

COVID-19 REALITIES

NANGO newsletter documenting COVID-19 outbreak in Zimbabwe.

Myth: Quarantined people tested positive for Coronavirus.

Fact: Quarantine refers to the separation and restriction of movement of people who have potentially been exposed to COVID-19, but who are currently healthy and do not show symptoms. In general, quarantine is mandatory and is mainly for duration of a minimum 14 days, but in specific situations it can be done in dedicated facilities. People that show symptoms of COVID-19 are taken to designated treatment centers not quarantine facilities

Quarantine in Zimbabwe: Experiences of a returning resident

The situation of returning residents and other travellers who are in mandatory quarantine has been a topical issue in Zimbabwe. Social media has been awash with fake news, while various opinions have been passed as facts. As Zimbabwe gears up for the increased return of Zimbabweans from across the world, the discussion on the suitability of the government provided quarantine facilities needs to be explored broadly and multi-stakeholders brought to the table to ensure the safety of citizens. In this fourth volume of NANGO COVID-19 Realities Newsletter, we got in touch with one of the returning residents to hear his experience of quarantine. The NANGO Senior Communications and Visibility Officer (NANGO Infor) conducted an interview with Dr. Hillary Musarurwa (Dr. Musarurwa) who is currently under mandatory quarantine at ZIPAM.

NANGO Infor: Thank you Dr Musarurwa for accepting our request to have this short but important interview, we greatly appreciate your time. To start of our interview may you tell us how long you have been in mandatory quarantine?

Dr. Musarurwa: Since Sunday, 3 May 2020.

NANGO Infor: We understand that there are misconceptions that come with the mandatory quarantine and we are honoured to have the opportunity to get first-hand experience from you. Regarding this, what message can you share with Zimbabweans in the country and those abroad?

Dr. Musarurwa: I'm sharing a bit about my experience because there has been a lot of negativity round the Zimbabwe quarantine process. The information that is out there makes one dread getting into a quarantine facility.

NANGO Infor: What is your assessment of the living conditions at the institution where you are quarantined?

Dr. Musarurwa: The picture that I got before arriving was that people might be harassed or tormented as they go into quarantine, but that is not the case. The team that is deployed here at ZIPAM provides rooms that have all the necessary

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facilities and ensures social distancing. We have been provided with personal protective equipment and sanitisers. There is constant water supply and numerous points where one can wash hands. There are also spaces where one can do physical exercises.

While things might be good here at ZIPAM I would like to believe that conditions are not the same in every place.

NANGO Infor: How was the process conducted from the time you arrived in the country and how were you informed that you have to go into compulsory quarantine?

Dr. Musarurwa: When I arrived at the Robert Gabriel Mugabe International airport aboard Ethiopian Airways we were welcomed by a team from the Ministry of Health and Child Care. They are doing commendable work. They were very professional and calm as they inducted us on what we should have expected and why people were going into compulsory quarantine upon arrival. We were then driven to ZIPAM, in each car there was a driver and two passengers. At ZIPAM we were welcomed by a great team as well. There are different stakeholders working at their level best to get people into quarantine. The police are among those stakeholders and they are monitoring the situation.

I commend the staff working on the ground; there is something positive being done to curb the spread of COVID-19 and frontline responders deserve some appreciation.

NANGO Infor: What do you think could have been done better?

Dr. Musarurwa: Communication needs to be improved. Returnees are anxious because the communication in here isn't clear. No one knows when or how we will be released. There's little transparency on procedures. Regarding mass communication, people need to hear about the quarantine processes/procedures from other

sources other than government mouthpieces only. These are often dismissed as churning propaganda. I think NANGO should arrange a civic society tour around facilities to ascertain, independently, how people in these facilities are living and to advocate for better conditions where necessary. There's need for an independent assessment of the centres.

NANGO Infor: Following your experience, what recommendations would you give to Government, Civil Society Organisations and Development Partners so as to improve public health service delivery and emergency disaster response?

Dr. Musarurwa: 1. Clarity of information. 2. We're seeing a lot of information about funds being donated but the public is not clear on how these are being disbursed. There's need for transparency and accountability from state actors and NGOs accessing these funds. 3. The involvement of other agencies in the fight against the pandemic needs to be made more elaborate so that credit is given to those playing these important roles. 4. Civic society has a critical role of monitoring and providing the nation with credible statistics. I don't know if CSOs are complimenting the Government's low testing levels but if they are, I don't think the information is communicated widely enough. There's also need to channel funds directly into supporting research within Zimbabwe instead of us relying on solutions from outside.

NANGO Infor: On a lighter note, what are you looking forward to post COVID-19?

Dr. Musarurwa: I'm looking forward to getting my side burns cut and my locs neatened up. It's been more than 8 weeks since I visited my loctician.

NANGO Infor: Thank you for your time and candid responses. May you continue to follow what the Ministry of Health and Child Care and other stakeholders are encouraging you to do in order to keep safe from contracting COVID-19.



Calls to fight disinformation during Coronavirus crisis

Hurungwe's Proportional Representative Member of Parliament, Goodluck Kwaramba, is challenging leadership from across the political divide and churches to fight disinformation fuelled by fake news during the Coronavirus crisis.

Contributing during a debate on Hurungwe Community Radio, Hon. Kwaramba said its high time leaders disseminate factual information on the impact of Coronavirus to their communities during lockdown.

'It is our role as Members of Parliament, councilors and traditional leaders to take lead in giving accurate and factual information of what is trending in our communities regarding Coronavirus. We must dispel fake news which is rife on social media and spread by people mostly out of ignorance. People are not practicing social distancing due to lack of information and as community leaders we should scale up our approach of educating communities about COVID-19,' she said.

Her call came against the backdrop of a fake suspected COVID-19 case that was reported in Hurungwe and went viral on social media recently.

It claimed that one patient had tested positive at Chidamoyo Mission Hospital, 80 kilometers west of Karoi town.

Clinical tests were done and came out negative.

An official from the Provincial Civil Protection Unit (CPU), Cecilia Chitiyo, said they activated district CPU committees, and they helped confirm the Hurungwe case as untrue.

Chitiyo said that their teams are on high alert within the province's seven districts including Hurungwe,

Kariba, Makonde, Chegutu, Mhondoro-Ngezi, Zvimba and Sanyati.

She said, "Currently we are pooling resources and teams are on high alert at our existing facilities including two of our northern border entry points at Chirundu and Kariba. We have a quarantine center at Chirundu border post".

She added: "We want to assure the nation that Mashonaland West is safe as the suspected case in Hurungwe was fake and a hoax.

Our team of trained doctors and nurses went there and verified that the suspected patient had never traveled out of the country."

Mashonaland West's Mhondoro-Mubaira district registered its first COVID-19 death case following passing on of Gogo Nguni nee Chitemere.

She was mother of former Mhondoro-Mubaira MP and Minister of State in Vice President Office Sylvester Nguni.

This has seen Ministry of Health and Child Care launching mass COVID-19 testing in the rural outlying village.

Minister of Health and Child Care, Obadia Moyo, was quoted in The Herald saying they have launched mass testing in the village. "Our teams from Harare and Mashonaland West province have started combing the whole area tracing and testing all individuals as we are trying to get to the bottom of the whole issue," Moyo told the state media.

Women Aids Support Network (WASN) Director, Anna Pindukai, called on communities to seek accurate information. "Communities need correct



and consistent information on all media. Let us fight misinformation at all costs,” said Pindukai.

Coronavirus is an airborne disease and transmission is through respiratory droplets and contact with an infected person. It has claimed the lives of over 250 000 people globally and some of the worst affected countries are Italy, Spain and United States of America and United Kingdom.

It started off in China in December 2019 and has impacted social, economic and political environment of the world.

The author, Nhau Mangirazi, is a freelance journalist and Hurungwe Community Radio Initiative Coordinator.

COVID-19 Donations: How to Decide Where to Give

Zimbabwe’s Finance Minister had asked for \$200 million from overseas, World Food Programme (WFP) is appealing for US\$205 million in funding to help feed more than 4 million Zimbabweans, and Solidarity Trust Zimbabwe (SOTZIM) is making a \$2.7 million urgent plea for donations as they ramp up hospital preparedness in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. SOTZIM has been streaming weekly on Facebook as part of their efforts—a citizen-led response.

Deciding to give to charity is not always an easy decision for many Zimbabweans. With the rest of the world grappling with the exponential growth of the coronavirus, it may be up to the citizens of Zimbabwe to stand together in solidarity. And, at a glance, here’s what’s been happening:

Last 6 Weeks—Government of Zimbabwe On April 2 —Finance Minister, Mthuli Ncube, wrote to IMF seeking \$200 million. He’ll get \$7 million from the World Bank.

On April 30—President Emmerson Mnangagwa broke his own COVID-19 lockdown order, travelled to Chimoio to meet President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique where, together they announced, “The two Leaders reiterated their call for the immediate lifting of illegal sanctions imposed on the Republic of Zimbabwe to enable the Government and people of Zimbabwe to focus on development without hindrance.”

On 6 May—the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee said, “The \$7 million World Bank grant for Zimbabwe reported today should come with strict transparency and accountability measures to ensure Zimbabweans receive services and support during COVID-19, and that these funds aren't lost to ongoing mismanagement by the Zimbabwean government.”

As many of the unemployed are hit hard with the Coronavirus lockdown measures and people’s lives are upended because of the possibility of the disease outbreak, families might be asking what they can do to help and how. Standing in solidarity with your neighbours who are working hard to re-open St. Anne’s Hospital in Harare could be one way to make a significant, charitable difference in Zimbabwe’s uncertain times. Taking stock of how an organization within your community is helping those in need will help you decide how to give and where to give.

Last 6 Weeks—SOTZIM

Effective 1 April—SOTZIM ramped up to gear up St. Anne’s Hospital for COVID-19 readiness.

By 15 April—individuals were able to, “dial 2019 from any number in Zimbabwe and speak to a nurse.” If escalation is needed, the individual is referred to a Medical Doctor on duty.

Last 6 Weeks—WFP

In Epworth, people are facing extreme challenges. Food is in severe shortage.

By March 25, Victoria, Mufadzwa, Tendai (4-children), and Shingirai (2-children)—all living in Epworth—received help from WFP.

However, although WFP has made positive changes in their lives, the COVID-19 lockdown will mean Victoria might not be able to sell her tomatoes, Mufadzwa might have to shut his small storefront, and Tendai and Shingirai might not be able to feed their children.

Citizens should do their homework.

SOTZIM can be found on Facebook and you could watch their weekly Facebook streaming to learn more about them and how you can go about reaching out to them to donate. WFP also has information on their website on how they can be reached. Look at their websites to get a sense of what they are actually doing in your community. As you evaluate, there should be some evidence that the receivers you wish to support can actually get the work done.

How much you donate will be your personal decision.

Do you care about having a great hospital or feeding the hungry? Donate to something that targets what you care about. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “The first question which the priest and the Levite asked was: ‘If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?’ But...the good Samaritan reversed the question: ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?’”

Zimbabweans will need to stand in solidarity with each other to face COVID-19.

Columnist, Pearl Matibe has geographic expertise on U.S. foreign policy, think tank impact, strategy and public policy issues. You may follow her on Twitter: @PearlMatibe



Sustainability and resilience post COVID-19



Source: zimbabwevoice.com

Harare City municipal police went about demolishing illegal market stalls, vending sites and workspaces used by vendors and informal traders in the high-density suburbs such as Mbare, Highfields, Hopely and Glen Norah.

It is not clear whether the demolitions are an enforcement of Section 8 (1) (l) of Statutory Instrument 77 of 2020, gazetted on 23rd March, empowering government to “authorise the evacuation, closing, alteration or demolition of any premises whose occupation or use is deemed likely to aid the spread or render more difficult the eradication of Covid-19”. Nor has it been clarified if this is compliance with the Ministry of Local Government and National Housing’s 8 April directive to local authorities to implement a Cabinet resolution “to clean up and renovate work spaces used by SMEs and informal traders during the lockdown period”.

Whatever the motivation, the all-important question pertains to whether it is essential or desirable to demolish vendors’ stalls in the midst

of an unprecedented crisis already hitting the poor the most. The impact of the COVID-19 inspired five-week lockdown on the livelihoods of the vendors and informal traders is dire and the demolitions of their workspaces will worsen it. They lost property and stock while the demolitions themselves were characterised by corruption and human rights violations such as extortion, bribes harassment and assaults.

In an op-ed published in the *Newsday* of 6 April, two weeks after gazetting of S.I 77/2020, I warned about the possibility of the COVID-19 pandemic being abused as a pretext for demolitions. I also cautioned that this would harm the socio-economic welfare of the already impoverished informal settlement dwellers surviving from vending.

The demolitions mean that after the lockdown, most informal traders will struggle to restart their businesses, having exhausted capital on lockdown subsistence, and having lost both their wares and work spaces.

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It is important for me to emphasize that the organisation that I work for, Community Alliance for Human Settlements in Zimbabwe (CAHSZ), do not encourage illegal occupation of state land for whatever purpose. CAHSZ strive for proper, orderly and lawful human settlements. One of our formative goals is to contribute to Zimbabwe's efforts to achieve sustainable cities and communities aspired under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11.

However, the pursuit of this noble aspiration should not be at the expense of sanctified rights to livelihoods and shelter. That is why, as CAHSZ, we advocate for relocation as a more humane alternative to forced evictions. That is also why we advocate for human rights-based approaches that place citizens at the centre of all policies, whether aimed at governing human settlements, achieving sustainable communities or combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 22 April 2020, four days after Harare demolitions had begun, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres gave an update on the COVID-19 global situation. He called on all responses to ensure protection of livelihoods and to cushion the most vulnerable population sections such as informal traders, slum dwellers and internally displaced persons. The demolitions currently underway in Zimbabwe are a direct opposite of these recommendations. In fact, they show that we learnt nothing and forgot nothing from Operation Murambatsvina of 2005.

Firstly, Operation Murambatsvina led to loss of livelihoods and shelter by at least 570 000 people. Likewise, the current demolitions will disrupt jobs and livelihood sources of several thousand informal traders residing in the same urban and peri-urban informal settlements demolished during Operation Murambatsvina fifteen years ago.

Secondly, in 2005, the authorities started by demolishing illegal housing structures before implementing Operation Garikai / Hlalani Kuhle to build houses for those it had rendered homeless. The victims had to stay in the open while houses were under construction. This month, the City of Harare demolished vending sites first and then set out to finish construction of designated vending sites for relocation of the affected. They put the cart before the horse, as affected vendors will be without operating spaces until construction had been finished.

Thirdly, the timing is insensitive. Operation Murambatsvina was implemented in the midst of winter exposing women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities to harsh weather conditions. Current demolitions are being undertaken in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic when informal traders who live on a dollar-per-day, hand-to-mouth basis have not been working for a month now due to the lockdown.

The big questions are after the COVID-19 pandemic has been arrested, how do communities recover to become more sustainable and resilient? How do we ensure that even the most vulnerable citizens are not left behind but are in better positions than before the pandemic?

These are three suggestions that can help make this possible. Firstly, current COVID-19 mitigatory measures should guarantee, protect and promote access to social safety nets, especially for the most vulnerable populations such as informal settlement dwellers and traders who have limited access to social safety nets. This should include immediate disbursement of social support grants promised by government to cushion vulnerable citizens. This also includes improving availability of basic goods such as mealie-meal at affordable prices.

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Secondly, post-pandemic interventions should be responsive, inclusive and equitable enough to stimulate sustainable recovery of vulnerable groups such as youths, women and informal traders who are currently being excluded by government interventions. An example is the ZWL\$17 Million COVID-19 Youth Relief Fund “meant to provide relief support to youth enterprises affected by the Coronavirus pandemic and the measures taken to contain it”. The Fund’s eligibility requirements announced by Youth Minister, Kirsty Coventry on 24 April are stringent and discriminatory against youth informal traders. Applicants are required to provide proof of residence such as bank statements of up to six months prior to the lockdown, and also proof of place of operation such as a valid lease agreement or utility bills. Only the formalized businesses not affected by the demolitions meet these requirements. Youth and women informal traders whose work spaces were demolished will not access this stimulus package. Government should revise these requirements to ensure that vulnerable groups equitably access the Fund and any other resources and opportunities that will enable recovery and resilience.

Lastly, current COVID-19 preventive measures and recovery efforts should be consultative, inclusive, open and transparent. It is a fact that we currently live in desperate times that may justify desperate measures. However, arbitrary measures such as the ongoing demolitions will only generate ill will and resistance thereby crippling all efforts to arrest the spread of COVID-19. In a crisis such as this, citizens need agency and a voice in order for them to cooperate. Broad-based participation guarantees this and government should adopt it to ensure buy-in, trust, compliance and cooperation by citizens.

Francis Mukora is a public policy analyst, human rights campaigner and social justice activist. He writes in his capacity as the Research and Advocacy Coordinator for Community Alliance for Human Settlements in Zimbabwe an organisation advocating for safe and secure settlements and access to socio-economic rights for all.

GBV spikes during national lockdown

The announcement by President Emmerson Mnangagwa to extend the lock down by a further 14 days came as no surprise but it has certainly brought with it a number of challenges for some women. This is because the first phase of the lockdown recorded chilling, worrying and sad stories of gender based violence targeted at women.

This report summarises observation of the lockdown terms of human rights abuses, especially whose victims are girls and young women in Chipinge district.



Platform for Youth and Community Development (PYCD) has so far recorded 110 cases of gender based violence characterised by physical, neglect and emotional abuse. Namely the abuses have included rape, termination of pregnancy, wife battering, neglect of minor children, denial of food, locking spouses in rooms, attempted suicide and forced marriages among others. These statistics documented over 21 days are almost double the average of 62 cases the organisation receives per month.

The period under review has disqualified the assumption that the lockdown period was going to provide more family time for couples and siblings to bond. Instead during this period the perpetrators of gender based violence have dodged gatekeepers and law enforcement agencies. There is concern that

going forward under the same conditions the cases of gender based violence will increase.

The lockdown has not only increased marital tension due to infidelity and mistrust but also exposed the weakening ties of extended families who are suffering from lack of economic activity and poverty.

In one of the cases recorded in ward 26 of Chipinge South, a married woman is said to have suffered a miscarriage after a fight ensued over how her husband was failing to provide for the family during the lockdown. It was established that the 35 year-old man is self-employed and owns a Honda Fit that plies between Chiredzi and Checheche while the wife is a vegetable vendor at Checheche growth point. Due to the lockdown, neither of the two are able to make their daily income.

In yet another case, a 28 year-old Tuzuka man is now in the hands of the police at Chisumbanje after allegedly raping minors who were under his custody during this lockdown. He was arrested after he raped a 9 year-old who later narrated the traumatic ordeal to her parents. The case has not yet been heard in court as the courts are only attending what they term emergencies until after the lockdown.

There is a high likelihood that cases of gender based violence are currently under reported as people cannot move freely to access service providers that can offer protection and other assistance.

There is a strong correlation between domestic violence and poverty and this consequently affects women and children the most. To date 28 people have tested HIV positive and three have lost their lives owing to gender based violence. Stakeholders are called on to ensure that justice takes its course and there are effective community based protection systems.

Authors: Muburwa Allan Murozvi and Memory Khosa in Chipinge.

Challenging retrogressive societal norms through creative arts

CultureACTIONs aims to harness the transformative power of the creative arts to challenge retrogressive societal norms. It also aims to reduce Gender Based Violence (GBV) among women and girls aged between 15 and 44 years; mainstreaming climate change and environmental sustainability within targeted communities, especially among children.

Following the successful implementation of the first phase of CultureACTIONs in Mazowe, Makoni and Chipinge between 2017 to 2020, the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust; with support from the Embassy of Sweden in Zimbabwe through the Swedish Development Agency (Sida) is extending the life and scope of the project by another eighteen months. Due to the devastating impacts of Cyclone Idai, CultureACTIONs is expanding programming to include Chimanimani - targeting 2 wards in the district. In the districts of Chipinge, Makoni and Mazowe, CultureACTIONs will cover an additional 2 wards per district.

Culture Fund has reconvened Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in the four districts; Real Open



File photo taken by Culture Fund in Mazowe (2019)

Opportunities for Transformation Support (ROOTS), Women and Land Zimbabwe (WLZ) , Chenhaka Trust, Zimbabwe International Schools Festival Trust (ZISAF), Diocese of Mutare Community Care Programme (DOMCCP), Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust (AWET) and Southern Alliance For Indigenous Resources (SAFIRE) to deepen impacts within communities, particularly activities targeting women and girls between the ages of 15 and 44 years. Based on lessons learned from the project’s first phase, men and boys will be deliberately targeted to boost agency towards reducing GBV and child marriages.

The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has unfortunately exposed many women and girls to incidences of GBV. In response to this reality, CultureACTIONS has integrated COVID-19 related GBV mitigation into new activities. Working in solidarity with others, locally and across the globe, to flatten the pandemic's spread, the project is devising innovative and context related responses. Culture Fund employs its Creative Knowledge Toolkit – an approach that deploys creative assets in response to community-grown solutions to their problems. CultureACTIONS will intensify efforts to raise awareness among targeted communities; actively and responsibly collaborating with state and non-state stakeholders in COVID-19 responses.



COVID-19
**REALITIES: PROTECTION OF WOMEN,
 GIRLS AND CHILDREN**

Let us all ensure that community-based protection systems are still effective to protect women, girls and children from sexual and physical abuse, domestic violence and gender based violence.



Doing things differently



COVID-19 has meant that organisations have to change their information sharing strategies with most having to rely on posters as fliers exacerbate the spread of COVID-19.



RUVHENEKO RWENYENYEDZI TRUST

CORONA VIRUS: COVID-19

- Wash Your Hands Often With Soap And Water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue
- Disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.

Need help during the lockdown? Here are suggestions of who you can contact

COVID-19 related information: Toll Free 2019

To know your human rights: Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
24 hour National Hotline +263 772 257 247
Matabeleland/ Midlands +263 773 855 635
Manicaland/ Masvingo +263 773 855 718

To report gender based violence: 24 hour toll free lines
Musasa Project - 08080074
Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association - 08080131
Adult Rape Clinic - 0775 672 770
Shamwari Yemwanasikana Hotline 0772 607 384

To get legal advice: 24 hour toll free legal service helplines
Legal Resources Foundation - 08080402
Women and Law in Southern Africa - 0777 366 952
Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association - 08080131
Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights - 0772 257 247

For psycho social support: 24 hour toll free line for children in distress and COVID-19 information
Childline Zimbabwe - 116

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