless.

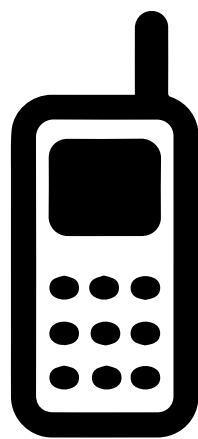
42 percent: The average daily increase in COVID-19 new cases in South Africa, in the two weeks before the lockdown.

4 percent: The average daily increase in new cases in



South Africa since the start of the lockdown.

20 000: The number of cellphones donated by Vodacom for health workers that



will be involved in screening and tracing in communities.

100: The Reserve Bank initially reduced the interest rate by 100 basis points, making it easier for consumers and companies to access credit. It later reduced it by another 100 basis points.

R6 500: The Employment Tax Incentive was expanded to include all employees earning below R6 500, giving them a subsidy of R500.

R50 million: Businesses with a turnover of less than R50 million are allowed to delay their PAYE tax payments

over the next four months, and their provisional corporate income tax payments over the next six months, without penalties.

R500 million: The amount allocated by the Department of Small Business Development to assist small and medium enterprises.

R3 billion: The amount allocated by the Industrial Development Corporation for funding for companies that produce essential goods.

R1 billion: The South Africa Future Trust was estab-



lished to provide a further R1 billion in zero-interest loan funding to small and medium enterprises in distress.

R30 billion: The Unemployment Insurance Fund created a Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Scheme, with over R30 billion to provide income support to

workers where employers are unable to pay their full salaries.

60: Government launched 60 new mobile lab units to



increase South Africa's testing capacity, increasing the number of mobile testing units to 67.

R1.2 billion: The amount ringfenced by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development for assistance, to mainly target financially distressed small-scale farmers.

200 000: On 7 April, the Motsepe Foundation and associated companies, Business for South Africa and the Solidarity Fund secured critical stock of 200 000 three ply masks, 100 000 KN95 masks and sterile gloves and surgical masks for use by frontline doctors, nurses and healthcare workers.

80 085: The number of tests conducted in South Africa by 12 April.

6.1 percent: The figure that the South African Reserve Bank expects the gross domestic product to contract in 2020, compared to the -0.2 percent expected in late March.



235: The number of community development centres where 40 841 food parcels were distributed between 3 and 10 April.

24 000: About 24 000 members from the South African Police Service, South Africa National Defence Force, Metro Police and other law enforcement agencies were deployed to be at the helm of the COVID-19 battle and to ensure that people stay at home.

5: The date in March that the National Institute for Communicable Diseases confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in South Africa.

50: 50 is the number of mourners allowed at a funeral. Currently, no gatherings are permitted.

14: On 9 April, President Cyril Ramaphosa extended the lockdown by another 14 days, until the end of April.

114 711: The number of COVID-19 tests conducted in South Africa by 19 April.

54: The number of COVID-19 deaths reported in South Africa by 19 April.

For more information
call 0800 029 999.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Our heroes on the COVID-19 Frontline

Dale Hes

Nompumelelo Ncube is one of our healthcare heroes working on the frontlines of the COVID-19 fight.

Ncube works as a communicable disease control and outbreak response co-ordinator for the Tshwane health district with the Gauteng Department of Health. This means that she is at the very heart of the country's efforts to control the epidemic.

"We make sure that all the right systems are in place to respond to the virus, that health workers are correctly trained and that we are on the ground doing testing of patients and tracing of contacts," says Ncube.

Long hours on the frontlines

Ncube has been working long hours, up to six days a week.

"It has been very draining but fulfilling at the same time. It is rewarding to be able to help in curbing the increase of infections. It has also been very heart-warming to see the co-ordinated response from all sectors of healthcare and government, from emergency medical staff, to ward councillors and the outbreak response teams."

She says that although the arrival of COVID-19 has been scary, she and her colleagues were prepared for it.

"Even when the virus first emerged in China, we were receiving training on how to handle it if it arrived here. So before the first cases

came, we knew what to do and the processes to be followed. We had all the necessary protective equipment, training and information.

"COVID-19 has really taken me back to the basics of infection prevention and control prevention. It is the things that we speak about all the time, such as washing of hands, proper cough etiquette and social distancing. Now the rest of South Africa has been alerted to the importance of these basics."

She says that seeing patients recover from the virus has been the best part of her job.

The importance of sticking to lockdown regulations

Around the world, social

distancing (staying away from other people) has been recognised as one of the best ways to prevent the spread of the virus. It helps with lessening the strain on the healthcare system and prevents hospitals from being overcrowded with patients.

Ncube says that she was delighted that President Cyril Ramaphosa took such early action to prevent the virus from spreading.

"The enforcing of the lockdown at such an early stage was a brilliant move by the

President. It is exactly what we need to prevent the spread of new infections."

She says that although some communities may find social distancing difficult, everyone needs to try and play their part.

"Staying at home is really the best way to prevent the spread. I encourage everyone to follow the lockdown regulations and to try social distancing, wash your hands and cough into your elbow or a tissue."



Nompumelelo Ncube is proud that President Cyril Ramaphosa took such early action to prevent the virus from spreading.

Armed forces battle COVID-19



Serving with pride is Lieutenant Mamosala Tsoane, of Platoon 2 Charlie Company in the SANDF's 21 South African Infantry Battalion.

Jauhara Khan

The night before South Africa entered its national lockdown, President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered a moving address to members of the South African Police Service and the South African

National Defence Force (SANDF).

"Tonight, you begin the most important calling of your mission: To save the lives of South Africans."

Among the soldiers stood a proud Lieutenant Mamosala Tsoane, of Platoon 2 Charlie Company in the SANDF's 21 South African Infantry Bat-

alion. She has served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and at various border posts in South Africa during her 15-year career with the armed forces.

For the lockdown, Tsoane was deployed to Alexandra township. She was one of thousands of SANDF soldiers across the country at the frontline of efforts to curb the spread of the virus.

Tsoane says she felt a mix of emotions before the lockdown.

"This situation was a new experience for all of us. We knew Gauteng had a high number of coronavirus cases, but we didn't know where it would spread. People were also not aware

of how dangerous the virus was, and how quickly it could spread. People live close to each other and the virus could bring down the whole township. We knew it would be challenging to get people to listen to us and stay home."

The streets of Alexandra were packed with people on the first day of the lockdown, says Tsoane.

"Some residents did not even know there was a lockdown. Many were angry that they were being forced to stay indoors."

It took time for residents to accept the regulations of the lockdown, but many were happy to have the SANDF present because it led to a decrease in crime.

Tsoane worked in 12-hour shifts from 6am to 6pm. Her duties included conducting foot patrols and vehicle control checks. She also counselled residents about the impact of the

virus and precautions they needed to take.

Despite wearing protective gear, Tsoane knew she was still at risk of contracting the virus. Soldiers were screened daily for symptoms and if necessary, transferred to nearby hospitals for further testing.

Tsoane was stationed at the Doornkop Military Base in Johannesburg, away from family, including her 10-year-old son.

Serving with honour

Tsoane says despite the risks of her deployment, being called to serve the country during this global crisis was a special honour.

"This is not an ordinary job. We risk our lives every day not knowing what we will face. Not everyone can do it. But our superiors have placed their trust in us and this is the time to show that we are here when our country needs us."

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Small business support during COVID-19

THE UNCERTAINTY and financial strain placed on entrepreneurs and small business owners by the global coronavirus pandemic is being alleviated by a host of public and private support schemes.



Dale Hes

Small business owners and informal traders are amongst the South Africans who are most heavily impacted by the lockdown. In order to get through this difficult time, these business owners can take advantage of a number of interventions that government has put in place to assist them.

SMME Debt Relief Fund

Following the announcement of the lockdown,

the Department of Small Business Development immediately made a debt relief fund available for small businesses negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than R500 million has been made available through the fund, which small and medium enterprises must apply for through an online application process.

Here are the steps that need to be followed:

1. Your business must be registered on the SMME South Africa portal. If you are not yet registered, you need to go to www.smmesa.gov.za to

register.

2. Once your registration is complete, you can apply for the COVID-19 SMME Debt Relief Fund. You can find the application form on the Department of Small Business Development's website.
3. If you meet all the criteria (such as your business being tax compliant and 100 percent owned by South Africans), relief funding will be paid out to approved applicants within 12 working days. If you own a micro-enterprise, then the Small Enterprise Development Agency is available to help you to apply to the debt

relief scheme. Requests for assistance must be emailed to debtrelief@seda.org.za.

Solidarity Response Fund

President Cyril Ramaphosa also announced the launch of the Solidarity Response Fund, which received a R150 million kickstart from government. The fund allows organisations and individuals to donate to the nationwide effort to support small businesses and COVID-19 response efforts.

In the first two weeks of the fund, over R2 billion was donated, which will be channelled into relief efforts.

Support for spaza shops

Government has recognised the unique challenges that the pandemic poses to those working in the informal sector. In this respect, Minister for Small Business Development Khumbudzo Ntshavheni has also released support packages for people working in this sector.

This includes a dedicated support scheme for spaza shops.

"The spaza shop support will include dedicated networking, purchasing power and bulk purchasing through pre-selected and pre-approved wholesalers," explains the minister.

This support will allow

spaza shops to gain access to goods which they can sell. Minister Ntshavheni adds that the scheme will also provide credit to spaza shop owners, to allow them to access the money needed to buy stock.

"This will be followed by a credit facility to enable spaza shop owners to continuously buy, even after the COVID-19 outbreak is over."

The department will also provide advice on how to successfully run their shops.

"We are also supporting them with business management support because we know that there are problems in spaza shops running their businesses to be profitable," Ntshavheni says.

Helping informal traders

Government is also working on creating a package that will provide income relief to informal traders who have lost income due to the crisis.

Informal businesses also qualify for the SMME Debt Relief Fund but are required to register with the department in the same manner as other small businesses.

For information about financial relief for small businesses, call 0860 663 7867.

Water tankers bring relief to dry communities

WITH HAND WASHING and general hygiene essential to combatting the coronavirus, government has put emergency measures in place to assist communities without access to water.

Silusapho Nyanda

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to spread, government is working to bring relief to water scarce communities. The Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation (HSWS) has delivered tanks and water-carting trucks to communities across the country.

By mid-April, 14 737 tanks and 1 239 water-carrying trucks had been distributed to different communities across the country. HSWS is working with the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs to deliver temporary water services to communities in need.

Water and sanitation has launched a command centre, based at the Rand Water offices in Johannesburg, to co-ordinate the supply of water to all corners of the country.

Speaking after visiting the command centre, President Cyril Ramaphosa said the 400 000 tanks available for HSWS to buy will help people maintain good hygiene.

"We have urged people to practise social distance but the personal hygiene side is also something that we must focus on by getting people to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds," he said.

"The command centre makes sure that all the water tanks that have been procured are taken to places that



have been identified as in need. Municipalities will be responsible for identifying the places where the water tanks will be located," says HSWS Minister Lindiwe Sisulu.

Sisulu says they have identified 2 000 communities that will receive water through trucks and tanks. She says the department is ensuring

water supply to communities not yet served by a formal water service. "This will include providing communal water storage with water collection points, which will be filled by means of water carting in the interim," she says.

In addition to this, Minister Sisulu called on private companies that drill boreholes

to help with the provision of water to communities. "We are appealing to borehole-drilling companies across the country to extend a helping hand by drilling boreholes for communities which are in desperate need of water," she says.

HSWS is also providing hand-washing facilities in public places, such as taxi

ranks.

Minister Sisulu's department is also planning to move people from densely populated areas. The de-densification programme will see people from 29 densely populated informal settlements being moved by HSWS.

"These informal settlements have a high propensity for the spread of COVID-19. The spread could get out of control and we could find ourselves overwhelmed if we do not do something as a matter of urgency. As such, we have decided that we need to resettle some of the residents to ease congestion.

"These are in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Western Cape and the Eastern Cape. I can confirm that we have identified 17 land parcels for resettlement purposes should the need arise. Of these, 13 land parcels are state owned and four pieces of land parcels are privately owned. We have already started preparing some areas for resettlement," she says.

The plan will be implemented by resettling households; building temporary residential units and using temporary accommodation that is immediately available, with the approval of the Department of Health.

Tanks per province (as at 17 April 2020):

Western Cape: 526
Eastern Cape: 4 678
Northern Cape: 507
North West: 1 285
Free State: 1 217
Limpopo: 440
Gauteng: 1 785
Mpumalanga: 299
KwaZulu-Natal: 4 000

The number of water-carrying trucks that have been delivered to each province is (as at 17 April 2020):

Western Cape: 53
Eastern Cape: 171
Northern Cape: 70
North West: 145
Free State: 134
Limpopo: 34
Gauteng: 46
Mpumalanga: 59
KwaZulu-Natal: 527

People can call 0800 200 200 to report areas that are experiencing water shortages.

COVID-19 success for civil obedience



A young South African woman who has recovered from the coronavirus (COVID-19) says citizens of all ages and races need to take the

deadly disease seriously and obey the regulations set by government.

Ncebakazi Willie (27), from the rural village of Xhora in the Eastern Cape, contracted the virus when she was working on a cruise ship in March.

"The cruise ship had stopped in Italy, where the virus was starting to get very serious. There were a lot of people dying there."

When Willie returned to South Africa, she decided that she should get tested at her local hospital.

"I knew that there was a risk that I might have contracted the virus but I could not self-isolate because I live with a family of 10 people. So I went to the hospital and had a test done."

Her test was positive.

"I was shocked because I did not have a single symptom. I

felt completely normal. This is what makes the virus dangerous, the fact that people can be spreading it without even knowing they have it."

Willie says she hears a lot of South Africans saying that the virus will not affect them.

"This is not true. This virus can infect anyone, no matter if you are young or old, white or black. I urge everyone to take it seriously. It is selfish to think that you cannot get it. If you think like that and don't take the necessary measures to protect yourself, then you will get the virus and spread it to other people."

Willie says that in Italy, she saw first-hand how badly the virus can affect a country when people do not follow health guidelines.

In Italy thousands of people have died and the healthcare system is struggling. I am

worried now that the virus is in South Africa because a lot of people are also not obeying the regulations. So the same thing could happen here."

Willie was fortunate to recover from the virus after 14 days of quarantine in hospital.

"When I got my negative results back, I was running around the room and shouting with joy. I feel blessed that I managed to get through it. Other people have not been so lucky," Willie says.

■ Ncebakazi Willie is urging South Africans to take the coronavirus seriously and follow government regulations.

*If you are showing any symptoms, such as a fever, cough, or shortness of breath, contact the COVID-19 hotline on 0800 029 999 or WhatsApp the word 'Hi' to 0600 123 456.

MYTHS

Dispelling coronavirus myths

myths

With South Africa being hit by the coronavirus, there have been myths about how

the virus spreads and if it can survive in hot climates. Below are answers to questions that will dispel myths about the virus.

Can the virus spread through food items?

The coronavirus is spread

from person to person through respiratory droplets. Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of coronavirus associated with food. Before preparing or eating food it is important to always rinse the food with water and wash your hands with soap

and water for 20 seconds for general food safety.

Does warm weather kill the virus?

The coronavirus does not survive well in warmer climates. It is therefore expected to thrive in the colder winter seasons.

Who is at higher risk of getting the virus?

Those at higher risk of contracting the virus include the elderly and individuals with chronic conditions or a compromised immune system. Chronic conditions include high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer and lung disease

Survivors' calls for civil obedience

COMMUNITIES MUST obey government's rules during the coronavirus pandemic because they are in place to keep you safe.

A month after testing positive for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) on 15 March, Mbombela orthopaedic surgeon Dr Alex Kuhn (55) was so ill he was unable to walk up five stairs.

"I was severely sick and lost nine kilograms in 10 days," says Dr Kuhn.

He says he suffered extreme exhaustion, had coughing spasms that prevented him from getting air, had fever and chills and suffered excruciating muscle pain in

his lower back.

Fortunately, unlike many other people who have been very sick from the virus, he has suffered no long-term lung damage.

Dr Kuhn says he fully supports the measures taken by President Cyril Ramaphosa to curb the spread of infections.

"Everything the President is doing, is to prevent as many deaths as possible. I urge South Africans to follow the instructions of government and health officials. We need to practise civil obedience. Yes, people are suffering. They have lost work and their incomes are affected but despite this, we must obey the rules for

the long-term good of our country and its people," he appeals.

Despite his personal COVID-19 ordeal, Dr Kuhn called on South Africans not to panic. "I do not want to downplay the pandemic, but people must not think that if they fall sick, they will die."

On 13 April, there were over 1.8 million cases worldwide. "This needs to be seen in relation to the global population of 7.7 billion people."

The global death rate was 116 045 but far more people had survived the virus, with 435 185 recoveries. "There is positiveness in these figures," he says.

According to Statistics South Africa, youth (aged 18–34) constitute almost a third of South Africa's population. "This is an important factor in our fight against the coronavirus because older people are most at risk of dying as a result of the virus."

People with underlying health conditions – like asthma, diabetes, HIV, obesity and lung disease – have the greatest risk of dying if they contract the disease. "They need to keep up to date with their medications. People with diabetes must make sure their sugar is controlled," he cautions.

Dr Kuhn and his wife Linda – who had only mild symptoms – contracted the disease in Europe. When he tested positive for the disease, the hospital at which he works was temporarily closed so that sanitation measures could be taken



and the Kuhns went into 21 days of self-isolation.

Dr Kuhn personally contacted the around 300 people with whom he had been in contact and they also went into self-isolation.

"My greatest anxiety was that I had brought the virus to the Lowveld and that many people would fall sick as a result, but fortunately, only one person was infected as a result and she was only moderately sick," he says. "This shows how effective isolation is," he says.

He says the support he received from the community was phenomenal.

Keeping yourself safe

The virus will be with us for some time yet, says Dr Kuhn, and it is important that people continue to practise social distancing

– he advises keeping two metres between you and another person; keeping up with regular handwashing for at least 20 seconds; not touching your face – most especially your mouth, nose and eyes, and wearing a mask when out in public.

"Masks prevent you from infecting other people if you are sick and also remind you not to touch your face."

If you get flu or a cold, stay home and isolate yourself because when you are sick, your immune system is weakened and you are more likely to become very sick should you contract COVID-19."

He reminded South Africans that there is no cure for the virus yet and everyone must do their part to avoid being infected.

H

FACT

amongst others.

What should I do if I am at risk of getting the virus?

If you are at higher risk of getting the virus, you should take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others. When you go out,

try to avoid unnecessary contact, non-essential travel and exposure to others who are sick. Wash your hands often, avoid crowds and if there is an outbreak in your community, consider staying home and limiting contact to essential people.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

2020 School year won't be lost

VIRTUAL LEARNING, support material and plans for post-lockdown catch-up are some of the ways that South African learners are being enabled to complete 2020's curriculum.



More Matshedis

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has partnered with the SABC to launch a multi-media learner support initiative, which will be available to learners throughout 2020. The COVID-19 learner support initiative was launched less than two weeks into the lockdown, in the beginning of April. It is part of efforts to prevent a total loss of the school year.

"The programme broadcasts across three SABC TV channels and 13 radio stations, with online support. The series provides curriculum support lessons to learners in grades 10, 11 and 12 and early childhood development (ECD)," the department says.

Some of the subjects covered are mathematics, physical science, English, life sciences and accounting. A number of African languages are also covered in the ECD phase.

Additionally, the department says the initiative

will provide learners with relevant support material to prepare for mid-year examinations.

Learners are encouraged to check when their local radio station will air the support programmes.

SABC Chief Operations Officer Ian Plaatjies says the initiative is supported by a YouTube channel, which allows learners to watch the content as many times as they want.

Gauteng interventions

To complement the national department's efforts, the Gauteng Department of Education has instructed all schools in the province to come up with a practical and comprehensive catch-up plan to be implemented post the national lockdown.

Spokesperson Steve Mabona says to make up for time lost, the school calendar for the second term will be adjusted and the length of school holidays will be reduced.

During the nationwide lockdown, learners were

provided with a content guideline document and other education material for both general education and training and further education and training subjects to enable them to independently study at home.

The guideline document and support material are available on www.education.gauteng.gov.za and can be accessed by searching School Curriculum.

Parents and learners are also encouraged to use the curriculum-based activities in workbooks (Book 1) produced by the DBE in the following subjects:

- Mathematics – grades 1 to 9;
- Languages – grades 1 to 6;
- Life skills – grades 1 to 3.
- In all other subjects, including maths and languages, learners must use the relevant textbooks.

In addition to the activities, learners can access online programmes such as:

- Nal'ibali – www.nalibali.org
- SAIDE – www.oerafrica.org

- Grades 7 to 9 Siyavula – www.siyavula.com (maths and science practice).

Mabona says access to additional material and E-content can be retrieved by learners on the following educational websites:

- Skool.com
- Mathsisfun.com
- <https://learn.khanacademy.org/khan-academy>
- <https://phet.colorado.edu/>
- <https://za.ixl.com>

Matric 2020

This year, the department has designed a Matric booklet to assist Grade 12 learners to prepare thoroughly for the 2020 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination.

Mabona says the booklet is a 46-page user-friendly publication that guides Matrics on the pass requirements for an NSC, including policy amendments and implications and learner concessions.

In addition, it provides study skills and examination preparation infographics that guide and motivate learners to take responsibility for their learning and creates awareness through self-management and self-assessment techniques.

Other critical areas of the booklet include examination room protocol and invigilation; sourcing critical supplementary materials, specifically NSC question papers and basic techniques on how to effectively answer examination questions.

He says the book will be available electronically on www.education.gauteng.gov.za under School Curriculum, and a guideline on how the book can be utilised more effectively by learners is also available.

"It is advised that parents familiarise themselves with the guideline and the booklet," Mabona says.

TV schedules

SABC 1: Monday to Sunday from 5am to 6am

SABC 2: Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 11am

SABC 3: Monday to Friday from 6am to 7am

Radio slots

Umhlobo Wenene FM: 2:30pm - 3pm

Thobela FM: 5pm - 6pm

Phalaphala FM: 3:30pm - 2pm

Munghana Lonene FM: 2:30pm - 3pm

Ukhozi FM: 9pm - 10pm

Lesedi FM: 4:15pm - 5:45pm

Ligwalagwala FM: 9:10am - 9:40am

Motsweding FM: 7pm - 7:30pm

Ikwekwezi FM: 10:30am - 11am

Radio Sonder Grense: 7:30pm - 20pm

Tru FM: 9am - 11am

X-K FM: 9:30am - 10am

Radio 2000: 11:30am - 12pm

Solidarity Fund helps combat COVID-19

THERE HAS BEEN a heartwarming response to government's call to people to donate to a fund established to respond to the coronavirus through prevention, detection, care and support.

More Matshediso

South Africa's Solidarity Fund, which was established by government after consultation with social partners, raised R2 billion in its first two weeks.

Citizens learnt about the Solidarity Fund when President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that the nation would be going into a lockdown. During his address to the nation, he said the fund – with seed capital of R150 million donated by the state – would contribute to the country's COVID-19 response.

"Following consultation with social partners, we have set up a Solidarity Fund, which South African businesses, organisations and individuals, and members of the international community, can contribute to," said President Ramaphosa.

The President said never before in the history of South Africa's democracy has the country been confronted by such a severe situation, however, it is a situation; that we will be able to overcome if we work together.

The fund is chaired by renowned businesswoman Gloria Serobe who is committed to upholding the highest principles of corporate governance. She is supported by an independent board. The President said the fund will account fully for every cent that is contributed.

The money raised

through secure, tax-deductible donations will be used to;

- curb the spread of the disease;
- detect and understand the magnitude of the disease;
- care for those in hospital or under medical care;
- and support those whose lives have been disrupted by the pandemic.

Through this fund, individuals and organisations will be able to support these efforts through secure, tax-deductible donations.

Solidarity Fund transparent

According to the Solidarity Fund, it will operate with the highest principles of corporate governance and through an independent board. All activities will be reported in a transparent manner.

The President said the fund will account fully for every cent contributed and will also boast a board of eminent South Africans to ensure proper governance.

In the early days of the fund's establishment, government provided a seed capital of R150 million and the private sector has also pledged to support the fund with financial contributions in the coming period.

The President applauded the commitment made by the Rupert and Oppenheimer families following their contributions of R1 billion each to assist small businesses and their employees affected by the pandemic.

Days later, Mary Oppenheimer and daughters and then the Motsepe family, in partnership with the companies and organisations

that they are associated with, each donated R1 billion.

The Motsepe Foundation and associated companies also handed over a consignment of masks and gloves to Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize.

The foundation said the equipment will be distributed in the country's nine provinces to assist in ensuring that healthcare workers are

protected as they remain in the frontline of the COVID-19 battle.

"We will be spending money to save lives and to support the economy," said the President.

The fund will be independently administered by a team of people drawn from financial institutions, accounting firms and government.



To make a donation to the Solidarity Fund, please use the following bank account details or visit the fund's website www.solidarityfund.co.za

Bank: Standard Bank
Branch Name: Sandton City
Account Name: Solidarity Fund
Account No: 023070021

Account Type: Current account
Branch Code: 051001
SWIFT Code: SBZAJJ

*For all EFT payments, please include your identity / company registration / trust number, as applicable, to facilitate your Section 18A tax certificate preparation.

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Repatriated twins advocate for social distancing

Silusapho Nyanda

It is of great importance for people to adhere to the rules set by government, say twin brothers who were at the heart of the Chinese coronavirus outbreak.

Medical students at China's Hubei Polytechnic University, Mvuzo and Mvuyisi Nkcosolwana-Vili (28) saw with their own eyes how practising social distancing and adhering to the regulations put in place by government can stop the spread of the pandemic.

The two spent over 80 days in isolation. The Nkcosolwana-Vilis, who were part of the 114 students repatriated by the South African government from Wuhan, were living in the city of Huangshi in the Hubei province when the virus first broke out and the province went into a 54-day lockdown.

Mvuyisi says that following the authority's advice will help curb the virus. "Social distancing helps curb the spread of the coronavirus. If people continue to engage in social behaviour, then the virus will continue to spread.

"The restrictions on things such as alcohol are there because when people are drunk, they don't practise safe hygiene," he says.

The Chinese government stopped all services, with the exception of health services and a reduced police service. Mvuyisi believes that China's success in curbing the virus at its epicentre was the result of residents adhering to the laws and tough enforcement measures.

Mvuzo, who is the student representative council president, agrees and says to succeed in curbing the virus, the state must enforce the laws related to the pandemic and act against those who disobey them.

While under the Chinese lockdown regulations, the Nkcosolwana-Vilis say they were not free to leave their rooms. The Chinese government only allowed them to step outside for air at certain times. Even then, they were not allowed outside the yard of their residence.

The students were repatriated after the South African government struck a deal with their Chinese counterparts to allow those who had no symptoms to leave. On the flight back, social distancing measures were put in place and anyone who exhibited symptoms during the flight were placed in a designated isolation area.



■ The Nkcosolwana-Vili twins, Mvuyisi and Mvuzo, were repatriated from China after the breakout of the Coronavirus.

Upon returning to South Africa, the students were isolated for 14 days at the Ranch Resort in Polokwane, Limpopo, where they were screened for symptoms on a daily basis.

Future repatriations

South Africans in other countries that are looking to return home will not be repatriated by the government in the same way as the Wuhan students were.

Lunga Ngqengelele, spokesman for the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, says they help those who were in possession of a return ticket when the lockdown was declared.

Ngqengelele says they negotiate with the host country to let South Africans travel to an airport where a flight will be departing for South Africa, as was recently done in Germany.

UIF to help pay wages of distressed companies

Silusapho Nyanda

Employment and Labour Minister Thulas Nxesi reacted swiftly to minimise income loss during the COVID-19 lockdown.

"Employers are encouraged to continue to pay employees but where this is not economically possible, we have created a special benefit under the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF)," he says.

Called the COVID-19 Temporary Employee / Employer Relief Scheme (TERS), the benefit is available to companies that, as a direct

result of the pandemic, have to close their operations for three months or less. The fund covers some of the costs of employee salaries.

TERS is de-linked from the UIF's normal benefits. Payments are capped at R17 712 per month for each employee, with the amount to be paid out determined by the income replacement rate sliding scale of between 38 and 60 percent.

Nxesi says: "In instances where companies decide to close for a short period as a precautionary measure, the short-term UIF benefit will kick in."

He says that once the UIF is informed of the shutdown, assistance will be provided with the processing of claims.

Businesses applying for funding must submit the following documents to the UIF:

- the completed agreement between the UIF, bargaining council and employer,
- a completed prescribed template containing employer information,
- evidence of the past three months' employee salaries,
- confirmation of banking details in the form of a cer-



tified current bank statement,

- a letter of authority on an official company letterhead, granting permission to the individual specified to lodge a claim on behalf of the company.

In the case of an employee falling sick and having to be placed under quarantine, the Illness Benefit will be appli-

cable. This benefit will pay out once confirmation of the quarantine is received from both the employer and the employee. Should an employee be quarantined for more than 14 days, a medical certificate from a medical practitioner must be submitted with a continuation of payment form.

Healthcare workers to screen people at their homes

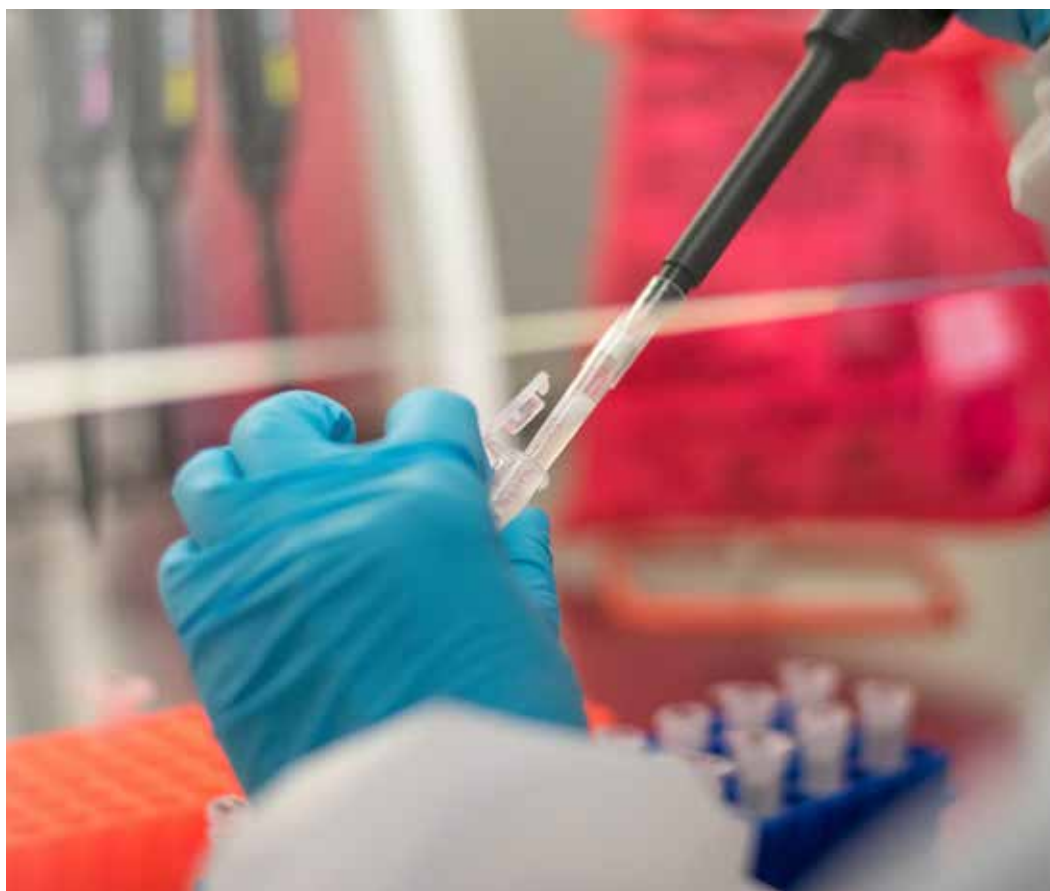
DOOR-TO-DOOR household screening, initially in areas identified as high-risk, is one of government's proactive responses to the coronavirus pandemic.

Silusapho Nyanda

Government is ramping up the fight against the coronavirus (COVID-19) with new mobile testing labs. The National Health Laboratory Service has bought 60 mobile sampling and testing units, bringing the number of mobile units that will be used across the country to 67.

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize says government is planning to use rapid mobile testing labs to speed up the testing process.

At a press briefing on 1 April, he said: "At this stage, the focus will be on collecting nasopharyngeal specimens for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests or GeneXpert testing. The current capacity is 5 000 tests in 24 hours in 10 laboratories countrywide. When we reach full capacity, we will be able to process 30 000



tests per 24 hours."

The mobile testing units, which are uniquely-fitted vans, have been equipped to carry out the same function as a laboratory. The PCR tests to be done in the mobile units involve swabbing

up the nose, all the way to the back of the throat.

The Department of Health will also create dedicated COVID-19 treatment centres in all towns across the country.

"We need to procure addi-

tional beds and dedicated treatment centres where only coronavirus patients will be treated," Mkhize says.

Additional community quarantine facilities will also be established.

Following President Cyril Ramaphosa's announcement that 10 000 healthcare workers will go into communities to screen people for symptoms of the virus at their homes, Minister Mkhize says the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and Right To Care had identified 993 wards where priority screening will take place.

The screening process will involve scanning people's foreheads to take their temperature and asking several questions, including:

- Did you come into contact with anyone with confirmed COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
- Do you have symptoms such as fever, a cough and difficulty in breathing?

The healthcare workers will be provided with uniforms and identifiable tags.

People with COVID-19 symptoms will be referred to health facilities or mobile units for a PCR test.

Remember to play your part in minimising the spread of the Covid-19 by following the following tips.

1. Wash your hands

Wash your hands with soap thoroughly for at least 20 seconds. Wash the back of your hands, between the fingers and under the nails. Always wash your hands with

soap before you eat and after being out in public.

2. Good personal hygiene

Cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing. Avoid touching your face at all times.

3. Do not share food and utensils

The virus can be transmitted onto knives, forks, spoons and straws. Only use clean utensils and do not share drinks. Always clean your hands before eating.

4. See a doctor if you are unwell

Typical symptoms include coughing, runny nose, fever and shortness of breath. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms seek medical attention promptly.

For more information, call the National Institute of Communicable Diseases' 24-hour hotline on 0800 029 999 or log on to www.health.gov.za or www.nicd.ac.za

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE



#MakeAMask

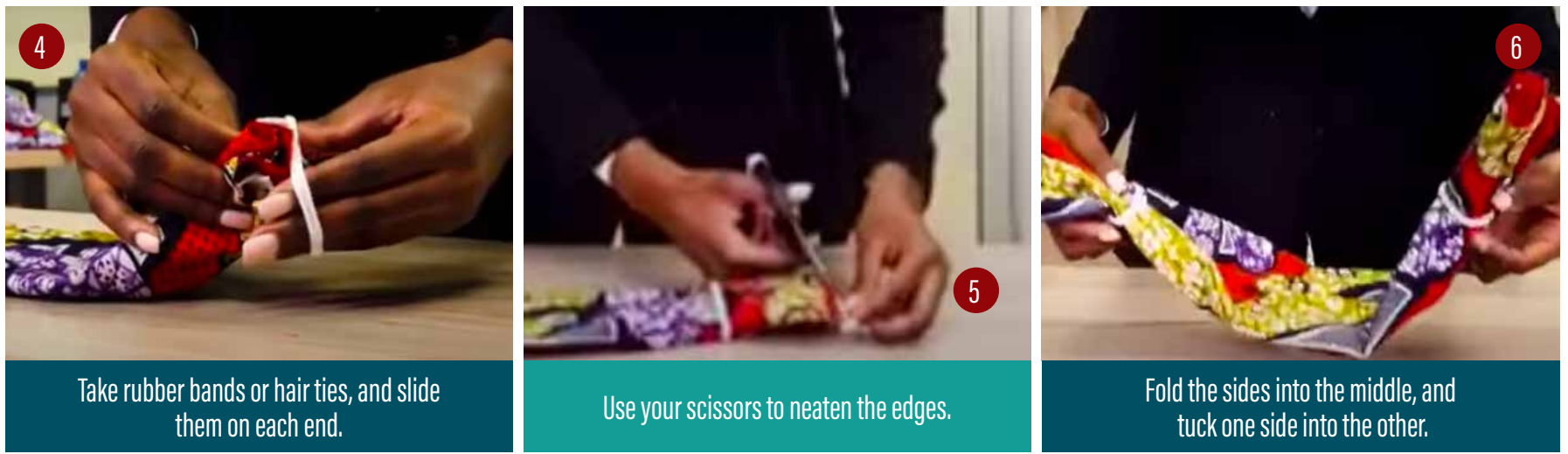




Scissors **Rubber band (or hair ties.)** **Bandana or a cloth - make sure to wash first.**



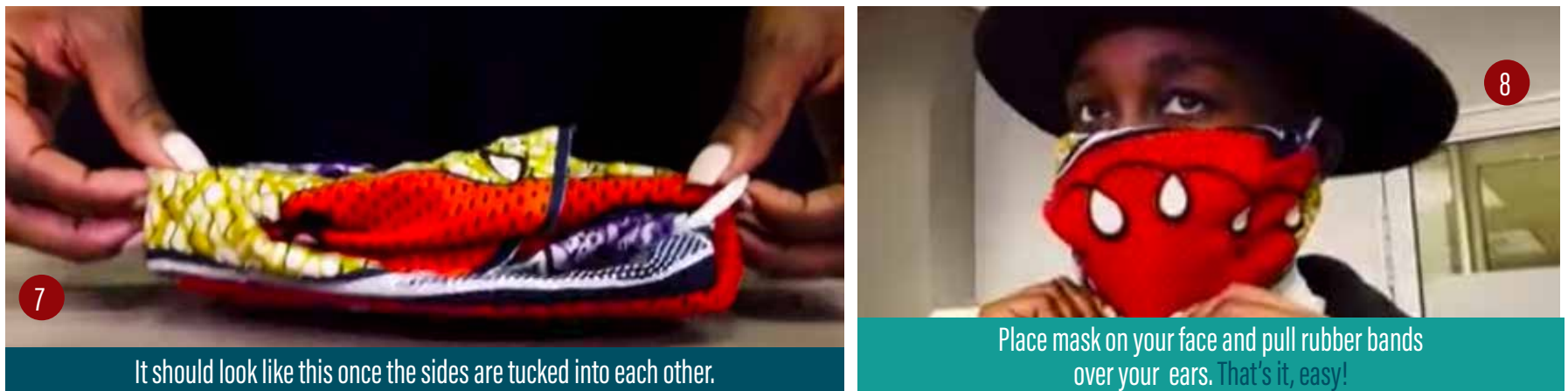
Fold your bandana or cloth into three folds.



Take rubber bands or hair ties, and slide them on each end.

Use your scissors to neaten the edges.

Fold the sides into the middle, and tuck one side into the other.



It should look like this once the sides are tucked into each other.

Place mask on your face and pull rubber bands over your ears. That's it, easy!

Information provided by: Department of Health

IS YOUR EMPLOYER PAYING YOU THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE?

If you are not paid the national minimum wage of R20.76 per hour

- R18.68 per hour for farm and forestry workers
- R15.57 per hour for domestic workers
- R11.42 per hour for workers under the Expanded Public Works Programme

then dial the **FREE IMPIMPA HOTLINE**.

THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

A TOOL TO CLOSE THE WAGE GAP AND TO OVERCOME POVERTY



FREE IMPIMPA HOTLINE: *134*305#
DIAL THE FREE IMPIMPA HOTLINE AND FOLLOW THE PROMPTS



employment & labour
Department
Employment and Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR, WORKING FOR YOU

Uniting to provide beds for healthcare workers



■ Rather than let their rooms stand empty, some accommodation establishments are offering healthcare workers a safe and convenient place to lay their heads.

In a remarkable show of support, accommodation establishments in South Africa have joined hands to provide beds to doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals work-

ing on the frontlines of fighting the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Ubuntu Beds was founded by Kim Whitaker, a Cape Town-based tourism entrepreneur. Whitaker contracted COVID-19 herself after a trip to Germany.

This gave her the initial idea to unite hospitality businesses, which now have empty beds due to the lockdown, in offering accommodation to healthcare workers.

"Healthcare workers were exhausted and unable to return

home for fear of infecting their families," says Whitaker. Ubuntu Beds offers an alternative that allows healthcare workers to get the rest they need without having to travel far.

By mid-April, over 220 accommodation establishments from around the country had signed up, committing over 2 000 beds to the cause. The establishments are offering accommodation either for free or at a very low cost.

The Ubuntu Beds website does not only allow hospitality establishments to sign up, but also healthcare workers who may need accommodation.

Dr Tshisevhe Liphosa, a doctor working in Johannesburg, is staying at the Once in Joburg Hotel – one of the establishments signed up with Ubuntu Beds. He says that it is safe and convenient.

"The hotel is comfortable, safe and clean and that puts me at ease after a long day/night's work. It also feels good to have small chats in the passageways with the hotel staff, which is a good distraction from the panic

of the pandemic and the same repetitive, anxious conversations," says Dr Liphosa.

Dr Liphosa says that he misses his family, but knows he is doing what is best for them.

"It seems like it's going to be a while before I can see them again and even when I do, I'll have to keep a safe social distance. But we are hopeful and taking the necessary measures to stay safe so we are quite at ease."

Zodwa Manitswana, a manager at the hotel, says that it is rewarding to be able to keep healthcare workers safe.

"Although things have changed a lot at the hotel, it feels good that we are able to help the people who are helping South Africa. We try to make sure that they can feel comfortable and relaxed here."

***If you are a healthcare worker or hospitality establishment, you can sign up at www.ubuntubeds.org**

NCR warns cash-strapped public of credit scams

The National Credit Regulator (NCR) has urged consumers to be careful of fake credit provider scams, as South Africa continues the fight against the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

"The NCR is warning consumers to be careful of scammers who act as legitimate credit providers, preying on vulnerable consumers during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of this pandemic has unfortunately left many consumers desperate for money with some having to resort to borrowing," said the NCR Chief Executive Officer, Nomsa Motshegare.

She said criminals have spotted an opportunity to exploit vulnerable people by posing as legitimate registered credit providers and offering loans with a condition of an "upfront payment".

"The NCR has, during this period, been receiving queries from consumers about unregistered companies posing as registered credit providers, offering them loans via SMS and email. These scammers use the registration details of lawfully registered credit providers, inform consumers that the loan is approved and before the loan is paid out, they demand an upfront payment from the consumers.



"Once consumers pay this upfront payment, the scammers will disappear with no

trace and no loan will be paid out to the consumer," Motshegare said.

According to the National Credit Act (NCA), an upfront payment for a loan is unlawful and not allowed.

The agency, which falls within the ambit of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), urged consumers not to fall for this scam and to never pay any upfront fee for a loan.

Those who have fallen victim to this scam and have paid upfront fees should open criminal cases at their nearest South African Police Service.

All registered credit providers' details are listed on the NCR website www.ncr.org.za. - SNews.gov.za

Artists make a song and dance of hygiene



Silusapho Nyanda

The Future Stars Theatre Project in Emalahleni, Mpumalanga, has collaborated with a Pretoria-based music recording company to produce a dance that teaches the youth about the importance of hygiene during the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Future Stars' Roger Ntuli (38) says the choreography brings to life a song about the virus that was recorded by Chaithoo Studio artists Ria, Diya, Dinesh 'Mr D' Chaithoo and Prince 'Shembry' Sithole.

Ntuli says the nine- to 14-year-old dancers came up with the choreography and the dance is being shared virally.

"The production ideas came from the dancers. It was easier for them to create something relevant to their peers. We want

to make sure that the message reaches young people and that they understand the coronavirus does not only affect the elderly."

In the popular video, the dancers are seen wearing masks and gloves and carrying placards that call on their peers to stay safe. They demonstrate the elbow greeting, sanitising their hands and social distancing.

"When we did the video, we used information from the Department of Health as a guiding tool. We made sure that the message we were conveying was accurate and in line with what government is advising people to do," Ntuli says.

The dance video by Future Stars Theatre Project won a lockdown challenge hosted by Chaithoo Studios, in which people were invited to record and submit a dance done to the studio's COVID-19 song.

The song is a combination of electronic dance music, gqom, hip-hop and Indian fusion and contains the lyrics "Wash your hands every day. Sanitise every hour of the day... Sanitise, sanitise, don't delay. Use your soap every day. Use your soap, don't delay... Corona I am not your friend. Go away. Go away."

Arts sector goes digital

THE WORLD IS increasingly connected and as physical contact is restricted by the coronavirus pandemic, people are finding innovative ways to share their work.

Silusapho Nyanda

A young artist has published her artwork online as the coronavirus continues disrupting life as we know it.

Stellenbosch University Fine Arts graduate Alexandra Edmayr used a picture of a plastic bag and photoshopped it to create a piece of art that was published as part of the #MaterialsMatterChallenge by the Iziko Museums of South Africa.

Iziko Museums is calling on artists to create their own artwork using recyclable materials lying around their home and post a photo of it on social media using the hashtag #MaterialsMatterChallenge. Iziko posts the artwork on its social media pages.



■ Artist Alexandra Edmayr has exhibited her artwork online as part of the #MaterialMatterChallenge.

Edmayr says she chose to create the artwork as a digital piece as she did not have plastic recyclables at home. She says: "The first challenge

was to create something with a plastic bag. I've been doing my best to avoid single-use plastics so I actually didn't have any plastic to work with

as a sculptural element. I did, however, have a photo of a plastic bag from a different piece I was planning to make. The piece then became a digital

artwork that I titled 'Plastic all around us'."

She says that she chose to participate in the #MaterialsMatterChallenge as it is a fun way for everyone to join in. "We find ourselves scrolling through social media more often since the lockdown started. When I saw the challenge, it sparked me into action. Whether you are an artist, a parent or a school child, we all find we've got more time on our hands, so the idea of using found objects and creating something beautiful can bring us together," says Edmayr.

Ellen Agnew, spokesperson for Iziko Museums of South Africa, says that even though museums are closed, people can view art through digital platforms such as www.iziko.org.za and the #MuseumFromHome initiative.